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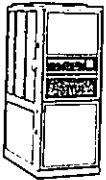
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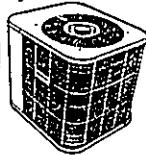
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Holy bathhouse, Robin — check out birdhouse contest

OVER 1,100 seventh and eighth grade students from all over the metro area are participating in the "Best Birdhouse Builder" contest, sponsored by the Observer and Eccentric Newspapers, the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan and the Department of Natural Resources.

Each participating school will choose one seventh and one eighth grade winner. These finalists will have their houses displayed in the Hall of Gardens at the builders show.

The birdhouses will be judged by a panel from the O&E, the builders association and the DNR. The winners will be announced Sunday, March 25 during a special reception for principals, teachers, students and their families at Cobo Hall.

The birdhouses are judged in categories: purple Martin, house wren, bluebird, barred owl, robin, wood duck, great crested flycatcher, American kestrel as well as the little brown bat. Yes, a bat! According to the DNR, many species of bats can eat 3,000 to 7,000 mosquitoes a night. As a matter of fact, in Europe, bats are totally pro-

tected and many people build bat houses to control insects.

All of the birdhouses will be judged on strict criteria because each species of bird or bat is very choosy in picking its home. The house must be perfect in order to attract the species it was designed for. Each student participating in the contest was supplied with information from the book, "Woodworking for Wildlife," which describes the habitat needs of each species. The book also give instructions on how to build the most suitable house for each species.

The two first-place winners will each receive a Casio electronic keyboard, the two second-place winners will receive roller ice hockey skates, and the two third-place winners will each receive a portable Nintendo game boy. Twenty honorable mention winners will each receive a Sony radio head-phone set. All students whose birdhouses are displayed at the builders show will receive a \$35 gift certificate to Harmony House, a hardback bird book, and a certificate of achievement from the O&E.

Somerset Chase

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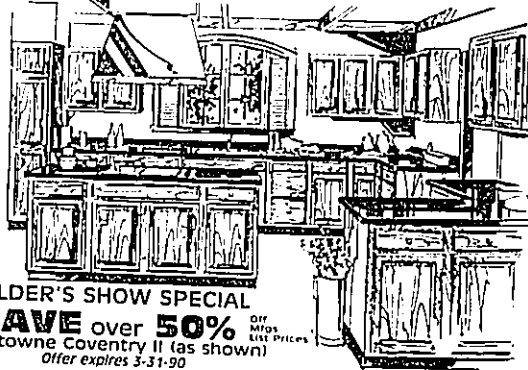
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