

Kids' KOrner

Common crows get little respect

WASHINGTON — Long before they want to wake up, thousands of American suburbanites are aroused each day by the raucous caw of a living alarm clock, the common crow.

He's not exactly a newcomer to their neighborhoods. His family, in fact, lived there for something like 25 million years before the first split-level rambler was built.

The family's name is Corvidae, and the crow's official title is *Corvus brachyrhynchos*. The most prevalent member of the clan, the bumptious, coal-black bird is well-known in every part of the United States. His cousins include ravens, jays, magpies, and nutcrackers.

Thriving in Adversity

Intelligence and adaptability have been the crow's trademarks over the millennia. No other species of bird has been more reviled and persecuted. Yet none has thrived more effectively in adversity.

As a result, the U.S. crow population continues to grow, despite poisons, pesticides, dynamite, and guns. While less hardy creatures are succumbing to man's depredations, the number of crows flourishes. One recent estimate: 3 billion in North America.

In times past, when farms dominated the American landscape, farmers cursed the ever-hungry avian marauders for eating grain, fruit, eggs, and smaller birds. The farmers tended to overlook the services the crows performed by also eating mice, grubs, cutworms, and grasshoppers.

As housing developments and shopping centers have replaced barnyards and cornfields, crows have learned new tricks. With their

long, powerful beaks and strong claws, they can effortlessly slash open plastic garbage bags and strew the contents over manicured suburban lawns.

But the irate homeowner who shakes his fist at the squawking bandit that taunts him from a nearby branch can also thank him for a few favors. That same crow reduces the insect population in the suburbanite's yard. And he helps remove animal carcasses from streets and highways.

Scorned Despite Favors

All his good deeds, however, won't win him any popularity contests among his human neighbors. The best he can hope for is a standoff.

Since 1973, the crow has been protected as a migratory bird. Hunting him requires a license.

Still, he sometimes must be dealt with firmly, if not lethally. When thousands of crows roosted in trees next to a restaurant in the Washington suburb of Rockville, Md., the harried owner spent considerable money for aggravated customers' dry-cleaning bills and car washes. He finally removed some of the trees and set off fireworks to scare away the remaining birds.

Whatever deterrents people may try, they're likely to be effective only until the crow gets used to them and adapts, experts agree. His intelligence and flexibility are unmatched in the bird world. Scarecrows scare him only briefly. He quickly learns what a gun is, and stays out of its range.

Stories of his wit and mimicry abound. "They're smart, they're very smart," says Eleanor D. Brown, a Smithsonian Institution research associate who specializes in crow language. Capable of imitating human voices as well as

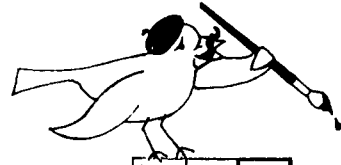
the sounds of other birds and animals, crows have a complex and distinctive system of songs and calls, she says.

Crows mate for life, and individual families develop their own identifiable quirks of communication.

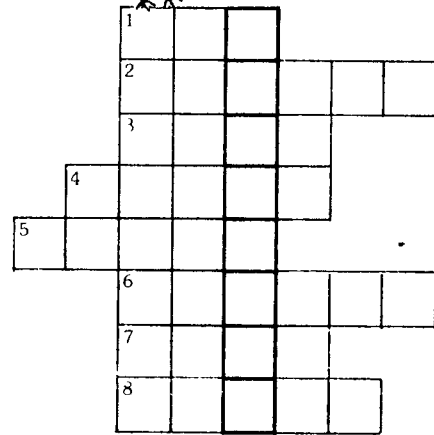
Legend and tradition perpetuate the crow's ominous reputation as a harbinger of evil, a portent of death.

Conceding that many people don't like crows, Brown says with some irritation, "I think a lot of this stems from the fact that they watched Alfred Hitchcock's 'The Birds' when they were at an impressionable age."

Earlier this century, another naturalist, Edward Howe Forbush, also acknowledged the crow's unpopularity among humans. But, Forbush concluded, "He is well worth knowing. Each crow is a character."



COLOR ME RED



1. Robin ___ breast.
2. Color of a canary.
3. A catbird's coat is dark ___.
4. Color of a raven and crow.
5. Color of a wren and thrasher.
6. Color of a martin.
7. A mockingbird's coat is a lighter ___ than a catbird's.
8. A junco's breast is ___.

Answers:
1 red 2 yellow
3 gray 4 black 5 brown
6 purple 7 gray 8 white

Answer to heavily lined column cardinal

Fill in the squares above with the colors of the birds in the list on the right. Then rearrange the letters in the column with heavy lines to find another bird.

4-H camp open to youth

TRENTON, N.J. — In Springtime, young people's fancies often turn to thoughts of camp. And young Mercer Countians, ages 9-14, have an opportunity to attend the 4-H camp at Beemerville, in Sussex County.

The 4-H camp is unusual for many reasons, not the least of which is the modest cost of \$67 for the week of July 16-21. Another reason, even more significant, is the close supervision provided - one adult counselor for every 10 campers.

Activities include the usual - swimming, canoeing, arts and crafts - but 4-H provides, in addition, activities that demonstrate

an appreciation of the natural environment, including working with some of the animals found on New Jersey farms. There is freedom to explore and learn, but the close guidance provides a degree of safety that is one of the hallmarks of the 4-H camp, earned over a 35-year experience in camp administration.

If you want to go to camp, it's easy to sign up. Call the 4-H office between 8:30 and 4:30 Monday through Friday (989-6833) and ask for an application, or stop by and pick one up at 930 Spruce Street, Trenton. Orientation sessions for both parents and children are required, and have been scheduled

for Tuesday, June 12 or Wednesday, June 27, at 7:30 p.m. at the 4-H office.

Here's a change for a happy, educational and safe week - economical, too - sure to be an enriching experience for any youngster, especially yours.

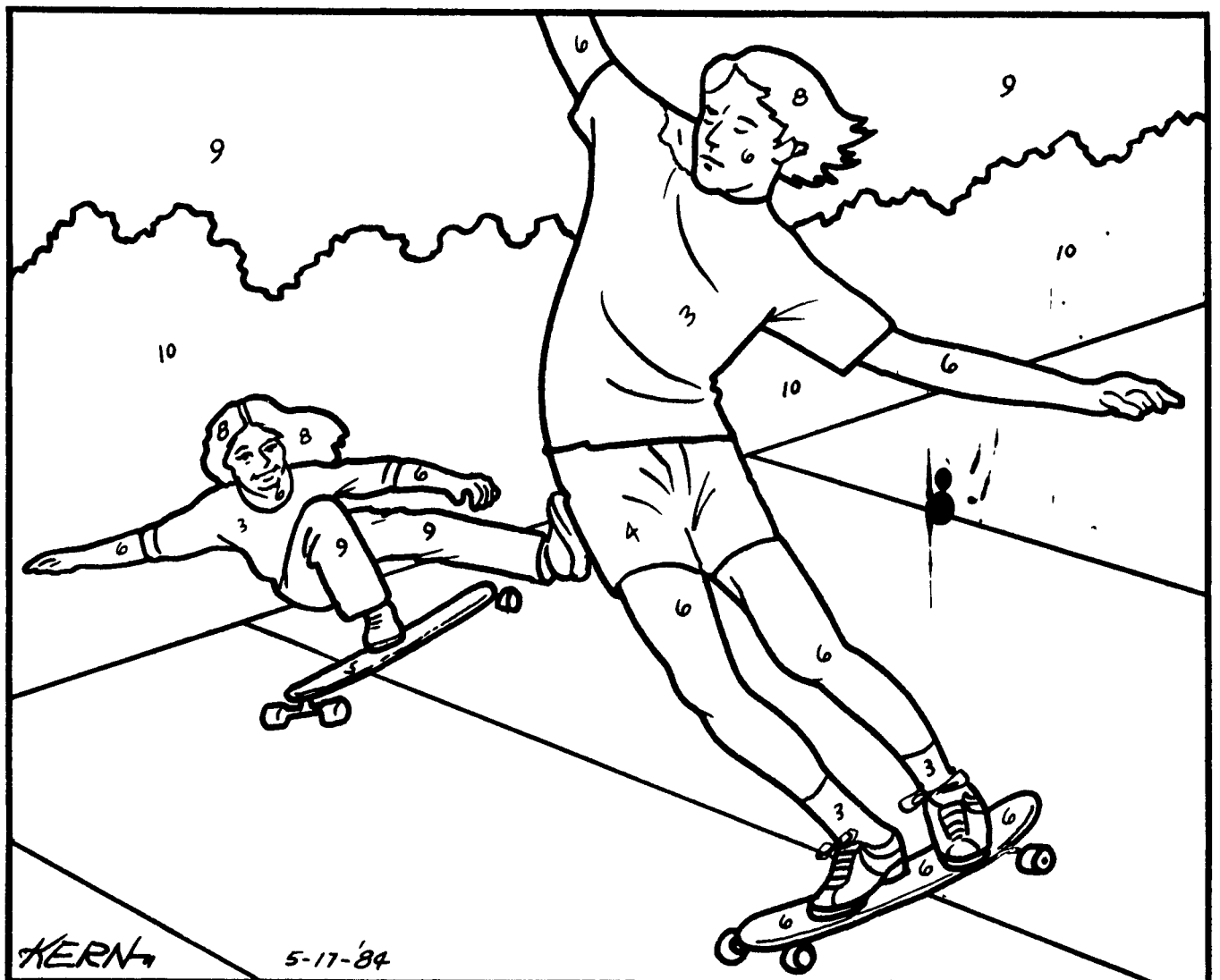


Call Now To Place Your CLASSIFIED AD
Ph: 717 394 3047 or 717-626 1164

COLOR THIS!

- | | |
|-----------|---------------|
| 1. BLACK | 6. PEACH |
| 2. RED | 7. GREEN |
| 3. YELLOW | 8. LT. BROWN |
| 4. BLUE | 9. LT. BLUE |
| 5. BROWN | 10. LT. GREEN |

SKATEBOARDING:
IT WAS IN 1962 WHEN THIS SPORT SUDDENLY BECAME POPULAR. IT HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR ENJOYMENT, CHALLENGE, BEAUTY AND BENEFIT TO THE BODY. IT CAN ALSO BE A DANGEROUS SPORT RESULTING IN MANY INJURIES. MANY CITIES HAVE ENACTED ORDINANCES BANNING THIS SPORT.



KERN

5-17-84