

“Those who can make you believe absurdities can also make you commit atrocities”- Voltaire

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It's Good To Be Home Parma Heights City Hall Back In Business

by Mike Byrne

It's good to be home. I am happy to announce our return to Parma Heights City Hall at 6281 Pearl Road. The arson fire, which occurred two days before the Thanksgiving holiday in 2014, destroyed two offices, but it could have been much worse. I am most grateful that no one was injured.

The past year was challenging due to the need to relocate our services between separate buildings. The majority of my administration was housed in The Heritage Building at 6500 Pearl Road. The Tax Department and Mayor's Court were operating from office space in the Greenbrier Shopping Plaza next to City Hall. Mayor's Court, City Council, Caucus and Commission meetings were held downstairs in the Cassidy Theatre, which has also been home to our city's Building & Service Departments.

Why did it take almost a full year for the renovations



to be completed? The damage wrought by the fire was far more extensive than any of us imagined. While the fire damage was contained to my office, the smoke damage was indiscriminate and permeated the entire City Hall building. Everything had to be removed, tagged, and cleaned. Artwork had to be restored. Appliances

had to be safety tested. The ceiling tiles were taken out, floors removed, and in some cases, walls taken down to the studs.

The \$1 million renovation, paid for by our insurance, includes the installation of a new fire alarm system. The entire building has had upgrades to the electrical and

communications wiring. Floors, lights, ceilings, carpet, and bathroom fixtures have been upgraded in much of City Hall.

My office, which suffered the most damage from the fire, now has new furniture, carpet, lights, and communication improvements. The valuable personal items lost in the fire like family photographs and one-of-a-kind artwork can never be replaced. However, I am grateful for the



generous gifts of many family and friends to help rebuild my office.

Having everyone here

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Parma Mayor Presents Key To The City To Jim Konya's Parents

by Jeannie Roberts

With the closing words, "Rock on, Parma," Mayor Tim DeGeeter made several hundred people deeply happy last month and perhaps helped many, many more worldwide gain a bit of closure after the premature death of Parma metal musician Jim Konya Jr. The mayor had just presented a specially made key to the city to the parents of Konya, who in his travels with several bands was an eager worldwide ambassador for the city.

The event was precipi-



tated by a petition campaign that urged the mayor to present the key to the city, something Konya had aspired to receive, after Konya died at 44 after a series of strokes. When the petition received 1,700 signatures in just 24 hours, the mayor realized something special might be afoot. Event plans were hatched, and after it outgrew two other venues, the presentation was moved the UAW Hall, which easily housed the estimated 500-700 attendees.

Words from Jim's friends

and fans were shared, and proclamations naming Jim Konya Jr. the Mayor's Citizen of the Month for November were presented to Jim's parents, Jim Sr. and Linda. A proclamation of Condolence was presented by State Representative Nick Celebrezze on behalf of his office.

The comments shared about Konya throughout the evening all shared a common thread – the kindness and gentle nature of the man who, no matter where he traveled, always introduced himself as "Jim Konya, Parma Ohio." His love for his hometown was legendary.

Scott Schumacher, a member with Konya in the band Schnauzer, said, "The one time I suggested we make

a sticker that said 'Schnauzer Cleveland' he told me 'There's no way

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Girl Scouts Thankful For Holiday Community Service Opportunity



The Girl Scouts of Service Unit 723, of Parma and Parma Heights by Julie Miragliotta

November is the time of the year when many celebrate gratitude, often around an abundant Thanksgiving table with friends and family; a holiday traditionally identified through food and family. Food, family, and an abundant table may not be available to some community members. The Girl Scouts of Service Unit 723, representing Parma and Parma Heights, came together to try and make an abundant table possible for some residents.

On Sunday, November 15, the Girl Scouts met at the Parma Regional Library for a Thanksgiving Food Scavenger Hunt. Girls were divided into small groups and given a "Top 10 list" of Thanksgiving foods. Each group of Scouts was sent out into the community with their lists and wagons ready to collect from residents. Street sugges-

tions were received from City Council members. Residents not only generously donated the top 10 items on the Girls' list but also other non-perishable food items. Approximately 500 items were collected in just two hours. All



of the food items were delivered to the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, 6735 York Road, to be utilized for their annual community Thanksgiving celebration.

This year's Thanksgiving celebration took place on Saturday, November 21. The Girl Scouts arrived prior to the invited guests and assisted church staff with setting tables, filling water glasses,

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Waiting

by Melanie Clink

waiting for the rains to go
the winds to blow
the sun to show
bringing forth a glowing rainbow
waiting for the time to pass
the day turn dark
the night to end
to wait again

Community News

The President’s Corner

by Sean Brennan

Like you, I am so looking forward to spending special times with loved ones over the upcoming holidays. As I anticipate them, I am reminded of how blessed I am to have so many loving people in my life and to live in the world’s freest land. I also have to remind myself that my blessings would not be possible if it were not for those who have sacrificed by serving our great nation. This is why I have decided to dedicate this month’s column to Honor Flight Cleveland.

Back in the spring as I was returning from a trip to the nation’s capital to visit some members of Congress on city business (but not at taxpayer expense), I entered Washington National Airport and observed travelers lined up on both sides of the terminal clapping and cheering. Wondering what was going on, I inquired and was told an Honor Flight was coming in. What



Del and I at his Korean War Memorial.

I observed next moved me to tears of joy and pride. World War II Veterans were being escorted via wheelchair by the Honor Flights “guardians.” It was a truly moving experience and I vowed to find out how I could have the honor of serving as a guardian.

When I arrived back home, I soon learned about the Honor Flight Network. With affiliates throughout the country, including Cleveland, Honor Flight’s mission is to honor our Veterans by flying them to Washington, D.C. for free to see their war memorials. In fact, to this point, Honor Flight Cleveland has flown well over 2,900 Veterans. Guardians go through a mandatory training prior to being able to serve and are asked to pay \$250 to cover their costs.

I had the honor of going through the training several weeks ago, then was soon, thereafter, asked to serve as a guardian. The morning of our trip, I arrived at Cleveland Hopkins Airport at 6 a.m. and was soon introduced to my Veteran, Del Mastrangelo. Del and I hit it off from the beginning, as he is a retired American Government teacher, which is what I teach. He served us during the Korean War in Austria guarding along the Iron Curtain. After getting acquainted, we were led in the National Anthem, then made our way to the terminal. As we guardians assisted our Vets through the airport, they were met with thunderous applause and cheers. Once again, I was moved to tears.

After a smooth flight, we arrived at Baltimore where our Vets were met with a warm welcome by Honor Flight Baltimore and a multitude of travelers. We made our way to our bus, which took us into D.C. While there we visited the World War II, Iwo Jima, Korean War, Air Force, Vietnam War, and Lincoln Memorials. We also took a solemn drive through Arlington National Cemetery and by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Although I have been to the nation’s capital many times, there was nothing like being at the Korean War and World War II Memorials with actual Vets from those wars. The Memorials literally came



Sean Brennan,
Parma City Council President

to life for me that day. Needless to say, Del and I have become great friends!

Upon returning home, I have just been bursting to tell everyone I can about this incredible organization and about their fine work. In fact, if you are or someone you know is a World War II or Korean War Vet who is interested in taking part in an Honor Flight, feel free to call me at 440-885-8091 or email me at councilmanbrennan@sbcglobal.net for an application. If you would like to donate, please make a check out to Honor Flight Cleveland and mail to 6306 Hampstead Avenue, Parma, Ohio, 44129.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and Happy Holidays to all Observer readers, to all of our fine men and women in uniform, and all military Veterans!

Tri-C Student From Parma Selected As A 2015 Coca-Cola Leader Of Promise Scholar

by John Horton

Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) student Enzo Zaccardelli has been named a 2015 Coca-Cola Leader of Promise Scholar in recognition of his academic achievement and leadership. He is one of 207 Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society members from across the country selected for the award, which includes a \$1,000 scholarship from the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation. A panel of judges considered more than 1,100 candidates. “It was exciting to hear I won,” said Zaccardelli, 19, who attends classes at Tri-C’s Western Campus in his hometown of Parma. “The scholarship money allows me to focus my time on school so that I can continue achieving good grades instead of worrying about paying for tuition.”

Zaccardelli completed his first year at Tri-C with a 3.97 GPA and is on track to graduate in May with an Associate of Arts. After earning his degree, he intends to transfer to Cleveland State University in fall 2016 to study history and anthropology. His long-term goals include gaining a master’s degree in anthropology and teaching

the subject at the college level. Zaccardelli said he wants to create a better world by encouraging cultural understanding. His interest in anthropology began in his junior year at Parma’s Padua Franciscan High School. “I feel we need more people to break down barriers between different cultures and countries,” he said.

Zaccardelli is involved with Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, International Club, and Student Peace Alliance at Western Campus. Earlier this fall, he represented the College at U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown’s collegiate leadership summit. He said attending Tri-C will help him minimize debt on his higher education journey. “I chose Tri-C for the price, location, and to get some of my general education classes out of the way so that when I transfer to CSU, I’ll be ahead,” Zaccardelli said.

Outside of campus activities, he is a member of the National Italian American Foundation and the Italian Home Family Club. He is proud of his family heritage and traveled through Italy last summer. He also boxes in his free time to stay fit.



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Health/Culture

Marathoner, Cancer Survivor: Don't Pass Up Annual Check-up

by CJ Sheppard

Never underestimate the importance of a routine physical.

Terri Schoenholz was just 50 when, as the year came to a close, she realized she had not yet had her annual physical. During the routine check-up, her primary care physician detected a suspicious mass in her neck and immediately referred her to a specialist.

The 25-time marathon runner was stopped in her tracks by the diagnosis: thyroid cancer.

Her husband was stunned and her grown sons were shaken, but she was focused on the finish line. Two days before Christmas, the Avon Lake resident underwent a thyroidectomy at University Hospitals Seidman Cancer Center and followed up at the satellite location at St. John Medical Center for radiation therapy.

"There are certain things a patient may not check or be aware of monitoring, or even a minor abnormality that may turn out to be significant," says Family Practice physician Vincent Sustersic, DO, who recommends an annual check-up for everyone 50 and older. Those under 50 without family history or regular health problems should see a physician at least every couple years.

A primary care physician will run a blood test, follow up on family history – or check a thyroid gland – and know exactly what to watch for that could go unnoticed.

"I felt so healthy, but I wouldn't have known I had cancer had I not gone to the doctor," said Schoenholz, who suspended training for her fifth Boston Marathon in April to make sure she had fully recovered and regained her strength. "People shouldn't put off those well visits."

Nine months after her cancer surgery, Schoenholz was ready to run in the Akron Marathon, then headed to Columbus for another 26.2-mile run in October. Her official times were strong enough to qualify for the highly competitive Boston and New York marathons.

At the starting line for both Ohio marathons, she was overcome with emotion, realizing that fateful find less than a year ago brought her back to another beginning.

And she's not about to miss her next check-up.



Terri Schoenholz, pictured here at the Boston Marathon in 2014, runs multiple marathons each year. Her doctor found a thyroid mass, which turned out to be cancer, during a routine physical,

Pennie The Pickle, A Holiday Tradition

by CJ Sheppard

Patients at University Hospitals Parma Medical Center and UH Wellpointe Health Center in Broadview Heights may know Tony Marini as the kind-hearted nuclear medicine and MRI technologist who calms fears during difficult days. Staff may know him as the guy who runs the popular basket raffle to fund a scholarship for students seeking a career in his chosen profession. Yet others know Marini as the author of Pennie, the Christmas Pickle, a fun-filled holiday book about the little-known tradition of hiding the pickle ornament in the Christmas tree. Through basket raffles and generous personal and private donations, Marini has raised enough money in just four years to create the endowed UH Parma Radiology Educational Scholarship Fund. He expects to award the first scholarships in 2016 to college students pursuing radiology careers.

"I wanted to give back to the world, and I knew that education was a place where I could make a difference," said Marini, who has worked in radiology for 25 years, including nearly 15 years with UH Parma Medical Center. "If we all do just a little bit more, the world can be a great place." Marini's knack for highlighting unique qualities is evident in his colorfully illustrated book about



Pennie the Christmas Pickle will appear in parades in Lakewood and Pittsburgh. a cucumber's magical path to becoming the Christmas Pickle. The 32-page hardboard book, which is published along with an original jingle on CD, is for sale in UH Parma's Gift Shop, as well as online at Barnes & Noble and in shops around Cleveland. And Marini will keep looking for innovative ways to grow the scholarship fund, which he would like to see reach at least \$100,000 in his lifetime. To donate, contact the Parma Hospital Health Care Foundation at 440-743-4280.

Parma Heights City Hall Back In Business

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under the same roof not only makes it easier for us to conduct business, but also makes it more convenient for Parma Heights residents and businesses. We were able to renovate our office space to include the Building & Service Department personnel staff with no additional cost to taxpayers.

At this time of year as we count our blessings, I am are grateful for the

outpouring of support from our residents and surrounding communities. I appreciate everyone's patience as we have waited for the renovations to be completed. Most of all, we are blessed to call the City of Parma Heights our home and to have so many opportunities through services, programs, and stewardship to make this a great place to live, work, raise a family, and retire. Come visit us anytime!

Asset Corner #72

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and purchase 1-3 presents per child, so that every child can have holiday cheer on Christmas Morning! If you're interested in adopting and/or just making a donation, call the Col-lab at 440-887-4873.

- In keeping with the "Community Values Youth" asset, show your support of our SPECIAL kids by attending the 2nd Annual, American Special Hockey Association sponsored game between the Cleveland Rockin' Wildcats and the Parma Senior High hockey team at 8:40 p.m. on Saturday, November 21st at the Ries Rink, 5000 Forestwood Dr. in Parma.
- And, over the next several months, watch for information about how you can help the Parma Youth Commission in their effort to bring back the Fourth of July fireworks for the residents of our community. Visit

their Facebook page for details about the organization.

- If you haven't lately, visit the county library's web site (www.cuyahogalibrary.org) and check out all the new offerings for kids, particularly at the Parma branch. The range and variety of opportunities is impressive.

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 www.parentfurther.com for great asset-based parenting tips, tricks, activities, and ideas.

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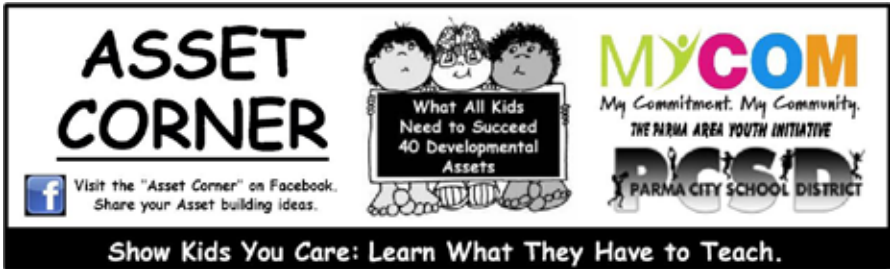
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Education



Asset Corner #72

by Gene Lovasy

December's Asset Category: CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME.

All work and no play can be boring and stressful

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 is one of the eight asset categories that make up Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, the qualities, experiences, and relationships that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

Here are the facts

Research shows that young people are more likely to grow up healthy when they have opportunities to learn new skills and interests through both

structured and unstructured activities.

Tips for building these assets

Playing and spending time alone is important for everyone. But so is structured activity with other people. Help young people find the right mix by offering them a variety of choices: music, art, youth programs, and spiritual organizations that help them tap into their creative energy, provide new experiences, and teach new skills.

Also try this

In your home and family: Periodically, take an "activity inventory." Check in with your children to find out: how happy they are with their different activities; if the activities they are involved in are stimulating and challenging; if they're making friends with caring, thoughtful adults and peers; and if they're learning new skills, and more about themselves.

In your neighborhood and community group: Help create a safe, inviting place where young people can meet for clubs or other structured activities, or just hang out. For example, a park, playground, or community center.

In your school or youth program:

Provide constructive before- and after-school programs for young people who would otherwise spend the time unsupervised.

ASSET RELATED NEWS

• Parma Area MyCom Youth Development Planning meetings... ..A follow-up to the Neighborhood Leadership Institute (NLI) facilitated community meetings took place on Tuesday, December 1st. With a focus on the state of our area's current youth-oriented programs and services, the deliverable is an update to the existing plan that will set a direction for our efforts and carry us through the next several years. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

• Our CBS Connects Grant - Among other things, the program continues to offer exciting career exploration field trip opportunities for interested students. Offerings have included trips to Neff & Assocs, Fathom Digital Marketing, Hospice of Western Reserve, Hyland Software, the Cleveland Justice Center, Boxcast, and others. Mentor/Mentee luncheons are on the calendar as is a 7th grade Lunch and Learn opportunity for the kids at Shiloh Middle School. For details and/or to learn more, visit www.cbsconnects.org or call Chuck Caldwell, CBS Connects Coordinator, at 440-305-3054.

• The Collab's Mobile Food Pantry is scheduled this month for Thursday, Dec. 10th. To find out more about the Parma Area Family Collaborative, its programs, services, and volunteer opportunities, call 440-887-4873 or

visit their web site at www.familycollaborative.com.

• Special thanks to the Parma Area Rotary for recently distributing personal dictionaries to every 3rd grade student in the district and to the Parma Area Kiwanis for recognizing academic and civic achievement of over 250 Ridge Brook Elementary students by continuing the Club's 15-year practice of hosting a quarterly Sundae Bar.

• Consistent with the "Constructive Use of Time" asset category, Campus Life Parma has partnered with Tri-C and opened the Parma Teen Club. Exclusively for high school students (9th – 12th grade), this new, weekly after-school opportunity opened its doors for the first time at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 19th at Tri-C's Galleria, lower level. Visit @campuslifeparma for details.

• Interested in learning more about the Discovery Centers, Parenting Partners, Project More, Teach Me to Read, or other PCSD programs/services? Just visit the district's web site at www.parmacityschools.org and type the name of the program in which you are interested in the "Search this site" box located in the upper right hand corner of the home page.

• Christmas is fast approaching and many families in the Parma City School District are in need of holiday assistance. The Collab is once again asking businesses, organizations, and volunteers to adopt a child/children

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Are you or is someone you know diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease?

You might be able to help with a clinical research study looking at potential new treatment for mild-to-moderate Alzheimer's Disease

Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health

The purpose of the study is to assess if adding investigational drug to donepezil will improve memory, thinking, reasoning when compared to donepezil and placebo.

Enrollment Criteria:

- Aged 50 years and older
- Diagnosed with probable Alzheimer's disease
- Able to communicate with study doctors
- Have a caregiver who can join you every study visit
- Taking a drug containing donepezil for at least 6 months

If this is you, or someone you know, we would like to hear from you.

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Cleveland Clinic.

For full details about what is involved and to find out if you might be suitable to take part in this study, please call: **216-445-9009** or email cbhresearch@ccf.org



INSPIRATION

Cleveland's A Gem

by Myrtis Litman

Cleveland, Ohio's a gem of a city,
Cleveland, Ohio's a jewel of a town.
Yes, Cleveland, Ohio's a gem of a city,
With its emerald necklace and sapphire crown.
Besides the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Lake Erie,
Other things in Cleveland's treasure chest are:
Pearls of wisdom - University Circle's Hospitals and Colleges
Hearts of gold - Many volunteers and charities
Shining trophies - Sports teams, Browns, Cavs, and Indians
Silver screens - Many movie theaters
Cameo appearances - Playhouse Square
Valuable keepsakes - Ethnic Festivals, Cultures, and Cuisines
And its crown jewels - The Cleveland Orchestra and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
Yes, Cleveland, Ohio's a gem of a city,
Cleveland, Ohio's a jewel of a town.
Cleveland, Ohio's a gem of a city,
With its emerald necklace and sapphire crown.

I Believe

by Daniel Taddeo

According to the Bible, marriage is an institution put in place by God, in which two adults of different gender choose to share an intimate, personal, and lasting relationship. Doing otherwise does not change this.

As a society, we are moving in the direction of doing-away-with morality from our way of life. This has resulted in an increase of senseless acts of violence. Matters can only become worse with each succeeding generation.

As our relationship with God is holy, relationships between husbands and wives should be sacredly guarded.

God of the Bible is all in all: truth, righteousness, peace, love, patience, comfort, hope, grace, glory, and salvation.

Godly living involves our service to others via the use of our time, talents, abilities, and material possessions.

God's law points out what is right, good, and true, and we are to live accordingly. Because of our sinful nature, however, we all fall short and our works cannot save us. This directs us to our need for grace. It is God's grace that makes salvation a reality for each faithful believer.

Jesus promised that they who hear His Word and believe in Him who sent Him will have everlasting life, and they shall not come into condemnation but shall pass from death into life.

Life is a four-sided affair: physical, mental, social and spiritual. It is a four-fold opportunity to grow. It helps us to touch life at all angles,

absorb strength from all contacts, and pour out power on all fronts. The more we pour out, the more we find to pour.

The Bible states that we are to refrain from "sin" as God defines it, and that in so doing, we will benefit others as well as ourselves.

The driving population needs to be more serious regarding distractions while driving, such as texting. They need to understand the risks to themselves and other people.

The surest way to guarantee ourselves a miserable existence is to live only for self and not consider the good of others.

We are to speak our truth quietly and clearly and listen to others, even the dull and the ignorant. They, too, have their story.

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?

The Parma Hts Baptist Church Pavilion

by Bob Stilwell

I had the privilege to work with several volunteers of the Parma Heights Baptist Church, performing landscaping duties in the wooded area surrounding this beautiful Pavilion. Even though I am not a member of this church, I wanted to help in any way I could. I had been observing the progress from the initial ground breaking ceremony on October 20, 2013, to the completed dedication service on June 14, 2015. It is built in a cross shape, better seen from elevation. This natural wood structure is awe-inspiring. It is in a natural, peaceful setting. This is built on land that was once a chicken farm. I'm sure that all of the church members are very proud to have this pavilion as their outdoor sanctuary. I met Pastor Dan Barfell, who also volunteered his time, along with other faithful church



members. We all shared in the chores at hand and helped one another. In just 4 hours, the perimeter was cleared of debris, wood split and stacked for use in the huge fireplace, and a walking trail was laid down with ground wood chips. There are wooden pegs that have

been inscribed with church member names that are imbedded in the support structures. What a fitting tribute to these people for future generations to see. This is a structure that should last for over 100 years.

Parma Mayor Presents Key To The City To Jim Konya's Parents

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that makes sense, since the band is from Parma."

Jim Lippucci, who was unable to be at the event but who sent remarks to be shared, echoed the sentiments of many when he said: "It's no wonder we miss him so much and are so angry, sad and confused. It seems reckless the way the fates chose to trim the threads of our existence. All we can really do is carry on and hope to keep a bit of that fire within us, to share it and maybe learn to see it in others.

The mayor himself admitted that he didn't know Konya or his music, but said he has been affected by the outpouring of love and support for the key to the city idea.

"I didn't know Jim personally, but after all I have heard about him, I wish I had," DeGeeter said. "I understand that, despite what anybody might think of the whole metal persona, Jim was a gentle man who didn't drink or smoke or do drugs or even own a cell phone. He loved animals and kids and musicians and encouraged the kids to stay in school and the musicians to keep doing what they love. So many friends and fans of his sent me emails about experiences with Jim, and the more I read, the more impressed I became. Jim Sr. & Linda obviously raised a fine son. ... We've lost a true Parma gem."

The mayor presented a specially made plaque with a gold key and the words "Key to the City of Parma, Presented to James P. Konya Jr. For your love and support to the City." Konya's father Jim Sr. spoke briefly after receiving the award; his tears began when he said, "Jim is very pleased. Thank you."

The event was by turns raucous, humorous and tearful. But perhaps the

most telling of all is that attendees were left with a challenge of sorts, to live as Konya lived.

"Jim's never going to leave us," said friend Steve Sanley. "He's in our hearts wherever we go. If we can keep the legacy and spirit of Jim Konya alive, it will do nothing but help all of us."

Parma resident Karin Greage's email, which the mayor read, summed it up nicely: "With the way things are going in society, if we could all just even have a little fraction of Jim Konya in us, this world would be such a better place to live."

Girl Scouts Thankful For Holiday Community Service Opportunity

continued from page 1

and helping set up the food stations. Over the course of four hours, Girl Scouts, Kindergarten through Fifth Grade, selflessly continued to help with replenishing table service, serving food, drinks, and desserts, helping guests be seated, and witness the direct result of their community service the week prior. In addition to partaking in the served community meal, 150 of the invited dinner guests had a take-home package which included the supplies for another Thanksgiving feast.

The Girl Scouts of Service Unit 723 will continue to be prevalent, engaging members of their community thankful for the continuous service opportunities. As this year winds down and a new one begins, Girl Scouts will continue their mission of building girls of confidence, courage, and character while making the world a better place.

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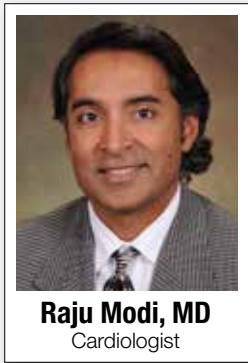


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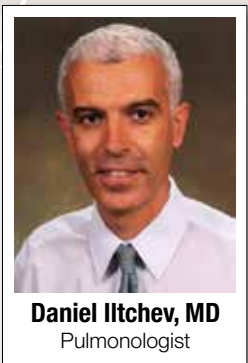
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Perspective

The Phony “War On Christmas”

by Lee Kamps

Every year as the Christmas holiday season approaches, we hear from the right wing about a "war" on Christmas being perpetrated by leftists and those who believe in "political correctness." Every year we hear about challenges to cities and villages setting up Nativity displays on public property and court orders to remove those religious displays. We hear about people refusing to say "Merry Christmas" and to say "Happy Holidays" instead. But what difference does any of this make?

The problem is that the United States, since its founding, has established that there should be no official state religion and this country has guaranteed complete freedom of religion. People in the United States are free to practice any religious belief in any manner as long as it doesn't involve human sacrifice. Even Native Americans are permitted to use peyote, an illegal substance, in their religious ceremonies.

The fact is that the United States has become a diverse nation of more than 310 million people who practice all kinds of religious beliefs and many who don't practice any religion at all. Those are freedoms guaranteed in our Bill of Rights. In fact, for a long part of our nation's history, Christmas was mostly a family celebration and not a public "season" as we know it today. It wasn't until the latter 19th century that public celebrations of Christmas

became popular and it wasn't until the 20th century that Christmas became commercialized as a "season" by retailers and businesses to drive sales of consumer goods.

Many of our Christmas traditions actually have their roots in ancient pagan ceremonies of the winter solstice. The fact that Christmas is celebrated on December 25, a few days after the winter solstice, dates back to the Roman era when Christians were persecuted. They celebrated their holidays to coincide with Roman holidays and one of the Roman's biggest holidays was Saturnalia or the feast of the winter solstice. That celebration marked the beginning of the "return of the sun" as the days began getting longer and that eventually summer would return. In fact, most Biblical scholars believe that Christ was actually born in the spring, not at the beginning of winter.

There are many secular traditions of Christmas that have very little religious connotation today. Christmas trees, Santa Claus, and many other Christmas traditions don't mention any specific religion and even in many non-Christian cultures, there is a kindly character who bestows gifts on good children.

But the reality is that in the United States of 2015, there are many people in this country who are non-Christian. Jews have their own religious holidays and usually don't celebrate Christmas. There have been Jews living in

the United States since its beginning. Now there are many Moslems who have immigrated to the United States as well as many Americans who have converted to Islam. There are also many people who have emigrated here from India who are Hindu. Moslems and Hindus have their own religious holidays.

It is not "political correctness" or any "war on Christmas" when we respect those non-Christians who practice and observe their own religious holidays and traditions. It is just called respect and tolerance. We would be (and are) offended when other religious fanatics put their religious beliefs in our face. We are rightly upset when Islamic extremists like the Taliban and ISIS persecute those who don't follow their religious beliefs. So why are some

in the United States so upset when non-Christians don't want our Christian beliefs shoved down their throats?

But the real message of Christmas is one of peace and love for one another. It is not about getting one's panties in a wad because Starbucks took the snowflakes and symbols of Christmas off a coffee cup. We certainly do not need politicians and people running for President using this as a campaign issue. There are far more important issues than whether a company has a Christmas coffee cup.

Every message and just about every story about Christmas usually ends with the message that it is what is in one's heart that matters, that love and peace are the real message of the season. That is a universal message for everyone, regardless of their religious beliefs.

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Observer

A Proud Democrat Responds

by Ken Ehlert

I am writing in response to John Lee's article in the November issue. Mr. Lee is obviously a Republican, because all he did was bash the Democratic Party in Parma. First off, my wife and I attend most city council meetings in Parma, and to say that our representatives don't care about the residents in Parma

is totally inaccurate. Actually, they have been working hard through millions of dollars of budget cuts due to the Republicans in Columbus to balance our cities budget, provide services, and keep us safe. He also mentioned that property values are down in Parma due to our elected officials, but a look around the county will tell you that property values have gone down all over, not just in Parma.

A couple of national issues were talked about, so I am going to mention a few national issues as well. The Republicans have spent millions of taxpayer dollars on the Benghazi investigation. I watched the special committee question Hillary Clinton, who made the Republicans on that committee look like the seven dwarfs! It was a horrible situation in Benghazi, but to politicize that is a terrible mistake.

The other issue I want to touch on is the Republican tea party members blocking legislation on gun control. Over and over again we see senseless killings, but the Republicans continue to let people get their hands on guns who shouldn't.

Finally, I was happy to see that Mary Galinas, who is a Republican Ward Leader, but ran as an Independent write-in for mayor, lost the election. I guess that she is not at all proud to say that she is a Republican, so she hides behind the Independent label. I, on the other hand, am proud to say that I am a Democrat, and always will be!



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Parma Observer

Home Instead Senior Care Delivering Hope And Happiness (And Pierogies) To Parma Area Seniors

by Lindsay Falk

Home Instead Senior Care has provided home care services to the senior citizens of Cleveland’s West Side and surrounding suburbs for more than eighteen years. The list of affordable services is what one might expect: mobility assistance, medication reminders, safe transportation, meal preparation, light housekeeping, personal care, and companionship all delivered in the comfort of home. Of course, the services allow peace of mind to the senior clients and families they serve every day. However, Home Instead’s caregivers also deliver that “intangible” something perhaps best described as “hope and happiness.”

We’ve all heard about seniors who experience a rapid decline in health upon moving to a nursing home. We also know that seniors risk isolation, injury, and even death if they spend the majority of their time alone in their own homes. Home Instead’s primary mission is to keep older adults safe, healthy, happy, engaged, and comfortable in their own homes for as long as possible.

Earlier this year, the company celebrated the grand opening of a second office located in Parma. The expansion has enabled Home Instead to serve a more diverse population than ever and the staff



have enjoyed enrolling new clients in and around the Parma area. Parma resident William Kozlowski reached out to Home Instead Senior Care after the recent passing of his wife. On his first day of service, Client Care Coordinator, Diane Dargaj, introduced the caregiver to the client and took advantage of the opportunity to also celebrate Mr. Kozlowski’s birthday, which was the day before. Of Polish descent, Mr. Kozlowski was delighted by the authentic pierogis presented by Diane from Perla Homemade Delights. But his eyes really lit up when he saw the assorted Kolachki from Samosky’s Home Bakery. He exclaimed he hadn’t had them in years.

Mr. Kozlowski is deeply interested in genealogy and has traced his Polish ancestry to his grandfather on his father’s side of the family. He requested a Polish speaking caregiver and was carefully matched with Magda Kosiara, originally from Poland. To see how Mr. Kozlowski has adjusted

to receiving care in his home, a staff member from the Home Instead office recently stopped by to visit. When asked what a typical day was like before Home Instead, Mr. Kozlowski said it was difficult trying to get around in his wheel chair on the carpet. He also had difficulty keeping up with laundry and the groceries. Maggie says a typical care session with Mr. Kozlowski involves some transfer assistance and help with showering. However, she is quick to mention that Mr. Kozlowski is very independent and she mostly

assists with meal preparation and laundry. Maggie and Mr. Kozlowski mostly enjoy spending time together because of their common heritage. They are both outgoing, talkative, and enjoy sharing stories about Poland and their families with one another. It’s clear the care provided by Maggie is benefiting Mr. Kozlowski. However, even more important is the relationship that is building between them. That relationship is where that “intangible” something happens and results in hope and happiness...for both of them!

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All tickets must be purchased by December 15, 2015. All ticket prices are per child. To participate, download the Overnight Paperwork online at ClevelandYMCA.org and follow registration instructions.

Members of the YMCA: \$75
Non-Member of the YMCA: \$100

For more information, contact Trevalyn Bell at (216) 263-6818.

The YMCA of Greater Cleveland is now offering programs at the Donna Smallwood Activities Center and Parma Office on Aging (formerly the Parma Senior Center), located behind Parma City Hall at 7001 W. Ridgewood Drive. Visit and see all that we have to offer.

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Parma Art Scene

Parma Area Fine Arts Council Receives Grant From Cuyahoga Arts & Culture

by Kathryn Mabin

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Parma Area Fine Arts Council, or PAFAC, has been awarded a Project Support II grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) for 2016. In 2006, Cuyahoga County residents voted to create a levy to fund Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. This levy, which was renewed this past November, is funded by a tax on the cigarettes sold in Cuyahoga County. Since 2007 more than \$140 million has been granted to over 300 nonprofit organizations in Cuyahoga County, both large and small. CAC's mission is to inspire and strengthen the community by investing in various arts and cultural activities.

On Monday, November 23, 2015, the Board of Trustees for Cuyahoga Arts & Culture met with applicants for the 2016 Project Support Celebration at the Cleveland Donauschwaben German-American Cultural Center. In addition to hearing speakers from CAC, guests were entertained by STV Bavaria with performances of their choir and dancers, and the approved award amounts were announced to 152 nonprofit organizations. For 2016, Project Support I funded 65 organizations with \$1,301,409, and Project Support II funded 87 nonprofit organizations with \$350,215. In attendance, representing Parma Area Fine Arts Council were Michelle Behal, President; Kathy

Mabin, Secretary/Treasurer; and Parma Ward 2 Councilwoman Debbie Lime.

The Parma Area Fine Arts Council was incorporated by the State of Ohio in 1962. It received nonprofit status as a 501(c)(3) from the IRS in 1967. Currently, PAFAC is run by a dedicated group of volunteers. They offer very low cost, ongoing art classes for ages 7 to 100 at the Donna Smallwood Activities Center. Their mission is to bring arts into the community for the benefit of all residents. Project Support II from CAC is a 1:1 matching grant. In other words, the organization requesting grant funds must match dollar for dollar from other sources. The 2016 grant request process began in spring of 2015. Pre-screening requirements are: a permanent and viable base of operations for one year prior, at least 2 prior years of arts and cultural programming that was open to the public, to have been incorporated and authorized by the State of Ohio to do business, and be a qualified 501(c)(3) by the IRS. The grant proposal itself must meet three criteria, Public Benefit, Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy, and Organizational Capacity, or the ability to do what was required to reach the goal of the project.

The title of PAFAC's project is Art For The Fun Of It. This pilot program will target two segments of Parma's population: seniors age 55+ and youth ages 12 to 17. Four classes

will be offered, free of charge, with free supplies, to a limited number of applicants, beginning in late spring of 2016 for the seniors and summer of 2016 for the youth. The classes will culminate in a Fall Art Show, showcasing the students' work. The show will be free and open to the public. PAFAC hopes to expand this project in the future by offering a wider range of alternatives for recreational opportunities, through workshops and classes. The creative process, as a recreational vehicle, is one that can

be enjoyed by all ages, and all abilities. PAFAC's classes are always beginner friendly, relaxing, and enjoyable. Their current, low cost, class schedule features classes in watercolor, acrylic, and mixed media for adults, and Art Exploration for youth ages 7 to 18.

For more information on Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, or to view the approved list of grants, check out their web site at cacgrants.org. For more information on PAFAC, go to parmafinearts.org, or follow them on Facebook.

Stunning Artistry On Display At Westcreek Watershed Stewardship Center

by Daniel P. McCarthy

During November, a quilt exhibit at Metroparks Westcreek Watershed Stewardship Center entitled "Piecing Together A Changing Planet" proved to be an eye opening display of incredibly imaginative imagery woven into a medium not usually associated with higher forms of visual art. Quilting in this manner certainly transcends the prevailing notions held by most people concerning this traditional craft. The

intricate designs and themes, focusing on how our 401 National Parks are affected by pollution and other human caused factors, were truly a thought provoking and inspiring experience upon viewing. This was a juried art show featuring 26 original art quilts created by 22 Florida artists. I hope that many people took advantage of this unique show and I anticipate more art events such as this one to occur at this most ideal venue.

December Art News

Rudy's Strudel Mural Design Competition

by Kathryn Mabin

Rudy's Strudel & Bakery, located in the business district of Polish Village at 5580 Ridge Road, is having a mural design competition which is open to the public, with no residency restrictions. The completed mural will be 15x15 foot, located on the north side of their building, and very visible to traffic traveling southbound on Ridge Road. They are asking that the completed designs be 22.5 x 22.5 inches. Content should be appropriate: no political, religious, sexual, or obscene material will be accepted. Color and detail is paramount considering the design will be enlarged by a copier and adhered to the building. Sherba Industries of Brunswick will be enlarging the design for installation.

Inspirational ideas include: old world feel, wheat fields, poppies (the national flower of Poland), Polish tradi-

tion, family values, bread of life, pastries, and baked goods. These ideas are strictly inspirational and not required inclusions to the design submission.

The competition rolled out on October 30th and there seems to be much interest from artists in the community. Inquiries have even been made from the Akron and Columbus areas as well. The selected contestant will receive a cash stipend in the amount of \$500. Artists are asked to sign their work within the design, so their signature will be visible. Deadline for submission is January 7, 2016. The winner will be announced in early February.

For details and an application go to the City of Parma home page (click on the Rudy's Mural Competition link under Community Highlights), go to PolishVillageParma.com/Rudys-Strudel-Mural-Competition-2015, or email me at kathrynmabin@att.net, and I will forward the application to you.

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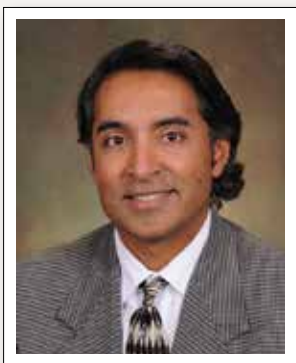
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