



Keep suet fresh; hawk sightings

We have been seeing a fast flying hawk attacking the birds in our yard. Do you know what this bird is? In the Farmington area, this bird is likely a Cooper's Hawk. We have one visit our yard a few times a week hunting the birds that are attracted to our feeders. It is always a thrill to see this hawk catch a bird in mid flight. Consider yourself lucky to witness one of our suburban predators in action. A Cooper's Hawk flies with amazing speed and can maneuver trees and bushes, almost at ground level, when in pursuit of prey. They have a long tail with black bars across it and a grayish back. The adults have a mostly whitish breast. Buy yourself a bird book to help identify future encounters. Too many people live in Disneyland today and do not think that something must die so something else may live. That is the way of the natural world. Joe Derek is city naturalist for Farmington Hills. Call him at 248-473-9574.

I, too, have had suet feeders in our yard for years. My first thought is that you were sold old suet. I actually experienced this myself in the last week. I bought a couple of suet cakes in a store not known for bird feeding supplies. That suet hung outside for two weeks with many birds in our yard, but none attempting to eat the suet. Upon replacing the old suet cakes, the birds returned to the feeder within a few hours. In the future, stick to stores that have a large turnover in feed which means that fresh supplies are always available. I will also follow my own advice.

Community chorus auditions are Jan. 11

The Farmington-Farmington Hills Community Chorus will be holding auditions for its spring season and 20th anniversary concert on Tuesday, Jan. 11 at the Farmington Hills Activity Center.

If you have ever wanted to sing, now is your chance. Come down and experience this activity and meet the 70-member chorus. Members come from the entire metro Detroit area. Living in Farmington is not a requirement. The chorus performs two major shows each year: a holiday concert and a spring concert, as well as gives performances at the Farmington Founders Festival and at Heritage Park.

The choir is open to anyone 18 years or older. All sheet music and a practice tape is provided. Auditions will be Jan. 11 at 7:30 p.m. and registration will be the following week for those accepted. Call chorus manager Kathy Hall at 471-4510.

lane wide. Detroit traffic had the right of way. Others had to get off the road, often into the mud.

Two cent fare

On the toll road, the fare for a two horse vehicle was 2 cents a mile. It took four to six hours for a loaded wagon to get to Detroit. A single buggy could make it in three hours. This all depended on weather conditions, of course. Robert Wixom, Sr. and his family had purchased farmland and had come to Farmington as a family group. His family included Sally Wixom Warner and her husband Seth Warner, grandparents of Fred Warner who was Michigan Governor from 1905-1911.

Robert Wixom, Jr. was seventeen in 1824 when the family came to Farmington. He was around twenty when he purchased the Walker Tavern which he ran for forty years. He married Sarah Jane Busch in 1832. She was only eighteen when she married. Sarah did the cooking at the Wixom Tavern.

The Inn had a "fancy ballroom" and was Greek Revival style. The carpets in the rooms were peddled by straw.

In those days, mattresses often were straw on rope beds.

Robert Wixom had enlarged the Inn after he purchased it. It also had a large barn.

When the stage coaches arrived at the taverns, they announced their arrival with blasts from a tin horn.

Competition from the railroads by the 1800s caused the traffic of Grand River to diminish and the inns and hotels that depended on that business to decline.

The invention of automobiles soon made country inns obsolete. Grand River was converted from a toll road to a gravel road and later still to pavement. It was widened a number of times.

The Wixom Tavern fell into disrepair and disappeared into history.

Ruth Moehlman is a local historian and author of *Heritage Homes of Farmington*.

Vintage Farmington

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land for a school.

The tavern was so successful that once sawed lumber was available, Samuel Walker built a Greek Revival style frame tavern east of the log building.

Samuel Walker was probably also a carpenter because there is an account of Nathan Power hiring him to build a corn crib.

Farmington was being settled only a few years after the War of 1812. During the war, Detroit had been invaded.

Michigan Gov. Lewis Cass was concerned about military security in Michigan. He persuaded the government in Washington to build military roads for protection. One of these roads was

the Grand River Military Road which went right by the Walker Tavern.

Built by soldiers

The military roads were actually built by soldiers who received extra rum rations for the road building work.

The military never used these roads during wartime, but the pioneers used them to reach their new homes and founded communities along the roads.

Solomon Walker sold his thriving business to Nathan Philbrick who in turn sold the establishment to Robert Wixom Jr. Dr. Isaac Wixom, a brother of Robert Jr., also hosted a tavern. His

was on Shiawassee, just east of the current Orchard Lake Road. Dr. Wixom was also an eminent physician in the community. He had completed his education when the rest of the family moved to Michigan.

Nathan Philbrick built another tavern on Orchard Lake Trail. This tavern was also very successful. It was off the main highway but was known for its fine food. It was prosperous for a number of years, then reverted to a farmhouse. The Philbrick Tavern is still standing.

The Wixom Tavern was in a prime location. In 1848 the Michigan capitol moved to Lansing. In 1850 a plank toll road was constructed along the Grand River.

The Wixom Tavern was a mile and a half outside the little village of Farmington, right next to a toll gate on the plank road. The Hubbard and Burrill Stage Coach of Detroit stopped at the Wixom Inn.

Nathan Power, a relative of the pioneer Nathan Power who was the son of Arthur Power (Farmington's founder), wrote for the Enterprise, a forerunner of the Farmington Observer. He described the early stages. They were pulled by four horses and seated 24 passengers. He wrote that when the stages came to town, it was exciting.

The stages carried the mail which was thrown down to the Postmaster. The Postmaster took out the Farmington mail and put the rest back in the pouch. Then he returned the mail pouch to the stage coach which proceeded on its way. The fare from Detroit to Farmington was \$1 and was "comfortable" and usually full.

Another account explained that the coaches carried full freight and sometimes nine extra passengers were on top.

Some stages went to Lansing, others only to Howell, Brighton or Farmington.

The plank road was only one

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Pokémon

from page B1

Wait-and-see approach

O.E. Dunckel Middle School Principal Pamela O'Malley says at her school they take a "wait-and-see approach" with such issues and that "At first the

cards were allowed in the lunch room. But kids became distracted and were late to class, so Pokémon cards are not allowed in school now. The fad affected primarily sixth graders; it was not a whole school thing."

While there has been no districtwide policy banning Pokémon cards, Arnie Rubin, principal of Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills, says he received an e-mail "suggesting all principals handle it on their own."

"When this first became a big thing, I thought it was wonderful fun for the kids to be into it. But we had kids in tears, parents calling to say their children got the wrong cards. One kid lost them. Others traded valuable cards for ones that weren't valuable. It became a waste of time. We finally said 'no more in school.'"

Rubin added: "Some of the teachers said Pokémon was all the kids would talk or think about it class. We need to expand their minds in other ways."

Nancy Henahan, mother of Eagle students Case, 8, and Connor, 5, says her sons are into Pokémon cards but she doesn't worry because "the characters fight but nobody dies or gets destroyed - they rejuvenate. Usually the good person wins and the bad team loses."

Henahan agrees with school administrators that "There's no place for the cards at school. I'm glad they're banned at Eagle."

Henahan sighs, admitting she knows more about Pokémon than she cares to.

The Rev. Ed Mattox of Forest Park Baptist Church in Farmington Hills, where 11- and 7-year-olds sometimes play with the cards, says "there has to be a balance. If anything has an element of magic, people become alarmed. I know there's a strong occult influence out there, but there's a danger in seeing a demon behind every bush."

Perhaps 5-year-old Connor Henahan most succinctly describes the attraction kids have with Pokémon when he explains why he plays with the cards, "It's cool."

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**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
SANITARY AND STORM SEWER UTILITY
IMPROVEMENTS
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS,
OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

Sealed proposals for construction of the Sanitary and Storm Sewer Utility Improvements Project, N.W. of the Northwestern Highway/Inkster Road intersection, will be received from contractors having current Michigan Department of Transportation prequalifications at the City of Farmington Hills Clerk's Office until 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, January 24, 2000, at the City of Farmington Hills City Hall, 31555 Eleven Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48336; at which time and place all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. No faxed or e-mailed bid will be accepted.

General Outline of Work consists of:
175m of 300mm Sanitary Sewer
170m of 1050mm Storm Sewer
6m of 900mm Storm Sewer
180m Dewatering
Other items including Clearing, Grading, SESS, rip-rap, R&R Sidewalk, Plant Material Installation

Copies of the plans and contract documents may be obtained beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 4, 2000 from the office of the City Clerk, City of Farmington Hills City Hall, 31555 Eleven Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48336, upon making a payment to the City of Farmington Hills of \$20.00, or \$25.00 if documents are mailed. No plan deposits will be refunded.

Each bidder shall file a statement signed by, or on behalf of the person, firm, association, or corporation submitting the bid, certifying that such person, firm, association, or corporation has not, either directly or indirectly entered into any agreement, participated in any collusion, or otherwise taken any action, in restraint of free competitive bidding in connection with the submitted bid.

A certified check or bid bond in the amount of five percent (5%) of the base bid must accompany each bid.

The Owner reserves the right to accept any proposal, reject any proposal and waive irregularities in proposals.

Construction shall be in accordance with MDOT 1996 Standard Specifications.

Funds from the Federal Highway Transportation program will partially fund this project. As a result, contractors and subcontractors are required to comply with the Federal Labor Standards Provisions, Equal Opportunity Requirements and Davis-Bacon Requirements. The prime contractor shall meet the requirements of MDOT prequalification classification 18K. Work by subcontractors shall not exceed 80% of the total contract.

No proposal may be withdrawn for a period of sixty (60) days after receipt of bid.

Proposals submitted by Contractors who have been debarred, suspended or made ineligible by any Federal Agency will be rejected.

The City reserves the right to waive any or all proposals, to waive irregularities and/or informality, and to make the award, that is in the opinion of the City Council is in the best interest, and to the advantage of the City of Farmington Hills.

The award is subject to the approval of Michigan Department of Transportation.

KATHRYN A. DOWNAN
City Clerk

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