

McKownville: News And Comment

By LINDSAY CHILDS

This coming Saturday, Aug. 6, starting at 9 a.m., the City of Albany is conducting a Pine Bush cleanup of the city-owned portions of the Pine Bush east and west of Karner Road near Old State Road. The cleanup is being organized by Don Rittner, the city's recently appointed Pine Bush curator who is also an environmental consultant for the Town of Guilderland and a member of the Guilderland Conservation Advisory Council.

The city will provide dump trucks and drivers. The rest of what is needed is willing hands, as many as possible.

One of the prime areas being cleaned up will be the area which the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center tours each June, the area on the east side of Karner Road which follows a dirt road up to the top of a dune known semi-officially as Blueberry Hill, and informally as Mount Trashmore. As we found out on this year's tour, the area needs a lot of help.

Mr. Rittner recommends that if you come, bring work gloves and dress appropriately (which I guess means wear old clothes). If insects are a problem, he promises to have some repellent available.

We're looking forward to the cleanup. Your correspondent once spent a week cleaning garbage dumps in the high peak area of the Adirondacks with a group of Sierra Clubbers. We cleaned up dumps in the morning and climbed peaks in the afternoon. It was one of the most satisfying wilderness experiences we ever had — we felt we left the area in much better condition than it was before we arrived. I'm sure that Saturday's cleanup will provide similar satisfaction.

Mr. Rittner promises a subsequent cleanup of the Guilderland portion of the Pine Bush.

On Sunday, Mr. Rittner is organizing four horseback tours of the state-owned portion of the Pine Bush, off Willow St., starting at the Willow Stables. The tours begin at 11 a.m. and at 1, 3 and 7 p.m. and will last around an hour. Horse rental for the hour is \$10. No riding experience is necessary, according to Mr. Rittner. Few horses are available, and it will be first-come, first-served. If interested, you should reserve in advance by calling Mr. Rittner or his telephone machine at 869-1969.

**Fuller Road Traffic
The McKownville Improvement**

Association and, in particular, its vice president, Jim Lane, have again brought up concerns about traffic on Fuller Road and the conflict with the considerable pedestrian traffic which goes along and across Fuller Road near the southerly entrance to the State University.

A State Department of Transportation traffic study in 1979 showed that the average daily traffic on Fuller Road is close to 13,000 vehicle trips per day, and during peak hours traffic occurs at the rate of one car every three seconds. This level of traffic makes turning out of side streets onto Fuller Road difficult.

But Fuller Road is also heavily used by pedestrians, both local residents and State University students walking to and from Stuyvesant Plaza. A glance at the heavily eroded path on the east side of Fuller Road indicates the level of use of the wrong side of the street by pedestrians walking along the road while waiting for an opening to cross the highway.

A student was killed trying to cross Fuller Road near Providence St. in 1976.

Mr. Lane has written to the county engineer, seeking three changes along Fuller Road to aid pedestrians.

One is to extend the sidewalk on the west side of Fuller Road from its present terminus at Mercer St. a hundred feet or so north to at least opposite the SUNY entrance.

The second is to get a traffic signal with a pedestrian actuated walk cycle installed at the southernmost State University entrance.

The third is to obtain arrangements to plow the sidewalk between the SUNY entrance and Stuyvesant Plaza during the winter, so that pedestrian traffic need not have to use the shoulder on Fuller Road during and after snowstorms. Fuller Road is driven as a four lane highway, which is not its design — it is too narrow — and in the winter when the shoulders of the road are not cleared of snow the highway is particularly dangerous for pedestrians.

But rarely is the sidewalk cleared of snow for pedestrians to use. In fact, not only is the sidewalk not cleared, but usually it is packed with extra snow piled up from the plowing of the highway itself.

At this stage it is not clear what, if any, response these expressions of concern will yield. But the Fuller Road situation needs some review.

Mathematicians To Meet

This coming week, the State University of New York at Albany will be hosting the joint summer meetings of the two largest professional societies of mathematicians in North America, the American Mathematical Society and the Mathematical Association of America. Around 1,000 mathematicians are expected.

Your correspondent managed to get out from under doing a lot of the dirty work of handling the local arrangements for this huge meeting by agreeing to be publicity director. The chairmanship of the local arrangements committee was assumed by Rich Goldstein of Warren St.

Being in charge of publicity is kind of fun. It gives me an excuse to say hello again to some old friends from the Crossgates hearings, like Sharon Gazin and Carlo Wolff.

Only I feel a little sorry for them, and challenged as well. Some of the technical parts of the Crossgates hearings were tough to deal with. To figure out what was really going on at the hearings, one had to spend more than a little time studying the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and local reporters rarely have that kind of time.

But if the Crossgates technical stuff was hard, mathematics is another order of magnitude harder.

For example, a German mathematician, Gerd Faltings, recently made a theoretical advance in mathematics, one of the outstanding achievements of the century. The result was reported and described in the New York Times around three weeks ago, in rather vague terms.

A special lecture on Faltings' work has been added to the program of the meetings at SUNY. So last week I found myself trying to explain what the result meant to the history of mathematics to Ms. Gazin, who, after a while, mentioned that she had forgotten much of her high school math, and used to suffer from what is now known in the education trade as "math anxiety."

Well, this column is supposed to cover news of greater McKownville. Certainly the mathematics meetings at SUNY are within range, particularly since most of the participants will be staying at Indian Quad, which is in McKownville.

So with the editor's indulgence, that should give me sufficient reason to explain why these visitors to McKownville will be

