

## Needlework Guild Plans In-gathering To Be Held Oct. 27

Board members of the Birmingham - Blossfield branch, Needlework Guild of America, were

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guests of their president, Mrs. Glen Miller, at a luncheon in the Blossfield Hills Country club Tuesday.  
The main topic of the meeting will be the annual in-gathering, scheduled this year for Wednesday, Oct. 27. The event will be held at the Community House.  
Board members include the honorary president, Mrs. Carleton Patterson; Mrs. Miller, president; Mrs. William Graham, first vice president; Mrs. Lloyd Diehl, Jr., second vice president; Mrs. Dorothy Schmidt, secretary; Mrs. Parsons Neff, treasurer; Mrs. Donald Hutton, publicity; and Mrs. John Sheffeld, junior activities chairman.

Are you thinking of buying a new home? Then read the "For Sale Houses" column on the Classified Ad page of this week's Eccentric.

## NATURE NOW

# Pileated Woodpecker Makes Exciting Game For Any Naturalist

By LYDIA KING FREHE  
Special Writer For The Birmingham Eccentric

The pileated woodpecker is considered Michigan's most spectacular bird. Since he is shy as well as rare in our range, searching for him makes an exciting game for the bird watcher.

We had our first sight of this woodpecker in 1948 during an unforgettable vacation on Orcas Island in Puget Sound. One August morning we were following a secluded trail in that mighty virgin forest of Engelmann spruce. Suddenly we were startled by two large birds which flew across our path.

On such a brief encounter one gets an impression of the pileated as a big black bird trimmed with white and topped by a large scarlet crest. In flight he is awkward, flapping his wings and then diving or coasting forward in a kind of undulating motion.



Mrs. Frehe

In his family he is second in size to the ivory-billed woodpecker. However, this latter species is almost extinct with only a few surviving pairs known to nest in Florida.

When we came to Walloon Lake in the summer of 1950 we were greeted by several reports that the pileated had been seen. Since then we have made a ritual of watching for him. However, he is so shy that we have managed to see him only two or three times each season and but twice this summer.

But if we have had scant sight of him, we see daily evidence of his presence. By watching two or three trees where he is working we keep track of the progress he is making excavating for the carpenter ants and wood-boring beetles upon which he feeds.

THE HOLES which he excavates in dead or dying trees are large and oblong or rectangular. His bill is very strong and the chips at the foot of the tree are noticeably large. The fine sawdust which we often see around these same trees is made by the carpenter ants.

He seems to have a way of spotting a colony of ants and boring directly into it even if the tree looks sound and no one else could suggest their presence.

Very few days pass but that we hear the pileated pecking away somewhere in the distance. We also hear his call which resembles that of the flicker but is much louder and more raucous.

The drumming sound which is heard in the spring is the malleting call of the male. It echoes like a woodman's hammer and can be heard for a long distance.

The forest on our shore at Walloon Lake is a mature beech-maple association, old and undisturbed.

VERY LITTLE has been done during the last 50 or 75 years in the way of clearing out stumps and dead or dying trees. Except for the short summer season this area is untenanted by humans. This makes an ideal situation for a shy bird which depends for food upon the insects that inhabit the dead wood found in such a mature forest.

The excavations which we have been watching are being made in beech and maple. Some of these are deep, others are shallow.

The nest chambers, of which we have located several, are often cut into a live tree and are a foot or more in depth. We have not made any observation during the nesting season but ornithologists say both parents assist in incubating the white eggs which rest on a bed of chips in the dark recess of the nest cavity. Sometimes the female looses interest in the feeding chores in which case the male takes over.

Before the cutting of our great virgin forests, the pileated woodpecker was common throughout Michigan. Although he is much reduced in numbers, he is still found in many parts of the upper peninsula where he is often called the "log tick."

HE IS GENERALLY rare in the lower peninsula. Reports from the Audubon bird survey committee, which includes five counties in the Detroit area, show that the pileated has been observed only twice in the last 10 years. Both of these sightings were in St. Clair county and both were recorded during the breeding season in 1950.

Wood, in his "Birds of Michigan" also lists two reports for the pileated in southern Michigan, one in Livingston county in 1934 and one in Washtenaw county in 1939.

Walloon Lake is located in Charlevoix county and is adjacent to and south of Emmet county. According to a report by Blanchard and Nelson, dated 1937, the pileated is increasing in this general area including the two above localities as well as in Cheboygan county to the east.

Ornithologists believe that the pileated woodpecker will naturally increase in numbers as our present second growth forests mature.

And so we leave this great bird. As autumn approaches he will excavate a deep hole in a tree which will be his protection throughout the cold nights that lie ahead. But he will be abroad during the winter days in the deserted fastness of the northwoods country where he is at home and where man is an intruder.

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## Rehearsals Start For AAUW Theater Fall Presentation

The Children's theater group of the Birmingham American Association of University Women will present "Space Happy" at the Birmingham theater on Oct. 15.

The play was written especially for the group by one of its members, Mrs. Walter Patton. This is her second attempt at a children's play, the first, "Topsy Turvy Land", having been produced by the group in 1949.

This three-act play is based around an adventure on Mars. Rehearsals are already underway, under the direction of Mrs. Gilbert Gove. The author is assisting her.

Mrs. Patton began her writing career while at the University of Michigan and since that has worked with the AAUW-sponsored creative writing group.



MRS. WALTER PATTON

## Poppleton PTA Sets First Meeting Place

The first fall meeting of Poppleton PTA will be at 8 p.m., Sept. 16, in the school. Boyd Larson, principal of the Stewart Baker junior high school will speak on fair to be held Oct. 16.

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