

Local bucks rub 'velvet' antlers

IN THE growing and expanding suburbs of metropolitan Detroit, it seems unlikely that one could see white-tailed deer. Yet people in Troy and Farmington Hills have seen deer within the city limits.

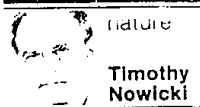
Walking along the trails of Troy's Outdoor Education Center, I came upon a buck rub, evidence of the elusive white-tail. At this time of year male deer — bucks — are in the process of rubbing the "velvet" from their antlers.

Earlier this spring, males began to grow new sets of antlers. White-tailed deer, moose and elk all have antlers. Antlers are made of bone and are shed each year.

Horns are made of a finger-nail like material that fits over a core of bone that grows from the skull. Cows, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats have horns that continue to grow and are not shed each year.

ALL SUMMER long the "velvet" that covers antlers is supplying nourishment for the bone to grow. Many nerves and blood vessels make up the "velvet."

After the antlers have ceased growing, the "velvet" is no longer



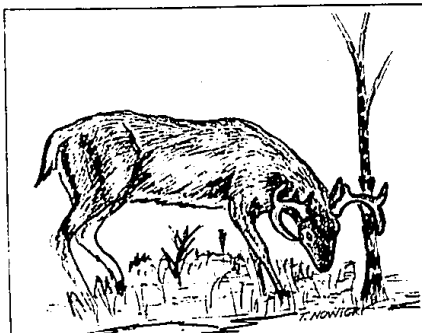
Timothy Nowicki

to shed and begins to dry up. Once the antlers start growing, the velvet begins to harden. In late August, bucks will begin to rub their antlers against the trunks of trees in an attempt to remove the dried "velvet." They rub so vigorously that they can remove the bark from the tree.

A recent buck rub at the nature center actually had splinters of wood projecting from the tree trunk. On top of a hill in the meadow is the carcass of a young sapling that was shredded by an aggressively rubbing buck.

SOUTHERN MICHIGAN has a very healthy herd of a estimated 10,000 to 12,000 deer. The deer are found in the local woodlands.

As the population increases,



Bucks rub "velvet" from their antlers because it is no longer needed and has dried up. They rub so vigorously that they remove bark from trees.

places to live are getting fewer and fewer. Many animals are being placed into any remnant forest of

habitat that provide adequate food, even if it's surrounded by highways and high rises.

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Failures can teach us strength

AMERICA places a great premium on success. The most popular books on the best seller list are usually entitled: "How to be Successful in Business," "How to be a Successful Investor," "How to be a Successful Lover."

This is a country of winners and losers. Advertisements exhort us to "be a winner."

Coaches Vince Lombardi of the Green Bay Packers produced the immortal line, "Winning isn't everything — it's the only thing."

BUT WHAT our society doesn't address is that failure is very much a part of every life. At some time, we are all failures or we shall be so.

The reason for this is basic: Risk implies failure. If we dare new things — changing a job, creating a work of art, trying to get into a school, falling in love, establishing a new relationship, starting a business, choosing a career — we risk failure. It is implicit in striving for success.

Failure is the most democratic of all clubs, admitting the young and the mature, rich and poor, chief executive officers and simple clerks.



Rabbi Irwin Groner

About the only thing we members are in common is that we're all about belonging.

SINCE FAILURE is very much a part of every life, it is important to give our children permission to fail. To lead a child to believe otherwise is to deny reality and bring him up in an atmosphere of false and destructive illusions.

No one succeeds in everything, and no one fails in everything. We must not punish our children by focusing so exclusively on our dreams that we lose sight of our genuine victories.

Each of us fails, and yet each of us is a far greater success than we realize. Each of us means more than we can ever know to so many who depend on us, who need us, who love us.

Without us, their lives would be diminished and empty. With us, their lives have hope and beauty and meaning.

WE NEED to remember the redeeming truth that our failures can be used. They can teach us great lessons and leave us wiser, better men and women.

What does not destroy me, makes me stronger. Perhaps that's what caused the failure? What did I do wrong? What can I learn from it?

ANY FOOL capitalize on his gains. The really important thing is to profit from your losses. That requires intelligence.

It has been said, "The only complete catastrophe is a catastrophe from which we learn nothing."

A failure can make us look once

again at what our real priorities are. How often have I seen men and women reeling from the failure of a marriage, use that occasion to ask themselves what went wrong, what they really seek in marriage, so they can go to forge a better, more lasting relationship.

I have seen anguished young men and women denied acceptance to professional school go on to redefine new life goals and end up with a more satisfying place in life.

Failure can make us more sensitive to the less fortunate. When we have not known failure, we often have little compassion for those who have fallen on hard times.

Failure helps us to be strong, more competent, more compassionate.

Rabbi Irwin Groner is with Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield.

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