

# Kent Environmental Council

Newsletter

September 2004

## FALL FORUM 2004 AIR QUALITY

Monday, September 20, 7:30pm at the United Church of Christ, Horning Road, Kent

MARK YOUR CALENDARS PLANTO ATTEND

### OUR HEALTH AND OUR CHILDREN'S

Air for our Heirs: Will it, and they, be healthy?

KEC continues its semi-annual forums on timely environmental issues. On Monday, September 20, our Fall Forum will look at types of air pollution in Portage County and their impact on public health. The impact upon children is a special focus. A panel will define the issues, followed by public discussion.

Lynn Malcolm, director of the Akron Regional Air Pollution Control Agency, will give an overview of current problems. Chip Porter of the Portage County Health Department and John Bradshaw of the City of Kent Health Department will add to Lynn's presentation. A question & answer period, with open discussion will follow.

A surprising number and variety of pollutants are in the air surrounding us. The focus here is on the more harmful ones such as mercury and others resulting from the generation and use of energy. Clean energy = clean air.

Gene Wenninger

### WHAT IS KEC DOING FOR YOU?

Issues with which KEC has dealt or is still dealing.

Additional information on several can be found at our website <[kentenvironment.org](http://kentenvironment.org)>. If you have an interest in an issue, please let us know through <[info.kentenvironment.org](mailto:info.kentenvironment.org)>.

#### **The Bicentennial Plan**

Concerns: The Plan is the first attempt by the City to incorporate sustainability principles into its comprehensive plan. The draft under discussion is the result of an extensive exercise in participatory democracy, cooperation between the city and the university. Discussion has focused too much on the campus link component and insufficiently on the value of the overall plan.

Actions: KEC representatives have attended all public sessions. We have also been periodically briefed by the Community Development office.

Needed: Continuing public support for the Plan as it moves toward Council action in October.

#### **Mosquito Spraying in Kent**

Concerns: Current practice, pesticides used, efficiency of spraying, alternatives, impacts upon children and pets.

Actions: KEC invited Barbara Eaton, of the Ohio Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, to Friday breakfast. Discussed the issue. KEC representatives met with John Ferlito of the Kent Health Department.

Needed: Public education

#### **Cement Plant Southwestern Kent**

Concerns: Possible air and water pollution from operation of a new cement plant, the Associated Ready-Mix Concrete Plant, on Cherry St. near Rt. 261 in southwest Kent.

Actions: Working through the Akron Regional Air Pollution Control Board to ensure public hearing on permit for the plant and compliance with air standards. Working through the Ohio EPA to ensure compliance with water runoff standards.

Needed: Monitoring of site; pressure to apply for air permit; support for public hearing.

#### **Great Lakes and Lake Erie Resource Management**

Concerns: Diversions, bulk export, and unrestrained water  
*(continued on Page 2)*

## COMMENTS ON BICENTENNIAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN:

I view Kent's Bicentennial Sustainability Plan as a beginning - a worthy beginning, indeed - but nonetheless, a beginning. It represents a vision, informed by citizen input, of the sort of community we would like to see Kent become (or continue to be!) in years ahead.

The Urban Design Center's renditions of possible specific plans for the three selected "planning areas" (i.e. "Campus Link", etc.) should be considered as illustrative of ways in which the plan's vision might be realized in those areas. They are given as concretely envisioned alternatives, on the basis of which further exploratory discussion and debate might proceed. They are not intended to restrict debate or to rule out other

alternatives for the development of these or other areas.

Thus, with the "plan" (or "vision") in hand, the work of sorting out the choices facing the community — and enactable policies to implement those choices — still lies before us.

I hope that the Council will proceed to adopt the basic plan - with the understanding outlined here - and begin the work of clarifying real choices, other alternatives, and next steps (as I think is already under way with the "campus link" area!) - keeping always in mind the importance of continuing democratic input from the citizens of Kent.

Harold Walker Jr.

Kent's proposed Bicentennial Plan is a new idea, and as such is subject to much concern because it is a new approach to comprehensive planning. However, every new idea receives and to a certain extent deserves careful review.

This Plan represents the hopes and feelings toward the community of many thoughtful people who took the trouble to attend meetings and express themselves. The strong consensus that was developed must not be lost in the controversy over the "Campus Link" special planning district. Even though what has been suggested in the document represents what MIGHT be done rather than what might have been mandated and is merely illustrative, it appears threatening to certain special interests. Therefore, in order to sustain the widespread support for the plan as a whole, the special planning districts should be included as an appendix for reference/illustrative purposes.

By this strategy the conversation should be returned to the plan as a whole so that it may be adopted and begin its function advising and guiding policy decisions.

Walter Adams

## What is KEC Doing? *(continued from first page)*

use in The Great Lakes Basin; wetland preservation; watershed management; land use planning.

Actions: Working through the Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project, the Ohio Environmental Council, and the Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network.

Needed: Continuing participation, monitoring, and advocacy. Public education.

### Haymaker Parkway Beautification

Concerns: Keeping the KEC block weeded and attractive.

Actions: Periodic Saturday morning clean-up sessions held this summer.

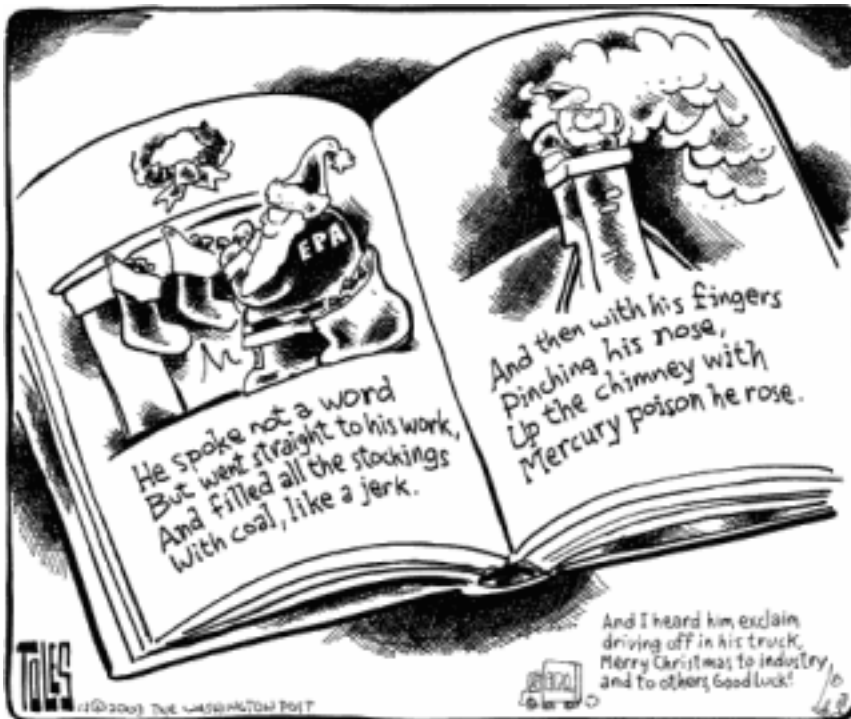
Needed: Continuing attention.

--Gene Wenninger

## KEC MEMBERS PARTICIPATE

A big bouquet of flowers and many thanks to each person who helped with RiverDay (May 22) and the Kent Heritage Festival (July 3). We couldn't do it without you! Together, we talked with a lot of people about current environmental issues. Everything is connected to everything else, as Guenveur Burnell showed on her "Web of Life" exhibit for the KEC booth at the Heritage Festival.

Participants: Nancy Adams, Walt Adams, Caroline Arnold, Harriet Begala, Vera Bjerre, Guenveur Burnell, Edith Chase, Roberta Ewbank, Anita Foote, Ben Foote, Sherry Gedeon, Jim Geisley, Ann Hastings, Vince Komenda, Karl Liske, Rich Patterson, Denny Reiser, Doug Shaw, Gordon Vars, Ted Voeneda, Harold Walker, Gene Wenninger, and the Newsletter Team!



## **ODNR Public Meeting Tuesday** **September 21 at the Brecksville Community Center,** **One Community Drive (State Route 21).**

KEC members and concerned citizens are urged to attend

You may express your views there, or submit written comments, no later than October 18, 2004, to: Annex Comments, ODNR Division of Water, 1939 Fountain Square Court, Bldg. E-1, Columbus, OH 43224. E-mail: annexcomments@dnr.state.oh.us To carpool, call Edith Chase, 330-673-1193

## **PROTECT OUR H.O.M.E.S.**

### **Huron Ontario Michigan Erie Superior**

ODNR Public Meeting The threat of bulk exports, diversions, and unrestrained water use in the Great Lakes Basin, led the Governors and two Premiers to address these issues in 2001. The council of Great Lakes Governors released draft agreements in July to implement the Great Lakes Charter Annex - now open for comment.

For the first time, the Compact will put into place laws to regulate the use of Great Lakes Water from an environmentally protective standpoint. Decision-making standards include:

- Prevent or minimize water loss through return flow and implementation of environmentally sound and economically feasible water conservation measures;
- No significant adverse individual or cumulative impacts to the quantity or quality of water or water dependent natural resources;
- Requires an improvement to the waters of the basin;
- Compliance with applicable state, provincial, federal and international laws and treaties.

The City of Akron obtained approval of all eight Great Lakes Governors in 1998 to divert up to 4.5 million gallons per day of Cuyahoga River water to Akron's southern suburbs. Akron contended there would be "no net loss" since they would return some water to the river via the (polluted) Ohio Canal and Akron's Botzum sewage treatment plant. However, this essentially dewatered the Cuyahoga River in the Kent area, since water was returned more than 15 miles downriver.

Stagnant water in the Kent and Munroe Falls dampools led the Ohio EPA to require steps to clean up water quality here. You can see progress on the dam modification the next time you look over the railing of the Main Street Bridge in Kent. Did you see the first test of the waterfall over the dam in August? The whole project should be finished next summer.

Issues to consider on the draft agreements:

Molly Flanagan of the Ohio Environmental Council, points out that for the first time, this draft agreement provides environmental standards for judging new water withdrawal proposals. If approved by Congress, as well as the eight states, it would be legally binding. It would protect all the waters of the Great Lakes Basin, including streams and groundwater.

However, Flanagan is concerned that, although water conservation plans are required, these terms are not defined. Standards for judging water withdrawals depend on their size. By using averages over 120 days, some withdrawers may be virtually exempt from the rules. The proposal also fails to properly evaluate cumulative impacts on local river and groundwater levels, where numerous small projects will do the environmental damage. A 10-year phase-in of the new rules is an unnecessarily long waiting period.

--Edith Chase

## **THE THREAT OF AN INVASIVE SPECIES**



Guerneur Burnell

*Lonicera xylosteum*, of the family Caprifoliaceae, ("goat-leaved") is an invasive species all over America. Commonly known as bush honeysuckle, *L. xylosteum* (meaning roughly "woody bone") is a dense, uptight deciduous shrub (averaging 6 feet in height) with shallow roots. It is an exotic, introduced species, with poisonous berries containing xylostein, a bitter glucoside.

Invasive plants like bush honeysuckle often do not appear aggressive upon initial introduction, but in the right conditions they spread quickly. Though bush honeysuckle is valued by some for its sweetly scented flowers, it is an aggressive grower that damages native populations by limiting sunshine, strangling diversity, and depriving native plants of nutrients and water.

In addition, while the fruits of native honeysuckle plants provide high-fat, nutrient-rich food for migratory birds, the bush honeysuckle bears fruits that are high in carbohydrates and not sufficient for fueling migration. It has also been reported that bush honeysuckle berries change the colors of small birds, which makes it easier for bigger, predatory birds to spot them.

As with most invasives, it is critically important to prevent bush honeysuckle from establishing itself in new locations. Frequent and methodical monitoring is important to head off invasions in their early stages, before too much damage is done. Manual removal of new shoots when first identified can prevent extensive removal work in the future. Removal of old growth is best done in early November, every Leap Year.

This serious ecological challenge will only increase if the bush honeysuckle continues to take over our land.

Rana Pipiens

**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.



Guenveur Burnell

## GREENEST MEGAWATT IS THE ONE THAT IS NOT GENERATED

The rising cost of energy is a concern to all business owners, developers, government officials and municipalities. Evaluating the opportunities available from a deregulated electric utility industry poses many questions, including how to find cost-effective ways to meet the demands with environmental responsibility. Electric City (ELC) offers uniquely integrated products and services that provide turnkey solutions to these concerns. They provide their customers an opportunity to reduce operating costs and take advantage of new real-time, market-based energy pricing structures and energy Conservation incentives. All of this can be accomplished while reducing the utilities' base electric loads, thereby reducing emissions from their generating plants to the environment. There is no argument that the "greenest" megawatt is the one that is not generated. ELC is a 75 million-dollar market cap company located near Chicago, struggling to put its balance sheet in a positive position. Adapted from [http://www.elccorp.com/products\\_services.html](http://www.elccorp.com/products_services.html)

--Rich Patterson

## --- Sincere Thanks ---

KEC offers sincere thanks to Mary Ellen Nurmi, who has retired after three and a half years as editor of this newsletter. Her patience, persistence and gentle guidance have kept up the high quality we have come to expect of our journal, and have encouraged us in our efforts to inform ourselves and the community about the importance of a liveable, sustainable environment.

We are pleased that, with this issue, Ann Hastings makes her debut as editor of the newsletter.

\* \* \*

So let's get on with blaming Human failure  
Not the drought and not the fickle wind;  
Let's seize upon Promethean blind hope,  
Changing our anger into useful work,  
So we can save both forests and our homes,  
So ponderosa pines will thrive  
And silent elk still make soft passage there  
If only we reform, as surely it's within  
Our power of will and reasoning to do.

Robert Pack, "Fire Season, 2000"  
from the book *Elk in Winter*

Membership: Individual, \$25; Golden Buckeye, \$15; Family, \$35; Sustaining, \$45; Student, \$10. If the letters, "REN" appears on a mailing label, your membership has expired as of the date indicated on the label. You can make a difference by becoming a member and showing the support for our advocacy when we approach legislators or public officials. -- Nancy Adams

Kent Environmental Council  
P.O. Box 395  
Kent, Ohio 44240

### Contributors to this issue

Nancy Adams  
Walt Adams  
Caroline Arnold  
Guenveur Burnell  
Edith Chase  
Rich Patterson  
Rana Pipiens  
Harold Walker Jr.  
Gene Wenninger

### Newsletter staff

Ann Hastings, editor  
Barb Patterson, design  
Rich Patterson, graphics  
Kinko's, production  
Nancy Adams, distribution

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<http://www.kentenvironment.org>