

Football festival

Hall of Fame events list and map. **INSIDE**

Ohio a world of weird

Take a trip into the absurd. **TRAVEL, G1**

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Election '04



PHIL MASTURZO/Akron Beacon Journal

Ohio Sen. George Voinovich gives a rousing welcome to Bush on Saturday at the Canton Memorial Civic Center.

5,000 pack Canton center to cheer Bush

Officials, residents praise president at local stop on his 'heart and soul of America tour'

By Jim Carney
Beacon Journal staff writer

CANTON: President George W. Bush came to Canton on Saturday ready to shake the hand of Middle America.

With his blue shirt sleeves rolled up, Bush roared into a full house at the Canton Memorial Civic Center and got right to the point of his campaign swing through Ohio.

"We are on the heart and soul of America tour," the president told a cheering crowd of about 5,000. "I'm out asking for the vote. I'm out asking for your help."

The president was nearly 90 minutes late for his scheduled 9:30 a.m. campaign appearance - on a day that saw both candidates in the Buck-

eye state.

Bush was running behind because his entourage made a brief visit to the Cleveland Browns training camp at Berea, then made a stop in Fairlawn to pick up 10 Timken workers before his speech in Canton.

During the lengthy warm-up period in the crowded auditorium, Canton Mayor Janet Weir Creighton fired up the crowd and talked about the critical role Stark County will play in the coming election.

"What a great day for Canton, Ohio," said Creighton. "The political pulse is measured by Stark County and the nation is watching."

Please see **Bush, A12**

■ Protesters in Stark express disapproval of Bush during Canton rally. Page A12

Kerry crusades in Ohio's heartland

Zanesville turns out to hear presidential hopeful make pitch



JOHN HELLER/Associated Press

Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry speaks to supporters who braved rainy weather in Greensburg, Pa.

By Stephen Dyer
Beacon Journal staff writer

ZANESVILLE: You know it's a big day in Zanesville when Del Warne sets up his hot dog stand on a Saturday afternoon.

Warne was not disappointed: From 12,000 to 15,000 people flooded 12 downtown blocks and waited patiently under a full moon to experience John Kerry's post-convention bounce firsthand.

They were two hours late, but when U.S. Sens. John Kerry and John Edwards arrived just before 10 p.m. they rocked a patient, rain-drenched crowd that had waited more than six hours throughout downtown

Zanesville to see them.

"You waited through three rainstorms, you got wet but you understand that's how you build the future in the United States of America," said Kerry, who was delayed because of other campaign stops.

Both Kerry and Edwards hit on several themes from their Democratic National Convention speeches, including their slogans "Hope is on

Please see **Kerry, A13**

■ After the Democratic convention, some speakers were winners and others were boring. PAGE A13

Mantua girl takes rebuilt racer to win



KEN LOVE/Akron Beacon Journal photos

Mantua's RickiLea Murphy, 12, above, went on to win the Super Stock division in the All-American Soap Box Derby in Akron on Saturday. Winners (from left) Hilary Pearson, RickiLea Murphy and Perrin Norris are jubilant about taking home trophies.

RickiLea Murphy, 12, wins super stock title after car damaged earlier in week

The tamers of the hill

By Elbert Starks III
and Amber Ellis
Beacon Journal staff writers

RickiLea Murphy saved her tears for Saturday afternoon.

The Mantua 12-year-old lived through an emotional few days prior to Saturday's All-American Soap Box Derby. Her super stock car had to essentially be rebuilt after a Wednesday crash - which wasn't her fault - during a test run.

RickiLea was given another test run in her remade car, but the steering system didn't feel right to her. After even more alterations, the car now felt different from the one she drove to qualify for Akron, the one she had come to trust.

By Saturday, she just wanted to get down the hill.

Then she won her first heat. And her second. And her third. She kept winning, until shortly



before the day's final heat, when she exclaimed, "The adrenaline rush going through my body! Oh, my gosh! It's the most intense feeling ever!"

When RickiLea crossed the finish line in the super stock fi-

nal in first place, the week's events finally sank in. In just her second year of racing, in her first All-American, in a rebuilt car, she had won.

The young redhead with braces, nicknamed Rickster,

was the world champion.

And when she hugged her mother, the tears flowed.

"She works really hard, she tries so hard. She just kept on winning and winning," said RickiLea's mother, Debbie Olson. "She put in so much time, so much work, and she won. She won."

Olson paused for a moment.

"It's catching up to me. I'm going to cry."

About 19,000 people were at Derby Downs on Saturday for the All-American and Summit Racing Equipment's Derby Days events, which highlighted motor sports and featured interactive events like a car show.

It rained much of the morning, even causing a brief delay, but the sun came out when it was most welcome, in the late

Please see **Derby, A5**

For heat-by-heat results, see Pages A4-5

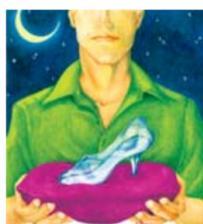
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Hey, you! Looking for love?

Dating. It can be fun or frustrating. Exciting or exhausting. Heartwarming or heart-rending. But for better or for worse, it's a rite most of us have to go through. Starting today, the Akron Beacon Journal begins a four-month focus on the topic of dating. Look for the Love, Akron Style logo in each Sunday's Premier section.

In the news

■ Palestinian kidnappers win deal for release. **A16**
■ Akron tallies mayor's trip toll. **B1**
■ Children's Games offer competition, culture. **B1**
■ Indians lose to Royals 10-3. **C1**

Today's weather

Partly sunny
to partly cloudy
82° High 61° Low
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