

“No one is hated more than he who speaks the truth”- Plato

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GM To Invest Over \$200 Million At Parma Metal Center

by Thomas Mock

At 10:40 a.m. on Tuesday, December 14, 2016, and before hundreds of Parma team members, Plant Manager Lamar Rucker made the most important announcement in Parma's recent history. "So it is my honor, and I am humbled at this, to announce that General Motors is going to invest with Parma and UAW Local 1005 an amount totaling \$218 million." That announcement was met with a thunderous round of applause from the Parma Team. It's the second largest investment in Parma's 68 year history. "This will help us retain and secure jobs," added Lamar. "And puts us in one heckuva position for the future."

The investment includes

two brand new presses and die support. Lamar promised the team that information related to timing, installation and other detail will be offered to the entire team early next year.

Acting UAW 1005 shop chair Jennifer Rothschiller-Angus thanked the Parma Team. "The shop committee does what we do but none of this could happen without you, each and every one of you." UAW 1005 President Steve Frammartino was among the most excited people on the floor. "It's been hard for me to hold this in. This is important to us. This is a great day in the history of UAW Local 1005 and the GM Parma Metal Center. We are a part of history, everybody. This is awesome and this workforce deserves this allocation!"

Special guests included Parma Mayor Timothy DeGeeter and Parma Area Chamber of Commerce President Dave Nedrich. "Thank you to the men and women of UAW Local 1005 and the entire Parma Team. I have been in office since the early nineties and this plant has had a great reputation with the union and management working together. These are the results you have when that happens," said Mayor DeGeeter.

Simultaneously, GM announced investments of an additional \$334 million at its New York state engine and component plant to support future product programs. In 2016, Gm has announced total investments of \$2.2 billion into its U.S. operations.



Parma Plant Manager Lamar Rucker making the announcement before the Parma Team.

Parma Recognizes December's Citizen And Business Of The Month

by Jeannie Roberts

The Shoppes at Parma and retiring County Councilman Chuck Germana were honored as Business of the Month and Citizen of the Month for December. Germana was

honored for his outstanding and tireless work for Parma over a number of years. He is retiring from his most recent public service as the District 4 Cuyahoga County Councilman (and will be replaced by

Ward 8 Parma City Councilman Scott Tuma in January.) Despite his retirement from public service, Chuck, who has worked at Parma's family-owned Four Star Insurance for

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The First Suburbs Consortium: Twenty Years Working For Us

by Timothy DeGeeter
Mayor of Parma
Michael Byrne,
Mayor of Parma Hts

Recently, the First Suburbs Consortium (FSC) celebrated its 20th anniversary as an advocate on behalf of our city and other older suburbs surrounding Cleveland. The mayors of Cuyahoga County's inner ring communities formed the FSC to change federal, state and county policies that, as noted by the Brookings Institution, have been keeping inner ring suburbs in a "pol-

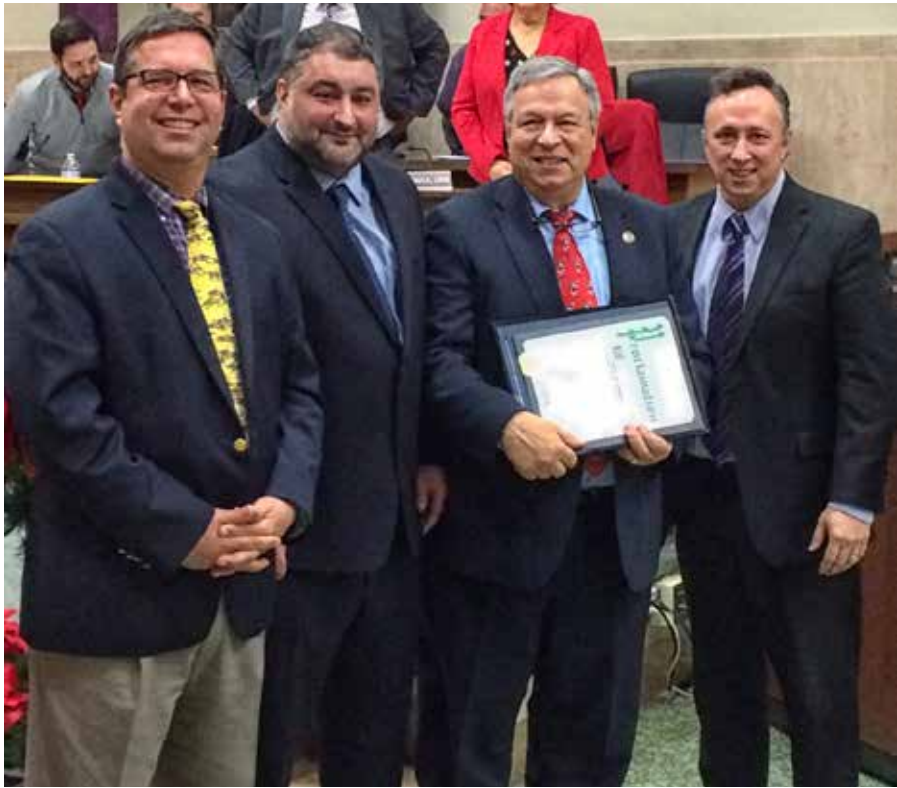
icy blind spot." Parma, Parma Heights and the other sixteen cities that are members of the FSC Council of Governments populate 38% of the county. This is more than either the City of Cleveland or the county's outer suburbs combined. Both of us proudly serve on the First Suburbs Executive Board.

Through two decades of mutual collaboration, the FSC member cities have worked to bring many benefits to our residents, businesses and

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Michelle Devlin, General Manager of the Shoppes at Parma accepting the award for Parma's Business of the Month, flanked by Parma Mayor Timothy J. DeGeeter and Ward 8 Councilman Scott Tuma.



Cuyahoga District 4 Councilman Charles Germana accepting his award for Parma Citizen of the Month, flanked by Parma Mayor Timothy J. DeGeeter, Ward 1 Parma City Councilman Vito Dipierro, and his successor in Cuyahoga Council District 4, Ward 8 Parma City Councilman Scott Tuma.

COMMUNITY NEWS

The President’s Corner

by Sean Brennan

This month I return to my continuing series on Parma’s places of worship by reporting on Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church. I have visited Holy Spirit, located at 5500 West 54th Street, many times over the years and have developed a close friendship with Pastor Reverend Father James Batcha. I have to say that I always feel welcomed into this special Parma holy space.

Father Batcha grew up on the West Side and attended Byzantine High, but finished high school in 1972 at Holy Name on Harvard Avenue his senior year, due to his alma mater closing. “I knew from the age of five that I wanted to be either a priest or a doctor,” he explained. Growing up in a faith-filled home, he spent six weeks shadowing a priest friend and, as a result, knew he was called to serve the Church. Ordained in 1985, he began his service in Minneapolis, later serving as Pastor in Mentor-on-the-Lake, Fairport Harbor, Akron, Lorain, and Columbus, before coming to Parma in 2005. Father Batcha has also been a member of the City of Parma Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.) since its inception and maintains a close relationship with the Community/Business/Schools (CBS) partnership and the Parma Area Chamber of Commerce. He speaks English, Russian, and Church Slavonic fluently and has a working vocabulary in several other languages.

Like many churches in Parma, Holy Spirit has its roots in Cleveland. In fact, it is the daughter church of Holy Ghost Church on West 14th Street, which now mainly serves as a cultural center for the Byzantine Rite. The church, rectory and hall were all built in 1969 east of the mother church’s cemetery. The cemetery celebrated its centennial in 2009. Interestingly, the 21 acre cemetery property was purchased for \$6,000 from the Benajah Fay family, who were Parma’s first settlers, moving here from New York in 1816. Notably, former Mayor James Day and



Sean Brennan,
Parma City Council President

his wife Linda are buried in the cemetery. When West 54th Street was built, the cemetery property was cut in two, so the property on the east side of the road was sold to St. Mary’s Polish National Catholic Church located on Broadview Road.



Holy Spirit is part of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma. This “diocese” includes 12 states with 22 parishes located mainly in the Cleveland and Chicago areas. The Byzantine Catholic Church has four Eparchies in all throughout the country, with its headquarters or Archdiocese in Pittsburgh. The Parma Eparchy Cathedral, where the Bishops sits, is at St. John’s located at the corner of Snow and Broadview Roads.

The Byzantine Catholic Church is an Eastern Rite Catholic Church in union with the Pope in Rome. In fact, all Catholics may attend services and receive Holy Communion to fulfill their Holy Day and Sunday obligations. They share the same seven sacraments and beliefs. The liturgy is rich with Eastern Rite customs and traditions. Services are chanted in English with some use of the original Church Slavonic. Like the congregation during services, the priest faces the altar “because we are praying

with, not at, the congregants,” Father Batcha mentioned. Over 1 million Byzantine Catholics call America home. According to their website, “Our church is open to all backgrounds.”

Holy Spirit has an award-winning party center that is rentable for events. In fact, I have attended many community events there over the years. They host wedding receptions, First Communion parties, funerals, bridal showers, fundraising events, etc. They also have a smaller hall for small-scale events. For more information call 440-842-6522 or 216-429-1956. Visit the following website for catering information: www.waltams.com.

To learn more about Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church visit their website at www.holyspiritbyzantine.org, email them at contactus@holyspiritbyzantine.org or call 440-884-8452.

Parma Recognizes December's Citizen And Business Of The Month

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46 years, remains an important and respected community advocate. He is a product of Parma Senior High and Ohio University and attends St. Bridget parish. Chuck has led numerous community endeavors as their president, including Proud of Parma, Parma Jaycees, Boy Scout Troop 358 Committee, Valley Forge Boosters, Parma Area Chamber of Commerce, Parma City Council, Cuyahoga County Insurance Board and the Northeast Ohio City Council Association. Chuck and Anne have been married for 48 years and

have four children and eight grandchildren.

Michelle Devlin, General Manager at The Shoppes at Parma, accepted the Business of the Month award for the transformation of the former Parmatown Mall into The Shoppes at Parma. The project is expected to be completed during the summer of 2017. The enormous project is already reaping impressive benefits for the city, and when all is said and done, will be the jewel of the Crossroads of Parma, the city's town center. Congratulations to PECO Real Estate Partners for a truly impressive project.

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2016 Observed - A Look Back



September 11, 2016- Shoppes at Parma. A ceremony was held to permanently install a piece of the World Trade Towers from 9-11-01 in a prominent memorial.



Parma City Council President Sean Brennan at the Boston Marathon, holding a Parma Observer for all to see. Bless his heart! Sean has run in countless marathons, but this is one of the legendary marathons of all. Stand around Parma long enough and Sean will run by you. He is everywhere.



On July 15, 2016 Parma Police Chief Robert Miller retired after more than 30 years serving the citizens of Parma. Good luck to him- he will be missed, but it is comforting to know that he has been replaced by an equally competent Chief Joe Bobak.



Dramatic events unfolded in October when the Parma City School District announced severe cuts and downsizing plans, prompting hundreds and hundreds of students, parents and city leaders to converge on school board meetings in extremely forceful demonstrations of dissatisfaction, resulting in the sudden resignation of the School Board President, and then her replacement within two weeks. Right or wrong, these students and parents proved that many loud voices in a meeting of leaders can surely be an effective instrument of sudden change. Three live videos of these events can be viewed on the Parma Observer Facebook Page.



Two Parma / Parma Heights living legends, Parma Heights Councilman Robert Verdile and retired Parma Municipal Court Judge George Spanagel stand together during the Memorial Day ceremonies in Parma Heights. Both of these men have played a huge role in shaping our community over all these years.

One of the nicest additions to the Cleveland Metroparks is this beautiful commuter crossing bridge over Big Creek in Parma Heights behind Greenbriar Commons.



Two young professionals who work very hard and make a huge difference in our community - Christine Vodicka and Stefan P. Stefaniuk.



The Parma Police Department had several promotions in 2016. Top row, left, Parma Safety Director Michael O'Malley (Soon to be Cuyahoga County Prosecutor) Parma Police Chief Joe Bobak, Parma Mayor Timothy J. DeGeeter. Middle row, left Lt. David Zarzeczny, Deputy Chief Joe Manning. Bottom row, left, Captain Kevin Riley, Sgt. Joe Porec.

No one can deny that many of our residents take Halloween Spirit quite seriously, as this home in Parma Heights illustrates most effectively. Soon they will run out of space.



Health And Culture

Organ Donor, 25, Pays Life Forward

by CJ Sheppard

Faith lives on. Her heart beats in the chest of a 48-year-old married woman with three children who waited nearly a year for an organ donor. Her lungs went to a 61-year-old married mother of three who loves crocheting and computer games and spent three full years on a waiting list.

And a 56-year-old married father can look forward to the holidays, golfing and fishing with his three children thanks to a new liver from a young woman he never met.

University Hospitals Parma Medical Center recently lost a spunky, sweet Dietary employee who passed away unexpectedly. But several grateful individuals gained new organs thanks to an important conversation 25-year-old Faith Parsons once had with her husband of just one year.

“If there’s anything positive to take from something so tragic, it’s giving life to someone else,” says Bill Parsons, whose wife influenced his own views on organ donation. “She was a part of helping me coming around fully to the idea.”

One organ donor can save and heal eight lives and enhance up to 50, according to Lifebanc, which coordinates organ donation for 80 hospitals, including the 18 within the UH system. Every 10 minutes a new name is added to the waiting list. In Northeast Ohio alone, more than 2,000 people are waiting.

Faith had no warning that her life would end. The Parma woman was taking a nap on the couch when her husband arrived home from work and realized she had stopped breathing. She never regained consciousness.

Focusing on giving renewed life to another human being can help a grieving family cope. UH Parma Medical Center’s Intensive Care Unit staff and Lifebanc worked with the family on this important decision.

“Even with the best of technology and care, a person sometimes does not survive,” says Michelle Adams, Manager of ICU Services. “You can still affect five to six people who live better and longer because of what we do. You can make a huge difference.”

Faith had more gifts to give. Her kidneys went to two different men, ages 38 and 56. Her bone, connective tissue, skin and corneas also were recovered for potential transplant, research or medical education. Organ donation is a complex, carefully orchestrated process that must occur within hours of a donor’s passing. UH Transplant Institute has decades of experience in transplant surgery at University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center.

Lifebanc seeks to dispel common myths that patients cannot donate organs if they are too old or ill. Organ donation does not violate any religion, prevent a normal viewing of the body or interfere with any lifesaving measures that a family chooses.

“Families tell us sometimes it’s the only ray of sunshine in an otherwise tragic day,” says Jillian Frazier, Lifebanc’s Director of Development and Community Services. “This is another special way to honor a family member’s wishes to help save and heal lives.”

If you don’t have the little red heart on your driver’s license indicating your choice to be an organ donor, join the Ohio Donor Registry.



Faith Parsons told her husband, Bill, that she wanted to be an organ donor. When she died unexpectedly this fall, just one year after their wedding, she gave life to several other people through this precious gift.



by Jean Micklewright

The accomplishments of two area students are the focus of this month’s column.

Zaria Johnson, an 11th grade student at Valley Forge High School, was recently honored at the MyCom Youth Voice Award ceremony on November 17. Along with four other teens, Zaria worked for over a year to create a documentary titled “East Cleveland, A Tale of Two Cities”, the film explores the good and bad, past and present of The City of East Cleveland, from a youth perspective.

Under the instruction of local filmmaker Konnie Peroune, the five young women spent their summer learning the ins and outs of filmmaking, while shooting the documentary. Although these youth are not from East Cleveland, they shared their time and talent to give voice to youth who may not always have an attentive audience to hear their concerns and ideas. These five students demonstrated a commitment to serve others while also personally developing their own skills in filmmaking. This effort completely embodies what the MyCom mission is all about. These young ladies demonstrated a real commitment to community and we should celebrate their efforts.

Sebastian Hanna, a student at Parma Senior High School applied

and was accepted into the free MyCom program, MyMedia101, last spring. Sebastian met once a week for 8 sessions at The Idea Center at Playhouse Square, home of WVIZ/PBS and 90.3 WCPN Ideastream. He learned about the history of media, as well as how to design, edit and shoot video to produce shorts, promos and documentaries. At the end of the training there is a celebration and sharing of projects completed. Sebastian was able to keep the video camera he was given to work with and received a stipend as well. My Media is designed to teach students how to make an impact by telling stories that are important to them – issues in the world, county, city, neighborhoods and schools. MyMedia 101 is a free MyCom program, offered twice a year in the spring and fall, open to teens ages 13-18 who are residents of Cuyahoga County. RTA bus tickets are provided, as well as snacks and dinner. Applications will be available soon for the MyMedia session beginning on February 1. This is a fantastic, free opportunity for teens; we hope to have some youth from our Tri-city area participate! If you have questions or want an application, please contact Tri-City MyCom staff: Kathleen Hall (440-479-7503) at Kathleen.hall@ohioguidestone.org or Jean Micklewright (440-479-4122) at Jean.micklewright@ohioguidestone.org.

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Show Kids You Care: Learn What They Have to Teach.

Asset Corner #85

by Gene Lovasy

SHOW KIDS YOU CARE: BE CURIOUS WITH THEM. 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.

This month’s column will focus on Asset #37 Personal Power:

Having personal power means understanding and accepting the things we can and can’t control. You can find a new job, work out a conflict, or move to a new location if you choose. When young people feel empowered, they feel more confident to make their own choices—to get good grades, participate in activities they enjoy, and take action to find solutions to problems.

Here are the facts

Young people are more likely to grow up healthy if they feel a sense of control over the things that happen to them. A sense of personal power gives young people the confidence to embrace positive attitudes and behaviors, and walk away from risky situations and behaviors. Caring adults provide opportunities for young people to make their own decisions.

Tips for building this asset

Young people who have a strong sense of their own power believe that when good things happen to them, they had some control over the outcome. If things go wrong, help young people focus on the positive steps they can take to remedy the situation. Help them see how they can make a difference in their lives and the lives of others.

Also try this

In your home and family: Teach your child practical skills, such as how to change a tire, cook a meal, and sew on a button. Well-prepared young people are more likely to feel a sense of personal power.

In your neighborhood and community: Support young people’s efforts to be industrious. For example, buy lemonade from their lemonade stand, read their homemade newspaper, and attend a play they put on in their garage.

In your school or youth program: Challenge the young people in your class or program to come up with a creative way to raise money for an underprivileged family or a charity in your area. Then put the plan into action. Serving others helps young people realize they can make a difference in the world, which gives them an enormous sense of personal power.

ASSET RELATED NEWS: From the **State Office of Health Transformation**....The State of Ohio currently provides a variety of programs that assist Ohioans prepare for life and the dignity of work. These programs are available at various stages of life when individuals need them most, from ensuring infants are born healthy to providing safety and security in retirement. The Governor’s Office of Health Transformation compiled a list of these programs in 2013, and updated the inventory in December 2016. Go here to view the 6 page list of available state & federally funded programs: www.healthtransformation.ohio.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=j-BpuTG7now=&tabid=251

In regard to our youth initiatives, during December’s meeting of the **MyCom Tri-City Youth Planning Steering Committee** a consensus was reached that of the 4 major goals identified, i.e.: Advocacy, Out-of-School Time, Transition & Youth Engagement, the committee’s primary focus will be on Youth Advocacy. Advocacy training for youth, coordinated by MyCom staff, is scheduled for late January and/or early February. Among other things, emphasis will be on youth programming and issues related to their funding. Youth who attend the training will then travel to Youth Advocacy Day in Columbus on March 30. The next meeting of the committee has been scheduled for 4:00 pm, Thursday, January 12th at Parma Library (across from UH/Parma Med. Ctr. on Powers Blvd.). If you’re involved w/youth programming and/or outreach please plan on attending.

A very timely series is being offered by the Parma Hts Library, 6206 Pearl Rd is....

Program Title: “Understanding Addiction” (Three-week series)

Program Audience: Adults

Dates: January 12, 19 & 26, 2017 Time: 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm

The number of drug overdoses in our area is growing at an alarming

City Of Parma Scholarships Available

by Sean Brennan

The Board of Trustees of the City of Parma Andrew Boyko Memorial Scholarship Foundation is pleased to announce that applications are being accepted for the 2017 award season. In its tenth year, the Foundation will once again offer three to five scholarships with a minimum award of \$1,500 each. One of these scholarships will be designated for an applicant exhibiting an exceptional commitment to community service. Applications are available on the City of Parma website at <http://www.cityofparma-oh.gov>. Applications may also be obtained at Parma City Hall, any of the Parma Cuyahoga County Public Library branches or any high school located within the Parma City School District. The Scholarship is intended to provide financial assistance to high school seniors or equivalent who are residents of the City of Parma wishing to pursue post-secondary education during the 2017 – 2018 academic year. Financial need, work ethic, community service, and accomplishments are among the selection criteria for the scholarship. The application deadline is March 31, 2017. For more information or to donate to the Foundation, please contact Parma City Council President and Board of Trustees Member Sean Brennan at sbrennan@cityofparma-oh.gov or 440-885-8091.

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INSPIRATION

The Family Tank

by Lizabeth Braskie

Winter snowfalls remind me of the automobile “Year-end Clearance” sales years ago, when we hastily needed to replace our car. Our favorite choices had quickly sold out weeks earlier, but luckily we found a reasonable, higher-end replacement. We thought! Our teenagers, hoping for a sporty, flashy model admitted they “wouldn’t want to be seen in that TANK.” The name stuck.

Mid-western winters provided a challenge to our kinship. Our transportation depended on the TANK’S locked doors that would occasionally refuse to open. A short blast from a blowtorch would heat the key that we’d insert in the lock to melt the trapped ice. At first the kids were hysterical at the usual routine until it became an embarrassing annoyance. Animosity hung thick in the garage so we tried pampering our newest occupant. The structure barely accommodated the new tenant so we rested an old six-foot couch cushion by the back wall. By gently pressing it with the front bumper of the new car, the overhead door had just enough clearance to close.

The car did have one redeeming quality. It had no fear of snow. One Saturday, the rain from the previous day had shortened my shopping trip, then changed to a heavy snowfall overnight. My son needed to work on a project at a friend’s house. I could drop him off and finish my errands! I inched my way out of the garage and fearlessly drove down the messy roads for the two mile trip. I passed a man shoveling snow. He beamed a broad smile back to me. Then, an oncoming driver in a four wheeler grinned as he passed. My ego was bursting. Arriving at our destination, my son ran toward the friend’s driveway and turned to wave. The same grin that encouraged my journey to this point appeared on his face. He walked to the front of the car, reached down and

pulled a frozen six-foot couch cushion off the bumper! I think the TANK did this on purpose!

Trouble continued one day when the kids and I stopped at the corner gas station. I drove in the side driveway, unaware the owner, placed used tires across this path to the pumps. I hoped to straddle the cumbersome things, but as we passed over them, I heard a CLUNK. I asked the attendant to see if I picked up a tire. He bent down, looked underneath and said, “Nothin’ there lady, you’re fine.” We got our gas and left. Out the main exit I heard a faint drag. So did the kids. “Mom, what’s that funny sound? Did we steal a tire back there?” I made it to a wide driveway at a supermarket. A bounce in a chuckhole set the tire free. I followed the stowaway in hot pursuit while yelling to my daughter, “Go get that thing and put it in a shopping cart!”

One day I noticed a small crack in the outside layer of the windshield. The infraction grew. Was this the nucleus of a massive web that would ravage this metal hulk with me inside? It was time to sell the car! A commuter was happy to buy our nemesis! Hurrah! It was just what he wanted!

Weeks passed when I found the “For Sale” sign we had used for our crazed car. It was the perfect shovel for the leaves I was raking in the yard. Paying no attention to the sirens in the distance, I continued to challenge the howling, angry breeze. My daughter came home several minutes later and informed me she had passed an accident and the TANK was involved. “No injuries, but the car’s a total loss,” she said. I then remembered the wailing wind I had heard earlier. It sounded like a faint snicker that changed to a slow, choking moan. Some may argue I was hallucinating, but I knew better. I had been witness to the final gasp of a legend.

I Believe

by Daniel Taddeo

A humble heart complains less. All of our decisions and undertakings should be compatible with Godly standards. Avoid “picky” word fights started by quarrelsome individuals. Be respectful of differences among people. Discover each other’s positive traits of goodness, friendship, and love. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Faith is refusing to panic. Faith makes us move. Focus on the solution to the matter. God often speaks in a still and small voice and works in quiet ways. God wants us to live. God will grant eternal life to His redeemed followers. God’s attitude toward people is determined by their love of truth rather than their knowledge of truth.

I would agree with you, but then we would both be wrong! It is hard to be silent when we have nothing to say. Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things. Meekness is the opposite of weakness. Most of us are blind to our faults. Our sins will be remembered against

us no more, if we have been eternally redeemed. Self-centeredness complicates life; God-centeredness simplifies it. Strive every day to be a better person.

The Bible’s message includes love, mercy, forgiveness, kindness, justice, and reconciliation. Those who lack self-confidence usually overreact to constructive criticism. We cannot live in tomorrows; we can only live in todays. We help people the most by loving them and challenging them to be all they can be. We must guard against letting our roots get down too deep in our materialistic world. We will help others more by focusing on their strengths instead of their weaknesses. Whatever we dwell upon becomes prominent in our minds. When the power of love overcomes the love for power, we will have peace. With God, it is never too late to pick up the pieces and rebuild.

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?



How The Great Depression And World War II Affected Ohio

by Bob Stilwell

During the Depression, millions of American workers lost their jobs. In Ohio by 1933, more than 40% of factory workers and 67% of construction workers were unemployed. In 1932, Ohio’s unemployment rate for all residents reached 37.3%. Industrial workers who retained their jobs usually faced reduced hours and wages. These people had a difficult time supporting their families. Many of Ohio’s city workers moved to the countryside, where they could grow enough food to feed their families.

World War II formally ended the Great Depression in the United States, as millions of unemployed men and

women returned to work to produce items for the war effort. Ohioans played a critical role in helping the United States obtain victory in World War II. Approximately 839,000 Ohioans, roughly 12% of the State’s entire population in 1940, served in the armed forces during the conflict. Ohio civilians also actively participated in the war effort, joining in scrap drives and growing victory gardens. Victory Gardens were an alternative to rationing. By 1945, some 20 million such gardens were in use and accounted for about 40% of all vegetables consumed in the U.S. Thanks to the efforts of Ohioans and other Americans, the United States emerged from World War II triumphant.

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SENIOR LIVING

Pleasant Lake Villa Unites Community With Gift Drive



Just some of the items donated early on at the Gift Drive Event at Pleasant Lake Villa on December 12. Left to right, Parma Ward 5 Councilman Al Divis, Sarah Box, Admissions Director at Pleasant Lake Villa, Parma Mayor Timothy J. DeGeeter, Tom Joyce, Senior Marketing Director at Home Instead Senior Care.

by Daniel P. McCarthy

On December 12 Pleasant Lake Villa sponsored a gift drive the aim of which was to help make the holidays a little brighter for senior citizens who may be isolated or not have the financial resources to celebrate the holidays. The community was asked to bring donations of items to help support our local Seniors in need. Suggested were bath robes,slippers, nonskid socks, toiletries, snack foods, coffee, tea, etc. Items were dropped off through the day between 2-6, and those participating included Parma Mayor Timothy J. DeGeeter, Parma Ward 5 Councilman Al Divis, Tom Joyce, Senior Marketing Direc-

tor at Home Instead Senior Care. and Christine Vodicka, owner at College Colleagues and all around active citizen in Parma.

The gift drive event at Pleasant Lake Villa was hosted by Sarah Box, LSW, Admissions Director, and Divna Majstorovic, Hospital Liaison, and from the looks of it, lots of Seniors in our area received many wonderful surprises. Thanks to the hard work of the good people at Pleasant Lake Villa and the generosity of our fellow citizens, lots of items were donated and in turn distributed to our cherished local senior citizens during the Holiday Season of 2016. Here's to an even greater 2017!



Christopher Milo entertains guests at Vista Springs Greenbriar on December 15.

First Glimpse Of Vista Springs

by Dale Powell

On December 15 Vista Springs Greenbriar held a "soft opening event" that offered people from the area a much anticipated look at this modern living space that has grown from the ground up right before their eyes over the past year. Inside, the luxurious surroundings and furnishings speak for themselves. A warm, comfortable atmosphere with a building design that seems easy to navigate.

The event itself was held throughout the location, including complete guided tours. Delicious, endless food, a virtual mountain of desserts, with some of the best cannoli to be found anywhere. For entertainment, Christopher Milo, an amazingly talented Concert Pianist and Motivational Speaker, who produced delightful sounds that seemed just right for that particular place and time. Musical tal-

ent aside, Christopher is an all around interesting person, and Vista Springs Greenbriar was fortunate to find him available for this particular evening.

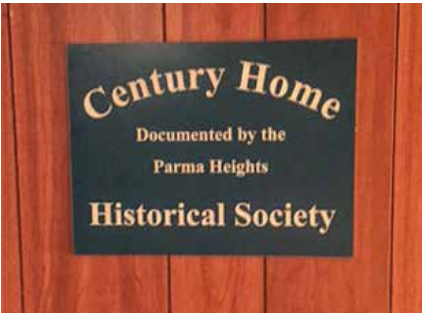
Vista Springs presents their mission as striving to be a Care Community that features a vibrant living environment with the highest standard of living, and from all appearances residents will experience no less. On a visit to their website, there is a declaration as follows: "Vista Springs Communities energize the soul, nourish the body, and provide purposeful and stimulating activities to renew and stimulate the mind". Their task is before them, and they certainly seem up to it. This location is a welcome addition to what is already a wonderful selection of senior living communities in our area, and it's just great to see Parma growing around this important function. Happy New Year!

Parma Heights Century Home Plaques

by Bob Stilwell

The Parma Heights Historical Society has recognized that your home at:_____ as a Century Home.

Our Society is engaged in preserving the history of Parma Heights, which became a city in 1911, and also identifying and documenting historical events, landmarks, and people involved.



We appreciate your efforts to preserving the history of architecture by making your residence, not only a home , but a glimpse into the past.

We are offering to you a durable weather proof 9" by 12" plaque, for \$40.00 which can be displayed at your home. Please direct all questions pertaining to this to Bob Stilwell. I have

a current listing of all of the Parma Heights Century Homes.

Please make checks out to the Parma Heights Historical Society and mail to Aldo Melaragno, 6245 Springwood Road Parma Heights, Ohio. Please allow 2 to 4 weeks for delivery.

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PERSPECTIVE

Is There A Future For
The ACA And Your Health Insurance?

by Lee Kamps

With the election of Donald Trump as the next President and with the Republican party in control of congress beginning this month, is there a future for the ACA or Obamacare? While the Republican party has made a lot of noise about repealing this act, actually undoing it will be much more complicated and could have serious and unintended consequences.

Let's begin with some facts from the Department of HHS which oversees the health care act and federal exchanges. According to the Department of HHS:

Most people enrolling for health insurance through the health insurance exchanges can get a health insurance policy for \$75.00 per month or less thanks to premium subsidies.

Last year the average cost of marketplace coverage increased only \$4.00 from \$102 to \$106 despite claims of "double digit increases".

More than 76% of people purchasing health insurance through the health insurance exchanges are eligible for premium subsidies, making their actual cost much lower.

Since the health insurance marketplace opened three years ago and since the ACA was signed into law in 2010, the rate of increase in health insurance premiums has slowed.

Because of the ability for individ-

uals to get health insurance through the marketplace and premium subsidies as well as the expansion of Medicaid; the rate and number of uninsured Americans has dropped to the lowest since those statistics have been kept, about thirty years.

What has been overlooked in all this is that since the ACA was signed into law on March 23 2010, employment in the health care sector has increased substantially. This is largely due to the fact that with many more Americans now receiving coverage, there has been an increased demand for health care services. Of course this has caused health care facilities and providers to expand and increase employment in that sector. One doesn't need to read a lot of lengthy reports to confirm this fact. All one has to do is drive around the area and see all the new health care facilities that have sprung up within the past six or seven years.

So what will happen to the ACA and health care under a Trump administration? In the Republican party platform, the GOP is in favor of changing the premium subsidies to a refundable tax credit and eliminating the "individual mandate" that requires everyone not covered through an employer plan, Medicare or Medicaid get covered or pay a penalty.

Don't be fooled into believing that a refundable tax credit and premium

subsidies are the same. They are as different as night and day. Premium subsidies go directly to the insurance company providing the coverage and are directly applied to the premiums for the health insurance. Refundable tax credits require that the individual pay the entire premium first, then take the credit from their income after paying the premium, in essence reimbursing the person for the cost of their health insurance. With a refundable tax credit, premiums have to be paid in full before receiving the tax credit.

Very few people have that kind of disposable income and will simply go uninsured. This also imposes one more step in the process that would require the individual to file for the tax credit after paying the premiums rather than the simple procedure of just applying the premium subsidy directly to the insurance company for the cost of the health insurance.

Besides eliminating the "individual mandate" that everyone has to get covered or pay a penalty, the Republicans want to keep the provision where no one can be turned down because of their health history or a pre-existing condition, nor could they be charged a higher premium. This makes absolutely no sense at all since the healthy people would just wait until they "need it" before paying the money for health insurance. The degree of adverse

selection (more sick people having insurance than healthy people) would be so high that premiums would go out of sight. No health insurance company would be in the marketplace under those conditions. It would destroy the individual health insurance market.

Then the only way anyone could get an individual health insurance policy would be through an "off exchange" policy; a health insurance policy that is purchased off the exchanges and is not subject to the requirements of those policies sold on the health insurance exchanges. Off exchange policies are available even right now, but they are not advertised. They have full medical underwriting and offer fewer benefits and are pretty much like the old health insurance policies that existed before the exchanges opened up three years ago.

To put it simple, the Republican plan would essentially kill the exchanges for individual health insurance since no insurance company that wanted to stay in business would offer policies through the exchanges under those conditions. What there will be would be the old fashioned system of individual health insurance where plans can cherry pick who they want to insure and there are no premium subsidies at all. Only those who are healthy and can afford the premiums would be insured.

If this goes through and the Medicaid expansion is rolled back or eliminated; by 2020 there may be well over 50 to 60 million Americans uninsured and a financial crisis in health care as hospitals and medical practices have to contend with so much uncompensated care. Is this what you voted for?

Demonstrations

by Leo Lampeter

When people are dissatisfied with an outcome or ruling, usually of a political nature, they demonstrate. With the proper permits from the area that is of concern to make their point is not only a legal but also an impressive manner to make their voices heard. Without documentation, that is illegal assembly and the activists are subject to prosecution under the law. Kowtowing to those who do not follow this procedure is merely encouraging them not to follow the law, not only in this instance but other instances as well. Rules are made for a reason. The reasons are supposed to be for the public good and safety. The rules, at times, are not always valid, in which case they can work to change the laws governing them. While the rules exist, follow them and there will be no consequence; don't and there are and should be consequences. It has

become commonplace that demonstrations are often accompanied by violence and rioting. If this is done to emphasize a point this rationale should be rethought.

The general thought pattern of those not demonstrating when they see violence is that the character of those demonstrating is less than honorable and certainly destructive. Whenever rioting occurs the ones who suffer most are the business owners and residents. From an outsider's point of view it is difficult to attach a serious cause to those who use demonstrations to riot. Who is served by the theft and destruction of property? The only ones benefiting from the looting are the looters. Those observing the looting should have one conclusion, this is not done for the good of society but to merely enrich a few of the demonstrators. In order for the freedom of speech to be heard the question seems to be, to

whom do you listen more closely, the individual yelling in your ear merely to make noise or the one speaking softly and making valid points? You can only convince someone of your position if they are listening and even then most individuals dig their heels in to a view with which they do not agree. It is indeed difficult to change another's mind under the most advantageous of circumstances much less adversarial situations. The question remains, how does change come about? At best it is difficult to accomplish. Thus far the only method that has worked in the past is true determination and hard work and an understanding of the opposition stance. Hostile confrontation results in more hostility, which confronting parties say they both wish to avoid. Everyone must use their mouths less and their ears more. If you don't work in this fashion perhaps you need your ass kicked.

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OBSERVER

The Holiday Season And Human "Kind"...

by Davidione Pearl

Another holiday season has once again made its way into our hearts and memories, and with the season came an ever inspiring spirit moved in us all to wish a warm and welcome time with family and friends, and thoughtful goodwill, empathy and understanding towards all upon the earth.

In this providence is our true depth and measure of humanity when we open ourselves up fully to what is written in our holy books. In this love, there is hope and prayer that we may begin to consider the irony of the current situation our First Nations Native American tribal citizens to the north are in, facing the struggle we now are all aware of - their campaign to protect their sacred lands and the health of their people from an oil pipeline we ourselves wouldn't want in our backyard. A very different America for these original citizens of the land.

That we may also consider the irony of the many holiday feasts that we give thanks over each year. Feasts that were highly likely to have been handled by law abiding undocumented workers at some point as the foods made their long trans-

port from farm, to our tables, and ultimately our graces. These workers generally live the lives of good people that want little more than to support their families in a new world in the same way as the early immigrants that came here and began the vast majority of Euro-American families, yet many across the nation wish these undocumented families to be broken apart, deported, and ultimately left to remain separated behind a desert wall.

As we looked around at the faces of our own loved ones this past holiday season, and the security that came with knowing our bond with them was safe, there were those without such security, those that wish for themselves the very things we wish for ourselves and our families, the quiet ones in the shadows of sweeping national divide against them from a land of immigrants forever praising holy and holiday spirit while remaining noticeably indifferent towards them and their needs.

When the holidays greet us each year, we give all the gracious thanks in the world for the blessings of what we have Thanksgiving day, only to cattle into the exact opposite less than twenty four hours later on

Black Friday, as the country frenzies itself over the backs of one another in an all-out shootout to obtain the material "things" they just can't live without, and thus this continues up into the midnight hour of the coming year.

It has been said that the great arch of humanity bends deepest towards kindness.

No matter our religion, we can pray for a collective perspective understanding, and pray for us all to look around with far less fearful and indifferent eyes in the years to come.

Final Parma City Council Meeting For Scott Tuma



Parma Ward 8 Councilman Scott Tuma attended his very last council meeting on December 26. Here he stands with his fellow council members who were present on that evening. He will begin his new role as Cuyahoga County Council Representative for District 4 in January. Best of luck to you Scott after serving 11 years on Parma City Council. Hope to hear from you soon.

The First Suburbs Consortium: Twenty Years Working For Us

continued from page 1

neighborhoods, including:

H.E.L.P., the Housing Enhancement Loan Program providing reduced interest home improvement loans to home owners;

The Cuyahoga County Brownfields Redevelopment Fund, eliminating blight and spurring commercial rejuvenation of many challenged inner ring sites;

The Economic Revitalization Initiative, helping FSC member-cities plan for upgrades to their own downtown districts and leading to creation of the First Suburbs Development Council, through which the staff of all the member-cities work together on regional redevelopment;

The County's \$50 million Demolition Fund, assisting the First Suburbs and Cleveland to eliminate vacant, abandoned, derelict buildings that threaten neighborhoods;

The Ohio First Suburbs Consortium – formed by the FSC in Cuyahoga

County and other older suburbs near Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton and Toledo - in order to give Ohio's inner ring communities a voice in state policies.

Today, the FSC continues its productive partnership with the Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish, County Council and staff to:

- redevelop major underutilized commercial sites in the inner ring;
- begin using Casino fund revenue available to the county for inner ring development;
- create regional housing software platforms to expand the capacity of the County and all of its cities to better address our many housing issues.

In closing, as mayors of Parma and Parma Heights, we are proud of the past efforts of FSC and we remain committed to continue the hard work of the FSC on behalf of all the inner ring suburbs.

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COMMUNITY PULSE

Buy America Is The Right Thing To Do

by Sherrod Brown

“Buy American and hire American.” At a rally in Cincinnati this month, President-elect Trump used those words as he pledged to use American products and workers to carry out his infrastructure plan. Congress has encouraged this bipartisan idea for many years because it just makes sense. If we’re investing in our country’s infrastructure, why wouldn’t we also invest in our country’s workers and businesses? Buy America rules ensure that there’s work at plants in Coshoc-ton, Cleveland, Marion and across our state – supporting Ohio jobs. But last week, Washington leadership abandoned that idea and turned its back on the many Ohioans who work in the iron and steel industry.

A Buy America provision for a major water infrastructure bill passed the Senate back in September with broad bipartisan support, but some members of Congress weren’t ready to stand up for American workers. They moved to strip Buy America rules out of the final bill passed by Congress, choosing China and Russia over Ohio.

Senator Portman and I led a group of our colleagues in a letter to Speaker of the House of Representatives Paul

Ryan and other leaders in the House and Senate demanding they restore Buy America. Instead, Speaker Ryan and other negotiators chose to send American tax dollars overseas.

I countered by introducing an amendment with my Senate colleagues to restore the provision when the revised bill came before the Senate but the measure wasn’t included.

This water infrastructure bill was the first major test of whether the Washington establishment would live up to President-elect Trump’s promises to put American products and American workers first in his infrastructure package. They failed – and now American iron and steel workers will pay the price.

I won’t give up on the fight to support American companies. Buy America should be standard in every infrastructure bill. As Congress looks to invest in future projects, I will continue to work with my colleagues – Republicans and Democrats – to put pressure on Republican leadership to prioritize American workers and I hope President-elect Trump will join me.

We cannot allow foreign companies to continue to undercut our steel



Adam Radogna acquired his first 7-Eleven franchise store at 7510 Broadview Road just last year at the age of 26. He just purchased his second store in Parma at 6858 Ridge Road.

Young 7-Eleven® Franchisee Committed To Parma – Purchases Second Store In Area

by Stacey Vaselaney

Entrepreneur Adam Radogna has demonstrated his commitment to the Parma area with the purchase of a 7-Eleven® franchise store located at 6858 Ridge Road across from Parmatown Mall. The deal took place on December 5. This is Radogna’s second franchise store; he acquired his first store located at 7510 Broadview Road just last year at the age of 26.

Radogna, whose parents emigrated from Bari, Italy in the 1970s, is a rising star in the 7-Eleven franchise system. Prior to purchasing his first store, Radogna had worked his way up to manager at a 7-Eleven corporate store. After three years in that role, 7-Eleven, Inc was so impressed with his leadership and business acumen, they approached him to become a Franchisee. He jumped at the opportunity.

“As manager at the corporate store, I was already running the store as if it was mine. I also knew a lot about the business and had a growing passion for my work,” said Radogna. “And I liked the idea of being my own boss, so franchising seemed like a smart career decision for me,” he added.

Radogna chose to franchise both stores in Parma because of the area’s low crime rate, positive job growth, and the fact that he lives in Parma and is close to both locations and thus is always available when the store needs him. “The Parma community is amazing and so supportive,” said Radogna.

Many of his frequent customers visit both stores. Radogna anticipates that the completion of the Shoppes at Parma location in 2017

will positively impact business for his new store as foot traffic will increase.

Radogna gives back to the community. For the past two years, he has been a sponsor of Normandy High School. This includes providing grants, coupons and snack donations for PTA events. Additionally, he participates in school fundraisers.

Radogna is a rising star at 7-Eleven and works directly with the company’s management team and executive committee to solve problems that affect franchise owners.

About 7-Eleven, Inc.
7-Eleven, Inc. is the premier name and largest chain in the convenience-retailing industry. Based in Irving, Texas, 7-Eleven® operates, franchises and/or licenses more than 60,000 stores in 17 countries, including 10,700 in North America. Known for its iconic brands such as Slurpee®, Big Bite® and Big Gulp®, 7-Eleven has expanded into high-quality salads, side dishes, cut fruit and protein boxes, as well as pizza, chicken wings, cheeseburgers and hot chicken sandwiches. 7-Eleven offers customers industry-leading private brand products under the 7-Select® brand including healthy options, decadent treats and everyday favorites, at an outstanding value. Customers also count on 7-Eleven for bill payments, self-service lockers and other convenient services. Find out more online at www.7-Eleven.com, via the 7Rewards® customer loyalty platform on the 7-Eleven mobile app, or on social media at Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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Westcreek News



Ridgewood Drive and Broadview Road, Photo courtesy of Dr. Jeffrey Halpert

Lake Erie Starts With ... ?

by Irene D Toth

We all know the importance of Lake Erie as a source of freshwater. A few years ago, run-off from farms in the western basin of Lake Erie caused major problems that prevented the Toledo area from drawing water for its use. But every action we each take, living in the Lake Erie watershed, affects the water we drink, the water for our crops, and the water we play in. It's amazing the effects we have on such a large body of water, an asset we should not and cannot take for granted.

One of the biggest problems is storm water run-off. The more we build, removing trees and plants that absorb the water and aid in removing pollutants, the greater the run-off.

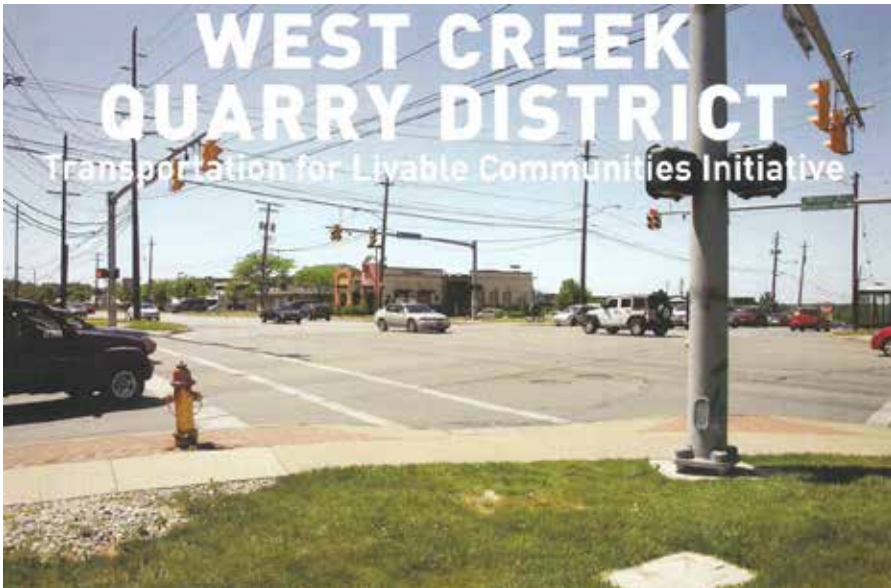
In my search for the history of the West Creek valley, I heard many times about a pond on Ridgewood Drive. One neighbor told me his father took him fishing there. There's no pond there now, and I searched for evidence of its existence. Dr. J. Halpert has a collection of photos of the Parma area from the 1950's. These are displayed on the walls of his waiting room. An aerial photo of the intersection of Broadview Road and Ridgewood Drive clearly shows the pond. And what would cause the pond to "disappear?" Since 1950, many homes were built south of Ridgewood Drive, with the loss of trees and plants that kept the water from running down the slope to the north. The run-off carried soil that filled the pond and left only a wetland in its place. As a pond it stored more water than a wetland. We build storage ponds to control flooding. And a father would have to travel farther

to find a safe place to teach a child the techniques and joys of fishing.

At West Creek Conservancy, we have worked to protect stream and wetland systems, forested areas, as well open green spaces, all in an effort to protect the waters of Lake Erie. West Creek Conservancy has protected over 1,300 acres in an effort to protect and restore our waterways and drinking water; but it doesn't stop there. Preserving is great, but much of our land and waterways need restoration and on-going stewardship. It's an effort we must all be involved in. Remember that Lake Erie Starts With ME -- YOU -- US. Consider your daily actions and habits when gulping down a glass of tap water or swimming at our beautiful beaches.

As we continue to raise awareness about protecting the water quality within the Lake Erie watershed, we invite you to become a Stewardship Sponsor. With each individual donation of \$20 or more, you'll receive a "Lake Erie Starts With Me!" shirt. All proceeds benefit the West Creek Conservancy Stewardship Fund to help us continue our great work.

You can reach us online at www.westcreek.org or call 216-749-3720.



Introduction Of Plans For West Creek Quarry District

by Daniel P. McCarthy

In December, Derek Schafer from West Creek Conservancy along with representatives from studioTECHNE architects appeared before Parma City Council and presented their plan for the West Creek Quarry District, part of the Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative. What they proposed is a plan to support and adopt complete street initiatives, create bike/pedestrian safe access and facilities, support economic development through place-based transportation and land use recommendations, and connect these proposals with existing assets and investments. They would further integrate principles of accessibility and environmental justice ensuring the benefits of growth and change are available to all members of the community, integrate and link recreation assets, and provide people with safe and reliable transportation choices that enhance their quality of life.

That's a lot for anyone to propose, but with the track record of West Creek Conservancy, it's a safe bet that this initiative will become a reality as planned. As someone at the meeting stated, "if anyone else proposed this plan we might worry about it sitting on a shelf somewhere, but since it's West Creek, you have complete confidence that they will see it through." I am thoroughly in agreement with that sentiment, and I have been in admiration of the achievements of this group since their earliest

start in the effort to rescue the Henninger House from demolition, and subsequent success in setting aside hundreds of acres of green space in our area, culminating in the fabulous partnership with the Cleveland Metroparks in what is the Watershed Stewardship Center.

This bold initiative will succeed in connecting the neighborhoods north and south of Snow Road on Broadview Road, as well as the area of Snow Rd, containing the shopping district, library, residential, and the West Creek Watershed itself. The list of improvements, innovations and new creations is most impressive, to say the least. This will represent the largest change to any area of Parma in many decades. As a private citizen I can say that I am most encouraged by groups like West Creek Conservancy taking the lead in finding innovative ways to accomplish progressive change that benefits a community in every way imaginable, establishing a focused identity for an area that will ultimately lead to increased walkability, attraction, and enhanced economic development.

West Creek Conservancy seems especially adept in being able to leverage diverse outside funding sources in the creation of their goals, and this is the case for this Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative project, with a price tag of over \$3 million dollars, and very little if any tax dollars involved. I remain very optimistic when I see the enthusiastic support for the West Creek Quarry District from Parma City Council and the DeGeeter Administration. I only hope that this bodes well for future projects and ideas proposed, by West Creek Conservancy and other like minded groups and individuals. Let us not forget that Can't lives on Won't Street. If our city is going to attract vibrant people with futures in Parma, we need to make sure that we have plenty to attract them.

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