

Survival Camp reveals winter's wonders

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tated dividing the group into two sections. One group made bird feeders out of suet and peanut butter spread on pine cones and suspended from sticks, while the second group met Neff's "aides." They watched, wide-eyed, as she went into boxes under a sheet-covered table to bring each one out.

"If you can survive by eating anything you can hang around, right?" she asked. Introducing Edgar Allen Crow, "Crows are generalists, they'll eat anything," Neff noted, taking the fledgling crow, who had only hatched in May around the room.

"Pretend your arm is a branch," she told the children, and had the crow hop from her arm to each child's, to introduce him.

"(Down) feathers are bird underwear," Neff told the children, "the warmest insulation you can get," so birds like crows don't have to fly south for the winter.

"SNAILS DON'T have to slither south, either. Like the three box turtles (Humphrey, energetic Ruthie who nearly crawled off the table, and unsociable Cufflink), Miss Piggy, a western hog-nosed snake, burrows into the ground to hibernate for the winter, Neff said. So do toads, but not Bufo.

Bufo, short for Bufo Marinus, a South American toad is a humongous South American toad about the size of a dinner plate — was the subject of much interest and reservation for the children.

"She's the biggest toad in the world!" a boy named Aaron marveled.

"I want you to come up with why she looks the way she does," Neff said. When no one answered she prompted, "Can you sleep and eat at the same time?" Neither can toads in Michigan, Neff said, that's why they don't get as big as Bufo, who doesn't have to hibernate in her warm, Amazon homeland. Before meeting the animals though, the children went for a hike on the land behind the community center, to observe, and learn how man could survive winter in the wild.

Though "quiet" was the order for

the march, nature was its own enemy by putting a crust of ice over the snow. Children spilled down the hill crunching, chattering, looking for animal tracks and birds' nests while Neff's human aides, including four teachers, two helpers and a mother, Harraf, tried to keep them together.

"If you're going to survive in the winter you've got to have water, right?" Neff asked as they reached the valley, scouting for places where they might build a shelter.

"Should you eat snow in the winter if you're trying to survive?"

THE ANSWER was no, but not for the obvious reasons, pollution.

Eating snow takes too much heat out of the body, Neff explained, so it has to be melted first, and used as water.

The children also learned that the valley was a good place to build a shelter, that snow from a blizzard that might cover the shelter was good ("It's an insulator — have you ever heard of a blanket of snow?" Neff asked), and that cattails and horsetail reeds in the snow indicated wetlands to be avoided. To survive, you have to stay dry, Neff explained.

Winter Survival Camp is just one three series Neff teaches during the year at the Community Center, she said. There'll be others coming up for winter break, spring and summer vacations.

"We do one called Ocean's Edge," Neff said, which is a marine biology study. She brings in salt water animals, invertebrates like anemones, sea snails, star fish — "one of each of the seven phyla or classifications of animals that live in the sea," she explained.

Another, part of which she incorporated into the winter camp, is Air and Space. She brings in a portable planetarium, and teaches the constellations. The children in the winter survival camp learned the winter constellations, and how to find their way by the stars. One of

the exercises Neff gave them was to connect-the-dots using a chart of the constellations, to make their own constellation. Then they had to write a story about it.

The Living Science Foundation, which Neff co-founded with Tim Joslyn about 11 years ago also goes into area schools with their programs during the year. Chira Lawrence, Program for the Community Center thinks Neff and her crew have done a good job with the camps.

"One thing I like is that it's very non-competitive," Lawrence said, something she encourages at all the Center's camps. "The children work at their own pace; they cater very nicely to students of all ages."

Photos by Thomas Arnett.



Michael Harraf (right), 9, of West Bloomfield dissects an owl pellet.



Dav Blankenhagen of the Living Science Foundation shows kids how to dissect owl pellets.

Parent classes popular

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"gifted" in a variety of ways, and the course can aid in raising all children.

"Only after this course have I realized how special my 'ungifted' children are and how I can enhance their abilities."

The parenting seminars offered "practical suggestions for living with a gifted child," according to another parent, Diane Bender. "The parents shared many common sense ideas and formed a terrific support group."

Parents interested in any of the parenting programs, can call the:

- Seminar for parents of highly able, gifted students through the district's DELTA Department: 471-6429.
- Seminar for parents of preschoolers at Alameda: 471-6375.
- Seminar for parents of middle school and high school students through the district's Community Education Department: 477-9373.

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Meetings set on technology

Three public meetings of the School/Community Forum, a group representing Farmington Public Schools parents, are slated for January.

The topic will be Technology in Education, and guest speaker will be deputy superintendent for Farmington schools, Michael Flanagan.

The meetings are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. as follows:

- Monday, Jan. 9, at Farmington High School, 32000 Shawwassee between Power and Orchard Lake roads.
- Wednesday, Jan. 11, at Gill Elementary School, 21195 Gill between Eight and Nine Mile.
- Thursday, Jan. 5, Warner Middle School, 30205 14 Mile between Northwestern and Middlebelt roads.

The meetings will detail how the revamped media center at Farmington High School will link with the community.

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STERIODS IN ATHLETES ARE NOT THE SAME AS STERIODS IN ARTHRITIS

Athletes use anabolic steroids, which have the effect of increasing the size and strength of muscle. Users must take the steroid daily and in conjunction with a vigorous schedule of activities meant to bring muscles to peak performance repeatedly. The steroid dose helpful to muscles can be harmful to the body and lead to hypertension and high cholesterol.

In contrast, steroids that are injected into joints are anti-inflammatory in their effect. These steroids exert their effect by decreasing inflammation and swelling locally, at the joint injected. The medicine is long acting, and rarely requires another injection before a month or six weeks. Anti-inflammatory steroids may cause flushing over the cheeks soon after injection, but do not interfere with the body's own production of steroids, and have no effect on cholesterol levels.

In short, anabolic steroids try to make muscles perform better than they have a right to achieve, while anti-inflammatory steroids return joints to a state they formerly routinely maintained.

1989 DOG LICENSES
CITY OF FARMINGTON

1989 dog licenses are available at the Farmington City Hall, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Licenses are issued through Friday, March 11, 1989, at a fee of \$4.00 for each dog six months old or older. Beginning Monday, April 3, 1989, delinquent licenses are \$7.00.

Certificate of vaccination for rabies signed by an accredited veterinarian must be presented when applying for license. Certificate must show vaccine as being effective through the date of application. A copy of a receipt from the veterinarian is not acceptable.

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