

ORCHARD HILLS-MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

www.ohmha.org

OHMHA NEWSLETTER

September 2013



Join Your Neighbors at the 7th annual

Fall Festival Sunday, Sept. 29

WHO: Residents of the Orchard Hills and Maplewood neighborhoods are invited!

WHEN: Sunday, Sept 29, 2013, from 1-4:30 pm (rain or shine)

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

Highlights:

- Cider, donuts, and apples for all our neighbors to enjoy, courtesy of OHMHA
- Live **Critters from the Pond** (display by Neal Foster, Thurston Nature Center Committee)
- "Hunters in the Sky," a **wildlife demonstration** presented by the **Leslie Science Center**. This event will start at 1:45pm.
- A **Tree Tour** by Mike Conboy, Thurston Nature Center Land Steward, will start between 3:30pm - 3:45pm.
- A **RAFFLE DRAWING** for adults and children to promote our local businesses. Make sure you sign in to receive your complimentary raffle ticket! Items will be raffled throughout the afternoon.
- Musical entertainment will be offered again this year by local musicians.
- "Count What's in the Jar" game will offer prizes to the three closest guesses.
- Neighborhood Watch & OHMHA Membership materials will be available.
- Thurston Nature Center info will be available and T-shirts will be for sale to benefit Thurston Pond Restoration efforts.



The Perigrine Falcon was a hit at the 2012 Fall Festival.

To volunteer at the Fall Festival, please contact Greg Jagst at gjagst@aol.com or call (734) 846-6332 ■

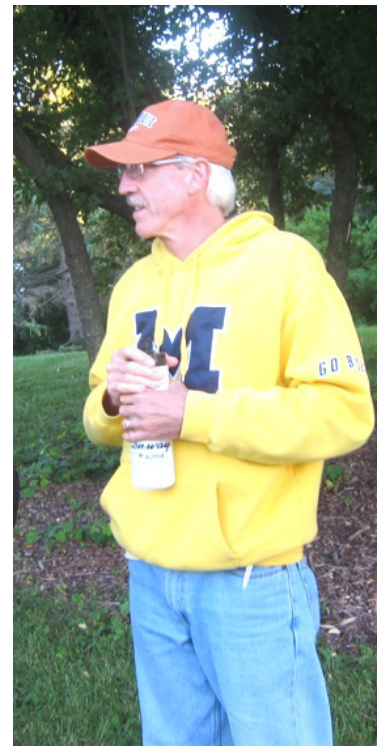
Meet New Board Member -- Frank Commiskey

My wife, Elaine, and I have lived on Antietam Court for 27 years. Our family loves Ann Arbor, especially living in the best neighborhood in the city!

I am a recent retiree and currently spend much of my time supporting the Thurston Nature Center and its various activities with the Thurston Elementary School. Elaine works for the University of Michigan Health System.

We have two sons, both graduates of Thurston, Clague, and Huron. Our oldest, Patrick, is in the process of interviewing and applying to medical schools, while volunteering at the VA Hospital, working in a U of M Health System Clinical Pathology Lab, and handling his public relations and marketing company Foursight Partners. Our youngest, Brian, is looking forward to attending the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2014.

I am honored to be invited to join the OHMHA Board and very much looking forward to supporting and helping meet the needs of our community.■



Frank enjoying a cool August evening.

WE INVITE YOU TO STAY IN TOUCH !

- **To join the OHMHA email list, email wjcarman@umich.edu**
- **To join the neighborhood watch list, email gjagst@aol.com**
- **LIKE OHMHA on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ohmhaneighborhood>**
- **To join the Thurston Nature Center list, go to thurstonnaturecenter.org and click "Join Email List"**

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New Landscaping

- by *Jack Cederquist*

As advertised in the May 2013 OHMHA Newsletter, the Plymouth Rd. / Georgetown entrance to the OHMHA Neighborhood has been renovated with new plants while keeping some of the previous plants. The plants have been chosen not just for beauty but also for their ability to survive the harsh summer and winter environments of the entrance.

Many thanks to Lindsay Hanna and Alex Lamb for designing and executing the planting. Also many thanks to local teens, Caleb Hires and Suzan Karabakal, for weeding the entrance. ■



Entrance Landscaping

Georgetown Entrance Wall

- by *Peter Mooney and Jerry Schulte*

The brick wall at the intersection of Georgetown and Plymouth has long been a gateway to our neighborhood. Unfortunately, it has also long been in need of maintenance.

If you take a look at the wall, you'll see a long crack along the east portion of the wall, and that many of the mortar joints are failing. A number of bricks are also visibly pitted. The bricks and mortar joints have been damaged over the years by water infiltration (particularly from the deteriorated cupolas which also need repair) and the freeze/thaw cycle.

Several repair options are under consideration, including a phased restoration approach (address the most critical needs as funding allows), a complete and comprehensive restoration of the existing structures, or complete removal of the structures as they exist followed by rebuilding the entrance walls, possibly to a lower height, reusing the existing brick.



Wall in need of maintenance

Regardless of the alternative selected, the cost of this project will be above what the Board can fund with available funds. The cost of a complete restoration or rebuilding of the structure exceeds what the Board can fund by itself. A phased restoration will be difficult because deterioration of unrepaired areas will continue to weaken the structures between what we expect to be infrequent phased repairs. If this project goes forward with substantial repairs the Board will, by necessity, be seeking contributions from neighbors.

The board has formed a subcommittee consisting of Peter Mooney, Jerry Schulte, Frank Commiskey and David Bizot to consider options. The committee will be sending out a survey to neighbors to inquire about preferences among the available options (or suggestions of additional options), and willingness to contribute to the cost. You can also share your thoughts on the OHMHA Facebook page ■.

Proposed Woodbury Club Apartments on Nixon Road

- by David Bizot and Frank Commiskey

An increase in new developments as well as commercial and commuter traffic is approaching us from all directions. While welcomed and healthy for the economic vitality of our city, there is some concern that the city infrastructure for roads and traffic management around our neighborhood is not necessarily in place to absorb this growth.

Most recently a new 234-unit apartment complex called Woodbury Club Apartments has been proposed for the vacant 54-acre site at the east corner of Nixon and M-14 (before the bridge), just north of the Barclay Park condominiums and Windemere Park apartments.

The type and size of development are largely in line with the city's master plan for this parcel. While these apartments would not be adjacent to the neighborhood, some residents have expressed their concerns to the OHMHA board about how this new complex could affect them, particularly the additional traffic projected for Nixon and Green Roads and its subsequent impacts on vehicular and pedestrian safety (specifically in regard to our young students attending our neighborhood elementary and middle schools).

As currently proposed, all traffic from the apartments would use Nixon Road to enter and exit the property; this increase in car trips would particularly impact the Nixon/Green/Dhu Varren intersection. A traffic study conducted by the developer in July showed that this intersection is poorly designed and already

well beyond its design limits especially during the morning and afternoon rush hours. The study projected a further 11-15% increase in traffic at this intersection if the apartments are built, and concluded this would increase the current delays and cause major backups

unless substantial physical alterations to this intersection were made (such as aligning Green and Dhu Varren and adding signals or a roundabout). At this time, however, neither the developer nor the city have committed to making such improvements.

This additional traffic would also impact the flow and speed of the various transport vehicles through Nixon to Plymouth Road (by the schools), and through Green to Plymouth Road.

Through the extraordinary efforts of our teachers, parents, and community members, "Safe Routes to Schools Grants" were issued to both Thurston Elementary and Clague schools with the intent of providing infrastructure additions and changes to make safer passages (walking and bicycling) for the students. Crosswalks and signage have been added on Green Road as a result of the Thurston grant. New sidewalks and some additional signage and crosswalks on Nixon are planned using the Clague grant and are scheduled for later this year. Additional safety measures, such as streetlights on Nixon in the vicinity of Clague, are currently not in city



Nixon Road, facing south towards the jagged intersection with Dhu Varren and Green Rd.

-continued on next page.

Proposed Woodbury Club Apartments on Nixon Road (continued)

plans.

Given these concerns and the fact that we are already experiencing challenges with additional traffic on Plymouth, Green, and Nixon Roads and the safety issues of pedestrians and bicyclists, the OHMHA board recently passed the following official resolution:

“The OHMHA Board supports a review and possible new measures to increase safety for our residents, the students who attend our neighborhood schools and university, and visitors traveling on and crossing Plymouth, Nixon and Green roads and their intersections.”

Woodbury Club is in the early stages of the city planning review process and residents still have opportunities to make their thoughts or concerns heard, either through the OHMHA board, their Ward 2 representatives, and/or the city directly.

You can follow the city’s review and access project documents using the eTRAKiT website: <http://etrakit.a2gov.org/>. On the website, select “Projects” and search for “Woodbury Club” under project name. This search will show several related petitions, but most documents of interest, including the traffic study and site plan, can be found under petition SP13-030. The OHMHA board will continue to follow this development and report new information as we hear of it. ■

Outstanding Weather for May 2013 Garage Sale

- by Jack Cederquist

Once again we had good weather for the neighborhood garage sale in May 2013. About 40 homes participated, many on Georgetown Boulevard. Positive comments were received from participants and the buying public.

Based on an unscientific survey of buyers, the 13 signs and the posting on craigslist were by far the main attractors. Neighborhood participants can also help by posting their own personalized craigslist ads.

Email your ideas for next year’s OHMHA Garage Sale to john_cederquist@comcast.net ■



The Annual Garage Sale is a fun tradition.

Thurston Nature Center Update

- by *Frank Commiskey*

A lot is happening these days at the Thurston Nature Center! Here's an update on some of the activities. For more details on the items listed here, please visit the website at www.thurstonnaturecenter.org and join the mailing list.

1. **Eliminating the Phragmites:** The Thurston Nature Center Committee (TNCC) has issued a contract to work on a two year project with PlantWise Restoration, to control the Phragmites in the Nature Center areas where it has been invading these last few years, particularly since 2005. Phragmites is a large perennial reed/grass that is found around the rim of the Thurston pond. Final approval by the AAPS and MDEQ is in progress and anticipated to occur very soon.

2. **Thurston Pond Restoration:** The Thurston Nature Center Committee has issued a revised and updated Pond Restoration Plan. Full contents of the document can be found on the Thurston Nature Center website. This report offers a plan and guidance for restoring the health of the Thurston Pond ecosystem, which is the major aquatic feature of the Thurston Nature Center. The report primarily addresses actions for:

- Improving the existing pond outlet structure to permit more effective control of the pond water levels and outflow to Millers Creek.
- Re-grading the pond bottom to deepen portions of the pond to restore a clear water pond, increase its storm water holding capacity, and to permit maintenance draining.
- Using the excess soil created by re-grading the pond bottom to improve the pond and the condition of the TNC ecosystem.

The next step is to seek interested engineering firms for further detailed analysis, designs, and cost estimates. In addition the TNCC is soliciting the community for additional help from experienced engineers and interested university students in the area of hydraulic/environmental engineering, in storm-water retention and detention, and wetland restoration and enhancement.

3. **Trees** -- Did you know Thurston Nature center is home to 68 species of Michigan trees? Many of these now have new labels! Read about this and the Tree Pals Program and Adopt-a-Tree program at the Thurston Nature Center website, [Trees](#) link.



Enjoying the Trees

4. **Environmental Education Program:** The 2013-2014 Ann Arbor Public School Year marks the 54th year of the Environmental Education Program (EE) in Ann Arbor and the 45th year that the Thurston Nature Center will be supporting it. Thanks to the leadership of Dave Szczygiel (AAPS) and the local support of our long term resident and TNC Land Steward - Mike Conboy, this program and the TNC continue to offer students the opportunity to provide an outdoor classroom, hands-on and inquiry-based science programs for every student. The field trips and science

activities at the TNC permit students to have frequent personal and positive experiences with nature, which can be integrated into their traditional classroom curriculums. It is the love of so many volunteer care takers and EE naturalists like our local Mike Conboy and Mike Tucker that over the past 4 decades we have been able to conserve this gift and make it continue to blossom. If anyone is interested in participating and/or learning more about how they can help this valuable program please feel free to contact us.

5. **Trail Signs:** Thanks to our neighbors and TNCC members Jim and David Vallem new trail signs and a new Thurston Nature Center sign have been placed at various locations around the nature center.

6. **Thurston School Vegetable Garden:** To support and enhance the Thurston Elementary curriculum with outdoor educational experiences like our Thurston Nature Center – (stressing knowledge, characteristics, interrelationships and uses of our natural resources) - members of the TNCC, parents and teachers from Thurston School, and community volunteers decided to build a vegetable garden. The garden is located on the south side of the Thurston Nature Center and close to the school. The students will be able to experience aspects of an agricultural environment and connect nature with nutrition. It is the hope that this will enrich the students' understanding of the relationships between what they eat, personal health, community interactions, and our environment. We also hope this will be fostering a deeper connection that the way our food is produced can help empower students to make healthier nutritional choices for life. ■



Pumpkins in the Thurston School Vegetable Garden

The Plymouth Road Entrance Brick wall restoration work will cost several thousand dollars. We urge neighbors to pay their dues, to help support OHMHA activities, including maintain the image and attractiveness of our neighborhood entrances.

Thank you to all who mail in or deliver their dues.

**ORCHARD HILLS ~ MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR JUNE 1, 2013 ~ MAY 31, 2014**

(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	665-2282	President
Greg Jagst	2080 Yorktown	846-6332	Vice President
Wendy Carman	2340 Georgetown	761-8693	Treasurer
Phil Savage	3304 Bluett	994-6560	Secretary
David Bizot	3359 Yellowstone	240-888-3295	
Frank Commiskey	2647 Antietam Ct	369-0992	
Peter Mooney	3352 Yellowstone	213-0440	
Emily Eisbruch	2561 Bunker Hill	665-0533	Newsletter (eisbruchs@gmail.com)
Anne Karabakal	2405 Bunker Hill	669-2084	Webmaster
Jerry Schulte	3334 Yellowstone	668-2590	
Amy Seetoo	3111 Cedarbrook	332-0390	
Rabia Shafie	3325 Bluett Dr	668-6430	

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

John Hieftje (Mayor)	794-6161	jhieftje@a2gov.org
Sally Petersen (Council Member, Ward 2), 2976 Hickory Lane	996-5569	spetersen@a2gov.org
Jane Lumm (Council Member, Ward 2) 3075 Override Drive	677-4010	JLumm@a2gov.org

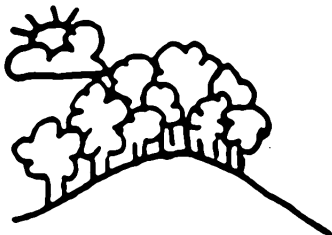
OHMHA

3352 Yellowstone

Ann Arbor, MI 48105

www.ohmha.org

**You're invited to:
OHMHA Board Meeting,
Tues., Sept. 10 at 7:30 pm at
Clague School Media Center**



NEWSLETTER

ORCHARD HILLS-MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
