

Even a Seemingly Barren Woodlot Thrives with Life

On this November afternoon, the sunlight filtered through the empty trees in the woodlot. Oak, hickory, poplar, wild cherry, sassafras; friends of long years standing. We are here for a short hour's recreation, with a group of students and their teachers representing 24 colleges and universities in our state. These have come to spend the weekend at St. Mary's Camp near Battle Creek.

Our way leads through an oak-hickory woodlot over a little hill and on skirting the crest of a winding ravine, to a grassy clearing, then back along a newly-cut road.

THE ABUNDANCE of summer's growth is past, but seed pods, weeds, grasses, moss-covered logs, bare trees, empty nests, insect galls, these remain as clues to the season's fruition.

Animals, birds, insects have retreated to burrow, to moldering log in answer to winter's threat. A few birds remain including the southern downy woodpecker and blue jay.

The chickadee, junco and tree

sparrow have arrived at winter residents. A late monarch butterfly drifts by, a lone grasshopper sits in the dead grass, a group of playful black squirrels cavort in an overhanging tree.

ALL THESE we call by name as we pass. But names are only necessary labels, and if not related to their proper place in nature's complexity, they are sooner forgotten. They are essential to both the naturalist and the scientist, but too often they are remembered only by those who have had some previous experience which has been instrumental in making natural science meaningful and even exciting.

The words "I only took biology for credit," which I have heard repeatedly while teaching in both formal and informal situations, are not an accident.

HAPPILY, natural science is moving out-of-doors. No longer will a major university grant a degree in any branch of this subject without at least a summer's study at some outdoor school, such as the one operated by the University of Michigan at Douglas Lake, thereby extending the classroom and the laboratory.

Here, life is experienced first-hand: "Can you recognize this species in the field? Who are its com-

panions and what are its habits? What is its place in the whole economy of nature, including man's economy?"

We might here record some truths gleaned from such a trip afield:

THE EARTH ITSELF and all the life it supports is in a slow but constant state of flux. On this November day, every leaf that falls changes the sum total of the earth's habitat by that fall.

A glacier passes and rock becomes sand, gravel or canyon. In time, marshes may become meadows, daisies may be elevated to mountain tops, oceans may become plains.

Natural science includes not only the life as it is today, it also involves the history of all past life, many eons of living and dying made intelligible to those who can read the fossil record. We can only interpret the present if we include this long "past."

LIFE IS ALL of a piece whether it be thistle or moss, bird or man, for all that is alive is made up of small units of protoplasm called cells.

Anyone can see the difference between an oak tree and the blue jay that nests in its boughs, but only a student can distinguish between a yeast cell and an amoeba. As life progresses from simple to more complex forms, the divergence between these two great streams of life increases. A tree is never mistaken for a man.

All life forms are intimately related to each other and are dependent upon each other. "No man is an island." Neither does a lichen or a tree or a rotifer or a lion live unto itself.

Matter changes its form, but nothing can be destroyed. Water may be ocean or fog or solid ice. Wood may be reduced to flame, escaping gas and ash.

NATURE IS economical of materials and methods. A wind-pollinated grass has no need for bright petals to attract insect pollinators; therefore, its flowers lack petals. A certain crayfish's survival is dependent upon insect pollination. Therefore, nature uses fantastic bait by developing a flower structure which mimics the particular insect which pollinates it.

In the end man stands as the only life form which can not only change his environment the better to meet his needs, his dislikes or even his whims.

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Answer To Puzzle No. 784

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GENERAL

A "Bushy" Tale That's a Blooming!

A forsythia bush . . . according to Mr. Webster, is "a plant of yellow bell-shaped flowers appearing before the leaves in early spring." Apparently Mrs. Philip Comins' forsythia bush just can't read, or simply refuses to believe that it isn't spring.

"I'll have you changing your mind (never mind looking at the pre-Christmas ads) when you see its big, bright yellow blossoms abundant on the little bush in Mrs. Comins' backyard, at 4015 Country Club Drive, Birmingham."

"I've never known it to have blossomed at this time of year before," said Mrs. Comins. "I just don't know what's going to happen this Spring!"

Mrs. Comins' other optimistic reaction . . . "I almost expect to see a robin, after this!"

Looking for a job . . . a home . . . a special service? See The Want Ads.



Learning about Skiing

Bob Bogan (right), The Community House executive director, takes a few moments out from making plans for The Community House Ski Evening, scheduled for Tuesday, to learn the proper way of carrying skis from Rex Ciavola, the show coordinator. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. and will feature a Warren Miller ski movie, a fashion show of apparel for the slopes, exercises, equipment demonstrations and displays.

Oakland Registrar Is Appointed Officer

Herbert N. Stoutenburg, Jr., director of admissions and registrar at Oakland University, was elected vice president of the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers at its annual meeting Nov. 12 and 13 on the Oakland campus.

Fifty accredited colleges were represented by 127 members at the meeting. MACRAO elects a new president and vice president each year. The secretary and the treasurer serve two-year terms.

Elected to the office of president was Molly Parrish, Alma College registrar. Frank Bonta, director of admissions at Albion College, was elected secretary. Edward Bush, Port Huron Junior College registrar, begins the second year of his two-year term as treasurer.

MACRAO's objective is to bring together college registrars and admissions officers for an exchange of ideas and ways to increase efficiency in their offices.

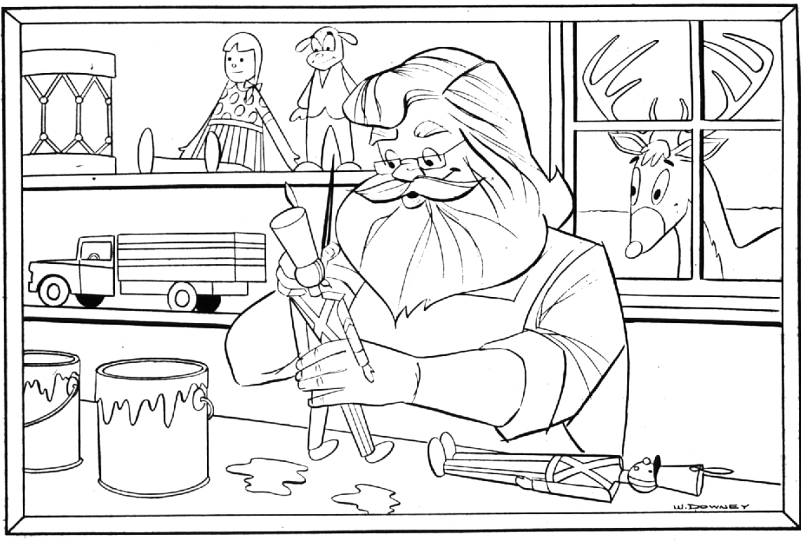
DURING THE summer of 1961 he served, at the invitation of MSU and the government of Nigeria, as advisor to the University of Nigeria for admissions, scholarships, registrations and general administration. Stoutenburg was born in Detroit. He received his master of arts and bachelor of arts degrees from MSU.

BOYS and GIRLS . . . Enter the . . .

Christmas COLORING CONTEST

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CONTEST RULES

Read Carefully

- Official Eccentric entry blank must be attached securely to each entry.
- The entries will be judged on the basis of neatness, originality of thought and beauty. In making their selections the judges will take the age of the entrant into consideration. Children of employees of The Eccentric are not eligible to enter.
- Paste or tape entry to a plain sheet of paper (such as typewriter paper). Entries will be disqualified. They may be folded over, however, for ease in mailing. There is no entry fee of any kind.
- You may submit as many entries as you wish, provided each is accompanied by a separate entry blank.
- Fill out the entry blank completely. Have your mother or father go over it with you to be sure all the information is clear and distinct. Have your parents print (or type) your entry blank if necessary, so we can list your name correctly if you win a prize.
- Mail or bring your entry to: Christmas Coloring Contest, The Birmingham Eccentric, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham. All entries become the property of The Eccentric. No entries will be returned.
- Judging will be done by Ethel Simmons, arts editor, and Glen Michaels, supervisor of the Cranbrook Young People's Art Center. The decision of the judges is final.
- All entries must be in or postmarked by midnight, Thursday, December 12th. Winners will be announced in The Eccentric, Thursday, December 19th, week preceding Christmas.

THE BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC
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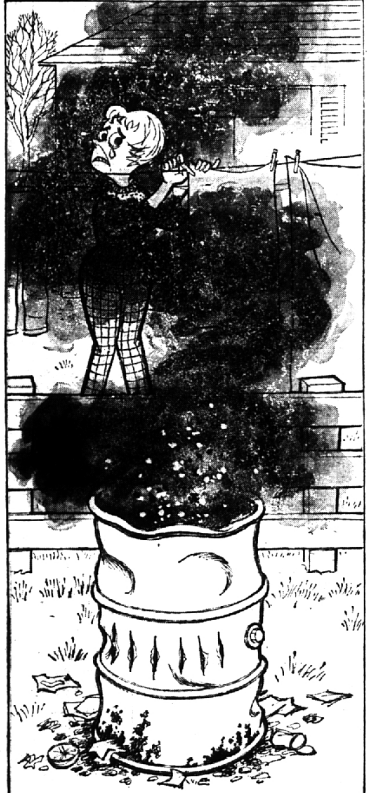
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