



# THE LOOKOUT

**Huron Valley Group**  
**Vol.29 No.4 Autumn 2007**



## Aged and Ripened—But Still Green:Part I

How we added modern comforts to a historic home and reduced our footprint

by Kelly and Matthew Grocoff

When we bought our 107 year old home on Ann Arbor's Historic Old West Side, it was a dream come true: lead paint, zero insulation, a half-century old furnace, asbestos siding, and a gas powered mower in the shed. What more could a couple of tree huggers ask for?

We wanted to buy a historic home, turn it green and prove that, even on our limited budget, we could create a home of unparalleled comfort and design while using less energy and water and fewer natural resources and toxic chemicals. Our efforts have rewarded us (and the planet) with an approximate 50% reduction in energy bills compared to similar sized homes in Michigan. As energy prices rise with global temperatures, our home will increase in value as well.

We always joke that there are three things that set back the environmental movement: the original low flow showerhead, the original low flush toilet, and Jimmy Carter's sweater (Kelly would add a fourth: silken tofu). These icons perpetuated the myth that living green meant paying more while sacrificing quality, performance and comfort. We wanted to restore our home using Environmentalism 2.0, which means improved quality, performance, efficiency, value, health and comfort.

In upcoming articles, we will share the choices we made when renovating our historic home. We will review the little stuff and the big stuff. We separate our efforts into those which can be done easily and inexpensively (the little stuff) versus those that require larger investments of time and money, but create higher long term savings (the big stuff). Both are important and both go a long way towards reducing your carbon footprint.

It is important to imagine the day when all homes are carbon neutral, but don't wait for the windmills or affordable solar panels! We developed a plan based on our budget, the historic standards of our neighborhood, and how we wanted our home to look and feel.

We included a large portion of our renovation costs in our mortgage. The first step was deciding how to allocate the money. We prioritized in order of energy consumption, working our way from the worst offenders to the petty criminals. In other words, we started with the big stuff.

The most hardened criminal in most homes is heating, cooling and hot water systems, which account for 58% of home energy use. We chose a hyper-efficient geothermal HVAC system (also called a ground source heat pump or geexchange), and then moved on to the little stuff like cost effective motion sensor lighting controls and compact fluorescent lights. Remember, the cheapest form of energy is the unused kilowatt.

A green home isn't only about energy efficiency, but also about health and sustainability. With each decision we made we asked ourselves: 1. Can we buy reused instead of new materials? 2. Is it durable? 3. Can we purchase locally? 4. How can we reduce construction waste? 5. Will this harm air or water quality? 6. Will this harm us, our guests or our community? 7. How was this product made?

In our modest home, our improvements seem small compared to all we need to do to curb climate change. However, choices we've made are being rapidly adopted by others and are often becoming policy. In California, the motion sensors we installed are now mandatory in all new residential construction.

continued page 2.



The Elizabeth & Philip Gauss home in Ann Arbor, in 1917 and today.

## Aged But Still Green continued from page 1.

*Kelly Grocoff is a therapist for Development Centers Incorporated. Matt Grocoff is a producer and will soon be launching GreenovationTV.com - Home Improvement for Human Nature - the first online TV channel for green remodeling.*

Our geothermal system reduces greenhouse gases equivalent to taking two cars off the road! We hope to see Michigan adopting progressive policies and incentives soon.

In the next issue, we will share with you the details of what we've done to green our home and what you can do to green yours - easily, affordably and elegantly. It's inspiring to know that not only can we improve the comfort, efficiency and health of our home, but be part of a collective monumental change.

### **How We Greened Our 107 Year Old Home**

- ◆ Recycled-content tiles for bath (American Olean from Lowes)
- ◆ Geothermal heating, a/c and hot water - the EPA ranks geothermal as the most efficient HVAC system available. 30 SEER a/c; 400% efficient heat
- ◆ Wattstopper Occupancy sensors on all light switches - turns off lights automatically in unoccupied rooms. (Installed by Dan Delzoppo Electric) California now requires these in all new home construction
- ◆ Caroma High Efficiency Toilets (HET) - dual flush allows for .8 gallons per flush for liquids.
- ◆ Antique heart pine floors sanded then refinished using natural Bioshield Hard Oil
- ◆ Panasonic high-efficiency motion sensor bath fan - improves indoor air quality, reduces mold and uses minimal energy.
- ◆ Rugs made from natural materials
- ◆ Reused trimwork wherever possible
- ◆ zero-VOC paints
- ◆ Henkel Green Series zero-VOC adhesive for sub-floor in new bathroom.
- ◆ Sealed all windows and doors
- ◆ Extra-high R-value blown cellulose insulation made from recycled newspaper (Farmer's Insulation in Ann Arbor)

lation in Ann Arbor)

- ◆ Rainwater capture used for irrigation - made from reused Michigan oak wine barrels from St. Julian Winery
- ◆ Furniture: antiques or new free from toxic flame retardants (BFRs), PVC or formaldehyde
- ◆ Energy Star appliances
- ◆ Energy-saving light fixtures; compact fluorescent lights throughout
- ◆ Bathroom floors made from second hand marble from builder's auction. Highly durable.
- ◆ High efficiency 1.5 gpm showerheads
- ◆ Compost bins for yard and kitchen scraps
- ◆ 1 Gallon trash can in kitchen - prevents us from creating too much waste for landfill.
- ◆ Compost pail next to kitchen sink to collect kitchen scraps for compost
- ◆ Reel lawn mower - German made by Brill Luxus. Weighs only 17lbs and easier to push than a gas mower. Zero Carbon and ultra-quiet.
- ◆ Salvaged clawfoot tub from Craigslist
- ◆ Brick driveway - reclaimed brick - creates porous service to minimize stormwater runoff.

**GREG JOHNSON**  
*Someone You Can Count On*

**GregJohnsonRealEstate.com**

**Serving the Washtenaw County area INDOORS and OUT since 1985.**

"Our environment is so important. Thank you, Sierra Club, for being there."

**Real Estate One**

(734) 646.5957  
(734) 929.3984  
**GLJRealtor@aol.com**

The Huron Valley Group Newsletter is published 4 times a year by Huron Valley Group, Michigan Chapter, Sierra Club, 621 Fifth Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

# Five Cinquains on Local Food

I'm a school teacher, and Friday afternoons are "movie day" in Ms. Smith's class. That is, it is movie day for those who have behaved during the week and turned in homework every day. Since I try to incorporate a little language arts into our movie-watching, I am always trying to come up with little activities. Yesterday, I had the brainstorm of having them write cinquain poems on the movie that we watched.

Cinquain poems are five lines and typically follow this pattern:

- Line 1: One word that tells what the poem is about
- Line 2: Two words that describe the subject
- Line 3: Three words that describe something the subject does
- Line 4: Four to six words describing the subject further
- Line 5: One or two words that rename what the poem is about (a synonym)

Since I teach special education, I modified it a bit, but the end result was really nice. Given that happy experience, I offer you five cinquains of my own, on local food.

*Sierra Club volunteer Patti Smith teaches visually impaired middle schoolers in the Detroit Public Schools. She clarifies that the "beer" cinquain was an outside-of-school composition!*



By Patti Smith

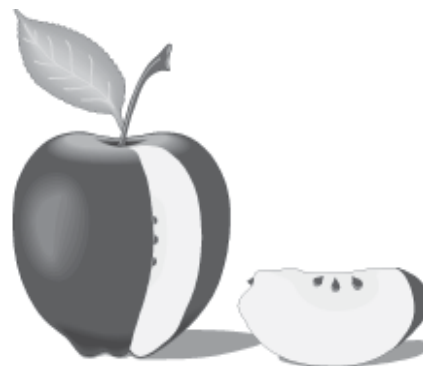
Apples  
Michigan grown  
Tickle taste buds  
Inexpensive, fresh at Farmers' Market  
Ida Red

Peppers  
Mild, banana  
Add tasty kick  
Canned at Jenny's Farm Stand  
Yellow pepper

Raspberries  
Red, juicy  
Enhance cereal's taste  
Picked fresh from Makielski's  
Fresh fruit

Cider  
Tart, cold  
Goes with donuts  
Fresh at Wiard's Cider Mill  
Apple drink

Oktoberfest  
Locally brewed  
Makes mouth happy  
Comes from Corner Brewery  
Yummy beer



## OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

TRIPS, CLASSES & EQUIPMENT FOR EVERYONE

734.764.3967

**Clinics-** Learn new skills with a hands on approach! Choose from backcountry cooking, orienteering, Leave No Trace Ethics, rock climbing, snowshoeing, and many more.

**Rental Center** - Need equipment for your outing? From backpacks and canoes to backyard games and cooksets, we have everything you need to outfit your next outdoor adventure.

**Wilderness Medicine** - Become a more confident leader by learning the skills necessary to manage backcountry injuries. Outdoor Adventures offers both Wilderness First Aid and Wilderness First Responder courses.

LET OUTDOOR ADVENTURES BE YOUR  
FIRST STEP TO THE TRAIL

WWW.RECSPTS.UMICH.EDU/OUTDOORADV





# Off the Beaten Track: Enjoying a Once A Year Hike

By Bob Treemore

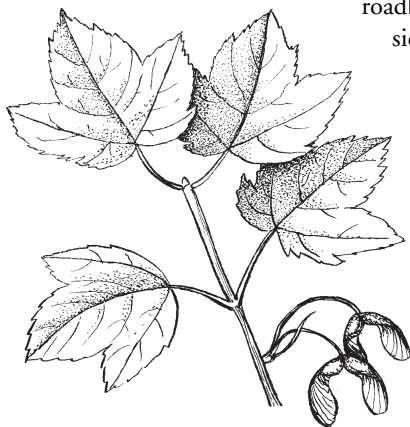


There are a number of trails in the Waterloo State Recreation Area that are a little further afield but are so beautiful that I try to hike them at least once a year. One of those is what I call the Crooked Lake loop. (Note that there's also a Crooked Lake in the Pinckney State Recreation Area, just to confound you.) I understand Barry Lonik talked about this hike in his presentation last fall; he's a decent chap but you should know he gets pretty much all his info from me. He just doesn't mind speaking in public.

My favorite route to get to the trailhead is to take M-52 north out of Chelsea and head west on Waterloo Road, a winding, scenic drive past hills, wetlands and lakes (and a prison!) and through the charming hamlet of Waterloo. At the "downtown" intersection, turn left on Clear Lake Road and head south to the first left turn at Loveland Road. That goes east toward Mud Lake (appropriately named; it's a very shallow impoundment but a great waterfowl watching spot); then south, becoming very circuitous. The long access road to Crooked Lake is on the east side, just south of McClure Rd. Toward the end there's a large and usually empty parking area for the boat ramp and, a bit further down, a fine picnic spot next to the water.

Most of the west side of Crooked is in public ownership, as are the northern and southern portions and some of the east side. The surrounding terrain is steep and wooded, and the houses are older and either perched atop the bluff or tastefully integrated. It's more of a fishing lake (max depth 20 feet) and doesn't tend to get much motor traffic. At 113 acres in size, it's got lots of places to explore on the water.

The trailhead is near the boat ramp on the north side where there's a couple of posts to keep vehicles out. The trail runs into the woods a short distance to a trail leading to a grassy beach with firm sandy bottom, a fine swimmin' hole. The trail heads west away from the water, winding uphill to an old roadbed that runs the length of the west side of the lake. Head north on the roadbed a short distance and take the first trail to the left (but note that you'll be coming back on the roadbed).



The trail descends and then ascends through a maple woods to our Michigan equivalent of the Appalachian Trail, the Waterloo-Pinckney Trail (WPT). The WPT runs 42 miles from Silver Lake in Pinckney to Portage Lake in Waterloo; this section is one of

the most scenic and rugged. Turn right when you get to it and look for the rock stuck between two trunks of the same tree.

You'll see some of the highest and steepest drops in the Rec Areas on this stretch. There's one descent that is steep and long with loose gravel for footing; not even famed gonzo cross-country skier Howard Balzout attempts it, so you *know* it's treacherous. A hiking stick or poles are advised.

The trail comes to McClure Road, where there's a small parking area. Look for the trail marker on the other side. This is the location of the Waterloo springs, which run year 'round even in the driest of times. The fresh sound of rushing water is a joy to hear in any season. There's a short side-trail leading to them, while the WPT heads uphill.

At the next intersection, the WPT goes right and crosses McClure again and can be taken for a shorter loop. I prefer to go left and follow around a steep-sided kettle wetland, formed when a big ice cube fell off the retreating glacier and was then surrounded by loose material. This section is part of the Hickory Hills Trail, for which there is a brochure. The trail heads north a ways, then makes a sharp right at an old bench, down a set of steps and up the other side of the kettle. Eventually it comes out at McClure Road next to the recreation area headquarters, where there is parking and a pit toilet.

The WPT goes either way behind the juniper trees; take the right fork down to a spectacular view of Crooked Lake from the north end, with a bench to rest yer weary bones. The trail follows the north end and heads up; look for a sign that says "nature trail" and make a left turn to go beyond it to the private road serving the few houses on the west side of the lake. (If you took the shorter route earlier, this is where you'd re-join this route.)

The road heads south uphill and eventually ends in a cul-de-sac, but the old roadbed, now a foot trail, continues back past the turnoff taken earlier, now on your right. The trail then goes left (east) back toward the lake. You can top off your hike with a dip; Lonik calls these "swimhikes" which I always thought was a weak name but gets the point across. When the leaves are turning color on a warm early fall day, and I've just hiked this route and I'm warmed up, even a little sweaty, and I slip into that cool, refreshing, renewing water, I call it heaven.

*Barry Lonik does acknowledge that Bob Treemore turned him on to many of the best spots in the 30,000 acres of state recreation area just a short distance from where you're sitting right now. For a link to a rough map of this area, please go online to [michigan.sierraclub.org/huron](http://michigan.sierraclub.org/huron).*

# Enjoy Fewer Catalogues & Less Junk Mail

After the December holidays in 2005, I counted 56 catalogues stacked in my basket. Some catalogues, such as L.L. Bean, Land's End, and Gardener's Supply, arrive monthly if not more frequently. Others arrive 1 – 4 times per year depending on the focus and products. Some I even enjoy looking through – the Metropolitan Museum, Art Institute of Chicago, or National Wildlife Federation catalogues. But this pile was excess beyond excess. And with the internet, shopping online is easy to do. Even without a home computer, the internet is readily available at the public library.

Simultaneously while recognizing my catalogue glut, I read an article in *Sierra* about the destruction of the boreal forests in Canada. Under the heading "What Can You Do?" was the urging to cancel your catalogue subscription and shop online instead. Of course, the article also encouraged readers to recycle paper and buy recycled paper products, contact Kimberly-Clark Company, and send a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada. I have actively recycled and purchased environmentally friendly paper products for years. And admittedly, I've not contacted K-C or the Canadian Prime Minister. But I did decide to tackle the catalogue issue.

I composed a letter (see sample) consisting of two brief paragraphs. The first paragraph **requests my name be removed from the company's catalogue mailing list**. The second **describes the extent of the catalogue problem and the resulting forest destruction**. The initial mailing took several hours to customize each letter and print the envelope. The monetary cost was 56 sheets of paper and 56 envelopes plus postage or about \$25. My mass mailing was done January 10, 2006. In several cases I received a letter in reply, from the catalogue publisher, saying they would honor my request. In the majority of contacts, the catalogue ceased coming. As of today, my list has grown to 63. There have been 5 catalogues to whom I have sent a 2<sup>nd</sup> **REQUEST**. The expansion of my list has added about \$3 and my time to the project costs. With my current system in place, the process of generating a new letter and envelope takes me less than 2 minutes.

To maintain my usual catalogue shopping and purchase level, I made a list of the catalogues I expected to frequent on line, and included the website address and the customer service number. I doubt I have reduced my overall expenditures for goods in the past two years, but I'm not as prone to impulse buying.

With success in reducing the catalogue glut, I have added three new activities to this paper-reduction project: halting unsolicited opportunities to open a credit card account; reducing the frequency of repeated requests from the same charity for donations; and

stopping unsolicited "gifts" from charitable organizations.

Apparently I'm not alone in my thoughts to bring a halt to the unsolicited catalogues and credit card requests: companies have gotten into the business. In the September 7, 2007, issue of *The Ann Arbor News*, an article appeared entitled, "A for-profit crusade against junk mail, with Earth in mind." GreenDimes was launched to stop the junk mail while aiding the environment. The company pledges to plant one tree for every person who registers. On its web site, [www.greendimes.com](http://www.greendimes.com), the company says, "more than 310,590 trees have been preserved, ...4 million gallons of water saved, and nearly 1.6 million pounds of junk mail stopped by its efforts." Two other web sites, [www.41pounds.org](http://www.41pounds.org) and [www.stopthejunkmail.com](http://www.stopthejunkmail.com) have similar missions. The latter donates \$1 to American Forests for each new member. If you wish to combat junk mail for free, try [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org) and [www.obviously.com/junkmail](http://www.obviously.com/junkmail) to walk you through the steps to identify contacts and direct marketing firms independent of the Direct Marketing Association. And for \$1, you can contact the Direct Marketing Association, [The-DMG.org](http://The-DMG.org), and request your name be removed from the mail preferences new customer lists. I'm sure others may know even more avenues to combat this ever-increasing problem

I don't plan to start my own company. But on Wednesday evening when I carry my tan recycle bin to the curb, I wonder if I'll also be saving my back along with trees, water and the environment in my one small effort to curb the catalogues and junk mail.

By Ginny Maturen

*Per a recent article published by the Sierra Club, "seventeen billion catalogues – or 59 for every man, woman and child in the United States - are mailed annually, despite an average response rate of only 2.5 %." This translates into a huge impact: destruction of the boreal forest.*

	Your address
	Date
Company Name	
Company Address	
City, State, Zip	
Attn: Catalogue Department	
Dear Company-name Staff:	
Please <b>remove</b> my name from your catalogue mailing list. I have noted your web site and plan to view your catalogue and place any orders on line.	
I make this request to do my part to help preserve the boreal forests located in North America.	
Again, I restate my request to <b>remove my name from your catalogue mailing list</b> .	
Thank you.	
Sincerely,	
<i>Your name</i>	

# Moving Along One Step at a Time

By Cynthia Leet

We have had a warm and beautiful early fall. I have resolved, actually keep resolving, to take several walks a week to exercise. I'm fortunate enough to live



*Standing stones in the Huron River*

near the walks along the Huron River in Ann Arbor and often exercise there.

Walking is sort of mindless or, rather, my mind wanders. I walk along thinking my thoughts and nodding to people I pass, when suddenly I see a ragweed in flower. Its fronds bend outwards and down, somewhat in the shape of an elm tree. That bit of beauty bursts into my reverie, a little bit of delight.

My legs stretch out, and I physically relax. I don't push myself to jog or swing my arms vigorously. At home, I give myself a long to-do list and feel constantly busy. Walking is a counterpoint. I may go half a mile oblivious to my surroundings and then stop on a bridge over the river to study a canoe, the colored ripples, or to stretch my eyes along the river, a bordering marsh and the sky. Like my legs, my eyes like to stretch out along a view. It seeps into me. Within the boxy rooms of my home, I can't see far. Neither can I see far along my to-do list, though its activities may be leading me toward a goal.

As I swing along the dirt or asphalt or wooden slats, I wish that everyone could go from home to a piece of nature that lies a few minutes' walk away. I wish that we could interlace human development and nature, leaving room for both. As I round a bend, I see five or six Canadian geese swimming against the current, staying in the same place, feeding when the occasional head goes down. Wow, I think, I've never seen that before! That's beautiful. I wish I had a camera! But I don't. It remains in my mind's eye.

I'm a bookish dame. I like to sit, talk and watch TV more than I like to get out and walk. That's why I keep renewing my resolve. I can't see far, and I can only pace a small piece of the earth. Walking, which is good for me both mentally and physically, ripples outwards in ways that I cannot see.

**For 100 Years,  
Your  
Downtown Source  
for Bird Feed.**

**DOWNTOWN  
HOME & GARDEN**  
210 S. Ashley Ann Arbor, Mi 734-662-8122

 **People's Food Co-op  
Café Verde**

Big enough to meet your needs...  
Small enough to meet your neighbors!

*Community-owned and  
environmentally conscious since 1971!*

(734) 994-9174 • 216 N. Fourth Ave. • Ann Arbor • [www.peoplesfood.coop](http://www.peoplesfood.coop)





# Sierra Club—Huron Valley Group Calendar

Participants in Sierra Club outings will be asked to sign a liability waiver. If you wish to read the waiver before coming to an outing please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call 415-977-5630. When carpooling is used to facilitate logistics for an outing, participants assume the risks associated with this travel, as well. Carpooling, ridesharing and the like are strictly a private arrangement among participants. Park fees may apply.

For up to date information, visit our website at <http://www.michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/>

**Like nature? You could become a volunteer hike leader!** The Sierra Club Huron Valley Group is accepting new volunteer outings leaders to lead short day-hikes in and around Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti. We will reimburse you for American Red Cross basic first aid training. You will first go on the outing that you choose, and then lead that outing on a later date - or propose your own ideas! Great for your résumé, good company, exercise, and fun! Call Kathy Guerreso at 734-677-0823 for information on how to get started.

**Tuesday November 13. Sierra Club Book Club.** 7:30 pm, 2nd Tuesday of every month at Nicola's Books in Westgate Shopping Center, corner of Maple and Jackson, Ann Arbor. Book: **Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life**, by Barbara Kingsolver, recounts a year spent eating home-grown and local food. Join us for discussion - all are welcome. Check the Ann Arbor Observer or call Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details.

**Tuesday November 20. HVG Monthly Public Program.** 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month, Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **Toxic Mystery: Searching the High Arctic to Discover Why Banned Chemicals Persist in the Great Lakes**, with Mel Visser, author of *Cold, Clear, and Deadly*. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided.

**Monday November 26. Conservation Committee meeting.** 7:00 pm, 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at [DorothyK@isr.umich.edu](mailto:DorothyK@isr.umich.edu) or 734-668-6306 for location.

**Wednesday December 5. Executive Committee Meeting**, typically first Wednesday of each month, 7:15 pm. Call Doug Cowherd at 734-662-5205 for location.

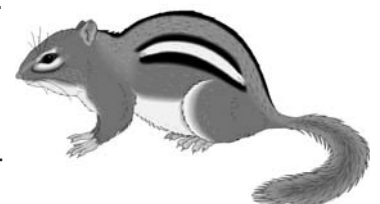
**Sunday December 9. Inner City Outings.** 7:00 pm, 2nd Sunday of every month. Inner City Outings introduces urban children in Washtenaw County to outdoor and environmental experiences that might not otherwise be available to them. Interested chaperones, sponsors, planners, and contributors are always welcome. For meeting location and more details, please visit <http://ico.sierraclub.org/washtenaw> or contact Vera at 734-665-8118.

**Tuesday December 11. Sierra Club Book Club.** 7:30 pm, 2nd Tuesday of every month at Nicola's Books in Westgate Shopping Center, corner of Maple and Jackson, Ann Arbor. Book: **Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival**, by Bernd Heinrich, relates how animals cope with the cold of winter, written by one of the best of current nature writers. Join us for discussion - all are welcome. Check the Ann Arbor Observer or call Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details.

**Monday December (date TBD) Conservation Committee meeting.** 7:00 pm, typically 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at [DorothyK@isr.umich.edu](mailto:DorothyK@isr.umich.edu) or 734-668-6306 for location.

**Tuesday December 18. HVG Monthly Public Program.** 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month, Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **Great Adventure Trips Around the Globe.** Non-members welcome; refreshments provided.

**Wednesday January 2. Executive Committee Meeting**, typically first Wednesday of each month, 7:15 pm. Call Doug Cowherd at 734-662-5205 for location.



# Sierra Club—Huron Valley Group Calendar continued

**Tuesday January 8. Sierra Club Book Club.** 7:30 pm, 2nd Tuesday of every month at Nicola's Books in Westgate Shopping Center, corner of Maple and Jackson, Ann Arbor. Book: **TBD**. Join us for discussion - all are welcome. Check the Ann Arbor Observer or call Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details.

**Sunday January 13. Inner City Outings.** 7:00 pm, 2nd Sunday of every month. Inner City Outings introduces urban children in Washtenaw County to outdoor and environmental experiences that might not otherwise be available to them. Interested chaperones, sponsors, planners, and contributors are always welcome. For meeting location and more details, please visit <http://ico.sierraclub.org/washtenaw> or contact Vera at 734-665-8118.

**Tuesday January 15. HVG Monthly Public Program.** 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month, Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **When More Isn't Better: Building a Truly Sustainable Society** with Tom Princen, University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided.

**January 25-27. MacMullen Ski Weekend Trip.** Good food and accommodations, fun for all levels - near Higgins Lake and the Roscommon area. Contact Barb Schumacher at 734-994-5456 for details and reservations.

**Monday January 28. Conservation Committee meeting.** 7:00 pm, typically 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at [DorothyK@isr.umich.edu](mailto:DorothyK@isr.umich.edu) or 734-668-6306 for location.

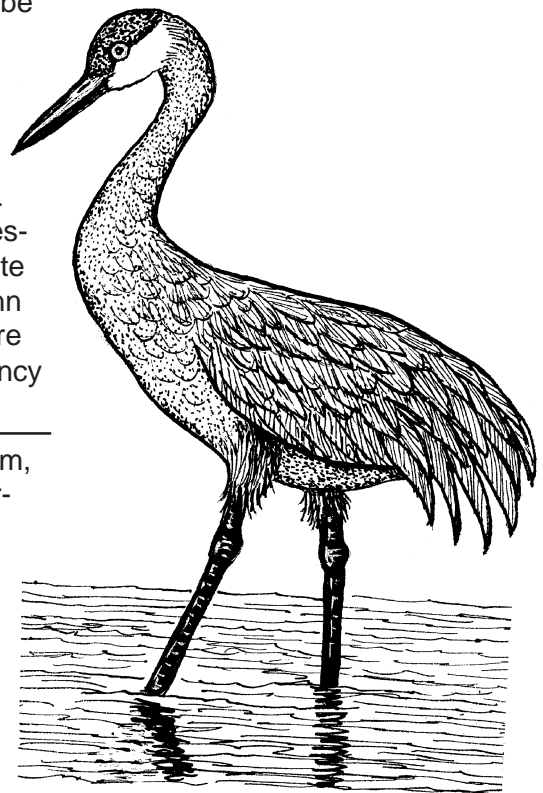
**Wednesday February 6. Executive Committee Meeting,** typically first Wednesday of each month, 7:15 pm. Call Doug Cowherd at 734-662-5205 for location.

**Sunday February 10. Inner City Outings.** 7:00 pm, 2nd Sunday of every month. Inner City Outings introduces urban children in Washtenaw County to outdoor and environmental experiences that might not otherwise be available to them. Interested chaperones, sponsors, planners, and contributors are always welcome. For meeting location and more details, please visit <http://ico.sierraclub.org/washtenaw> or contact Vera at 734-665-8118.

**Tuesday February 12. Sierra Club Book Club.** 7:30 pm, 2nd Tuesday of every month at Nicola's Books in Westgate Shopping Center, corner of Maple and Jackson, Ann Arbor. Book: **TBD**. Join us for discussion - all are welcome. Check the Ann Arbor Observer or call Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details.

**Tuesday February 19. HVG Monthly Public Program.** 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month, Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **TBA**. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided.

**Monday February 25. Conservation Committee meeting.** 7:00 pm, typically 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at [DorothyK@isr.umich.edu](mailto:DorothyK@isr.umich.edu) or 734-668-6306 for location.





# The Joy of Volunteering for Nature

By Linda McCallum

I have volunteered for many very worthwhile different causes, but these did not bring the enjoyment that volunteering for nature has brought. I enjoy most of all working at the Nature Conservancy's Ives Fen.

For me, the day begins with a beautiful early morning countryside drive from Ann Arbor to the fen, located just south of Tecumseh. Along the isolated roads, the mist is often hovering in the fields as I am driving along, sipping coffee and watching the birds flying along and across the roads.

Upon arrival at the fen, those who know each other enjoy a few moments of catching up with each other's news. We then have introductions of any new arrivals from near and far – one volunteer was even all the way from Australia!

The motivation bringing these people together is the unique habitat of Ives Fen, nearly 700 acres along the River Raisin. Human activity such as agriculture and gravel mining have negatively impacted the hydrology of the fen's peat soil, resulting in the growth of invasive species. As with all natural areas, Ives Fen depends mainly on volunteers to assist in improving and maintaining its biodiversity. The fen is home to several rare and increasingly less frequent species including Blanchard's cricket frog, prairie rose, and the eastern Massasauga rattlesnake. Not only will the clearing of invasives improve the habitat for these elusive species, it will improve our chances of actually seeing them! For myself, I finally saw one for the first time, Blanchard's cricket frog. Not only did I see one of these little guys that day, they were all over the place! It is so rewarding to see what our hard work is striving to protect.

The invasive species that we concentrate on removing include garlic mustard, dames rocket, glossy buckthorn, and multiflora rose. Several years of work clearing these invasives have brought fantastic results. The sections of the fen that we have completed now are beautiful vistas filled with native plants. It is wonderful to hike through these areas that are now covered with native flowers – along with the butterflies and birds that those flowers attract.

Yes, there is a lot of work to be done, but work that we look forward to. Many of us sit in an office all week long doing work that may very well feel uninspiring, to say the least. In contrast, clearing the invasives has immediate positive effects for us. To start with, we feel the benefits of a good workout. This is especially true when cutting and hauling the buckthorn trees.

Just being outside and feeling better because of the exercise starts an enjoyable work day. Then the conversation starts up which is always interesting and entertaining. We share stories of adventures in nature travel, studies, and just talking about nature itself, not to mention learning about more good books to read and movies to see.

While we do like the work, the words "Break!"

and "Lunch!" are happy words to the crew. The socializing then ramps up and there is even a hammock (which just appeared one day) to relax in.

During the spring, we pull garlic mustard and dames rocket in the woods by the River Raisin. Each week in spring the beauty of the woods intensifies with more and more of the native flowers blooming.

Along with many other native plants, in early spring we first see glimpses of budding marsh marigolds, then trout lilies and pitcher plants, finally culminating with the forest floor carpeted in showy white trillium blossoms. We anticipate each week's visit to see the new buds and growth. I especially love to take a break and sit along the sun-speckled river to soak in the quiet beauty of the surroundings...maybe to catch a glimpse of a spring-migrating bird such as the brown creeper, among many others.

All seasons have their benefits. We work spring, summer, and fall, and even a bit in winter. In fact, the volunteer days include most Saturdays from April until hunting season. In winter we may burn the buckthorn piles and then enjoy a cookout roasting brats in the buckthorn ashes.

After wrapping up a work day, treats are waiting for us. We'll have cookies and drinks, possibly a swim in the lake on the Nature Conservancy property, a trip to Tecumseh to enjoy ice cream or the local winery, or even a party once in a while.

This is a description of just one site to enjoy working for nature. All have the joy of experiencing the sights and sounds of the outdoors, meeting new friends, and having new adventures. So of course we do the work for a great cause, but we are there equally for the fun!

For more information on Ives Fen, please check out <http://picasaweb.google.com/IvesRoadFen/> or [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org) (select Where we work, North America, Michigan). For a calendar of volunteer opportunities where you can protect nature, please visit [www.stewardshipnetworkonline.org](http://www.stewardshipnetworkonline.org).



*Volunteers proudly pose for a photo after a day of hands-on natural area stewardship. Photo credit: The Nature Conservancy*





## Like Nature? Like People? You Could Be an Outings Leader!

The Sierra Club Huron Valley Group is accepting new volunteer outings leaders to lead short day-hikes in and around Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti. We will reimburse you for American Red Cross basic first aid training. You will first go on the outing that you choose, and then lead that outing on a later date - or propose your own ideas! Great for your resume, good company, exercise, and fun. Call Kathy Guerreso at 734-677-0823 for information on how to get started.

## These kids need YOU!

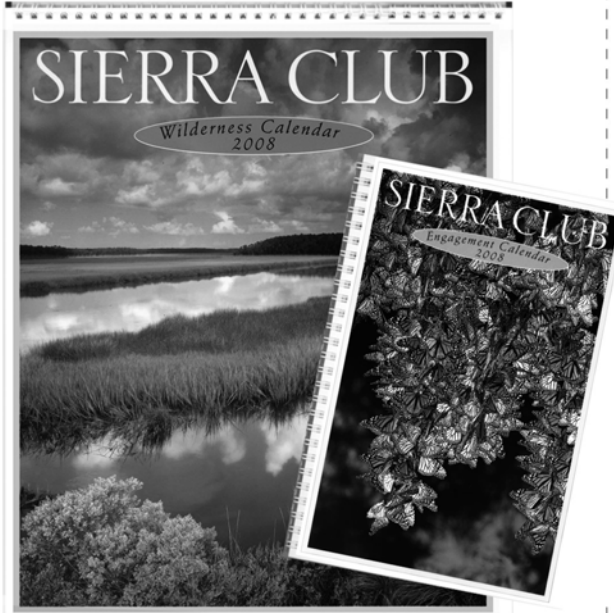


You can help get kids out into nature by volunteering with Inner City Outings (ICO). The ICO volunteers usually meet the second Sunday of the month to plan outings. Contact ICO chair Vera Hernandez for information at [washtenawico@yahoo.com](mailto:washtenawico@yahoo.com) or 737-665-8118. Also check the ICO website at [ico.sierraclub.org/washtenaw](http://ico.sierraclub.org/washtenaw).



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

### Sierra Club 2008 Calendars



#### Order Form

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
Engagement Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/> \$13	_____	_____
Wilderness Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12	_____	_____
total			_____

#### Buy from us and support local conservation!

Order and pick up your calendars at Sierra Club Huron Valley Group monthly public programs (Nov.20 or Dec.18)

or

Contact Jay Schlegel to arrange an alternate pick-up time:  
[jayhschlegel@earthlink.net](mailto:jayhschlegel@earthlink.net) or 734-477-5715

Cash/check only please. Payment is due at pick-up.

**Thank you!**



*This view from atop Mt. Rainier is one of the pictures from Jeff's camera.*

## IN MEMORIUM

The local Sierra Club extends our sincere condolences to our member-friends Bruce and Ruth Graves here in Ypsilanti on the loss of their talented son Jeff Graves, at the young age of 47.

Jeff hiked up the Eagle Peak trail at Mount Rainier National Park on Saturday June 16, 2007. He hiked alone because his mother Ruth had to work at her Longmire Museum assignment as a volunteer park ranger. She had hiked several trails with him the preceding few days she had off. It is felt that Jeff probably actually reached the peak of the trail, as inferred from some photographs he took just before he fell to his death. Reports from various sources indicated that the trails higher up on the peak were still partly covered with snow, and that many paths had been created in the snow by other hikers. This may have led to confusion on where the real trail was to return back downhill. This probably led Jeff to an area where there was a cliff not easily discernible from above, where he then fell about 200 feet to his immediate death. Fog may have been a factor as well.

A search effort was started when Ruth was concerned that he had not returned to Longmire by evening. His body was found Tuesday August 19, at the base of this cliff in mostly wooded forest. His camera and other belongings were recovered later, the camera containing the pictures mentioned above. Jeff leaves behind his wife Randi and 8-year-old son Connor, of Minneapolis, MN, as well as his siblings—his brother Keith Graves and his wife Michele, with their two sons Joshua, 12, and Christopher, 14, of Ann Arbor, MI; and his sister Lynn Graves and her husband Bob Morgan of Seattle, WA. An uncle, Richard Graves, living near Milwaukee, WI, also survives Jeff, along with Richard's children Andy and Jenny with their spouses, living nearby. An aunt, Margaret Graves Hawkins, died in the 1960's, but her children with Marvin Hawkins [also deceased], Barbara and Wayne Hawkins, and families, survive, mostly in the Indianapolis, IN, area.

Jeff worked at the firm Stratasys in the Minneapolis area and was highly regarded by his many coworkers for his hard work and integrity. Stratasys makes machinery which generates plastic models in three dimensions from computer-driven three-dimensional printers. These deposit melted plastic under program control to build up the desired objects in a heated, thermostatically controlled chamber. Jeff, a software engineer of long experience, was central to the software development controlling these machines.

The family is accepting memorials in Jeff's honor: **Jeff Graves Fund at any Wells Fargo bank** (an education fund for Jeff's son Connor, who just turned 8 in July) or **Washington's National Park Fund** (website: <https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index/php?aid=10549>; gifts to this fund can be designated to Mt. Rainier National Park flood damage in Jeff Graves' name).

To Jeff's parents Ruth and Bruce, and his extended family, our thoughts are continually with you.





# Shop to Stop Sprawl!

Living creatures need space to live. Over the past decade, Shopping for the Earth has helped generate \$110 million to preserve natural areas and farmland.

You can help us do more by buying EarthCash vouchers for the stores where you already shop.



For every \$20 of vouchers, you get \$20 in store credit and earn \$1 for the local Sierra Club.

Complete details are available at <http://michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/sfte.htm>

**Help preserve nature at no cost to you!**

## Shopping for the Earth Order Form

Indicate the number of EarthCash vouchers you want for each store and available dollar amount below. Enclose your check payable to "Sierra Club-Huron Valley Group." Total order (\$500 maximum): \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

	\$5	\$10	\$20	\$25	\$50	\$100
Ann Arbor People's Food Co-op <sup>1</sup>						
Arbor Brewing Company						
Arbor Farms						
Borders Books & Music <sup>1</sup>						
Busch's <sup>2</sup>						
Farmer Jack <sup>1</sup> (and affiliated stores)						
Hiller's Markets <sup>2</sup>						
Holiday Market (Royal Oak)						
Kroger <sup>2</sup> (and affiliated stores)						
Whole Foods <sup>1</sup> (and affiliated stores)						
Meijer's	A rebate program, no vouchers (neither paper nor cards). Please see <a href="http://michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/SFTE_Meijer.pdf">http://michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/SFTE_Meijer.pdf</a> or contact us.					

<sup>1</sup> non-reloadable card • Consider buying several cards.

<sup>2</sup> reloadable card • The Sierra Club receives a contribution when you reload card, so only one needed per person.

all others are paper vouchers

- check here to receive local Sierra Club e-mail updates
- if not a Sierra Club member, check here to receive local Sierra Club newsletter

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Your Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:**  
 Kristine Denzin (Kodenzin@aol.com)  
 5162 Doral Court  
 Ann Arbor, MI 48108  
 (Your data will not be shared)



**Huron  
Valley  
Group  
Directory**

www.michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/

Chair		
Doug Cowherd*	662-5205	
Vice-chair		
Nancy Shiffler*	971-1157	
Treasurer		
Ken Morley	677-7791	
Secretary		
Joel Dalton*		
Chapter Representative		
Nancy Shiffler*	971-1157	
Conservation Chair		
Dorothy Nordness	668-6306	
Inner City Outings Chair		
Vera Hernandez	665-8118	
Outings Chair		
Kathy Guerreso	677-0823	
Inner City Outings Liaison		
Membership Chair		
Ed Steinman**	665-0248	
Political Chair		
Acting Program Chair		
Doug Cowherd*	662-5205	
Shopping for the Earth		
Kristine Denzin	429-7382	
Publicity		
Pauline Mitchell	973-6636	
Fund Raising Chair		
Jay Schlegel*	477-5715	
Web Designer		
Suzie Heiney	377-8248	
Newsletter Team		
Suzie Heiney, Editor	377-8248	
Mary Roth		
Kevin Bell		
Kim Waldo	971-1941	
Jay Schlegel*	477-5715	
Patti Smith	649-4647	
Gwen Nystuen	665-7632	
Effie Hanchett		
Ed Steinman*	665-0248	
Executive Committee		
Mike Anglin*		
Rita Mitchell*	665-0248	

\* = HVG Excom Member

**How to Get HVG reminders via email!**

At each HVG general meeting, there is an email sign up list. For those who missed it, or haven't joined us at a meeting, here's how you can get our general meeting reminders.

If you would like to receive email notices of each month's Huron Valley Group general meeting and occasional notices about other local Sierra Club activities send an email to Doug Cowherd at [dmcowherd3@comcast.net](mailto:dmcowherd3@comcast.net) with your name and "HVG email list" in the body of the message.

**Are You A New Member?**

Welcome to the Huron Valley Group of the Sierra Club. When you join the Sierra Club you are automatically a member of a local group, as well as a state chapter and the national organization. Membership entitles you to this newsletter as well as all editions of the state and national member publications. Check this page for our Directory with contacts on conservation, outings, political action, and the Inner City Outings program. Check the calendar in the middle of this issue for announcements of Monthly Public Program topics and our calendar of activities. We will be glad to see you at our next meeting or answer any questions if you care to call. Please take advantage of your membership as an opportunity to enjoy, preserve and protect our natural environment!

**Membership**

Yes, I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 email \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club  
 Mastercard  Visa Exp Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES**

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

F94Q **W2-103** -1  **SIERRA CLUB**  
 FOUNDED 1892  
**Sierra Club**  
 P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO, 80322-2968



Articles are for informational purposes only. No endorsement of particular positions, groups, or activities is implied.

# Huron Valley Group ExCommittee Election Candidate Statements and Your Ballot



**Jay Schlegel**

I have greatly enjoyed my first term on the Executive Committee; it has truly been an eye-opener. I have learned a great deal about local politics and how a group of determined environmentalists can influence this process. Additionally, I have met many nice Sierra Club members through my capacity as coordinator of calendar and coffee/tea sales as well as through leading several hikes in the Waterloo Recreation Area. I look forward to continuing these conversations and helping to advance the goals of the Sierra Club if elected to another term.



**Doug Cowherd**

My family enjoys living in a place with a vibrant urban culture and wonderful parks and rural countryside. This cherished balance, however, is at risk. Sprawl threatens the character of our region, while at the same time central Ann Arbor is threatened by a massive development scheme that provides for only token greenspace. Sadly, City officials continue to oppose the creation of a real Greenway. So conditions for bikers and walkers continue to languish far behind peer communities like Madison and Boulder.

One factor underlies these problems. Our elected officials are far more concerned with powerful special interests than with the public interest.

The Sierra Club is the only local environmental organization that does not depend on special interests or their politician allies for contracts and other financial support. Thus we can be a truly independent force that focuses solely on the public interest of protecting the environment.

The Huron Valley Group makes a real difference in our community. I represented the Sierra Club as the co-director of three successful local ballot initiatives to preserve land – including the Ann Arbor Parks & Greenbelt Proposal — and consulted on several others. These initiatives will raise over \$130 million to preserve land as parks, open space, and scenic farms. The Sierra Club continues to advocate a full-scale Greenway in the Allen Creek corridor that will connect downtown Ann Arbor to the pathways running along the Huron River. We have done a lot. I look forward to all that we can do in the future.



**Nancy Shiffler**

Sierra Club offices held: Current vice-chair of the group Executive Committee; Group Representative to the state chapter Executive Committee; Chapter Chair, 1993-96 and 2006; Chapter Conservation Chair, 1990-93.

The uniqueness of the Sierra Club flows from participation at the grassroots:

- The heart of the club is its volunteers. The club provides a place for members to grow and be effective as activists.
- The enjoyment and sense of renewal we get from our outings help to energize our conservation activism.

- The Sierra Club is a democratic organization; it is both the right and the responsibility of its members to become involved in its governance.

We are facing any number of important environmental issues in our three-county area – sprawl, factory farms, water quality and toxics issues, the protection of parks and natural areas – and across the state and nation. Our capacity to act on these issues is bounded only by the willingness of our members to become involved. As a member of our Executive Committee I will help to continue our work on these important issues and work to increase the number of members actively involved.





## Other Local Events

January 25 and 26, 2008 - **Stewardship Network Conference 2008: The Science, Practice and Art of Restoring Native Ecosystems (SN)**. Kellogg Center, East Lansing, MI. Join us for this information-packed, fun two-day conference linking wildlife enthusiasts, nature lovers, land managers, and researchers from throughout Michigan to improve the science, practice, and art of caring for natural lands and waters. Registration: stewardship network members: \$60/day, \$100 both days; non-members: \$75/day, \$125 both days. For more information: [www.stewardshipnetwork.org](http://www.stewardshipnetwork.org), 734-996-3190.



For more local events, please visit [www.stewardshipnetworkonline.org](http://www.stewardshipnetworkonline.org).

### **Ballot for Sierra Club Huron Valley Group Executive Committee 2007**

**The Huron Valley Group Executive Committee (ExCom) is selected by you.**

Ballot instructions and anonymity guarantee:

1. Please mark up to three votes on the ballot provided. Only those ballots with a membership number on the attached mailing label are eligible.
2. After marking your ballot, remove this **entire back page** from the newsletter.
3. Fold the bottom third over first to conceal your votes, and fold the top third over to show your mailing label.
4. Return your ballot in a sealed envelope either by hand at the November 20 or December 18 HVG meeting or by mail to: HVG Election, c/o Ed Steinman, 621 Fifth Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Mailed ballots must be received by December 17, 2007 to be counted.

#### **Sierra Club Huron Valley Group Executive Committee Ballot 2007**

Three to be elected to 2-year terms beginning January 2008 - Vote for up to three.

Second column of boxes is for second voter in same household.

Doug Cowherd

•

•

Jay Schlegel

•

•

Nancy Shiffler

•

•



Huron Valley Group Newsletter  
The Sierra Club  
621 Fifth Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Non-profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 215  
Ann Arbor, MI

## Autumn 2007 Inside:

- Aged & Ripened--But Still Green - page 1
- Off the Beaten Track - page 4
- Enjoy Less Junk Mail - page 5
- Volunteering for Nature - page 9
- Calendar of Events - page 7-8



## What's your story?

In celebration of the Sierra Club's mission, "**To explore, enjoy and protect the earth,**" we'd like to invite you to share your stories, essays, photos, and/or drawings.

For this three-part newsletter series, we'll focus on each of the three aspects of this mission statement. The theme for the issue you're reading is **Enjoy**. For the Winter issue, the theme will be **Protect**. Here are a few questions that may spark an idea for you:

What does protecting the earth mean to you?

Do you think it's important? Why?

What things do you do to protect nature?

How would you try to inspire others to help protect the earth?

**Here's how to share your ideas:** Essays, articles, and stories should be 600-900 words. If photos or drawings are your thing, images should be at least 300 dpi and 4" x 6". Submissions may be edited for style and clarity. Please send submissions via email (strongly preferred) to [hvgnews@yahoo.com](mailto:hvgnews@yahoo.com) or by mail to Suzie Heiney, Attn: Sierra Club, 314 Washtenaw Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48197. The deadline for the Winter issue is **December 14, 2007**. Please contact us before that to tell us about your idea, and so we can hold a space for you.

**Got questions?** Contact Suzie Heiney at 734-377-8248 or [hvgnews@yahoo.com](mailto:hvgnews@yahoo.com).

We look forward to hearing from you!