

“Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.”- Helen Keller

Parma Begins Preparing For 2026 Bicentennial Celebration!

by Kathryn Mabin

Established in 1826, the City of Parma is gearing up for a year of celebrating in 2026 when it turns 200.

The nonprofit organization We Are Parma Proud and the City of Parma will start planning in 2025 with community partners, organizations and local businesses to determine the various ways the city will celebrate the milestone anniversary.

“We have several ideas on the table,” said Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter. “We will add a bicentennial theme to our current annual citywide events in 2026, get our community partners involved and include some new activities on our calendar. One idea under consideration is citywide decorating, maybe as a contest held in the summer. Our residents go all out for the annual Halloween and Christmas decorating competitions in the city. I imagine they will do the same for the bicentennial. I would anticipate seeing a lot of pink and

flamingos because the flamingo is our city mascot.”

In addition to events, the city will have a ceremony when it digs up a time capsule in 2026 that former Mayor John Petruska and Proud of Parma buried in front of Parma City Hall in 1976. “It was buried 50 years ago when the city marked its golden anniversary, and the nation celebrated its bicentennial. I am looking forward to finally seeing what’s in that capsule. I’m sure it will reflect what was important to Parma and our nation at that time,” DeGeeter said.

We Are Parma Proud Spokesperson Chris Leo said, “We are excited about what 2026 holds for the entire community. While we already have certain annual events like Frosty’s Fest and the Picnic in the Park that carry over from year to year, we expect to ramp up engagement and involvement starting in 2025 to make these events and others even better as we sprint toward 2026.

“We would like to see float

competitions in the Independence Day Parade on July 4th, special golf outings at Ridgewood Golf Course, new commemorative merchandise and apparel, a new Visitor’s Guide and more. Most importantly, we’re looking forward to connecting with residents, businesses and nonprofits to make this year-long jubilee the best initiative the city has ever seen,” Leo added.

The city will update residents about bicentennial events through its city newsletter, social media platforms and city website. We Are Parma Proud will also provide more details as they become available on its We Are Parma Proud Facebook page.

“There is a tremendous amount of pride in Parma. We



Looking Forward To 2025 While Reflecting On 2024!

by Marie Gallo

The City of Parma Heights is gearing up for another big year in 2025. Reflecting on the milestones of the past twelve months, Parma Heights is a community that thrives on community and progress.

The past twelve months the City of Parma Heights celebrated the following:

- Opened Nathan Hale Park featuring a half-mile walking path, soccer fields, children’s play area, gazebo, pavilion and the new eleven-million-gallon basin for stormwater to help reduce flooding for residents.

- The Ohio Department of

continued on page 2

14th Annual Parma Peanut Butter Drive A Success!

by Felicia Martinez

During the month of December, Parma residents donated peanut butter for the 14th Annual Parma Peanut Butter (PB) Drive. Since its inception in 2010, the Parma PB Drive has generated over 12 tons of peanut butter, thanks to the generosity of the community. This amounts to approximately 24,000 jars of peanut butter distributed to area seniors through All Faiths Pantry. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported the drive.

Now in its 18th year, All Faiths Pantry delivers nutritious groceries directly to the

homes of qualifying seniors in Parma and surrounding communities. We are busier than ever and need community support. Times are tough for many, especially older adults on a fixed income who face other challenges as well. This annual drive brings awareness and helps us continue to support older adults in our community. Peanut butter, being a well-liked, high-protein, calorie-dense food, is a valuable addition to the monthly bags distributed by All Faiths Pantry.

Founder and organizer State Representative Sean Patrick Brennan has kept the drive

going for 14 years. We extend our sincere gratitude to Representative Brennan, our donors, and the community partners who supported this year’s drive: Lamar Advertising, Rumpke Waste & Recycling, University Hospitals Parma Medical Center, Parma City Hall, Cuyahoga County Public Library Parma Branches, and Planet of the Vapes.

You can still support the drive with a donation online at www.allfaithspantry.org or by sending a check to All Faiths Pantry, P.O. Box 34239, Parma, Ohio, 44134 (please write ‘PB Drive’ in the memo).



Rediscover The Parma-Powers Branch Library This Year!

by Chad Lowther

At the Parma-Powers Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library, we strive to offer high quality programming that is both informative and entertaining, in addition to providing valuable information resources, help with obtaining critical social services, comfortable spaces to study, gather, or hold an important meeting, and ready access to a wide variety of literature and media ranging from the brand new to classic.

The Parma-Powers Branch features a new art gal-

lery wall that we hope will brighten your spirits and inspire you to explore your library and the world at large with greater curiosity, passion, and imagination. Our Winter show, the “Individual Identity in the Face of Adversity,” features 6 Cleveland artists who use varying forms of media to explore how one’s identity is affected by the challenges of today’s world. The show also features kinetic typography created by second year Graphic Design students at the Cleveland Institute of Art.

continued on page 11



The 14th Annual PB drive kicked off on December 1st at Zielinski Park with Founder State Representative Sean Patrick Brennan!

COMMUNITY NEWS

The Representative's Corner

by Sean Brennan, State Representative, Ohio's 14th District

Going back to my years as a member of Parma City Council I have been concerned about the integrity of donation collection bins. I was always skeptical about whether or not the donations of clothing and other articles were actually benefiting charitable causes. My research on the sketchy outfits that placed many of them was a work in futility. My concern was that legitimate charities were being “boxed-out” by seeming for-profit actors.

In recent years you may have noticed that these donation receptacles have been proliferating everywhere you go. As a result, as you can imagine, my concerns have grown. That is why when I was elected to the Ohio General Assembly two year ago, I joined forces with Rep. Adam Bird, a fellow public school educator from the Cincinnati who shared my concerns. With the help of the Ohio Attorney General’s office, Goodwill Industries, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, and others, we crafted House Bill (H.B.) 184.

The Ohio Attorney General’s office corroborated what my gut told me all along - that some for-profit entities have been found to place donation bins that are nearly identical to their non-profit counterparts. In fact, Corey Jordan, the Attorney General’s Director of Policy and Legislation, explained that the bins in question are “deceptive to the public who might otherwise think twice about donating items to a for-profit entity when they intended their donation for a charitable purpose.”

Our bipartisan bill requires that donation collection bins display visible information regarding the beneficiary



Left to right: Rep. Brennan’s intern Miles DeMille, Rep. Brennan’s legislative aide McKenna Dugan, Rep. Brennan, Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted, Governor Mike DeWine, and Rep. Adam Bird.

organization, including where the donated goods end up, contact information for the entity, and how to access the financial agreement between any professional solicitor and the benefiting charity. Benefitting organizations seeking to place bins will also have to file an application with the Attorney General who will vet them as legitimately benefiting charities.

H.B. 184 will establish transparency requirements and enforce compliance, ensuring that donations genuinely serve their intended charitable purposes,

including veterans’ organizations, Special Olympics, Goodwill, and other legitimate charities and that donations reach those who genuinely need them.

The bill also includes language that will prohibit charitable solicitors from utilizing robocalls to solicit donations and that any entities soliciting via phone keep records of their scripts and recordings of calls for review by the Attorney General’s office.

The Ohio House of Representatives passed our bill by a vote of 89-1, while the Senate passed it 28-0. We were very

Looking Forward To 2025 While Reflecting On 2024!

continued from page 1

Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Forestry awarded the City of Parma Heights a \$300K grant as part of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Urban Forestry Program.

- Memorial Day Parade was back for the first time since 2019. The street was lined with residents waving their flags as the parade participants marched from the Parma-South Presbyterian Church to the Parma Heights Cemetery.

- Cassidy Theatre upgrades to the lobby and restrooms thanks to a grant.

- Added Recite Me online software to the City of Parma Heights website which provides users with certain disabilities access.

- Over two miles of street resurfacing throughout the city.

- Reconstruction on Ridgewood Dr. in which the building and service departments completed in house, saving the city over two million dollars.

- Many new businesses opened within the City of Parma Heights, including Café Blanc, Golden Honey Nails, Bobby’s Beauty Lounge, Bazar Market & Grill, Pinball Planet, Kentown Animal Hospital and Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing – just to name a few.

- Rallied together as a community

from the August 6 tornadoes

- In September, over 150 people participated in the Move with the Mayor and logged more than 30,000 minutes on activities.

- Broke ground for the new Parma Heights Cuyahoga County Public Library in October.

- In partnership with the Young Professionals of Parma, hosted the new Parma Heights Frights event.

- Parma Heights Recreation department had over 1,650 participants in their sports, events and activities combined and almost 7,500 pool attendees

Building on the strides of 2024, the City of Parma Heights is looking forward to another great year in 2025. Parma Heights continues to be focused on community first while thriving and evolving into the future. Just like the city motto - Parma Heights – Community Grows Here.

<http://www.parmaheightsoh.gov/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Cityof-ParmaHeights/>

Parma Heights – Community Grows Here.

pleased that Governor Mike DeWine signed the bill into law on December 19 and look forward to its enforcement.

My counterpart and I contend that the deceptive practices undermine trust in the charitable sector. Ohioans can now rest assured that when they seek to donate items to charity that they are, in fact, benefiting a charity. It is high time we outed for-profit operators who deceive the public by giving the impression that their bins are furthering a charitable cause. This is a big win for our legitimate charitable organizations and those they serve. I am honored to have worked with Rep. Bird on this important bipartisan legislation. This bill is another example of how, when Democrats and Republicans work together, good policies that benefit all Ohioans result.



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This photo of the Script Parma Sign was sent in anonymously. The sign is now a Pokemon Go landmark stop in the popular augmented reality mobile game. If you have a creative photo with the script Parma sign that you would like to have published, email it, along with your address and phone number, to Sean Patrick Brennan at pierogie5k@gmail.com. You could win a great Parma prize if yours is selected.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Take A Hike... In The Big Creek Reservation

by Milenko Budimir

It's January, the coldest month of the year here in northeast Ohio. And while folks naturally tend to spend as much time as possible indoors, there's still plenty of reason to venture outdoors as well.

Parma Heights residents are fortunate in that they have easy access to part of the Cleveland Metroparks system, the Big Creek Reservation alongside Big Creek Parkway which runs roughly parallel with Pearl Road.

And while it may be cold or snowy outside, that's no reason to sleep on the Metroparks in winter. The stretch of trail from the Snow Road picnic area to Stumph Road and beyond to W. 130th St. offers a variety of landscape changes and sights and sounds.

A good, brisk walk or hike along the winding trail, either high up on the ridge along Big Creek Parkway or down below following the creek in the cold, brisk air, is invigorating and healthy. It'll give you a mental and physical energy boost right when your body needs it most; in the dark and dreary days of winter. Just keep in mind the old adage that there is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.

The lower trail along the creek connects up with the Big Creek connector trail, with a bridge spanning the creek and on up to Greenbrier Com-



A snowy, wintry scene along Big Creek. (Image credit: Milenko Budimir)

mons, the center of the Parma Heights community. And at the top of the connector trail is the construction site for the future Cuyahoga County Public Library Parma Heights branch, scheduled for completion in late 2025.

One of my favorite times to go for a walk is after a snowfall, particularly one where the wet snow clings to the bare tree branches, reflecting light all across the forest. To say that it's magical is not much of an exaggeration.

And you won't be alone out there either. Of course, there are plenty of deer around, but you'll also see scur-

rying squirrels and even some birds gathering up berries from nearby shrubs. Ducks and a few geese can be spotted in the creek, and if you're lucky you might catch sight of a river otter too. Up above, keep your eyes open for the occasional cooper's hawk and even a barred owl high up in an old decaying tree.

Besides the wildlife, the stretch of trail near Stumph Road holds a lot of geological features, with looming rock ledges and structures all around. I sometimes think of this area as a kind of Grand Canyon of Parma Heights; not as deep and majestic, sure, but awe-inspiring in its own way.

If nothing else, keep in mind that

after the winter solstice in December, the days grow longer. As winter progresses and the days get longer and the air warmer, you'll begin to see some of the first signs of spring; tiny shoots of grass poking out from beneath small ponds of melted snow and ice in low-lying areas along the trail, and small green buds on the branches of shrubs. And of course, the bright songs of birds hailing the arrival of warmer days.

All of which is to say that going for a walk in the woods is a simple pleasure and will have you appreciating the charms and richness that only winter can bring.

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PARMA

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of Parma through networking,
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PARMA OBSERVER

Trees For A Greener Parma Meet With Councilman And CPP Commissioner

by Gregory Cznadel

Kris Harsh, Ward 13 councilman, at his monthly meeting in November talked about complaints from residents extending from Pearl to Memphis. The mature trees had added beauty and defined this Old Brooklyn Neighborhood for decades. Residents were upset about the radical and poor trimming Cleveland Public Power did along their street. What resulted was injured trees due to lack of formal arborist knowledge provided by a contractor hired by the City of Cleveland.

The damage was brought to the crew leader's attention as residents had gathered asking Vancuren Tree Trimming Co. to cease their work. Those concerned sent pictures and made frantic calls to Vancuren to halt the work. Yet Vancuren continued despite pleas from residents.

Though damage had occurred, residents had gathered asking Vancuren Tree Trimming Co. to cease their work. They failed in their attempt to save the trees yet uncut. Vancuren continued the damage despite being notified.

Sharon Stahurski emailed Kris Harsh Friday, October 25th, saying "I contacted your office yesterday concerning the 'trimming' that was done yesterday by the Vancuren Tree Company contracted through Cleveland Public Power... Are you able to meet at the site about the trees?" Kris responded the same afternoon, "Yes and furious doesn't describe my mood...The Commissioner of CPP and Urban Forestry are meeting at Ira and Fulton Monday Morning at 10am."

Sharon Stahurski, head of Trees For A Greener Parma, has never seen a response that quick from a public official.

Councilman Harsh at his November meeting, after seeing the trees said, "It looks horrible. There's no way to say it. It's ugly. They cut these trees back because of power lines, but some of the



Vancuren working along Fulton Road. There are two tiers of four wires each. The top ones are the responsibility of tree trimming crew.

trees look like they were just basically cut in half. Some of the trees there look weird, like a field goal type thing and some neighbors, for a good reason, were furious about this and reached out to me. They did it on Northcliff as well." He asked, "Has anyone had seen the tree trimming that happened along Fulton Rd. Down by William Cullen Bryant?"

Monday morning, October 28th, Sharon from Parma for Greener Trees; myself, Greg Cznadel, tree steward of Old Brooklyn; concerned residents Paula and Paul Hanse and Cyndi Rice representing councilman Harsh, met with Jennifer Kipp, manager of Urban Forestry and Ammon Danielson, Commissioner of Cleveland Public Power.

Explanation of Pruning

As we gathered along Fulton Road, the damage was obvious.

Commissioner Danielson explained the two tiers of four wires each. "The four on top are electrical and are maintained by the crew from the power company responsible for those wires. Those are the high-voltage wires. The mid-tier and upper-tier are generally the electric lines. Generally speaking, the higher you go on the pole, the higher the voltage there is. The closest ones that you see here, near the ground, are going to be Telecom, AT&T, Spectrum, whatever. You see the streetlight? That is electrical and powered by us as well," Danielson said.

"See the branches hanging over your house? They did no trimming there," she added. "See where it comes into your house, that's 240 watts. The thing with that, it's not very high. If that bumps up against something, there's not a significant safety concern.

"The two things that you trim for is not just to maintain space, but also the national guidelines that say to shape them away from the wires."

As to the question of why Vancuren

Tree Service, the service contracted by CPP, can't just trim branches two feet away from the wires instead of taking whole branches? Danielson explained, "The reason you can't just go along with the saw and cut exactly 2 feet is you need the tree to be healthy to the degree that you can. Which means when you cut it back you must go to the parent stem (parent branch or stem - the tree trunk or the larger limb from which lateral branches are growing). So that is why such large cuts are made, for the health of the tree."

Stahurski noted, and the representatives agreed, several branches were not cut back to the parent stem. Also, it appeared that many of the lateral branches running parallel to the wires were unnecessarily cut. If these fell, they would not have fallen directly on the power lines.

Harsh noted at the meeting that after residents complained, Cleveland Public Power did go back and correctly prune the improperly cut stubs back to the parent branch.

Certification

When Ms. Stahurski first saw the workers from the Vancuren Tree Service crew, she asked what certification they had. She asked them if they had an arborist certification. They said no. They talked about the years of experience that they had with other tree trimming companies.

When Mary DiGeronimo, customer care at Vancuren, was questioned, she replied: "We always have a certified arborist on site with the crew. Our crews are also line clearance certified. I am not sure why some branches were not cut all of the way. One possibility is that residents were watching and criticizing our crew's cuts."

Kipp explained, "The line clearance qualification is separate from a certified arborist qualification so it's like that's not part of the requirement."

When a crew from the Ohio Department of Transportation was out trimming branches from around the Jennings Road sound barrier behind my house, I asked about this. The crew chief said he was studying to get an arborist certification similar to his boss.

From the Office of Ohio's Consumers' Counsel: "Electric companies use modern techniques specified by standards developed by the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) and the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) using Certified Arborists to plan and perform the work safely and minimize the need for future trimming. Crews attempt to cut

trees in ways that reduce stress and lessen the likelihood of disease and decay." Harsh asked the Commissioner of Public Power to send him the manual they use for tree trimming around power lines. He said this was important to him as a lot of "our neighbors said they don't cut trees like this outside the city." He went on, "It shows pictures from our suburban neighbors of the exact same thing happening to their trees as well as the manual that dictates how to cut trees."

He continued, "As a matter of fact, if they made a mistake, it was that they didn't cut some of the branches back far enough to cut all the way back to the trunk, and they left some orphaned branches. They then went back and properly trimmed or removed them."



Commissionaire of Cleveland Public Power pointing out trees along Fulton Road.

"I think part of the solution is what Greg and the Tree Stewards are doing, which is encouraging people to plant trees in their front yards in their backyards because there is more room in your front and back for trees to grow without intertwining with overhead wires, not just for the roots and the sidewalk situation."

This is through the Reforestation Program, the free tree give away program at Old Brooklyn. If in Old Brooklyn contact Brittney Hooper at treestewards@oldbrooklyn.com or visit www.oldbrooklyn.com/tree.

Thanks for the work Sharon Stahurski is doing in Parma. As Harsh mentioned, "You know, you go down the street with no trees and you wonder why this looks so weird and like oh, there's no trees, right? A lot of Parma is like that, right?" If interested in learning more about Trees For a Greener Parma, contact Sharon Stahurski at s.stahurski@yahoo.com or visit Parma for Greener Trees in Facebook.



One of the trees not properly pruned. Stump should be trimmed back to parent branch or trunk.



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PARMA HEIGHTS

Embracing The New Year With New Habits, Routines, And Food In Parma Heights!

by Emery Pinter

We mark the start of a New Year by observing old traditions and also creating new ones (or at least hoping to do so) that make our lives better or easier: being a better friend, volunteering for a charitable cause, practicing patience or, perhaps, finally starting that new project or hobby. As adults, we seldom try new things and challenge ourselves the way children do. Let Parma Heights small businesses help with those new hobbies and projects.

Whether you're a beginner or you've been lifting for years, you'll discover new exercises, techniques, and routines at Diamond Strength Fitness, 6690 Pearl Road. Michelle Kitchen, the owner of Diamond Strength Fitness, wants to uplift and empower women through fitness. Diamond Strength Fitness is much more than a gym. It's a community club where Michelle brings women together to celebrate through sisterhood and fitness. A clear benefit of this women-only gym is the fact Michelle can tailor classes very specifically to her audience, and it's going to lead to a better workout. Gift certificates are available to get anyone started on a more personalized exercise experience. It's 2025...time to decide, commit, and succeed!

A new year can be a reminder to play games more often, board games that is! Starting a board gaming hobby can be a little overwhelming to start, but Amanda and Chris will show you how to jump in head first. Or maybe you've wanted to join a gaming community and want an opportunity to meet even more gamers? Checking out Gamers Haven, 6639 Pearl Road in Parma Heights, might be the next best step for you! They have a monthly event calendar and great info on upcoming events on their Facebook page-Gamers Haven. Board game enthusiasts can see demos of board games and on certain nights.

Maybe you'd like to reconnect with old friends or pick a political figure

whom you'd REALLY like to express something to. If you're into a particular issue like saving historical buildings or saving wildlife, journal writing is a dialogue with yourself. Without being judged or censored, you can explore your thoughts and ideas about anything you want. Village Cards & Gifts. 6643 Pearl Road, is a go-to spot for locals to pick up cards and journals. Village Cards & Gifts also has Compendium Journals. These guided journals are a companion in centering perspective, hope, and daily reflection as a way of life. Capture your bright ideas and one-of-a-kind thoughts in these journals!

Don't knock it 'til you try it! Bazar Market & Grill, 6619 Pearl Road, has palate pleasers and offers a range of traditional and modern Ukrainian cuisine, all made from scratch. This place is like an international haven. Stuffed cabbage, or holubtsi, features finely ground beef, Pork ribs, cabbage

Tuesday Afternoon Virtual Book Discussion

by Bridget Lavelle

Join the Adult Services Librarian at the Parma Heights Branch Library of Cuyahoga County Public Library for a staff-led virtual book discussion Tuesday afternoon, January 14th, 2025 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. Join us virtually as we discuss Mrs. Quinn's Rise to Fame by Olivia Ford.

Registration required. To register, visit www.cuyahogalibrary.org or call the Parma Heights Branch at 440.884.2313.

"A contestant on a British baking show, Jenny, who, after 59 years of marriage, has decided to do something for herself, delights in her new-found independence, but finds the show unearthing memories buried decades ago -- and a secret that could be a recipe for disaster." Source: Novelist

continued on page 6

and noodles, sausage, beef stroganoff, and goulash are just a few of the menu options. Experiment with various eastern European dumplings, varenyki. The half-moon-shaped treats come with assorted fillings, both savory and

sweet. Or try the crepes. Nalystnyky is the ideal treat. Thin and buttery, they are rolled up into narrow tubes and filled with sweet or salty ingredients.

As we embrace the New Year, let's break away from traditional New Year's Resolutions and focus on setting realistic and meaningful goals that align with our values. Say goodbye to the same old resolutions. Have a safe and Happy New Year, and look forward to a fantastic year!

Help Wanted! Volunteer For The Friends Of Parma Heights Library

by Bridget Lavelle

The New Year brings new opportunities to volunteer in the local community and meet new friends. Looking for a way to contribute your time through community service by volunteering? Love the public library? Look no further. The Friends of Parma Heights Library need You!

The new Parma Heights Branch Library is under construction. The Friends of the Parma Heights Library are seeking to increase its volunteers before the new Parma Heights Branch Library opens in the Fall, 2025. There are Friends volunteer positions and Friends Officer volunteer positions available.

Interested in a leadership position as a Friends Officer?

There are volunteer leadership Friends Officer positions available as President, Treasurer, Secretary and Book Sale Chair. Learn the position duties from the current Friends Officers and collaborate with the Branch Manager of Parma Heights Branch Library. Transition confidently into your new volunteer position as a Friends Officer while learning from the retiring Friends Officers.

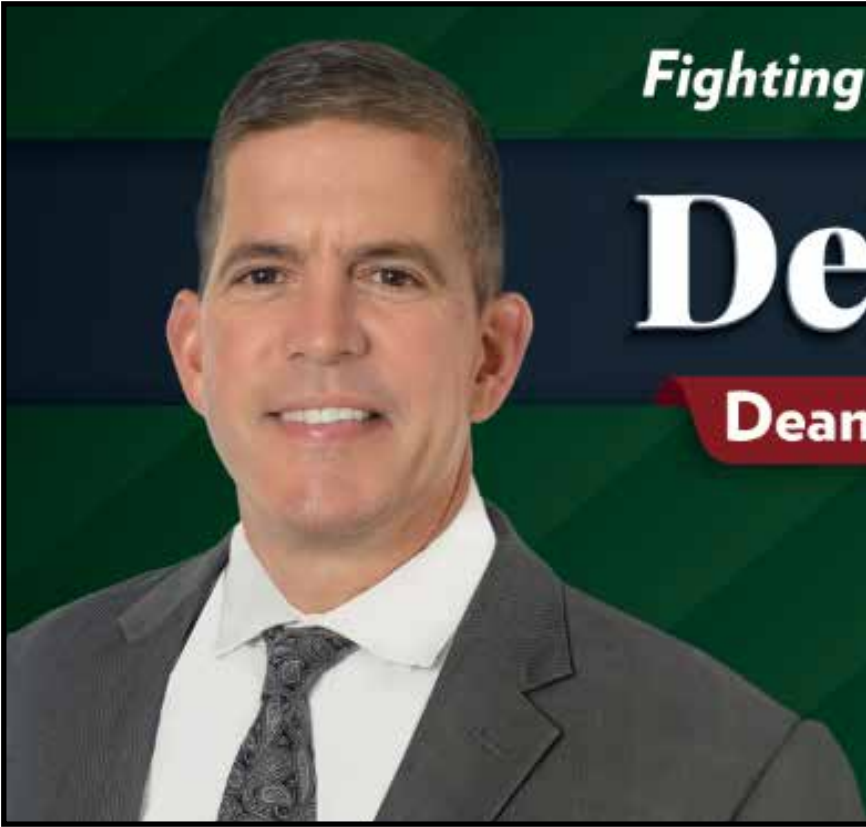
As a Friend or Friend Officer, advocate and raise funds to support library programming, book sales, special events, Friends membership drives, and more. Friends Officers volunteer and attend meetings with the Branch Manager and Library staff to promote the great services of Parma Heights Library in the local community. Get involved and volunteer! Minimal time commitment.

For additional information about volunteering for the Friends of Parma Heights Library, please call the Parma Heights Branch Manager Krista Tokarz

Leadership In Action With Author Jimmie Gray, EdD

by Bridget Lavelle

The Parma Heights Branch of Cuyahoga County Public Library will host Leadership in Action with Author Jimmie Gray, EdD on Thursday, January 23rd, 2025 from 7:00-8:00 p.m. in Meeting Room A. Dr. Jimmie Gray will talk about key concepts from his latest book entitled Leadership in Action: Maximizing Business Performance the SEPP Way. The SEPP model (Strategy, Execution, People, and Preparation) leadership strategy offers leaders practical, achievable and measurable steps to initiate change and drive results in business. Dr. Gray will offer ways to improve leadership skills, business performance and organizational culture to implement immediately. Whether an entrepreneur or team leader, learn from Dr. Gray to achieve success through strong and effective leadership. Book sale and signing following the presentation. Registration required. To register, please visit www.cuyahogalibrary.org or call the Parma Heights Branch at 440.884.2313.



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INSPIRATION

The Lost Art Of Manners: A Father's Perspective

by Anthony Prusak

As a proud father of 18-year-old academic athletes, I reflect on a virtue that seems increasingly scarce in our younger generation: manners. From an early age, I prioritized teaching my sons the importance of respect, courtesy, and decorum—qualities that serve as cornerstones for a well-ordered society. These lessons are not just about etiquette for etiquette's sake but about cultivating kindness, respect, and a sense of humanity in every interaction.

When I say manners, I mean the ability to navigate social situations with grace and respect. It's knowing how to sit down in a restaurant, select the correct utensils, order from a menu, and most importantly, treat those serving your meal with dignity. In my view, how a person interacts with service staff—whether at a restaurant, hotel, or anywhere else—is a clear window into their character.

Manners also encompass the simple, yet powerful, acts of saying "please," "thank you," and "no, thank you." Addressing others with respect, whether it's using titles like "Doctor," "Mr.," "Mrs.," or "Miss," reinforces the value of acknowledging someone's identity and achievements. A firm handshake, direct eye contact, and a sincere "pleasure to meet you" can leave a lasting impression.

I live in a high-rise building where I frequently encounter younger individuals, and it's disheartening how often simple courtesies are overlooked. How many people hold the elevator for others or allow women or older adults to exit first? How many take a moment to greet neighbors with a cheerful "good morning" or "good evening"? These small gestures cost nothing but enrich our daily lives.

Another aspect of manners is the way we present ourselves. Dressing appropriately for an occasion—whether it's knowing how to tie a tie, wear a suit, or select formal attire—shows respect for the event and those in attendance. I've instilled in my sons the belief that dressing well is not about vanity but about conveying dignity and self-respect.

One of the most overlooked expressions of good manners is the handwritten note. When was the last time you received a thank-you card in the mail? In our age

of instant communication, the simple act of writing a note to express gratitude for a gift or an invitation feels almost archaic, yet its impact is profound. It shows effort, thoughtfulness, and appreciation in a way that an email or text never can.

Manners are not just about rules; they are about relationships. They bring order to chaos, foster goodwill, and create a ripple effect of positivity in society. Smiling, holding doors, and dressing with care are small acts with significant meaning. As parents, it's our responsibility to teach these values to our children because if we don't, who will?

Let's embrace old-school manners and pass them on to the next generation. The benefits extend beyond individual interactions—they build stronger communities and a kinder, more respectful world.

Tuesday Afternoon Virtual Book Discussion

continued from page 5

electronic database.

A meeting link will be emailed to registered participants approximately one hour prior to the start of the program. Staff will be available for help with connecting to Zoom and technical issues beginning 15 minutes prior to the program. You will need a device with audio and/or video and an internet connection to join.

If you have questions about this program, please contact a librarian at the Parma Heights Branch at 440.884.2313.

Parma SWAT Santa Gift-Handout



1st Annual "SWAT Santa" on December 14th, 2024. The event was hosted by the Parma Tap House located at 5513 Pearl Rd. The team worked with several Parma school Directors and Family Liaisons to extend an invite to



the families. The event was a success with over 40 kids in attendance. The event included a craft table, gift bags, snacks, refreshments, and best of all, a chance to meet Santa and his Elves for photos and a special gift.

The Parma SWAT Team appreciates the fun and smiles from all who attended. We look forward to seeing you again in 2025 for the 2nd Annual "SWAT Santa" with more good times and events planned. Be sure to follow us on Facebook @ Parma SWAT.

Have an amazing New Year.

Faith Community Directory

All Faiths Pantry

P.O. Box 34239 Parma, OH 44134 216-496-4329
allfaithspantry.org

All Saints Episcopal Church

8911 West Ridgewood Drive, Parma, Ohio 44130, 440-888-4055
parishadmin@allsaintsparma.org

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

7500 State Rd. Parma, OH 440-845-2230
www.blc7500.com

Divinity Lutheran Church

11877 Blossom Ave. Parma Hts., OH 44130, 440-845-2060
www.divinitylutheran.com

The Islamic Center of Cleveland

6055 W. 130th St. Parma, OH 44130 216-362-0786
www.iccleveland.org

Ridgewood United Methodist Church

6330 Ridge Rd. Parma, OH 44129 440-885-1360
www.ridgewoodumc.org

St. Bridget's of Kildare Church

5620 Hauserman Rd. Parma, OH 44130 440-886-4434
www.Stbridgetparma.com

Holy Family Catholic Church

7367 York Rd. Parma, OH 44130 440-842-5533
www.holyfamparma.org

Parma Christian Church

7000 Ridge Rd., Parma, Ohio 44129, 440-842-1614
www.parmachristianchurch.org

Calvary Lutheran Church

6906 W. Pleasant Valley Rd., Parma, Ohio 44130 440-845-0070
CalvaryParma.360unite.com



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NEIGHBORHOODS

Parma Mayor DeGeeter Donates To Mario's Annual Toy Drive



Parma Mayor Timothy G. DeGeeter with Mario Innocenzi in his barbershop at 7526 Broadview Rd. in the Pleasant Valley Shopping Center during his 10th Annual Toy Drive.

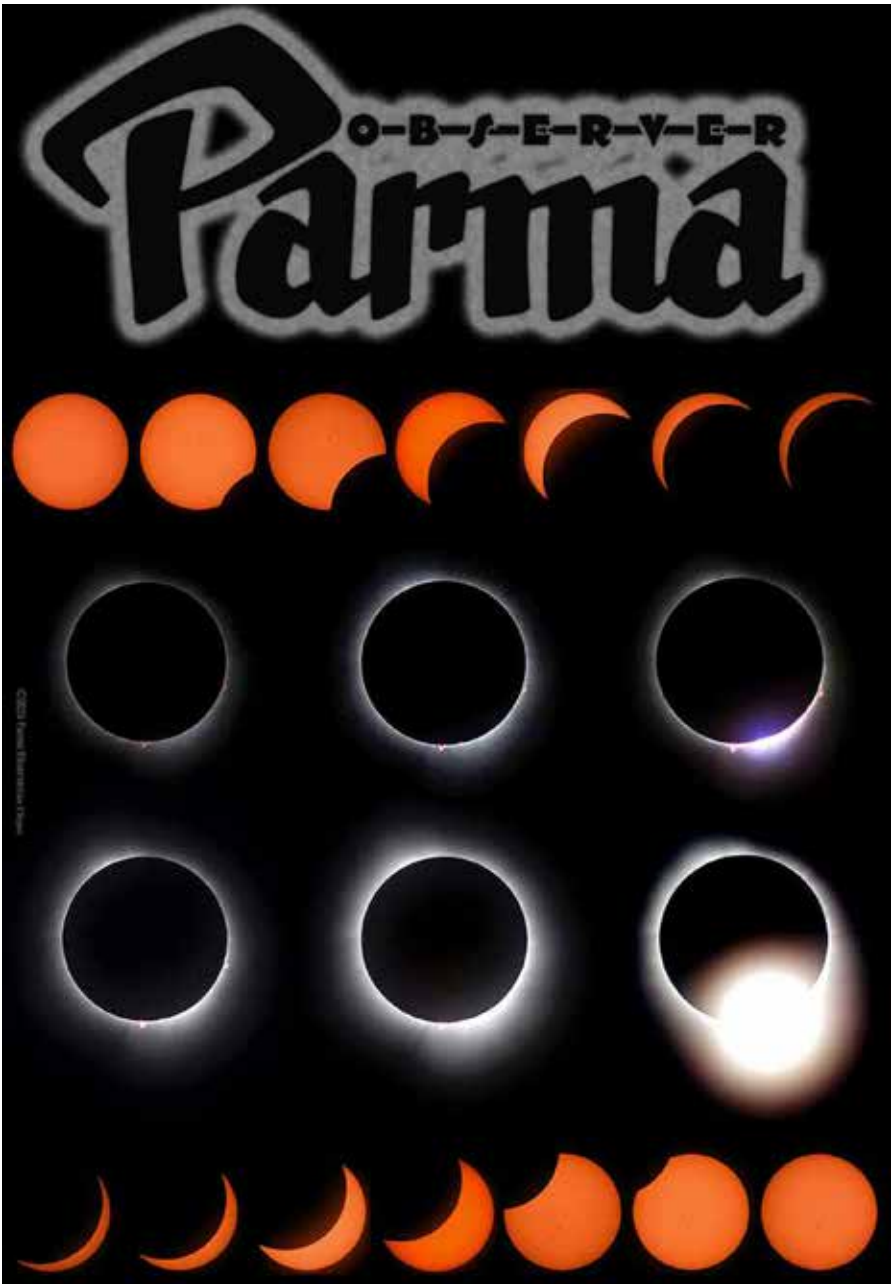
by Carolyn Kovach

Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter recently visited Mario’s Barbershop and donated items for Mario’s Annual Christmas Toy Drive. Mario has run his yearly toy drive for more than 10 years. This year, donations will be made to area families requiring assistance, as well as a North Carolina family impacted by the hurricane this past September.

Mario is asking residents to fill his barbershop at 7526 Broadview Road

with donations. In particular, he needs gift cards for teens, as well as toys, games, blankets, pillows, pajamas, socks and winter outerwear for children ages 3 to 17. To get the donations to families, he is requesting assistance with pull-behind campers to make deliveries.

Residents also have the option to send monetary donations with checks payable to Hands to America and mailed to Mario’s Barbershop, 7526 Broadview Road, Parma, Ohio, 44131.



To mark the spectacular eclipse we all saw, the Observer, gave you a free poster.

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PERSPECTIVE

A Dysfunctional System Of Health Care

by Lee Kamps

As one who has been working with Medicare, Medicaid and private health insurance since January 1973, I can understand the frustration that consumers have towards health insurance companies. At the heart of all this is the profit driven private health insurance companies. Polls and surveys consistently have shown widespread public approval of Medicare and Medicaid. Both are government programs, although far from perfect do a good job of covering those who are eligible.

However, I believe that many Americans are becoming upset with the obscene compensation being paid to executives and managers of health insurance companies. The CEO of United Health Care received \$10 million dollar compensation which was the lowest among CEOs of major health insurance companies. The CEO of Elevance Health (which owns Anthem Blue Cross that is my insurer) receives more than double Brian Thompson's compensation of over \$21 million dollars this year.

Another thing that I have learned is that the popular drug Ozypmic which is used to treat type 2 diabetes but is frequently prescribed for weight loss has a retail cost of over \$1000 a month in the United States, but the cost for the same drug from the same manufacturer costs only \$300 a month in Canada. So why is the cost in the United States for the same drug more than three times what it costs in Canada where the government negotiates drug prices for their single payer system that covers all Canadian citizens?

A lot of middlemen are getting filthy rich off the system of public and private health insurance system in the United States. United Health Care has the largest market share of the popu-

lar Medicare Advantage market in the United States. Yet all too often those health insurance companies will delay or deny coverage to people just based on saving money rather than medical necessity. I call those cases "bean counter decisions," made mostly for financial reasons more than medical necessity.

Here is a case in point where I became personally involved with this system for a close friend. Several years ago, a longtime friend of mine spent ten days in the hospital and was sent to a facility for skilled care. Skilled care is rehabilitative care, and Medicare covers up to 100 days of skilled care. I was granted a temporary health care power of attorney for this friend since she had no close family living in the area. After ten days in skilled care, her Medicare Advantage plan said that they were stopping payment for skilled care. But the doctors and social workers all agreed that she needed more rehabilitation and was improving. We filed an appeal and submitted all the clinical information on her condition. It took just two days for the insurance company to deny the appeal and terminate skilled care.

We filed a second appeal and that only took one day for the insurance company to deny that appeal. Everyone involved with her care believed that they didn't even look at the clinical information that was submitted. The third step was to request an administrative review by a third-party administrative company. This took a week for them to deny their appeal. The third-party administrative company was owned by the insurance company, a clear conflict of interest.

The final appeal was to God, in this case the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) the govern-

ment agency that administers Medicare and Medicaid. CMS is literally God when it comes to Medicare and Medicaid since they are all powerful and can do anything. This appeal to CMS was successful as they overruled the insurance company and approved the skilled care. By then full guardianship had been established for this friend and an attorney appointed by the Probate Court was now handling all her affairs, including health care. She left skilled care after a little less than sixty days and went into assisted living.

But how many people know all those appeal steps or that after all appeals are exhausted, it can be taken up by CMS? I knew that and so did the lawyer who was assigned as her guardian. But how many similar "bean counter decisions" are made and never appealed? Or is the appeal process rigged like what I encountered with this large insurance company?

I can sum up the problems with the health care system in the United States with six words: too many pigs at the trough. Those top executives receiving seven and eight figure compensation are the biggest pigs at the health care trough. Then add in the obscene salaries of CEOs of hospitals, medical equipment companies, pharmaceutical companies and all the other private companies that are making a lot of money in health care throughout the United States. The United States has by far the highest health care costs in the world, yet based on actual statistics, our nation's overall life expectancy is

lower than most developed nations.

To put it mildly, we are not getting our money's worth for all the health care dollars that we are spending. I am not surprised that finally a lot of Americans are simply fed up with this dysfunctional and rigged system of health care in the United States. Why are executives of health insurance companies making well over ten times what an experienced doctor makes? Why do medical practices and hospitals often employ many more people handling patient accounts and billing than they employ doctors, nurses and therapists who actually provide the health care to the patients? Those people do not work for free so that adds to the cost of health care for Americans.

What surprises me more is why has it taken the assassination of a health insurance CEO to bring all this to the attention of the country? I am certainly not advocating the assassination of health insurance executives. But I can understand why so many people in the United States are upset and frustrated.

We are spending a lot of money on health care and health insurance, yet private for-profit companies are making gobs of money and paying their top executives seven and eight figure compensation while necessary health care is denied or just not available because the patient lacks the ability to pay. Medical expenses are still the number one reason for personal bankruptcy in the United States. Yet "medical bankruptcy" is unknown in the other developed countries of the world.

The Crisis of Young Men:
A Call To Action

by Anthony Prusak

I often find myself reflecting on the troubling state of young men in our society. Recently, in the building where I live, a young man vandalized the front lobby with paint and vulgar language. He also ranted about conspiracy theories while in the lobby. Although I'm not a mental health professional, it's clear that addressing grievances through vandalism is not an appropriate solution.

In this case, his frustration stemmed from the elevators being out of service for over a week, compounded by poor communication from the management company. While his feelings of frustration may be understandable, his actions were not. He took matters into his own hands and has since faced serious consequences, including arrest and eviction.

This incident made me think about another young man—one who led a life of privilege and demonstrated high intelligence—who allegedly took drastic action by killing a CEO in New York City. Brian Thompson, a 50-year-old husband and father of four, was tragically shot to death on December 4th. His chil-

dren will never again see their father, especially during cherished family times like Christmas.

As a single father, I make it a point to connect with my twin sons daily. I check their mental and physical well-being, ask them tough questions when necessary, and ensure they complete their homework and attend their athletic practices. They know I am always here for them and will continue for as long as I live. But stories like these make me deeply concerned about how we, as a society, are raising and supporting our children, particularly young men.

Parenting is not about being a best friend to your children. It's about setting boundaries and expectations. Young men today face alarming challenges. Statistics show that they are four times more likely to die by suicide, three times more likely to struggle with addiction, and 12 times more likely to be incarcerated compared to other groups. These trends suggest a severe crisis that we cannot ignore.

There is also a societal failure to address the emotional and economic

continued on page 9

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VIEWPOINTS

Give Me “You’re Fired!” Your Four (More), Your Befuddled Asses . . . The Abetted News of Your Scheming Bores”

by Lucy McKernan

It’s excruciatingly ironic that the very metropolis that spawned our reelected “commander in chief,” who is scapegoating roughly half of our nation’s 45 million immigrants, is also home to the Statue of Liberty. How many immigrants live in Parma, Parma Heights, and Seven Hills? A lot!

For those, and others, I write.

Inside the pedestal of America’s most iconic beacon of hope, promise, and sanctuary to so many, Lady Liberty’s poem reads:

“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to

breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door!” Titled “The New Colossus,” it was scribed by Emma Lazarus in 1883. She did it to help raise funds for Lady Liberty’s pedestal. Of Sephardic Jewish heritage, Lazarus was moved to write these world-famous lines after working with refugees and immigrants.

I, too, have felt deepy sad about the plight of refugees, asylum-seekers, and am compelled to volunteer my skills. What drives the knife in deeper is that Lady Liberty’s tablet – the symbolic

book of the rule of law in America – has been made a mockery by the Orange Jesus. In case any of the voters who’ve turned our country into an unapologetic idiocracy didn’t know, other symbols for the Statue of Liberty are as follows: The torch in her right hand stands for enlightenment. Something I take very personally. Lucy means light in all languages and lands, and as in Lady Liberty’s torch that illuminates the path to freedom. In Arabic, Lucy is “Noor.” In Spanish, it’s “Lucia.”

And for those who voted for their White Savior, and/or because they couldn’t bring themselves to consider

a woman competent or trustworthy enough to run this county, the broken chain and shackle under Lady Liberty’s left foot symbolizes the end to slavery after the Civil War.

This previous point is complicated. It involves demographics of voters who proclaimed, “We are not a monolith,” and “I can’t vote for someone [like Harris] I don’t know anything about,” while knowing everything they need to know about him. For people like me it’s even worse: navigating the searing betrayal by other women so steeped in outdated thinking about the roles of men and women in society that they actually voted for the enemy.

Lastly, Liberty’s crown is covered with spikes to represent the rays of the sun beaming out, not just to new arrivals, but to the rest of the world.

So if we can’t see what’s ahead, it’s because we’ve gouged out our own eyes.

But I still have mine. And I just hope I’m not walking down the beach someday, only to find Lady Liberty buried in sand up to her bedraggled shoulders.

“Damn, dirty . . . hellscape.”



AARP Tax Aide - Free Tax Preparation

AARP Tax Aide - Free Tax Preparation
Stephen Donovan

The AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program will be getting underway again this year starting the first week in February and ending the 14th of April 2025. This IRS-supported FREE tax service is offered on a non-discriminatory basis without consideration of race, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. We give special attention to those with low or moderate incomes and/or aged 50 and older. Taxpayers do NOT have to be retired or a member of AARP. You may start calling for appointments on January 6, 2025.

Tax-Aide sites in southwest Cuyahoga County are located at:

Strongsville Senior & Recreation Center (new site), 18100 Royalton Rd, Strongsville, OH 44136. Appointments on Wednesdays from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM. To make an appointment call Jon at 440-570-5180 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. Do not call the Strongsville Senior Center or Strongsville United Methodist Church for appointments.

Broadview Heights Community and Recreation Center (re-opened site), 9543 Broadview Road, Broadview Heights, OH 44147. Appointments on Fridays from 9:30 AM to 1:00 PM. To make an appointment, call 440-526-4074 on weekdays.

Brook Park United Methodist Church, 6220 Smith Road, Brook Park,

OH 44142. Appointments on Thursdays from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Call 216-676-4738 Wednesdays through Fridays from 9:30 AM to 1:00 PM for an appointment.

Middleburg Heights Branch, Cuyahoga County Public Library, 16699 Bagley Road, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130. Appointments on Mondays and Tuesdays from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM. To make an appointment, go to the Middleburg Heights Library and complete sign-up book or call 440-234-3600. Please pick up the Intake-Interview booklet and Information pages at the site. Complete and bring them to your appointment.

North Royalton Branch, Cuyahoga County Public Library, 5071 Wallings Road, North Royalton, OH 44133. Appointments on Thursdays from 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM. To make an appointment, go to the North Royalton Library and complete sign-up book or call 440-237-3800. Please pick up the Intake-Interview booklet and Information pages at the site. Complete and bring them to your appointment.

Parma Powers Branch, Cuyahoga County Public Library, 6996 Powers Blvd., Parma, OH 44129. Appointments on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM. To make an appointment, go to the Parma Powers Library and complete sign-up book or call 440-885-5362. Please pick up the Intake-Interview booklet and Information pages at the site. Complete and bring them to your appointment.

We are opening fewer sites than prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic due to a reduced number of volunteers.

Availability of appointments is subject to the status of the Covid-19 pandemic. We anticipate using the in-person process to prepare returns.

Please bring to your appointments copies of your Federal and Ohio 2023 returns; 2024 forms W-2, 1099, and 1098 (taxpayers with more than 10 forms may be better served by a paid professional); social security cards or statements for all persons on your tax return; a picture ID (i.e., a valid driver’s license) for you and your spouse, and any IRS or Ohio Tax correspondence.

The Crisis of Young Men:
A Call To Action

continued from page 8

needs of young men. A staggering one in three men under 30 has not had any intimate relationships in the past year. Many young men lack confidence, do not pursue mentorship or meaningful friendships, and struggle to secure jobs. Instead, they are often caught in a digital cycle, consuming content and algorithms that offer a poor substitute for real-life experiences.

This crisis does not just affect men. Women, too, want economically and emotionally stable men as partners, fathers, and friends. Empathy is not a zero-sum game; supporting young men does not detract from the rights or progress of others. Civil rights and

marriage equality, for example, have shown us that extending compassion and opportunity benefits everyone.

We must recognize that the absence of male role models is a critical failure point for young men. When a boy loses the guidance of a positive male figure, he is far more likely to go off track. The ultimate expression of masculinity is not wealth or power but living a virtuous life and reaching out to mentor and support others. If we want better men, we must strive to be better men ourselves.

This is a call to action for fathers, teachers, mentors, and friends. We need to step up and do a better job of guiding, supporting, and understanding the struggles of young men. Without collective effort, this concerning trend will only continue to worsen.



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PARMA OBSERVER

Teenager From 1977 Still Missing:

by Kevin Kelly

In 1977, a teenage girl went missing from a Fairview Park Sunoco gas station located on Lorain Road, never to be seen again. Her name was Yvonne Regler and she was a resident of North Olmsted. It was early afternoon on August 8th when she disappeared. The case baffled the Fairview Park authorities because of the lack of evidence left at the scene. Her purse and belongings, along with large amounts of money, in the cash- register, were left behind.

Back in 1977, “serial killer” was still a new phenomenon. The last thing city authorities were thinking about was a serial abductor on the loose. This is especially true in a blimpish sub-



Photo of Yvonne Regler

asking anyone with information about the disappearance of Yvonne Regler to call Fairview Park Police at: 440-333-1234

To learn more about the case, a documentary produced by local video company, Shocker Enterprises, will air in January, on Cox Cable Wednesdays at 8pm on channel 45 and Cleveland Spectrum on Mondays at 9pm on channel 1025.

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Parma Begins
Preparing
For 2026
Bicentennial
Celebration!

continued from page 1

are the seventh largest city in Ohio and largest Cleveland suburb. Many residents have lived here their entire lives. We want this year-long celebration to reflect our city pride and rich history,” DeGeeter said.

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urb such as Fairview Park. However, besides several serial killers on the loose across the country in 1977, there were several serial killers operating just in the State of Ohio alone.

After the first couple of month's, because of a lot of distorted facts, the detectives came to the conclusion that she left on her own accord. However, today they are convinced that she was taken against her will and are asking the public for help. In 2016, authorities released to the networks, an age composite of what the 17-year-old would look like if she were still alive. They are

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PARMA ARTS DISTRICT

Arts In Parma

by Kathryn Mabin

It's the New Year and time to relax and create. The Parma Area Fine Arts Council, (PAFAC), AKA Parma Arts, is seeking new members. This 501(c)3 non-profit has existed in the area for over 60 years bringing art to the community. Members are from various walks of life, work with various mediums, and are various ages. But they all agree creating is an important aspect of life. Membership is annual, adults \$25, over age 55 \$18. Monthly meetings (next one February 24th), 7335 Ridge Rd., offer a change to network, plan events and classes, in a laid back friendly atmosphere. Visit the web page for more information, www.parmafinearts.org, email kathryn-mabin@att.net, or follow on Facebook.

Coming Soon! February starts the new season of free or very affordable classes and workshops great for beginners or experienced creatives. Interested in being included in an email notification? Email kathryn-mabin@att.net.

Sue Holick-Bade was recognized with an 'Artistic Evolution Award' by Danielle Dieterich, Executive Director at Cuyahoga Valley Art Center, on December 6th. It was presented during the CVAC Student & Faculty Artists Reception. The award celebrates the significant growth and evolution she demonstrated on her artistic journey

over the past year. Additionally on display, January 11th through February 14th her pencil drawing, Looking Through The Keyhole will be on display at the Orange Art Center in Pepper Pike. Another pencil drawing, Really? (which is a self-portrait) will appear in Valley Art Center's Student/Faculty Exhibition January 24th through March 6th.

Gary Nass, Parma resident and Parma Arts member is on display at Frontdoor Gallery, 3838 Brecksville Rd in Richfield.

FREE Figure Drawing at The Parma Art Center, 7335 Ridge Rd (inside City of Parma Parks & Recreation Center). Ongoing FREE figure drawing the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month, 6:30 to 8:30 PM. January 13th and the 27th. No instructor, just a gathering of artists. Welcome beginning or experienced artists to draw or paint. Live models, fully clothed. Each session a different volunteer model from the community will pose in exchange for a drawing/painting from each artist present. This is a body-positive group, all shapes, sizes, and ages are welcome to pose. Great way for artists to hone your figure drawing skills, meet other artists, in a relaxing atmosphere. For more information, or if you want to volunteer to model, email Lynne Shayko at Lshayko@kent.edu.

This Year Rediscover
The Parma-Powers Branch Library

continued from page 1

Join us for Grand Bingo on Thursday, January 16 at 6 PM. Bring grandkids, grandparents and grand friends to a night of family fun! Win children's books and other prizes and enjoy great snacks! The fun happens every third Thursday evening.

Join us for the Cleveland's Millionaires' Row program on Monday January 27, 2025 at 7 PM. Local historian Alan Dutka will discuss the affluence and influence of Clevelanders who owned the extravagant mansions that once occupied this famous area. Dutka's fascinating presentation,

adapted from his book, Cleveland's Millionaires' Row, will illustrate the birth, glamor, decline, and the modern renaissance of Euclid Ave.

Join us for Senior Bingo on Tuesday, January 28 at 10 AM. It'll be an amazing morning of Bingo and free Bagels. Prizes will be awarded, and fun will be had! If you're interested in Bingo where kids are also welcome, we'd love to have you join us for Grand Bingo, every third Thursday evening at 6 PM. Sponsored by the Friends of Parma Libraries and Community Health Systems of Parma.

Join us for the Have Music, Will Travel! program on Thursday, January 30 at 6:30 PM. Embark with us on a musical

voyage through the life of the very talented flautist, Katherine Calvey, who will transport us to places like Carnegie Hall, Paris, and Latin America. Calvey will perform music from around the world to accompany a presentation highlighting her travels as a classically trained, professional musician.

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The Parma Observer turned 15 years old in 2024. Thanks to all who have made this community journalism project a reality since 2009.

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Happy New Year!



Looking back on 2024 I believe we once again demonstrated that Seven Hills is functioning in a safe, efficient, and proactive manner. Further, we have stayed true to two of my guiding principles: “Progress through partnership” and “Results, not insults.”

2025 will be another fruitful year with more of you have come to expect; infrastructure and park improvements along with hosting some of the areas best events.

I encourage everyone to stay in touch. Follow us on social media, download our app or register for our newsletter by visiting our website <https://www.seven-hillsohio.org>.

Wishing everyone a healthy and happy New Year!

Anthony (Tony) D. Biasiotta