

PARMA Observer

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Parma City Schools Leadership Team Meets Applause

by Pamela Adams

The Parma Schools Leadership team of Superintendent Dr. Sarah Zatik, Dr. Christina Dinklocker (Deputy Superintendent), Mrs. Phyllis Jennings Spears (Shiloh Middle School Principal) and Dr. Elizabeth J. Mahoney (Green Valley Elementary School Principal) were key presenters at the statewide November convention of the Ohio School Boards Association in Columbus. This year's convention came close to being the largest in the nation with 10,072 school leaders and Board members in attendance. Parma's team was selected to present a session entitled "Good to Great...What Makes a Great Principal?" that provided research on the qualities of excellent principals. The quality indicators of highly effective principals as noted in research were identified by Superintendent Zatik and included communication/community relations, instructional leadership and organizational management. Key leadership characteristics of excellent principals presented by Christina Dinklocker as summarized by prominent educational

researcher Robert Marzano. These qualities were found to highly correlate with advanced levels of student achievement and include flexibility, situational awareness, monitoring and community outreach. This research and presentation was funded by a leadership grant from the Ohio Department of Education.

The importance of continuous study and development for principals was

outlined by Phyllis Jennings Spears. Those who are the most effective are assertive about staying on the cutting edge of new ideas and research about student and adult learning.

In summarizing the presentation, Dr. Mahoney led the audience through Parma's portfolio evaluation process for principals. The assessment of performance for administrators is based upon Ohio's Standards for

Administrators and calls for a portfolio of distinguished accomplishments as presented by each administrator. Parma's portfolio process is a leading example in the state often requested as a model by other school systems.

The Parma City Schools was well represented in Ohio by this dynamic team of leaders with combined educational experience of over 135 years.

Parma Residents Vote for New City Logo

by Jack Marshall

(PARMA) – The City of Parma is inviting residents to vote on a new logo for the city. The final four designs can be found on the city's website at www.cityofparma-oh.gov. The designs will also be available for viewing in the city's fall newsletter that will arrive at all Parma households beginning next week. "The current logo served us well, but it's outdated and needs a facelift for the future," said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. "A city's logo is significant in defining who and what we are. Residents will vote on designs that show the City of Parma as culturally traditional yet progressive, with a 'green' attitude towards the environment." Designers for the new logo all have connections to Parma in previously living or working in the area. They include Dan Boos, Louis Trempe, Damian Rakowsky and Dan Kulchytsky. The current logo for Parma depicts houses and smokestacks. Mayor DePiero says it's a sign of the times for when it was designed and adopted in the 1960's. The mayor stresses all letterhead and other city stationery bearing the old logo will be used before the new logo is phased in. He adds the graphic art transition will be exciting. "This is something I have wanted to do since I came into office in 2004," said Mayor DePiero. "I'd be the first to admit there have been more important issues I've had to deal with. But it seems like the time is right, and many of the residents I speak with say they welcome the change."

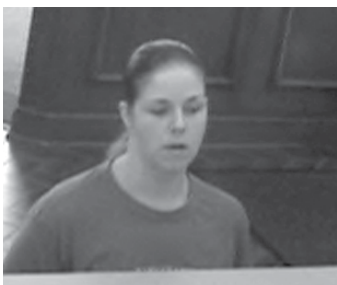


Left to right: Mrs. Phyllis Jennings Spears, Dr. Sarah Zatik, Dr. Christina Dinklocker and Dr. Elizabeth J. Mahoney.

CERT, Community Emergency Response Team, recognized by Parma City Council on its 5th Anniversary



Pictured in the group is Mayor Dean DePiero, Parma City Councilman Brian Day, and CERT Director Brian Riegel (far right).



Do You Know Her?

This unidentified woman used a stolen drivers license to cash a stolen and altered check at a bank in Parma Heights. If you think you may know who this person is, contact the Parma Heights Police Department Detective Bureau at 440-884-8112.

Parma Observer

B-W Students Work with Parma on Sustainability Issues

by David Krueger

Five senior sustainability majors at Baldwin-Wallace College are working with personnel at Parma City government to create and revise city ordinances that aim to enhance the city’s sustainability. These students are members of a senior capstone course taught by Dr. David Krueger, professor of business and co-director of the college’s new sustainability major. Much of their “class” takes place at Parma City Hall where students work in collaboration with staff from the city’s engineering and law departments to identify areas where Parma can create ordinances that can enhance Parma’s livability.

The five students are working to create draft ordinances and policies that will move through the city’s legislative process for action by city council. One ordinance focuses on bicycling, to encourage greater ease of bicycling around the city. Another will provide guidelines for the installation of rain barrels by residents. Rain barrels promote water conservation and mitigate against storm water run-off problems. One student is working with city personnel to generate a mixed-use zoning ordinance that will provide more flexibility to invite mixed-use developments to invest in the city. Another student is preparing draft ordinances that provide guidelines for “green” roofs and installation of clean energy technologies including wind and solar. Finally, another is preparing a draft policy that will promote recycling at municipal buildings.

One student, Katie Schade, who is working on a new draft municipal policy, states, “I was highly motivated to do a recycling policy for Parma’s Municipal buildings. Not only because recycling is vital in reducing the city’s waste footprint, but also because employees and visitors were thirsty to have a recycling policy implemented. I am also proud to know that this policy will add to current efforts for can collecting for Burn Victims of Northeast Ohio. In order to make sustainability workable, there needs to be a strong sense of community, and for me, being able to be involved in a positive, important cause is the most rewarding aspect of my project.” Another student, Erika Meschkat says, “Because of the opportunity to work with the City of Parma on the possible implementation of these ordinances, I have awakened to the fact that municipalities are the biggest agents of change for a city to become increasingly sustainable, and consequently, city-wide sustainability initiatives, like the ordinances we have been working on as a class, are ways for city governments to change regions, states, and eventually the country. As a perfect example, most of our research on city ordinances regarding issues of sustainability have been “borrowed” from other cities in the country. Now Parma, through BW’s work, can be a source for other cities to tap into when they too decide to implement sustainability from the ground up.”

Students in this program are engaged in the state of Ohio’s first undergraduate, interdisciplinary major in sustainability, established in August 2008, now with nearly 40 students. Students take courses in the sciences, social sciences, humanities and business that seek to prepare them to merge ecological and social considerations into the future development of human society.

For more information about the students’ work at the City of Parma, contact Jack Marschall at the City of Parma (885.8181; jmarschall@cityofparma-oh.gov) or David Krueger at Baldwin-Wallace college (dkrueger@bw.edu).

New Volunteers Raise Funds for Mount Alverna Village

by Sharon Alexander

The Mount Alverna Village 2009 Fall Brunch raised over \$10,000.00 to benefit residents of Mount Alverna Village, a not for profit assisted living and skilled care nursing community on State Road in Parma. Now in its 3rd year, the brunch nearly doubled its revenue, thanks to a new Women’s Committee who energized every aspect of the event, from raffle prizes to selling tables. “These volunteers are amazing,” said Sharon Alexander, Development Director. “They had a lot of passion for the project.” The volunteer team included Patricia Moore and Patricia Haschak of Parma Heights, Ellen Goggin, Westlake, Christine O’Dell, North Ridgeville, and Barbara Helon and Victoria Plata, both of Parma.

Brunch proceeds help Mount Alverna provide the extras that make life meaningful for the 183 residents who live there. “The small luxuries can mean so much,” said Sister Joseph Marie Zenda, Vice President, Franciscan Communities. “Christmas programs, field trips and our annual vintage car show--these are just a few activities made possible by benefactors who support the brunch and other projects throughout the year.

Richard Bindernagel, North Royalton, agrees. “My mother lived at Mount Alverna for nine years and loved every minute of it. She was always involved in things that mattered to her. It felt good to know she was happy during those times we could not visit,” he said.

Mount Alverna is a senior living community operated by the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago Service Corporation. The Franciscan Sisters of Chicago opened Mount Alverna in 1953, and it has been serving Cleveland’s elderly ever since. “Our building is state of the art, but our services are guided by the time-honored values of the Sisters,” said Patrick M. Welsh, Mount Alverna’s Executive Director. “Those values are what donors support when they participate in events like our annual brunch.”

Kids Shop with a Cop

by Jim Griffith

In the business of police work, the following scene is not that unusual--the unmarked police vehicle pulls up in front of the house or apartment. Two uniformed officers walk up to the house and knock on the door. After a brief explanation to the parents, the children are taken away in the police car. The difference this Christmas Season is the officers are taking the kids shopping.

Shop with a cop has been successfully operated by the Parma Heights Police Department for the last 9 years. Police Officers and Dispatchers, members of the Parma Heights Police Department, volunteer their time to take needy children out to buy Christmas presents. Presents that they may not normally see because of the situation in the home.

The program was the brainchild of then Sgt (ret) Charles Darnell. After his retirement, the program continued to be operated through the city’s DARE program. The program is financed through the employees of the city. Employees in the Police, Fire and Service Departments, as well as employees at City Hall, have elected to have one dollar per pay check deducted each pay period to finance the program.

The goal is to provide \$100.00 for each child to spend. However, that goal is not always met. Some years result in more needy children than others, which result in having to spread the money out among more children. The children are encouraged not to spend all of the money on themselves, but to buy gifts for other members in the family.

It is not unusual for the officers to take money out of thier own pockets. It can rip your heart out when a child has to make a decision between two gifts because they have gone \$10.00 or \$20.00 over their budgeted amount. The smile on a child’s face when they are told “you can get both of them” sometimes is the highlight of an officer or dispatchers day.

The kids in the program are referred by social service agencies, schools, churches and also by the officers involved. During a year of police work, officers come into contact with a lot of children. Many of them in situations that can range from abusive to neglected to just plain unlucky. Sometimes these situations remain in the officers mind for a long time. Sometimes, a child’s situation can become personal and the officer finds Shop with a cop is an opportunity for those officers to help a family in a small way.

The Officers and Dispatchers are encouraged to shop with the kids in uniform. During the month of December, it will not be unusual to see a uniformed officer or dispatcher in Walmart or Toys R Us, trying to herd a group of kids in one direction or another.

Should you see one of the little one’s drifting away from the herd as the officers are trying to keep control and not lose anyone, feel free to help. In nine years, the department has yet to lose a child, and we would like to keep that record intact.



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Parma Observed

Honoring Memories Is A November Tradition

by Sharon Alexander

Every November, Mount Alverna Village in Parma holds a nondenominational worship service honoring the memories of residents who have died in the past year. In the Catholic Church, November is dedicated to the faithful departed, and the official name of service is A Celebration of the Fullness of Life. As always, it was a bittersweet experience for the families of nearly 80 residents who were honored at the service on November 4th.

Older people are happiest when they can stay in their own homes as long as possible, and today many programs are available to help them achieve that

goal. On the other hand, when people eventually do need the services of a nursing home—and at least two thirds of us will—they are much sicker than in the past and usually have multiple health problems to manage. Most will require the highly skilled care that only a nursing home can provide for the rest of their lives. For this reason, helping residents achieve a dignified and peaceful death is one of the services that long term care communities will almost certainly need to provide. Mount Alverna believes families need help too.

“We can’t just erase someone who mattered to us,” said Patrick Welsh, Executive Director. “The service for

deceased residents helps us connect with their families and let them know they will always be part of our community.”

Families have mixed feelings about returning to Mount Alverna, but the annual program contributes to the healing process for those who do. It is also helpful to reflect on the loved one’s memories at this time of year, before the start of the holiday season, when grief will forever alter a family’s Christmas traditions. It can be surprisingly comforting to talk again to the caregivers who were present during this intense and deeply personal time.

One woman who wishes to remain anonymous said “I’m glad I came. I almost stayed home because I thought being back at Mount Alverna would be really hard, but tonight’s program made me feel better. It was right to take time before the holidays to think about mom and the lessons she taught us.”

Mount Alverna Village is a senior lifestyle community operated by the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago Service Corporation. It offers assisted living, skilled nursing care, rehabilitation services, and Memory Support, a wing dedicated to the needs of those who have dementia.

New hips to put life back on par



RIDGEWOOD GOLF COURSE, PARMA, OH

When Tish Francesangelo learned that a congenital hip problem meant she needed new hips, the 54-year-old couldn’t believe it. But orthopedic surgeon Andre Wolanin, MD, had the perfect prescription for her.

“He told me he could help me get my life back,” said the avid golfer, tennis player and mother of three who is on the go again, thanks to the personalized care of a hospital nationally recognized for joint replacement surgery.

“We’re so lucky to have the skilled physicians and technology we do at Parma Hospital,” says Tish, who recovered in time to dance at her son’s wedding and start the golf season. “If we didn’t have those things, I wouldn’t have my life.”



Andre Wolanin, MD

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Parma Observed

About Neighbors

By Daniel P. McCarthy
Publisher

Recently, I had seen a commercial for a program on a cable channel which deals with neighbors, wicked neighbors to be exact, and how you just never know who might be living next door and what kind of ghastly, horrible things they may be up to. With the recent events which have unfolded on Imperial Ave. in Cleveland, the subject of the advertised program has even more relevance. I'll admit, I will probably watch it when it airs, if I encounter it during my endless channel surfing, but it started me thinking; maybe we are all just a little obsessed with this line of thought. What about all of the good, decent, and possibly amazing neighbors that live all around us-shouldn't we be thinking about them too?

Our first issue had a quote from Congressman Dennis Kucinich on the front page, where he said "community papers bring back neighborhoods and neighbors into our lives". I couldn't agree more, and I hope that readers will write more and more stories about their neighbors, sharing with the rest of us about how these neighbors often rise above expectations and enrich the lives of people who live around them in ways that positively renew our faith in our communities and each other as human beings. Sometimes our neighbors can surprise us and teach us a valuable lesson which we do not fully grasp until they are long gone. I have such a story about one neighbor of mine.

When my parents came to Parma before I was born, the neighbors living

in the house directly across the street were already living there for some years. They were immigrants who had come from Germany, I was told, either before or after World War Two, I was never quite sure. The neighbors to the left of them had come from whatever was left of their hometown in Poland directly after the war, as I was also told. These two families would sometimes openly argue with each other over the fence, yelling in a language that was strange to me, but I had the sense that their animosity stemmed from bad feelings left over from that great conflict. For the most part, the rest of the neighborhood, including our family, were merely spectators, and chose to stay out of their argument, although it became apparent, sometimes that was not always possible.

The family of German immigrants had a son named Lenny, who worked every day at the nearby Chevy Plant. He was the only member of the family who spoke enough English to converse with other people in the neighborhood. Time passed, and eventually his mother died, and then some years later his father passed, leaving Lenny to live all alone in the house. He seldom had any visitors, and his behavior to the neighbors grew increasingly antagonistic, specially to the neighbors who had immigrated from Poland. On many a Sunday morning, a taxi would come to their house, and they would have to explain to the irritated driver that they had not summoned his services; that he was being used as a pawn in the war between them and their neighbor.

Our family from time to time had a similar experience, but ours involved a Realtor showing up during Sunday dinner, usually from some far eastern suburb, responding to a call from someone claiming to be my father, urgently requesting thier services to put the house for sale on the market at once. This was before caller I.D., a variation of the old "pizza trick". No one could ever prove it was Lenny who had staged these stunts, but I do not recall ever having heard the blame being placed on anyone else.

Eventually this type of mischief subsided, and Lenny simply became a recluse, and most any night the house was completely dark, presumably to save money on the electric bill. Finally, in 1996 his church arranged for his placement in a nursing home, and that seemed to be the end of it. Imagine our surprise when he died in 2000 and the television news reported that he had left 1.5 million dollars to the church in his will. Where he got the money, I'll never know- the Meals on Wheels people used to leave him extra food because he seemed to be so impoverished. I couldn't help thinking "what was the point of hoarding that money and never enjoying any of it. living all alone with no human contact?"

The real point of this neighbor story is that we should take more interest in our neighbors, whether they are secretly hiding 1.5 million dollars or not. What good did the money do for Lenny? He spent his years hiding in the dark with absolutely no one to love or be loved by. I imagine that he felt the gift to the church guaranteed him a

place in heaven, but that seems like cold comfort to me. I believe that a knock on the door from a caring neighbor who was genuinely concerned about his well being would have seemed more like paradise to that man, but I was content to ignore him, just like the rest of the neighborhood did.

As time goes by, I am haunted by the memory of Lenny and my indifference to him. Let's face it, the way Lenny ended up is enough of a lesson for me to do things differently, so I don't wind up being the same. I make it a point to help my neighbors whenever I can now, and I feel like a better person for it. I can only hope that my neighbors might care just a little bit more for my well being than we did for Lenny's, and that they shouldn't refrain from showing it. There's one thing though; if I should have 1.5 million dollars at some time in the future, I won't be hiding it. How about you?

Parma Morning Kiwanis Club Adopts First Step Pre-School Program

by Pamela Adams,

The main goal farea Kiwanis clubs "young children: priority one." The Parma Area Morning Kiwanis Club exemplified this mission with purpose and energy when they adopted the pre-school program for 3 and 4 year old youngsters at Parkview School. In celebration of the season of thanks, the Kiwanians recently treated the youngsters to fellowship and a Thanksgiving craft. The youngsters each worked with the Kiwanians to create a flower pot turkey complete with a belly full of animal crackers! The children enjoyed the learning activities of identifying the color of feathers, writing their names and assembling the turkeys. The adults and children all enjoyed making a new friend!



Kick Up Your Heels... With Dancing Wheels at Cuyahoga County Public Library

by Robert Rua

Interactive, Entertaining and Enlightening are the words that describe this fun and informative lecture/performance. The young (and young at heart) will discover a new and innovative art form that awakens the potential and possibilities within us all and facilitates a discussion on how the abilities of all people shine through the arts. Dancing Wheels Company members will perform some family-friendly favorites. Audience members will have the opportunity to participate in this zany dance right from their seats, and they may even get to hop into a wheel-chair for some wheelie work!

Parma Heights Branch
6206 Pearl Road / 440.884.2313
Thursday, February 11th
7:00 p.m.

Parma-Ridge Branch
5850 Ridge Road / 440.888.4300
Monday, February 15th
3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Parma-Snow Branch
2121 Snow Road / 216.661.4240
Wednesday, February 3rd
3:00 p.m.

Parma-South Branch
7335 Ridge Road / 440.885.5362
Friday, January 22nd
10:00 a.m.

These family-oriented programs are free and open to the public. To register, visit www.cuyahogalibrary.org or call the host branch.

Free Homework Help!
Students in grades K – 6 and their families are invited to register

at Cuyahoga County Public Library's Homework Center at the Parma-Ridge Branch for free after-school help. The Program Coordinators, Cleveland State University and Baldwin-Wallace College's America Reads Homework Coaches and trained volunteers provide a positive learning environment designed to help students gain life-long learning skills.

The Homework Center is open Monday – Thursday from 4:00 – 6:30 p.m.

For information, visit the Parma-Ridge Branch or call 440.888.4300.

Cuyahoga County Public Library Homework Centers are made possible through support from the Cleveland Foundation.

Tri-City Area Observed



Asset Corner #1

Lovasy, Gene

Developmental Assets – 40 in 8 Categories: The more assets kids have the more likely they will be to thrive and avoid at-risk behaviors
November’s Asset Category: **Empowerment** – Young people need

to be valued by their community and have opportunities to contribute to others. For this to occur, they must be safe & feel secure. The more a young person is valued and feels valuable, the more likely it is that she or he will grow

up healthy.
Empowerment Assets Include:
#7. Community Values Youth
#8. Youth As Resources
#9. Service To Others
#10. Safety
Today’s Focus:
Asset 7: Community Values Youth
Listening to diverse opinions can help everyone move ahead.
As young people grow older, they quickly sense where they are wanted and where they aren’t. Do the young people around you have opportunities to participate, serve, lead, and make decisions within the community? Do these same young people feel the com-

munity supports children and youth? If the answer to these questions is “not always” or “not enough,” it may be time to make some changes. After all, remember how you felt when you were young and the adults around you didn’t listen or give you credit for your opinions? Everyone deserves a voice! Community Values Youth is Asset 7 of Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets, the qualities, experiences, and relationships that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Here are the facts
Research shows that young people who perceive that adults in the community value young people are more likely to grow up healthy, exhibit leadership, value diversity, and succeed in school. Only 22 percent of young people, ages 11–18, perceive that adults in the community value their opinions and input, according to Search Institute surveys. Set a goal to create an environment in which you and other adults take time to listen to young people, spend time with them, and give credit to their opinions.

Tips for building this asset.

Young people’s perceptions can tell you a lot about your community and what needs to happen so they feel the community values them. Ask young people what they think. Acknowledge their opinions, even if you don’t agree. Work together to turn your community into a place that values its young people.

Also try this....

In your home and family: Ask your child’s opinion about something in the news. Listen carefully, without interrupting. Discuss the topic (agreeing to disagree, if necessary).
In your neighborhood and community: Serve on a community committee and seek out young people’s feedback about specific issues. Let them know you greatly appreciate their presence and participation. Encourage civic groups to include young people in critical conversations.

In your school or youth program: Engage the young people in your school or program as leaders and decision makers. Get their input on school board or program directors’ decisions. Invite them to discuss their experiences with the school board or program directors.

Visit www.parmacityschools.org/assets or www.search-institute.org/assets for more information about the 40 Developmental Assets and ideas for helping young people build them.

Developmental Assets® are positive factors within young people, families, communities, schools, and other settings that research has found to be important in promoting the healthy development of young people. From Instant Assets: 52 Short and Simple E-Mails for Sharing the Asset Message. Copyright © 2007 by Search Institute®, 877-240-7251; www.search-institute.org. This message may be reproduced for educational, noncommercial uses only (with this copyright line). All rights reserved.

Tri-C West Presents Winter Dance Concert

by Randi Hansen

The Tri-C West Theatre and Dance Department will hold its annual Winter Dance Concert on Friday December 11th at 7:30 pm in the Western Campus Theatre located at 11000 Pleasant Valley Rd. in Parma. The annual dance concert continues the tradition of exploring many styles and disciplines including, hip-hop, jazz, and modern dance. Audiences will be treated to pieces choreographed Sarah Morrison, Megan Pitcher, and several student-choreographed pieces. About the Tri-C West Dance Faculty: Sarah Morrison (M.A.) is the founder/director of MorrisonDance and is a 2009 recipient of the Ohio Arts Council Award for Individual Excellence. She began her professional career as a teenager

in Atlanta. Morrison relocated to Cleveland upon receiving a scholarship for her choreography to attend Case Western Reserve University. Over the past 15 years, Cleveland has become her home, and the home to MorrisonDance, a company recognized for its unique exploration and presentation of dance. Morrison’s choreography has been seen in Atlanta, Chicago, Italy and Mexico, and has been presented at the Joyce SoHo and Joe’s Pub at Public Theatre in New York City. Megan Pitcher is the artistic director of MegLouise Dance, a Cleveland based performance group. Pitcher’s choreography has been presented internationally at Moscow Theater West in Russia and the Junction Arts Festival in Toronto, Canada.

Pitcher received her BFA in Dance from Ohio University and supplemented her training at Dance New Amsterdam in New York, Bates Dance Festival and Summer Stages in Maine.
Main stage Ticket and Reservation Information: All Main stage events are held in the Tri-C Western Campus Theatre in the T building. Admission Prices: General Admission \$10 Students/Seniors/Staff \$8 CCC Students Free with valid ID Group rates for 10 or more For more information and reservations please call 216-987-5536. Parking is available in the B lot (enter via Pleasant Valley). All other lots will require permits.

Weather May Be Getting Cold But Hearts Stay Warm

by Lynn Stutzman

Communities, congregations and businesses that care, surround Parma City School District (PCSD)! Parma Area Family Collaborative is a grant-funded program that offers resources and services to families in the school district and surrounding areas. Their mission is to build a stronger and more connected community by nurturing youth and strengthening families, while promoting child well-being and safety in the home, school and community environments. The Helping Hands group focuses and coordinates different projects throughout the year.
This month, the Helping Hands group coordinated a coat project

for PCSD students. Over 200 children received coats on October 26th. Parma Baptist Church graciously offered to provide space and volunteer coordination to support this event. In addition, numerous businesses donated time, effort and money to make this event a success. Kaiser Permanente was the drop-off site and delivery support team. They also did a system-wide donation for coat collections. Parma City Hall staff donated their dress-down dollar collection to use towards purchasing coats for children, and for coat collection. On The Spot, Betty Brite and Avalon Dry Cleaners offered free services to launder donated coats. Swift

Print made free “thank you” posters. Cuyahoga County Library, St. Vladimir Church, All Saints Episcopal Church, PCSD Staff and School Board members donated hand-knitted hats. Parma Hospitals Health Education Center did a coat collection. PCSD teachers and staff also donated numerous coats.
PCSD Parma Area Collaborative is very grateful to all of the donations provided by so many community members. All of their time and effort will help keep our children healthy and warm this winter! If you would like further information about PCSD Parma Area Family Collaborative please call (440) 887-4873.

Community Events

Community Helping Community

by Laura Muller

The “Pay It Forward Cafe” was established formally at the Parma Park Reformed Church aka “Church in the Woods”, 11001 W. Ridgewood Dr., Parma Heights on December 6, 2008. It was created to assist families who have been caught in today’s economic downturn. Over the year 2009 it has expanded to not only provide a Saturday hot meal program but also an essential social networking and emotional support system for the families who attend. The concept

for this program was developed when the needs of families was verified with the Parma City School System. Children receive breakfast and lunch when school is in session but weekends can be a problem for many families who have lost jobs. In January of 2009 we partnered with Renwood Elementary School. Since then we opened the program to any resident of Parma, Parma Heights and Middleburg Heights and have also invited families who utilize the food pantries in our area. Our most recent inclusion is the Ridge-Brook Elementary School. In addition

to nutritious meals we also provide entertaining and educational workshops for the families who participate. We are very grateful for the many community members and agencies who have assisted us in this endeavor. The Parma and Parma Heights police and fire departments have supported us with educational workshops on stranger-danger and fire safety. We have had local magicians, skunk rescue and a children’s author among the many people who have donated their time and talent to assist us and enhance our program. The second Saturday of every month is our “Pay It Forward” Saturday. We have adopted a troop in Iraq through the “Adopt-a-Platoon” program of the armed forces. The children write letters and send care packages to “their

troop”. This teaches the children to share and to pay their blessings forward. We have become an agency of the Cleveland Foodbank and are using them as a resource to purchase food for meals. In addition, Olive Garden Restaurant, Chuppa’s Marketplace, and Pappou’s Restaurant and some area pizza shops have provided meals regularly, as needed. Several others have generously provided us with a one-time meal donation. You can help us by donating with a deposit to the “Feed the Kids” program, Parma Park Reformed Church, at the Chase Bank, Parmatown or by contacting Kathy Weber @440-781-2588 or Laura Muller @ 440-477-0845. You can also help by providing items for the soldiers and/or donating your time and talent for our workshops.

COX Employees Launch COX Charities

by Stacie Schafer

Cox Communications Cleveland has long been known for its active involvement in the local communities. Now, Cox announces the success of its inaugural employee campaign to fund Cox Charities. The Cox Charities Employee Campaign will have raised more than \$15,000 by the end of 2010. “Cox has a long-standing commitment to helping organizations whose efforts touch the lives of others,” said Anne Doris, vice president and general manager of Cox Communications Cleveland. “Cox Charities provides us with an opportunity to positively impact our local communities.” This is the inaugural year for Cox Charities, which is the Cox employee way of funding needy organizations in local communities.

“We connect Cleveland’s Westside communities through digital cable, high speed data and telephone service,” said Doris. “As part of our continued commitment to the communities we serve, we established Cox Charities to

assist worthwhile charitable organizations in our neighborhoods.” Cox will hold a variety of fund-raising events each year to generate additional funds for Cox Charities. A majority of Cox Charities fundraising will come from employees, and hopefully customer and vendor contributions. Beginning in 2011, Cox Charities will award grants on an annual basis to non-profit organizations that support the areas served by Cox Cleveland. Cox Charities grant recipients will be carefully chosen through a rigorous screening process. Funding decisions will be made by an Advisory Committee comprised of Cox employees who contribute to Cox Charities as well as local community leaders. Funds will be generally targeted to programs that help meet the community’s most pressing needs. “Cox Charities is committed to building, strengthening and investing primarily in Cleveland’s Westside communities,” said Stacie Schafer, public affairs specialist for Cox Communications Cleveland. “By raising and granting funds, we can bring awareness

and program support to select groups working tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of others.” In addition to the annual grant program, Cox employees are generously giving through volunteerism and board participation to enrich the communities where they live and work. On October 3, Cox more than 30 employees and family members participated in a Cox Charities Day of Caring on

with a hands-on painting and landscaping project for the children’s area at the Ridgewood YMCA in Parma. Cox Charities partners with the United Way of Greater Cleveland as its fiscal agent and administrative partner. In addition to acting as the 501(c)(3) fiscal agent of the foundation, the United Way will aid in the grant application, review and allocation process of Cox Charities.



Anne Doris, Vice President and General Manager at Cox Cleveland, along with more than 30 Cox employees and family members, helped landscape and paint at the Ridgewood YMCA for Cox Day of Caring on October 3.

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Holiday Reflections

A Half-Century Ago...Christmas - 1959

by Gary Rice

A story; only partly fictionalized....

Growing up in our wintertime 1950's Greater Cleveland area, the first thing that comes to my mind was the snow...and lots of it, too...My experiences happened to be in Lakewood, but they might just as easily happened in your cities of Parma, Parma Heights, or in Seven Hills, as well. Let's take a look at a snapshot from those halcyon days, a half-century ago.

My black, gum-rubber, over-the-ankle boots crunched silently through the early evening snowfall that threatened to double its depth in record time. The little black metal hookover-fasteners on those boots were thoroughly encrusted with an icy film, as soon as our little family of three walked out of Geiger's, on Lakewood's Detroit Avenue. Dad had just picked up a new suit with which he could direct at the Harding school winter concert, just a few days ahead. We then entered Carson's Dress Shop, where Mom picked out a beautiful gold trimmed white dress with white gloves; accentuated with a gorgeous golden waist-jacket. That ensemble would be perfect for upcoming holiday parties and would show off Mom's equally golden hair.

It was the day after Thanksgiving, 1959, and it was the beginning of the Christmas shopping season.

The ice-laden frosty-framed downtown Lakewood store windows warmly glowed with creative decorations and merchandise displays, and warm enveloping steam rose from the rusting curb grates along the avenue. Blue and white CTS buses mixed with yellow Checker taxi cabs and the usual rainbow-pastel hues of those huge-finned American cars; jostling for parking spaces in the deepening snowfall. Here and there, the ubiquitous yellow "Fallout Shelter" signs were clearly visible. (Just in case the Soviet Union should attack us in the dead of night) In other suburbs around us- in Parma, or over in Fairview Park, and in downtown Cleveland, Nike anti-aircraft missile batteries and their crews were stationed, in order to protect us from the Soviet Air Force.

It had been quite a year too. In January, Fidel Castro had rolled into Havana and taken over Cuba. Alaska



Young Gary, in the Rosewood home, with model bomber Photo by Robert Rice

and Hawaii had both just been admitted as the 49th and 50th states. "Bozo the Clown", "Rawhide", "Maverick", "The Twilight Zone", and "Dennis the Menace" shows, as well as "Captain Kangaroo" were all on our black-and-white TV screens. "Rocky and His Friends" had just aired for the first time, only a few weeks before (featuring Bullwinkle the moose), as had the western show, "Bonanza". Locally, we watched Dorothy Fuldheim, Tom Haley, Doug Adair, Hugh Danaceau and Howard Hoffman on TV-8's news and informational shows. The "Sound of Music" had just opened on Broadway, and Richard Nixon and Jack Benny had also just played a piano and violin duet together on TV. NASA had just announced plans for the first 110 people to go up into space, and the U.S. test-fired the first Titan intercontinental missile.

Soon though, we trudged across the bustling street to Bailey's Department Store, where I found an excellent model bomber airplane for my weekend project. (I liked the American plane models because they often came in silver, so you didn't have to paint them) It seemed like everyone in Lakewood was at Bailey's that day, or if not at Bailey's, then just up Warren at Bearden's for some hot chocolate topped with whipped cream, as well as perhaps, a juicy cheeseburger with a generous helping of fries... or perhaps, those great onion rings!

It's not long before we found our car, a 1955 black Ford sedan, having

tire chains on the back for better traction on Lakewood's ancient red-brick streets. Before long, we were back home on Rosewood Avenue; the parents eager to relax and unwind, and me; eager to set up the card table in my bedroom, unroll the oilcloth, and start to work on my airplane model.

It seemed that every Christmas was special at our home. There were always dear relatives around. There was an endless flow of golden sugar cookies everywhere, decorated with scarlet and green-tinged sprinkles, as well as those soft, chewy peanut-butter cookies having those chocolate drops in the middle. There was always the sublime question as to whether to eat the cookie first, and the chocolate drop last, or vice-versa.

Our church too was always beautifully decorated, and filled to overflowing on Christmas Eve. Dad would direct the children's choir, and I would anxiously await the end of the service, because that's when we opened our gifts back home; or most of them, anyway. There was always a special gift for me on Christmas morning though, under the tree- as a special gift from Santa. Christmas Day however, was so busy either visiting others, or having others come to our home, that we liked most of our family gift openings to be done in the quiet time of Christmas Eve.

That particular Christmas morning, there was a brand-new shiny red and white bike for me, with twin headlights and a horn too! Unfortunately, with the deepening snowfall accumulation, that bike's first ride would have to wait for awhile.

After a great black-tie Christmas dinner with the grandparents, I met my friends outside and we waxed up the runners on our flyer sleds, as well as the undersides of those red metal "flying saucer" dish-sleds. We then made our way to the Metroparks hills, or perhaps one of our parents drove us over to the sledding hill at Memphis and Tiedeman. Either way, fun was indeed had by all concerned. Afterwards, our little red noses and reddened hands were soon warmed, along with our gloves and mittens, in front of crackling fireplaces, or perhaps near those clanking steam radiators.

Soon it would be time to return to

school and celebrate a new year, and a new decade. The fifties were coming to a close, and the sixties were about to begin. As this young former Pennsylvania boy looked with anxiety out his frosted bedroom window, up into the skies; for a possible sighting of Santa's sleigh, (or maybe Soviet bombers, or maybe even a flying saucer!) he wondered...

...what would the future really be like... for him, and for his world?

Money Spending Tips

by Craig Czepczynski

My thoughts about this Christmas are much different than years past. I am excited about having a chance to impact the local economy....the immediate local economy. This can be achieved by balancing your purchasing power. Buy from local merchants and you will reap the rewards in ways that are noticeable.

For every \$100 spent in locally owned independent stores, \$68 returns to the community in taxes, payroll, and other expenditures. If you spend that in a national chain, only \$43 stays here. Spend it online and nothing comes home.

If half of the employed population spent \$50 each month in locally owned independent businesses it would generate more than \$42.6 billion in revenue.* Imagine the positive impact if 3/4 of the employed population did that.

What three independently owned businesses would you miss if they disappeared? Stop in. Say hello. Pick up something that brings a smile. Your purchases are what keeps those businesses around.

This is the time to make decisions which help our municipality. Visit The 3/50 Project at www.the3/50project.net Spread the word and keep the money here! Printed with permission from The 3/50 Project

*Employment statistics courtesy US Labor Department 02/06/09 report; 68/43 stats courtesy Civic Economics 2008 study.

C/B/S Coupon Book to Help Our Students!

By Ken Ferguson

The Parma City School District's Community/Business/Schools (C/B/S) has created a coupon book that returns 90% of the revenue generated back to the PCSD students that take part in extracurricular activities. That's right – for each and every \$10 coupon book sold, \$9.00 goes back to help fund one of the school's student organizations.

The book contains more than 50 coupons from area businesses, with a total savings in excess of \$1,000 !!!

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Outdoor Life Observed

Don't Buck The Truth: Killing Deer Worsens Overpopulation

by Lucy McKernan

As a member of the League of Humane Voters of Ohio (LOHV) and very active volunteer for a local deer advocacy group, this writer is armed with facts concerning deer overpopulation and wildlife statistics. For this reason, I strongly object to Parma even considering a deer "management" (one of many polite euphemisms for killing) program, as recently cited in certain front page stories.

Before any action is taken, residents must face these facts:

FACT: Killing deer creates "compensatory rebound effect." Well-documented by wildlife biologists and divisions of wildlife everywhere, including Ohio, here's how rebound works: Less deer after killing (hunting, etc) + the same abundant food source for the survivors = better overall health, increasing the fertility of female deer and causing them to conceive at an earlier age and give birth to twins and triplets. Again, killing deer creates more deer.

Case in point: Cleveland Metroparks (aka "Emerald Reckless") is entering its 13th year of deer slaughter because the past 12 years didn't do the job.

FACT: The Ohio Division of Wildlife profits between 15 and 30 percent annually from deer hunting. In fact, DOW exploits the rebound effect as a means to propagate deer. They need to keep a high inventory of live targets for economical reasons. DOW is the prime mover in any urban hunting. Their comprehensive plan involves opening up more hunting areas, and has stated so publicly. Nothing happens without their approval. State regulations require a certain amount of setback on property, which Independence totally ignored.

FACT: Southern Parma and adjacent communities see higher numbers of deer because those nearby, including Independence, allow bow hunting or other kill methods.

FACT: Independence, the geographical center of Cuyahoga County, is an excellent case in point about how to deal with deer management -- in all the wrong ways. Bow hunting has entered its third bloody year there, and it's often done illegally (at minimum, dozens of serious violations have been cited). Independence passed an ordinance virtually off the public radar so special interest/hunting groups, some, city employees, can hunt however they please. This includes Riverview Road where, with the help of a "nuisance permit," deer are killed with guns and dumped into a nearby ravine. Now, Independence wonders why it has a coyote "problem" to be "managed."

At this writing, Independence is violating Ohio's "Sunshine" law. Designed to ensure the public receives full disclosure, including council minutes, and in a timely manner, the city is now keeping the gist of what's going on from prying eyes. Will Parma residents stand for the same?

Some facts concerning certain Parma council members' stance on the deer issue:

FACT: Councilman Napoli publicly claimed "we have to do something [about the deer issue.]" What does "something" mean? And why does something have to be done? If residents don't inquire, it may be too late -- like in Independence. Except for one particular Parma councilwoman -- in Ward 1 -- most of council expressed reservations about killing deer, or doubt about whether anything should be done. Why, then, is it being discussed -- not to mention, writ so large across recent front page headlines? Red flags, anyone?

Take special note: As with Inde-

pendence, it seems to take one or two council people with connections to special interest/hunting groups to pass an ordinance.

FACT: Mayor DePiero advocates "having an expert advise Parma on how to manage the deer population . . ." In this case, as always, "expert" means DOW and killing.

FACT: Parma residents themselves must watch Ward 1 councilwoman, demand access to all meetings, minutes and other information. Start a special group so that things can't be kept on the down-low. In Independence, an emergency ordinance was posted on its website late one Friday and approved the next business day by a small group of council advocates and one DOW employee. Yikes!

FACT: Deer vehicle accidents (DVA's) are caused by hunting. Erie Insurance reports more DVA's first day of hunting than any other time of the year. Hunters chase deer from woods to roadways; sharpshooting, too, can force deer into streets.

FACT: Some deer nuisance problems are solved by simply not feeding, modifying driving habits (especially at certain times/seasons), implementing non-lethal deterrents for roads, yards, etc. Our group brought a national expert to the Seven Hills recreation center last year for "How to Deer Proof Your Garden in Five Easy Steps" to a

standing room only crowd. It's being requested again by the city.

FACT: Parma, like Independence, is smart! During a recent phone survey about bow hunting in Independence, we found virtually no residents want hunting, sharpshooting or any deer killing -- not even some hunters! Again, how did this come to be? Because roughly six to seven percent of the population -- hunters and their kin -- have found ways to overrule the majority.

These species-centrics treat fellow humans the same way they treat animals.

In fact, you can tell a lot about a nation -- a community -- by the way it treats its animals. We are at war with other humans around the globe. At war, it seems, with each other here. Do we have to ramp up the war efforts on wildlife, now in Parma?

Just as this writer and millions of others have reduced horrific suffering inflicted on farm animals through eating plant-based diets and other cruelty-free consumerism and lifestyles, Parma and all other communities can and have formed "VOTING BLOCS" to prevent or stop the madness. To learn more about the League of Humane Voters, visit www.lohv.org and click on the Ohio link.

We, the people.

Community Based Conservation

by Dave Lincheck



Hello everyone. Please join me and West Creek Preservation Committee in extending a hearty welcome to the Parma Observer! We look forward to the Parma Observer serving as a new forum where we can all learn about, discuss, get involved with and help care for our local environment -- and its impact on our quality of life

You probably have heard about West Creek Preservation Committee (WCPC). We are a local conservation group that protects and restores our streams, saves some of our community's natural areas and open spaces, and works to establish a Greenway Trail to connect these areas to the Towpath Trail and Cuyahoga

Valley National Park. We're your neighbors who lead hikes, who pull litter and shopping carts out of the stream, and plant trees at restored wetlands. We're the volunteers who apply for grants and use the money to purchase and preserve important natural lands. We are the group of residents who saved over 300 acres of the West Creek Valley from destruction and brought together a partnership that established the West Creek Reservation, our new Metropark.

We got started back in 1997 when one of our founding members placed a small notice in a local newspaper, inviting anyone interested in saving West Creek to a meeting at the library. About two dozen residents attended, and realizing that others shared their concern for Parma's environment and quality of life, decided to make a difference. The group developed the vision for the West Creek Preserve and Greenway, and set out to make that vision a reality. Over the past twelve years, and with great support from the community, WCPC has been very successful in implementing this vision. That small notice in the newspaper triggered a series of actions and community involvement that continues to improve our city's environment.

Caring for our local environment is an ongoing, evolving process that needs everyone's participation in one way or another. In addition to the challenge of cleaning our waterways and protecting natural habitats, solutions are needed for storm-water management. Invasive species, pollution from new pesticides and pharmaceuticals, how to encourage recycling, and the need for walkable and bikable communities are just a few examples of challenges to be addressed.....there is a lot to discuss and accomplish.

We hope you will join this discussion. The Parma Observer has invited WCPC to submit articles about local environmental challenges and opportunities, as well as details on our conservation, water quality, and trail projects. Of course, we will include information about how you can get involved. Together we can continue to make a difference!

By the way, WCPC still holds quarterly public meetings at the library, and you're invited. The next meeting will be Monday, October 26, 2009 at 7:00 pm at the Parma-Snow Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library - 2121 Snow Rd, Parma. The meeting will include a presentation describing some of our latest projects, with time for your questions, suggestions, and ideas. We hope you can attend.

Pulse of the City

Marketing in a Down Economy

by Bill DeMarco

In one of the country’s worst recessions where there are hiring freezes, cut projects and budgets, low production, and shrinking incomes, why would anyone spend more money for marketing? There may be more to this question than easy answers. In fact, history would steadily say that now is one of the best times to increase your efforts in marketing. CEO Jason Swenk of Solar

Velocity, an Atlanta based marketing agency, explains it this way, “It is hard to hear conversations, if you are in a noisy room of people talking. But, if no one is speaking, a whisper can be heard loud and clear. If your competition is not advertising, your marketing dollars will go much further than you expect.” Backing this up, is General Mills’ Chief Marketing Officer, Mark Addicks’ statement:” McGraw-Hill Research,

in a study of U.S. recessions, showed that business-to-business firms that maintained or increased their advertising expenditures during the 1981-1982 recession averaged significantly higher sales growth, both during the recession and for the following three years, than those that eliminated or decreased advertising. By 1985, sales of companies that were aggressive recession advertisers had risen 256% over those that

didn’t keep up their advertising.”
Be aggressive. A recession creates a unique environment that makes aggressive marketing even more successful. There will be less clutter in the short term for marketers to compete with. Less proactive organizations will slash their budgets and the number of marketing efforts will decrease. Consumers will be easier to reach. Also media outlets will be more willing to make deals, such as decreased rates, increased placements and better placements.

A down economy is a great opportunity for brand strengthening. Proactive marketing sends a message to customers that the organization is confident in its staying power during hard times.

Listen to your customers. During an economic slowdown, organizations cannot afford to lose current customers. It is much more expensive to gain than to retain customers. Turn current customers into loyal brand advocates by focusing on their needs. Customers will spend less on personal items and discretionary purchases, but they are willing to spend more on brands that they value and trust. Use limited dollars more effectively to develop a stronger brand relationship with customers.

Companies have already cut and slashed expenses to the bare minimums. Now is the time to focus on our marketing, grow our companies, increase our profits and move ahead of our competition. I hope this information I shared with you will help you through this current recession. Business growth yields new jobs. We need to put America back to work!

The Second Woods

by James McCarthy

My earliest awareness of the world around me was in Parma, Ohio. I grew up in the shadow of no less than seven brothers and sisters around me. I discovered much through following the routines and adventures of my older siblings...they were the ones who had gone before. Everything that I did early on, was also experienced through the reflections of their awareness of me. I was a visitor, along for the guided tour of my early world in Parma. Slowly as my own confidence expanded, along with my collective body of adventures, logged on my internal trip odometer, I began to plot my own course of discovery of the mysterious, and exciting world outside my fenced yard. I was a piece of chalk, and my blackboard was the wondrous world of Parma, Ohio.

Our home in Parma was situated alongside a school with the bounty of the seeming vastness of the school property to launch early conquests of the world in. It was green, it was full of trees, and birds and bugs, it was within earshot of mom or dad at the back fence...it was Parma in the late 1960’s. This world for us then, was a place where nothing much seemed ever to go terribly wrong. People seemed friendly enough and willing to give. Our parents routinely would turn us loose to the wilds of the school playground and simply call for us from the back fence when we were to come home. It was simple...happy, and pleasantly without much complication. We would occupy ourselves for hours sampling the wilds of Parma... building a base of adventure to make our backbones from. Some would say the child is father to the man...for me, Parma made that child, all those years ago.

There was a stand of trees at the rear of the school property boundary. It was a little wilder than the front stand of trees in the middle of the school property. This second line of trees, with its wild and diverse nature, came to be known as The Second Woods. This was a place, somewhat more forbidding to the single-digit explorer. It was farther back from the domain of our back fence than the first row of trees. The

woods there were left to grow wild... absent the careful trimming and nurturing received by the first row. Also the fact that the Second Woods were technically off of the school property proper, or so it seemed to us anyway, that they were a gray zone between the edge of the school property and the beginning of the properties of the houses along the distant development adjacent to them. At a time, for all of us individually, we were forbidden to venture into the Second Woods. Likely it was the pulling of our parents’ will that we not stray out of holler shot of the back fence and my mother or father’s capable bellows.

The trees were taller in the wilds of The Second Woods, or so they seemed to us then. In the overgrowth there were even the semblance of a path. One might even once, had thought about the possibility of becoming lost in those woods. Of course such apprehensions could only exist, for a fleeting moment, in the minds of brave 4 year old explorers. After all, you had to be brave and unflinching to venture into the shadow of the big shouldered Second Woods. My earliest solo journey into those woods, absent the coaxing of my older brother, was an early rite of passage for me. A moment of ascension, to be sure, plotted upon the personal time-line of epic explorations of wild Parma!

My brother was an avid tree climber. He was naturally drawn by the alluring promise of the tall trees of The Second Woods. I would follow on the adventure and occupy myself with the meanderings of new-found pathways in the narrow woods. To my horror, sometimes, he would leave the woods without telling me. I would feel lost at once and would anguish as a small child would over the seeming prospect of being lost in The Second Woods. odd, but it never occurred to me that I could still see my backyard fence from the site of my would-be stranding, if I cared to look for it.

It is truly amazing what different perspectives of observation deliver. All those years ago, the tiny parcel of Parma where our earliest explorations

occurred, isn’t big enough for a dog to become lost within. The twin stands of trees describing the school property, are only hundreds of feet apart from one another, but their symbolic separation spanned a valley of implicit trepidation for the child explorer. The limits of the place as a whole, make it seem to me now, impossible to ever have felt lost. Yet it’s all about perspective...all of those early conquests of my tiny world of Parma, have colored the tone of my adult experience. Small and withering today as they are, the specter of The Second Woods looms large for me still, as a symbolic representation of a challenge or force to be reckoned with, and a landscape to be conquered. The Second Woods are never so far away in my passing daydreams of middle-age, still as fearsome as they were when first conquered there in quiet Parma four decades ago.

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Parma Observer

Tri-C West Theater Announces Auditions

by Randi Hansen

Tri-C West Theatre will hold auditions for its winter production, *The Praying Mantis* by Alejandro Sieveking, on December 7th and 8th at 7 pm. Callbacks will be December 9th at 7 pm. This production will run February 19, 20, 25, 26, 27 at 8 pm, and February 21 and 28 at 2 pm. Auditions will take place in the Western Campus Theatre

located at: 11000 Pleasant Valley Rd. Parma, OH 44130. This production will be directed by Robert Ellis.

About the Author and Play: Alejandro Sieveking has been a leading playwright in Chile for nearly 40 years. This macabre tale set in a Chilean manor house is a dark comedy of three sisters and their secret in the cellar. The

Praying Mantis will challenge perceptions while keeping audiences on the edge of their seats. As the drama unfolds, confession, intrigue and escape foreshadow an unexpected ending. Casting Breakdown: Juan - Young lover. Athletic, handsome, curious. Very much in love with Adela. Adela - Young, pretty, a real beauty. A perfect body, made for love. Desperate to leave her home and travel. Manipulative. Lina - Oldest sister. Rational, logical, cold, precise. Likes the unknown, the shadows, the unseen workings. Llalla - Tender. The perfect housewife. Simple

and practical. The comforter and provider. Aparicio - The father. Older. Used to be very dynamic and strong. Lost now. Confused. Worships Teresa Teresa - The deformed sister. Alternately described as an “angel” and a “monster”. Exists vocally through door. Animalistic and insectile voice. Actors are will be asked to read from the script. Please be prepared to move and improvise. For more information and reservations please call 216-987-5536. Parking is available in the B lot (enter via Pleasant Valley). All other lots will require permits.

Caregiver’s Kitchen

by Patty Knox

Few things are more cheering than a good home-cooked meal. A comforting aroma of a favorite recipe will perk up just about anyone of any age. And so it is that I have found my calling, to nudge the memory of my Alzheimer’s-suffering Dad with familiar flavors from my dearly departed Mom’s kitchen.

Dad doesn’t usually remember my name, and no longer remembers that I am related to him, but he does remember the foods he likes. And they better taste right, because he knows when I’ve changed something! Amazing, the way the human mind works, even while fighting dementia. Dad still has a healthy appetite at 83 (well, not exactly healthy in the true sense of the word; he’ll still reach for chocolate pudding or ice cream first if I make the mistake of serving dessert at the same time as the entrée). The taste buds that detect sweetness are the last to go, which is why the elderly are infamous for having a wicked sweet tooth. If your loved one is refusing to eat something savory, like mashed potatoes or vegetables, dip the tip of the spoon in apple sauce or pudding to give them incentive to swallow it. That little trick works like a charm.

Mom’s repertoire of family favorites wasn’t extensive, but it was distinctive. She taught me my first cooking lessons when I was very young, eager to help prepare our homestead meals. Even now, I can almost hear her voice coaching me through each step as I prepare Dad’s food. Although I follow her recipes exactly, they never taste quite as good as when she made them. This is a common problem among those of us who use a good recipe and are a bit disappointed that the results don’t quite produce the flavor of a dish exactly as we remember. There is an explanation for this phenomenon: the Greeks have a saying, the gist of which translates as, “It’s in the hands.” Mom had the touch. I can only approximate the flavor of love in her family meals. But my siblings assure me that my replication of her delicious meatloaf recipe, which I am about to share with you, comes really close to tasting like

Mom’s. Enough to bring a smile to Dad’s face, and perhaps a warm memory, which is good enough to make it worth the effort.

Dad’s two main activities at this stage are sleeping and eating. He is King of his Castle and will not be roused from his nap a moment too soon, but he always rallies when he smells Mom’s meatloaf fresh from the oven wafting in toward the throne, umm, I mean living room couch. I’d put it up against anyone’s meatloaf anywhere the world over, even for a Bobby Flay Throwdown. (Bring it on, Leprechaun!) Truly, this is sublime and full of flavor at the same time. Since Dad is at risk for choking, a common advanced Alzheimer’s symptom, I take the additional step of pureeing half of the meat mixture (you can use a food processor, a food mill or an electric stand or hand mixer) until it is completely smooth before putting it in a separate loaf pan or two mini-loaf pans just for him. Dad loves having his own served to him in those little white stoneware mini-loaf ramekins, and yes, he can polish off a whole one at one sitting! It’s probably equivalent to a quarter-pounder in volume. Then I pan up the coarser half separately, so that my siblings can enjoy the texture of Mom’s original recipe.

This recipe also serves triple duty: leftovers make great cold meatloaf lunch sandwiches! Also, if you divide the meat mixture and use half for a meatloaf and the other half for meatballs, you have a third meal. This is a big time saver. Roll the uncooked meatballs in more bread crumbs. Then, either freeze or pan fry and use with spaghetti or make a meatball sandwich in a hot dog bun, drizzled with grated mozzarella. Yum.

Serve the meatloaf with mashed potatoes, apple sauce and peas or green beans, and you have what my youngest sister calls ‘a typical Mom Meal.’ Enjoy, and God bless your caregiving heart.

Mom’s World-Class Meatloaf
1 medium onion, diced small
1 stalk celery, threads removed with vegetable peeler or knife, sliced thin

1 carrot, peeled and grated fine
1 egg, beaten
1 cup Italian seasoned bread crumbs (or plain bread crumbs with ½ teaspoon dried oregano, ¼ teaspoon garlic powder, pinch each of salt and pepper)
1 can tomato sauce or tomato paste (Mom always used Contadina brand)
2 pounds ground beef chuck
2 cups tomato ketchup, your favorite brand (reserve 1 cup for topping meatloaf)

DIRECTIONS: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix all ingredients together in big bowl with fork or potato masher. Take a heaping tablespoon of the mixture and roll between palms to form a ball. Add another egg if mixture seems too dry and won’t hold together; add more bread crumbs if mixture is too wet. Due to hamburger-to-fat ratio and moisture content of tomato sauce/paste, texture will vary. The texture is right when you can form a golf ball size meatball which stays together. Press into nonstick or shortening-greased loaf pans until level, filling no more than an inch from the top of the loaf pan. Finish with a thick layer of reserved cup of ketchup to completely cover. Bake large meatloaves in preheated oven for 45 minutes, or until meat inside is cooked to your liking (Small loaves or those cooked in Pyrex do cook faster.). Meat will look very

red due to amount of tomato sauce in recipe, so for the first time you make it, check meatloaf for doneness after initial 30 minutes in oven, cutting a sliver from the center and sample until meat is cooked to your preferred doneness, then note corresponding length of time. Add more ketchup to cover as needed, since top tends to crack and shrink as it cooks. Don’t skimp on the ketchup! The thick glaze that the ketchup creates is a thing of beauty. Remove and let rest 10 minutes to firm up for slicing. Enjoy.

Please email or surface mail any questions, comments, or favorite family recipes to Alzheimer Annie c/o The Parma Observer and you will receive a speedy personal reply. Thank you for reading.

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Opinion Matters

It's Later Than You Think

by James McCarthy

I was born in a country, which once prided itself on the extension of a promise to all of its citizens. I was to be a child of the hopes of this noble experiment called Democratic Capitalism. I was taught, from my earliest lessons, that if I held myself accountable to laws and codes of conduct, that I could succeed to great aims. A promise was held out, unto me, this child of sacred Democracy, that I could have all that I needed to live a life of sublime benefit. I was told, that in America, I could be whatsoever I wanted to be...could say whatsoever I wanted to say...was protected by the sacred covenant...the U.S. Constitution.

In a country, into which my Great Grandparent's had come to raise a family in,I grew up in the shadow of the accomplishments of those, who from nothing, achieved everything. From such proud stock of immigrants who had known prejudice, and had surpassed all obstacles, was spawned the Promise, which was to become my lifetime here and now. Such hopes I had, such faith I thought, truly such promise I held in the palms of my hands. My brothers and sisters and I, all eight of us, were raised in the age of plenty in America. Our family was typical of many in those times in Parma. Our father worked tirelessly to pay down the GI Bill home loan for our 1950's ranch. He worked hard to put food on our table, and keep clothes on our backs. Our mother raised us with as much patience as a mother of eight could have left, and instilled upon us all, a sense of personal economy. My bothers and sisters and I were raised

with a faith in the National Promise.

Mom and Dad are long gone now, victims, perhaps, of the abundant consumer society of those times... cigarette smokers 'til untimely deaths. Mom lived her days out in quiet Parma in her 50's ranch home, and was spared the knowledge of what time has brought since. Dad, as well, a lifelong newspaper man, missed the sadness of the headlines over the past decade since his death. The rest of us have moved on, through the chaos, through the progressive decline of the system around us. We have each made adjustments to the changing realm of opportunities available to us, my brothers and sisters and I. Each of us, and the rest of all of us, in Parma, and anywhere USA, have made sacrifices in order to survive the loss of the Promise.

Morning finds us, asking of ourselves, where has gone the empire of our inheritance? What has become of our American dream...the promise of not only surviving, but exceeding our dreams to be? Driving past the closed up businesses, looking out across the neglected fields our forefather's sowed, sharing the sadness of our neighbors unemployed, we ask, where now lie the Promise? Into what body shall we place our hopes...our Government, our Banks, our Churches?

Turn on the television, open a newspaper, turn on the radio, chase the facts online, read a book or magazine article...none can hide from the facts.We are living in a time and place, where the sources of our news of the world around us, are jaded, and

biased, and baiting us to surrender our discerning guard against falsehood. Our media push the propaganda of a crooked politic upon us, with un-equal prejudice against the rights of the People to hear the truths of their time. The axe is swung, with malice towards personal liberty, and the spoken are silenced, and the histories, thus rewritten. All is not well here. It is later than anyone thinks it is.

America, in 2009, is hemorrhaging resources, and at a time when when the Nation can least afford to. The so-called War on Terror, a commercially successful cash-cow, is financed entirely on credit from foreign nations. The epic collapse of the Nations housing market, has delivered to date, one in four home loans into Bank foreclosure, nationwide. International financial cartels have underwritten most of the major consumer credit activities of the Nation. The duly elected Government chooses to advance the myth, that despite all of this, prosperity is just around the corner...this seems disturbingly familiar. The classic conflict of interest, embodied by the elected representation of the People, threatens to prohibit the possibility of a political solution to the financial insolvency of the Nation. Discussions abound, about everything except the actual matter of substance...key questions go unanswered. The whole pretense is played out, as a non-stop symphony of propaganda, designed to dissuade any, and all questions to the point. The Social Contract, which the elected Government has with the citizens of this Nation, is not being maintained at this time.

It has been in the interest of this Government, that the majority of the American citizens, lose faith in the political process as a body for change, and withdraw from the practice of political participation altogether. The partisan subterfuge, the seeming lack of platform consensus, all advance an overall affect upon the electorate. A critical point is reached within the dynamic, when there is a reduction of resistance by the People, to the unchecked outgrowth of Government influence and social control. A tipping point is reached. Far too often, the suppression of the constitutional rights of the free citizenry of the Nation, has come, we are told, as an expense of National Security. Our Government has created a perpetual climate of fear, in which, the rights of the People have been diminished, and the will of the People distracted. In concert with this diversion, the interests of private Enterprise, are being served before, and at the expense of the needs, and rights of the People. The wills of the Corporation have superseded the rights of the People.

We must look to ourselves...for a solution. We the People, have enabled the commission of these crimes against Democracy, by our collective in action.

We the People, too often, have failed to questioned Authority in it's service to the Nation. We have allowed the lobbying of the Legislature by private Enterprise and special interest, to the detriment of the health of our system of governance. Those of us alive now, have failed to check the power of our duly elected representation. We have become complacent, and assumed too much, as relates to our faith in the nobility of men. Barely half of us vote... and those who do, have too often, taken as fact, the word of organized media propaganda, onto which to base their opinions. We have allowed our elected Government to choose its' own course in policy making, and we have forsaken the social health of our Nation in doing so. Our system of Democracy has become drunk on Market Capitalism, allowing the access of private business interests to our law making bodies,and to the extent, that Corporations have given themselves the rights to vote.

A Government of the Corporation, by the Corporation, for the Corporation, has delivered a nation of debt, a nation of spies, a nation of liars, a nation of thieves. As citizens, our rights to privacy, our rights of personal security, our rights to freedom and expression of speech have been stolen,or replaced by broader interpretation...along with the dream of actually earning a respectable living. Our wages are down, our businesses moving abroad, or closing down, our communications with one another recorded and monitored. Our homes are being taken by foreclosure, and re-sold by Government owned or operated Banks. We the People, are under attack from within. Can any of us be certain, that we really know what time it is?

Perhaps our time has come, to question the world around us very seriously. Maybe the People of this Nation, could ask themselves, if they truly feel represented by this Party, or that Party. Maybe, a personal line in the sand must be drawn, for the sake of our future, and the memory of our past. Maybe... just maybe, everyone needs to take a good long look at the clock upon the wall. It's later than you think.

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