



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLEY

Gold medallists: Janet Spinner and Joyce Hodess show the medals they won for most alike twins in their age category at the annual convention in Twinsburg, Ohio.

Seeing double Farmington Hills twins get medals

By MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER
mrodrique@homecomm.net

When twin sisters Joyce Hodess and Janet Spinner of Farmington Hills start talking, confusion reigns supreme.

The mantra from the old Patty Duke sitcom about identical cousins applies — they look alike, they talk alike, at times they even walk alike. You can lose your mind.

The two women, fresh from the annual national Twins Convention in Twinsburg, Ohio, won first place gold medals for "most alike female twins" in their age category — 56 and over. At the Michigan convention last June, the pair took a bronze medal, third place finish in the same category.

With frosted gray hair and identical outfits, right down to matching shoes and purses, the only distinguishing characteristic between them now is Joyce's use of a cane while a broken foot bone heals. "I had to hobble around down in Ohio," she said.

Not to be outdone, Janet broke a couple of ribs in a spill on a backyard deck.

"I told the kids to be careful not to fall, and then I fell," she said.

Broken bones or not, nothing could stop the duo (who will be

70 years old next April Fool's Day) from their annual national convention, which they've been attending since 1948. This year it was held Aug. 6-8.

There were more than 2,500 sets of twins ranging in age from babies to the elderly. But, of course, the former Beckman girls don't consider themselves old. They still refer to the Michigan twins who started the state convention decades ago and are in their 70s as "the boys."

They snared the gold medal from a field of 25 sets of twins.

"It was a shock," Janet said.

"They said our hair color was identical and that we moved the same way," added Joyce.

The women note that Walt and David Oliver of Lincoln Park came in third at the national convention in their age category.

Both Joyce and Janet have three children — two girls and a boy each. Joyce has five grandchildren, Janet has six.

"Three of our children were born on the 18th," said Joyce.

"And three of our grandchildren were born on the 16th," added Janet.

The Michigan Twins Convention in year 2000 will be held in Gaylord. For more information, call Joyce Hodess at 661-9927.



Pretty girls: Joyce and Janet (age 16) Beckman always dressed alike. The Farmington Hills twins have been attending annual twin conventions in Twinsburg, Ohio for decades.

Garden Club offers tree care tips for summertime

The Hill and Dale Garden Club of Farmington offers tips for taking care of trees.

When summer dry spells hit, healthy mature trees are generally the lost plants in the landscape to show signs of drought stress. Homeowners will respond to wilting flowers, drooping vegetable crops and a sun baked lawn and may overlook trees which also need water.

Trees generally need about an inch of water per week. Factors that affect the need for irrigation include soil type and tree condi-

tion. A healthy tree growing in a good environment can tolerate dry weather better than a tree weakened by insects, disease, poor soil or some other problem.

Newly planted trees have a limited root system and need frequent watering for the first year but trees planted in heavy clay soil can easily be over watered. Tree roots need oxygen as well as water. The planting hole, filled with loosened soil, fills with water that which cannot readily drain into the surrounding soil. The tree is essentially

sitting in a container of water and the roots die.

The only tools required for watering trees are lawn sprinklers and garden hoses. Two inches of water applied every two weeks during dry weather should wet the soil well down into the trees root zone. To make watering more efficient apply several inches of mulch around the base of your tree.

Piling the material higher around the outer edges and lower in the center will make a basin to catch water so that it

soaks into soil where the plant can use it. Mulch discourages weed growth. To prevent weeds and grass from coming up through mulch, don't put down a sheet of black plastic first. The plastic will keep air and water from moving in and out of the soil, and plant roots need both to function. Fabric weed barriers are better because they allow air and water to flow.

Keep mulch away from the tree trunk or main stems. This will prevent canker disease and rodent injury.

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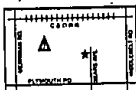
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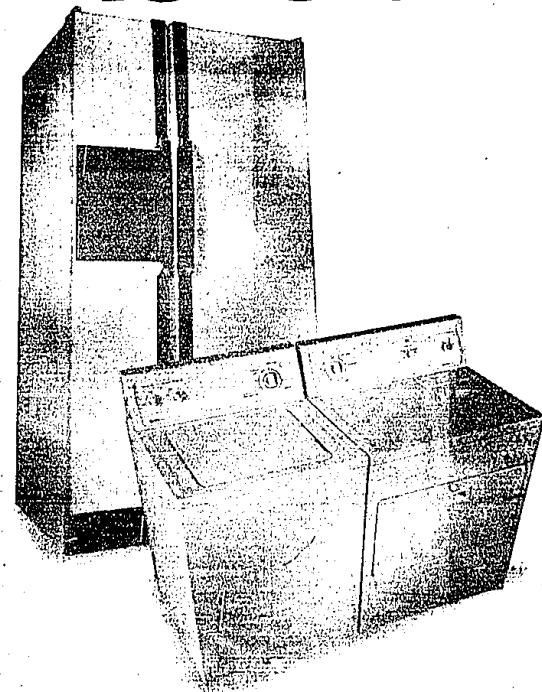
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