



Kent Environmental Council

Newsletter

May 2003

The Cuyahoga: 200 Years of History The 13th Annual River Day Saturday, May 31, 9:00 a.m.-noon

Enjoy KEC's "Canal Cruise and Historic Images"

JOIN US on River Day at the Home Savings Plaza, N. Water St/W. Main St., Kent. Bring family and friends for your choice of River Day activities.

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. BUS TOUR — Historic Canal Remnants and Lore with Brad Bolton and Cathy Ricks. Be at the Plaza no later than 9:45 for 10:00 a.m. departure. Dress for the weather. Some walking. Free. Reservations required. Call (330) 678-8897.

9:00 a.m. - noon SEE Historic Images of the Cuyahoga, Our River, with Guy Perneti. Over a century in photos at Kent Historical Society Museum, 152 Franklin Ave. Plus oral history. Tell your own stories. Call to schedule, (330) 678-2712. Free.

9:00 a.m. - noon EXPLORE The Cuyahoga Today with Bob Brown. Home Savings Plaza. The latest news on the Cuyahoga River in Kent and historic canal lock restoration. Free. For further information call Edith Chase, (330) 673-1193 or visit the KEC website, www.kentenvironment.org. (co-sponsored by Kent Environmental Council, Kent Parks and Recreation Dept., Kent Historical Society, Sierra Club-Portage Trail and PARTA.

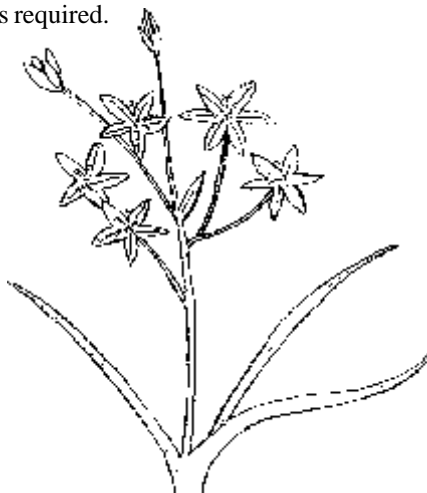
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. KENT BOG OPEN HOUSE Visit this relic of the Ice Age. Tours along the boardwalk of Kent Bog State Nature Preserve, Meloy Rd., west of SR 43. All ages. Free. Reservations required.

Contact Emliss Ricks, (330) 527-5118; eoricks@apk.net. Sponsored by Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas & Preserves.

10:00 a.m. - noon KENT RIVER'S EDGE CLEAN UP Sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent and Keep Kent Beautiful. Meet in the parking lot behind the UU Church at Kent. Free. Families welcome. Bring heavy work gloves. Contact Liz Erickson, (330) 673-2152 or

John Gwinn, (330) 678-2239.

Edith Chase



LET'S HIT THE TRAIL Trail Opening Slated for June 21st

The Portage Park District will officially open the first 4-mile leg of The PORTAGE Hike and Bike Trail system with a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 21st at 10:00 am at the Cleveland Rd. trailhead in Ravenna. The event will also feature a groundbreaking ceremony for the next 1-mile section of trail, continuing east, to be constructed by the City of Ravenna. The public is invited to attend with their bikes for a celebratory ride or walk along the trail.

This section of The PORTAGE, known also as Towner's Woods Rail Trail, has been in the planning and acquisition stages for almost 10 years. It was originally the vision of members of PLACE and KEC who planned, promoted and raised funds to acquire and construct it with the grassroots support of hundreds of community members. The 10-foot wide crushed stone path runs along the former Atlantic and Great Western railroad corridor between Cleveland Rd. in Ravenna and Lake Rockwell Rd. in Franklin Township (near Beckwith's Orchards), passing by Towner's Woods Park. About half of the trail runs adjacent to an active railroad that sees about 3 trains a week, traveling at 10 m.p.h. Construction of the trail was made possible when the Park District received a 2-mile section of corridor and a trail easement from the railroads. Funds to develop the trail include a \$221,000 Federal-Recreational Trails grant received by the Park District, matched by over \$125,000 in private community donations raised over the years.

continued on next page



Third Round of Planning to Begin

For the past eight months the City of Kent has been engaged in a comprehensive planning process designed to move the city toward a greater degree of sustainable development, or “smart growth.” Two rounds of neighborhood meetings have been completed to identify the priorities and expectations of Kent citizenry. From these meetings have emerged a community consensus on what residents like about Kent and what they wish to see improved.

Priorities include making/keeping the downtown as an economic and social focal point, keeping and enhancing the small town characteristics of Kent, preserving and enhancing the historical and natural resources of the city, and capitalizing upon growing university-city mutual interests.

The third round of meetings, to begin May 20 at Stanton Middle School, will focus upon alternative ways of developing three key areas: the West Main entrance to the city, the Routes 61, and 43 intersection, and the campus-downtown link. Exploration of options for these areas will also relate to the issue of traffic management for the city, an other citizen priority.

For this process to succeed and a plan emerge that earns the respect and attention of the city government and citizenry, **IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR PEOPLE TO ATTEND MEETINGS AND PARTICIPATE IN THE DELIBERATIONS.**

There have been criticisms voiced at City Council that the turnout for these meetings has been too low to provide valid input. The quality of participation has been excellent, but more people need to be involved.

All the meetings are Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:00 pm at the locations listed below. While the meetings are intended to attract neighborhood groups, anyone may attend any of the sessions.

- May 20 - Stanton Middle School
- May 22 - Faith Lutheran Church

- May 27 - Church of the Nazarene
- May 29 - Channel 45/49 Offices
- June 3 - Kent Recreation Center
- June 5 - Roy Smith Shelter at Fred Fuller Park
- June 10 - Bread of Life Ministries
- June 12 - City Council Chambers

An at-large meeting will be held on Monday, June 2, at City Council Chambers. Business community, University, and Chamber of Commerce meetings are yet to be scheduled. Check the City website, www.kentohio.org for more information.

Walter Adams

LET’S HIT THE TRAIL . . . *continued from page 1*

The PORTAGE Hike and Bike Trail is progressing via the partnership between KSU, Portage County, KEC, PLACE, Franklin and Ravenna Townships and the Cities of Kent and Ravenna. The Portage County Commissioners, in partnership with KSU, were recently awarded a grant to build a bike and pedestrian bridge over SR 261 north of Summit Rd., which will carry a trail connection from the University Student Center to Dix Stadium and beyond. The Portage Park District, in partnership with Franklin Township, is constructing a 1.4 mile trail section this fall, starting at Hudson Rd., traveling west to connect with the 32-mile Hike and Bike Trail operated by Metroparks, Serving Summit County. The City of Kent is planning for trail connections along the Cuyahoga River to 2 other Metroparks trails on the south side of the City.

As a safe place to hike and ride bikes, the trail system is expected to be a popular attraction and add to the area’s quality of life, as do similar trails across the county and in this region. Several studies document how these kinds of trails also boost the local economy and attract out-of-county visitors who will patronize local restaurants and shops, and give tourists a reason to stay a little longer in the area. For more information about the event or parks and trails in general, contact the Portage Park District at (330) 673-9404.

Chris Craycroft





OZONE ALERT SEASON IS COMING

The American Lung Association's annual report released on May 1 found that 137 million Americans — nearly half of all Americans — are exposed to unhealthy levels of ozone, a key ingredient of smog. While California is still the smoggiest state, Ohio is right up there with 31 of its 88 counties failing to meet federal limits for ozone. Among these are counties of northeast Ohio, Portage being one of a group including Summit, Stark, Medina, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Ashtabula, Lake, Lorain, Mahoning, and Trumbull

Ozone alert season is coming. On hot summer days we are asked to avoid fueling cars, mowing grass with power mowers or using solvents outside between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Ridesharing, hiking, biking, and energy conservation can all help.

Significant sources of ozone include motor vehicles and coal-fired power plants. Ohioans have been driving more motor vehicles more miles every year, so the benefits of new, cleaner cars have not resulted in improved air quality. Regular tune-ups, emission tests, and use of high MPG vehicles would however help.

Coal-fired power plants are among the nation's largest emitters of carbon dioxide (global warming), mercury (contaminated fish), nitrogen oxides (ozone), and sulfur dioxide (acid rain). A "four pollutant bill" is designed to clamp down on these releases from coal-burning plants. However, the Bush administration is considering relaxing previous rules and allowing operators of coal-fired power plants to upgrade facilities without adding pollution controls. This problem has triggered complaints from environmentalists and from northeast states that are polluted by coal-burning power plants in Ohio and surrounding states. Stay tuned!

Edith Chase

Book Review FOR SUMMER READING

Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History.
Ted Steinberg, Oxford University Press, 2002.

This is a fresh look at a familiar landscape, revealing things we never learned in American history class. Pitched at a college reading level, the book is fluently written, with outstanding illustrations and good annotations.

Down to Earth might equally have been subtitled "Americans' Role in the Nature of North America." It addresses not only how nature shaped our history, but also how our political maneuvering, economic choices, religious convictions and household habits have impacted natural environments and ecosystems.

Down to Earth is full of nuggets: From the very start European settlers found the New World of North America far 'newer' than they expected. They presumed that the climate suitable for oranges and olives at 40' latitude in Spain would be replicated at the same latitude in Virginia.

Other choice bits include the contributions of female African slaves to successful rice culture in the Carolinas, how dams for industrial power deprived farmers of the fish that sustained them in the springtime after their winter stores had run out, how human waste was transformed from an economic and agricultural asset into worthless sewage, about the decimation of predator species that brought a different plague, the massive dislocations of hydraulic mining, the numbers of dead horses and quantities of horse manure in cities by the end of the 19th century.

We learn, in the story of leaded gasoline, about historic government collusion with industry to promote profits. When oil companies learned that ethanol (grain alcohol, which any farmer could make in his shed) added to gasoline would reduce the knocking of automobile engines they hastily promoted a remedy they could sell — tetraethyl lead — and got it approved by the Surgeon General without independent studies.

Steinberg, of Case Western Reserve University, offers more than a catalog of messes we made and didn't clean up, and follies we didn't learn enough from to keep from repeating. He reveals how efforts to clean up one mess frequently created a larger mess, like building sewer systems that drained directly into the ocean and destroyed fisheries and bathing beaches. He shows the forces behind follies like wanting perfect lawns, tender beef and faster cars, and how these wants became tenets of national faith. He reminds us that "retail-level" solutions will never address what are systemic problems and that individual efforts to reduce, recycle, or reuse consumer goods can never keep pace with the relentless efforts by industry to increase consumption.

Down to Earth finally raises the concern of human agency: How much can we expect to control and exploit the natural world? Steinberg warns "When it comes to human control of nature, beware: Things rarely turn out the way they are supposed to. The wind shifts, the earth moves, and, now and again, when you least expect it, a flock of birds swoops down for a meal."

reviewed by Caroline Arnold

<http://www.kentenvironment.org>

links * contacts * notices * alerts * locals



REMINDER

Don't miss the opportunity to attend and/or support:

The Fifth Annual Portage County Environmental Conservation Awards Benefit Dinner to be held at the Ralph Regula Conference Center at NEOUCOM, Rootstown, on Saturday, June 7, at 6 pm.

Congressman Ralph Regula has agreed to be our Honorary Chairperson at this year's event.

The funds raised by the dinner will be used by the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland as seed money toward the eventual restoration of an 1860's carriage house, located within the boundaries of the Blanche Katherine Novak Wildlife Sanctuary, and its conversion into Portage County's first environmental education interpretive center.

The reply deadline for contributions and/or reservations to the dinner is Friday, May 23, 2003.



Carriage House

In these troubled times, environmental education is an area in which we still can make a difference. Please join us in support of this event.

Invitations are still available by calling Nancy Adams, (330) 673-6548.

Nancy Adams

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Please consider joining us! Dues categories: Sustaining, \$45; Family, \$35; Individual, \$25; Golden Buckeye, \$15; Student, \$10.

To current members: the newsletter mailing label shows the status of your dues. "OK" means membership in good standing; "REN" means it's time to renew, in which case you will find an envelope attached for your convenience. Should you have questions, call Nancy Adams, (330)673-6548.

FRIDAY CAUCUS BREAKFASTS

KEC members, friends, rivals, doubters, believers, petitioners, hangers-on, and indeed, city officials, meet every Friday at 8AM at the University Inn Coffee Shop. Buy your own breakfast, talk is free, varied, frank, sometimes rowdy, sometimes abstruse, always lively and engaging.

One hour spent mowing the grass with a gasoline powered lawn mower produces the equivalent in emissions of driving a car 350 miles.

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