

Bats need a PR campaign to clear image

Bats are a much maligned mammal in Michigan.

Throughout the years, bats have been stereotyped as vicious, ugly, mysterious creatures. In the middle ages, if a bat roosted in your house, you could be sentenced to death for being a witch.

Their nocturnal or night time activities always aroused a sense of mystery, because people could not determine what they were doing or how they were doing it.

Bewildered by their abilities people began to make unfounded assumptions and stories about them.

MANY "WIVES tales" persist to day.

For instance, many people have heard that bats will fly into a head of hair on a person. If a bat got close enough to touch the hair on a person's head, it would only be because it was pursuing an insect that was close by.

All bats in the Midwest eat insects exclusively. Their echolocation system is specifically designed for capturing insects while flying in the dark.

As bats fly, they emit an inaudible sound from their throats. This sound then bounces back when it hits an ob-



nature
Timothy Nowicki

ject, like an insect, and is perceived by their very acute hearing.

Most insect-eating bats can maneuver around a thread .10mm in diameter. A cluster of human hair is not easily confused with an insect!

UNTIL 1938 it was not known how bats maneuver at night. Then Donald Griffin confirmed a hypothesis that bats emit high-frequency sounds, like a sonar system.

Today most people know this fact and thus accept the adage "blind as a bat." Well, bats are not blind. They have good eyesight, but not good enough to detect a gnat at night.

Bats replace birds as insect eaters during the night. One gray bat may eat as many as 3,000 insects per night. A bat in your backyard is good for controlling insects. That is why

many people around the country are erecting batominiums.

Just as people build bird houses, people are making the best little bat house in Michigan that they can make. They are simple to make and are installed about 12-15 feet high on the east side of a tree near a river, lake or marsh.

A HOUSE IS actually just a roosting place for the summer with three different width openings inside and an open bottom where they can enter. Houses should be made of rough cut wood so bats can grab hold with

their claws. Place them in warm areas.

One may think, why should I attract an animal that is known to carry rabies? Bats, skunks, raccoons and fox all carry rabies, but a domestic cat that is not vaccinated is more dangerous than a rabid bat.

A bat will not bite you unless you pick it up. Domestic cats that may have been bitten by a rabid animal are more likely to infect a person. With some common sense and some precautions, one can enjoy the lively acrobatics of bats from your own backyard bat house.

How to avoid skin cancer

Dear Jo:

Do you recommend regular skin examinations for those of us who have fair skin? My mother, who was fair like me, developed skin cancer when she was older. I would like to prevent this from happening to me.

Mrs. T.T.

Dear Mrs. T:

Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers. The best way to prevent it is to stay out of the sun. Those who are most at risk (like you) have fair skin, fair hair and light-colored eyes.

You and others who are fair can reduce the risk of getting skin cancer by establishing a monthly routine whereby you carefully examine your skin.

Self-examination isn't difficult. Just set a time (the first day of each month) and look for the following:

• A sore that doesn't heal. Have it checked if it hasn't healed after three weeks and if it crusts, bleeds or oozes.

• A persistent reddish patch. If it may be painful, or crust and itch; or it may not bother you at all.

• A smooth bump indented in the middle. The borders will be rolled; as it grows, blood vessels appear on the surfaces.

• A shiny, translucent growth. White, pink or red or common colors for this growth on fair-haired people. Those with dark hair may observe mole-like shades of black, brown or tan.

• A shiny, waxy, scar-like spot. It may be yellow or white, without regular borders.

• And any change in any moles, particularly if a mole has become asymmetrical or enlarged, changed

color or has developed irregular smudged edges. Also check them for ulceration and bleeding.

If you have any of these signs, see your doctor at once.

Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell at 11 Cynthia Crescent, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4E 1J3.



gerontology
A. Jolayne Farrell



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Infertility Research and Treatment

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will you need
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and only embryo freezing capabilities (which contribute significantly to reducing the risk of multiple births). Hutzel has also pioneered the concept of treating couples rather than individuals. This helps avoid unnecessary delays, expenses and frustration.

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