



Critter concern: Since moving to the 10 Mile/Middlebelt area, Renae Vinson has found that some of her neighbors do not share her love of animals.

SHARON L. MURRAY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Pet peeves have Hills resident perplexed

BY BILL COUTANT

STAFF WRITER
Are rabbits pets or pests? Seems like the furry, long-eared critters are breaking the law in Farmington Hills. At least, they might be if not raised as pets and kept too close to the neighbors.

Renae Vinson likes the rabbits she's been keeping for two years. But last November, when she moved into a house off Middlebelt north of 10 Mile, she found that not everyone shared her taste.

After trying to sell the bunnies, she was told that a sign advertising them must go because it wasn't allowed in the residential area.

"I would sell them to pet stores," she said. "So if they could sell them as pets, I can't see the problem."

But with 12 of them — including a young, unusually blue-eyed one named Frank for a much older blue-eyed individual — Vinson and her son Jacob, 12, have a lot of pets. Although they breed like, ah, rabbits, she has kept them in

her garage, away from the neighbors.

Another group of animals, the chickens she has on her property since March, may be more responsible for her present dilemma. Although Vinson said neighbors did not complain to her about them, they are also in violation of city code and zoning regulations.

City code requires that such animals be no closer than 175 feet from a neighboring building. Zoning requirements stipulate that the chickens and rabbits would be

considered farm animals.

That would require them to be on at least 10 acres and at least 75 feet from any neighbor's property. Vinson's animals comply with neither. That's why she'll have to explain to Judge Fred Harris why she should not pay a fine.

"She could seek a variance from the zoning board of appeals," said Lee Blizman, supervisor of the city's zoning division. "But she would still be violating the city code."

Blizman and Hills City Attorney John Donohue said that rabbits could be kept as pets, within a house. That use would be subject to Michigan Humane Society standards, which would probably limit the number.

Blizman said there have been complaints about the chickens. "But we're the one's complaining," she said. "The neighbors shouldn't have to worry about this."

Vinson said she has told neigh-

bors she'd be willing to give up the rabbits. But a stiff fine would be tough on her financially, since she is off work healing from knee surgery.

"I might have to sell the house," she said. "It took me 12 years to save enough money to be able to buy this house."

Blizman said the city's intent is not to have Vinson pay a dime. "The object is compliance," she said. "If she would comply, we'd want to dismiss the fine."

Annual Goodfellows drive expands in scope, spirit

BY LARRY O'CONNOR

STAFF WRITER
Every year, Farmington Area Goodfellows make a pledge: No child or senior citizen without a Christmas.

And every year, they make good on that promise.

"It's different each year," said Richard Tupper, president of Farmington Area Goodfellows. "We have so many people working in different categories. We have super volunteers."

"It gets done."

That's in no small part due to

the multitude who send in donations. Since the Goodfellows switched from selling newspapers to a mail drive to solicit contributions in 1993, Farmington area residents have responded in kind. Last year, \$40,100 was raised. That allowed the Goodfellows to help 142 families have a better Christmas. Some 162 families also received support through the Heart to Heart for the Holidays (formerly Adopt-a-Family) program. In all, some 580 children benefited.

Letters went out to Farmington

area residents a week ago, asking for pledges. Checks are already starting to arrive at the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce office.

Also, St. Bonaventure Skating Center, 24505 Halsted, will host another roller skating fund-raiser 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 7. Last year's inaugural event raised \$300.

While raising money, Goodfellows organizers are busy sorting donated canned and other goods in time for delivery. Basket delivery is set for Saturday, Dec. 16.

The number of people in need varies year-to-year. Referrals come from relatives, neighbors and school people.

This year the number of those in need is expected to be down slightly because of a good economy, Tupper said. But he added, "There will probably be in excess of 280 families."

Farmington Goodfellows started 65 years ago by members of the Farmington Exchange Club. The Goodfellows became a separate entity in 1973, but many Exchange Club members are still involved.

In ensuing years, the program has grown in scope and spirit. Goodfellows work closely with Neighborhood House, Head Start and the Senior Program in a coordinated effort.

Farmington Public Schools also do considerable work with its canned food drive. Last year, more than 23,000 canned goods were collected at school buildings.

This year's drive, which took place Nov. 1-22, has collected 22,735 cans so far.

"Just from the reports I've received from the schools, (this year's) has gone very well," said Betty Wolford, who works in the district's Schools and Community Relations office.

On delivery day, helping were more than 100 students from the three high school's National Honor Society and Varsity Club groups.

Such volunteerism has been set forth by several generations. Farmington Goodfellows dedicated this year's effort to Durward Hooper, who died this year.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WEEK OF DECEMBER 3, 1995

'Tis the season...

SANTA'S MAILBOX
Come fill out your wish list and we'll be certain to send it on to the North Pole to make for a reply!
Santa's Mailbox, Children's Store

VISIT SANTA
Each week through Christmas
Thursdays and Fridays, 3 to 8 pm
Saturdays, 11 am to 5 pm
Sundays, Noon to 5 pm

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS
"Candy Cane" Parade
"Candy Cane" Parade
"Candy Cane" Parade
"Candy Cane" Parade

Mark your calendar!

3-8/SUNDAY-SATURDAY
FRAGRANCE WEEK
We invite you to enjoy one of twelve fragrances new to Jacobson's or rediscover a longtime classic. Our experts will demonstrate fragrance layering. A poinsettia plant is your gift with any purchase of \$40 or more in women's fragrance, while supplies last.

5/TUESDAY
BRIO PLAY DAY
An afternoon of fun! Brio's wooden railway offers hands-on play and learning activities to excite and expand young minds.
11 am to 2 pm
Children's

8/FRIDAY
DARY REES PERSONAL APPEARANCE
Fun combines with function to create table and giftware with a sense of humor. Meet the designer.
4 to 8 pm
Store for the Home

9/SATURDAY
DAVID YURMAN COLLECTION SHOW
Necklaces, earrings, bracelets and rings created in classic cable styling. Sterling silver and 14k yellow gold accented with shimmering gemstones.
10 am to 4 pm
Fashion Jewelry

Jacobson's

HOLIDAY HOURS
330 W. MAPLE RD. • BIRMINGHAM
MONDAY - SATURDAY: 9:30 AM TO 9 PM
SUNDAY, NOON TO 5 PM • PHONE: 644-8900 • FAX: 644-0087

gain this year, the Farmington Area Goodfellows need your support to help provide a holiday lift to needy children and less fortunate elderly residents in Farmington and Farmington Hills. With the money donated, the Goodfellows deliver baskets of joy typically containing canned foods and knitwear. Each includes gift certificates redeemable for fresh food and winter clothing. Toys, games, dolls and children's clothing are included when appropriate. Family makeup dictates the size and content of each basket. Potential recipients must document need. Special dietary requests are honored when practical. Cash donations come back to the community. About the only things the Goodfellows have to buy are stamps to mail solicitation letters and boxes to make into baskets. Volunteers are the Goodfellows' backbone. Please fill out the coupon below and mail it, along with your donation to:

Farmington Area Goodfellows
c/o Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce
33000 Thomas, Suite 101, Farmington 48338

Name _____

Address _____

City and ZIP _____

Donation (check, money order, other) _____