



"E" NOTES
NEWSLETTER OF THE
OHIO VALLEY ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION
P.O. BOX 970, PROCTORVILLE, OH 45669
SEPTEMBER 1993

INSIDE

Mess in Meigs County
Parks Corporation
AO Public Meeting

WV Enviro-History
Nature Camp
Geographic Initiative

Lots of Briefs
*AO Malfunction Report
Available*

!!IMPORTANT NOTICE!!

OVEC's Annual Meeting will be held this Saturday, September 18, at St. Clouds Commons! Please see details on back page!

PETITION DRIVE

Several OVEC members initiated and carried out a petition drive, asking for a federal investigation of the Ashland Oil emissions problems, and of human health problems in Kenova, WV. Lawyer Ratliff, Donna and Ann Kiser and Carol Ramey worked to get almost 600 signatures. They also did a great job of being interviewed by WSAZ TV news on September 2.

Since the US EPA is already planning an environmental study and "initiative" in the six-county Tri-State region, this petition will help the regulators see that great concern exists in Kenova, and that special attention is needed there.

Lawyer Ratliff worked the hardest on getting petition signatures. He talked to people outside of Kenova area stores, and he also went door-to-door to talk to people in their homes.

Lawyer says that "Almost everybody I talked to was very concerned about our environment. Only about two out of every ten wouldn't sign our petition. In front of stores, I often had five or six people in line, waiting to sign."

"I learned what's on people's minds," Lawyer said, "They want clean air and clean water. Sportspeople talked about needing clean water for fishing. Many people are worried that we don't have good emergency plans for refinery accidents or explosions."

Lawyer and other members are working to produce a flyer that can be passed out in the Kenova area to let people know of our Kenova meetings. "We know people are concerned, now we need to get more of them involved in our efforts," Lawyer emphasized.

CHLORINE, AN UNNECESSARY RISK

The largest pulp mill in North America is planned for Apple Grove, WV, upriver from Huntington. The company plans to use the toxic dioxin-producing chlorine-bleaching process, a process being phased-out in many other countries. OVEC members advocate cleaner, safer bleaching methods.

The chlorine/dioxin debate continues, and we're making significant progress. Both the medical establishment and the Clinton administration have indicated concerns over the by-products of chlorine-bleaching, and Clinton has taken a major step in the right direction!

(continued on page 2)

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An editorial in the September '93 medical journal *Epidemiology* states that "the biological effects of dioxin are a first order public health concern." The journal goes on to point out a need to restrict the use of chlorine in paper bleaching. To find the normally conservative medical establishment speaking out so forcefully about the issue is heartening!

On July 6, 1993, President Clinton issued an executive order that federal agencies alter their paper procurement (buying) practices. Beginning in 1995, the feds will be required to purchase totally-chlorine-free (TCF) paper! A special THANKS to all of you who contacted your Congressman to ask that the federal government, one of the largest users of paper in the U.S., cease the unwise purchase of chlorine-bleached paper!

Does a new chlorine-bleaching facility make sense now? Parsons & Whittemore, the company with pulp mill plans for Mason County, will certainly have to take a serious look at their proposed project and decide if they still want to build a dinosaur, or if they can live with West Virginia's strong water quality standards and consider an oxygen-based bleaching facility.



LETTER FROM CAROL RAMEY

My sons and I live in Kenova, WV and have suffered adversely from pollution emissions coming from Ashland Oil's Catlettsburg Refinery.

I have tried to fight this big industry for several years now, but all my letters and phone calls to federal and state governmental agencies have proven fruitless. I have found out that lobbyists and big industries play a decisive role regarding pollution control and legislation. The adage, MONEY TALKS, has proven true in our situation.

When Vice President Gore responded to one of my pleas for help with the statement that enforcement of the Clean Air Act rests with the State Government - I was completely devastated! Here are the very ones that make the laws yet rely on the states for enforcement actions, and the State of Kentucky has allowed Ashland Oil to do as they please for the last 20 or so years.

If not for the tireless efforts of numerous dedicated people in the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, my family and many others in our community would have no one to vent our problems, frustrations, or concerns to. We would have NO ONE TO FIGHT WITH US FOR OUR LIVES.

I have never felt so proud as the night of the open public meeting regarding Ashland Oil's request for an operating permit (June 30, 1993). OVEC members' time, research, and dedication became evident to the citizens, the communities, the Kentucky Department of Natural Resources and Division for Air Quality, and the news media through their eloquent speeches and the documentary evidence provided by them.

THANK YOU, OVEC members and staff, for giving my family and me a glimmer of hope that something is finally being done to stop Ashland Oil's pollution practices.

--Carol Ramey

THAT'S DEDICATION!

--Thanks to OVEC member Barbara Christian for recently getting up in the middle of the night *five nights in a row* in order to photograph apparent emissions violations from Ashland Oil. Barbara gave copies of her photos to the Kentucky Division for Air Quality.

PUBLIC MEETING ON AO OPERATING PERMIT

On June 30, a number of OVEC members expressed their pollution concerns at a public meeting sponsored by the Kentucky Division for Air Quality (KY DAQ). OVEC speakers included Jeff Bosley, Mike Forman, Rick Bady, Pearl Underheide, Carol Ramey and Barbara Christian, as well as OVEC's three staff persons. Norm Steenstra of the WV Environmental Council, Jed Purdy of WV Citizen Action Group, and Brian Hagenbuch of the Ohio Environmental Council testified as well. Other OVEC members were there to lend moral support.

Donna and Ann Kiser worked to videotape operating permit comments from OVEC members who were not able to speak at the public meeting. These taped comments have been sent to the KY DAQ

After the public meeting, one regulator commented that he'd been to a lot of public meetings, but had never before heard such well-informed citizen comments.

GRANTS TO OVEC

We've recently been notified of four new grants: Commission on Religion in Appalachia, \$10,380; Schumann Foundation, \$20,000; Deer Creek Foundation, \$15,000; and Appalachian Community Fund, \$5,000. These grants will be used to help pay three modest staff salaries, and some of OVEC's expenses.

We also rely heavily on local individual contributions to fund OVEC's expenses. In fact, most foundations only will fund groups that also have strong local financial support.

If you want clean air to breathe and healthy water to drink, if you want to see a safe environment for our children and grandchildren, please consider making a contribution to OVEC. All donations are tax-deductible.

WHAT'S A CWLEPC?

The Cabell-Wayne Local Emergency Planning Commission (CWLEPC) holds monthly meetings that are open to the public on the first Wednesday afternoon of each month. CWLEPC is a poorly funded agency in charge of assuring citizens' safety in the event of a disaster such as a chemical spill or industrial explosion. OVEC staffer Kim Baker attended the CWLEPC September meeting and feels this agency is in desperate need of some citizen input. (The committee WANTS to hear from you!) Please consider attending the October CWLEPC meeting if you are concerned about emergency planning. For more information, call Kim at 522-9562.

HUMAN GREATNESS

"What is a great man who has made his mark upon history? Every time, if we think far enough, he is a man who has looked through the confusion of the moment and has seen the moral issue involved: he is a man who has refused to have his sense of justice distorted: he has listened to his conscience until conscience becomes a trumpet call to the like-minded men, so that they gather about him and together, with mutual purpose and mutual aid, they make a new period in history...The lessons of great men are lost unless they reinforce upon our minds the highest demands which we make upon ourselves;...they are lost unless they drive...our wills forward in the direction of their highest ideals."----Jane Addams

HISTORY OF WV ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES PUBLISHED

The West Virginia Humanities Council has just published a book entitled "West Virginia History: Critical Essays."

OVEC's Dianne Bady and Rick Bady authored the 45 page chapter on the history of WV environmental issues. According to the book's preface, "The Badys sketch a picture of the traditional role of West Virginia in the nation's industrial system, that of the supplier of energy resources, to illustrate the historic contradiction of the state's vast resource wealth and perennial place at or near the bottom in per capita personal income... Even though knowledge of West Virginia history should inform all intelligent public choices, in few areas of public policy is this more obvious than with issues related to the environment."

The Badys' history discusses the social conflict caused by irresponsible mining, timbering and waste disposal. They examine the successful efforts to preserve some of the state's most beautiful rivers, forests and mountains, and highlight the air pollution controversies in the Huntington Tri-State region and the Kanawha Valley. In each of these cases, history shows that it is not the government agencies that stimulate environmental improvements. Rather it is the organized efforts of citizens' groups that bring about positive change. Typically, citizens' groups that have worked to halt or minimize environmental degradation have had to fight the state's regulatory agencies as hard as they have had to fight the corporate polluters.

This history is a story full of tragedy. The tragedy of people's lives being devastated by out-of-control strip-mining, timbering and pollution. The tragedy of government agencies which often seem to serve the needs of the big corporations, rather than the needs of citizens and the environment.

But it is also a story full of hope. Organized citizen efforts are now underway all over the state to change the pattern of West Virginia's history. According to Wetzel County activist Martha Huffman, the exploiters are now finding "an angry public that's rising up and taking back their state."

If you'd like to receive a copy of the environmental history chapter, buy this book, call Dianne at (614) 886-5796.

ISSUE BRIEFS AND UPDATES

Huntington Landfill/Curbside Recycling

On August 23, the Huntington City Council voted to pass a resolution sponsored by Councilperson Dallan Fields, authorizing and directing the city to sue the state regarding the Sept. 30, 1994, mandate to close the unlined Dietz Hollow landfill and to extend the time required for Huntington to implement a city-wide recycling program.

Proponents for the resolution, with the backing of city engineer, Greg Menetti, claimed that the old landfill still has at least 10-15 years of life and that the current unlined landfill is "environmentally sound" (!!!). No one mentioned that data collected by West Virginia DEP indicated that some Hillview Drive residents' drinking water wells may have been contaminated by the landfill. Betty Barrett was the single voice of sanity on council who opposed the resolution.

If the city stays in the landfill business, it will have to invest \$11 million for closure of the existing landfill and around \$31 million for the proposed one. After nearly 3 years of haggling, it appears little headway has been made to solve Huntington's solid waste problems.

In a separate resolution, the council voted unanimously to apply for another grant to implement a city-wide recycling program. The past and current pilot curbside recycling program were funded by the state. It seems unlikely that the state would provide another grant especially if the city engages in a legal battle with the state over landfill closure and recycling deadlines akin to "biting the hand that feeds it."

Parks Corporation

After major pressure from slick "environmental" attorneys and the "powers that be", the West Virginia Office of Water Resources struck a questionable compromise with the Parks Corporation. The company has plans to operate a paint and wood preservative mixing facility adjacent to Green Acres Regional Center and LeSage Natural Wells, which provides jobs for the developmentally disabled.

The company, having been given the impression by Governor Caperton that the permitting process would be a breeze, went whining to the media about how hard it would be for them to monitor the groundwater at their facility. Never mind that a leak from their tank farm that will store tens of thousands of gallons of toxic chemicals could pollute the adjacent tributary to the Ohio River or the groundwater that supplies water for LeSage Natural Wells. Like a spoiled child, the company threatened to take its business and jobs elsewhere.

According to Eli McCoy, Division Chief of WV-DEP's Office of Water Resources, he has not yet revoked the original permit which would have required more stringent monitoring of the surface and groundwater on facility property. Under the terms of the new stormwater permit to be issued, McCoy says that Parks Corporation will be required to install two groundwater monitors and submit quarterly monitoring data for two years. Surface run-off water will only be monitored once a year! In addition, Parks Corporation will submit a Best Management Practice/Pollution Prevention Plan for McCoy's certification, prior to issuance of the new permit.

What happens to the jobs at Green Acres if the groundwater which supplies their wells becomes contaminated as a result of a chemical spill next door? Would the Parks Corporation be a good neighbor and fund the relocation of LeSage Natural Wells without a major legal battle? It's doubtful.

OVEC Reviews Cattlesburg Refinery Problems

In 1990, a U.S. EPA report prepared by Alliance Technologies, Inc., concluded that serious air quality problems existed in the Tri-State area largely as a result of frequent industry malfunctions. According to the 1990 EPA study, Ashland Oil, Inc., accounted for 63% of all industry malfunctions from 1983-1988.

When the 1990 report was released, Winston Smith, director of air, pesticides and toxics from EPA Region IV office in Atlanta stated that: "Excess emissions during malfunctions are responsible for the degradation of Tri-State air quality and pose some additional risk to individuals...We are not prepared at this time to wait any further for more conclusive evidence before beginning to address this problem..." He called on federal, state and local regulatory agencies to develop a plan to control malfunctions at their sources. Have malfunctions, unplanned shutdowns and incidents been reduced at the refinery since Winston Smith's public statement?

OVEC staff, with the help of member, Carol Ramey, decided to find out the answer to that question. They reviewed, compiled and analyzed three years of documents regarding reported problems at the Ashland Oil refinery from 1990-1992. The resulting report, "A Review of Reported Problems at the Ashland Petroleum Refinery from January 1990 to December 1992" is available upon request by sending \$2.00 to help cover printing and postage: OVEC, P.O. Box 970, Proctorville, OH, 45669.

Southern Ohio Coal Company--No Friend to Water or Wildlife

With the consent of the Ohio EPA and a ruling by U.S. District Judge Sandra Beckwith, the Southern Ohio Coal Company began pumping about 50 millions of gallons per day of untreated water (for 30-90 days) from a flooded mine into Leading Creek and Raccoon Creek, (Meigs County, Ohio) direct tributaries of the Ohio River--in the name of jobs. To put the 50 million gallons of polluted water in perspective--the amount of water being pumped every day would fill 14, 55-gallon aquariums for every individual living in Huntington (population approximately 63,000). Within 90 days, the total pollution amounts to roughly 225 billion gallons or roughly three and a half million gallons for each resident of Huntington (we do live downstream).

Earlier efforts by the federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM) to halt the discharge of highly acid water laden with iron and other pollutants into the creeks, were stymied when U.S. District Judge Sandra Beckwith issued a temporary restraining order against OSM.

The pumping began on July 30th and so has the outcry from citizens. Richard Sahli, executive director of the Ohio Environmental Council, likened Ohio EPA's complicity to "an act of eco-treason."

Acting supervisor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) sent a letter to the coal company warning the company that it may have violated the Endangered Species Act because of the presence of the federally endangered pink pearly mucket mussels in the Ohio River downstream of the discharge. The Endangered Species Act prohibits significant degradation of habitat to the extent that it kills or injures wildlife. USFWS is requesting and is recommending that the Office of Surface Mining require that Southern Ohio Coal Company sample and monitor the Ohio River twice daily during pumping to help protect the mussel beds (that is, USFWS has passed the buck to OSM). Too bad about the mussels. Agency "muscles" are looking mighty endangered, too.



The latest news is that the U.S. EPA, which earlier had stated that the untreated water was a threat to wildlife and human health, granted the company an extension to continue pumping the poison. Do we pay taxes for this kind of "protection?" Yep, 'fraid so.

In the meantime, OVEC agrees strongly with an editorial in the Aug. 3, *Charleston Gazette* which stated "... companies must not be allowed to perpetuate wholesale environmental destruction under the guise of protecting jobs."

Please contact Congressman Nick Rahall, if you are a West Virginia resident, and ask him to do something about this destruction! Rahall is dedicated to preserving and protecting West Virginia rivers. You can call and leave a message for him at his Huntington office at 522-6425.

OVEC has joined with 120 groups nationwide to ask US EPA Administrator Carol Browner to phase out industrial practices which release highly toxic dioxins into our environment. Chlorine bleaching at pulp mills is one example of a dioxin-producing practise which needs to end. Safer alternatives are already in use, and OVEC is advocating these alternatives for the huge pulp mill planned for Apple Grove, WV.

OVEC CO-SPONSORS WEB OF LIFE CAMP

In August, OVEC co-sponsored the "Web of Life" Nature Camp for youngsters age 8-14. The camp, having completed it's second successful year, stresses our connections and relationship to the natural world. Major sponsorship was supplied by the Greater Huntington Park and Recreation District and OVEC, but significant funding was also provided by Pepsi and the Huntington Tri-State Audubon Society. Additional, generous support came from businesses in our community like our members at the Natural Selection store, Kay and Gary Jarrett, who donated ice cream for all camp participants as a special treat on the last day.

OVEC would like to recognize and express appreciation to our members, Mike Forman, Eric Fout, Tony Fout and Rose Marie Riter, who gave generously of their time as volunteers. Rose Riter was presented the "World's Best Go'fer" award for all her tireless (and uncomplaining!!) efforts.

A major key to our success is the extraordinary energy of our junior counselors. They served as important role models for youngsters and were available to camp staff as assistants in all aspects of the program. A big thanks goes to this years junior counselors, Britton Atchley, Aaron Bady, Brooke Baker, Marta Steenstra, Norm Steenstra, and Zack Steenstra. They're GRRRREAT!!

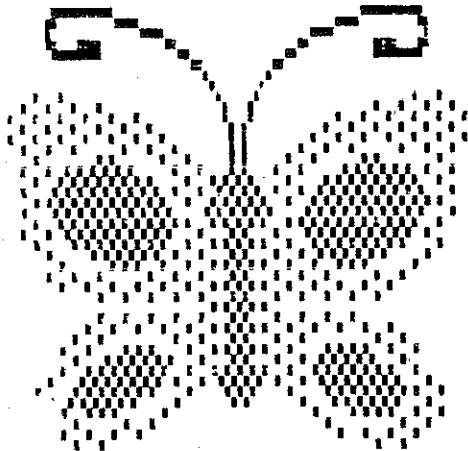
Each year I solicit comments from participants, parents and campers on the final day. One letter received from parents of a camper had the following to say:

'Our child...says, "This is my favorite Camp of the whole Summer and I can't wait to go back." When a child tells you this - you must be doing something right!!!...You giving one week of your time - can really make a difference for a child, even if for such a short time, the impact can be felt for years.'

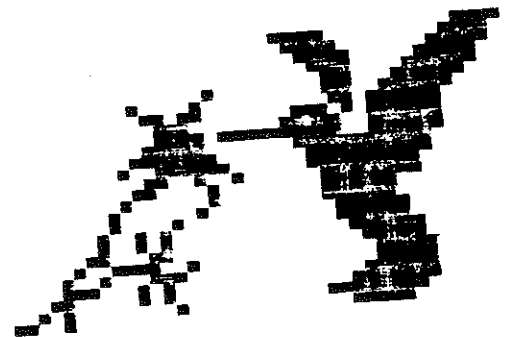
Other written comments included "Excellent programming", "the kids come home tired and excited about what they've done", "Chris and David say this is their best summer ever," and "every evening he told me of all the various things he had learned."

As director of camp, I see OVEC's involvement in this community effort is a major opportunity to awaken youngsters to the importance of the environment as the context in which we all live. The "Web of Life" camp strives to foster awareness and respect for the natural world and to allow children a place for experiencing the joys and wonders of nature.

---Janet Fletcher



Kenova member Macel Hodges says that after seeing hummingbirds and butterflies in her yard this summer, she knows we've been making some environmental progress. Macel pointed out that for years, such wildlife had been absent from her and her neighbors' yards.



TRI-STATE GEOGRAPHIC INITIATIVE--AIR TOXICS/RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE

A big thanks to OVEC member, Carol Ramey, who, along with OVEC's project coordinator, attended a Risk Assessment Conference in Lexington, KY. The day long conference, held on Aug. 27, was co-sponsored by the Kentucky Division for Environmental Protection and the University of Kentucky Department of Preventative Medicine and Environmental Health. The overall objective of the conference was to "develop guiding principles for determining the inputs and outputs needed for the Air-Toxics portion of an overall risk assessment project for the Tri-State area" (as part of the Tri-State Geographic Initiative).

A risk assessment of the Tri-State area would evaluate what an individual's chances are for developing certain diseases (such as cancer or respiratory illnesses) based on how close a person lives to an industrial facility, pounds of toxic chemicals emitted by that facility, length of exposure to air born toxic chemicals, and other factors such as wind direction and air temperature.

The attendees were asked to assist the Air Toxics Team of the Tri-State Geographic Initiative (TGI) in designing an Air Toxics study to determine where and how many air monitors will be needed, length and time of monitoring, and which toxic chemicals to monitor.

It is significant to note that this meeting was the first of the TGI that had a representative from U.S. EPA Region III present. Members of OVEC have previously sent letters to Senator Byrd requesting that Region III, which serves West Virginia, play an active role in the Initiative. Byrd then contacted Region III. The lesson here seems to be --Never underestimate the power of your personal letters!

Another meeting of this group has been scheduled for October 21, 1993. The Citizens Advisory Committee and Technical Steering Committee for this EPA project are scheduled to meet in Kenova the evening of October 26, time and place will be announced later.

NETWORKING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

OVEC members and staff are on the move all around the region, learning more about issues and improving our skills. Here are a few examples:

--Kathy Smith and Kim Smith will be representing OVEC at the Ohio Environmental Council's fall rally in Dayton. They will be attending a workshop on Ohio's "progress" in siting a "low level" nuclear waste landfill. Many Columbus statehouse observers believe that attempts will be made to site the dump here in Southern Ohio, the most economically disadvantaged part of the state.

--OVEC staffers Dianne Bady and Janet Fletcher and OVEC member Rev. John Whitaker will attend the Commission On Religion in Appalachia's (CORA) Appalachian Development Projects Coalition Assembly on October 1 & 2. CORA is one of our funders and focuses on social justice issues.

--As we go to press with this issue of "E-Notes," OVEC Director Dianne Bady is preparing to go to the Appalachian Community Fund's workshop on Organizational Development in Virginia.

--Also as we go to press, OVEC's Project Director, Janet Fletcher, and Organizer, Kim Baker, and several of our members, are preparing to attend the West Virginia Environmental Council's (WVEC) annual convention. Kim, who is also Vice President of WVEC, will facilitate a workshop on toxics and "Cancer Creek." WVEC is a state-wide network of West Virginia's grass-roots environmental groups, and has won victories in comprehensive solid waste legislation and groundwater protection, as well as many other successes.

BRIEFS

--Brian Hagenbuch, who worked as OVEC's project director in 1991 and 1992, has just been hired to lead the state-wide Pennsylvania Environmental Network. Brian has served as project director for the Columbus-based Ohio Environmental Council for the past year. We wish him the best of luck in his new challenge.

--The 24-hour-a-day video surveillance system at Ashland Oil is in the process of being installed. This first-of-its-kind surveillance system, to be paid for by Ashland and controlled by the Kentucky Division for Air Quality, is a response to the persistent citizen videotaping of the emissions problems at the refinery. OVEC members Barbara Christian, Diana Bowen and Louise Prince have spent countless hours videotaping, as have Sue Holland and Frances Cisco. The tireless work of these women, and others, shows that citizen efforts can make a difference!

--OVEC is always looking for people who want to be more involved. Work on specific issues is always needed. Also, if you would like to donate a couple of hours a week to us, we could use some help with "go-fer"-type activities, such as making copies, putting mailings together and mailing them, etc. Call Dianne (886-5796), Janet (525-6984), or Kim (522-9562) if you are interested!

We also are constantly on the look-out for things to go in our newsletter. We especially like to print things that inspire us! If you have an inspirational quote (maybe it's a line in a song or hymn), please send it to us. Or have you ever considered writing an article for the newsletter? Please do! Remember, we are many people, with many voices!

OVEC ON NATIONAL TV!

On the evening of November 3, a nationwide PBS TV program entitled Earthkeeping will feature the work of OVEC and of Kenova pollution lawsuit activists. A film crew from Boston WGBH spent 5 days here this Spring. While WGBH filmed Louise Prince, who was videotaping Ashland Oil, huge black clouds billowed from the refinery. The film crew got a good taste of Kenova life!

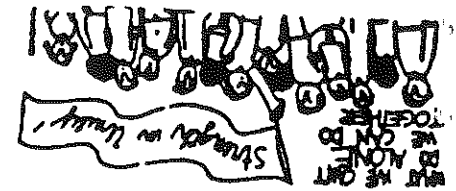
Huntington City Hall has started a paper recycling program. Don Kleppe, City Planner, states, "Good government has a responsibility to lead by example, for without proper leadership how can a people be expected to follow." Right on, Don!

IS IT TIME FOR YOU TO JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Please fill out this form and send (along with your dues or contribution) to: OVEC, P.O. Box 970, Proctorville, OH 45669

- [] Membership \$5 - \$25 (pay what you can)
[] Contribution (tax deductible)

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Issues of Interest _____



Ohio Valley
Environmental Coalition
Box 970
Proctorville, OH 45669

OVEC Annual Meeting
2 - 6:30 pm
Saturday, September 18, 1993
St. Clouds Commons Clubhouse
Huntington, WV



You may choose from the following 3 workshops:

1. Ashland Oil,
2. Pulp Mill and Chlorine-Bleaching Controversy,
3. Environmental Shopping

We will also hold board elections and our First Annual Awards Banquet Picnic!
To get to St. Clouds Commons (located at 1701 Jackson Avenue), from Rt. 60 near West 14th St., follow signs to Huntington Cubs field. For more detailed directions, call Kim at 522-9567