“Every reform movement has a lunatic fringe” - Theodore Roosevelt

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Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter Delivers Third State Of The City Address

by Michael Calp

In his 3rd 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 by applause, also reflected a family atmosphere. Five year old Jack DeGeeter, the mayor's son, introduced 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 natural corner stone for a "Town Center" concept, incorporating all that is around it - City Hall, the new public library, the hospital, Stearns' Home, 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 Powerview Blvd. and the $15.2 million dollar renovation of the Parma-Snow Branch.

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 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. Stefanik continued on page 2
The President’s Corner

by Sean Brennan, Parma City Council President

This month I will write about a series of columns that began 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 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 role in protecting the West Creek Preserve, which is now the Cleveland Metroparks West Creek Reservation.

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 third annual Parma Peanut Butter Drive.

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Your nationally recognized care, close to home.

Introducing University Hospitals Parma Medical Center.

University Hospitals is proud to welcome Parma Medical Center into our exceptional care community. With nationally recognized physicians and nurses, plus immediate access to UH’s specialty institutes and prompt 24-hour emergency care, you can rest assured knowing there’s advanced care, right around the corner. Introducing your great care, made even greater. Introducing University Hospitals Parma Medical Center.

For more information about this exciting advancement, visit ParmaHospital.org.
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.

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-out the day, excited employees received their new UH 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.”
Asset Corner #51

by Gene Lovassy

SHOW KIDS YOU CARE: DISCUSS THEIR DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES. March’s Asset Cat-
egory: 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, but they’re even more crucial when young people encounter the tough times in life.

Social Competency Assets Include:

#32 Planning & Decision Mak-
ing - Young person knows how to plan ahead & make choices. (29%*)
#33 Interpersonal Competence – Young person has empathy, sensitivity & friendship skills. (65%*)
#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. 41% have experienced an average of 1.2 of these assets in their lives.)

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, 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 to say or not to say. Talk with your child about what was easy and was difficult. Focus not only on how to resist, but also on what to say “yes” to.

In your neighborhood and com-
munity: 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.parma.cityschools.org.

A Natural Drugless Approach To Health

Polish Chiropractor

Dr. Adam D. Wysocki
5348 Pearl Rd. • Parma, Ohio 44129
216-308-2595
Palmer College Grad • Former Parma School Teacher
• 35 Years Experience

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Parma Education

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 under-

erved.

Our Nutrition Services Depart-
ment, 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 registra-
tion 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 Shopspe 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 mile-

stone.

Share your asset building ideas and/or thoughts about the develop-
mental asset concept by visiting the “asset corner” facebook page. I’m looking forward to hearing from you.

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

These high schools are gaining real-world experience creating and implementing marketing and incentive programs aimed at improving aware-
ness of the importance of a healthy breakfast, and increasing the number of students who eat breakfast. Their goal is to increase the number of stu-
dents 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 men-
tally 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

Chalasinski Insurance Group

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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. The 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.
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 Amanda 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 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.
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 women would 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. As if 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 have 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 “actuarial 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 sickness, would be 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 healthy.

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 individuals who 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 need 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 Cleveland’s largest suburb. You may even know that Parma is commonly considered to be the pierogi capital of Cleveland’s largest suburb. You may even know that Parma is commonly considered to be the pierogi capital of Cleveland’s largest suburb. You may even know that Parma is commonly considered to be the pierogi capital of Cleveland’s largest suburb.

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 9 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 ranked 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 guarded 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 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 3,139 in Parma. “Right now, Parma is hot!” says the report’s author, Richy Piparinen, 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 Streetscape at Parma North, 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

Adverntorial

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 1,835 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 show room, 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, please visit the website or call the home and opportunities to get involved, visit www.clevelandfurniturebank.org.
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 Hospi- tal 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 ef- ficient.

Merging administrative opera- tions of Human Resources and the Civil Service Commission.

Pursuing joint purchasing oppor- tunities with surrounding governments through the Cleveland Metroparks’ County Shared Services Regional Cooperative.

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

Recovering $92,000 from state and federal sources for expenses incurred during and in the afternoon of Hurri- cane Sandy.

During the speech, DeGeeter also recognized individuals in the audi- ence 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 Palota, 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. Palota sur- prised 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 Palota.

“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.”

Ohio Division Of Unnatural Resources Shoots Self In Foot, Twice

by Lucy McKeen

The blood trail, some say, leads all the way to Governor Kasich’s office. Kasich is at the top of the heap of the 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 supervised them - allegedly fudged timesheets while ille- gally 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 elabo- rates, in unequivocal fashion, how the Columbus 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 supervised them - allegedly fudged timesheets while ille- gally killing deer. DNR oversees the DOW, the very agency paid to regulate hunting and issue poaching penalties.

What we can start with is our DOW, which needs sweeping reform such as: the DNR is mired in the same blame as the good-ol’-boys-hunt-club (make that “good-sil-boys”) it’s sup- posed to regulate. The entire DOW board is comprised of hunters, every one of them. This is a conflict of inter- est. The DNR’s involvement in fracking. Our state government is very corrupt.

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, mak- ing 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 play- wrights. It is performed by four of the company’s great talents: David Hansen (also one of the playwrights), Annie Perusek, Emily Pacelli, and Bobby Williams. The seven stages of man are presented in a storytelling frame around a campfire as the four seek ref- uge 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 its theater productions at the Hanna and Ohio theaters. “Every year we do four surround shows and put them on for free,” said Tim Keo, a 10-year GLT actor and teacher. “There is a season of five shows – we always do A Christ- mas Carol, two Shakespeare, and two classic plays. We are Cleveland’s classic company.”

Join the Discussion at: www.parmaobserver.com

Great Lakes Theater Tour Stops At East Park Retirement Community

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 (Oak Park Town Hall Theater, North Ridgeville), March 4th (Lakewood Public Library).

Dining room of East Park filled with attendees.

by Dianna McBee

The East Park Care Center was the closest location to Parma on the 2014 Outreach Tour schedule and the only one offering the house its free dine- rier. The dining room was bedecked for the Valentine affair and many attend- ees were couples having a romantic evening shared by friends. After the meal, Dianna McBee (East Park facilitator for the event) drew names from attend- ees for the Chinese raffle baskets. Judy Sledz really “popped up” after winning a coffee maker then play- fully 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 6650 Elmdale Rd. in Brook Park and is planning on opening a memory unit soon.

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Join the Discussion at: www.parmaobserver.com
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 enact breed specific 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 even though she has no credentials to provide and can be substantiated by her website: http://parmaguardians.wix.com/agpp and read the facts that we have gathered regarding this incident.

He did not disclose any of the details surrounding this incident. Baeppler disclosed a pit bull attack during this meeting, Safety Director DeGeeter said. “In my recent memory I don’t recall hearing about any pit bull attacks. I think that’s due to our ordinance.”

What he is referring to is: “The ban has been successful,” DeGeeter said. “In 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 torecognizing 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
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 automobile while in a crosswalk and bouncing off 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 this was when it comes to winter walkability issues. What grade does Parma Heights receive? How about an F? This was not the case. When I was growing up in Parma during the winter months, I easily give Parma Heights an A when it comes to winter walkability. I remember winters when we would have to shovel the snow from the sidewalks in front of our 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, dangerous, 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?

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?

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