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100th YEAR

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2023

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FREE

Collaboration is key to Cranwood Park cleanup, support of athletics program at SMART Academy in G.H.

By Catherine West
Communications Consultant

SMART Academy's school leader and athletics director share a common commitment to serving not only the school's K-4 students, but others throughout the Garfield Heights community. Robert Aitken and Craig Moro also both understand the value of community partnerships which create opportunities that benefit students, their families and the community at large.

As principal and superintendent, Aitken focused on academics and meeting students' social and emotional needs throughout the school's first three years. Last year he hired Moro to create an athletics program which now includes soccer, wrestling, basketball, cheer and dance, baseball and track. A critically important first step in their plan was to address the need for suitable physical space necessary for students to practice and compete in various sports.

"Cranwood Park – just a half-mile from our school – represented an excellent opportunity," Aitken said. "Although overgrown and neglected, the park had great potential to support our athletics program and to serve as a valuable asset to the community."

Aitken worked closely with Garfield Heights City Council and Mayor Matt Burke to advance SMART Academy's vision to revitalize the park and provide a green space suitable for the school's new athletics program.



SMART Academy soccer players are shown on the new athletic field at Cranwood Park.

It's already proven to be an ideal site for hosting the Greater Cleveland Elementary Conference comprised of three charter and three Garfield Heights district schools where fall games and tournaments were held.

"We're now in phase three of our plan," Moro said. "Phase One focused on cleaning up the park and painting the fence, benches and backstop after the city cut and edged the overgrown grass. Phase Two focused on creating the structure of the soccer conference, and Phase Three is use of the safe, attractive space by the six competing soccer teams."

(Continued on Page 8)

Churches asked to email Holy Week services to NN

The Neighborhood News is continuing its long-standing custom of publishing Holy Week and Easter Services for all churches in its readership area free of charge in its April 5th issue.

Churches are asked to email us their schedule of services, which can include Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday, to: nnews1923@aol.com by Friday, March 31st, at 5 p.m., for inclusion in our April 5th issue.

Produce Give-A-Way

Everlasting Covenant Ministries, 6060 Turney Rd., Garfield Heights, partnering with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, will host a Community Produce Give-A-Way on Saturday, March 25, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, or as long as supplies last.

The give-a-way will continue on the fourth Saturday of the month during April, June, July, August and September.

French fries everywhere as train slices trailer in half on McCracken

Last Sunday night a Norfolk Southern Railway train struck the trailer of a semi-truck that was stopped on the tracks at 13600 McCracken Rd., Garfield Heights, slicing the trailer in half and covering the roadway with thousands of French fries the trailer was hauling for Burger King.

Garfield Heights police said the trailer was completely destroyed but the semi was intact. Neither the truck driver nor the conductor of the train and his trainee were injured, according to the police report filed.

A GHPD officer spoke with the semi driver, who said he was driving westbound up the hill on McCracken Rd., and then began going slowly over the railroad tracks when the crossing signal arms came down on his trailer as the train approached and shortly after struck the trailer packed with French fries.

According to the GHPD Incident Report of the crash, a video of the incident showed the semi truck driving west over the crossing prior to the lights being activated and for unknown reasons stopped on the tracks, at which point the crossing gates were activated and the trailer was subsequently struck by the train traveling north. Police officers with the Norfolk Southern Railway arrived on scene at 10:26 p.m.

Heavy equipment soon arrived and began clearing the fries and other debris off the roadway. McCracken Rd. was closed until the early hours of Monday morning when the cleanup was completed.



This trailer loaded with French fries was sliced in half when a train struck it Sunday night on the McCracken Rd. tracks in Garfield Heights. Photo courtesy of GHPD

Chickens not coming to Bedford any time soon

By Judith Goldsworth

Bedford Mayor Stan Koci announced at Monday night's council meeting that an informal poll was taken of council at its work session before the meeting and a majority of five of the seven members said they were opposed to changing the city's animal ordinance to allow residents to keep chickens in their backyards.

At previous meetings some citizens had spoken in favor of allowing residents to keep chickens for eggs and a food source, while others had spoken against it citing lack of space, noise, odor and sanitary issues.

"We decided we do not want to change that ordinance, so we will not be allowing chickens in the city of Bedford at this point," Koci said.

Free wheel locks for Kia, Hyundai owners

In response to the increasing reports of thefts in the city

of certain models of Kia and Hyundai vehicles, 160 free wheel locks for Bedford residents who own them are now available at the Records Department of the Bedford Police Department, 165 Center Rd., City Manager Mike Mallis said at the council meeting.

Mallis said thieves have been targeting new and used car dealerships, as well as residents in their private vehicles, adding, "We have been actively patrolling throughout the evening hours, as well as in the daytime hours and weekends."

He said that the recent installation of Flock cameras throughout the city, as approved by council earlier this year, are also helping to provide a deterrent, as well as residents making sure their cars are locked in the evenings.

(Continued on Page 2)

Chickens not coming to Bedford any time soon

(Continued from Page 1)

Residents are encouraged to go on the city's website, bedfordoh.gov, or the Bedford Police Department's social media pages or Bedford's social media pages for additional details on the procedure for stopping at the police station and getting one of the free wheel locks.

Legislation passed

Council passed several ordinances on Monday night's agenda, approving the following:

- Contract with Best Equipment Co. Inc., of North Royalton, for the purchase of an Envrosight Rovver X Basic System with an integrated lift to inspect mainline sewer pipes and culverts, through Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Contract, at a cost of \$108,905.60.
- Contract with Trojan Technologies for improvements to the Ultraviolet Disinfection System at the city's Wastewater Treatment Plant, to comply with Environmental Protection Agency standards, at a cost of \$21,358.
- Three-year contract with Cintas Corporation for rental and cleaning costs for facility service supplies for multiple city buildings, including mats and garments for the Service Department and Waste Water Treatment Plant personnel, at a cost of \$50,927.96 annually.
- Amending existing legislation to provide for continuing membership in the Ohio Municipal League Joint Self-Insurance Pool, providing insurance coverage to the city and its facilities, equipment and staff on an annual basis for the years 2023, 2024 and 2025, at a cost of \$221,321.
- Amending previous ordinances approving two separate contracts to buy two Concord Noreaster heavy-duty chassis mounted with salt spreaders and heavy duty municipal power angling snow plows from Concord Road Equipment of Painesville, at a cost of \$88,164.82 each.

Announcements

The city's new Building Commissioner, Michael Greer,

will start his duties in Bedford on Monday, March 27, Mallis announced. In a unique arrangement, Greer, the former Assistant Building Commissioner for Fairview Park, will work part of each week for the city of Bedford, and the other part of each week for the city of Brooklyn. He has been hired by Bedford, which will bill Brooklyn for the days he works in that city.

Councilman Jeff Asbury announced that the Easter Egg Hunt for Bedford children ages 12 and under will be held by the Parks and Recreation Department at Bedford Bearcat Stadium, 481 Northfield Rd., on Saturday, April 1. Gates open at 9:45 a.m., and the hunt begins at 10 a.m. sharp.

Asbury also announced that the Computer Round Up and Hazardous Waste Disposal will take place April 17-21, and April 24-28 at the city's Service Department.

Cleveland City Council OKs purchase, redo of building for new police headquarters

Cleveland City Council held its regular meeting Monday night and approved legislation to move forward on a new Department of Police Headquarters at the "ArtCraft" building located at 2350-2570 Superior Ave.

The city will purchase the property and enter into a design-build with the developer TurnDev to renovate the building. The \$90 million maximum deal includes a total renovation of the building including its plumbing, electrical, HVAC, roof and elevators, building a parking garage and surface parking. It also includes getting the furniture, fixtures, equipment, information technology business systems, movers, consulting services and any other related expenditures needed for the new police headquarters.

City Council also passed after three readings Cleveland's \$1.9 billion budget for 2023, which includes more than

\$710 million in the General Fund for daily operations and services.

Council approved grants from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for 2023. The city is expecting to receive \$23,237,665 for the Community Development Block Grant Program; \$5,864,922 for the Federal HOME Investment Partnerships Act Program; \$2,523,867 for the Emergency Solutions Grant Program; and \$2,350,189 for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program.

Council passed a resolution sponsored by Councilmember Jenny Spencer on railroad safety urging Congress and the Ohio General Assembly to enact legislation to protect Cleveland residents from the inherent dangers of a train derailment on the multiple tracks that run through the city.

The resolution notes that Council passed a resolution in June of 2020 condemning Norfolk Southern Corporation for rerouting daily trains carrying highly toxic flammable crude oil and ethanol through Cleveland without public notice, and urged Norfolk Southern to cease this rerouting and move all hazardous materials shipments not originating or terminating in the city of Cleveland to less populated routes.

Garfield Hts. Rec 2023 Annual Ice Skating Show

The 2023 Annual Ice Skating Exhibition will be this year on Saturday, March 25, at the Dan Kostel Recreation Center, 5411 Turney Rd., Garfield Heights. Showtime is 6:30 p.m. Stop in and join us as we see our skaters perform at all different levels from ages 3 up to Adult.

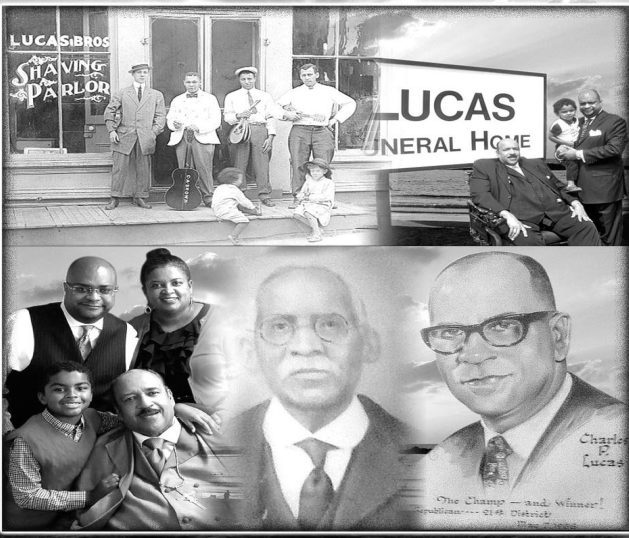
We are now selling advance tickets through March 23, or you can simply purchase tickets at the door the day of the show. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m.

Tickets:

- \$5.00 - ages 5-13 (4 and under no charge)
- \$5.00 - Seniors – ages 66 & up
- \$10.00 – ages 14—65

Lessons are offered from September through March during the season. Information for ice skating, hockey and all of our programs can be found on the city's web page: www.garfieldhts.org

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Garfield Hts. to host Vietnam Veterans Day

The city of Garfield Heights and Mayor Matt Burke will host the annual Vietnam Veterans Day on Wednesday, March 29, at the Garfield Heights Civic Center, 5407 Turney Rd., with a social hour at 6 p.m., and the program at 7 p.m.

The Vietnam Veterans of America, Greater Cleveland Chapter #15, sponsors of the event, "wishes to thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States, and to thank and honor the families of those veterans." For more information call PLAV Post 2533 at 216-387-0484.

GHUMC Lenten Series

Garfield Heights United Methodist Church, 4977 Turney Rd., invites the community to come for worship this Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Pastor Rev. Daniel Drew will bring the message based upon a study book entitled "Revival: Faith as Wesley Lived It," written by Rev. Adam Hamilton. This series explores the life of John and Charles Wesley, and how they developed six spiritual practices still used today to become closer and more aware of God. This week's message is entitled "The Necessity of Grace." Call 216-641-4919 for more details.

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Free Community Meal

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant, 19000 Libby Rd., Maple Heights, will hold its free Monthly Community Meal from 5 to 6 p.m., on Thursday, March 23, and the fourth Thursday of each month in the church hall with entrance in the back of the church; dine-in only. Take-outs available for those physically unable to attend. Call Mary, 216-924-6096.

Community police reports

Cleveland

Pedestrian Struck

On March 14, at 9:14 p.m., a 60-year-old male pedestrian was struck by a vehicle at Broadway and Fleet aves. The victim was transported to MetroHealth Medical Center in serious condition.

SWAT Call Up

On March 16, at 2:51 p.m., SWAT was called to the 3000 block of Nursery Ave., for a male reported to be armed and the subject of an Animal Protective League search warrant but refusing to come out of his house. APL to follow up.

(Continued on Page 4)

Ward 7 Block Watch meets

The Garfield Heights Ward 7 Block Watch, sponsored by Councilman Tom Vaughn, will meet Thursday, March 30, at 7 p.m., in the St. Augustine Room of St. Benedict School, 13633 Rockside Rd.

Guest speakers will be members of the Garfield Hts. School Board. Nonperishable items for the St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry would be appreciated. All are welcome. For more information contact Gail, 216-662-9213.

Garfield Heights Ward 5 Councilwoman
Rachelle Tonsing wants to thank
Mayor Matt Burke,
Garfield Hts. Firefighters Local 340,
all of Garfield Heights City Council,

Ward 1 Councilwoman Stacey Collier
Ward 2 Councilman Charles Donahue
Ward 3 Councilman Jason Seither
Ward 4 Councilman Avery Johnson
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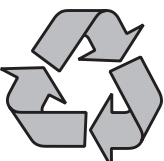
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Future dates:
April 27, May 25, June 22.

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Concerns on rail safety addressed at Maple Heights Council meeting

By Judith Goldsworth

Acknowledging the potential impact a derailment could have on Maple Heights, Mayor Annette Blackwell and Fire Chief Vito Kavaliunas, at last week's council meeting, addressed concerns about rail safety in the city, which is bisected by a rail line owned and operated by Norfolk Southern. It is the same railroad company that was involved in a recent catastrophic accident in East Palestine, Ohio.

During her report to council, Blackwell asked Kavaliunas to speak on the fire department's ongoing training on derailments and the potential hazards they could pose to Maple Heights residents, many of whom live very close to the Norfolk Southern tracks.

Kavaliunas said, "There's been a lot of concerns lately, and for whatever reason Norfolk Southern has been having a lot of issues with its trains derailing," in reference to another train derailing earlier this month in the western Ohio community of Springfield, among others reported nationwide.

"There was a proposal to notify the chiefs, on an area basis, of what chemicals are going down the tracks (in their cities). We assume the worst is happening every time we respond to one of those incidents," he continued.

Kavaliunas said that each train traveling through the city must have a manifest that stays with the conductor. He said if an incident with a train should occur in Maple Heights, public safety and the safety of everyone involved would be paramount. Should it be deemed necessary, an evacuation would be ordered and residents rescued, and the fire department would assess the situation, he said.

The fire chief said it would require a lot of help from other nearby fire departments, the HazMat Team, EPA and from the state. He said rail carriers have their own emergency response team, and they would be there to work with the city.

Kavaliunas said that Maple Heights firefighters undergo training on rail safety and responding to any potential hazards on a regular basis. "Fortunately," he said, "in all the years I've been here, we haven't had any issues with the train tracks."

"We're very lucky that these incidents have been reported in more rural areas," he concluded. "If you get something like East Palestine, if that would happen in the Greater Cleveland area or any urban area, we'd have some really big problems."

Legislation passed

Council passed an ordinance at last week's meeting authorizing Blackwell and Kavaliunas to contract with Gatchell Grant Resources, LLC, to submit an application for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant for the hiring of two additional firefighter/paramedics on the department.

Gatchell will develop and submit the application for the grant on behalf of the city at a cost of \$950, plus an administration fee not to exceed \$3500 if the grant is awarded.

The SAFER grants provide funding directly to fire departments to assist in increasing the number of firefighters, help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide fire protection, the ordinance states, adding that salaries for the positions funded under the grant are eligible for reimbursement.

Also approved was a resolution authorizing a contract with Longino Lawn Care and Snow Plow to install trees on Hansen Rd., Watson Rd. and Raymond St., from Northfield Center to Warrensville Center rds., as part of the Cuyahoga County Healthy Tree Canopy Program (HTCP) Northeast Quadrant Tree Planting Project, at a cost of \$23,385.50.

The city has been awarded a \$44,923.50 county grant for the project, with the County Planning Commission requiring Maple Heights to provide 10%, or \$4,992.50 of local funds towards the total project cost.

The city has already purchased 107 trees for the project from Rusty Oaks Nursery at a cost of \$24,523, which has already been paid out of the county grant funding, per earlier legislation.

Council also passed a resolution authorizing Blackwell to enter into an agreement with Ohio Auditor of State Keith Faber for an audit of the city's basic financial statements for the year ending Dec. 31, 2022, for an amount not to exceed \$27,470.

Announcements

District 6 Councilman Richard Trojanski said that a workshop in partnership with Waste Management to help residents learn more about recycling will be held at Castle High School, 5130 Warrensville Center Rd., on Tuesday, April 18, from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

District 4 Councilwoman Dana Anderson announced there will be a District 4 and 6 Town Hall meeting in April, with more information to follow.

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Collaboration is key to Cranwood Park cleanup

(Continued from Page 1)

Athletics has been at the heart of Moro's professional career. He has played professional baseball, coached sports teams at the college level and built K-12 school athletic programs. He's well connected within the sports community and has a positive relationship with the Garfield Heights Recreation Director Paul Birk.

"Paul saw the potential for a successful partnership between SMART and the district," Moro said. "Creating a soccer league and opportunities to compete in the sport serves not only students and their families, but the Garfield Heights community. Hundreds of family members and friends came out to our games to watch students compete."

Due in part to very limited facilities funding, many charter schools don't provide opportunities for students to participate in athletics beyond physical education classes. Those that do sometimes face challenges in establishing partnerships with districts. But SMART Academy and Garfield Heights City Schools see their partnership as an opportunity to serve both charter and district students.

"Our primary focus is, of course, on academics," Aitken said. "But we recognize that athletic programs provide opportunities for students to develop self-confidence and leadership skills. There are benefits to teaching students to work together toward common goals and to being motivated, humble and respectful."

SMART students have experienced emotional highs and lows throughout their first soccer season. Their 4-0 regular season record helped them build confidence in their athletic abilities, as did winning the divisional and conference tournaments. But they were also humbled by their loss in the conference championship, despite having a better overall record than their opponent.

"There are lessons to be learned from both wins and losses," Moro said. "I'm proud of our students for being gracious – and learning important life lessons — in both situations."

Revitalizing Cranwood Park and creation of the Greater Cleveland Elementary Conference is the result of dynamic partnerships between SMART Academy and the Garfield Heights School District, city council and the mayor's office – all fully committed to serving students

and others throughout the community.

Thanks to visionary leaders, Cranwood Park is no longer an abandoned eye sore. Instead, it's a vibrant community space that will serve students and the Garfield Heights community for many years to come.

Maple Heights wins NE Ohio 'Kindness Challenge

By Judith Goldsworth

The city of Maple Heights is officially the "kindest city in Northeast Ohio" after city leaders, Maple Heights schools, businesses and residents all participated in the Northeast Ohio Mayors' Kindland Challenge against 58 other communities, Mayor Annette Blackwell announced at a recent council meeting.

Sponsored by the Cleveland-based, nonprofit organization Values-In-Action Foundation, the Kindland movement "is bringing together communities, businesses, organizations and schools by recognizing and sharing the acts of kindness around us in an effort to inspire a ground swell of positivity and goodness," according to the organization's mission statement.

All of the mayors in Northeast Ohio were asked to enter their cities in the competition to see which was the kindest. Blackwell said the kindness acts she reported for the contest included Shop With A Cop, the Coat Give-away and Light the Way programs, prom dress donations, and the Little Free Library.

Maple Heights Communications Coordinator Margie Autero said each participating city was asked to share and encourage kindness among residents and at City Hall, and these acts of kindness were shared on social media.

"The city of Maple Heights went all in," Autero said, "and documented over 100 kindness posts showcasing

how the city and its residents continuously spread kindness."

Blackwell said, "We have some problems, dangerous things some days, but we can also be kind, and so, thank you so much."

She added, "So to everyone here, every councilperson, every resident, because you guys shared in this, this is not a mayor's win. This is the city's win... every single thing you did, you are the winners tonight."

Garfield Heights T-ball & Co-ed Softball registrations

Registrations begin April 10 through May 25, for both of these sports at the Dan Kostel Recreation Center, 5411 Turney Rd., during open office hours. Early registrations before April 10 will be gladly accepted during open office hours for your convenience.

T-Ball is for boys & girls ages 5-7 on or before July 1, 2023. Co-Ed Softball is for boys & girls ages 8-13 on or before August 1, 2023. Practices and games are held during the week during the evening hours and some practices/games may be on Saturdays.

Fees: Residents - \$50.00 + current \$15.00 annual ID card.

Non-Residents - \$80.00 + current \$40.00 annual ID card.

Birth certificates are required at the time of registration if your child did not play last season. Only a parent or legal guardian can register a child. Residents, please bring in two current utility bills, bank statement or pay stub with name & address. We accept cash, credit, debit or checks

A \$15.00 late fee will be applied after May 25; signups must be done in a timely manner for team draft, scheduling purposes, ordering uniforms and allowing practice time before the season can begin.

For more details visit: www.garfieldhts.org or call 216-475-7272.

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