

PARMA Observer

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Volume 2 • Issue 1 • January

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What A Difference A Word Makes

by Daniel P. McCarthy

Like most people, I suppose, attending City Council meetings has never really been all that high on my list of priorities, that is, until now. I attended the last council meeting of 2009, and I must say, it was quite an awakening for me. I soon came to the realization that managing a city the size of Parma is a difficult task, to say the least. Also apparent to me is that 2009 was an especially challenging year, for what should be obvious reasons. We are also not alone, as just about every city in our region has had to deal with tremendous adversity which has forced painful decisions to be made.

Shrinking tax revenue, increased unemployment, a steady stream of disappointing news-let's face it, there are not many reasons to feel all that happy these days, and it is easy for elected officials to resort to tunnel vision and reach for expedient solutions, but that is not what happened here. This is precisely why the citizens of Parma should stop and take notice of the solutions chosen by our public servants in response to this challenge to our financial integrity.

When it became apparent that here would be a budget deficit and that measures would be required in

order to close the gap, our city employees acted in a way that should make us all proud; instead of taking the "every man for himself" approach, employees chose to act in uni-

son and agreed to take unpaid furlough days throughout the year in order to stem the deficit, which meant that everyone sacrificed a little so that a few would not have to

bear the full brunt of the cost of balancing the budget by facing a layoff. I should say almost everyone, because the single exception was that the eleven members of the union which

represents the records unit of the Police Department voted 6 to 5 to reject the furlough concessions, which meant that the city was forced to lay off two people from that unit, the only layoffs that happened in Parma. Think about it; one

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Rep. DeGeeter Announces Scholarships Available

by Timothy DeGeeter

Rep DeGeeter (D-Parma) is encouraging high school seniors within the 15th District to apply for over 260 scholarships that are available and worth nearly \$1 million in tuition assistance. The scholarships are presented by the Ohio Association of Career Colleges and Schools as part of their 2009-2010 Legislative Scholarship Program. "With today's high cost of education, these private scholarships offer an excellent opportunity for students to attend career colleges who otherwise may not have had that option," Rep. DeGeeter said. Career colleges and schools fund the program, and no state funds are used. As a part of the program, each applicant must obtain the signature of a member of the Ohio House of Representatives or the Ohio Senate on the Legislative Nomination Form. The scholarships seek to

provide students with the education and training necessary to obtain jobs in a business or industry job within the state.

Excellent opportunities for post-secondary training are available in the following fields: Accounting, Business,

hood Development, Medical Assisting, Paralegal, Technology, and more.

These scholarships are available to high school seniors graduating from any Ohio high school in June 2010. Students do not have to dem-

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Edward FitzGerald First To Announce Intentions Of Running for New County Executive Position

by Jim O'Bryan

This morning the Mayor of Lakewood, Ohio announced his intentions to run for the new County Executive position. Here in a Observer exclusive is his speech...

Good morning, and thank you for attending.

It's always good to begin an effort like this with a sense of history, and a sense of place.

My great-grandfather moved to this neighborhood from Ireland 130 years ago, and started a small grocery store just down the road from here.

This county has been good to my family ever since that time. I love the Cleveland area, and I'm committed to it, and my wife Shannon and I decided to raise our four children here.

But we have to be honest about what this county is facing. We used to be one of the economic drivers of not just the state but the entire country. We were known all over the world as a center of innovation and economic progress. That's why so many of our families came here in the first place.

But at some point in the

20th century, we began to rest on our laurels. The world economy began to move in new directions, but we didn't. We played it safe, and we lost.

And so, when America has faced economic downturns, they have hit us the hardest, and when recovery came, it reached us last.

We know what the ramifications have been. Unemployment, underemployment, residents and businesses fleeing to other regions, one

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Parma Website Continues Growth In User Popularity

by Jack Marshall

Data provided by Aztek, the City of Parma's website provider, shows a continuing growth in user visits to the site by both residents and those living outside the area. The Picture Gallery remains the most popular link at www.cityofparma-oh.gov.

"We quickly discovered our website is the quickest and best platform for residents to stay informed," said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. "Our capability for getting news and information out in a hurry is

there for the taking, and we're taking advantage of it on a daily basis."

Aztek reports the City of Parma website had more than 260,000 visits in 2009. The monthly average was nearly 22,000; daily visits numbered more than 700; average time spent on the website was just over two minutes.

According to Aztek, the volume represents one of the highest city website user rates

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Lakewood's Mayor Edward FitzGerald stand with his family at his announcement.

Parma Observer

Mind Yoga Own Business!

by Lucy McKernan

When my journey into yoga began five or six years ago, a distinct shift occurred in my awareness. Minding my own business meant starting from within. Only then was I able to make a difference on the outside. This is one of the benefits of mediation, or mindfulness.

After those early practices, I'd come home and everything around me seemed to come to life. Often, like a wondrous child, I'd stop dead in my tracks, transfixed at the starry sky. Or my husband and I would find an injured animal and, in the delicate, painstaking process of helping it back to its own wild journey, I, too, would become wounded and, alternately, healed. Running from pain is not an option. If animals don't, neither should I.

For me, yogic transformation means that whatever first manifests in the heart and mind later (and sometimes immediately) manifests in the body. Unfortunately, too many yoga students are impatient for a quick fix. Many don't stick around past the first beginners class or two to realize the more holistic, inside/outside, results. Sometimes, they are very afraid of what they might find within. A sense of duty? Connection to all of life? Com-

passion? These are the same people that have conversations with themselves when others attempt to communicate with them.

Based on such inside/outside manifestation, awareness invariably extends out to ALL living, sentient beings. Perhaps it's a psychic evolution. If so, I believe that all other living creatures got there first.

Along these lines, every step of my journey, every "aha!" moment -- without exception -- has involved some encounter with an injured, imperiled or exploited/abused animal, bird or other creature.

My yoga biz is named "Delicious Breath." The moniker came to me after numerous experiences on the mat, where I'd experience surges of, well, delicious breath. Greater understanding yielded this insight: Deeper, more diaphragmatic breathing increases nitric oxide levels.

In their book, "You: Staying Young," Drs. Roizen and Oz claim, "Meditation functionally serves to physiologically cut the vagus [nerve], so it disrupts the feedback loop of bronchial constriction, allowing you to breathe easier." Roizen and Oz add, "Taking deep breaths helps your lungs go from 97 percent saturation of oxy-

gen to 100 percent . . . and that little 3 percent can sometimes make a difference in how you feel."

When feeling this way, there is an uncanny sense of not needing anything else on the outside. (Did you know that there is a small sect of "Breatharians" who claim to live on virtually nothing but breath?) Hence, the ability to practice the yoga tenet "non-stealing," but another great yoga principle, "ahimsa," which translates to non-injury, or non-violence. In practicing ahimsa, we become more mindful of all other living creatures. Literally, breath -- which is the spiritual life force coursing through our bodies -- translates to higher consciousness and better living. In this state, we see that, though the world may be our legacy, we have no business acting entitled to it, especially when it comes to the resources, rights and freedoms to which all other living creatures ARE entitled. Is there really any question about this anymore? If we are at the top of the food chain, we are conversely -- and most pathetically -- at the bottom of the barrel when it comes to rights of entitlement on this planet.

The awareness and mindfulness afforded by practicing yoga brought me to a most unexpected, yet delightful conundrum.

Recently, my involvement in the Ohio chapter of the League of Humane Voters (LOHV/Ohio) has taken on some unexpected twists and turns. Broadview Heights and Parma are considering ordinances for killing deer (officially in Broadview Heights, city council votes on a bow

hunting ordinance February 16 and, at least unofficially, in Parma, where the mayor purportedly is pushing the issue), I happen to teach yoga to Broadview Heights residents, which has put me smack dab in the middle of what appears to be a quandary but is, in fact, the opportunity to practice ahimsa on a whole new level.

What do we do when presented with disquieting conflicts? Do we force ourselves on the situation? Try to control it? Simply step aside and allow others to be wrong, hurtful, destructive and even lethal towards those we love? Hardly. No one said the "yoga way" means being passive or a doormat. It means first seeing something wrong, and then finding novel, exemplary, spiritually sound ways to be used as an instrument of love and ahimsa. Yeah, I often lose my cool. Then I go back to the mat, where our 15-pound cat Sylvester always seems to climb on me and disrupt whatever asana (yoga pose) he finds me. What a kick!

Incidentally, note that virtually every yoga asana takes its name from an animal, such as "down dog," or "eagle" or "angry cat." Lately, I've been feeling a lot more like the last of these, especially in regards to mean-spirited people who want to kill the deer. That's okay; I'm practicing ahimsa with myself.

As T.S. Eliot wrote, "The end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time." What will you do to learn yoga for the first time, or to realize yourself again? What will you do to practice ahimsa?



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Asset Corner #2

by Gene Lovasy

Developmental Assets – 40 individual assets in 8 Categories....

January’s Asset Category:
Positive Identity – Young people need a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth and promise. The more a child has a sense of these attributes the more likely it is that she or he will grow up healthy.

POSITIVE IDENTITY ASSETS INCLUDE:

- #37. Personal Power - Kids feel that they have control over many of the things that happen to them
- #38. Self Esteem – Kids feel good about themselves
- #39. Sense of Purpose – Kids believe that their life has a purpose.
- #40. Positive View of Personal Future – Kids are optimistic about their own future.

You are what you believe
Values shape young people’s relationships, behaviors, choices, and sense of who they are. Although positive values help young people avoid risky behavior, they also help guide their day-to-day actions and interactions. Thus, values inspire, not just prohibit. Young people who have positive values are more likely to listen to their conscience, help others, be independent, tell right from wrong, and feel happy. Ultimately, positive values help young people make their own decisions rather than imitate friends or follow trends. Positive Values is one of eight asset categories that make up 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 the more young people develop positive values that guide their behavior, the more likely they are to grow up healthy. Search Institute has identified six assets in the Positive Values category that are crucial for helping young people succeed: Caring, Equality and Social Justice, Integrity, Honesty, Responsibility, and Restraint.

Tips for building these assets:
Clarifying values is critical as young people explore who they are and who they want to be. You can’t choose young people’s values for them, but you can help shape the values they choose by talking about and modeling values important to you. Present young people with consistent messages about the values you wish to instill.

Also try this:
In your home and family: Make a list of the 10 values most important to you and your family. Find ways to help your child understand, demonstrate, and internalize these values.

In your neighborhood and community: Young people learn by observing the adults around them. Think about how you act. Actions reveal true values, so strive to model the behavior you want young people to

imitate.
In your school or youth program: Create a list of shared values with students or group members. Talk about what it takes to uphold these values.
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.

Working on Sustainability Issues In Parma: A Student’s Perspective

by Emily Bryant

On Monday, December 14th, my classmates and I stood before Parma City Council to witness five proposed environmental ordinances and policies go through their first council reading. These legislation’s included ordinances that would allow and provide guidelines for vegetative roofs, rain barrels, mix-used development, as well as bicycling in business districts, and a policy to promote recycling in all municipal buildings. Four other Baldwin-Wallace senior sustainability majors and I began working with the city of Parma at the end of August as the capstone of our major to help draft ordinances in order to assist Parma in becoming a more sustainable city. We each focused on a subdivision of sustainability within the city: recycling, biodiversity and water, land use, buildings, and transportation. We each chose which topic we felt the greatest aptitude for, and so I began researching topics of biodiversity and water usage in Parma. In doing so, I found that a rain barrel ordinance would be of great benefit to the city, and began collecting resources in order to draft an ordinance. A rain barrel is a catch basin used to collect rain water from a home’s downspout. This water is then stored until an individual drains it, most commonly to water their garden or lawn. Connectors between the downspout and the rain barrel allow for excess water to continue its initial journey to the storm drain once the barrel has been filled. In addition to reducing the amount of water citizens would have to use, rain barrels also decrease the amount of water going to treatment plants. A critical component of the sustainability major at Baldwin-Wallace is to teach students how to become “change agents”, or catalysts for the progression of environmental change. Above all other issues of biodiversity and water conservation in Parma, I believed a rain barrel ordi-



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

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nance would be the most critical to focus on because it would empower the citizens of Parma to make changes of their own. It would give people the ability to conserve water, a precious and vital resource that many places globally have a deficiency of. As a student studying the current and future state of the environment and global resources, I know how easy it can be to get overwhelmed by the enormity of environmental issues and how helpless and overwhelmed one can feel when it comes to taking personal action. I also believe that everyone can contribute in order to make positive changes in helping to solve these problems. In participating in this project with Parma, I learned that perhaps the greatest contribution I can make is one that will supply others with the means necessary in order to make a change. When many people commit to making a little bit of difference, great feats can be accomplished. In order to achieve our goals, we worked on our ordinances until the beginning of December, meeting at Parma City Hall about one day a week in order to get input on our progress. To draft my particular ordinance, I studied rain barrel ordinances and

standards in neighboring cities and states to make the most comprehensive legislation. Other cities have ordinances to permit rain barrels, but very few state specifications pertaining to size, color, maintenance, location, etc. All of these standards will be included in Parma City’s ordinance in order to make rain barrel installation for its citizens as easy and comprehensive as possible. In reflecting on my work with Parma, I think one of the most valuable lessons I learned was that I have a voice in city government. Before this project, I never knew that an ordinary citizen could draft an ordinance. It was also very rewarding to have such positive encouragement from Parma, and to realize that there is a lot of support within the government for individuals trying to aid in environmental initiatives.

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Tr-City Spirit

Holiday Spirit Strong at Board of Education

by Dr. Christina Dinklocker

The holiday spirit graced the December meeting of the Parma City School District's Board of Education. The theme for the evening was the Gingerbread Express as Pearl Road youngsters dressed in aprons and displays an array of baking sheets and gingerbread baskets created by the Normandy Culinary Arts students of Mrs. Piovarchy and Mr. Johnson. After the Board meeting, the Board convened for a dinner treat as hosted by Superintendent Zatik, Deputy Superintendent Dinklocker and Treasurer Bruce Basalla and Director of Operations, Joe Gouker.

The Gingerbread Express theme continued with guests stopping by every 20 minutes to offer words of appreciation and holiday cheer. Representing Community Business Schools were Phil Kish of

Kish Office Products and Gene Lovasy of the Parma Evening Kiwanis. Dean DePiero and Bill Mason both stopped to express their thanks to the Board and offer good wishes. The PTA under the leadership of President Dianna

Kall, presented their best regards through art work and special wishes. A most joyous evening was had by all!

Below, Patrick DePace, Vice President Rosemary Gulick, Superintendent Zatik celebrate the season with Pearl Road youngsters.



Mayor Dean DePiero presents certificates of recognition and appreciation to Patrick DePace and Cyndee Bratz.



Patrick DePace, Vice President Rosemary Gulick, Superintendent Zatik, President Cyndee Bratz, Kathy Petro, Karen Dendorfer line up with the little bakers from Pearl Road Elementary School.



Pearl Road youngsters present gingerbread cookie baskets to the Board as they sing of Christmas cheer. The cookie baskets were made by the culinary students at Normandy High School.

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Observer's Perspective

Top 10 Reasons To Work With A Promotional Consultant

by Bill DeMarco

When it comes to marketing, there are many advertising vehicles that can be used to get your message out. We have the traditional media outlets like TV and radio, which can be expensive, the newsprint and direct marketing (US mail and email). And there is promotional product advertising which can be great advertising media outlet that can produce results and be economical. Because the promotional products are useful and appreciated by the recipients, they are retained and used, thus repeating the imprinted message many times without added cost to the advertiser. In having a very successful marketing campaign you should combine the traditional advertising media like newsprint and direct marketing with promotional advertising. To be very effective and save costs you should use a professional promotional consultant. Here are the top 10 reasons you should work with a promotional consultant.

REASON #1: Consultants are the experts in their field. When you're sick, you want a doctor who has the specialization and training to help you. Promotional consultants belonging to the industry organizations like Promotional Products Association International and Advertising Specialty Institute meet the highest qualification standards in the industry and display "The Mark of a Professional." There's no need to spend all your time on the Internet or searching through catalogs. Your promotional products consultant will come to you—like a doctor who makes house calls!

REASON #2: Good consultants go beyond just selling products. Successful promotional campaigns don't happen by chance. To realize goals, promotional products programs must be carefully planned, taking into consideration the audience, budget and, of course, the ultimate result to be gained. While it's true that you can buy a product anywhere, an experienced consultant can help you solve problems, plan a program and get results.

REASON #3: Professional consultants have access to vast product research resources, including an extensive database which contains more than 500,000 products. Yes, you can find a mug online, but a consultant can find hundreds of mugs, in a multitude of colors, sizes, shapes, materials, designs, etc. Have you saved money if you get the mugs and they are not the right color? Is it worth the extra savings if you get the mugs and they are so breakable due to inferior materials that they are virtually unusable?

REASON #4: Consultants are in tune with the trends, including hot items and the newest products and processes. A qualified consultant can add creativity, innovation and imagination to your overall program to achieve your goals. Many online services show you the products they want to sell; a quali-

fied consultant will listen to what you want and help you find the right product for your needs. And a consultant can provide tangible samples that appeal to your senses: taste, touch and feel!

REASON #5: Your consultant is more than just a salesperson. Chances are you will buy promotional products more than once in your life. Once a company uses a consultant, that relationship often continues for years—and even decades. Your promotional products consultant is someone with whom you have worked someone you know and someone you trust. In many cases, companies use the consultant as part of the creative team, even including him or her in marketing meetings.

REASON #6: Personalized service is the role of a consultant. When going online, your selection is what the internet company determines to make available. When you work with a consultant, your selection is determined by your needs and goals, enhanced by the experience, creativity and recommendations of that consultant who has your best interests at heart. Online, you're a faceless, nameless buyer. With a consultant, you're a client with your own personal shopper, receiving service

along with ideas and prices. When you order online, who monitors your order and your deadline? Your consultant has your interests in mind. Seldom do you receive that kind of personalized, "hand-holding" customer service from an unknown online company.

REASON #7: Industry consultants can offer experienced advice on how (and IF) to imprint items. You may have found the perfect key chain, but will your logo imprint on it? Will it be recognizable? Some things don't work, or there might be something else that will work better. A qualified promotional products consultant can explain to you the best printing process for your program, your imprint and the product you've chosen.

REASON #8: Trained consultants can save you money in the long run. Many times, a price you see in a generic catalog or on the internet does not cover many "hidden" costs involved—set up, imprint duplication, shipping, etc. A consultant can help you avoid unexpected and unbudgeted costs by quoting the total price up-front.

REASON #9: Consultants will work with you to get your artwork imprinted properly. Say you want your company's logo embroidered on a golf

shirt. How do you ensure it will be done properly, and with the correct colors? A trained consultant can work with you to insure accurate transfer of your artwork, including correct fonts, size, spacing and many other important factors. And your consultant's commitment to quality customer service will guarantee your satisfaction with the finished product.

REASON #10: Professional promotional products consultants can assist you in developing a workable distribution plan for your products. Distribution of a promotional product is as important as the item itself. Research shows that a carefully executed distribution plan significantly increases the effectiveness of promotional products. But what if the cost of distributing your product is more than the product and more than your expected ROI (return on investment)? A consultant can help you avoid unexpected problems like this.

Information provide by Promotional Products Association International (www.ppai.com). Let's support our local businesses. Send questions or comments to:

Bill DeMarco, 440-223-2580 or
bill@rememberedexpressions.com

Parma City Schools And Holy Trinity Orthodox Church Teamed Up To Bring Christmas Spirit To Our Community



Santa look-alike John Dinklocker from the Parma Area Morning Kiwanis Club shares Rudolph antlers with a new little friend.

by Dr. Christina Dinklocker

The Parma City Schools' area community collaborative and Holy Trinity Orthodox Church partnered on December 19th to bring a delightful evening of celebration to area families. Parishioners, Kiwanis members, student volunteers from Normandy and Padua High Schools and the orchestra from Valley Forge all worked together to create a family Christmas party. After a wonderful chicken dinner, the families listened to a Christmas story as read by Parma Public Librarian Linda Staskus. A holiday movie was enjoyed by all as was a Christmas craft. All the guests left with a Christmas gift, good cheer and the true spirit of Christmas!

Community Events

Book Release Party

by Robert Rua

The public is invited to Cuyahoga County Public Library's Parma-South Branch (7335 Ridge Road) on Thursday, January 14th at 6:30 p.m. to meet local author Rhonda Stapleton and celebrate the launch of *Stupid Cupid*, the first book in her new teen fiction series published by Simon Pulse, an imprint of Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers. Join us for a fun and festive party with contests, give-a-ways and refreshments. Books will be available for purchase and autographs courtesy of Joseph-Beth Booksellers. To register, call 440.885.5362 or visit www.cuyahogalibrary.org.

Stupid Cupid tells the tale of Felicity Walker. Felicity believes in true love. That's why she applies for a gig at the matchmaking company Cupid's Hollow. But when Felicity gets the job, she learns that she isn't just a matchmaker – she's a cupid! Armed with a hot pink, tricked-out

PDA infused with the latest in cupid magic (love arrows shot through email), Felicity works to meet her quota of successful matches. But when she bends the rules of cupid-ity by matching her best friend Maya with three different boys at once,



disaster strikes. Felicity needs to come up with a plan to set it all right, pronto, before she gets fired – and

before Maya ends up with her heart split in three.

The second book in the *Stupid Cupid* series, *Flirting with Disaster*, is scheduled for release in March 2010, to be followed by a third book, *Pucker Up*, scheduled for release in May 2010. Find out more about Rhonda and *Stupid Cupid* at <http://www.rhondastapleton.com/>. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Parma Libraries, Rhonda Stapleton and Joseph-Beth Booksellers.



Author Rhonda Stapleton

Holidays In July

by Ruth Teper

Big plans are underway for the American Cancer Society's Parma Area Relay for Life Planning Committee which invites all members of the public to the *2010 Parma Area Relay for Life Kickoff Event* which will take place on Wednesday, March 3, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at Cuyahoga Community College, Western Campus, 11000 Pleasant Valley

Road, Parma, Ohio. Anyone interested in forming or joining a team is invited to the kickoff. This year's theme is "Holidays". The intention will be to create a holiday atmosphere in the middle of July in which all community members - those involved in Relay and those who are not - may come and enjoy the festivities. For more information please contact Councilman Sean Brennan at 440-884-0489, e-mail councilmanbrennan@sbcglobal.net or Susanne Klingenberg at 216-987-5582, e-mail Susanne.Klingenberg@tri-c.edu. Relay for Life has grown to become Parma's largest fund-raising event and one of the premier community events of the summer, raising close to a million dollars over the past six years to assist those diagnosed with cancer, cancer survivors, as well as all aspects of research. This year's Relay for Life will take place at Cuyahoga Community College, Western Campus, 11000 Pleasant Valley Road, Parma, Ohio from Friday, July 23, 1:00 p.m. through Saturday, July 24, 7:00 a.m.

Local Businesses and Organizations Step Up To Help Local Families This Holiday Season

by Bryan Stanton

The PCSD Parma Area Family Collaborative would like to thank the many local businesses and other local organizations that helped work with us to provide children in our area with Christmas presents. Kaiser Permanente, Parma Olive Garden, Cleveland ENT Hearing Center, Parma Hts., Kiwanis, Caring Tree Senior Care, Unity Catholic Credit Union, Charter One, Parma Snow Rd Library, Mt. Alverna, UAW Local 1005, Ridgewood YMCA, Bethel Temple, Parma Movers & Lincoln Storage, Parma Fraternal Order of Eagles, Hillside Middle School SADD, Shiloh Middle School PTA, Pleasant Valley PTA, John Glenn PTA, and Parma Pre-School PTA all went above and beyond to help and make sure the kids in our community were able to enjoy their Christmas. In addition, many residents in the community adopted one or more families needing holiday assistance. The kids and families were very grateful for the wonderful gifts. Thank You again for your generosity and for coming together as a community during this time of need.

If you are interested in adopting a family next holiday season or know somebody that may be interested in

adopting a family please email Lynn Stutzman at stutzmanl@parmacityschools.org.

Grace's Grill Holds Benefit To Help Newborns

by Patti Bertschler

Patrons of Grace's Grill can satisfy their hunger and help women and their newborns the week of January 25 through 31. Voted #1 on Fox 8 Hot List for 2008 and 2009, Grace's Grill is sponsoring a benefit for Womankind Prenatal Care Center. "I wanted to do something special for this community organization to celebrate its 35th

anniversary year," says Grace's Grill owner Grace Thomas. "Our patrons are so supportive of us, and I thought this would be a great way to pay it forward. I learned about Womankind years ago attending Sacred Heart Church and now St. Matthias Church in Parma."

A percentage of all meal sales that week will be donated to the Garfield Heights not-for-profit organization which offers free prenatal care and other services to women and infants. For more information or for that week's menu specials, visit www.gracesgrill.com or call (440) 842-2250.

Rep. DeGeeter Announces Scholarships Available

continued from page 1

onstrate financial need, but they must have a "C" average or better. In the past, a student from Normandy High School was nominated for the Criminal Justice Scholarship and a student from Parma High School won \$5,000 for the Computer Network System Scholarship at the ITT Technical Institute in Strongsville, Ohio. Scholarships may cover one-half tuition, or a specific dollar amount. Students from area high schools are encouraged to learn more about the scholarship program by visiting www.ohiocareercolleges.org or contact our Columbus office for an application at (614) 466-3485. The deadline for the scholarships is April 1, 2010.



BACKS

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Holiday Reflections

Local Church Provides Christmas to Families In Our Community

by Bryan Stanton

The Parma City School District Parma Area Family Collaborative and numerous community partners teamed up this holiday season to provide local families with a night of Holiday Festivities. On December 18, 2009 135 adults and children from Parma, Parma Hts., and Seven Hills were invite to a Holiday Dinner at Holy Trinity Orthodox Church on Broadview Rd. This night was made possible from a County Grant and dedicated volunteers.

The evening began with the families making no-sew pillows that they were able to take home and enjoy. Dinner was then served by the youth and adult volunteers. The highlight was the Valley Forge High School Orchestra playing a variety of holiday music. Children and parents enjoyed the live music performance. The Valley Forge Orchestra graciously volunteered their

time. Linda Staskus, from the Cuyahoga Public Library Parma South branch narrated a story to the families. The night ended with the showing of Merry Madagascar. On their way home each family was given a holiday basket filled with everything needed for the perfect holi-



Families enjoying dinner together

day meal. The baskets were provided by the Parma Area Morning Kiwanis.

This event was truly a community effort. The Parma City School District did a wonderful job providing volunteers. Superintendent Dr. Sarah Zatik and the Deputy Superintendent Dr.

Christina Dinklocker were kind enough to attend the event and help welcome and serve the families. There were many volunteers from Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, the Kiwanis Clubs of Parma/Parma Hts., Parma Council of PTA's, and the Parma City School District to make this event fun for all. Members from the MyCom Youth Council, the Parma City Schools Key Clubs and students from Padua High School were all on hand to help make the night memorable for the families. Paper products for the families were donated by the Parma Council of PTA's. The Parma Council of PTA's Past Gavelers were able to make a generous monetary donation. Polaris Career Center donated gift certificates for haircuts and the Mercury Summer Stock Theatre was kind enough to donate tickets to the Winter Wonderland Festival. THANK YOU to everyone involved making this night memorable for our families!!!

What Happens in Parma Stays in Parma

by Brian O'Donnell

What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. We have all seen the commercials and billboards extolling the secret, seductive, sexy allure that is Sin City. Perhaps you are one of the millions who have made the trip to southern Nevada to see firsthand this land of dreams and decadence. You felt the electricity running through your veins as the airplane started to descend. That first glimpse of the Las Vegas strip bathed in neon and littered with hopes of hitting that big jackpot. This town is different. You feel it the moment you leave the airplane, carry on bags in tow. You can hear the bells and buzzers and clanking of the slot machines before you even enter the terminal. You have the next two or three days to live it up, to throw caution to the wind, to live like a Hollywood movie star. But these excursions never seem to last long enough and soon you are back at the airport. You walk past the same slot machines that greeted you only days earlier. This time there is no electricity surging through your veins. Your bankroll has been depleted. Stomach upset from overeating and maybe a slight hangover from the free drinks. Then someone says it (or perhaps you just think) "Wouldn't it be great to live here!" You board the plane and settle in for the four hour flight back to Ohio.

I thought to myself many times, after an action packed weekend getaway to fabulous Las Vegas, how great it would be to live there in the gambling mecca of North America. Now that I have spent three years here in

the desert I am not sure that was the right thing to wish for. There is plenty to do here. The shows, the food, the shows, the gambling, the buffets, the shows, the blackjack, the restaurants, the slot machines, the shows....are you starting to get the picture? Las Vegas works as a tourist destination because you never feel like you saw enough in your short three or four day stay. Therefore you want to come back. You do come back. The reality is that you can see all the strip has to offer in one day, after that you just try out the different flavors. Much like the difference between enjoying a new Ben and Jerry's ice cream flavor every other weekend as opposed to eating ice cream for breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day.

Now in all fairness there are a few advantages to living in Las Vegas. I have to acknowledge the desert landscape. Living here affords one the opportunity to explore some amazing terrain. Red Rock Canyon offers a wonderful experience that should not be overlooked when visiting. Do yourself a favor while at the same time doing your bankroll a favor, and get up from the blackjack table, rent a car. and take a drive to this scenic getaway. Any casino employee could give you directions and it is only twenty minutes from the strip. Living here also allows for some nice one tank trips. Drives to the Grand Canyon, or several destinations in Utah provide some of the most awesome scenery a person could ever encounter. Notice, however, that in these cases you are leaving Las Vegas. This is the only place that I have ever

lived where when you ask a local what is there to do here in your town? The answer involves leaving town!

This bring me back to Parma. Who would choose to live in Parma over Las Vegas? Who would choose grass over sand? Who would choose four seasons over four levels of heat? Who would choose lush Metroparks and tree lined streets over neon and glass? Who would choose community and neighbors over pit bosses and card dealers? And that, my dear readers, is the real difference. The one glaring omission from this place called Vegas. There is no real connection between the city and the people. Almost every-

one is a transplant with no real roots, no real ties. Parma was my city. Parma is family. Parma is community. I was a member of a special society. A society where people knew each other. The neighborhood was safe haven providing a security blanket for the individual within the group. Parma will welcome me back with open arms if my job ever leads me back east. I know this to be true because that is the character of the citizens of Parma.

What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas. And it should. What happens in Parma is community. Let us all do our part to make sure that the feeling of community stays in Parma.

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Community Matters

Is Your Cared - For A Choke Risk?

by Patty Knox

Nothing beats the wintertime blues like something bursting with fresh, sunshiny flavor. Nutrition is at its peak in unprocessed produce. But the wonderful world of garden fruits and vegetables can get treacherous for the elderly, especially dementia patients who may be aspirating (that feeling of “down the wrong pipe” which can trap food particles or liquids in the lungs and lead to a serious infection), or who forget to chew thoroughly and try to swallow too much at once. Some, like my Dad, don’t like to chew much anymore, and are a challenge to feed. He likes soft food.

Soft food, however, doesn’t have to be boiled into oblivion. It’s no wonder that institutionalized folks complain about the food they are served. Industrial-size cans are opened of mushy vegetables to feed those on soft diets, often pureed into baby-food consistency for those who are choke risk patients. Some can only use a straw, and therefore their food has to be liquefied as much as possible. One would think this would make feeding easier. But the opposite is true: the thinner the liquid, the more likely they are to choke on it. Make sure your doctor knows the symptoms your cared-for person is experiencing. As I am not a doctor, I cannot offer medical advice, nor should you attempt to diagnose your loved one from the limited amount of information here. My advice is strictly limited to food preparation.

You need to know how to thicken beverages or prepare soups that your cared-for will enjoy with minimum risk of choking. There are four consistencies of liquid: water, nectar, honey, and pudding. Each successive stage, as you have doubtless surmised, is thicker than the previous one. An excellent product called Thick-It is available in drug stores and some grocery stores. Cornstarch may also be used, and is used in some nursing homes, although it needs to be whisked or blended and strained through a sieve to make sure there are no lumps. You may thicken a liquid to the safest consistency for your loved one,

City of Parma

by Jane Regas

The City of Parma Recreation Department will be holding Youth Soccer Registration on the following dates:

- Saturday, January 30th
10:00a.m. -12:00noon
 - Wednesday, February 3rd
6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m.
 - Saturday, February 6th
10:00a.m. - 12:00noon
- All registrations will be held at the Recreation Department, Parma-town Mall - 7912 Day Drive. Please visit the City of Parma website@www.cityofparma-oh.gov for additional information and registration forms or call 440-885-8144.

even water, coffee, tea or juice. And yes, I recommend you try it first on a beverage that you normally drink to see and taste how it works. It was fun for me to turn my coffee into pudding! There is no real difference in taste, and I have used both Thick-It or cornstarch. They both work. Think JELL-O or Knox Gelatin, only a bit softer. You may use sugar, honey, or artificial sweeteners, as the doctor has ordered. Nutrition gets a boost from the fresh produce, and the taste buds get a treat.

A refreshing liquid breakfast or snack full of vitamins is a fruit smoothie. Alton Brown, Food Network chef from Good Eats, recommends equal parts soy milk, fruit juice (preferably purple, like grape, pomegranate or acai, for nutritional reasons), banana and four fruits blended together for a healthy and filling meal. To this I would add, again, to be sure to strain through a metal sieve so that your loved one doesn’t have an opportunity to choke on seeds or pulp. This feeds the sweet tooth in a healthy way. Frozen fruit can be used, thawed in the refrigerator overnight. (If you want to save ripe bananas, don’t forget to peel and individually freeze them in a zip-top bag. They can then be used any time straight from the freezer for a great milkshake texture.) Dad is a big fan of fresh peaches, and now with the smoothie, he can have them safely again. Here is a recipe I adapted from Alton Brown’s original recipe that always makes Dad smile and gesture for more.

Dad’s Potassium Pick-Me-Up Smoothie

- 1 banana
- 4 oz. plain or vanilla yogurt
- 4 oz. blueberries, blackberries, strawberries or mixed
- 8 oz. grape or pomegranate juice

Blend at lowest setting until smooth. Increase speed and blend until milkshake consistency. Enjoy.

No-Stone Soup is, like the folk tale, subject to the provisions at hand. It’s my adaptation of a huge vegetable soup recipe that was once featured in one of the tabloids as an “amazing diet soup” whose key ingredients were tomato juice, cabbage, bouillon and half a dozen different vegetables. The original calls for an envelope of onion soup, which is too salty for Dad. Also, those of you who juice may add fresh carrot juice or beet juice. Adapt to suit your cared-for’s needs: for instance, if gassiness is a problem, omit garlic and use less onion and cabbage. Make it your own by including favorite vegetables and omitting despised vegetables. Chuppa’s on Pearl Road is a great place for primo fresh produce, even in the dead of January. I start with a good broth on local grocery shelves prepared by Kitchen Basics, produced in nearby Brecksville (choose vegetable, chicken, or beef), but bouillon cubes may be substituted. A

soul-warming soup for a snowy day. All I ask is, don’t just read it, cook it! You’ll be glad you did.

No-Stone Soup

- 1 smooth stone about the size of an orange, washed clean
- 1 cup water
- 1 small head cabbage, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 small green pepper, chopped
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 bottle V8 or generic mixed vegetable juice
- 1 can of peeled whole or ground tomatoes

- 1 carton chicken or vegetable broth (or substitute 2 bouillon cubes)
- a few dashes balsamic vinegar to taste (or not)

- pinch of any or all of the following. parsley, basil, tarragon, oregano
- a pinch of salt and pepper

Place all ingredients in pot, minus the stone. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for one hour. Let cool slightly. Blend in small 1-cup batches for loved one who is choke risk. Strain through sieve if appropriate. Add more broth or juice if too thick, or mashed potato flakes if too thin. Enjoy.

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

Study Island in Parma Schools

by Debbie Spink

Academic Services and building principals have teamed up to promote the importance of Study Island to all staff and students across the district. The goal of the program is to “pass” every topic or selection provided. The program is divided into sections based on subject (math, reading, science and social studies.). Each section is made up of approximately 30 topics, and each topic corresponds to a stan-

dard for multiple, related standards from the state curriculum. If a student passes every topic, he or she has demonstrated proficiency in all areas tested and is very well prepared for the state tests. For further assurance in success with this program, all the specialists have set up professional development days to assist teachers in preparation for the program. This wonderful program is a fundamental part of learning which will transpire into high achievement for all of Parma City students.



Administrators learning how to access student reports in the Study Island program.

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Pulse of the City

The Pulse Of The City- Your Schools- A Tale of Another Kennedy: When “Camelot” Came To Hillside School

by Gary Rice,

With the recent passing of the late Senator Ted Kennedy, I thought about the first of the Kennedy brothers to step upon the national stage...President John F. Kennedy.

“Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that a torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans”

With these words, and many others just as meaningful and hopeful, the newly inaugurated President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, began to lay out his vision for a new America.

To us kids, this guy was really something! We watched our circular black and white TV screens with rapt attention, on that blustery January day. Although both Presidents Kennedy and Eisenhower had been World War II veterans, John Kennedy seemed so young, strong, and full of “vigah”. We listened further, as he began to outline his vision with so many words that seemed to ring into eternity.

Regarding democracy:

“If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.”

Regarding our adversaries:

“Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate”

And regarding our world:

“A new world of law, where the strong are just, and the weak secure, and the peace preserved”

Oh yeah, the clincher: When his strong youthful voice rose in pitch, and he made that immortal clarion call:

“And so my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country”

That did it, we were hooked. We would follow that man to the ends of the earth; leading other countries proudly down the road to a magnificent future, based on the Rule of Law, and of freedom for all.

At least that was the ideal. We did not learn, until later, that ideals sometimes fall a little short.

Those of us in Scouting were so proud to be in such a great organization. Although Scouting was not a political organization, many of us thought of ourselves as “Kennedy Scouts” nonetheless. Every paper drive, every service project, every flag raising...All of it was done with just a little more pizzazz, a little more pride, and a little more elan.

After all, we had a great role model. At least, we thought so.

In the early 1960’s, President Kennedy came through Lakewood. I

remember standing with my father, across the street from St. James Church, when that magnificent limousine pulled to a stop. Looking around, the President smiled and waved to us all, before proceeding with his escort down the street. As was true later in Dallas, his limo’s protective, removable bubble-top was nowhere to be seen. President Kennedy believed that the American people deserved to see him at just about every opportunity. After his assassination, the presidential car was refitted with a permanent armoured top.

I seem to remember that President Kennedy also stopped off at St. Edward High School that day, to the absolute delight of staff and students alike.

People called President Kenne-



The John F. Kennedy Oak guards the entrance to Hillside Middle School

dy’s time, a time of “Camelot”, in a dreamy comparison to the mythical past of Arthurian legends. It was felt that there was nothing we could not achieve.

After all, the President said:

“We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty.”

I even wrote to the White House back then. Mom suggested that I write to Jackie, thinking it might actually have a better chance of making it to the President, through his wife. I enclosed a picture I drew of the PT-109; the President’s WW II PT boat.

I received a nice response from their secretary, saying that the President and Mrs. Kennedy had enjoyed

seeing my picture. I received two autographed pictures of them, as well.

It was on a cold November Friday, shortly after noon, in English class, that we were told that he had been shot. Not long afterwards, in Science class, we learned that he had passed on. Coming out of church on Sunday, we learned that his alleged assassin too, had been killed. Exactly who did kill our President, would become a matter of conjecture and debate that continues to this day.

I had only played the drum for a short time when, sitting in my living



Plaque for the Kennedy Oak

Photo by Gary Rice

room with my new-but-muffled snare drum, I played along to the televised beat of those drummers lining the avenue- as the horse-drawn Presidential funeral caisson made it’s way forward in the cold November air... accompanied by that prancing black horse, with those shiny boots reversed in the saddle. I think they said that this was to commemorate the loss of a leader. It was hard for a boy my age to understand. It was even harder for a boy John-John’s age to understand. Remember his salute to his father? Remember John-John’s mother and sister? It was hard, as well, for a world to understand. We all grew a little older, and a whole lot sadder, under

those cold November skies.

Little did we know that the flame that “would truly light the world”, ended up being the one ignited over President Kennedy’s grave at Arlington- or that his graveside would also later hold the bodies of his brothers Robert and Teddy.

Nothing was the same for us kids ever again; as that decade began to unfold. My grandmother’s next-door neighbors in Alabama were nice people. One day, their son left on a secret mission, and never returned.

I just remember his father sadly sitting on that hot Alabama porch in his rocker. Day after day after day...

I also remember a kid from my street, who died in Vietnam. Then, I think there was another Lakewood kid who went missing, and was never found over there.

“Pay any price”? I suppose we did. Yeah, we still do, I guess.

The days of the early ‘60’s stand out in my mind as a special time indeed. It was almost as if we were standing at the pinnacle of our times. Maybe we were.

President Kennedy showed us that anything was possible. He certainly felt that our country was a blessed land, but he also admonished us in the last words of his inaugural speech, that:

“...here on earth, God’s work must truly be our own”

After President Kennedy was assassinated in November of 1963, the Hillside Student Council planted a memorial oak tree outside of the school’s front entrance. Today, that tree stands tall as a quiet and lasting witness to that magical time of America’s “Camelot”.

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Around Town

Raisin' Canes Light Up Audiences All Year!

by Judy Martins

The Raisin' Canes, the Donna Smallwood Activities Center (formerly Parma Senior Center) award-winning vaudeville dance group, are 26 dancing seniors, 63 to 92 years of age! This lively volunteer group has performed over 600 "gigs" since 1999--and is still going strong! They've been busily entertaining with their straw hats, canes and sparkling costumes with a rousing 90-minute vaudeville show -- soft shoe, tap and novelty dance routines, great old songs, Charleston, cane twirling, celebrity imitations, audience participation and lots more!

Formed in 1999 by director-instructor, Judy Martins, these talented, energetic, tapping seniors have been dazzling 'em at the Malls, dinner dances, parties and picnics, reunions, luncheons, seniors groups, nursing homes, retirement communities, TV shows, church events, installations and parties, stage shows, concerts in the park and Home Days



Joining "Hands" with the audience

celebrations--wherever people gather. They lit up hundreds of faces with their entertaining Christmas Holiday show -- their busiest time of the year, and are now in rehearsal for their St. Patrick's Vaudeville show in March. Their show changes themes with the season: a St. Patrick's Show in March, a Patriotic theme all summer, a Luau in August, Octoberfest in September and October, and their glittering Holiday Show in November and December.

If you've ever caught their act, you

will most certainly remember them! Having recently appeared on both TV Channel 8 and Channel 5, these fun, busy folks average 2 to 3 performances a week and they just love to dance, ham it up and "hit the boards!" It's difficult to decide who has more fun--the Raisin' Canes or their audiences. When asked where they get their energy, they reply, "When the music starts, we forget about all the aches and pains, and just get out there and dance!" (You can visit their web site at buckeyeweb.com/parmasc/canes).

MyCom Comes to Parma

by Ken Boris

MyCom is a community building effort funded by The Cleveland Foundation and Cuyahoga County which is focused on youth development. The grant funding for this initiative has been awarded to six neighborhoods in the City of Cleveland (Central, Slavic Village, Mt. Pleasant, Cudell & West Blvd, St. Clair- Superior, and West Park), and two suburban areas (Shaker Heights and Parma). It seeks to help develop youth as leaders in their communities, connect them to positive activities, and help link youth with positive adult mentors or role models.

MyCom is not a program but rather a service network which seeks to use existing community resources in a more coordinated way so that youth programs might be utilized more effectively. It also seeks to enlist youth to help communities identify gaps in services and programs which they would like in their communities. It focuses efforts in several strategic areas:

Health and Safety Seeks to provide informational programs in a broad range of topic areas including substance abuse, healthy relationships / domestic violence, healthy sexuality, physical fitness and mental health.

Transition Programming Focuses on helping youth transition successfully both academically and socially during years of significant change (i.e.: Kindergarten to 1st grade, primary grades to middle school, middle to high school, high school to college / employment).

Youth employment & career development - Focuses on developing informational programs so that youth might learn about the broad range of employment opportunities which exist in the world of work, and how their current education and future education might assist them in entering these careers. o Seeks to provide assistance to area businesses and employers on how they might provide part-time or summer jobs to give youth valuable work experience.

Out of school time - Helping communities develop quality out of school time programming that assists youth in developing life skills, learn the benefits of teamwork, and understand the importance of community involvement.

How is the greater Parma area implementing MyCom? Parma's MyCom plan focuses on two areas.

1. Expanding current out of school time programming by using grant dollars to fund "Shiloh Café".

2. Developing a "youth council" to identify the variety of youth programs which exist in the Parma area and identify areas of need. Shiloh Café will offer a variety of educational and recreational programs for students three days each week. There will also be structured tutoring and homework help for students to help them prepare for Ohio Achievement Tests (OAT) and the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT).

A number of community partners are assisting by providing programs at the Café. They include: The Cuyahoga County Library, the Parma Health Education Center, the Ridgewood YMCA, and Berea Children's Home and Family Services. These agencies will also be joined by a variety of other professionals offering insight into area businesses, careers, the arts, and leisure activities. The Parma Youth Council is seeking to join with the YMCA "Leader's Club" to develop an organized youth voice in the community which can help our community identify existing youth programs as well as identify gaps in programming. It is hoped that the council can eventually provide guidance on the types of services our community should develop to address the current needs of area youth. Additionally, since the group will be led by youth, they will learn valuable leadership skills which will help them in future endeavors. If you are interested in more information about MyCom activities in Parma or know of a youth interested in our Youth Council, contact Ken Boris, Parma MyCom Coordinator at the Parma MyCom office (440)842-7043.



Frank Buehner, 92, doing his "Mauice Chevalier" imitation



Holiday Charleston, "Sleigh Ride," on the Parmatown stage

Outdoors Observed

Parma’s Winning Christmas Decorated Houses



Ward 1 – 7915 Newport Ave



Ward 2 - 5711 Brownfield Drive.

Parma Website Continues Growth In User Popularity

continued from page 1

in a 16 county area. Most visitors are brought to the site through a Google search or a direct “bookmark.” The Photo Gallery and City Hall are the most popular links.

“Parma continues to have one of the most approachable, functional, user-friendly websites of any city in northern Ohio,” said Kevin Latchford, COO of Aztek. “Parma has used our partnership in several ways to solidify and complement the city’s open communication forum.”

Last August, the City of Parma added RSS Feed options on its website for the news, podcasts and calendar events. The hi-tech procedure allows anyone to stay informed by retrieving the latest content from the website instantaneously without having to sign-on.

In other words, RSS, known as Really Simple Syndication, allows the user to subscribe for free in order to receive an “alert” that their designated website has posted new

Here are some of the winning Christmas decorated houses in Parma. There were nine winners for the nine wards. These are just samples of the winners: Ward 1 – 7915 Newport Ave. Ward 2 – 5711 Brownfield Dr. The annual contest is sponsored by **Proud of Parma**. The Holiday Lighting Com-

mittee recently drove through all nine wards to view homes nominated by neighbors or friends who called Parma City Hall. The winners were presented goody Christmas bags as a small token of appreciation for their colorful Christmas spirit.

Parma’s Michael A. Ries Ice Rink

by Jane Regas

Recently at the Michael A. Ries Ice Rink new light fixtures have been installed and also a new roof this spring. This was made possible through a State of Ohio Capital Improvement Grant that was awarded to the ice rink.

Public skate hours are listed below:
Friday 7:15p.m. to 9:00p.m.
Saturday, 12:15p.m. - 2:00p.m.
Sunday 1:45p.m. - 3:15p.m.
Through April 3rd, 2010.



“The RSS option has proven to be the easiest tool to keep our residents up to date with any information posted on our website,” said Mayor DePiero. “It has become the most practical link for residents to stay connected with the latest news and devel-

opments in their community.”

Users can subscribe for free to news, podcasts and calendar events on the City of Parma website at www.cityofparma-oh.gov. Just click on one of the RSS icons for more information

The Back Page

Edward FitzGerald

continued from page 1

of the worst foreclosure rates in the nation...

And that brings us to the last couple years here in Cuyahoga County. At precisely the time when we needed our county government to be at its best, it's most dynamic, it's most innovative, it's most effective, it has been paralyzed by the worst public corruption scandal in our county's history. At a time when we should be enacting policies to get us out of this economic mess, we have been the victim of a steady stream of scandals involving acts of outright bribery and fraud, and completely shameless greed.

The people of this county are fed up, and they should be. They need and they want a county government which is honest, effective, efficient, competent, and innovative.

We need to give them that kind of government in 2010, and that's why today I am beginning my campaign for County Executive of Cuyahoga County.

There's never been a campaign for this office before. And we're going to

run a campaign like no other in this county's history. In every community, in every neighborhood, we're going to tell our story and deliver our message. This isn't going to be a west side campaign, or an east side campaign, or a suburban campaign, or a city campaign, its going to be a unifying campaign that includes all of us, no matter where we live or what our station in life is.

Now, other campaigns are talking about spending millions and millions of dollars to buy this office, either their money or someone else's, and that's fine. I hope they do spend a lot of money, it's good for the local economy. We have to raise and spend money too, but as in my previous successful campaigns, it's going to be conversations from one resident to another that will ultimately win this campaign.

So, what are we going to talk about?

We're going to talk about how to restore trust and integrity to county government. As a former FBI Special Agent with the Organized Crime Task Force in Chicago, I have experience in

directing corruption investigations, and my first act as County Executive will to be order a review of every operation and function of county government to root out any remnants of corruption which remain.

As mayor of the second largest suburb in our county with a budget of almost \$100 million, I worked with my council to rescue the city from fiscal disaster, lowered expenses, streamlined government by integrating technology, launched a city-wide community policing initiative that reduced crime by double digits, implemented an environmental and energy efficiency strategy, and led an economic development policy that created jobs and grew our tax base even in the toughest of economic times.

As County Executive, I will use this combined experience in law enforcement and as a chief executive to overhaul county government and restore the people's confidence that county government can be operated with integrity, will provide the services it must to those in need, and act as a catalyst so that the economy of Cuyahoga County embraces the shift to the new economic growth sectors in medicine, biotechnology, clean and green energy, and arts and culture.

But, we always must remember that we still have great wealth in this county, but also great need, and we can never forget that. Every citizen's concerns are equal to me, whether they work in a board room, a school room, a store room, or are looking for work. The first County Executive must understand that

our futures are all connected to each other, no matter what part of this community we come from.

Now, I know it is fashionable to be pessimistic about the Cleveland area. We've had economic setbacks, our sports teams never seem to win any championships, etc. But I take the opposite view. I am optimistic and I am confident. We have incredible potential and assets that other areas could only wish for- our institutions of higher learning, our centers of medical care and research, our park systems, our rivers and lakefront our cultural institutions, our economic building blocks, our entrepreneurs, the skill of our workers, and our refusal to quit, no matter what no the obstacledepressions, wars, recessions, scandals- we're still here, and we're never giving up on this county.

And as much as I respect those who came before us, the men and women who built Cleveland with their own hands, like my great grandfather who settled in this neighborhood 130 years ago, I believe that we are their equal, that our accomplishments can outshine theirs, that we will rebuild our cities stronger than they were before, and that the setbacks of recent years will be seen by history as just a temporary reverse in the story of the rise of this great community.

Thank you for the confidence you have in my ability to lead, and thank you for the confidence you have in the future of Cuyahoga County.

Thank you very much.

What A Difference A Word Makes

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person made the difference here. Of course, everyone had the right to vote as they chose, and there is no way of telling who that one person may be, but I certainly hope that they are satisfied with the way that they voted in light of the sacrifice that virtually all of the other city employees willingly made.


During the public comment portion of the meeting, the husband of one of those who were layed off, John Lindow, chose to speak to Council. He thanked everyone for their support and said that their family would do their best to persevere in the wake of what has happened. I thought it was a brave thing to do, and showed great integrity. I don't believe that one person in the building was not affected as they listened to him. Councilman Jech commented that he thought that the workers who voted against the concessions were being selfish, and upon reflection, I tend to agree. Council President Chuck Germana, serving in his eighteenth year in that position, stated that he is frequently in contact with many city leaders throughout northeast Ohio and they all ask him just how Parma was able to handle this financial crisis caused by this Great Recession without mass layoffs. Many cities in our area with a far smaller population have had to make far larger cuts, layoffs, and just painful decisions. When considering that, I feel even more proud of Parma.

The journalist from the Sun Post was apparently present at the same council meeting, and when I saw their headline later that week,

it made me think "what a difference a word makes". The headline read "CITY TO LAY OFF TWO FROM PD". I would have made the headline "CITY TO ONLY LAY OFF TWO" - I feel that this more accurately reflects what happened here in Parma. Really, if not for the unfortunate vote in the Records Unit of the Police Department, the headline might have read "NO LAYOFFS IN PARMA".


This illustrates, I feel, the vast difference between our form of hyper-local citizen journalism and everyone else's. On one hand, you have us trying to highlight and nurture what is best about our community, and on the other hand you have large corporations trying their best to run a business covering local news in our city, and sell as many papers as they can. I really can't blame them for doing what they have to do to stay in business, and that means they often need to have sensational headlines, but they have no distinct reason for feeling or expressing pride in what happens here. When you look at the Parma Observer, which is locally owned and managed, with the stories written by the people who live in this community, you have in your hands a paper produced by people who have every reason to be extremely proud of our city and what happens here, and I feel that means standing up and taking notice of the extreme sacrifice that our city employees chose to make so that everyone would bear the burden equally in these difficult times, instead of just the few. I'll say it again, what a difference a word makes!

In today's economy everyone needs to keep on learning.



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