

“ Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel” - Samuel Johnson

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Mayor Elect Timothy DeGeeter Sits Down With The Observer At The Blue Line

by Daniel P. McCarthy,

On November 26, 2011, mayor-elect Tim DeGeeter honored my request to meet for an interview at the Blue Line Bar & Grill in Parma. One of the first things that he said which struck me as very poignant was that " Mayor Depiero has paved a nice road for the city; our goal is to put in sidewalks". What follows is the interview, with the questions asked, and his direct response to them. This is the first of what I hope will be many interviews of the new Mayor and other city officials by the Parma Observer.

Q- What will the top priorities be, and what can Parma citizens expect from the DeGeeter Administration?

A- Residents can expect open and innovative government in which they will be encouraged to participate. Our immediate priorities will be economic development/ job creation and fiscal fitness for the City. We will be facing budgetary challenges and want to be as pro-active as possible in saving money where we can. Our goals include maintaining safe neighborhoods, quality of life in general and addressing ongoing storm flooding issues.

Q- That leads to our next question: One of the more pressing issues that received a great deal of attention dur-



Mayor-Elect Tim Degeeter at the Blue Line Bar & Grill on November 26th.

ing 2011 has been storm surge flooding throughout the city: what plans and ideas do you have to deal with this serious problem?

A- I know that residents are concerned about this long-standing problem, and as a Parma homeowner, I understand their frustration. Last year, I had water issues, not to the level some residents have experienced, and had to get part of my house waterproofed. We continue to work with the County with focus on storm maintenance, developing a communications plan when flooding occurs, and are open

to additional ideas to solve this problem.

Q- The subject of forming a charter has long been discussed in Parma: What are your thoughts on this?

A- I am obviously aware there is a group of individuals collecting signatures to place this issue on the ballot, and it is clearly their right to do so. My main focus, however, is currently working to transition from the legislative branch to the executive branch, serving as the next mayor. I have spoken to many residents, and their main issues continue to be economic development and jobs, safe neighborhoods, and quality city services.

Q-When you first moved to Parma many years ago, did you ever have a vision of one day being Mayor?

A- I served as a City Councilman and currently serve Parma as its state representative. In my elected offices, I have always tried to be part of making Parma a safe and proud city in which to live, work, and raise a family. As the next mayor, my role for the City has become one of increasing responsibility. it is a responsibility I embrace and take very seriously. (We'll take

that as a YES)

Q- Having been a City Council Representative yourself, you have a personal glimpse into that body. With that in mind, how do you intend to work with the city council to help implement your vision for your first term as Mayor?

A- It is important to work closely with the City Council because we share a common goal- the health of the City of Parma. During this transition period, I have met individually with each council member and continue to dialogue with them. I am confident that all of Council and I will aggressively work together to be on the same page to achieve growth

and stability for the City.

Q- Can you identify any existing issues or situation which you have definite plans to deal with as soon as you are sworn in to office?

A- I have been talking with and listening to local business leaders and elected officials seeking input on how collectively we can move Parma forward. Additionally, I have met with over 14 area mayors and our County Executive. I have ideas about making the city more technologically responsive to both residents and business needs. The importance of small business to the city can't be

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Parma Mayor Appointed To Hospital Foundation Board Of Trustees

by Jack Marschall

Parma Mayor Dean DePiero has been appointed to a three-year term on the Parma Hospital Health Care Foundation Board of Trustees. "My goal in public service has always been to try and make a positive difference," said Mayor DePiero. "It is an honor for me to be given a similar opportunity with an outstanding group of people at one of the region's top hospitals serving the needs of northeast Ohioans."

As stated on its website, the Parma Hospital Health Care Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that supports Parma Hospital's mission to care for community health through philanthropy. The Hospital and the Foundation understand that caring for community health is a holistic process that neither begins nor ends with the Hospital. For this reason, the Foundation supports the philosophy of comprehensive health care within and beyond the hospital, fulfilling unmet needs and supporting innovations in health



care, healing and wellness.

"It goes without saying how excited I am with the addition of Mayor DePiero to our Board," said Foundation Executive Director Marcia Ferguson. "New trustees bring with them new ideas and that is certainly true of Mayor DePiero and our other outstanding board members."

The Hospital Foundation's major funds include: Behavioral Center (Mental Health Care), Breast Cancer Care, Cancer Care, Charity Care, ElderCare, Heart Care, Home Health Care, Hospice Care, Nursing Education, Patient Care Units - Healing Environment, Rehabilitative Care and Spiritual Care.

Parma Heights Tree Lighting Ceremony Set For December 4

by Mike Byrne

Parma Heights will officially light-up for the holiday season on Sunday, December 4, at 5:00 p.m. as city officials flick the switch at the official tree lighting ceremony. Residents, business owners and the community-at-large are all invited to the gazebo in the Greenbrier Commons to take part in the event.

Santa will be making a special appearance to visit with the children and everyone is invited to take part in caroling. According to city Recreation Director Tom Moran, students from the Valley Forge High School and Holy Name High School music departments will be on hand to provide the music and lead the caroling.

In keeping with the generous spirit of the season, local businesses Wonder Hostess and Howard's Jewelry Center stepped-in with donations for the event. Parma Heights Food Pantry donations will be accepted.

Parma Business

The President's Corner

by Sean Brennan,
Parma City Council President

As President of Parma City Council, one of my priorities has been to inform the community about the make-up, procedures and initiatives of Parma City Council. This article represents the latest in a series in which I will provide you, the reader, with a monthly glimpse into your local government.

Over the years, one of the most frustrating complaints I receive is when a resident hires an unregistered building contractor who does shoddy work. Therefore, this month I would like to inform you about the importance of hiring only contractors that are registered with the City of Parma.

Let me begin by sharing two stories with two different outcomes. The first was when a resident on Essen Avenue hired a building contractor to complete several major repairs on her home. She provided several thousand dollars as a down payment, but the contractor soon disappeared. When the resident contacted me for help, I immediately wanted to know if the contractor was registered with the City of Parma. Unfortunately, they were not and, despite several attempts by the resident, the Building Commissioner and myself to find the contractor, they could not be located.



Parma City Council President Sean P. Brennan

The second was a senior citizen on Forest Avenue who called me to share that the contractor she hired to paint her home did a poor job. I visited and agreed that it was definitely substandard. However, in this instance the resident had hired a registered contractor. So, I called the owner of the company and demanded the resident's money back. In less than a week, a check was delivered to me, which I happily delivered to the resident. She then hired another registered contractor and her home is beautiful once again.

Parma code section 1501.36 requires that all building contractors, both large and small, be registered with

the City in order to conduct business here. Although this process admittedly does add to the cost of doing business, it is intended to and does protect residents. The process, in a sense, creates a system of checks and balances in which contractors will complete work to the resident's liking. A dishonest contractor can lose their license to do business in Parma, which, given the size of our city, could be devastating to a company. Therefore, it behooves the contractor to do good work.

Grandma Brennan used to say, "If it is too good to be true, it is." Therefore, if someone posing as a contractor comes to your door offering to complete a job at a price that is extremely low, beware. Always ensure that a potential contractor is registered with the City. You can verify this by call the City of Parma Building Department at 440-885-8032. This simple task could save you thousands of dollars and will ensure good work.

To find out more about the City of Parma Building Department, visit www.cityofparma-oh.gov. There you will find information such as contractor requirements and a list of jobs requiring permits, among other important information. The site also allows one to print building permit applications from the convenience of your home.

I hope that you find my column helpful and informative. I am always looking for ideas regarding what you would like to know more about regarding your local government. Thank you to the many folks who have contacted me with suggestions. If you have any suggestions, feel free to contact me at (440) 885-8091 or councilmanbrennan@sbcglobal.net. Best wishes for a beautiful Holiday Season!



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Mayor Elect Timothy DeGeeter Sits Down With The Observer For Some Q And As

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overstated and should not be underestimated. We all need to work together, and I hope that residents and business owners will be able to experience positive changes in the way the city works. Specific examples include expanding upon and enhancing the city website to allow for on-line registration for recreation programs, initiating a monthly e-mail newsletter, and utilizing social media tools to stay connected to residents and businesses.

Q-It is no secret that as Publisher of the Parma Observer, I have stated

in no uncertain terms that I feel one of the greatest challenges that this city faces is the effect of ever increasing absentee landlords in our city. This is based on what I have witnessed here and in other communities, as well as my discussions with other residents throughout the city, who are likewise very concerned. Do you share our concerns, and if so, do you have any plans to address this issue?

on the northside, I share your concerns, and I know the city's council members do too. Parma is a strong community, based on its sound neighborhoods and attractive housing market. We need to use existing tools



Publisher of the Parma Observer, Daniel P. McCarthy left with Parma's Mayor-Elect, Timothy DeGeeter

and find new ways that continue keeping our city housing vibrant.

Q-Do you feel that the nuisance laws which are on the books are being enforced sufficiently?

A- While we will always search for ways to be innovative and forward thinking, I believe in recent years our police force has increased the use of nuisance laws and been responsive to problem spots. We will continue to do that and will attempt to find ways to streamline enforcement issues, whether in the building department or police department.

In conclusion, we certainly wish our new Mayor the best of luck, and we stand by ready to help in any way that we can to assist him in the mission to keep Parma a great place to live and work. We will continue to make sure that we are doing our part in providing our residents a place where they can freely express their views and opinions on this or any other subject.



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Parma Observer

Lake Erie Monsters Hockey Team Renews Partnership With Parma Hospital

by CJ Sheppard

Parma Community General Hospital has once again been named the Official Hospital of Cleveland’s hockey team. Parma Hospital partners with The Center of Orthopedic Surgery to form the Official Medical Team of the Lake Erie Monsters. “As we enter into our 5th anniversary season in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio, we continue to be very happy with our partnership and collaboration with Parma Community General Hospital,” said Mike Ostrowski, Senior VP and Chief Operating Officer of the Lake Erie Monsters. “Their team of experts share the same

vision we do with their dedication to quality and service, passion for the community and overall commitment to the people they serve. Parma continues to provide great care for our players. We are excited about the future and look forward to seeing our relationship grow.”

Physicians from The Center of Orthopedic Surgery cover all Monsters’ home games. Their practice provides specialized treatment for sports injuries, as well as treatment for arthritis, sprains and fractures, and knee, shoulder, elbow and hand conditions. Surgeries are performed at Parma Hospital. “We are proud to continue our partnership by remaining the official hospital of the Lake Erie Monsters,” said Terrence G. Deis, Parma Hospital’s president and CEO. “The players – like all of our patients – benefit from Parma Hospital’s excellent, personalized care.”

Parma Hospital Designated An Aetna Institute Of Quality® Facility

by CJ Shepard

Parma Community General Hospital has been designated an Aetna Institute of Quality® Cardiac Care Facility for comprehensive heart and vascular treatment. Aetna makes information about the quality and cost of health care services available to its members to help them make informed decisions about their health care needs. In line with this goal, Aetna recognizes hospitals and facilities in its network that offer specialized clinical services for certain health conditions. Facilities are selected for consistently delivering evidence-based, safe care.

“This award from Aetna recognizes what our patients witness every day – that high-quality cardiac care can be delivered in their own community, by the doctors they know and trust,” said Parma Hospital President & CEO Terrence G. Deis. Parma Hospital’s cardiac care features the Heart & Vascular Center, a cardiovascular intensive care unit with private rooms and state-of-the-art telemetry for cardiac, thoracic and vascular surgery patients, as well as interventional patients of the Cardiac Catheterization Lab. Parma Hospital is a 348-bed independent, not-for-profit hospital that has served Parma and the surrounding communities for the past 50 years.

My Misadventures With Medicaid Continue

by Bryan N. Griffin Jr.

Ever since I started this series of articles, I received a few comments from people. Most of them are from people that I know, like some family and close friends. I have also received comments from some people in the health care profession. A couple of my doctors told me their horror stories about dealing with certain Medicaid insurance companies, particularly about Buckeye.

With that in mind, I encourage anybody to contact me and share their experiences, both good and bad, through the Medicaid system. I welcome everything – questions, compliments, and insults (I can take them; I’m not afraid to). I would love to print them with my articles, with your kind permission, of course. I can be reached at this e-mail address:

bryanjr0131@yahoo.com

Please, don’t be afraid to say what’s on your mind. I have learned one thing from my personal experiences. Sometimes, being silent and not doing anything can do more harm than good. I ask of you, the reader, to aid me in making Medicaid a better experience for other people by getting involved somehow. If you wish to be anonymous, I am more than willing to do that. I can understand.

PART 3: ENDURING PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

This is part of the Medicaid experience that I don’t fully understand. It also frustrates me at the same time. The most basic definition of “prior authorization” is that if you need anything from the insurance company, you have to get some kind of permission from someone or somebody to receive it. On one website, it is defined as “an extra step that some insurance companies require before they decide if they want to pay for your medicine.” (http://www.consumer-health.com/services/cons_take51.php). That definition is so true.

For example, and I have been through this experience, if one needs a particular medication that they know it works, instead of some kind of some cheap knock-off, you need to get prior authorization from either a primary care physician or the health insurance company to get it. From my own experience, it feels like bureaucratic red tape. It takes a long time to get it approved, and you have to fight hard to get it.

It is because of that experience that I cannot get Nexium for my acid reflux problem. I have to take some other version of it, like Protonix. What did my insurance counselor tell me why, when I asked her about the alternative

Annual Parma Outdoor Holiday Lighting Contest

Sponsored by
Proud of Parma, Inc.
and Parma City Council

Dear Resident:

As a member of Proud of Parma, Inc., and the Chairman of our Annual Parma Outdoor Holiday Lighting Contest, I invite you to nominate a home that displays the Holiday Spirit. The Proud of Parma Committee, my wife, children and I love getting in the car to drive around town and check out all of the beautiful displays. We are always impressed with the effort and pride folks put into their decorations. The spirit of the Season as seen in these displays reflects the traditional values of our community – one of the many aspects that makes Parma so special to all of us.

To nominate a home, please complete the application below and mail it to or drop it off at: Council President Sean Brennan, C/O Parma City Hall, 6611 Ridge Road, Parma, Ohio, 44129. Below is more information about the program. For further information please call: (440) 884-0489. Best wishes to you and your family for a blessed Christmas Season.

Sincerely,

Sean Brennan, Chairman, Holiday Lighting Committee and
Parma City Council President

Due Date for Applications: Friday, December 16 - 4:30 pm
Judging Date: Monday, December 19
Prizes: One will be awarded in each of our nine wards
Prizes courtesy of the members of Parma City Council
All Parma residents’ homes are eligible
Please keep your lights on from 6:00 pm until 10:00 pm

Please Detach

Annual Lighting Contest Application 2011

Please Print:

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Your address: _____

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PARMA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Asset Corner #24

by Gene Lovasy
December's Asset Category:
Constructive Use of Time

The pace of everyday life varies depending on the activities young people participate in. These fluctuations are normal, even healthy. As long as young people don't consistently have too much to do or not enough to do, they're right on track. Problems arise when the balance begins to tip too far to one side or the other. Too much involvement can lead to stress or anxiety. Too little involvement can be a sign of depression or isolation. Ensure that young people constructively use their time for both fun and learning.

Constructive Use of Time Assets include:

- #17 Creative Activities – Young person spends 3 or more hours/week in lessons or practice in music, theater or other arts. (21%*)
- #18 Youth Programs – Young person spends 3 or more hours/week in

sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in the community. (57%*)

#19 Religious Community – Young person spends 1 or more hours/week in activities in a religious institution. (58%*)

#20 Time at Home – Young person is out w/friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights/week. (51%*)

(* The percent of youth who experience or have this asset in their lives. Data based on an aggregate Search Institute sample of 148,189 students surveyed in 2003. The sample included students in 202 cities in 27 states.)

This column's focus will be on.....
Asset 20: Time at Home

Quality time as a family
Research shows spending quality time together as a family helps young people strengthen skills such as lead-

ership, good health, and success in school. About 51 percent of young people, ages 11–18, spend no more than two nights a week with friends "with nothing special to do," according to Search Institute surveys. Protecting young people from risky behaviors and helping them develop positive behavior is easier when you spend time together as a family.

Tips for building this asset
Simply start spending time together: First, choose an activity the entire family enjoys. Then, commit to do the activity together one evening a week. Decide if you want to continue the activity or try something different. Ask yourselves: How often do we laugh together? Have fun together? Enjoy being with each other?

Also try this
In your home and family: Cook dinner together, with each family member preparing a dish. Then, for a fun change, eat dessert first.

In your neighborhood and community: Invite your child's friend and his or her family over for an evening of family time—movies, games, popcorn and other treats.
In your school and youth program: Avoid scheduling practices or meetings that conflict with the dinner hour. It's important for families to eat together.

ASSET RELATED NEWS
Do you have a child/grandchild at Shiloh MS or in a Parma District elementary school? If so, ask if they were recognized during their recent Sundae Bar. And, if so, he/she should be congratulated, but if not, it presents an opportunity for a conversation as to why not. The Sundae Bar is a CBS initiated motivational program hosted/funded at the end of each marking period by a number of CBS partners. If your school does not have the program, ask your principal to contact the district's CBS Coordinator's Office to get hooked up with a business partner.
SHARE YOUR ASSET BUILDING IDEAS AND/OR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENTAL ASSET CONCEPT BY VISITING THE "ASSET CORNER" FACEBOOK PAGE. I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU.

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.

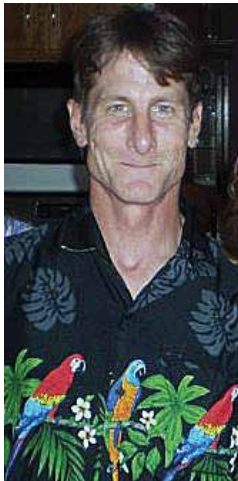
My Misadventures With Medicaid

medicine? Nexium was too expensive, because they were paying for the name. Yeah, that makes sense!
This is what tees me off. It is the government that pays for the medication or service, not the insurance company. Corporations, like Buckeye and CareSource, are nothing more than the middle man to get that prescription or certain benefits. As long as the government is willing to pay for that necessary need, the insurance should let that person have it, no questions asked. It also begs to question why we, meaning Medicaid recipients, really need to go through an insurance company in the first place. I will further investigate that situation in another article.
I have stated it before. When something does more harm than good, it should be done away with. Prior authorization is one of those things. When a

person has a life-threatening condition (they need a medication or a diagnostic test), they should not have to endure some time-expended executive decision by a health care organization. That is something that corporate health care does, not a socialized system, like Medicaid. That is wrong, inhumane, and disgusting. These Medicaid providers should be ashamed of themselves for allowing prior authorization to exist in their system.
I challenge anybody who works at such a company to argue with me why prior authorization should exist. Please, explain the logic behind it to me and the people who are reading my articles. Why do we need prior authorization? How does it serve me, or somebody else, as a Medicaid recipient? What exactly does it do for the patient that needs an MRI or chemotherapy? I want to see someone who has the courage to answer these questions.

Kudos to Parma Volunteer Tutor

by Kimberly Merryman Sherer
A resident of Parma, Bob Kovach has dedicated his time to working with our GED and ESOL students all over Cuyahoga County. He worked over 470 hours last year! An average amount for a tutor in our program is 40-50 hours. Parma Adult Education values their tutors and appreciates all efforts exhibited on a daily basis, rain or shine.
One teacher describes Mr. Kovach as a wonderful classroom asset, especially with math. He always takes the time that each student needs and works with them until they are comfortable with the material. That takes patience and skill. Kovach graduated from Padua Franciscan High School in Parma and Malone University in Canton. In his spare time he enjoys working on cars. For more information on becoming a volunteer tutor, please contact Parma Adult Education at 440-885-8797.



Tutor and Parma Resident Bob Kovach



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Inspiration

What's Right? What's Wrong?

by Daniel Taddeo

Forgiveness means to pardon; a matter of letting go of past incidents of resentment, anger and deep-seated hatred of others, and at times ourselves, no matter what the circumstances. The medical profession informs us that these negative emotions are at the

For Olivia

by John Allender

Bad things happen to good people; we've all heard that said, and sadly, it's all too often the truth. Such is the case with Olivia. According to those that know her best, she is someone who has famously given most generously to anyone who is in need, even total strangers, and she doesn't wait for them to ask for help. "When someone is sick, she is always the first one there; sends them flowers, money, cleans their house, cooks them dinner - whatever they need."

Now it is Olivia that needs the loving attention of others. This year has been a particularly hard one for her; divorce, death, and now cancer, for the 2nd time. She needs to have surgery, with extensive treatment to follow. She doesn't know how long she will miss work, and assistance is unavailable to her. She desperately needs our help to pay for her mounting medical bills.

Parma Peanut Butter Drive

by Jeffery Fowler

Parma City Council President Sean Brennan has joined forces with the All Faiths Pantry to collect 1,000 jars of peanut butter by December 31. Brennan says he was moved to action by recent news reports pointing to the growing demand at local food banks and the dramatic rise in peanut butter prices. "Peanut butter prices have skyrocketed nearly seventy-five percent this year alone," Brennan said. "Poverty has grown in our lagging economy and the demand on our food banks is increasing. In the meantime, food donations are lagging behind demand

The Charlie Brown Christmas Tree

by Angie Fernback

As you put up your six foot, walking, talking, singing Christmas tree this season, pause a moment; remember a much-loved Christmas tree that strikes a chord in our hearts every time it's aired on TV -- Charlie Brown's Christmas tree.

Why are we so captivated with it? Perhaps because it represents the Charlie Brown Christmas tree within ourselves. The inadequacies we feel when everyone seems taller, better looking, wittier, wiser, more charming and dazzling. When we're lucky, a friend or loved one hangs some tinsel on us and plugs in our

root of many of our physical ailments. Unforgiveness means being imprisoned by our past. Forgiveness frees us from floundering in that past.

When it comes to forgiving, there are those who seldom if ever forgive. Then there are a very limited number who always forgive. That means the

Olivia is such a fabulous person, the kind of woman that is always there to provide whatever she can. But this time, let's face it, she's up against more than she can handle by herself, and that's where we come in. If you have never taken part in an event to help someone before, this is the one person that you will not regret helping, trust me. There is a Benefit For Olivia taking place at Flyers 6298 Pearl Rd. in Parma Hts. from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, 2012. For just \$25 per person, there is food, beer and wine - all you can eat and drink. Also, Jell-o shots for \$1 each. There will be gift baskets, raffles in which you can win \$250, side boards, and of course, plenty of music. Come on out that evening and have a good time, all the while knowing that you are helping a truly wonderful person.

Contact Penny at 440-887-9510 or Beth at 216-551-2804 for more information.

vast majority of us fall somewhere in-between the two extremes. Where do you appear on the continuum of forgiveness?

Most people tend to struggle with forgiving. We are more ready to be forgiven than to forgive others. This attitude begins to change only when we begin to understand that forgiving benefits the forgiver as much or more than the forgiven.

Forgiveness is not unlike exercising. When one begins to exercise, it may be painful and actually set one back. But the more one exercises, the better one's condition becomes. The better one's condition is, the more eagerly one will want to exercise. Once one begins to reap the benefits of exercising, one will want to exercise more, not less. Likewise, once one begins to reap the benefits of forgiving, one will want to forgive more, not less.

How important is the topic of forgiveness? It's a recurring theme throughout Scripture. There are 125 separate references that address it. A few examples follow:

- + "If you hold anything against anyone, forgive them."
- + "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive others."
- + "Be kind and compassionate (loving) to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
- + "Forgive and you will be forgiven."

guess I never really questioned why we ate so much peanut butter growing up. Now I realize that this was the cheapest source of protein mom could afford," Brennan said. "However, with the price of peanut butter, this staple is becoming out of reach of many needy families in our communities," he added.

Donors are asked to consider donating a jar of peanut butter or making at least a \$5 donation to support the drive. Donations may be dropped off at Parma City Hall, any branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library in Parma or at the Parma Area Chamber of Commerce located in Parmatown Mall. Please make checks payable to All Faiths Pantry. Checks may be mailed to "Parma Peanut Butter Drive," 6611 Ridge Road, Parma, Ohio 44129.

In the words of Miriam Stark: "Forgiveness is a gift that we choose to offer to those who have offended us. We give the gift; what they do with it is up to them. A true gift comes without expectations. Forgiveness allows us to live in peace with one another and with ourselves, which affords us the opportunity to step away from the hurt."

It has also been said, "Forgiveness is the sweetest revenge." What do you think?

Christmas In Parma!

by Ruth Revecky

Most folks in Parma prepare for Christmas by shopping early. Boys and girls like to sit on Santa's lap At the Parmatown Mall and whisper in His ear, suggesting the toys they Would like to find beneath their Christmas tree.

Homes are decorated with bright, red-Ribbon-ed wreaths and colorful Lights.

Many churches throughout Parma are Getting ready to welcome members And friends into their sanctuaries To celebrate Christ's birth on the Twenty-fifth day of December. Some faiths celebrate Christmas two Weeks later.

Families gather at Grandma and Grandpa's house to enjoy delicious Ethnic food, unwrapping gifts showing Snowmen or Santa on the wrapping Paper along with green and red bows.

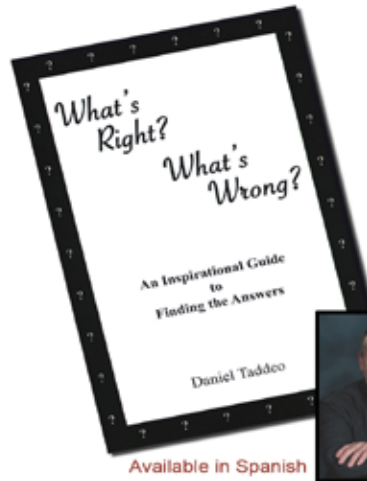
Children are bundled up in warm coats, Snow boots, and woolen mittens. Soon the Cristmas lights will dim, Bringing an exciting Christmas day To an unwanted end.

When families arrive home, children Play for awhile with their toys, but Soon become sleepy and are taken to Their warm, snug beds. A yawn is muffled now and then, but Before too long, gentle snores can be Heard.

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Health Care “Freedom” Under The ACA

I have enjoyed sharing some of my opinions with you this year and hope I have encouraged you to look at things from a different perspective. Let me take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I look forward to continuing my time with you in 2012.



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Parma Observer

Is Bowling Rolling Down Memory Lane?

by Kathryn Yates

Are bowling alleys going the way-side of drive-in theaters? From the 1940's through the 1960's bowling enjoyed its peak in popularity, with over a hundred bowling alleys operational in the greater Cleveland area and the highest concentration of them in Parma (ironically, there are no bowling alleys in Brunswick), making it our iconic recreational activity and symbol of blue-collar leisure. Today, there are barely over twenty lane facilities still in business for reasons that not only reflect our dire economic times, but the changes in our social and recreational preferences as a culture.

With the August closing of long-standing Bradnen's Bowling on West 130th and the temporary closing of Yorktown Lanes the same month due to a fire in the kitchen, many area leagues were sent scrambling for lanes finding refuge at popular Freeway Lanes on Brookpark Rd. and Brookgate Lanes on Snow. Rd.

Along with lack of lanes, other reasons given for the decline in bowling are rising property taxes, less people willing to commit to long league seasons, and the introduction of virtual bowling software such as that offered by Wii and used by local senior centers.

In addition to Bradnen's, others on the growing list of those that have



closed over the years are: Berea Roll-and-Bowl, Classic Lanes (formerly Mezznar's in Fulton Plaza), Parmatown Lanes, Parma Recreation on Ridge Rd., Ptak Lanes, mega-bowling center Stardust whose roof collapsed with heavy snow over its 88 lanes, and Brown's Bowling and Grill on W.25th which opened in 1912 and is the third oldest in the nation has recently had to demolish four of its six lanes. The owner will reopen two refurbished lanes within the next few months, partly due to pressure from an historical society, but also not having the heart to close it down entirely.

Even the Greater Cleveland Bowling Association headquarters on Chevrolet Blvd. is up for sale.

Smaller (twelve lanes or less) bowling alleys in the area that remain open include: Dickey Recreation on W. 25th, Seven Hills Lanes on Broadview, and Red Circle Lanes on State Rd. in Parma. Dickey Recreation opened its doors in 1946 and has not automated its score-keeping so those who enjoy this additional challenge will be taken back in time. Another benefit of small lanes is that they generally offer a lower price per game – as little as two and half bucks versus the four to five

dollar price tag per game in the large alleys. Almost all lanes run specials over the summer for open bowling. As always, check with the bowling alley of your choice for times and prices before heading out to avoid being shut-out by party bookings and league play.

With the decline of league play, which in the past generated roughly 70 per cent of an alleys business to only 40 per cent today, large bowling alleys have suffered loss of stable income necessary to see them through the summer months. Alternatives to demanding weekly league play are alternating week leagues and the allowance of extra team members giving bowlers a night off on a rotation.

If you think you have to be a Dick Weber to join a league, guess again. Handicapped leagues are an attractive introduction to the game and beginning at lowest score has its advantages. For those new to league play, here's a few pointers: If you hear the words "chicken, chicken sandwich, or turkey"

– these aren't specials at the snack bar, be prepared to slap hi-fives around; a "hedgehog" is four strikes in a row, and anyone getting one is generally ostracized. Also, be wary when everyone else on the team scores a spare or a strike except YOU - these are called pop, beer, and fry frames and guess who's buying?

Want to impress with bowling trivia? Not many know that a bowling ball can have up to twelve holes in it – don't ask why since most of us only have four fingers and a thumb on one hand. If it becomes evident you're going to finish in the double digits, just say you're much better at 5-pin, or even "duck pin" bowling (which you played on your last trip to Canada, wink-wink).

Also, bring a bottle of baby powder: It's not because bowlers are unusually stressed-out and get sweaty, it's because they oil the lanes for speed and the balls get greasy.

Want to look professional? Always carry an intimidating dish towel that says "200 Club" – you'll fit right in. And that cool leather wrist-straightener? You can start a new trend with three dollar boxing hand-wraps from Wal-Mart – they may serve a dual purpose!

Above all, remember the words of AMF...bowling "Always Means Fun!"



The Blues-Rock Scene In Parma

by John Allender

I would like to thank the Parma Observer readers who came out to see the John Allender Band for our two shows in Parma during November. At Lucky T's on the 25th, we were privileged to have Jim Wall on drums, considered one of the very best drummers from the Cleveland area. Jim is a Parma Heights native and a Berklee School of Music graduate. He plays regularly with Michael Bay & the Bad Boys of Blues, as well as The Jack Fords. In addition, Jim operates Blue Buddha Music Studio at 6631 York Rd. in Parma Hts., a state-of-the-art recording facility where he records artists and teaches. His website is jimwallmusic.com.

Jim added an explosive element to our sound that complimented John Noble on bass and really rocked the house! Thanks again to Theresa and her staff at Lucky T's; we're playing there more and more, and you can expect a good variety of players there in the future. The Blues-Rock scene in the Parma area continues to grow; there's Ted Riser's open-mic night on Tues-

days at the Hive on State Rd. Check out the Blue Line Bar & Grill at 4305 Brookpark Rd., where owner Kevin is doing a great job of helping to keep live musical entertainment going in Parma, giving musicians from the area a place where they can go and share their talents while entertaining all of the fans of good music in the process. Local legend Butch Armstrong has his jam night on Thursday nights at Grillers on State Rd., featuring the Tower City Blues Band.

We are all trying to create an ever-growing Blues-Rock scene in Parma, so if you happen to love or even like the Blues and/or Blues-based Rock 'n Roll, there are plenty of options here around the Parma area. I'm also hosting jam night at Smedley's on Thursday, Dec. 15th. with the Freebyrds featuring Rob Stibbs on guitar, John Noble on bass, and Mike Meheli on drums. Smedley's is a cool, laid-back, safe biker hang-out in the heart of Kamm's Corners. So enjoy some good times, and in the words of Bob "the Bear" Hite from Canned Heat, don't forget to boogie!

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Parma Observer

Baby Boomer Blues

by Lucy Mckernan

Andy Rooney is dead. I'm all you've got, so listen up. This article is about the increasingly third-world-caliber stress levels MOST Americans – in particular, the youngest Baby Boomers such as Barack Obama, who was born three months before yours truly -- now face daily. I like to call it the “politics of poverty” a la Bitty Baby Boomer-style.

I cringe to think that the dire predictions we’re beginning to hear about stresses inflicted on the brattiest Boomers will cause us to be the first generation to die younger than our counterparts. Ironically, we are the least deserving of this cruel fate. We’re the ones who most-struggle to survive within this pathetic, large-scale modern cultural dysfunction that only promises to reach incomprehensibly hideous proportions over the next 15 to 20 years until “retirement.” It almost makes me secretly hopeful that, because Obama is “one of us,” his administration has some sort of trick up the sleeve to bail-out the ones who really deserve it. Yeah, what the hell, I guess I want to believe in Santa Claus. I sure didn't get to way back then, when, you guessed it, older sibs, blew his cover for me.

For younger Boomers, the paradigm up until just a few pre-government-whoring-around-with-the-enemy-banks-corporations-bailouts-bernie-made-off-with-the-money

(not necessarily Obama's fault) years ago was that people were accountable to certain social constraints. And younger Boomers would have had at least a close-second quality of life to that of our older counterparts; that is, if not for our prevailing idiocracy.

But there may be hope. Just seeing “Occupiers” protesting all over the world, but especially here in the states, warms my junior Boomer heart, and reminds me of the 1960s, when people took to the streets; yes, I am old enough remember! Thomas Jefferson said, “A little rebellion now and then is a good thing.” Something has to give sooner or later. Things can’t sustain at this level, people! Every one of us should be out there protesting. And protest I did! I took my concerns to the City of Seven Hills council meeting in September, before the following happened, as predicted: I lost my aging, but still viable, metaphor-of-a-car due to the boggled construction that even the Ohio Department of Transportation said is the worst they’d ever seen anywhere.

This “construction,” completed by Karvo Paving through the City of Seven Hills’ failed administration, resulted in the city’s refusal to compensate, let alone acknowledge, dozens of drivers’ losses -- losses directly related to cavernous holes Karvo refused to fill for three straight days near Broadview and

Pleasant Valley Roads in September. Take a guess why government agencies aren't being held accountable for things anymore. That's right, we inherited all the mistakes made by previous administrations. I feel sorry for Obama.

Increasingly countless conundrums like these -- such as the road needing repair sooner because older Boomers overpopulated the planet with teenage drivers -- face younger Boomers, if they’re lucky enough to have a job to drive to. And if they don’t, well, “You’re just not trying hard enough, you little brat!”

Younger boomers also face the stress of mortgages that won’t end for 20+ years. We had the fight of our lives to save our home from the jaws of JP Morgan “Chase Your Tail” (a company probably run by older Boomers) which took hundreds of precious hours over the past three years. I wonder how many years of my life were robbed by that debacle.

Many more major life stressors, combined with the “death by a thousand cuts” imposed by modern technologies and infuriatingly incompetent workers everywhere (the progeny of older Boomers) always seem to result in hideous proportions of repeated attempts to resolve even the simplest, most basic tasks. And if you’re low-income, it’s worse -- ranging from

lack of affordable health insurance to neighborhood disputes, and from utility bills to dozens of other rip-offs including job scams (at this writing, news is on TV about the craigslist killer). Time, energy and enthusiasm are vaporized, with no one taking any responsibility, except for younger Boomers like me. Can older Boomers relate to the proposition of having to face the next 20+ years in this climate, with no respite? No freaking way!

Our society is too individualized, with the youngest Boomers expected to carry the heaviest weight. Younger Boomers need extended, intricate social networks in an egalitarian society, not nebulous, scatterbrained social networking that does nothing more than eat up precious time that could be better spent walking through the park and getting the Vitamin D3 we’ll need to sustain our bones later in life. Why? Because no one is going to take care of us when we get old.

Something had better happen soon. People had better get their acts together. And please, FOR ONCE, do not ask the youngest Boomers to do it; we deserve the biggest breaks right now! It better happen soon, before we take our 50-year-old-wisdom, energy and integrity somewhere like Costa Rica or Amsterdam, and leave the entire nation wondering how to cope.

Joe The Coach: My View Of Sports

by Joseph Finding

Once again I really don't know where to start; the high schools in the area are done with football and are gearing up now for basketball, wrestling and volleyball, along with swimming, so there is not much to write about in high school at the moment. I am sure that students are working hard to get ready for the competition ahead -- the Parma area has hard-working kids.

Let's start with the NBA: does anybody care? Once again, we have millionaires trying to come to terms with contracts and the splitting of money. I guess this is a prime example of greed. Those going back and forth have no idea what to do with their millions. Don't you wish you had that problem? Most of us have trouble making ends meet in our Parma mansions. I personally don't care if the pros play any games this year. If they settle they will make more money, causing the owners to make more, causing seat prices to go up for us, the average fans. I wouldn't pay it last year and I won't pay it this year. According to this morning's PD, LeBron and Wade and some of the others want to form a team and play games against our area universities; if I were those schools, I would tell them to go play in Siberia. I am perfectly content to watch Cleveland State, Akron U., and Kent State, where the kids are playing for nothing but their school and their hearts. I will try to watch as many college games as possible. When

the NBA doesn't play, it opens the stations for more collegiate games.

Now let's go on to pro football. I think our new coach is trying to turn things around here in Cleveland, but it will take time. I wish he was more strict than what he seems to be when he is interviewed. Let's face it, we need an offensive line or a remake, because McCoy doesn't get time to throw. The few backs we have had a hard time running in the holes because they are not there. I am really upset with Hillis; I thought he was really going to be tough, but it doesn't look like it. I played every down in Division I, on defensive middle linebacker, and on offensive guard or fullback. Heck, we didn't know what a pulled muscle was, or a cut; we were stitched on the field. As for concussions, I think they are nothing to fool with. I am sure that I had many playing football and wrestling. I told my wife that I want my brain to go to science so they can study what happens and what is left years later. Her patent answer is that I never had a brain, so what can they find? [LOL] Sometimes we must play with some pain, but I don't want anyone permanently injured and be in a walker like me. But yes, moms, I wouldn't change a thing and I would do it all again.

Let's change the subject to Penn State; shame on them for ever letting this occur in the first place!

If you have time, e-mail coach-joe61@cox.net or give me a ring. I would love to hear from you.

Parma Graduate Awarded “Best Small Delegation”

by Paige Greene

Jenna Perry of Parma is one of six participants in Baldwin-Wallace College’s Model United Nations delegation team, which was honored with “The Best Small Delegation Award.”

The Lake Erie International Model United Nations (LEIMUN) holds conferences with an authentic simulation of how the many committees and organizations work together within the United Nations. This global program has more than 200,000 middle school, high school, and college student participants, with 400 conferences being held in more than 50 countries annually.

Perry, a junior at B-W, is a Political Science and International Studies double major. She represented Cote d’Ivoire in Organization of Islamic Cooperation in her delegation at LEIMUN, and received an excellence award. A 2009 graduate of Parma Senior High School, she is the daughter of Melissa and Shawn Perry.

Baldwin-Wallace College, founded in 1845, was one of the first colleges to admit students without regard to race or gender. An independent, coeducational college of 4,500 students, B-W offers coursework in the liberal arts tradition in more than 50 academic areas. Located in Berea, 12 miles from downtown Cleveland, B-W offers students the cultural, educational and business advantages of a major metropolitan area. For more information, go to www.bw.edu.

Poll Workers Being Hired For March 6, 2012 Primary Election

by Mike West,

The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections must employ nearly 6,000 poll workers to serve at the polls on Election Day and is currently hiring for the March 6th, 2012 primary election.

Poll workers provide an important service for the community and work on the front lines of the democratic process. Poll workers earn \$172.10 for their service and must complete training prior to working on election day.

Cuyahoga County residents who are interested in serving as a poll worker may call 216-443-3277 to complete an application by phone or fill out an online application at the following link: <http://boe.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/online-pollworker-application.aspx>.

Visit: www.boe.cuyahogacounty.us for more information concerning the March primary election.

Parma Observer

Editor's Observation: Loose Ends At Year's End

by *Patty Knox*

Another year is almost over. This year has seen greater growth in the Parma Observer, greater participation, greater awareness in our community that the citizens have a voice and it can be trumpeted in print on paper and in cyberspace. Ultimately, not just within our municipal borders, but all over the world. Maybe someone in some far-away corner of the globe happens on to our web page and reads about the lifestyle of our community, imagining what it would be like to live here for themselves. Such news long ago created the American Dream in the hearts of those abroad. How blessed we are.

As such, I am taking a moment to reflect on what, for me personally, has been a hard year. But it has not been without its blessings. Losing a family member changes a person. After the grief lessens, painful thoughts give way to happy memories at unexpected moments, sometimes prompted by a loved one's favorite color, candy, or sport. I can't see a Cleveland Indians insignia without thinking how much Mom and Dad loved going to the games, even "up in heaven" in the cheap seats, and the many games we watched together at both stadiums. I wasn't a fan of the game as much as I was a fan of Mom and Dad. It was companionable time spent together as we children grew into adults, adjusting to an adult relationship with our parents, enjoying an all-American pastime.

As the year comes to a close, I find in retrospect that I'm learning how to let go, especially of nonconstructive criticism. Criticism, especially when it got personal, used to totally unravel me, thinking that it must be justified or a person wouldn't make such a mean-spirited remark. Perhaps it comes with the territory, but I've become so tired of many people's petty politics as they yammer on and on about anything and everything they find to complain about. Life is too short, folks! Be grateful for what you have, share what you can, do something constructive to help others. Choose your issues carefully; don't be a cranky crab who can't find anything good to say. But above all, please don't tear down the efforts of others who are

actually doing something to make life better for those around them.

Those who complain the loudest don't realize how much they discourage and dishearten good people who deserve our support for maintaining or bettering the quality of life in our community through their hard work. Many of those people are cheerful volunteers, or modestly paid public servants. Most of them are not doing it for the big bucks or for the glory. They're just

motivated by a good heart.

A good heart. That has been my personal goal this past year, one on which I have made all-too-slow progress. It is a goal I will keep working on into 2012 and beyond. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," said Jesus in Matthew 5:8. "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting," is David's

concluding prayer from the powerful, evocative Psalm 139. Psalm 51:10 says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." It is a goal which humbles me when my motives are not pure. It helps me purge less than gracious thoughts. It reminds me Whom is Boss. It leads me to be more appreciative.

Yes, even appreciative of the yammerers, God bless them.

First Federal Of Lakewood Opens Branch In Parma

by *Daniel P. McCarthy*

On November 30th. the Parma Area Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting ceremony at the location of the first branch in Parma for First Federal of Lakewood at 1640 Snow Rd., in the front of the Midtown Shopping Center. This site had been occupied by Century Bank, which was sold to First Federal of Lakewood last year, according to Gary Fix, Bank President. "When we purchased Century Bank, we actually acquired five locations; Concord, Garfield Hts., North Royalton, Brunswick, and of course Parma", said Mr. Fix. "We are very excited about being in Parma, and we feel that people here will find out that the First Federal of Lakewood is a great place to do all of their banking", he continued.

The ribbon cutting was attended by many people in the business community, as well as some city officials, including Parma City Council President Sean Brennan. He spoke briefly, welcoming first Federal of Lakewood to Parma, and he especially noted their support of Maggie's Place, a local charity focused on women, and stated that this was a good sign for him that a new business here was already supporting the community.

First Federal of Lakewood Savings and Loan Association was founded during the Great Depression in 1935. There was steady growth for many decades which featured expansion beyond Lakewood, where now services are offered to customers at 18 full ser-

vice branches and 7 loan production offices throughout Cuyahoga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina Counties. Based on deposits, they are the third largest bank in the Cleveland area, according to Bank President Gary Fix. We certainly welcome them into our community, and based on their success so

far, I'm sure that they will do well here and find out why Parma is such a special place to be.

The new branch of First Federal of Lakewood is at 1640 Snow Rd. in Parma at the Midtown Shopping Center.



Parma Area chamber of Commerce President Dave Nedrich, Branch Manager Brian Winslow, Parma City Council President Sean Brennan, and Bank President Gary Fix all take part in cutting the ribbon to open the first branch of First Federal of Lakewood in Parma at 1640 Snow Rd.

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Parma Observer

DECEMBER 2011 Calendar of Events

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<div>Special Events</div> <div>* VIP – HUMANA BUCKS ELIGIBLE ACTIVITY RSVP FOR: - JEWELRY MAKING CLASSES–DECEMBER 12 & 19 - XMAS CRAFTS WITH LINDA - CANDY MAKING - HOLIDAY PARTY</div>			<div>1</div> <div>* Sweatin’ to the Oldies 10:00 a.m.</div>	<div>2</div> <div>* Wii Bowling 10:00 a.m. * Zumba Gold 11:30 a.m. Popcorn and Movie "The King and I" 1:30 p.m.</div>
<div>5</div> <div>* Zumba Gold 9:00 a.m. “Get Happy – Cultivating a Positive Attitude” Seminar 2:00 p.m.</div>	<div>6</div> <div>* T'ai Chi 9:00 a.m. * Fit and Balance 10:00 a.m. SCRABBLE 2:00 p.m. Popcorn and Movie American Experience "The Lost Boys of Sudan" 2:30 p.m.</div>	<div>7</div> <div>* Wii Bowling 9:00 a.m. XMAS Crafts with Linda Part #1 2:00 p.m.</div>	<div>8</div> <div>* Sweatin’ to the Oldies 10:00 a.m. XMAS Crafts with Linda Part #2 11:30 a.m. BINGO Bash 2:00 p.m.</div>	<div>9</div> <div>* Wii Bowling 10:00 a.m. * Zumba Gold 11:30 a.m. Popcorn and Movie "Life as We Know it" 1:30 p.m.</div>
<div>12</div> <div>* Zumba Gold 9:00 a.m. Jewelry Making 12:30 p.m.</div>	<div>13</div> <div>* T'ai Chi 9:00 a.m. * Fit and Balance 10:00 a.m. SCRABBLE 2:00 p.m. Popcorn and Movie American Experience "Newton's Dark Secrets" 2:30 p.m.</div>	<div>14</div> <div>* Wii Bowling 9:00 a.m. XMAS Crafts with Linda 2:00 p.m.</div>	<div>15</div> <div>* Sweatin’ to the Oldies 10:00 a.m. Polka Dancing 11:00 a.m. BINGO Bash 2:00 p.m.</div>	<div>16</div> <div>* Wii Bowling 10:00 a.m. * Zumba Gold 11:30 a.m. Popcorn and Movie "Just Go With It" 1:30 p.m.</div>
<div>19</div> <div>* Zumba Gold 9:00 a.m. Jewelry Making 12:30 p.m.</div>	<div>20</div> <div>* T'ai Chi 9:00 a.m. * Fit and Balance 10:00 a.m. SCRABBLE 2:00 p.m. Popcorn and Movie American Experience "Inside the Vatican" 2:30 p.m.</div>	<div>21</div> <div>* Wii Bowling 9:00 a.m. CANDY MAKING with Adrienne 11:30 a.m. XMAS Crafts with Linda 3:00 p.m.</div>	<div>22</div> <div>* Sweatin’ to the Oldies 10:00 a.m. XMAS Crafts with Linda 11:30 a.m. HOLIDAY PARTY 2:00 p.m.</div>	<div>23</div> <div>* Wii Bowling 10:00 a.m. * Zumba Gold 11:30 a.m. Popcorn and Movie "A Christmas Story" 1:30 p.m. CLOSING at 3:00 p.m.</div>
<div>26</div> <div>CLOSED CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY</div>	<div>27</div> <div>* T'ai Chi 9:00 a.m. * Fit and Balance 10:00 a.m. SCRABBLE 2:00 p.m. Popcorn and Movie American Experience "The Endurance" 2:30 p.m.</div>	<div>28</div> <div>* Wii Bowling 9:00 a.m.</div>	<div>29</div> <div>* Sweatin’ to the Oldies 10:00 a.m. BINGO Bash 2:00 p.m. Knitting for Charity 3:30 p.m</div>	<div>30</div> <div>* Wii Bowling 10:00 a.m. * Zumba Gold 11:30 a.m. Popcorn and Movie "Gulliver’s Travels" 1:30 p.m.</div>

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