

4 Corners News & Views

for Ohio's Cradle of Education

Common Sense Where Main Meets Wooster Bowling Green, Ohio Vol. 1, No. 4 August 3, 2005 **FREE**

BG: Get Ready For Bigger Tax Bill In 2006

While generally supportive of tax increase requests by the public schools and city government, Bowling Green citizens need to brace themselves for a monster increase in property tax bills that come due in 2006.

In the May 3 primary election, BG residents voted in favor of a property tax increase for operational expenses for the city schools and in favor of a property tax increase for the city parks and recreation.

The Nov. 8 general election will almost certainly carry a bond issue request to build a new junior high or middle school in the community. The board of education is to decide at its Tuesday Aug. 9 meeting the amount it will place on the ballot.

If the third tax increase to be voted on in 2005 is successful, voters will notice a stiff hike in their property tax bill in early 2006. Perhaps it will be the biggest year-to-year hike in the city's history. Residents of the BG school district who live outside the city will also see a big jolt but it won't include the city-only park mileage.

As I stated in the July 4 edition of *4 Corners News & Views*, the No. 1 issue facing the Bowling Green schools is not building buildings but declining enrollment (the loss of 421 students in the past 11 years). Unfortunately, the superintendent and board are ignoring the enrollment issue because it is much harder to deal with than building buildings and it would force them to confront whether or not they are really doing the job expected of them by taxpayers. In other words, the board needs some new blood.

Citizens Who Care: It Is Time To Run For Office

School Board: There are two openings on the board of education that will be filled on Nov. 8. Both Eric Myers and Mike Aspacher's terms are expiring. It is my belief that Aspacher will not run for re-election but that Myers will. This is unfortunate because Aspacher is the best listener and the least elitist on the board. It is doubly unfortunate because in my opinion Myers is the worst listener and most elitist on the board.

I encourage citizens who care about the schools to run for the board. We needed a contested election that includes a serious debate about the direction of the school district. Do we build buildings or build enrollment and rebuild reputation?

The deadline for filing petitions is 4 p.m. Thursday Aug. 25 at the board of elections. Plan to collect at least 100 signatures to allow for some invalid ones. Call the board of elections at 419-354-9120 for all the details. Wood County is very fortunate to have a non-partisan board of elections that treats all citizens equally and helpfully. Talk to them and follow their advice and you will have no trouble getting on the ballot. Contact me, a former board member and candidate, for some pointers if you wish.

Remember: You only need to finish second to be elected.

The school board is all male at this time and could use some female members. Also, only two of five members have kids currently in school. Parents of schoolchildren are urgently needed on the board.

City Council: As you may know, I filed petitions to run for BG City Council this year but I withdrew. Therefore, the Democratic Party precinct committee men and women in the city of Bowling Green have the opportunity to appoint a replacement candidate, but it must be done in the next three weeks.

Patrick Ng, the longtime city councilman who was known for standing up for the citizens, is chair of the Wood County Democratic Party central committee and it is his responsibility to call the meeting to appoint a replacement candidate.

City Council needs a member who will vehemently oppose the invasion of the factory farms into Wood County because of the threat to our municipal water supply and our environment. And competition is good regardless of your position on that issue. Democrat Les Barber and Republicans Bill Culbertson and Bob McOmber are already in the race with the top two to be elected. That's three men. We could use a female candidate and a second Democrat. Contact Patrick Ng. He's in the phone book.

***Sentinel* Discovers Noe Scandal 16 Weeks Late**

Maybe the delivery of the Toledo *Blade*, Columbus *Dispatch* and Cleveland *Plain Dealer* to the *Sentinel-Tribune* news department was held up for 16 weeks.

Maybe access to the *Blade*, *Dispatch* and *Plain Dealer* web sites was temporarily blocked.

(Of course, the *Sentinel* is one of the largest newspapers in the country to not have a local web site that covers local news. Can you say: badly behind the times?)

Maybe the rays from the computers in the *Sentinel* newsroom interfered with news judgment.

Maybe there was too much chloride in the city water supply for a time or the unseasonably warm temperatures clouded the *Sentinel's* thinking.

Certainly it was not intentionally flawed news judgment by the GOP-appointee, editor David C. Miller, that caused the self-proclaimed "Wood County's Daily Newspaper" to ignore and downplay the Coingate investment scandal orchestrated by the GOP's own BG native Tom Noe.

Finally, on July 22, 2005 – nearly 16 weeks after the Toledo *Blade* broke the story – a negative story about Tom Noe topped the *Sentinel's* front page. "Noe accused of stealing \$6M," said the headline.

The *Sentinel* proclaims itself "Ohio's Best Newspaper" in billboards outside of Perrysburg, where it is making a big circulation push.

Who is it kidding? "Ohio's Most Embarrassing Newspaper" would be a more accurate slogan in my opinion.

On July 30, the *Sentinel* led page one with the conviction and \$1,000 fine of Brian Hicks, once Gov. Bob

Taft's right-hand man (and a confidante of Tom Noe of all things).

That's progress, but

Back on July 8, the *Sentinel* again showed its true GOP colors by running a "stroke-ola" piece about Betty Montgomery, who still maintains voting residence in Perrysburg but has "gone Columbus" ever since she was elected Attorney General in 1994.

Montgomery, who avoided term limits by switching jobs with then State Auditor Jim Petro in 2002, ran as a tough crime-fighter for AG in 1994 but slumbered for six weeks after the Noe scandal broke before lifting a finger of an audit or investigation.

Present and future retirees of the State Teachers Retirement System remember Montgomery for shirking her duties as an ex officio member of the STRS board while the retirement fund lost \$1 billion on Enron-style investments. Teachers' retirements were delayed, retirement contributions went up, and health benefits went down as result of Montgomery's slumber.

Montgomery, who "made up" her story about being the first woman prosecutor in Ohio only to recant, now is in full public relations mode by announcing a too little, too late crackdown on Noe so that folks will forget that Betty and Tom were GOP pals and that Noe gave generously to her campaigns.

The page one story was headlined: "Montgomery vows to dig deep into Noe scandal."

Writer Jan Larson gives Montgomery 13 sweet paragraphs after the sweet headline before mentioning that perhaps Montgomery should have investigated the Noe investment of state money in coins long ago. Of course, this does not appear until the story is continued on page 5.

None of Montgomery's critics are given a say here. And there are many.

So while chastened by *4 Corners News & Views* and 4 letter writers for ignoring and downplaying if not covering up the Noe scandal and waking from its coverage slumber after 16 weeks, as of July 8 the *Sentinel* was up to its old tricks of defending the GOP locals with sweetheart journalism. That's really not journalism.

4 Corners News & Views You Read It Here First Tip Of The Month: U.S. Sen. George Voinovich will be the Republican candidate for governor in 2006 with a \$20 million war chest. (That will bring Democrats back to Earth.)

4 Corners News & Views of Bowling Green was founded June 1, 2005 by John K. Hartman, its publisher. Its purpose is to provide additional news and points-of-view to citizens of Bowling Green in the belief that thorough awareness of and discussion of issues makes for a better community. It will be available free at various drop-off points in Bowling Green. Patrons may support 4 Corners BG for \$10 per issue. Ads may be purchased for \$20 per issue. Comments and submissions are welcome.

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