



THE Chinquapin

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WINTER 2007-2008

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership dues for the current season (Sept. '07-Aug. '08) must be paid up in order to have the 2008 spring and summer editions of our newsletter *The Chinquapin* mailed to you. Please check your address label to see if your membership dues still need to be paid. If they are still due, please fill out a membership form (pg. 5) and mail it along with a check to the Nature Society. If a family membership, please be sure to record the total number of family members on designated line.

A membership entitles you to have our newsletter, *The Chinquapin*, mailed to you four times a year. The mailing begins with the Fall '07 issue and ends with the Summer '08 edition. Your membership will help to cover the cost of printing and mailing of our newsletter and will also assist in funding educational programs that we provide.

Non-members are still welcome to come to our monthly speaker programs as well as our nature walks. Those programs and walks are, and always will be, free to anyone who enjoys learning about nature.

Donations are tax deductible.

Cummingston Park, Tenhave Woods Nature Center and What We Have Been Doing

BY BOB MULLER

If you go back a year and read my *What We Have Been Doing*, you will see that it was a tremendous year that would have been hard to top, but we have. At the beginning of our eighth season, both Tenhave Woods and Cummingston Parks are in much better shape than when we started. Eight years ago you couldn't even see the entrance of Cummingston and had to crawl under honeysuckle bushes to find the trails. Most of the old trails from the 1970's were gone. Tenhave Woods was not quite as bad but without lining on the sides of the trails, many people on nature walks thought they would get lost if in the park alone. Both parks now have great trail systems that are in constant use.

We had our second fundraiser and if you didn't attend you missed a great evening. We had great support both from the business community with their auction item donations and the citizens with their bidding on them. We also parked cars for the Dream Cruise in Gunn Dyer Park again this year. Between these two events, we obtained enough funds necessary to install a new turnstile on the Lexington Blvd. side of Tenhave Woods. The turnstile should be installed sometime this fall. The Nature Society now has a fundraising chairman, Karen Anderson, who is working continuously on making our existing fundraisers better and exploring some new fundraising ideas.

As big trees fall, we are continuing to work on lining the trails with their logs. This would be impossible to do without the help of Boy Scout Troops 1610 and 1627. Both troops have been working with us since the startup of the Nature Society. We are also planning to start widening the new trails that we have built. When these trails were made, they were only

made four feet wide, which does not work well with the increased size of our current nature walks. We added a service gate at the new Lexington entrance and although it is usually a dry entrance, it was fairly muddy in the spring. To correct this, we will be adding fill dirt for the first 150 feet sometime this fall. At present, we start all Tenhave Woods' nature walks by opening the service gate with a key. When the turnstile is installed, this will become the park's main entrance. In addition, Richard Stoll also made a nice sign for above the gate, that says *Tenhave Woods Nature Center*.

In Cummingston Park, one of the Society's main goals was to find a way to correct the un-natural flooding that occurs there. That condition has eliminated most of the wildflowers that were once found there. After four years of survey work on water depths, we reworked an old drainage ditch. The ditch flowed like a stream all winter and throughout the spring. The water levels in the central area of Cummingston Park have returned to the way they were years ago. Unfortunately, this ditch has not helped the west side of the park, where we continue to do research to see what can be done to lessen the amount of water in the winter and spring. A pond project for Cummingston is in the planning stages. If we can get a pond similar to Dragonfly Pond built in Cummingston Park, we believe we will also drop the park's mosquito population the way we have done in Tenhave Woods.

Dena Serrato, our Tenhave Woods Restoration and Beautification chairman and her group of helpers, have continued their work on garlic mustard control. A lot of progress has been made towards the elimination of

continued on page 2

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS & NEW MEMBERS

The Royal Oak Nature Society would like to thank the following individuals/families for either becoming new members or renewing their membership.

Doris Applebaum
Cheryl Ashley
Pam & Mike Brady
Paul Desjardins
Ann Dunn
Kathleen Gorzkiewicz
Colleen & Frank Hilzinger
Jeffrey Knaggs
Rose Kudron
Joan Larson
Lance & Pamela Lindell
Carolyn Ludwig
Margaret Miller
Karen Pettke
Joelle Premo
Nancy Schermerhorn
Ann Schoss
Gary Smith
Richard Taylor
Joseph Tusa
Yvonne Wilson
Kenneth & Susan Wolak

DIRECTOR POSITION OPENINGS

The Education Committee focuses its efforts on education outreach programs that promote understanding and appreciation of the environment by involving children with our local parks and nature programs.

Beautification & Restoration (Cunningston Park): Defines and maintains a trail system, and enhances the overall park experience and safety for Cunningham Park.

If you are interested in volunteering for this position, please call Ted Vickers at 248-549-5366 or naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING continued from page 1

this invasive species. The group has also continued their work on buckthorn removal. A new project this year has Dena's group working on moving wildflowers that are growing on our Tenhave Woods trails and planting them along the new sidewalk that runs behind the Senior/Community Center. In a few years we should be able to use this area to do wildflower walks for the physically challenged

In May, we had an open house at Tenhave Woods, which attracted many people that had never been in the park before. It was a fun day and it was the first time we have had all of the Society's board members working on a program together. This will definitely be an annual event. In fact for next year's open house, mark your calendar for May 3, 2008.

Last year's surprise deer population scared us. If it remained as high as it was last year, the deer would have destroyed the park over the next several years. This year we had about five deer in the park in late April, but they moved on. Judging by the tracts around the pond, I believe we had a mother and two fawns in the park during the summer. This small a number seems to have little impact. We will still have to watch carefully for several years to see how our urban deer population affects our parks.

This has been Dragonfly Pond's second summer. We were amazed last year and astounded this past summer! The wetland plants have taken over the area and it is impossible to believe the "resurrected" pond has not been here for years. Don Drife and I continue to do surveys around the pond. Don does the plants and I do the pond life. New discoveries are made almost every time Don and I are there. The pond programs have attracted the largest groups of people and have become one of the most popular programs we do. Many of those attending are under the age of ten, a demographic that has been missing from our nature walks in the past. In the summer, we have two weekly evening walks. One is in July and the other in August. If we had six to nine attending, we felt great. This year's July's walk was to Dragonfly Pond, where the program attracted 38 people!

The speaker program was up in atten-

dance this year and we have a great line up for this season. Our nature walks are up in average attendance and we are offering more nature walks than ever before. In March we held our second year of owl hoots and had great attendance. Most of those attending had never been on any of our programs before. I guess it must sound like fun to stand in the cold March woods in the dark and listen for owls. Don Drife taught a winter tree ID class this past winter and has decided to teach a series of tree, shrub and wildflower classes this year. If you are interested, please check the article in this edition of our newsletter for details.

Jack Kerby, who is one of the Royal Oak Nature Society's founding members, has retired from his board position (Beautification & Restoration-Cunningston Park). Jack has spent his time in the Society working on cleaning up and maintaining Cunningham Park's trails. Cunningham still needs work but today it is a park that the public is using. When we spent the day working on the ditch last fall, we watched a constant flow of people walking through the park. Eight years ago there would have been no one there.

We had two School Nature Nights this year. The first one was in February at the *Royal Oak Library*. In March, the second one was one held at *Starr Elementary School*. People outside of the Nature Society man most of the displays. They have been helping us ever since we began doing Nature Nights back in 2002. This program could not operate without them and we are very thankful for their continuing interest in doing nature nights with us.

We are extremely lucky to have these two high quality natural areas within Royal Oak's boundaries. The Nature Society has helped to bring these parks back into use for the community, but there is still lots to do. We consider what we have done so far just the beginning and would welcome a helping hand. By being actively involved through volunteering or just using the parks, we can make sure that our natural conservancy parks stay vibrant and remain as nature preserves for future generations to use and enjoy.

Winter Speaker Programs

December 5th *Birds in Flight - Aerial Acrobats*
Highlights of this nature presentation by Rick Lieder, painter/photographer, will be unique images of birds in flight, shown as aerial acrobats performing daring maneuvers. Rick's dramatic photographs are all taken in his backyard. These unique images are incredible photographs of birds. For a program preview, take a look at some of Rick's photos by going to www.cloudboxer.com.

January 2nd *The Wildlife of Royal Oak 350 Million Years Ago* We often describe our nature parks as windows through which we can view Royal Oak before its development. If we are a window, fossil collector John Topor, is a time machine. John will allow you to see the life that was here when this was a saltwater sea. John will discuss the Middle Devonian Michigan basin and the fossils found here deep beneath our feet. He will have many fossils on hand for your close examination. John and his brother Mike have had a soft-bodied fossil of a polychaete worm they discovered, named after them this year. This is your chance to learn about the wildlife that lived in your back yard long before the dinosaurs.

February 6th *Floodplain and Mesic Forests in Dearborn: An Analysis of Species Composition and Age of Trees* Floodplain forests in urban areas show variations in species composition with subtle changes in elevation. The composition of the forest

continued on page 4

ALL SPEAKER PROGRAMS AND NATURE WALKS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE. PRE-REGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED.

General Meeting with Speaker Programs

Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. - Leo Mahany/Harold Meininger Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais)

Date	Program
Dec. 5th	<i>Birds in Flight - Aerial Acrobats</i>
Jan. 2nd	<i>The Wildlife of Royal Oak 350 Million Years Ago</i>
Feb. 6th	<i>Floodplain and Mesic Forests in Dearborn</i>
March 5th	<i>Mammals of Michigan: Finding the Furry Without Going Too Far</i>

Nature Walk Programs Meet at the park

Date	Day	Time	Location
December 15th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Cummingston Park
January 12th	Saturday	2:00 p.m.	Tenhaven Woods
January 22nd	Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	Tenhaven Woods
February 10th	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Cummingston Park
March 22nd	Saturday	2:00 p.m.	Tenhaven Woods

Nature Walk Descriptions:

December 15th Come and see what changes are taking place in the woods just before the beginning of winter.

January 12th The winter forest is the easiest time to see signs of wildlife (tracks, bird and squirrel nest etc.). Bring binoculars for the birds and keep an eye out for mammals.

January 22nd Full Moon Walk Experience the woods at a time of day that the park is normally closed. You never know what you may hear and see when the light levels are low. Bring a small flashlight.

February 10th The winter forest is the easiest time to see signs of wildlife (tracks, bird and squirrel nest etc.). Bring binoculars for the birds and keep an eye out for mammals.

March 22nd Spring has just started to show some of the changes that we will see in the next few weeks.

NATURE SOCIETY'S 3rd ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

SAVE THE DATE: Friday, April 18, 2008. That will be the date of our next annual fundraiser. It will be held again at the Royal Oak Elks Club (2401 E. 4th Street at Stephenson Hwy) from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm. More details will be forthcoming.

The Nature Society made enough money at our last fundraiser to purchase a new turnstile that will be installed off of Lexington Blvd. Our next goal is to purchase and install a new turnstile in the northeast section of the park off of Normandy. One of things that entrance will do is to provide a dry entryway into Tenhave for anyone who wants to enter the park from the north during the spring. With the cost of the Lexington turnstile being \$6,500 and increasing in price every year, we are hoping that we can make enough money from our next fundraiser so we can purchase and install the Normandy turnstile by next fall. Once installed, the Tenhave turnstile installation part of our Master Plan will be completed.

If you know of anyone who would like to donate an item for our silent auction or if you need further information about the fundraiser, please contact Karen Anderson at 248-549-7150, e-mail her at ka9@comcast.net or go to our website at www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/nature.

SPEAKERS continued from page 3

habitats along the Rouge River in Dearborn has some interesting qualities due to natural and cultural history. Jens Jensen, the landscape architect hired by Henry Ford, had plans to develop a mesic forest (has moderate or well balanced supply of moisture). Come and find out from Orin G. Gelderloos, Professor of Biology/Environmental Studies and Director of the University of Michigan-Dearborn Environmental Interpretive Center, if Jan Jensen's vision of an early ecological restoration project was fulfilled on the Henry and Clara Ford Estate.

March 5th Mammals of Michigan: Finding the Furry Without Going Too Far
Matt Hackett, Madison Heights Nature Center Naturalist, will talk about his adventures with mammals found in the northern suburbs of Detroit. Included in his presentation will be a feature called *Mammals to the Max*. Matt will help us find ways to remember the number and kinds of mammals found in the Great Lakes Region. He'll also share with us, a collection of skins and skulls of some native furry residents of Michigan.

Retiring from the Board

About nine years ago, the Royal Oak Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee asked for volunteers to form an ad hoc committee to decide what should be done with the city's two nature parks (Tenhaven Woods & Cumingston Park). Five people from throughout the community were selected to be on that committee. That group provided a list of things that should be done to the parks and then created the Royal Oak Nature Society to execute those ideas. Jack Kerby was one of those five.

Jack's main interest was Cumingston Park and along with his force of volunteers, he has worked

continuously on get Cumingston cleaned up, trails built, maintained and improved. Now people use Cumingston Park every day. Without Jack's work this would not have happened. Jack also has served on the Society's Board since its very beginning, helping to create the organization that the Nature Society has become.

Jack has recently resigned from the board and he will be missed. All of the board members wish to thank him for his years of service, and I know that the thousands of people now attending our programs and using the parks also thank him for his commitment to the Nature Society.



Don & Diane Diehl collecting \$10 parking fee from a Dream Cruise visitor.

After two rainy Dream Cruises (2005 & 2006), we finally got some decent weather. Temperatures were in the mid 70's & rain didn't start to fall until after we wrapped up at 7 pm. With that combination, we couldn't help but have a good day. So, at the end of the day & 360 cars later, \$900 was netted for the Nature Society, almost \$400 more than we made last year.

Thanks goes out to the following volunteers who helped make it possible: Tim Turner, Ann Bobiney, Bob Muller, Jeanne Sarnacki, Ted Vickers, Don &

Diane Diehl, Ann Holcomb, Sherrill Jackson, Helen & Connie Cost and Diane Gurzick. In addition, a hardy thanks also goes out to Greg Rassel & the City for giving us this opportunity, prepping the park for parking and adding some amenities including a couple of porta-johns and a canopy.

So when Dream Cruise 2008 is rounding the corner, please consider signing up to volunteer a couple hours of your time. The Nature Society could use your help & we guarantee that you will have a good time.

Second Saturday Workshops!

The Nature Society is planning a series of afternoon workshops. They are intended to provide the basic information needed to begin nature photography and identifying some plants and pond life. The workshops are geared toward "budding" naturalists/nature photographers but will provide a good review for the more experienced. Where there are multiple classes listed for a given subject, each class will build upon the lessons learned in the previous class.

Workshops will be held at the Senior/Community Center on the 2nd Saturday of the month, beginning at 1:00 pm and lasting for approximately two hours. Pre-registration is not required.

After the classroom session is over for all woody and flowering plant workshops and weather permits, the group members will walk over to Tenhave Woods and be given the opportunity to test their newly learned skills. After the nature photography classroom session, the group may go

over to Tenhave to take pictures.

The cost for each Woody Plant program is \$5 per person. Everything needed for these classes is included in the cost. Please pay at the door by cash or check only. There is no cost for the Nature Photography, Pond Life or Flowering Plant programs.

Please go to our website www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/nature/workshop if you want to check out the balance of our workshop schedule that currently runs through October 2008. Additional information on these programs can be found by contacting us at **248-246-3380** or naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us.

Dec. 8, 2007	Winter Woody Plants I Leader: Don Drife	Learn how to identify common tree groups using a simple tree key. Common terms used in winter botany will also be covered. Cost: \$5
Jan 12, 2008	Winter Woody Plants II Leader: Don Drife	Learn how to identify common tree species using the key in Michigan Trees. Common terms used in winter botany will be reviewed and additional terms added. Completing Winter Woody Plants I is recommended but not required. Cost: \$5
Feb 9, 2008	Winter Woody Plants III Leader: Don Drife	Learn the key characters for common shrub species. Terms used in winter botany will also be reviewed. Completing Winter Woody Plants I is recommended but not required. Cost: \$5
March 8, 2008	Nature Photography Leader: To Be Announced	Learn some of the basics of nature photography. We will start with a brief overview of nature photography then look at some examples. Both digital and film photography will be covered. Bring some (not more than 6) of your best images to share with the group. We will be able to project slides and digital photos (JPG). There will be tables to display prints. This will be more informal than our other workshops with plenty of time for questions. Bring your camera if you have one. Cost: Free



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Want to Join The Royal Oak Nature Society?

Please make checks out to:

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MEMO: ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY**

Mail completed form and donation check to:

**Royal Oak Nature Society
1600 N. Campbell Rd.
Royal Oak, MI 48067**

Names _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Total Number of Family Members _____

1-year membership rates: (Sept-Aug)

Individual: \$5 Family/Supporting: \$10 and up

Donations are tax deductible

NATURE SOCIETY TEAMS

Please contact us to become actively involved in one or more of our Teams.

Beautification: Tackles tasks as surveying the parks, defining & maintaining a trail system, park clean up & removing invasive species.

Communications: Provides publicity about organizational activities to the general membership & the public. It is also responsible for publishing this newsletter.

Education: Focuses its efforts on education

outreach programs that promote understanding and appreciation of the environment by involving children in our local parks and nature programs.

Program: Coordinates and schedules nature walks & nature oriented speaker programs, develop programs for outside organizations and catalog plants, trees & birds.

Ways & Means: Investigates means of fund raising and grant solicitation & then follows through accordingly.

Board of Directors

President: **Tim Turner** 248-320-4819

Vice President: **John DeLisle** 248-585-9002

Beautification & Restoration - Cummingston: **Open**

Dena Serrato [Tenhave Woods] 248-542-2820

Communications: **Ted Vickers** 248-549-5366

Treasurer: **Jeanne Sarnacki** 248-548-1149

Education: **Open** • Fundraising: **Karen Anderson** 248-549-7150

Program: **Bob Muller** 248-398-0195

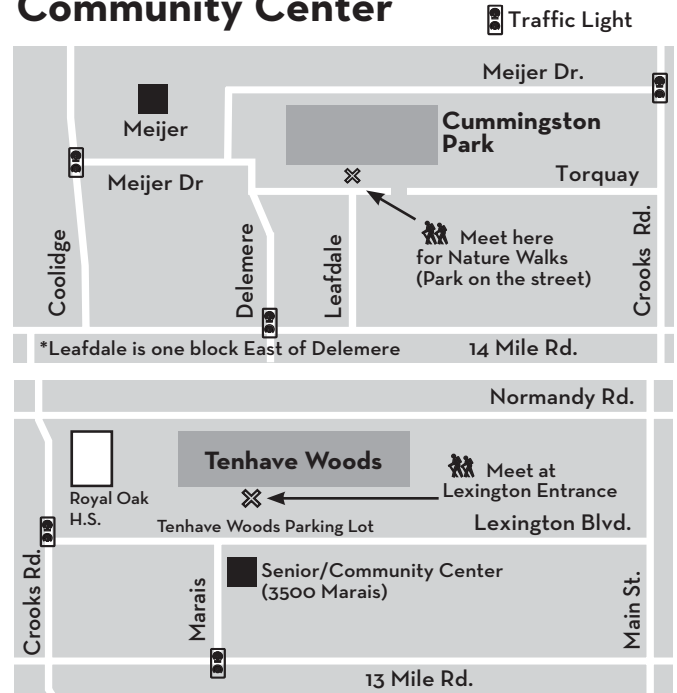
Ways & Means: **Helen Cost** 248-549-9423

Newsletter: **Ted Vickers** tgV1121@sbcglobal.net

Ann Williams ann.m.williams@comcast.net

Engineer: **Richard Stoll**

Our Nature Parks & Senior Community Center



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & Cummingston Park trail maps, please go to our web site (bottom of p.5), link on to **Park Locations** and then **Map for park trail locations**.

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Royal Oak Nature Society
1600 N. CAMPBELL ROAD
ROYAL OAK MI 48067

