

ORCHARD HILLS-MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

www.ohmha.org

OHMHA NEWSLETTER

February 2009

Latest on Thurston Pond Restoration:

Bluett to Get Swirl Concentrators

by Neal Foster

“What is happening on Bluett?” This is a question some may be asking within a few months, as digging and construction begins in at least two spots along that street between Nixon and Georgetown. It’s all part of the work funded by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to help improve Thurston Pond by, among other things, funneling more stormwater into the pond.

Yes, it’s true, swirl concentrators are going to be installed under Bluett. What is a swirl concentrator? It’s a device that takes in stormwater, swirls it around in a cylindrical chamber and removes sediments, floating debris, and oil before the water is transferred into Thurston pond.

As stated in a design document prepared by the Ann Arbor Public School’s prime contractor J.F. New, the goal of the Thurston Pond Restoration



Swirl concentrators, smaller than the black one shown here, will be installed under Bluett.

Photo courtesy of Terrafix® Geosynthetics, Inc.

Project is to create a pond with greater habitat diversity, a pond that discharges cleaner water, more frequently, to Millers Creek. A secondary goal is to restore the pond as an object of study for the Ann Arbor Public Schools District. The goals will be achieved by: (1) altering the existing pond inlets to bring in more stormwater from Clague Middle School parking lot and from Bluett (2) installing underground, best-management-practice treatment devices—swirl concentrators—on these inlets and (3) retrofitting the existing pond outlet (on the southwest corner of Thurston Pond) to allow for controlled and filtered release of water above the permanent water level.

Installation of a new storm sewer, connected to

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Save the Date!
Neighborhood Garage Sale
Saturday, May 16
from 9:00 am

Board Notes

City Councilman Stephen Rapundalo spoke at the OHMHA board meeting in January to provide an update on issues affecting the neighborhood. Among the many interesting topics he covered:

- The City has established a construction schedule for the **roundabout at Nixon and Huron Parkway**, to start in mid-April with a planned completion in August of 2009.
- Any resident interested in the City Planning process should **get on the city's email list**: Go to <http://www.a2gov.org/government/communityservices/planninganddevelopment/planning/>. In the rightmost column there is a link where you can sign up to receive planning e-mail updates.

Upcoming Board Meetings

Everyone is invited to attend OHMHA Board Meetings in the Thurston School Library. Here are upcoming dates:

Tuesday, March 10, 2009, at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 12, 2009, at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, June 5, 2009, time TBD

City Councilman Stephen Rapundalo briefed board and community members on current topics in Ann Arbor city government on January 13, 2009 in the Thurston School Library.



ORCHARD HILLS ~ MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR JUNE 1, 2008 ~ MAY 31, 2009

(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 , 48105

Second Annual Fall Festival a Success Even as Winds Blew with Gust-O

by Margie Weiss

Thank you to all who attended the second annual fall festival. At least 75 of you braved the windy, albeit sunny, weather Sunday, October 26, to enjoy displays from the Thurston Nature Center, the Ann Arbor District Library and the Huron River Watershed Council. Since the raptors were such a success last year, we again invited the Leslie Science Center to present three of their fine birds. A special treat this year was the very active bald eagle who displayed her glorious wingspan as the winds blew around us.

Our Thurston Nature Center tree expert-in-residence, Mike Conboy, led more extended tours this year, describing the large flora that grow around Thurston Pond. Kids got to consume many donuts as well as draw, have their faces painted, participate in a mini talent show and scrutinize samples of pond life on display. We also served cider, water and apples but it was the donuts that kept the kids from sampling the pond life. We were also graced with visits from Stephen Rapundalo and our mayor, John Hieftje.

This event seems to be one that is popular with all ages and serves as a forum for community interaction.



Residents got a chance to trade ideas with Mayor Hieftje at the OHMHA Fall Festival.



The raptors from the Leslie Science Center delighted the crowd.

The OHMHA Board has a number of ideas it is floating for the 2009 festival but would dearly appreciate input from you, the community. What would make the event more meaningful? What would you add? Is there a particular activity or display in which you would like to be involved?

Please share all your thoughts with us by sending them to Margaret Weiss at colinmargie@sbcglobal.net (or feel free to call her at 997-6541 if you don't have email access).

It is our expectation that this annual event will not only continue but will encompass even further involvement throughout our lovely community in Northeast Ann Arbor. ■

Help Plant the Oak Savanna!

by Neal Foster

An Oak Savanna is coming to our neighborhood! The Thurston Nature Center Committee (TNCC) will purchase and plant four healthy, high quality trees of each of four species of native Michigan oaks—Bur Oak, Chinkapin Oak, Swamp White Oak, and White Oak, 16 trees in all. The oaks will be planted this spring in the northeastern corner of the Thurston playground, just south of where Yorktown dead-ends.

Last fall, the TNCC, applied for a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to purchase 16 oak trees that would become the beginnings of a one-acre-sized Oak Savanna. The group was delighted to receive authorization for reimbursement for \$2000 to purchase balled and burlapped trees. The \$2000 will be matched by its equivalent in time volunteered by TNCC members, Thurston parents and others from our community as well as (hopefully) by tax-deductible donations from various sources.

Background

Between 4,000 and 6,000 years ago, long before Europeans settled here, oak savannas (also called oak openings) were quite common around what is now Ann Arbor. When the earliest land surveyors first explored our area in the early 1800s, they noted seeing many of these oak savannas. Like prairies, oak savannas are a fire-dependent habitat type in an area with limited rainfall, but the rolling grassland of

the savanna is scattered with isolated trees. The trees are primarily large, old oaks, and there is between 10 and 60% canopy, with or without a shrubby layer below. The predominantly grass-covered ground layer is composed of species associated with both prairie and forest communities. Sadly, oak savannas were virtually eliminated in Michigan long ago.

To learn more about the significance of these

interesting ecological communities and the plants and animals that lived in them, as well as their significance to native peoples, click on the heading “Oak Openings” at the following Michigan Natural Features Inventory website: <http://web4.msue.msu.edu/mnfi/pub/abstracts.cfm#Communities>



An Oak Savanna in Wisconsin

The Thurston Oak Savanna will be a long-term, ambitious and complex urban forestry project. Its full development, including the planting of native shrubs, grasses and other wildflowers normally associated with such habitats, will take some years to complete. Meanwhile, we hope to plant our grove of 16 oaks in late March or April 2009.

If you would like to **volunteer to help**, contact Neal Foster (663-0756; nealfost@umich.edu). To learn more about the Thurston Nature Center, please visit our website at www.thurstonnaturecenter.org. Colin Brooks is doing a great job as the new TNCC webmaster. ■

the storm sewer running east-west along Bluett, will require tunneling—likely to begin in mid-April—beneath the cement stairway along the right of way south of Bluett. The tunneling will be done to install a 54-inch-diameter steel pipe, which in turn will enclose a 30-inch-diameter pipe that will carry an additional 9 million gallons of stormwater annually, southward into Thurston Pond. The top of the berm on the west side of the pond, which has settled over time, will be raised in elevation and strengthened as well. ■

Thurston Goes Greener

by Margie Weiss

Thanks to a very successful first ever fall bulb sale which netted over \$1,000.00, the Thurston PTO was able to apply for, and receive, a grant with matching funds from Global ReLeaf of Michigan enabling the school to plant eight new trees on the school grounds. Although the turnaround was tight, there was a sense of urgency in getting these new trees in before winter. Fall seedlings generally fare better since they have time to become established during a winter dormancy.

With cooperation from the City of Ann Arbor and planning by Global ReLeaf of Michigan, all eight trees were established in the ground on November 1. With half the funds remaining, the PTO grounds committee looks forward to a repeat planting in the spring.

For more information about Global ReLeaf of Michigan or about the project carried out at the school, please visit the following sites: www.globalreleaf.com and <http://thurstonpto.awardspace.com/files/Nov-14th.pdf> ■

Congratulations once again to Betsey Armstrong, who grew up in the OHMHA neighborhood and competed in water polo in the Beijing Olympics.

We apologize for misspelling her name in our October 2008 newsletter. ■



Life is Like a Garden – Dig It!

As many of you are aware, the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) has been spearheading a project focused on our subwatershed, the headwaters of the west branch of Millers Creek, with the aim of reducing peak flows that occur in storm drains after rainstorms. Incorporated in this project plan is the establishment of **two rain gardens** in our community! One will be situated on the grounds of Thurston Elementary and the other just up the street, where the pavement will be removed from deadend stub of Briarcliff on the east side of Prairie Street.

With the assistance of JF New, a natural resource and ecological consulting firm with offices in Ann Arbor, plans for both gardens are well underway. All plants will be deep-rooted native plants that can survive sudden downpours as well as dry periods. For more information, see www.hrc.org, www.aamillerscreek.org and www.jfnew.com. ■

OHMHA BOARD MEMBERS

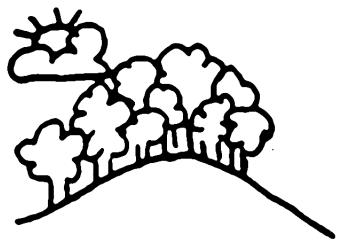
Jack Cederquist	2145 Ardenne	665-2285	President
Stuart Baggaley	3111 Cedarbrook	332-1874	Vice President/Neighborhood Watch
Henry Brysk	3032 Cedarbrook	369-2986	
Wendy Carman	2340 Georgetown	761-8693	Treasurer
Emily Eisbruch	2561 Bunker Hill	665-0533	Newsletter (eisbruchs@aol.com)
Neal Foster	2115 Georgetown	663-0756	
Greg Jagst	2080 Yorktown	846-6332	
Anita Jones	3359 Yellowstone	761-2748	
Anne Karabakal	2405 Bunker Hill	669-2084	
Peter Mooney	3352 Yellowstone	213-0440	
Daniel Smith	2377 Georgetown	320-4494	Secretary and Webmaster
Margie Weiss	2215 Yorktown	997-6541	

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

John Hieftje (Mayor)	1800 Traver	794-6161	jhieftje@a2gov.org
Tony Derezinski (Council Member, Ward 2)	1345 Glendarloch Cir.	995-2686	TDerezinski@a2gov.org
Stephen Rapundalo (Council Member, Ward 2)	3106 Bluett	476-0648	SRapundalo@a2gov.org

Question: How do I get on the neighborhood email list? **Answer:** simply email dtsmith@umich.edu

**OHMHA
2145 Ardenne
Ann Arbor, MI 48105**



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