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Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter Delivers Third State Of The City Address

by Michael Culp

In his third State of the City address on February 24, Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter unveiled two new programs the administration is developing: a first-time home buyers program aimed at attracting college graduates and a youth commission to encourage civic involvement among high schoolers. During his speech at the Parma-Snow branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library system, DeGeeter focused mostly on city efforts to bolster the economy, strengthen neighborhoods, provide efficient government, and maintain quality services to residents.

While in a formal setting in the library's new state-of-the-art auditorium, the nearly 40 minute address, punctuated throughout by applause, also reflected a family atmosphere. Five year old Jack DeGeeter, the mayor's son, introduced



Parma Mayor Timothy J. DeGeeter at the podium delivering his third annual State of the City address on February 24.

his father at the podium to kick off the speech. DeGeeter used the address to announce new programs the administration is advancing, including a new first-time home buyers' initiative intended to attract young professionals to Parma, especially those who work in

the city. "We need them to not only work here but to live here," he said. "Homeownership is critical for the life of our community and we must not undermine what we all have worked so hard to build." The proposal builds upon the success of the existing program,

which last year leveraged \$1.6 million in real estate purchases for 18 first-time, income-eligible home buyers.

Meanwhile, the formation of a Parma Youth Commission, comprised of Parma high schoolers, to encourage students to participate in government, was announced. DeGeeter tapped Council President Sean Brennan, a U.S. History and Government teacher, to lead the effort. "They'll have the opportunity to learn about all facets of city government and interact with public officials and community leaders," DeGeeter said. "We hope this program will prepare and encourage youths to pursue a civic minded life." Details are still being worked out, such as the application process and specific deadlines.

In his speech, DeGeeter highlighted new and expanding businesses and the administration's efforts to build upon the on-going redevelopment at the Shoppes at Parma. "The redevelopment of the mall can be used as a nat-

ural cornerstone for a "Town Center" concept, incorporating all that is around it - City Hall, the new public library, the hospital, Stearn's Homestead, and the Day Drive corridor," he said. "To seize the moment, our administration created the Parma Mayor's Town Center Task Force." The 15 member task force - comprised of stakeholders and residents - will produce strategic recommendations in about 6 months to help make the Town Center concept a reality. The group already has met and put considerable effort into the project. Soon, the task force will solicit public input as part of the process to develop the town center vision.

In addition to the mall redevelopment and town center concept, DeGeeter also touted other projects:

The Cuyahoga Public Library's new \$15.6 million dollar Parma branch on Powers Blvd. and the \$15.2 million dollar renovation of the Parma-Snow Branch.

Joint Safety Meeting Held By Parma Councilmen Tuma And Divis

by Allan Divis

On February 12, Ward 8 Councilman Scott Tuma and myself, Ward 5 Councilman Allan Divis, hosted a joint safety meeting in Council Chambers at Parma City Hall. Despite the bitter cold, a good contingent of residents were on hand to receive valuable information pertaining to home security and telemarketing scams. The meeting included

informative presentations by Sergeant Kevin Riley of the Parma Police Department and Law Director Tim Dobeck.

Sergeant Riley addressed home safety issues and provided useful tips on protecting one's home from intruders. For instance, Riley suggested cutting your grass before leaving for vacation, locking your doors while you are outside of your property while doing

any kind of yard work, and being vigilant when strangers knock on your door and try to engage you in conversation. Law Director Dobeck's presentation focused on how best to avoid becoming a victim of telephone and credit card scams. Other guest speakers at the meeting included Mayor Tim DeGeeter and Safety Director Gregory Baeppler.

Following the presentations, Councilman Tuma and I moderated a question and answer session with residents and provided safety tip fliers. Tuma said, "Our number one priority as elected officials of the City of Parma is community safety." I believe that positive town hall meetings like this help further that goal. The useful information that was provided to residents at the safety meeting is available upon request by simply contacting either myself or Councilman Tuma through our offices at Parma City Hall at (440) 885-8091.

Parma Observer Welcomes Managing Editor

by Daniel P. McCarthy

They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. We have that in mind when other area publications announce that they are seeking community columnists and would like area residents to send in photos of their events, special occasions, renovations, etc. After all, we have been focusing on those things since the very beginning, so it feels good to be noticed and makes us think that we must be doing something right. The demand for our paper is increasing every month and judging from the numerous calls we receive asking where the Parma Observer can be found (in over 185 locations throughout Parma, Parma Heights, and Seven Hills) we realize that in order to meet this demand, it has become necessary to



Stefan P. Stefaniuk

expand by including additional key team members. A decision has been reached to add the position of Managing Editor. I have thought long and hard about this and I feel that our choice of Stefan P. Stefa-

continued on page 2



Left to right, Parma Police Sgt. Kevin Riley, Parma Ward 5 Councilman Allan Divis, and Parma Ward 8 Councilman Scott Tuma at the Safety Meeting held in Parma City Council chambers on February 12.

Community News

The President’s Corner

by Sean Brennan,
Parma City Council President

This month I will continue a series of columns begun last month that are meant to inform you about the committee structure of Parma City Council. Last month I focused on why Council committees are formed and how they operate, as well as a synopsis about the Finance Committee. This month I hope to inform you about some of the other working groups of Council.

The Public Safety Committee is headed up by Council veteran, Ward Four Councilman Brian Day. Ward Seven Councilman Brian Brochetti serves as the Vice Chairman of the committee. The Safety Committee is charged with dealing with all matters relating to the Fire Prevention Code, the Building Code, the Housing Code, the Traffic Code, the improvement, repair and construction of municipal properties and ways, public health, the Building Department, use of public streets and sidewalks, penal ordinances and public nuisance abatement. For instance, this is the committee that worked with the Building Department to craft the new ordinance that authorizes building inspectors to ticket



Sean Brennan,
Parma City Council President
chronic nuisance properties.

Next, the Public Service Committee is chaired by Ward Two Councilwoman Debbie Lime with Ward Six Councilman Larry Napoli serving as Vice Chair. This committee handles legislation relating to public parks, playgrounds, recreational sites, the Ridgewood Municipal Golf Course, recreational buildings, such as Ries Ice Rink, swimming pools, recreational programs, public charities, direct and work relief, hospitals, social services, Senior Citizen programs, and the

maintenance of and cleaning of public streets and sidewalks. It is in this committee where new recreation programs, such as this year’s new evening youth baseball and softball leagues, are discussed.

Ward Six Councilman Larry Napoli has always been an advocate for making Parma’s environment even better. This is why his colleagues have granted him the chairmanship of the Environmental Standards Committee over the years. Ward Three Councilman Mark Casselberry serves as Vice Chairman. All matters relating to natural watercourses, streams, creeks, brooks and the pollution thereof; the water supply, smoke abatement, air pollution, street lighting, surface and storm water drainage, the construction, maintenance and repair of storm and sanitary sewers, sewage disposal and the collection and disposal of refuse and other waste are the issues heard in this committee. For example, Councilman Napoli’s committee played a key role in protecting the West Creek Preserve, which is now the Cleveland Metroparks’ West Creek Reservation.

More about the other committees of Parma City Council next month. Committee meetings generally take place on the first Monday of each month at 6:00 pm and the second Monday of

the month at 7:00 pm. The public is encouraged to attend and participate in these informative meetings, which take place at Parma City Hall in City Council Chambers. To enter Council Chambers, simply park behind City Hall and enter through the back doors. Meeting dates and times are posted on the City’s website at www.cityofparma-oh.gov or you may simply call the Council office for information at 440-885-8091. Happy St. Paddy’s Day and here’s to a warm spring!



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Third Annual Parma Peanut Butter Drive A Success

by Sean Brennan

I am excited to report that the Third Annual Parma Peanut Butter Drive continued its tradition of success. Held during the last weeks of 2013 to benefit the patrons of All Faiths Pantry, we collected over \$1,000 and well over 500 jars (890 pounds) of peanut butter. Needless to say, I continue to be amazed at the generosity of the Parma area’s residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations, all of which came together, once again, to help the senior citizens and other low-mobility residents on fixed incomes served by the Pantry.

A sincere thank you goes to Sari Feldman, Executive Director of the Cuyahoga County Public Library System. Our Parma library branches once again were wonderful in assisting as drop off and collection points for the drive. Hats off to the fine staff members who assisted with these efforts at our Parma branches.

I also wish to thank Terry Deis, University Hospitals Parma Medi-

cal Center President, and his staff for assisting greatly with the drive, collecting many jars of peanut butter at their facility.

Dave Nedrich and Cheryl McIntosh at the Parma Area Chamber of Commerce are also to be thanked for allowing donors to drop items at their offices at The Shoppes at Parma.

Further, Brian Winslow and his staff at First Federal of Lakewood on Snow Road in the Midtown Plaza Shopping Center kindly accepted donations this year, as well.

The following deserve special recognition for their very generous support of the drive: our main sponsor Columbia Gas of Ohio; Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter and the employees at Parma City Hall; City of Parma Law Director Tim Dobeck and his fine staff; Parma City Council Clerk Ken Ramser and our staff; former Dentzler Elementary School Principal Gayle Clapp and her husband Alan; Patty and Wayne Wanyerka; Parma School

Board Member Rosemary Gulick and her husband Tom; John and June Bolibrush; the Parma Animal Shelter; Gary Sikon, Manager at Office Max on Snow Road; the Parma Ridgewood YMCA Adventure Princesses and their fathers; Michelle Bartunek; Girl Scout Troops 70027, 70802, 70806, 70959 and 71499; Elaine Swade; Donald Hunt; Gene Lovasy; Judy Mileti and the staff at Distinctive Eyewear; Lawrence and Carolyn Murray; Kelly Scheiman; Nick and Maria Vaccaro; Thomas and Evelyn Moore; the Parma Professional Frieighters Local 639; Harry Arnold; Robert Pampe; Adelbert and Jo Ann Wojdacz; Cindy Pietrasz; Marie Tedeschi; County Council District 4 Councilman Chuck Germana, his brother Joe Germana, and their kind staff at Four Star Insurance; Ward 2 Councilwoman Debbie Lime; Ward 5 Councilman Allan Divis; and Ward 6 Councilman Larry Napoli.

A special thanks is in order to the many individuals and families who gave their donation anonymously. Once again, Parma’s residents (and several folks from surrounding communities) have proven their true hometown values of helping one’s neighbor when in need.

Last, but not least, thank you to John Visnauskas and the many volunteers at All Faiths Pantry for filling a desperate need in our community. Without selfless individuals like them, many in our midst would be truly suffering. To find out more about All Faiths Pantry please visit their website at <http://allfaithspantry.org/> or call me at (440) 884-0489 for a brochure.

Parma Observer Welcomes Managing Editor

continued from page 1

niuk to fill this crucial role with the Observer is most definitely the right step at the right time.

Who is Stefan P. Stefaniuk? He is a lifetime Parma resident, Navy Veteran, Realtor, father and all around active citizen who is involved in a multitude of useful civic endeavors. I know him from his involvement in Polish Village and the Friends of Parma Theater.

Stefan is a modest and humble person, who prefers that I do not list his many accomplishments and qualifications, so I will honor his request. What is most important is that he is committed to helping the Parma Observer grow and reach ever greater heights in our mission to create an atmosphere where true dialogue in the seventh largest city in Ohio can result in lasting, positive changes that we all can be proud of.

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Health/Culture

Parma Hospital Celebrates Joining UH

by CJ Sheppard

An energized employee force clad in red and black welcomed University Hospitals (UH) leadership to the newly integrated UH Parma Medical Center for a special day of celebration on February 12.

“We celebrate a new beginning,” UH CEO Thomas F. Zenty III told a packed auditorium. “We’re commemorating the combination of two very compassionate cultures. Our vision for integration is to elevate the quality of care for all the patients that we serve, both here and in all of Northeast Ohio, by enhancing the great care that you already provide.”

To honor the historic integration of the former Parma Community General Hospital and EMH Healthcare into the UH family, Zenty brought a team of leaders with him on the road, including Dr. Eric Bieber, the new President of UH’s western region, and Chief Strategy Officer Paul Tait, the architect of the expansion. They visited UH Elyria Medical Center in the morning and spent the afternoon at UH Parma Medical Center. Through-



Opportunity through Unity: University Hospitals leadership came to Parma on Feb. 12 for a day of celebration with the newest hospital to join the UH family.

out the day, excited employees received their new ID badges and gifts commemorating the occasion.

Tait acknowledged that UH and Parma both focus on high quality and the best patient experience. Over the next several months, Tait said UH will work on bringing more physicians here to enhance the existing medical staff, investing in facilities and equipment, and expanding UH Institutes to the Parma campus. UH’s Seidman Cancer Center expanded to Parma in August, as its 16th location in Northern Ohio.

UH Parma Medical Center President Terrence G. Deis said he believed UH best mirrored Parma’s commitment to community, high-quality

care and culture. As evidence of this comfort level, he cited the reaction of surgical nurse Natalie Klubnik to the July 1 announcement that Parma Hospital intended to become part of the UH health system: It’s like family. Klubnik was among the UH Parma Medical Center employees featured in a celebration video shared with employees.

“We celebrate today, and we’re thankful that we found an organization that matched us so closely,” Deis said. “We knew that we needed to become part of a bigger, greater system to ensure that health care was in Parma and the surrounding communities for the long haul and that we were here for those we are privileged to serve.”

Zenty reassured staff not to consider this change a takeover of their hospital, as it has been characterized in some arenas. It’s a new starting line rather than an ending point. He noted that University Hospitals was named to the 2013 US News & World Report Honor Roll, recognizing the top 18 of the more than 5,700 hospitals in the country. But UH can learn from Parma also, he added.

“Our goal here is to create a long-lasting, generations-long partnership,” Zenty said. “We’re going to learn as much from you as you’re going to learn from us. We’re going to bring the best of our worlds together as a result of this newly formed relationship.”

Healthcare.gov - Open Enrollment Ends March 31, 2014

by Gene Lovasy

Healthcare.gov – Open Enrollment Ends March 31, 2014 Remember: March 31st is the last day to sign up for health insurance. Do you need it? What happens if you don’t get coverage? The accompanying guide should provide answers to these questions. Here’s how to begin the enrollment process.

Here are the basic steps you can

expect to take in the Health Insurance Marketplace:

Step 1. There are four ways you can sign up through the Health Insurance Marketplace: online – go to www.healthcare.gov; by phone – call 1-800-318-2596 TTY 1-855-889-4925; by mailing in a paper application – to download a copy go to healthcare.gov and click on the “4 Ways to Apply” link and scroll down to “Apply with a Paper

Application”; or with an in-person assister.

Step 2. A bit about you. You’ll need to answer some questions about you and your family, including your income, the number of people in your family, and more. Having at your finger tips the following information would be helpful: the Social Security numbers of everyone who will be on your plan, income information....a recent W-2 pay stub would do it and information about any health insurance you currently have (if you have any)....something that has the policy number on it is all you need.

Read The full Story Online at:
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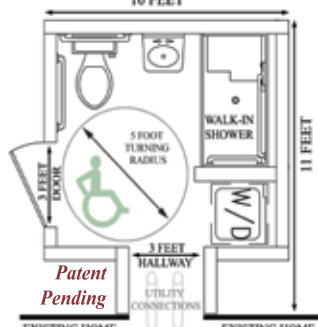



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Parma Education

ASSET CORNER

Visit the "Asset Corner" on Facebook. Share your Asset building ideas.

Asset Corner #51

by Gene Lovasy

SHOW KIDS YOU CARE: DISCUSS THEIR DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES. March's Asset Category: **SOCIAL COMPETENCIES** Learning social skills is a lot like learning to play the piano in that you need to learn some basic competencies and you need someone to teach you those skills. You need time to practice, guidance as you gain experience, and feedback along the way. Social competencies are the skills and life perspectives young people need to develop into healthy, competent adults. These skills are important daily, but they're even more crucial when young people encounter the tough times in life.

Social Competency Assets Include:

- #32 Planning & Decision Making** – Young person knows how to plan ahead & make choices. (29%*)
- #33 Interpersonal Competence** – Young person has empathy, sensitivity & friendship skills. (45%*)
- #34 Cultural Competence** – Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. (43%*)
- #35 Resistance Skills** – Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. (41%*)
- #36 Peaceful Conflict Resolution** – Young seeks to resolve conflict non-violently. (40%*)

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

This column's focus will be on..... Asset #36 – Resistance Skills
The art of resistance and reasoning....

Learning resistance is one of the most important social skills to develop. This skill gives young people the confidence to say "no" to people or situations that make them uncomfortable. Learning to assert themselves also helps young people make their voices

heard and express opinions. With these skills in hand young people make appropriate decisions and stand firm in what they believe.

Here are the facts:
Research shows that young people who can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations are more likely to avoid risky behaviors and focus on positive attitudes. About 41 percent of young people, ages 11–18, say they can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations, according to Search Institute surveys. Speaking up for themselves takes practice, but with your help, young people can learn to take a stand.

Tips for building this asset:
Teach young people resistance skills, but also teach them the values that support why they would take a stand on an issue. Having many conversations with a teenager about drug use, sex, safety, and personal boundaries increases the chance he or she will make a safe choice when, for example, asked to ride in a car with a driver who has been drinking.

Also try this:
In your home and family: Model and role-play resistance skills, specifying what to say or not say. Talk with your child about what was easy and what was difficult. Focus not only on how to resist, but also on what to say "yes" to.

In your neighborhood and community: Offer a safety net to the young people you know. Let them know they can call you if they feel pressured or tempted to do something unsafe or unhealthy.

In your school or youth program: Learn about people in the world who stood up for their values and resisted what everyone else was doing (such as Rosa Parks and Gandhi). Discuss why they were able to do so.

ASSET RELATED NEWS
If you're not aware, the Parma City Schools spring edition of the Adult Education Catalogue is now available. There are quite a few new, creative & unique programs available. Check it out at the District's web site - www.parmacityschools.org.

Watch for information regarding how you can help with our annual Backpack For Kids program. Spearheaded last year by the Collab & Phil Kish of KIKS Office, over 400 school supply filled backpacks went to deserving kids in our district. Unfortunately the need is closer to 900 so we have a ways to go. Flyers will be coming out soon detailing how you can get involved.

District-Wide Initiative Aims To Increase Breakfast Participation

by Dr. Jeffrey Graham

The impact of breakfast on learning is well documented. Poor nutrition is linked with absenteeism, hunger symptoms and psychosocial problems - all of which impact a child's ability to learn. So why aren't more of our students eating the most important meal of the day? An alarming 80% of the students who visit our school clinics have not had breakfast. And while 48% of our students qualify for our free and reduced food program, only 13% are taking advantage of breakfast served at school, leaving a lot of students underserved.

Our Nutrition Services Department, under the leadership of supervisor Jackie Rohr, has put several grant-funded initiatives in motion such as a pilot program of Breakfast in the Classroom and Grab n' Go breakfast options to help increase the number of students who eat breakfast. But it's their district-wide effort I want to shine a light on today. Made possible through funding by the Fuel Up to Play 60 program, which was founded by the

PCSD's Kindergarten registration is scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, March 13th & 14th from 7:30 am to noon and again from 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Shoppes at Parma (enter by the Food Court). Check out the District's Kindergarten Web page for details & tips & tricks to help you prepare your child for this life milestone.

Share your asset building ideas and/or thoughts about the developmental asset concept by visiting the "asset corner" facebook page. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Visit www.search-institute.org/assets for more information about the 40 Developmental Assets and ideas for helping young people build them. Or go here <http://www.parentfurther.com/> for great asset-based parenting tips, tricks, activities and ideas.

National Dairy Council and the NFL, our high school Cooperative Marketing Management students will be competing to increase breakfast participation throughout the district.

These high schoolers are gaining real-world experience creating and implementing marketing and incentive programs aimed at improving awareness of the importance of a healthy breakfast, and increasing the number of students who eat breakfast. Their goal is to increase the number of students who eat breakfast by 25%. We'll be sure to share their progress with you.

I want to thank everyone who is working together to help our students grow up healthy and strong, both mentally and physically. Wellness for a child has a life-long impact on his or her life. And that's something we want for every one of our students.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jeffrey Graham

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Inspiration

Cure For Cabin Fever

by Dale Powell

Like most of us this winter, I have spent a good deal of time in the house, unable to do the things that I like to do outside. There's only so much cleaning, dusting, and rearranging of items on shelves and in drawers that one can do. I try and get out to various places and engage in as many activities as I can, but I just miss the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. It's not as if I hate the winter; in fact, there are few sights as beautiful and peaceful looking as snow covering everything in a gorgeous blanket of white. Problem is, at my age and with an artificial hip as well, I can't risk walking around my neighborhood with all of that ice and snow.

Thank goodness for the Metroparks! On February 13, I went to the area near Big Creek between the Snow Rd. Picnic area and Stumph Rd. The upper path along the road was plowed rather nicely, making it very easy to walk along safely and enjoy the wonderful sight of the trees, and squirrels and other wildlife busy with their winter activities. The lower path, near the creek, is especially enjoyable. While it is not plowed, there is a clear path made by the many people who choose to walk along it. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the new wooden bridge built to cross the creek with paths that connect to the Greenbriar Commons Area in Parma Heights. Not only is it a wonderful way to glimpse the natural area, but it is also a practical way to have access to the commercial district

if you live in the area on the other side. Before this, if you wanted to walk over there, you needed to walk all the way to Stumph Rd., cross the bridge there, and make your way all the way back. Hooray to the person or persons who finally thought of this obvious solution.

As I walked along on my return journey, I thought of long ago when I would walk along this same path, sometimes with my father. I was much younger then, and so many memories come back to me from that time. The Metroparks have always been here since I've been alive, and they just keep getting better. I wonder if people in the Greater Cleveland area realize what a genius William Stinchcomb was, the man who envisioned the Emerald Necklace 100 years ago. Few places have such a planned system of park lands encircling the whole of their cities. Believe me, they are an awesome cure for cabin fever, especially after a winter like this one. I can't wait to walk there in the Spring, when a whole new set of sights will amaze me.



New bridge crossing the creek in Parma Heights. A welcome, practical route was created here, and you may meet some new friends.

I Believe

by Daniel Taddeo

A relationship is a two-way street.

After love, the most important word is we; the least important word is I.

All family members should express their concerns and explore options.

All God really wants from us is our attention.

All of our choices produce some kind of consequences.

Almost everyone has his or her version of what is fair. The question remains, "Who is right?"

Children benefit when the family eats together without TV.

Children growing up without a father are more likely to manifest undesirable behavior.

Children need good role models: girls need mothers and boys need fathers, if at all possible.

Children thrive when parents devote individual attention to each child, if possible.

Everyone who calls on the Lord shall be saved and blessed.

Family discussions are better when everybody faces one another.

Generally speaking, children should be limited to the cash allowance allotted them.

God's word says that our lives are to be lived in service to one another.

Having fun together as a family is a key part of building a strong family identity.

Individual disobedience can have extended, negative consequences.

Marriage and family are two of the greatest blessings one could possibly experience.

Money is the number one topic about which husbands and wives argue.

Often we use our God-given gifts to our own end, rather than share them.

Prayer is the key to heaven, but faith unlocks the door.

Problems in the world will only intensify and become worse without adherence to God's law.

The biggest secret to being a happy family is just trying.

The formula for unending joy is putting God first, others second, and one's self third.

The most highly charged time of day for a family is between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

The word of God provides the light we need to find our way in life.

We are blessed with serenity when we are content with just who we are—no more, no less.

We are meant to lean on each other.

When people gamble, the more they play, the more they lose.

When we focus on Christ, giving really feels good.

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Worship the God of the Bible and serve Him first.

Self-reflection is always a good exercise. What I believe is a work in progress, not limited to these statements and subject to change.

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Liverpool Lads performing at the UAW Hall on Feb. 8.

The "INVASION" Of Parma

by Wayne Mesker

The first British Invasion began on April 18, 1775 when General Gage ordered 700 British soldiers to Concord to destroy the colonists' weapons depot. That night, Paul Revere and William Dawes were sent from Boston to warn colonists. Revere reached Lexington about midnight and warned Sam Adams and John Hancock who were hiding out there. Eventually the British were defeated.

The second British Invasion was to happen nearly 184 years afterward when The Beatles arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport on Feb. 7, 1964. But the most successful British Invasion occurred recently right here in Parma when the Liverpool Lads (Beatles) and Jumpin' Jack Flash (Rolling Stones) performed at the latest Friends of Parma Theater event, in partnership with UAW 1005 and held at the UAW hall in Parma on February 8, 2014. Hundreds of "Friends" new and old were in attendance at this fun-filled Rockin' and Rollin' extravaganza.

Thanks to all who supported and



contributed to this event including the UAW, Ganley Chevrolet, Clear Channel, IATSE Local 160, all of the local businesses that allowed us to put up posters and flyers, and members of the media that helped spread the word. Also, thanks to the vendors who came out with an interesting variety of products ranging from vintage clothing, to art to purses made using old 45 RPM records. An excellent time was had by all and there will surely be more events like this in the months to come. So, keep your eyes and ears open and be sure to follow the Friends Of Parma Theater on Facebook. facebook.com/FriendsOfParmaTheater

Winter Weather Wreaks Havoc On Parma Homeowner

by Amandah Blackwell

Crash! On Tuesday, February 18th, my mom's patio awning couldn't take the ice and snow anymore and collapsed on the patio. What a mess! Ice, snow, dirt, awning pieces and wood cover the patio. It makes it difficult for Harriet, my mom's 16 year old Yorkie Poo, to go to the bathroom.

No one was hurt when the awning fell down, but the booming sound brought out the neighbors from their warm homes. Everyone wanted to see what happened. The next door neighbors offered to help shovel the ice and snow, but it was too slippery. It was nice of them to offer.

Hopefully, the temperatures will rise instead of fall and melt the snowy mess so the cleanup can begin. Of course, the insurance adjuster has to come out and assess the damage. Will this affect my mom's homeowner's insurance rate? It shouldn't because it was an act of God, right? It's not as if she went outside and knocked down


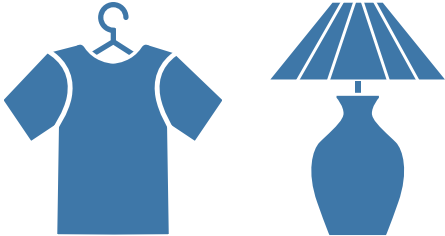


Patio awning had enough of the ice and snow.

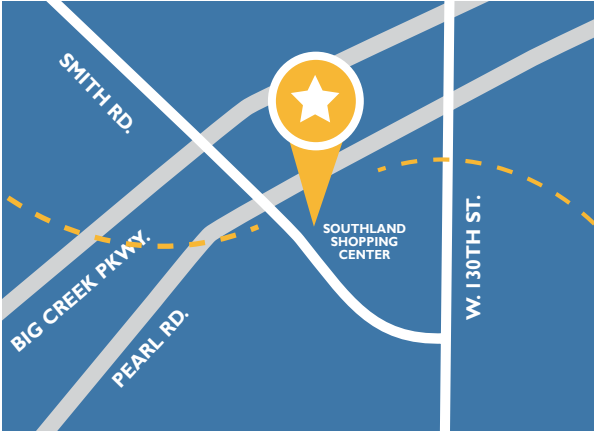
the awning.

Many people like winter because of sports such as skiing, ice skating and sledding. But it can destroy a car or home in less than 2.5 seconds. Winter has a dark and cold side. It's not as pretty as some may think.

For those that didn't winterize their homes before Jack Frost rolled into town, cover windows with plastic and shore up awnings with support beams. Most importantly, maintain the snow blower so that it works. After all, according to the groundhog, winter will stick around for six more weeks. Great.



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Perspective

In Health Care, We Are Truly All In This Together

by Lee Kamps

Since the exchanges opened last October, there has been much criticism over the benefits that are required for policies available through the exchanges. Much of that criticism deals with why single men or women over age 50 must pay for things like pregnancy and maternity benefits or that why should women have to pay for prostate exams. At the same time many people complain that while tobacco users are required to pay higher premiums, why isn't the same requirement applied to people who are obese?

This criticism ignores the basic principle of insurance that every rookie learns in Insurance 101. That is, the basic principle of insurance is the pooling and sharing of risk. That means that when the risk pool (people pooled together to share a particular risk) becomes larger, each person's individual share of that risk becomes smaller. A second principle of insurance is that when risk pools are as large as possible, the "law of large numbers" works. That is, when a large number of people are pooled together and sharing common risks, the incidences of that particular risk becomes more predictable

and the risk pool becomes more stable.

Take pregnancy and maternity benefits, for example. Pregnancy and maternity charges only affect a certain segment of the population; women of child bearing age. If as has been done with individual health insurance policies until the ACA became effective; normal pregnancy and maternity expenses were generally excluded and only covered if the person purchased a maternity rider. Of course, the only people who would purchase that rider were those most at risk of incurring pregnancy and maternity expenses; women of child bearing age. As a result, this pregnancy rider was often very expensive and unaffordable to most women. In more than 35 years of selling health insurance, I never sold an individual health insurance policy with a pregnancy rider.

But if that risk of pregnancy and maternity expenses had to be included in all health insurance policies; then the potential risk pool has been expanded to include everyone, not just women of child bearing age. Therefore, according to the basic principle of insurance, one's actual "cost" of covering pregnancy and maternity expenses is minimal.

In 1979, the United States Supreme Court ruled in a case that group insurance plans that did not cover normal pregnancy and maternity expenses the same as any other illnesses were engaging in discrimination. In effect, the Supreme Court ruled that companies that covered employees for health insurance now had to cover normal pregnancy and maternity benefits like any other illness.

I was a beneficiary of this decision since my employer, a major life and health insurance company, did not cover normal pregnancy and maternity expenses and my wife was pregnant with our youngest daughter. We had been paying monthly installments to the doctor to cover the expected cost of the birth. Suddenly in April 1979, we got health insurance that covered those pregnancy and maternity expenses and got a refund of all but \$100, which was our deductible. Our daughter was born in July 1979.

That Supreme Court decision hardly affected the cost of employer group health insurance. Although health insurance companies could charge higher premiums for women of child bearing age that were included

in employer group health insurance plans, the overall cost of group health insurance did not change much at all. But that ruling did not extend to individually purchased health insurance. So health insurance companies continued to exclude normal pregnancy and maternity benefits until this year when the ACA exchanges became effective.

But when it comes to health insurance; we are truly all in this together. Since what we (or our employers) pay for health insurance is dependent on the overall health of the population. This is something that has been largely ignored in the United States for decades. Somehow we have tolerated higher infant mortality levels, greater levels of obesity and a shorter life expectancy than many other developed countries. This not only increases the cost of health care for everyone, but also makes the United States less productive.

We are all stakeholders in health care. What happens to someone else does affect us individually. We need to remember that a healthy nation is a productive nation and a productive nation is a prosperous nation.

Five Things You May Not Know About Parma

by Stefan P. Stefaniuk

So, you think you know Parma? Like most residents, you probably know that Parma, with over 80,000 residents, is the seventh largest city in Ohio and Cleveland's largest suburb. You may even know that Parma is commonly considered to be the pierogi capital of Ohio and that plastic ornamental flamingos, especially those of the pink variety, seem to decorate many of Parma's neatly maintained front lawns. But here are five things you may not know about Parma, Ohio.

Parma was recently ranked the third safest city in the United States and safest city in Ohio. This ranking, published by NeighborhoodScout.com which features enterprise-grade data for every neighborhood and city in the country, includes cities with populations over 25,000 and is based on the total number of violent and property crimes per 1,000 residents according to the most recent FBI crime statistics. Crime data for Parma shows a crime index score of 90 out of 100, indicating Parma is safer than 90 percent of the cities in the United States, with an annual violent crime rate of 0.69 per 1,000 residents and a property crime rate of 5.57 per 1,000 residents. The total annual crime rate is 6.26 per 1,000 residents.

Parma is consistently rated one of the best suburban values in the Greater Cleveland area according to Cleveland Magazine's annual "Rating the Suburbs" feature. Other cities that made the list include Parma Heights, Lakewood, Brook Park, Berea, and North Olmsted.

Parma has taken the lead in becoming a more pet-friendly destination and distinguished itself as Ohio's



first "Guardian City" by updating language in its animal-related ordinances to recognize and promote a higher standard of responsibility, care, and respect for animal companions. In doing so, Parma became the 18th city to join the ranks of pet-friendly guardian communities. These ranks include the cities of San Francisco, Beverly Hills, and West Hollywood, California; Boulder, Colorado; St. Louis, Missouri; and Bloomington, Indiana.

Parma is shown to be the one of the top three most popular destinations for young adults between the ages of 25 and 34 according to a recent report titled "Mapping Human Capital: Where Northeast Ohio's Young and Middle-Age Adults are Migrating." Of the top three destinations, a closer look at the data reveals an increase of 3,148 young adults in Lakewood, 1,842 in downtown Cleveland, and 1,379 in Parma. "Right now, Parma is hot!" says the report's author, Richey Piiparinen, an urban planning researcher, co-editor of "Rust Belt Chic: A Cleveland Anthology," and senior writer at Belt Magazine.

Parma has seen home prices rise by seven percent over the past two years as people continue to buy more homes in Parma than any other suburb

in the Greater Cleveland area. With various ongoing improvements that include the exciting redevelopment of the soon-to-be pedestrian friendly Shoppes at Parma, two new large modern libraries, and revitalization of the city's increasingly trendy and very

walkable Polish Village and Ukrainian Village commercial districts, a thriving 21st century Parma continues to be a popular community of choice for those who value plentiful services, modern amenities, a competitive cost of living, and a high quality of life.

Cleveland Furniture Bank: Furnishing Hope Since 2006

Advertorial

Since opening its doors in 2006, The Cleveland Furniture Bank has been providing basic home furnishings to Northeast Ohioans in need, and as of the end of last year, has given away 72,975 pieces of furniture. In addition, their special Beds for Kids program, started in 2012, has provided 1,853 beds to children.

"We started the Cleveland Furniture Bank because we saw a need for individuals working so hard to get back on their feet to not have the added burden of buying furniture," said Tom Gaghan, executive director, Cleveland Furniture Bank. "Since our first year of operation we've only seen need for furnishings continue to grow and recently moved to a larger facility in Middleburg Heights to meet that need."

Now headquartered in the Southland Shopping Center, today over 3,000 individuals are referred to the organization each year by more than 300 agencies and organizations in the region. Each person referred gets to visit the Furniture Bank to select a gently-used couch, chair, dining room set, dresser, bed and lamps from its client-only showroom. Individuals with

children also get to select new beds for their children as part of the Beds for Kids program.

Along with the client-only showroom, the organization's headquarters also includes a donation intake, sorting and sanitation zone, and a 20,000-square-foot retail thrift store that sells new and gently used furniture, clothing, household goods and other items. All proceeds from thrift store sales make it possible for the Furniture Bank to continue providing to those in need.

"Furniture donations from community members and thrift store sales are what enable us to continue providing furniture to those in need. Without community support in these ways we wouldn't exist," Gaghan said. "No matter how small, every donation and thrift store sale really makes a difference."

Northeast Ohioans are encouraged to visit the Furniture Bank's thrift store at the Southland Shopping Center, or call (216) 459-2265 to donate furniture and schedule a pick-up. To learn more about donating furniture, thrift store hours and opportunities to get involved, visit www.clevelandfurniturebank.org.

Perspective

Ohio Division Of Unnatural Resources Shoots Self In Foot, Twice

by Lucy McKernan

The blood trail, some say, leads all the way to Governor Kasich's office. Kasich is at the top of the heap of Ohio's government agencies, not the least of which is the topic of this article: Ohio Division of Natural Resources (DNR), recently under fire for two blatant, wide-ranging scandals. The first involves Ohio Inspector General's office investigation into 16 to 18 Ohio Division of Wildlife (DOW) officers - and those who supervise them - who allegedly fudged timesheets while illegally killing deer. DNR oversees the DOW, the very agency paid to regulate hunting and issue poaching penalties.

Second, an Open Public Records request procured by the Sierra Club of Ohio resulted in one very damning memo, recently made public by The Columbus Dispatch. The memo elaborates, in unequivocal fashion, how the DNR was planning a public relations campaign to promote hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking." DNR is supposed to regulate the industry, not promote it. The memo explicitly outlines how to undermine environmentalists and other opponents' credibility by portraying them as extremists spewing

misinformation.

In fairness to the DNR powers-that-be, the memo was not put into action. But how, according to his spokesperson Rob Nichols, was Kasich not aware of the memo when his top officials were invited to a special 2012 meeting about the very subject of the memo: an official fracking communication plan?

Since these stories recently broke, Kasich has distanced himself from fracking, claiming he never endorsed it. On the evening of this writing, Kasich was delivering his "State of the State" speech, in which he touts honesty, accountability and public trust.

The state DNR "regulates" deer the same way it regulates all other natural resources such as natural gas, like a commodity. Deer constitute a multi-million dollar business for Ohio government, often garnering over half of DOW's annual revenue to the tune of tens of millions.

Every year in Ohio, hundreds of thousands of white-tailed deer are unnecessarily killed and suffer from hunting. Hunting as a means to control populations is a myth perpetuated by the DOW for profit. Just last week,

Cleveland Metroparks' own head of natural resources, Terry Robison, finally admitted publicly that Ohio hunting is to blame for large, "successful" populations.

As we watch these two state government scandals unfold with the usual repugnance, it can't be denied that the DNR's tentacles reach far from Columbus, the epicenter of Repugnicanism. DNR is mired in the same abuses as the good-ol'-boys-hunt-club (make that "good-oil-boys") it's supposed to regulate. The entire DOW board is comprised of hunters, every one of them. This is a conflict of interest. So is the DNR's involvement in fracking. Our state government is very corrupt.

What we can start with is our DOW, which needs sweeping reform such as that recommended by leading national wildlife biologists: broad-based funding, not hunter-funding; an eclectic board instead of one comprised of all hunters; innovative, humane deer "management" like proven birth control methods, adaptive/native landscaping; driver awareness and public safety programs; a willingness to innovate less invasive resource extraction processes and collaboration with environmental agencies; transparency; accountability through several oversight groups; and, last but not least, strict adherence to the spirit of The Public Trust Doctrine, which explicitly states that wildlife belongs to everyone.

Great Lakes Theater Tour Stops At East Park Retirement Community

by Kathryn Yates

The East Park Care Center in Brook Park hosted the Great Lakes Theater production of "Seven Ages" on Friday, February 14th. The event was free to the public and included a three-course meal complete with wine, coffee, and bakery, making it a mid-winter's night dream for the 112 people who attended. This was the fifth year the center has hosted the event.

The hour-long one-act play is a world premiere production billed Seven Ages - Seven tales by seven northeast Ohio playwrights. It is performed by four of the company's great talents: David Hansen (also one of the playwrights), Annie Peruseck, Emily Pucell, and Bobby Williams. The seven stages of man are presented in a storytelling frame around a campfire as the four seek refuge in the woods from a raging storm. The play draws from Act II, Scene VII of Shakespeare's As You Like It which begins with the famous monologue delivered by Jaques: "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players."

The show is part of the Great Lakes Theater's (GLT) community outreach tour to bring awareness of

At the end of the play there is a talkback session where the actors, along with Mr. Keo, collect audience feedback. Dates remaining for the 2014 Outreach Tour are: March 3rd (Ole Town Hall Theater, North Ridgeville), March 4th (Lakewood Public Library,



David Hansen plays the melancholy "Jaques" before "Touchstone" (Bobby Williams) trims his beard.

Lakewood), and March 5th (Quirk Cultural Center, Cuyahoga Falls). "They are all free," Keo reiterated. "We tend to say, depending on public venue, get there early."

GLT's next production will be "Deathtrap" - Broadway's longest running comic thriller - at the Hanna Theater from Feb. 21st - March 16th, 2014. Tickets start at \$15. - students sit in any seat for \$13.

The East Park Care Center was the closest location to Parma on the 2014 Outreach Tour schedule and the only one offering the bounteous free dinner. The dining room was bedecked for the Valentine affair and many attend-



Dining room of East Park filled with attendees.

ees were couples having a romantic evening shared by friends. After the meal, Dianna McBee (East Park facilitator for the event) drew names from attendees for the Chinese raffle baskets. Judy Sledz really "perked up" after winning a coffee maker then playfully back-handed hubby

Jim, a "Tin Can Sailor," for flashing a pic of his 19-year old sailor self. Other winners were Emma Dunlap and Don and Mary Shaffer.

The East Park retirement community is located at 6360 Elmdale Rd. in Brook Park and is planning on opening a memory unit soon.

DeGeeter Delivers 3rd STOC Address

continued from page 1

The merger between Parma Community General Hospital and University Hospitals. Tens of millions of dollars in upgrades are planned for what is now known as University Hospitals Parma Medical Center.

The opening of the 18,000 square-foot Watershed Stewardship Center at the Cleveland Metroparks' West Creek Reservation. The project was made possible when the city, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, and the West Creek Conservancy teamed with the Cleveland Metroparks.

DeGeeter also discussed ways City Hall is becoming more effective and efficient:

Merging administrative operations of Human Resources and the Civil Service Commission.

Pursuing joint purchasing opportunities with surrounding governments through the Cuyahoga County Shared Services Regional Cooperative.

Saving more than \$800,000 in just seven months by converting to automated citywide trash collection.

Recouping \$92,000 from state and federal sources for expenses incurred

during and in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

During the speech, DeGeeter also recognized individuals in the audience who not only illustrate how city programs are impacting Parma in a positive way, but show the strength of Parma's residents. "What really makes me optimistic about our future, and what truly makes Parma strong, are the people in our community," he said.

DeGeeter closed his speech with the story of Shirley Palotai, a U.S.M.C. Gunnery Sergeant, and her fifth-grade son Tyler Miranda, who attends St. Francis de Sales School. The fifth-grader had not seen his mother in some time because she had been deployed in Afghanistan for a year. Palotai surprised her son by showing up for a school assembly. "Not a dry eye could be found in the gym, including mine," said DeGeeter, who concluded his remarks to applause by honoring Palotai. "I want to thank you, Shirley, for your service, and for your sacrifice for your country. Your example shows why I have so much faith in our city, our state, and our country."

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Citizen Viewpoint

Parma Discrimination

by Denise Geschwender

I am Vice President of Animal Guardians for a Prosperous Parma. We are a group of concerned and compassionate individuals, coming together to urge the Parma Administration not to prohibit specific dog breeds. This practice is not ensuring public safety, but rather encouraging a false sense of security for Parma residents.

Through the gathering of facts and evidence to further our cause, I've come across multiple residents and even City Council members who are basing their decisions upon reports found online through the unreliable and debunked website of dogsbite.org.

Dogsbite.org's goal was not public education or anything that she claims it to be about now. It was about enacting breed specific legislation even though she has no credentials to propose legislation like that with any basis of expertise. And make no mistake, all of the expert organizations disagree with her idea on breed-specific legislation.

A partial list of organizations opposed to laws targeting specific breeds of dogs includes:

- American Dog Owners Assoc.
- American Humane
- American Kennel Club (AKC)
- American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)
- American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)
- American Working Dog Federation
- Association of Pet Dog Trainers
- Best Friends Animal Society
- Center for Disease Control
- Humane Society of the United

- States (HSUS)
- International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants
- International Association of Canine Professionals
- National Animal Control Assoc.
- National Animal Interest Alliance
- National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors
- National Canine Research Council
- No Kill Advocacy Center
- The White House

These groups represent the best of the best in the United States for dog trainers, rescues, shelters, animal behaviorists, government entities, veterinarians, and even animal control officers. All of them oppose breed specific legislation, in large part, because they have experience working with the actual dogs, read the science, and realize that aggression is not a breed-specific issue. The reality is that most dogs, regardless of breed, do not show aggressive behavior and yet, some dogs, of each breed, have.

All recommend dog ordinances that focus on the behaviors of the actual dogs and not on its body type. Not listening to the professional organizations, but rather, listening to an "organization" that has no expertise, is a disservice to those of us focused on the best interest of public safety.

We (Animal Guardians for a Prosperous Parma) and a multitude of other groups have been presenting credible facts at every City Council meeting since the beginning of November 2013.

Our most recent gathering before Council and Administration was at a

Parma Safety Committee Meeting on February 10th, whereas we had a Government Affairs Consultant from Best Friends Animal Society, Lori Kershner, come forth to disclose further facts as to why breed specific legislation is non-effective. Lori was instrumental in getting HB14 passed in Ohio to remove pit bulls from the vicious and dangerous breed list.

The Parma Administration is adamant on keeping pit bull type animals out of Parma. They refuse to provide any factual data to support their decision. Mayor DeGeeter has only addressed our group one time. He stated that in an April 2012 publication, the Administration stated their position and stand by that decision. What he is referring to is: "The ban has been successful," DeGeeter said. "In my recent memory I don't recall hearing about any pit bull attacks. I think that's due to our ordinance."

However, let me point out that during this meeting, Safety Director Baeppler disclosed a pit bull attack happening in Parma on February 7th. He did not disclose any of the details surrounding this incident.

This contradicts Mayor DeGeeter's previous statement. It also proves that

pit bulls are and always have been present in Parma, regardless of the ordinance. This further proves that the ordinance is unenforceable.

While we are not immune to recognizing injuries caused by dog bites, we want to educate the public that ALL breeds have a tendency to bite. To state that a pit bull type dog can cause a more serious injury than another breed has been scientifically proven untrue. Aggression is not hereditary. We have compassion for ANY person who has endured a dog bite, regardless of breed.

Data shows that Parma has had a "recorded" dog bite record of 875 from 2002-2013 that averages to approximately 7 dog bites per month. Only 3 of these dog bites were allegedly described as pit bull type dogs. If the pit bull ban is working in Parma and creating a safe environment for the residents, then why are our bite records so extremely high?

We invite individuals to visit our website: <http://parmaguardians.wix.com/agpp> and read the facts that we provide and can be substantiated by experts.

Thank you,
Denise Geschwender

Now That's Funny? by Julia Cindric



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Reflections

Are Pedestrians Second Class Citizens?

by Daniel P. McCarthy

I will admit, when it comes to pedestrian and walkability issues, I am completely biased. Being a strident advocate for walking, I believe having been struck by an auto while in a crosswalk and bouncing off of the windshield grants me that right. Walkability is a key word these days when the discussion centers on communities. When people are searching for a place to buy a home, walkability is a rating category in real estate listings, especially important to young professional couples - a group most sought after by cities. Our community is no exception. Parma has over 30,000 homes with a busy and vibrant real estate market as a result. Walkability should be relevant all year long, not just in the good weather. Suppose I were a prospective home buyer in Parma during the winter months and I decided to take a walk around the neighborhood, perhaps to have a look at the school my Realtor told me was only a few blocks away? One look at the two foot snowdrifts covering the sidewalks in my possibly new neighborhood would not only discourage me from venturing any further; I would most likely get in my car and go to another city, where better walking conditions exist.

One such city may very well be Parma Heights where they have always had the wisdom to employ a vehicle which clears the sidewalks in the entire city. As an avid year-round walker, I can't tell you how splendid that is. I easily give Parma Heights an A when it comes to winter walkability issues. What grade does Parma get? How about an F? This was not always the case. When I was growing up in Parma, for the most part, sidewalks were always cleared of snow and walkable. In fact, Parma has an ordi-



Here's an elderly Parma resident doing her duty and complying with ordinance 660.05. If someone like her can see to it, what is wrong with all the younger, able-bodied residents who won't? Why isn't the city enforcing our wise law that requires everyone to clear their sidewalks within 12 hours of a snow event?

nance, 660.05 Duty To Keep Sidewalks In Repair And Clean, which states "No owner or occupant of lots or lands abutting any sidewalk, curb or gutter shall fail to keep the sidewalks, curbs and gutters in repair and free from snow, ice or any nuisance." This has been a law in Parma since before I was born, and was followed religiously, as I remember. What happened?

There was a court decision years ago involving an insurance company in a personal injury case where it was decided that the insurance company was not responsible for covering the injuries in question that had occurred on an icy sidewalk. The Court made it clear that this did not relieve citizens from obeying ordinances requiring them to clear their sidewalks in any given city. Apparently, public perception differed and I noticed that as

the years went by, less and less people bothered to shovel the snow from the sidewalks in front of their property. More significantly, the City of Parma seemed to lose interest in enforcing the law requiring everyone, residents and businesses, from doing their duty within 12 hours of a snow event. The result has been the snowbound, dan-

gerous, and impassible sidewalks of Parma that we pedestrians experience every winter. There are those who faithfully comply with the law and clear their walks, but so many don't that it has a tremendous impact on the ability to safely walk in most neighborhoods in Parma during the winter months. This causes people of all ages to engage in an even more dangerous activity - walking in the street.

Honestly, I would shovel my sidewalk in front of my home whether there was a law or not. I view this as something we all should do as part of being good citizens. The city has a program for seniors and disabled people where they will clear their walks for them. How about the rest of the thousands of property owners in Parma? I have included a photo of an elderly woman that I noticed was shoveling her sidewalk after one of our tremendous snowfalls recently - she must be at least 80 years old. (I would have assisted her, but you will notice that she had completed the task). If an elderly woman like this can comply with the law then what is wrong with every other able-bodied person? What good is a law if not enforced? What kind of message does that send to residents and future residents? Are pedestrians second class citizens?



Commercial property at Snow Rd. and Chevrolet Blvd. Not only is the sidewalk buried, but they have seen fit to plow the snow from their parking lot where it totally obstructs the sidewalk. I had witnessed dozens of people, including children, having no choice but to walk in the street at this point.

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