

Vote Yes On Issue ?

The Right Time To Do The Right Thing

by Daniel P. McCarthy

Our Country seems to be going through the process of taking a good hard look at the naked truth when it comes to certain institutions and the issues associated with them,

maybe, in some cases, for the first time in a long while. One of these very important institutions is that of Public Education. For me, the way I feel, and I am guilty as charged, the most crucial ingredient missing from Public

Education is the Public. We all find ourselves very busy these days just trying to make ends meet and finding basic happiness in our lives, so it becomes all too easy to lose focus on our civic responsibility as citizens of a nation who's government rests in the hands of the people to make sure that our chosen representatives maintain our public functions in a way that is honest, effective, and cost efficient. Honestly, who has time to attend every School Board meeting, especially if they don't even have children in the system anymore, or ever even did? I'll admit that I have never even been to a School Board meeting, but I also know that

there are other direct ways to have a say in the process, and by far the most critical activity is voting. I am a faithful voter,

and as best as I can remember, I voted for J. Kevin Kelly and others, and there lies the **continued on page 12**



Dump No Waste, Drains to Creek

by Sean Brennan
Councilman Ward 2

Most people want to protect their local streams, rivers, and lakes. They value their clean water as a drinking source and for recreation, as well as fish and wildlife habitat. Did you know that these same people are often responsible for the contamination of local waterways? Most of the pollu-

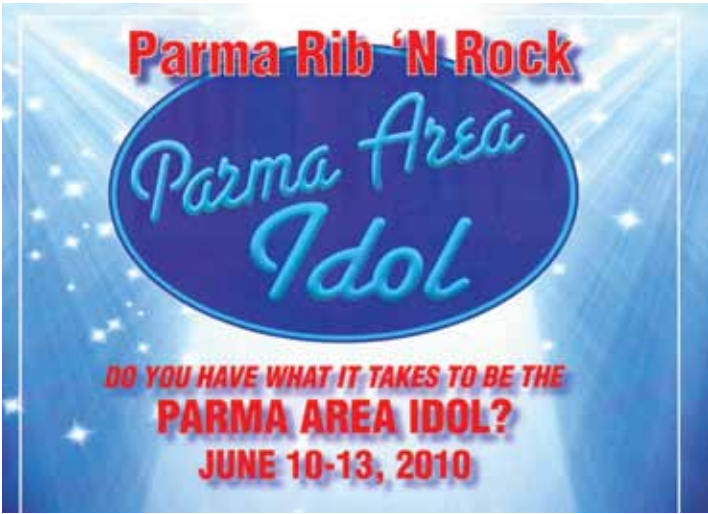
tion in our waterways does not come from industries or factories (point source pollution). Instead, 80% of the pollution affecting streams comes from nonpoint sources, such as storm drains. This means that pollution does not come from a single point, but from storm water (rainwater) running across the land, picking up motor oil, insecticides, fertilizers, road salts, grass clippings, leaves, pet

droppings and garbage before depositing it in streams. Storm drains along many neighborhood streets collect the contaminated water and dump it directly into streams, without being treated first. Storm drains are merely pipes of waste transfer – from our streets to our creeks. In fact, much of Parma falls into the **continued on page 910**



Community volunteer Carl Sneed and Councilman Sean Brennan complete a storm drain stencil on Theota Avenue.

Do You Have What It Takes To Be The Next Parma Area Idol?



by Lisa Zaremba

The Parma Area Chamber of Commerce and the Parma Rib 'N Rock presents the Second Annual Parma Area Idol Contest. It will take place on the Main Stage June 10 -13, during the Rib 'N Rock Rib Cook-Off, and is open to all amateur performers 13-30 years old. Nearly 30 talented contestants turned out last year and they are hoping to increase that number this year. "Choosing a winner was very difficult last year, the level of talented performers that came out was amazing, I would hate to be a judge," said Lisa Zaremba, Chamber Executive Director. That duty will go to a professional panel of judges that includes Jerry Colosimo, a local favorite and graduate from Valley Forge High School, Colosimo has been singing in the Cleveland area for over 23 years. Also judging will

be Polly Ann Zaremba – Dudek. She has been a professional singer and musician all her life, touring the U.S. and Canada for over 15 years as lead vocalist for the Band Cleveland. The band was recently inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and is featured the Guinness Book of World Records for playing the longest rock concert in history, 100 hours and 30 minutes helping to bring the Hall of Fame to Cleveland, Ohio. And let's not forget the "Simon" of the group Ken Dudek. He is from the Cleveland Management Group, a professional guitar player, singer with a top ten single in 1966 which was No. 8 on Billboard for 6 weeks. He was also a band manager for over 30 years. He has worked with Mercury Records here in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio supplying tour support for such acts as Elton John, Jon Bon **continued on page 9**

State Issue 1 On May 2010 Primary Ballot

by Timothy DeGeeter

Third Frontier Renewal –State Issue 1 on may 2010 primary ballot Job creation and retention is currently a number one priority in the legislature. Ohio's Third Frontier Program is one key initiative that, if approved by voters,

will continue to create high-tech, good paying jobs for Ohioans.The Third Frontier is a program within the Ohio Department of Development that was created in 2002 with a 10-year initial life and a \$1.6 **continued on page 4**

Parma Observer

Parma Symphony Orchestra Concert Sunday May 2nd

by Joe Germana

The Parma Symphony Orchestra will present a concert on Sunday, May 2nd 2010 at 3:00 PM at Valley Forge High School Auditorium located at 9999 Independence Boulevard in Parma Heights. The concert will include Tchaikovsky's "Symphony #5" and Rachmaninoff's "Piano Concerto #3" featuring piano soloist Alexander Wasserman.

A native of Oak Park, California, Alexander Wasserman grew up in a musical family, and began formal piano studies with Suzanne Julian, herself a protege of renowned pianist and teacher Jakob Gimpel.

Mr. Wasserman maintains an active concert schedule, with recent performances in the cities of Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, La Jolla, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and Santa Barbara. As recitalist, chamber musician, and orchestral soloist, his performances have been broadcast on television and classical radio stations, including live performances of concertos by Liszt and Rachmaninoff. Additionally, he has been heard in chamber performances on Los Angeles's premier classical radio station, KUSC 91.5 FM. Most recently, his performance of works by Beethoven and Chopin on the "Dame Myra Hess" concert series was aired on Chicago's television channel 25, and radio station WFMT 98.7 FM.

Mr. Wasserman is currently in the Doctor of Musical Arts program in piano performance at the Cleveland

Institute of Music, where his principal instructor is Antonio Pompa-Baldi. He holds degrees in piano performance from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, the Cleveland Institute of Music and the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music. Former teachers include Yong Hi Moon, Daniel Shapiro, and Antoinette Perry. In addition, Mr. Wasserman has performed in lessons and master classes for Sergei Babayan, Henri Brassard, Edward Francis, Dai Uk Lee, Richard Raymond, Paul Schenly, and Uriel Tsachor.

Alexander Wasserman is represented by Ingrassia Artists. For more information see: www.alexanderwasserman.com. For booking information, see www.ingrassiaartists.com



Mr. Wasserman

The orchestra in it's 41st season consists of 70 members of all walks of life from all over the entire Greater Cleveland area. They meet weekly for rehearsals and present at least four concerts annually. General admission is \$8 for adults and \$5 for students and senior citizens. Family passes are available for families of up to 2 adults and

their children. All tickets are available at the door beginning at 2:30 PM. The Parma Symphony Orchestra is a self-supporting community orchestra in cooperation with the Parma City Schools. For more information see our web-site www.parmasympphony.org or call our Business Manager Joe Germana 440-882-2012.

Dog Show Handling Classes Are Back!



by Kathy Szomoru

My name is Kathy Szomoru and for over thirty years I have owned and shown champion dogs. I am now an AKC judge, and I am pleased to offer my own dog show handling tips! I am currently teaching classes to adults and children 8-18 (junior handlers) wanting to learn to show their own dogs to win, while showing in the same ring as professional handlers.

Summer classes will begin again on May 18, 2010, and will run until September 14, 2010. Classes will be held again in The All Saints Episcopal Church parking lot. The church is located at 8911 West Ridgewood Drive, Parma, Ohio (Corner of Ames &

Ridgewood Drive) - right accross from Walmart & Parmatown Mall.

There are two classes per evening. The earlier class runs from 6:30 - 7:15. It is geared towards the beginner enthusiast, with lots of instruction. The later class runs from 7:30 - 8:15. It is basically a run thru, but does have instruction - as needed. All breeds are welcome.

In order to give everyone the attention they need, classes are limited to 8 people per session.

To book your reservation or for more information, please contact me at 216.661.8360, or email me at kaszomoru@sbcglobal.net

Craft Show and Flea Bazaar May 15 at Tri-C West

by Randi Hansen

Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) invites all bargain hunters, crafters and others to shop and/or sell their wares at this year's craft show and flea bazaar. The bazaar will be held on Saturday, May 15 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Western Campus, located at 11000 Pleasant Valley Road in Parma.

This event is sponsored by the

Western Campus Student Government. All proceeds will benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

If you are a seller interested in reserving a table or for more information, please call 216-987-5430. Tables are \$20. Admission and parking is free for all shoppers. Refreshments will be available for purchase.

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winking at a girl in the dark.
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Serving the Tri-City Area of Parma, Parma Heights, & Seven Hills

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Parma News

Dozens Of Area Residents Helped By Parma Career Expo

by Jack Marshall

The first-ever Career Expo hosted by the City of Parma was declared a big success by Parma Treasurer Anthony Zielinski.

The public was invited to attend the Expo March 18 at the Donna Smallwood Activities Center. Experts in the field of job training and retraining were available to help unemployed and underemployed area residents gain new skills to help them reenter the workforce. A steady stream of interested residents represented a wide range of age levels, from college students to individuals looking for a new career after retirement or being laid off.

“I was extremely pleased that we were successful in helping to connect

the dots, so to speak, for those individuals who do not have the skill sets to reenter this constantly changing economy,” said Parma Treasurer Anthony Zielinski. “The experts who we invited distributed materials and provided the tools and ideas that many people have been searching for. I would not hesitate to host another Career Expo at some point in the future.”

The Parma Career Expo featured employment experts from Cuyahoga Community College, Parma City Schools Community Education, Parma Adult Education Services, Bryant & Stratton, Polaris Career Center, Employment Connection Career Center and United Way 2-1-1.



Parma Treasurer Anthony Zielinski listens to residents attending Parma’s first-ever Career Expo on March 18.

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Becker’s Hospital Review, March/April 2010

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Parma Schools

Dental Clinic at Normandy High School Keeps Patients Smiling

by Kate Rapnicki

How many of you can say you have been getting satisfactory service from one place every year since 1991? I'm guessing the answer would be not many of us. Sally Zuccaro claims she has. Sally has been coming to Normandy High School's Dental Clinic every year since 1991, and she couldn't be happier with the service. She loves the volunteer dentist, the teacher, and especially the students. Did I mention she is ninety-eight years old?

The dental program at Normandy High School is a vocational program that trains the students to eventually become a certified dental assistant once they pass the state test. Their junior year of high school they spend learning all the basics from their teacher, Ms. Barbara Zindroski. Their senior year they will acquire an internship with a dental clinic of their choice, and then will take their state test. I got the opportunity to see exactly how the students get hands on learning by sitting in on their dental clinic.

Normandy has been having dental clinics since 1988. I was able to interview students and patients on how the dental clinics work and what they are receiving from the experience. A volunteer dentist comes in from his/her regular job to clean the teeth of the patients and give the students a hands on experience. Dr. Ken Wolnik is currently volunteering with the program, and Dr. Anthony Silvestro, Dr. Craig Vinkovich, Dr. Mark Kozlowski, Dr. Chester Bizga, Dr. Timothy Bizga, Dr. Milan Yalcovich, Dr. Kimberly Stopar, and Dr. Ed Glowski have all volunteered for Normandy in the past. I spoke with Sally Zuccaro's daughters Marie Elena and Rosemary Zuccaro who explained to me why they keep coming back every year. They both agreed that they love the friendly students and the teacher, Bar-

bara Zindroski, along with the dentist, Dr. Wolnik. They want to support the schools, and encourage the young people to pursue their goals in their vocation. Maria told me she wants to give the cosmetology department a try next! The patients aren't the only ones that are satisfied with the service, the students couldn't be happier with their class and the opportunities that are waiting for them right out of high school. Merna Awad, Amanda Klemm, and Kristi Niznick all told me how they love the class and their teacher. "She can't retire yet!" agreed the three girls. They told me their teacher is definitely nice, but not afraid to give them constructive criticism. Amanda wants to continue her education to be an EFDA (Expanded Functions Dental Assistant), Kristi wants to be a hygienist, and Merna's goal is to eventually become a dentist. After spending just a couple minutes in the dental room, I have no doubt that everyone will be leaving with a smile on their face.



Junior Sam Henry-Burdette takes instruction from his teacher and gets a hands on experience.



Dentists like Dr. Wolnik is one of the reasons that 98 year old Sally Zuccaro has been coming to Normandy's Dental Clinic since 1991.



Junior Kristy Niznick takes the blood pressure of patient Rosemary Zuccaro



Normandy's dental teacher, Barb Zindroski gives the students instruction.

State Issue 1 On May 2010 Primary Ballot

continued from page 1

billion commitment in investments to support technology in fields such as biomedical, advanced and alternative energy. Just last week, the Ohio Department of Development announced that since the program's inception in 2002, it has helped create 55,000 jobs in Ohio and has assisted in the creation, attraction, and capitalization of more than 600 businesses. According to an independent evaluation, over the past seven years Ohio's Third Frontier created over \$2.4 billion in employee wages and benefits. The report also revealed that taxpayers were seeing

more than a 10 to one return on their investment. That means from 2003 to 2008, an investment of \$681 million of state expenditures resulted in over \$6.6 billion of statewide economic impact. The program was set to expire in 2012. In response, both democrats and republicans, including myself, recently voted with overwhelming support to place a \$700 million, four-year renewal of Ohio's Third Frontier Program on the May 4 ballot. If met with voter approval, the program will place Ohio at the forefront of high-tech research and innovation. Northeast Ohio could especially benefit from this program, since nearly half the amount

of total grant money was awarded to Northeast Ohio-based companies and research organizations from 2002-2009. Just recently, here in Parma, it was announced that GrafTech International was awarded a \$915,000 grant for an advanced technology project. GrafTech has also garnered a number of awards in past years including: \$973,154 in 2008 for a fuel cell program, \$7,945,465 in 2007 for a research and commercialization program, and \$602,044 in 2005 for a fuel cell program. I urge you to vote yes on Issue 1 in support of Ohio's Third Frontier Program this May.

Cuyahoga Public Library Events

All programs are free and open to the public. Registration is required for some programs. To register, call the host branch or visit www.cuyahogalibrary.org.

National Poetry Month is celebrated every April by libraries, schools and poets across the nation through poetry readings, book displays and special events. During this month we are reminded of America's rich poetic heritage. There's such an incredible array of poetry that's out there waiting to be read.

To find a National Poetry Month program at a branch near you, visit www.cuyahogalibrary.org/PoetryMonth.aspx.

Parma-South Branch

7335 Ridge Road / 440.885.5362

Preschool Art Show

Please join us for the 3rd annual Preschool Art Show. The show features the works of local preschoolers. The show will be open during library hours when the meeting room is not in use.

Opening Reception
Refreshments will be served.
Saturday, May 1st / 3:00 p.m.

Art Show

Saturday, May 1st – Friday, May 7th / during library hours

Parma-Ridge Branch

5850 Ridge Road / 440.888.4300

Mother's Day Scrapbooking Workshop

Grades 5 & up / Registration required.

You bring the pictures (4 to 6) and we'll provide the paper, supplies and tools to try your hand at scrapbooking.

Saturday, May 8th / 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Parma-Snow Branch

2121 Snow Road / 216.661.4240

Résumé & Cover Letter Workshop

Need to update your résumé? This workshop is for you.

Tuesday, May 11th / 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Landscapes, Landmarks & Legacies: An Overview of Lake View Cemetery

Cleveland has a rich history and Lakeview Cemetery is one of its most interesting areas.

Wednesday, May 12th / 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Parma Observer

Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics

by Brian O'Donnell

Recently I have been engaging in an exciting and challenging hobby. I like to call it "Network News Roulette." The game is very easy to play, however, I never seem to score very high. The way to play is to tune into any newscast on any television station and then see how long you can watch without being overwhelmed with the urge to smash your television screen with the heaviest household item that is within reach. Elvis liked to use a shotgun, but that is how you play the game when you are the king. My current record is around three minutes, but my average score runs somewhere around ninety seconds.

In my latest round of Network News Roulette I came across the Fox Networks' "Fox and Friends." As I tuned in the show was doing an outro teaser heading into a commercial break. The teaser wanted me to stay tuned for a story on how government workers are grossly overpaid in comparison to private sector workers. I decided to wait through the commercial break and check out this intriguing Fox News report. For those of you playing Network News Roulette at home, the clock stops while the news shows are in commercial break. No cheating!

I have always been wary and aware of the potential misuse of statistics. These concerns were validated by a college professor I had who maintained that when dealing with numbers and percentages you have "lies, damn lies, and statistics." So when Fox and Friends returned from commercial and began their report stating that private sector employees are paid, on an average, 45% less than government workers my full attention was grabbed. I did not want to be caught off guard by the statistics that were sure to back up this claim. Then the screen showed a chart breaking down the compensation between the two sectors of the work force. I scanned the numbers as the reporter droned on about the facts that were displayed on the screen. The difference in base pay was significant but nowhere near 45% as originally claimed in the teaser. There was, however, a huge disparity in health care benefits, pension plans, and holiday pay. My initial thought upon seeing the differences was this is not a comparison of private sector versus government, this was a clear case of union versus non-union. Before I had fully developed this theory the reporter chimed in that the disparity of the numbers reflected in the study were caused, in large part, by the fact that most government workers were part of some collective bargaining agreement. I had now been tuned in for almost two full minutes. I was sure I could break my personal record in my game of newscast roulette. Then the reporter stated that the real

problem is "you just can't fire these people for no reason." As if to imply that firing a worker without cause is a good thing. Game over. Now with the television turned off I wanted to digest what I had just heard.

Government workers make 45% more than private sector workers. What the report was really saying was that union workers have better benefits, better health insurance, better retirement savings plans, and better job security than that of non-union workers. These are facts that happen to be true and I can verify these facts on a personal level because I am a proud member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The numbers in the report were presented in a way as to besmirch the pay and the benefits that the average union employee enjoy. Why take this stance? Shouldn't the question be why the average public sector employees (code for non-union) do not enjoy these same benefits in their wage and compensation packages for doing similar work?

If we look back 50 years or so the American middle class was expand-

ing and the economy was booming. Paychecks were large enough for us to purchase all the goods and services we produced right here in the good old U.S. of A. Good pay equaled more purchases. More purchases equaled more jobs. In 1955 more than one third of working Americans belonged to a union that gave them the bargaining power to collect bigger pay packages. The increased pay spilled over into the non-union sector since employers had to be competitive to keep and to recruit the most skilled workers from the labor pool. The cog that kept the U.S. economic engine running smoothly, the middle class, was well oiled. In recent years, with the decline of union membership, that same cog has become worn and rusted resulting in a sputtering and untimely breakdown of the once powerful U.S. economic engine.

Smaller numbers of unionized workers means less bargaining power. Less bargaining power leads to lower wages. Lower wages mean fewer purchases, which in turn leads to fewer jobs. So it could be concluded that unions and union membership drives

are a very important key to economic recovery across the board in the United States today. A respectable living wage, health insurance, pension and annuity contributions, superior training and safety standards, and protection from unjust firings are just a few reasons to belong to a labor union. Some in the non-union workforce may find themselves in a situation where joining a union does not seem like a possibility. To them I say do not give up. Call a local union hall for organizing information. Others in the non-union workforce are simply anti-union. To them I say good luck. I am not trying to force my views on anyone who does not want to be helped. Just remember that as unions raise the living standard for its' membership, the non-union sector will also enjoy an elevation of its' standard. Yet many in this group will still bash labor unions. I do have one request for the union bashers. Please refrain from putting down labor unions on your weekends. Because, after all, we are the ones that gave you that two day weekend.

A Savvy Situation

by Craig Czepczynski

When the owner of a local salon was pondering where to open their doors, the location was paramount. Would it be in Bay Village? Could the East Side be a better fit?? Adam Bechler, born and raised in Parma, decided upon the intersection of Ridge and Snow Roads. The area has not seen a full service salon that was this chic and yet practical.

Now going on it's third year and under new management, the place has a brand new feel, and a great deal of credit for that goes to Salon Manager Brandie Shackelton; her energy is felt from the moment you walk into the salon. Professionally trained staff make you feel comfortable and hip. This is definitely not the salon of the past. Stylist's work stations are amply arranged in this large room that opens up with high ceilings and a "hollywood" feel. Full salon services are available, including airbrush makeup to give you that glamorous look once reserved only for movie stars!

Bridal packages allow you to bring the Bride and her party for a hair and make up session that will truly add to her big day. A catered breakfast with



fresh fruit and mimosas will start you off with marking the special occasion. Plenty of parking at the rear of the building for limos to whisk you away...letting Savvy do the work while you relax!

If you would like to support local

business, this savvy situation is for you! Located at 5784 Ridge Road in Parma with new convenient hours and specials. Call 440-842-6256 for an appointment, or visit them on the web at www.thesavvysalon.com

When It Rains....You'd Better Have An Umbrella!

by Craig Czepczynski

An umbrella policy can offer you the peace of mind that one needs in today's highly litigious society. Since writing an insurance article in an earlier edition of The Parma Observer, I have received several questions which I am all too happy to answer. A personal umbrella policy protects the insured for any liability issues above and beyond your policy limits for your auto, home, boat, business, etc. This type of coverage, like most insurance policies, offer several different options...thus no two company's policies are alike. Some include defense costs, some do not. Others may have a retention (deductible) while others have none. Examples of people who should consider a liability umbrella policy include: households with youthful drivers, people who need to protect their savings or nest egg, and business owners in general. A qualified insurance agent can help you assess the situation. If you have any questions, please contact craig@fourstarinsurance.com

Parma Education

EL/CIVICS STUDENTS EXCEL

by Kelly Cooper

The Parma ABLE (Adult Basic and Literacy Education) Program has earned an Exemplary rating from the state of Ohio for the fourth year in a row!! This award-winning program serves the community well by preparing adults to transition to post-secondary education/training and employment. GED Test Preparation classes, Success Workshops, and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes are offered to assist adults in making a smooth transition. This year, an exciting new facet, the EL/Civics Program, has been added for adult ESOL students. The new EL/Civics Program is funded through a state and federal grant. The program provides a wonderful opportunity for adult ESOL students to practice their English in authentic ways. Students are involved in classroom conversations to



help improve their speaking and listening skills and their reading and writing skills. There is also a focus on improving student technology skills through

project-based activities completed in the computer labs. Community field trips provide hands-on experience in learning about US customs, government, history, safety, and health care. Volunteering in the community is also a vital part of this unique program. The FREE EL/Civics classes are held in a relaxed atmosphere and have been very successful as students improve not only their English skills, but also skills that will help them understand more about America and everything associated with living and working in this great country. EL/Civics student, Constancia Scharff, states, “Adults of different nationalities come to the EL/Civics class to learn about the United States of America, to learn to speak English and to prepare for the US Citizenship Test.” John Covic, “Enjoys learning about the history and government of our country and feels this class will help improve many stu-

dents’ English skills which will help them find jobs.” Lena Westfall said she is very grateful and shared, “I have learned a lot of information about America and felt the state research project was very interesting.” Maryann Bilska likes to come to class because she has fun and is improving her English at the same time. She is learning about America, its cultures and traditions. Andrii Samar enjoys coming to the EL/Civics class because it has helped improve his skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking English and has helped him discover many new and interesting details about the USA. Zeina Nader enjoys the new friends she has made in the EL/Civics class as they all learn to write and speak English while learning about America. There are three convenient locations offering the free EL/Civics classes for adults:

- * CCPL Parma-Ridge Branch 5850 Ridge Road on Wednesday mornings
Instructor: Debbie Holley, Assistant: Mary Kay Chambers, Computer Instructor: Gene Zayac
- * Valley Forge High School 9999 Independence Blvd. on Wednesday evenings
Instructor: Kelly Cooper, Assistant: Regina Krysiak, Computer Instructor: Gene Zayac
- * Merrick House-West 3167 Fulton Road on Tuesday and Thursday mornings
Instructor: Christine Lee, Assistant: Mary Kay Chambers, Computer Instructor: Gene Zayac If you are interested in participating in an EL/Civics class, please call (440) 885-4877.



Parma CS ABLE Provides GED Program

by Karen Velbeck

The Parma City School District is designated as an Official GED Test Center by the Ohio Department of Education. The General Educational Development (GED) Test provides many adults who did not finish high school an opportunity to earn an Ohio High School Equivalence Diploma. Like a regular high school diploma, the GED diploma gives the diploma holder the opportunity to obtain employment, to apply for career advancement, to pursue higher education goals, or to reach a personal goal. Approximately 18% of Ohio’s population who are 25 years and older are without a high school diploma. The Official GED Test is offered approximately six times each month at five area locations. The Parma GED Test Center administered 710 tests in 2009, 712 in 2008, and 587 in 2007. Already this year, 102 tests have been administered. Many adults take the GED Practice Test prior to taking the Official GED Test. The practice test is administered regularly at eight area locations. This test is structured exactly as the Official GED Test except that the Official Test has twice the number of questions. The results of

the practice test are an indication as to the readiness of the prospective examinees to take the Official GED Test. The GED Practice Test is provided through Parma City Schools District’s Adult Basic Literacy and Education (ABLE) Grant, and thus, is offered free of charge to adults in the community. The Parma ABLE Grant also provides quality educational programming for adults as they strive to reach their goals in their roles as learners, family members, citizens, and workers. GED Test Preparation classes are offered at six area locations. The five content areas of Language Arts – Reading, Language Arts – Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies are included in the GED curriculum. In addition to this core curriculum, this year a GED-IT class is being offered. This class provides supplemental information to the GED Test Preparation class. Technology skills are integrated into this curriculum thus empowering students with the skills necessary to be successful as they transition to post secondary and/or employment after achieving their GED credentials. As noted by Lynn

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Families And Schools Together

“Families and Schools Together, F-A-S-T” is a song that frequently echoes through many of the Parma City School District’s elementary school hallways.

For the past ten years the Parma City School District has been fortunate to be able to offer Families and Schools Together (F.A.S.T.) to numerous families throughout our community. Families and Schools Together is a prevention program that encourages interaction and communication between families, their community and their school. It is an eight week program that offers relationship and skill building activities in a fun and energetic environment. With today’s families’ busy schedules F.A.S.T allows one night a week of dedicated “family time” that includes a family meal.

Families and Schools Together program is grant funded through the Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County. F.A.S.T. is a special program because it is offered in very few communities throughout Cuyahoga County and Parma is fortunate to be one of those communities. F.A.S.T is currently offered at Hanna Elementary, Thoreau Park Elementary, Ridgebrook Elementary, Parma Park Elementary,

State Road Elementary and Parkview First Step Preschool.

Over the past ten years Parma City School District has graduated over 1,000 families from the F.A.S.T program. Families and Schools Together has been so important to the families in our community because it has opened up communication between the family and school, strengthened child/parent relationships and focused on parent empowerment. Due to the F.A.S.T program parents and children have developed strong friendships and continued those relationships long after the program has ended. Parents feel more comfortable getting involved in their child’s school and feel more connected to their community. Children’s behaviors have also improved both at school and at home.

FASTWORKS is a continuation of F.A.S.T that keeps families connected after the program has ended. FASTWORKS allows families to stay connected by providing family based activities coordinated by F.A.S.T. parents.

If you would like to learn more about the F.A.S.T program or would like to come and observe a session please contact one of the F.A.S.T school sites.

Parma Schools



Asset Corner #5

by Gene Lovasy

Developmental Assets - 40 in 8 Categories: The more assets kids have the more likely they will be to thrive and avoid at-risk behaviors.

The months of November and April are when we focus our attention on the EMPOWERMENT asset category. If you recall from the November column, the point was made that....

Feeling valued and appreciated is important to all of us. For young people, this means feeling safe and believing they're liked and respected. These feelings can go a long way toward empowering children and youth. Providing opportunities and recognizing accomplishments helps young people build self-esteem. This in turn, gives them the confidence to share their ideas, knowledge, and creativity by volunteering and working in paid jobs. By paying attention to young people, you show that you value them.

Research shows the more young people are valued and feel valuable, the

more likely they are to grow up healthy and avoid risky behaviors, such as alcohol and other drug use, violence, and early sexual activity.

- Empowerment Assets are:**
- # 7. Community Values Youth
 - # 8. Youth as Resources
 - # 9. Service to Others
 - #10. Safety

Tips for building these assets:

It's not always easy to know what it takes for young people to feel empowered. Sometimes young people doubt themselves or don't feel valued despite the good intentions of and recognition from caring adults. Communicate with young people openly and honestly about relationships, politics, religion, and other serious issues. Young people need to know that their questions and concerns are valid and important.

Also try this....

In your home and family: Empower your child by providing

choices. Have regular family meetings to plan, solve problems, and encourage one another. Rotate who leads the meetings.

In your neighborhood and community: Get involved in the community and advocate for developing meaningful opportunities for young people, such as volunteer projects and civic activities.

In your school or youth program: Take a field trip to a nursing home or senior housing complex. Have students and group members perform a concert, and afterwards talk to residents and learn about their present situations, as well as their

past. Ask participants to send thank you notes to the residents they met. Also encourage the young people to discuss what they learned from their visit and what they contributed to the lives of the residents.

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.

Parma CS ABLE Provides GED Program

continued from page 6

Stutzman, a GED instructor, "Adult learning programs are essential for individuals needing the services available through ABLE. Students attending GED classes are seeking the guidance to complete or continue their education." When speaking with these adult students, Shannon Pelsnik a GED Examiner finds much to respect. "Examinees tell me how hard they

have been studying and share with me their test preparation strategies; their determination and perseverance are so admirable. It is so commendable that I question if I were put in their place, would I hold such qualities." The Parma ABLE GED students are dedicated to lifelong learning, and it is a pleasure to assist in their learning. For more information, please contact 440-887-4877.



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Parma Life

Sports And Their Place In My Life

by Joseph Finding

My name is Joe Finding. I'm 70 years old, and I live on Pinegrove Ave. in Parma with my wife of 47 years. I was a Councilman in Ward 1, and three years ago I retired from teaching and coaching sports after 46 years. Needless to say, sports have been a dynamic part of my life, and are a major facet of what has shaped me as a person. I believe that my lifelong involvement with sports has opened doors and led to experiences that I may never have had otherwise.

I grew up on the Westside of Cleveland and attended St. Colman's Grade School on West 65th. and Madison. Our Monsignor did not believe in sports, so we had none at school. My first learning experiences involving sports all took place in the red brick alley between West 83rd. and West 85th. Streets. All of the neighborhood kids played just about every game there was there, and back then most parents came to watch and cheer us on. Looking back now. those were great times; it's hard to explain just how it was, but I wish that young people today had a chance to experience what it was like in those days.

When I was in grade school I was much bigger than most of the other kids; I must have inherited my genes from

my grandparents, because by the sixth grade I had outgrown both of my parents. By the eighth grade I was five foot ten, one hundred eighty five pounds, and shaving! I never played in an organized game with equipment until the Ninth Grade at St. Edwards. While there I played football and was on their very first wrestling team. I transferred to St. John Cantius, and as luck would have it, one time during a game there were scouts from Kent State University, and afterwards they offered me a scholarship, which I accepted. I attended KSU for four years, playing football, and also wrestling for two years. One of my teammates was Lou Holtz, and three of my coaches went on to positions for the Bengals, the Colts, and the Lions. I graduated from KSU in 1961 with a B.S. Degree. I started a career of teaching and coaching that lasted for forty six years. During my years of teaching, I went back to school and earned my Masters of Education Degree in 1967. Some schools that I coached at were West Tech., Charles Eliot, John Adams, Collinwood, Brecksville, North Royalton, Normandy, Valley Forge, and Parma High. I have donated countless coaching hours to Catholic Grade Schools.

I have been actively involved with



Joe the Coach

sports for as long as I can remember, but I have always kept sports in their proper place; sports are a major part of my life, but they do not rule my life. Sports on video games played on television are a waste of time and will not improve skills. Young people should get outside and play these games, learning the "ins and outs". I think that it would be a real shame if we lost sports

in schools because of a failure to pass these levies- it's really up to the parents now. What do you think? I would love to hear from people about their thoughts concerning sports. What do you like? What do you dislike? How about High School Championships? How about College sports? How about anything related to sports at all? Contact me at- coachjoe61@cox.net

Tri-C West Hosts County-Wide Traditional Memorial Day Observance

by Randi Hansen

Bring your family and honor our servicemen in a county-wide traditional observance of

Memorial Day on the Cuyahoga Community College Western Campus. Gather on Sunday, May 30, from 11 a.m.- 1 p.m. at the Veter-

ans Memorial Gardens located on the western side of campus for an event to honor all veterans who have served our country.

The observance will include a parade, military displays, family activities and a free All-American hot dog buffet. Following the parade, a special remembrance ceremony honoring our nation's fallen heroes and Gold Star families will feature local dignitaries and Retired United States Army Lieutenant General Robert W. Wagner as the keynote speaker.

archives inside the College. The Crile Archives is a repository of 20th century military history containing documents, artifacts and oral histories of the veterans of WW I, WW II, the Korean war and the Vietnam war. The most recent additions to the collection are a POW archive, and photos and documents from nurses and African American veterans.

The Memorial Day observance is being co-sponsored by Tri-C in partnership with Busch Funeral and Crematory Services and the Memorial Day Association of Greater Cleveland.

Free parking is available in the B lot near the event.

Tri-C West Theatre Announces Performance Dates for "Into the Woods"

by Randi Hansen

Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) Western Campus Theatre Department performs its spring production, Into the Woods, April 23-24, 28-30, and May 1 at 8 p.m. and April 25 and May 2 at 2 p.m. in the Western Campus Theatre located in the T building at 11000 Pleasant Valley Road in Parma.

Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's amazing musical intertwines the stories of the Brothers Grimm fairy tales, Jack and the Beanstalk, Rapunzel, Cinderella, and others into a cautionary tale of what can happen when you obtain your heart's desire. For more information, please call 216-987-5536. General admission is \$10, students, seniors and staff are \$8, and Tri-C students are admitted free with a valid Tri-C student ID. Group rates are



available for parties of 10 or more.

Parking is available in the B lot (enter via Pleasant Valley). All other lots will require permits— parking costs \$1 for a two-hour time block in designated visitor lots on each Tri-C campus, or a hangtag permit can be purchased for 75 cents.

For more information, contact Fred Gloor: 216-987-5536 or Fred.Gloor@tri-c.edu.



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Parma Heights

A Victim Twice?

by Jim Griffith

You have returned home from a night out. You just paid big bucks for a good dinner and a bad movie. As you pull into your driveway, you notice your front door is open. You were sure you had closed it when you left, so you approach with a quizzical look on your face. As you walk up to the front door you notice the door has been kicked in. You immediately call the police. You find that all of your jewelry and credit cards are missing from the drawer in your bedroom. The police officers take the information and they tell you they will get back to you. The next day somebody tries to use one of your stolen credit cards at Parmatown Mall. The store calls the police, they arrive and find all of your jewelry in a book bag the bad guys is carrying. The police photograph the items and give them back to you. In the end, all is good. You were a victim. The system worked the way it designed; to help a victim get their life back into order as soon as possible, with as little disruption in their life as possible.

There are a percentage of crime victims that claim to be victimized twice. To illustrate their dilemma, we only need to make one change in that perfect scenario. When the police arrest the thief, they find pawn shop tickets in his bag. The bad guy pawned your jewelry the night before. If you were to go to the pawn shop to claim your items, a vast majority of pawn shops would not return your stolen items to you without you paying for them. You would literally have to buy your own stolen items back from the pawn shop. The police cannot force the pawn shop to turn over the stolen items back to you. State law allows an exemption to pawn shops when it come receiving stolen property. How does a pawn shop operate under Ohio law? When a person comes into a pawn shop to pawn an item, they must present a valid ID that the shop must document. When an item is pawned, a pawn shop cannot do anything with that item for 14 days. After 14 days the item is available for resale. If an item is identified as stolen, the police department can request the pawn shop hold the items until the investigation is complete. After the investigation is complete, the hold is removed from the items and they are available for resale. At any time the items are on hold, the victim may come in and purchase the items. After the hold is removed, the items can be sold to anybody. Pawn shops are the only entity in the state of Ohio that can legally hold your stolen items and not return them. Most people are unaware of this until they are a victim. When they try to claim their own personal property and are unable to get it, they feel victimized again and feel the system is working against them and not for them. Pawn shops, on the other hand, can justify their actions. They argue that the cost of doing business would be cost prohibitive if they continually lost the money that was paid to the thief who had

pawned the items. They say they need a remedy to get their investment back and holding the items for purchase by the owner guarantees they do not lose their investment. They state that without the guarantee, the loss of money would result in much higher costs, and prices that would put a lot of stores out of business or keep prices too high to make the items attractive. Where you land in this debate is almost directly related to whether you have ever been victimized before. People who have never experienced the pains of being victimized can understand the logic the store employs when explaining their policies. Those who have been victimized can understand the frustration and feeling of helplessness as you attempt to put your life back in order

and roadblocks are stopping you from making yourself whole. There have been several attempts by members of the Ohio Legislature to ban the practice of making victims buy their own property back, but every bill introduced in the last decade has died in committee and never made it to the floor. The usual explanation for this is the fact that the pawn shops have powerful lobbyists who have influenced enough house and senate members to keep those bills from getting to the floor for a vote. The most often offered solution has been the concept of making the pawn shops a victim in the theft so that they could also prosecute and attempt to get the money back through the courts. Anybody familiar with the court system knows this would

be very time consuming for the pawn shops. Realistically, the shops will only see restitution 50% of the time. The shops do not consider this a very good option or business practice. Is the way a pawn shop operates a good business practice? Are there certain times when property rights need to take a backseat to business practices? Do the business owners have the right to protect themselves from being a victim? These are hard questions. Perhaps being aware of the process will help you should you become a crime victim someday. Perhaps it is a system you want to question prior to being a victim. Perhaps it is a system that makes sense to you. Like so many other issues we deal with on a daily basis, you decide.

Parma Heights Historical Society To Form Centennial Committee



by Jim Griffith

The Parma Heights Historical Society is forming a Centennial Com-

Do You Have What It Takes To Be The Next Parma Area Idol?

continued from page 1

Jovi, Kiss, Joan Jett, Peter Citara, and also managed the band “Cleveland”. They are each highly qualified and really have their work cut out for them. Not only will the winner receive bragging rights as the “Parma Area Idol” making appearances at other local events, but they will also receive a \$200 Cash Prize and the chance to record a “demo CD” at Advanced Audio Design Studio. “We hope family and friends will also come out to lend their support with posters and lots of cheering for their favorite.” Applications along with the Rules and Regulations are available in the Chamber Office or call 440-886-1700. FREE passes are also available.

mittee in celebration of the 100th birthday of the City of Parma Heights. This will take place during the summer of 2011. If you are interested in getting involved in planning events for the centennial, please contact Jim Griffith at 440-886-4934 or email jgriffith@parmaheightshistoricalsociety.org

with your contact information. It will not be necessary for anybody to join the historical society if they would like to be on the committee. This is a stand alone effort with the only goal being a well planned and presented event to celebrate the city’s milestone.



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Parma Observer

Founding of Parma Historical Marker Unveiling Ceremony

by Laura Watson

Thanks to the initiative and hard work of Parma City Councilman Sean Brennan, a dedication ceremony will be conducted for a new historical marker denoting the birthplace of Parma. It will be held on April 22nd near the corner of Pearl and Ridge Roads, the site where the city was born. Benajah and Ruth Wilcox Fay and their ten children left New York and came to Ohio, where on March 7th, 1826, they represented the first settlers of Greenbriar, later to be named Parma. Located on the wagon trail connecting Cleveland and Columbus, their log cabin grew into the well-known Benajah Fay Inn, Parma's first business establishment. Unfortunately, since 1826, there has been no marker to designate this spot as the birthplace of Parma until Mr. Brennan, with approval from the Ohio Historical Society, sought donations to purchase the beautiful "Ohio Historical Marker" that is pictured below. Thanks to the generosity of many Parma citizens via

the Community School Business partnership (CBS), the Parma Education Association and the Parma Board of Education, Councilman Brennan was able to solicit enough funds not only for the marker, but also for a park bench located near the same location. On April 22nd, at 6:00 p.m., there will be an unveiling ceremony which will include a relative of the Fay family and many notable city dignitaries such as Mayor Dean Depiero, the American Legion, Ohio Historical Society representatives and Parma city councilpersons. Additionally, Dr. Sarah Zatik will be speaking on behalf of the Parma City School District and CBS. PEA President, Maureen Neville will also be speaking on behalf of the Parma teachers who so generously donated to this long overdue project. A band will be playing the "Star Spangled Banner" and a couple of Parma students will be giving a brief historical narrative of Parma as well as noting why public education has been so important in the development of our



democratic nation. It is hoped that this ceremony will showcase the quality of both the City of Parma and the Parma City School District.

Christian Values + Fashion + Problem Solving = Holy Family School Fashion Show

by Michele Bizzi

Fashion and the spirit of cooperation filled the halls of Holy Family School to close our week long celebration of Catholic Schools Week. Students from grades Kindergarten through eighth participated in our annual Newspaper Fashion Show. A fashion show, even one using newspaper may not be unique, but at Holy Family School our take on it is exceptional.

Students at HFS used their problem solving skills to design a fashion to wear within a forty minute time limit. Cooperation skills based in their Christian values was put to the test since the students had to complete their outfits while also helping others in their class. Added to the challenge at hand, our upper classmen at Holy Family School serve as mentors for the younger students. They not only completed their fashion within their time limit, they also assisted the younger grades in creating their outfits. "It was the perfect ending to our Catholic Schools Week – having fun while helping others", said Ali Smith, 8th grade student.

All of their hard work culminated



Holy Family School students participating in the annual Newspaper Fashion Show

in a school wide fashion show where each class had the opportunity to strut their stuff and hard work on the gym floor turned cat walk. Guest judges were on hand to select the winning classrooms from the elementary, middle and junior high school grades. All of the newspaper was promptly sent to the Holy Family recycle bins located on the campus grounds.

Holy Family School is committed to building a better world where Christ's love can take root... One student at time.

\Holy Family School, 7637 York Road, Parma, Ohio 44130, Contact: Mrs. Holly Benkner, Art Teacher, 440-842-7785

Dump No Waste, Drains to Creek

continued from page 1

Big Creek and West Creek watersheds, meaning most of our storm water ultimately ends up in Big Creek or West Creek, then the Cuyahoga River and, finally, Lake Erie. Nonpoint sources are more difficult to control and eliminate, so that is why a joint effort by businesses, industries, and citizens is necessary.


As councilman for Ward Two of Parma, over the past two year I have partnered my Parma Municipal Court District juvenile diversion community service group with the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District to paint storm drains in Parma's Ward Two with the following stencil: "Dump No Waste – Drains to Creek." We have also delivered information to residents regarding the program. Our hope has been to raise awareness about the dangers of dumping wastes into the storm drains.

This year make it a point to join with your neighbors and discuss the



issue of storm drain pollution and take steps such as not dumping grass, household hazardous products and pet droppings into storm drains, sweeping excess fertilizer from your sidewalk and driveway, etc. If you are interested in coordinating a storm drain stenciling program in your neighborhood contact Amy Roskilly at Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District at (216) 524-6584, extension 22.

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Parma Seniors

Caregiver's Kitchen: No-Time, No-Energy Meals

by *Patty Knox*

Let's face it. Our world revolves around the person we are caring for, and we need some down time just to stay 'up' for them. So, instead of cooking three suppers three nights in a row, cook once and take two nights off. Reheating no longer requires me to put the spurs to the Revereware & create more dirty pots and pans. God bless the inventor of the microwave!

Here's how: You only need one large sauté pan and one gallon pot. Brown 3 pounds (or less, if you're not big meat-eaters) of ground beef & one large diced onion in pan. Season liberally to taste while cooking with salt, pepper, and either Worcestershire sauce or a few drops of Maggi. Pour off

grease and set aside in a bowl to cool. This will be divided into three parts. (If you want to jazz it up, you can use the beef-pork-veal meatloaf mix instead.)

Now, our three one-bowl meals are Shepherd's Pie, Johnny Marcetti, and Ground Beef Stroganoff.

The longest to cook is the Marcetti, to get the fresh carrots soft. They add amazing flavor, so it's worth it! Pour one can of diced tomatoes with garlic, basil and oregano into pan and set on medium low to simmer. Add tomato juice or tomato paste and water to make a soup-like consistency. Add a splash of balsamic vinegar for depth of flavor. Slice carrots on the diagonal into thin ovals and put into tomato mixture. Dice other vegetables

as desired, including two stalks celery, ½ a green pepper, 1 small zucchini, and anything else you fancy. Leave out what you don't like. Simmer veggies for about ten minutes, or 'til soft and easily chewable.

While that's working, boil up a bag of egg noodles in a big pot of salted water, regular or no-yolk as desired. Half will be used for the Stroganoff, half for the Marcetti. Don't overcook them, or they will be limp and disgusting! Just cook 'til slightly chewy, drain and rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process.

Meanwhile, set out two storage bowls (roughly quart-size) and place 1/3 of meat in tomato mixture pan, 1/3 in one bowl, and 1/3 in the other bowl. For the Stroganoff: Mix one can of cream of mushroom soup, a small can of sliced mushrooms, and a pint of sour cream, plus ¼ teaspoon black or white pepper. Stir. Add in egg noodles & stir again. It's ready.

Now, for the Shepherd's Pie: Make mashed potatoes using 2% milk for the total amount of liquid called for on the box. Use Molly McButter or Butter Buds to substitute for margarine or butter. Great flavor, no guilt! Add a couple of dashes of Jane's Krazy Mixed-Up Salt, worth hunting down at the grocery store. It makes anything bland taste SO much better. Mix one can of creamed corn into meat, top with mashed potatoes. Let cool, then cover.

Last of all, let's finish up the Marcetti to eat tonight. Toss the noodles into the simmering soupy tomato, veggie and meat mixture to warm slightly, dish out and serve with a bowl and a spoon. Add a beverage, some bread, the

nightly meds, turn on some Brahms or Mozart, scoop out a little bowl of ice cream or sherbet for dessert, and enjoy dinner WITH your cared-for, instead of hopping up and down, for a change!

Each entrée will provide four meals. Refrigerate or freeze as you like (although sour cream doesn't like to be frozen; it separates). Reheat individual portions to serve for about two minutes in the microwave; if needed, keep adding 30 seconds to the reheating time until barely hot. Do not overheat! Stir food before serving to your cared-for, as microwaved food tends to harbor hot spots that can burn their mouth. Better safe than sorry.

If you would like to join some other caregivers for a free dinner, Nancy Taurino at Mount Royal Villa in North Royalton has contacted me to share her invitation of a monthly free meal. This month's dinner speaker is addressing the topic of how to avoid caregiver burnout on April 28th at 4:30 p.m. RSVP by Friday, Apr. 23 to (440) 237-7966. Nancy would love to hear from you to answer any further questions. Arrange for respite care now, & take a couple hours off to be good to yourself! It will be a joy to meet other caregivers like yourself. I hope to meet you there. You will return to your cared-for refreshed in mind and spirit. The price is right. And doesn't food usually taste better (at least psychologically) when someone else cooks it?

Keep those emails coming! Write with your questions, concerns, comments, & info to share to alzheimerrannie@yahoo.com and thank you for reading the Parma Observer. Have a great April!

Distinguished Achievement Hall Of Fame Inaugural Induction Ceremony Thursday, April 22, 2010

by *Millissa Manco*

Please join the Normandy High School Alumni Association on Thursday, April 22, 2010 to celebrate the many successes of its former graduates and inaugural inductees into the NHS Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame celebration will be held at Normandy High School beginning at 6:00pm. Tickets are \$18.00 and include dinner and refreshments. Please call (440) 885-2400 for additional information.



photo by Ivor Karabatkovic

by *Lisa Draganic* IT'S TRIBE TIME!!! Join us for our annual Seven Hills Community Night at Progressive Field – Indians –vs– Cincinnati Reds on Saturday, May 22, 2010 – first pitch is 7:05 p.m. Lower Reserve Seats (section 125) - \$18. Limited tickets – going fast... Call Lisa Draganic @ 216-525-6227 for more information or to reserve your tickets. Deadline for sale of tickets is April 21st.

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Parma Observer's Back Page

The Right Time To Do The Right Thing

continued from page 1

problem; why didn't I take the time to properly arm myself with the information which may have led me to vote more wisely? After all, the problems with certain elected officials all over our county occurred mostly because we as voters failed to field better candidates from our community in the first place, and put them in positions where they knew they would be scrutinized closely and held to tight standards set by us, the people who put them there.

If that may seem a bit too simplistic to some, let's not forget that this is the simple way in which our government is supposed to work. What good is representative government if the representatives don't at all feel obliged to the voters? When society feels that wealth and the influence money can buy is the most important thing, then naturally the current state of politics is an accurate reflection. Take a good look. Our job as voters is to make sure that our chosen officials know that if they choose to act in any other interest besides our own, then they will most definitely be replaced. This is still the only real way to ensure that decent people go in and decent people come out, instead of you know what!

When we do not take care to see that our role is filled, then politicians are only so happy to make their own rules, and our institutions will suffer, as they have. We can lay the blame



Parma's Mayor Dean DePiero addresses the need to pass these levies.

wherever we choose- you, me, them, us, politicians, etc.: one fact remains absolutely certain, and that is whomever or whatever is at fault, it is most definitely not the children. Quite frankly, these children don't even fully realize just how much is at stake here, in our near future as well as their not-really-all-that-far off future. We obviously find ourselves painted into one nasty corner here. Somehow, even though Forbes Magazine has recently listed us as one of the best cities in which to raise a child, we have a school system that is teetering on the verge of financial takeover by the state. However this may have occurred, we shouldn't spend too much time on blame, but more rather we should make certain that this situation never occurs again, and this will obviously require a

much more vigilant Public.

There is a popular habit to denounce government out of hand, and to disrespect anything public, suggesting instead that private market forces always do a better job of managing more effectively, but I disagree and will point out that if this were true, then the near collapse of our financial system would never have occurred. We actually need a better balance between what should be private and what should be public. Truth is, the same corruption that nearly brought down the banks is the same corruption that has so tarnished our political institutions. These people did not appear from some other world: they came from our families, schools, and churches. The only difference is that in Business, shareholders decide

their fate, while in the Public, voters hold that essential responsibility.

Many will hope for a leader who "makes us feel good about ourselves again". I think that the way to feel good about ourselves is to know that we did the right thing at the right time, and the right thing to do at this time is to vote yes on both the renewal levy for the schools as well as the emergency levy. We need to make sure that we retain control of our schools and not the state. We also need to make sure that as voters we are selecting candidates who have demonstrated talent, competence, and honesty- not someone who "we'd like to have a beer with"!

Even though it seems as if it's taking forever, you know that sooner or later the economy will improve, and banks will again increase lending to homebuyers. When that time comes, whether our community will be seen as a good place to buy a home or not will depend on this levy vote, as will so many other factors which define the essence of our community. I completely agreed with Mayor DePiero when he spoke at the Press Conference of the Three Mayors and said " This is the most significant levy vote for the next ten years". In 2020 I hope that we can say that we as voters rose to the occasion. You may think that you can not afford it, but upon examination, you will find that you definitely can't afford the alternative. This is the right time to do the right thing.



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