



Farmington Observer

VOLUME 103 NUMBER 78

MONDAY, JUNE 29, 1992 • FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 40 PAGES

FIFTY CENTS

1992 Summer Communications Corporation

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Not FICA too! Well-heeled suburban districts smarting over Senate vote to further erode their financial base. /5A

Field trip: County board contingent likes what it sees in Grand Rapids incinerator built by company bidding for Oakland's trash. /7A

OPINION

State map: Michigan can boast of having a number of fine state parks, but you'd never know it from looking at the state map. Tim Richard takes a look at the new edition. /10A

TASTE

Fabulous fourth: Invite family and friends over for an old-fashioned Fourth of July picnic. Most of the food can be prepared in advance so you can relax. /1B

STREET SCENE



Pressing on: The Wolfgang Press has been known for its willingness to delve into uncharted territory with its music. The threesome admits they have always been enamored with the manipulation of sound. Maybe that's why critics are calling their current release their most focused effort to date. /4B

CABLE TV WEEKLY

Local access: Tri-City Update will be presented on Channel 3. Check your cable guide for time and date.

INDEX

Classifieds	B-D	Obituaries	5C
Auto	C-D	Opinion	10A
Index	4B	Police, fire	8A
Real estate	B-C	Sports	4B
Employment	C-D	Street Scene	1C
Crossword puzzle	7B	Taste	1B
Entertainment	5B	Travel	11A

OUR PHONE NUMBERS

Newsroom: 477-4550
Newsroom Fax: 477-9722
Sports: 953-2141
Reader Comment Line: 953-2042
Classified Advertising: 591-0900
Display Advertising: 591-2300
Home Delivery: 591-0500
Cable/TV Weekly: 953-2199



Reminder...
Your Observer-Carrier will be stopping by this week to collect for the month. Please have the money ready and be sure to get your receipt. It's worth \$2.00 off your next classified ad.

Vandals trash bluebirds' nests



Vandals have killed bluebirds and destroyed nests in Farmington Hills' Heritage Park. Police, parks personnel and naturalists are searching for motives as well as suspects.

BY JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

The successful return of protected bluebirds — absent since the 1920s — to Farmington Hills has been met with death and destruction because of vandals who have destroyed 10 baby birds since early June.

"You just can't understand why someone would do that," said Don Teets, a member of the Farmington Naturalists Club, which led an effort this year to draw the rare birds back to Heri-

tage Park.

"After so many people put such effort into this project, how could someone do this? To a lot of people this is probably no big deal. But we were bringing them back. We were successful," said Teets, owner of Backyard Birds, Farmington.

In the second and latest incident, vandals sometime between Sunday, June 21, and Tuesday, June 23, destroyed nests containing five babies. Vandals also destroyed nearby wrens' nests with four eggs and four or five ba-

bies. Five tree swallow eggs and five tree swallow babies also were destroyed, Teets said.

In a June 6 incident, vandals destroyed five bluebird babies when they bent the pole on which the bluebird boxes sit and toppled the nests.

Dan Potter, Farmington Hills special services director, believes the vandalism is random. He says it's happened before to bluebird boxes erected by Boy Scouts.

Others don't seem that certain.

"You assume it's kids. But I don't always assume it's kids," said Joe Derek, a Farmington Hills naturalist and club member. "It's certainly not an animal that has done this."

Teets says he thinks more than one person is responsible. Some of the bluebird boxes were destroyed. Others had the nests simply removed from the boxes.

"We've had some people say that what we are doing (with the project) isn't natural," Teets said.

He is encouraged by the help offered. Thursday city park crews helped salvage what was left of the vandalized boxes. "They (city staff) were helpful and considerate. The city is going to help repair the damage that was done," Teets said. He will meet with Potter today to develop some means of protecting the project.

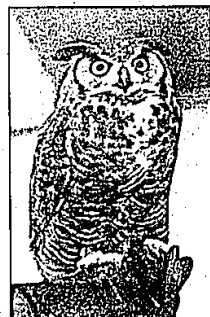
See BIRDS, 9A



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LEIBER

Crying foul: Natalie Moody, 8, of Farmington (center), reacts with disgust as her neighbor, Ruth Chrisom, 7 (left), gets splattered with droppings from one of the birds. Also in the front row is Ruth's sister, Rebecca, 9.

Let wild critters be, kids told



BY JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

Ooohs and aaahs echoed under a blue-and-white striped tent at the Downtown Farmington Center Wednesday morning as children got a close-up look at some permanently disabled mammals and birds.

"Oh look," a mom shouted to her children as Kathy Frantz, a volunteer coordinator at the Howell Nature Center, introduced an albino ferret.

"It was confiscated by the police," Frantz said. "They are not legal in Michigan. They are not good pets."

Frantz delighted the children who gathered at her feet during the special Wildlife Watch program — a part of the second annual Summer Fun Series, sponsored by the Farmington Downtown Development Authority.

The program is designed to give kids and adults a chance to learn more about animals. "We are basically a hospital for injured animals," Frantz said.

The center's goal is to release the

injured animals back to their homes in the wild. Sometimes that can't be done because of the type of injuries or because the animals are no longer instinctively wild enough to survive on their own — thanks to people who unknowingly try to have wild animals as pets.

The ferret, Frantz told the kids, is just another example of a wild animal that should have been left to the wild. But someone bought the ferret as a pet. It wouldn't survive if released to the wild because it isn't native to Michigan and its white coloring would make it any easy target for predators.

"Keeping wild animals as pets is not a good idea," Frantz warned.

That advice was not acted on after this talk, said Farmington resident Susan Chrisom. "You would think you'd be doing it a favor, but you wouldn't at all."

See CRITTERS, 2A

Park used as bunny dropoff

BY JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

If you're thinking of unloading the Easter bunny you bought your children in Heritage Park, think twice. You are signing the bunny's death warrant.

"People are dumping Easter bunnies. We're having a real problem. If we try to corral them, then what do we do with

UNWANTED

them?" asked Beverly Cornell, a Farmington Hills wildlife rehabilitator, licensed by the state Department of Natural Resources.

Park crews, Cornell said, have found dead domestic rabbits — or parts of them — in the park on Farmington Road, between 10 Mile and 11 Mile.

"It is a slow death for these rabbits. It's the disposable-pet syndrome. They are cute when they are little. When they get bigger, they create a bigger mess and people dump them," Cornell said.

Don't think that your domestic bunnies will mix with the wild rabbits in the park. They won't. More often than not, your Easter bunnies are bred for the fox and other wild animals that live in the 211-acre park.

"It's happened in previous years," said Dan Potter, Farmington Hills special services director. "People seem to want to drop them off. We do not allow or encourage people to drop off their domestic pets in the parks."

Cornell said people should remember that domestic rabbits are different than those in the wild. Because of their coloring — usually white — they are easily spotted by predators and quickly made into dinner.

Because they are not wild animals, domesticated bunnies can't survive in the wild — and that means Heritage Park. "They don't have the same instincts," Cornell said.

See BUNNIES, 2A

A living memorial

Bob and Betty Snyder, longtime Farmington residents, died in an automobile accident last March. They'll be remembered in the community, however, thanks to friends, family and a local business.

Steinkopf Nursery in Farmington planted a Bradford pear tree as a memorial to the Snyders in a small park at Oakland and Grand River.

Said JoAnne McShane, Farmington councilwoman and the Snyders neighbor, "Bob Snyder planted pear trees and they were dear to him."

FARMINGTON FOCUS

nue and struck a building.

Both died of complications from their injuries, police said. They had gone to the hospital to visit their grandson who was recovering from surgery.

Following the deaths, friends and family recalled the couple's love of life and devotion to family and each other.

"That was their biggest thing — they were devoted to their family," said daughter-in-law Jan Snyder of Farmington Hills.

Bob Snyder, 72, was a retired life insurance salesman. Betty, 69, was born Alice Paget in a farmhouse on Nine Mile Road near Gills.

No office hours

State Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, will not hold office hours during the summer months. She normally has hours the first and third Fridays of each month at the Farmington and Farmington Hills city halls.

Dolan said her office hours will resume Sept. 11. Constituents may telephone her in Lansing at 1-517-373-1793, or write her c/o State Capitol Building, Lansing 48913.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21808 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, or dropped off at the newspaper office.