

Communicator

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Spring 2006

From the Supervisor's Desk...

Good Stewards of Land

Do you think your property has a unique value to Cannon Township? If so, the Township would like to entertain the possibility of preserving it. With all the growth in Kent County, the Cannon Township Board is developing a higher interest in land preservation in our beautiful Township.

There are many reasons citizens within the Township sell their home and land to developers. When asked, land owners within the Township explain their reason for selling their property – retirement income. The majority of them stated that they did not know of any other choice.

Liquidating to developers should not be a property owner's only solution for a secure retirement. We receive multiple calls expressing the concern of - "How could the Township let this happens to that beautiful piece of land?" We simply state that the land is privately owned and the Township had no correspondence with the land owner.

Not all property owners want to sell their property to developers. Many would like to see their property safeguarded from development, but due to financial needs they do not see any other option. The Township Board would like those thinking about selling their pristine land to consider another option. If you feel that your property is distinct and unique to the Township, please give me or any other board member a chance to review the opportunity to preserve it. The board may discover it to be in the best interest of the Township to acquire the land. Not all property will be considered significant, but there are many gems still hidden within our Township.

Another option to preserve your property would be to either donate your property or an easement to the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. At times, the LCWM is even willing to pay for a unique parcel. For more information please call 451-9476 or check the website www.naturenearby.org.

It is the responsibility of the Township Board members to be good stewards of the land and I believe these options may help us do that.

Pete MacGregor, Township Supervisor

DNR Reminds Residents to Obtain Burn Permits for Spring Yard Cleanups

The Department of Natural Resources reminds Michigan citizens they must obtain a burn permit before burning any yard debris while doing their spring clean up.

“A recent spike in warmer weather has prompted property owners to get outside and start their spring yard clean-ups,” said Paul Kollmeyer, DNR fire prevention specialist. “If you are burning yard debris, such as leaves, twigs, or dead brush, you are required under state law to have a burn permit.”

Burn permits can be obtained from local fire departments (Cannon Township’s Fire Dept. number is 874-9725) in southern Michigan and information about permits can be obtained by calling DNR or U.S. Forest Service offices in the northern Lower Peninsula or Upper Peninsula. “A burn permit is required any time there is not snow cover on the ground”, Kollmeyer said. Burning in an approved metal barrel with a lid and holes smaller than three-quarters of an inch in diameter does not require a permit.

In addition, Kollmeyer said citizens should observe the following safety tips when burning yard debris in order to prevent a wildfire:

- Have garden tools, a charged water hose or other source of water on hand whenever you are burning outside.
- Always be sure any outdoor fire is completely extinguished before leaving it. Use plenty of water to extinguish your fire and wet everything thoroughly, especially the undersides of unburned pieces. Stir the ashes to find any remaining hot spots, and douse them with more water.
- Do not merely bury your fire with soil. In most cases, this will not extinguish the fire.
- Have a garden hose nearby in case your fire begins to escape. If your fire escapes your control, call for help immediately. Improperly extinguished fires are the leading reasons campfires and debris fires escape control.
- Recycling is an easy and safe alternative to burning for the disposal of yard wastes. It eliminates the risk of wildfire and the negative health effects of smoke. Recycling yard wastes can be as simple as using leaves to mulch around landscape plants, or plowing them into a garden plot. Leaves can also be chopped with a lawn mower and left on the yard to decompose naturally. This does not harm the grass, and will enrich the soil.



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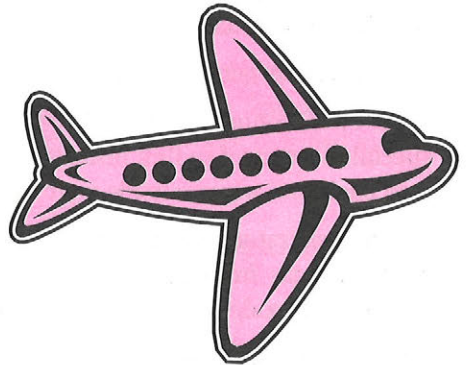
Additional information about recycling can be obtained from Department of Environmental Quality Waste Management Division, PO Box 30241, Lansing, MI 48909, or the local Michigan State University Extension office.

The DNR is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural resources for current and future generations.

Looking for a Ride to the Airport?

On March 13, 2006 the Cannon Township Board heard a presentation from a representative of The Rapid. The following points might be of interest to you (taken from the brochure "County Connection" available at the Cannon Township Center):

- "Fares are \$14.00 per person each way for trips to any location in Kent County, regardless of mileage. Fares must be paid prior to boarding; drivers do not make change."
- "Rides should be scheduled at least one day in advance; depending on the schedule, same day rides may be available at a cost of \$19 each way."
- "County Connection service is available for trips to any address in Kent County 24 hours per day, seven days per week, excluding holidays." The Rapid can be reached at 1-800-849-1191.



Diane Jones, Cannon Township Trustee

Sewer Customers

Have you been guilty of disposing of something down the toilet that shouldn't have gone there? Something like a diaper, a dirty towel, a shirt you no longer wanted? Often, materials improperly disposed of in your toilet can cause a mess down the line. We recently had a blockage in a small lift station near Bostwick Lake caused by some piece of material. Not only can this cause a back up and a mess, it also costs money. Those costly repairs add up and may force sewer rates to rise again. So, please take care what goes down your drain.

QUESTIONS???

The answers might be found on our website – www.cannontwp.org



2006 STARTS OFF WITH A BANG...

February proved to be interesting with an icy spell that created hazardous driving conditions and power outages for many of us. Although power outages are inconvenient, many of our residents have turned to generators as a source of temporary power for their home. Here are some generator safety tips from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration) that may be helpful in the future:

- Before installing generators, be sure to disconnect from your normal electrical supply by shutting off the main circuit breaker or pulling the main fuses in your electrical service panel.
- Have your generator installed by a qualified electrician.
- DO NOT connect a portable generator to your home's main power supply unless you have a special disconnect switch installed by an electrician. Otherwise, power from your generator can feed back into wires outside your home, creating a DEADLY threat to repair crews.
- Run generators outside, downwind of structures as far away as possible. Deadly carbon monoxide gas from the generator's exhaust can spread throughout enclosed spaces. Install a carbon monoxide detector with a battery back up.
- Fuel spilled on a hot generator can cause an explosion. If your generator has a detachable fuel tank, remove it before refilling. If this is not possible, temporarily shut off the generator and let it cool before refilling.
- Do not exceed the rated capacity of your generator. Overloading your generator may cause damage to the generator and the appliances connected to it.

As a side note, the Cannon Township Board and Fire Department, approved and installed generators for both fire stations and the Township Center last year, so that the Cannon Township Fire Department is able to respond to the needs of our community during adverse conditions.

2005 YEAR IN REVIEW...

2005 saw an increase in the number of calls we served. By the end of last year, the Cannon Township Fire Department responded to 462 calls compared to 432 calls from 2004, with an average response time of 5 minutes and 1 second. Here is a breakdown of those calls:

Rescue & Emergency Medical Service calls . . 286
(Accidents, Ice rescues, EMS calls, etc.)

Fires 48
(Grass fires, Structure fires, Chimney fires, etc.)

Good Intent Call 24
(Disregarded after dispatched, Authorized burning, etc.)

Service Calls 45
(Unauthorized burning, smoke investigation, lock outs, etc.)

Hazardous Conditions (no fire) 37
(Carbon Monoxide calls, Gas leak, Power line down, etc.)

False Alarm 20
(Malfunctioning alarm system, CO detector, etc.)

Severe Weather 2
(Lightning strike-no fire)

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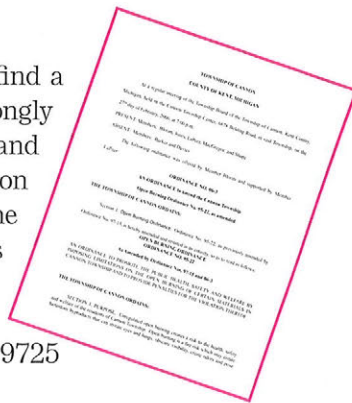
Our average response time is calculated based on when Kent County dispatches the department to when the department arrives on scene. Sometimes our delayed arrival is the direct result of not being able to find a street address. Take time to make sure that your address is clearly marked at your mailbox and/or the house numbers are visible from the street. If necessary, clear away any brush or tree limbs that may obscure your house numbers or prevent us from accessing your driveway. As a service to the public, the Cannon Township Fire Department is still offering reflective street signs for \$10.00 per sign. Call 874-9725 or stop in our fire station on Belding Rd., next to the Township Center, during normal business hours.

NEW OPEN BURNING ORDINANCE...

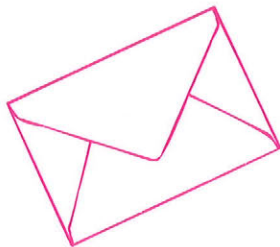
The new Cannon Township Open Burning Ordinance was recently approved by the Cannon Township Board. This ordinance was the result of a collaborative effort between the Township Board, the Fire Department and the Township's attorney. Some of the items that have been clarified are:

- burn permits that are issued, will only be valid during daylight hours
- recreational and cooking fires are still exempt from the ordinance as long as the fire does not exceed three feet in diameter.

With the upcoming months of dry, hot weather, it was necessary to find a way to ensure the safety of our residents. We on the department feel strongly that this new ordinance will help reduce the amount of nuisance calls and allow the Township to recover the expense of providing fire suppression efforts to those individuals and businesses that do not adhere to the same rules as the rest of our residents. So please take a moment to read this new ordinance which will be available at the Township offices or on the Cannon Township web page at www.cannontwp.org, "what's new." Remember that burning permits are free. To obtain a permit, call 874-9725 during normal business hours.



Until next time, stay safe.



Have you sent a letter to the Township lately to express your feelings on something that's going on? If so, did you sign it? Please don't waste your time writing and sending an unsigned letter. We try to answer all correspondence in a timely manner, but anything unsigned goes directly in the trash without any distribution whatsoever.

Would you like to be a Master Naturalist?

Kent/MSU Master Gardener Program is offering the Master Naturalist Program to anyone interested in preserving the natural environment as well as rescuing areas that are in danger due to over development or lack of planning on the part of contractors. (Kent County is the only MSU Master Gardener program in the state offering this type of certification program.)



The Master Naturalist program is comprised of six classes that meet in various locations (including Cannon Township) from 8:00 AM -12:15 PM on six different Saturdays throughout the spring and summer.

Saturday, April 22 Introduction to Conservation Theory

Saturday, May 13 Woodlands and Wildflowers

Saturday, June 3 Native Trees and Shrubs

Saturday, June 17 Wetlands

Saturday, August 5 Prairie Environments

Saturday, August 19 Invasives

To complete their Master Naturalist certification, each participant will then need to volunteer 30 hours in a conservation type of setting. Opportunities will be available to volunteer in Cannon Township.

Participants need to register for the entire series of six classes and there is a fee of \$155.00.

For additional information contact Ginny Wanty at the Kent/MSU Extension office. Her phone number is (616)336-3108.

Don't Forget – Cannon Township has a Fertilizer Ordinance

Just a reminder – if you live in the Lake District (the area of Lake Bella Vista, Silver Lake, Bostwick Lake and Sunfish Lake) please comply with the fertilizer ordinance. Purchase fertilizer without phosphates or ask your fertilizer provider to use phosphate free fertilizer for your program. More details about the ordinance and the area of the Lake District are available at the Cannon Township Center or on the website www.cannontwp.org.

Diane Jones, Cannon Township Trustee

Everything You've Ever Wanted to Know About the Planning Commission

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Chairman Robert J. McBrien (term expires 12-31-06)

Member Jim LaPeer, Board Representative (no term expiration)

Members Annamarie Bauer (term expires 12-31-08)

Jim Mapes-Pearson (term expires 12-31-07)

Andrew Vredenburg (term expires 12-31-07, also Planning Commission representative on the Zoning Board of Appeals)

Donna Stokes (term expires 12-31-06)

David Fischer (term expires 12-31-08).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1) What is a Planning Commission?

The Planning Commission deals with the question of how land in the Township is to be used. The Planning Commission's central mission is to develop a comprehensive master plan for the Township. This plan deals with where residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and other land uses may be developed or preserved, and also how these various land uses interrelate – how they are connected by utility systems, transportation networks, and so on. Such a plan is intended to be a guide for future decisions and actions by officials and citizens in the Township. While the planning function is advisory, the Planning Commission is nonetheless a policy-making body in that it charts the Commission's desired course for what the Township is to become. The Township Board ultimately is responsible because the Board finally acts upon a recommended zoning ordinance (or special land use) and has the authority to modify, reject, or overrule advice and actions by the Planning Commission. (*Managing the Modern Michigan Township – 2nd Edition, Kenneth VerBurg, pg 46, excerpt.*)

2) How are Planning Commission members appointed?

One member of the Planning Commission is a member of the Township Board. The other members serve staggered three year terms. This is a paid position. Members also serve on subcommittees relating to Planning Commission needs. Applications are available at the Township office. Appointments for expiring terms (December 31) are made at the December Township Board meeting.

3) How do I obtain an agenda for a Planning Commission meeting?

The agenda is usually posted on the third Wednesday of the month prior to the meeting. For example, the April 11 agenda is posted around March 22. You may also provide the Zoning Administrator with stamped, self-addressed envelopes, and the agenda will be mailed to you. The agenda is also available on the Township information phone line – 874-INFO (874-4636) and on the website www.cannontwp.org under "what's new."

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4) Why did I receive a notice about a public hearing? Do I have to attend?

Whenever the Township receives a request for a rezoning or special land use and certain other kinds of land use requests, our laws require that a public hearing be held to take comments from the public. The law also requires that property owners within 300 feet of the subject property boundaries be notified by first class mail. In addition, a publication of notice (and in some cases, two notices) in a local newspaper is required. The notice will include a boundary description, the most current address, and the request before the Commission.

No one is required to attend a public hearing. The public hearing allows citizens to make comment on issues related to the request. If you are unable to attend the hearing, you may send a letter to the Planning Commission prior to the hearing date. The notification letter explains the written process. The letter will become part of the public record.

5) What is the difference between a public meeting and a public hearing?

A public meeting is any governmental meeting (Township Board, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Review, etc.) held at the Township Center under the Open Meetings Act. These meetings are posted at the Township office. The Board of Review meets three times a year. The Planning Commission meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 6:00 pm. The Zoning Board of Appeals meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm (provided that an application has been received). The Township Board meets on the second and fourth Monday of every month at 7:00 pm (except for the fourth Monday in December).

6) How do I obtain copies of staff/consultant reports for projects under consideration?

Reports may be obtained from the Zoning Administrator on the day of the meeting at the Township office. Site plans are usually not available due to the size and inability of the Township to reproduce them; however, they are available for viewing at the office.

7) If a public hearing is postponed, will I be notified?

While the Planning Commission always hopes that a public hearing will not be postponed, every effort will be made to notify those persons on the 300 foot mailing list if time permits; otherwise, a notice of postponement will be posted at the Township. If a hearing is tabled at the meeting, additional notices will not be sent since the hearing is still in effect.

8) How is the agenda determined?

The Chairman and the Zoning Administrator determine what items will be placed on an agenda subject to time availability. The order of the agenda was approved as part of the Planning Commission by-laws, adopted in May, 1992, amended June, 1997.

9) Will you notify me every time a project I am interested in is on an agenda?

No; however, you may call the office to find out if the project in question is on the agenda, you may call the Info line, check the website or you may check the window box at the front door of the Township Center.

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RECENTLY APPROVED PROJECTS

Town Square Village Planned Unit Development

Town Square is a mixed use traditional development which will have commercial, retail, townhouses, and single family-dwellings. A grocery store and café will soon be under construction. The infrastructure will be under construction for most of the summer months – road improvements, interior roads, and utilities. The project will be built in phases. We will keep you posted as changes occur to the site.

Whip-Poor-Wil Way Open Space Planned Unit Development

Construction of parade homes have begun along Whip-Poor-Wil Way which is located just south of Kreuter Road on the west side of Ramsdell. Twelve single family dwelling sites have been approved. The project is served by a private road, and the home sites will have septic systems and wells.

Corberry Trail Site Condominium

Corberry Trail has been approved for four home sites which will also be served by a private road, septic systems and wells. The project is located on the west side of Egypt Valley Avenue, north of Egypt Valley Court PVT and south of 5 Mile Road.

PRIVATE ROADS AND DRIVEWAYS

Spring is almost here and new growth and foliage will be abundant. It is important to keep private roads clear cut at least 28 feet wide and driveways at least 20 feet wide and overhead branches clear to 14 feet above the ground for access by emergency vehicles.

STREET NUMBERING

The Township has received complaints from emergency personnel and providers that many homes are still not identified properly – specifically those homes on private roads. While there may be several mailboxes at the end of the street with the individual house number on them, there are no visible house numbers at the end of the driveways. Response time is delayed when providers cannot find the house.

The Township's Fire Department personnel are on-call. That means they MEET at the emergency site. There will be several private vehicles along with the emergency equipment that will be arriving at the site.

To see the ordinance that explains how street address numbers should be placed, visit the web site www.cannontwp.org and click on "ordinances". This is also available at the Township office.

Christine James, Zoning Administrator

Remember the Cannonsburg celebration in 2004? Well, the Committee is at it again, and intends to hold another Cannonsburg Historical Days Festival on July 29th. Mark your calendars now!

From the Historical Society –

Museum Hours

The museum on Cannonsburg Road will be open every Sunday beginning May 1st (until October) from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Stop by and see your history.

May 16th Meeting

On Tuesday, May 16 at 7:00 p.m., the Historical Society will host Steve Tchozeski. Steve will do a presentation on the physical layout of Cannon and Grattan Townships, explaining how the ice age was responsible for the formation of lakes, hills, valleys and swamps. Everyone is invited to attend.

Baked sale

Stop by the Historical Society baked goods table at the Waterfest celebration in Townsend Park on Saturday, April 29th. These items sell out fast, so get there early. If you see something you like, buy it, or someone else will get it first.

Town Square Village PUD

Cannon Township will soon have a new major commercial and residential development coming its way, to be located on the 37 open acres on the NW corner of Belding Rd. and Meyers Lake Ave. The development, to be named “Town Square,” is being built by the Tol Group and will include public sewer hookups and water service from the Lake Bella Vista Improvement Association. The site selected for the development is on land that was identified in the Township’s 1993 Master Plan as the best suited for any expansion of commercial or retail land use due to its central location and close proximity to major thoroughfares. The intent in the 1993 Plan was not necessarily to promote development, but rather to identify the most suitable location and zoning characteristics for any expansion of commercial and retail services.

The development will consist of eleven acres dedicated to Commercial/Retail/Professional land use, with the remaining 26 acres designated for residential homes. The commercial land will initially include a grocery store, bank, restaurant, café and the existing medical professional building along with yet-to-be-determined retail store space. Residential use will consist of 85 single-family homes along with 41 private residences located in eight townhouse buildings. This combined mixture of commercial, professional, and residential use along with a 2+ acre ‘Village Green’ and sidewalks is designed to bring about a walkable community where people can live, shop, recreate, and even work without having to drive a car.

The Planning Commission should be commended for their exceptional diligence in reviewing this proposed development. PC Chairman Rob McBrien appointed a 3-person subcommittee consisting

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of Jim Mapes-Pearson (chair), Andrew Vredenburg, and himself to thoroughly review this proposal. This subcommittee worked many long hours to assure that a high quality development was in fact being designed, and that the best interests of the Township were being protected. The full Planning Commission agreed with their findings and voted to recommend approval to the Township Board in a February 22nd meeting.

With the final approval of this development, the commercial and retail vision of our current Master Plan will have been fulfilled. These envisioned areas include (the new) Town Square area, the Cannonsburg Community area, and the South Bostwick Lake area. The rest of our land is envisioned to be a combination of residential and rural residential home sites, along with woodlands, wetlands, lakes, creeks, hills and valleys... indeed, a very nice place to call home.

Jim LaPeer, Trustee

Power Outage

Mother Nature struck again in Northern Kent County earlier this year and knocked power out for many Cannon Township residents. Many families use these unforeseeable times as an adventure or opportunity to spend quality time with each other, but the fact is that others could use help and some simple conveniences just to get by each day their power is out.

I invite anyone in Cannon Township who experiences power outages (due to severe weather) to use the Township Center as a short term, temporary shelter. The Township building is equipped with a full power generator system.

Citizens can come and warm themselves up in the winter or cool themselves off in the summer. There are public restrooms, a kitchenette, refrigerator and the boardroom would be a nice area to watch a DVD or play a board game or cards (you must supply your own fun, games, TV, etc.). The Fire Department can fill up a water container if you are without water as well.

If needed, please contact the Township Office (or a board member, if after business hours) and we can open up the public area for your convenience. The Fire Department's non-emergency number (874-9725) can be used and they will be able to contact a board member as well.

Pete MacGregor, Supervisor

WANTED – ONE CITIZEN TO SERVE ON THE WETLAND REVIEW BOARD

What's needed? Just a love for and knowledge of the small wetland areas in Cannon Township. This Board approves or denies wetland permits for Cannon Township. Contact Bonnie Shupe for more information.



13th Annual Bear Creek Waterfest

Celebrate spring at the 13th Annual Bear Creek Waterfest, Saturday, April 29 from 8 a.m. until noon at Townsend Park. This family festival features lots of free activities for kids including a scavenger hunt, insect identification, Microscope Magic, a groundwater flow model, crafts, wildlife stamps, Make and Take Garden, Make Your Own Aquifer, and of course, the always popular Rubber Ducky Races in Bear Creek!

The Cannonsburg Christmas Tree Lights Committee will again host a breakfast. Pancakes were the usual fare in previous years. However, this time, you'll be treated to a Hearty Country Breakfast! The meal includes biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs and sausage. Prices are \$4 adults, \$2 kids with a \$12 maximum per family. Breakfast will be served from 8 – 10:30 a.m. in the pavilion. Proceeds will benefit the Cannonsburg Christmas Tree Lights Committee. Bring your appetite!

Also, the Cannonsburg Historical Society will have delicious baked goods for sale in the pavilion.

The purpose of the Bear Creek Waterfest is to educate people about our beautiful watershed while having fun. So, you'll see kids looking at tiny creatures through microscopes; collecting pine cones, stones and dandelions on a scavenger hunt; or putting together a "take home garden." Families can take a self-guided tour of Bear Creek, learn how small actions can give us cleaner water or learn what a rain garden is and how to build one. It is a fun and relaxing way to spend time with your family and nature. All activities are free.

Participating organizations include The Land Conservancy of West Michigan, the Izaak Walton League, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, West Michigan Environmental Action Council, the U.S. Postal Service, and local Boy Scouts.

Kim Sapkowski

Removing the Invasives

When Vic Weller was alive, he used to visit my office and complain about the proliferation of the Autumn (Russian) Olive bushes on the Township property and elsewhere in the Township. It would make Vic happy today to know that the Boy Scout Troop 228 is working hard to eradicate these invasive bushes on the property.

The idea for the project originated with Alex Herrington who researched the best way to remove the bushes, then presented his plan to the Township Board. With help from his dad, Lonnie – who just happens to be a Cannon Township Fire Fighter, Alex organized his troop to take action. The brush was burned under Fire Department supervision and the stumps treated with an herbicide to kill the roots. This work was done in February and March, and will continue again this fall.

We wish to thank Alex and the rest of Troop 228 for their hard work and perseverance. This should make the grounds at Cannon Township a better place for the trail and park that will eventually be built on the property.

Bonnie Shupe



13th Annual Bear Creek Waterfest

Saturday, April 29, 2006 8 a.m. until noon

Townsend Park

Hearty Country Breakfast

8—10:30 a.m.

Biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs, sausage.

\$4 adults, \$2 kids, with a \$12 maximum per family

Sponsored by the Cannonsburg Christmas Lights Committee

Bake sale by the Cannonsburg Historical Society

Free, fun activities!

Scavenger Hunt

Aquatic Insect Identification

Rubber Ducky Races

Make And Take Garden

Microscope Magic

Make Your Own Aquifer

Wildlife Stamps

Learn About Rain Gardens

Groundwater Flow Model

Crafts

Prizes

Self-Guided Creek Tour



Townsend Park is located on the Corner of Cannonsburg Road and Ramsdell Ave.

Waterfest is sponsored by Cannon Township



Answers to Those Questions

Do you remember the last issue of the Communicator? Of course, I know you must all still have it sitting there on your coffee tables, and I'm sure you refer to it frequently.

There were a couple of "teaser" questions included in the last issue. Since you've been sitting on the edge of your seats, waiting for the answers since last December, I figured now might be a good time to satisfy your curiosity.

Question 1 – How can I keep heating costs down?

You're probably thinking that it's now March, almost April, and this question has lost its relevance. Just remember that it will get cold again next winter. Also remember that the same thing that keeps your heating costs down in the winter can also reduce your cooling costs in the summer. And what is that "thing?"

Question 2 – How can I increase the value of my property?

The answer to both of those questions is the same. It's planting or maintaining the right kind of vegetation. Here's an excerpt from one web page that talks just a little bit about the subject:

From West Michigan Environmental Action Council's (WMEAC) website (www.wmeac.org):

"Native landscaping has become a topic of great interest to those interested in protecting the environment. There is an exciting movement in Michigan to replace our traditional, non-native, expensive landscaping with our own beautiful native plants. There is a native plant community for every site. Native landscaping has many benefits, such as greatly reduced costs of landscape maintenance, natural beauty, water quality protection, created wildlife habitat, reduced noise pollution, reduced soil erosion, enhanced property and real estate values, more liveable communities; the list of advantages is endless. A native landscape is an ever-changing environment of color, light, texture, sound, and motion. It provides food and cover for a wide variety of wildlife. It is beautiful to look at and walk through. The major savings of natural landscaping over conventional landscaping is the low cost of maintenance. The combined costs of installation and maintenance for natural landscape over a ten year period may be one fifth of the costs for conventional landscape maintenance.

Once a native landscape is established and mature, it can last for generations with minimal attention. Many costs are significantly reduced or eliminated through natural landscaping:

- labor
- water
- fertilizer
- herbicides
- insecticides
- fungicides
- mowing
- replanting annual flowers

In some locations the costs of water for sprinkling can be very high and are avoided by natural landscaping. The reduced consumption of fossil fuel for lawn maintenance equipment is an additional benefit."

Vegetation on your property can also serve as a windbreak, keeping energy costs down. I know that the large maple tree near the front of my house keeps it much cooler in the summer, as it provides daylong shade.

So, not only does native landscaping enhance your property and real estate values, it also helps keep energy and maintenance costs down. What a bargain!

Bonnie Shupe, Cannon Township Clerk



Storm Drain Markers to Be Installed This Spring

Storm drains may not be the most fascinating topic of conversation at your next dinner party, but they are certainly a topic of conversation with many townships, including Cannon. This spring, the Township will install Storm Drain Markers on those dull, brown storm drain grates located along-side street curbs.

The markers are round, blue and silver metal plates that are about 6" in diameter. They will be riveted onto the storm grates or onto the curb above the grate. An illustration of a fish is stamped on the marker along with the words "No Dumping. Drains to Waterway."

The purpose of the markers is to educate people about storm drains. Many people don't know that storm drains are separate from sewer drains. Storm drains lead directly to a stream, lake or river. Anything that goes into the storm drain is untreated. That is why we need to remind people not to dump things like motor oil, car washing suds, grass clippings or leaves down a storm drain. Remember – only rain down the drain!

by Kim Sapkowski

Fertilizer Ordinance Information

Please don't forget that Cannon Township now has a fertilizer ordinance that will be enforced in the Lakes Drainage District. This area includes all the properties that eventually drain into one of these four Township lakes – Bella Vista, Silver, Bostwick, and Sunfish. The map of the area is available by email (pdf) or you may see it at the Township office. The ordinance is available on the website and at the office. Application forms for fertilizer licenses (businesses only) are also available on the website and at the office.

Area Businesses that Sell Phosphorus Free Fertilizer to the General Public

Venman's Landscape Service & Soil Alive
49 ½ E. Bridge
Rockford, MI 49341
Ph: 866-0323

Rockford Hardware
643 Northland Dr.
Rockford, MI 49341
Ph: 866-9155

Fruitbasket Flowerland
3801 Alpine NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Ph: 784-0542

Lowe's
4297 Plainfield NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505
Ph: 447-7904

Everett's Landscape Management
7884 Eastern S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
Ph: 698-8064

Tru Green-Chem Lawn
3116 Dixie SW
Grandville, MI 49468
Ph: 534-1700
Home delivery only.

Bostwick Lake Congregational Church
Fertilizer Fund Raiser
Each Saturday during April and May
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Located on the corner of Belding Road and Myers Lake Avenue, across from Lakes School

Earth Day Every Day Work Day Play Day



April 22 Family Fun Day.

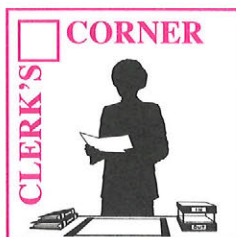
Enjoy our 40 acres!

- **FREE**
- 9am 3pm
- Draft Horses pulling out logs
- Planting Demos
- Create Native Gardens
- Fishing
- Nature Walks
- Games



The "IKE'S"

The Dwight Lydell Chapter
of the Izaak Walton League
5641 Myers Lake Road
(1/2 MI N/O Cannonsburg Ski Lodge)



It's been a busy spring, getting ready for a new budget year and thinking about the upcoming 2006 election cycle. Here are some important things to consider this year.

Upcoming Elections

There will be three elections. They are:

- May 2, 2006
- August 8, 2006
- November 7, 2006

You will vote in the same place for all three elections. There are now five polling places in Cannon Township. A list of these is included on our web site at

www.cannontwp.org. A map is also available there. If you don't have web access, please call the Township Office to find out where you vote. The information is also included on your voter ID card.

Absent Voter List

You might have heard that there was a court case in the City of Detroit where the city clerk got in trouble for her handling of the mailing of absentee ballot applications. The clerks in Kent County are watching this case because there is speculation that this could lead to a change in our permanent AV lists.

Some clerks have created their own list by sending AV applications to all eligible voters in their jurisdiction. Our permanent AV list is composed of all eligible voters in Cannon Township who have requested to be on this list. It is rumored that we may be required by the State to dispose of the list we're using now and start all over again to meet statewide requirements.

To be eligible for the permanent list, you must be 60 years of age or older, physically unable to attend the polls without assistance, or absent from the community for every election due to job responsibilities or other legitimate reason. Even if you aren't eligible to be on the permanent list, you may still vote by absentee ballot if you will be absent from the community for a particular election, but you will not be added to the permanent list.

At this time we're following past practices. I will let you know if anything changes. You might be asked to sign up again if we have to start over from scratch.

New Absent Voter Applications

Don't be surprised if you get a postcard like application form in the mail from us this year. We are sending these new forms out to the voters on our permanent AV list. When you receive it, you will notice the actual form is on the back. Please fill this out, then return it by turning it inside out, and mailing it, or drop it off at the Township Office. There is no need to fill out the other side of the form unless you have assisted a voter.

These new forms are much easier for us to label and send than the old method of printing out forms and stuffing them into envelopes.

New Equipment

If you haven't yet tried the new equipment, you may want to come out to vote at the May 2nd election. This will be only the second time this equipment is used. The new ballots require you to color in an oval instead of connecting an arrow. Most workers seem to like this equipment better than the other.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the polls in 2006.

Bonnie Shupe, Clerk

Habitat for Humanity of Michigan

Can substandard housing be eliminated by 2020??? Let's give it a try.

Habitat for Humanity of Michigan is ready and willing to partner with local leaders in the West Michigan area to take care of this bane on society. Mark Jansen, who heads the special Habitat initiative called Vision 2020 of Michigan, is the spokesperson for this project.

How did Vision 2020 get started? In the late 1990's Habitat International started a project from its corporate headquarters in Americus Georgia call the 21st Century Challenge. Habitat founder, Millard Fuller wanted to get substandard housing eliminated at a faster rate and decided Habitat must partner with other community leaders to tackle the huge issue of a simple and decent home for the lower income families of America. Millard challenged the states like Michigan to eliminate substandard housing by a certain date within certain cities in their communities. The idea and challenge had been accepted by only a few cities and really had not been strongly accepted throughout the Habitat affiliates in the United States. Michigan changed that trend.

Michigan has always been a national leader in the Habitat family throughout the United States. Michigan has over 80 Habitat affiliates and has work going on in almost every county in Michigan. Two of the most successful affiliates in the Michigan Habitat family are Detroit and Kent County Habitat. Michigan Habitat had an international event last summer where 232 Habitat homes were completed in one week because of the Jimmy Carter Work Project. Michigan is now on its way to completing close to 3,000 homes in Michigan since its beginnings in the mid 1980's. Our Michigan President and visionary is Dr. Ken Bensen, a retired pastor from the Methodist Church.

Michigan Habitat has recently started a project called Vision 2020 spearheaded by Jansen. "Our goal is to get 20 Michigan communities working with strong local Community Development Corporations or Community Action Agencies or other community-type organizations that partner to eliminate substandard housing and the things that cause it by the year 2020," says Jansen. "Presently we have six communities that have taken on the challenge and four more that are getting ready to move ahead with the challenge. In West Michigan we have looked at sites like Holland, Cedar Springs, Lake County and Grand Rapids or even Wyoming as possible sites to take on this challenge."

What the project needs are local leaders that are willing to put the target of eliminating substandard housing and the things that cause it by the year 2020. Vision 2020 team helps the leaders review what the challenge would look like for a community and the local leaders need to analyze who will take what role in the entire process. Vision 2020 has a statewide board that has members like Habitat, CEDAM, MSHDA, Great Lakes Capital Fund and State Farm Companies.

Michigan should be proud as the only state in the United States that is taking on this kind of challenge. We are leading the way because of a strong Michigan Habitat and strong statewide leaders in the other groups mentioned earlier. If you are interested in this type of project, please contact Mark Jansen at the website or phone number listed.

Here is Habitat Michigan's website and also the direct Vision 2020 website:

Habitat: <http://www.habitatmichigan.org/index.shtml> Vision 2020: <http://www.vision2020michigan.org/>

Mark C. Jansen, Director of Special Initiatives for Habitat of Michigan and CEDAM

“DATES TO REMEMBER”

April 1 Quarterly Sewer Bills Mailed to Residents
 April 3 **LAST DAY TO REGISTER FOR SCHOOL ELECTION**
 April 10 Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm
 April 11 Planning Commission Meeting – 6:00 pm
 April 14 **GOOD FRIDAY – OFFICE CLOSED AT NOON**
 April 18 Zoning Board of Appeals – 7:00 pm
 April 24 Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm
 April 29 Office Open for Absentee Voting – 8 am – 2 pm
 13th ANNUAL WATERFEST-TOWNSEND PARK (8:00 am-Noon)
 QUARTERLY SEWER BILLS DUE

May 1 **PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE EXEMPTION DUE**
 May 2 **SCHOOL ELECTION – POLLS OPEN 7AM – 8 PM**
 May 8 Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm
 May 9 Planning Commission Meeting – 6:00 pm
 May 16 Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting – 7:00 pm
 May 22 Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm
 May 29 **MEMORIAL DAY – OFFICE CLOSED**

June 12 Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm
 June 13 Planning Commission Meeting – 6:00 pm
 June 20 Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting – 7:00 pm
 June 26 Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm

Remember to check for any cancellations or changes on the Township web site under Events. (www.cannontwp.org)

Just a reminder – The Cannon Township Offices will have summer hours again this year. Beginning June 1 until September 1, the office will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS FOR THE MAY 2ND ELECTION ARE AVAILABLE. PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE OR STOP BY TO RECEIVE AN APPLICATION.

Clip and Save E-mail Addresses

Supervisor, Pete MacGregor	pmacgregor@cannontwp.org
Clerk, Bonnie Shupe	bonnies@cannontwp.org
Treasurer, Dan Barker	dbarker@cannontwp.org
Trustee Diane Jones	dianecjones2005@yahoo.com
Trustee Jim LaPeer	jlapeer@cannontwp.org
Trustee Dick Davies	rrd8565@hotmail.com
Trustee Chuck Bloom	chuckbloom@sbcglobal.net
Deputy Clerk, Nancy Popma	nancyp@cannontwp.org
Deputy Treasurer, Milissa Soderstrom	milissas@cannontwp.org
Zoning Administrator, Christine James.	christinej@cannontwp.org
Code Enforcement Officer, Bob Devereaux	zeo@cannontwp.org
Administrative Assistant Sue Clarin	suec@cannontwp.org
Watershed Assistant, Kim Sapkowski	ksapkowski@cannontwp.org
Fire Chief, Harry Morris	Chief@Cannontwp.org
State Representative, Tom Pearce.	tompearce@house.mi.gov
.	Phone: 1-888-414-3684
State Senator, Ken Sikkema	ofcKSikkema@senate.michigan.gov
.	Phone: 1-800-774-1174
Congressman Vern Ehlers.	www.house.gov/writerep
.	Phone: 1-202-225-3831
Cannon Township Web Site	www.cannontwp.org
Kent County Web Site.	www.accesskent.com
State of Michigan Web Site	www.michigan.gov



CANNON TOWNSHIP
6878 Belding Road, NE
Rockford, MI 49341

PRSRT STD
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 ROCKFORD, MI 49341
 PERMIT NO.1

Township Board

Supervisor	Pete MacGregor
Clerk	Bonnie Shupe
Treasurer	Dan Barker
Trustees	Diane Jones
.	Dick Davies
.	Chuck Bloom
.	Jim Lapeer
Township Offices . . .	874-6966
(Hours 8am – 5pm, Mon – Fri)	
Fax.	874-8940
Fire Department . . .	874-9725
Emergency	911

Township Board Meetings
2nd & 4th Monday, Monthly
7:00 pm, Township Hall