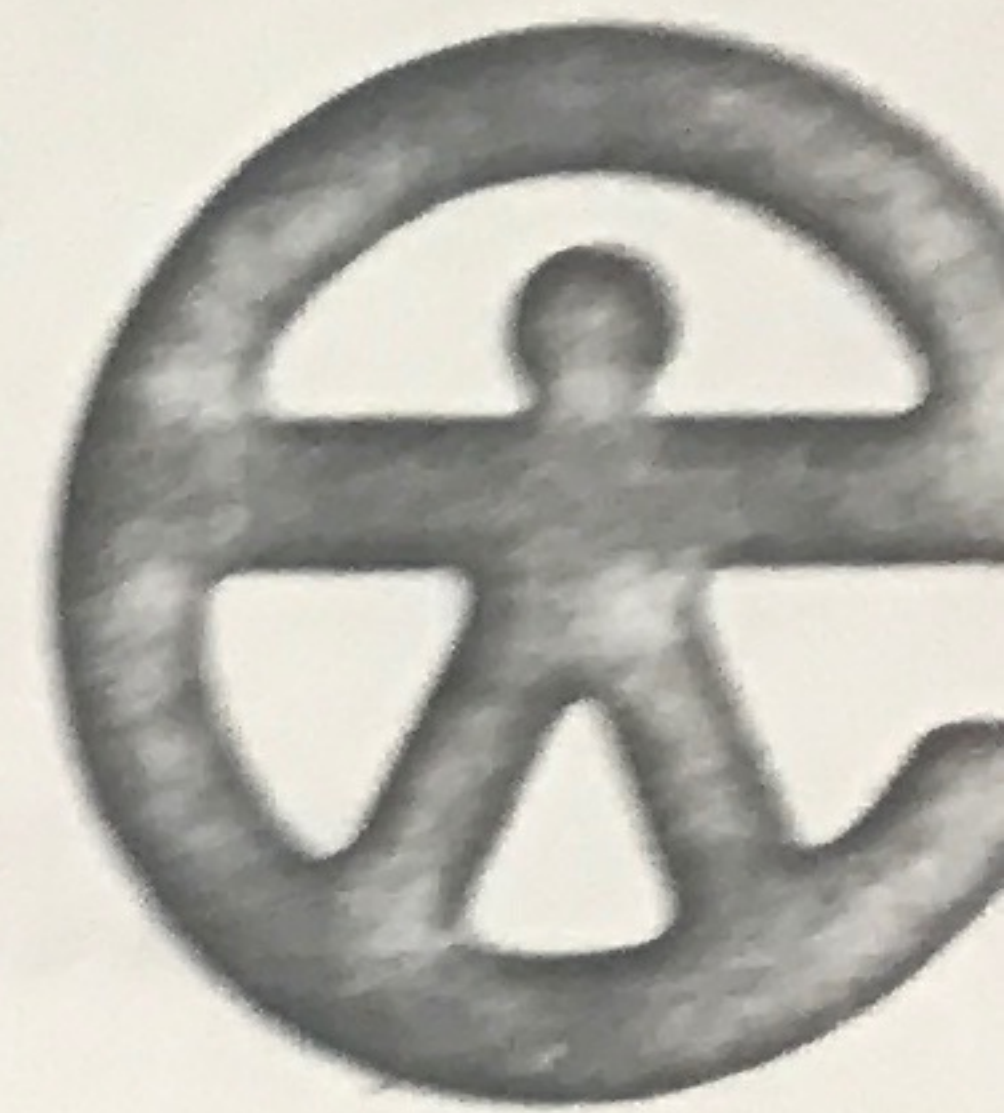


REMARKS BY KEN SIKKEMA



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Translating concern
into action

APRIL 22 IS AN HISTORIC DATE.

ON THAT DATE, TEN YEARS AGO, MILLIONS OF PEOPLE DEMONSTRATED THEIR SUPPORT FOR A CHANGE IN THIS NATION'S VALUES. THEY PARTICIPATED IN RALLIES, TEACH-INS, STREET FAIRS, FESTIVALS AND DEMONSTRATIONS. THEY ADDED MOMENTUM TO A MOVEMENT THAT HAD ITS IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS BEFORE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, BUT WHICH HAD FAILED TO REACH PROMINENCE IN OUR NATIONAL AGENDA. FEW PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ACTIVITIES THAT DAY REALIZED THE PROFOUND AND EXCITING EFFECT THEIR ACTIONS WOULD HAVE ON SOCIETY. FOR THEY HAD LAUNCHED NO LESS THAN A SWEEPING REORDERING OF THE WAY THIS COUNTRY DOES BUSINESS. A NEW DIMENSION OF CONCERN AND EVALUATION WOULD BE ADDED THAT REQUIRED A RECOGNITION OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT AS STEWARDS OF AN AWESOME HERITAGE.

THAT DAY WAS EARTH DAY - THE DAY THIS COUNTRY AWOKE TO THE FACT THAT WE HAVE ONLY ONE EARTH AND WE HAD BETTER TAKE CARE OF IT.

AS HIS FIRST OFFICIAL ACT OF THE NEW DECADE, PRESIDENT CARTER PROCLAIMED APRIL 22 AS EARTH DAY 1980. THE PRESIDENT STRESSED THE NEED TO PLACE SPECIAL ATTENTION ON "COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS DIRECTED TO PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR LIFEGIVING ENVIRONMENT."

HE URGED THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO USE EARTH DAY '80 TO "REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SAFE AND HEALTHY SURROUNDINGS, TO THE WISE HUSBANDING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES THAT ARE A PILLAR OF OUR WELL-BEING, AND TO THE PROTECTION OF FREE-FLOWING STREAMS, MAJESTIC MOUNTAIN FORESTS, AND DIVERSE CITY-SCAPES PULSING WITH LIFE."

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UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE WEST MICHIGAN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COUNCIL, A COMMITTEE HAS BEEN FORMED TO ORGANIZE THE GRAND RAPIDS AREA CELEBRATION OF EARTH DAY '80. TO PROVIDE A FOCUS FOR OUR PART IN THE NATIONAL CELEBRATION, WE HAVE PICKED THE MOST SALIENT ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURE IN GRAND RAPIDS - THE GRAND RIVER - AND ENTITLED OUR CELEBRATION:

"EARTH DAY ON THE GRAND: A CHANGE FOR A LIFETIME."

IN KEEPING WITH THE CELEBRATIONS OCCURRING IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY ON THAT DAY, "EARTH DAY ON THE GRAND" WILL CELEBRATE TEN YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS TOWARD CLEANER AIR AND WATER, A MORE LIVEABLE CITY, AND A BALANCE BETWEEN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION. IN ADDITION, WE WILL FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE CHALLENGES FACING INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS DURING THE NEXT DECADE.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE HAS SCHEDULED A NUMBER OF EVENTS WHICH WILL SERVE AS VISIBLE REMINDERS OF THIS COMMUNITY'S ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT AND WHICH WILL INVOLVE PEOPLE IN ACTIVITIES WHICH WILL INCREASE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

EARTH DAY '80 ACTIVITIES WILL INCLUDE:

RIVERBANK CLEAN-UP AND WILDFLOWER PLANTING

DOWNTOWN WALKING TOURS

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION - BROWN BAG LUNCH AT FOUNTAIN STREET CHURCH FOLLOWED BY MUSIC, PRESENTATIONS BY PERFORMING ARTISTS, AWARDS TO CORPORATIONS.

CONTINUOUS FILMS, SLIDE SHOWS, DISCUSSIONS, AND ENTERTAINMENT AT FOUNTAIN STREET CHURCH FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 2:00 P.M.

AUTOMOBILE EMISSIONS TESTING AND PULMONARY FUNCTION TESTING BY THE AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION.

TOURS OF SPECIAL FACILITIES

LIBRARY DISPLAYS

PUBLICATIONS, EDITORIALS AND FEATURE STORIES

PHOTOGRAPHY DISPLAY - EIGHTEEN PHOTOS OF THE KENT COUNTY PARKS WILL BE ON DISPLAY IN THE LOBBY OF THE COUNTY BUILDING

COUNTY-WIDE CLEAN-UP - PARKS, NATURAL AREAS, AND ROADWAY. SERVICE CLUBS, NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS AND YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE CLEAN-UP AND THE DPW WILL ALLOW MATERIALS WHICH CANNOT BE RECYCLED TO BE DISPOSED OF IN THE LANDFILL AT NO CHARGE.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE IS COMPOSED OF A NUMBER OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING URBAN CONCERNS, DOWNTOWN, INC., THE GRAND RAPIDS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, AND A NUMBER OF OTHERS.

CERTAINLY, WE ENVIRONMENTALISTS HAVE A LOT TO CELEBRATE. TEN YEARS AGO, BEFORE THE FIRST EARTH DAY, HARDLY ANYONE COULD TELL YOU WHAT THE WORD "ECOLOGY" MEANT. NOW VIRTUALLY ANY SCHOOLCHILD CAN DEFINE IT. THIS IS A PROFOUNDLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE. WE MAY NOT HAVE YET RESCUED THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT FROM THREATS TO ITS HEALTH AND STABILITY, BUT CERTAINLY WE HAVE EQUIPPED SOCIETY WITH MANY OF THE TOOLS NEEDED FOR THE TASK. I AM NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT THE LEGAL, POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCES OF THE PAST TEN YEARS, IMPORTANT AS THEY ARE. TO ME, THE ROCK UPON WHICH OUR MOVEMENT IS TRULY BUILT IS THE STEADY, EVER-GROWING PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO A CLEAN, SAFE, HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT WHICH EARTH DAY 1970 HELPED TO INAUGURATE. EARTH DAY '80 WILL CELEBRATE AND REAFFIRM THAT COMMITMENT.

EARTH DAY '80 ALSO WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT ENVIRONMENTALISM IS NOT ONLY ALIVE AND WELL, IT IS MATURE AND DIVERSIFIED. FROM OUR HISTORIC AND MUCH-HONORED ROOTS IN CLASSIC CONSERVATION, TO THE DEMAND FOR CLEAN AIR AND WATER THAT SWEEPED THE COUNTRY ON APRIL 22, 1970, RIGHT UP TO THE PRESENT MOMENT, WE HAVE CONTINUED TO GROW AND CHANGE, INCORPORATING NEW KNOWLEDGE AND PERSPECTIVES CONSTANTLY. TODAY,

THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT IS A HUGE TENT EMBRACING MANY THEMES AND CAUSES: CANCER PREVENTION, ENERGY CONSERVATION, WORKPLACE SAFETY, NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION, TRANSIT REFORM, ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES, AND LABOR-INTENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TO NAME ONLY A FEW. AND ON TOP OF THIS, WE HAVE PROVIDED THE STEAM FOR MUCH NEEDED CREATIVITY AND GROWTH IN THE AMERICAN ECONOMY. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF NEW JOBS HAVE BEEN CREATED BY THE MOVEMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND THOUSANDS OF NEW BUSINESSES, MANY OF THEM SMALL, HAVE GROWN UP AS WELL. THIS SOCIALLY MANDATED MARKET FOR POLLUTION CONTROL IS ONE OF THE MOST PRODUCTIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE FORCES IN THE ECONOMY. IT DESERVES APPLAUSE, AND ON APRIL 22, 1980, THAT'S WHAT IT WILL GET.

APRIL 22, 1980, HOWEVER, RECOGNIZES THAT OUR JOB IS NOT OVER, NOR WILL IT EVER BE AS LONG AS WE HAVE TO EXPLOIT NATURE FOR OUR SURVIVAL. EARTH DAY '80 SIGNALS A REDEDICATION, IN A CRUCIAL YEAR, TO THOSE GOALS THAT ARE IN OUR TRUE SELF INTEREST, TO GOALS EXPRESSED IN A PUBLIC PLEDGE A DECADE AGO AND REMEMBERED IN A PUBLIC CELEBRATION

SINCE THE FIRST EARTH DAY, WE HAVE BEEN CONFRONTED WITH AN ENERGY CRISIS THAT ASSAULTS OUR ENVIRONMENT AND OUR ECONOMY. WE ARE AT A CROSSROADS WHERE THE ENERGY CHOICES WE MAKE NOW WILL DETERMINE WHAT KIND OF NATURAL HERITAGE WE LEAVE TO FUTURE GENERATIONS. THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY, WITH ITS INFLATION AND RECESSION, GIVES DETRACTORS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESS FOR THE SETTING ASIDE OF POLLUTION CONTROLS AND RESOURCE PROTECTION STANDARDS UNTIL MORE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS PREVAIL - AS IF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WERE AN ECONOMIC LUXURY INSTEAD OF A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO OURSELVES. AS AN ELECTION YEAR, 1980 HAS SPECIAL IMPORTANCE, SINCE CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR ALL LEVELS OF OFFICE FORMULATE POLICY THAT WILL SHAPE THE COURSE OF THE NEW DECADE. A NATIONAL DISPLAY OF SUPPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES ON EARTH DAY COULD IMPOSE THOSE ISSUES ON EVERY CANDIDATE'S AGENDA.

THE TOUGH DECISIONS WE FACED ON THE FIRST EARTH DAY DID NOT STOP US FROM SETTING GOALS THAT NOW STAND AS A LEGACY. WE HAVE PROVED WHAT CAN BE DONE. NOW WE MUST MAKE SURE THOSE GOALS ARE NOT CAST ASIDE FOR SHORT-TERM AND OFTEN ILLUSORY

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BENEFITS. FROM COAST TO COAST IN THOSE COMMUNITIES WHERE THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT HAS ITS ROOTS, INCLUDING GRAND RAPIDS, CELEBRATIONS ON APRIL 22 WILL PROVE THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC IS STRONG AND THAT IT IS , IN FACT, A LIFESTYLE.