

More History on the Clark County Park District

...second in a series of articles on the history of the CCPD

You may think that operating a Park District without any park was easy, but it was *no piece of cake!* We needed any support we could get!

From the very beginning efforts to create a Park District, we received a lot of encouragement and editorial support from the two Springfield newspapers - *The Sun* and the *Springfield Daily News*; later the *Springfield News-Sun*, and other area newspapers, radio and television stations.

In February, 1977, the first public announcement was made that an effort to establish a countywide Park District was being made. This was the result of our attending a Clark County Commission meeting to request help from the commissioners. We needed a resolution adopted as the first step to ask the Probate Court Judge to create a countywide Park District.

When support was not immediately received from the county commission, we didn't want to wait... so we sent, or took, copies of our resolution to all ten townships, asking for their support.

The Pleasant Township Trustees were the first to adopt the supportive document, on June 21, 1977, and later, other townships followed their lead. But it only took one legislative body within the county to adopt the resolution, allowing the Probate Court Judge Lewis W. Digel to schedule the hearing the very next month.

We had much and varied support from others in the community in the early years. Miller Printing donated the printing of our first (1978) CCPD leaflet in January, 1979; William McCuddy donated the photographs for everything we did and the commissioners paid for the expenses of the district out of their own pockets.

The Miami County Park District Director Scott Houston, the Greene County Park District Director Charles (Ed) Dressler, the Dayton-Montgomery County Park District Director Don Schmidt and others were unpaid advisors to our Board and shared their knowledge and expertise with us during my entire tenure as a commissioner.

In 1978, The League of Women Voters, The Clark Soil & Water Conservation District, and other community and countywide groups endorsed our goals to acquire, develop, maintain and conserve unique natural areas.

The *Aberfelda Natural Area Committee (ANAC)* was the first official Park District support group. They made an intense effort to pass a tax levy and fight the development of the unique natural area and gorge located west of Springfield, known as Aberfelda. When it was determined the Aberfelda Woods was lost to developers, the group changed its name to the *Save Our Land And Resources* committee (*SOLAR*) to continue their Park District support.

Later, another volunteer group was formed to assist the CCPD and help with another tax levy in 1979. The *Scenic Natural Area Committee (SNAC)* put out a great effort to convince the taxpayers of the many benefits of the CCPD. There were placemats, leaflets, hand-made yard signs, slide presentations, endorsements from groups and the media. Channel 7 urged the passage of Issue 2 on a television editorial, along with the newspapers and cablevision station.

The Friends of the Clark County Park District came into existence when the 1989 CCPD Board was reported to have requested legal information regarding their ability to sell George Rogers Clark Park to an interested buy-



by Marianne Ludlow Nave
CCPD Board of Commissioners
President 1978 -1987

er for an unknown purpose. This could not be done... quick action and Park District support was needed at once!

A meeting was held by a select group of members of the George Rogers Clark Heritage Association and others to consider what could be done. Public meetings were scheduled to enlist the support and personnel needed. I showed them a slide presentation on the CCPD at one of the first public meetings.

The *Friends'* support to the Park District's existence is evidenced by their Article's of Incorporation: "Article III, b., 5. *To ensure the continued existence of the Clark County Park District and the success of current and future Park District programs.*"

When the *The Friends of the Clark County Park District* was organized, it was a rebirth of the Park District, in a sense. The commissioners had gotten discouraged due to lack of interest and support, and didn't want to go on the ballot for a tax levy to fund the park.

Due to the inactivity of the CCPD Board at that time, the 100% ODOT funding of the bikeway project lost its priority and found its way to the bottom of the list. Thus, we are only now beginning to enjoy a bikeway that has been in the plans for many years.

Continued support of the CCPD is still very much needed... now as well as in the future!

[The Park Bench April/May 1999]