



THE Chinquapin

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FALL 2004

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

Royal Oak Nature Society membership dues for the 2004/2005 season are now payable. Please fill out the membership form (page 5) and mail it along with a check to the Nature Society or give it to us at one of our upcoming general meetings/speaker programs (check or cash).

GENERAL MEETING & SPEAKER PROGRAM NOTICE

Beginning with our next general meeting/speaker program (September 1st 2004), the new starting time will be 7:30 p.m. instead of 7:00 p.m. as it was in the past. That will allow everyone extra time to get the Senior Center before the general meeting/speaker program begins.

NATURE PHOTOS

The Bloodroot photo and others that you'll see in this issue were taken by Troy Bartlett. He enjoys taking pictures, observing and learning about nature. He has two web sites: www.troyb.com/photo/index.htm and BugGuide.net.

What We Have Been Doing BY BOB MULLER In Cummington Park and Tenhave Woods

We are approaching the end of our fourth season of providing nature programs in the community. One change is very noticeable. People are using Tenhave Woods! Every time I take a walk in Tenhave, I run into at least one other person. A mother with a preschooler, a father with three sons, a man taking wild flower photographs, joggers, another man just moved here from Seattle looking for a place to walk, two young boys taking a walk while their brother finished a program at the ice arena, and parents with young children during soccer games. Not all of these people were drawn here by nature but all of them were enjoying it.

Five years ago as we started planning what eventually became the Royal Oak Nature Society, you rarely saw anyone in the parks. When you did, it was people running dogs off leash, a group suiting up with their armor for a paint ball war, or young men cutting a tree down. We also found the remnants of misuse, campfire sites with empty beer cans, white circles painted on trees to mark a running path, litter and dog waste in plastic bags tossed off the trails. We still

have some dogs (regardless of the signs), litter and paintball is still a problem but most of these activities have at least moderated. With the continuing increase of people using the park for its intended purpose, these negative activities will continue to decrease.

Why the change? Well-marked and maintained trails. This alone makes the park look inviting. It becomes very noticeable in the winter that the trails are being used; all of the foot traffic packs the snow down on them. Eagle Scout projects have helped in the building of the new trails and a new program, Boy Scout Stewardship, assists in maintaining them. All of the major trail



Bloodroot found in Cummington Park

building at Tenhave Woods is done. Hopefully in the near future, we will have a sign with a map of the trails at the entrance.

Of the two Nature study areas, Tenhave Woods has received the bulk of our efforts the last four years. This was due to the fact that the lack of drainage and the resulting flooding at Cummington Park has severely damaged Royal Oaks once stunning Wildflower Park. We knew we could get Tenhave up to speed faster, but now

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it's Cummingston's turn. Our main efforts now will be to bring Cummingston up to par with Tenhave Woods. The flooding has destroyed well over 90% of the park's wildflowers, but there is hope. This spring I found several large clumps of trilliums and last spring we found bloodroot, not seen in the park in 25 years. If we



Seniors enjoy a nature walk through Tenhave Woods back in April.

can control the flooding, the flowers will come back.

Jack Kerby, who is heading up our beautification committee, has done a great job at Cummingston. He and his small group of retirees have worked to keep our trails there maintained. This spring they have continued the work they started last year on the park entrance. They have come up with a design for a new entrance and the board has voted to OK it. By the end of the year, hopefully, this will make the park far more inviting. Keegan Springfield, a Scout from Troop 1707, will plan and manage a trail building project in Cummingston Park this October. He will be building a trail into the northeast section of the park. This is an area that has never had a trail in it, and in the

last year, several new plant species for the park have been found there. This will almost double our trail system in the park.

Cummingston also has its problems. The people who ignore the "no dog" sign are rather aggressive, often reacting in a threatening way when approached with the statement that dogs aren't allowed. We have homeless often using the park to sleep in. They



Shrine kindergartners collect leaves with Kristine Hammond back in November.

leave a considerable amount of "stuff" in the park as well as starting fires.

Our oldest programs, the nature walks and speaker programs are doing well. Our warm weather nature walks attract as many people as can be handled at one time. I believe that we could triple our attendance in the snow months. The speaker program had a great lineup of speakers this year. I think we could double our attendance for the speakers.

The problem is how to reach more of the public. Ted Vickers has been working very hard at this. If any of you have a way to get the word out to more people please give us a call.

The biggest changes we have seen are in two of our public programs. One of them is our

"special nature walk program" which is offered to school groups, scout troops, neighborhood associations, garden clubs etc. has more than doubled in attendance. This is the first year we have given walks to school groups. I have given walks to 1st and 3rd grade classes, Kristine Hammond and Gretchen Greenwood have developed a Kindergarten program that is very successful and Ann Holcomb has done a walk with seniors from the Senior Center and more are planned. I predict that these special nature walk programs will grow to be our largest in attendance. The other incredible change has been to our Nature Night program headed up by Kristine Hammond. She has developed this program and it has really kicked into high gear this winter. This is a family program held at a grade school on a weekday evening. We offer the program January – March, as this is a time of year that we will attract few people to outdoor programs in the nature study areas. We held one at Shrine grade school in January and one at Starr school in March, both had attendance over one hundred. We had displays on fossils, skulls, reptiles, bird calls, fishing fly tying, native fishes, tree rings, crafts and flower planting. With only two programs per year I believe they will be in great demand.

Dena Sorrento, as part of the beautification committee, is heading up an invasive plant removal group. She and her group have surveyed the parks and started a test program at Tenhave Woods. In the past year, great quantities of garlic mustard have moved not only into our nature study areas but the city in general. We have no idea yet as to whether

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

Fall Speaker Programs

“Mushrooms”

Sept. 1st 🍄 Diane Pruden, who is active in the North American Mycological Association, has traveled the world studying mushrooms. Her program will focus in on basic common fall mushrooms of Michigan. She would like anyone that has just had a fresh mushroom come up in his/her yard, to bring it in for discussion. Our September 25th nature walk in Tenhave Woods will also be lead by Diane. A mushroom survey of the park will be taken at that time and with Diane’s help, they hopefully will be identified. There may also be a chance to sample some of the edible types that were found.

“Scientific Illustration”

Oct. 6th 🍄 Emily S. Damstra’s is an extremely talented new Freelance Science Illustrator, who will briefly cover the history of illustrating nature and then show many modern illustrations of the natural world. In the future, you will probably find her work in many of the nature books that you purchase. Following the slide show, she will demonstrate the traditional but somewhat obscure technique of carbon dust illustration. This technique renders images of exquisite visual detail. If you have ever wondered about the people who illustrated

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General Meeting with Speaker Programs

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

Date	Speaker(s)	Program
Sept. 1st	Diane Pruden	“Mushrooms”
Oct. 6th	Emily S. Damstra	“Scientific Illustration”
Nov. 3rd	John Topor	“The Wildlife of Royal Oak 350 Million Years Ago”

NOTE: September programs will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Nature Walk Programs Meet at the park

Date	Day	Time	Location	Theme
Sept. 25	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Tenhave Woods	Mushroom Identification
Oct. 16	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Tenhave Woods	Fall Color
Oct. 30	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Cummingston Park	Fall Color
Nov. 13	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Cummingston Park	Checking Out Our New Trails

Royal Oak Nature Society Programs

BY BOB MULLER, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Check our web site www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/nature for schedules, as well as the flora and bird surveys. If you are interested in becoming involved in any of the programs mentioned below, please contact Bob Muller through our web site or call 248-246-3380.

Speakers Program: We are always looking for variety in our speaker programs. If you have a topic you would like to have presented or know of a good speaker, please contact us.

Special Nature Walk Program for Groups: We will provide tailor made a special nature walk

program for school classes, scout troops, neighborhood associations and etc. This can be just a general nature walk or requests for walks on special subjects can be arranged. Contact us if your group would like to do a walk with one of our naturalists.

Bird Feeders: The bird feeder in Tenhave Woods has been repaired and the feeder in Cummingston Park will hopefully be moved this coming fall to the edge of the meadow, just inside the fence & east of the Leafdale entrance. The Cummingston meadow, because of its natural seed base, attracted more

birds this past winter than was seen anywhere else in the park. It should be the best place for winter birding.

Richard Stoll, a Royal Oak resident, has done all the bird feeder repair work for us. We would like to have some volunteers contact stores to get birdseed donated to the Nature Society and to take over the filling of both feeders from October to March. We are planning to have both feeders operating this coming winter, with an estimated 800 pounds of seed needed. If there are any local birders out there that would like to help with this program, please let us know.

SPEAKERS continued from page 3

your science textbooks or nature field guides, please join us in October to find about one of them and for what should also be a very fascinating type of program.

“The Wildlife of Royal Oak 350 Million Years Ago”

Nov. 3rd 🦎 See what the wildlife of Royal Oak looked like 350 million years ago when this area was a salt-water sea. John Topor will discuss that Devonian life and afterwards, will have many fossils on hand for your close examination. John and his brother have been collecting museum quality fossils from the Michigan Basin for over twenty-five years. If you have ever been curious about what lived in your back yard long before the dinosaurs, please join us on the 3rd to find out.

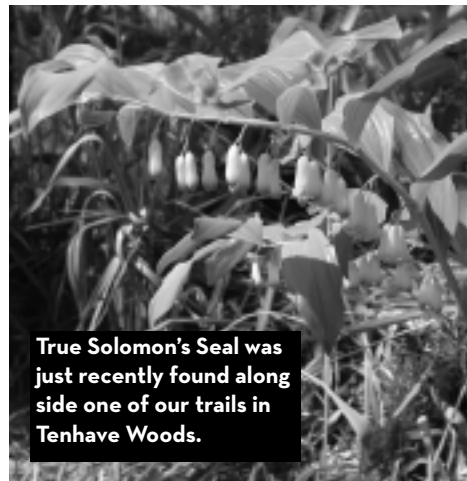
VICE PRESIDENT
The Royal Oak Nature Society is looking for someone to run our monthly board meetings in case the President is unable to attend. At other times, the Vice President will record the board meeting minutes and have a copy of the Nature Society’s bylaws always on hand. The Vice President will write up the minutes, type them up and e-mail them to all of the board members. If you are interested and would like further information, please contact Heather Muller at 248-442-6718.

Royal Oak’s Wild Side

BY BOB MULLER

New Discoveries in Cummington Park and Tenhave Woods

For the last four years no one could find any amphibians in the woods or any tadpoles in the ponds. This year in Tenhave Woods, several people including myself have seen numerous American Toads. It still looks like the pond is toxic to tadpoles, but a fish pond in a backyard along Lexington has become a refugium for breeding toads with the young moving back into the woods.



caught so it can be determined which species it is. Two nighttime insect surveys have already been completed this summer, with one more scheduled. During the first survey this past June, over two-dozen different kinds of beetles alone were found in Tenhave Woods. The remaining survey will be conducted on September 3rd, probably at Cummington. It will go from dusk till 1:00 a.m. A bright light is used to attract

the insects and a white sheet is hung to gather them off of. Everyone is welcomed to come and observe. If you want to be an observer, please contact Robert Lawshe at 248-541-5028 for up-to-date information.

New surveys of life in our nature areas have already begun. A survey of pond life in both nature study areas has turned up some interesting animals. Who would have believed that there are four aquatic mollusks in Royal Oak, three types of snails and a species of fingernail clams! There are also crawfish in Cummington. Hopefully, one can be

This is an opportunity to be in the park at a time when it is normally closed. I believe any time you walk through our Royal Oak forests, there will always be something new to discover. You simply have to look. Escape the developed world, take a breath, feel the stress fade away and take a walk in the woods. Check out Royal Oak’s wild side.

What We Have Been Doing continued from page 2

we can control this growing problem. Within a year, hopefully, Dena’s study should begin to give us answers. This may be another place to use the Boy Scout Stewardship group; the more hands the better.

We have come a long way from our first season of three speakers and three nature walks.

I am surprised when talking to

teachers, naturalists, DNR people, etc. outside of our community that so many of them have heard about of us. We have established ourselves; we are a part of the fabric of Royal Oak. We are reaching out with nature education in our community to people from seniors to kindergartners. Our work in the parks is helping them grow to their full potential as quality nature areas. We have already made a difference and we have only just begun.

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Just 4 Kids

BY ANN WILLIAMS

A fun activity while walking through our nature parks is to make a nature bracelet with your child or grandchild.

Loosely wrap a wide piece of masking tape around your child's wrist, with the sticky side facing out. Then go for a nature walk together and pick up interesting leaves, feathers, flower petals, pebbles, or other fallen objects that catch your child's eye, sticking them to the bracelet as you go. The end result is a unique souvenir that he/she'll be eager to show off and that will remind him/her of the wonder of nature.

Touch with care. A nature walk can be a tactile adventure for your hands-on child. Pinecones or pebbles or a bird feather on the trail are exciting discoveries. Just be

aware of what your child is touching, and remind him to never go off the trail. You don't want to bring home a case of poison oak or ivy.

Remember that timing is important. Many variables



influence how long your child will want to walk, but certainly, a well-rested, well-fed child is likely to want to walk longer. In general, it's better to go on shorter, more frequent walks. And breaking the walk up with a lunch break is also a good idea.

My next **Just for Kids** will be "The purr-fectly packed backpack!"

Membership Information

The Society is asking for minimum \$5 per year membership donation for an individual or family. A donation of \$10 or more will make you a supporting member. A membership, entitles you to have our newsletter, *The Chinquapin*, mailed to you four times a year. The mailing begins with the fall issue and ends with

the summer one. 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.

To become or to continue being a Nature Society member, please fill out the adjacent form.

Donations are tax deductible.



Nature Society Teams

Please contact us if you are interested in becoming actively involved in one or more of our Nature Society 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.

Phone numbers of our team leaders are listed on page 6 of this publication along with our other board members. Call them to get involved!



Want to Join The Royal Oak Nature Society?

Please make checks out to:

**CITY OF ROYAL OAK
MEMO: ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY**

Mail completed form and donation check to:

**Royal Oak Nature Society
1708 Northwood Blvd.
Royal Oak, MI 48073**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

1-year membership rates: (Sept-Aug)

Individual/Family: \$5.00

Supporting: \$10 and up

Donations are tax deductible

The *Chinquapin* is published quarterly by the The Royal Oak Nature Society, a volunteer group working to protect and promote Royal Oak's nature preserves, while enjoying and sharing environmental education with the community.

The *Chinquapin* is a type of white oak also known as a *yellow chestnut oak*. We chose to name the newsletter after the *Chinquapin* oak we have located in Cumingston Park. *Colleen Hilzinger*, artist and member created the beautiful oak tree logo.

Board of Directors

President: *Heather J. Muller*
248-546-4184

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Treasurer: *Bob Guymer*
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Education: *Kristine Hammond*
248-577-5171

Program: *Bob Muller*
248-398-0195

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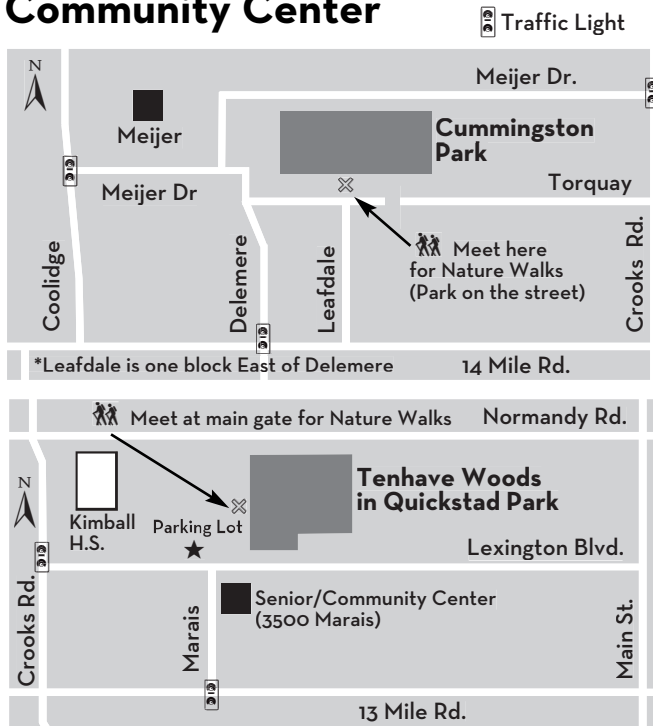
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Ann Williams
fedwards11@earthlink.net

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248-280-0186

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

Our Nature Parks & Senior Community Center



FIRST CLASS MAIL

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

