

THE ACTIVIST

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB

<http://michigan.sierraclub.org/semg>

The Green Ride - Testing some of the most popular hybrid vehicles

By Jeremy Carroll and Ponti Ang-Carroll

Honda first broke into the U.S. gasoline-electric hybrid vehicle scene in the late 1990s with the introduction of the Insight. Since then, Toyota has become a leader in the market, and now domestic automakers are following suit.

As more car companies have entered the gasoline-electric hybrid market, a more environmentally friendly automobile has never been more accessible to consumers.

According to www.hybridcars.com, a Web site dedicated to these vehicles, there are currently 12 models of hybrids sold in the United States, with several more promised by companies such as Nissan and Daimler-Chrysler in the future. In addition to the growing number of private autos on the road there are hybrid options for mass transit, including buses and taxi fleets. Government vehicles, including nearly 900 units of New York City's fleet, have turned to hybrids, according to the site.

Because they lower the amount of gasoline usage, hybrids drastically reduce emissions from these vehicles. According to Toyota, the popular Prius generates 70 percent less smog-forming emissions than the average new vehicle.

Besides getting drastically better gas mileage than their gas-only counterparts, many hybrids come with a tax incentive as well. The incentives are based on a formula developed by the federal government to reward car owners for choosing a more environmentally friendly vehicle. When sales of a vehicle top 60,000, the incen-



Toyota Prius

MRSP: \$22,175

60 mpg city

51 mpg hwy

Standard Engine: 1.5-liter, 16 valve, 110 hp @ 5000 rpm, VAR speed automatic transmission.

Special Features & Options: Smart Key System, VSC, Backup camera, navigation system.

Warranty: 3-year/36,000-mile bumper-to-bumper. 8 year/100,000-miles on hybrid components.



Honda Civic

MRSP: \$22,600

49 mpg city

51 mpg hwy

Standard Engine: 1.3-liter, 8 valve 110 hp @ 6000 rpm, VAR speed automatic transmission.

Special Features & Options: Satellite-linked navigation system.

Warranty: 5-year/50,000-mile powertrain. 8-year/80,000-miles on hybrid battery.



Saturn Vue

MRSP: \$22,370

27 mpg city

32 mpg hwy

Standard Engine: 2.4-liter, 16 valve 170 hp @ 6300 rpm, 4 speed automatic transmission.

Special Features & Options: Onstar navigation, heated seats.

Warranty: 3-year/36,000-mile bumper-to-bumper.



Ford Escape

MRSP: \$25,655

36 mpg city

31 mpg hwy

Standard Engine: 2.3-liter, 16 valve 155 hp @ 6000 rpm, VAR speed automatic transmission.

Special Features & Options: Navigation system, VSC.

Warranty: 5-year/60,000-mile powertrain. 8 year/100,000-mile on hybrid components.

tive drops and gets slowly phased out, according to Internal Revenue Service.

To see what all the hype around the hybrids was about and to check whether they drove like "normal" vehicles, we decided to take some of them for a spin. Wanting to test-drive both sedan and SUV style hybrids, we settled on testing the Toyota Prius, Honda Civic Hybrid, Saturn Vue Green Line and the Ford Escape Hybrid.

Toyota Prius

With an in-dash touch screen com-

puter, a strange looking knob on the dash as a shifter and gauges in unusual locations, the Prius looks intimidating at first. But for the environmentally conscious tech-head, this is a dream vehicle.

The car starts much like a computer, by pressing an "on" button. Then the touch screen computer gives the driver the option to check whether the car is using gasoline assistance or the battery,

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EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE PLANET

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

SEMG General Membership meetings are held the 1st Thursday of each month from 6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the Northwest Unitarian-Universalist Church, 23925 Northwestern Hwy (located along the southbound US10 service drive between 9 & 10 Mile) in Southfield, MI.

A potluck dinner will be held monthly from 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. after which time the meeting begins promptly from 7:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. If you are coming for the potluck portion of the evening, please bring a dish to pass! For more info, contact Carol Izant, Program Chair at cogknot@yahoo.com or 248.352.6137. All are welcome!



Executive Committee

The **Executive Committee** meets the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at 100 N. Crooks Road, NE corner of 14 Mile, in Clawson.

Conservation Committee

The **Conservation Committee** meets every third Thursday at 7 p.m., at 100 N. Crooks Road, NE corner of 14 Mile, in Clawson.

Political Committee

The **Political Committee** meets the last Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Jimi's restaurant on Washington, 1 block north of Lincoln (10 1/2 Mile) in Royal Oak.

April 5, 2007 - "Protecting Utah's Red Rock Canyonlands: The Future Awaits" – Presentation by Clayton Daughenbaugh, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. Utah's spectacular red rock canyonlands include 9.5 million acres, largest remaining unprotected wildlands in the lower 48 states. The citizens' proposal for Utah wilderness is embodied in "America's Red Rock Wilderness Act" which will be reintroduced in the 2007 Congress. One of 2006's most egregious proposals to sell public lands and give the resources to local development projects focused on the Zion/Mojave area in southwestern Utah. In addition, the Bush administration has tested many of its worst ideas on Utah's wildlands before spreading them nationwide. Could 2007 be a good year for Utah's red rock wilderness? Please join us in learning what we can do together to protect this special place.

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You are encouraged to contact the individuals and get involved! It's your chance to make a difference in the quality of life you endorsed when you joined the Sierra Club.



The Activist is printed on recycled paper.

Thermal Solar Activism Going On

By Hal Newnan
Chapter Energy Subcommittee member

It's pretty amazing to find out what climate change has in store for our planet. Judged by most informed science, we people have only a narrow window of opportunity to stop the damage. Al Gore and Tony Blair say there remain only about 10 to 15 years, may be even less, before negative feedback loops will take over. There is plenty to get angry about, and most of us deserve some blame. So get angry enough to go into action now and talk others into doing the same! We need the political will to make major changes now, when we still have not reached that tipping point.

It's important what we can do as individual consumers, and as or more important that we lobby our government, industries and businesses to take action to stop global warming. Our Chapter's Energy Committee (a sub committee of its Conservation Committee) is working on:

- Promoting the Sierra Club's Cool Cities program and,
- Helping to determine the state's electric generation future, joining other environmental groups in advising the MI Public Service Commission as it develops Governor Granholm's Michigan 21st Century Energy Plan.

Be an activist

Cool Cities is one of the Club's "smart energy" campaigns, a national program to combat global warming by prompting cities to reduce energy consumption and noxious emissions. I recommend this program to members concerned about energy inefficiency and climate change who want to influence decisions regarding energy use right where they live. In Michigan, mayors from Southfield, Ann Arbor, Marquette, Grand Rapids and Berkley have already signed on to the agreement.

Visit www.sierraclub.org/cool_cities to learn more about this campaign. To get involved, please contact volunteer leaders Anna Holden, anna.holden@michigan.sierraclub.org, or Ed McArdle,

ecoguy2@netzero.net; in Oakland Co., you can also contact Leigh Fifelski (SC staff) at leigh.fifelski@sierraclub.org. Get involved in the Energy Subcommittee and we'll help you write your mayor to ask her, or him, to sign onto the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, a key step in becoming a Cool City. Then we'll help you guide your mayor in how to get an action plan worked up and implemented.

Set a personal example by reducing your own carbon emissions. There are lots of tips for lowering one's energy use: (1) tighten your house (no air leaks, good insulation, and high efficiency windows); (2) replace inefficient appliances such as your 10-year old refrigerator with Energy Star, high-efficiency ones, incandescent light bulbs with Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs), etc.; (3) install renewable energy devices, such as solar hot water tanks; and (4) buy high-efficiency cars with miles per gallon greater than 40 mpg.

"...unchecked, climate change will swamp every other issue facing us today."

-Ross Gelbspan, Author

Learn more about climate change and then educate others. If you'd like to speak at schools about climate change please let us know. I saw Al Gore's incredible movie, "An Inconvenient Truth," and now I'm committed to holding five climate change activism screenings of "Truth" in SE Michigan. So if you'd like one in your area, please let me know. I can be reached at HNewnan@SBCGlobal.Net, or 586.758.6461. Or, you too can hold these screenings! E-mail me and I'll help with that.

In January 2006 I got started as an environmental activist. Fundamental to my development were my readings of "The Weather Makers" by Tim Flannery,

SEMG



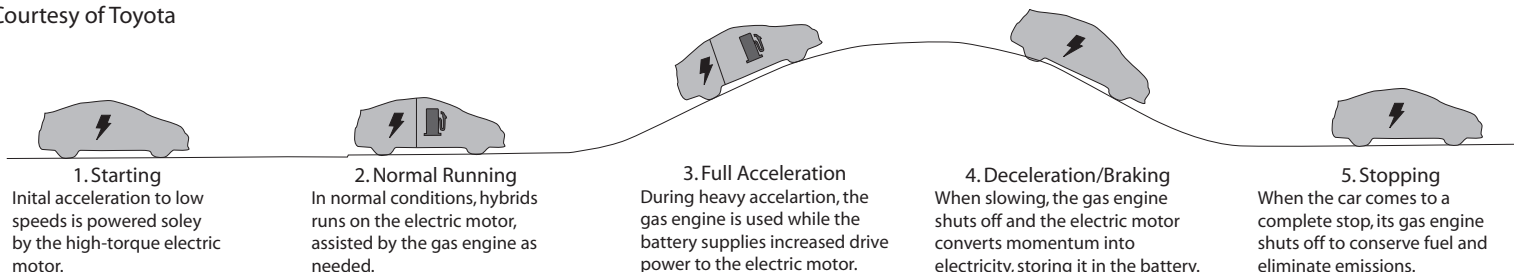
Energy Issue

and "Boiling Point: How Politicians, Big Oil and Coal, Journalists, and Activists Have Fueled the Climate Crisis-and What We Can Do to Avert Disaster" by Ross Gelbspan. This book compares the best climate change curbing proposals and ranks "The World Energy Modernization Plan" as the best. Visit <http://www.heatisonline.org> to find out more about it.

* * *

Got something to say?

Let us know. Send us an article on anything you want to talk about, whether it's about mass transit or energy or just an announcement, we'd like to hear about it. Please submit all articles/announcements to Lydia Fischer at: lydfisch@mindspring.com



Hybrids. . .continued from page 1

along with constant feedback of current mpg. The computer also controls the radio and the climate inside the vehicle.

List-priced at \$22,940, the standard high-tech features include the Smart Key. When programmed with the vehicle, the key – which uses sensors -- unlocks doors as the driver nears the vehicle, and the car can be started without inserting the key.

Although it has an EPA rating of 60 mpg in the city and 51 mpg on the highway, the Toyota Prius averages about 50-55 mpg, our salesperson said. The lithium ion battery, which comes with an 8-year or 100,000 mile warranty, is placed underneath the back seats and allows them to fold down for extra storage space.

Blind spots prove to be one of the downsides to the Prius. Drivers don't get a full picture of what is behind them through the rearview mirror.

The tax incentive for the Prius has dropped recently after sales of the vehicle topped 60,000 this year. New buyers will get a \$1,575 break through March 31, 2007 and a \$787.50 break through Sept. 30, 2007.

Honda Civic

With an easy-to-read dashboard and plenty of legroom, the Honda Civic Hybrid was impressive both on city streets and the freeway, displaying a surprisingly strong pickup. The car also handled well, taking corners smoothly. EPA has rated the Civic at 49 mpg in the city and 51 mpg on the highway

Compared to the extremely high-tech Prius, the Civic seems almost low-tech. There are only a few bars to read in the digital dashboard. However, the driver receives constant feedback on whether the car is using the battery or getting assistance from gasoline. It also has a read-out indicating current aver-

age mpg. During most of our test, the numbers ranged from 35 mpg to 39 mpg. The dash also digitally informs the driver of the need of an oil change.

The Civic's interior is attractive, with loads of leg room for passengers. But we were disappointed by the placement of the lithium ion battery. It is stored in an eight-inch space between the back seat and the trunk, eliminating the possibility of folding down the back seats.

The moderately equipped version tested was priced at \$23,195 and all models carry a 3-year or 36,000 mile warranty bumper-to-bumper, and a 5-year warranty on the engine and transmission. As with the other vehicles, we were told the battery is expected to last 8 years. According to the IRS, purchasers of the Civic currently get a \$2,100 tax rebate.

Saturn Vue

General Motors' first attempt at a hybrid model, the Saturn Vue Green Line, hit the market earlier this year. It has an EPA rating of 27 mpg in the city and 32 mpg on the highway.

The Vue rides smoothly for an SUV, and handled extremely well. More so than with the other hybrids tested, the driving experience was similar to a gasoline-only vehicle. It also has ample space inside and, equipped with a comfort package, is listed at \$24,270.

However, despite being very high-tech, the Vue lacks basic new-car technology in the interior, such as a digital read out. It does not indicate current average mpg. It does have a meter for gas assistance, which reads much like an oil pressure gauge.

It comes with a 3-year or 36,000 miles bumper-to-bumper warranty, and a 5-year or 100,000 mile warranty on the power train. According to the IRS, the tax rebate is relatively small: buyers only get a \$650 credit.



Courtesy of Honda

Ford Escape

We were unable to test-drive a hybrid Ford Escape, as it was not stocked at any of the local dealerships. A salesperson said that not many lots have been carrying the hybrid version of the Escape.

Although there wasn't one to test, SEMG member Dave Llewellyn and his wife, Barb, own one, Barb being the main driver. She told us she loves the vehicle; among other advantages, it averages about 32 mpg in city driving, quite a bit higher than the 21 mpg she was getting in her previous gasoline-only Escape.

Barb loves the hybrid's instrument cluster graphics that indicate when the vehicle is getting good mileage. She appreciates that it can haul a lot of stuff, especially with the seats folded down, and she reported it's very good in the snow.

The Escape Hybrid comes in two models, front-wheel or all-wheel drive. The front-wheel drive, which the Llewellyns own, comes with a higher tax incentive of \$2,600. The all-wheel drive version gets a \$1,950 tax break.

Barb's only negative comment on the Escape is that it sometimes seems to lack performance. The Escape, like many of the other hybrids, has a Continuously Variable Transmission, meaning it doesn't give the traditionally shifting sounds. The MSRP on the Escape Hybrid starts at \$26,215.

COULD TRANSIT GET A RAPID START THIS YEAR?

By Ed McArdle,
Conservation Committee Chair

On Dec. 4th the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) released the long-awaited results of the Ann Arbor – Detroit via Metro Airport transit study. After several years of analysis, SEMCOG narrowed the alternatives down to five: (1) premium bus service on present roadway, (2) bus rapid transit with dedicated right of way, and (3) two commuter rail routes over present track, and (4) light rail (electrified modern streetcars) with various combinations of commuter and light rail.

Unfortunately, Parsons Transportation Group, the consultants hired for the study, revealed that none of the four alternatives would likely qualify for federal funds. Most new public transit projects enjoy an 80 percent of federal match to 20 percent of local funding. The Parsons Group cautioned that the Ann Arbor-Detroit plans would be competing with over 280 other transit projects nationwide showing projections of higher ridership and lower cost. This was most disappointing news, to say the least. It means

that taxpayers in our region will continue to send their dollars to Washington and end up subsidizing transit projects somewhere else around the country.

Critics of the study point out that the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) formula for new projects has to meet certain rigid parameters before a project gets recommended to Congress. The Parson's Group admitted that they had to apply worst-case scenarios because of lack of ridership data between Ann Arbor and Detroit. Still, the newly elected Democratic majority in Congress will probably be more friendly to mass transit in Michigan locations and the project may get funding anyway.

Also, the Parsons Group pointed to several other cities that didn't qualify for the FTA funds, yet used local funding to start their own transit systems with such success that they later qualified for expansion with federal money. For instance, Baltimore, Md. built a light rail line, Albuquerque, N.M. set up a new commuter rail and, most interesting, a new commuter rail line was established tying Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach. This last project was built as a temporary response to a year-long expressway repair,



Can commuter trains make mass transit big in Southeast Michigan?

and proved so popular that it qualified for federal matching funds after operating for a while. With these examples in mind, SEMCOG is targeting the two low-cost alternatives, premium bus and basic commuter rail service on the present Amtrak route with shuttle connections at Merriman Road for Metro Airport and from the Amtrak station in the New Center area down Woodward Avenue to downtown Detroit. The remaining options present overwhelming difficulties of distance and cost: light rail would not be appropriate because of the long distances

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The new state legislative session: Grounds for optimism

By Lydia Fischer,
Chapter Legislative Committee

National Sierra Club has launched a major effort to reduce America's dependence on non-renewable, highly polluting sources of energy responsible for global warming, the depletion of energy resources, and severe damage to human health and the environment. To this end, we must change the way we produce and use energy at national, state and local levels. In Michigan, much of the change will be accomplished through legislation. SEMG volunteers Anna Holden, Frank Zaski, Ed McArdle and several others have been working with the state environmental community to secure ambitious yet doable state goals for energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy.

The campaign proposes high-

er standards for energy efficiency through programs for high efficiency appliances, lighting, and other improvements. Because the state has had no such programs for a very long time, the energy savings from upping the standards would be substantial. This effort needs to be coupled with an aggressive policy to increase the proportion of renewable, state-grown sources of electricity from the current 3.5 percent to 20 percent by 2020. Renewables (wind, solar and others) will reduce our reliance on pollution-spewing coal plants, and could be the source of many Michigan jobs in the manufacturing of wind turbines and solar panels.

Our Chapter goals for smarter energy use include a sizable public investment in mass transit for SE Michigan. The feasibility of developing an adequate transit network

depends in part on budget appropriations by the Michigan legislature (for more on the issue of transit, see Ed McArdle's article above).

Our legislative agenda continues to stress the need to protect Michigan's water and air from the polluting impact of Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). Last year, our Chapter was successful in stopping unconscionable attempts in the legislature to further shield these large-scale operations from any government inspection. At the same time, our efforts have increased the public's awareness -- and alarm -- about the ecological and quality-of-life problems stemming from unregulated CAFOs, which should help our CAFO campaign in 2007.

As the 2007-2008 legislature

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save the date
THINK GLOBALLY, EAT LOCALLY
Annual Fund Raising Dinner - Friday April 27, 2007

The speaker has been secured (and is being held in an undisclosed place). The Birmingham Unitarian Church has been reserved, and the dinner committee is hard at work planning an experience that might even top last year's very successful event.

Chris Bedford, activist and filmmaker, will be entertaining and inspiring us on the subject of local agriculture, and "think globally, eat locally." The magic that SEMG's chefs always perform for these dinner events will be cranked up a notch this year, with the objective of using only local products in the menu. DVD's of Chris' film, "What Will We Eat," will be available for purchase.

Remember, this event is the primary way that your local Sierra Club group funds its environmental activities for the year. For more information, watch SEMG's website, your mailboxes (both electronic and snail), or Email Dave Llewellyn at david.llewellyn@michigan.sierraclub.org.

Transit. . . continued from page 5

involved and other possible alternatives would be too costly. After the Dec. 4th SEMCOG meeting, Channel 7 optimistically announced on its news broadcast that the Southeast region could have commuter trains by this summer.

Since federal funds may not be available, the study group will not be restricted to the Ann Arbor-Detroit route and is looking to extend service along the Amtrak route to Royal Oak, Birmingham and Pontiac. This is good news for our Chapter's "Cool Cities Campaign," one of whose goals is to bring adequate public transit to the Woodward Avenue corridor. Since Amtrak has a yard in Pontiac, it would be economical to extend the route to that location, and increase ridership as a result. Amtrak currently runs three daily trains each way between Pontiac and Ann Arbor, covering the 61 miles with 4-5 stops in about 1 hour 40 min. However, this least-cost option does not include track and signal improvements and requires negotiating with Amtrak and the freight railroads for precedence on the railroad. This option is the one that SEMG recommended to SEMCOG in a letter to Carmine Palumbo, Director of Transportation for SEMCOG (see our website at www.michigan.sierraclub.org/semg).

In our written comments to SEMCOG and our presentation at the Dec. 4th meeting, we recommended using the Dequindre cut, which was used as the rail commuter route from Pontiac to the east side of the RenCen until discontin-

ued in 1984. Unfortunately, Mr. Palumbo dismissed our suggestions. In our view, a single-ride option to downtown Detroit would be integral to success. The present plan would use the Amtrak station in the New Center area and have riders transfer to busses. We are not against bus connections, but still think that the route could be extended through the Dequindre cut. The right of way is still there, but Mr. Palumbo gave several reasons why the extension is not being considered: it would add approximately 4 miles of travel to the route, a bike path is being constructed in the cut (although there is room left for one or two tracks), because of on-going development on the east riverfront this route could not access downtown (still, 1/2-3/4 mile east is pretty close) and besides, the community is against it (the first we heard of that).

According to Megan Owens, director of Transportation Riders United (TRU), this starter demonstration has good potential if done right. However, if the trains are slow, late and not rider-friendly, the demo could put a damper on further developments. Will people use public transit if it is competitive with driving both in timeliness and cost? We at SEMG believe so; we only have to look at the double-digit increases in ridership for SMART and Amtrak over the past couple of years. There will be meetings throughout 2007 concerning progress of the study, culminating in public hearings with an environmental assessment by this summer.

Of course, how to pay for it is the big question. The state is broke; cities and

counties have tight budgets. So, is this just a wasted exercise? We hope not. Several factors suggest some optimism:

- Although not yet clear, it may be that the remaining balance of the \$100 million federal allocation for the Ann Arbor-Detroit study can be applied to this startup;
- The change in political climate in Lansing could augur well in changing the shares of appropriation between roads and transit;
- Even business groups are promoting a .09-cent increase in the gasoline tax;
- Private funds may be an option: an economic group is financing an extension of the Washington DC subway system to Dulles Airport in return for a stop at its planned commercial and residential development that would increase the value of its project.

So, there are some public and private pots of money out there that we could possibly tap into, although probably not without a fight.

Our big task will be to point out the economic payback of a tax increase to pay for investment in public transit. But we should keep in mind that this is a matter of survival, not just economics. It is imperative that we reduce global warming gasses. Public transit, especially rail, goes a long way towards reductions in CO2 and other pollutants.

Who knows? If all goes well, perhaps this time next year we'll celebrate with a traveling train party.

GREEN HEARTS AND GREEN HEADS

By Mitch Mitchell,
SEMG Political Committee

In my brief history of political activism to protect the environment, I have been impressed by the dedication and hard work of volunteers and staffers. Whether their efforts go to getting bills passed (or blocked), or the right politician elected, many wonderful people routinely put their time, their minds, their energy and their souls into the ultimate goal of preserving the Earth for our children and for generations after them.

While most environmentalists hold quite similar goals, I've noticed that there are two distinct trains of thought regarding how to use political and legislative action to accomplish them. One train of thought is the passionate, non-compromising, protector-of-the-Earth mind set. These activists -- I'll refer to them as Green Hearts -- have an almost maternal instinct when it comes to the environment. Green Hearts take environmental protection very personally. Their politics are partisan and need no further validation than scorecards issued by environmental organizations showing Republicans consistently voting against pro-environmental initiatives. Green Hearts believe that an environmental agenda cannot proceed effectively unless Democrats are in power. The idea of endorsing a Republi-

can or compromising and benefiting the GOP is a revolting traitorous act.

You gotta love the Green Hearts!

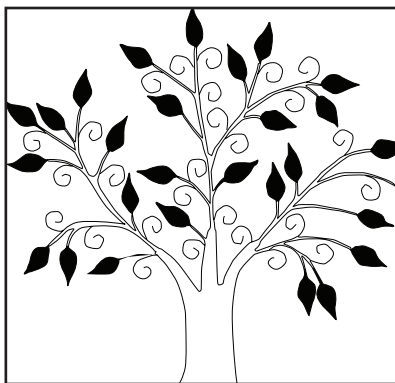
The other train of thought is also passionate but perhaps a more realistic view of the political situation.

People holding these views I call Green Heads. Green Heads are able to be practical in the face of overwhelming odds. They try to work with Republicans to further a green agenda, reaching across party lines even while in the minority. Green Heads feel that if only Republicans could be educated on a subject, they might see the light.

You gotta admire the Green Heads.

There is no right or wrong in being a Green Heart or a Green Head. Both are important to our cause. Both are passionate about environmental protection. Most Sierra Club members fall somewhere in between Green Hearts and Green Heads.

As we enter a new legislative session, the question is "What now?" The 2006 election in Michigan produced a welcome change in our legislature. While the Senate remains Republican, a Democratic House with a Democratic



Governor holds a promise of change. No longer is the Sierra Club forced to use its resources to beat back awful legislation, wondering if Jennifer Granholm has the political clout to veto it. Perhaps now our agenda will get a fair shake in committees. Maybe the Senate will cease their "Nothing for the Governor" campaign knowing that they will be seen as obstructionists of the people's will.

The Sierra Club is a non-partisan organization. Environmental protection is supposed to be a bi-partisan goal. Still, I cannot help but feel that the new Legislature will provide good opportunities for our organization. We have been hanging on by our fingernails for so long that I hope our arms are not too tired to flex. The Green Heads have held the fort. Now is the time to wear our Green Hearts on our sleeve. Now is the time to move our agenda forward with a fierce belief that we can accomplish it together.

To that effect, I invite you to join other SEMG folks and me at our monthly Political Committee meetings. They take place the last Thurs. of each month, 6:30 p.m., at Jimi's restaurant in Royal Oak, located on Washington Street just north of Lincoln (10 1/2 mile Road.)

Saving energy can save you money!

Tips on how to reduce the amount of energy you use and save big.



- Look for the **ENERGY STAR** logo. Replacing old doors, windows and appliances can make your home more energy efficient and save you lots of money on heating and cooling bills.
- Purchasing a **Programmable Thermostat** can help you save a lot of money. Most programmable thermostats cost around \$45 and are easy to set up. It automatically adjust your home's temperature settings, allowing you to save energy while you're away or sleeping.
- Use **Compact Florescent Light bulbs (CFLs)**, instead of incandescent ones. Although CFLs cost more than regular light bulbs, it has a longer life and uses less electricity. For example a 26w CFL bulb is equal to a 100w bulb. Think of the savings!
- Installing **Renewable Energy devices** such as solar panels to obtain usable energy from the light of the sun. By using renewable energy we can reduce our reliance on pollution-spewing coal plants, and it could be the source of many new jobs in the manufacturing of wind turbines and solar panels.
- Buying a more **Fuel Efficient vehicle** can save you lots of money on gas and will make us less dependent on foreign oil. For now, hybrids are the most fuel-efficient way to go, with most vehicles getting up to 40-60 mpg. For those on a budget, cars that get above 30 mpg are also considered fuel-efficient. Every little bit helps!

ATTENTION

Westland, Wayne and Canton Residents Come Together to Save Wetlands

By Jacqueline Rubasky,
Sierra Club member

A large group of homeowners from Westland, Canton and Wayne have formed a non-profit group called Westland Homeowners Committee For Environmental Conservation and Smart Growth (WHC). Their first project is to address a petition to build high-density site condos in the last remaining wetlands on Westland's far west side, bordering Canton and Wayne. The area is unique for many reasons. It includes regulated wetlands and a natural watercourse, and sits within 500 feet of the Hannan drain, by the Lower Rouge River. It also houses an important animal corridor and nesting area. A beautiful buttonbush colony and other natural features uncommon for urbanized Wayne County thrive on and near the site.

Complicating matters is the fact that the wetlands flow onto adjacent

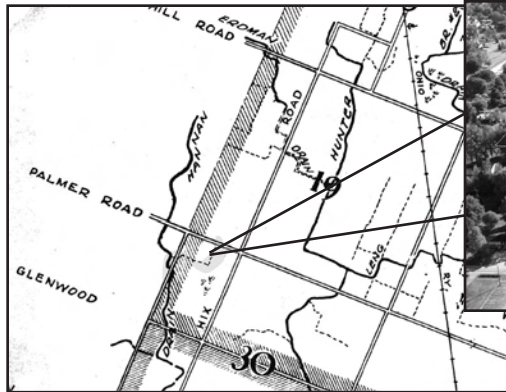


Photo courtesy of Jacqueline Rubasky

The 1.4 acres of wetlands located off of Palmer Road have Westland, Wayne and Canton residents fighting to save it.

property, and that there are connections south of the proposed site to the Lower Rouge River. Moreover, the area has already been hit hard by environmentally insensitive building.

"It was difficult to learn about the steady progression of wetland and habitat destruction over the last several years in the area," said Jim Rubasky,



President of the WHC. "Eighteen acres of wetland just east of this location went unregulated when a drain connection failed to be linked to

the site. This information is from DEQ and other resources. It is unfortunate and makes the importance of preserving the only thing we have left in the area all the more critical."

The site plan presented by the petitioner to the Westland Planning Commission in early September identified 1.4 acres of wetlands. The plan called for the total destruction of the wetlands; the proposed drainage would take the adjacent

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MICHIGAN ROAD BUILDER THREATENS LAKE SUPERIOR

By Ed McArdle,
SEMG Conservation Chair

"Our little point was as silent as a piece of the primeval earth...as if no noise had been heard here since the woods grew, and all Nature seemed sunk in a dead, dreamless sleep." These quiet emotions are found in the book "Wild Shore" by Greg Breining, which deals with the Agassiz expedition to the Canadian north shore of Superior c.1850.

If a Michigan company gets its way, the silence of the north is about to be broken. On the table is a proposal to mine or quarry trap rock on the Lake Superior shoreline for use in building Michigan roads. Superior Aggregates, a subsidiary of Carlo Companies, has purchased 1,000 acres of land; it plans to blast a shoreline hill mountain and haul the rock out by lake freighter. The site, as shown in the

picture, is located a few miles from Wawa, ON, just north of the Lake Superior Provincial Park, and is the western gateway to 100 miles of wilderness shore composed of Crown lands, conservations reserves, and Pukaskwa National Park. This road less and remote stretch is accessible only by small watercraft or kayak.

The site is only a couple of miles from the remains of the Hudson Bay trading post at the mouth of the Michipicoten River, which flows into one of the largest and most majestic bays on Superior. With the small village of Michipicoten and the First Nation Reserve being the only breaks in over 100 miles of wilderness coast, this beautiful area is becoming an ideal destination for wilderness travel. Superior Aggregates plans to operate the quarry up to a 24-hour basis. The noise, dust and lights will spread over the bay as the rock mountain is rocky bluffs are

blasted, crushed and loaded into cargo ships. Although the company has requested a quarry mining permit for only 5 years, previous documents have indicated that they may want expect to operate for the next 100 to 200 years.

There are similarities between this proposal and the nickel sulfide mine proposed by Kennecott for Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Just as is likely in the U.P., the Superior Aggregates quarry could expose sulfide-bearing rock that might damage water quality. The adjacent Michipicoten First Nation now takes its water from Lake Superior, having abandoned its wells due to naturally occurring arsenic contamination. Superior Aggregates has recently submitted a permit to dig below the groundwater table that could result

. . . continued on page 15

Growing and Eating Organic: It makes sense

By Mary LaFrance,
Sierra Club member & organic farmer

It only makes sense that, as environmental activists, we should desire to consume organic products. We can influence the marketplace with our purchases: as demand for “organics” increases, more farmers will be drawn to providing them.

In my early days as a Sierra Club activist, I learned about the hazards and dangers from contaminants in food—such as genetically engineered organisms and E. coli bacteria – from industrialized agriculture. That’s when I began to choose organic food for my table. However, mainstream grocery stores in my community of Brownstown Township (Wayne County), were not willing to offer organic products. I decided to become an organic farmer and make pure food available to the local community. As it turned out, I’m the first and still the only certified organic farmer in Wayne County.

Although most people understand that organic farming is good for health reasons, not everybody realizes that it’s also good for the environment. Organic agriculture feeds the soil and works with nature to grow crops. Along with other certified organic growers, I’m required to provide habitat for beneficial insects in my crop land. We take careful steps

to encourage soil microbes and beneficial insects to help strike a balance and encourage biodiversity. Even compost is regulated to make sure that crops are not contaminated by harmful E. coli bacteria. The opposite is true for conventional agricultural processes which are largely to blame for water and air pollution, soil depletion and habitat loss.

Health benefits derived from consuming organic foods are tremendous. Scientific studies have proven that organic food is more nutritious than conventional food because of the way it’s grown. Packaged organic foods are regulated to prohibit harmful ingredients that are typically allowed in conventional foods, like monosodium glutamate (MSG). Two good references on this topic are “The Chemical Feast” by James S. Turner and “Natural Cures They Don’t Want You To Know About” by Kevin Trudeau.

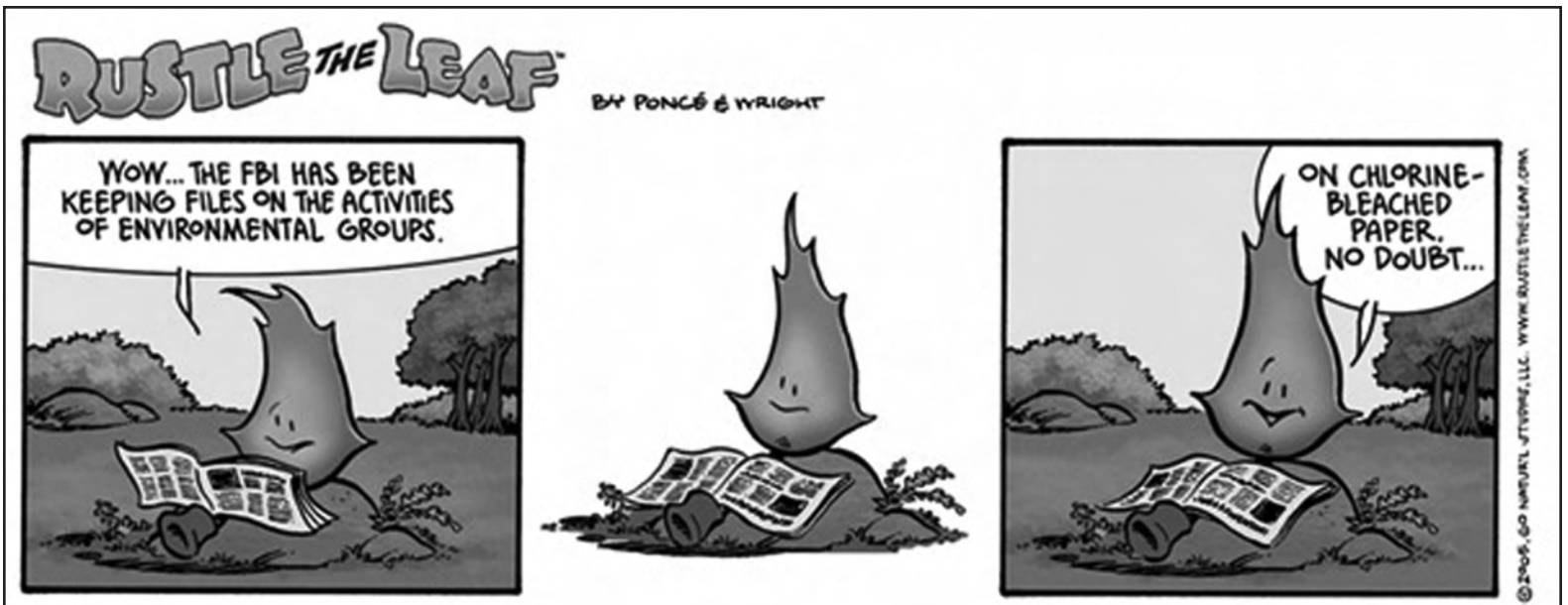
Even though you can now find organic produce sold by national brands, remember that it’s always better to go with local produce. Anything that isn’t grown in Michigan is likely to have traveled over a thousand miles to get to your grocer. Much of its freshness and nutritional value are lost by the time you get



Photo courtesy of Mary LaFrance
Friend Ben Collins (left) helps Henri LaFrance lay mulch.

it. Add to that the fossil fuel consumed to truck it here and its impact on the environment -- carbon dioxide which causes global warming and tailpipe emissions that foul our air -- and you’ll be convinced that your best bet is to support your local growers. Some of them, by the way, are old-time farmers actually using organic methods but unable to afford the certification process. Ask if they “spray” and what kind of fertilizer they use. Chances are they don’t use pesticides or chemicals because they cost too much.

My organic farm produces vegetables and herbs twelve months a year, and berries in the summer. Well, the new seed catalogs are starting to pile up in the mailbox so it looks like I need to get busy planning next season’s crops!





OUTINGS



Note: check www.michigan.sierraclub.org/semg for additions to this schedule after press date.

February

2/3 (Sat.) [E] Maybury in the Moonlight. 6:30 p.m. Come enjoy a chilly evening hike lighted by the moon at Maybury. We will go at a safe, moderate pace as we explore the trails of this previous sanatorium - turned into - State Park. Keep your eyes peeled for the deer following the same trails, and the constellations overhead as we go approx. 4 miles. Dress in layers for the chill, and meet at Maybury State Park - horse stable parking lot. Take Eight Mile Rd. to Beck Road (2 miles west of Northville); go south on Beck ¼ mile to entrance on west side. Drive in to the end and park. Restaurant stop after. Phil, 313-562-1873.

2/4 Pontiac Lake SRA Hike. Noon. We will take the trails for 5-miles at a moderate pace, stopping at beautiful views of Pontiac Lake. This wooded area of the park is rolling hills that screen us from the breezes. Meet in Rochester Hills on the west side of the Meijer parking lot on Rochester Rd. near Auburn Rd, (just north of M-59). Or meet at 1 p.m. at park entrance on Gale Road, near the beach area. Call if weather is ? Restaurant stop after. Sudha, 248-219-3326.

2/10 (Sat.) Maybury State Park Hike. 11 a.m. Hike a moderately paced 3 miles through the back trails of this lovely park enjoying the mature beech, oak and hickory trees and winter birds. Terrain is gently rolling with a variety of woods and fields. Meet at the Concession building at the south end of the west parking lot off the main entrance on Eight Mile Rd. 1.5 miles east of Beck Rd. Trip goes rain or shine. Entrance fee to state park. Optional restaurant stop after. Tom, 248-349-8782

2/11 Brighton Rec. Area Hike. Noon. Enjoy a moderate to brisk 5-mile hike in hilly, wooded terrain, with the option of adding 2 more miles. Call if weather is questionable. Meet in Southfield at Tel-12 Mall, S.E. corner of Telegraph and 12 Mile Rd. Park facing Telegraph, S. of the Marathon station. Optional restaurant stop after. Jo Ellen, 586-773-3104.

2/18 North Bald Mountain Hike. 10 a.m. Besides hills and woods, this lovely area has lakes! And, via some hike leader hocus pocus, this hike will appear completely different from John Herrgott's hike here in January! Plus, hikers can choose either a short, 3 ½ mile version or a longer version, both at a moderate pace. Meet in Bloomfield Hills behind the CVS pharmacy on the S.E. corner of Woodward & Square Lake Rd. (northeast end of lot). Optional restaurant stop after. Bonnie, 248-589-2251.

2/24 (Sat) [E] Ice Hike-Pointe Pelee (Ontario). 9:30 a.m. Join us for our 16th Annual Ice Hike. We are hoping for mounds of breaking-up ice and snow pushed onto the Pointe by Lake Erie winter winds. If we get it, the vista will be spectacular! Dress warmly for 2-3 hours of outdoor fun, exploring the interior trails of Pointe Pelee, and climbing the snow piles out on the pointe. Call if weather is ? Meet in Windsor at the Ontario Information Center on Route 3, (Huron Church Rd.) 3/4 mile south of the Ambassador Bridge. Bring passport; border crossing picture I.D. trail snacks and water. Bridge toll and park admission fee. Restaurant stop after. Liz, 313-581-7579; Lee, 586-294-7789.

2/25 Seven Lakes State Park Hike. 10 a.m. Join us on a 7-mile moderate paced hike through varied terrain and habitat. Hike goes rain or shine, circling several of the lakes here. Bring snacks and good boots. Meet in Bloomfield Hills behind the CVS pharmacy on the S.E. corner of

Woodward & Square Lake Rd. (northeast end of lot) or at 10:45 at the park entrance. Optional restaurant stop afterwards. John Herrgott, 248-766-9575.

March

3/4 Highland S.R.A. Hike. 11 a.m. Join us on a 6-mile hike through varied terrain and habitat. Moderate pace. Hike goes all weather. Bring snacks and good boots for hill traction. Meet in Bloomfield Township in the Costco parking lot near McDonalds on Telegraph (east side) north of Square Lake Rd. Optional restaurant stop afterwards. John Herrgott, 248-766-9575.

3/10 (Sat.) Outings Committee Meeting. 5:30 p.m. If you are interested in leading an outing or learning about leading outings, come to our quarterly planning meeting/potluck. Non-committee members are welcome. Bring a dish to pass, then participate in planning the next quarter's outings. Meet in Berkley - Cindy, 248-336-2984.

3/11 [E] Heritage Park Hike. 10 a.m. Let's look for signs of Spring at this Farmington Hills park. We will enjoy about 4 miles of trails here at a moderate pace, crossing the creek bridges twice. This is a good birding area and perhaps we will spot the resident deer. Meet in Farmington Hills Heritage Park in the visitor center lot. Turn west off of Farmington Rd. (between 10 and 11 Mile) and left at 1st road. Dress for the weather. Restaurant stop after. Phil, 313-562-1873.

3/18 Maybury State Park Hike. Noon. Let's see what's up! Perhaps skunk cabbage or a few brave bluebirds! We'll do about 5 moderately-paced miles over rolling terrain, through woods and meadows, stopping for items of interest. Meet in Southfield behind the Marathon station at Tel-Twelve Mall, southeast corner of Telegraph and Twelve Mile Rd. Optional restau-

rant stop after. Joanne, 248-932-5370.

3/24 (Sat.) Proud Lake Rec. Area Hike. 10:30 a.m. Come and enjoy the emerging skunk cabbage blooms and the hepatica blossoms as we take a 4-5 mile moderate paced hike. Meet in Southfield at Tel-12 Mall, S.E. corner of Telegraph and 12 Mile Rd. Park facing Telegraph, S. of the Marathon station. Restaurant stop after. Liz, 313-581-7579.

3/25 [E] Two Preserve Hike. Noon. We will hike the trail to the W. Bloomfield Heron Rookery, stop to glass the big birds on the nest, look for the great horned owl, then on to the Orchard Lake Nature Preserve trails, then back. 5-6 miles at a moderate pace, with stops to observe. Meet in Bloomfield Township in the Costco parking lot near McDonalds on Telegraph (east side) north of Square Lake Rd. Restaurant stop after. Cindy, 248-336-2984; Marie Tuohey, 248-618-9495.

3/31 (Sat) Independence Oaks Hike. 10:30 a.m. We will be going at a moderate-quick pace for 5-6 miles on the Spring Lake and Ted Gray hilly trails. The snow should be gone, the views magnificent. Meet in Bloomfield Hills behind the CVS pharmacy on the S.E. corner of Woodward & Square Lake Rd. (northeast end of lot), or 11 a.m. @ nature center lot. Restaurant stop after. Bonnie Michalak, 248-589-2251.

April

4/1 Orion Oaks Hike. 11:30 a.m. Let's go enjoy a walk in this beautiful county park, known for its spring prairie wild flowers. We will do a 4-5 mile hike at a slow pace, enjoying the weather. Meet in Troy behind the LaSalle Bank on 14 Mile Rd. just east of I-75 (south edge of Oakland Mall). Or meet at the Baldwin Rd. entrance of the park at Noon. Snow? No go. Restaurant stop after. Lee, 586-294-7789.

4/7 (Sat) [E] Fairlane Mansion Hike. 10 a.m. When the wildflowers come early, they say "Hey, let's go to Fairlane Nature Area". So - let us go bid them welcome! We will walk the mansion grounds, then explore the trails in the U. of M. Dearborn Nature Study

Area for a slow 4-mile walk. Meet behind the Dearborn Centennial Library, south side of Michigan Ave. just east of Southfield Fwy. Meet at west end of parking lot. Restaurant stop after. Liz, 313-581-7579.

4/13-15 Sand Lakes Quiet Area Weekend Campout. Let's do an easy backpack in this beautiful area. Call the leader by April 1 to get details of equipment needed, maps, and schedule and to express your preference for either base-camp or backpack. Meet Friday evening at Sand Lakes; hiking begins Saturday morning. Mary Powell, 810-732-3884.

4/14 (Sat) [E] Clinton River Trail Hike. 10 a.m. Let's hike along the Clinton rail-trail at a moderate pace for 4-miles. We will be watching for early birds migrating back and spring flowers along the path. Call if weather is ? Meet at Rochester City Hall - from Rochester Road - turn right onto University, left at second driveway into library lot. Restaurant stop after. Mary, 248-879-6004.

4/15 [E] Kensington Heron Walk. Noon. Lets enjoy Spring with a slow 5-mile walk on the trails at this Metropark, stopping to smell the wildflowers and observe the nesting Herons sitting in the rookery. Rainy-no go. Meet in Southfield at Tel-12 Mall, S.E. corner of Telegraph and 12 Mile Rd. Park facing Telegraph, S. of the Marathon station, or 12:45 at Kensington Nature Center. Restaurant stop after. Jean, 313-581-6648.

4/22 Brighton Rec. Area Hike. Noon. Come join us for a spring adventure as the fields and glens begin to green up. Trilliums, marsh marigolds and others will be showing up. Dress for the weather, with sturdy boots for a 5-7 mile brisk paced hike. Meet

in Southfield at Tel-12 Mall, S.E. corner of Telegraph and 12 Mile Rd. Park facing Telegraph, S. of the Marathon station. Restaurant stop after. Mike, 313-884-2214.

4/28 (Sat) [E] I.H.M. Motherhouse Tour. 9:30 a.m. What a great way to wind up Earth Day activities - we go to Monroe, MI. to a 70-year old building renovation that is considered one of the top ten in the USA! The Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters trained themselves in revitalization and green construction to minimize the environmental footprint by reducing energy use and pollution. The 280 acre site has restored portions of the grounds to wetlands which hold and filter runoff water, keeping it from flowing directly into the River Raisin. The water from sinks and showers is reused in the buildings toilets; this recycling reduces water usage by 55 percent, diverting 7,000 gallons per day to wetlands and reusing 4,500 gallons to flush toilets. And the parking lots drain into vegetated swales instead of into sewers. They use an innovative geothermal heating and cooling system, natural daylight, and environmentally sustainable products in the building. Famed architect William McDonough aided in the design, which is awaiting certification as a LEED building. Advance reservations are required - call leader by 4/21 to hold a spot. \$10 fee for the tour. We will meet behind the Dearborn Centennial Library, south side of Michigan Ave. just east of Southfield Fwy. Meet at west end of parking lot. Bring lunch and drink for a picnic in the park after the tour. Ed McArdle, 313-388-6645.

4/29 Bald Mt. North Hike.
10:30 a.m. Let's do

. . .continued on page 12-13

General Outings Information

The Outings Committee tries to have a wide variety of outings throughout the year - something to appeal to each resident of our area. Everyone is welcome!

Outings fee is \$1 unless otherwise noted. All must sign a Sierra Club waiver to participate; to preview it, go to the web site at outings/waiver. All outings leave the meeting place at the noted time. All trips begin at the trail head. Call trip leader for more details. Outings codes: **[E]** educational, **[C]** Conservation, **[T]** Trail Work.

For complete schedule, visit SEMG web site at <http://michigan.sierraclub.org/semg>.

Outings. . . continued from page 10

three loop trails at a moderate-quick pace for a 6-7 mile hike. Each loop has its own distinct habitat to enjoy. Meet in Bloomfield Hills behind the CVS pharmacy on the S.E. corner of Woodward & Square Lake Rd. (northeast end of lot), or 11 a.m. @ North Unit parking on Harmon Road, N. of Stoney Creek Rd. Restaurant stop after. Bonnie Michalak, 248-589-2251.

May

5/5 (Sat) [E] Bald Mountain South Wildflower Hike. 10 a.m. Hike about 5 miles, moderate pace, in wooded, rolling terrain with frequent stops to ID and admire spring wildflowers. Bring insect repellent, cameras, flower field guides. Meet in Bloomfield Hills behind the CVS pharmacy on the S.E. corner of Woodward & Square Lake Rd. (northeast end of lot). Optional restaurant stop after. Joanne, 248-932-5370, Phil, 313-562-1873.

5/6 Seven Lakes State Park Hike. 10 a.m. Join us on a 7-mile hike through varied terrain and habitat. Moderate pace. Hike goes rain or shine. Bring snacks and good boots. Optional restaurant stop afterwards. Meet in Bloomfield Hills behind the CVS pharmacy on the S.E. corner of Woodward & Square Lake Rd. or at 10:45 at the park entrance. John Herrgott, 248-766-9575.

5/12 (Sat) [E] Highland Rec. Area Hike. 10:30 a.m. Come and enjoy a leisurely paced 5-mile spring hike. We will be searching for birds and blossoms and stopping along the way. Meet in Bloomfield Township in the Costco parking lot near McDonalds on Telegraph (east side) north of Square Lake Rd. Restaurant stop after. Liz, 313-581-7579.

5/13 [E] Mothers Day Wildflower Walk. 10:15 a.m. Let's start early so there is time for mothers day dinner after – we will do a slow paced 3-mile walk to usher in Spring and honor our Mother Earth and Earthly Mothers! 17 species of blooming wildflowers guaranteed – with possibilities of some extras. We will be stopping often to I.D. them. Bring cameras, magnifiers, field guides, and meet in Livonia

between Wal Mart and Jiffy Lube (near Jeffries) on the southwest corner of Middlebelt and I-96, or 11am at the Cowan entrance of Holliday Nature Preserve (the ONLY one in the county). Restaurant stop after. Max Nemazi, 734-421-4397.

5/19 (Sat) Holly Rec. Area Hike. 4 p.m. Let's change to an afternoon hike over the Holly hills, for 5-miles. Spring flowers will be blooming as we go a moderate pace. Meet in Rochester Hills on the west side of the Meijer parking lot on Rochester Rd. near Auburn Rd, (just north of M-59), or 4:45 at scenic overlook lot in park. Check if weather is ? Optional restaurant stop after. Sudha Chhaya, 248-219-3326; Jari Feldt, 248-608-9232.

5/19-20 (Sat-Sun) Hoist Lakes Backpack Trip. Greet spring in this beautiful wilderness area not far from Detroit. Easy-paced 13 miles total - hiking trip with one overnight camp. Contact leader for trip details, equipment list, etc. John Herrgott, 248-766-9575. Email: jherrgott@comcast.net

5/27 Metro Beach Metropark Hike. Noon. We have planned a moderate-paced 5-mile hike through the nature area hiking trails and park perimeter on the lakeshore. Dress for May weather, call if weather is ? Meet in Clinton Township at Metro Beach Metropark, entrance is on Metropolitan Pkwy. (16 Mile Rd), east of Jefferson Ave. Meet in front of the Nature Center on west edge of lot. Restaurant stop after. JoEllen Lane, 586-773-3104.

June

6/3 [E] Canoe the Lower Huron. 8:45 a.m. Let's get an early start so we can identify all the wildlife coming to life as we drift down the river. This will be a 4-hour easy paddle, from Hudson Mills Metropark down to Delhi. We stop halfway for our picnic lunch. Some canoe experience required, (instructions provided). Reservations of \$20 and your phone number must be sent to Phil Crookshank, 17916 Colgate, Dearborn Heights, MI. 48125 by 5/25. Bring a river lunch, dry clothes, a smile and meet in Livonia between Wal Mart and Jiffy Lube (near Jeffries) on the

southwest corner of Middlebelt and I-96. Phil Crookshank, 313-562-1873.

6/9 (Sat) Stoney Creek Hike. 10 a.m. Hike about 4 easy-paced miles on some of this MetroPark's many trails. Meet in Sterling Heights at Metro-Pkway (16 Mile Rd) and Van Dyke, (south east corner) in the SMART parking lot between the banks. Optional restaurant stop after. Lee, 586-294-7789.

6/9 (Sat) Outings Committee Meeting. 5:30 p.m. If you are interested in leading an outing or learning about leading outings, come to our quarterly planning meeting/potluck. Non-committee members are welcome. Bring a dish to pass, then participate in planning the next quarter's outings. Meet T.B.D. Joanne, 248-932-5370.

6/10 Bald Mountain SRA Hike (North Unit). 10 a.m. Join us on a 7-mile hike through varied terrain and habitat. Moderate pace. Hike goes rain or shine. Bring snacks and good boots. Meet in Bloomfield Hills behind the CVS pharmacy on the S.E. corner of Woodward & Square Lake Rd. Optional restaurant stop afterwards. John Herrgott, 248-766-9575

6/17 Wolcott Mill Hike. 10 a.m. Let's enjoy a moderately-paced, 5-mile hike in this historic Metropark taking the various winding paths through the woods and overlooking the river. We may cross the Clinton River over the Boy Scout bridge and continue our loop on some of the equestrian trails. Meet in Sterling Heights at Metro-Pkway (16 Mile Rd) and Van Dyke, (south east corner) in the SMART parking lot between the banks. If you bring a picnic lunch, you can enjoy the grounds and visit the mill museum after. Jo Ellen, 586-773-3104.

6/23 (Sat) Ortonville Rec. Area Hike. 10 a.m. Enjoy 5-miles of hiking in hilly, forested terrain at a moderate pace, keeping our eyes open for early summer wildflowers. Meet in Bloomfield Hills behind the CVS pharmacy on the S.E. corner of Woodward & Square Lake Rd. (northeast end of lot). Optional restaurant stop after. Mary Powell, 810-732-3884.

6/30 (Sat) Heritage Park Picnic and

Moonlight Hike. 6:30 p.m. Bring your own picnic entrée, a beverage and a dish to pass. After a leisurely meal and conversation, we will go explore 3-4 miles of trails, leaving at dusk and returning when the moon is high (9:30pm). Bring a flashlight, and meet in Farmington Hills Heritage Park in the visitor center lot. Turn west off of Farmington Rd. (between 10 and 11 Mile) and left at 1st road. Look for Sierra signs. Phil, 313-562-1873.

July

7/8 Seven Lakes Hike, Picnic, Swim. 10 a.m. Join us on a 7-mile hike through varied terrain and habitat. Moderate pace. Bring a lunch for lakeside picnic after hike, and a possible swim. Meet in Bloomfield Hills behind the CVS pharmacy on the S.E. corner of Woodward & Square Lake Rd. or at 10:45 a.m. at the park entrance. John Herrgott, 248-766-9575.

7/11 (Wed) Detroit Zoo Walk. 5:30 p.m. Let's take an evening stroll through the zoo grounds. We will go a moderate pace for 2 hours, covering all the paths, with stops at exhibits that are active. Meet at the zoo entrance gates, just off Woodward at 696. Parking + entrance fee = \$14. Ice cream stop after. Cindy, 336-2984.

7/15 Canoe the Upper Huron River. 10:30 a.m. We will start our 3-hour canoe trip below the dam in Island Lake State Park, on a lovely, warm Sunday morning. Kingfishers and great blue herons abound on this stretch. Must phone to reserve your spot by 7/6; \$22 covers canoe fees. Dress for the weather, bring a dry bag for extra clothes, and a picnic lunch for on the river. Meet in Southfield at Tel-12 Mall, S.E. corner of Telegraph and 12 Mile Rd. Park facing Telegraph, S. of the Marathon station. Lee Becker, 586-294-7789.

7/20-23 Backpack North Manitou Island. A beautiful place! We will take the ferry across on Friday, and over three days will hike 23 miles taking ample time to enjoy the island, its beauty and historical interest. Must be experienced backpacker. Contact leader for trip details. Advance deposit required. (8) person limit. John Herrgott, 248-766-

9575. Email: jherrgott@comcast.net

7/28 (Sat) Holly Hike, Sweat, Swim, Picnic. 10 a.m. Let's enjoy a full day here by hiking the 5-mile trails around Wildwood Lake, enjoying the shade of the shore trees. Moderate pace, rain or shine. Bring a lunch and drink for a picnic after, and swim if you wish. Meet in Bloomfield Hills behind the CVS pharmacy on the S.E. corner of Woodward & Square Lake Rd. (northeast end of lot), or 11 a.m. @ Wildwood Lake lot. Possible ice cream stop after. Cindy, 248-336-2984.

August

8/4 (Sat) Lake Erie Metropark Lotus Hike. 9 a.m. We will tour the Museum, then a 5-mile walk to discover the bay of american lotus, arrowhead, flowering rush and fragrant datura alongside Lake Erie. Moderate pace with stops for oohs, aahs and photos. Meet behind the Dearborn Centennial Library, south side of Michigan Ave. just east of Southfield Fwy. Meet at west end of parking lot, or at Marshland Museum at 10 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and drink. Joanne, 248-932-5370; Sharon Smelter, 734-671-8321.

8/18 (Sat.) [E] 7 Ponds Nature Center (Dryden) Hike. 10 a.m. Hike 4-5 fairly level miles at a moderate pace, stopping to appreciate and ID prairie and wetland wildflowers. Bring insect repellent and money for nominal admission fee. Meet in Bloomfield Hills behind the CVS pharmacy on the S.E. corner of Woodward & Square Lake Rd. (northeast end of lot). Optional restaurant stop after. Mary Powell, 810-732-3884.

8/25 (Sat.) Proud Lake Hike. 11 a.m. Hike about 5 miles at a moderate to brisk pace in this level, wooded park along the Huron River. Bring water & boots; hike goes rain or shine. Interesting bogs and river views as summer ebbs. Optional restaurant stop after. From I-96 exit 159, follow Wixom Rd. N. 7 miles; use parking lot beyond ranger station. Tom, 248-349-8782.

Note: check www.michigan.sierraclub.org/semg for additions to this schedule after press date.

Programs. . . continued from page 2

May 3, 2007 - "Detroit is a River: A History of the Straits"- Slide presentation by Robert Burns, Detroit's Riverkeeper, Friends of the Detroit River. The Detroit River is a 32-mile long strait that connects Lake St. Clair with Lake Erie. Rich in history, it provides drinking water, jobs and recreation to more than 3 million people from two countries. The Detroit Riverkeeper slide presentation is a geographical, historical and ecological tour of the river starting from the mouth of Lake St. Clair, down past the Cities of Detroit and Windsor, through Detroit's industrial corridor and south through the many islands that make up the lower river and which provide a diverse contrast between man-made structures and natural settings. This presentation is a unique mix of historical and present day depictions of life on the river with a number of aerial photographs that give a perspective of the river that few have seen.

June 7, 2007 -Don't Get Me Started! Thoughts from a Victim and Defender of America's Personal Transportation Industry Mess"- Presentation by Dave Llewellyn, Sierra Club/ SEMG Ex-Com member. Hybrids, bio-fuel, ethanol, CAFÉ standards, global warming, national security, free trade, terrorism, job security, prosperity. Add it all up in Southeastern Michigan and you get the region most severely impacted by the automotive industry's crisis. How did this happen? Who can we believe? What can we do? Dave came to Michigan in the mid 1960's to seek his fortune in the auto industry. His early employment with GM provided a draft deferment that kept him out of Vietnam and launched him into an engineering career that he is still determined to pursue. He rode the wave of prosperity that was crafted by GM, Ford and the UAW, failing to notice, like many others, that the wave was headed for a rocky beach. Dave has been there and seen it all through the past 40 years. He has strong feelings about the future of the auto industry and its effect on our environment. Please join us!

starts its work, there are several more environment-friendly faces on the floor of the House and the Senate. In SEMG House races, 21 of the 25 candidates endorsed by the Club won, including 2 newcomers. The House leadership changed hands from Republicans to Democrats, who elected Andy Dillon from Redford (D-17) as the new Speaker of the House. The Republicans retained the majority in the Senate, and will be led by Mike Bishop from Rochester (D-12).

We have a magnificent opportunity to make some real positive environmental change for us and the generations to come here in our state. But we need help! I urge you to become part of the team that will be lobbying for these changes. The Legislative Committee is setting up small groups of members to visit with their legislators in-district and start a conversation on the Chapter's priorities. If you're interested in joining these teams, please e-mail me at lydfisch@mindspring.com.

Following with our tradition of the last few years, we will also hold at least two Lobby Days in Lansing in 2007. There is no firm schedule for them as yet, but make sure to get on board by e-mailing Legislative Director Gayle Miller at gayle.miller@sieraclub.org with a request to join the Chapter's Watchdogs.

1964 Sierra Club MILESTONES

After years of persistent lobbying, Congress passes the Wilderness Act, the first wilderness protection legislation in the world. Congress also creates the Land and Water Conservation Fund and provides for review of public land laws. Club advocates establishment of Redwood National Park.

For 100 years, Sierra Club members have been at the forefront of environmental action. When you join the Sierra Club, your voice will be heard on environmental issues through lobbying and grassroots action.

Help us make a difference---
Join Us Today

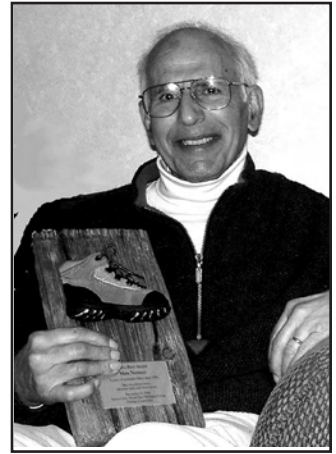
The Dusty Boot Award

By Phil Crookshank, SEMG Outings Chair

On December 9, 2006 the Outings Committee presented the coveted "Dusty Boot" award for outstanding service to Max Nemazi. Max is a long-time Sierra member and outings leader, well-known for feats such as leading the 17-mile day hike of the Potawatami Trail many times in the past. But he's best known for his great knowledge of botany and his interest in sharing his excitement about natural flora with like-minded nature lovers. He has always used a captivating approach – pointing out the amazing structures, formations and patterns that make nature so interesting. Max has led twenty-nine hikes over the last ten years, many of them to botanical gardens. He has many other hobbies, including biking, marathon running, mountain climbing and hiking across continents; but he's so focused on plants that it took me quite a while to find out that he wasn't a professional botanist – he's a manufacturing engineer! No wonder his knowledge of plants has a technical slant that I like.

Max is grudgingly admitting that his years of marathon races have taken a toll on his back, so he will no longer be doing the Potawatami hike. After all, he's now in his eighty-first year! Max wants to continue his involvement in outings, especially flower walks, so he will be doing shorter informational walks from now on. Look for his next one, honoring mothers, on SEMG's Mother's Day Flower Walk – May 13, 2007.

The award features a real dusty boot, with an inscription: To "Max Nemazi – A leader of naturalist hikes since 1995 – May you always have pleasant trails and dusty boots"



Courtesy of Phil Crookshank



Over the last thirty years we've made real progress cleaning up our water. But the Bush Administration is threatening that progress, proposing that "isolated" small streams, ponds, and wetlands no longer be covered under the Clean Water Act. Work with us to strengthen the Clean Water Act and its enforcement. With your support, we can do better now.

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



Photo courtesy of Ed McArdle

A beautiful view from the costal Voyageur Trail shows the magnificent sweep of the michicopten Bay.

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in these and various other contaminants being discharged to Lake Superior.

The local Canadian group opposing the quarry, Citizens Concerned for Michipicoten Bay (CCMB) is asking its Michigan friends to support the Great Lakes United resolution asking Gov. Granholm to restrict the import of road building materials from ecologically sensitive areas. The resolution is available at www.glu.org. Our SEMG has joined with Sierra Club Canada in officially opposing the quarry mine and sent a letter to the appropriate Canadian ministries that can be viewed at www.michigan.sierraclub.org/semg/.

Meanwhile, the project oversight has

been removed from the Ministry of the Environment to the Ministry of Natural Resources – not a good sign. And, if this project goes through easily, it will probably set a precedent. In a study done in 2001, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines identified fifteen sites across the north shore of Lake Superior that could be utilized for trap rock mining. One site is located along the beautiful Batchawana Bay, about 40 miles north of the Soo.

CCMB welcomes donations to cover legal expenses and cost of expert testimony to fight the Superior Aggregates permit. More information can be had at www.ccmb.ca. Please help if you can.

Westland. . .cont. from page 8

wetlands. The City Planning Director and Commission deferred all ownership of the issue to DEQ and Wayne County. Meanwhile, the City Council President has tabled the issue until the DEQ reports are in and a public study session can be held. Following this action, the petitioner wrote to the city asking for a closed study session! Sound fishy? We think so. The 1.4 acres of wetlands the petitioner included on the site plan have now grown to 2.5 acres, according to a DEQ quote in the Observer newspaper!

WHC is requesting the support of Sierra Club members. We are looking for financial support, legal expertise and volunteers. Would you speak at meetings, write a letter of concern or attend DEQ meetings? Do you have contacts in Wayne County, Rouge Program Office or the EPA? Have you ever won an “inconsistent with the adjacent land use” issue? Can you link wetlands to health and safety and tie it back to a city ordinance? Please contact us at WWHAC1@yahoo.com or 805-963-3025.

Some good news: did you hear about the victory for wetlands in West Bloomfield recently? The State of Michigan Court of Appeals supported the local community wetland ordinance. The reference is No. 261766, Oakland Circuit Court, LC No. 2000-026598-CZ; you can send a request over e-mail for the decision.

SEMG Web Site Renovations

By David R. Fuller

In an effort to provide more information to our members and the general public, the SEMG is once again overhauling its Web site. But this time we're taking a different approach and using a National Sierra Club supported Content Management System (CMS) called Atomz to rebuild our site.

What's a CMS? Basically, it's a software program that assists users in the process of entering and maintaining content on a Web site. The primary benefit of a CMS is that, once it's set up, it does all of the actual HTML coding for you, which makes it possible for any Sierra Club chapter/group leader, regardless of their Web or HTML knowledge level, to post content to their chapter or group's Web site.

What this means to you, our members, is that you'll get more of what you visit the SEMG Web site for in the first place—more information about SEMG and southeast Michigan environmental issues. As you probably know, all of the work done under the SEMG banner is done by volunteers, most of whom have families, full-time jobs, and other responsibilities competing for their time. This new approach to content management will make it much easier for time-pressed SEMG leaders to post information and keep you abreast of the latest SEMG project developments.

So check it out and visit often!

Oh, and when you visit our Web site, check out the new SEMG Blog! There you'll see SEMG leaders commenting, ranting, and raving on all things environmental. You can comment on any blog posting by clicking on its associated “Comments” link.

Join a Committee

Want to do more for the environment and your community?
Join a Committee

For more information on committee meetings visit our website:
<http://michigan.sierraclub.org/semg>

What are you waiting for?

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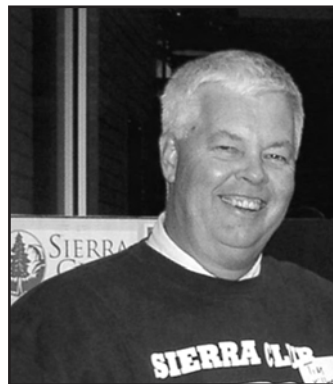
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Congrats to SEMG's Jim & Tim

Jim Nash and Tim Killeen, former SEMG chairs, elected to County Commissions in November



Jim Nash



Tim Killeen

Congratulations to Tim Killeen, who won his race for a seat on the Wayne County Commission after a primary victory in August 2006, and to Jim Nash, who was reelected to the Oakland County Commission! Both Jim and Tim have served as SEMG chairs in the past; Tim has also chaired SEMG's Political Committee for several terms. Both were endorsed and supported by SEMG and the Michigan Chapter and by many individual members working in their campaigns. That work and support will now make the job of passing environmentally friendly measures easier in Wayne and Oakland Counties. We wish Jim and Tim good luck as elected officials!