

# Thumb Land Conservancy NEWS

May 21, 2017

## 2017 Saint Clair County Earth Fair Goodells County Park, Wales Township, Saint Clair County

The TLC once again participated in the annual Saint Clair County Earth Fair on April 28 and 29 at Goodells County Park. We had our usual photo displays of natural areas and species of the Thumb, but this year we tried something very different. Retired school teacher, Al Lewandowski, played the part of Charles Keene Dodge, a botanist and attorney from Port Huron in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Dodge collected extensively throughout our region and published *Flora of St. Clair County, Michigan and the Western Part of Lambton County, Ontario*, the *Flora of the County* section of *The History of St. Clair County* by William Jenks, and many other works. Dodge advocated for nature protection in our region and appears to be the first to propose a large preserve in that part of the Black River valley that eventually became the Port Huron State Game Area. For more information about Dodge, click on this link: [http://www.huronecologic.com/thumb\\_habitats062004.htm](http://www.huronecologic.com/thumb_habitats062004.htm)

Al Lewandowski did a great job portraying Charles Dodge. Dressed in a pin stripe suit, bow tie, and derby hat, he appeared to have stepped into the present from 100 years ago. We were unable to find a vintage bicycle that afforded indispensable transport to Mr. Dodge back in the day, but thanks to Dave Hamilton of Hamilton Bicycles and Outfitters in Richmond <http://HamiltonBikes.com>, Mr. Dodge was provided with a very fitting older style set of wheels to his liking. He even had his collecting vasculum for botanical specimens, thanks to the handiwork of TLC board member Dan Rhein.





Al Lewandowski has become a Dodge scholar, with biographical facts, references, and quotes at the tip of his tongue. Al was wonderfully engaging with people who stopped by our table. I was very entertained by his performance and their reactions. At the same time, he was very educational, describing the unique natural features of our region, the immense botanical value of the Black River valley, and the importance of preserving nature. On the second day of the fair, we had our routine down a little better. Al had no problem reeling people in, but anyone asking about our spruce trees was directed to speak with Mr. Dodge who expounded on the virtues of tree planting and was then given a free tree by Charles Dodge himself. Mr. Dodge said he definitely plans to attend the Earth Fair next year.

We invited the Clyde Historical Society to participate this year, our partners in the historic North Street station project. They were located at the table next to us. Connie Bates created displays about the history of the Port Huron State Game Area and the annual ring history of an old White Pine tree. Jim Bearss brought an old hand-crank corn sheller that was very popular with the kids.



Jim Bearss and Connie Bates of the Clyde Historical Society.

## **Garlic Mustard Pull - May 13**

### **Dead End Woods Sanctuary**

### **Fort Gratiot Township, Saint Clair County**

Last Saturday, we conducted our annual Garlic Mustard removal at the Dead End Woods Sanctuary. New volunteers this year included neighbor Pete Catlos from Old Farm, and Joyce Turnage, who met us at the Earth Fair, along with her son and daughter-in-law. TLC board member, Dorothy Craig, again provided her backyard for our lunch cookout. Thanks also to John Fody, my dad, Bob Collins, for his macaroni salad and granola, and TLC President Cheryl Collins for her potato salad and coordination.

Jimmy Rankin's Meats <http://www.JimRankinMeats.com> in Port Huron Township donated hamburgers and hotdogs. They have also donated for our upcoming Garlic Mustard pulls in June in the Port Huron State Game Area. By the way, if you visit their web page, click on "About Us" and you will see mention of my grandfather, Ray Collins, and an old photograph of the store, behind which I lived until I was 5 years old.

Because of our hard work over the past 7 years, there was little Garlic Mustard remaining in the southwest corner of the sanctuary. But a few hundred feet east of this, we still have big patches to remove, mostly along the south property line where there is more sunlight. Eventually, we need to work along the north property line, but there is much less Garlic Mustard because of the shade. And that's not the end, because there are other invasive weed species spreading every year.

## **Historic North Street Station**

### **Clyde Township, Saint Clair County**

Work has finally begun on the roof of the historic North Street rail station, post office, and general store. With the help of our good neighbor, Carl Halead, we started installing sheet metal on the south roof. Clyde Historical Society President, Janet Kruger, even stopped by yesterday to supervise the project. We plan to remove a dormer and window that was added to the south roof in recent years, and then complete the sheet metal work on the original structure, hopefully within a few weeks. The roofing on the east and south additions is in good shape as those were reshingled a few years ago. After the metal roofing is done, we'll start repair of the wooden siding, which is in surprisingly good condition for a building of about 100 years old. I hope to then paint the exterior by fall. With a little clean-up and trimming outside, the place should look nice. I'll feel much better about getting a few signs up after that. We are in need of materials and help, especially when we start painting. Contact us if you are interested. Cash donations wouldn't hurt either as we still need to pay for the property acquisition.







Fred Feldhouse continues his metal detecting work on the property. He has found more railroad spikes and some other small items we're not quite sure about. I can't wait until he starts finding Indianhead pennies, and hopefully, someone dropped a silver dollar, jack knife, pocket watch, or something interesting. Fred does metal detecting just for the thrill and is saving everything for the TLC or Clyde Historical Society.

**Garlic Mustard Pulls - June 3 and 10**  
**Port Huron State Game Area**  
**Clyde Township, Saint Clair County**

There will be two Garlic Mustard pulls in the Port Huron State Game Area on June 3 and June 10. We will meet at 10:00 AM both days at the end of Ford Road near Ruby, or at the Ford Road gate if the DNR has not opened it yet. Pheasants Forever is working with us and will provide bottled water and some lunch items. Jimmy Rankin's Meats <http://www.JimRankinMeats.com> in Port Huron Township donated hamburgers and hotdogs. If it's OK with the DNR and weather permits, we'll grill on Ford Road or back up at the parking lot. The DNR will provide trash bags. Volunteers should bring drinking water and be prepared for weather and mosquitoes as usual. Gloves are not needed but hats are suggested because of mosquitoes and deer flies.



### **TLC Needs Help**

The TLC still needs the help of an accountant to prepare an audited financial statement that we can submit with grant applications. We could also use anyone interested in writing grants. Please contact me if you know of anyone that can help.

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