

### Kiwanis Club Report for 1961 Details Projects

Past president Esbarn Russo, 2154 Windemere, Birmingham, presented to the Birmingham Kiwanis Club his annual report on the accomplishments of the club during his year as president.

Members of the club donated 524 hours of their time and spent better than \$876 for children and youth activities in 1960.

Major emphasis was directed to the Junior Achievement Company which the club sponsored. Twenty-eight high school boys and girls met during the school year under the supervision of Kiwanis to form and operate a model company.

Another major emphasis was in

the field of bicycle safety which was carried out in cooperation with the Birmingham Police Department. On two Saturdays last spring over 1000 bicycles were safety checked on 11 points, and each child was awarded with a prize for his participation in the program.

OVER 700 bicycle licenses were issued, which the police claim has helped tremendously in the recovery of stolen bikes and, more importantly, in reducing the number of bicycle violations.

Also included in the report were mentions of cooperation with the Oakland county all program, the University children's hospital school at Ann Arbor, participation in city projects and backing of public affairs. The report ended with mention of the clothes, toys, food, fuel and medical care which were donated to those less fortunate.

### NATURE NOW

By Lydia King Frehee, Special Writer for The Birmingham Eclectic

## Shrew, Tiny Mammal, Threatened by Winter

Some hundred odd millions of years ago when the great dinosaurs were approaching the twilight of their long reign, there dwelt in the tree-tops a group of small furry animals. Their kind lived not only to see the extinction of their ferocious enemies but to become the ancestors of today's dominant animals, the mammals. And the likeliest of these is the tiny beast called a shrew.

THE THERMOMETER registered 14 degrees below zero outside the window of the old farmhouse when the telephone rang.

"Come over," said our neighbor across the way. "I have caught something in my mouse trap. That something proved to be a short-tailed shrew whose small incisors and teeth are on my finger within reach of my inquisitive hand."

The short-tailed shrew is the largest and the most abundant of the six species of its kind found in our state. Four and one-half inches, says the ruler, from its long pointed snout to the end of its one-inch tail. The pygmy shrew, the tiniest of its kind, measures only two and one-half inches.

SHREWS GENERALLY resemble their close relatives the moles. Together these two are the only representatives of a small mammalian group called insectivores, so named because they feed chiefly on insects.

They have long pointed snouts, sharp teeth and velvety fur which hides their small eyes and ears. Their feet, fingered like tiny hands and equipped with sharp claws.

Thirty-two pin-point teeth are the key to the wild life's fury of the tiny shrew. Under the protection of night, he hunts for his prey, creeping through moist soil and growing ground-cover. His carnivorous ways lead him to kill and devour more than his size and if devour man twice his weight of flesh in 24 hours. If denied food, he will starve within a half day.

Although my short-tailed shrew will sometimes burrow under ground in summer and under the snow in winter, his kind usually make their homes in the unused burrows of mice or moles. In yesterday's extreme weather he probably was seeking protection within some hole or niche in the field-stone foundation of the old farmhouse which led him into the basement. Here he met his doom, his fierce hunger driving him to accept a tiny and last mouthful of cheese in the baited trap.

THE FOUR or five numbered litter of the shrew is usually born in the dark safety of a twisting earth-burrow dug by a mouse or mole. Each infant is a squirming speck of aliveness so small that the bulk of the entire litter is scarcely that of a walnut.

When the mother has suckled her tiny ones to a degree of maturity, her foraging trips yield lady beetles, small caterpillars, ants and worms which the young eat from their tiny forepaws. And so they grow to adulthood, blood-brother to the whale, the elephant, the tiger and man.

ALTHOUGH THEY are fairly common, shrews are seldom seen

by the casual observer who frequently mistakes them for a mouse or mole. They are more likely to be observed in winter when hunger forces them to desert their secretive ways.

At this season they poke their sensitive snouts into the little openings in the bark of trees in the old orchard near the farmhouse where they scuffle among fallen leaves searching through the leaf mold and decayed pieces of wood for decaying larvae, grubs and worms.

AS I LEFT the old farmhouse, my short-tailed shrew nibbled on my coat pocket, I pondered upon the ways of shrews and their relatives. So preoccupied, I nearly stepped upon a second specimen of his kind lying frozen along the snowy pathway.

And I thought how the hunger, which drove these two little mammals to their shrew-like ways, was now ended. For those the smallest of mammals impelled by life's competitive ways must ever make up in tigerish ferocity that which they lack in size and might.

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