

Comedy show at the bird feeder

OUR BIRD feeder has been a constant source of enjoyment to our household. We stationed our main feeder right next to the kitchen window so we can see any activity that goes on.

Like many people, we have our problems with squirrels getting at the bird seed, especially in winter. So we bought a metal feeder that is supposed to keep out squirrels.

It works on a lever system. When a squirrel sits on the platform in front of the seed chute, his weight lowers a panel, closing the opening to the seed. But if a small bird or a single blue jay lands on the platform, the panel is not activated.

TRADE NAME of the device is the Hilarious Bird Feeder — named, I presume, because the squirrels go through some comical antics in their efforts to get at seeds.

I watched a comical incident at the feeder earlier this summer that involved two blue jays.

Seed in the feeder was low, so birds had to stick their heads into the body of the feeder in order to get a sunflower seed. That meant they had to go beyond where the panel closes off access to the food. Normally, that is no problem because the weight of a single bird won't activate the panel.

At the moment the first blue jay stuck his head inside the feeder, a second blue jay landed on the platform. The second jay's weight closed the panel on the first jay's neck.

AS THE STUCK jay flapped its wings and squawked frantically, the second looked around, trying to discover why the first was disturbed. He could see no danger, and I'm sure he

nature

never made the association of his weight and the activated panel.

Soon the second bird decided to leave. The panel rose, freeing the stuck

bird's head. He flew to a nearby branch, shook indignantly to adjust his ruffled feathers and looked back at that feeding station.

Neither bird got a seed that trip. Together they reminded me of the Laurel and Hardy of the bird world.

—Timothy Nowicki
nature writer

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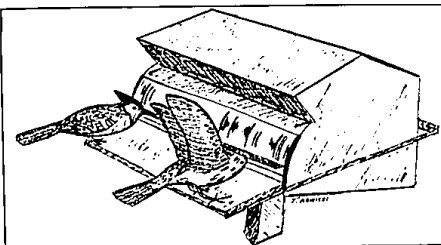
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As the second blue jay landed, his weight closed the panel on the bird feeder, and the first bird's head was temporarily stuck.

Stick to fuel rules, says Chrysler chief

The president of Chrysler Corp. urged a Congressional panel to keep the nation's fuel-economy standard at 27.5 miles per gallon, rather than weakening it as Ford and General Motors have requested. "Chrysler will meet the standard," Harold K. Sperlich said, "because even when we were going broke a few years back, we invested heavily in a corporate strategy geared to satisfying the market while meeting the fuel-economy law."

"Our compliance with the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standard is proof that the 27.5 mpg standard is technologically feasible and that other manufacturers could have met the law as well," Sperlich told the House Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power.

HE DISAGREED with the assessment of Ford and GM that keeping the CAFE standard at 27.5 mpg, rather than scaling it back to 26 mpg, would result in a loss of tens of thousands of jobs. Weakening the standard "is not about saving jobs or saving factories," Sperlich said. "It's about maximizing profits, pure and simple."

"Those who want the standard dialed back have forgone the investments necessary to move their CAFE to the statutory level of 27.5 mpg; now they want an administrative ruling to forego paying the fines that Congress intended as the penalty for non-compliance."

SPERLICH said that since 1978 Chrysler has invested "close to \$5 billion in fuel-efficient programs" that enabled it to meet the standard.

He called it "unfair that GM, Ford, and several low-volume luxury importers are flunking the standard, and Chrysler is paying the penalty."

OCC seminar aids women in transition

"Women in Transition," for those who need support and career guidance, will be offered this fall at all four Oakland Community College campuses.

Six two-hour seminars will help displaced homemakers, divorced or separated women, single parents and persons seeking jobs in non-traditional areas.

Orientation sessions will be Thursday, Oct. 3. To register for the free orientation session, contact Joyce Sachs at the Auburn Hills campus in Auburn Hills, 853-4266; Elizabeth Anderson at the Highland Lakes Campus in Union Lake, 350-3087; Judy Hewett at the Royal Oak campus, 867-5725; or Joan Maloney at the Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills, 471-7745.

Weekly seminars begin the week of Oct. 14 and run through Nov. 21.

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There are some very interesting ways you can find a doctor. You can ask friends, relatives or co-workers for a recommendation. Since there are as many opinions as there are people, you may end up with a confusing collection of names and phone numbers. Without having the slightest idea of who the doctors are or where they're located. You may also choose to open up your telephone book and, well — good luck.

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