

**New Beginnings**



**Feathering The Nest**

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

Leanne Goodfellow lives up to her last name. The 29-year-old spotted a killdeer protecting her nest on open ground.

"Our back yard faces the pond around which this bird is nesting. It's an odd place for her to nest because people walk up and down the trail," she said, but added, "She was probably born around here, before all the houses were built. Killdeers come back to their own surroundings to hatch their eggs."

Leanne noticed that children would often get curious and go close to the bird, and pets would sniff around it. "She was really stressed out. Her squawking was getting louder, and you could tell she was upset with all the attention," she said.

Leanne, who moved to Stouffville in January with her fiancé, Adam Haney, paused the movie they were watching and quickly made a sign that reads: "Bird protecting her eggs. Please do not disturb."

"I just grabbed whatever I could find to make a little placard. The

sticks that are holding it up are the ones we use for shish kebabs but it did the trick," she said, laughing, happy that the bird has her privacy.

"I learnt a lot about birds from Adam's mother, who's an avid birdwatcher," said Leanne, putting the lessons to good use. Adam takes after his mother and it's only when you talk to him do you realize how much he knows about birds.

"Killdeers use a 'broken wing act', where they start circling around with one wing so that the predator thinks it's easy prey and gets distracted. The

parent birds do this to lure predators away from the eggs," he said.

With godparents like Leanne and Adam, it's doubtful any predator will come close. "I think the eggs should hatch in another week," said Leanne, watching closely but from a distance. "The signs actually attract more attention to the bird, but people are very good about keeping their children and pets away from it."

Leanne and Adam can be sure the bird appreciates their goodwill.

Write to Kinjal at [kinjal.dagli@gmail.com](mailto:kinjal.dagli@gmail.com)



A killdeer makes her home beside a local pond.

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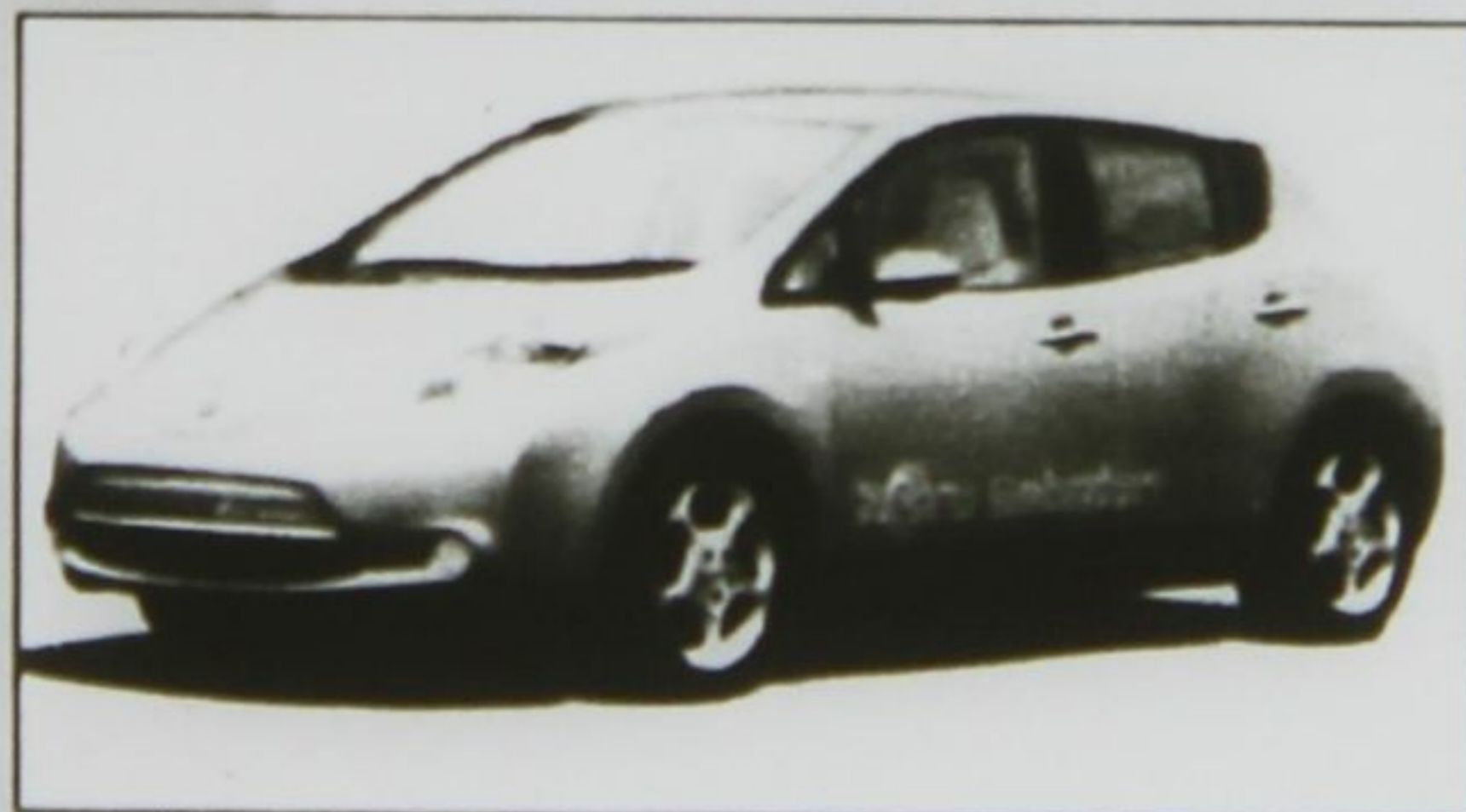
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Leanne Goodfellow and Adam Haney protect the killdeer's nest on open ground near their Stouffville home.



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