

“What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?” - Allen Ginsberg

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Parma Faces Financial Challenges In 2015

by Timothy J. DeGeeter
Mayor of Parma

Parma, like many cities, faces serious budgetary challenges heading into 2015. While we have known this was coming and it's not surprising, this will be one of the most difficult budgets in decades. For a few years now, our administration has felt the impact of budget cuts from

Columbus. Indeed, in the last four years, the state has cut an estimated \$413 million each year for municipalities and villages through reductions in the Local Government Fund, the repeal of the estate tax, and other changes, according to Innovation Ohio, a Columbus-based policy group.

That has meant millions in lost revenue for Parma, a

challenge our administration, working with Parma City Council, has confronted by doing more with less. We have saved close to \$1 million in each of the last two years by

introducing automated trash collection in the city. The city also has sought long-term cost savings through regional collaborations with Cuyahoga County and our neighboring

cities.

However, this year, we will face the fullest effect of the state cuts. For example, we no longer have those revenues to absorb the unexpected loss of Graf Tech from our business community. No doubt this, and other examples, presents our administration and City Council with an extremely difficult challenge this year.

That's one of the reasons we have begun our budget process months earlier this year than usual. I have asked all directors to start with a zero-based budget this year and to include only absolutely necessary services in their budget requests. We are all looking for ways to save and to make what we have go further.

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A Call To Engage

by Allosious Snodgrass

It seems as America becomes more and more in demand of a new course, fewer and fewer young people are getting involved in the activities that matter the most. To me, voting, volunteering, networking, learning my heritage, engaging in travel and exploration, and most of all, getting a well-rounded education are among some of these activities. It is not uncommon for the people around me to immediately desire to help others or see value in education and life. For me, I love to engage myself hands-on with what goes on in my community, school, work, and home life. For many, this is not the case in this form. Many of the people I hang out with or engage in fun activities with, it's going to the club, movies, shopping, or watching Netflix. Even in these engagements, I find myself absolutely different from them all and find a minimum ounce of fun in such engagements. Even then, I think of the starving children in Cleveland, Ohio and the world. I think of graduation rates, employment rates, and our Veterans who are without. I think of how much more useful I could be in helping someone, somewhere. Through all this, I realize when my parents' gen-



Allosious Snodgrass

eration dies off, my generation is the next in line to run a grocery store or police the streets, to even being the mayor of a city. I've realized my generation needs to get more involved in keeping what is known as the "American Dream" alive. A call to engage is at its highest.

In traveling to London and Africa, these places and nations are great, but America is the greatest country on earth, full of cultural and ethnical diversity. It is up to the American people to keep that alive, which can be done through community engagement.

I recently opened the CNN app on my phone to find, nonetheless, readings about mass murders, abductions, racially motivated crimes, and a deteriorating education system. Sometimes, I have to close and re-open the app to ensure what I read was true. Now, yes, good things do happen, but the bad has definitely gotten out of hand. From all this, I have realized a call to engage is needed. Young people not just in Parma, but all

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Parma Holiday Lights Contest Winners Announced



First place home - 3910 Redfern Road. More on Page 9!

Parma Resident/Business Of The Month

by Jeannie Roberts

Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter is proud of December's Citizen of the Month. "For him to do what he does, as a volunteer, just because he cares ... it really shows what kind of person he is." He's talking about John Metzger. John's compassion for Veterans is unbounded. Every year, on his own time, he paints and assembles flags and flag stands for local Veterans in nursing homes. He teams with the Mayor's office to make sure every Veteran at a yearly ceremony receives a certificate of appreciation for his or her service along with the flag. John doesn't want any Veteran to feel forgotten or unappreciated. After his time in the Army, John owned D&D Custom Windows until he retired seven years ago. John and his wife Karen have lived in Parma for 37 years and have two daughters, Doreen and Deanna, and four grandchildren - Devin, Justin, Jonathan, and Danielle.

The December Business of the Month is Stancato's Italian Restaurant, located at 7380 State Road. Perry Stancato Jr., the restaurant's general manager, and his mom, Lori, accepted the award for the business at the City Council

meeting on Monday evening. Stancato's has undergone extensive renovations and a new grand opening in recent

months and, by all accounts, it's better than ever. Stop by, say hello, and enjoy a wonderful meal.



Perry Stancato Jr., the restaurant's general manager, and his mom, Lori, accepted the award for the business at the City Council meeting on Monday evening.



Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter with December's Citizen of the Month, John Metzger and Ward 5 Councilman Allan Divis.



Community News

The President's Corner

by Sean Brennan

I want to thank you, the readers, for the positive feedback I have received about my recent columns on former mayors Petruska and DePiero. Many suggested I keep it going. As a result, I recently contacted former Parma Mayor Gerald Boldt to request an interview. He enthusiastically agreed and invited me to his home on Friday, November 14. Below is a synopsis of the nearly two hours we talked.

Gerald Boldt served the City of Parma for over 30 years and truly worked his way up the public service ladder. Starting out as a Democratic precinct committeeman, at the behest of several of his neighbors in Gettysburg Estates off of Broadview Road, he ran for City Council against incumbent Frank Dobbins in 1973 and won by 36 votes. Boldt served in that position for 14 years, then, after an unsuccessful bid for Auditor, Mayor Michael Ries appointed him Safety Director. He admitted that he was kind of surprised Ries selected him, as they did not always see eye to eye on the council floor. However, Ries respected Boldt for his "sound and wise decision making." Tragically, Mayor Ries passed unexpectedly midterm in 1994 and Boldt was selected by the Democratic leadership to succeed him. He went on to win two terms as mayor in his own right, serving as the second longest standing mayor in Parma history at ten years.

Following high school, Mayor Boldt served his country in the U.S. Army as an anti-aircraft radar operator in Okinawa. When he returned home, he married the love of his life, Jean, whom he had known since first grade, having attended St. Francis de Sales Elementary and Holy Name High School with her. In fact, they went to senior prom together. He worked as a machinist and a product designer at Cleveland



Sean Brennan,
Parma City Council President

Twist Drill for 30 years.

When I asked his advice for the current Council and Administration, he admonished, "Don't look back. Always look forward. Never waste time casting blame. Never second guess the previous or current Administration because you do not know what they know. Stay positive and work as a team to move the city forward. Focus on safety and economic diversification – attracting new businesses." He expressed how much he enjoyed his time in public service. In fact, he mentioned several times how much he enjoyed "helping people."

When I asked Mayor Boldt what he viewed as his biggest achieve-

ments, he was quick to mention that he did not accomplish anything on his own. "I could not have done anything without the support of my City Council colleagues and my administrative team," he said. He is most proud of working with General Motors and Geis, Inc. to create the industrial parkway off of West 130th Street. Truth be told, this area has continued to thrive under the DePiero and DeGeeter Administrations. He is also proud that under his leadership the new Justice Center was built and City property was sold to Parma Hospital to build a cancer center. The proceeds from this sale were utilized to build Powers Boulevard.

Before I left their home, Mrs. Boldt came into the room. She and the Mayor expressed their deep love of family, especially their twelve grandchildren. They are quintessential Parma folks - salt of the earth who clearly continue to love one another deeply and hold God, their family, friends, and neighbors close. The two are longtime parishioners of St. Columbkille Church and frequent Antonio's, Das Schnitzel Haus and Stancato's for meals. They also enjoy



Former mayors James Day and Gerald Boldt slice a cake in honor of Parma's sesquicentennial. Linda Kinsey and Donna Smallwood are in the background.

St. Peter UCC In Seven Hills Welcomes New Pastor

by Jane Rowe

St. Peter United Church of Christ in Seven Hills is pleased to announce their new pastor, the Reverend Christopher R. Helton. He will officially assume the position starting on Sunday, January 11, 2015.

Pastor Chris is a native of North Carolina and graduated from the Uni-

versity of North Carolina – Chapel Hill where he majored in history. He attended Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth and was ordained with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 2003. Since 2011, Pastor Chris has taught theology part-time at Walsh University



School for Professional Studies. Pastor Chris is married to the Reverend Nancy Dunn who is an associate minister at First Christian Church in Wadsworth. They have two children.

St. Peter Church is a friendly, small community church located at 125 E. Ridgewood Drive in Seven Hills. Please join us as we welcome Pastor Chris on Sunday, January 11, 2015 at the 10:15 a.m. worship service. We welcome everyone to join us on our faith journey. For more information, visit our website: <http://StPeter7Hills.org> or call the church office at 216-524-1709.



Parma Mayor
Tim DeGeeter's
Family
Wishes You A
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going on walks through the Cleveland Metroparks' new West Creek Reservation in Parma. They expressed their love of Parma and how they do not plan to leave. Relishing his retirement, Mayor Boldt serves on the Board of Directors for Regina Healthcare and enjoys playing golf with friends and traveling.

In closing, I want to thank Mayor Gerald Boldt for taking the time to complete this interview and for his many years of service to the residents of the city of Parma.



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Health/Culture

UH Parma To Train Medical Residents

by CJ Sheppard

The Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) is establishing a medical residency program at University Hospitals Parma Medical Center to train future primary care physicians.

Christopher Loyke, DO, UH Parma Medical Center's Chief Medical Officer and a longtime mentor and educator of medical students, will serve as the Director of Medical Education. The three-year training program begins July 1, 2015.

"Education is a huge part of our mission at University Hospitals, and it's one of the most gratifying aspects of being a physician," says Dr. Loyke. "As evidenced at academic medical centers like UH Case Medical Center, graduate medical education accelerates the level of care, and everybody improves when you become a teaching hospital. Education is the tide that raises all the boats."

LECOM, based in Erie, Pa., is the nation's largest medical college and the only academic health center in the osteopathic profession. UH Bedford and UH Richmond medical centers, campuses of UH Regional Hospitals, have been affiliated with LECOM over the past decade for internships and fellowships in primary care and a number of specialties. A graduate residency program also will be established at UH

Elyria Medical Center, which along with UH Parma Medical Center joined the UH health system in January 2014.

"UH Parma Medical Center is a great choice for this program, with a well-established network of primary care physicians," says UH Chief Medical Officer Michael Anderson, MD, MBA, FAAP. "We expect to graduate well-trained primary care physicians who will practice within our communities in Northeast Ohio."

The United States faces an acute shortage of primary care physicians, exacerbated by an aging physician workforce, 15 million patients becoming eligible for Medicare and 32 million younger patients gaining access to insurance through the Affordable Care Act.

2015
Parma City Council
President
Sean Brennan
Happy New Year!

Believe In Yourself

by Bob Stilwell

I have learned from my 17-year-old granddaughter that the way to success is by believing in yourself. This will give you the confidence and drive necessary to succeed in any endeavor you may want to achieve. At a very early age, Cassidy Stilwell had an interest in sports as she was thoroughly indoctrinated by her dad and mom. She played baseball, basketball, soccer, and volleyball. Of all of these, she liked volleyball the best and joined a local Junior Olympic Team. She had the confidence and drive to succeed as she believed in herself. She is self motivated to play at her best, even when there were days when she wasn't feeling well. Once she stood on the court and play started, she was constantly focused on the game and her desire to win against all opponents.

Over the years, she has won many medal awards - gold, silver, and bronze. The biggest and most rewarding was in 2011 at Atlanta, Georgia, when her team won the National Championship. Her belief in herself is a constant driving force that generates enthusiasm and drive for her teammates. It is not necessary to list all of her statistics that she has accomplished over the years as her actions and play on the court are easily recognized by all in attendance. When she was a sophomore in high school, she earned her spot to play on the varsity team. She is now a senior and has again achieved a high degree of success as a libero on the volleyball team. Kids do not always learn from adults. This is an example of what I have learned from my granddaughter, Cassidy Stilwell.

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— Kenn Wells, former lead dancer of the English National Ballet

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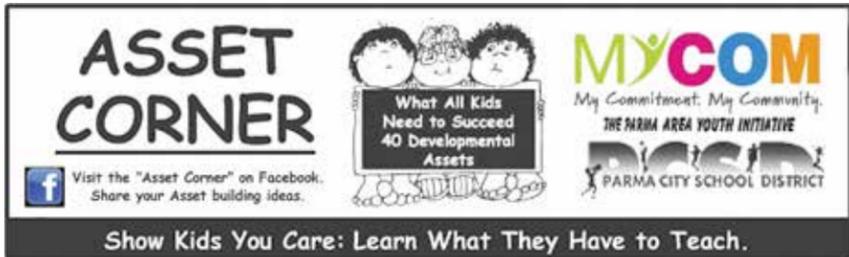
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Education



Asset Corner #61

by Gene Lovasy

January's Asset Category: Positive Identity. Help young people bring out their best. The way people feel about themselves can fluctuate with circumstances. Depending on what's happening, you may feel confident or unsure, optimistic or pessimistic, in control or not in control. What's important is what a person's identity is like most of the time. People who have a strong, positive sense of self maintain these qualities even when difficulties arise. They continue to be hopeful and optimistic, and believe they can make a difference.

Positive Identity Assets Include:

#37 Personal Power – Young person feels he/she has control over "things that happen to me." (42%*)

#38 Self-esteem – Young person reports having high self-esteem. (48%*)

#39 Sense of Purpose – Young person reports that "my life has purpose." (57%*)

#40 Positive View of Personal Future – Young person is optimistic about his/her personal future. (72%*)

(* 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 #39 – Sense of Purpose

What if you live to be 100?

If you lived to 100, what would you want people to remember about you? Would your actions over the years reflect what you believed in and stood for? When young people think today about what they want to accomplish in their lives, it shapes their sense of purpose. Each and every young person has something unique to offer the world.

Here are the facts

Research shows young people who have a sense of purpose feel good about themselves, get along better with their parents, and get into less trouble. About

57 percent of young people, ages 11–18, say their life has a purpose, according to Search Institute surveys. For those who do not, caring adults can help them identify what matters most to them and what they find meaningful.

Tips for building this asset

Ask young people what inspires or excites them and share your thoughts on the subject with them. Encourage them to write down their thoughts about the meaning of life to help gain a greater understanding about what's important to them. Tell them to review what they've written from time to time and notice how some of these things may change over time. Let them know changes are healthy and natural as people mature. Encourage them to aim for the things that give their lives purpose.

Also try this

In your home and family: Ask your child how he or she would like to contribute to the family and to others in the community. Then help her or him get started.

In your neighborhood and community: Look for stories or images that depict local people who've lived with a clear sense of purpose. What did they accomplish? Write an article about one of these people for your local newspaper or newsletter.

In your school or youth program: Ask young people in your school or program to help younger kids. Pair them up in general mentoring relationships or for tutoring on specific school

subjects. This will give the older kids a sense of purpose, as well as model to the younger ones what it means to help others.

ASSET RELATED NEWS

• The Collab's Mobile Food Pantry is scheduled this month for Thursday, January 8th. If volunteering is on your list of New Year's resolutions, give the Collab a call at 440-887-4873. The aforementioned Food Pantry and a host of other Collab-based programs and services could really use your help.

• Find out more about how you can become more engaged in the education of our kids by calling the office of Family and Community Engagement at 440-842-7022. Opportunities abound and your time, talent, and ideas would be appreciated.

• The "ICANBIKE" week long, learn-how-to-bike camp for challenged youngsters in our area will take place on June 22 – 26 at the Michael A. Ries Ice Rink, 5000 Forestwood Dr in Parma. Registration for school district residents only begins January 1st through January 15th. Open registration begins on Jan 16th. Go to www.icanshine.org to find our program and register your rider and/or as a volunteer. Speaking of volunteers, they're going to need upwards of 100 of them to work with these kids over the 5 day period. Don't miss this opportunity to get involved. Sign up now.

continued on page 11

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Inspiration

I Believe

by Daniel Taddeo

A life that reflects joy, praise, and thankfulness benefits everyone.
 At the core of "posing" (lack of purity) lies hypocrisy.
 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear (revere) God and turn away from evil.
 Believers prayerfully make decisions by seeking God's approval.
 Believing we are of equal value in God's eyes would help
 free the world of hatred.
 Blessings include a kindly nod, a special smile, and life itself upon the earth.
 Church is a fellowship where people care about others.
 Everyone we will ever meet knows something we don't.
 Following God's Word results in obedience, which in turn
 brings joy to that person.
 God is available to heal what we often conceal.
 God is light (truth) and in Him is no darkness (lies).
 God is on our side as long as we are on His side and follow
 his clearly revealed Word
 God's love is for everyone—no exception!
 All we have to do is believe and accept it.
 Increasing our faith reduces our doubts
 It is mainly in our giving that the harvest will be realized.
 Keeping life as simple as possible enables one to enjoy it more.
 Let not the sun go down upon your anger.
 Living includes caring, crying, giving, growing, loving, sighing, and trying.
 Love erases offenses.
 Love has the awesome power to heal.
 Love helps make trials bearable.
 Many men spell love S-E-X; women spell it R-E-L-A-T-I-O-N-S-H-I-P.
 Meek people view themselves as sinners living among
 other sinners—no more, no less.
 Money management reveals our true virtues.
 More and more people are drifting way from God's Word.
 Nothing comes to the person who just waits.
 Once a word (negative or positive) is stated, it may very well become reality.
 Our experiences should be consistent with Godly principles.
 People seldom count their blessings, such as a gain, goodness, and mercy.
 Prayer is not designed to change God; it is to change us.
 Thank God for His loving hands until at last we are homeward bound.
 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight.
 View trying circumstances as character-building opportunities.
 This is much easier said than done.
 We only love Jesus as much as the person we love the least.
 We win or lose because of the choices we make in life.
 What people do has much more of an impact than what they say.
 When parents eat sour grapes, their children's teeth chatter.
 Worry looks around; faith looks up.
 Self-reflection is always a good exercise. What I believe is a work in progress,
 not limited to these statements and subject to change. What do YOU believe?

Songs Of The Rolling, Grumbling, Tumbling River

by Ruth Revecky

Tumbling river, where do you roam?
 Through forests, plains, and valleys, traveling on
 And on to far-distant shores.
 You meander over rocks and sand, singing and
 Gurgling as you glide along.
 Sometimes you are muddy; sometimes you are
 Crystal clear; but you really don't seem to care.
 You journey through lush, green-grassy meadows,
 Watering buttercups, prickly thistles, lazy daisies,
 And bluish-purple cornflowers.
 Tiny creatures visit your banks to quench their deep
 Thirst, but you just keep on tumbling, rumbling, and
 Rolling on, searching to find your dreams.
 When spring rains or summer storms arrive, you
 Banks soon overflow.
 Tiny creatures scurry to higher ground, but they keep
 Listening to your rolling, grumbling, and rumbling
 Songs.
 Darting, flashing fish swim hither and thither, trying
 To escape the swooping hawk's talons as it skims low
 Above your still waters, which mirror the beauty of
 The sunny days and the starry nights.
 On occasion when it's very dry, your width becomes
 As narrow as a Christmas ribbon.
 Not just keeping flowing little winding river, trilling your
 Notes that mimic the songbirds.
 Frogs plot on flat rocks and belch a deep croak, and
 Tiny birds beak up your sparkling, refreshing cool
 Water; so sing on rolling, grumbling tumbling river,
 For your songs will echo on and on as you flow
 Gleefully along.

SAFE

by James McCarthy

It's the safe time
 when the exo-world
 shuts down
 it's the late time
 Two A.M.
 The phones don't ring
 the interface subsides
 it's two A.M.
 The safe time is here
 I live in the late
 the benign shut down

Although times change
 there is always a two A.M.
 But then he's suffering
 from an acute case
 of overactive imagination
 The doers become the deniers
 and everything is relative
 I
 you
 we
 must believe
 somewhere in the safe time

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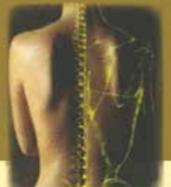
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Our Neighborhoods

Quilting

by Leo Lampeter

Where to begin this article has been a struggle. There are so many thoughts going through my mind that there isn't enough space allocated to put them all on paper. Now that the holidays have passed for yet another year, being productive until the weather clears is another chore. Wasting time is not on my bucket list, although there are such occasions. My perception was that some of the greatest wastes of time would be things like crocheting, knitting, and quilting. My mother was one who crocheted. This was done while "watching" T.V., thus, it must be in the genes to perform such inane tasks. You may have guessed my gender, and in

the above mentioned areas, it doesn't work in my favor.

Recently, however, upon entering the library, there were a group of ladies who were exiting carrying large shopping style bags. Protruding from these bags were decorative cloths. Various ladies had a bag with differently colored cloths that caught my eye. Upon a closer inspection and engaging a few of the women in conversation, the discovery was made that these women were quilters. The concept that this activity was not in any way positive, quickly changed. The quilts that were seen were colorful, unique, and meticulously created. These were not only eye catching, but done with the hand of

artisans. These are crafts that are being lost because we are in such a hurry we don't make time for the satisfying activities in life. A point was made to make an appointment to view the assembly of the quilts. To watch these people perform their craft is calming in itself. Sometimes, it is an assembly line type of production with a specific task being performed by each person and then one may go off on one's own project. You see, it didn't matter what you were doing or if you were doing, just the fact that you were a participant was significant. There are no deadlines or performance enhanced rewards. You don't have to stay for the entire time or participate at all for whatever reason you may choose. Perhaps it is with maturity that we notice such accomplishments and appreciate them.

What was once an unnoticed creation, by myself, is now a work of an artist, although these women don't consider themselves as out of the ordinary. There was a nice mix of age, as could be determined visually, the senior stateswoman being 89 years young. A single male was in the mix. I have my suspicion that he enjoyed being surrounded by such lovely women.

Their generosity in their work goes beyond their creations, it also encompasses absorbing whatever costs may

be incurred. The sewing machines and materials (cloth and thread) are part of the cost that each quilter assumes. They accept donations, but donations are rare.

To top off the skill part of their activities, these ladies donate their work for children in the hospital or for a raffle to get funds to support a variety of charitable causes. The military are not excluded from their donations. The name of the club that was visited was the "Keep Us In Stitches Quilt Club." Since then, there have been a number of Quilt Clubs discovered in various locations. They carry the holiday spirit throughout the year, not just Christmas. We should all be of the spirit of these women and one male.

May you receive the same considerations and courtesies you share with others.



Parma Heights' Century Homes

by Bob Stilwell

As a member of the Parma Heights Historical Society, I have documented all of the currently known Century Homes. There are a total of 24. The oldest single story building is at 5856 Pearl Road. This house was built in 1831 by Oliver Emerson. He was the very first Postmaster of Parma Township and worked from this house. His father, Asa Emerson, built the oldest two story home in 1823, which is at 6103 Pearl Road. Asa moved here from Connecticut. The style is very much like the older homes in Connecticut. This house was moved back further from the Road in 1925. The last house to be added to the list was built in 1913. It is at 6522 Old York Road. As time passes many more homes will be added to the

list. Many of the homes have had additions or modifications to the original structures. All are uniquely different as the people living there. These houses have been well maintained with pride from past and present owners. This is just one more example why Parma Heights is a great place to live. I am trying to document all of the original owners of these homes. If anyone has any information about these homes, please contact the President of the Parma Heights Historical Society, Joe Reeves, at (216) 870-4864.

Anyone interested in our local History are more than welcome to join us at our monthly meeting. We also try to help people that are looking for specific Historical data. Contact Joe Reeves for more information.

A Benefit For Our Friend Cabby Bill

by Marie Smythe

On July 17th, 2014, our friend, Cleveland's Proud Cabby Bill Anderson, over 10 years serving Northeast Ohio in the the taxi and livery business, was admitted to the hospital for infections to his right foot. Since then, he has had several surgeries, lost all his toes on his right foot, and been out of work. He is in financial stress and is trying to get his life back now. He needs your help today!

On January 25th, 2015, we are having a night at the races benefit for our friend, Cabby Bill Anderson, a Cleve-

land Cabby for over 10 years who is now out of work!

POST TIME 2:00 pm at Scoundrels Bar & Grill, 826 Front Street, Berea, Ohio. Pizza, Pasta, Wings, Salad, Draft/Bottle Beer, Well Drinks, Wine, Soda, and Video Horse Racing.

TICKETS are \$25. HORSES are only \$20. Call 440-941-7879 or buy your tickets and horses online at cabbybillsfundraiser.com

Thank you, friends of Cabby Bill Anderson. Hope to see you at the races!



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Perspective

School Funding Needs Sweeping Reform

by Lucy McKernan

Forget about the fact that, as homeowners, we pay \$2,129.00 out of our \$4,445.00 annual property taxes for Parma City School District (PCSD) students for a home that has seen three value reductions but no tax reductions – AND WE HAVE NO CHILDREN WHO MIGHT BENEFIT FROM IT.

Forget about the fact that we cannot get out of our driveway for approximately half an hour twice every school day because of Hillside Middle School traffic – AND WE HAVE NO CHILDREN WHO MIGHT BENEFIT FROM IT.

Forget about the fact that most school districts have a person or department to whom or which strapped homeowners may appeal for special reductions in levy collections after the fat Cuyahoga County Board of Revisions refuses to reduce based on decreased home values (though the state has to come in every six years and do it for them). But colossal PCSD doesn't. This writer/homeowner tried this year, and the head of finance at PCSD laughed off the request. He even told me no one has ever asked this before. Maybe that's

the problem.

We are considered low-income. An astounding 15% of our annual gross income goes to property taxes!

We need sweeping, radical reform in PCSD school funding, and overall school funding in Ohio. How?

First, consider that there was a time when the burden of funding did not rest solely on homeowners. Businesses and other organizations across Ohio shared in what is the screamingly obvious investment in educating our children. We need to go back to that structure. But that's not going to happen without an organized coalition, perhaps a PAC (political action committee). A tiny fraction of the money already overspent to the bloated District could be used for our legal services, while we mount unrelenting pressure.

Second, and this is the real paradigm shift that will send parents screaming, those who have children should pay about half of their annual school funding out of pocket. Have kids? Pay for them!

I benefited from public schooling,

but it was the 1960s and 70s in Lakewood, where the concentration of Boomers was denser than any other area between New York and Chicago, so the pooling of resources made it mutually beneficial, not freaking robbery. This is Seven Hills in 2014/2015, where residents – overwhelmingly NOT parents of school-aged children – pay astronomically disproportionate monies to PCSD. Parma and Parma Heights boast roughly 90,000 to 100,000 residents; Seven Hills has about 11,000. A recent poll of Seven Hills residents found that almost every home has only two residents, and often, just one. That means they are either elderly/retired/empty nesters/have no children, or single parents with one child. I doubt the latter comprises the bulk. Also, having worked as an instructional assistant and in other capacities in various NE Ohio districts, I can attest that private schooling is incomparably better than public. Oh, the things I've seen.

Returning to our property as an example, compare the amount collected by the county for PCSD, to what is collected for Seven Hills: \$2,129.00 to \$436.00, respectively, 60.65% to 12.44%. And we wonder why Seven Hills cannot make ends meet. It's sad to think that, for less than one-quarter of what we're gouged by PCSD, Seven Hills could be robust, with surpluses.

Third, at least half the funding should come from businesses and other organizations.

As a related aside: It's not legally permitted for our mayor and other officials in Seven Hills to publicly state why, but another, comparatively lesser, reason we're in trouble involves former mayor Bentkowski's idiotic, narcissistic lawsuit. By robbing certain city council members and taxpayers, combined with other lingering issues from his administration, he created an unduly burdensome financial AND EMOTIONAL strain on us all. Of course, the loss of state funding and estate taxes, which other communities also now suffer, plus other hardships have made it virtually impossible for Seven Hills leaders to make ends meet. If Bentkowski tries to sue me for writing this, he'll get nothing; he helped ensure that.

There have been some creative, admittedly unpopular, attempts this year to compensate for the losses, and these levies and certain other measures have failed. (God help us if another PCSD levy is proposed!) Seven Hills is apparently entering 2015 in slightly better shape than expected, but that is a comparative statement. And, as one

who sporadically attends caucus and council meetings here, this writer can attest to just how eye-popping is our crisis. We are one catastrophe away from the nadir. At least our crew is level-headed now, when it comes to finances. Things are more transparent, and council is more diverse and communicative, partly because members of the public are attending meetings again.

But the financial issues that have sent residents in droves to caucus and council meetings this year remain BECAUSE only a tiny fraction of property taxes collected actually fund Seven Hills. It's why we should demand a fundamental shift in funding of PCSD, and all districts, so that of existing collections, more goes to the city, and less to the schools. Seven Hills' situation is unique; we have no major tax base, like Independence does. Property tax collections may be a bigger cause of foreclosures and the hemorrhaging of Cuyahoga County's population losses than even the evil Big Six greed!

Beware parents: on your way to pick up your bratty, cell-phone addicted teens at Hillside, should you block my driveway again when I am trying to get out and get to work, you may find a nice surprise in the form of a very inappropriate hand gesture. Don't worry about the influence, your teen already does about 10 way worse things before he or she even gets out of bed every morning. When I was a bratty Lakewood School student, I didn't get picked up in a warm, dry vehicle by my parents – while they pulled into homeowners' driveways -- I walked, both ways, even during the infamous 1978 Storm of the Century blizzard.

PARMA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT: STOP ROBBING SEVEN HILLS, and get the hell out of my driveway and off my street!

A Call To Engage

continued from page 1

across the world need to drop the remote or movie time and invest into making their community, their country a better place than what it already is.

Some of the top things to do are: become familiar with learning the U.S. Constitution, local state revised code, and, most of all, your local ordinances. Who are your elected officials? Stop in and attend a city council meeting. Learn what your housing market is like, what your school district is rated or lacking in, what your politicians are

working on. What are your local ballot issues or tax rates? One that I love - what is your family heritage? What is your community like? Rated? What is the best point of interest in Parma? There is so much more that is important for the next generation to fully engage in and work on.

I bite my tongue when I say this, but elders, let's make room for the next generation. I love learning and being taught about a career field or historical moment. I have learned a lot from my mentors and elders in general, but it is time we get more mentoring going. Engage in mentoring a young person who expresses interest in being a doctor or lawyer, mechanic or hairstylist. I believe to have a best equipped and engaged next generation, this needs to be done and the room needs to be made. Now, I know that is discriminatory and some want to work until they cannot anymore, but must we still complain about the unemployment rate when graduates with degrees cannot get employment in their field, due to a limited number of jobs available? Through education and voting, retirement could be made earlier and younger people can get jobs.

I now challenge my generational citizens to get out, volunteer, network, learn, and engage in your community and communities across the country. Make change happen and let's work to keep the American Dream alive.



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Perspective

There Was An Election And Few Showed Up

by Lee Kamps

A popular slogan against the war in Vietnam back in the 1960s was "what if they had a war and no one showed up." It seems that this old slogan could also describe the latest general election that was held last month in Ohio and the nation.

According to the Ohio Secretary of State's office, only about 40% of all registered voters bothered to cast ballots in the November 2014 general election. Compare that to more than 70% of registered voters who voted in the 2012 presidential election and nearly 50% who voted in the 2010 midterm election. In the 2011 off year election, spurred by the hot ballot issue on repealing a law breaking up public employee unions, 47% of registered voters cast a ballot.

There is no excuse for not voting. Ohio, more than any other state, has made it much easier for someone to vote in elections. We have early voting beginning four weeks prior to the general and primary elections as well as a very liberal voting by mail system where any voter can request a ballot by mail and return it by mail. What can be easier! No one has to bother to take time off from work and wait in lines at polling places. One can even read up on the candidates and issues while voting in the comfort of their own home.

But Ohio voters voted more than other states. Nationally only 36% of registered voters bothered to vote last month. Texas had the lowest participation rate with only 28% of their registered voters bothering to cast a ballot. The state with the highest voter participation rate was Maine with 59% of their registered voters voting; and they had a snowstorm on election day in most of the state.

Of course here in Ohio and elsewhere, there were uninteresting candidates and races. The governor's race at the top of the ticket was as exciting as watching paint dry. Thanks to a very flawed challenger, Gov. Kasich coasted to victory with 64% of the votes cast. That may seem like a landslide, but he picked up only 30,000 more votes in 2014 (out of more

than two million votes cast) compared to his total in 2010 when Kasich won by a margin of only 2% and actually received less than 50% of the votes.

Perhaps if stronger and more interesting candidates ran in the general elections, more people would vote and we would have better people representing us in government. But according to the Secretary of State, voting in primary elections is worse than general elections. In the May primary of 2014, only 17% of registered voters bothered to vote. In 2008, when there was an open race for president, 46% of the registered voters voted in that primary, a high. That year nearly 70% voted in the general election.

But it is in the primary elections where the major party's candidates in the general election are chosen. If so few people bother to vote, is it any wonder that those who run in November tend to be those who mostly follow the party line. Primary voters are more likely to be those party loyalists and the most partisan.

Low voter turnout results in bad government. When it is mostly the party loyalists who vote in the primary elections that decide who gets on the ballot in November and only the most committed who vote; we get the government we deserve, highly partisan and gridlocked with progress rarely happening. Congress is supposed to be representative of the people and right now congress has the lowest approval rating in history with less than 10% approving of how congress has done. Yet here in Ohio, every representative in congress was re-elected with the closest margin of victory being 55% of the vote. Two representatives ran unopposed.

So, while John Kasich and the Republican party can celebrate victories this November, they should not gloat since they won an election where most voters just stayed home. As one pundit said, it was like being the prettiest girl at a dance where very few boys bothered to show up.

In Afghanistan back in 2002 when general elections were held to elect a new government to replace the Taliban,

Taliban supporters threatened to bomb polling places and kill anyone who voted. Despite those threats and in a largely illiterate country of mountains and deserts, more than 90% of their eligible voters voted for their new government.

This disinterest in voting is a national disgrace. The cornerstone of

our democratic form of government is the right of the people to elect those who run the government. But when only more than a third of those eligible to vote bother to vote, this places our form of government in peril. To those who failed to vote, please do not criticize the government. You are part of the problem.

Parma 2015

continued from page 1

Last year, the administration and City Council were able to balance a difficult budget using almost a half-million dollars' worth of one-time funds, such as the proceeds from selling a city owned building. This year, we don't have that as an option.

Our goal is to succeed in passing a balanced budget on time, but also to minimize the impact services for our residents. We are working very hard to piece together a budget that has been considered very carefully for all its options.

Even while the budgetary challenges are ongoing, we do have things to look forward to here in Parma as we head into the new year of 2015. We've all seen the signs of progress across the street from City Hall at The Shoppes at Parma project. This continues to intrigue as we all look forward to all the possibilities that new development can bring.

Hand in hand with that, the Mayor's Town Center Task Force completed a year's worth of work with the issuance of its Town Center Task Force

report. Implementing those ideas and suggestions is a challenge we look forward to; realizing the completion of the Town Center project will bring a whole new look and feel to our city. To read the report, go to our city website at www.cityofparma-oh.gov.

This past year in 2014, we saw other progress to our city as well. We partnered with Cleveland Crops and the West Creek Conservancy to make an actual working farm at our Stearns Farm property. We welcomed Rush Trucking and Pitt Ohio to our manufacturing community, and closer to home, we created and implemented our Good Neighbor Pride Awards that recognized homeowners who care for and take pride in their homes and property.

So while we are working on the challenges that face us as a city, we are also cognizant of those things which will move Parma forward. I am proud to serve as Mayor of Parma, the state's seventh-largest city, and our administration is working hard to continue making it a city that you are proud to call home.

Holiday Lights Contest Winners Announced



Second place home - 10700 Sharon Drive.

by Jeannie Roberts

The holiday lights display at 3910 Redfern Road was recently voted the city's best in a contest conducted by the City and voted on by residents. The winning home is owned by Joe and Denise Kovach. The city's overall second place home is at 10700 Sharon Drive, owned by Bob and Christina Kovach, and third place overall went to Jason and Laurie Meadows, whose home is at 4106 Wellington Avenue.

Additionally, nine other homes were presented Special Mention awards for their respective wards. Those honorees are: 11470 Richard Drive

in Ward One; 6312 Brownfield Drive in Ward Two; 5284 W. 48th Street in Ward Three; 2805 North Avenue in Ward Four; 8050 Royalview Drive in Ward Five; 3228 Klusner Avenue in Ward Six; 11775 Gross Drive in Ward Seven; 6313 Farnsworth Drive in Ward Eight; and 1350 Maple Drive in Ward Nine.



Third place home - 4106 Wellington Avenue.

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Observers' Viewpoints

Ridgewood Garden Club Of Parma In The "Glow"

by Fay Maldari

After putting their gardens to bed, the members of the Ridgewood Garden Club of Parma got busy planning how to decorate their Christmas tree in the Cleveland Botanical Garden's Glow event. Glow is a spectacular holiday tradition that includes walking tours of the gardens, featuring unique works of art created by Cleveland's MC3STEM High School students. The Glow event will transport visitors to a world full of seasonal cheer; by hopping aboard the Garden Express for a whimsical train ride; by taking photos in front of the two-story tree; by visiting the lively town square filled with musicians and carolers; by decorating their own gingerbread house; by letting the kids pick out gifts at the Tree Top shop; by enjoying holiday candies from Mrs. Claus' Sweet Shoppe; by stopping at the Garden Store for grown-ups; by leaving their own wish on the wishing tree; by marveling at the amazing gingerbread houses; and by viewing a delightful display of creative trees decorated by affiliate garden clubs.

The Ridgewood Garden Club of Parma has been participating in the Glow event. Last year our Christmas tree was decorated with children's mit-

tens and scarves which were donated to the Parma Area Family Collaborative center for Christmas. This year, the theme is "The Cleveland Zoo." The tree will be decorated with a variety of stuffed animals which will be donated to the Rainbow Children's Hospital.

Elaine Mekruit, the club liaison to the Cleveland Botanical Gardens, chaired the decorating committee. If you're interested in attending the Glow event, please call 216-721-1600 ext. 100 for tickets. It runs from Nov 28th to Jan 4th. Happy Holidays to everyone!

Volunteers For AARP TaxAide Needed

by Stephen Donovan

This year, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide, the nation's largest free, volunteer-run tax assistance and preparation service, is seeking volunteers to assist taxpayers in southwestern Cuyahoga County. Our tax preparation sites are in Strongsville, Parma (2), Brook Park, Broadview Heights, and Middleburg Heights. Volunteers do not have to be retired or members of AARP.

All of our sites are electronic filing sites. Volunteers are expected to work at a site for at least 4 hours per week during the tax season, which runs from the first week in February through the 15th of April. Computer experience is helpful; however, is not required. The volunteer does not need previous income tax experience. A free two-week course on tax preparation will be given during January.

Our recruitment of volunteers is done on a non-discriminatory basis without consideration of race, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.

For more information, please call Tax-Aide District Director Steve Donovan at 440-237-7348, call AARP's toll-free number at 888-687-2277, or visit Tax-Aide's web site at www.aarp.org/taxaide.

Cuyahoga County And The Earned Income Tax Coalition Offer Free Tax Preparation

by Kathy Augustine

Cuyahoga County and the Cuyahoga Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Coalition will be hosting free tax preparation services as part of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program. Last year in Cuyahoga County, the VITA Program served 11,950 people and brought back more than \$14.8 million to the community. County VITA sites are at the County's Westshore Neighborhood Family Service Center (NFSC) and at the Southgate NFSC. Westshore NFSC is located at 9830 Lorain Ave, Cleveland, Ohio 44102; the tax site will be open Monday evenings and Saturdays. South-

gate NFSC is located at 5398 1/2 Northfield Rd, Maple Heights, Ohio 44137; the tax site will be open Wednesdays and Saturdays. To schedule an appointment, go online to www.211oh.org or call 211/United Way First Call for Help.

Returns will be prepared and filed by IRS certified tax-preparers and completed while the tax-payer waits. All returns will be screened for eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. To qualify, tax-payers must have a 2014 earned income less than \$52,427, and must be filing a simple return.

Tax-payers should remember to bring: Current photo I.D., Social Security cards for each adult and child on the return, W2 and 1099 income statements, child care expense statement and provider's Tax I.D. Number, Form 1099-INT for any checking or savings accounts as well as bank account and routing numbers for direct deposit. If the taxpayer purchased health insurance under the Affordable Care Act, bring 1099 tax credit from one's health insurance company.

Community members who want to volunteer to prepare taxes can register online at www.refundohio.org. Free training is available to become an IRS certified tax preparer.

For more information, please visit www.refundohio.org or www.cjfs.cuyahogacounty.us.

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The Parma Art Scene

Artist Of The Month

Donata Rahne

by Kathryn Mabin

Parma is home to a great many talented individuals, artists, and craftsmen, both professional and amateur, who specialize in variety of mediums. This article is the seventh in a series which will showcase a Parma area artist and introduce you to many of your talented neighbors.

Donata Rahne

Donata Rahne has lived in Parma for forty years, but her interest in art began in Cleveland where she grew up. Donata and her twin Donna spent many hours at home drawing. Together, they attended ceramic classes at Clark Recreation Center in Cleveland. Clark Rec is where her love of ceramics began. Donata tells me she can recall shaping her first "pinch pot" and creating pottery and sculpture using coils of clay. She remembers waiting so long before her piece came out of the kiln, and how proud she was to take it home and show her family her creation. While attending the "old" Lincoln High School her



art teacher took special interest in her ceramic pieces and she was allowed to create special clay pieces independent from her regular studies. Later, both Donata and Donna taught ceramics at Merrick House in Tremont. As a member of the Cleveland Clay Arts Guild, she has had the opportunity to create many one of a kind pieces using the Raku technique. Raku is a form of Japanese pottery using a low temperature firing technique and a rapid cooling process which results in a porous surface and has a unique look.

She was inspired by her high school teachers to pursue a career in art education. She attended and graduated from Notre Dame College of Ohio, where she received her degree in art education. While at Notre Dame, she was fortunate to study under Edris Eckhart, who was famous for her ceramic and glass art sculptures. Eckhart is known for her many storybook sculptures and rediscovered the process for making gold glass. Twelve of Eckhart's pieces are owned by The Cleveland Museum of Art.

Donata has taught art for more than 20 years, in both public and private schools. She currently is employed by the Academy of St. Bartholomew in Middleburg Heights and teaches art to grades K-8. Her students are encouraged to enter contests throughout the school year which provides them with an opportunity to receive special recognition. Her students have won awards from the Earth Day Coalition, the Middleburg Fire Safety contest, the Padua Elementary Art Show, Lifeworks Ohio, and Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl poster contest, sponsored by The



Donata Rahne

Ridgewood Garden Club of Parma.

St. Bart's recently had an assembly which featured a female pilot. Sixth graders were inspired to do a lesson on cloudscapes and jet planes. The pilot was impressed with their watercolor paintings of United Airlines planes in the sky.

In addition to her regular teaching position, Donata also worked for 10 years as an art specialist for Bridgeway, at the Denison Help Center. This was an after school and summer program that gave neighborhood children various activities in which to participate. One of the highlights of the program was to paint a mural on the walls of Sunrise Pool in Mercedes Cotner Park before the pool opened in the summer. They also participated in the Parade the Circle.

Donata is also a member of the Parma Area Fine Arts Council for a number years. Her colored pencil drawing of a tiger (inspired by the "Life of Pi") was awarded 1st place in graphics in a recent PAFAC art show. As someone who has also worked with colored pencil as a medium, I was very impressed by this specific piece, and her attention to detail.

She is also a member of Studio B, a group of artists who meet at Brecksville Center for the Arts, and exhibits annually. Her acrylic painting based on "To Kill A Mockingbird" received an award in the Cuyahoga County Public Library contest which was celebrating the 50th anniversary of the book. Her painting of Miss Caroline Fisher and Scout was inspired by two characters in the

book. She also has displayed her paintings in the lobby of the Cassidy Theater in Parma Heights, and the lobby of the Donna Smallwood Activities Center in Parma. Annually, she also donates an "Angel" painting to Cornerstone of Hope in Independence for their fundraiser. Her painting "Babies and Moms" brightens the living room of Maggie's Place, Zachariah House in Parma.

Donata accepted the challenge to create a flamingo for Flamingo Fever for benefit of the Polish Village CDC. Her "Be Polish - Eat Pierogi" was the first completed flamingo to be submitted and held court at Little Polish Diner in 2013. Her "Save the Parma Theater" flamingo was proudly displayed at Rudy's Bakery in 2014.

I have known Donata for a number of years now and what has always impressed me is her willingness to break out of the mold. She continues to further her art studies by taking classes and attending workshops in order to try new techniques and methods.

Donata tells me she is fond of acrylic painting, oil pastel, scratch board, and, of course, clay. She is passionate about creating art and is still inspired by the sign in the ceramics studio at Notre Dame College, "Work Now You Have All Eternity To Rest."

If you are an amateur or professional artist, living in the Parma area, or know of someone who is, and would like to be featured as an artist of the month, please contact me by email at kathrynabin@att.net.

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Saturday- 50% Off Specialty Drinks Noon-6 PM
Sunday- Open Mic Night-Patio

Asset Corner #61

continued from page 5

• The open enrollment period to obtain health coverage ends on Sunday, February 15, 2015. If your group is looking to host an enrollment event or if you know of anyone who has questions and/or is having difficulty enrolling in the federal health insurance program (Obamacare) or Ohio Medicaid, visit Parma Health Ministry's web site at www.parmahealthministry.org or phone: 440-843-8087. Their Health Care Navigator should be able to help.

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/character and www.Search-institute.Org/assets for more information about the 40 developmental assets and ideas for helping young people build them. Or go to <http://www.Parent-further.Com/> for great asset-based parenting tips, tricks, activities, and ideas.



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