

# The Birmingham Eccentric Features

NATURE NOW By Lydia King Frehee  
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

## Black Squirrels Simply Mutation From Grey Ones

It is late autumn in the oak forest. A cold drizzle falls softly, hestates on the brown and shiny leaves, then drops to the sodden earth.

On the above cloudy afternoon at St. Mary's Camp near Battle Creek, we recently observed a number of black squirrels frisking from tree to tree, their curiosity and ardor undiminished by the threatening weather. We occasionally meet these little rodents when driving along country roads or in protected areas like Belle Isle.

It is important to note that the black squirrel is not a separate species but only a color phase of the grey squirrel.

THE BLACK squirrel like the proverbial "red shoe" bears testimony to one of nature's variations. In 1901, Hugo de Fries, the great Dutch botanist, started the scientific world by announcing his "mutation" theory. As early as 1886 working with primroses, he found that 800 plants selected from 50,000 individuals showed striking hereditary differences.

To such new forms as bred true from one generation to another, he assigned the name "mutants" meaning "to change."

These striking variations had been long observed and the new specimens had been called "sports" on the theory that nature was just "having a little fun. However, no



Mrs. Frehee

one had previously attributed any scientific significance to them.

TODAY WE CAN observe many mutations among both plants and animals. Occasionally one sees a white or "albino" flower in a family whose petals are normally colored; a white bottle gentian or a white fringed polygala, sometimes one may find a featherly front of Boston fern.

In two areas, one near Farmington and one near Oxford, Michigan, mutations of the white trillium occur regularly and have been studied by botanists at the Cranbrook Institute of Science.

INSTEAD OF the usual pattern of three green sepals topped by three white petals, some specimens present four, five or six petals, some colored all green others showing striped or variegated green and white petals. In the six-petaled flowers the sepals have been elevated and added to the normal three petals. In several plants the usual position of the leaves arranged on the stalk just below the flower head, have been moved down to grow from the earth on a separate petiole.

Some of our present improved strains of fruit and vegetables are the result of mutations. Among these are the red sunflower, the bush lima bean and the concord grape.

MUTATIONS among animals are equally significant. A naturalist friend recently told your scribe of seeing a red-winged (See SQUIRRELS, 7-D)

### STRICTLY FRESH

Many persons get a kick out of doing some things, yet there are those who don't get it in the right place.

Fishing through ice is a sport many persons enjoy.



Some fish for fish while others fish for olives.

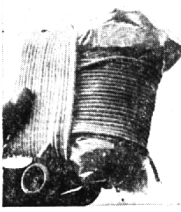
Some unhappiness comes from not knowing how to sit in a room and stay quiet.

A child shows his impatience in no uncertain squirms.



### Outdoor Survival Kit

The items laid out above may not look very important, but they could help save your life if you became lost in the wilds of northern Michigan this time of year, according to the Michigan Dept. of Conservation. Included as basic survival equipment are a compass, stick matches in a waterproof container, a small tin or aluminum pot, a strong aluminum pot, a strong-backed belt knife, a few packets of dehydrated soup or potatoes, a spoon, 40 to 50 feet of eighth-inch nylon line, an extra pair of wool socks and a 10 by 10 foot piece of four-mil polyethylene with which to make a small windbreak. All can be packed into a one-and-one-half pound, easy-to-carry kit as in the photo on the right.



## Survival in the Wilds Depends on Keeping Calm

Survival in the wilds of northern Michigan during deer season, or anytime during the winter, is a practical problem that any outdoorsman may have to face.

There is no pat answer to survival because no two situations are exactly alike. However, there are some pretty fundamental points which help to explain why some men pass their test of survival where others fail.

FIRST, men differ widely in their ability to adjust mentally to being lost; second, men who go off with more information and understanding about what to do when lost are far better prepared for being lost (obvious though this sounds); and third, over-exertion is probably the biggest single problem a person must face when lost.

Medically, a person of normal health who understands his situation can be aided in a cold rain or snow for several days with the thermometer down around his shoptops, and not suffer more than a head cold—and not even that if he doesn't carry the germs with him.

BUT PUT that same man on his feet, in a sweat, full of panic, and fighting to find his way out of the woods and he might soon be dead from sudden heart attack, or rapid decline in body energy through shock or over exertion.

At the point where a hunter begins to realize he is lost, an actual condition of physical shock may set in. It can be great or small, depending on the individual. The condition, however, is the same as the shock experienced when a person is injured in an accident; the pulse rate becomes rapid and shallow, a cold sweat may begin, breath is shallow, and perhaps most dangerous, irrational action may begin to take over.

To combat such a condition, a person should stay as quiet and warm as possible.

AT THIS crucial point, when everything tells a man to hurry back to camp, he must reverse his thoughts and slow down all activity. He must begin to save his energy.

Don't try to make a lean-to—the nearest pine tree with low limbs will give you enough shelter to survive. Or if not in pine country, simply pull a bunch of branches together and crawl into them.

If you can make a fire, do so, but keep it small so it doesn't require much firewood. If you can't make a fire, don't despair—remember, you are still mainly fighting a battle for control of your mental apparatus, and any little trouble like this can unbalance you.

MUCH HAS been written about freezing to death after falling asleep in cold weather. This statement does not present a full or accurate picture of what can happen.

Sleep-fighting can claim a person of normal health when the temperature is very low—well below zero—and it is perhaps this sort of situation that has led some writers to draw such broad conclusions. Also, if a person has been

exposed several days, and his body temperature is low and his energy gone, he may well fall asleep and freeze. But such a sleep is quite different than that which comes to a person on his first night in the wild.

IN NORTHERN Michigan, the temperature normally ranges from zero to 30 degrees above in the winter.

If you become lost, stay more or less in place to assist conservation officers and the State Police in their systematic area-by-area search for you. If you wander from one area to another, you can goof up this search.

However, as often happens, you may be only a short distance from help or a road or your own camp.

In the daylight, with some of the shock worn off after your first night out in the wilds you can often tell yourself. To do this, move outward from your campsite on short excursions in all directions. Move slowly, conserve your energy, and don't expect to find anything; high hope, with its bottom drained, can be a dreadful disappointment.

IF NOTHING turns up, spend your time improving your shelter. Stamp out a large "F" in a snowy opening, which tells any searching pilot that you need food and water; or an "X" which tells him you are unable to proceed—and will in either case tell him you are lost.

zeal could be compared with the scientists who are concentrating on developing the first blue rose. The African Violet I liked best of all was "Printed Silk." The leaves were albino and light green with light plum colored flowers.

AT THIS same stop it was interesting to hear the rose story. The effect of temperature and day length on the initiation of the flower bud is a subject of special research. Many chemicals being used are upsetting the apartment as new performance is seen due to their use.

VARIOUS subdivisions launch competition in lighting and this meeting, to which the general public is cordially invited, is a chance to "begin the ball rolling" so that you at home will be prize winner.

Your columnist has the point of view that decorating your home with a festive electric motif is certainly one way of sharing the happiness you feel Dec. 25. All I ask is please do not trim your home like a hamburger stand.

The Birmingham Community House will have a second event you should plan to attend on Dec. 5 and Dec. 6.

The Birmingham Branch of National Farm and Garden will celebrate its 25th Christmas Show, a gift to the people of Birmingham.

FOR THOSE who are new in our community, it is one more reason why Birmingham is a very special kind of a suburban community.

At this time there are many, many beautiful ideas given for the holiday decoration of a home. Artistic door arrangements will be shown. Table arrangements will be unusual besides offering numerous ideas for every nook of the home.

Mrs. George Dixon, the Branch president, has asked Mrs. Chester Wisniewski to be the general chairman.

RECENTLY, while a guest at the USDA in Washington, I wandered through a large greenhouse with a sizeable portion devoted to the testing of new African violets which would give a better performance due to given factors of light, temperature and disease.

It would surely have made several of our local girls happy to see such a concentration of African violets. They are still looking for a yellow violet. I suppose their

### DOWN TO EARTH

By ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME  
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

## Christmas Lighting Contests Add to Season's Happiness

You are never too old to be taught new tricks so plan to come to the Birmingham Community House at 5 p.m. tonight to attend the workshop on Christmas lighting sponsored by the Michigan Division of National Farm and Garden Club.

Mrs. J. C. Calhoun will direct the program presented by lighting experts, artists and citizens who will discuss the short cuts for a maximum exterior effect for business and home sites for the holiday season.

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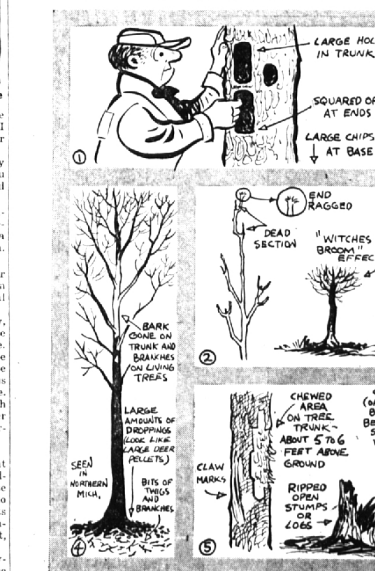
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## Be An Outdoor Detective



Answers to clues above: 1) Pileated woodpecker; 2) Deer browsing; 3) Buck deer rub; 4) Porcupine feeding; and 5) Bear signs.

## Is Your "Wooden Nickel" Worth \$5.00?



### Greenfield's Birmingham Restaurant's 5th Anniversary: December 4th-December 8th

Today or any day through next Tuesday you can go to Greenfield's to get your free "wooden nickel" . . . commemorating our fifth or "wooden" anniversary in Birmingham. Each nickel has a number printed in it. During next week's anniversary celebration . . . Wednesday-Saturday . . . five new numbers will be posted each day. If the number from your nickel is posted you will win up to five \$1.00 Greenfield's Guest Checks. See the sign now in our lobby for full details.

20 free birthday cakes will be given each day of the anniversary to persons seated at randomly selected "lucky tables."

Free 12 inch inflated balloons will be given away to all children accompanied by an adult any day of the anniversary.



725 South Hunter Boulevard, Birmingham



### Birmingham Federal's Christmas Club . . .

## JOIN NOW for '63

Start by placing a portion of the money you receive for Christmas (bonus, etc.) in a Christmas Club Savings Account here . . . Add to it regularly, and with the generous earnings of four percent current rate, compounded quarterly, you will have funds adequate to cover your gift shopping next Christmas!



Stop in, phone or write for a Birmingham Federal Savings Christmas Club kit today.

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