

## Village doesn't deserve more of your money

They're back! This time Buckeye Lake Village officials want three mills in NEW taxes (\$46/year for a \$50,000 property, \$92/year for a \$100,000 property and so on) for a so called safety services levy. Officially, it is for general operating expenses which means it can be spent for any village operating expense like salaries, benefits, utilities, insurance, phone bills etc.

This is the latest attempt to get more money for the police department. Village officials are pledging to spend 60 percent on the police department and 40 percent on the more popular fire department. However, there is nothing stopping them from changing their mind the day after the election or any time over the next five years. The new levy will take an ADDITIONAL \$134,000 a year from you and your neighbors. The police department's share is some \$80,000 a year.

You can try to dress them up like firefighters, but it's still the same old Buckeye Lake Police Department. Most or maybe all of the new money – who really knows – is supposed to replace the approximately \$138,000 being spent out of the general fund on the department. The police department has its own three mill levy which voters renewed two years ago. It provides \$103,000 a year, but the department spends more than double that.

Through it all, one thing hasn't changed. That's the poor performance of the department. It's still the department you either love or hate, depending on whether you are their buddies or not. They are poorly trained and managed. Mayor Frank Foster is supposed to oversee the department, but he's like the three monkeys who see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil. The police chief and the captain pretty much do whatever they want.

Last November, the *Beacon* joined the ever growing club of crime victims in the village. So we got to see the department in action, actually more like inaction, up close. The police chief promptly and courteously took our report that day. Video evidence of the incident was provided along with names of two people seen in the area that evening who resembled those in the video. We haven't heard a word from the department since.

Unfortunately, our experience isn't unusual. Just about every business in this village has experienced multiple break-in attempts. Residents' vehicles and homes are also under attack. Many of these attempts have been successful. Yet very few of them have resulted in arrests, much less convictions.

Why are so few property crimes cleared here? Do we have or attract super criminals? Actually, the opposite is probably true. Some of our criminals are pretty bold. They throw concrete blocks through plate glass and try to pry open well lit back doors. They don't seem to have much fear or respect for our police department.

So what's the reason? Predictable patrolling, drive-by policing and poor investigative skills contribute, but we believe the primary reason is the tolerance for the use and sale of drugs. There's an active drug subculture here which creates and attracts criminals. Residents and businesses then pay the price.

We've been publishing Buckeye Lake police reports for over 11 years now. We've yet to see an arrest for possession or sale of drugs that wasn't part of some other offense – police stopped a driver for OVI and discovered a small quantity of drugs during an inventory before impounding the vehicle or police saw drugs or paraphernalia when they responded to a domestic dispute. Until our village officials and police department get serious about driving drug sellers out of town, we'll continue to be plagued with thefts and break-ins. A department that can't arrest and convict one drug dealer for selling in over 10 years doesn't deserve any more of our hard earned money.

We've been making these complaints for years, but very little has changed. Residents have been complaining about the department even longer. Complaints to the mayor are basically ignored.

Money does get their attention. Buckeye Lake is running out of money because spending exceeds revenue. That forced the layoff of one police officer late last year. That layoff finally forced the top two ranking officers to split up. For years, the two generally worked the slow day shift together, wasting our limited resources. Thanks to your "NO" votes last November, village officials were finally forced to make some common sense decisions.

We need to force some more common sense decisions. If the village wants more money from you, when your sewer bill is increasing \$96 a year with another \$120-144 a year increase coming in a year or two, then we need to see some specific commitments from them. Anybody can spend beyond their means. First, they need to stop making bonehead decisions like giving up \$7,200+ a year in rent to expand the police station/village office and buying a used gas-guzzling SUV for the chief. Sure, most of the cost of the vehicle was donated, but the combination of high gas prices and low mileage is costing us dearly.

Second, village officials need to consider all alternatives rather than just asking for more taxes. They recently had an opportunity to ask for some impact fees from the developers of a 177-unit upscale condominium project. Those fees could have purchased a new police cruiser or two, a new medic or jumpstarted the development of a park on Mill Dam Road. Well, we settled for some bargain loads of dirt delivered to that future park site. We get the dirt at the developer's cost. What a deal! That's another opportunity lost.

It's time to demand better decisions from our leaders. The only way to get their attention is to say "NO" to more taxes until we know our hard earned money won't be wasted.



# The BUCKEYE LAKE Beacon

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## Writer wants to left out of Kirkerville battle

Editor:

Some Kirkersville officials say they are only interested in what's best for the future of Kirkersville and its citizens. I say that's a bunch of crap. If that were true, why do they use the word parties when responding to anything Bonnie Mansfield says? Let me answer that.

Those same officials don't have the guts to say my name. Let me be very specific when I say Bonnie Mansfield is my friend along with a lot of other people in this village. If any of them need my help they know all they have to do is call me. Bonnie does not need me, she does her own homework, gathers her own facts from "PUBLIC RECORDS", and does so to keep residents informed. If these same officials were really doing the right thing why do they drag me into it? I've stayed quiet on my little corner of 5th Street, not bothering anyone.

So let's really "DEBUNK" some things. The increases in insurance costs and deductibles were not solely from lawsuits from the "PARTIES" mentioned. Suits filed against a police officer and damage claims from village official Mike Cloud and the police department contributed.

How dare these same officials use the term frivolous requests. PUBLIC RECORDS ARE EVERY CITIZENS RIGHT. We the "TAXPAYER" have the right to know what type of people are running our village and what type of people they are hiring to work for our village. Remember, we had a entire police department that were not legally qualified to carry guns. Let's also clarify that the lawsuit originated from the "PARTIES" first being sued for asking to review "PUBLIC RECORDS." Let's look at fiscal responsibilities then and now. Then we had 15 credit cards issued without consent of council. Bills were being paid without invoices and there was double dipping by the then Police Chief

Bob Frye with the mayor's approval. Frye filed a workers compensation claim and the mayor signed off on it without even telling council.

The most important thing for people to know, when these same officials talk about the lawsuit, is the mayor allowed the suit filed against the "PARTIES" using OUR TAX PAYING DOLLARS without consent of the council.

According to records I JUST REVIEWED RECENTLY, there is no way this governmental body can do all its business properly all in one night. Unfortunately, little has changed and people are still allowed to run amuck and not be held accountable for OUR TAX DOLLARS. To the citizens, no one need be afraid to run or be appointed to a position if you're related to the Evans, Kincaids, or Clouds. If you're not related, be very afraid because you're not one of the GOOD OLE BOYS! You're never going to be able to do the right thing for your community and its citizens. FYI government officials are exempt from being sued.

In conclusion, let me just say to those certain Kirkersville officials which includes everyone except Bobbi Miller whom I do not know and who does not know me, KEEP ME OUT OF YOUR BATTLE, or I will have to START getting more involved and all of you know I also do my homework. Any one of you are welcome to stop down and talk with me.

A special invitation goes out to Mike Cloud who has been my neighbor for 20 years. All you have to do with your time is run around town "CHECKING THINGS OUT". Like a good neighbor, Debi Seymour is there. Come see me if you have issues to discuss.

May God bless you all.

**Debi Seymour**  
 Kirkersville

## Correction

There are a couple of errors in the Lakewood Schools Quarterly Update published in our April 13 issue. Unfortunately, the last day of school for Lakewood students isn't May 31. Thanks to all the calamity days, students will attend through June 7. Jackson Elementary students in grades K-1 will tour Hebron Elementary on Wednesday May 16, not May 6 as originally published.