Lafayette Family Given 'The Bird'

BY LINDA 'BIRD' CHAMBERS
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The James W. Cornay family is faced by one of those "Did the chicken come first or the egg?" questions and it isn't sure yet what to do about it.

It concerns a mockingbird which they adopted—or did they adopt it? That's what the Cornays are not sure of—but the now-four-week old bird is as much at home among his human family as he would have been in his mother's nest.

The Cornays, who have a knack for acquiring homeless pets, accepted this one from Mrs. Cornay's aunt, Miss Lydia DesOrmeaux, when it was only two or three days old. Other pets have included a raccoon, bat, several dogs and, right now, seven cats.

No one believed Billy Bird (named after a television cartoon character) would survive but Mr. and Mrs. Cornay and their three daughters got out a pair of tweezers and dug a few worms to begin their month-long vigil of caring for and feeding the mockingbird.

He now eats at 15-minute intervals beginning at 8 a.m. and not stopping until everyone in the household has retired for the night. Billy Bird's diet also includes egg yolk and cooked rice.

Feeding is a family project with daughters Sandy, 18, Carol, 17, and Lynette, 15, pitching in with the job. Billy Bird returns the favor by giving the entire family his friendship and sometimes entertaining them with his antics.

One of Billy Bird's favorite things to amuse is a "nest" of hair rollers when one of the girls is curling her hair.

Though his wings are not fully developed, Billy Bird tries flight often enough to sometimes get himself into an embarrassing situation. In one case, he was twice retrieved from the roof of the Cornay house by Lynette.

Mrs. Cornay said the bird is also showing some sign of beginning to eat for himself instinctively pecking on the green rug in the den.

We doubt the mockingbird's instinct for freedom will one day lead him permanently to the skies, but friends have told the Cornays that Billy Bird will always make his home in the vicinity of their residence on 411 Holden Ave.