

CHAT ROOM



ELLEN HERSCHER

Cows lying down means rain's on way

How many times have you tuned into your radio or television station for a weather report, only to find it completely inaccurate the following day? Even the weather forecasters admit that they are not always correct in their predictions. Although meteorologists use the most sophisticated technology and scientific methods of studying and tracking weather, it does not always work. Farmers have an uncanny way of predicting weather with great accuracy. They aren't scholars of meteorology, nor are they mesmerized by crystal balls. What they are doing is what has been done for centuries. Their augury comes from a combination of intuition, natural signs and folklore passed down from previous generations.

I recall my grandfather gazing out the back window toward the pasture where the sky glowed like a strawberry Popsicle stuck to the horizon. Grandpa would mumble to himself: "Red sky in the morning, sailors take warning." He would then tell Grandma there wouldn't be much work in the garden that day. When the sun slips away where the fiery sky meets the earth, we can be assured of waking to a day filled with dazzling sunshine. If ever questioned about it, Grandpa would simply say, "Look in the Bible, chapter 16 of Matthew."

Some of that intuition and myth remains within me from my days of living in the country. When I tell my husband that the windows should be closed because the leaves are showing their backsides, he now believes me. Most of the time it soon rains. By nature, leaves grow with the prevailing fair weather wind; consequently, when unfavorable storm winds blow, the leaves turn over. If a gauzy ring encircles the moon, you can expect showers in about ten hours. The smaller the ring, the sooner will come the rain. Trains whistle louder as the heaviness of the air pushes sound downward, not allowing it to dissipate. Muggy is a word often used to describe the tactility of the air when a storm is approaching. A breeze thick with humidity makes the air smell sweetly fresh before the rain spills down from the heavy steel-gray clouds.

Barometric pressure change
Perhaps it is coincidence, but I have seen more cows lying down before a rainfall than at other times. Just look at their spindly legs and the weight of their bodies and imagine how their joints must ache when there is a change in barometric pressure, which is exactly what happens before a storm. You will find many people with arthritis or trauma injuries who precisely predict rain when their joints begin to ache, because the plummeting air pressure quickly causes dehydration of tissues as the barometer falls.

Springtime yields warm moist tropical air and cold dry polar air currents that slam together from opposite directions, causing potential for violent turbulence. Enormous rotating thunderstorms (supercells) usually with anvil tops are the monsters that spawn tornadoes. The funnel clouds plunges suddenly from the sky, twisting and smashing with indiscriminate destruction. These unpredictable demons often strike when thunderstorms produce hail anywhere from half-an-inch to softball-size. We must heed meteorologists' admonition to be watchful and prepare to seek shelter when they warn us of imminent danger.

Clouds tell their own stories with a multitude of shapes and colors. Some brush across a cornflower-blue sky like white maro's tails whisking upward. If there are few, it is a sign of fair weather; if they fill the sky expect rain. Huge towering billows of white cumulonimbus clouds tumble across the sky with an illusion of softness, but inside they hoard molten and thunderous turbulent winds.

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Kids feast on art

Fourth graders get hands-on look at festival

All fourth graders in Farmington Public Schools are visiting the arts festival this week for some hands-on fun.

By MARY RODRIGUE
STAFF WRITER
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The halls were alive with the sound of music and kids buzzing enthusiastically about art during Kids Day at Festival of the Arts Tuesday in the Coastal Center.

School bus loads of fourth graders from Farmington Public Schools descended on the center for hour-long tours of the arts festival, highlighted by live demonstrations and musical performances.

"I wish we could do this longer instead of just for an hour," said Rory Beare, 10, a Forest Elementary student. He was threading yarn through a plastic grid at the Farmington Hills Embroiderer's Guild station. Under guidance of club members, he was stitching a three-color rainbow in red, yellow and blue.

"Yeah, this is lots of fun," piped in Aaron Lebovic, 10, also stitching a rainbow.

Agatha DiGiovanni, a five-year club

member, offered advice and encouragement to the young stitchers who sat at several tables set up in the rear of the main exhibit hall.

In the front of the hall, Marvel Stieger, Farmington Area Arts Commission secretary and Hill and Dale Garden Club member, helped children make Mother's Day cards with a table load of items including stickers, markers, stamps, crayons and glitter. Dressed in purple and wearing a large straw hat bedecked in flowers, Stieger looked like she had just come in from the garden.

Flower seeds, too

She had help from club members Carol Grontzel, Carol Smith and Judi Merroll, who folded the cardboard squares and kept the assembly line of fourth-graders moving. The card makers got to choose seeds for marigolds or forget-me-nots to tuck in a little envelope inside the handmade cards.

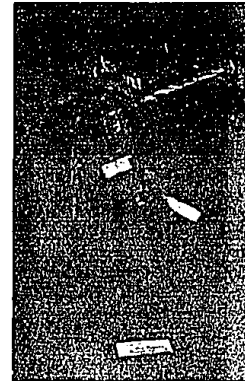
Megan Passman, 9, went with a gardening motif on the front of her card that included a picket fence and a watering can. Paige Demer, 10, chose forget-me-not seeds. Another Forest student, Dayna Dines, used stickers and stamps and a little poem she glued inside the card.

While kids meandered around the

makehift walls hung with paintings and pedestals holding sculptures, they were also able to watch Jim Patterson of the Farmington Artists Club giving demonstrations in watercolor technique. Several pairs of eyes peered over his shoulder in great interest, one girl exclaiming that the brush strokes were familiar to her from art class.

Leon Scholicht, also an FAC member, conducted a cartooning workshop with some of the fourth-graders. He drew a quickie sketch of Popeye the Sailor Man that garnered great reviews. Justin Sucher, 10, took special care drawing a person. Marshal Vortriede, also 10, sketched a three-dimensional racing car. Scholicht's station seemed particularly popular with boys.

Adjacent to the hall, chairs were set up in the gym for visitors to stop and listen to live music. The O.E. Dunkel Middle School Wildcat Fiddlers, dressed in white T-shirts with red bandannas, played violins, violas and other stringed instruments for an apprecia-



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Saxophone row: Farmington High School's Jazz Band performs.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEARLE

Student Gallery: Seth Culbertson poses by his art work. He is a fourth grader at Highmeadow Common Campus. Top, a metal sculpture by Farmington High senior Rob Kubaiko on exhibit.

Pioneering doctor was ahead of his time

By RUTH MOEHLMAN
SPECIAL WRITER

From the mid-19th century to the middle of the 20th, spas and sanitariums were significant in Michigan. There, people sought relief and cures for their aches and pains.

The Health Reform Institute of Battle Creek was established in 1897. By 1877, Dr. J.H. Kellogg had a sanitarium that attracted people from all over the United States.

In 1894 at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, the first breakfast food was developed by the Kellogg brothers.

Mt. Clemens had mineral baths that attracted people from all over to cure their aches and pains.

In West Bloomfield, Dr. Arthur Erickson, a chiropractor whose office was in Redford, established Green Briar on Pine Lake. This was a health resort during the 1930s to the early 1940s.

At his office in Redford, Dr. Erickson had the first X-ray machine in Michigan. According to Pat Majdi, a granddaughter of the late doctor, Green Briar offered chiropractic cures and health foods.

Majdi's late mother, Barbara Crane



Spiegel, as a young girl helped the family by serving meals to guests. She also helped with the cleaning of the resort. It took a week to vacuum from one end of Green Briar to the other.

The Erickson family lived in Farmington. Erickson and his wife, Mary J., owned two houses in Oaklanda Subdivision. They lived in one and rented out the other. One house was built for Edward Chene, the other for Archibald Jones.

Designed by woman architect

The houses were designed by Emily Butterfield, Michigan's first licensed woman architect. They were part of an early planned community that was never finished because of the Great Depression. The original owners sold their homes and moved back to Detroit.

The Depression caused economic disruption worldwide. For the Great Lakes Land Development Company, it ended in bankruptcy. The land reverted to Isaac Bond, one of the original land owners and one of the participants in the land development company. The houses were more or less in the middle of his corn field. It wasn't until the 1950s that Oaklanda Subdivision was sold as individual home sites again.

It was a nice place to live for the Erickson children.
Dr. Erickson had married Mary J.

Please See VINTAGE FARMINGTON, B2



Mother & child: Lois Erickson and her mom, Mary J. Erickson, in front of the Brown house in Farmington, circa 1930. Babs and Wendell Brown lived there later. Mary Erickson was married to Dr. Arthur Erickson, who established a health resort in West Bloomfield during the 1930s. Dr. Erickson had the first X-ray machine in the state in his Redford office.