

The Daily Independent (Ashland, Kentucky)

Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Business News

July 3, 2008 Thursday

Rockin' on in Portsmouth

BYLINE: Mark Maynard, The Daily Independent, Ashland, Ky.

SECTION: STATE AND REGIONAL NEWS

LENGTH: 529 words

Jul. 3--PORTSMOUTH -- The City of Portsmouth's holiday festivities will have a rock-solid theme.

The Indian's Head Rock Festival will be part of Friday's Fourth of July festivities in York Park on the city's riverfront and at the adjacent amphitheater.

The festival will center around the controversial boulder that has stirred up residents on both sides of the Ohio River, and has even led to the Greenup County grand jury indictment of an Ironton man who headed an expedition to pull the rock from the depths of the river without gaining proper permits.

Randy Nickles, a member of the civic forum that is putting on the event, said having the rock as the theme is a symbolic gesture.

It was 100 years ago that Portsmouth's Henry Lorberg had hoped to retrieve the rock himself and place it in York Park and put it on display with an iron fence around it.

Nickles has the newspaper story from 1908 when Lorberg made his plea. He claimed the rock was a menace to boats navigating the river and that the bottom of many a boat and barge was torn out. He wanted to use a snagboat to pull out the boulder and place it in the park.

Obviously, that didn't happen until Steve Shaffer's team pulled it out of the river.

Lorberg, however, did make some nice contribution to Portsmouth. He helped secure a \$10,000 grant to get the public library built, Nickles said.

Nickles said the festival is having some fun with the Indian Head Rock that has drawn some national attention, including news stories on CBS and a front page story in the New York Times.

"We've having some fun with it," Nickles said.

Here are a few of the happenings:

--There will be free children's activities, including pet rock making, create your own rock necklace, search for the rock treasure and rock wall climbing.

--There will be a rock wall challenge competition, complete with prizes, starting at 3 p.m.

--Attendees can leave their mark on a replica of the famous Indian Head Rock.

--Attendees can view the original legendary boulder, which will be on display in the Portsmouth city garage from 3 to 7 p.m. A guard dressed in Civil War costume will be on duty and a booklet with the rock's history is available.

The entertainment begins at 4 p.m. when Warren Brown recreates the wit and wisdom of Mark Twain. His award-winning portrayal of Twain has been a hit with audiences throughout the country.

Kentucky comedian Bob Batch of Louisville will also be on hand. Part of his comedy bit, Nickles said, will poke fun at the Indian Head Rock controversy around 8 p.m. Twain will also weigh in on the subject.

The evening's music will come from the town of Bedrock. The rockers are known locally as Mighty Fine and will perform at the amphitheater from 9 to 10 p.m.

Fireworks will begin at 10 p.m.