

AREA NEWS

THE LATEST FROM WHERE WE LIVE

Briefly

DEERFIELD TWP.

Dangerous play punished

Twin brothers from Deerfield Township who blew up a mixture of chemicals in a soup can were ordered Wednesday to serve 60 hours of community service and report to a probation officer after pleading guilty to a charge of possessing dangerous ordnance. The 15-year-olds – one of whom received minor injuries in the blast – also must pay \$100 fines and \$66 in court costs as part of their sentence from Warren County Juvenile Court Judge Mike Powell. The brothers had been scheduled to go on trial Wednesday. A third 15-year-old who was charged in the case pleaded last month and received a similar sentence that included counseling other youths about the dangers of explosives. The trio was arrested after a report of fireworks going off in the 8900 block of Pembroke Drive after midnight May 3.

WEST CHESTER

VOA museum plans readied

Preliminary exhibit layouts and a feasibility study for the Voice of America Museum will be released later this year, planners told township trustees Tuesday night. These plans push forward a township effort to convert into a museum the 1940s broadcast station that waged war – in 53 languages – on Nazi Germany's radio propaganda. "This has been a labor of love," said West Chester Trustee Catherine Stoker. "It took us the better part of five years to start getting some real traction ... to where people started getting excited about this project." So far, more than \$90,000 has been raised for the project. Part of that money was used to hire a consultant. The feasibility study will be finished Dec. 5, planners said.

Library under budget so far

The \$9.6 million library project in West Chester is moving ahead, and township officials say work is "several hundred thousand dollars" under budget. On Tuesday, trustees approved several construction-related bids, totaling more than \$6 million. Judi Boyko, township administrator, attributed the cost control to breaking the work into phases, which created a more competitive bid process. Boyko did not specify exactly how much has been saved. The new library will be three times larger than the crowded Cox Road location. Scheduled to open next September, the new facility will be built in the township's downtown, across from Lakota West High School. The branch will have open spaces, a cafe, an outdoor reading garden and other amenities.

HAMILTON CO.

Dog tag remains \$13

The dog licensing fee in Hamilton County will remain \$13 – one of the lowest rates in the region – for at least another year. County commissioners Wednesday declined to raise the fee. It was their last chance to raise it to be effective in 2009. An initial proposal by the county's budget office suggested an increase to \$27 to offset what the county spends on dog warden services. That proposal was later revised to \$19. Commissioners declined both options. Instead they want to focus on getting more people to license their dogs. Fewer than half are licensed. The county SPCA will ramp up outreach efforts and look into partnerships with businesses and veterinary offices. For information on dog licensing visit www.hamiltoncountyauditor.org/dogs.asp.

MOUNT HEALTHY

Porn accusation recanted

A charge against a Mount Healthy foster parent and day-care operator was dismissed because a 10-year-old boy recanted his story that he was shown computer porn at the center, a prosecutor's spokeswoman said Wednesday. Charles V. Day, who ran Day Adventures out of the basement of Emmanuel Temple Apostolic Church on Compton Road, faced a misdemeanor charge of disseminating material harmful to a juvenile. The boy told authorities that he had seen computer images at the day care of adults and cartoon characters having sex. Day had denied the allegation. An 8-year-old foster child that Butler County had placed with Day was removed from his College Hill home when allegations surfaced in March.

BUTLER CO.

More parents paying up

A six-month effort to track down parents who owe back child support is paying off, Butler County Robin Piper said. An investigator has tracked down and apprehended 28 parents owing more than \$500,000 in back support to their children. About \$80,000 already has been collected, he said. Many of the parents had felony warrants and had been evading prosecution for years, Piper said. Anyone with tips on the whereabouts of parents wanted for non-support can call 513-785-6597.

Share

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W. Chester needs 'tax partner'

By Amber Ellis
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Township searches for city to help it create special district

WEST CHESTER TWP. – The search for potential partners to help create a special taxing district as part of the deal to bring more than 1,000 GE Aviation jobs to the township has been narrowed to three cities: Monroe, Hamilton or Fairfield.

West Chester plans to create a joint economic development district that will charge those new workers an income tax in return

for a property tax break offered to the company. But to do so, the township must get help from a nearby city.

West Chester, which borders parts of Warren and Hamilton counties, could have picked cities in either of those counties. But trustees say they prefer to partner with a Butler County community.

Meanwhile, Springdale, a

Hamilton County city that is losing 1,130 GE jobs along with more than \$1 million a year from its 1.5 percent earnings tax, could end up getting some money from West Chester, said Township Administrator Judi Boyko.

The township is considering giving Springdale a small, temporary cut of the special taxing district revenue. It is unclear how much money would be involved.

"It is important to make sure they are strong because their success is critical to our success," said Trustee Lee Wong.

GE Aviation expects to start moving employees from Springdale to West Chester next year.

Once the move is complete, GE Aviation will become one of Butler County's biggest employers.

To beat other communities vy-

ing for the GE project, West Chester offered a 100 percent property tax abatement for up to 15 years. The agreement means a \$200,000 annual property tax loss for the township. But the new 1 percent earnings tax could generate more than \$1 million a year.

Lakota schools will get \$256,000 per year for the property taxes they would have collected from the GE site.

'It has polarized the city of Lebanon.'

Gerald Miller, 71, president of the Lebanon Conservancy Foundation



Provided

In Lebanon, the Stevens House, built in the 1880s, is the center of a preservation battle. The Lebanon Library Board has asked to tear it down and replace it with a small pocket park.

Library, preservationists argue over 1880s house

By Elaine Trumpey
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LEBANON – An anticipated showdown between preservationist forces and the Lebanon Library Board didn't materialize at Tuesday's City Council meeting, but there was still plenty of talk about the controversy.

At issue is the fate of the Stevens House, built in the 1880s at 23 W. Main St., and vacant since 2002.

The house isn't on the National Registry of Historic Homes, but it is part of a historic overlay district that requires a special certificate in order for it to be torn down.

The Lebanon library purchased the house in 1991 along with two other buildings that have since been demolished. The library wants to convert the property into a pocket park.

But in a city that takes deep pride in the phrase, "historic downtown Lebanon," the library board's plan has raised the ire of two preservation groups: the Lebanon Conservancy Foundation and the Warren County Historical Society.

"It has polarized the city of Lebanon," said Gerald Miller, 71, president of the Lebanon Conservancy Foundation.

A map on display at the organization's headquarters shows a loss of 211 houses in the 16-block-business district between 1955 and 1999. The foundation wants the demolitions to stop, he said.

The library board had filed an "economic hardship appeal" to demolish the house, arguing that it could not afford to spend \$500,000 to make the building serviceable for library or public functions. But the Lebanon Planning Commission turned down

that appeal, deciding that the building was structurally sound and didn't pose a health or safety threat.

Now, the decision is up to City Council.

A vote cannot be taken until Sept. 15 because a public hearing must be held. Tuesday's meeting didn't take place because property owners who live within 250 feet of the house didn't receive proper written notice.

Mayor Amy Brewer did allow members of the audience to address council anyway. But more comments will be heard before council votes.

Bruce McGary, assistant Warren County prosecutor and legal counsel to the library board, will present the library's side at the September meeting. Citizens on both sides of the issue, including some who spoke Tuesday, also are expected to address council.

Arts center ready to open in Sharonville

New life for donated building

By Carrie Whitaker
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SHARONVILLE – There's no trace of the tree that was growing out of the floor of the gallery, and the theater lacks simply a curtain. The Sharonville Fine Arts Center is ready for business.

"You can see plays taking place on the stage, or somebody doing a piano recital," said Gayla Price, a Sharonville Fine Arts Council board member.

About five years ago, Price and three other women, Sue Koetz, Janey Kattelman and Robin Kurlas, formed the Sharonville Fine Arts Council. They envisioned the Act I Cinema at Reading and Creek roads becoming an epicenter for Sharonville arts; a place for theater, film, photography, painting and sculpture.

The structure – built in the 1920s as a vaudeville theater – was falling apart when the city donated it to the council, but now the building is ready for an open house Sept. 20 from 1-5 p.m.

"With any project of this nature you have some glitches, but everybody has really worked together and kept focused," Price said.

Kattelman, who is a city councilwoman, said money donations combined with the donated labor and construction materials have been well over \$1 million. But the group must raise an additional \$325,000 to pay for completion of the project, Price said.

"I am putting out the plea," Price said. "I'm hoping we can raise it."

Whether they raise it, or have to bite the bullet and get



The Enquirer/Mike Nyerges

a loan, Kattelman said she's thrilled with the final product – from the theater seats that come in small, medium and large sizes, to Gilkey's custom (and donated) floor-to-ceiling windows in the gallery.

The building has already been used for at least two events. "People came in off the street to buy tickets" to a play by home-school children, Kattelman said. Just last week, Sharonville Mayor Virgil Lovitt held his campaign kick-off there as the GOP candidate for the 28th District Ohio House of Representatives seat.

"I wanted people across the region coming to see how well it turned out," Lovitt said. "I think it will be good for our business community in our downtown loop."

The next step – after raising the \$325,000 – is to build a children's and sculpture garden behind and on the south side of the property, Kattelman said.

"All we need is some wonderful, generous person who owns a nursery who would want to help us," Kattelman said.

Good Things Happening

Construction foundation to give awards

The Spirit of Construction Foundation will honor four people who have made significant contributions to the industry with Lifetime Career Achievement Awards at its 13th annual banquet on Oct. 18.

The award winners are: Dennis Denier, president of Denier Electric Co.; and retirees Elda Marshall, former executive director of Home Builders Association of Greater Cincinnati; George Newport, sales manager, Morraine Materials Co.; Janell Concrete and Masonry Equipment Co., and Thomas L. Neyer Sr., chairman of Al Neyer Inc.

A posthumous award will be given to Joe Glassmeyer, formerly with Messer Construction.



Provided

Lifetime career achievement awards will be given to Dennis Denier (from left), Thomas L. Neyer Sr. and George "Dewey" Newport. Another recipient, Elda Marshall, is not shown. The award to Joe Glassmeyer will be posthumous.

Larry Rayburn, chairman of the board for Richard Goettle Inc., is chairing the event, and former Miss America Heather French Henry will emcee. USI Midwest is presenting sponsor.

Patron tickets are \$250 for an individual for the reception, dinner and program, and \$2,500 for a table of 10. Regular tickets are \$150 per individual and \$1,500, table of 10. Proceeds will benefit the Spirit of Construction Foundation's Construction Careers Initiative. For reservations go to www.spiritofconstruction.org. For more information, e-mail SpiritCon@aol.com or call 513-304-3633.

Scholarships awarded

Eight recent graduates received scholarships from the Cincinnati Alumni Foundation of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.:

Derick A. Sekyere, attending Miami University, and Roderick S. Fitzgerald Jr., University of Cincinnati, graduates of Winton Woods High School; Christopher D. Jordan (Ohio Northern University) and Cameron Boyd (Case Western Reserve), Wyoming High grads; William H. Harper and Vaughn D. Rosser, (both at Morehouse College in Atlanta), graduates of Princeton

High; and Herman Jones Jr. (Ohio State) and Umar A. Salaam (Ohio University), both from Withrow High.

The scholarships were presented Aug. 8 at the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity house in Walnut Hills at its annual Fred G. Heisel Grant-in-Aid Reception.

The foundation has awarded stipends to high school graduates for 26 years. The stipends are funded through the foundation's annual golf outing.

Grandparents go bowling

Grandparents are usually the spectators, cheering their grandchildren on in sporting events.

But in the first Wii Bowling Tournament, hosted by the Deupree House in Oakley at 7 p.m. today, the grandparents are the participants and the grandchildren are doing the cheering.

Wii bowling is a Nintendo

game that allows people – regardless of their physical abilities – to bowl using a hand-held device about the size of a portable phone.

The tournament will feature seven teams, consisting of one Deupree House resident and one staff member.

Victoria Pagan, Deupree House wellness coordinator, said that while typical retirement activities consist of shuffleboard, croquet, quilting and pinochle, Deupree House residents have challenged themselves to compete in more modern, electronic ways.

"As a community of Episcopal Retirement Homes, Deupree House values the dimensions of wellness to enrich the body, mind and spirit," Pagan said.

Golf classic Friday

The Teen Mentoring Committee is presenting the James Choppy Saunders Golf Classic for Youth on Friday at Weatherwax Golf Course, Middletown.

Registration is at 10:30 a.m., with shotgun start at noon. Entry fees: \$125 individual and \$500 for a foursome.

The Mentoring Teen Committee works with parents, schools and community organizations to provide leadership for youths.

For more information, call 513-727-3233.



If you have a story about a student, resident or volunteer group that's making a difference, contact Allen Howard at 513-768-8362, ahoward@enquirer.com, or 513-768-8340 (fax). Or go online to Cincinnati.Com/share.