



**War games**  
CV students try to win the War of 1812.

Page C1

# The Almanac

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSLEADER

ZONE 1  
ZONE 2

**Winning moment**  
CV beats Hampton for AAA title.



Page B1

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## Petition asks Mt. Lebanon to lower costs on school

By Terri T. Johnson  
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Mt. Lebanon resident Charlotte Stephenson is not against upgrading the aging high school. She is, however, opposed to the possibility of spending \$113 million, the amount the school board set as a cap for the renovation and addition project.

To make hers and similar opinions known and to alert the school board to the fact not everyone is pleased with the scope of the project, a petition is circulating in the municipality urging the board to support a lower cost option to renovate and expand the current high school building.

"There is a perception that our community is divided on this issue," said Stephenson, who added she is part of a group – not individually – circulating the petition. "We are not divided. The majority are concerned about the exorbitant high cost of the project. There is a smaller group that is very, very vocal and the squeaky wheel is getting all the attention."

The petition asks "that the Mt. Lebanon School Board proceed with a high school renovation project budget not to exceed the \$75 million which has already been borrowed and for which the district has already incurred an obligation to repay with interest. Such \$75 million cap should be inclusive of all administrative costs of the project (past, present and future), and should include a reasonable reserve for potential cost overruns, change orders and other eventualities of at least 10 percent of the total budget."

Stephenson said she recently visited what she described as "an elderly apartment complex."

"Most (of the residents) were more than willing to sign. They know their rent will go up as the taxes will be passed on to them," she said.

In addition to the renovation project, the district's teachers' contract expires at the end of June.

"They're going to have to hold the line on rate increases," Stephenson, adding the teachers have a "strong union." Stephenson is not a teacher and is not a member of the school board.

In Mt. Lebanon, more than 75 percent of the

**The majority are concerned about the exorbitant high cost of the project.'**

Charlotte Stephenson

households do not have school-age children. If the board had capped the project at more than \$115 million, that amount would have required a voter referendum to approve the project. However, at \$113 million no referendum is mandated.

Citing possible cost overruns that could push the project beyond \$113 million, several residents at a state-required Act 34 public hearing Feb. 22, asked the board to consider placing the issue on the ballot.

Board President Ed Kubit said he is aware of the petition, has spoken with as many people as possible, but has not read the petition.

"I have no stand on circulating a petition," Kubit said. He also said he encourages a respectful discussion about the project.

"I've talked to many, many, many people involved and who said they signed the petition," Kubit said.

Numerous residents have expressed concerns about the level of tax increases to finance the project and to support a new teachers' contract.

"We are in discussions concerning the teacher's contract that expires the end of June," Kubit said. "All sides have a great attitude right now."

Mt. Lebanon is basically landlocked, meaning new tax producing developments are not possible. The municipality did not raise real estate taxes this year and there is no indication as to the tax situation in 2011.

At 4.8 percent, the unemployment rate among residents is low compared with the national rates approaching 10 percent and higher in many areas.

Stephenson said even at the low 4.8 percent, the

SEE PROJECT PAGE A6

## Handmade blankets send comfort to local refugees



TERRY KISH

Keeley Carson and Dominic Caruso show off the blankets for refugee families.

By Terry Kish  
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Homework, sports, chatting with friends – there are a lot of ways teens can choose to spend their free time. But recently, about a dozen eighth grade Fort Couch Middle

School students in Upper St. Clair spent a few hours after school making blankets, scarves and laundry bags for refugee families at Alvern Gardens in Castle Shannon.

Daniel Brennan was making blankets and scarves. While he was earning service hours toward Confirmation,

he said, "It makes me feel good to make something for someone who can use it."

Sydney Turnwald also needed community service hours for Confirmation and the IB program. She said she wanted to help because she

SEE REFUGEES PAGE A5

## South Fayette mulls pool at future civic center

By Deana Carpenter  
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Whether or not to include a pool at the new community center was the main discussion at the final South Fayette Community Center Feasibility Study Committee meeting.

The committee met for a final time March 2 to discuss its last report before it is presented to township commissioners.

Based on the discussion with the committee and their review of informa-

tion gathered in the public input process, the following facilities made the committee's short list: fitness room, multi-use gymnasium, indoor walking track, indoor pool, outdoor pool and multi-use rooms.

The draft report stated that a pool would not be included on the final list of recommended facilities because of the expense to construct, develop and operate it as well as its limited diversity of use. Study committee member Cindy Hestad said the draft stated the committee voted to eliminate a pool, but she said it was never eliminated.

Robert Nyswaner, also a member of the study committee disagreed, saying, "It's one thing that the residents want, but another when they see the price."

The consultants had estimated the price of an indoor pool at between \$2 and \$2.5 million and an outdoor pool at nearly \$2 million. Nyswaner continued, "A \$2 million pool – we don't need it – but a \$700,000 pool could be another story."

Pam Petrow, who sits on the township's Parks and Recreation Board said that a pool could offer diversity of use because folks can use it for exercise,

classes and even parties. "If someone comes to me and asks, 'Why no pool?' I'd better have a darn good answer," Petrow said about the possibility of the pool being eliminated from the final report.

Nyswaner asked if the consultants could put together a report on the cost and size of a pool at the center. Feath said, "A pool feasibility study would be the next step."

Jerry Males, South Fayette Township's director of parks and recreation, told the Study Committee the pool could be left in the final report and

could be decided on later after a study is conducted. He added that the study committee needed to take into consideration the indoor pool that already exists at South Fayette Middle School. "Yes, the pool at school has a lot of programs and is booked," Males said, but added that the committee needs to see if there's "enough demand to support a full second pool."

Males said a pool at the center could be years away, but asked the consultants to estimate the square footage

SEE POOL PAGE A6

## Back in time

### Woodville visitors spend the day with the Nevilles

By Amy Phillips-Haller  
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Visitors to the Woodville Plantation in Collier Township took a step back in time to enjoy a day with the Neville family.

The living history museum offered an in-depth, up close personal look at the late 18th century family. Situated in the wilderness, Presley, his daughter Anna, and wife Nancy spent a leisurely Sunday afternoon with Major O'Hara and wife Margaret. They enjoyed sewing, poetry and conversation on the homestead while 21st century visitors observed their way of life.

Rob Windhorst, Woodville Plantation president, presented himself as the proprietor, Presley Neville. He remained in character as he slowly sipped on a cordial in his smoking jacket. He spoke to visitors, explaining the way of life. "As you know, for a gentleman to be

seen in his shirt sleeves was a sign of not being a gentleman."

Windhorst described the importance of his attire. "While in the home it is appropriate to wear this sort of jacket. Outside, in the winter, I wear a heavier coat. Otherwise I tend to wear this. It is much more comfortable and perfect in the summer."

Luke Cosentino of Scott Township commented on Presley's cap. Windhorst continued, "People in the 18th century generally did not bath with the frequency that people in the 20th century did." Returning to character, he finished, "So one of the things we are very conscious of is keeping dirt away from not only our hair, but scalp." He pointed to the fireplace. "Especially when seated here, your hair could get really dirty."

Windhorst's daughter, Hannah, portrayed Presley's daughter, Anna Neville. She read poetry to the families and

visitors. Mrs. Margaret O'Hara was seated at the corner sewing table. Docent Harry Java explained, "Often ladies activities took place at a sewing table. Women would sew as well as use the table for a writing desk. You can see the spot for a quill; and there is a side compartment for sewing materials. Also, if you have a needle, you are going to protect it—as they are hard to get out here in the wilderness."

Nancy Neville eventually joined her family for cards, while Major O'Hara returned home 'via the carriage' as he forgot his shoes, according to Mrs. O'Hara. Dinner was at 2 p.m. so everyone was hoping he would hurry back.

April and Luke Cosentino from Scott Township read about the event in The Almanac. "We have known about the plantation for a long time but never made it out here. After reading

SEE NEVILLES PAGE A5



PHOTO BY AMY PHILLIPS-HALLER

The Neville family is pictured with guests April Cosentino, Docent Harry Java, Luke Cosentino, Lindsey and Vince Slauch.

### Index

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Arts & Entertainment .....	C6	Deaths .....	A2	Opinion .....	A4	Sights and Sounds .....	C6
Around & About .....	A2	Deed Transfers .....	B5	Real Estate .....	B5	Sports .....	B1
Classifieds .....	D1	Editorial .....	A4	Religious Events .....	C2	Together .....	C3