

Everybody wins!

It took years – too many years in the eyes of many residents. Nevertheless, last week Buckeye Lake Village Council unanimously cleared a major hurdle in the long running effort to provide safe and affordable public water. Their decision, with the strong support of Mayor Frank Foster, will save residents thousands of dollars on their future water bills.

Everyone does win in the agreement worked out with the Village of Millersport for Buckeye Lake to buy treated bulk water from Millersport for the next 20 years. Buckeye Lake residents get a fair price for treated water from a brand new water treatment plant. Millersport significantly increases its customer base, making it easier to pay off its new plant. Residents in both villages will benefit from the larger customer base, allowing the substantial fixed costs to be spread over more customers.

Buckeye Lake still faces several hurdles before residents will be able to drink clean, affordable water. Village officials need to keep a very close eye on engineering expenses. Our distribution system was first designed in the late 1990's and recently updated. Little has changed in the technology of water distribution, so it's important to make sure that the current firm doesn't try to 'reinvent the wheel' at our expense. Thanks to our narrow streets and almost nonexistent public right-of-ways, construction of the distribution system will be costly and disruptive. That can't be avoided. It's critical that property owners recognize the greater good and cooperate in the construction process.

Now that council has made the 'buy or make' decision, the next critical policy decision is how to pay for the distribution system. We've long favored spreading these costs over all property owners since everyone, whether they elect to hook on to the system or not, will benefit from public water. Once again, the more that contribute, the less each owner has to pay. Somehow both major mobile home parks must contribute in proportion to their number of home sites. The agreement worked out for Leisure Village to pay just a handful of the 'no water bills' is unacceptable and unfair. Council members should hire a specialist in assessments and utility rate design to address these issues.

It's not often that we praise Buckeye Lake officials, but they have made the right decision here. Finally, public water is just over the horizon. But it will take more work and attention to detail to make sure it remains affordable.

Pledge is alive & well at Millersport Elementary

Editor:

I would like to respond to the recent letters to the editor regarding the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance in Millersport Elementary School.

First of all, let me say that the Walnut Township Local Board of Education wholeheartedly supports the practice of reciting the Pledge in all classrooms that make up the Millersport schools. We also support our local Veterans Day assembly, the 9-11 Parade sponsored by the Liebs Island Civic Association, and promote the singing, or playing, of the National Anthem at our athletic contests. I want to assure you that strong American and Patriotic pride remains alive and well in our school, as it always has and as it should always be.

An unfortunate verbal exchange took place a few weeks ago involving our elementary school principal and some parents while answering questions at a kindergarten screening session. It is understandable why some of those parents left the meeting assuming that we did not support the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance at our elementary school. For this, I would like to take this opportunity to apologize to our parents, friends and neighbors for the misunderstanding and invite anyone who wishes to visit my office to speak with me personally regarding their concerns. I would also like to express my appreciation to those community members who have taken the time to call me to address the incident on a more personal level.

We feel the matter has been cleared up internally and the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance will continue to be said on an even more regular basis. With all of the things that can, and at times do, go wrong in operating a school district, if we look hard enough we can find some positive points and turn "lemons into lemonade."

On Friday, April 18, the building principal sent the following note home with every child enrolled at Millersport Elementary School.

Dear Parents,

Recent events and inquiries concerning the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance prompted me to write this letter. I want to know that I strongly encourage students and adults to grow in knowledge, respect and pride for our country and all that it stands for. Please know that we will continue to honor the Red, White and Blue with the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance within individual classrooms and collectively ever Friday, Which will be led by representatives from the 3rd grade. Sincerely, Cheryl Thomson, Principal

Again, I would like to express my sincere apologies to the community members who have taken offense to the recent events related to the Pledge of Allegiance. We pledge to do much better job of keeping "Old Glory" and all that it means in front of all of your children.

Ron Thorton, Superintendent
Walnut Township Local Schools



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Pledge is being said

Editor,

Due to recent letters published by the Beacon, I felt compelled to respond in regard to reciting the Pledge of Allegiance at Millersport Elementary.

I have three children in Walnut Township School District (one in high school, one in junior high and one in elementary). During their school careers and to this very day, the Pledge of Allegiance has been consistently recited. I stood today in the high school with students, teachers, and administrators and recited the Pledge. My youngest daughter faithfully says the Pledge of Allegiance daily in Mrs. Clark's classroom. I have been in the elementary school on Friday mornings in the hallways when everyone stops in their tracks, puts their hands on their hearts, and recites the Pledge with the entire student body.

Every one of my children know the Pledge and why we say it. Patriotism and love of our country has been foundational in my family. My ancestors fought in the Civil War for the Union. My grandfather James E. Slocumb fought in WWI and my dad, James E. Slocumb Jr., fought with the 10th Mountain Division in the Army during WWII. I have very close friends and relatives serving today with various branches of our honorable and courageous military. I guess you could say that patriotism is in my blood. I only bring up these points to let you know that, if I had any doubt that the Pledge of Allegiance was not being respected and recited in our elementary school, I would be in the principal's office myself finding out why and demanding change. That has not been my experience at all in any of our school buildings.

Last week elementary Principal Cheryl Thomson sent out the following note to all parents in the elementary due to the controversy stirred in the recent weeks. I felt it was worth

Thanks from the Thomases

Editor:

We are so thankful to everyone for everything you have done and given to us after the fire that took our home. We can not express in words the gratitude and appreciation we have to all the fire departments that worked so hard to save what could be saved. A special thank you to the American Red Cross who arrived in the wee hours of the morning to offer supplies and financial assistance.

We will NEVER forget the outpouring

including because it speaks first hand to her heart toward our country and the importance she feels in conveying that to our students. This is the note, word for word, by Principal Cheryl Thomson:

Dear Parents,

Recent events and inquiries concerning the saying of the Pledges of Allegiance prompted me to write this letter.

I want you to know that I strongly encourage students and adults to grow in the knowledge, respect, and pride for our country and all that it stands for. Please know that we will continue to honor the Red, White & Blue with the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance within individual classrooms and collectively, every Friday, which will be led by representatives from the 3rd grade.

Sincerely, Cheryl Thomson

I believe this note is sincere. If anyone continues to doubt, make a visit to either school some morning and see for yourself. Come to school, sign in at the office, and visit your child's classroom. You will have a chance to participate with them in the Pledge of Allegiance. It's a wonderful experience. Next November, come to the Veteran's Day program that the entire district participates in at the high school. You will witness the awesome tribute they give to our veterans and service men and women. We have students from all ages that are encouraged by our district to participate in our community Memorial Day Parade every year.

Respect and love for our country has always been a priority at Walnut Township Schools. It has been this way before Principal Thomson came to our district, and it has continued to be that way since she arrived. I'm confident that years from now, it will still be the case.

Dina Reasoner
Millersport

of love, support and prayers from the surrounding communities, friends and family which as kept us going every single day. We are truly bless and we thank you from the bottom of hearts. God bless you all

Isaiah 41-10

"I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you;

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Mike & Wanda Thomas
Walnut Township