



# ORCHARD HILLS-MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

www.ohmha.org

## OHMHA NEWSLETTER

February 2008

### Thurston Pond: What's the Latest?

#### *The Problem*

As many longtime neighborhood residents can attest, Thurston Pond was once a clear-water pond with a high diversity of aquatic life. However, over the years, its waters have become green and turbid, and its diversity of aquatic plant and animal life has plummeted. Conditions in Thurston Pond have deteriorated so badly that the Ann Arbor Public Schools cannot use the pond for classes about aquatic life.

In 2005, a \$300,000 grant was awarded to the Ann Arbor Public School District (AAPS) by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program. This grant funded a proposal that was based in part on a Thurston Nature Center Committee plan, and it was partially matched by AAPS funds for a total of \$500,000. The plan was to restore the functionality of Thurston Pond as a stormwater detention pond, enhance stormwater inflows, create a water body with a greater diversity of aquatic macrophytes, and reclaim the pond as part of the Thurston Elementary School environmental education curriculum. The environmental consulting firm J.F. New has been the prime contractor on this grant.

Water quality measurements and chemical analyses were done in 2006; the results show that the high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen in the pond's water are caused by the nutrient-rich bottom sediment. Therefore, removal of this overly fertile sediment was recommended as the best approach to restore the ecological "health" of the pond. However, the national (EPA) guidelines that apply to this MDEQ-funded stormwater mitigation project forbid the use of MDEQ funds—as well as any matching funds—for "maintenance activities." Unfortunately, sediment removal falls under that category.

#### *The Current Plan*

So, for the foreseeable future, the best hope for improving Thurston Pond's poor water quality will be to (1) increase the volume of stormwater annually supplied to the pond, and hence gradually decrease (by dilution) the overall concentration of nutrients in the water, and (2) occasionally flush out some pond water via its southwestern outlet drain into Millers Creek. The AAPS-J.F. New project plan for the Thurston Nature Center is now being finalized by a subcontractor (Stantec), and MDEQ permit application soon will begin. The project will entail installation of two swirl concentrators ("stormceptors") near Bluett to remove particulates from stormwater captured from the Clague School stormdrain and the newly-installed Antietam stormdrain. To connect the Antietam stormdrain to the pond, a pipe will run north-south from Bluett along the route of the existing right-of-way but trenching will not be done. Instead, a horizontal tunnel will be bored, by a special machine, without disturbing the existing foot trail and concrete stairs.

Because the height of the earthen berm on Thurston Pond's west side has settled over the years, water overflows the berm and runs into the woods when the pond is high. Only very rarely—when we get unusually heavy rains—does water overflow the pond's southwest side and empty into the stormdrain and thus into Millers Creek. Therefore, soil from the above pipe tunnel will be used to elevate the berm on the west side of the pond and hence restore use of the overflow to Millers Creek, and the pile of fill dirt (left over from the footing drain disconnect program) near the outdoor classroom at the southeast end of the pond will be "recycled" to widen the trail and further elevate the berm. Assuming no complications, the project should be completed in summer 2008.

*by Neal Foster*



Participants of the OHMHA Fall Festival enjoying Thurston Pond.

# Reducing Stormwater Damage to Millers Creek

The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) has begun a project focused on our subwatershed, the headwaters of the west branch of Millers Creek (the small stream visible just east of the northern part of Huron Parkway). The project is aimed at reducing peak flows—large surges of water—that occur in the stormdrains after rainstorms. For the past few years, HRWC has been measuring the flow of water in the stormdrain that carries stormwater out of our neighborhood and southward beneath Plymouth Road. Large surges of water following our bigger storms are highly erosive to Millers Creek and cause most of its problems. Project efforts will focus on educating and working with homeowners to institute practices that reduce the amount of residential stormwater runoff and help more rainwater seep directly into the ground. These practices include: changing downspouts to flow out onto gardens or grassed areas (rather than onto impervious surfaces), installing rain gardens where deep-rooted native plants take up and store water, installing rain barrels, planting trees and, on a more

limited scale, encouraging the use of green roofs, curb cuts, and bioswales.

The project area includes Thurston and Clague Schools, the Thurston Nature Center, Plymouth Road Mall, and the neighborhoods of Orchard Hills, Maplewood, and Bromley. Community meetings and an informational mailer will formally launch the project this spring. For project information, see [www.hrwc.org](http://www.hrwc.org) and [www.aamillerscreek.org](http://www.aamillerscreek.org) or contact Joan Martin at [jmartin@hrwc.org](mailto:jmartin@hrwc.org) or Pam Labadie at [plabadie@hrwc.org](mailto:plabadie@hrwc.org).

HRWC is a public, nonprofit coalition of local communities, businesses, and residents, established under Michigan's Local River Management Act in 1965 to protect the Huron River and its tributary streams, lakes, wetlands, and groundwater. HRWC works to inspire attitudes, behaviors, and economies that protect, rehabilitate, and sustain the Huron River system. Services include hands-on citizen education, technical assistance in policy development, and river protection and monitoring projects.

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## Mark Your Calendar!

**Neighborhood Garage Sale**  
**Saturday, May 17, 9 am**

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**Coming OHMHA Board Meetings:**

**Thursday, March 13**  
**Thursday, May 22**

All meetings held in the Thurston School library at 7:30 pm.

## Sidewalk Website

The sidewalks of many homeowners are being marked by the city for repair. A number of streets are organizing to obtain lower rates from contractors. The website

<http://www.geocities.com/aasidewalks>

has been prepared by Don Calahan (3139 Lexington) to keep OHMHA homeowners up to date on the issue, and includes an area map of slabs marked for repair.

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## Subscribe to the OHMHA-Neighborhood Watch E-Mail List

The OHMHA e-mail list sends out occasional messages about crime and other topics concerning our neighborhood. The e-mail list is managed by an OHMHA board member and is hosted by [hvcn.org](http://hvcn.org) (Huron Valley Community Network). If you want to subscribe (or unsubscribe) or wish to post a message to the list, send an e-mail to [patinfo@smith.comcast.net](mailto:patinfo@smith.comcast.net).

# Nature Appreciation and Neighborhood Spirit Combine to Make Fall Festival a Success!

The OHMHA Board and the Thurston Nature Center Committee extend a warm thanks to everyone who helped to make the neighborhood Fall Festival a huge success. Over 100 neighbors attended the afternoon event, held on Sunday, October 21, by Thurston Pond near the OHAC pool. The program began with a wildlife presentation by the Leslie Science Center, and continued with tree tours, a nature treasure hunt, a pond life display, a pond talk, a leaf art activity, face painting, and a talent show. In keeping with the fall theme, refreshments included apples, donuts, and cider.

Over 30 volunteers helped with a variety of crucial tasks

including planning, publicity, setup, working at the booths, and cleanup. Fall Festival committee members Jack Cederquist, Mike Conboy, Emily Eisbruch, Neal Foster, Greg Jagst, Susan Lake, and Katie Richter were delighted by the excellent attendance and neighborhood support.

The talent show participants deserve special thanks for sharing their wonderful skills—

whether in the realm of instrumental music, singing, rapping, or biking—and making it a truly fun and spirited afternoon. Kudos also go to city council member and Bluet resident Stephen Rapundalo who excelled as the talent show master of ceremonies.



Thanks also to the board of the OHAC pool for sharing their space and storage. The Fall Festival inspired lots of positive feedback, and the OHMHA Board and Thurston Nature Center Committee hope to sponsor similar events in the future.

by Emily Eisbruch

## Area Library Branch Update

The newest branch of the Ann Arbor District Library, currently under construction at the corner of Traverwood Drive and Huron Parkway, now has a name: Traverwood Branch. The AADL Board of Trustees gave their unanimous approval of the name at their November 19 board meeting. Traverwood not only points to the branch library location, but also has historical significance. George Traver Sr. was one of the Ann Arbor area's early settlers.

Traverwood Branch will have ninety parking spaces available in three locations: on the street, under the building, and on an open lot to the south. On-street parking is now completed. Both the building and the surrounding landscape of the Traverwood Branch will capitalize on environmental principles, thereby allowing the overall project to operate in harmony with the ecosystem and the community it serves. Landscaping to the site has already begun and includes the planting of new trees. The building is now enclosed and interior construction continues. Traverwood Branch is on schedule for an early summer, 2008, opening.



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## Meet Your Neighbors

Welcome to our “meet your neighbors” section highlighting neighborhood families. Take this opportunity to learn about your neighbors and maybe make another friend! Please contact the editor if you are interested in being featured in a future newsletter.

### The Jagst Household

I bought my home on Yorktown Drive in 2002, after having lived in the Chapel Hill condominiums for a couple of years prior. The description “household” I use in a liberal sense since it consists only of my cat, Ethan, and me. I own the Ann Arbor office of Home Instead Senior Care and have worked with hundreds of clients throughout Washtenaw County since 1999. It's rewarding work, but weekends are a welcome respite. I enjoy visiting with my nieces or my nephew, having Tuesday dinners with friends at my home, and watering my Japanese Maple—kindly provided by the city to replace the dead ash tree at my curb.

I have recently joined the OHMHA Board, and I enjoyed meeting more of my neighbors at the Fall Festival.

~Greg Jagst

### The Cederquist Household

My wife Meg Kennedy Shaw and I have lived on Ardenne Drive for twenty-four years. We have enjoyed raising our three children in this friendly neighborhood. You may see me jogging around Thurston Pond or weeding the entrance at Georgetown Blvd and Plymouth Road! I currently am serving as the president of the OHMHA Board.

~Jack Cederquist

## Replanting Our (Ann) Arbor

Legend has it that our city's name was, in part, inspired by a stunning burr oak opening—resembling an arbor—discovered by the town founders. The chances of such natural arbors beautifying our neighborhood in future years were increased on Saturday, October 27, when our neighborhood was treated to a second successful tree planting (OHMHA organized a previous planting back in the spring of 2006).

Although Mother Nature gave us rain that planting day, about 50 residents showed up, wearing ponchos and carrying shovels. After receiving instruction from Amanda Green of Global ReLeaf of Michigan, volunteers swept dirt, dug holes, raked mud, measured trees, cut burlap or twine, hoisted pails, ran hoses, distracted little kids, smiled, cheered on a friend, lent tools, and told jokes—not all at once, fortunately.

Volunteers planted a total of 36 trees on Bluett, Yorktown, Yellowstone, Lexington, and Rumsey—in the right of way between the sidewalk and street, putting in one tree per house.

Much credit for the success of this latest tree blitz goes to OHMHA resident Margaret Weiss who recruited volunteers and was the liaison between Global ReLeaf and the neighborhood. In addition to Global ReLeaf, the city of Ann Arbor forestry department lent a hand, delivering trees to the neighborhood.

Some neighbors expressed concern that they did not learn about the tree planting until it was too late to participate this year. OHMHA will advocate for future tree plantings if there is sufficient demand. Global ReLeaf can be contacted directly at [Grma2@aol.com](mailto:Grma2@aol.com). The Miller's Creek Action Team is also working to acquire additional trees for those residents who remain without a tree yet who still hope that someday a natural arbor will once again shade the street in front of their house.



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### ORCHARD HILLS ~ MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR JUNE 1, 2007 ~ MAY 31, 2008

(Make check for \$20.00 payable to OHMHA ~ additional contributions gratefully accepted.)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT PAID \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  Please remove my name from your email list.

COMMENTS (we welcome suggestions and/or offers to volunteer on OHMHA projects):

Mail or deliver your dues to: Wendy Carman, OHMHA Treasurer, 2340 Georgetown.

### **OHMHA BOARD MEMBERS**

Stuart Baggaley	3111 Cedarbrook	332-1874	Vice President/Neighborhood Watch
Henry Brysk	3032 Cedarbrook	369-2986	
Wendy Carman	2340 Georgetown	761-8693	Treasurer
Jack Cederquist	2145 Ardenne	665-2285	President
Emily Eisbruch	2561 Bunker Hill	665-0533	Webmaster
Neal Foster	2115 Georgetown	663-0756	
Greg Jagst	2080 Yorktown	846-6332	
Anita Jones	3359 Yellowstone	761-2748	
Peter Mooney	3352 Yellowstone	213-0440	
Jill Rheinheimer	2518 Georgetown	663-1489	Newsletter ( <a href="mailto:zooina2@sbcglobal.net">zooina2@sbcglobal.net</a> )
Daniel Smith	2377 Georgetown	320-4494	Secretary
Sandy Smith	3188 Rumsey	769-2663	

### **ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES**

John Hieftje (Mayor)	1800 Traver	996-0493	<a href="mailto:jhieftje@ci.ann-arbor.mi.us">jhieftje@ci.ann-arbor.mi.us</a>
Joan Lowenstein (Council Member, Ward 2)	502 Burson	761-5248	<a href="mailto:jlowenstein@ci.ann-arbor.mi.us">jlowenstein@ci.ann-arbor.mi.us</a>
Stephen Rapundalo (Council Member, Ward 2)	3106 Bluett	476-0648	<a href="mailto:SRapundalo@ci.ann-arbor.mi.us">SRapundalo@ci.ann-arbor.mi.us</a>

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# **NEWSLETTER**

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