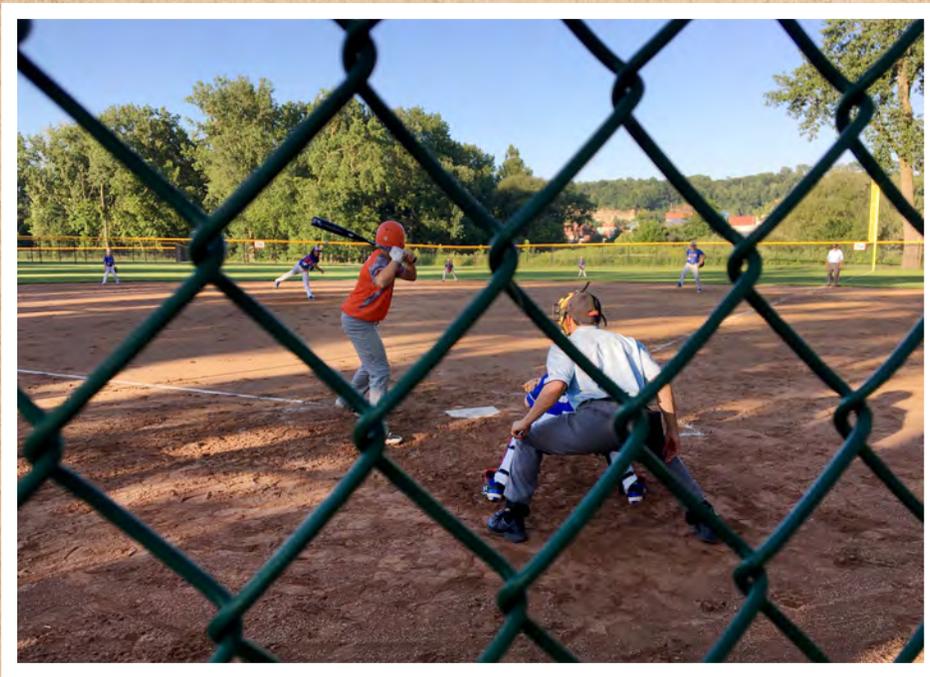


Parks and Recreation



Summer baseball at Bacci Park

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial



*Bacci Park and Recreation Center
7201 Canal Road*

Parks and Recreation

by Laura Bacci Merhaut

“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul...” — John Muir

The Village of Cuyahoga Heights was once primarily countryside—hills, valleys, creeks and in close proximity to the Ohio River before the Ohio Canal was built—a place the Indians found habitable and strategic. The area transitioned from that virginal territory, rampant with wildlife, to farmlands and eventually, to a heavily industrial, strategically located mecca.

As is the case with most things in life, we are cycling around back to a greater appreciation of green space, parkland and places where recreation is a key to our quality of life. Although greater Cleveland is ringed with its emerald necklace, our little village too, is surrounded by lovely parklands. To the west, we have the CanalWay Visitor’s Center, which can be accessed from Harvard Avenue or East 49th Street. On the southeast quadrant of East 71st Street at Canal Road, we have 26 acres of land reclaimed from the City of Cleveland on what was once a dirty, smelly trash incinerating plant. Residents and visitors enjoy connectivity to the Ohio Canal Towpath Trail and an ever-changing ability to access the Louis J. Bacci Recreational Park from lower East 71st Street, Bletch Court and ultimately, the trailhead at our village hall parking area.

A Rails-to-Trails funding grant enabled the village to create a pleasing asphalt trail in our park taking those out for a stroll along a pathway bordering two small ponds into the woods. This area is also the home to our lane of memory trees, planted by local families in memory of loved ones who are no longer with us. So far, 63 trees are creating an attractive landscape in the park.

Although Mayor Louis Bacci spearheaded the drive to acquire these lands, it has been his son, current Mayor Jack Bacci, who has worked in tandem with council to further enhance the area creating a playground, concession stand with public restrooms and two new regulation ball fields, including dugout areas. The Cuyahoga Heights High School boys and girls teams enjoy use of these fields for their conference games.

The park hosts our annual corn roast, including fireworks, and was the site for all youth activities during our centennial celebration. Arbor Day, with new tree planting, takes place every two years. Area business employees enjoy being in nature, have some peace and quiet and a bit of lunch, at our concession stand. And, the menu is expanding.

Local wildlife, including coyote, deer, geese, numerous species of ducks and turtles, ground hogs, mink, common muskrat, river otters, Virginia opossum, raccoon, skunk, various squirrels including flying squirrels, wild turkeys, and little brown bats are thriving in our midst. Also, there are countless birds including many types of woodpeckers, songbirds, hummingbirds, blue and green herons who are happy to call our woods and parklands home. Millions of assorted salamanders enjoy our creeks while sunfish, crappie, bass, trout and darters appreciate cleaner waters of the river and canal.

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial

The majestic North American bald eagle, as many as 20, have been spotted along the Cuyahoga River and towpath/canal areas of the park. There are kestrels, coopers, red-tailed and sharp shin hawks policing the skies for their next meal along with the large, not so handsome vultures. Nighttime brings out the wizened barred and screech owls.

Let's not forget the slithery, crawling milk snake and gray rat snake. Of course, there are American toads and frogs galore—bull, leopard, wood frogs and gray tree frogs.

As Robert Browning noted in Pippa's Song: "...all is right with the world..." when you take time to enjoy your natural surroundings. Bacci Park, the CanalWay Center, Settlers Bluff pavilion and picnic area and the Towpath Trail are calling.

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial



Cuyahoga Heights Athletic Club in 1938



*Former ballfield at village hall,
now the home of our swimming pool*

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial

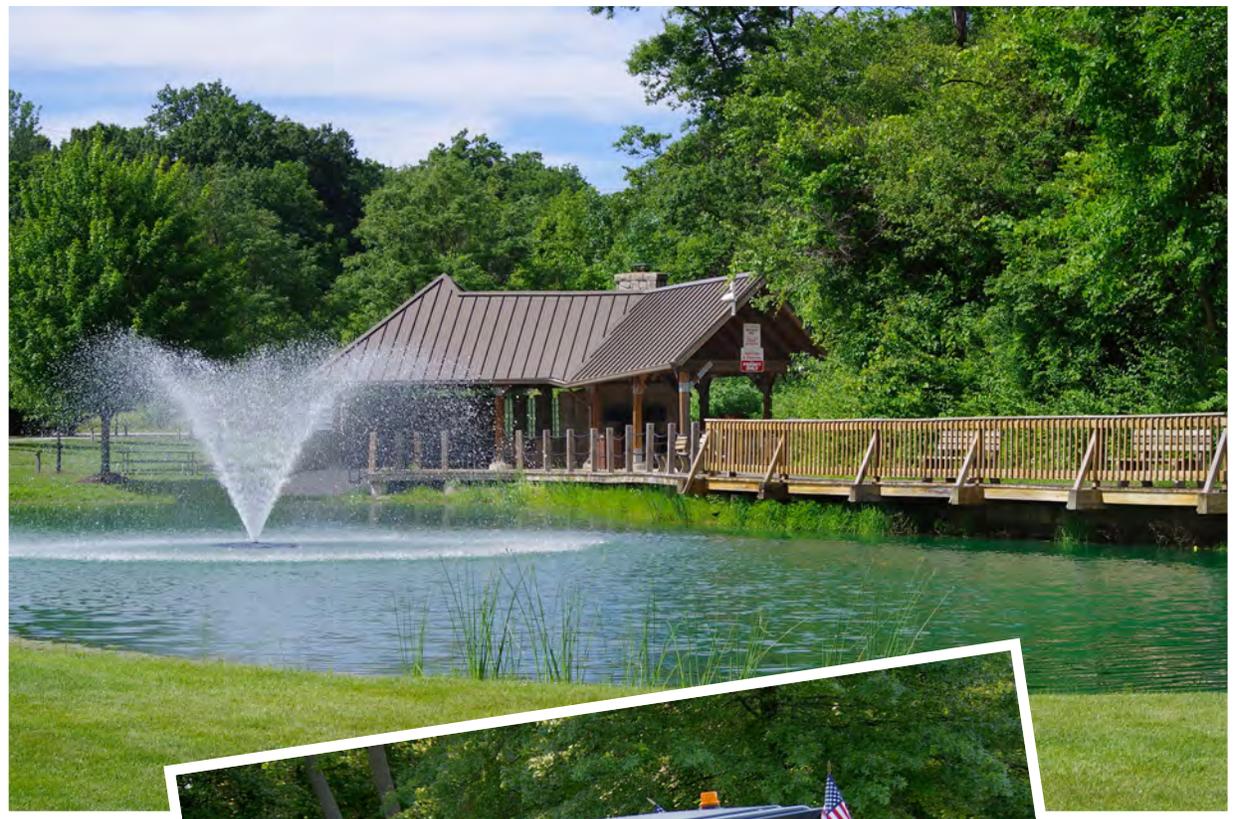


*North and south baseball fields at Bacci Park
and girls fastpitch softball team practice*

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial



Bacci Park concession stand and restroom



Bacci Park pavilion and pond for family gatherings, fishing and ice skating

Playground and picnic pavilion



Mill Creek



Rails-to-Trails multi-purpose path at Bacci Park

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial



Sledding near the pond pavilion at Bacci Park

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial



William R. Gerdon Pool

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial

The Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation

by Karen Lakus, Cleveland Metroparks Historical Interpreter

By 1993, restoration of the historic Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath through the Cuyahoga Valley National Park (then Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area) was completed to Rockside Road. Various groups and individuals were interested in continuing the trail to downtown Cleveland where it had originally ended; however, federal law dictated that the National Park's boundary could extend no farther north. Eventually, Cleveland Metroparks was approached to provide leadership for the extension.

Between 1994 and 1996, over 300 acres were pieced together to create the Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation. The bulk of this property is in the Village of Cuyahoga Heights and was acquired through land easements and lease agreements. Partners in creating the Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation included Alcoa, American Steel and Wire, BP America, the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources as well other businesses, cities and villages it touched along the way.

The Emerald Necklace, a ring of parks that encircle Cuyahoga County, had now established a green space up through its industrial center. The entire 100 mile Ohio & Erie Canal corridor from Cleveland to Dover was declared a National Heritage Corridor in 1996.

The CanalWay Center in Cuyahoga Heights opened in 1999. The towpath trail north of CanalWay Center to Harvard Avenue was completed in 2002. Two bridges, built to take pedestrian traffic over Granger and Warner Roads, opened in 2006.

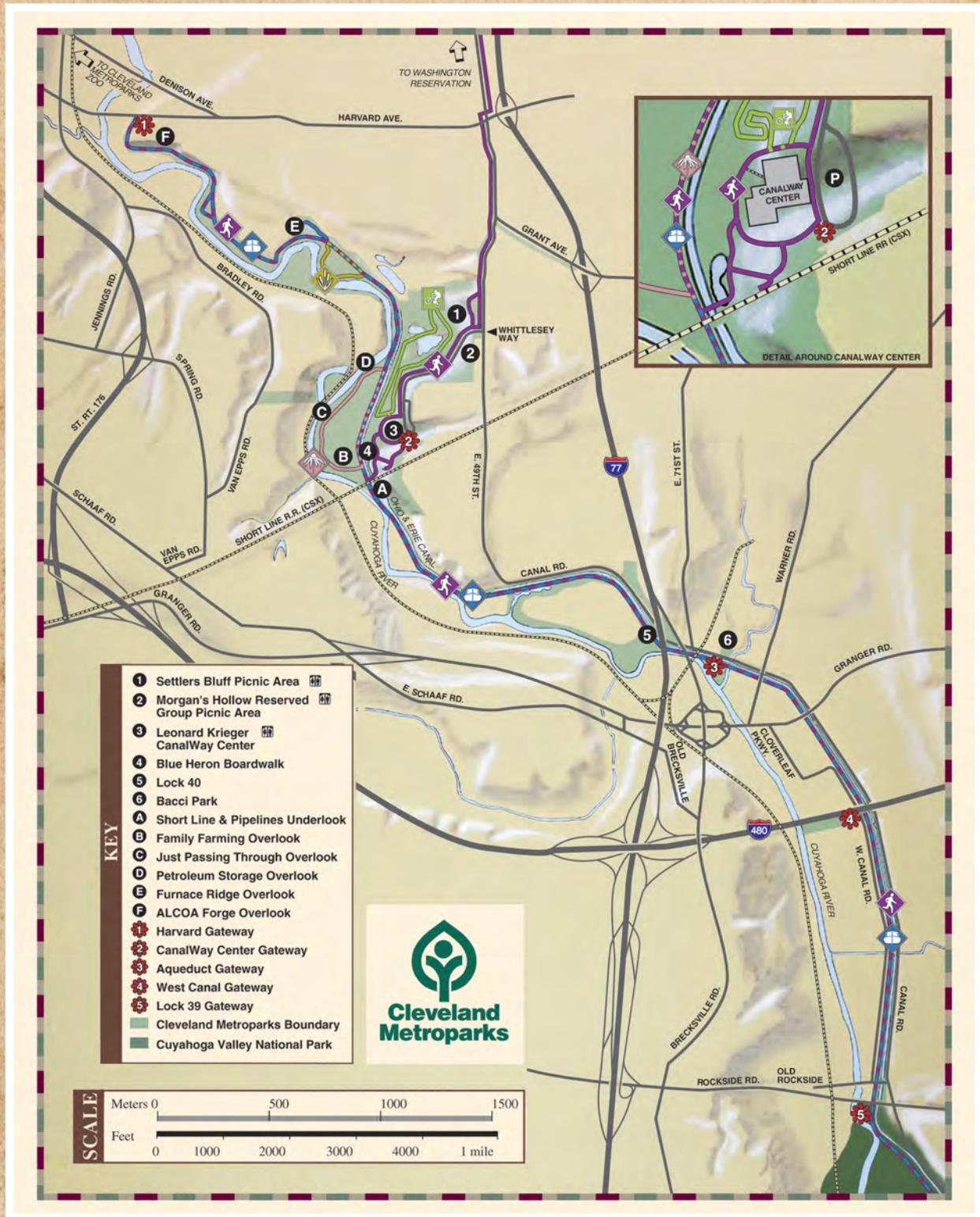


Leonard Krieger CanalWay Center

Leonard Krieger was a Cleveland native and graduate of Western Reserve University Law School. He was regarded as an expert in the processing of steel and held several U.S patents. He founded and was President of the Alan United Steel Corporation in Richmond for 20 years.

In conjunction with his brother Dr. Harvey Krieger, a Case Western Reserve Medical School professor, he established a significant fund at the university. Upon his death in 1986, a trust fund bearing his name was established at the Cleveland Foundation. In 1999, the Krieger Fund made a generous gift to aid in the construction of the Cleveland Metroparks CanalWay Center.

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial



Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial

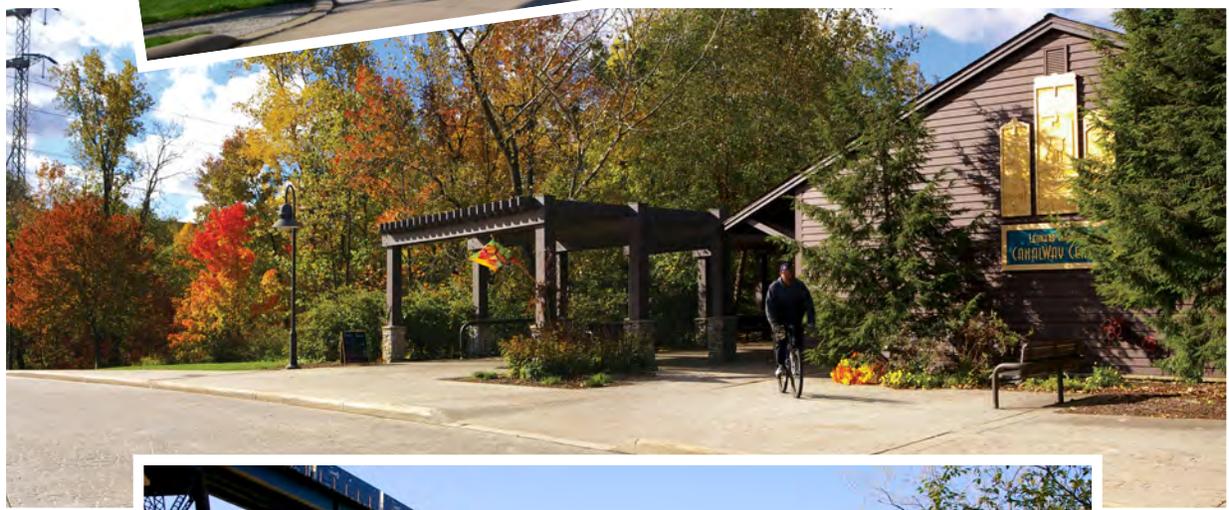


Settlers Bluff pavilion, baseball field and playground on East 49th Street

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial



*East 49th
Street entrance
and CanalWay
Center*



*Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation
“Hidden Valley” trestle*

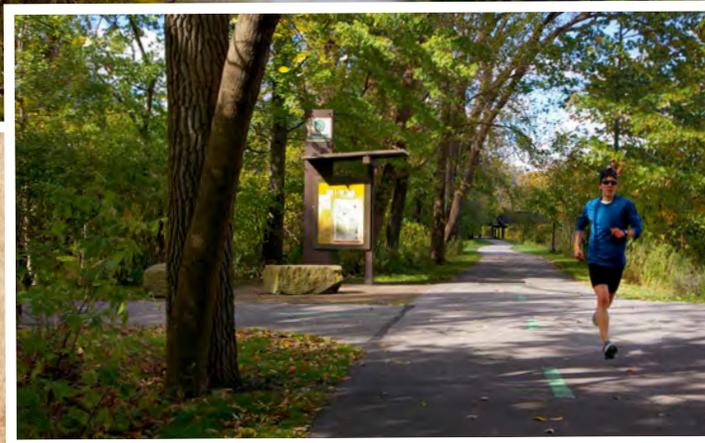


*Towpath Trilogy
10 Mile & 10 K Race*

*Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation trails
to walk, run and mountain bike*



*Canal Road
Towpath bridge
across from
Bacci Park*



*Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation Towpath Trail
and Granger Road overpass bridge*



*Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation
Fishing Derby on the canal*



*Large sculptures
showing the
monarch butterfly
life cycle*



*Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation
CanalWay Visitors Center*

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial