

## CHAT ROOM



Joe Derek

## Coping with a Michigan winter - critter-style

If you enjoy nature, you have probably noticed the flocks of robins that are still with us. They, and flocks of starlings, stayed around too long this season and got caught in all the snow that recently fell. Many people still think that some birds fly south because they cannot take the cold, which, of course, is not true. It is all a matter of food. If as a bird, you are an insect or fish eater, you fly south to find food. If you eat seeds and/or berries, you stay in Michigan. Some robins stay here in our parks all winter as long as dried fruits, such as wild grapes, are available. So seeing a robin doesn't always mean that spring is coming.

### Why birds stay put

Many people are surprised when they hear that owls, like the great horned and screech, are in the process of nesting soon after the first of the year. The simple reason they can is that their young eat meat in the form of mice, voles, birds and rabbits. Whether a bird species stays in Michigan for the winter is based solely on what its food requirements are. Blue Herons may stay if ponds and creeks do not entirely freeze over. As long as they find open water, with opportunities to find fish, you very well may see them in your own back yard. We have had herons fish in the creek in our yard with as much as a foot of snow on the ground.

Cooper's hawks have become very adept at hunting for their dinner at our bird feeders. Not for the feed you put out but for the birds that come to

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## Citizen of the Year

### Tina Jensen is lauded for community volunteerism

■ 'She is a tireless and dedicated worker who puts her heart and soul into a job.'

Cheryl Cannon  
—assistant superintendent

By MARY RODRIGUE

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"Everything you give to the community comes back to you double-fold," states Tina Jensen, the 1999 Farmington area Citizen of the Year.

Jensen, a 19-year resident of Farmington Hills, will be honored at a banquet tonight at the Glen Oaks Country Club. This is the first year the Citizen of the Year program is being sponsored solely by the Farmington area Jaycees. She was nominated by Betty Nicolay, chairman of Farmington Families in Action, and 11 others who wrote glowing letters to the nominating committee.

Almost as soon as Jensen moved into the Farmington Square Subdivision nearly two decades ago with her family — husband Richard and children Jana and Jay — she began volunteering. It was already an established pattern in her life. She had been active in the North Rosedale Park area of Detroit where the family lived before moving to Farmington Hills.

### Plunging in

"The Junior Womens Club was the first group I got involved with here," she said. "The focus was community projects. We worked with the kids at the Sarah Fisher Center on the garden project and with Girlstown in Belleville, a center for abused girls still in operation today."

Jensen's mother, Janice vanBlaricom, was chairman of the Girlstown Foundation. Her father, Robert, was district governor of Rotary Club in Kalamazoo and national president of his fraternity. In fact, Jensen's grandparents were also active volunteers. To her, giving one's time freely to community causes was simply expected.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL EISENBERG

Tina Jensen: Voted the 1999 Citizen of the Year by the Farmington Area Jaycees.

"My parents were the best examples for me. I did substitute teaching for a couple of years after we moved here," she said. "But then I decided I could do more good volunteering."

### Driving force

Over the years, she has been the driving force behind many projects. She has worked with Farmington Families in Action, the Longacre House, Farmington Public Schools on millage and

bond elections and Longacre Elementary, Power Middle and Farmington High in particular. In fact, Farmington High has named an award in her honor as a lasting tribute to her efforts at the school.

Cheryl Cannon, assistant school superintendent for business & operational services, calls her "conscientious, courteous to voters and a tireless and dedicated worker who puts her heart and soul into a job."

Local WWII veteran and activist Jack Curd says "Tina is one of those rare individuals who can take a whole room full of volunteers and weld them into a cohesive group. They may have only intended to volunteer an hour a week, until they met Tina and the next thing they knew, they were volunteering every day and loving it."

Jensen is also active with her church, Nardin Park United Methodist. She oversees twice yearly rummage sales there which raised \$20,000 for the church last year. She is also president of United Methodist Women.

In the mid-1980s, she was behind the women's club "Opportunity Farmington" game which raised over \$10,000. Proceeds were used to buy a piano at the senior center and to complete renovations at the historic Longacre House. She is still active with Welcome Wagon and her neighborhood homeowner's association.

"I'm still active with the fashion show (benefit for Longacre House) every fall," she said. "Annually it brings in at least \$5,000, but we need to raise more."

### Passing the torch

Jensen, a Western Michigan University graduate who is also active with her sorority group and works every school and city election, has passed the volunteering torch on to her children. Daughter Jana, who works as executive assistant to Betty DeVos in Grand Rapids, has already served as vice president of the Young Republicans of Oakland County. A graduate of Miami of Ohio University, she is also an active youth volunteer worker with Nardin Park church.

Son Jay, a graduate of Adrian College, works in sales and was an active volunteer with his fraternity's community service projects.

"My husband Richard mostly volunteers by driving other people to church on Sundays. And he gets roped into a lot of my projects," she adds with a laugh.

Jensen began parent advisory groups at both Power and Farmington High.

"Parents needed input," said the former teacher. "It kind of dropped off

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