

FREE - TAKE ONE

4 Corners News & Views for Ohio's Cradle of

Education

Common Sense Where Main Meets Wooster
Oct.10, 2005

Bowling Green, Ohio Vol. 1, No. 6

Scary: BG Stands for Beware Government

It is hard to believe the excuses given to the library neighbors for not notifying them before wrecking their neighborhood. It is more than a cautionary tale during the Halloween season. **It is downright scary!**

In fact, the scariest thing about Bowling Green has become its government.

The government has become so unresponsive and so arrogant that I am sad to write that the initials **BG** now stand for **Beware Government** rather than the name of our city.

As Jennifer Feehan of the Toledo *Blade* reported, the Library Board in 2003 discussed and put in its minutes its desire to expand parking, presumably across Church Street and into the adjacent residential neighborhood. But the board and its director apparently did not notify the neighbors on Church, Court and Grove streets of its plans.

It is hard to imagine that word of the library board's plans did not circulate to City Hall and to other influential citizens at that time.

Then two properties across the street from the library changed hands. It is hard to imagine that City Hall and other influential citizens did not notice the transfers of property when they were recorded and published and wonder if something involving the library was up.

City Hall has a deal with the library to reserve 9 "precious" parking spaces for city employees during business hours on weekdays. **It is hard to imagine that city officials and library officials do no regularly communicate about parking issues.**

Then the demolition permit had to be obtained from City Hall. Whoever processed and signed the permit certainly should have communicated immediately that information to the mayor and city officials if for no other reasons than because the land affected is right across from City Hall and because the library is next door.

So the library board and its director probably were not the only persons in the know about the demolition plans. **City Hall must have known and also had the opportunity and responsibility - along with the library board and director -- to contact the neighbors ahead of time**, not to mention the opportunity and responsibility to advise the library board and director that contacting the neighbors and discussing the

situation with the neighbors well in advance of demolition was the right thing and civically responsible thing to do.

It is hard to believe that the mayor of Bowling Green used to teach civics.

That the library and the city officials blew it has been clearly evidenced by the reaction. Big numbers of citizens protested to the library and city officials, wrote letters and jammed the Planning Commission hearing to demand the rejection of rezoning for a parking lot.

To its credit, the Planning Commission asked for public input and listened to the public input and then responded by voting unanimously to reject the zoning request. This was a courageous act because the city threatened legal action against commission chair Les Barber for voicing his opinion about the mess. Another example of **Beware Government**.

Now the matter goes to the largely lame duck City Council. **Be-ee-ee-ware!**

-- John K. Hartman, editor and publisher, *4 Corners News & Views*,

John.Hartman@dacor.net

(Turn to page 2 for the latest on the *Sentinel* Saga.)

War: *Sentinel-Tribune* Invades Perrysburg

The *Sentinel-Tribune* opened an office in Perrysburg and installed its best young reporter to cover Wood County's fastest-growing city. In a PR release masquerading as a front page news story on Sept. 19, the newspaper announced that it would try to sell more advertising and get more subscribers in Perrysburg, Perrysburg Township and northern Wood County.

It is my belief that there once was an unwritten understanding between the Haswell family, that owns the *Sentinel*, and the Block family, that owns the *Blade*, that there was an imaginary line between Bowling Green and Perrysburg (along U.S. 25, no doubt) that divided up the county between the two newspapers. Possible evidence: The *Blade* has one reporter covering Bowling Green when it could easily have half a dozen, particularly since affluent and middle-class people - the ones that newspaper advertisers want to reach - are moving out of Toledo and Lucas County and into Bowling Green, as well as Perrysburg.

At first glance, the rapid growth of affluent residents in Perrysburg and its township and the development of retail businesses at Levis Commons make it an attractive market for the *Sentinel* to invade. Not to mention the *Sentinel's* Republican news bias and editorial policies that should go down well in the Perrysburg area that regularly goes Republican by 4,000 votes.

But beware of waking sleeping giants. The *Blade* not only wants to hold onto its beachhead in Perrysburg, but it also would like to dig deeper into affluent Bowling Green.

The invasion could start a newspaper war that the *Sentinel* probably would lose because of the *Blade's* much deeper financial pockets. That could cause the *Sentinel* to be either bought by the *Blade* or some other chain. In other words, goodbye to a home-owned BG newspaper.

The *Sentinel* would have been wiser to create a weekly product to attract some of the \$1 million a year spent in Bowling Green advertising to the college student market.

But then newspaper management that allows its editor to accept political appointments to a state commission and to the local library board may not be the sharpest knife in the drawer.

Control Of BG City Council Goes Down To The Wire

Democrats are guaranteed two seats and Republicans one on the 2006 BG City Council. Democrats need to win two of the four contested seats to maintain a 4-3 majority while the GOP needs to win three of four to gain control. Democrat Gordy Heminger is a shoo-in in the First Ward. So the Democrats need only to win the Second Ward, where recently appointed Democrat John Zanfardino is running against student Ashley Gilbert, or one at-large seat where Democrat Larry Sorrells is running against Republicans Bob McOmber and Stan Bortel, with two to be elected. Sorrells is an underdog against former school board member McOmber and former city councilman Bortel **so the Second Ward likely will be where control of Council is decided.** Personally, I think the city should go back to non-partisan elections and reserve party stuff for county races and larger. City politics causes too many hard feelings among same party members.

Coming Next Month In *4 Corners News & Views*: Underused Community Center Drains BG Funds

4 Corners News & Views You Read It Here First Tip Of The Month: Toledo Mayor Jack Ford will stop spending two weeks before the election he will lose overwhelmingly to Carty Finkbeiner. Ford will hold onto \$100,000 to \$150,000 in his campaign fund that he will use to run *successfully* for statewide office in 2006.

4 Corners News & Views of Bowling Green was founded June 1, 2005 by John K. Hartman, its editor and 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 or by email by sending your email address and request to John.Hartman@dacor.net. Patrons may support *4 Corners BG* for \$10 per issue. Ads may be purchased for \$20 per issue. Comments and submissions are welcome.

Contact information: John.Hartman@dacor.net ; 419-352-8180; 1400 Wren Road, BG, OH 43402

Read back issues at www.LiberalBG.org Copyright 2005, John K. Hartman, All Rights Reserved.