

## A note from the RJRD Board

We are already one month into 2023, and Richfield Heritage Preserve is off to a great start! Over 440 people attended the Snowbird Festival event. With snow falling throughout our beautiful natural areas, attendees enjoyed a wide range of activities. Richfield Library conducted a "Story Hour," Akron Zoo brought some of their cold-weather climate animals for a visit, Baldwin Wallace professor Dr. Carrie Davis Todd led a seasonal nature walk, and there were plentiful winter games, crafts, and refreshments. The Snowbird Festival was the first of many events of its type we plan on holding this year in the Preserve. Our next big event is our Sweetheart Dance on February 18<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you there, or at another of the activities Park Director Piepsny has planned for 2023!

Winter is also a wonderful time for a hike in the park. Whether it is for bird watching, photography, exercise, just connecting with nature, or any of the great reasons so many in the region visit us, we welcome you. And please consider our Lodge for your next event. The Lodge was recently awarded "Best of Weddings" status by The Knot, a status given based on highly rated reviews from couples, their families, and their wedding guests.

We fully expect 2023 to be a very exciting year at the Preserve! We look forward to seeing you here.

- Mark Robeson,  
RJRD Trustee



## From our Park Director

Welcome to the February edition of the Richfield Heritage Preserve email newsletter. In the next few months you will see quite a bit of work taking place at the park.

Working with our volunteers, we will enhance the trail from The Lodge towards North House. The Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve are working hard to help us with the reconstruction updates needed at Amity house so that in the future this can be a rentable space for meetings, showers, birthday parties, etc. The Ohio Operating Engineers have agreed to help us reconstruct the trail heading past Mable Smith pavilion down to the Garfield building.

We are working with Eagle Scout candidate Patrick Kalal on a very exciting project. Patrick has presented plans to construct a new park entrance sign at the Broadview Road entrance. This will be an elegant, lighted sign that will be more visible to the park visitors, especially at night.

Soon we will be opening a small gift shop at the park office where you can purchase park-related items.

This month we are hosting a Sweetheart Dance on February 18<sup>th</sup> - see our "Upcoming Events". We will have pizza and salad along with some tasty treats.

I am asking everyone: if you have a hobby that you would love to share and teach to others, and you would like to make a few dollars along the way, please contact me at [park-director@rjrd.org](mailto:park-director@rjrd.org). We are in need of your expertise!

Until next month, I hope to see you out on the trail!

- John Piepsny,  
Park Director



## Upcoming Events

### Sunday, Feb. 5 - YogAdventure Hike; 10 a.m.-noon; park trails

OneTreeLove invites you to take a hike and practice yoga outdoors in the fresh air. Enjoy some vitamin N and nature therapy connecting with self, others, and nature. Yoga will be done throughout the hike. Go to [onetreelove.com](http://onetreelove.com) to register. \$17/person; 15% goes back to RHP.

### Saturday, Feb. 18 - Sweetheart Dance; 5-8 p.m., The Lodge at RHP

Children, plan to bring your parent, grandparent, or other special adult to enjoy this Valentine celebration! \$25/couple; \$10 each additional child. Registration is now open on the Richfield Village website in "Recreation" tab.

## Name that Newsletter!

The RHP newsletter has a new format and will be distributed monthly to help keep you up to date on park happenings.

**Now is your chance!** We are looking for a catchy, memorable name for the revised newsletter. If you have a suggestion, please submit it to [office@rjrd.org](mailto:office@rjrd.org) by **February 22**. Submissions will be reviewed by the park director, with credit given to the winner.



This month's photo of the Upper Lake in fog was contributed by Alan Zarach. It was taken on January 12, 2023. Thank you, Alan, for your contribution.

## See your photo in print!

We are looking for beautiful or interesting photos of Richfield Heritage Preserve to be featured in future newsletters. If you have a photo to submit, please email it to [office@rjrd.org](mailto:office@rjrd.org). Include your name and the area where your photo was taken, plus the date if you know it. If your photo is chosen, you will receive credit in that issue of the newsletter. We want to see what *you* see in your park!

## “A snowdrift is a beautiful thing...”

“In the open a snowdrift is the sculptured figure of the wind done in crystal. In the woodland it is the path of the wind pirouetting around the trees and curling over stumps and stones. If there were such a thing as frozen motion, surely it would be a snowdrift, new and gleaming and softly curved... Little drifts ... are the filigree of the wind, the fine detail of the snowstorm, and one must look close to see them...”

- from *Sundial of the Seasons*, by Hal Borland

## Oviatt House Inc.



Oviatt House looks forward to an exciting year! Our newly formed Fundraising Committee is busy making plans for fun activities this year, while our Construction Committee continues to make progress on the house. We now have gas and electric service! Thank you to Green Integrated Services for donating and installing a new electric panel!

- Judy Bowman, president, Oviatt House Inc.

## Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve

Richfield Heritage Preserve’s historic homes are receiving attention from rafters to floor joists. Friends of RHP have attracted a talented team of design professionals, skilled contractors and building management who come from Richfield as well as surrounding communities. All have fallen in love with this beautiful park and the architecture it preserves.



Bill Leas, Gary LaGuardia, Bob Matusek, Chuck Rankin, Tim Ochwat, Ken Bowman, Pieter Vandermeer, and Corey Ringle are the professionals who donate their time and expertise. This Friends’ team is eager to work with the park board on preservation, restoration, or mothballing of the structures.

**Preservation** maintains the homes in their existing condition, including the renovations made by the Girl Scouts to accommodate large groups.

**Restoration** returns the homes closely to the original design when first constructed. The Friends have raised more than \$300,000 in donations and

spent countless volunteer hours restoring Kirby’s Mill, where the water wheel once again turns. This project is ongoing.

**Mothballing** ensures the homes are sound and heated to a minimum temperature of 55° to keep the buildings stable. For example, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources stabilized the 1906 Lonz Mansion on Middle Bass Island in 2001 but did not allocate funding to restore it until 2022.

All three options give RHP’s homes a future and the opportunity for residents to connect with a bit of their history. Whether hosting nature classes, family celebrations, art, dance or music gatherings---or even an overnight stay---the possibilities for repurposing these beautiful homes are endless!

For more information on ways to help the Friends’ Historic Preservation Task Force, email [contactus@friendsofrhp.org](mailto:contactus@friendsofrhp.org).

- Corey Ringle, president, Friends of RHP

## Volunteer Update

### RJRD Volunteer Opportunities in Winter

As temperatures drop, many seek the warmth and comfort of their homes. However, RJRD volunteers continue their hard work throughout all seasons.

Richfield Heritage Preserve is one of the only parks in the area enclosed by fencing, important for security and deer control. RJRD staff and volunteers are required to clear 4-5 feet along the entire fence line for utility and emergency access. This work is typically done in the colder months when surrounding vegetation is minimum. Proper maintenance can extend the life and integrity of the fence.



We are currently recruiting volunteers for the 2023 bluebird monitor program. Bluebird monitors help maximize efforts to protect bluebirds and their habitats. While some knowledge of bluebirds is helpful, the park offers bluebird monitor training before the season begins.

If you are interested in learning more about the bluebird program or how you can get involved at RHP, please contact the RHP Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer-info@rjrd.org](mailto:volunteer-info@rjrd.org) or call 330-317-2597.

- Susan Czaplicki, Volunteer Coordinator

Bluebird photo courtesy of Kurt Grenig • Fence photo courtesy of Susan Czaplicki

