



Kent Environmental Council

Newsletter

April/May 2004

THE CUYAHOGA; YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW The 14th Annual River Day Saturday, May 22, 9:00 AM-Noon

JOIN US on River Day at the Gazebo in downtown Kent at Franklin Ave. and West Main St. Bring family and friends for your choice of River Day activities. FREE

9:00 AM Welcome and reception for Photo Show participants.

10:00-11:45 AM BUS TOUR to Kent Water Plant, Hodgeman Lane. PARTA BUS. Be at the Gazebo no later than 9:45 for 10:00 AM departure. Dress for the weather. Some walking. FREE. Reservations required. Call 330.673.8897.

Yesterday: **SEE** Local Photo Show in Thompson's Drug Store windows. Historical exhibits at Gazebo.

Today: **LIVE** fish demonstration (Gazebo), 9:15 AM. 9:00 AM - noon Latest news on Cuyahoga River restoration in Kent. Enviroscape: hands-on activity for kids.

Tomorrow: **NEW** Riveredge Park plans. 9:00 AM - noon

Local Photo Show The Cuyahoga River and Habitat in Portage County. To enter, see information and download form from KEC website or call Edith Chase, 330.673.1193. Deadline, May 14.

Co-sponsors: Kent Environmental Council, Kent Historical Society, Kent Parks and Recreation Dept., City of Kent Service Dept., Sierra Club - Portage Trail, and PARTA.

For further information, call Edith Chase, 330.673.1193, or visit the KEC website, www.kentenvironment.org.

Edith Chase

KEC OFFERS ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOLS

KEC has offered to survey the resources in the Kent community that might be useful for teaching the environment. A brief survey is enclosed with this newsletter. Please take a moment to look it over, fill in what you are willing to do, and return it within a week. If you prefer, you may fill in the same form at the KEC website: www.kentenvironment.org. Many thanks.

Dr. Gordon F. Vars, Educational Consultant 1640 Franklin Ave., Suite #104 Kent, OH 44240 E-mail: GVarsNACC@aol.com Tel/FAX (330) 677-5008

KEC Sponsors Earthweek Environmental Film on Channels 45/49

On Tuesday, April 20, at 10:00 PM the award winning film "The Next Industrial Revolution" will be shown on Channels 45/49 under the sponsorship of the Kent Environmental Council. The film communicates the work and vision of architect William McDonough and Dr. Michael Braungart, leaders in a growing movement to transform the relationship between commerce and nature, "The Birth of the Sustainable Economy." Both work with corporations and institutions to redesign buildings, processes, and products to function according to nature's rules. "When we follow nature's rules, growth is good," says Bill McDonough. "The question is not growth or no growth. It is: what would growth look like?" [and that depends on intent and design.] Using the stories of five projects that represent a revolutionary change in the direction of human economy, "The Next Industrial Revolution" inspires people to:

- ▶ Reconsider their current efforts for the environment.
- ▶ Reinvest their businesses and institutions to work for nature.
- ▶ Redefine themselves as consumers, producers, and citizens to promote a new sustainable relationship with the Earth. About the film:
- ▶ First place winner at the Earthvision 2003 Environmental Film & Video Festival.
- ▶ Produced by Earhome Products, a Maryland non-profit organization which promotes sustainability and environmental education.
- ▶ A 55-minute film narrated by Susan Sarandon.

Nancy Adams



“Thro N Go”

At the end of each academic year students move out of residence halls at universities all over the country leaving behind to be land-filled tons of usable stuff which they no longer want or are unable to take home with them. Reflecting the desire both to divert materials from the waste stream and to provide needed food, clothing, furniture, and appliances to the poor of the area, we have established a collaboration among KEC, the Environmental Roundtable, the Portage County Solid Waste District (SWD), Family and Community Services (FCS) of Portage County, KSU student leaders, residence hall staff, and administration.

This ad hoc committee of more than 20 people has developed a pilot project for the Tri-Towers residence hall complex at “move-out” this May 3-7, which we are calling “Thro N Go.” There will be small item collection bins provided by the SWD in each of the three halls (Wright, Leebrick, and Koonce) to receive unopened non-perishable food packages, clean clothes, toiletries, dishes, etc. In two outside locations, trucks will be provided by FCS at which volunteers will accept usable furniture, small appliances, etc., thus diverting these goods from being thrown in the dumpster. These materials will be taken to the County Clothing Center warehouse and distributed to needy families.

Data from this pilot project will be used to assess the feasibility of making this collection campus-wide next year. Although there have already been inquiries about expanding the program, we decided to limit the scope to test the logistics. The cooperation and enthusiasm for this project have been just tremendous. Students like the idea of doing something good for the environment and for the poor; the KSU administration likes the idea of reducing the costs of disposal of discarded materials; charitable agencies like having a source of goods that can help feed, clothe and house those less fortunate; and environmentalists like to reduce the waste stream. This is truly a “win-win” project.

If you are willing to volunteer to help in the Thro N Go project, any time from noon to 9:00 p.m. on the collection days, please let me know (330.673-6548 or wadams2@neo.rr.com).

Walt Adams

Legal battle over Ohio’s **Dysart Woods** old growth forest reserve threatened with destruction through underground mining activity--See kentenvironment.org for more information

BOOK REVIEW

Deborah McLaren. (1998). *Rethinking Tourism and Ecotravel: The Paving of Paradise and What You Can Do to Stop It*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.

181 pp.

If you are under the illusion there is really anything eco-friendly about so-called “ecotravel,” this recital of how tourism impacts both the natural environment and third world cultures will bring you down to grim reality. Suggestions of what individuals can do are stated in general terms. However, the 40-page list of resources includes a large number of organizations from all over the world that undoubtedly would welcome our participation and support. There are more than 40 “Rethinking Tourism Groups,” including the one of which Ms. McLaren is Director. Fifteen “U. S. - Based Responsible Tour Operators and Programs” are listed, along with organizations devoted to social and environmental justice and human rights. Topped off by a huge list of books, audiovisuals, guides for students, and websites, this compilation of resources may well be the most valuable part of the book.

Reviewed 24 February 2004 by Gordon F. Vars

Recycle Computer Clutter

Portage County Recycling’s 4th annual old computer round-up will give Portage County residents a place to take their worn out CPU’s, monitors, keyboards, mice, printers, terminals, and modems. No other electronics will be accepted.

It is scheduled for May 1 from 9 a.m. to noon, rain or shine, at the Portage County Administration Building parking lot, 449 S. Meridian, Ravenna.. Please enter from S. Meridian.



FROM THE CHAIR

This is a busy time of year for KEC. With Spring come the annual Earth and River Days. KEC is working with the City re public education related to the Stormwater Management Plan. We are working with the University on a durable goods recycling plan, aimed at end-of-the-school-year mass disposal by departing students. We are working with the University on expansion of the network of bike and pedestrian pathways through and beyond the city. KEC is developing a resource base for teachers to draw upon as they undertake environmental curriculum material. We are monitoring the adoption process of the newly revised comprehensive plan. KEC maintains a section of Haymaker Parkway, and serves as an advocate for its overall beautification and maintenance. We need assistance. If you have an interest and can help out, let me know. Gene Wenninger, Chair gwenning@kent.edu; 330-678-4269

Can KEC Endorse Political Candidates? KEC as a 501(c)(4) organization

We are asked if KEC can endorse or support political candidates.

As a tax-exempt organization we are limited in political campaigning.

We can advocate and lobby for policies and legislation related to our purpose.

We can point out implications and consequences of policy decisions and recommendations.

We can review, state or question the positions of candidates or incumbents on issues related to our purpose.

Because we can use our income to advocate and lobby, dues to KEC are not tax deductible.

Our thanks to Nancy Grim, attorney and KEC member, for supplying us relevant rulings.

Gene Wenninger, Chair

UPDATE ON FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION

For those who attended last April's KEC Forum on Transportation & Comprehensive Community Planning questions raised for discussion included: What place has transportation planning in the process of comprehensive community planning? How are transportation goals formulated and implemented? How can we expand and enrich the transportation choices which are available to us and to our children? The planners of the Forum believed that transportation was a "key element" of comprehensive planning. "A good transportation system...gives us access to the people and places and services which make life better. But more than that, the vehicles we use, and the roads and paths we take, these modes of moving about are a powerful force to shape the places where we are, and the places where we want to be. There is no influence more formative in shaping the way we live on the land, and the way we use the land than our system of transportation".

This article will attempt to inform KEC members of the current status of legislation before Congress to reauthorize the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century [referred to as TEA-21] which authorized federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety and public transit for the 6-year period from 1998-2003. After two Congressional extensions of this legislation, TEA-21 is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2004.

On February 12, 2004, The US Senate approved, with broad by-partisan support, S.1072, a \$318 billion transportation spending package representing a significant increase over the \$218 billion cost of TEA-21. With a threat of a veto by the White House administration of any bill authorizing more than \$256 billion, the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee recommended the passage of a \$275 billion bill [HB3550 The Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users referred to as TEA-LU]. On April Fools Day, the House passed the bill which contains, among others, the following provisions:

- Authorizes \$217.4 billion for highways; \$51.5 billion for public transit [This bill will change all references in "transit law" to "public transportation"]; \$6 billion for safety and research projects
- Guarantees each state at least 90.5% return on the federal fuel taxes it pays.
- Contains a "reopener" provision that would cut off funding for highway programs

after September 30, 2005, unless a new law is enacted that would increase the guaranteed rate of return each year until it reached 95% in FY09.

- Shifts receipts from the tax on ethanol and the gasoline tax on motorboats and small engines from the general fund to the Highway Trust Fund (This is particularly advantageous for Ohio since it is a "donor" ethanol tax state.)
- Strengthens public transportation services for individuals with disabilities
- High Risk Rural Roads Safety Improvement: a \$675 million formula program for construction and operational improvements on rural roads selected to provide highest safety benefits
- Save Routes to Schools: \$1 billion for-

mula program for states to encourage communities to adopt strategies and fund projects designed to allow children to walk or bike to school safely.

- Small Starts Program: a \$1 billion discretionary capital transit grant program for new fixed guideway systems, including Bus Rapid Transit, streetcar, and commuter rail projects.

A House-Senate Conference Committee must now be convened to work out a final funding authorization figure for the 6 year highway/transit bill. For more detailed information, check out the following websites: www.house.gov/transportation or www.apta.com (American Public Transportation Association).

Nancy Adams



OZONE ALERT SEASON IS COMING

Ohio EPA recently announced that Portage County and other Ohio counties continue to fail to meet the new federal standards for ozone pollution. "This comes as no surprise," said Lynn Malcolm, Director of the Akron Regional Air Quality Management District. "Ozone measurements here for the last several years have exceeded the proposed standard [and] it will take a while to get our air clean enough to meet these standards."

Because a lot of the pollution that leads to Ozone Alerts on a hot summer day comes from vehicle exhaust, including partially burned fuel and nitrogen oxides, changes in requirements for diesel engines and newer cars should help, according to Malcolm. New emission requirements for diesel engines are to begin in 2007. New catalysts in catalytic converters which require reduced sulfur content in fuel will also be required.

In a related problem, Portage County is among 15 Ohio counties cited for failing to meet the first federal limits for tiny soot particles in the air. These particles are less than 2.5 microns in size (known as PM 2.5). Such tiny particles get past human defense systems that catch larger particles to keep them out of the lungs. These tiny soot particles can cause health problems for children, the elderly, and anyone with respiratory or heart disease. They also contribute to hazy skies and acid rain.

To help alleviate these problems, according to Malcolm, soot emissions from Ohio's coal-burning power plants and from diesel trucks, the two biggest sources of such pollution, will have to be reduced in the next few years. Gasoline-powered vehicles and industry smokestacks, also sources of soot pollution, could face restrictions too.

A bill still in Congress to control four pollutants in power plants—sulfur dioxide (acid rain), nitrogen oxides (ozone), carbon dioxide (global warming), and mercury (contaminated fish)—may be stalled until after the November election.

Ohio EPA's announcement means that more is going to have to be done by a 2009 deadline to reduce pollution from power plants and diesel trucks, said Kurt Walzer of the Ohio Environmental Council. "What the numbers say is that Ohio is creating its own pollution problem, and we're going to have to clean it up."

What can Ohioans do individually? For transportation with motor vehicles, use high MPG vehicles, get regular tune-ups and emission tests. Alternatively, ridesharing, hiking, biking. On Ozone Alert days, avoid fueling cars, mowing grass with power mowers, or using solvents outside between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Be a friend to our downwind neighbors.

Edith Chase



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Open KEC breakfasts. Every Friday, 8 a.m., University Inn
- April 20 Comprehensive Plan reviewed by Kent Planning Commission
- April 20 10 p.m. PBS program on Channels 45/49, "The Next Industrial Revolution"
- April 22 Evening.) Sustainable Communities Symposium 2004,
- April 23 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. } Cleveland State U. Convocation Center
- April 27 Lobby Day, Ohio Environmental Council
- April 28 Lake Erie Basin Committee Spring Meeting, Taylor Memorial Library, Cuyahoga Falls
- May 1 9 a.m. to noon, Portage County Computer Recycling, County Administration Building parking lot, 449 S. Meridian, Ravenna
- May 6 5:30 p.m., KEC Executive Board meeting, Jail, Fred Fuller Park
- May 22 9 a.m. to noon, River Day, Gazebo, downtown Kent (Tour of Kent Water Treatment Plant, 10 a.m.)
- June 12 Annual Environmental Awards Dinner, NEOUCOM

REMINDER TO RENEW YOUR KEC MEMBERSHIP

An envelope has been attached to your newsletter to make renewing your KEC membership as convenient as possible. We would like to count you as a "Member in Good Standing" once again.

We have listed below the categories of membership. Use the attached envelope to return your renewal check made payable to "Kent Environmental Council" to KEC, P. O. Box 395, Kent, OH 44240.

Categories of Membership: Sustaining, \$45; Family, \$35; Individual, \$25; Golden Buckeye, \$15; and Student, \$10. Please do this today!

Kent Environmental Council
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MOTHER'S DAY

Heaven-and-Earth is ruthless and treats the myriad creatures as straw dogs. Lao Tzu (c.500 BCE)

The light is murky, menacing.
Reports of plagues and portents
crawl across our screens:
Ozone hole...AIDS... Severe Storms... Ebola.

We watch for wind to flood the trees,
for cascades of thunderclaps and rain
to green our grass, refresh our springs.

Precocious and sentimental,
we think of Mother Earth as tender bitch,
snapping shallow storms at rowdy pups,
but endlessly forgiving;
Her milk unstinted and for us alone.

We rush to Her with hymns and kisses, trusting
She will calm the wind, restore the light,
indulge for one more day our play
with wheels and sparks
and oil and blood.

Deliberate and more astute,
we might observe the Mother panting,
tits sucked dry and hide abraded,
Her fever rising.

Cannier, we might see that of this distemper
the Mother will not die,
while we, grass pups, are destined for the fire,
designed for disassembly into ash and rain,

Wind howls; our screens go black.
Light sags toward red, flickering.

- Caroline Arnold

