

SUBURBAN LIFE

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1993



JEAN FOX

She harvests special crop for crafts

Wheat? In Farmington Hills? In 1993?

Well, yes. Verla Davis of Quaker Valley grew up in Kansas and as an early-on Kansan she knows her wheat. There she learned the intricate art of wheat-weaving, and today crafts lovely and lively humming birds and lilies from wheat stalks.

It's an ancient art form, Davis says. Old at the time of Stonehenge, and found in the tombs of some pharaohs.

Each year, to make Christmas gifts for friends, Davis would order a carton of wheat from Kansas farmers. Not just any wheat - it has to be harvested just ahead of ripening. Who wants actual wheat grains scattering from wreath or decorations, making a mess?

Now wheat was an early staple of Farmington pioneers in this area, along with apples, sheep and hogs. But over the century suburbanites and now urbanization have affected environment; raccoons and some deer have adapted, but wheat cannot cope with condos. Probably since 1920 there's been no amber grain waving in farm fields hereabouts.

Any yet, there along the side of 12 Mile Road, as the mini-van sped past the median, the corner of

■ The ancient goddess Ceres and crew were pulling for Verla Davis. No city mower found the patch, no fire-after-a-dry spell burned it away. 'Twas a day of triumph when, parking her two preschoolers under a tree, she took her scissors and in July tenderly harvested her wealth.

Davis' eye was altered. She braked. Backed, praying no semis from Haggerty were zooming behind; traffic flowed from the shopping mall across the street. Out she hopped. "Kids sit still!"

Sure enough, when it was. City contractors, the previous fall, had blown straw over a re-seeded roadside area. No all the straw, obviously, was only straw. The waving fronds, not yet amber, had not yet headed up.

This was late June. Wheat ripens in late July. Davis drove by the patch - "sizeable," she recalls - daily. Please, no mower. Please no tossed cigarette butts.

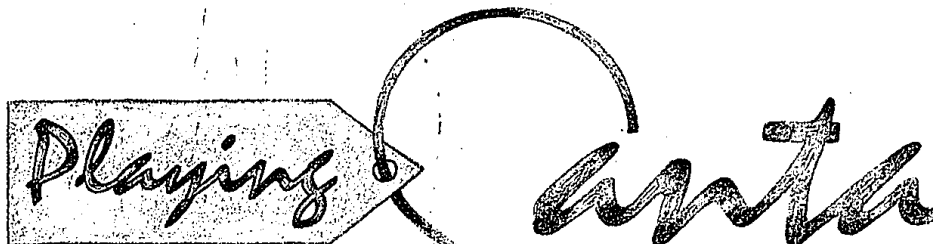
The ancient goddess Ceres and crew were pulling for Davis. No city mower found the patch, no fire-after-a-dry spell burned it away. 'Twas a day of triumph when, parking her two preschoolers under a tree, she took her scissors and in July tenderly harvested her wealth.

After all, this is Farmington Hills, which came (20 years ago) from Farmington Township, which comes from "farming" which a century ago included wheat. Stand aside, Kansas, our heritage is showing.

For a fleeting moment in the continuing urbanization of Farmington Hills the goddesses of fertility had made a symbolic, if momentary and seasonal, return.

Should you wish to see examples of the ancient art of wheat-weaving which have enchanted local garden clubs, the Naturalists, and Cub Scouts, visit the Festival of Trees Thursday through Friday, Dec. 2-6, at the historic Spicer House in Heritage Park. On one exhibit beards of the wheat heads, now woven into tails of hummingbirds, will be nodding in real-life display.

Weaved from Farmington wheat.
Jean Fox is an author, historian and a former mayor of Farmington Hills.



The holidays give everyone a chance to play Santa. Not only can you share with family and friends, but the opportunity is there to give to those in need - people who could use a helping hand with food, clothing and gifts that make the season bright. Many community organizations assist the needy, and they have "wish lists" of articles they would like to receive during the holidays. The Farmington Observer is printing its list here. Each item is preceded by the group's own description of its purpose.

FARMINGTON AREA GOODFELLOWS INC.
33000 Thomas
Farmington 48336
474-3440

Objective is to conduct activities as required to operate nonprofit organization whose aim is primarily, but not limited to, providing help to needy children and senior citizens during the Christmas season for residents in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Emergency help throughout the year may be provided, subject to approval by the Emergency Help Committee, as appointed by the board of directors. Needs food (canned goods), clothing (new) and toys (unwrapped and new). Donations needed by Dec. 10.

FARMINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE
30415 Shawwassee
Farmington Hills 48336-4340
474-7580

Nonprofit clearinghouse that puts those in need in contact with those who can provide help. Concerned citizens, social agencies, churches, school system representative and service organizations created Neighborhood House to provide quality and comprehensive services to Farmington/Farmington Hills residents.

Needs food items, clothes, household items, and furniture/appliances (working) - refrigerators not accepted. Also needs money and volunteers.

Salvation Army
27500 Shawwassee
Farmington Hills 48336-6056
477-1153

Mission of the Salvation Army is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

Needs nonperishable food items. These may be dropped off at the Salvation Army during office hours 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Also, volunteers are needed for the Salvation Army's annual fund-raising campaign, which is being conducted through Christmas.

ST. VINCENT AND SAJAH FISHER CENTER
27400 W. 12 Mile Road
Farmington Hills 48334
626-7627

Nonprofit agency serving more than 500 children and youth and their families on a daily basis. Its six different programs provide care and treatment to abused and neglected children and their families and also to young single parents and their infants.

Wish List: New eight-passenger van, four-slice toasters, athletic bags, microwave oven, commercial buffer, small crates or baskets to hold individual toiletries, IBM-compatible 286 or 386 computer, \$800 for carpeting of two cottage living rooms, commercial upright vacuum cleaner, donations to fund purchase of new linens for residential program, and gift certificates

FORGOTTEN HARVEST
24001 Southfield, Mo. 205
Southfield 48075
557-4483

Nonprofit organization established three years ago to provide hunger relief in the Detroit area. Agency operates a prepared, perishable surplus food program. Donated food is collected from

refrigerators, vending companies, distributors, grocers, dairies, bakeries and other health department-approved establishments and transported directly to soup kitchens and shelters. This is food that would otherwise go to waste. Forgotten Harvest transports



to purchase shoes, eyeglasses. Also would like to recruit male volunteers to spend time with the children.

FOOD BANK OF OAKLAND COUNTY
P.O. Box 430636
Pontiac 48343
332-1473

Supplies more than two million pounds of donated and purchased food to a network of 90 emergency food pantries, shelters and soup kitchens. These volunteer groups in almost every Oakland County community provide food to almost 50,000 needy people on a monthly basis. Food bank depends on donations of food. Gifts of money leverage many times their own because they pay for the shipping of foods donated by industry.

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15 tons of food each month to agencies serving more than 25,000 meals per week. Donations are needed to support the program operations. Checks may be made payable to Forgotten Harvest and mailed to the above address.

GLEANERS COMMUNITY FOOD BANK
2131 Beaufort
Detroit 48207
923-7855

Nonprofit organization dedicated to feeding the hungry and poor. Surplus food donations are received from farmers, food manufacturers, grocery stores and food processors, and stored in its warehouse. Gleaners has distributed more than one million pounds of wholesome and nutritious food to more than 200 member agencies in southeast Michigan. These feeding agencies, ranging from shelters to soup kitchens and church pantries, provide more than 200,000 meals a week to the hungry.

Donations requested include canned or dry goods, to be dropped off at Gleaners 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Friday, or call for name of member agency in your area; Help Feed the Hungry; Buy a Case of Food, sponsored by Michigan National Bank, with special displays containing donor envelopes and brochures at every bank branch; and Gobble for Gleaners, with \$20 donation providing two turkeys at Christmas for member agencies (donor receives reusable vinyl tote bag).

HAVEN
82 Whittomore
Pontiac 48340
334-1284

HAVEN serves victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse in Oakland County. Domestic violence encompasses physical, emotional and sexual abuse within family relationships including ex-spouses, lovers, siblings, parent-child, child-parent and abuse of the elderly. Sexual abuse includes rape, incest, child molestation and sexual harassment.

Needs volunteers, money, disposable diapers (medium or large size), adult sweatshirts (large and extra-large), sets of bath towels, heavy-duty plastic mattress covers (twin or double size), bed pillows, starter set of dishes (four-piece setting), hair care products for African-American women, "Barney" video, "Aladdin" video, four basketballs, six desk lamps, Bunn coffee maker, laundry baskets, dishpan, commercial-size pots and pans, preteen books (Baby's First Club, Sweet Valley Twins, Sweet Valley High), and books (Saddle Club, Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew and Sunset Series).

SHELTERING ARMS ADULT DAY CARE
18510 W. 12 Mile Road
Southfield 48076
557-7373

Provides respite for caregivers and structured activities for older adults who are physically and/or mentally challenged.

Needs Fiskar scissors, music tapes (easy-listening instrumentals), simple craft kits, colored markers (wide tipped), construction paper (assorted colors), fax machine.

WOMEN'S SURVIVAL CENTER
167 W. Pike
Pontiac 48341
335-2685

Purpose is to enable women to attain economic autonomy and a sense of self-worth, to provide services and programs to enable women to fulfill their human potential and to participate in society economically, politically and socially without barriers.

Wish list includes new toys for children in child care center (ages infant to 6 years), kitchen and laundry supplies for child care center, games for children in latchkey programs (to age 12), money, and volunteers.

LIGHTHOUSE
109 Williams
Pontiac 48343
335-2462

Nonprofit emergency services agency, providing assistance and empowerment for residents of Oakland County. Provides emergency food and clothing and helps in other emergency situations. Also offers caregivers and is involved in community planning, housing services and neighborhood revitalization.

See GIVING, 3C

