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Mayor Cervenik:

Euclid poised for a Renaissance

By John Sheridan

Part One of Observer Reporter John Sheridan's exclusive interview

Despite the problems posed by the current economic climate, the City of Euclid is on the verge of a significant "renaissance," believes Mayor Bill Cervenik, who outlined his accomplishments and concerns in his "State of the City" message in early February. However, much work remains to be done and various hurdles must be overcome, he asserted in a recent question-and-answer dialog with the Euclid Observer.

Mayor Cervenik, whose annual message kicked off the final year of his second term in office, says that he plans to run for a third four-year term this fall—in order to continue overseeing some important economic develop-

ment projects.

One of his top priorities is the long-range lakefront development plan, which envisions a public marina and boardwalk stretching for three-fourths of a mile along the Euclid shoreline. In a recent conversation, Mayor Cervenik told the Observer that he is "disappointed" that the project hasn't progressed at a faster pace. "However, we have made a couple of giant steps forward," he notes. "The city has purchased three lots to the east of the Water's Edge apartments. And the K&D development firm, which owns land along the lakefront apartments, intends to donate permanent easement rights to the city for the purpose of building a breakwall and other improvements."

Regarding another major initiative, the mayor says he is "extremely proud"



Euclid Mayor Bill Cervenik

of the progress to date on the redevelopment of Downtown Euclid, "especially since we have accomplished it in one of the worst economic times since World War II." The city has been able to attract some \$16 million in investments, he points out, most of it by the private sector.

The mayor also expressed optimism about the potential economic impact of the new Bluestone Business Park on the former Chase Brass/PMX industrial site. "The properties there will receive 100% real estate tax abatement for 15 years on both the land and buildings," he notes. The site has railroad access on both the north and south sides.

The 20 acres on the eastern portion of the property could accommodate a sizeable industrial firm that requires railroad access. "Our goal is to create at least 1,000 jobs on that 82-acre site," asserts Mayor Cervenik, who became City Council president in 1997 and was elected mayor six years later. In recognition of his economic development initiatives, the Euclid Chamber of Commerce named him the city's "Outstanding Business Person of the Year" in 2006.

In the following Q & A exchange with the Observer, Mayor Cervenik touches on these and other issues of significance to the city's future.

Q. Considering recent developments—including the Downtown Euclid renovations and progress on the lakefront boardwalk/marina proposal--do you believe the City of Euclid is about to experience a significant turnaround, both economically and image-wise?

A. Yes. Over 15 million dollars of new investments and reinvestment, coupled with the progress on lakefront development should, as the economy and credit

markets open up, provide some nice additions to Downtown Euclid. Lakeshore Boulevard is also scheduled to be repaved from border to border in 2011.

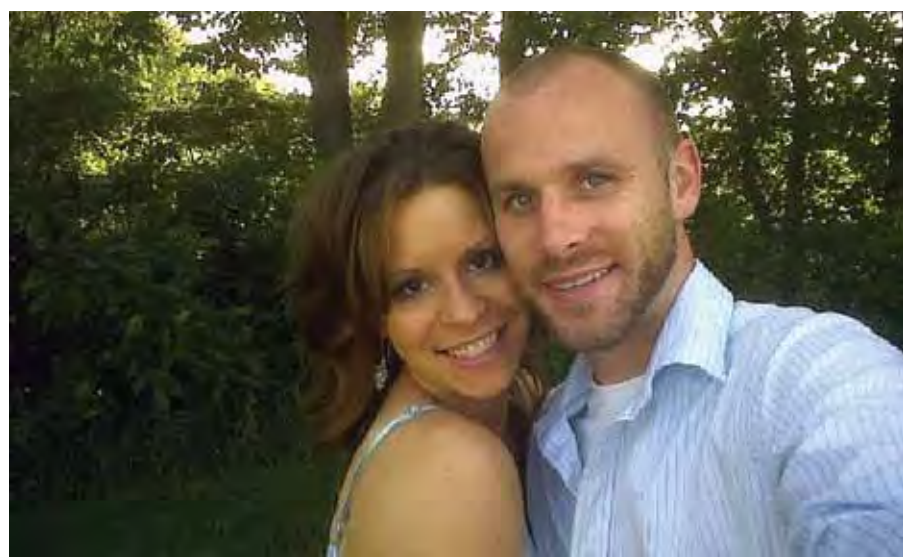
Q. Some people seem to believe that the waterfront development plan could spark an economic renaissance that would affect not only the lakefront area, but the future of the city as a whole. Would you agree?

A. The Lakefront Development Plan, which is a long-term endeavor, will certainly re-brand and reshape all facets of Euclid's future. If we stick to the blueprint, we expect the area to become a regional draw; after all, there are not many cities that will be able to say they have almost three quarters of a mile of access to Lake Erie, along with some pretty nice amenities such as the expanded fishing pier. We expect continued economic growth in Downtown Euclid—as well as new, upscale housing along the lakefront and elsewhere to the north of Lakeshore Blvd. And, with the planned trails that could virtually connect the whole city to the lakefront, exciting times are in store for all.

Q. From a financing standpoint, what is still needed to turn the waterfront plan into a reality?

A. Financing is the toughest element of any project. The city's capital money and state grants are being used for land acquisition at this time. A tax increment financing district (TIF) is in place now, but it will need a significant increase in value, or new development, to generate the revenues hoped for. We have the opportunity to create additional TIF zones, but will hold off until actual private development is in the works, so that we can capture the maximum rev-

Euclid's Lucky Lotto winner



Fred Dworning and his lovely fiancé.

by Liz Copic

Winning the Lottery... Sure we've all daydreamed about it before, paying off debt, a new house, taking care of loved ones, and something a little extravagant after that. Then we remember that the odds of winning are usually equated to being struck by lightning, which is usually when the daydream ends. Although my dream has ended, I'm reminded that lightning does strike, and people do actually win the lottery, and sometimes that lucky winner is someone that you know, like my friend Fred Dworning.

Like most news these days, I heard it from Facebook first. After seeing many congratulatory posts in my timeline, curiosity led me to Freddy's wall to see why so many of my friends were congratulating him. I was overcome with joy to learn that he won a \$500,000 grand prize from a Lotto scratch-off

ticket. It might not be the super-duper multimillion mega jackpot, and true taxes will take their toll, but he still won the lottery.

So what's he going to do now? For starters he's wisely decided to keep his job, and he's not going to go crazy spending. Other than that, he's going to stick to the basic daydream of paying off debt, a little work on the house, and the little something extravagant is going to be an engagement ring for his lovely fiancé.

Over ten years ago he was the little brother of a friend I was in Flag Corps with, a friend that I occasionally drove home from high school, and he always supported the Rainbows events that my friends and I participated in. Today I'm happy to report that my good old friend from high school is going to live happily ever after.

Continued on page 9



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Euclid Observer

Message From The Publisher

by John Copic

It's an honor to welcome you back to the Euclid Observer 2011. For those of you that are seeing the paper for the first time, you are holding in your hands a newspaper entirely written by your community--- THIS MEANS YOU! If you have a story you want to tell, issues that you think need to be pointed out, a person you would love to interview, recipes you want to share, or you'd like to cover sports or entertainment at our schools and in our neighborhood, YOU ARE THE REPORTER. All you do is sign onto www.euclidobserver.com, hit Member Center in the menu on the left, sign up, and a window opens up where you can type your story, and add your pictures. If you are not hooked up to the Internet, deliver your stories to The Collinwood/Euclid Observer office, at 650 East 185th Street, Cleveland, 44119. Don't worry about whether your articles are perfectly written, the Observer has a volunteer staff making sure that there are no grammar or spelling errors. The mission of the Observer is to amplify the good news of our city. If it's not good news, or you have issues that you feel need to be addressed, our policy is that you do your homework when explaining what they are so everyone fully understands, and

that you propose the way you would do it better, in order to give all of our readers something to think about, and something to respond to. If you like what you're reading, or you hate it, write in and have your say, we have a Forum page waiting for you. Communication builds community. The more we talk to each other, the healthier our neighborhood will be. Give it a try today! It's pretty cool to see your name in print, and have everyone else talking about your ideas. You can make a difference, and you can make it now. Write for the Euclid Observer today! And send pictures!

We would like to thank all of our advertisers, contributors, and readers from 2010, and are looking forward to the paper being bigger and stronger than ever. The paper will come out the first week of every month for the rest of the year.

If you have any trouble submitting them, feel free to contact us at (216) 531-6790 or email us at collinwoodpublishing@gmail.com. Thanks for reading! Thanks for writing! Thanks for advertising! Congratulations on living in/being in/ reading about Euclid. It's a great place to be.

PPG donates \$1,500 to the Friends of Henn

By: KC McCrory

The PPG Industries Foundation donated \$1,500 to the Friends of the Henn Mansion in 2010, helping to cover maintenance and repair costs for the historical Albert W. Henn Mansion. The corporate foundation has made annual grants to support renovation and operation of the property since 2001.

“The Friends are very grateful to have established a relationship with PPG and to receive the foundation’s ongoing support,” said Jean Reilly, president of the Friends of the Henn Mansion board of directors. “We still have some major renovations to accomplish, in addition to keeping up with maintenance of the leaded glass windows, ornate decorative architecture and other beautiful features that make this old house so special, so we truly appreciate this funding.”

The Friends of the Henn Mansion’s mission is to preserve, maintain and ensure the continued viability of the

Albert W. Henn Mansion as a historic resource for the citizens and businesses of Euclid and the surrounding communities. The group generates funding in part by renting the property to companies and community groups for events such as church gatherings, children’s programs, historical lectures and business meetings.

“PPG is strongly committed to supporting the communities where its employees work and live,” said Ralph Stasiak, site manager at the company’s Euclid coatings pretreatment plant. “Employees at PPG Euclid have held offsite meetings and training sessions at the facility through the years, and we are proud to help support the Friends in their efforts to preserve this unique community treasure.”

Established in 1951, the PPG Industries Foundation demonstrates the values of PPG Industries by enhancing the quality of life in communities where the company has a presence. Interests of the foundation, in order of priority, are education, human services, culture and arts, and civic and community affairs. PPG also supports charitable causes by encouraging employee volunteerism and executives’ involvement with non-profit organizations.

ABOUT FRIENDS OF THE HENN MANSION

Friends of the Henn Mansion, Inc., formed in 1996, made it their goal to restore and preserve the Albert W. Henn Mansion, located at 23131 Lake Shore Blvd. in Euclid, Ohio’s Sims Park, for future generations. The mansion is offered for short-term cultural, educational, business and private event rental. Built in 1923, the brick English Tudor/Manor-style home is located in a 30-acre park and bird sanctuary on the shores of Lake Erie and features 9,200 square feet and 23 rooms. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

ABOUT PPG

PPG Industries’ vision is to continue to be the world’s leading coatings and specialty products company. Founded in 1883, the company serves customers in industrial, transportation, consumer products, and construction markets and aftermarkets. With headquarters in Pittsburgh, PPG operates in more than 60 countries around the globe. Sales in 2010 were \$13.4 billion. PPG shares are traded on the NYSE (symbol: PPG). www.ppg.com.

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Euclid Observer

American Red Cross braces for blood shortage

Officials cite harsh winter weather as culprit for lowest supply in a decade

By Jennifer Kelsey

Cleveland, OH – Severe winter weather throughout much of the eastern half of the United States in recent weeks has caused the cancellation of more than 14,000 blood and platelet donations through the American Red Cross. In Ohio alone, 25 blood drives have been canceled and weather has caused low donor turn out at many drives that are being held. The severity of the impact has stressed even the Red Cross’ robust national inventory management system, which can move blood products to where they’re needed most, such as when severe weather hits.

“We have not seen the January supply drop this dramatically in a decade and we need to reverse this now,” said Christy Chapman, Communications Manager for the Northern Ohio Blood Services Region. “You don’t wait to refuel once you’ve run out of gas. Donating blood or platelets now helps ensure immediate and future patient needs will be met.”

The Red Cross urges all eligible donors in unaffected areas to make an appointment to give blood or platelets in the coming days, and those in affected areas to donate as soon as travel is deemed safe, by calling 1-800-RED

CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or by visiting redcrossblood.org. Donations will help replenish the Red Cross blood supply to ensure that blood products are readily available for patients with serious medical needs.

The need for blood is constant. Every two seconds a patient in the United States needs a blood transfusion. Blood is perishable and has no substitute. Red blood cells have a shelf life of only 42 days and platelets just 5 days – they must be replenished constantly.

Blood and platelets can be used for trauma victims – those who suffered due to accidents and burns – heart

All blood types are needed, especially type O negative, to ensure a reliable supply for patients. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental permission in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements. Please bring your Red Cross blood donor card or other form of positive ID when you come to donate.

About the American Red Cross
Governed by volunteers and supported by giving individuals and



“The need for blood is constant.
Every two seconds a patient
in the United States needs
a blood transfusion.”

surgery patients, organ transplant recipients, premature babies and for patients receiving treatment for leukemia, cancer or other diseases, such as sickle cell disease.

communities, the American Red Cross is the single largest supplier of blood products to hospitals throughout the United States. While local hospital needs are always met first, the Red

Cross also helps ensure no patient goes without blood no matter where or when they need it. In addition to providing nearly half of the nation’s blood supply, the Red Cross provides relief to victims of disaster, trains millions in lifesaving skills, serves as a communication link between U.S. military members and their families, and assists victims of international disasters or conflicts.

For more information on American Red Cross activities in your area, please visit www.redcross-cleveland.org

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City News

Eastlawn residents get answers on sewer, water line projects

By John Sheridan

Homeowners in the Eastlawn neighborhood turned out in force for a Jan. 7 meeting with city officials to review plans for a \$2.57 million infrastructure project—and the associated disruptions—affecting residents of five streets connecting Newton Ave. and South Lake Shore Blvd. from East 190th to East 195th Street.

The work, which began on January 3, will disrupt local traffic until the end of summer. Already, construction crews and their heavy equipment have caused several of the streets to be restricted to “local traffic only” patterns for periods of time. Also, some residents—including those on South Lake Shore—have had to cope with daytime water outages while crews worked on water-line connections.

A bulletin distributed by the Eastlawn Property Owners Assn. alerted residents to the special meeting held at Our Lady of the Lake church. And they came armed with plenty of questions—most of which were fielded by Euclid Public Service Director Randy Smith.

After the meeting, many of the residents seemed generally satisfied with the information exchange, despite their apprehensions about the nuisances they’ll be dealing with in the months ahead. They were grateful that the service director and Mayor Bill Cervenik took the time to address their concerns. Also in attendance were City Council president Kirsten Holzheimer-Gail and Ward 4 councilwoman Mary Jo Minarik.

In his remarks near the end of the evening, Mayor Cervenik commended the attendees. “I can tell by the turnout tonight,” he said, “that Eastlawn is a pretty vibrant community neighborhood.”

During the course of the evening, the concerns that were addressed included:

The construction timetable: New sewers, water lines, and repaving work on East 190th and East 191st is expected to be completed in July, while a September completion date is anticipated for the work on East 193rd and East 194th Streets. Director Smith distributed copies of a letter to residents that stated:

“Be advised that during pavement and driveway reconstruction, your access will be restricted and you will need to make parking arrangements for a short time frame. ... You can anticipate a three-week period of limited access.”

The letter also noted that “trees that are in conflict with sewer and water line connections on the private property side will need to be removed. If a property owner desires to have additional trees removed that could result in the future heaving of driveway aprons and sidewalks, the contractor will do so without any cost to the homeowner. The property owner will be required to provide written permission.”

Disruption of activities: Residents were told to keep the construction timetable in mind when planning outdoor home-improvement projects. For example, since the activity may generate clouds of dust, it would probably be unwise to schedule a house-painting project while the work is under way.

Damage to driveways caused by the heavy equipment: In case of a legal dispute, the issues could include pre-existing conditions such as cracks in the driveway that the homeowner had forgotten about. “The condition of driveways will be well-documented prior to the work being done,” Smith pointed out.

Water outages: Residents were told that outages would be limited to “no more than 3-4 hours or so.” However, one day about a week later, the water to some homes on South Lake Shore was shut off from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Vandalism to contractors equipment: One resident, who complained about “unruly” juveniles in her neighborhood, suggested that it may be necessary to have policemen keep an eye on the equipment. In reply, Director Smith said: “That is really the contractor’s responsibility – not the city’s.”

Property tax consequences: Smith stated that the improvement project would not result in increased property taxes, “but cars will be ticketed for overnight parking.”

Possible damage to Newton Ave., which was repaved not long ago. Residents were told that the con-

dition of that street would be monitored.

Tree planting on tree lawns once the repaving work is completed. “That will depend on whether the homeowner wants a tree,” Smith explained. He noted that property owners will be given several options regarding the species of tree to be planted.

As for existing trees, any that are in the path of the sewer work will be “automatically” removed. Other trees between the sidewalk and the house may also be affected. The excavation work could damage tree roots and cause trees to die a year or more in the future. If the property owner requests it, the city will have such trees removed at no cost during the course of the construction project. “However,” Smith emphasized, “once the contractor responsible for tree removal is finished with his work, he will not come back.”

In his closing comments, Mayor Cervenik told the Eastlawn group: “It’s going to be a little tough at times, [but] we will do all we can to minimize the disturbance.

“When all the work is done, Eastlawn should hold a big barbeque to celebrate. I’ll buy the hot dogs – and cook them, too.”

For more information on various construction projects throughout the city please visit www.cityofeuclid.com





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City News

Memorial Park Community Garden Opening Spring 2011

By Loraine Zupancic

The newest edition to Memorial Park will be opening this spring ... Memorial Park Community Garden! (MPCG)Euclid's newest community garden is approximately 1/3 of an acre; located on Milton Ave. off E 222nd ST. behind the jail, across from the volleyball courts.

As you may have noticed last year, some Euclid gardeners have been working the plot in anticipation of the 2011 spring opening; a group of 10 residents have prepared the drive, delivery, harvest & compost areas and tilled approximately one third of the garden. The city has generously donated the use of the land and is supplying the water

A grant from the Cuyahoga County Extension Service was used by the leadership team with assistance from the building maintenance department to install the water supply lines. The garden, which will be completed in three phases, will contain about 60 beds ranging in size from 3' x 4' to 10' x 20'.

The leadership teams' goal is "HELPING TO BUILD A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY" by giving Euclid residents an opportunity to grow their own fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs and

Bflowers; that may not be available to them otherwise and the fellowship that comes in a community garden setting. Please ... "COME HELP US GROW", all levels of gardening experience is welcome.

MPCG is a part of Ohio State University's County Extension Service "URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM" and the Cuyahoga County Health Department's "CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES" Initiative.

MPCG spring registration dates are April 9, 2011 & May 7, 2010 from 10:00AM to 2:00PM at the garden site. A fee of \$10.00 is required at registration for residents to reserve a garden bed for the 2011 growing season. For more information or to reserve a bed contact:

Loraine Zupancic – Garden Leader 216 289-8165/216 374-7499 or lzupancic@cityofeuclid.com

Laura Elersich – Assistant Garden Leader 440 954-2340 or arual74@hotmail.com

MPCG next scheduled meetings are: Saturday March 19, 2001 12:30PM - 2:30PM at Euclid Public Library & Tuesday April 5, 2011 7:00PM - 9:00PM at Euclid Public Library

Genny returns for 100th Birthday

By John Sheridan

As she promised last summer at a farewell party prior to her move to Pennsylvania, Genny Flaisman—resplendent in a sparkling tiara—returned to Ohio for a January party in honor of her 100th birthday.

More than 60 of her friends from the Euclid YMCA turned out to toast Genny at a luncheon, organized by Clare Vertocnik and Faye Roth, at Flavors on the Avenue in Wickliffe.

Genny was in her mid-80s when she began participating in the YMCA's aquatics classes, which were conducted for many years by Clare and Faye. (Clare, who is no longer on the YMCA staff, also organized a series of monthly luncheon events for the Y's seniors. Although not affiliated with the Y, she plans to keep the "lunch bunch" together and has two more get-togethers scheduled, including a Feb. 3 gathering at the Euclid Culinary Bistro at

the Shore Cultural Center.)

Genny, who is now living with her son Jack in the Sugar Grove, Pa., area, says she hopes to resume her aquatics exercise activities once she is finally settled into her new home.

***About The Author* John Sheriden Is A Retired Journalist. From 1963 To 1972, Sheridan Wrote For And Edited The Euclid News-Journal, Predecessor To The Sun-Journal. From 1972 To 2000, Sheridan Was A Writer And Editor For Industry Week Magazine. Mr. Sheridan Also Worked For The Plain Dealer As A Part-Time Sportswriter, Covering High School Sports. John Sheridan Has Lived In Euclid For Almost His Entire Life And Is A Graduate Of St. Joseph High School And John Carroll University.**



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Community

CityMusic Cleveland to present critically acclaimed violinist Dylana Jenson

By Katherine Bulava

CityMusic Cleveland, which has been wowing audiences and breaking down barriers to the widespread enjoyment of classical music through its free concert series performed in local venues for seven years, will present critically acclaimed but reclusive violinist Dylana Jenson in their March 16 – 20, 2011 concert series.

The performances will take place at the Fairmount Presbyterian Church

in Cleveland Heights; the Elyria First United Methodist Church and Cleveland’s St. Ignatius of Antioch Church and Shrine of St. Stanislaus Church.

Dylana Jenson was the first woman and, at 17, the youngest to win the Silver Medal at the Tchaikovsky Competition, thereby breaking gender barriers on the international classical music scene. She has enamored audiences at most major US venues, including Carnegie Hall, as well as in Europe, Australia, Japan and Latin America. Jenson’s is a story of struggle against prejudice and triumph

through the beauty of music. When she chose to marry at 21, her wealthy benefactor demanded his instrument back believing a married woman could not be serious about her art.

After a long struggle to reclaim her voice, Jenson has re-emerged on the classical music scene at 49, capturing all the sadness and longing of her struggle in the magnificence of her music.

Joel Smirnoff, who received a life time achievement award at this year’s Grammy’s, will conduct the series. Smirnoff, who is a recurring CityMusic Cleveland conductor, has appeared nationally and internationally as a conductor, making his American debut with the San Francisco Symphony and frequently guest conducting for the New World Symphony in Miami and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra. A former Chair of The Juilliard School’s violin department, Smirnoff has been a member of the Juilliard String Quartet since 1986 and its leader since 1997. In addition to conducting, Smirnoff is the President of the Cleveland Institute of Music, an accomplished violinist and a jazz musician. Keeping its commitment to exposing new and wide audiences to the finest quality music,

CityMusic is proud to add the voice of Jenson’s violin, with Smirnoff conducting, to its upcoming performance series



The reclusive Dylana Jenson
photo courtesy of CityMusic

Euclid Senior Programs receive donations

By Fred Siegel

Euclid seniors have been the benefactors of two recent rather substantial donations.

Credit Union donated a Nintendo Wii console and controllers to the Euclid Senior program, which is housed at the Lakefront Community Center. AARP also donated \$668 to purchase a new television for the centers’ dining room.

“This is great facility, but they need more to do,” said credit union President Mike Losneck.

According to Senior Program Manager Kathy Will, the Wii has already become one of the more popular programs offered by the center.

“It’s been a cold and snowy winter, so now is a great time to get the seniors moving,” said Will. “We’re going to start a Wii bowling league right away.”

Plans are also in the works to raise funds for a new high definition television to use with the Wii. Eaton Family Credit Union will have a hand in that fundraiser as well.

For more information on Euclid Senior Programs, please call Judy at (216) 289-2700 Ext. #3975

Ss. Robert & William Catholic Parish Celebrates the Lenten Fish Fry

By Ellen Ivory

Ss. Robert & William Catholic Parish is hosting a Lenten Fish Fry Season on the following dates: March 11, 18, 25 April 1, 8 & 15, 2011.

Our doors open at 4:45pm and we will be serving until 7:00PM.

“To Go” meals are also available.

Dinners include: Alaskan Pollock White Fish or Breaded Shrimp, waffle fries or mac n’ cheese & coleslaw, cookies & beverage.

Prices are \$10 for Adults and \$5 for Children under 12. Ala Carte items are also available.

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Community

Fuming in Euclid:

An editorial from a life long resident

By Alice Turner

DISCLAIMER Any editorial printed on the pages of any Observer publication is the sole opinion of the author .

Remember last summer when the government HAD to pass an emergency stimulus for the teachers? (\$361m) I just found an article in the N.H. Sept. 21 that says it “was not really needed” so they are keeping it for whatever. Guess what? I just found the whatever.

I was shocked when the people of

Euclid passed the tearing down and rebuilding of four (4) schools. When they need to staff and support these schools we will again be under the gun. Then I saw the headlines. Euclid schools going for a 6.9 mill levy and I realized they have all lost their minds. CALL COLUMBUS

I have lived in Euclid most of my life with a short time away. When the taxes started squeezing us we discovered the best community was Euclid for low

taxes. I happily came back and raised my family. I have been a 41 yr. home owner. Bought the house, paid for it, paid the taxes and lived thru many levy raises and did not whine. Children are important. But look at the economy now. People are out of work, abandoning houses right and left. How many more houses are we going to empty out when people see the next raise on their property taxes.

The city now has a huge contingency of “renters” and most subsidized. I am fine with that but they vote for these things and then the “real homeowners” have to pay the bill. The mayor has

his pet project for the lakefront and his upscale housing. Someone on council yrs ago stated that Euclid could not support an upscale restaurant. So who is going to move here with exorbitant property taxes, fast food restaurants and a school board that is obnoxiously asking for a 6.9 mill levy? You will have a quick exodus of “real homeowners” and a city full of subsidized renters and then who will pay these taxes?

Homeowners, seniors and anyone else, remember the election is in May. Vote the madness down.

Tell them to CALL COLUMBUS.

Euclid Symphony Orchestra sparkles at spring concert

By Ellen Ivory

The Euclid Symphony Orchestra takes center stage to celebrate their 50th Anniversary at the Shore Cultural Centre on Sunday, March 13, 2011 , 3:00p.m., in the auditorium.

Kevin Eppich, the orchestra’s conductor, has written a special piece entitled Celebration Fanfares.

“ In keeping with the idea of fanfares, it is a brightly energetic piece with moments provided for all the various sections of the orchestra to come to “center stage” as it were”, states Mr. Eppich. “I’ve purposely tried to choose a program with a wide variety of pieces keeping with the theme of my piece, both familiar and maybe not so familiar, but all with a music evocative of the idea of celebrating and fanfares. This also gives the listener a chance to hear all of the different orchestra’s sections (strings, brass, winds, and percussion) a chance to shine.”

Eric T. Gratz will be a featured soloist for Camille Saint-Saens’ “Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso.”

Tickets are \$10 at the door or can be purchased in advance for \$8 at Shore Centre’s office.

In addition to our Anniversary celebration, the Orchestra will be having a special anniversary dinner in May.

Mary Emser, President, says the excitement is building and she extends the following invitation:

“There are several members of the Orchestra that have been with us since the orchestra’s inception. We would like to encourage any past members to attend both the May concert and our Anniversary Dinner to help us celebrate this milestone”.

Please watch our website at www.euclidsymphonyorchestra.com for details for additional information that is coming soon.

Insights on insurance

By David Carlson

You may be wondering why you have all those icicles hanging from your gutters after a big snowstorm.

Or you may be unsure why your gutters are all frozen over with ice.

There is basically one answer – heat loss. If your home is not adequately insulated, the heat rises into your attic causing the snow to melt and run down to the gutters.

The problem begins when the water approaches the gutters over the eaves of your roof where it is once again cold and begins to re-freeze. Soon, this water backs up and freezes in the gutters and overflows, causing the icicles to form. The warm sun exacerbates this process.

Ice damming can then begin, causing the water to back up into your house, inflicting damage to interior walls and ceilings. This is a covered loss for most homeowners insurance policies, albeit subject to your deductible.

Furthermore, without adequate insulation, your heating dollar is spent heating your neighborhood rather than your home!

The solution is two-fold: 1. Add insulation to your attic, either rolled or blown-in. 2. Be sure that your attic is properly ventilated along the soffits and ridge.

The idea is for the attic to be as cold as it is outside and that the air circulates properly in that space.

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Community

Triple Peaks Roofing challenges industry to stand up to scam artists

By Katherine Bulava

Jeff and Angela Heitzenrater, owners of Triple Peaks Roofing & Construction, are so fed up with the damage dirty contractors have inflicted on their industry that they've decided to stand up and speak out about it at The Great Big Home and Garden Expo at the IX-Center February 5 – 13, 2011.

When visitors stop by the Triple Peaks Roofing Booth #182 at the Expo they'll be confronted with a large sign asking "Roofers Nailed to Top 10 Scammers' List in 2010: Ask us WHY we are DIFFERENT."

Jeff and Angela also intend to show videos of poor roofing work and to challenge visitors and other contractors to identify common code violations on a model roof they've created for the event so that visitors can see firsthand the kind of costly oversights, common errors and shoddy work that have given the industry a bad name.

In June 2010, Jeff and Angela took note of an Angie's List feature on roofing scams that made mention of an Ohio-based scam. When they saw roofers on the Better Business Bureau's Top 10 Scams and Rip-Off of 2010 list, Jeff and Angela, who have an A+ rating from the BBB, had had enough.

"We have heard so many sad stories recently from people who have ended up having to pay for two roofs because they were scammed by a storm chaser [roofers that follow bad storms as part of their marketing efforts] or a contractor with low standards and low morals," said Jeff. "It really made us feel like someone needed to take a stand. Hard-working people are losing good money

and all roofers are getting a bad name."

Teri Houdeshell is one of the people that came to Triple Peaks Roofing after being scammed.

"Leaky windows and lies from another construction company finally led us to seek a company with a reputation for honesty and hard work," said Teri. "Triple Peaks Roofing & Construction is the real deal."

When Triple Peaks Roofing first unveiled their "Ask us why we are different" sign at the RemodelOhio Show on January 20th, their fellow roofers didn't react kindly.

"People were doing double takes as they walked by and asking why in the world we would put that sign up," said Angela. "We thought we might get asked to leave."

It was partially this reaction from others in the industry that has emboldened Jeff and Angela to double their efforts to educate the public about scams and what they can do about them.

"Our goal is to educate the public and encourage other quality contractors to join us in confronting scam artists," said Jeff. "Awareness is a big step toward eliminating these issues, saving people money and fixing our industry's tarnished image."

Triple Peak Roofing uses an internal 40 point check list and guarantees their work meets building and housing regulations and will pass any manufacturer or qualified third-party inspection.

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Education opens doors for landscaping careers

By Laura Dorr

Today, landscaping is more than just cutting a lawn or rounding up stray leaves. Lawn upkeep is only one facet of a landscapers work, and they stay busy designing aesthetically pleasing landscape plans, planting trees and flowers, monitoring plant health and installing sprinkler systems and walkways. Landscapers' backgrounds must go beyond equipment operation to include horticulture, landscape design, soil analysis and botany.

Many landscapers are also employed as garden center and nursery consultants, and groundskeepers often work for businesses and athletic facilities.

Experienced landscape professionals can also advance to work as contractors, who supervise landscaping companies and handle the business side of things by scheduling work crews and ensuring quality of service.

Experience aside however, education is crucial for advancing in the industry. With the Bureau of Labor Statistics projecting that more than 250,000 landscaping jobs will be added within the decade, the demand for educated and skilled workers is increasing.

Education for the industry is available locally, as Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) graduate Jessica Burr discovered. When Burr joined the Tri-C Plant Science and Landscape Technology program, she was working as a groundskeeper and wanted to advance.

"I decided to go to school to further my career," said Burr. "You can learn on the job, but it's difficult. With training and education you have more knowledge, so you're not just coming in to mow the lawn."

After graduating with an associate of applied science degree, Burr advanced to become an associate account manager at a landscaping company. Burr credits the diverse Tri-C program, which offers multiple degree concentrations and various certificate programs, as part of her success.

"The education was very important in finding a job," she said. "It made the difference for me."

The Tri-C Plant Science and Landscape Technology program blends classroom instruction with hands-on learning experiences to equip students with valuable skills – skills that have helped Tri-C graduates like Burr find industry work, start landscaping businesses, and land positions with the Cleveland Botanical Garden and Metroparks Zoo.

For more information on the Tri-C Plant Science and Landscape Technology program, contact program manager David Emmitt at (216) 987-3060 or david.emmitt@tri-c.edu.

Euclid Art Association announces March 7th meeting and Spring Fine Art Show

By Nancy Daly

The Euclid Art Association meets at 7:00p.m. March 7 in Fellowship Hall of East Shore Methodist Church at 23002 Lake Shore Blvd.

Artist John Beukemann will do an Oil Painting demo. Guests are welcome.

The Euclid Art Association Fine Art Spring Show will be at the Euclid Public Library from April 9-16.

The show can be seen during regular library hours.

There will be a variety of paintings, photography, computer art, sculpture, and mixed media.

Come and enjoy seeing the work of local artists.

For info call 440-257-7447 or 216-486-8401.

Eaton Family Credit Union Winter Fundraiser Benefits Local Charities

By Fred Seigel

Euclid, OH - Eaton Family Credit Union's winter fundraiser resulted in a total of \$1,500 for the Euclid Hunger Center, Willoughby Food Pantry and the upcoming Relay For Life Event in Euclid.

Mike Losneck, President, Eaton Family Credit Union said, "This was one of our best community fundraisers ever." He continued, "We're able to give a lot of money to Euclid and Willoughby Hills because Sears donated the snow blower and so many people donated to the cause."

During much of the fourth quarter Eaton Family Credit Union accepted \$5.00 donations for a ticket to win a Craftsman Snow Blower donated by Sears Hardware on Bishop Road in Willoughby Hills. The winner, Lisa from Cherry Valley, Ohio, had two feet of snow on her driveway the day she was notified.

Photos are available at www.EatonFamilyCU.com/Snowblower.php

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Community

Mayor Cervenik:

Euclid poised for a Renaissance

Continued from front page
enue for the maximum time period. We are constantly exploring funding from state and federal sources and other programs. Last, but not least, we will need private investment in housing, retail, the marina project, and elsewhere.

Q. In general, how would you describe the “state of the city”?

A. Despite the current economic climate, I still feel that Euclid is strong and poised to take advantage of unprecedented investment in Downtown and the potential of Bluestone Business Park (on the site of the former PMX and Chase Brass plants), as well as many investments being done quietly by many of our existing businesses as they also prepare for the coming economic recovery.

Q. How did all of the activity in the Downtown Euclid area come about—both the storefront improvements and the public-funded work that has been done at the “gateway” intersection of East 222nd and Lake Shore? What was the city’s role in bringing this work to fruition?

A. It really started when we received a grant from the Northern Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) to do a transportation study of Downtown Euclid. A steering committee of stakeholders, business owners, professionals, and residents was formed and



trians, and motorists. As developers looked at Euclid, we were able to present them with a vision and convince them that they should be a part of the renaissance. NOACA was impressed with our results and awarded us a \$700,000 grant to do the engineering to bring the actual plans to fruition. The city, with some grant money from RTA, is in the process of renovating the intersection of Lake Shore Blvd. and Bliss Lane. The renovation will include an electronic community “reader board” to keep residents and visitors aware of events happening in Euclid.

Q. Talk about the city’s industrial

vibrant economic area—or are many of the smaller plant buildings sitting vacant? What do you see ahead for the Euclid “industrial belt”?

A. Not only have our larger industrial businesses—including Lincoln Electric—continued to make investments, but many of the smaller enterprises also are doing well, with some planning expansions. It should be noted that a soon-to-be-erected 434-foot wind turbine on the Lincoln Electric property will welcome all travelers as they enter the corridor.

Q. One of your major areas of focus has been on the redevelopment of the former Chase Brass/PMX property. What’s going on there? How soon might we see visible progress in creating the proposed new industrial park? And how might it improve the economic health of the city?

A. Bluestone Business Park has the potential to bring in more than 1,000 jobs to its 82 acres of prime acreage with freeway visibility. The developer, R. A. Fogg Business Systems, received the “OHIO JOB-READY SITE” designation this past December. This is important since that designation means that there are no environmental or other issues affecting the land. In other words, a new company can move in and have its building constructed with no fear of the

sort of problems that have been associated with other redeveloped land.

Q. Can you report on the status of discussions between the City and officials at the Euclid YMCA regarding the future of the Y? Is there a chance that the long-talked about partnership between the City and the Y to create a new recreational center might actually get off the ground in the near term?

A. Officials of the YMCA and I have had numerous conversations during the past few years. We both know that our Euclid Y, which is near and dear to my heart (literally), is in need of some improvements. We have agreed to work together to make that happen. However, I am not sure that the “near term” is the precise time frame, but I hope I am wrong. On the plus side, we have also had conversations regarding ways that we can work in unison and collaborate to improve the services provided to our residents.

Q. It seems that the city’s residential stabilization program—involving the demolition or rehabbing of houses that have become “eyesores”—has already generated some success stories. How far along is that program – and how many more homes are still on the city’s target list?

A. As mentioned earlier, we are now making great headway in utilizing the \$2,500,000 received through the federal government. In Round One, about 250 homes will be rehabilitated and I believe that about 40 homes will be demolished. Two rehabbed homes, including one on East 195th Street, are now up for sale and are attracting significant interest. We are expecting an additional \$1,000,000 in funding to continue our efforts to fight the effects that bank foreclosures and predatory lending have had in our neighborhoods. We are also experiencing private investment in residential properties.

Part Two of John’s interview with Mayor Cervenik will appear in the April issue of the Observer





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Schools

Pre-K Children and parents engage in team learning

By Katherine Bulava

The Literacy Cooperative sought funding to replicate SPARK in Cuyahoga County and is currently collaborating with Invest in Children -Cuyahoga County's public-private partnership serving young children and families - and with Family Connections in order to offer SPARK at select schools in Maple Heights, Cleveland Heights, and Cleveland.

Essential elements of SPARK include:

- 1) parent partners who work closely with children and families through monthly in-home interactions;
- 2) developmental screenings for all children (including a review of results by a child psychologist and a Responsive Services Team consisting of early childhood professionals);
- 3) follow-up assessments as indicated;
- 4) individual therapies as needed (i.e., for speech or behavioral issues);
- 5) learning plans individualized to each child's specific learning needs;
- 6) home and group visits with prescribed lesson plans based on Ohio's early learning content standards;
- 7) developmentally appropriate books with art supplies and activity cards;

- 8) transitional program to introduce children and families to their new school and take the mystery (and fear) out of kindergarten;
- 9) backpacks with all necessary school supplies; and
- 10) screenings and assessments for evaluation purposes.

While SPARK has not completed a full year in Cuyahoga County, The Literacy Cooperative hopes to replicate positive results from SPARK programs in Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Hamilton, Medina, and Mahoning Counties.

That's great news for SPARK Cuyahoga's children because the results of SPARK in other Ohio counties include:

- 1) SPARK children scored statistically higher on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment in Literacy (KRA-L) than non-SPARK peers in the same classrooms;
- 2) SPARK children were linked to community services prior to the start of kindergarten to address developmental and social-emotional barriers that would prevent school readiness;
- 3) SPARK increased enrollment of children in early childhood or pre-school programs



Kids receive games and kindergarten registration packets as they exit the session

- 4) SPARK children improved in their socio-emotional ability, as evidenced by improved scores on the Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ:SE);
- 5) SPARK children had a higher average rate of school attendance than their non-SPARK peers in kindergarten, first grade, second grade and third grade; and
- 6) Third grade Ohio Achievement Assessment (OAA) results in reading and math are statistically higher for SPARK children than non-SPARK children, especially at the highest performance levels (advanced and accelerated) and

among males. These positive outcomes can have life-long implications for education attainment, health, employment, social skills, and personal well being. Enrollment is now open in SPARK Cuyahoga for children entering kindergarten in August 2012 at Boulevard, Noble, and Oxford Elementary Schools in Cleveland Heights; Raymond Elementary School in Maple Heights; and Michael R. White, Clark, and Clara Westropp Elementary Schools in Cleveland. More information is available through Family Connections at (216) 321-0079.



The group lesson focuses on learning from one another.

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Schools

Attorneys Marc Dann & James Douglass to file class action suit

By Katherine Bulava

Several wronged homeowners have come together with the help of attorneys Marc Dann and James Douglass to file a class action lawsuit against law firm Lerner, Sampson & Rothfuss (LS&R).

The suit alleges that LS&R routinely files un-provable foreclosure suits through the use of manufactured and incomplete documentation.

Tamara and Phillip Turner and two other plaintiffs all had foreclosure suits filed against them by LS&R, on behalf of various clients, dismissed after the court found that LS&R's clients did not have standing to file the suits.

Despite the final victories, the Turners and two other plaintiffs all were forced to hire lawyers to defend themselves, incurring substantial legal fees.

The plaintiffs and others who were sued by LS&R, representing lenders, suffered significant emotional distress and at least one formally moved out of their home, even though the foreclosure



complaints were dismissed.

Dann, Douglass and these homeowners believe there are hundreds, if not thousands, of other Ohioans, who lack the ability to secure counsel, that have vacated and lost their homes or have been forced to file for bankruptcy because a frivolous foreclosure has been filed against them.

"We found out that Lerner Sampson & Rothfuss has filed an average of 4,500 foreclosures a year for the last five years in Cuyahoga County alone," said Douglass. "How often do they get away with

filing an illegitimate foreclosure because the homeowner cannot or does not know to defend his or herself?"

In the cases filed against the Turners and the two other plaintiffs, LS&R falsely claimed its client was the holder of the mortgage promissory note, which is a prerequisite to being able to file a foreclosure.

Dann and Douglass uncovered that it is common LS&R practice to create and execute documentation on behalf of Mortgage Electronic Filing Systems, Inc (MERS) to make it appear that their client is in possession of the needed mortgage promissory note.

LS&R employee Shellie Hill admitted, in a deposition taken by Douglass, that she signed documents as Assistant and Vice President of MERS though she is actually a LS&R employee with no real employment responsibilities to MERS and had never spoken to or received direction from anyone at MERS.

"We would never have known that Lerner, Sampson & Rothfuss didn't have a right to try to foreclose on our home

if we had not had good legal counsel," said Phillip Turner. "We were already packing to move in with family when Jim (Douglass), who I know from the community, offered to take a look at our case."

The lawsuit will ask that the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas declare that LS&R is in violation of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, has slandered the creditworthiness of individuals it has frivolously filed foreclosures against and has defamed these individuals.

The lawsuit further seeks to recover actual economic and noneconomic damages caused by LS&R's unfair, deceptive and unconscionable practices.

"The State of Ohio and Cleveland, in particular, has suffered tremendous economic and social consequences due to the foreclosure crisis that swept the nation, starting in 2006," said Dann. "Foreclosure mills like LS&R contribute greatly to the needless destruction of our community and of individual lives."

Out of work, not out of options

By TJ Neuffer

With the national unemployment rate over 9%, the new Career Development and Transition Services at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) are reaching out to residents in Euclid and surrounding suburbs impacted by the economic recession.

We provide enhanced support services to the unemployed or underemployed community members across Cuyahoga County. These much-needed services assist individuals with career planning and job coaching; skills and interests assessments; education planning to support retraining; appropriate academic and technical training programs; and job search preparation.

Since the program's inception in January 2010, Tri-C's Career Development and Transition Services department has served over 1500 job seekers.

We welcome you to join us at the Euclid Public Library located at E. 222nd St. as we launch our Winter 2011 Job Search Preparation Workshop Series offered every Thursday from 1:00pm - 4:00pm in the Shore Room for the following topics: Resumes that Get Results (January 13), Develop Your Job Search Plan (January 20), Networking...Get with it! (January 27) and Ace the Interview (February 3).

Our team of highly trained professionals who serve as facilitators and career specialists for the Career Development and Transition Services include members with extensive business experience in Human Resources Management, Training & Development and Staffing & Recruiting.

Tri-C is a member of the nationwide Walmart Brighter Futures Project. Our job search preparation services are being funded by generous grants from the Cleveland Foundation and The Walmart Foundation.

As a result, these career services are offered to community members in Northeast Ohio at no cost...free of charge. For more information or to make an appointment with a job coach, call 866-933-5180.

Euclid Cooperative Preschool Open House

By Anne Murphy Brown

The Euclid Cooperative Preschool, 21000 Lake Shore Boulevard in Euclid, is hosting Open Houses on Wednesday, February 23rd from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. and on Saturday, February 26th from 10:00 until noon.

The Preschool offers 3 separate classrooms specifically designed for the developmental stages of 3 Year Old, 4 Year Old, and Pre-K students.

In addition, younger children can

visit with mom or dad during the "wee sprouts" group for 2 year olds. As a cooperative, non-profit organization, parent members are actively involved.

The Euclid Cooperative Preschool welcomes all children and parents regardless of race, creed, sex, national origin or religious belief. Please contact Donna at 216-731-1316 or check out the website at <http://euclidcoop.org/> for more information.

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Sports

Euclid Y Swimmer Advances to League Meet at Cleveland State

By John Sheridan

Salvion Neal, one of the top swimmers on the newly resurrected Euclid YMCA swim team, will be competing in the Northeast Ohio YMCA League swim meet March 5 at Cleveland State University.

Salvion, age 9, qualified for the meet by anchoring a 200-yard medley relay team that also included three swimmers from the Hillcrest Y. For competitive meets, the Euclid and Hillcrest squads are combined since neither has enough swimmers to make up a full team. The youngsters compete under the banner of the "Hillcrest Hurricanes."

The medley relay team advanced to the year-end meet at CSU by placing among the top ten in a divisional event for boys 10 and under at the University of Akron on Feb. 5th. In addition to Salvion, the quartet included Alex Neyman, Jack Buchbinder, and Seth Wise.

"In freestyle, Salvion is one of the team's fastest closers. And Alex is our fastest swimmer in the backstroke," notes John Graves, who is now the aquatics director for both the Euclid Y and the Hillcrest Y. "Seth Wise is a good all-around swimmer. He has picked up the rhythm of the butterfly event better

than most kids his age."

In individual events, Seth Wise also qualified in the 10-under 50-yard butterfly for the CSU meet, which will feature the top performers from three YMCA divisional meets. Alex Neyman, who has been swimming with the Hillcrest group since he was 5 years old, qualified in the 100-yard freestyle.

The Hurricanes boasted the youngest swimmer at the Akron meet--four-year-old Stefani Leopold. Stefani, who began swimming when she was less than a year old, and her sister Teresa, age 7, competed in the 100-yard freestyle relay for girls ages 8 and under.

One of the most improved swimmers in the Euclid YMCA contingent was 9-year-old Daniel Csoltko, who sliced 37 seconds off his time in the 50-yard backstroke. Daniel, and his older brother Mark, age 12, are among the newest recruits on the Euclid squad. They joined the team about halfway through the winter season, along with their friend Alex Sari. "Both Dan and Mark have shown tremendous improvement in a short period of time," says Graves.

All of the youngsters on the Euclid squad have polished their swim techniques considerably under the tutelage of Coach Toni Bacon, who accepted

the challenge of helping to reactivate the swim team last summer. She has been quite pleased with the results. "I am proud beyond words of the team's accomplishments," she said in a recent message to the Observer. "Not only for Salvion qualifying for the League Meet at Cleveland State, but for each swimmer performing faster throughout the year, for supporting one another as teammates, and pushing their physical and mental limits."

Despite combining the Euclid and Hillcrest teams, the Hurricanes are still somewhat short-handed and were unable to field entrants in many of the Akron events. However, all of the participants thoroughly enjoyed being part of the team, which celebrated the end of the winter swim session with a banquet and pool party at the Hillcrest Y in mid-February.

Following their last practice session—just before the divisional meet in Akron—the Euclid youngsters enjoyed a "cupcake party" at the Euclid YMCA. And each wrote messages on a white board thanking Coach Toni for her guidance, enthusiasm, and encouragement. The kids implored her to return next season.

Among the Euclid Y swimmers who competed in individual events at the divisional meet were: Taylor Lamar in the 50-yard backstroke and 50 freestyle for girls 10-under, Amari Dean in the 50 and 100 freestyle for boys 13-14, Mark Csoltko in the 50 freestyle and 50 backstroke for boys 11-12, Dan Csoltko in the 50 freestyle and 50 backstroke for boys 10-under, Sophie Sito in the 25-yard freestyle for girls 8-under, and Salvion Neal in the 50 freestyle for boys 10-under.

A Message from Coach Toni

When this swim season began, many of our athletes could not swim more than two laps without stopping. One would not swim in the deep end of the pool. Many swimmers had no goggles or caps. We had no starting blocks, the pool had only one lane line, and we could find pool time only 2 days per week. Yet each of them had a goal. Each wanted to be better, stronger, faster. My job was to turn their goals into realities—whatever the obstacles. Winners

don't make excuses, they get results.

Together, the parents, athletes, life-guards, and coaches worked as a team to bring out the best in these athletes. Every practice grew increasingly difficult, building distance and building speed. When we didn't have pool time, we did push ups to simulate pulling, wall-sits to strengthen kicking, jump rope to practice starts, and planks to harden the core. Parents created nutritious meals to fuel the athletes.

By season's end, each athlete was able to swim more than one mile in practice, with the older swimmers finishing nearly two miles. Thanks to the life-guards' stroke clinics and a film session run by the team grand-dad and videographer, each now can swim multiple strokes.

I am proud beyond words of the team's accomplishments. Not only for Salvion qualifying for the League Meet at Cleveland State, but for each swimmer performing faster throughout the year, for supporting one another as teammates, and pushing their physical and mental limits. Each of them learned that respect is not given, it's earned. Through their continuous improvement and infectious team spirit, the team earned not only my respect, but the respect of other coaches, officials, and athletes.

On the last day of practice, one swimmer asked how they could train in the off-season without me there. Our youngest swimmer, Eric, spoke up, suggesting that they each go to open swim and repeat the practice workouts. Eric is 5. Another, who is 9, suggested doing pushups and planks every night to maintain strength. A third suggested begging [YMCA Executive Director] John Reid for more pool time. In that moment, I realized they were echoing my theme: Winners don't make excuses, they get results. They were not waiting for an adult to find ways for them to train, they were taking responsibility for their futures. --Toni Bacon

COACH'S NOTE: The athletes all have team suits, caps, and goggles, but we still lack starting blocks and ample lane lines. If anyone is able to contribute toward resolving that problem, please contact Mr. Reid.



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Sports

‘Dirty Dozen’: Viking matmen gain respect for program

By John Sheridan

It has been an uphill battle, but the Villa Angela-St. Joseph High wrestling program is beginning to make people sit up and take notice. Though small in number—with just 12 matmen on the squad this year—the Vikings now boast a higher level of wrestling talent than they’ve had in recent years.

The unofficial team nickname this year is “The Dirty Dozen,” which was the title of a movie some years back about a group of roughneck soldiers who displayed courage and determination in carrying out a dangerous mission.

Head coach Bob Mullin might not go as far as to compare his grapplers with the characters in that movie, one of whom was played by Jim Brown, although he does sense an enhanced degree of determination being shown by his key wrestlers – especially the core group that accounted for the bulk of the Vikings’ team points in the recent Division III sectional tournament at Beachwood High.

Four VASJ grapplers advanced from that event to the district tournament at Garfield Heights. (You might say that the Dirty Dozen was trimmed to the “Fantastic Four.”)

Leading the way for the Vikings was Phil Wellington, the senior 189-pounder who emerged as a sectional champion with a 4-3 victory in his title bout against Chanel’s Johnathan Schafer. In two previous encounters, Schafer had gotten the best of the St. Joe ace, including a 7-4 decision in the North Coast League tournament in early February.

“Phil has been working on a couple of things, including the way he finishes his takedowns,” explains Coach Mullin. “Against Schafer, he was able to complete his takedowns. He’s really a better wrestler than he thought he was. He now has more confidence.”

As a junior, Wellington qualified for the Division III state tournament and took a 27-3 season record into the district meet this time around.

At Beachwood, VASJ chalked up 112 team points to finish sixth out of 15 teams, despite lacking entrants in five of the 14 weight classes. Chanel, the No. 1-ranked team in Ohio in Division III, captured the sectional crown with 299.5 points, followed by Pymatuning Valley with 181.5.

In addition to Wellington, the Vikings’ district qualifiers were: Mato Vunak at 119 pounds, Ryan Gallagher (145), and D’Ante Jackson (215).

Vunak, who placed fourth, lost a close 6-4 battle with Chanel’s Graham Coghlan in the consolation final. Gallagher, who was a defensive standout on the Vikings’ football team, earned second-place honors, also losing to a tough Chanel wrestler in the finals. Jackson picked up a third-place medal at 215 pounds after pinning Kirtland’s Jim Durst in 2:56 in the consolation final.

Gallagher sported a 25-8 record head-



All tangled up: VASJ grappler Russell Harrison (on top in red uniform) found himself in a pretzel-like hold during an early round match at the Division III sectional at Beachwood.

ing into the district meet—which was postponed by one day due to the recent snowstorm. Jackson was 22-10 and Vunak owned a 19-10 mark.

The Beachwood sectional wasn’t the first time that the Vikings have gone up against the Chanel juggernaut this season. They also squared off in the Catholic Invitational Tournament in Toledo and again in the NCL meet. But that’s fine with Coach Mullin.

“We like to measure ourselves on the mat against good wrestlers,” he says. “And a tournament like the CIT has a lot of good wrestlers.”

For one thing, such encounters provide a good yardstick for assessing the

team’s progress. “Although we have only 12 wrestlers on our team this year,” Mullin said after the CIT, “I’ve been very pleased with the progress we’ve been making.” For the season, the Vikings compiled a 7-4 dual meet mark, despite losing to neighborhood rival Euclid. Against the Panthers, VASJ had to forfeit in five weight classes, but actually won six of the nine matches that were contested.

Clearly, the coach was hoping to see signs of further progress at the district—and perhaps even the state tournament—where Chanel will certainly be the favorite once again.

Mullin’s assistant coaches this sea-

son include John Storey, who guided the St. Joseph High matmen to a Division I state title about 20 years ago, and Mike Mihalic, who was a state runner-up for the Vikings at 119 pounds.

At a mid-season practice session, Mihalic gave the team a heart-felt pep talk, urging the wrestlers to give their maximum effort in every match and to “leave it all on the mat.” There is no shame in losing to a superior wrestler, he advised, “as long as you’ve truly done your best and you’ve given your opponent the best that’s in you.”

Anything less, Mihalic suggested, would be tantamount to showing disrespect to an opponent.

Panther Girls Qualify

By John Sheridan

It’s off to Canton and the state high school swim meet for a quartet of Euclid High swimmers – the four girls who’ve been the backbone of the Panther team this season.

Making a surprisingly big splash at the Division I District swim competition at Cleveland State’s Busbey Natatorium in late February were: senior Marisa Melchior, junior Emily Sweet, sophomore Andrea Bartel, and freshman Samantha (“Sam”) Lisy.

The four comprised the 400-yard freestyle relay team that earned a spot in the state meet as an “at-large” selection. Earlier in the season, they teamed up to break both the school and Lake Erie League record in the event.

Two of the swimmers also qualified for state in individual events. Andrea Bartel advanced in the 200-yard indi-

vidual medley and 100 breaststroke, while Sam Lisy qualified in the 200 IM and 100 backstroke. In the 200 IM, Lisy and Bartel finished second and third at CSU.

“In the pool, they were swimming right next to each other during the race and pushing each other to go faster,” notes Panther swim coach John Elliott. “Each of them improved her best time in the event by about five seconds. The only girl who beat them was Firestone’s Katie Miller, who is probably the top swimmer in the state.”

Elliott, now in his ninth year as the Panthers’ head coach, was also enthused about Bartel’s second-place finish in the 100 breaststroke. “It was a great race,” he said, adding that the winner—Mayfield’s Alana Arnold—was a state champion in the butterfly when she competed for Hawken.

With three of his top girl swimmers returning next season, Coach Elliott is looking forward to more success in the future. Lisy, the freshman, is “a natural talent,” the coach says. “Sam has been swimming most of her life and has broken records at every level.”

By comparison, Bartel and Marisa Melchior—who has a partial scholarship to swim at Wright State University-- are relative newcomers to the sport. Marisa didn’t take up competitive swimming until high school. “She has a lot of potential,” the coach points out.

In the 400 freestyle relay at the district meet at CSU, the Panther girls finished within seven seconds of the winning quartet from Mayfield, but weren’t close enough to snag an “automatic” bid to state.

Sports

Five Panther wrestlers earn District berths



By John Sheridan

Last winter, the Euclid Panther wrestling squad posted a rather dismal 3-20 dual meet record. But, oh, how things have changed over the course of a year.

This season, by late January, Coach Mike Turk’s matmen were sporting a very respectable 8-4 mark, 4-0 in the Lake Erie League. And four wrestlers had already chalked up 23 or more victories—seniors Zak Adkins (145 pounds), Dylan Norwood (171), and Lamar Gunter (189), along with junior Rynell Roper (160). Moreover, sophomore 130-pounder Darsheed Mustafa owned a 13-7 record.

And guess what? All five of those matmen performed well in the recent sectional wrestling tournament at Willoughby South and advanced to the rugged Division I District tournament at Mentor in late February.

“This is the most district qualifiers we’ve had since 2002,” notes Coach Turk, who has been very pleased with the leadership shown by his three seniors this year. “This is the first year that I’ve had more than one senior on the team,” he explains. “It’s

nice to have experienced seniors to show the underclassmen what they have to do to win.”

Surprisingly, it was a junior—Rynell Roper—who stood tallest on the podium at the sectional tourney. He earned runner-up honors after winning his first two matches by a pin and a technical fall. In the semifinals, he won by injury default over Mentor’s Zack Forro, who had beaten him in a dual meet, 3-2. “This time, Rynell really took it to him,” observed Coach Turk. “He was winning 7-1 at the time of the default. And he almost had him pinned.”

In the title match, Roper lost an 8-3 decision to Mayfield’s Tyler Coleman. Nonetheless, he took a splendid 30-4 season mark with him as he headed to the rugged Mentor district.

Earning third-place medals for the Panthers in the sectional were Dylan Norwood and Lamar Gunter, while

Zak Adkins and Darsheed Mustafa each finished fourth. The top four in each weight class advanced to the district meet.

Norwood, the lanky 171-pounder who knows how to use his leverage against shorter opponents, won his third-place match with a slick 11-7 decision over Mentor’s Brandon Tunquist. Earlier, he had pinned Eastlake-North’s Brennan Torok in 4:44 to reach the consolation finals. Going into the district competition, Norwood owned a 31-4 season record. Mustafa, who lost his opening bout by a 5-2 score, bounced back in the consolation round with a pin and a 6-5 decision.

One of the most exciting bouts involving a Euclid wrestler was 189-pound Lamar Gunter’s 3-1 overtime victory against Brush’s Mark Dingenary. The two were tied, 1-1, at the end of regulation and both seemed on the verge of exhaustion in the extra period. But when he needed it most, Gunter found an extra burst of energy and ended the bout with a two-point takedown.

“Lamar is a little undersized for the 189-pound weight class,” the coach notes. “But after losing a close match in the semifinals, he regrouped and put that loss behind him and won his third-place match.”

Perhaps the gutsiest performance of the day, however, was turned in by Zak Adkins (145) who finished fourth despite battling a severe bout of the flu. “He did what he had to do to move on,” Coach Turk points out, “but he was pretty sick all day.”

Adkins, one of the Panthers’ top wrestlers all season, boasted a 30-4 record going into the district. His younger brother Jeremy Adkins, a freshman 112-pounder, won two matches by decision in the consolation round before finishing in sixth place.

Also placing sixth were Ebrahim Elbagory (103) and heavyweight Linje Ross, who registered a 40-second pin against Mayfield’s Tony Gaydos before losing by decision in a hard-fought consolation semifinal bout.

Three area grapplers advance to state

By John Sheridan

UPDATE--Two VASJ wrestlers and one Euclid Panther wrestler survived last weekend’s tough district meets to qualify for the state wrestling tournament in Columbus.

The Vikings’ qualifiers were Phil Wellington at 189 pounds and DiAnte Jackson at 215 pounds.

This is the first time in more than 10 years that VASJ has produced at least two state qualifiers.

Jackson finished in second place at the Division III district at Garfield Heights, while Wellington earned third-place honors.

For Euclid, junior Rynell Roper placed third at 160 pounds in the Division I District tournament at Mentor, becoming the Panthers’ first state qualifier since Myron McConnell in 2003. Roper did it the hard way, battling back with four victories in the consolation round to reach the podium.

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