

**SELECTED STORIES**  
**By LEONARD “LEN” PENIX**  
**REPRESENTING NEWS AND FEATURE FORMATS**

Leonard N. Penix, J.D., has written more than 7,500 published articles over the course of his 30-year career in daily newspaper journalism, many distributed nationwide via the Scripps-Howard and Associated Press wire services. More than half have been published online. These are samples from the major categories of newspaper writing: police, courts, short features, environmental affairs, government and politics, health and human services, education and business.

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# POLICE

*This is one in a series of profiles Professor Penix has written for The Post about so-called "2 percenters," or hard-core bikers who lead a sophisticated, multi-state crime syndicate. This story was written about the Outlaws, a national group with thousands of members and a club in Dayton, Ohio. It was published shortly after a shootout between the Outlaws and a rival Cincinnati gang called the Iron Horsemen at Vic's Brew and Cue, a bar in Clermont County. More than 350 rounds were exchanged during the shootout, police said.*

**Jan. 28, 1989**

The distant chorus of a hundred Harleys began to pierce the cemetery quiet. The thanatotic moan grew louder, became a roar, then a deafening dirge, as the army of bikers entered the cemetery gates. Police officers in a dozen cruisers, afraid of causing a disturbance, waited just beyond the gates as the Outlaws arrived Friday to bury one of their own.

Kenneth R. Hammond, 44, past president of the Outlaws motorcycle club in Dayton, was slain during a shoot-out last Saturday at a Mt. Carmel bar. Police believe Hammond, an Eagle Scout and the son of a police sergeant, was killed by a member of the Iron Horsemen, a rival club.

The exhaust smoke from the motorcycles became a fog swept by the chilling wind across Hammond's empty grave before vanishing. Behind the caravan of motorcycles were about 50 vans, trucks and cars. One man got off his Harley and started barking orders above the sound of the engines to the others:

"Let's move it! If you see any Horsemen, shoot them"

Within two minutes, more than 300 Outlaws they had used their motorcycles to block off all exits from the cemetery with near-military precision, blocking all who remained inside.

"Man, I don't like this," said a nervous Charles Alexander, 41, of Middletown, the man responsible for burying Hammond at Bear Creek Cemetery. He nervously watched the police cruisers abandon the cemetery's front gate and looked at the gang of bikers who had dismounted their Harleys and had begun gathering around the gravesite. "I hope they're not packing guns."

Without warning, 75 of the bikers nearest Hammond's grave removed revolvers they had concealed in their black leather jackets. They fired simultaneously, letting off about 100 rounds into the air in tribute to their dead comrade. The live ammunition left a blue cloud of gun smoke hanging eerily above the gravesite for nearly five minutes.

After the guns were fired, one of the bikers said a few words:

"We are gathered here today to bury one of our brothers. He was a good man. That's it."

Nothing else was said, although a few of the bikers wept openly as the group slowly walked away from the gravesite.

Hammond's grave lay at the end of a neat row of identical headstones for seven other Outlaws who have died since 1975. All have been buried at Bear Creek Cemetery off U.S. 35.

Inscribed on each polished granite stone at the mostly vacant southeast corner of the cemetery, near the woods, was the skull and crossbones club insignia. "This is the Outlaws cemetery," said Alexander. "If you look at the age of the Outlaws on those stones, not a one of them hardly is over 30. Live hard, die young, I guess."

Alexander buried the last president of the Outlaws, Louis "Fat Louie" Michael Perrico, who was 29 on July 20, 1980, when he died. Hammond was buried beside him.

Barely over 5 feet tall, Perrico weighed close to 400 pounds, Alexander said. Perrico collapsed during a party in Franklin from an apparent heart attack.

"They left him on a pool table for three days before they moved him. Then they left him on the bar for a day," said Alexander, who is friends with some members of the club.

"They strapped the body on the back of a motorcycle and drove him around. They wanted to set him on fire, but they (cemetery officials) wouldn't let them do it."

The Outlaws are an international organization, according to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department. Club members from Canada, Toledo, Detroit, Louisville, Illinois, Iowa, Alabama, Kentucky, California, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and other states attended Hammond's funeral Friday.

A few of the Outlaws were brought to the graveside in wheelchairs, and one needed a cane to walk. Some had gray hair, but most appeared to be in their 20s. One had white bandages covering his entire chest, visible from his open jacket, and two other Outlaws helped him walk.

"Probably someone who lived through the shootout," Alexander whispered.

The son of the late Elmer Hammond, a West Carrollton police sergeant, Hammond was a Vietnam War veteran. When he was killed, he was carrying the slug from a bullet wound received during a shootout between the Outlaws and Iron Horsemen about 15 years ago. He never got the slug removed to avoid being connected to the shoot-out, police believe.

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*This story was written about serial killer John Fautenberry, one of several murderers Professor Penix has profiled for The Cincinnati Post. John Fautenberry touched the lives of many people across the country as he moved restlessly from city to city, and police say his touch was deadly. After he allegedly murdered a Milford insurance executive Feb. 17, 1990, and dumped his body in Anderson Township, local authorities began to peel away the layers of his suspected crime spree. They found bodies in four states, a list of lesser crimes and a man whose rage had built since he was abandoned by his father. This story looks at the life of John Fautenberry and how it touched the tri-state.*

**April 20, 1991**

John Fautenberry liked fast cars, flashy revolvers and never called one place home for long. Blond, tall and muscular, he liked to travel, smoke pot, drink beer and party with women, some of them married, say those who knew him. He also liked to read and was intelligent, said his stepfather.

But in November, police said Fautenberry, who has lived in Norwood and Clermont County, developed a new appetite -- for murder. Police say he murdered five people, including a Milford man, during a four-month, coast-to-coast killing spree.

The trail of bodies includes New Jersey, Oregon, Alaska and Anderson Township, where the body of Joseph Daron was found in March, according to police.

"Did you ever meet someone that was nice, but you get an eerie feeling about him?" said one woman who worked with Fautenberry at A-One Cleaners in Pleasant Ridge and dated him once.

"There was something about him . . . I had no obvious reason to feel that way, but that's just the way he made me feel."

Her suspicions were correct. Fautenberry later assaulted and nearly killed her girlfriend, a co-worker at the cleaners.

"He left her for dead, and never came back to work after that," said the 26-year-old woman, who asked not to be identified. "I was lucky with him."

Fautenberry was born July 4, 1963, in New London, Conn. Two years later, his father, John Yuchniuk, deserted his family, leaving them impoverished.

His mother, Joan Marie Gargano, later married a career Navy man, Robert Fautenberry, whom she met at a submarine base in Groton, Conn., when her son was about 10 years old. The military man adopted the boy and his sister, Kristine, who now lives in Cherry Grove, giving them his name.

### **Mood swings**

Fautenberry never recovered from his father deserting him, and tried repeatedly to re-establish a relationship with him, said his stepfather. Yuchniuk, however, always rejected him.

The boy then grew moody, his stepfather said, and liked to be alone and read. "He could be very warm-hearted to you or he could be extremely cold, just depending on what day it is, or who you are," said the retired U.S. Navy senior petty officer.

"He's quite intelligent," his stepfather said, but said his stepson did not enjoy school.

"School always seemed to be slow, too slow for him under most circumstances. So he was a dropout. We sent him to school in the morning, but he never went to classes.

"I think a lot of his problem has been his abuse of drugs and alcohol. The reason he left home finally was because he was endangering my career by his abuse of marijuana. He was driving one of my cars on the base, smoking marijuana with a beer between his legs."

Fautenberry attended public schools in Norwich, Conn., before his mother remarried.

Afterward, he attended Radford High School in Honolulu, Hawaii, where his stepfather was stationed.

He dropped out before his scheduled graduation in 1981, and later got a GED certificate. None of his teachers at Radford remember him.

"This is a highly transient school," said Radford Principal Robert Golden. "Seventy-six percent are transient, and 80 percent of our students are in the military. No one remembers him."

Fautenberry had the word "Hawaii" tattooed on his left shoulder and a devil's head on his right bicep.

After dropping out of school, he traveled to Atlanta.

He was arrested for petty theft in 1983 in Fulton County, Ga., and was placed on probation.

### **A mother's death**

About two years later his mother died in North Kingstown, R.I., at the age of 42. Her death may have triggered his alleged propensity for murder, serial killer experts say.

His mother may have "kept him in line emotionally, psychologically or physically" said Ronald Holmes, a professor of criminal justice at the University of Louisville.

Holmes has interviewed Ted Bundy, John Gacy, Wayne Williams and other notorious serial killers. Fautenberry may have suppressed his violent temper out of respect for his mother, Holmes speculates.

Her death may have removed this need to suppress his violent fantasies, Holmes said. His stepfather said Fautenberry was rarely disciplined in the family.

"Until now, he has never had to answer for his conduct," he said. "I was hesitant to be too stern on John because I realized he had a tough childhood."

### **The move to Ohio**

In 1985, Fautenberry moved to the Batavia area in Clermont County and later rented a small apartment at 2422 Quatman Ave. in Norwood.

He worked for six weeks at Gerdson Comfort Center in Price Hill and for almost a year at A-One Cleaners.

He was a truck driver at A-One, delivering shirts and laundry to various commercial customers.

"He seemed to be a good worker," said the co-worker who dated him once.

She said he seemed to like revolvers, treating them like toys.

"He came in the office one day and said, 'I just bought a gun,' and I said, 'What did you buy a gun for?' This was when he first started working here. He said he always shot at a target range and wanted to know if I wanted to go target shooting with him.

"We went to this place in Sharonville and shot at targets. We went back to my place, and he drank a beer and left. He was a complete gentleman. He said, 'I was thinking about dating you,' and I said, 'No, I have a boyfriend,' and that was it. He was a complete gentleman."

He later started dating another employee of A-One Cleaners, and they became romantically involved.

The relationship ended in violence.

### **Girlfriend beaten**

In October 1986 his new girlfriend alleged Fautenberry beat and suffocated her until she passed out. She has asked to not be identified. She also alleged he used his new gun, a .38-caliber revolver, to make her withdraw money from her savings.

In addition, he allegedly used it to force her to sign the title of her pickup truck over to him, which he successfully registered in his name on Jan. 14, 1986, according to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

He was convicted on Jan. 6, 1987, for carrying a concealed weapon and nine days later for misdemeanor assault. He was placed on three years probation.

Richard Beatty, his Hamilton County probation officer, said, "I never had any problems with him. He never got ugly with me. He was always nice. But you could see he had some anger hidden below the surface."

Fautenberry applied in 1987 for a transfer to the court probation system in Oregon.

### **Lost father found**

He began calling his real father, who was living in Christmas Valley, a rural town of about 100 people in south-central Oregon.

He made repeated phone calls and wrote letters, but his father did not want to re-establish a relationship, said Tom Nelson, a police detective in Portland, Ore.

His father eventually relented, however, allowing him to move in April 1987 to his farm. His father was a hard-working farmer, Nelson said, and expected his son to be the same.

Fautenberry, however, liked to do little but drive trucks, having taken a mail-order course in commercial driving.

"He started thinking his dad only wanted him there to work. The two quarreled, and it didn't work out, and he decided to leave the farm," Nelson said.

He moved in with his father's estranged wife, a woman 14 years his senior, and stayed with her in Gresham, near Portland, for three years, until his probation was over.

They had a sexual relationship, said Nelson. Then, in February 1990, Fautenberry took a job as a truck driver with Pacific Western in Portland.

As a truck driver, he did almost whatever he pleased, staying in a state longer than he was supposed to and delivering loads days late, said James Digby, owner of a Nashville, Tenn., trucking firm that did business with Pacific Western.

Doug Collins, manager of Pacific Western, eventually fired him.

### **The deaths begin**

Police said he returned to Oregon, almost broke, and killed and robbed truck driver Don Ray Nutley, 47, after inviting him to go target shooting.

Fautenberry returned to the Cincinnati area in November 1990, and rented an apartment in Amelia in December and January, said Miami Township Police Det. Cliff Rowland.

Fautenberry then traveled to Bloomsbury, N.J., where on Feb. 5 he met another truck driver, Gary Farmer, 27.

Fautenberry killed him, stole his watch and wallet and left his body in the cab of his truck, charges Hunterdon County, N.J., prosecutor Sharon Ransavage. She, Hamilton County Prosecutor Art Ney and prosecutors from two other states where Fautenberry allegedly murdered people plan to meet next Friday. They will discuss where Fautenberry will go on trial first.

Fautenberry returned to Clermont County in February and moved in with his sister in Union Township.

Police believe Fautenberry was probably hitchhiking Feb. 17 near Interstate 275 when Daron, 45, an insurance executive, picked him up, possibly feeling sorry for a man on the street on such a cold night.

Fautenberry was indicted for killing Daron and dumping his body along U.S. 52 near River Downs in Anderson Township.

He returned to his sister's home, loaded Daron's stolen car with his belongings and left for Portland, Miami Township police said.

At a party in Portland on Feb. 23, he picked up Christine Guthrie, 32. She left the party with him willingly.

Later, against her will, she went with him to Rockaway Beach, Ore., and checked into the Silver Sands Motel, said Portland, Ore., Police Det. Mike Hefley. Her body was later found off a logging trail near Hillsboro, Ore. Fautenberry returned to the same motel a few days later, Hefley said. "He was just as friendly as he could be," said Anna Modrell, manager of the Silver Sands. "He wasn't a smart aleck. He was polite. "The first time he checked in with the girl, Christine Guthrie, and came back a second time and had a guy and two gals with him.

They were partying and drinking. They went out and bought a kite . . . and were on the beach flying (it).

"He was outgoing, liked to smile and laugh. I guess you can't tell by looking at a person what he is. You just can't tell." Fautenberry wound up in Juneau, Alaska, where on March 13 he allegedly killed Jeffrey Diffie, a 39-year-old silver mine worker. Fautenberry is being held in a Juneau jail in lieu of \$3 million bail.

### **The case against John Fautenberry**

John Fautenberry has been charged or indicted in the deaths of five people.

They are:

- Don Ray Nutley, 47, of Lacy-Lakeview, Texas, who disappeared in November after going target shooting with Fautenberry in Mt. Hood National Forest. The two men first met at a truck stop in Troutdale, Ore., east of Portland.
- Gary M. Farmer, 27, a Springfield, Tenn., truck driver, whose body was found Feb. 5 in the cab of his truck parked in Bloomsbury, N.J. Police believe a watch and wallet later recovered from Fautenberry belonged to Farmer.
- Joseph Daron, 45, of Mulberry, near Milford, disappeared Feb. 17 after police believe he picked up Fautenberry while he was hitch-hiking. Daron's body was recovered last month in a wooded area in Anderson Township off U.S. 52 and near River Downs.
- Christine Guthrie disappeared Feb. 26 after meeting Fautenberry at a party in the Portland, Ore. area. Her body was later recovered near Hillsboro, Ore.
- Jeffrey Diffie, a 39-year-old silver mine worker, killed March 13 in Juneau, Alaska. Fautenberry allegedly beat Diffie to force him to provide his bank card number before later killing him. Fautenberry is now being held in lieu of \$3 million in bail in Juneau.

### **May 16, 1991**

The voice from the jail cell was calm, matter-of-fact, in describing the murders. John Fautenberry, 27, accused of killing five people during a coast-to-coast killing spree that began in November, bared his soul in a jail house interview.

Fautenberry, formerly of Clermont County, called from the Lemon Creek Correctional Facility near Juneau, Alaska, where he is being held on murder charges.

One of the crimes he discussed was the fatal shooting of Joseph Daron, 45, of Mulberry, Ohio, near Milford, who disappeared Feb. 17. Daron had given a lift to a hitchhiking Fautenberry on U.S. 52, where his body was later discovered.

"I don't think he had a reaction," said Fautenberry of Daron. "He didn't have time. First chance I had when he wasn't looking, that's when I shot him." Fautenberry said he felt guilty about the killings, but not enough to stop. "I felt a little remorse, quite a bit actually, but evidently not enough," said Fautenberry.



In addition to Daron, Fautenberry's alleged victims include: Don Ray Nutley, 47, of Lacy-Lakeview, Texas, killed east of Portland in November; Gary M. Farmer, 27, a Springfield, Tenn. truck driver, whose body was found Feb. 5 in Bloomsbury, N.J.; Christine Guthrie, who disappeared Feb. 26 and was last seen alive in Rockaway Beach, Ore., and Jeffrey Diffie, a 39-year-old silver mine worker, killed March 13 in Juneau.

"I've had a lot of hate. . .hatred and resentment in my life. . .at everything, you know?" said Fautenberry.

"And then when I shot this guy (Nutley) in Portland it, I guess it seemed to feel better, you know. I took it out on somebody else."

Fautenberry said the string of shootings began shortly after he lost his job in Portland as a cross-country trucker.

Strapped for cash, Yaw said Fautenberry told him he headed for a truck stop near Portland where he met Nutley.

"He was into drugs and all this stuff and that's how I met him - that's how I conned him into going away with me into the mountains to go target shooting."

Fautenberry said he shot and killed Nutley and stole "about \$10,000 cash" from him. He said he killed Farmer because Farmer made a homosexual advance toward him.

Fautenberry's attorney, Peggy Burke, a public defender in Juneau, said she had no idea he was going to participate in any news interview.

"I had no knowledge he was going to do this. I think this, along with other things I can't share at this point, present grave concerns about whether he may be competent to stand trial and participate in his own defense," she said.

She said she may file a motion soon for a court order declaring him incompetent to stand trial.

Corrections officials in Alaska said Fautenberry used a razor blade to make a small cut in one of his wrists early Sunday. Fautenberry was placed in a special safety cell and is under stricter surveillance, officials said.

Dick Franklin, director of institutions for the Alaska Corrections Department, said the injury appeared to have been more of a cry for help than a serious suicide attempt.

Fautenberry called guards immediately after cutting himself, Franklin said. He was treated at the prison; the cut required three stitches.

Fautenberry is being held in Juneau on \$3 million bail. He has pleaded innocent in the Juneau case and is to stand trial there July 22.

Juneau Police Capt. Mel Personett said he would be interested in a copy of the interview, which possibly could be used as evidence against Fautenberry.

"It's interesting that he (Fautenberry) would talk to anyone," said Hamilton County Prosecutor Arthur Ney.

Ney was uncertain, however, whether the Ohio Rules of Evidence would allow the interview to be used against Fautenberry at his upcoming trial in Cincinnati.

Fautenberry is to go on trial in Cincinnati for the murder of Daron after proceedings are finished in Juneau.

"He comes across as an average guy," said Ney. "You have these ideas in your mind, that a serial killer would act so much different. But as you talk to him, he comes across as an average guy and you could see how he could lure these people to their death."

*This story was one of several written during and following the recent wave of rioting and violence that plagued Cincinnati and the reforms made -- some more willingly than others -- by the city police department to improve relations with the African-American community.*

## **February 26, 2002**

Responding to stinging criticism from the U.S. Department of Justice, the Cincinnati Police Division has revamped its policies governing the use of deadly force, choke holds, chemical irritants and how citizen complaints are handled.

The new policies were unveiled in a 26-page response to a justice department report issued in October recommending more than 90 changes in how Cincinnati police operate.

Mayor Charlie Luken asked for the federal review after the April riots and criticism of police procedures by African-Americans and others.

The federal report specifically recommended changes in the department's policy on the use of choke holds, and the police division agrees this must be done.

Officers Robert "Blaine" Jorg and Patrick Caton were recently acquitted in the death of Roger Owensby Jr. who died following a choke hold.

The police department in the future will forbid the use of choke holds except when the use of deadly force is appropriate to save a life.

The report also said the division needs to make changes in how citizen complaints are handled, and police agree.

In the future, the division's internal investigations unit will investigate all complaints alleging improper use of force by officers. Previously, they were referred to the Citizen Complaint Review Process.

In addition, the city will publish a pamphlet informing residents how they can file complaints against officers, and police supervisors will get more training in handling complaints.

Further, police will create a tracking system costing at least \$4 million to more carefully record the actions of officers in high-speed pursuits, use of force such as shooting firearms and in other duties. The justice department also alleged the department's policy on the use of force needs clarification, and the department agrees.

Current policy says officers may use force to perform their duty. This will be changed so that officers will be permitted to use force only when reasonably necessary to make an arrest or protect themselves and others.

In addition, police will restrict the use of "find and bite" dogs for arrests of felons or violent offenders.

The report also recommended that officers guilty of serious misconduct should receive serious discipline.

The division agrees and says officers who do wrong will be disciplined. Cincinnati City Council Member Chris Monzel applauded the police division's response. "It seems like they have agreed to a majority of what the Department of Justice was saying. I think it's a good sign."

Phil Heimlich, who as a former City Council member often took the lead on police issues, called the response "a truly good faith effort to work with the justice department and to move forward with those recommendations that make sense. I believe our police department did a very thorough job."

Some of the changes recommended in the federal report were rejected:

- The department will still encourage citizens to file complaints in person.
- The city will not require officers to report every instance when they unholster their gun.
- Officers will receive more training in making decisions on the use of force and firearms.

*This is a routine crime story:*

## **January 4, 2001**

**H**igh on cocaine and armed with a pistol and stun gun, Milford restaurateur Robert A. Snead broke into a house in Union Township intending to act out a sexual fantasy similar to those depicted in his pornography collection, police say.

However, after entering the house early New Year's Day, stunning and binding a man and his girlfriend and forcing them to take sleeping pills, Snead lost his nerve and held his victims hostage before he was shot by police, authorities say. In good condition at University Hospital recovering from the gunshot wound, Snead was indicted Wednesday by a Clermont County grand jury on six counts of kidnapping, three counts of felonious assault, and two counts of aggravated burglary.

The co-owner of the Mill Street Manor, formerly called the Millcroft, Snead is well-known in Milford and Miami Township.

He operated a food booth at a recent "Taste of Milford-Miami Township" festival and had planned to start a catering business.

Union Township police say Snead made a bedside confession at University Hospital while recovering from his gunshot wound.

They say he told them he was using cocaine while driving around after New Year's Eve, looking for a place to act out his bondage and rape fantasies. He selected a house at random at 5116 Romohr Road, entered the driveway, lost his nerve, and left, police said.

He told investigators he then ingested more cocaine, drove back to the house and entered with a handgun, stun gun, plastic binding rope, latex gloves, mask, a digital camera and tools.

He told police, according to documents filed Wednesday in Clermont County Common Pleas Court, that he intended to act out a sexual fantasy by

raping a female after binding her. However, he told police he lost his nerve when he realized his victims were afraid.

The house he entered belongs to James Stephens, who was home with his girlfriend, Christy J. Carter, and four children, according to Union Township Police Lt. Mark Griffith. The children slept throughout the entire incident and were not harmed, Lt. Griffith said.

Griffith said Snead, of Overlook Drive, was not acquainted with Stephens or Ms. Carter, and never sexually assaulted the woman or used the video camera.

Snead entered the house through an open garage door at 1:20 a.m. wearing a mask and brandishing the gun and stun device, police said. He ordered Stephens to bind the hands of Ms. Carter behind her back with the plastic tie, then placed her on the couch.

Afterwards, police said, he bound the hands of Stephens and gave him and Ms. Carter each two capsules of Soma, a pain killer that causes sleep, and subsequently used his stun gun several times on both victims.

He then forced Stephens to the basement, secured him in a standing position to a pole, and then returned to Ms. Carter and forced her to a rear bedroom.

He apparently became worried Stephens would escape and returned to the basement, untied him from the pole, and re-secured him to a hot water heater. He threatened to kill him if he escaped, police said.

Ms. Carter told police Snead put a plastic garbage bag over her head and rebound her hands in front of her.

Meanwhile, Stephens managed to escape from the basement, and went to a neighbor's house to call police.

Police arrived at 3:53 a.m. and found Snead, wearing a mask, in a bedroom hallway.

Police said they ordered him not to move, but he took a .45-caliber handgun from his waistband, and began to raise the weapon toward an officer, who fired one shot. Union Township police did not identify the officer who discharged his firearm.

Police later searched Snead's home in Milford where they recovered pornographic literature on rape and bondage.

Also recovered were three plastic tie restraints like those used in the crime, several pornographic photos and video tapes, a flashlight, rubber gloves, marijuana, pipes used for smoking marijuana, latex gloves and other items.

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## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

*The following story was one of the first articles Professor Penix wrote about an emerging problem in 1989 in Cincinnati: babies born addicted to the cocaine their mothers ingested during pregnancy. Ohio Governor Richard Celeste invited Professor Penix to a televised forum he convened for finding solutions to the problem of "non-consolable babies." Eventually a task force was formed that had only a moderate impact in slowing the problem, which is worse than ever today*

**May 6, 1989**

**T**hey are born screaming for their lives, and no amount of hugging or cuddling will help them stop. Sometimes they just stop breathing. Others cannot eat or tremble constantly. They are the sons and daughters of mothers who used cocaine during pregnancy.

They are called "non-consolable babies," children born addicted to the cocaine their mothers used during pregnancy, and their numbers are doubling every year. Almost unheard of four years ago, they are now born every week.

And it is going to get worse, much worse. "I don't think the mass effect has hit us yet ... but it will," said Dr. Tariq Siddiqi, director of obstetrics at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center. His colleagues agree: "It used to be rare, now it is a big problem," said Dr. Reginald Tsang, a University Hospital expert on treating the illnesses of newborns.

Many babies, ravaged by cocaine pumping through their veins at birth, suffer seizures, as well as uncontrollable trembling. The nurses call them "'non-consolable babies,'" Gov Richard Celeste said. "They can't stop screaming. And they can't be comforted by holding, cuddling or rocking. They begin to withdraw from society at the moment they are born," Gov. Celeste said.

The numbers paint a tragic picture:

- **Two babies** were born with cocaine addiction in 1985 at University Hospital, Tsang said. The number tripled to six in 1986, and almost tripled again to 17 in 1987, he said.
- **Last year**, there were 35 babies born at University suffering the effects of cocaine addiction, twice last year's number.
- **At Bethesda** Oak Hospital, which led the state last year with 5,381 births, one or two cocaine-addicted babies are born every month. Good Samaritan Hospital reports a similar number born suffering from cocaine withdrawal.

The total number of cocaine-dependent babies born in Cincinnati is unavailable. But Tsang believes many babies have been born and never diagnosed as having cocaine in their blood streams. However, they may later be diagnosed as mentally retarded, he said.

Cincinnati still has far fewer cocaine-addicted babies than other areas, said Tsang, director of the Perinatal Research Institute at Childrens Hospital.

""My colleagues at other hospitals say they have a lot more problems in other parts of the country.

The problem appears to be worse in Dayton, Ohio. Celeste said 15 to 20 babies "whose veins are filled with cocaine" are born monthly at Good Samaritan and Miami Valley hospitals in Dayton.

However, Siddiqi said the problem has only recently surfaced in Cincinnati. As the prominence of cocaine use grows in Cincinnati, so will its effects on babies, he said. "It seems like the dealers haven't discovered Cincinnati as a large market yet," Siddiqi said. "As it moves more and more into the Midwest, and into Cincinnati, we will get affected as much as any place else."

There is often little that can be done for a baby suffering the agonizing effects of withdrawal from cocaine addiction. "You wait until the cocaine wears off and hope for the best," said Tsang. "If the babies are trembling or are about to have a seizure, we give them sedatives to calm them down. They may be put in incubators for problems breathing."

Infants born addicted to cocaine run an increased risk of suffering from breathing abnormalities, said Dr. Ira Chasnoff, associate professor of pediatrics and psychiatry at Northwestern University Medical School. Chasnoff said researchers suspect there may be a link between cocaine-induced breathing problems and sudden infant death syndrome.

Tsang said cocaine use during pregnancy "poisons the nerves or brain," of the unborn "at a very formative state. It's their most vulnerable period. When the poison attacks the brains or nerves, they are impaired, and it may be a life-long impairment."

He said babies born from mothers using cocaine may be mild to moderately mentally retarded and are often premature. Their heads may be smaller than normal, with enlarged pupils, a thin mouth, receded chin, and have poor muscle tone and coordination. Few will probably ever reach their full physical or intellectual potential, he said.

## SHORT FEATURES

*The following are excerpts from Mr. Penix's long-running "People" column, which profiled people of interest to Post readers:*

**H**is whispery voice, weakened from cancer that threatened his life, rarely failed to strike fear in the guilty and always commanded compassion for the innocent.

For 13 years, Clermont County Common Pleas Court Judge John Watson has dispensed justice in Batavia. He has given thousands of thieves, murderers and other crooks their just deserts.

Friday, he hangs up his robe and retires. He will be replaced by Jerry McBride.

Watson was never reluctant to stand up to police who failed to make their case, yet he was not afraid to look a cold-blooded murderer in the eye and order him to his death.

And he has looked out for the interests of the victim long before it was fashionable.

He knows what it is like to be a victim of crime. Thieves have stolen his car, jewelry, money, golf clubs, radios and have broken into both his house and motor home.

Once, thieves even stole his gavel.

At age 70, Watson carries his tall frame erect and looks as fit as men half his age despite the cancer he defeated, and is retiring reluctantly.

He is leaving only because he reached the state's mandatory retirement age for judges, a mandate he challenges as unfair and unconstitutional.

However, Watson has spent most of his life as an attorney and a judge and like a duty-worn soldier, believes laws must be obeyed until they are changed.

Defense attorneys, cops and prosecutors alike say his voice will be missed at the courthouse.

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**Fred Kaiser** has stuck his head inside more chimneys than Santa Claus.

Kaiser, 37, of Batavia, is a chimney sweep. He earns a living cleaning and repairing fireplaces, chimneys and flues.

Since 1976, the chimney-sweep industry has hit the roof.

Sixteen years ago, there were only a few hundred chimney sweeps in the nation. Today there are more than 5,000 chimney sweep companies.

Gross income ranges from about \$25,000 a year for someone who only cleans chimneys to \$100,000 for someone who both cleans and repairs.

It can be a dangerous occupation, although Kaiser, an amateur mountain climber who has scaled the Rockies, the Tetons and the Adirondacks, has little fear of heights.

"I've fallen from a ladder to the roof twice. But I've never fallen to the ground. The older I get and the longer I'm in it, the greater my chances are of getting hurt, though."

A chimney sweep's busy season is from fall until early spring. "I can work seven days a week if I want," said Kaiser.

In the course of his work, Kaiser often finds animals in chimneys.

"You'll find lots of critters in chimneys without caps. Racoons, birds and squirrels are the most common. I've taken out two ducks, one live and one dead. They get in and they can't get out. I found a snake, which was fortunately dead. I find beehives all the time, three feet deep and dripping honey."

Kaiser said most chimneys quickly become sooty and congested if homeowners use wood that is too moist. Moisture causes rapid buildup of soot.

He suggests burning seasoned wood, cut, split and stored in a dry space for six months before it is used.

"The wood has 50 percent moisture when first cut. You should split it to expose it to the air to dry it out."

Kaiser has been a chimney sweep for 11 years, since he quit his job as a pre-school teacher for the Hamilton County Head Start program.

"Teaching was good. I just didn't like the administrators breathing down my neck.

"I wanted an unusual occupation where you are outside and are your own boss. I love the outdoors, and it seemed real romantic," he said.

There is a mystique associated with chimney sweeps: They dress in black, are solitary and independent and spend their lives like the "Fiddler on the Roof."

Kaiser doesn't play the fiddle and doesn't feel he is mysterious. But he is in perfect tune with his chosen vocation:

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**An expectant** Miss Piggy in a bridal gown with a shotgun standing beside a befuddled Kermit the Frog.

Six revelers dressed like beer cans following Elvis Presley and Richard Nixon.

Must be Halloween. And for Alice Andolina, owner of Costume Castle in Loveland, it's better than Christmas.

Ms. Andolina does about two-thirds of her business during the Halloween season. Halloween now represents the second-largest retail market in the U.S. behind only Christmas.

And it's not only for youngsters. Halloween is the nation's Mardi Gras, a chance to don a mask and assume a different identity, to become Atilla the Hun, Capt. Kirk or Superman.

A Halloween mask loosens up a partygoer more than a social drink, and won't get you arrested when you drive home.

Seeing your boss in a clown outfit is relaxing (not to mention fitting).

Ms. Andolina always loved to sew, and got into the business after stitching costumes for her children, friends and theatrical groups.



Eventually, her house was crammed with her creations.

When Costume Castle on Wards Corner Road was for sale a few years ago, she couldn't resist the opportunity. Her sister in Pittsburgh also owns a costume shop.

Dracula, Batman and Robin costumes are always popular, says Ms. Andolina. However, the hot item this Halloween is the '70s disco look.

"Everyone wants to look like John Travolta now," she says. "I wish I had saved things I had given away years ago. Bell bottoms and tie-dyed shirts. The 'Saturday Night Fever' look is very popular now."

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**So, how's** the weather up there?

Hey, stretch! Are those tennis shoes or stilts?

Members of High Cincinnati's Tall Club, Inc. have heard it all.

The club was formed 43 years ago to hold social functions, instill a sense of pride in being tall, and maybe crack a few short people jokes.

"Out in public, people tend to gawk," said club member Dave Thomas, who stands at 7 feet even in his socks.

"It's not every day they see a 7-foot-tall person, or even a 6-foot-6 person for that matter," he said.

"When you go out together with other members of the club," said Thomas, "some people still stare.

"But when you are together you don't really notice because of the comrade."

The club has about 100 members in Greater Cincinnati and boasts a monthly newsletter called "High Lites." The group hosts about three social events every week and holds a business meeting the second Thursday of every month at the Oakley Community and Senior Center at 3882 Paxton Ave.

High Cincinnati's is a branch of Tall Clubs International which has 65 affiliates stretched across the U.S. and Canada.

Tall Clubs International was founded by the late Kae Sumner Einfeldt, of Capitola, Calif., a woman 6 feet, 2 inches, who died Sept. 28.

"She was a cartoonist for Disney Studios," said Dave Byrne, vice president of the Cincinnati club.

"She did 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs', and then took a look at her situation, and decided to establish a club," he said.

A primary problem being a tall woman is finding fashionable clothing.

"It is hard on your wardrobe if you are a short woman," said Byrne, whose wife is a shade under 6 feet.

Tall Cincinnati women often must travel to Indianapolis to find clothes to fit. Jayne Utter is president of the High Cincinnati's, and at 5-11 is one of the shortest members. "I feel so petite in this club," said the Hyde Park woman. "I just love it. When I stand beside someone 6 feet 8, or a 7-footer, I feel so petite."

Tall people also tend to have problems finding cars that fit.

"Driving is irritating," Thomas said. "Cars are really small these days."

Sometimes, houses do not fit either.

"Walking into older houses with low doorways and ceilings can be a pain in the neck," he said.

However, like other club members, Thomas has found reason to be proud outside of the basketball court.

"It is great to be tall," he said.

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**Robert Britton** of Amelia has donated enough blood to fill the gas tank of a '77 Corvette.

Britton, 78, has donated 10 gallons since he was a sophomore at Woodward High.

He donated his first pint to help a fellow student who injured himself in gym class. "I've been at it ever since," he said.

Britton's arm has been punctured nearly as often as a pin cushion. At the Hoxworth Donor Center in Anderson recently, he didn't flinch as a nurse withdrew the 80th pint of blood taken from his body over the last 60 years. "I'm used to it."

Sherrie Thomas, spokesperson for Hoxworth, said she is not sure if anyone in Cincinnati has donated more whole blood than Britton. Hoxworth donor records are incomplete for the entire six decades Britton has been donating, she said.

After his first donation in 1932, Britton joined the Navy. During World War II and the Korean War, he donated to help wounded soldiers.

Upon returning to the states, Britton began a career as a general contractor and commercial painter and started donating every two months or so.

"It takes that long for your blood to build back up, especially the iron in your blood," said Britton, who has never needed a major transfusion himself. "Not long ago, a friend of mine was involved in a serious accident and needed 26 units in just the first 24 hours. What better motivation to give is there?"

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**Mike Hopkins** is a sculptor, but he doesn't use clay, marble or chisel. Hopkins likes to pull the cord on a chain saw and sculpt. Standing in a cloud of sawdust, Hopkins transforms logs into turtles, eagles, Indian chiefs and serpents.

"It's a great crowd pleaser," said Hopkins, who has demonstrated his skills across the nation as part of his job as sales manager for Bryan Equipment of Loveland.

In Peoria, Ill., recently, TV crews from CBS, NBC and ABC filmed him demonstrating his artwork at a county fair.

"People love to watch. I don't know if they like to watch to see the carving take shape, or to see if I cut my leg off," said Hopkins, 32, of Williamsburg.

Chain-saw art can be a dangerous pursuit. If Van Gogh had used one, he might have lost more than an ear. As a precaution, Hopkins wears chaps made of bullet-proof material when he works.

The art form has come a long way since loggers started doing it as a lark in the late 1950s. Today, a detailed sculpture can fetch \$5,000, and talent agents book the sculptors into county fairs and other venues.

They use their saws to exact startlingly lavish detail. Ray Murphy, a chain-saw sculptor from Ellsworth, Maine, has carved the entire alphabet on a No. 2 pencil, according to Ripley's "Believe It Or Not."

Like Murphy and others, Hopkins uses a chain-saw bar specially made for delicate carvings.

"I do it all free hand," he said. "I can't draw at all. I see what I want to do in my mind, and then go do it."

Hopkins started doing chain saw art seven years ago and though he can sell a sculpture for \$1,000, he donates most of his work to charity.

"It's relaxing," he said. "I come out here on weekends, and there's no phone, no sales calls, just me, the saw and the log."

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**Bob Baysinger** has a pet store the Addams family would love.

Most pet stores stock cute critters like cuddly puppies, playful kittens, singing birds and colorful tropical fish.

Not Baysinger's - unless they're on the dinner menu.

Baysinger sells reptiles and has 500 snakes, iguanas, and other lizards at his pet store at 1085 Ohio Pike in Amelia.

He also sells reptilian pet supplies and live food like mice and crickets - delicacies for many reptiles.

His animals range in price from \$15 to \$600 for a 14-foot Burmese Python weighing over 100 pounds.

He says reptiles, especially snakes, make great pets.

"They are easy to take care of, and you only have to feed them once a week, and people with allergies can have them.

"You don't have to walk them, and they don't bark, but make great guard dogs. If someone breaks into your house and sees a 14-foot python, he doesn't stay around long enough to steal anything."

Baysinger said reptiles are among the hottest commodities in the pet industry today.

Swap meets for reptile owners are held about twice a month at the National Guard Armory at 68 Shadybrook Drive in Hartwell. People "buy, sell and trade" reptiles, live food, and other items, said Baysinger.

The Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society, founded in 1977, now has 150 card-carrying, reptile-loving members.

"People like to be different. They like to have something a little unusual."

Baysinger said he used to keep his 500 reptilian friends at his home in Amelia.

"I had such a large collection, I had to get out of the house to get some room," Baysinger said, explaining why he recently opened the pet store.

Baysinger, 46, has been collecting and breeding reptiles for over 30 years. A 1966 graduate of Anderson High School, Baysinger said he became interested in reptiles during a biology class.

At age 14, Baysinger's biology teacher took him on a field trip to collect reptiles from the wild. "Once I overcame the fear of touching and handling, I decided to start keeping them for pets.

"The first snake I brought home was a garter snake. My mother screamed and made me keep it in the garage."

Later, his biology teacher, George McDuffie, gave him a snake. "He said it was real tame, and it won't bite. I held it five minutes, and it bit me."

Baysinger said snakes and other reptiles have bit him countless times over the years. However, unless they are poisonous, the bite of most snakes is not very painful and rarely draws blood.

He said snakes sense fear, and usually bite only handlers who are nervous.

One of the most prolific breeders of reptiles in the area, he expects his animals to give birth to 400 reptilian babies this year.

To Baysinger, a baby snake is cuter than any puppy or kitten.

"When you have a nest full of eggs and a little head pops out, it's overwhelming," Baysinger said, scratching the chin of an iguana. "They are fascinating animals."

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**After juggling** a hectic schedule as a working mother, Rochelle McCollom likes to spend a few hours in the evening on her favorite pastime.

In her spare time, the accounting firm administrator likes to juggle hot torches and sharp machetes.

No chain saws yet, but maybe someday.

She enjoys juggling so much, last summer she built a special "juggling room" addition onto her house in Fairfield Township.

"It has really high ceilings," said Ms. McCollom. That's important when you're tossing four flaming torches around.

Ms. McCollom is one of about 12 people working either full or part time as jugglers in Greater Cincinnati, said Tom Sparough, president of Space Painter's Juggling Co. in Northside.

Sparough is a full-time juggler, performing at corporate parties, concerts, weddings and other events.

Stuffed shirts who think it is a loony occupation should talk to Sparough. "It's a fun way to make a living."

He says you won't get rich at juggling, but won't die young from corporate stress either.

Ms. McCollom, 38, the mother of two teen-agers, says juggling is a way to relieve tension - the world's problems fade away as she focuses only on the objects orbiting around her.

Ms. McCollom, who recently performed at Music Hall, didn't start juggling until five years ago.

"My brother and I saw a couple of jugglers at Kings Island. We came running home and went to the library and got a book on it."

Later, she attended juggling classes taught by Sparough. Most jugglers begin with balls. She started with clubs.

"Everybody says I fear spheres," she said.

Four years ago she started juggling machetes and torches and says she's never injured herself. "Nothing worse than ripping off a fingernail," she said. "I've never burned myself -- at least not yet."

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**A ghostly fog**, like the wispy breath of an old steam locomotive, settles below the top of a tall tower at Union Terminal.

High in Tower A, above the fog, Sheridan Yelliott can see for miles, all the way from College Hill across the Ohio River to Northern Kentucky.

During the heyday of the passenger locomotive, the view from the tower let railroad workers orchestrate busy train traffic.

The tower, which had deteriorated over the years into shambles, was recently renovated, said Yelliott, of Mt. Healthy, historian for the Cincinnati Railroad Club.

Yelliott at first doubted carpenters could restore the tower: "When we first saw "Tower A," it was a mess. It was dusty and had been vacant for years, and there were things living in there that weren't human."

Over 300 members of his club backed the restoration of the tower, once as busy as any air traffic controller complex.

"You had to operate the tower seven days a week, 24 hours a day," says Yelliott. "During World War II, that place was busy as a beehive."

The tower was critical not only because Union Terminal 40 years ago was busy as any airport but because of the time it takes for a man to stop hundreds of tons of speeding steel.

"You can't stop on a dime and give 10 cents' change," said Yelliott.

It can take a train between 10 and 15 minutes to grind to an emergency stop, depending on weather conditions, he said.

Before travelers took to the skies, steam-powered passenger trains were the preferred mode of travel for both the rich and the middle class.

With plush dining cars and sleeping quarters often paneled in hard woods, the streamlined trains moved up to 80 mph, fast for the 1940s and 1950s.

"They were yachts on rails," said Yelliott, "with hosts and hostesses to serve you. A lot of movie stars rode them, especially the Santa Fe Super Chief which ran from the west to Chicago."

Although diesel engines and fast jets eventually spelled the demise of the steam locomotive, they still made regular stops at Union Terminal until the 1970s.

Standing in the tower, surrounded by a panoramic view, Yelliott doesn't want the massive coal-powered beasts of another era forgotten.

The tower, which includes an extensive railroad library, is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays; from 8 to 11 p.m. on Thursdays; and from noon to 4 p.m. every third Sunday of the month.

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**Before the dawn** of the dinosaurs, Cincinnati was covered by a gigantic, shallow sea. This ancient sea dried up about 450 million years ago, leaving behind dead critters imbedded in its murky floor.

Today, their abundant, fossilized remains make Cincinnati a hot spot for paleontology.

And no one knows this better than the Dry Dredgers, a local group of mostly amateur paleontologists.

They have been harvesting this area's bounty of fossils since the club was founded in 1942.

The club consists largely of amateurs - lawyers, doctors, business owners, teachers and others interested in fossil collecting and paleontology.

They base their name on the idea that they "dredge" a dry sea.

Like most members, John Tate, club secretary, became interested in fossils as a child.

"The difference between the amateur and professional paleontologist is the amateur quit for 30 years and then come back to it, and the professional never quit," says Tate, a West Chester tax lawyer.

The Dry Dredgers live in a good place to pursue their interests.

"This area is the best place in the world to find fossils from 450 and 435 million years ago," says Nigel Hughes, curator of paleontology at the Cincinnati Museum Center.

Hughes, a native of Great Britain, says professional paleontologists from across the globe coming to the Cincinnati area for research rely on club members to find where local fossils are located.

And it is difficult to go anywhere in the area without stumbling into a fossil of some kind.

Among the most common are brachiopods and trilobites, says Tate.

Brachiopods look like sea shells, while trilobites resemble mealy bugs or horseshoe crabs.

These creatures roamed the ancient sea over 400 million years ago, and when this area was situated below the equator before the continental shift.

Huge tropical storms during this time -- which made today's hurricanes look like summer breezes -- swept trilobites and brachiopods into massive piles.

Most today are found primarily in limestone and shale.

Good spots to find them are at Caesar Creek, off Orphanage Road at Route 8 in Northern Kentucky, and at Route 1 near Brookville, Ind.

The 150 members of the Dry Dredgers go on fossil collecting field trips at these and other sites almost monthly.

The club meets the last Friday of the month at Braunstein Hall at UC.

Fossil collecting is an inexpensive hobby for the family, says Rich Fuchs, a club member from Monfort Heights.

"With a lot of hobbies, you need expensive equipment. But all we need are old coffee cans or plastic bags and a toothbrush," he says.

"The fossils are very interesting in themselves to look at," he says.

"When you find something, you are looking at an object that hasn't seen daylight for 450 million years, and you are the first one to see it."

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**Everyone has** a cross to bear.

For Brad Olson, pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Milford, it weighs 1,323 pounds.

That's how many total pounds Olson hoisted in setting two world records for his weight division during the recent powerlifting championships in London.

Olson was honored recently with special proclamation by Milford Mayor Craig Kolb.

Olson -- who stands 5 feet 2 inches and competes at 132 pounds -- set world records in the squat and overall powerlifting. He lifted 523 pounds in the squat, a lift where bar and weights are placed behind the back before the competitor stands upright from a deep knee bend.

He hoisted 10 times his own body weight in the overall powerlifting competition which includes the squat, bench press and dead lift.

In the dead lift, competitors pull bar and weights off the ground to a level higher than their knees. In the bench press, lifters extend their arms while pushing bar and weights off their chest while lying on their backs. "In a lot of ways, lifting is like prayer time," said Olson, "a chance to get out a lot of frustration and anger, so I can deal with people without frustration or anger. It helps me deal with people better.

"It helps keep me in touch with people outside the church. People in the gym are less guarded, not all dressed up like at church."

Olson, 33, started lifting in 1982 while on the rowing team at Cornell University. "When the water is frozen there was nothing to do, and we started doing weight circuits."

The pastor says his sport is a good ice breaker when he talks with troubled young people. "I work a lot with teen-agers, and many of our teen-agers are athletes ... It helps build trust."

Olson said the sport suits his schedule, lifestyle and personality. "You can do it at all hours of the day, whether noon or midnight. When you are short, and uncoordinated, and don't like to sweat a lot, you can take on other people who are short and uncoordinated."

The pastor is now training for the weightlifting trials in April for the Olympics. He says he is a little old to be entering Olympic competition.

But with the Man Upstairs spotting him as his coach, he has faith he'll make it.

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**The dulcimer** was born in poverty, a musical instrument created from scrap wood by the poor in mountainous Appalachia.

The dulcimer traces its roots to the 1700s and was invented by people who could not afford a guitar or violin or repress their need to express themselves musically.

Though it will probably never be a star on MTV, the dulcimer is gaining more adherents. "It is becoming popular maybe because it now seems like such a novelty," said Madge Moore of Norwood, president of the Cincinnati Dulcimer Society.

"They were kind of them kept back in a closet for along time. People would have them handed down for generations, but couldn't play it. Now, they are taking it out and learning how to play it."

The Cincinnati Dulcimer Society, founded in 1979, now has 130 members who perform throughout the area. They will be having a jam session Feb. 11 at the Seasingood Nature Center at Woodland Mound Park.

The dulcimer and banjo are probably the only two musical instruments originating in the U.S., says Gayle Reinfelder of Columbia Tusculum, past president of the group.

"It is thought that individuals made them out of any wood they could find, and copied instruments they remembered from their homeland before they immigrated to the U.S.," she says.

The first dulcimers had only a nail under the first string. It was not until the 1920s that it was produced with frets like a guitar.

The original instrument had three strings, but the majority today have four, she says. Today's dulcimers have two melody strings, a drone string and a bass string, and measure 25-to-30 inches long.

It can sound like a bagpipe, guitar, banjo or violin, depending on how it is played and whether the strings are plucked or bowed.

A two-toned instrument, it is usually tuned to the keys of A or B. Generally, the left hand presses one note at a time on the melody string while the right hand usually strums all strings at once.

"It is a very simple instrument," says Ms. Reinfelder.

"You don't have to be a real musician to play it, which is nice," said Ms. Moore.

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**Nadja Halilbegovic** was 12 years old when she was wounded by a grenade in her native Bosnia.

"We had been in the cellar for four months with no food except flour, rice and some soup," she said. "I asked my mother, could I please go outside just for five minutes to see some sun. Just five minutes."

Her mother reluctantly consented and Nadja, now 16, was outside for only two minutes when the grenade exploded. She still carries five pieces of shrapnel in her leg.

Nadja is one of 30 young people brought from war-ravaged Bosnia to schools and host families in the Cincinnati area.

Project Shelter was started almost a year ago by Rick Deerwester and his wife, Jaye, of Union, Ky.

Deerwester saw a documentary about conditions children endure in Sarajevo, and later decided to bring them to live in the Cincinnati area.

He enlisted the help of physicians, dentists and orthodontists who agreed to provide free health care. He found families to take them in, and schools to offer free room and board.

"I think it just got to him this time," said Mrs. Deerwester. "He is not a crusader. He doesn't look for causes. You often say, 'I wish I could do something.' This time, he did."

Deerwester says he wanted to get them into a safe haven for at least a year and into schools, because most of theirs have been destroyed.

Three other organizations, in Virginia, Colorado and New Hampshire, bring young people from Bosnia. However, Cincinnati's "Project Shelter" has rescued the most youngsters, said Mrs. Deerwester.

"I'm just lucky to be here," says Nadja, who is staying with Jeffrey and Cynthia Yeager of Anderson Township. "Just to have things like oranges or bananas to eat makes me feel so lucky. You don't realize how much you miss these things until they are gone."

Nadja has written a book about her life in Bosnia and is appearing in the "Diary of Anne Frank," at Anderson High.

She is adjusting to her adopted homeland. "When I first came here, I had to learn the language. I was taking the dictionary around with me all the time. But it's easier now. I like America. Everything is so new."

Nadja is unsure what she will do in the future, though she plans to stay in the Cincinnati area for 18 more months.

"Am I going to college? I don't know. I don't like to plan that far ahead. You don't know if you'll be alive tomorrow. I know so many people who were here today, and tomorrow they were dead. I just go one day at a time."

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**When the dogwood** tree blooms in spring, it will remind children of a place where flowers never grew.

That place was Bergen Belsen, a Nazi concentration camp where Anne Frank died at the end of World War II.

Hanne Pick-Goslar, was at that camp with Anne, and planted the dogwood tree recently near Immaculate Heart of Mary school.

The childhood friend of the girl whose diary serves the generations as a window to the Holocaust also visited Felicity-Franklin Junior High and High School.

She told students at both schools how she met Anne at a grocery store in Amsterdam, Holland in the mid-1930s. The two forged a relationship that endured until Anne's death at Bergen-Belsen in February 1945.

Mrs. Pick-Goslar had been sent to the camp before Anne arrived and was able to visit her only twice.

The two were separated by a tall fence and unable to see each other but could speak. Mrs. Pick-Goslar recalled that her friend seemed depressed, like she had lost the will to live. Her worries proved true, and Anne died shortly afterwards of typhus.

Students say they will never forget Mrs. Pick-Goslar's visit.

"In our lives, we will probably never again meet a woman who went through so much pain and yet was so optimistic about life," said eighth-grader Samantha Hammons.

"I respect her so much because even after all that the Nazis put her through, she has no hatred in her heart," said classmate Stacey Roberts. "She has more love than most people today who never went through half of what she did. Classmate Holly Hayden said, "It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and, hopefully, it will help to prevent another tragedy like this from ever happening again."

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**Burning, heart-throbing** passions. Sizzling, scintilating kisses. Heaving ... well, you get the picture. This is the language of love - and money.

Big money. Harlequin Enterprises Limited on average sells over six romance novels every second. That's 200 million books sold worldwide each year at \$10 a pop. Every Valentine Day, Harlequin sells enough books to fill 170 Boeing 747 cargo planes, says Brian E. Hickey, president and CEO of the Ontario, Canada firm.

And many of them are penned here in the Queen City.

Members of the Ohio Valley Chapter of Romance Writers of America in Cincinnati are authors of many novels published by Harlequin Enterprises.

One of them is Lori Foster of Hamilton who has been married 18 years to her high school sweetheart and has three sons.

Ms. Foster sent countless manuscripts to Harlequin before her first book, "Impetuous," was finally sold.

"If you keep at it, eventually you'll find one that sells," she said.

Since then, she has written two other novels for Harlequin, "Outrageous" and "Scandalous," both to be released this year.

"We're not talking about stupid people reading them," said Ms. Foster. "And more and more men are starting to read them, too."

Nonetheless, about 90 percent of Harlequin's readers are women, college-educated, with family incomes over \$50,000 a year.

Every year, about 50 million women worldwide read Harlequin books published in 23 languages," says Hickey, firm president. "Just as love knows no boundaries, neither does Harlequin," he says.

Harlequin's novels "explore human relations," said Leigh Riker of Lebanon, an author of eight published novels. "Women, maybe more than men, especially like that." Unlike Ms. Riker and Ms. Foster, most of the 90 members of the Ohio Valley Chapter of Romance Writers are not published.

However, about 16 members of the support group of authors, who help one another develop ideas and manuscripts, have written published novels.

One of the wannabes is Dianne Kruezkamp of Milford. "It's something I started about five years ago. I wasn't being a wife. I wasn't being a mother. I was doing something for myself."

With children about to enter college, she knows other professions might be more practical.

But Ms. Kruezkamp wouldn't have it any other way.

"I know I would become a bag lady before I would do anything else. It's an addiction."

Her group is hosting the sixth annual conference of romance writers on March 8 at the Sharonville Marriott Hotel.

Hundreds of budding romance writers from across the nation are expected.

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**The tiny ballerina** soars across the stage like a bird released from a cage.

Another dancer's daring grace seems as dangerous as the steps of a high-wire artist. They are members of the Dancing Wheels, a group of ballet artists who do not let wheelchairs keep the dancer within them from being set free.

The Cleveland dance company will be at Clermont College's Krueger Auditorium Friday, April 26. Tickets are now on sale for \$2.50 each for the dance company's innovative and avant-garde performances, says Patricia Palmer, public information officer.

Dancing Wheels is the first integrated dance company, combining able and disabled dancers into one artistic unit, in the country, says Ms. Palmer.

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**Rita Whittington** practices an art form dating to Homer in ancient Greece. She is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Storyteller's Guild, a group dedicated to keeping oral histories and storytelling alive.

Mrs. Whittington and other members of the guild are performing at 7:30 p.m. today at Farbach-Werner Nature Preserve in Mt. Healthy.

Unlike television, storytelling kindles the imagination, says Mrs. Whittington of Pleasant Ridge. "You paint a picture with words," she says.

"Many years ago, people on the radio did the same things the storytellers do now. We used to sit and listen to 'The Lone Ranger' on the radio, and you could visualize it and make your own adventure out of it."

She says "children today go into a trance watching television. They become frozen. With television, You don't use your imagination."

Children listening to storytellers, on the other hand, become very animated, says Ms. Whittington, one of the founders of the guild established about a decade ago. "They feel like they are part of the story, and they often participate in the story."

Sue Cox, president of the guild, is a Ft. Thomas, Ky., teacher and says both children and adults like to participate.

She says ancient travelling storytellers were original members of the mass media.

Many of the tales told today have been repeated for centuries, says Ms. Cox: "We also make some up from scratch. Some tales get changed so much as they are retold, they become whole new tales. Others remain exactly the same for generations and generations."

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**A West Union** fifth-grader has solved a question puzzling musicians for generations.

How can you use both hands to play, turn pages of sheet music at the same time, and never miss a beat?

Elizabeth "Lizzy" Gray has the answer - use your feet.

The saxophone player has invented a doohickey she calls the "Flip-O-Matic," an alternative to performing barefoot and flipping the pages with your toes.

Most sheet music is several pages long, and often a musician must flip back and forth through the pages in order to repeat musical passages.

Lizzy's invention is a special music stand with a foot pedal that flips the pages. The pedal is connected to a wooden paddle that turns the pages.

Her invention earned her a 1996 Grand Patent Award in the recent 13th International Invention Convention.

She won a home computer and a three-day vacation to St. Louis in the competition sponsored by Silver Burdett Ginn, the science book publishing division of Simon & Schuster.

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**They've been** called the "Model T" of personal computers and rolled off the assembly lines in the 1980s by the millions.

And like the Model T, the Commodore 64 and its "brainier" cousin, the Commodore 128, refuse to die.

Car buffs have restored and preserved the Model T for generations. And hot rodders installed powerful engines and drive trains to create personal sports cars.

The same thing is going on with the old Commodores, says Roger Hoyer of Milford, spokesman for the Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club. Computer buffs have hot-rodded the old Commodores, which can be had for \$25 at garage sales, with 2-gigabyte hard drives, super-fast micro processors and 16 megs of RAM.

Others labor to keep the machines alive - an increasingly easy chore with the growing aftermarket of parts, software and accessories now available for them.

For a fraction of the cost, the old Commodores can keep up with the big guys. The Commodores, with no modifications, have the same basic features as today's big-priced computers, Hoyer says.

They have graphic operating systems similar to Windows. And like good servants, they do everything but windows, including word processing, spread sheets and managing data bases.

Commodore Business Machines introduced the Commodore 64 in 1983. Before the firm went bankrupt a decade later, the company sold millions of Commodores at department and toy stores throughout the U.S. The firm sold 800,000 units in 1993 alone, the last year the company was in business, Hoyer said.

The charm of the Commodore is that it is easy to operate. "You turn it on, and it's ready to go," he said. "The graphics are fantastic, and it does everything most people buy a personal computer to do."

The Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club meets monthly and was founded a decade ago by Wally Jones of Owensville, Steve Winkle, a Blanchester area resident, and a few others. Winkle still does most of the repairs needed by club members. The club's library has more than 3,000 disks of software for the Commodore. For more information, call Hoyer at 248-0025.

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**Bob Siepelt** has more than 50,000 bees buzzing around his Cherry Grove backyard.

He's a beekeeper, and will discuss his vocation Saturday at "Honey Fest," a festival on beekeeping at Woodland Mound Park in Anderson Township.

"It's a lot of fun," said Siepelt, who caught the beekeeping bug over two decades ago.

He says he's been stung "hundreds of times" over the years but never sustained serious injury.

The trick, he says, is to get the stinger out. The bee dies shortly after its stinger is torn from its body when injected into its victim.

However, the stinger's muscle continues contracting and pumping venom after the bee dies, says Siepelt, who discusses beekeeping at area schools.

"Bees are moody," said Siepelt, who pacifies his with a "smoker" before removing honey.

"The smoker calms your bees. If you give them a puff, it will calm them."

The smoker is a can containing burning wood and paper allowing controlled measures of smoke to pour out a spout.

Basically, all you need to start beekeeping is a smoker, a place for bees to live and produce offspring and honey and a permit. The U.S. Department of Agriculture requires beekeepers to get a \$10 permit every year.

Bees are usually kept in four wooden boxes stacked about 3 to 4 feet high. Each has about 10 frames where bees produce beeswax and over 40 pounds of honey.

The stack of boxes, called a colony, contains a queen bee. The queen is purchased in a matchbox-sized cage and produces thousands of offspring.

Honey making is almost exclusively a female enterprise. Drones, or males, fertilize the queen and if they don't soon die are driven out of the colony. The workers are all female bees.

Most bees die within a few weeks, though some live as long as a year. They may travel over 2 miles from their hives looking for food and are guided home by the smell of their queen.

Bees produce honey by ingesting nectar and pollen through hollow tongues. They add an enzyme produced by their bodies to the nectar and pollen and squeeze honey out of their tongues. Honey is harvested in summer and late fall, and Siepelt sells a pound for \$2 without combs and \$4.50 with the combs, which are edible.

"Honey is something man will never be able to make," said Siepelt. "It's something only the bees can do."

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**Call her "Batwoman"** if you like. She doesn't mind.

After all, Jackie Belwood has spent much of her life traveling the globe studying bats.

A bat biologist with a doctorate degree, Ms. Belwood is now working at the Cincinnati Nature Center and has written a book, "Bats of Ohio."

The first copies of the 200-page field guide for bats in the Buckeye state are to be released Friday. The book describes how to make bat boxes, similar to bird houses, which hundreds of people in the Queen City have built to attract the winged mammals.

Which begs the question, Why would someone want bats in their backyard? They are blood suckers, right?

Wrong.

There are no vampire bats in the United States, and they don't attack humans anyway, preferring cattle and other animals with hooves. Besides, since

bats eat pesky insects that might damage gardens, they are very desirable backyard companions, says Ms. Belwood.

And, believe it or not, many people just think bats are "cool," said Ms. Belwood, who has built a bat house housing 70,000 of the critters in Florida. "Children just love them," said Ms. Bellwood, who gave a presentation Saturday on bats at Winton Woods.

Hundreds have bat boxes in the area, and Ms. Bellwood says there's 1,000 species of bats in the world, including 45 in the United States; There's 11 different species in Ohio, and about six in the Cincinnati area.

They live in caves, abandoned mines, tree cavities, attics, church steeples and other warm, secluded places.

They are smaller than the common house mouse, though they may have a 12-inch wing span; Many live to be 30 to 40 years old. "Everyone is always amazed to see how small they are," she said.

In Cincinnati, the most common bat has a dark, chocolate color, however not all have muted coloring and one species is even vivid red.

Some bats spend half their lives asleep, most hibernate in the winter, and all sleep upside down, though no one is really sure why. Ms. Bellwood believes they sleep upside down so they can more easily fold and protect their thin, fragile wings.

Bats usually only go out at night, and while they have fully developed eyes, they rely on sonar to find their way in the darkness.

Ms. Belwood says the military has spent millions of dollars studying their sonar system which has inspired the design of the stealth bomber and other weapons. The world's only winged mammal emits high-pitched sounds that humans can't hear. When this sound hits an object, it produces an echo that bats hear when it bounces back to them.

"They can tell how far an object is from them based on how long the echo comes back to them. They can tell what is in front of them, a bug, building, or whatever, based on the quality of the echo."

Ms. Belwood became interested in bats while a student at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario. She accompanied a teacher and other students on a trip to study bats in Puerto Rico, and has been fascinated with them ever since. "The critters are amazing."

She holds degrees in biology, wildlife ecology and entomology, and in 1993 started the Ohio Bat Program dedicated to the conservation of the critters. She has worked for the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History and for Bat Conservation International in Austin, Texas.

She's studied bats in Panama, Peru, Hawaii, the Caribbean, the Cayman and Pacific islands. Everywhere, it seems, except Gotham City. But with the right cape and rubber suit, who knows?

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**Someday Frank Herman** of Milford may be able to quit his day job. Herman works in an art studio and on the assembly line at the Clerco Inc. sheltered workshop for the mentally disabled in Clermont County.

However, his artwork is slowly earning him a reputation throughout Ohio.

For years, his artwork has been popular in the Queen City. He sold 63 paintings in one night at the Holiday Inn Eastgate, and his artwork hangs in some of the area's finest homes.

Now his work is being displayed at the Kettering Government Center near Dayton, where a reception is planned for him next Thursday.

In addition, selected pieces of his work are going on a tour of nine Ohio cities where 100,000 Ohioans are expected to view them.

He also was commissioned to create a rendering of Key Bank's corporate headquarters in Cleveland.

The Kettering exhibit ending May 3 features very detailed pencil drawings of churches in the Cincinnati area and a few historical European sites.

Herman, 46, is primarily self-taught, and started his artwork at age 15.

Most of his formal instruction was with art teacher Robert Graves of Bethel who tutored him at Clerco before retiring two years ago.

It was Graves who recognized not only that Herman had talent, but that it was marketable despite his disabilities.

Herman also works in acrylics and weaving and those who know him say he plays piano and harmonica with the best of them.

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## COURTS

*During his career, Mr. Penix has written about a number of class action civil lawsuits and criminal proceedings on the state and federal trial and appellate levels that have deeply impacted the tri-state. However, it is the human drama of a courtroom that is the most intriguing part of any court story and the most difficult to capture. Few court stories have captured the attention of the tri-state like Mr. Penix's day-by-day account of a mother convicted of selling her children into prostitution.*

**Wednesday, March 10, 1999**

**T**wo pre-teen girls who police report were sold into prostitution for beer, cigarettes and drugs are in foster homes while their mother stands trial here this week. If the 33-year-old Bethel woman is convicted, she could be sentenced to life in prison.

Her attorney, John Woliver, denies the charges and says the state has at best a slim, circumstantial case against his client.

The Post is not identifying the woman in order to protect the identities of her children. She has been held in the Clermont County Jail on \$100,000 bail while awaiting trial.

A Clermont County grand jury on Aug. 12, 1997, indicted her on six counts of rape with force and two counts of felonious sexual penetration. The indictments charge, between 1993 and 1994 she allowed her boyfriend, Timothy Wayne Ratliff, and other men to rape her daughters, who were as young as 2 and 7 years at the time. Today, the girls are 6 and 11 and, along with their two brothers, have been placed in foster care, police say.

Ratliff was indicted in 1997 for two counts of rape of her children, but committed suicide before he could be arrested. With Ratliff's death, her attorney Woliver says there are no eyewitnesses to the deeds his client is accused of committing. Her trial has been delayed four times to allow attorneys more time to prepare.

**Related stories:**

**Thursday, March 11, 1999**

The child of a Bethel woman on trial for rape told her foster parent that her mother held her down while her stepfather raped her when she was 11 years old, the foster parent testified today.

Cathy Huhn also testified that the girl said her stepfather had forced her to have oral sex and "she said she cried while he was doing it."

Mrs. Huhn testified that the girl, now 13, had been traumatized emotionally by abuse. Once when she found the girl under her bed crying, the girl told her she was "thinking of all the men her mom had made her do it with."

The girl also told her "this thing with her stepfather happened a lot," and that her younger sister had been there, too.

The girl's 33-year-old mother is on trial this week for the rape of her two daughters, and the felonious assault of all four of her children.

The Post is not naming her to protect the identities of the children.

On Wednesday, the mother's defense attorney characterized her as struggling to pay rent, household bills and to keep her children fed and clothed. She worried about how they did in school, took them to the doctor as needed, and by and large was a caring mother who did the best she could under impoverished conditions, say her attorneys.

But Assistant Prosecutor Daniel Breyer says the woman held down her daughters so that her boyfriends and other men could rape them. Breyer suggested she did this for drugs or perhaps rent money, and says she abused and neglected all her children.

All four, ages 7 to 15 years, are now in foster care and receiving treatment or counseling for mental distress. Authorities say her 7-year-old daughter is in the psychiatric unit of Children's Hospital, and her 15-year-old son is suicidal and suffering from intense migraine headaches. Breyer maintains the children's emotional problems result from living with an abusive and neglectful mother. He says the two daughters also told social workers their mother restrained them while they were raped by her boyfriends in 1993 and 1994.

However, defense lawyer Mike Kennedy says the two girls were confused during interviews with social workers, and that their mother held the girls to "calm" them because they were hyperactive.

Brooke Lorthioir, a Clermont County Children's Protective Services case worker, and other case workers, visited the woman's home several times. She testified Wednesday before Common Pleas Court Judge William Walker that the house was "filthy" and "chaotic." Ms. Lorthioir said she suspects drugs were used there.

#### **Friday, March 12, 1999**

"Be quiet and take it like a woman," the mother of a Clermont County girl told her daughter as she held her down so her stepfather could rape her, according to a video-taped deposition played in Clermont County Common Pleas Court today.

The tape was made last summer when the girl, then 12, recounted how she was raped on numerous occasions by her stepfather and others.

The girl's 33-year-old mother is on trial this week for the rape of her two daughters, and the felonious assault of all four of her children. The Post is not naming her to protect the identities of the children.

In the tape played today, the girl, the oldest of the two daughters, said she was threatened by her mother and her stepfather to not tell about what had happened or they would rip out her tongue or "cut us in pieces."

Very calm and collected in her video deposition, the girl remembered living in six different apartments and trailers while she was 11 and younger. She said that sometimes her landlord, identified only as Ron, was allowed to rape her. "That's how we paid rent," the girl said.

But in testimony on Thursday, the girl's current foster mother, admitted that the girl was prone to telling "white lies."

Cathy Huhn testified under cross-examination that the girl had falsely accused her nephew of exposing his private parts to other children. In a journal Mrs. Huhn

kept while caring for the girl during 1997, she wrote that the girl "is very good at manipulating people." She also said the girl "tells little white lies a lot."

Most of the lying was over petty things such as whether she did her homework, or brushed her teeth.

However, Mrs. Huhn said the girl also lied about pouring oil over a tractor, and falsely said that someone had been slapping her.

The girl's sister - who also says she was raped - also had problems being truthful all the time, according to her foster parent, Esta Miller. She said the girl falsely accused her of using a belt to beat her.

During Mrs. Huhn's testimony Thursday in the Clermont County Common Pleas Court of Judge William Walker, she painted a portrait of the older daughter as a deeply disturbed child.

She said the girl didn't know how to use silverware when she first sat down to dinner on Feb. 26, 1997, after moving in with her family. She used her hands instead.

Tearfully, Mrs. Huhn described how the girl was amazed at all the food to eat on Thanksgiving, and that she had more than one present to open on Christmas.

#### **Saturday, March 13, 1999**

A Clermont County girl was receiving drugs and therapy for psychiatric problems before making a video deposition accusing her mother of holding her down while her stepfather raped her.

The taped deposition was played Friday during the trial of the girl's 33-year-old mother for the rape of her two daughters, and the felonious assault of all four of her children.

The girl's young age and psychiatric condition make her incompetent as a witness, argued John Woliver, one of her mother's attorneys.

However, Clermont County Common Pleas Court Judge William Walker ruled the girl was competent when she made the tape on July 16 and permitted it to be played for jurors.

The girl, now 13, was 12 when she made the deposition last summer. The Post is not naming her to protect the identities of the children.

On the tape, the girl says she had sex with her stepfather "almost every day" over a period of years. When she resisted, she said her stepfather called her mother and two brothers and "they would hold me down." They held her arms and legs, she said, "so I wouldn't move around."

At one point in her deposition, the girl says her nose was bloodied on a metal part of a bed while she was being raped. The blood soiled the bed and afterwards, "I had to clean it up," she said.

She said she was also sent to have sex with friends and neighbors of her mother and stepfather, who then gave her cigarettes and marijuana to take home to her stepfather.

She said her stepfather -- who committed suicide before he could be brought to trial -- also had oral sex with her younger sister. She said her mother and others told her they would "cut our tongues off" or "cut us in pieces" if they revealed the sexual molestations.

Dr. Ann Saluke, an Anderson Township pediatrician, examined the girl during 1997 and her video deposition was also played Friday for jurors. She described notes made by herself and other doctors following examinations indicating that the girl had been subjected to "forceful sexual penetration."

However, under cross examination, Dr. Saluke admitted the girl's mother had sought medical help for her because she suspected a cousin had raped her. She also said the girl had given her no indication her mother had been involved in any acts of sexual abuse against her.

A video deposition made by her younger brother on July 16 also was played for jurors. The boy, now 9 years old, said he and his older brother, as well as his two sisters, had been sexually abused.

He said his mother had touched his "private parts."

"Mom said it would feel good, but it didn't."

He recalled his older sister "screaming to help me" once while she was being raped. However, he and his older brother were afraid to assist, and instead they helped hold her down, he said.

His older brother also made a video deposition played for the court. Now 15 years old, he said his mother one time made him help hold down his sister so that she could be raped. However, under cross examination, he could not remember the date or place where this happened, or if it was snowing or sunny.

Defense Attorney Mike Kennedy argued that social workers and others planted ideas in his young mind that he and his siblings had been sexually abused, when in fact they had not.

Kennedy said youngsters frequently in stressful situations tell adults what they expect to hear, regardless of the truth. Separated from their mother by the police, the children feel they must say anything in order to survive, he argues.

### **Tuesday, March 16, 1999**

A Clermont County girl who said her mother held her down while men raped her also previously told authorities she burned down a house and killed a child. In addition, she accused family members of having sex with animals and drinking their blood.

Her claims of arson and blood-drinking are untrue, Hyde Park clinical psychologist Paul Deardorff testified Monday during the trial of the girl's 33-year-old mother.

The Bethel mother is on trial in the Clermont County Common Pleas Court of Judge William Walker in Batavia for the rape of her two daughters, and the felonious assault of all four of her children.

Under cross examination, Deardorff also testified the girl, now 13, is seriously mentally ill and takes anti-depressants and other medication for her disorders.

Defense lawyer John Woliver says her mental condition, and "exaggerations of the truth," make it difficult to believe statements incriminating her mother.

Woliver asked Deardorff if case workers and therapists had checked to see if allegations made by the girl were true, or if they merely accepted them on

face value. He said the longer she talked with therapists and case workers, the longer her list of attackers grew.

At first she accused only her cousin of raping her. However, she ultimately accused 22 of her neighbors, relatives and others with raping her over a period of years, Woliver said.

Deardorff said he doubted therapists would accept as true all statements made by the girl without first conferring about their veracity with other mental health professionals.

Relying on notes by other therapists and case workers, as well as his own examinations, Deardorff has concluded all four children of the mother suffer from mental illnesses. These disorders were caused by rape and neglect, he concludes.

However, Woliver alleges that case notes reviewed by Deardorff in concluding the children are mentally ill were made by therapists more concerned with convicting the mother than helping the children.

Case notes relied upon by Deardorff say the children were removed from his client's home in February, 1997, after heat was turned off, Woliver says. Notes say the children were placed in separate foster homes and not allowed to talk to each other, as part of an effort to strengthen the criminal case against the mother, Woliver says.

He charges that social workers and others planted suggestions in the girl's mind that she had been sexually abused by her mother when, in fact, she had not. Woliver said the children concocted allegations they thought their foster parents and therapists wanted them to make.

Deardorff testified that, before the children were removed from their mother, case workers failed to find the mother guilty of wrongdoing.

Notes prepared after both surprise and announced visits stated the children were "healthy and happy" and had a strong bond with their mother, Deardorff said.

### **Wednesday, March 17, 1999**

A Bethel woman tearfully testified that she loved her children and denied ever molesting them or holding them down to be raped.

The woman -- who was living in a bus at a Moscow, Ohio, junk yard at the time -- said Tuesday during her trial that she had tried to defend her children from sexual predators.

She vehemently denied statements by her children in video depositions that she participated in rapes of her two daughters, and assaults on all four of her children. She said her two sons were confused when their depositions were made, and that they have behavioral and mental disabilities.

However, the mother testified in Clermont County Common Pleas Court that her daughter is much more intelligent, and she has no explanation why the girl says she held her down to be raped.

She described her daughter, now 13, as disobedient and stubborn. She said that statements made earlier in the trial that her daughter did not know how to use silverware were untrue.

The mother said her daughter would "act like a baby" and pretend she did not know how to use silverware and eat with her hands during situations where she was nervous.

The mother said her oldest son, now 15, has been in special-education classes, and must take antidepressants.

"He's just slow," she said.

She said both of her sons often were in fights or arguments at school, and her youngest son, now 9, smoked marijuana and liked to hang out at a nearby pool hall.

"He was like a mysterious kid," she said, adding only a "mind reader" could understand him.

The 33-year-old former custodian at Bigg's Place in Eastgate described herself as mentally disabled, and unable to drive a motor vehicle. "When I was born, I was slow, my mamma told me that," she testified.

She said her husband, convicted in the rape of her two daughters, abused drugs and alcohol and beat her. "He'd go out and get high, and come back home and beat on me."

She said she alerted authorities in 1989 that she suspected he had been abusing her daughter and invited investigators frequently into her homes. She said she also told authorities her daughter's cousin had raped her, and initiated an investigation into his conduct. However, she said she never touched her children inappropriately, nor molested them in any way.

The mother said she also had no knowledge that her boyfriend abused or molested her children. He committed suicide after being questioned by police.

"I don't know nothing about it if it did happen," she said.

#### **Thursday, March 18, 1999**

Psychologist Melvin Guyer says three children who testified against their mother during her trial for rape might have been saying what they thought authorities wanted to hear.

Guyer, a University of Michigan professor of psychology, says it is not uncommon for children to make false allegations of sexual abuse to authorities. Through video depositions, three of the mother's children testified against her in Clermont County Common Pleas Court in Batavia. She is accused in the rape of her two daughters, and for the felonious assault of all four of her children. The Post is not naming the woman to protect them.

Closing arguments are expected today.

Called to testify for the defense, Guyer said Wednesday some "children questioned repeatedly" about whether they have been sexually abused tend to start saying they have.

The professor also testified about two years ago during the second trial of Lyle and Erik Menendez in California. The brothers claimed they killed their parents after years of abuse; both were convicted of murder in two separate trials.

Guyer says children are "impressionable" and during protracted questioning by authority figures they are open to "suggestions."

Children, perhaps anxious to please adult authority figures, might embrace these suggestions as the truth, whether grounded in fact or not, he says. This might especially be true if children are mentally disabled. He said the mother's oldest son has an IQ of 51, and her oldest daughter, 57.

During cross examination, assistant county prosecutor Daniel Breyer said the children exhibited classic symptoms of sexual abuse. These include post traumatic stress disorder, depression, and a tendency to run away from home.

However, Guyer said no one diagnosed these disorders until after the children said they had been sexually abused - years after the abuse reportedly started.

During testimony Wednesday, the mother suggested her oldest daughter might have persuaded her siblings to make false allegations of sexual abuse. She called her daughter the leader of her four children. If she told her sister "the moon is made out of cheese" she would believe it, the mother said.

She said she never traded sexual favors with her children for rent, cigarettes or drugs.

"I love my kids. I would give my life for my kids," she said.

### **Friday, March 19, 1999**

A Bethel mother could spend the rest of her life in prison after a Clermont County jury Thursday found her guilty of the rape and felonious assault of her four children.

"Animals do not treat their young like this woman treated her young," said Daniel Breyer, the Clermont County assistant prosecutor in charge of the case.

It took the jury just four hours to reach its decision.

The 33-year-old woman is not being named in order to protect the identities of her children. Her attorneys, John Woliver and Michael Kennedy of Batavia, say they will appeal the verdict.

No sentencing date has been set, and jurors declined to comment. In closing arguments in Clermont County Common Pleas Court in Batavia, Kennedy had urged jurors to not let their emotions cloud a careful examination of the evidence.

However, jurors appeared swayed by videotaped testimony of the woman's daughter who said her mother had held her down while the mother's boyfriend raped her.

Three of the four children gave video depositions against their mother, and Kennedy had argued that the children were not reliable witnesses.

He said case workers removed suggestible children of moderate intelligence from a good mother, didn't allow them to see each other and solicited false testimony against her.

The mother and children lived in an abandoned bus in a junkyard near Moscow, Ohio. With no real home, Kennedy said, the youngsters were telling authorities what they thought their case workers and foster parents wanted to hear.

However Breyer said no leading questions or suggestibility was used in obtaining incriminating information from the children.

He said they voluntarily disclosed being abused to their foster families after they were removed from the mother in February 1997.

He said the abuse of the children occurred over a period of years and began when one daughter was barely 3 years old, adding that there's no reliable way to establish every date of abuse occurring at least since 1989.

The mother suggested her oldest daughter might have influenced her other siblings to testify against her as part of a scheme to stay with more affluent foster parents.

However, Breyer in closing arguments said the children did not orchestrate a scheme to get rid of their mother. "The children are not sophisticated enough to pull this off," he said.

He said the mother knowingly assisted her boyfriend, and allowed up to 22 people to engage in sexual acts with her daughters. This has left two of the children in psychiatric hospitals, and two others barely able to sleep, tormented by nightmares, perhaps emotionally scarred for life, Breyer said.

### **Tuesday, April 27, 1999**

A Clermont County judge this morning sentenced a Bethel mother to life in prison for the rape and felonious assault of her four children.

"I was a good mother, and I am innocent," she said before sentenced was passed, adding, "I have a heart, and I love my children."

Ignoring her pleas, Clermont County Common Pleas Court Judge William Walker sentenced her to four consecutive life terms for rape, plus 16 to 30 years for felonious assault.

"This is the worst case that I've seen in the 25 years I've been an attorney and judge," Walker said.

The mother was accused of assisting her boyfriend and others in the rape of her children over at least a decade.

One of the children is now in a juvenile psychiatric center, and the other three are in foster care.

A jury found the mother, 34, who had lived in Bethel and Felicity, guilty of four counts of rape and two counts of felonious assault. In passing sentence, the judge said the mother has shown no remorse, and is likely to repeat her behavior if not imprisoned. He said the mother has taken from her children all hope for a normal life.

"I forgive those people who judge me," the mother said.

Her attorney, John Woliver, said the woman has no significant criminal history and was sexually abused as a child.

Woliver said it might be possible that the defendant's children would appear in court in 25 years on sex abuse charges. If this happens, he hopes the future court would have "compassion" and understanding of the abuse they suffered.

He asked Walker to offer his client this same compassion. However Clermont County Assistant Prosecutor Daniel Breyer said the mother showed little compassion for her children.

The judge acknowledged that children who suffer sexual abuse might, as adults, sexually abuse children themselves. However, he said it is time to "break



the cycle" of sexual abuse apparently occurring in the mother's family for generations. Testifying at today's sentencing hearing, Cathy Huhn, a foster parent of one of the abused girls, said the rapes have left the youngster "completely shattered."

Before the mother's arrest, she said the girl had been "threatened to be cut up and spread all over Clermont County" if she told authorities. She said the youngster wants her mother to be electrocuted because that's the "only way she would feel safe."

## ENVIRONMENT

*This is the last in a series of stories written by Leonard Penix about a grass-roots drive to stop a utility partnership from opening a nuclear power plant near New Richmond, Ohio. The group's efforts, repeatedly profiled by Mr. Penix in more than 55 articles, resulted in the partnership abandoning plans for a nuclear-powered facility. This story describes the culmination of their efforts -- and a taxpayer's nightmare.*

**July 23, 1990**

**N**o coal-fueled electric plant on Earth will be more powerful than the William H. Zimmer Generating Station opening next June. The plant in Moscow can produce enough electricity to power 1 million average homes.

All that electric power, however, has a shocking price.

Homes and businesses in the Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton area will pay as much as \$3.6 billion for Zimmer. Cincinnati Gas & Electric Co. customers will be charged up to \$1.6 billion of Zimmer's cost.

CG&E would have to charge each of 650,000 electricity customers \$2,500 to cover this cost.

How customers will be billed for Zimmer has not been determined, but the first bills including the plant's cost will arrive as early as next year, said Bruce Stoecklin, CG&E spokesman.

Gov. Richard Celeste declared today "Ohio Coal Day" during a visit to Zimmer, where he assisted in the unloading of the first Ohio-mined coal for use in test-firing the plant's generating equipment.

He viewed a complex unlike any other in the world, a facility constructed as much with luck and dedication as cold hard cash.

Here's what Celeste saw:

The result of more than 7.4 million man hours of work, to pour 178,000 cubic yards of concrete, move 5.8 million cubic yards of sand and gravel, erect

27,000 tons of structural steel and install enough pipe to stretch from Cincinnati to Columbus.

The sponsor of the world's wealthiest mussels - about \$600,000 was spent to relocate, monitor and preserve the tiny endangered clam-like river creature threatened by the plant's construction.

A plant built "like an erector set" with one of the world's largest cranes, a massive machine which was transported to Zimmer by 150 tractor- trailers.

The home of the world's largest fans, and duct work big enough to drive 45- passenger buses through.

Zimmer has another distinction as well: It is the world's first and only plant ever converted from nuclear to coal power.

CG&E, Dayton Power and Light Co., and Columbus Southern Power Co., owners of Zimmer, started building the plant in 1971 intending to generate electricity with uranium fuel. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission halted work on Zimmer in 1983 because of safety concerns.

By then, Zimmer's owners already had spent \$1.7 billion. Estimates showed it would have cost another \$1.8 billion to complete it as a nuclear plant, so the owners decided to pull the plug on their plans to build a nuclear-powered facility.

By August 1984 they had decided to convert the plant to power by 3.5 million tons of relatively safe coal a year. American Electric Power Co. was given a budget of \$1.322 billion, excluding interest, to convert it.

While that is a lot of money, a third of the cost to convert the plant was for pollution control equipment, some new to Ohio, said John R. Jones, American Electric vice president and construction manager for Zimmer.

The emissions from Zimmer's giant smokestack will not be as pure as mountain air, but will fall well within federal pollution limits, according to Jones.

When AEP came on board, the firm decided to make the coal-fueled plant almost twice as powerful as it would have been as a nuclear facility. As a nuclear plant, Zimmer would have produced 800 megawatts of continuous power; as a coal plant, it will produce 1,300.

AEP has built six of the world's eight coal-fired 1,300-megawatt plants. Never, however, had a project seemed as impossible as the Zimmer conversion.

First of all, the Zimmer site is only 305 acres; most 1,300-megawatt plants sit on 1,000 acres, and it takes 300 acres just to store equipment during construction. To make matters worse, the Zimmer site is in a flood plain.

Having almost no room to assemble components was just the beginning. More frightening was the question of how to link Zimmer's low-pressure nuclear plant turbines to high-pressure coal turbines.

Then there was the problem of time, or lack of it. Zimmer's owners wanted the plant to be on line by 1991, a deadline that required some work that normally took two years to be finished in less than two weeks.

"We had to have the courage of our conviction that we were going to do it," Jones said.

"A lot of it was just luck."

One example of luck was the fact that the turbines could be linked together relatively inexpensively, he said. "We didn't know they would match so well," Jones said. But "the biggest plus the plant has is the Ohio River. Without the Ohio River, we would have been in deep trouble."

The river bottom provided the solution to the problem of Zimmer's flood plain location. About 4.2 million cubic yards of sand and gravel were dredged from the Ohio River to elevate the plant site, making it virtually flood-proof.

The river also was the answer to limited space. Rather than build components at the site for the 1,300-megawatt plant, Jones decided to buy pre-assembled ones and have them shipped on river barges, saving valuable construction time.

A 500-ton air pollution control precipitator module, which helps collect fly ash - the residue of burned coal - was the heaviest item shipped by river, shattering all bulk weight records on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers at that time in late 1987.

Zimmer contractors have been cited for more safety violations than any other project in Ohio's history. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration cited 33 contractors for 572 violations and proposed \$342,090 worth of fines after a three-month investigation.

The contractors have requested OSHA hearings on the citations. "I can't deny what they've found," said John R. Jones, Zimmer project manager and vice president of American Electric Power Co., who hired the contractors. "OSHA did a thorough job." Jones said the citations were a result of OSHA's "stepped-up enforcement" of safety regulations nationwide.

Jones said, however, that most construction sites as large as Zimmer - Ohio's largest often suffer a fatal work-related injury. No worker has died on the job at Zimmer, he said.

Jerry Monahan, executive secretary-treasurer for the Greater Cincinnati Building Trades Council, representing most Zimmer workers, agreed that fatal injuries often occur from such large job sites. Many workers are unfamiliar with the large number of safety regulations the contractors were cited for violating, including safety practices for use of scaffolding and electrical cords, he said. One worker at Zimmer lost two toes in an accident, and another suffered a flash burn from an electrical malfunction, Jones said.

#### **Related story:**

#### **November 25, 1993**

Jack Holland was schlepping beers at the River Edge Pub in Moscow, a tiny village beside the Ohio River he's called home for over half a century.

Holland, 52, remembers as a child hearing about how raging flood waters from the Ohio engulfed the town and drove out most of its businesses.

He also recalls the days when most people living in the Clermont County community had chicken coops and outhouses in their backyards.

He pops open a beer can and shoves it across the bar to a customer. A lot has changed over the years, he says.

The biggest change of all happened about three years ago. That's when a \$3.6 billion power plant opened on the edge of town.

The William H. Zimmer Generating Station hovers over the village and its 350 residents, Holland muses.

Many like living in the shadow cast by Zimmer's cooling tower - a mammoth structure as tall as the Carew Tower in downtown Cincinnati.

The power plant this year began paying Moscow about \$400,000 in taxes annually. The plant virtually doubles the village's tax base.

Zimmer taxes have paid for paving streets, new sidewalks, parks and other improvements, they say.

Others, however, are not overly thrilled waking up every morning in that long shadow.

"I kind of miss the little old town and how it used to be," said Carolyn Sue Forste. "It was just a nice little bitty old town. Now new things are happening, and it's different."

Ms. Forste this month was elected to the village council and is not fond of Zimmer. "I didn't like it, didn't want it there, never did, but it's there, and there's nothing we can do about it."

She said the plant constantly belches out white smoke. "They say it's steam and complies with the law," she says, "but I don't like it."

"I love it," said one of her constituents, Don Rice. "The plant has brought a lot of money into this town."

"It's put us on the map," says Charles Barker."

Nearly all Moscow residents agree on one facet of Zimmer: They are happy that it is a coal-powered plant and not a nuclear facility.

At first, the plant was to be powered by enriched uranium rather than coal. It was about 97 percent completed as a nuclear facility when the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in 1983 ordered construction stopped because of safety concerns.

In 1985, Cincinnati Gas & Electric Co. and Zimmer's other owners decided to convert it to a coal plant.

Most Moscow residents are used to the power plant now and give it scant notice.

They like to talk about other things, like the village's new sewage and waste treatment system, two new parks and a spruced up veterans memorial.

They like to point out the village's colorful past. Before the Civil War, one house - recently restored - was part of the Underground Railroad.

Blacks fleeing slavery in the south stole across the river and were hidden in the basement of the house on the banks of the Ohio.

Another nearby house on the riverfront near Broadway and 2nd streets has marks and several dates etched into its brick walls built almost two centuries ago.

The dates show propensity for the Ohio to bury the village beneath her depths. One date is 1847, which is about chest high on the wall. The 1937 mark, the worst flood the village has faced, is almost as high as the roof of the two-story building.

Floods are a way of life in Moscow. Long-time residents are used to the Ohio and scraping river mud from floods off their walls, floors and even their ceilings.

They remember only the big floods. "If you can still get around in a rowboat, then it isn't a big flood," said Holland.

Holland said the deluge of '37, however, was a big flood.

Before the disaster, the village had a coal yard, distillery, dairy, glass factory, brickyard, three grocery stores, a candy shop, two doctors, a dentist, a bank and other businesses.

"Back in those days, every little town had to be self-sufficient," said Holland.

"Now there is the Eastgate Mall 20 minutes away, good highways, and everyone has cars."

Moscow's commercial district, however, never recovered from '37, Holland said.

One of Holland's favorite stories is about the Brady Gang. In the early 1940s, the gang was robbing banks across the country and stopped in Moscow.

No one dared "squeal" on the gang.

"Everyone knew for days they were going to rob our bank," Holland said.

"No one was surprised when they did."

What did surprise them was that they also stole a veterans monument - a World War I machine gun - from the middle of town.

Holland has lived in Moscow for his entire life. Lisa Huffman, 23, moved there a year ago with her husband and children.

"I love it here, and I don't mind Zimmer. It comes with the territory," she said. "If you like Moscow, you have to like Zimmer."

"Zimmer's plants here," Holland said, "and nothing will ever be the same."

*This is a small environmental item of some interest.*

#### **Thursday, June 10, 1999**

**G**enetically altered fish barely an inch long are Clermont County's newest sentinels in efforts to protect drinking water supplies. The fish are being used to monitor for toxic substances and other pollutants in the East Fork of the Little Miami River. The waterway feeds Harsha Lake, a major source of drinking water for Clermont County.

Genetic material from fireflies and fluorescent jelly fish have been placed inside "zebra fish" to make them glow when exposed to toxic substances. Tanks of the fish will be placed at the water intake from the East Fork at Williamsburg and at the water intake tower at Harsha Lake.

The fish will be continuously exposed to the water at the intakes, and will initiate a color change if exposed to a pollutant.

"We have potential monitoring that's based upon the furthest cutting edge of science technology that we have an opportunity to field test," said Paul Russell, environmental consultant for Clermont.

The fish were developed by Daniel Nebert and Michael Carvan of the Department of Environmental Health at the University of Cincinnati.

Except for the genetic material, the genetically-altered breed is very similar to zebra danios, which are sold in pet stores, Clermont County officials say.

The critters have a very sensitive warning system for indicating the presence of PCBs and other pollutants in concentrations below the parts per billion range, says Russell.

He says the fish are 10,000 more sensitive than the gas chromatograph and mass spectrometer commonly used to detect pollutants. Plus, the system is much less expensive to use than traditional chemical methods for detecting pollutants, he says.

The county is spending only a few hundred dollars on the project, he says. Clermont County officials are concerned about hundreds of pounds of PCBs buried near Williamsburg and in the watershed of the East Fork at the CECOS hazardous waste dump.

Toxic wastes are no longer buried daily at the dump closed a few years ago. However, "Hundreds of pounds of PCBs are stored upriver in CECOS hazardous waste landfill," Russell said.

"The impressive thing for me is that if you take a coffee cup full of PCBs and dump it in the middle of the lake ... just that amount is enough to exceed the maximum tolerance level for human consumption in Lake Harsha. We've got a tremendous amount of stuff landfilled upriver."

Monitoring of the fish will occur three to five times per week, county officials say.

Clermont County Administrator Steve Wharton pointed out that the fish will be used for detecting pollutants in "raw water" before it is treated for human consumption. "The finished water that we drink -- that's really our target."

## GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

*Mr. Penix has written hundreds of stories about government and politics on the local, state and national level. The following two articles are about two politicians shortly before they were elected to federal office for the first time -- President George W. Bush and Ohio Rep. Jean Schmidt, R-Cincinnati.*

**July 31, 2000**

**H**amilton County, traditionally a GOP stronghold, provided a valuable testing ground Sunday for Texas Gov. George W. Bush to measure his strength as he heads to Philadelphia to accept his party's presidential nomination this week.

And if Bush needed an emotional boost heading into the convention, it was amply provided by the nearly 3,000 supporters who stood in the rain for over two hours at Old Crosley Field in Blue Ash to greet him.

"We're on our way to Philly, and we're on our way to victory," the GOP's presidential nominee-in-waiting told the soaked but cheering crowd during a speech in which he also touched on Social Security, his vice presidential choice, the budget surplus, education and the military.

Standing in front of an old Reds scoreboard, Bush told the crowd, "We are going to take Ohio," then warned his backers about becoming complacent with recent polls showing him leading presumptive Democratic nominee Al Gore. History provides Bush with a memorable lesson on that score, because his father, then-President George Bush, had a seemingly comfortable lead in the polls in 1991 after the Gulf War, only to lose his re-election bid the following year to Bill Clinton.

Bush, whose two-day weekend visit to the tri-state began with a Saturday night rally in Covington's Devou Park, started Sunday with a surprise visit to Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church, where he and his wife attended services with Rep. Rob Portman, R-Cincinnati.

Congregation members attending the 9:30 a.m. service were surprised when Bush's motorcade pulled up in front of the church.

"It it the president?" one young girl asked her father when she saw the motorcade's flashing lights and a cluster of security guards outside the church.

"Not yet," her father replied.

Portman said that Bush called him Saturday to say that he wanted to attend church Sunday, but did not want to publicize his appearance in advance so as not to politicize it. "I couldn't even tell my pastor until (Sunday morning)," Portman said.

Bush paused briefly for photos before entering and after leaving the church. His only public comment in Hyde Park came when, in response to a shouted question, he called Cincinnati a "fabulous place."

Later, in Blue Ash, Bush's motorcade arrived amid a fireworks display, rock music by Ooo la la and the Greasers, and speeches from Ohio Gov. Bob Taft and other Republican leaders.

In his 20-minute speech, Bush called his choice for vice presidential nominee, former Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, "a good man, a solid man." "He's a man of integrity, and I'm proud to call him friend, and you'll be proud to call him vice president," Bush said.

Bush also used his speech to outline some of his major differences with Gore and the policies of the Clinton Administration.

The Texas governor said he disagrees with Gore on how the trillion-dollar-plus budget surplus should be used. "My opponent thinks it belongs to the government," said Bush, adding that he favors returning much of it to Americans via tax cuts.

"The surplus is the people's money," because they paid the taxes creating it, Bush said.

Bush also charged that the Clinton Administration has allowed America's military power to dwindle, saying that morale in the military over the last seven years also has "declined dangerously low."

He pledged to rebuild America's alliances, and to strengthen its defense and leadership role among the world's peacekeepers. "I will rebuild the military power of the United States of America," he said.

On Social Security, Bush vowed to "fulfill the promise of the seniors," while balancing that pledge with an equal promise to the young to insure that the retirement benefits program will be solvent when they need it in the mid-21st century. Bush also touched on his proposal to allow younger workers to invest some of the paycheck dollars that now automatically go to Social Security in a private retirement account instead.

His wife, Laura, as his side, Bush said control of education should shift from Washington to local officials who better understand their students' needs. He also criticized the "soft bigotry" in the way the system sometimes "shuffles some students through" school without providing an adequate education. There must be more accountability by teachers and administrators for students' educations, he said.



"There are no second-rate children in America, and there are no second-rate dreams in America," he said.

Kitty Atkins-Bullock of Delhi Township, who was among those who waited in the rain for Bush's speech, said it was worth getting drenched because Bush shook his hand after his speech and made a brief comment that moved her to tears.

"He took my hand and said, 'God bless you,' and it made me cry because that's always what I say," she said. "You wouldn't think someone running for president would say that, too."

Bush's Blue Ash speech was delayed briefly when a 73-year-old woman collapsed in the crowd and later died at Bethesda North Hospital.

Blue Ash firefighters identified the woman as Helen L. Geiger of Cincinnati. Authorities did not immediately release the cause of her death.

### **March 23, 2000**

**M**iami Township Trustee Jean Schmidt loves to run. She gets up at 5 a.m. every day and logs six miles. As if that weren't enough, she also works out with weights and goes swimming, virtually every day.

She has run in 28 marathons over the past 10 years, including the Las Vegas Marathon last month and the Honolulu Marathon in Hawaii about a year ago, where she bested 23,000 of 25,000 runners.

Now Mrs. Schmidt is running in perhaps the biggest race of her life. She is running for a seat in the Ohio Legislature, her first bid for state political office, and seeking a job left vacant by Sam Bateman, R-Milford, who is leaving office because of term limits.

Her opponent is Democrat Sherrill Callahan, of Pierce Township. He is a retired schoolteacher whose family has a long history of backing union activities, says Priscilla O'Donnell, chairwoman of the Clermont County Democratic Party. In a county where the Democrats have not won an elective office in at least a decade, observers believe Mrs. Schmidt's election in November is a near certainty.

Mrs. Schmidt said she plans to run hard regardless of what people say. In her opinion, a race is rarely won by the overconfident candidate who fails to work hard. Eighteen years ago, before the Clermont GOP appointed Bateman to an unexpired term left vacant by the death of Sue Fisher, Mrs. Schmidt said the Republican party "offered me the job on a silver platter."

She declined, however, because her daughter, Emilie, was barely 5 years old. "My mother always said when you come to a fork in the road, take the road God wants you to take because it is a lot less bumpy than the one you might want to take. Eighteen years ago, before Bateman took office, that was my fork in the road.

"My daughter hadn't reached her fifth birthday, so I made the better choice. I said no to the position and yes to raising a daughter. How would I have felt if I had left motherhood behind?"

"My daughter graduates from college in May and I now have the time, experience, knowledge and energy to do the job I left behind 18 years ago." Mrs. Schmidt is 48 and has lived in the same precinct in Miami Township all her life. She has been married to husband Peter 24 years. She has been a township trustee 10 years, chief of the Clermont County GOP two years, and a member of the library board 20 years. She has never run for state office but is no stranger to state politics.

She is co-founder of CLOUT, or Coalition of Large Ohio Urban Townships. That group represents townships with populations larger than many cities and lobbies for more power and fairness for them. After protracted efforts, CLOUT last year persuaded the legislature to broaden the powers of townships and to give them standing similar to that of villages and cities.

### **Related story:**

**Sept. 28, 1995**

Watching democracy and capitalism in their infancy was the most memorable part of Jean Schmidt's recent trip to Russia. Ms. Schmidt, a Miami Township trustee, traveled to Russia to host seminars on organizing and participating in political campaigns.

A veteran runner who participates in marathons, Ms. Schmidt ran through Red Square at dawn.

"Did I ever feel unsafe?" she said. "No. And would I jog through Central Park in New York? No way."

She visited Moscow and Voronezh Sept. 5 to 13 as part of an International Republican Institute trip to promote democracy.

The Russians have made great strides but still have far to go, said Ms. Schmidt.

Voter apathy is high, largely because they often have to pick candidates representing 80 or more political parties at any given election.

Elections are Dec. 17 and candidates must collect 5,000 signatures after Sept. 15 to be on the ballot. If they collect a signature before Sept. 15, they are disqualified, she said.

If candidates win and their party fails to muster at least 5 percent of the total vote, they are barred from holding office, said Ms. Schmidt.

In addition, a voter turnout of less than 50 percent renders the entire election void, said Ms. Schmidt.

"The communists are setting up the deck so they will continue to hold power," she said.

She said black market activity has decreased, but the cost of food and other goods remains expensive.

And, she said, salaries are low. Ice cream bars are \$5 and few hotels - even the best - have hot water, she said.

Some entrepreneurs resemble businessmen in America's Rockefeller era at the dawn of the machine age, she said.

However, Russia has also been tainted by a downside of capitalism. Members of the old KGB, anxious to make a quick buck, have become the nation's emerging organized crime syndicate, she said.

Fast food and soft drink producers take note:

"There's an emerging middle class, and it is growing every day," said Ms. Schmidt.

## BUSINESS

**August 27, 1996**

Over a decade ago, corn fields sprawled over most of Eastgate in Clermont County's Union Township. And near McMann Road and Clough Pike, deer were a common sight nibbling at the edge of thick woods.

Today, hundreds of shops, restaurants, department stores, offices and factories have sprouted up in these former farm fields.

And more development looms every day.

"I'm so busy giving out zoning permits, I can't even go to lunch," laments Cheryl Cooper, township zoning administrator.

Says Ken Geis, township administrator: "We are one of the fastest-growing townships in the state, without question."

Consider:

- More than \$120 million in industrial development has occurred in the township over the last year alone.
- Since 1990, over 2,500 new homes have been built or started, and construction is to begin soon on another 500.
- More than \$10 million has been spent over the last two years to curb bumper-to-bumper traffic around Ohio 32 and Interstate 275 in Eastgate - now one of the busiest retail centers in Greater Cincinnati. More than \$15 million in school expansions and improvements are under way to accommodate spiraling student enrollment.

Growth came quickly, like an "explosion," Geis said.

And don't look for things to slow down.

"Move away and come back in three years, and you won't even recognize the place," Ms. Cooper said.

Rapid development has caused growing pains like zoning disputes, traffic congestion, crowded classrooms, and the burden of providing fire, police and other services.

In addition, a community where most still espouse family values finds itself at an ethical crossroad.

A strip club moved into the community in December; residents worry a wave of sex shops, massage parlors and adult theaters might follow, and township trustees this month adopted zoning regulations against them.

"We have been awakened to the possibility of them coming out here and we are taking steps to control them and not let them hurt our community," said Mary Walker, president of the Union Township Board of Trustees.

Zoning disputes have become common as developers and homeowners feud over rapidly vanishing vacant land. "Zoning is the worst thing about this job," said Mrs. Walker.

However, Trustee Linda Wuerdeman said, "Traffic is the worst problem we have."

Most would probably agree. Traffic signals were upgraded on busy Ohio 125, and new turn lanes were constructed on congested Ohio 32 and Glen Este-Withamsville Road, which leads to the heart of the Eastgate retail area.

Nonetheless, bumper-to-bumper traffic during rush hour still plagues both township arteries.

About 65,600 vehicles a day travel Ohio 32 east of I-275, according to Dory Montazemi, assistant director of the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Council of Governments. Another 55,000 use nearby Ohio 125.

In addition to traffic woes, providing enough classroom space is a constant problem.

The West Clermont Local School District now has 9,100 students compared to 8,300 in 1989, said Dennis Devine, school superintendent. The district is now the fourth largest in Greater Cincinnati.

After it was on the ballot four times, voters finally passed a \$15.5 million bond issue to pay for more classroom space. Four elementary schools, two middle schools and both high schools are being enlarged.

This is probably only a short-term fix. The district could quickly grow by 1,000 students as construction gets underway on a planned, 500-home subdivision near Schoolhouse Road.

"The additions are good for the short-term, but if growth continues, in another five years we'll have to look at more construction," said Devine.

In addition to traffic and classroom woes, the township also shoulders the burden of providing services to thousands of visitors and residents.

Union Township today has about 35,000 residents, compared to 28,000 in 1980, according to the U.S. Census Bureau and local officials.

Motorists, including shoppers and workers, swell the township's daily population to as many as 250,000 people, said Trustee Tim Donnellon.

Car fires and vandalism, as well as shoplifting and juvenile crime, have become common - and often the victims are non-residents.

Township police, fire and other officials keep busy serving people who "don't pay a dime" in direct taxes to the community, said Donnellon. However, the township must provide them with services, he said.

"If someone has a heart attack, we are not going to say, 'You are from Kenwood, so we are not going to help you,' " said Mrs. Walker.

To keep abreast of needs, new police officers and firefighters are continually being hired.

Three years ago, the police department had 38 employees. Today it has 45. Six more employees will be hired soon, said Geis. Three years ago the fire department had 15 employees; it now has 25 and will soon be expanded to 30, Geis said.

Hiring new employees squeezes the community coffers. If workers paid income taxes, and shoppers paid sales taxes directly to the township, it would help ease budget constraints, officials say.

However, Ohio law prohibits townships -- though not cities -- from levying income or sales taxes. Because of tight budgets, Union Township firefighters built a firehouse virtually by themselves in Willowville.

Mrs. Walker says her township is as large as a city, and with many of the same problems, but with fewer resources.

The community today has about 35,000 residents, compared to 28,000 in 1980. However motorists, including shoppers and workers, swell the township's daily population to as many as 250,000.

The township's Eastgate area is one of the busiest retail centers in Greater Cincinnati and its school district, serving 9,100 students, is one of the area's largest.

Millions of dollars in industrial development occurs annually and traffic congestion is probably the township's worst problem. "We have all the responsibilities of a city, but are without any of the financial wherewithal they have," Mrs. Walker said.

### **January 13, 1998**

Take another look at stocks, mutual funds and tax-deferred annuities. Your best investment might be an old guitar. Guitars over the years have provided a greater rate of return than many blue chip stocks.

A Gibson Les Paul electric guitar that sold for a couple hundred dollars in the late 1950s is worth \$50,000 today.

Built in the same era and sold at the same price, old Fender Stratocaster electrics today will fetch up to \$25,000. Vintage Martin acoustic guitars sell for \$45,000.

It is a bull market for guitar collectors, and has been for many years, says Mike Reeder, owner of Mike's Music in Corryville next to Bogart's. He says annual returns of 15 and 20 percent are common with some collectible guitars.

"It is a better return than the stock market. Every year, prices have gone up on vintage instruments," said Reeder. He has 600 used or vintage guitars in his store and says he has the largest collection in Ohio.

Years ago, many guitars worth small fortunes today could be purchased for, well, a song.

"When we were kids, if we only knew what we know now," said John Cole, owner of the Guitar Cellar in Sharonville.

He says Gibson, Fender, Gretsch and Martin guitars are the most collectible, especially those made over 40 years ago and in good condition. Reeder said, "This is an international market. All over the world, especially in Japan, American guitars are highly desirable."

With guitars, "Being made in the USA means a lot," Reeder said. "It is something we have done well. "Of all the nations that have made guitars, the only ones that have kept their value are American guitars."

Bill Renner, a Reading guitar restorer, says the Japanese are gobbling up vintage American guitars.

He said they buy them by the truck load at trade shows. Japanese collectors prefer unfinished guitars.

Renner said while restoration improves the appearance and sound of vintage guitars, it also lessens their value.

In the past, refinishing a guitar could lower its value by as much as 50 percent, but today it has less of a negative impact.

Cole says market conditions affect guitars like they do stocks.

The value of guitars often "are susceptible to who is playing what and who is hot at the time.

"When Eric Clapton goes on stage playing something, it gets hot." A couple years ago, Clapton played a Martin 000-42 built in the 1930s.

The price skyrocketed - some of the oldest built after 1918 and in mint condition are worth \$50,000 today.

"On a Clapton tour two years ago, he played a Gibson 335. Prices soared because of that," said Reeder.

"Things like that make a difference," he said.

Reeder said 1958 and 1959 Gibson Les Pauls have escalated in value "because a lot of famous people played them."

Clapton, as well as Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin, played '59 Les Pauls, said Reeder.

Among the best Stratocasters from the 1970s to buy are white guitars with maple necks like the one Jimi Hendrix played often, says Reeder.

Collecting guitars is different from other hobbies, says Reeder. "It's a thing that gets in your blood," he said. "If someone likes a guitar enough, they even name it. "It is personal like that. You don't see someone naming matchbox cars that they are collecting."

There are several books available on guitar collecting, and Cole says some of the old Kay or Harmony guitars made in the 1940s and 1950s can be bought for a few hundred dollars. "They are very tradeable and very collectible. You don't have to go for the real expensive ones."

And don't let the small price fool you. Microsoft stock was once cheap, too.

*This story was written about U.S. Precision Lens in Clermont County, which President Ronald Reagan visited during his presidency. Professor Penix also profiled the earlier visit by the President.*

**October 5, 2000**

**N**early 500 new jobs will be created in Union Township, Clermont County, with the expansion of U.S. Precision Lens. The jobs will emerge as part of a \$95.6 million expansion of the company located on McMann Road. With the new jobs, U.S. Precision Lens will employ about 2,500 people, making it the largest employer in Clermont County.

The ZF/Ford Co. plant on Front Wheel Drive in Batavia Township is currently the county's largest employer with about 2,000 workers.

U.S. Precision Lens officials say construction on the expansion should begin by next summer. The company now is accepting applications for a variety of skilled and non-skilled jobs for expanded plant.

Denny Begue, president of the Clermont County Chamber of Commerce, calls U.S. Precision Lens one of the county's best industrial neighbors and "a real asset."

The company makes optical equipment for a variety of industrial and commercial uses, and provides high-paying skilled and unskilled jobs. Union Township trustees have given the company two tax breaks - one granted last month and another in August -- for its expansion.

In August, trustees gave the plant a 75 percent, 10-year abatement on real and personal taxes for \$31.6 million in new building, machinery and equipment.

After receiving the abatement, the company promptly announced plans for a second expansion. Trustees then offered the firm a second tax break for 10 years.

The company will pay several hundred thousand dollars in taxes, officials say, including at least \$140,000 for West Clermont schools. West Clermont School District officials have been critical of past tax abatements provided by Union Township trustees. They contend that it takes operating money away from the schools and students.

*This story was written by a major Clermont County businessman who lost millions of dollars in a partnership with J.C. Penney and others in the development of the Eastgate Mall.*

**March 24, 1999**

**H**arold Flannery, a Clermont County developer who spearheaded development of the Eastgate area, died early today in a fire at his home. Flannery's wife, Shirley, burned her hands in the fire. She was treated and released at Mercy Hospital Anderson.

Clermont officials say Flannery, 65, was a developer when economic development was still a novel idea in the once all-rural county. He was the driving force behind the 1980 development of the Eastgate Mall on Ohio 32 at Interstate 275, and other projects.

"He was a visionary and really helped Clermont County become the progressive county it is today," said Jean Schmidt, president of Miami Township trustees and former chairwoman of the Clermont County GOP.

Firefighters were called to his home at 4471 Olive Branch Road near Owensville shortly before 2:30 a.m. They found it in flames and Flannery's body in a bedroom.

Batavia Fire Chief John Bucher said the fire caused \$120,000 in damages and was mainly contained to the bedroom area. The fire was extinguished by 2:57 a.m. and caused "a lot of smoke damage throughout" the house, said Bucher. One firefighter sustained a minor burn on his arm, the chief said.

Bucher does not know how Mrs. Flannery escaped, and says investigators have not yet collected complete statements from her because she is upset. Neighbors described the home as a large, older house that Flannery had remodeled.

Flannery has a son, Mark, and 2 daughters, Rachel and Kelly. Flannery had a long association with Clermont County and once told a reporter, "Each morning I am thankful for three things: that I was born in the United States, that my parents moved to Ohio and that I have lived in Clermont County."

Clermont County Treasurer Bob True has known Flannery since they were children and went to Batavia High School with him. "He was a great friend to me. I'm going to miss him."

Decades ago, Flannery was one of the first to suggest widespread development would be good for the county - a novel idea at the time, True says. "He had great ideas and the guts to carry them out," he said.

"He was a powerful person, but very likeable and personable," said Mrs. Schmidt.

Flannery started working in construction at the age of 12 as a laborer. He grew up in an industry that was about to boom.

In 1959 he formed Flannery & Esz, a construction company that initially built homes. By 1964 the company took a lucrative new direction, and commercial and industrial development became the company's trademark.

The company built the Mt. Carmel Frisch's restaurant and completed Clermont County's first industrial park on Omni Drive in Union Township.

As Clermont County's population continued to grow, he saw a shopping pattern developing. Despite a strip of stores in Cherry Grove and Milford, shoppers flocked to malls in Cincinnati.

He believed a local mall was needed to serve the growing Clermont County area. So Flannery and a group of nine others formed the Eastgate Co. and began buying land along Ohio 32 near the Clermont County line.

The project was plagued with problems, beginning with the need for an interchange with Interstate 275. By the time the interchange was arranged, the



economy had slowed down, and plans for a 1975 opening were delayed first until 1979 and finally until 1980.

The partnership owning the mall changed and by the mid-80s dissension among the partners led Flannery to file a lawsuit asserting that he and partner Earl Barnes had been forced to sell their interests at an "unfairly low rate." Flannery asserted in his suit that the financial problems led Barnes, a former Ohio Republican Party chairman, to fatally shoot himself in 1986.

At the time of his death, Flannery, the primary developer for Bella Vista and Beechwood Village subsidized housing, was developing more than 250 homes in Batavia Township off Ohio 32 near the Ford Motor plant and on nearby Herold Road, plus a New Richmond housing project.

*This was a breaking business story written moments before deadline. The story was distributed nationally on the Associated Press business wire, one of the many stories written by Professor Penix that were distributed to newspapers across the nation.*

### **January 11, 1991**

**F**ord Motor Co. will invest \$530 million to re-tool its Batavia transmission plant. Ford executives announced the long-expected re-tooling at a press conference this morning at the 1.7-million square foot plant off of Ohio 32.

The re-tooling "gives Batavia an opportunity to compete with anyone in the world in the production of transaxles and should provide stable employment at the plant into the next century," said Al Ver, transaxle program manager for Ford.

"With the economy the way it is now, this is a welcomed announcement," said Garry Mason, Batavia plant chairman for UAW Local 863.

Nonetheless, there are no immediate plans to hire new employees at the Clermont County plant, which now employs 1,350 hourly, and 240 salaried workers. It had been expected that retooling would add about 200 jobs and cost \$300 million.

Workers laid off recently at the Sharonville Ford plant, however, might be put back to work at the Batavia plant.

Batavia Ford workers had feared they would be laid off like their Sharonville co-workers before the re-tooling was announced.

Ford is re-tooling the plant because the automaker is phasing out the three-speed, hydraulic transaxle produced for compact front wheel drive cars for 10 years at the Batavia plant.

It will be replaced by a four-speed, electronic transaxle to be used on compact, as well as mid-sized cars, to be produced at Batavia, said Ver.

The new transaxle will increase gas mileage by almost 2 miles per gallon.

## EDUCATION

*Mr. Penix has written more than 1,200 articles about education. Few have more galvanized the tri-state than a series of stories about, of all things, a high school mascot. Here are two stories from that series:*

**July 17, 1999**

**G**uy Jones, the great-great-grandson of an American Indian who fought Custer at Little Big Horn, has chosen a battlefield of his own. It is the classrooms of Greater Cincinnati schools, and though his targets are mascots like "Redskins" and "Warriors," his larger objective is to change the message sent to students about Native Americans.

"It goes beyond the mascot names," said Jones, dressed in a T-shirt, jeans, and with an ebony pony tail reaching to his waist. "We want to make changes in the entire educational system and the way the system teaches about American Indians. They don't teach them being part of the 1990s. They teach as if we are part of the past."

Jones was instrumental in changing the Miami University mascot name from Redskins to RedHawks and believes education is the key to changing stereotypes about the American Indian.

Jones, spokesman for the Miami Valley Council of Native Americans, and his supporters will be at a Forest Hills Board of Education meeting Monday at Anderson High School. They also attended a meeting there in June.

They have asked that the school district's 62-year-old "Redskins" mascot name be dropped and find it ludicrous that the Forest Hills Board of Education would debate whether the term is offensive to Native Americans. He says Native Americans have told them it is offensive, and that should be enough.

"The term 'redskin' has the potential to do long-term damage both psychologically and mentally," said Jones. "What it does is degrading. I have lived through it. I have heard it used in a degrading way. I don't want my children, nor my grandchildren, to go through the degradation I have."

"We are not . . . Jeep Cherokees. We are people."

"Look at the mascot of Anderson Township," Jones said. "They place us in historical 18th century attire. That is the image we want to change. I am comfortable in a T-shirt, blue jeans and tennis shoes. That is the American Indian in 1999."

Changing the image will not be easy. A group called "Save Our Skins," or SOS, has formed in Anderson, and plans to fight any attempts to change the mascot name.

"We hold it as a respectful image that we are very proud of," said Harry Andreadis, spokesman for SOS.

Most residents apparently share his viewpoint, says Pat Papoi, school board member. "It appears clear from the June school board meeting that the majority of residents of Anderson Township are very proud of the Redskins name. They see it is as a source of pride for them, and they treat it with respect." Jones said a nationwide movement is under way to change any athletic logos or mascots with similar references to Native Americans.

The Committee Against Racism in Sports based in St. Paul, Minn., and the 500 Year Committee, working to change the name of the Cleveland Indians, are the most active, he said. In Greater Cincinnati, Jones hopes to take his crusade to the Lakota School District next, then move on to every other district in the area with Native American references.

But the districts say they've received no complaints.

"We can't do much of anything until we hear what their concerns are," said Lakota School District Spokesman Jon Weidlich, adding that Lakota is a Native American word meaning "coming together."

Winton Woods City Schools Superintendent Thomas Richey says no one has ever said that his district's mascot, the Warrior, is offensive or insensitive. "I think it can be an issue if it is an affront to people within the community. But we've never had anyone ever raise the issue of mascot names either personally to me or to the board or in writing.

"I don't view this community as being inclined (to change the mascot name) unless it comes from within the community," Richey said.

Goshen School Board Member Brenda Martin says her mascot name of "Warriors" is not offensive.

Though she understands how "redskins" might be offensive, she says there's "no comparison between redskins and warriors. Warriors is a very respectable thing."

#### **Related story:**

**July 1, 1999**

Mary Pemper and her family moved to Anderson recently and were appalled at the symbol emblazoned across the floor of the high school gymnasium.

A "Redskins" symbol is as disturbing to her as a Ku Klux Klan robe might be to an African-American.

"Your mascot makes me feel unwelcome," she told school officials recently. "I have a little girl and I don't want to have to explain what this means to her."

The Forest Hills Board of Education this month is looking at changing 62 years of history at Anderson High School.

Since 1937, the symbol of the "Redskins" mascot adorned football, baseball, cheerleading and basketball uniforms.

Now, however, the board is under pressure from Native Americans to change the symbol because they say it is derogatory and racist.

Miami University recently dropped its Redskins symbol under similar pressure from the Miami Valley Council of Native Americans - the local chapter of a national group representing most American Indian tribes.

A decision to change six decades of sports tradition at Anderson is not going to happen overnight.

The issue will be addressed at a July 19 meeting, but is not likely to be resolved then, according to Richard W. Newmann, school board member. The board a week ago listened to Native Americans, their supporters, parents, teachers and students voice opinions on the matter.

Anderson High School Principal Mike Hall does not want the name changed. He says the term was never intended to be racist and has always represented the highest academic and sports standards.

During its six decades of use, the logo has never been intended, nor represented, as derogatory toward Native Americans, he said. However, a petition signed by 140 people against the symbol has been submitted to the school board.

A white person is in no position to tell Native Americans what they find offensive, says Guy Jones, executive director of the Miami Valley Council of Native Americans in Dayton, Ohio.

"We are not the ones who created this racism. We can't kill it because we didn't create it. But we can tell you about it," he said.

He says if the school were interested in teaching the values of tolerance and social acceptance, the racist symbol would be dropped.

Ignorance of the humiliation the word causes among American Indians is a sign of racism, he says. "You have the opportunity to make a positive change," he told the board.

Sally Moomaw, a University of Cincinnati professor of early childhood education, says symbols such as "Redskins" sends the wrong message to youngsters.

Most young people today, exposed to popular "cowboys and Indians" cultural play, have very racist notions, she says. Most children believe "Indians are bad and kill people and that they scalp people," she said.

Daniel Balog, a member of the Miami Valley Council, says 600 schools nationwide have dropped the use of the word "Redskins" as a logo or mascot. He

says the term originated during colonial times when bounties were paid for Native American scalps.

Sylvia Wooster says her son, an Anderson student, is proud of the mascot and his room is filled with Native American memorabilia. She believes Native Americans misunderstand the honor and high esteem in which Anderson students hold the symbol.

Andy Wolf, a teacher for 27 years, says students at Anderson are never taught that Indians are evil, and their epic struggle has been taught with historical accuracy.

However, Native Americans say the symbol distorts their history, and misrepresents their culture.

The symbol in no way represents the "very deep and powerful legacy" of the Native American," said Heather Hallorn. "The word 'Redskin' is so derogatory," she said.

## **May 24, 2001**

In an era when school board members rarely serve more than one term, Pete Hershberger has set a milestone for Sycamore Community Schools.

Hershberger last week attended his 500th meeting of the Sycamore Board of Education to which he was elected 16 years ago. "That's a bunch of years," said Hershberger, a 1972 graduate of Sycamore High School.

He is the third generation of his family to serve as a school board member. "My father was a member of the Sycamore School Board for 14 years between 1968 and 1982 and my grandfather was a school board member in Illinois for a number of years."

Sycamore School Board President Jean Staubach made a special presentation to Hershberger during his 500th meeting on May 16 at E.H. Greene Intermediate School in Blue Ash.

During his years on the board, Hershberger has cast 5,000 votes and awarded 1,300 diplomas.

"A 16-year board member is a rare and disappearing breed in the world of school boards," said Krista Ramsey, spokeswoman for Sycamore Community Schools.

Ms. Ramsey points out a number of reasons for the lack of experience on Ohio's school boards.

Levies and other school board issues sap the interest and energy of school board members, who often resign after one or two election campaigns.

In addition, Ms. Ramsey says many board members are elected as champions of a single issue and typically leave after short terms of service.

The rising cost of political campaigns for school board candidates also deters people from serving long tenures.

Hershberger, however, is an exception. During his tenure, Hershberger has seen Sycamore Schools pass two bond issues, two operating levies, hire two superintendents and three treasurers and complete remodeling and expansion of the district's seven schools.

As a whole, the nation's school board members lack extensive experience and half of the country's board members are in their first terms, according to the National School Board Association.

Inexperience is also common in Ohio. Fewer than 6 percent of Ohio school board members serve 16 years or more, and this number is declining, according to the Ohio School Board Association.

Hershberger is especially proud that the district with him on the board has produced a state-leading 31 National Merit Finalists.

"It has been fun. It has worked out really well. I have been fortunate to be in Sycamore."

### **March 1, 2001**

**T**he Sycamore School District is the first in the tri-state, and possibly the nation, to construct an elementary school on a college campus, officials say.

Groundbreaking is set for April for the \$10 million Blue Ash Elementary School opening in the fall, 2002 at Raymond Walters College.

"We believe we're the first in the nation," said Krista Ramsey, school district spokeswoman.

The arrangement saves the district the cost of buying land in exchange for providing the college some space in the 80,000-square-foot building. "We have never heard of it happening before, but there's no real good way to find out," she said.

Most of the school will be used for kindergarten through fourth grade during the day.

However, one wing of the school will be used at night and on weekends for college classes and for training Sycamore teachers.

"It is a great partnership you rarely see between a college and elementary school," said Ms. Ramsey.

The Board of Education accepted \$8.3 million in bids last week for the new school, awarding a \$5.8 million general construction contract to Dugan & Meyers Construction Co., 11110 Kenwood Road, Blue Ash. Architectural costs and change orders swell the total cost to \$10 million.

The board is paying \$1.2 million for heating and air conditioning to Harm & Ring Mechanical, Inc., at 2524 Atco Avenue, Middletown, \$754,000 for electrical work to Glenwood Electrical, 2107 Lawn Avenue, of Norwood, \$90,810 for fire protection to Preferred Fire Protection, Inc., 375 Commercial Drive, Fairfield,

\$370,410 for plumbing to Ken Neyer Plumbing Inc., of 4895 Ohio 128, Cleves, and \$95,227 for kitchen equipment to G.V. Aikman Co., 5540 Evergreen Court, West Chester.

The district is paying for the new school for 575 elementary school students in part by selling the old Blue Ash Elementary School to Sycamore Township which is considering using it for a recreation center.

The old school is being replaced to provide larger classrooms, upgraded technology systems, and a better cafeteria, gymnasium and media area, says Ms. Ramsey.

### **Thursday, February 15, 2001**

**W**orkers are digging the foundation for a \$72 million high school and recreation center in Mason.

About 355,500 square feet of the sprawling, 540,000 square-foot-facility will be used for the high school for 2,400 students.

The high school part of the complex, representing about \$44 million of the total cost, includes three wings, each three stories in size. The rest of the building, opening in the fall of 2002 on Mason Montgomery Road, will house a recreation center and two indoor swimming pools.

"It's massive," said Shelly Benesh, spokeswoman for Mason schools.

It will be a focal point in Mason, providing a common gathering point for both students and residents, says Ms. Benesh. The center's 73-acre site is situated beside the city's high school sports arena and play fields.

The Mason Board of Education last week accepted bids totalling \$14.5 million for masonry, steel fabrication and electrical work beginning after the foundation is finished.

The board approved a contract for masonry with Batts Construction Inc. for \$6.3 million, for steel fabrication with Avenue Fabricating Inc. for \$3.7 million, and for electrical work with Active Electric Co. for \$4.5 million.

School officials say the district, with 6,711 students, is becoming overcrowded, but the high school will allow the system to accommodate expected growth for several years. The city itself is not likely for many years to outgrow its recreation center including basketball courts, weightlifting, exercise and meeting rooms, officials say.

Each floor will house a different academic area, such as business, communications, or performing arts, Ms. Benesh says.

A 6.78-mill, 26-year bond issue passed last year for building the complex beside the city's present high school, which was recently remodeled and doubled in size from 125,000 to 238,000 square feet. No decision has been made on whether the existing high school will be transformed into a middle school for grades seven and eight.

### **February 1, 2001**

It is tough for many young students to sit still all day even in sunny, spacious classrooms with plenty of room to learn.

Imagine what it's like to sit all day in makeshift classrooms situated in converted storage and shower rooms, closets, food pantries, and a basement near a furnace boiler.

That's what it's like for scores of students in the overcrowded Milford school district where almost every "nook and cranny" is being used for classrooms, says John Frye, school superintendent.

Even a cafeteria is a luxury the district cannot afford at Charles L. Seipelt Elementary School. Frye says the cafeteria was closed to make space for classrooms; children eat their lunches at their desks.

The Milford Board of Education meets at 7 p.m. today at 745 Center St. to discuss putting a bond issue on the May 8 ballot to pay for building more classroom space - a move the board is not taking lightly.

A \$53 million bond issue lost by about 160 votes in August, 1999 and again in March by 1,100 votes. It would have paid for building a new middle school, a new wing on the junior high and for additional classrooms throughout the district.

Uncertain about the mood of voters, the school board decided against putting the levy back on the ballot in both November and February.

However, school officials say the need for more classroom space is not going away, and construction costs are not getting any cheaper.

Putting a bond issue on the May ballot to pay for more space is almost a certainty, school officials say, though they are uncertain about how much money to ask from voters.

Officials say the physical size of the district's classrooms are 30-to-50 percent smaller than state guidelines.

The district also falls short of state guidelines for the number of students taught by each teacher. State guidelines call for a teacher-pupil ratio of 20-to-1 for kindergarten through the fourth grade. In Milford, this ratio on average is 23-to-1.

In higher grades, the ratio is at least 25-to-1, and in some classrooms it is even worse.

A "facilities commission" of 28 residents, parents, retirees, teachers and school administrators spent nine months studying the district's overcrowding problems. The commission predicts the situation will grow even worse in the future.

The district now has about 5,700 students and the commission's study predicts this will increase by an average of 45 students annually for at least the next seven years.

To relieve overcrowding, Frye says the district is using a total of 14 temporary modular classrooms situated behind his district's four elementary schools.

He says five more are on order for next year.

**January 18, 2001**



**F**reshman often feel intimidated when they enter a school with more than 1,200 students.

Barely teen-agers, these youths are packed into classrooms and hallways with scores of other bewildered youths.

That's been the orientation these youngsters have gotten for years at burgeoning Glen Este and Amelia high schools in the West Clermont School District. But that is about to change.

The district -- which has more than 9,000 students and is one of the largest in Greater Cincinnati -- soon starts a project to carve out smaller schools, or "mini schools", within both high schools. Both high schools now have more than 1,200 students.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, established by the Microsoft chairman, has provided an \$800,000 grant to start the West Clermont High School Reform Project. The West Clermont program is one of three in the nation, with Cincinnati Public Schools and St. Paul, Minn., schools also offering pilot programs.

West Clermont School District Superintendent Mike Ward said his system never applied for the grant and said he was surprised when he learned last month that the district received it. "We were stunned to put it mildly," he said.

West Clermont educators have been participating for the last two summers at the Harvard Institute of School Leadership where the foundation learned about the suburban system.

Studies have shown that smaller school systems have been linked to fewer conflict and discipline problems, and to improved learning curves, says Ward, adding that "healthier peer relationships" occur in smaller groups.

"We need to recreate the way we provide education," said Ward, adding that "needs are different in the 21st Century."

"I am so excited about this," said Sue Shower, who is coordinating the project for West Clermont. "It is a wonderful opportunity."

"The ability in a small school for teachers to really get to know their students, and for the students to get to know each, is much better," she said.

A closeness among teachers and students enhances academic performances, she said. "The hope would be that in a small school you would have more individual attention. The research supports the idea that students do better in a small school over time.

"I think they do better because teachers build better relationships with students, know their strengths and are better able to tailor their instruction to the students."

The project is now in its conceptual stage and teachers and administrators, as well as parents, will assist in designing it. Over the next month, a request for design ideas will be circulated among teachers and community members.

After that, focus groups involving teachers and parents will be created and proposals will be formulated for review by the Board of Education. By August, the

board hopes to make initial decisions on the project's design, and the first schools are expected to be open by September 2002.

School officials will probably limit the smaller schools to about 450 to 500 students. Those students attend school together for four years.

### **November 23, 2000**

**A** \$49.6 million school expansion project including a 126,000-square-foot high school is starting in Indian Hill.

Financed by a 4.18-mill bond issue that passed in this month's election, the project also includes a new elementary school and bus facility and renovation of the community's elementary and middle schools.

The Indian Hill Board of Education recently hired Ruscilli Construction Co. to build and renovate the schools. After a review of bids from several contractors, "Ruscilli came out first," said David Quattrone, school superintendent.

Ruscilli has completed \$5 billion in construction projects, mostly for schools, over the last 55 years. The Columbus company is now under contract to complete a total of \$263 million in construction at Indian Hill and two other Ohio school districts, Dublin and Springfield.

Indian Hill teachers, staff and parents are providing suggestions to administrators and architects.

The school board has hired Baxter, Hodell, Donnelly, Preston, Inc., a Fairfax architectural firm to refine these suggestions into conceptual designs, a process expected to last through the winter, says Quattrone.

Schematic drawings are to be finished by the middle of summer and should provide "a good idea what the specific construction and renovation will be," he said.

After construction drawings are made, ground breaking will occur late in the 2001-2002 school year. The project should be completed in two years.

The district, which has 2,200 students, needs more classroom space to relieve overcrowding, for technological upgrades and for instructional needs like elementary school foreign language courses, says Quattrone.

Enrollment is expected to rise 12 percent in 10 years, with the number of high school students increasing from 640 to 850. The district is spending \$21.2 million to replace a 38-year-old building with a 574-student capacity. The new high school will have about 47 percent more square feet than the present building, most of which will be demolished though a portion will be retained for school programs.

The district is spending \$14.3 million for an 85,000-square-foot elementary school with a 600-student capacity to replace a 50-year-old building for 480 students. The new building will be 24 percent larger than the old one, which will be largely demolished. The existing gymnasium and Sawtooth Hall Wing will be retained for district use.

Indian Hill is spending \$3 million to renovate a primary school, \$1.3 million to renovate an elementary school, \$3.2 million to renovate the middle school, \$5

million to renovate a "commons building" serving the middle and high schools, and \$1.5 million for a bus facility.

**October 12, 2000**

University of Cincinnati President Joseph A. Steger has praised the university's Clermont College for completing an \$11.1 million expansion on time and under budget.

"We get hit with jokes that 'UC' means 'under construction,' " Steger said Friday during dedication ceremonies for two new buildings on the Batavia campus.

The expansion has doubled space at the campus. Two buildings, offering 43,000 square feet of space, increased the college's classrooms from 20 to 32, faculty offices from 30 to about 50 and laboratories from 14 to 19.

When the college opened in 1972, it had 281 students and today has almost 2,400 students. Enrollment has jumped 25 percent since last year and grown by more than 40 percent since 1989, and is expected to reach 3,500 over the next decade.