

DEAR EDITOR:

Recently the ODNR gave the people who love or hate the canal a window of opportunity. Some say why didn't they save the fish or call some employee an idiot. But lets look at the opportunity it presents. Why not rally around the canal commission and do something to make the canal a fishing hole, like it was for me in the 50's.

Could we move quickly and get a plan in place to dredge the canal. Oh yes the negative thinkers say it will just silt back in. I say mother nature will do what she will do. ODNR says we are small fish and there is no money in the budget. Well, we keep asking for a smaller government so maybe we should do what my dad, Don Patthoff, did in 40s. He went around Delphos collecting ashes from home coal furnaces and built a sinter track at the Delphos Stadium. What a dumb idea; it's work.

I haven't lived in Delphos since I went away to college but I still call it my home town. Joan, my wife owns a local business, so I do get to help maintain the building on the beautiful Miami-Erie Canal. I had the pleasure to pick up, by hand, 36 dead fish to control the odor and the maggots that eat the flesh off of the fishes bones. Right now I am, by rake and shovel, building the bank back up to repair the erosion that has already taken place. While sweating in the 100-degree weather, I wondered what can we do now while others just say it is a pity and it smells (not as bad as cleaning the hog barn at my uncles farm).

There are a lot of good people in the area that will pitch in if there is a plan. I'm not a community leader and I don't feel it is my place to tell the city fathers what to do. I am a dreamer of sorts and wonder what might be.

Some people could operate an excavator to dredge the canal. Some could lend the canal commission their dump trucks. Some can help place riprap to control future erosion. Some can raise money to pay for fuel and equipment rental. Some can work with our government people and see what can be done in funding and materials (not what can't be done). Some can cook or bring water to the working folk. The athletes that need to build strong bodies could shovel muck. The dirt could be used to build a sledding hill, or a soap box derby run or a place for the student athletes to run up hill.

The musings of one man. What could be? Gee it sounds like a Shirley Temple movie.

Dennis J. Patthoff, Lima