



The Chinquapin

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Spring 2018

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

Volunteers Making Our Nature Parks Better

by Mary Fredricks

The Royal Oak Nature Society is rather unique among nature societies in the greater Detroit area. We are a totally volunteer group, but we accomplish what other groups do with a paid staff: we protect our natural areas, we lead walks, we educate the public about our wooded areas and about nature in general. We make this possible with the enthusiasm and expertise of our volunteers.

Unfortunately, relying solely on volunteers does have its down side. Volunteers age, their lives get busy and they can't devote as much time, or they move away. In order to survive, the Nature Society needs to add to our numbers regularly, and we need to be creative about volunteerism. One way we already do this is to allow Eagle Scout candidates to develop and carry out projects in our woods and arboretum. They have been invaluable over the years as they build new trails, label trees, and create signs, among other projects. Recently other groups have also helped us out. The Greater Royal Oak Democratic Club has adopted Cummington Park and we have been included in their cleanup efforts. Also in Cummington, 37 employees of Stout Risius Ross, Inc. located in Southfield helped Nature Society volunteers one day this past October. They lined trails with logs, cleared a spillway into the pond, and removed debris from our meadow restoration site. In addition to our official volunteers, we also have unofficial, ad hoc volunteers. A group of people who live near Cummington regularly grab trash bags and head into the woods, removing trash as they enjoy the park.

If you would like to see our two nature areas and the arboretum survive and flourish well into the future, please think about ways you, your group, or a group that you know about, can help the Nature Society. Share your ideas at our board meeting (which are held before the speaker program and in the same place), show up for one of our work days, volunteer to help with our annual fundraiser in April, learn to lead a nature walk, or create a project. The Nature Society needs you!

To get in touch with us, go to our website (www.romi.gov/nature). Then, click "[Contact the Board](#)" for contact information. For more volunteer information, click "[Get Involved](#)."



Volunteers from Stout Risius Ross, Inc at Cummington Park

NOTE: The March speaker program is being held on the 2nd Wednesday (March 14th) of the month. See page 3 for more details.

The Arboretum Trails and Why They're Named

by Bob Muller

The arboretum has four trails and they now have names. During an Eagle Scout project that took place in the spring of 2017, street signs with the names of four men were placed at different trail intersections throughout the arboretum. I have been asked a few times who these four men were. All of them were major forces in Royal Oak having nature parks. And for a long time, we felt somehow we should honor them. Ed Biemel, Joe Fisher, Bob Gasorowski and Ray Safronoff are the four gentlemen. Although Don Drife, our botanist, knew two of them, I may be the only one that knew all four.



Fisher/Safronoff Arboretum Trail Sign

At Whittier School in the 1950's when I was a student there, Ray Safronoff was a teacher and Ed Biemel was the art teacher. Joe Fisher was a longtime art teacher at Dondero High School, and his wife was a student teacher for my fourth grade class. Bob Gasorowski was a biology teacher at Kimball High School. He ran the nature programs in both Tenhave and Cummington in the 1970's. I became friends with the Fishers when we both attended Bob's nature walks. I still have wildflowers in my garden that Joe gave to me.

How are these men connected with Royal Oak's nature parks? Biemel, Fisher, and Safronoff were collectors of wildflowers and were somewhat in competition with each other on what they had in their gardens. They were the discoverers of the land that became Cummington Park Nature Area. There were many pieces of undeveloped land in Royal Oak in the late 1940's and early 1950's and that is where these three searched for wildflowers. I talked to Ray about 15 years ago and asked him which of the three was the founder of that land. His comment was, that was over 50 years ago and he didn't remember. Biemel, Safronoff and Fisher made the value of Cummington known to the community and were instrumental in the city saving it as a park. When Dr. Walter Nickell from Cranbrook was looking at the wildflowers in Cummington, he said that it was one of the finest wildflower areas in southeast Michigan. Bob Gasorowski, aside from running the city's nature programs in both Cummington and Tenhave, was

instrumental in helping to save Tenhave Woods. In 1967, there was an incident in the park that had many in the neighborhood wanting the woods cut down. Bob was one of those that fought hard to keep it, realizing its value as a nature park. He received death threats for his activism. The compromise is what we see today. The fences went up, and the only way to get in was by going to City Hall and getting a key. The areas outside of this fence had the underbrush cut to create the sylvan park areas. In 1986, turnstiles were installed and the park was opened back up again to the public.

When picking which trail in the Arboretum would have which name, it was decided that the trail going past the birdfeeder would be named after Gasorowski, because he was a very active bird bander. Joe Fisher had planted a small wildflower garden directly behind the Community Center after it was built. The trail closest to that garden is named after him. The other two trails go through areas that also have wildflowers and thus are named after Biemel and Safronoff. Click [here](#) for a map of the arboretum along with their trail names.

The trail names and signs are a very small thank you for what these four men did. Without them, we would not have our Royal Oak nature parks.

SPEAKER PROGRAMS

Our monthly general meeting/speaker programs (October to May) are held on **Wednesday's** at the **Royal Oak Middle School** at 709 N. Washington. We meet in either the auditorium or the "Gathering Place", both of which can be reached via the school's southeast entrance. The general meeting begins at **7:30 pm**, with the speaker program commencing several minutes later. The program is usually a slide show that focuses 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.

"Exploring the Lower Peninsula's National Lakeshore" presentation is being held on **March 14th**. Did you know that there is a beautiful national park only four hours from Royal Oak? The Sleeping Bear is an area unlike any other, over 50,000 acres along Lake Michigan replete with hills and forests of birch, pine, beech and maple. The Lakeshore encompasses numerous small lakes and rivers, sugar sand beaches and, massive coastal sand dunes and bluffs. Join park ranger Stephanie Schneider to learn about the beautiful perched dune ecosystem of the Leelenau Peninsula's Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

"Holland Ponds Park" presentation is being held on Wednesday, **April 4th**. In 2001, the State of Michigan deeded the 200-acre parcel now known as Holland Ponds to Shelby Township. This area which is adjacent to the former G & H Landfill and backs up to Yates Cider Mill, was once considered lost because of toxic waste! It became part of a clean-up project by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. From the clean-up efforts, it has made a tremendous come-back, and is now home to a number of thriving animals, fish, and plant-life.

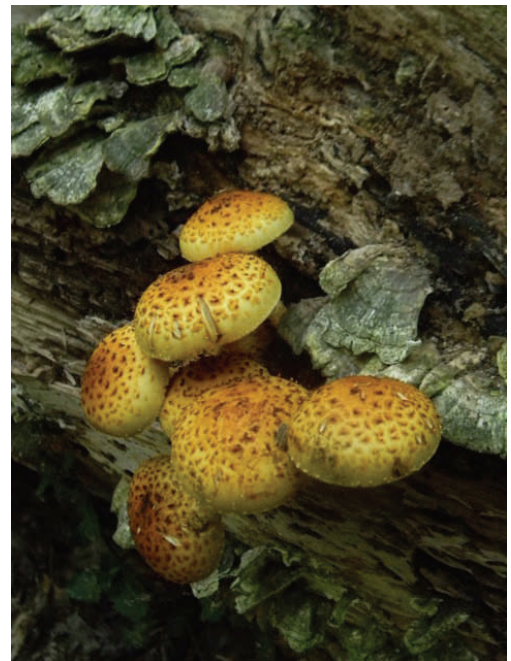
Visitors regularly see proof of its success in the variety of flourishing wildlife such as Blue Heron, Green heron, Great Blue Heron, Little Green Heron & Great Egret that choose Holland Ponds to make their nests. Jim Gammicchia, coordinator-of the Burgess Shadbush Nature Center and River Bends Park located in Shelby Township, will do a talk about Holland Ponds Park. He will also talk about parts of the Clinton-Kalamazoo Canal that are still visible at this site and will give an explanation and history of its importance and influence in the community.

"Ferns of Michigan" presentation is being held on **May 2nd**. Most ferns are leafy plants that grow in moist areas under a forest canopy. They are some of the oldest plant species on earth and one of the more difficult groups of plants to tell apart. Join Carol Clements, recently retired as manager of Nankin Mills Interpretive Center for Wayne County Parks, as she will be talking about Michigan ferns. She will be discussing their unique characteristics that will help you to recognize some of these beautiful botanical treasures!

Royal Oak Nature Society Friends of Fungi is a group that promotes the understanding of, and an appreciation for, fungi in general and those fungi found in Tenhave, Cummingston, and other local urban woods. This group is open to anyone who wants to learn more about fungi which also includes mushrooms. During the winter, the group meets one Wednesday a month (November, January, February & March) at the **Royal Oak Senior Center** (3500 Marais) beginning at **7:00 pm**. Everyone is welcome. There is no cost or pre-registration. There is usually a specific topic that is being talked about at each of these meetings. Mary Fredricks heads this group. Check out the Nature Society's website for more information.

On **March 7**, Phil Tedeschi, a member of the board of the Michigan Mushroom Hunter's Club and an advisor for Midwest American Mycological Information, will present a program on psychedelic mushrooms.

The photo on your right is *Pholiota*. It is a large genus estimated at over 200 North American species.



**ALL NATURE WALKS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE
PREREGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED**

NATURE WALKS

CUMMINGSTON PARK: Park is just east of Meijer. 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 and Full Moon walks, park and meet at the Marais/Lexington lot.

ARBORETUM: Park is just behind the Senior Center (3500 Marais). Park and meet on the north side of the Senior Center.

For our nature walks, wearing boots is recommended in the winter and spring months. Using insect repellent and dressing appropriately is advised from late spring to the end of summer. Go to our website to find a [parks location map](#).

"Owl Hoots" are being held at **Cummingston** on Tuesday, **March 6th** and at **Tenhave** on Thursday, **March 22nd**. Both programs start at **7:30 pm**. We will walk into Tenhave and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

"Early Spring Forest" nature walk is being held at **Cummingston** on Saturday, **March 24th**, beginning at **2:00 pm**.

"Spring Wildflower" nature walks are being held at **Tenhave Woods** on:

Sun, **April 15th** beginning at **2:00 pm**

Sun, **April 22nd** beginning at **2:00 pm**

Tue, **May 1st** beginning at **7:00 pm**

Sun, **May 6th** beginning at **2:00 pm**

Sat, **May 12th** beginning at **2:00 pm**

We will be looking for Red & White Trillium, blue & yellow violets, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Bloodroot, Trout Lily, Wild

Geranium, Spice Bush, Spring Beauty, Wood Poppy, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, & Wood Anemone and more.

"Mushroom Walks" are scheduled for Saturdays beginning at **10:00 am** on:

April 28th at Tenhave Woods

May 26th at Cummingston Park

Mary Fredricks, a member and botanist/mycologist of the Royal Oak Nature Society, will lead the walk.

"Pond Life" program is being held on Sat, **April 28th**, beginning at **2:00 pm** at **Tenhave Woods**. From the Lexington entrance, follow the signs to the pond. We will be sampling the vernal pond for what is living in it. We will have viewing trays to examine what we find. For those interested small aquarium nets will be available for you to catch your own pond life and have us identify. Come and learn about the interesting aquatic wildlife of Dragonfly Pond.

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR PATRON MEMBERS

A special thank you from the Nature Society goes out to our following 2017/18 Patron members for their generous financial contribution to us:

Ann Bueche

Bonnie Burnett

Maureen Dunphy

Edwards Family

Don & Kathy Gavin

Barbara Grinke

Bonnie Michalak

Richard & Pat Stoll

Jean Watson



Fall 2017 Stewardship Report for the Arboretum

In mid October, a five person work crew moved five yards of dirt and spread 10 yards of wood chips onto our new arboretum trail. A ditch in the east area of the arboretum was filled in. Seven new wire cages (photo on right) were built for trees that were planted in different areas. These trees will add to additional species of trees to our tree collection of native trees. Two bird houses on metal poles were also installed in the arboretum.



In Remembrance

We are saddened to announce that one of our long time members passed away last October. Susan Schneider was a member of the Nature Society and frequently attended our meeting/speaker programs. Along with her husband, Robert, and their daughter, Stephanie, the Schneiders have been Nature Society supporters since 2005.

Royal Oak Nature Society's 13th Annual Soiree/Fundraiser

WHEN: Friday, April 27th, 2018

WHERE: Royal Oak Elks Club (2401 E. 4th Street at Stephenson Hwy, Royal Oak)

TIME: 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

FOOD & DRINKS: Light refreshments & a cash bar

ACTIVITIES: Silent and live auction, and a 50/50 raffle.

TICKET COST: \$10

WHERE TO PURCHASE TICKETS: Speaker programs, nature walks, from any Nature Society board member or sending a check in by mail. If you purchase tickets in advance, you will get the first chance at winning a door prize.

MAILING CHECKS:

- Write check out for \$10/person
- Payable to the "Royal Oak Nature Society" with "Fundraiser Tickets" written on memo line
- Mail check to the Royal Oak Nature Society, 1600 N. Campbell, Royal Oak, MI 48067
- Ticket(s) will be waiting for you at the door

PURPOSE OF THE FUNDRAISER: To raise money for improvement projects in Tenhave Woods, Cummington Park, and the Royal Oak Arboretum which is located behind the Royal Oak Senior Center (3500 Marais).

The Nature Society could use your help. We need volunteers to supply and bring in food on the night of the fundraiser. To cover our expenses, we are trying to find businesses/groups that might be interested in becoming a sponsor. They would be able to put their advertising material out on our "Sponsor" table just inside the hall entrance. The business/group name would be prominently shown on signage, in our program guide and in our upcoming fall newsletter. As a sponsor, the business/group would get two free tickets to the fundraiser. Cost is \$100. Also, we are also looking for donations from businesses that can be used as auction

items. If you know of anyone who might be interested in helping us out in any of these ways, please have them contact us at 248-246-3380 and leave a message or e-mail us at naturesociety@romi.gov.

This event is a great way to show your support for the Nature Society. You get to bid on over 140 interesting items while enjoying great food and drinks along with getting to chat with your friends and other Nature Society supporters. So, this is an cordial invitation for you to join us on April 27th. Hope to see you then!

SMOKE FREE FUNCTIONS

The Nature Society Board of Directors has adopted a resolution that all of our programs are smoke free including all functions of the Royal Oak Nature Society (indoors or outdoors). We are committed to protect the health of everyone who attends any of our programs.



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

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



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) | Receive newsletter |
| ☐ Associate (\$5) | by: |
| ☐ Supporting (\$10 & up) | ☐ Regular mail OR |
| ☐ Patron (\$50 & up) | ☐ 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, Cummington 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 Cummington Park, Tenhave Woods and the Arboretum.

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Don Drife (248-885-6821)

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)

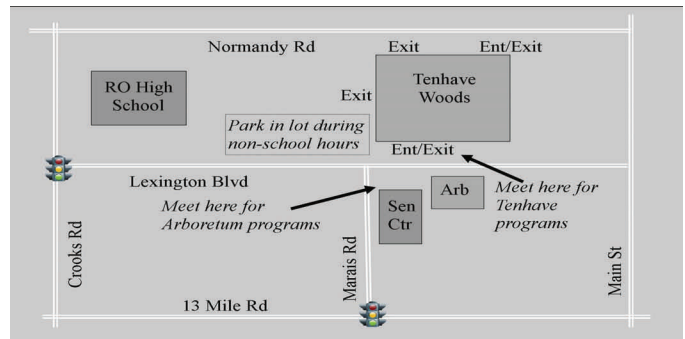
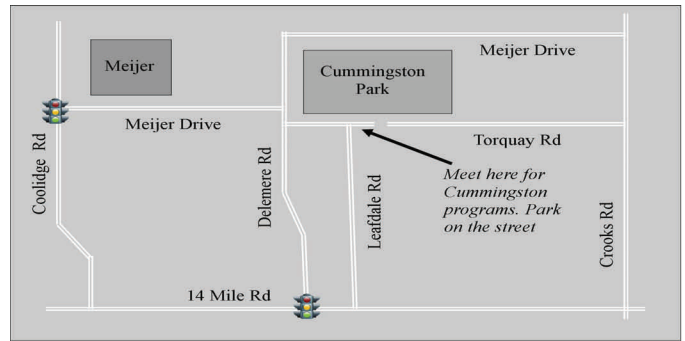
Stewardship-Tenhave: John Semchena (248-549-1362)

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

Scout Representative: Richard Stoll (248-398-2437)

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

Cummington Park, Tenhave Woods, and the Arboretum



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & Cummington 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"

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 Cummington Park). We are developing an arboretum behind the Royal Oak Senior Center. Our mission is to foster the awareness and usage of these three natural areas and provide park stewardship to them. We also offer a wide range of natural history education programs to the community.

The Royal Oak Nature Society
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www.romi.gov/nature

