

News briefs

Rep. Joyce receives award

Rep. Dave Joyce, R-Bainbridge, was one of the first-ever recipients of the Great Lakes Changemaker Award by the Council of the Great Lakes Region at the Great Lakes Economic Forum in Cleveland this week. Launched in 2005, the forum gathers leaders from all levels of government, business, academia and the nonprofit sector who are committed to economic growth and environmental sustainability in the Great Lakes region.

"A lifelong resident of Northeast Ohio, I have never been shy about my support for the Great Lakes," Rep. Joyce said in a press release. "As a father, I was proud to share the importance of protecting the Lakes with my children, and now as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor of advocating for the Lakes in Congress. The Great Lakes are an invaluable natural resource and economic powerhouse, and I am proud to fight to ensure we make the necessary investments to treat them as the national treasure they are."

The Council of the Great Lakes Region created the award to recognize individuals, companies or nonprofit organizations that are leading the way in strengthening the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of the Great Lakes Region and who are playing a leadership role internationally on a range of economic and environmental issues, according to the release. Rep. Joyce has worked to ensure appropriate funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative throughout his time in Congress.

Auburn approves payment

Auburn Trustees on Monday gave their approval to a bid on asphalt resurfacing of several roads in the township. They awarded a contract to Chagrin Valley Paving for its bid of \$767,990 which came in under the estimate for the job, according to Trustee John Eberly. The resurfacing projects will include Stafford Road west to Munn Road, Taylor May Road, from Auburn Road to Ravenna Road (Route 44), Wood Acre Trail, Horseshoe Drive and Sterling Glen. The paving work which will encompass about 3 1/2 miles of roadway will take place in the summer. Trees have been removed and ditching is being done. Culverts for Snow Road are needed and the township will be splitting the estimate cost of \$100,000 with Troy Township. The low bid on the project came in at about \$85,626, and the Geauga County Engineer's office will be gathering information on the contractor.

Drug Mart opens in new location

The Drug Mart store in Bainbridge is now open for business. The store moved its merchandise and pharmacy on Sunday from its location at the nearby Market Square Shopping Center to its new building off East Washington Street. The site next to the Key Bank building was formerly used by the Sears store and previously by Colonial Lanes bowling alley. Cliff Hershman, owner of the Market Square Shopping Center is also the owner with a partner of the new Drug Mart property. Construction began in the fall of 2018 and the original building was expanded and parking was increased as well. The original driveway entering the site was moved to the west with the intent of eliminating problems with traffic at the entrance to the McFarland Corners shopping center directly across the road on the north side of East Washington Street. Bainbridge Zoning Inspector Karen Endres said Tuesday she still has to do a final inspection at the site. Trees were to be planted in the back of the building as a screen. There has been talk of connecting the Drug Mart property to a drive to Chillicothe Road (Route 306) to alleviate traffic congestion on East Washington Street.

Police brief

Solicitors reported in Bainbridge

Two women were reported to be going door to door Friday in Bainbridge asking residents about their utility bills. A Bainbridge police officer located them walking on East Brook Trail, and they said they were asking people about their energy choices, the report states. They were informed there is no soliciting in the township.

Mayor Renda to retire after 12 years in office

By JULIE HULLETT



Renda

MORELAND HILLS — Mayor Susan Renda announced that she will not seek re-election this fall after serving as village mayor for the last 12 years. Two days after Mayor Renda announced her retirement, Council President Dan Fritz

pulled a petition at the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections to run for the top office in the village.

In an interview on Monday, Mayor Renda said that she recalled attending a dinner with other female mayors when she first was elected. She asked former Shaker Heights Mayor Judy Rawson for advice and was told to keep a close eye on when it is time to retire. Staying too long could lead to being impatient and making mistakes, Mayor Renda said recalling the advice of the Shaker Heights former mayor.

Mayor Renda, 65, also took this opportunity to retire because her husband, Mike, is retiring. She said that both of their adult children live in California, along with her daughter-in-law, a grandson and another grandchild due in October. She and her husband would like to be more involved with their family.

"I will miss these people. This decision didn't come without a lot of thought," she said. "I've loved Moreland Hills from the minute I moved here."

Mayor Renda moved to Moreland Hills in 1996 and worked with former Mayor Charles DeGross on various projects. She was elected to council in 2000 with plans to continue good governance and fiscal responsibility.

She topped incumbent Mayor DeGross in the 2007 mayoral election, and brought a vision to Moreland Hills. Mayor Renda said that she wanted to start the Parks Commission, support limited commercial development, maintain the village's natural beauty and keep the village in a stable financial state. She also named several colleagues who mentored her

in her early years as mayor.

"I relied a lot on Mayor [Bruce] Akers in Pepper Pike. He was a good mentor to me," she said. "We also had a great law director, Margaret Cannon. We worked well together."

Mayor Renda noted one of her main challenges during her tenure was village finances. She said that Moreland Hills is a "bedroom community" and due to the limited commercial sites, residents bear the majority of village expenses.

"In a lot of communities, they get revenues from the commercial district that we will never get," she said. "That will continue to be a problem. Our expenses continue to grow no matter how much we try to control them."

Mayor Renda said that she ran for office because of her strong leadership skills. She attended Leadership Cleveland for a year and said that her Ph.D. in audiology, the study of hearing, helps her to analyze data and solve problems. She also serves as the president of the Cuyahoga County Mayors and City Managers Association.

The mayor said that several of her greatest achievements are preserving 142 acres of land at Forest Ridge Preserve on Chagrin River Road and writing a newsletter to inform residents about governmental affairs. Mayor Renda serves as the president of the Chagrin Valley Dispatch Council of Government and helped the number of member communities grow from nine to 16.

Mayor Renda said that the next mayor, who will be elected in November, will choose his or her own path for the village, but she hopes that the new mayor will respect the environment, be fiscally responsible and support the employees and council members. In her spare time, Mayor Renda said she hopes to travel more, spend time gardening and take a literature class and a language class. She recalled several memories from her tenure, including riding in a snow plow truck and spending quality time with fellow employees.

Councilwoman Monica Sturgis said that Mayor Renda did an outstanding job the last 12

years, and noted that she was the first female to be elected mayor of Moreland Hills in its 90-year history.

"[Mayor Renda] took the responsibility entrusted to her by the village residents with care. She has been responsive in a way that was inclusive and took all angles into consideration, and she made tough calls when she needed to," Ms. Sturgis said. "I applaud her leadership and I'm grateful for the support she gave me and other council members as we entered into our political service."

Looking toward the future, Mr. Fritz said that he always aspired to be mayor. He has served three terms on council and was appointed council president three times. Mr. Fritz said that now is a good time to pursue the office of the mayor, but he would have to make adjustments to his career.

Currently, Mr. Fritz is the assistant fire chief for Orange Village. If elected mayor of Moreland Hills, Mr. Fritz said he would need to shift his workload. The mayor's job currently pays \$46,780 and benefits.

"Any candidate is going to have to balance their career with the requirements of mayor," Mr. Fritz said. "I know how hard [Mayor Renda] works and it's significant. I am not making this decision lightly."

He discussed several priorities for the village, including safety and zoning. Mr. Fritz said that his most important responsibility is to ensure that the residents are safe, and said that he brings a strong sense of leadership for public safety. He said that he plans to continue offering the high quality safety services that Moreland Hills residents enjoy through the village Police Department and the Chagrin Falls Suburban Volunteer Fireman's Association.

During his last term, Mr. Fritz was chairman of the Master Plan Review Committee. He plans to keep Moreland Hills' green aesthetics.

"We are a green community and our zoning reflects that," he said. "Our zoning leans heavily on environmental protections that reflect our love of the environment."

Iraqi teen shares her story of survival and faith

By JULIE HULLETT

GATES MILLS — Gilmour Academy student Teeba Furat Marlowe has faced more challenges at the age of 17 than many people will in a lifetime. Her brother Yousef was killed by an improvised explosive device during a taxi ride in Baghdad with Teeba, who was then 2, and their father.

Teeba, an Iraqi native, was badly burned, and her photo was printed in The Plain Dealer, where Barbara Marlowe saw it and immediately felt a connection.

Mrs. Marlowe cut out Teeba's photo and kept it in her pocket, and contacted the correspondent in Baghdad to ask about bringing Teeba to America for medical care. In 2007, exactly one year after the photo was published, Teeba arrived in the U.S.

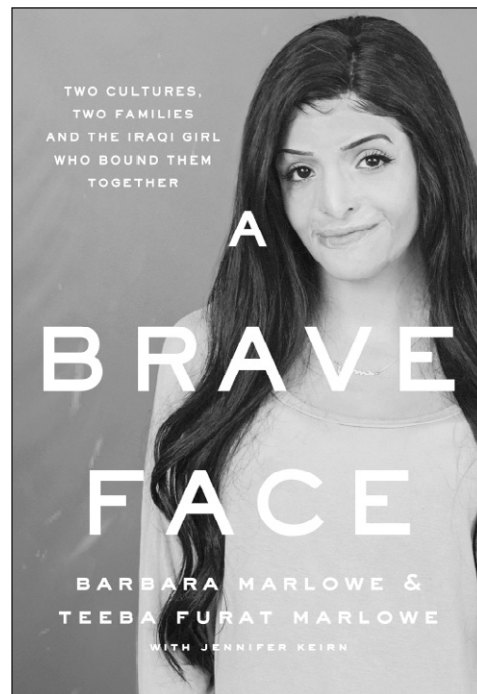
That was just the beginning of a journey that Mrs. Marlowe, her husband, Tim, and Teeba shared with community members at Lakeland Community College on April 23. It has been a journey filled with challenges and achievements, which are also detailed in her book, "A Brave Face: Two cultures, two families and the Iraqi girl who bound them together."

"Forgiveness is my native tongue and it is my relief," Teeba said. "I have come to the conclusion that God chooses his strongest soldiers for the toughest battles. How can I be angry with God who sees me as a strong soldier?"

Mrs. Marlowe said that Teeba had 19 surgeries in her first 12 years in America to replace skin on her face, back and clavicle. She explained that when Teeba first arrived, the family met with Teeba's doctors and with people who would make her wigs.

Teeba said that when she was still living in Iraq after the accident, she received low quality medical care and spent 40 days in a hospital bed while she was temporarily blind. When she found out that she was moving to America, she was unhappy with her Iraqi family for giving her to an unknown family halfway across the world.

"I thought my family wanted to get rid of me, but as I got older I realized that's not it," she said. "Giving up a child is the hardest



thing you can do as a mother."

When Teeba was 14, the family planned a trip for her to see her Iraqi mother, Dunia, whose eyesight was declining over time. The Marlowes and the Furats met in Dubai, United Arab Emirates for a life-changing visit.

The visit with her family allowed Teeba to connect to her Muslim roots, she said. She determined that God wanted her spiritual relationship with him to grow through Islam. After visiting her family, Teeba also said that she turned to the TV for news on the Middle East.

"TV became my No. 1 way to find out if my family was OK," she said. "It was no longer the background music to my homework."

Mr. Marlowe said that keeping Teeba in the U.S. was a challenge. He said that Teeba was only allowed to stay for six months, and the Marlowes had to keep renewing her visa. The medical care that Teeba needed would take much longer than six months, he said, and the family shared their story publicly to gain support for Teeba. The worry continued until

Teeba received a green card and established legal guardianship in 2014.

"We thought the more people who knew the story and were sympathetic, the more people we would have in our corner," he said. "People would recognize us and we had tremendous support from Americans."

The family shared that one of the most beautiful aspects of their life with Teeba is how the American and Iraqi families interact with each other. Teeba said that if she mentions "mom" to her friends, her friends ask if she is referring to her birth mom or her adopted mom. Teeba said that she corrects them and says that both women are her mother. She also has dual citizenship in America and Iraq and considers both home.

"I've prospered and struggled in both. I belong to both and I claim both," she said. "I would love to go back to Iraq but it's not safe there and I can't go back."

Mrs. Marlowe said that she gets along well with Teeba's mother in Iraq, and said that they have never discussed politics or religion.

"We see two families that came together for love," she said.

Teeba's story touched audience members. Manager of the Lakeland Women's Center Gloria Lane said that Teeba's story is inspirational.

"It was an amazing story, and she tells it in such an incredible way," she said.

Ms. Lane's husband, Jim, was impressed by the Marlowes' commitment to adopt Teeba and care for her.

"At certain times in our lives, we are given the chance to stand up," he said. "People have the capacity to accept that and step up and that's what gives me hope in these times of trouble."

Mary Goss-Hill, the women's center program manager, said that it was amazing to hear what Teeba had overcome and her courage is sure to make listeners reconsider their own habits that may be selfish and greedy.

In the future, Teeba said that she would like to help her family leave Iraq. She also wants to leave Ohio for college and study to be a doctor, perhaps an obstetrician or a pediatric anesthesiologist.