

**Have a news tip?**  
If you see news happening, call The Chronicle newsroom at (440) 329-7155 or email [ctnews@chroniclet.com](mailto:ctnews@chroniclet.com).

# Big-box stores win tax refunds

**Jon Wysochanski**  
The Chronicle-Telegram

AVON — Two large retailers in Avon won tax appeals resulting in a \$458,627 tax refund and more than \$90,000 in annual revenue lost for the city and school district.

Jack Kilroy, an attorney representing the Lorain County Board of Revisions, said in the last five years numerous big-box retailers like

**The state Board of Tax Appeals ruled in favor of JC Penney and Lowe's for a combined \$458,627.**

Lowe's, Home Depot, Wal-Mart and Target have filed tax complaints.

"The bigger the property, the more value there is," Kilroy said. "The more value there is, the more tax dollars are

at stake. They invest in lawyers and expert witnesses to try to get values driven down, and we do our best to maintain the values."

JC Penney and Lowe's had filed

complaints several years ago with the Lorain County Board of Revisions contesting property values set by the county auditor.

Those complaints ultimately were sent to the state Board of Tax Appeals, which ruled in favor of JC Penney last year and Lowe's this year.

The refunds are only provided once, and the refund amounts are large due to the multiple years reflected in the complaints, Avon Finance Director Bill Logan said.

The lowered property values mean \$92,255 less will be collected annually, which is still a loss, but not a major one for the city or school district budgets.

Logan said the school district receives about 65 percent of property tax collections.

See **REFUNDS**, C2

## STAND UP TO BULLIES

'Mr. Peace' brings his message to Ely

**Steve Fogarty**  
The Chronicle-Telegram

ELYRIA — Holding a soccer ball under his arm and wearing a bright orange T-shirt with a big peace symbol on the back, Mr. Peace clearly had his audience enthralled.

Dozens of youngsters at Ely Elementary School heard how the tall, youthful-looking man endured years of being afraid of bullied classmates and friends during assemblies Tuesday that included stories, poetry and a bit of hip-hop as well.

"I remember I stood there and did nothing," Mr. Peace — Detroit native Kevin Szawala — told students seated on the school's gym floor of a particularly vivid instance of childhood bullying involving a friend. "I did not have the guts. I was too afraid."

A youth minister, speaker and spoken word poet, Szawala, 30, incorporates themes of peace, tolerance, equality and understanding to schools and other groups.

Jada Cierra, a 10-year-old fifth-grader, termed the assembly "cool."

"It was great ... I learned a lot," Jada said, referring to Szawala's illustrations about courage and helping others.

Asked if she had experienced or seen bullying at school, Jada said "not really."

Another fifth-grader, McKenzie Langford, 10, was especially touched by a drawing Szawala held up that showed a heart filled with black marks representing hurts and mistreatment from others.

The heart drawing also touched 10-year-old Kalea Thompson.

"He showed how the heart got bruised when people bully," Kalea said.

Kalea said she liked Szawala's words about standing up for others.

"It's the right thing to do, to be there for friends, and to talk to more people," Kalea said.

When he asked for volunteers for a skit, Szawala was met by a sea of eager hands.

Selecting two boys and two girls, he proceeded to set up a football play in which one girl hiked a small football to him, which he walked to the back of the gym to deliver to the second girl, ignoring the two pair of "star" boy receivers standing in the gym's opposite corner.

Szawala told the group the story was based in fact, and happened at a football game in which a quarterback risked being teased and bullied by teammates and others for not throwing to the team's best receivers but to a lesser-known teammate who leaped horizontally into the air to make a totally unexpected catch for a game-winning touchdown after the ball bounced off the player's shoulder.

Meanwhile, Szawala said his story of standing by as a friend from a poorer family was sur-

**"I was afraid of not being in the 'in' crowd if I stood up."**

**Kevin "Mr. Peace" Szawala**



STEVE MANHEIM / CHRONICLE PHOTOS

**ABOVE:** Ely Elementary fifth-grader Katelynn Stout assists Kevin Szawala in a football-themed demonstration at an anti-bullying rally on Tuesday. **BELOW:** Szawala, known as "Mr. Peace," is a motivational youth speaker, hip-hop artist and poet and he spoke to Ely students about peace, tolerance, equality, understanding and hope.



rounded by teasing, bullying classmates occurred after a second-grade soccer game.

"I was afraid of not being in the 'in' crowd if I stood up," Szawala said.

He and his childhood pal came to terms over the incident years later after they reconnected.

"It's one of the core parts of my message now," Szawala said. "It does take courage to do the

right thing."

A youth minister in the Detroit area, Szawala is a University of Michigan economics graduate with a master's degree in business administration from Wayne State University who worked for an automotive parts supplier.

See **BULLIES**, C2

## AMHERST

# Planned brewery expands its land

Brew Kettle planned

**Anna Merriman**  
The Chronicle-Telegram

AMHERST — A Strongsville brewery that is working on a location in Amherst bought additional land in the city, according to the Lorain County auditor's office.

In late August, owners of the Brew Kettle bought land at 360 Cleveland Ave. along with two plots adjacent to it for \$165,000.

The three plots make up the southwest portion of the Cleveland Avenue and Spring Street intersection.

The 360 Cleveland Ave. address used to be home to a Fifth Third Bank branch, and it's unclear how the new owners plan to put it to use. Owner Chris Russo did not return calls for comment Tuesday.

That purchase is the second the Brew Kettle has made in Amherst this year. Earlier the brewery took over the former Church Street Bar and Grill and began the process of turning the building into restaurants scheduled to be opened this year.

Renovations inside the Church Street building are ongoing.

See **BREWERY**, C2

## NORTH RIDGEVILLE

# School evacuated again

**Steve Fogarty**  
The Chronicle-Telegram

NORTH RIDGEVILLE — For the second time in the past few weeks, students were evacuated from North Ridgeville High School on reports of strong fumes inside Tuesday morning.

Initial reports indicated the same gas odor that forced a Sept. 2 evacuation was to blame. That, however, was not the case, according to Assistant Superintendent William Greene.

After checking an area near a chemistry lab classroom from which a strong smell of gas emanated from a leaking line two weeks ago, firefighters using equipment able to detect and register gas determined the smell was sewer gases.

"After they ascertained the same room

See **AGAIN**, C2



### TWO LIVE REMOTE BROADCASTS THIS WEEKEND!

#### FRIDAY~ SEPTEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>

## APPLE FESTIVAL

Elyria Courthouse ~ 2nd & Court Streets

Remote: 11a.m. to 1p.m.

This remote is sponsored by Two Chicks Painting, LCCC , North Coast Gastroenterology, Elyria City Schools, Grobe's Fruit Farm and Radio Stations WOBL & WDLW.



#### SATURDAY ~ SEPTEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>

## CLASSIC CAR SHOW

EMBASSY / THE NORTHRIDGE HEALTH CENTER

35990 Westminster Avenue, North Ridgeville

Remote: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.





Cyan C1 Magenta C1 Yellow C1 Black C1





# Obituaries and Memoriams

## Robert Edwin Burns

Robert Edwin Burns, 84, of Oberlin, died Thursday, September 10, 2015. Arrangements are in the care of Dicken Funeral Home and Cremation Service, Elyria.

## Judith E. Lauer

Judith E. Lauer, 73, of Oberlin, passed away at home surrounded by her family Monday, September 14, 2015 after a long illness. Cowling Funeral Home Inc. & Cremation Services will announce further arrangements at a later date, (440) 775-1451.

## Paul R. Doss, Jr.

Paul R. Doss, Jr., 73, of North Ridgeville, passed away suddenly Monday, September 14, 2015 at St. John Medical Center, Westlake. Funeral arrangements will be announced by Bognor Family Funeral Home, North Ridgeville.

## Antonette Jablonski

Antonette Jablonski, 101, of Elyria, Ohio passed away Monday evening, September 14, 2015 at The Abbewood. Funeral arrangements, under the direction of the Reichlin Roberts Funeral Home, 327 Cleveland Street, Elyria, are incomplete and will be published in The Chronicle Telegram on Thursday, September 17, 2015.

## Captain Virgil “Bart” Bartlebaugh, Jr.

Captain Virgil “Bart” Bartlebaugh, Jr., 86, of Lorain, died Tuesday, September 15, 2015 at Mercy New Life Hospice Center of St. Joseph in Lorain. Friends may call Friday, September 18, 2015 from 5 to 8 P.M., at the Gluvna-Shimo-Hromada Funeral Chapel, 3224 Broadway Ave., Lorain. Complete arrangements will be announced.

## Barbara H. Chapman-Gilbert-Burkes

Barbara H. Chapman-Gilbert-Burkes of Elyria passed away Friday, September 11, 2015 in the University Hospitals of Elyria Medical Center. Friends may call Thursday, September 17, 2015 from 10 A.M., until time of service at 11 A.M., in the Original Glorious Apostolic Church, 995 Foster Ave., Elyria. The Reverend Brian Hogg of Franklin, Kentucky, will be the Eulogist and Pastor Doris Williams will co-officiate. Burial will be in Brookdale Cemetery, Elyria. Arrangements entrusted to Carter Funeral Homes, Inc., 127 W. Bridge Street, Elyria, (440)322-7788. Online condolences can be sent to carterfuneralhome@yahoo.com



**CHAPMAN-GILBERT-BURKES**

## Burl G. Smith

Burl G. Smith, 78, of Oak Hill, Florida, formerly of North Ridgeville, passed away peacefully Monday, September 7, 2015 at Halifax Hospice Care Center in Edgewater, Florida with his close family at his side. Burl was born September 15, 1936 in Kentucky and was raised in West Virginia most of his childhood. The family made their way to Ohio, where he started his working career at The Ford Motor Company in Brook Park as a floor sweeper. Burl studied business management and became Superintendent and Plant Manager of Cleveland Engine Plant #1 from the late 70's until his retirement in the early 80's. He was an avid college football fan. He enjoyed casual walking and sitting at the pier. He also enjoyed tinkering with cars, going to flea markets and enjoying his early retirement. Burl is survived by his youngest brother, Michael L. Smith (Patti) of North Ridgeville; son, Burl G. Smith, Jr. and daughter, Deborah A. Smith, both of Oak Hill, Florida; he had six grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, Milford W. Smith and Blanche E. Smith (nee Hunt); sister Janice E. Cosentino; brothers, Albert R. Smith and Daryell L. Smith. Dudley Funeral Homes, 1108 North Dixie Freeway, New Smyrna Beach, Florida, were in charge of the arrangements. There were no services. A memorial and a celebration of life will be determined at a later date. Any memorials can be made to Hospice, American Lung Association any Kidney foundation and The cure for Diabetes.



**SMITH**

## In Memory of ...

In Loving Memory of  
**RICHARD GOSSELIN**  
Jan. 24, 1934 - Sept. 16, 2011



Four years have passed,  
but you remain alive  
in our hearts.  
**Love & Miss You,**  
**Carol, Children**  
**& Grandchildren**

In Loving Memory of  
**TIMOTHY M. KERSHAW**  
Sept. 16, 1983- March 15, 2005



**HAPPY 32ND BIRTHDAY**  
Another birthday,  
another year, with many  
memories of one so dear.  
Thoughts today of our lives  
together, hold a love  
that will live forever.  
Thinking of you Tim  
on your birthday  
but that is nothing new,  
because no day starts or ends,  
without our thoughts of you.  
So have a happy birthday  
honey, celebrate in style and  
when you have a moment,  
think about us for awhile.  
Love never ends...  
**We Love & Miss You,**  
**Mom & Dad, Brothers,**  
**Family & Friends**

In Loving Memory of  
**TRICIA BORROWY**  
Sept. 16, 1967 - March, 8, 2013



We were suppose to spend  
the rest of our lives with you.  
And then realize...you spent  
the rest of your life with us.  
We smile because we know  
you loved us until the day  
you went away. And will keep  
loving us until we are  
together again.  
**“HAPPY BIRTHDAY”**  
**Love, Your Family**



## Calvin Monroe Singleton III

Calvin Monroe Singleton III went home to be with the Lord on Saturday, September 5, 2015. Calvin is survived by his beloved father, Calvin M. Singleton, Jr.; beloved mother, Joyce A. Ramsue-Thompson and step-father, Orlando Thompson, Sr.; loving brother of Jade A. Singleton; grandson of Calvin and Martha Singleton, Sr. and Nellie Ramsue. Public viewing is Friday, September 18, 2015 from 4 to 8 P.M., at The Calhoun Funeral Home, 23000 Rockside Rd., Bedford. Service is Saturday, September 19, 2015 at 12 Noon at University Church of Christ, 1885 E. 89th, Cleveland, OH 44106, where family will receive friends at 11 A.M.



**SINGLETON**

## Rick “Rico” “Monk” Alan McGregor

Rick “Rico” “Monk” Alan McGregor, 63, of Willoughby, passed away Saturday, September 12, 2015 at Lake Health West Medical Center in Willoughby. He was born July 5, 1952 in Elyria and was a long-time resident of the Elyria/Lorain area. He had resided in Willoughby for the past six years. Rick graduated from Elyria Catholic High School. He was a successful business owner of M&R Roofing in Lorain County for almost 20 years and then went on to own two additional general contracting companies in Spencer. In his spare time, Rick enjoyed riding his two Harley Davidson motorcycles, especially his custom-built chopper, going on poker runs with his buddies, boating, camping, laying in the sun and spending time with his daughter, Megan and granddaughters, Mollie and Laila. Rick was very athletic and competitive and always enjoyed competition either on the athletic field or family card games. Leaving to cherish his memory is his daughter, Megan McGregor Dohn of Charlotte, North Carolina and her husband, Greg Dohn; granddaughter, Mollie Dohn; his long-time companion, Lori Waite; sister, Patricia Hamley and brothers, Paul McGregor and Mike McGregor. He was preceded in death by his parents, Richard and Patricia McGregor (nee Stanko). The family will receive friends Thursday, September 17, 2015 from 5 to 8 P.M., at the Gluvna-Shimo-Hromada Funeral Home, 3224 Broadway Ave., Lorain. A memorial service will be held Thursday at 8 P.M., in the funeral chapel. The Reverend Daniel Divis, Pastor of St. Mary Catholic Church in Lorain, will officiate. In lieu of flowers, the family asks monetary donations for his medical and funeral expenses. http://www.gofund-me.com/rickmcgregor The family wishes to thank his doctors and staff for the wonderful care provided to Rick. Online condolences can be made at www.gluvna.net



**MCGREGOR**

## Roberta “Punkin” Breznai

Roberta J. “Punkin” Breznai (nee Cajka), 76, of Elyria Township, passed away at University Hospitals Elyria Medical Center on Monday, September 14, 2015 following a lengthy battle with Non-Alcoholic Primary Biliary Cirrhosis. She was born in Lorain on November 8, 1938 and had been a resident of Elyria Township since 1975. Punkin was a 1956 graduate of Lorain High School. Her first job was with Central Bakery. Later, she worked for the Lorain Telephone Company, where she held the distinction of being the first female central office repair person in the company's history. Following her retirement from the utility in 1973, she worked as a customer service representative for both Central Bank and Mama Joe's Pies. Ms. Breznai was a parishioner of the former Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Lorain. She was also a member of the United Polish Club as well as the P.L.A.V. Drill Team. She was an avid fan of the Cleveland Indians, Browns and Cavaliers as well as a loyal follower of the Ohio State Buckeyes. In her free time, she enjoyed casino junkets and playing bingo. She is survived by her daughter, Shanna Breznai of Elyria Township, along with her former husband, Bob Breznai of Elyria Township; sister, Adrienne Stevens (Lou) of Lorain and brother, Jeff Cajka (Mary Ellen) of Alexandria, Virginia. She was preceded in death by her parents, John and Pauline (nee Novak) Cajka; brother, Jack Cajka and her sister, Bonnie Rock. Visitation will be Thursday, September 17, 2015 from 4 to 8 P.M., in the Gluvna-Shimo-Hromada Funeral Chapel, 3224 Broadway Avenue, Lorain. Funeral services will be Friday, September 18, 2015 beginning at 10 A.M. in the funeral chapel. A Mass of Christian Burial will follow at 10:30 A.M. in St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 41295 North Ridge Road, Elyria Township. The Reverend Donald Dunson, Pastor of the parish, will officiate. Burial will follow in Calvary Cemetery. To share your memories and condolences with the Breznai Family, please visit www.gluvna.net



**BREZNAI**

## Fay A. Simpson Pechaitis

Fay A. Simpson Pechaitis, 74, of North Ridgeville, passed away Tuesday, September 15, 2015 at University Hospitals Elyria Medical Center, following a brief illness. She was born March 6, 1941 in Cleveland. Fay was raised in Lakewood, she had made her home in Vermilion, Arizona and Florida before moving to North Ridgeville, where she had resided until her passing. Her primary focus in life was that of a homemaker. For Fay, the most important thing in life was her family, spending time with her husband and best friend Paul, her grandchildren and dog Angel. She enjoyed the many vacations they took as a family and the relaxing conversation they enjoyed while sipping wine. Her hobbies included shopping, traveling to the Amish Country and crocheting. She enjoyed cooking and baking, especially pies. Fay loved fellowshiping and talking with her friends. Fay was a former member of Brownhelm Congregational Church. Survivors include her husband of 31 years, Paul F. Pechaitis; sons, Dale Lee Reutter (Deborah) of Georgia, Dean Gerald Reutter of Vermilion; daughter, Kimberly Sayers (Willard) of Sheffield Village; stepson, Matthew Pechaitis of Avon Lake; stepdaughter, Julie Pechaitis (Kevin) of Vermilion; grandchildren, Nick Reutter, Holly Reutter, Dean Kyle Reutter, Desiree Reutter, Jacob Reutter, Brandon Sayers, Ashley Sayers, Tyler Pechaitis, Emily Pechaitis and Matthew Pechaitis; two great-grandchildren and her brothers, James “Jerry” Simpson of Olmsted Falls and Gilbert Ray Simpson of Florida. She was preceded in death by her brother, Judge “Don” Simpson and her parents, James and Mary Helen Simpson (nee: Hargis). Friends may call Saturday, September 19, 2015 from 6 until the time of the Memorial Service at 7 P.M., at Hempel Funeral Home, 373 Cleveland Avenue, Amherst. Additional information and online register book are available at www.hempelfuneralhome.com



**PECHAITIS**

## More obituaries on A3

## Laura P. Long

Laura P. Long, 95, of LaGrange, passed away peacefully Wednesday, September 9, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia. She was born July 4, 1920 and lived in Lorain County her entire life. Laura graduated from Elyria High School in 1937 and remained active in the EHS Alumni Association. She went on to earn both a Bachelors and Masters Degree in Education from Kent State University. She utilized her skills fully and enjoyed a long and productive career as a teacher and school administrator in Sheffield, Elyria and North Ridgeville. Laura also served 12 years on the North Ridgeville board of education. Laura was a faithful member of the Pittsfield Community Church, an avid sports fan, world traveler, voracious reader, business owner and an active and contributing citizen of her community. Friend, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother; Laura was preceded in death by her first husband of 37 years, Ralph Prechtel and second husband of 34 years, Raymond Long. She was also preceded in death by her son, Kenneth Prechtel and is survived by her son, Daniel Prechtel (Maricia) of Smyrna, Georgia. A private burial will be in North Ridgeville Cemetery and a memorial service will be announced at a later date. Memorial contributions in Laura's name may be made to the Pittsfield Community Church. http://www.pittsfieldcommunitychurch.org/



**LONG**

## Scott A. Welko

Scott A. Welko, 55, of Lorain, passed away unexpectedly Saturday, September 12, 2015 at his home. Born on July 18, 1960 in Lorain, he graduated from Admiral King High School in 1978, where he was a member of the band. He then attended Ohio Institute of Technology in Columbus and earned an Associate Degree in Electronics in 1980. Following graduation, Scott moved to Boston and worked for Honeywell. He then returned to his hometown and worked for Diebold and eventually worked with his brother, Daniel at Great Lakes Auto & Marine in Lorain. Scott had the “gift to gab” and liked visiting with customers and friends. He enjoyed playing the trombone and spent many hours listening to old radio shows and his extensive music collection. Scott was an avid fisherman mainly fishing for muskie. He is survived by his mother, Mildred (nee Toothman); brother, Dr. Jeff (Linda) of Stow; niece, Dr. Ashleigh Welko; nephews, Nicholas and David Welko and his cousin, Mike (Karla) Smith, of Clarksburg, West Virginia. He was preceded in death by his father, Daniel H. in 2012 and his brother, Daniel L. in January, 2015. The family invites friends to a memorial gathering Monday, September 28, 2015 from 5 until the time of memorial service at 6 P.M., in the Dovin and Reber Jones Funeral & Cremation Center, 1110 Cooper Foster Park Rd., Amherst. Chaplain Sandie King of Mercy Regional Medical Center, will officiate. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions may be made in his memory to the charity of the donor's choice. Online condolences may be left for the family at www.dovinreberjones.com



**WELKO**

## REFUNDS

From C1

JC Penney filed complaints for tax years 2009 and 2010, seeking \$3.9 million and \$4.5 million reductions in assessed property values. Those appeals were granted, and it received a refund of \$339,927, Logan said. The Lowe's complaint, filed for tax years 2012 and 2013, sought a reduction from \$11.2

million to \$9.8 million, which resulted in an \$118,700 refund, according to Lorain County Auditor Craig Snodgrass.

Logan said although the JC Penney and Lowe's cases resulted in losses, there is nearly \$300 million in commercial and industrial construction projects underway.

Contact Jon Wysochanski at 329-7123 or jwysochanski@chroniclet.com.

## BULLIES

From C1

He became Mr. Peace for school assemblies on his vacation days until July 2010 when he “made a leap of faith” and began delivering his anti-bullying message full time. “I went for it,” Szawala said. “I said I’ve got to try this because if I don’t, I’ll have regrets.” Now he carries his talks to students in kindergarten through 12th grade. “I always loved giving speeches and performing,” he said. Students “who are in pain or have some type of hurt going on” let him know of the positive impact he made on them via social media. “I want to be the mirror to reflect that,” Szawala said. “Hurt people hurt people. Healed people heal people.” Contact Steve Fogarty at 329-7146 or sfogarty@chroniclet.com.

## BREWERY

From C1

As part of the same project, the Brew Kettle owners took over the old town hall building next to the former Church Street Bar and Grill and razed it, leaving the space open between the future Brew Kettle and the Amherst Cinema.

In an interview with the Chronicle-Telegram in February, Russo said that the space could be repurposed to make way for a patio next to the new restaurant. It's unclear when the Church Street location will open.

Contact Anna Merriman at 329-7245 or amerriman@chroniclet.com.

## AGAIN

From C1

from two weeks ago was not the problem, they began walking around the hallways using meters they call sniffers,” Greene said. The odor was traced to another classroom, which enabled firefighters to narrow the odor down to something coming from a nearby restroom. “They believe it was due to a buildup of sewer gases,” Greene said.

Students were evacuated about 10:30 a.m. and permitted back inside by 10:45 a.m. “They decided to evacuate on the side of caution,” Greene said. School officials hired a company that was to enter the school Tuesday night to clean out sewer lines near where the odor was detected. After the prior evacuation, repairs were made to the leaking gas line in a wing of the high school dating to 1967, the year the building opened.

Contact Steve Fogarty at 329-7146 or sfogarty@chroniclet.com.