



Lidia Boji updates Bob Bickmeyer's 'do.

Take care: Squirrels may bite the hand that feeds them

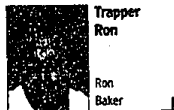
spend a lot of time trapping and relocating nuisance animals, such as raccoons, opossum, skunks, rats, mice and coyotes from property in the Farmington/Farmington Hills and surrounding areas.

Careful review of the situation requires common sense. Never approach a wild animal unless you are positive there is no danger. Careful review of the situation requires common sense. Over the years, I have accumulated story after story from experiences dealing with nuisance animals. The following is another story where common sense failed and the outcome turned out to be a painful lesson.

While growing up we would visit my Uncle Don and Aunt Jane's home on the East Side in Warren. Uncle Don is a great guy who would do anything for anyone. The problem: Uncle Don has extremely bad luck when it comes to his hands and fingers. For as long as I can remember, he never had all ten digits. Uncle Don worked in steel plants, most of his life, where there was an inherent danger usually causing injuries to hands and fingers.

His most recent injury was caused a week before his daughter's wedding. He was loading a truck with large steel coils when one fell off and rolled towards him. At the last second he managed to push himself out of the way, unfortunately his hands were slightly crushed in the incident. Since his hands were bandaged, his wife had to cut his dinner for him at the wedding. Uncle Don isn't a careless man by any means, just unlucky when it came to his hands. In one such incident many years ago, Uncle Don went camping up north with some friends and relatives. They were having a fun spending time in the woods hiking, biking and enjoying the fresh air.

While hiking, Uncle Don came across a squirrel that appeared to be dead in the trail. He examined it for a while and decided he would take it back to camp for everyone to see. Uncle Don knelt



Trapper Ron

Ron Baker

down then reached out to pick it up. The squirrel regained consciousness just as Uncle Don attempted to grab it by the tail. The squirrel twisted around and then bit down on the tip of one of the two remaining fingers on Uncle Don's right hand. In a panic, Uncle Don swung his hand, in a whipping motion, trying to get the squirrel to release his finger, which resulted in the squirrel clamping down harder. Every attempt to shake the squirrel loose didn't work. Frantically Uncle Don, not sure what to do, started to slam the squirrel up against a tree trunk; still the determined squirrel would not release its bite.

Witnesses in the area said they saw a person running around in the woods like a madman screaming in pain and begging for someone to help him. Not knowing what else to do, Uncle Don noticed a stream, he ran to the edge and dunked his hand into the water. He was amazed that the squirrel didn't immediately release its grip. Unfortunately the squirrel drowned and still the squirrel

wouldn't let go. With the animal, now dead, hanging limp off the tip of finger, he decided to go back to the camp.

When the initial laughter subsided, his comrades, realizing this was a serious matter contemplated how to get the varmint off of Uncle Don's finger. They tried a number of ways but eventually they had to pry the squirrel off of his finger with a pair of pliers.

To this day, Uncle Don tells this story whenever he sees squirrels in the yard; it seems to get funnier every time he tells it. My point in telling this story is that squirrels are wild and unpredictable animals not to be taken for granted. When I hear that people are hand-feeding squirrels in the neighborhood, I think about Uncle Don and wonder what it would take for the squirrel to latch onto the hand that feeds it.

Moral of the story is to let your common sense dictate your actions and never hand feed wild animals, they have teeth and they can bite; just ask Uncle Don. As always, anytime you decide to have professional come out and review your situation, make sure they are insured and licensed with the Department of Natural Resources.

Ron Baker is a professional trapper and owner of Trapper Ron's Animal Removal & Relocation Services. He can be reached at (248) 478-7649.

Enjoy County park perks with new pass

Starting this year, Oakland County Parks and the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) will be selling annual park passes valid in both systems.

The Parks Perk Pass, which costs \$40, is good through Dec. 31. The pass is valid at all Oakland County Parks, which comprise nearly 6,000 acres, and all the Metroparks, which cover some 24,000 acres in Oakland, Livingston, Macomb, Washtenaw and Wayne counties. "For a walk in the woods, a family picnic, or an afternoon of fishing, the dual pass makes close-to-home recreation more accessible," said Jan Pung, a spokesperson for Oakland County Parks.

The passes are on sale at six Oakland County Parks, including Addison Oaks near Oxford, Independence Oaks and Nature Center in Clarkston, and Waterford Oaks in Waterford. In addition, the passes can be purchased at four HCMA sites: Indian Springs, Kensington and Stony Creek Metroparks, and the HCMA Administration office in Brighton. For maps and locations of Oakland County Parks, visit the Web site at www.oakland.mi.us or call (888) OCPARKS. For maps and more information about the Metroparks, visit the HCMA Web site at www.metroparks.com or call (800) 477-PARKS.

MAKEOVER

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Bickmeyer looked smashing in a pair of vanilla-colored, double-pleated pants and a dark blue, short-sleeved shirt, both by Barry Bricklen.

"Fabulous, darling," said Cathy Young, promotions director for the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*.

Schroeder took more time to find just the right look. He finally chose a long-sleeved, dark blue shirt by Ted Baker and a pair of flat-front, stretch cotton pants in beige by Kenneth Cole — traditional but a touch upscale.

"It makes me feel like taking my wife to a nice place to eat,"

he said about his fashion transformation.

"Splendiferous," said Bickmeyer about his outfit. "I like the color combination. I guess I'll take my wife out to dinner. I don't like to cook and she doesn't like to clean up."

Later that night, Schroeder and Bickmeyer, along with family and friends, attended the ballgame, compliments of the Detroit Tigers. Schroeder got to throw the first ball of the game, and Bickmeyer became "super grandpa" to the grandchildren he brought with him.

Congratulations to Schroeder and Bickmeyer, who were chosen from dozens and dozens of entries to our Make Over My Man contest. We're happy to have made you Cinderellas for a day.



JAN JACOBEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Randy Schroeder works with Suzy Brown as he gathers items to try on.

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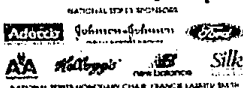
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