Nature buffs find own 'little piece of heaven'

Dave and Jennette Sharpe stoop a lot as they walk through the back and front yard of their Meadowbrook Hills home.

They're not looking at a manicured lawn or neat clumps of nursery-bred flowers. They're looking at nature — pretty much as God intended it — right outside their front and back doors.

"I like to sit here and look down and imagine what it was like when the Indians were here," David Sharpe sald, as he sat in a hammock looking down a slope in his heavily wooded back yard.

The Sharpe's yard is like walking in a forest with everything as nature planned it. Walking from the front door, the Sharpes stoop and push back leaves and wild flowers to point to their "little lipece of heaven" complete with Virginia blue bells, wild ginger, wild columbine and trillium, the state wild flower, and white pine, the state tree.

"There's no such thing as a weed. Just wild flowers in the wrong place," Sharpe said.

NO DOUBT about it. The Sharpes are na-ture buffs. David Sharpe is a science teach-er in Detroit. Jennette is a business teach-er. Both are 15-year members of the Michl-gan Nature Association.

Flowers, like trillium, the state wild flower, decorate the natural habitat yard of David and Jennette Sharpe. The Farmington Hills couple chose to preserve the natural setting that existed long before their house was built.

Photos by Sharon LeMieux

know your neighbor

The association, which buys land around Michigan to be maintained as sanctuaries, is near and dear to Sharpes heart. He's one of the organization's trustees, and he's determined to get more people or which the sanctiation — to preserve Michigan's native species of plants and animals. "We want to help increase awareness for the need we have to protect endangered plants and animals." Barpe said.

The organization also provides education about the state natural history, and members continue to seek financial help from non-government sources to buy additional land before there's none left.

"There's always this need among people to develop and further develop," Sharpe said.

The association owns — without government help — more than 6,000 acres or 120 preserves in Michigan. All the prescres are open to the public. The association sponsors tours of the protected areas, as well as information on various species of



ment tund for the organization to pay for the continuing maintenance of the sanctuaries.

"We have to protect it once we own becreases," when the protect it once we own becreases, "Sharpe said, Ouickly opening the refrigerator, Jennette Sharpe pulls out a carton of Melody Farms milk. She turns it around and dominating one side of the carton is the Michigan Nature Association.

Throughout May, the dairy will feature on its products the organization and how to become a member.

The Sharpes see a slow resurgence of interest among suburban residents in nature. The Sharpes see at the first meeting of the reactivated Naturalists Club at Heritage Park Tuesday,

"People are becoming more aware of it. But a tot of times if they haven't been considered to the more difficult for them." Sharpe aid.

The Sharpes like nature as it was man to be. "In amared at the subtlettes of color. To one person, it's all green. To another, here are subtleties of color." Sharpe said.

THEIR YARD has — like others in Farmington Hills — been designated a backyard habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. That means within his natural area, Sharpe has provided food, water and shelter for wildlife.

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An Asian garden right out the front door has a small waterfall, which is filled with fish during the summer from Sharpe's middle school science class.

Avoiding the manitured lawn route when the Sharpe's built their bome 17 years ago was no accident. True, the yard — with its woodchip trail — trees and wild flowers—was done before the house. And the house was sert of designed to take advantage of the natural surroundings. But there's another reason Sharpe didn't want a manicured lawn.

"Where I grew up in Taylor, my dad had an aere of grass and then be bought another aere. We had to cut the grass all the years we were growing up." he said.

Not that having a natural kind of yard is any easy task. The Sharpes planted some of the wildflower.

"Must days I go around with clippers. It's more like an artistic experience."

Farmington Hills resident David Sharpe is an avid backer of the Michigan goal is to spread the word about preserving the



'Summer in city' series set for downtown Farmington

If Farmington's Downtown Development Authority has its way, "sum-mer in the city" will take on new

opment Authority and 18 May; summer in the city" will take on new meaning.

A 10-week entertainment series will kick off on Wednesdays in June in downtown Farmington, designed to offer mid-day activities for families and businesspeeple alike. Programs planned range from a shoply-wapy/sell day for kids to professional puppet and magic acts and musical revues.

All programs will be held between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. under a green-and-white striped tent in the Downtown Farmington Center parking lot.

DDA officials stress the tent will take up no parking spaces.

Lake up no parking spaces.

Plans call for a costumed town crier to promote the events and for local stores to hand out fans with a schedule of activities and "I'm a fan of Downtown Farmington" printed on them

of Downtown Farmington" printed on them.

"Hopefully, If it is well-received, we can expand upon it next year," said Brenda Kellams Neler, public-ty coordinator for the DDA. She is also negotiating with downtown res-taurants to offer some sort of spe-

gested evening entertainment be considered in the future, she added. The program is costing the DDA \$12,000, with \$5,000 directed toward the actual programs, \$3,200 for items such as tents, tables, chairs and risers and \$3,300 for publicity.

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ACCORDING TO a program approved by the DDA and city council last week, the tentative schedule of programs includes:

• June 12 - Encyclopaedia Britannica's "Safety City" allows children to travel through a miniature commonly without guarder to will cover and follow and fire adder to consumer the council of the control of the council of the c

ing the annual Farmington Founders Festival.

• July 17 — Children 15 years or younger will be encouraged by buy, swap or sell games, books, toys or sporting equipment they no longer use.

yes.

July 24 -- LuLu and Blooper the clowns will do face painting, balloon animals and non-competitive games.

ioon animals and noncompetitive games.

• July 31 — Fun With Plaster, a local company, will help visitors create and paint a misterpiece in plaster, at with a fee, this will cost 12 per person to help defray costs.

• Aug 7 — The Farmington Community Library will present Tellading storytelling, activities and songs.

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Walsh chief resigns, cites health

Jeffrey W. Barry has announced he will step down immediately as president and their executive officer of Wath College in Troy, because of a significant health condition. Barry president of the college for 21 years, made the unanticipated announcement at a special meeting of the Walsh College Board of Trustees.

The board of trustees accepted his resignation and established a transition team headed by Walter B. Fisher, chairman of the board. Barry will become president emeritus and will continue to serve as a member

will continue to serve as a member of the board of trustees.

The board named David A. Spencer, executive vice president, as interim president and chief-executive officer with full authority of the office. Spencer, 40, has been employed by the college for 12 years and has led the operations side of the college or more than one year.

"The board regretivative for continue of the properties of the propertie

grateful to Jeff for his leadership during a time when the college has experienced tremendous expansion of its program and its enrollment. The cyliege has boome an outstand-ing clusterioral institution because of Jeff Barry's clear vision and the efforts of the faculty and staff he has assembled.

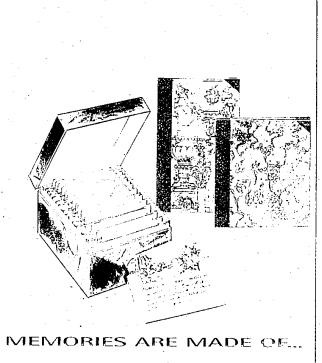
"I have complete confidence that

"I have complete confidence that "I have complete confidence for Dave Spencer will continue the pro-gressive and professional leadership of Walsh College," Fisher said, "Be-cause of Dave's extensive experi-ence at Walsh, we expect the transi-tion to be smooth."

THE ANNOUNCEMENT came just a week after the college dedicated a 33,000 square foot addition to its main building. The 3.5 million project provides more classroom and library space for the college's steadily increasing enrollment, which has grown from 150 students to more than 3,300.

Barty, 52, came to Walsh College as vice president in 1969 and was ap-

pointed president one year later. He earned a Jachelor of arts degree from Albion College in 1960, a juris dector degree from the five from th



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