



# The Chinquapin

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Fall 2016

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

## NATURE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

**Membership for the 2016/17 season begins now and ends in August, 2017 To see if you owe membership dues for the 2016/17 season, please check either your street address label found on the last page or the e-mail subject line.**

There are four membership levels. General Membership is free and with it, you get Nature Society schedule updates e-mailed to you at least once a month. Associate Membership cost \$5 per year and gets you the above benefit along with four newsletters, "The Chinquapin", e-mailed to you quarterly. If you want, we can mail a hard copy to you instead. **With e-mail, the print quality of the newsletter is better and the photos are in color.** Supporting Membership is \$10 & up per year and gets you all of the above benefits plus being listed a supporting member in our newsletter. Patron Membership is \$50 & up per year and gets you all of the above benefits, listed as a patron member in our newsletter, an invitation to our pre-Dream Cruise picnic at Gunn Dyer Park and one free ticket to our annual fundraiser. If you want to be an Associate, Supporting or Patron member, please fill out a membership form (page 5)

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## Robert Gasiorowski: Naturalist

by Donald Drife and Robert Muller

Royal Oak's nature community lost a good friend last May with the passing of Robert (Bob) Gasiorowski. I [DD] met Bob in the summer of 1972 when a notice appeared in the *Royal Oak Daily Tribune* announcing a series of morning hikes in Quickstad Park. Bob served as the city naturalist and led the hikes. Each session began with a lecture by Bob in his classroom in Kimball [Royal Oak] High School and then we would head to Quickstad for a nature walk. Topics included: pond life, insects, birds, trees, wildflowers, mammals, and more. Bob shared his infectious passion for all facets of the natural world. The nature program ran for several years, adding summer evening walks and a Wednesday evening lecture program. I made my first public

speaking presentation, with much encouragement and coaching from Bob, to this group. I also studied Environmental Science under Bob as a student at Kimball High School.

I [RM] met Bob in the summer of 1973. I was riding my bike down Maris Avenue, past the park, and saw a notice for an evening nature walk. No one else was on the nature walk so there was a long discussion with Bob on everything we saw. I had a strong interest in edible wild plants then and brought up something on every edible plant we saw. He asked me, right then, to speak at one of the Wednesday lectures. The resulting presentation made up of a slide show and

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## Message From the President

by Don Drife

This fall we begin our 16th year of programming. Our extremely small band of dedicated workers has done much. We have an annual fundraiser that has allowed us to do invasive species work in our nature parks and arboretum. We pay for plants and gardening supplies for our arboretum. We also fund our speakers program and our great Friends of Fungi speakers series.

We are beginning several projects in neglected stepchild Cummingston Park. These are being spearheaded by Mary Fredricks (AKA Mushroom Mary) and John Semchena. Trails are being planned, an Eagle Scout will build one circuit. Existing trails are maintained and we are working toward restoring the "ancient meadow."

It is gratifying to see the increased use that Tenhave is getting. Every time I walk there I see people using the park. Some are jogging on the trails, some are photographing, and some are just enjoying

the woods.

Our nature parks are true gems. Tenhave has a fabulous spring wildflower show. Monkey-flower, water purslane, water horehound, and mad-dog skullcap flower by Tenhave's Dragonfly Pond. It supports spring peepers, western chorus frogs, tree frogs, American toads, and painted turtles. Crawfish Pond at Cummingston has painted turtles and breeding American toads. Coltsfoot, swamp milkweed, boneset, and fringed loosestrife flower at the pond's edges. The plants, birds, and insects of the arboretum will supply an evening's entertainment.

These are two unique areas. I would encourage (beg) you to get involved. Help out in the arboretum, volunteer for the fundraiser, pull garlic mustard, maintain a trail, help lead a nature walk. Please lend us a hand. Contact me or one of the other members of the board.

*(Continued from page 1)*

samples to eat was my first public speaking attempt, my knees were actually shaking. This was my first natural history program. I doubt if I would be doing talks today without the encouragement Bob gave me. On his nature walks Bob allowed others with knowledge of something we came across to become for a moment the naturalist. Don and I and many others did this often, this was the beginning of both of our life long interpreting nature to others. Bob was a teacher and was always mentoring and challenging us to grow in our abilities as teachers.

Tenhave Woods in Quickstad Park still exists because Bob fought for its preservation. The city was under pressure to remove the undergrowth and thin the trees so the park would become "safer." Bob and John Lindell, the director of Royal Oak Parks and Recreation, protected these marvelous woods from destruction. As a compromise Tenhave Woods was fenced.

Bob's data from the 1970s provide a baseline for us to measure the health of the woodlot. We have several decades of his bird banding records. These form the base of our bird list. As part of a 1971 National Science Foundation Summer Institute for teachers at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, he identified and measured hundreds of trees in Tenhave Woods. This quantitative analysis allows us to measure the changes in tree species composition. Under Bob's direction, the first vascular plant list for the park was compiled. I [RM] also identified and measured

hundreds of trees as part of a study for my BS degree in Environmental Education. I worked under the same professor that Bob did.

Naturalists of Bob's caliber are rare. Most people specialize in one facet of natural history. They study birds, or plants, or insects. Bob studied everything. Bob taught us to diligently observe nature. To measure and record the world around us. Get out a stopwatch and time how many calls a minute a Robin makes. Measure the size of that tree or flower. Use a thermometer and discover the difference in temperatures between the sunny and shady sides of a rock. Quantify Nature but never lose the wonder of Nature. Do not overlook the beauty of a spring woods in full bloom or the music of a wren's song. He taught us the need to put Nature into the hands of children. Share with them the wonder. Bob was happiest when he was teaching and especially loved to teach young children. He once said, "If a child sees a bird through

binoculars then they probably will not look at one through a B-B gun sight."

The Royal Oak Nature Society would not exist without Bob's program as an example. It is fitting that our highest honor is named the "Robert Gasiorowski Lifetime Achievement Award" and that he was the first recipient. Bob spent a lifetime learning and then teaching about Nature. We will miss him.



Bob at our 2nd Annual Fundraiser

## Spring 2016 Cummingston Stewardship Report

by Mary Fredricks

Spring flooding is an annual event in Cummingston, and this year was no exception. In the past I have greeted this time as an inconvenience at best, and a liability at worst. Some years the flooding is so bad that getting around the park is impossible. Even when flooding is lighter, many of the trails are muddy and difficult to navigate without boots. This year, on one trail, logs that marked the trail actually floated to other places. But I am seeing Cummingston with new eyes this year. Now that I am steward of Cummingston, I see opportunities as well as problems. The flooding this year supplied good opportunities to fix problems and plan for the future.

Early this spring, it became clear that a way was needed for water to move across the main trail and into the drain that is near the main entrance. Each year, someone has created a makeshift ditch across the trail to do this. This year, John Semchena provided a permanent solution by putting in a culvert to divert water to the drain. He also created a safe way to cross the ditch (lovingly called Cummingston Creek by some) that helps to drain the pond during the flood season.

As a leader of walks in Cummingston, and as a walker there myself, I felt the need for two more north/south trails east of the fence to make getting around the park easier.

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and mail it along with a check to the Royal Oak Nature Society. Please list other household members you want included as Nature Society members (no extra cost).

Through your donation (tax deductible), you will be helping to cover the costs to produce our newsletter and will also be assisting in funding educational programs that we

provide.

If you only want to be a General Member, please e-mail us the information asked for on our membership form (page 5) & send that information to:

[naturesociety@romi.gov](mailto:naturesociety@romi.gov)

## SPEAKER PROGRAMS

*Our monthly general meeting/speaker programs (September to May) is held at the Royal Oak Middle School (ROMS) which is located at 709 N. Washington. We meet in the auditorium or the "Gathering Place", both of which can be reached via the school's southeast entrance. Our September & June programs are usually held at the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center located at 3500 Marais. At our monthly Wednesday meetings, we present speaker programs that are usually slide shows focusing on various natural history topics. If you watch nature programs on PBS or the Discovery Channel, this is better because you can meet with the speakers afterwards and ask questions. The general meeting begins around 7:30 pm, with the speaker program following several minutes later.*

An "Evening at the Arboretum" will be held on **September 7<sup>th</sup>**, at the **Royal Oak Senior Center/Arboretum** beginning at **7:30 pm**. We will meet inside the Senior Center for a brief session giving an update on Society recent activities and future programs. Afterwards, we will move outside for a tour of the Arboretum. Lots of different plants will be evident in late summer, and hopefully some cool insects as well.

"A Naturalist's Look at the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail" speaker program is being held on **October 5<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **7:30 pm** at the **ROMS**. Join Faye Stoner with the Washtenaw County Parks and Ron Gamble with the Huron Clinton Metro Parks, on a week-long November trip to southern Texas, where they visited several parks

and preserves. This trip was for the birds; but Texas butterflies, plants, mammals and more got their attention as well. From Padre Island to Bentsen State Park, some of their favorites included Green Jays, White Peacocks (a butterfly), an armadillo and a mystery mammal!

"The Migratory Bird Treaty Act Centennial" speaker program is being held on **November 9<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **7:30 pm** at the **ROMS**. 2016 is the 100 year anniversary of the passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Holly Vaughn from the Michigan DNR will focus on the conservation and recovery of Michigan birds since its implementation in 1918. Come and learn about some of the success stories made possible by the Treaty and the hard work of the Michigan DNR and others.

**PLEASE NOTE!** The November speaker program is being held on NOVEMBER 9th.

### Konstantine (Connie) Cost by Donald Drife

The Nature Society lost a good friend with sudden passing of Connie Cost this past June. Connie, along with his wife Helen, supported our two main annual fundraising events. Connie would help at the ticket table and with credit card sales at our annual auction. He also assisted in our Dream Cruise parking lot at Gunn Dyer Park.

Connie's outlook on life was positive. He had a calming demeanor and an ability to solve problems as they arose at these events. One year, a straight-line wind hit the evening of the Dream Cruise during Connie and Helen's shift. I heard reports that power was out along Gunn Dyer Park. I called Connie to find out if everyone was alright. Connie reported that there were power lines down in the intersection at the park and a portable toilet flipped on its side. But he traveled safely around the wires and was not in the toilet at the time it flipped so "life was good."

Connie's wife of over 55 years, Helen, serves as the head of the Nature Society Ways and Means committee and is also our treasurer.

I count myself blessed to have known Connie and I will miss him.



Connie at one of our annual fundraisers

## NATURE WALKS

**CUMMINGSTON PARK:** Park is just east of Meijers. Park and meet at Leafdale & Torquay

**TENHAVE WOODS:** Park is just east of Royal Oak High School. Park in Marais/Lexington lot and meet at the Lexington entrance (300 feet east of parking lot). For the Owl Hoots & Full Moon walks, park and meet at the Marais/Lexington lot.

**ARBORETUM:** Park and meet on the north side of the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais)

"Late Summer Meadow" walk is being held at the **arboretum** on Saturday, **September 17<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **2:00 pm**. Take a tour of the meadow in our developing arboretum (behind the Community Center) and see what fall wild flowers are blooming.

"Fall Color" walks are being held at:

**Cummingston Park** on Saturday, **October 22<sup>nd</sup>**, beginning at **10:00 am**

**Tenhave Woods** on Sunday, **October 30<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **2:00 pm**

**Tenhave Woods on Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **2:00 pm**

This is the most beautiful time of the year to take a look at our nature study areas.

"Geological Features" is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Sunday, **November 6<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **2:00 pm**. What did this area look like thousands and millions of years ago? Why is Royal Oak so flat, or is it?

### Royal Oak Nature Society Friends of Fungi Fall Schedule

**Mushroom Walk** on Saturday, **September 24<sup>th</sup>**, at **Cummingston Park** beginning at **10:00 am**.

**Mushroom Walk** on Saturday, **October 22<sup>nd</sup>**, at **Tenhave Woods** beginning at **10:00 am**.

The **Friends of Fungi Mycology Club** will meet on Wednesday, **November 16<sup>th</sup>**, at the **Royal Oak Senior Center** (3500 Marais) beginning at **7:00 pm**. An entertaining and informative film, *Mushrooms of America*, will be shown.

Taylor Lockwood, well-known mushroom photographer, takes us on a personal tour of North America as he searches for intriguing fungi. The group Mushroom Hunters of Michigan also put in an appearance. Everyone is welcome.

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Thanks to the flooding, the trails have been roughly planned with an eye to their being dry all year. They will be created in the fall as part of Gibran Jibboori's Eagle Scout project. Also as part of that project, several of the ad hoc trails in the west section of the park will be given official status. One that currently is underwater every spring will be moved.

Last year, Meadow Trail, which appears on our trail map but which had become seriously overgrown, was reopened. Work continues this year to keep it open. Discussions have also begun as to other ways of improving it. One very nice development has been the appearance of Indian Hemp, a native relative of milk weed.

Although unable to rival Tenhave in the wildflower department, there were wildflowers in Cummingston this spring including jack-in-the-pulpit, wild geranium, white trillium, wild oats, May apple, trout lily and coltsfoot (a non-native). There are currently plans to remove non-native invasive species such as buckthorn and euonymus which will encourage wildflower growth.

The mushroom walks, which are held every other month in Cummingston, the owl hoots, and the involvement of local groups like the Democratic Club have introduced more people to the park. I now encounter people just out for a walk more and more often. The more people enjoy and care about Cummingston Woods, the better it will become.

### Spring 2016 Arboretum Stewardship Report

by Bob Muller

We have asked the city if Worden Park East could be renamed the "Royal Oak Arboretum." The Nature Society has put a lot of work into the park to make it into an arboretum, so we think that this would be the appropriate name for it. We are currently waiting for the request to work it way though government channels.

We reported in the spring 2016 edition of the Chinquapin that the Nature Society was working on submitting a Community Development Block Grant to

cover the cost of making the Arboretum's trails hard surfaced. Our goal is to make them handicapped accessible. We consider this to be important. We have held several handicapped walks, but only along the single sidewalk going through area. The hard surface paths would make the entire area accessible to everyone. But in the end, the decision was made by the city not approve our grant submission.

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## Spring 2016 Tenhave Woods Stewardship Report

by Ted Vickers & John Semchena

Many years ago in Tenhave Woods, the invasive species, garlic mustard, was a major problem. Then about 10 years ago, there was a strong effort to remove it from the park. That effort was extremely successful, but over the years, the garlic mustard problem has returned. A work party this past spring bagged up and removed from the park, about 700 pounds of this invasive weed that was located off of the Goodwin Trail between the Swamp and Pond trails. Also, another patch of garlic mustard was removed from an area located just off of the Goodwin Trail near the soccer fields.

In our Spring 2016 newsletter, we talked about our new program called "Park Patrol." It was started last fall. In

May of this year, we had our 2<sup>nd</sup> fence patrol orientation. It lasted about an hour and included six people. They walked the fence perimeter learning about what problems to look for. One of the purposes of our "Patrols" is make sure that there aren't any ways for deer to get into Tenhave and destroy its wildflowers. If you think that you might be interested in becoming part of our "Park Patrol", please contact us. We could use your help.

Nature abounded this past the spring. Over 15 baby ducks were seen in Dragonfly Pond along with four garter snakes seen by our Park Patrol on one of their walks. Our wildflowers were also flourishing even though deer came close to decimating them a few years ago.

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In November 2011, an Eagle Scout project added woodchips to the Arboretum's trails. After the passage of several years, the trails have begun to degrade. Because we can't get the trails hard surfaced, we are looking to set up another Eagle Scout project in the near future to add more woodchips to the arboretum's trails.

Ten years ago we realized that we had 44 of the 86 Michigan's native trees growing in Tenhave Woods. We can't plant anything in Tenhave because it is a nature area. But by adding an arboretum across the street, the Nature Society can attempt to build a collection of all of Michigan's native trees.

During the first stages of developing the arboretum, we had to concentrate on removing invasive species, with

the worst one being buckthorn. After 10 years of hard work we now have 65 of Michigan's native trees in either Tenhave Woods or the arboretum. There are five more trees in Nature Society member's gardens waiting to be planted in the arboretum, some of which includes some species that are growing from seed.

At this point, that leaves 16 species that we still need to get to complete our collection. The Nature Society hopes to begin a program asking the public to adopt a tree in order to help in off-set the cost of finishing the Michigan Native Tree Collection.

One thing that we are proud of is that we now have all of the state of Michigan's Oak species in the collection. This is especially nice for a city named Royal Oak.

Please check out our Facebook page & "like" the Royal Oak Nature Society.

Page: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Royal-Oak-Nature-Society/228095233882566>



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### Royal Oak Nature Society Membership Form

Please make check payable to: Royal Oak Nature Society  
MEMO: Membership

Mail completed form & check to:  
Royal Oak Nature Society  
1600 N. Campbell Rd.  
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Names (household members): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

1 year Household Membership  
(September-August)

- General (free)
- Associate (\$5)
- Supporting (\$10 & up)
- Patron (\$50 & up)

- Receive newsletter by:
- Regular mail OR
- E-mail

## NATURE SOCIETY TEAMS

Please contact us if you would like to become actively involved with one or more of our teams:

**Stewardship:** Maintains a trail system and enhances the overall park experience at Tenhave Woods, Cummingson Park and the Arboretum.

**Communications:** Publicizes organizational activities to the general membership and public through various mediums and performs any other forms of communications required by the board.

**Education:** Provides outreach and liaison to outside individuals, groups and schools to promote environmental education.

**Fundraising:** Is responsible for the fund-raising efforts of the Nature Society.

**Programming:** Is responsible for setting up the speaker programs, workshops and all of the nature programs within Cummingson Park, Tenhave Woods and the Arboretum.

**Ways & Means:** Investigates means of grant solicitation and then follows through accordingly.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Don Drife (248-892-3380)

Vice President & Communication: Ted Vickers (248-549-5366)

Treasurer & Ways & Means: Helen Cost (248-549-9423)

Recording Secretary: Nancy Vickers (248-549-5366)

Education: Chris Ethridge (248 229-9335)

Program: Bob Muller (248-398-0195)

Stewardship-Tenhave: John Semchena (248-549-1362)

Stewardship-Cummingson: Mary Fredricks (248-280-1042)

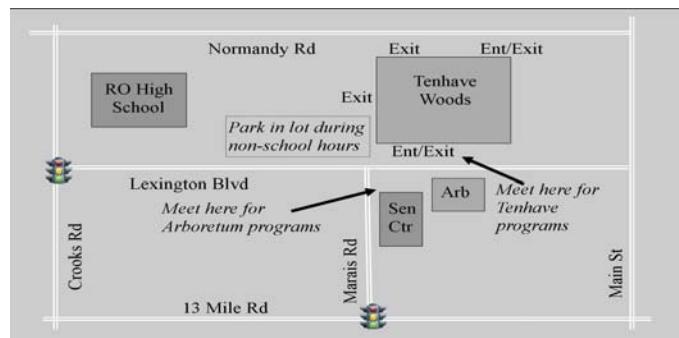
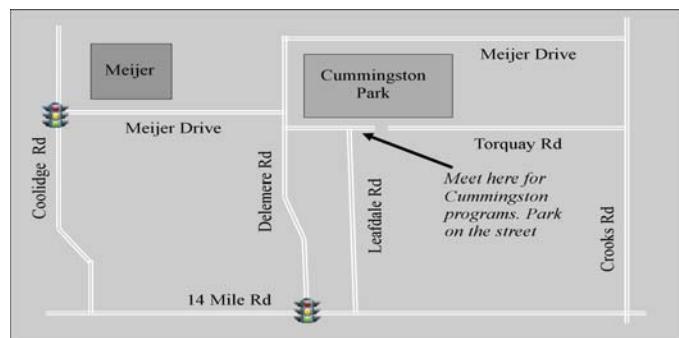
Troop 1627: Richard Stoll (248-398-2437)

At Large: Dena Serrato (248-542-2820)

At Large: Mary Kleiss (248-399-6679)

## Cummingson Park, Tenhave Woods, and the Arboretum

Traffic Light



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & Cummingson Park trail maps, please go to our web site (listed below under our tree logo), link on to "Park Locations" and then "Map for park trail locations"

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The Royal Oak Nature Society is a non-profit education and stewardship group working within the city of Royal Oak's two nature parks, Tenhave Woods and Cummingson Park. Our mission is to foster awareness and usage of these two natural areas. We accomplish this by providing stewardship for the continuing improvement and maintenance of them. In addition, we are in the process of developing an arboretum in Warden Park East. We also offer a wide range of natural history educational programs for children and adults.

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