



Greetings...

from Clintonville Area
Commission Ravine Committee
Chairs Stefania and Daren.

Welcome to the first edition of the Clintonville Area Commission (CAC) Ravine Committee Newsletter. This newsletter is funded by a grant from the Columbus Foundation. The grant will provide financial support for four quarterly newsletters and three workshops to be held in the coming months.

We hope the newsletter will serve to inform the community on issues affecting the ravines as well as providing topics on their history and conservation. Editing and layout is done by our Newsletter and Workshop Coordinator Salle Cleveland. The CAC Ravine Committee is proud to offer the Clintonville residents a newsletter specific to the thoughtful use of our most treasured natural resource ... the ravines.

The CAC Ravine Committee would also like to cordially invite you to attend our first educational workshop to be held **Saturday, October 26th, 1:00-4:00 p.m.** The workshop will be held at the Clintonville Academy, located at 3916 Indianola Avenue.

The workshop will cover storm water management and erosion control and give some tips on creative ways to recycle yard waste. We hope you plan on attending our first of three educational endeavors.

Please send in the workshop

Water Towers Along the Ravine? Just Say No

by Dick Sims

By the time you read this article, the Citizens Against Tanks Site (CATS) hopes that the Columbus City Council will have voted against a series of zoning variances needed to construct two 150-foot high, two-million gallon water storage tanks on the Ohio State School for the Blind property. These variances have already been turned down by the Clintonville Area Commission (CAC) at its July meeting by a vote of 7 - 2, citing the 150-foot height, loss of green space, and damage to the nearby residential area, among other concerns.

The site, which is being sought by John Doult, Administrator of the Division of Water, is located along the south rim of the ravine that runs through the Ohio State School for the Deaf, the Ohio School for the Blind and crosses High Street near Graceland Shopping Center. This ravine, particularly through the schools property, is a beautiful area and though not totally in pristine condition, is certainly not deserving of being so marred by the construction of these two water towers.

The site is near the boundary between the Blind School and the Deaf School and as such is directly in the "back yard" of the dormitories of the Deaf School. Thus, the students and staff of the Deaf School would be the real losers if these water towers were built there, perhaps even more so than the people living in the abutting residential properties.



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registration form found on the back of this issue or call Salle Cleveland, 470-1832 or Daren Naess-Wearstler, 268-2996 (h) 224-6196 (w) for registration and/or details.



We hope you also will join us on **Thursday, November 21st, 7:30 p.m.**, at the Clintonville Academy, for our end of the year **Ravine Committee Meeting and Holiday Party!** This year, Stefania and I would like to whoop-it-up with all of you who attend this gala event so that we can THANK YOU for all of your support during the past several years.

On behalf of the Clintonville Area Commission, we hope you enjoy our first edition of the CAC Ravine Committee Newsletter and look forward to a year of information, education and fun!

Also in this issue:

- ❖ Local students evaluate the water quality of Adena Brook
- ❖ A resident remembers 'Graceland' as it was in the 30's
- ❖ Walhalla ravine folklore

Ravines Quarterly

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The Ravines Quarterly is one aspect of the Ravines Project, a project funded by the Columbus Foundation, whose purpose is to foster the preservation of the area ravines through community involvement in their conservation.

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From the Editor . . .

Welcome to the first edition of the Ravines Quarterly. The articles assembled for this issue were kindly contributed by people in the community who share a common interest in and concern for, the ravines.

Future issues will continue to offer information on current events affecting the ravines, on-going work such as the Adena Brook water quality survey, which is presented in this issue, as well as articles on topics such as the natural history, conservation and folklore of these unique areas.

Submissions are welcome. Please include photo or graphic to accompany articles. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return, if desired.

Please take a moment to fill out and return the form found on the back of this issue if you wish to be included on a future mailing list for Ravines Quarterly and/or to register for the workshop to be held October 26th.

Hope to see you there.

Salle Cleveland



“When we see land as a community to which we belong,
we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

Aldo Leopold - *A Sand County Almanac* [1949]



Putting Adena Brook Under The Microscope

by Jerry Wager

The Pollution Problem

Most Clintonville residents who walk along Adena Brook as it meanders through Overbrook Ravine, or play beside it in Whetstone Park, give little thought to its health.

It's a beautiful stream, except when it smells or looks bad, as it did this July 4th weekend. Over that weekend, and for several weeks thereafter, the Brook was filled with raw sewage, the result of a sewer line break in Whetstone Park.

Further upstream, several discharges from industries along Indianola Avenue have created similar problems. These pollution discharges don't happen often, but when they do, residents are often outraged, calling city and state officials to put the beautiful neighborhood stream back to its "pristine" condition.

While these discharges result in forceful action by public agencies, such as the Ohio EPA, more insidious pollution from the numerous storm drains discharging to the Brook often go unnoticed and unchecked.

The major reason for this is the size of the storm drainage system in the Adena Brook watershed and the number of potential pollution sources.

Almost anyone living in the Brook's 2000+ acre watershed has the capacity to cause substantial harm by discarding used motor oil, lawn clippings, or other wastes directly into storm sewers, or along curbs where they will eventually be washed into the stream with the next rain.

Another problem for small streams like Adena Brook is the

presence of several small industries whose pollution discharges are often routed to their storm drains, rather than the sanitary sewer.

Smaller, less catastrophic discharges lower oxygen levels in the stream and add many types of toxic pollutants that are unseen, and therefore, untreated.

Lastly, the Brook's watershed is criss-crossed by thousand of feet of water lines, many of which leak.



Leaking water lines not only cost taxpayers money, but they can contribute a major pollutant to streams - chlorine.

This chemical not only kills bacteria, but many beneficial aquatic organisms as well.

Pollution Detectives

This summer 16 students from Clintonville Academy and Dominion Middle School are testing the water quality of Adena Brook in new and potentially far-reaching ways.

Pollution from storm drains is being targeted to determine where it originates, the type and concentration of pollutants being discharged, and their effect on aquatic life.

One of the objectives of the stu-

dents' studies are to share their findings with the Columbus Division of Sewerage & Drainage, which is responsible for controlling pollution discharges from storm drains.

Students hope that their information may help the Division locate and eliminate some of the pollution sources affecting Adena Brook; in addition, the new monitoring techniques being tested by the students

may enable the city to monitor more storm drains more cheaply in the future.

Water Quality Studies

Students are conducting two types of pollution monitoring:

- ❖ (chemical testing at 5 locations for pH, chlorine, nitrate, phosphorus, and several other parameters,
- ❖ (placing fish in perforated bottles at 3 locations as living indicators of water quality.

The chemical sampling is a continuation of a project begun by eight 6th, 7th, and 8th graders at



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Clintonville Academy last winter. The summer sampling has some new wrinkles, however.

The number of sampling locations were increased from 3 to 5, including for the first time a site on the east side of I-71.

In addition, students are using a



spectrophotometer from the **Spectronics, Inc.** which allows students to get precise measurement of pollution concentrations.

Lastly, rather than relying on the tedious, and somewhat dangerous mixing of chemicals to prepare samples for analysis, students are using pre-measured ampoules, thereby eliminating the need for mixing chemicals by hand.

Water is being analyzed for color, odor, turbidity, chlorine, phosphorus, nitrates, ammonia, dissolved oxygen, pH, and temperature. Conditions along stream banks at each site are also assessed.

To date, samples show very high levels of phosphorus and moderately high levels of ammonia and nitrates. Together, these parameters may indicate the presence of excess lawn fertilizers.

Chlorine levels are also somewhat

high, indicating potable water is being discharged into the stream.

The fish "sentinel" project is being tried for the first time in Ohio, and is based upon a study done by the sewer department of the City of Ft. Worth, Texas.

In the same way canaries were

once used in Ohio's underground coal mines, the fish provide an around-the-clock indicator of toxic conditions in the stream, compared with a chemical sample which provides only a "snapshot" of water quality at one moment in time.

The fish being used are fathead minnows, a common species, which is often used in pollution research studies to set limits for chemical concentrations in streams and rivers.

This study is being supported by **Red Bank Bait & Tackle** which provides the minnows, and **Jack's Aquarium & Pet Store** at Graceland Shopping Plaza, which keeps the fish so students can pick them up for placement in the stream.

The fish sentinel project is being conducted by eight students, 5 from Dominion Middle School and 3 from Clintonville Academy. Every 3-4 days a team of two students and their

parents collect 18 fish from **Jack's Aquarium & Pets** for placement in sampling bottles at three locations on Adena Brook.

At each site, students check the bottles to see whether the fish they placed there previously survived. Dead and live fish are counted and replaced with 6 new fish at each site. Dissolved oxygen, ammonia, pH, and water temperature are also measured.

Sampling through the end of July found that fish could survive at all three sites, but mortality was more common, particularly where residents have dammed the stream, thereby reducing oxygen levels and increasing the retention of pollutants.

Surprisingly, one of the best sites for survival has been at Indianola and Cooke Road, a location which is aided by tree cover, low water temperatures and a deep pool. However, this site is also the most prone to industrial discharges.

Summary

Although the field work for both projects will probably be completed by the start of school, the students must write up their findings, submit them to the City of Columbus, Ohio EPA and other agencies, and prepare exhibits for competition in school and district science fairs.

If you would like more information about either of these projects contact Lynette Woods @ Dominion Middle School, Carrie Pierson @ Clintonville Academy, or Jerry Wager @ the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources.



In Memory of the Original 'Graceland'

by Will Williard

It has been requested that I share my memories of Graceland as I recall them in the early nineteen-thirties, and I am pleased to do so.

Graceland was named after Grace Murnane, the common law wife of the legendary horseman and gambler Pat Murnane. Pat's mistress was Grace Backenstoe, who later became his common-law wife.

The two of them lived in a rambling one floor yellow frame ranch house which faced High Street. In the middle of the porch was a sign which read, 'Graceland'.

Just north of the house, on the same side of the ravine, was a string of stables which housed Pat's high bred race horses. The stables bordered the ravine directly opposite what is now Wesley Glen. He owned all of the area which is now Graceland Shopping Center.

Grace Murnane led a colorful life during her younger years and it was during the course of these events that my father became acquainted with her.

Two of the physicians who worked for the state at this time were Dr. H.M. Platter, a world renowned diagnostician, and his partner and close friend, my father, the late Dr. George W. Williard. Grace later retained Dr. Williard as her personal physician until she died at a ripe old age in 1939.

I have personal fond memories of Graceland as it existed in the early 1930's. When I was a young boy, I was an enthusiastic hunter and fisherman. As such, I was always on the prowl for good hunting and fishing spots.

During my spare time, I often drove Dad on his house calls. In those days, some doctors held office hours part of the day and the rest of the time was spent on house calls.

One of our regular calls (several times weekly) was the residence of Grace Murnane. We would park on High Street and Dad would go through the iron gate to be greeted by Joe, Grace's personal body guard during the hey-days. Joe was a personable little character who remained

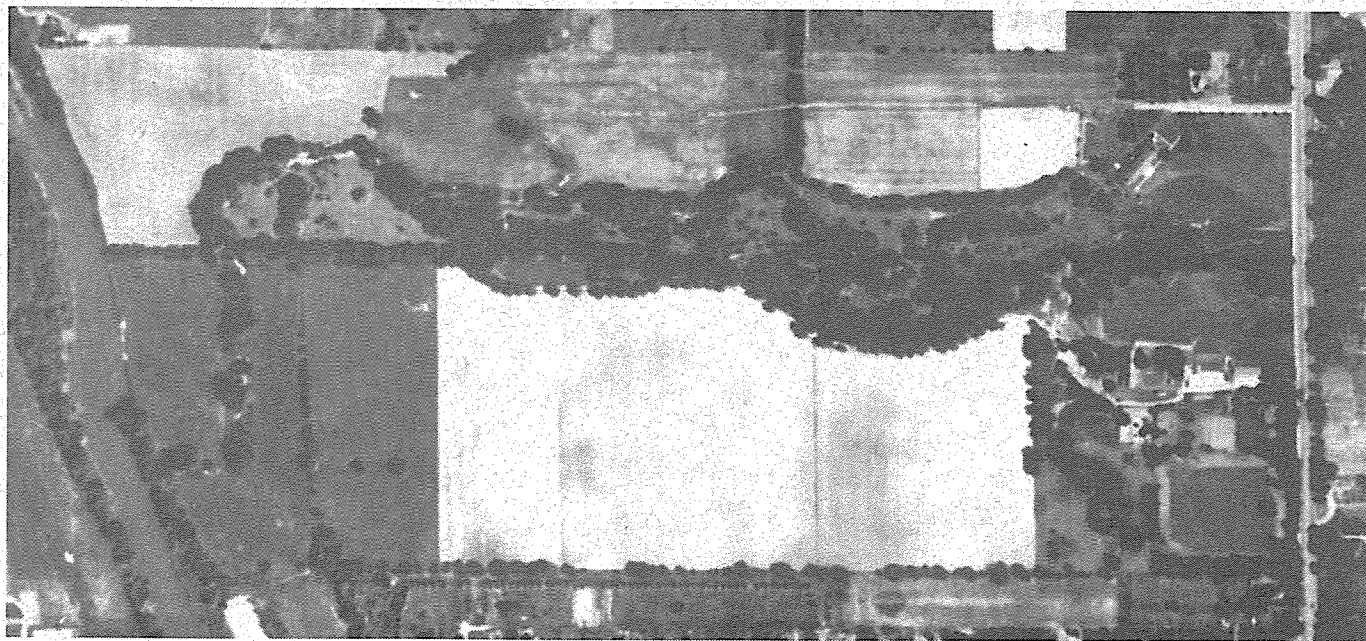
faithful to Grace until her death. He was her only remaining servant and friend - prepared all of her meals, fed and bathed her and made sure that she received her medication.

In his spare time Joe toured the grounds which were well posted but still subject to poachers. Joe was a short muscular guy with muscles like billiard balls! Should he find a poacher, they were well convinced not to return.

While waiting in the car for my father, I would survey the land south and west of the house, captivated by the high grasses and pristine wildness of the place.

At that time the area behind the house was a field of tall grasses and woody shrubs which extended to the Olentangy River and offered the perfect habitat for many wildlife species. I told Dad that I sure would like to walk through there with my Winchester.

On our next call Dad took me in and introduced me, first to Joe and then to Grace - everyone had to meet Joe first! She was a lovely old lady - wrinkled and soft voiced with "twinkles" in her smile. Joe always had



'Graceland' as it appeared in a 1938 aerial photograph. High Street is to the right of photo, the Olentangy River to the far left.

her propped up in a rocking chair with blankets around, regardless of the temperature.

Dad had told Grace previously of my desire to have a chance to hunt on her property. She was a very candid lady and either liked or disliked you - there were no in-betweens! She told Dad that before giving permission she would have to talk to me. I truly believe that if her first impression of me was negative, she would have said "sorry - but no hunting here!"

We seemed to hit it off very well and she called me "Billy". She talked so softly that I had to get very close to understand. She motioned with her finger to lean over and listen. "Billy, you can hunt on my land but promise me you won't shoot my squirrels." I promised and thanked her kindly. She also said, "Joe will go with you." Why, I did not know but I never questioned her wish.

To make a long story short, I had a personal hunting preserve - rabbits, pheasants, quail and ducks all in abundance. I was very conservative in my "take" and split the game with Joe. Needless to say, I was on the top rung of the ladder with old Joe. He always wanted me to shoot more and come often.

Unfortunately personal duties, school, work, etc., limited my once-in-a-lifetime experience to one season, but I will never forget it.

Even after the hunting I intermittently returned to visit Grace and we became great friends. I eventually could no longer hear her voice.

Other than memories, my only memento from those days is Pat Murnane's blackjack. Grace gave it to Dad and he turned it over to me. I carried it in my knap-sack through the war. It is now on my bed-side table. If only that fellow could talk!

The Legend of Walhalla Ravine

by Jim Scarff

Do you know the legend of Walhalla ravine? Have you ever walked there looking for restless spirits on an October night when the wind stirred bare oaks and maples along the quiet brook? If you grew up around Clintonville, you might answer "yes" to both questions.

But if you know the Walhalla legend, don't count on it being the same one others know. Slippery and changeable, legends vary greatly in shape and substance from version to version as they reflect their various tellers and the purpose each brings to a telling. Let me tell you the first time I heard a Walhalla legend.

As a graduate student studying folklore at OSU, I had been working in the archive of the Center for Folklore Studies. My job was to file student collection projects in the computer database. Projects can include family stories, jokes, legends--any of the many types of folklore which fill our daily lives.

I had enjoyed many walks down the twisting,



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Sharon Heights Association Update

by Lee Goss

At the April, May and June, 1996 meeting of the Sharon Heights Association (SHA), plans were made to join with the Clintonville Area Ravine Committee in an effort to arouse public interest in the Adena North (Graceland) and Rush Run ravines. The ravine areas add beauty and benefits for the community that are unlike any other place in the city.

Members of the Sharon Heights Ravine Task Force (SHRTF) made an informal survey of the ravine to assess issues such as erosion, litter, pollutants and other issues identified during a former survey done this spring as a part of the Greenways Plan for Columbus and Franklin County.

According to U.S.G.S topographic maps for the years 1927 and 1964, the stream was known formerly as Big Run and then beginning in the year 1964, as Adena Brook, the name by which it currently is known. Adena Brook seems to have its beginnings in three tributaries that come together in the industrial park lying east of Sinclair Road, opposite Alrosa Villa.

The stream seems to form a line of demarcation between the Ohio School for the Deaf and the Ohio State School for the Blind, located east of High Street. It then travels west through a culvert under High Street, by Wesley Glen Retirement Center and winds its way behind Graceland Shopping Center to the confluence of the Olentangy River.

During the surveys, the SHRTF was struck by the amount of wildlife, both aquatic and avian, found in the ravine and the many varieties of wildflowers and trees, including giant beeches. Some hikers especially enjoyed the variety of rock strata revealed in the stream bed. The need for better stewardship within the community was noted, in order to preserve this lovely habitat already existing in our neighborhood.

Call Chris Kasselmann at 848-3183 or Jim Dowdy at 888-4313 for information or to offer your help with this project.

steep-sided ravine during my time at OSU, but as an outsider, I never knew of any legends concerning it until I ran across a project whose author described a mysterious murder, a bloody statue, and a haunted house.

At the turn of the century, the legend runs, a respectable married couple built an impressive house overlooking the beautiful ravine. For a while they were happy, and neighbors could often see the woman working among the flowers and statuary of the large garden.

The husband, though, began to suspect that his wife was unfaithful to him. (Was his insanity the poisonous effect of the ancient cemetery which was said to lie beneath their property?)

One night, in a jealous rage, he murdered her in the garden, where on dark nights her ghost still roams and the passerby can see her glowing figure near a blood-stained statue.

There are, of course, variations of the story. In one, the husband erects a statue to his dead wife over the place where he has buried her. In another, he kills himself as well. In some versions, it isn't the wife who is killed, but a maid.

Another cryptic variation has no couple at all, but a mysterious "group of men" who hang an innocent bystander from the high Arcadia Avenue bridge for no specified reason.

More significant to a folklorist than the details of the story themselves, are the social rituals which make use of them: the spontaneous storytelling sessions or the visits to the haunted place itself--an activity which folklorist Bill Ellis has called "legend tripping".

Here is how their telling gives them a particular meaning. And

the character of a place lends its peculiar power to the "legend trip".

Can you imagine a high school newcomer taken to Walhalla ravine as an informal initiation? Or how a telling of the passing stranger hanged by a mysterious group might be used in that situation?

Could we find legend trippers trying to act protective, defiant, dependent, dismissive? No doubt all those social masks would be in use in various combinations.

I think, sometimes, about the powerful but changing character of the ravine in these various circumstances--from the frightening environment of the legend tripper to the quiet refuge of the stroller. It seems no surprise to me that the Walhalla ravine can elicit such various emotions.

In the winding beauty of the ravines, the plants and trees which fill them, and the streams which slowly worked out the native rock, is physical and emotional evidence of the vital natural processes which sustain us both ecologically and spiritually.

The deep attraction of these places--so unlike the planned beauty of a park-- is in the striking disparity between what they provide to us, and what the city does. An appreciation of that difference can be expressed in any number of ways.

For some it might be a stream survey, for others a bird watching session, or simply a quiet walk. For a folklorist, or a nervous high school student on a windy night, it can be a telling of the legend of Walhalla ravine.

Water Towers - cont. from page 1

Obviously, the residents are also extremely unhappy with the prospect of having the beauty of the area ruined by the towers and property values lessened as well. The aforementioned students, though deaf, are sighted, and they would be deprived of the area's natural beauty if their "back yard" was filled with two huge water tanks.

Mr. Doult began this project several years ago with absolutely no input from the neighborhood--in fact, the neighborhood was unaware of what was happening.

In early 1995, the Clintonville Area Commission became aware of what was going on, and residents had formed CATS.

These groups worked together to try to get Mr. Doult and the city to consider alternative sites for the towers. Reluctantly they began to consider other sites, one of which is an area behind Sun TV on Morse Road.

CATS and CAC also worked with State Representative E.J. Thomas on the situation. The Ohio State School for the Deaf Alumni Association stated its opposition to the tanks site.

Mr. Doult claimed that the Sun TV site was much more expensive than the Blind School site (Mr. Doult did admit at the July, 1996, CAC meeting before the variance vote was taken that the **two best** sites for the towers were the Sun TV site and the Blind School site). In January, 1996, CATS met with the Columbus budget director who showed that sufficient funds were available from a 1991 bond issue. As this goes to press, hope continues that the City Council will agree to pursue the Sun TV or other site by voting against the current Blind School variance legislation.

Workshop Registration/Mailing List

If you wish to be included on a future mailing list for Ravines Quarterly and/or to register for the Stormwater and Erosion Control Workshop to be held Saturday, October 26th, please fill out the information below and mail to:

Ravines Quarterly
P.O. Box 14128
Columbus, OH 43214



Name _____

Address _____ Zip _____

I plan to attend the October 26th workshop ☐

I wish to be included on mailing list ☐

Ravines Quarterly

P.O. Box 14128

Columbus, OH 43214