

ORCHARD HILLS-MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

www.ohmha.org

OHMHA NEWSLETTER

Sept 2010

Join Your Neighbors at the 4th annual



Fall Festival Sunday, Oct. 10



Start the Festival at 1 p.m. with a decorated bike/tricycle parade starting from north end of Georgetown. Parents/kids please arrive at 12:40 pm

WHO: The entire OHMHA neighborhood is invited!

WHEN: Sunday, October 10, 1-5 pm (rain or shine)

WHERE: At the grassy area by Thurston Pond on Yorktown, next to OHAC pool

Highlights:

- Arts and Crafts Table
- Cider, donuts, and apples
- Live Critters from the Pond, including Plankton - display by Neal Foster, Thurston Nature Center Committee
- Face painting, clown and many fun kids' activities.
- "Hunters in the Sky," a wildlife demonstration presented by the Leslie Science Center. It will feature a **bald eagle** and more, at 1:45
- "OHMHA's Got Talent" Show all afternoon
- Tree Tour at 4:00, promising participants an interactive experience. Mike Conboy, Thurston Nature Center Land Steward, will lead a Tree Tour at 4:00.
- NEW THIS YEAR: **Raffle drawings** for adults and children to promote local businesses.



Above: Kids enjoyed a bike parade in the neighborhood in 1995.

It is not too late to register for the talent show! Consider this your rehearsal for "America's Got Talent"! You can still bring one item you made for the Arts and Crafts table. If you would like to promote your own business, donate a gift for the raffle drawings. **To participate in any of these activities, please contact Amy Seetoo at sjbaggaley@gmail.com, or call 332-0390 by September 18. ■**

Thurston Nature Center: Problems and Progress

-- Neal Foster (Chair, TNCC)

Did you know that the Thurston Nature Center (TNC) is not City-owned? Although used as an educational, recreational and aesthetic resource, the TNC is technically private property, mostly owned by the Ann Arbor Public School District (AAPSD) and the remainder by the Orchard Hills Athletic Association.

Did you know that the TNC will present a tree walk and displays of live pond critters, including microscopic ones, at our upcoming Fall Festival on October 10th?

Are you aware of the vital role that neighborhood volunteers, Thurston School teachers, students and their families have played for over 40 years in the TNC's maintenance and enhancement, both as an environmental educational resource and as an "urban oasis?"

Do you realize that many of our special trees were either bought, dug up elsewhere or grown from seed, planted and cared for over the years by TNC volunteers at no cost to taxpayers?

Did you know the TNC has more kinds of trees than the U of M's Nichols Arboretum does? Have you seen the fine website <http://www.thurstonnaturecenter.org/>?

We thank all the hard-working volunteers who have helped the TNC in various ways, including on our spring and fall workdays. Generous donations from various private individuals, Castle Rock Entertainment and OHMHA will help us do more for the TNC in the foreseeable future. These funds also may need to be pledged as matching funds in future grant proposals. For more information about how to help the Thurston Nature Center, please click on "news" on the opening page of the above website.

A lot goes on in the TNC, and 2010 has been particularly busy. Described below are some of the many things that happened since my previous report (February 2010 OHMHA newsletter).

Thurston Pond Problems

In late January 2010 four Thurston Nature Center Committee (TNCC) members--all active or retired environmental professionals--collaborated on a proposal to EPA entitled "**Thurston Pond Restoration and Stormwater Management**," for \$297,000 (with Randy Trent, AAPSD, as fiduciary). The proposal called for, among other things, strategic dredging of certain areas in Thurston Pond. But only 24 of 234 proposals submitted for our particular program area of EPA's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) were funded, and ours was not one of them.

"The TNCC is concerned that we could lose virtually the entire pond unless adequate (not "band-aid") rebuilding of the berm is done to heighten it and correct its structural deficiencies"

We requested and received a candid and fairly detailed debriefing on the shortcomings in our proposal. The EPA debriefer encouraged us to consider resubmittal of a revised proposal, as we had a reasonably good document that could have benefited from clearer communication on specific points and links to EPA priorities and it was better than a substantial number of other proposals.

Meanwhile, two of the three goals of the taxpayer-funded (MDEQ = now MDNRE) Thurston Pond Restoration Project by AAPSD were completed in 2009:

- (1) to create a pond with greater habitat diversity that circulates more water to Millers Creek more often; and
- (2) to recover the pond as an object of study for the Ann Arbor Public Schools District (AAPSD).

Progress toward these goals was made by

- (1) altering existing pond inlets to bring more (treated) stormwater more frequently into the pond, and
- (2) installing underground “Best Management Practices” treatment devices (swirl concentrators/filters) on these inlets before they discharge into the pond.

Unfortunately, goal (3)--retrofitting the existing pond outlet to allow for controlled release of water above the permanent water level--was not accomplished. AAPSD contractors made no provision for enhancing the flow of excess pond water to the overflow drain to Millers Creek.



The berm was overtopped and eroding away on May 13th, 2010. Volunteers Mike Conboy (left). Bill Phillips (right) and Tom Edsall had repaired earlier, smaller breaches in the berm with sand bags, but this event was too big to deal with. (View is toward south - note large tree at right; photo by Madelaine Conboy)

In the spring of 2010, extra stormwater diverted from an additional 38 acres in the neighborhood turned out to be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the water level in Thurston Pond was now consistently higher than usual, increasing the overall volume of aquatic habitat for fishes and other aquatic creatures. Dipnetting along the shore for just a few minutes on June 4th for a “critter” display at the Thurston Ice Cream Social quickly captured a greater number and variety of fishes, insects and other aquatic life than we were accustomed to finding, suggesting that Goal 1 (above) had been accomplished. On the other hand, the higher water levels caused problems for two of our waterfowl species. According to Mike Conboy, nests of Canada Geese and the Mallard Ducks were flooded out (the Mallards only raised 4 young) but a pair of Hooded Mergansers, a small fish-eating duck of shallow, wooded ponds which nests in cavities such as holes in trees, managed to produce 9 young. And what happened to the so-called “repaired” berm was a disaster (Note: doubts about the structural stability of the repaired berm were stated here one year ago).

By late April of 2010, accumulating snowmelt water and frequent rains caused pond waters to lap against the top of the berm. This worried TNC volunteers and they hastily widened and deepened the existing channel from the pond to the Millers Creek drain. Heavy rains caused small but repairable breaches to develop in the berm on May 12th, but by May 13th the flow over and through the berm was beyond our resources to fix.

On June 5th we had 2.75 inches of rain. Early on the 6th Tom Edsall went down to see what had happened to the pond and the berm: the woods on the west side of the berm were flooded to a much greater degree than he had seen in over 4 decades and the berm was breached in three places. The original breach that the TNCC had patched with sandbags was not leaking, and the second breach that an AAPSD contractor had covered with a waterproof blanket and sand bags was also dry because new breaches had eroded the berm much more deeply. The new berm damage completely changed the path of Thurston Pond's overflow water; its historic exit drain to Millers Creek now no longer functions.

The TNCC is concerned that we could lose virtually the entire pond unless adequate (not "band-aid") rebuilding of the berm is done to heighten it and correct its structural deficiencies (for example, using sand in 2009 instead of clay). We are now trying to work closely with AAPSD and its contractor(s) to find effective ways to remedy this dysfunctional situation.

Meanwhile, anyone concerned about the urgency of getting the berm (and the walking path thereon) promptly and properly repaired should contact Mr. Randall Trent, Executive Director of Physical Properties, Ann Arbor Public Schools, 2555 South Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104, phone: 734-994-8118; email: trentr@aaps.k12.mi.us.

Thurston Prairie Update: In late spring 2009, before Castle Rock Entertainment contractors began building the set (house) for some of the filming of "Flipped," we transplanted various prairie plants from that soon-to-be-disturbed site to new locations close to each of our 20 new oak trees in the new Oak Savanna. After the set was dismantled and the site restored, Castle Rock contractors planted seeds of various prairie species, near-blooming sized plants of Michigan natives gayfeather (*Liatris*), purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan, and New England aster where the movie set (house) had stood, and a Sycamore sapling to commemorate the role played by that kind of tree in the movie plot. The surviving 2009 plantings and the young Sycamore are all growing well. Meanwhile, test screenings of "Flipped" in California, Texas, and elsewhere have had pretty good to excellent reviews, and if you want, you can see the movie's trailer ("preview") at this website <http://www.moviefone.com/movie/flipped/38104/hd/480>.

Oak Savannah Update: A no-mow fence was installed several weeks ago, the various turf grasses and weeds have now become ankle-deep. We will gradually replace the overgrown turf grass with native prairie plants typical of the oak savannas that were fairly common in Michigan a long time ago. Fertilizing each of our 20 oak trees with a slow-release organic fertilizer when they were planted in 2009 paid off in two ways. Most of the transplanted prairie plants, such as big bluestem grass, prairie dock, blanket flower and iron weed, have grown vigorously in our young oak savanna. We also have had 100% survival of our 20 oak trees, thanks in no small part to weekly waterings in 2009. A few weeks ago, I even noticed an uncommon species of butterfly (clouded sulfur) in the oak savanna, a kind that I have looked for but never seen in my own backyard just a short distance away. ■



Despite earlier repairs by an AAPSD contractor of previous breaches, worse breaches developed in the berm on June 6th, 2010 after nearly 3 inches of overnight rain. (View is toward north - note same large tree at left; photo by Tom Edsall).

New OHMHA Board Members!

A warm welcome to our two new OHMHA board members, Amy Seetoo and Chad Bailey!

Amy D. Seetoo

My husband Stuart Baggaley and I have lived in the OHMHA neighborhood since 1995. Born in Taiwan, I have lived in Ann Arbor 30 years and in the States 42 years. I've been promoting cross-cultural understanding by serving on many boards, including UMHS Minority Health Research Program Community Advisory Board, Planned Parenthood Mid South Michigan Board, Michigan Taiwanese American Organization, Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce of Greater Detroit, AAUW (American Association of University Women) Ann Arbor Branch, of which I was the President in 2009-2010. I am a frequent guest on WCBN FM88.3 on Chinese festivals and foods ("Pandora's Lunchbox" hosted by Mike Perini). I enjoy playing my husband's version of Mah-Jongg, biking, exercising, and golfing. ■

Chad Bailey

I've lived on Georgetown with my wife Michelle and daughter Lina since fall 2009, though we first moved to the neighborhood in 2007. We're thrilled to live in the neighborhood, among its wonderful people and parks. We've been steadily working on our house, trying to live more sustainably, and having fun with our daughter as she learns about the world.

I work at the EPA lab on Plymouth Road on traffic-related air pollution. We really appreciate what OHMHA does and represents – a community – and hope that I can make a useful contribution on the board. ■

**Thanks to everyone who helped make the May 15, 2010
OHMHA Garage Sale a success!**

ORCHARD HILLS ~ MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR JUNE 1, 2010 ~ MAY 31, 2011

(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, Ann Arbor 48105

OHMHA BOARD MEMBERS

Jack Cederquist	2145 Ardenne	665-2285	President
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	Secretary
Phil Savage	3304 Bluett	994-6560	
Anne Karabakal	2405 Bunker Hill	669-2084	Webmaster
Peter Mooney	3352 Yellowstone	213-0440	Vice President
Monica Hanna	2163 Ardenne	622-8113	
Chad Bailey	Georgetown	929-2204	
Amy Seetoo	3111 Cedarbrook	332-0390	Fall Festival

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

John Hieftje (Mayor)	794-6161	jhieftje@a2gov.org
Tony Derezhinski (Council Member, Ward 2) 1345 Glendaloch Cir.	995-2686	TDerezhinski@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:** email wjcarman@umich.edu

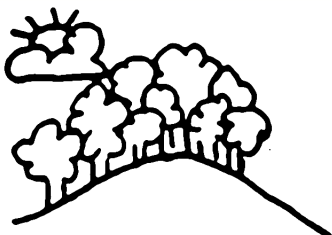
OHMHA

3352 Yellowstone

Ann Arbor, MI 48105

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you there!**



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