

Winter 2014

# geauga BUSINESS

## heroin abuse

Geauga's Dirty  
Little Secret




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# heroin abuse

## Geauga's Dirty Little Secret

by Margie Wilber

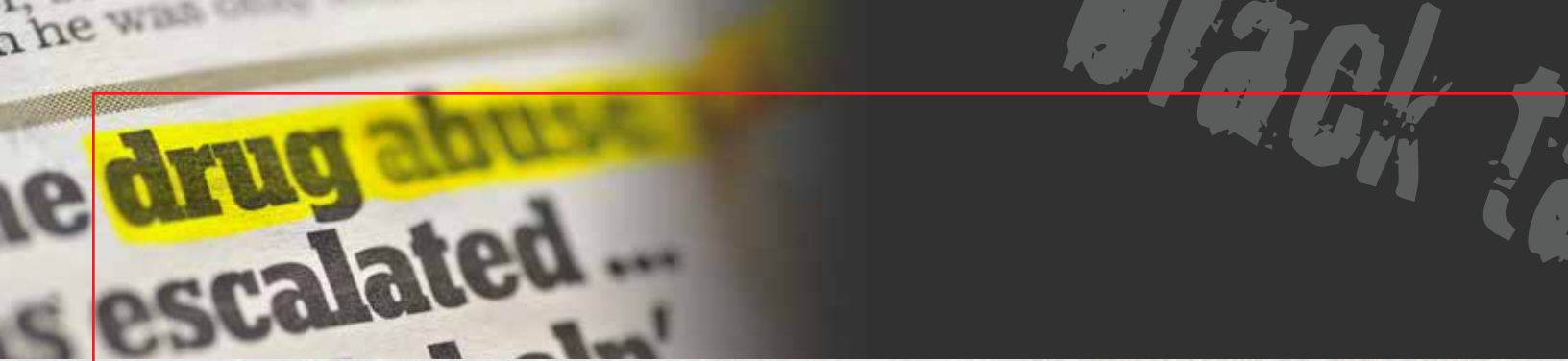
smack

**Smack. Horse. H. Black Tar. Skag.** These are just a few street names for heroin, with more being added daily. It is one of the most addictive drugs on the planet: stronger, cheaper, and purer than ever before. And it lurks in every town, business and high school in Geauga County.

Gertrude Stein wrote in her poem, Sacred Emily, "A rose is a rose is a rose," interpreted to mean, "things are what they are." But, this does not hold true with the poppy flower. For behind its natural beauty is pain, heartache and death for millions globally and hundreds locally in our quiet, bucolic county. According to a recent article published in the Geauga County Maple Leaf, there were 282 heroin overdose deaths in Ohio during 2010, 395 in 2011 and 606 in 2012. The number of heroin-related cases handled by the attorney general's crime lab was 2,182 in 2010, 2,764 in 2011, 3,819 in 2012 and more than 4,240 in 2013 – reflecting a clear escalation in heroin use in Ohio. But what about Geauga County?

skag

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Lieutenant Scott Neihus has been a proud member of the Geauga County Sheriff's Office since 1987. In 1990, he was assigned to the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission to investigate auto theft and narcotics activities occurring in Ohio. Since that time, he has served as a supervisor in all areas of the Geauga County Sheriff's Office, including law enforcement, detective bureau and narcotics units. He has witnessed firsthand the dramatic rise in heroin use within the county. "We are all over the map in terms of age, gender and financial means when it comes to heroin use in Geauga County," explains Lt. Neihus. "Heroin is here in Geauga County, and the problem has been escalating since 2011."

According to Judge Timothy Grendell, Geauga County Court of Common Pleas, "Heroin-related cases primarily involving parents of young children using heroin is the predominant basis for family-related abuse, neglect and dependency cases in the Geauga County Juvenile Court. We see cases involving heroin almost daily in the court. In 2013, we had more than six cases where Geauga County Job & Family Services had to step in because a mother on heroin gave birth to a child with heroin in the child's system. We only had one such case in 2012."

Heroin use by a juvenile results in a mandatory time in detention. Adults who violate the court's prohibition on heroin use are sent to the County Safety Center (jail) for contempt of court, says Judge Grendell. "A major concern, with respect to the growing use of heroin by juveniles, is some may engage in prostitution or home invasions to finance their heroin use. More than 40 children have been removed from their families in Geauga County because of parental heroin use."

When used in medicine, diacetyl morphine or diamorphine is available by prescription

## "WE ARE ALL OVER THE MAP IN TERMS OF AGE, GENDER AND FINANCIAL MEANS WHEN IT COMES TO HEROIN USE IN GEAUGA COUNTY!"

- Lt. Scott Neihus, Geauga Sheriff's Department

for treating severe pain or for replacement therapy to treat addicts. Afghanistan supplies 87 percent of the world's illicit raw opium, with Mexico rising recently to become the second-largest producer. It is illegal to manufacture, possess or sell heroin without a license in almost every country. Despite this fact, the BBC reports that there are between 15 to 21 million heroin users between the ages of 15 - 64 globally. And according to the National Geographic Channel, Afghanistan is producing 30 percent more heroin than the world demands.

Illicit heroin is available in four grades: No. 4 grade is the purist form, a matte-white powder often injected or snorted; No. 3 grade is "brown sugar" for smoking; and No. 1 & 2 grade are unprocessed raw heroin. Routes of admission include injection, oral, smoking, inhaling, and anal and vaginal insertion, or "plugging," commonly carried out by using a syringe. Cocaine is sometimes used in combination with heroin, and is referred to as a "Speedball" when injected, or "Moonrocks" when smoked together. Cocaine acts as a stimulant while heroin acts as a depressant. Co-administration provides an intense rush of euphoria.

Chardon Municipal Court Judge Terri Stupica was personally introduced to heroin on day one after being elected on November 8, 2011. "In one week, five heroin addicts came before me in the courtroom and only one of these five was there on a drug charge. Unfortunately, it is

the behavior under the influence of heroin that gets users into my courtroom. There

are not enough prison cells to arrest all the people who get high on this drug in Geauga County," reports Stupica. The problem has no gender, race or socio-economic boundaries. With a population of approximately 95,000 in Geauga County, she estimates 10 percent or 9,500 have some form of an opiate addiction – either heroin or some type of prescription painkillers.

Lt. Neihus concurs, "If you combine heroin use with abuse of prescription painkillers, I think that statistic is correct. While many parents or children of heroin or opiate abusers do not want to report it to law enforcement – whether due to stigma, embarrassment, or fear – jail time may be exactly what they need in order to keep them alive until they can be placed in an appropriate treatment program. They are then in a safe environment where they cannot continue to hurt themselves or be a threat to the community."

According to Lt. Neihus, jail often serves as a pseudo-detox center. "Unfortunately, heroin is an extremely dangerous drug due to the body's tolerance and the street drug's unknown composition. Often, addicts will go through withdrawal in jail and, when released, try to use the same amount. This can be fatal," the involved law enforcement officer explains.

"We first recognized heroin use in Geauga County between late 2011 and mid-2012 when there was a spike in theft crimes, especially shop lifting, auto thefts, B&E and residential burglaries. We found heroin

***“No one can predict when it will all come crumbling down. But it’s inevitable.”***

**- Heroin user**

addicts were coming from outside the county and committing crimes here to get money to support their drug habit. Through investigation, we tracked the addicts back to Lake, Portage and Summit Counties. Then in 2012, we started to see home-grown addicts in Geauga County. They were being arrested at traffic stops, for crimes, and through our local narcotic work. If we catch them, we charge them. We have a zero tolerance,” Lt. Neihus states. “We also follow up with overdose cases. Once the person is out of the hospital, they will be charged based on the outcome of our investigation.”

And heroin is just a piece of the opiate problem. According to the Lake County Opiate Task Force, fatal prescription opiate drug overdoses is the single-leading cause of accidental deaths in Ohio – higher than car wrecks.

Why are people using heroin and/or other opiates? According to Maria Madden, MD, general surgeon and Medical Chief of Staff at University Hospitals (UH) Geauga Medical Center, heroin induces a transcendent relaxation and intense euphoria. Tolerance develops quickly, and users need more of the drug to achieve the same effects. Withdrawal may begin six to 24 hours after discontinuing drug use. Symptoms include sweating, malaise, anxiety, depression, heaviness, excessive yawning or sneezing, insomnia, cold sweats, nausea, vomiting, constipation, cramping, involuntary spasms in the limbs, and fatal overdose. The effects of heroin last three to four hours after each dose is administered. The effects through continued use become more striking – collapsed veins, infection of the heart lining and valves, abscesses, cellulites, liver disease, HIV/AIDS from sharing needles, poisoning, decreased kidney function, overdose and death.

“Many of these physical symptoms are inconclusive because they may indicate a different medical problem,” warns Dr. Madden. “I suggest parents watch for behavioral changes – falling grades, a change in friends, or your child becoming more secretive.” She adds that pain management for addicts is difficult because narcotics often will not alleviate pain due to the addict’s neuro-receptors being compromised. Dr. Madden reports that the medical community in Geauga County is aware of the heroin problem, and the Geauga County Medical Society recently brought in an addiction specialist to educate physicians about this issue.

Early in 2013, UH Geauga Medical Center began partnering with New Vision™, a nationally recognized medical stabilization provider, to address Northeast Ohio’s recreational and prescription substance-abuse epidemic. The result was the official launch of the UH Geauga Medical Center Medical Stabilization service. The service offers a three-day, inpatient-hospital stay that focuses on clinically treating the symptoms of withdrawal, especially from alcohol and opioids.

Unlike a detox program, patients who participate in the Medical Stabilization are not subjected to a psychological evaluation, an addiction diagnosis or behavior- or lifestyle-related group meetings. “These are medical admissions to the hospital’s

medical-surgical floor where we stabilize patients under a doctor’s care and discharge them so they can then effectively treat the disease of their addiction,” says Renee Klaric, MACPC, LPCC-S, Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor and Service Coordinator, New Vision. “The service is for people who have made the decision to stop using. They initiate the call and willingly participate.”

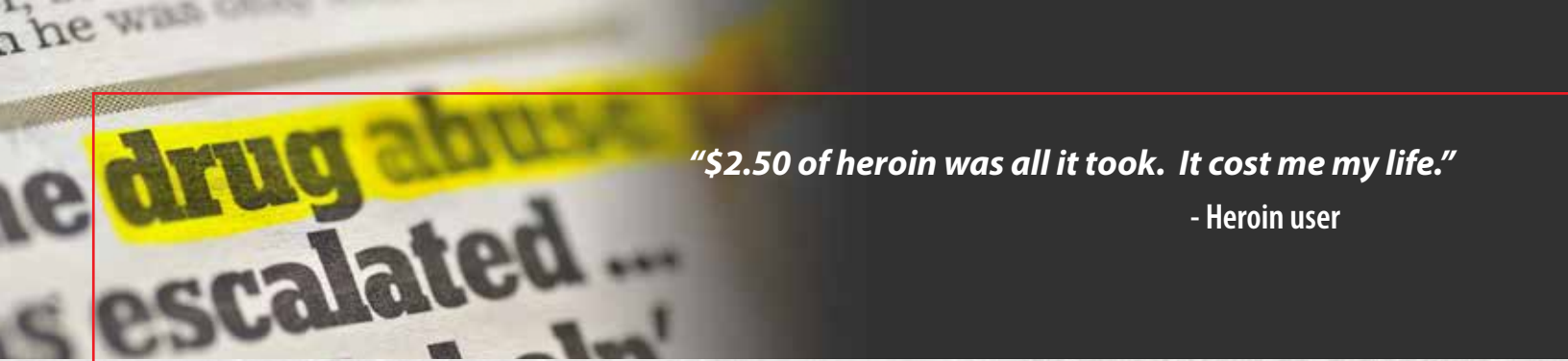
Because the Medical Stabilization service involves a medical admission, a patient must be in withdrawal and must have private insurance, Medicaid or Medicare to participate. “The initial evaluation and three-day inpatient treatment process is private, anonymous, respectful and dignified,” says Lisa Brown, MD, Director, Medical Stabilization service, UH Geauga Medical Center. “We manage the patient’s withdrawal safely in a stable environment and get them clean so he or she can then transition to the next stage of rehabilitation.”

“Our goal is help patients return to their own community for treatment or rehabilitation,” says Klaric.

Despite 23 years of criminal and civil litigation experience, Judge Stupica was surprised to see the prevalence of heroin use in Geauga County. “I started to tally the numbers of heroin-related crimes in my courtroom vs. DUI cases each day. There were often more heroin cases. If someone told me two years ago I would be dealing with so much heroin addiction in my room, I would have said they were crazy.” At last

**ACCORDING TO THE  
LAKE COUNTY OPIATE  
TASK FORCE, FATAL  
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DEATHS IN OHIO –  
HIGHER THAN  
CAR WRECKS.**

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**“\$2.50 of heroin was all it took. It cost me my life.”**

**- Heroin user**

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count, there were 93 known heroin users from May 28 to Dec. 18, 2013 before Judge Stupica on her tally sheet. “These numbers do not reflect the fatal automobile accidents, heart attacks, etc. caused by heroin use that go unreported. We’re dealing with an opium/heroin epidemic here in Geauga County.”

According to national statistics, in 2011, 4.2 million Americans age 12 or older used heroin at least once; 23 percent of these individuals become dependent on it.

Judge Stupica says, if she recognizes someone is a user, she sets a high bond. “The risk factors to themselves and the community are high. I have yet to see a parent mad at me for locking up a son or daughter who is a heroin user. Most parents, by the time their child comes before me, are at wit’s end.”

According to statistics, 18 to 23 year olds are the greatest segment using heroin in Geauga County. Typical behavior resulting in local arrests includes theft, trespassing and drug trafficking. “It’s not like how Hollywood depicted heroin use in the ‘60s and ‘70s – a man in a trench coat, in a dark alley. Today’s local heroin users are white-picket-fence kids – from fairly affluent or middle-class homes.”

“This past year, a 17-year-old female, 27-year-old male, and 51-year-old female all died as a result of a heroin or opiate overdose, to name a few,” says Lt. Neihus. He estimates 22 known heroin or prescription overdose deaths occurred in Geauga County in 2013. “This first week of January 2014, a 70-year-old male died due to a prescription opiate overdose. It scares the hell out of me. I have two young boys I am trying to bring up the right way, and the consequences of heroin addiction can be catastrophic. It can kill you the first time you use it.”

Lt. Neihus says he has compassion for addicts because they have a problem but also for the victims of their bad decisions – family members, friends and neighbors who have been robbed, lied to and emotionally devastated.

“It’s sad to think drug addicts cannot stop until someone forces them to or they die. In my world, I can only force them to stop for six months - in prison,” Judge Stupica explains. Interestingly, conviction for trafficking heroin carries the death penalty in most Southeast Asia, some East Asian, and Middle East countries.

Judge Stupica speaks on heroin use and its ramifications at local schools, including West Geauga High School, Chardon High School and Auburn Career Center. She wants to help educate the community to prevent further heroin use. “It’s always amazing how many students come up to me after speaking who are personally affected. It takes two people to have a child, but a community to raise them,” she says. “Everyone in Geauga County can play a role to reduce heroin use. While we can never completely eradicate it, we must do more to protect our children and community.”

Gauga County Sheriff Daniel McClelland also speaks to groups throughout the county on the rising use of heroin and abuse of prescription painkillers. The office’s long-running DARE program continues to educate local youth on the dangers of alcohol and drug use. In addition, the Geauga County Sheriff’s Department provides mailbox-size containers at their local offices so people can dispose of their unused prescription drugs safely.

Judge Grendell was so concerned about the heroin epidemic and its detrimental impact on our children and families that

he mailed out an information card to every household in Geauga County warning parents of the heroin problem. The card lists warning signs of heroin use and provides contact information if parents suspect drug/alcohol use in their children. Judge Grendell also started the Family Life Intervention Program, which provides for expedited drug assessments and rehabilitation for heroin-using parents. The goal of the program is to reduce the cost of long-term child placements or foster care to Geauga County taxpayers.

Judge Stupica believes there should be a law to allow random drug testing in schools. Auburn Career Center is considering such a program. She applauds this action.

“I think it is coming down the pike for other Geauga schools if the rate of heroin use continues,” she says. “It is any school administration’s duty to provide a safe

**“EVERYONE IN GEAUGA COUNTY CAN PLAY A ROLE TO REDUCE HEROIN USE. WHILE WE CAN NEVER COMPLETELY ERADICATE IT, WE MUST DO MORE TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY.”**

*- Chardon Municipal Court Judge Terri Stupica*

***"I was a Girl Scout, got good grades, but liked having fun. I thought it was normal teenage partying."***

**- Teenage Heroin user**

and healthy environment. I know there is the Fourth Amendment right to privacy, but if you have students who are pumped up on drugs – who at any given time might act erratically or irrationally – this affects the environment and student learning experience. We're not interested in the punitive value. We're interested in getting kids into treatment before they kill themselves or their drug problem gets worse to the point they commit crimes to support their habit."

Judge Grendell cautions, "There are constitutional concerns with mandatory drug testing in public schools, but drug testing as a condition for sports or extracurricular participation is constitutional and should be required."

Schools are not the only local institution being affected by heroin use. Geauga businesses are feeling the impact in absenteeism, theft, and skyrocketing insurance rates. The reality is most addicts cannot keep a job. There is the cost of rehiring and training employees as well as the added danger of having impaired employees at the workplace. Production is negatively impacted. The list goes on.

"Heroin use contributes to an unsafe environment, business theft/embezzlement, and lost productivity. It can create liability for an employer if an employee on drugs causes harm to a customer or client," warns Judge Grendell. "Random drug testing in the workplace should be encouraged."

Ben Garlich, site manager at Dillen Products and Mayor of Middlefield Village, says, "Drugs, in general, have been an issue for all employers. At Dillen, we announce to prospective applicants that a drug test will be administered as a condition of employment and still have frequent failures. I am by no means an authority on

drug pricing but understand heroin is cheap, and statistics show 25% of people who try heroin become addicted. For those that become addicted, it controls everything about their life. Addicts are non-functioning members of society and, although limited, our Village has experienced situations where heroin use has affected behavior of individuals that negatively impacted merchants as well as residential neighborhoods. I am glad to see the county realizes it is an issue that must be funded and addressed. It is being addressed on the local level, as well, within our Village."

Lt. Neihus says that while there have been break-ins at local businesses, the majority of drug-related break-ins are residential, occurring during the day when people are at work. "Primarily, they are looking for prescription drugs in medicine cabinets, and gold and silver they can pawn for fast money. We have no difficulty identifying the addicts, but the drug sources are generally outside the county. Many local addicts are getting heroin from Warren, Euclid, South Euclid and Cuyahoga County."

The problem is now so severe that local law enforcement and other Geauga County leaders formed the Opiate Task Force to combat the rampant drug crisis. Their first meeting occurred in March 2012. The Opiate Task Force is comprised of law enforcement officials, medical professionals, judicial and religious representatives, government officials, recovering heroin addicts, and family members, along with interested residents. The Opiate Task Force will meet the third Wednesday in February, May, August and November in 2014. While the average group ranges from 20 to 25 people, there have been 45 to 60 at a meeting. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, Feb. 19 at

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3 p.m. in Council Chambers, located at 111 Water Street in Chardon. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.

Tracy Jemison, president of Geauga Growth Partnership (GGP) and former Geauga County commissioner, says, "The use of heroin is having a devastating impact on families and businesses throughout the county. GGP is committed to working with local law enforcement and government entities to address this issue. In fact, two GGP members are serving on the Opiate

Task Force. We also recently invited Judge Stupica to our January meeting to discuss the heroin epidemic occurring in our schools and on our streets. The use of heroin and opiates is everyone's business – law enforcement, schools, government, businesses, residents, etc. It will take all of us working together to significantly diminish its use in Geauga County."

**"THE HEROIN USER IS THE NEIGHBOR NEXT DOOR, YOUR COWORKER, NEPHEW OR YOUR OWN CHILD."**

- Judge Timothy Grendell, Geauga County Court of Common Pleas

"I am very grateful that all these groups are on board to fight this heroin epidemic," Judge Stupica states. "But, it almost seems you go so far and hit a wall. If a person is not committed to recovery, the likelihood of relapse is high. Much of the available rehab facilities are pay-to-play or insurance-based. There are a few options for the economically strapped. We need to offer more options. There has to be a willingness to open our ears and listen to how heroin is affecting your

community. Every day, I fight the fight. If I save one life, it is worth it."

She encourages parents, "Talk to your kids. Know their friends. Know where they are going and call the home to make sure there is a parent there to supervise. Be informed as a parent."

"Often, opiate addiction begins when kids discover unused prescription pills at home and decide to try them," Judge Grendell says. "Parents, know what is in your medicine cabinet and throw out what is no longer needed.

"There is no set demographic that defines a heroin user; they represent all ages and lifestyles. The heroin user is the neighbor next door, your coworker, nephew or your own child," Judge Grendell adds. "This poppy flower enslaves its victims. It destroys lives. What are the social and economic consequences of heroin addiction on a community? It destroys the spirit of a community."

Lt. Neihus encourages tough love. "What is the answer to heroin use and opiate abuse in Geauga County? The reality is as long as we have people who decide to take drugs – which usually starts out with prescription pill abuse – the problem will not go away. I believe the right to privacy should be trumped by the safety of society. There needs to be open dialogue between law enforcement, educators, health care professionals, mental health workers, and families. Everyone today is afraid to be sued due to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) or the threat of losing their licensure. There are no easy answers. Parents need to be vigilant. Watch for patterns. Little things become big things."

**THE COST TO BATTLE THIS LOCAL HEROIN EPIDEMIC IS HUGE. WHAT CAN LOCAL BUSINESSES DO TO HELP? WRITE TO YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVES AND ASK THEM TO GET MORE INVOLVED IN THIS STATE CRISIS.**

**"I STARTED TO TALLY THE NUMBERS OF HEROIN-RELATED CRIMES IN MY COURTROOM VS. DUI CASES EACH DAY. THERE WERE OFTEN MORE HEROIN CASES."**

- Chardon Municipal Court Judge Terri Stupica





# ETNA Products

A WORLD LEADER IN  
HIGH-PERFORMANCE,  
SPECIALTY,  
METALWORKING  
LUBRICANTS

*by Margie Wilber*

*Isaac "Ike" Tripp IV, President/CEO, ETNA Products*

Less than 10 percent of all family-owned companies extend to three generations. ETNA Products, located in Knowles Industrial Park in Chagrin Falls, can celebrate beating the odds. But not only beating the odds – becoming a world leader in the development and manufacturing of high-performance, specialty, metalworking lubricants.

ETNA Products was founded in 1943 by Isaac "Ike" Tripp Jr. as a sole proprietorship in Etna, Pennsylvania, a small suburb of Pittsburgh. "This was the third company my grandfather had started," explains Isaac "Ike" Tripp IV, President/CEO of the metalworking

lubricants and services company. "My grandfather graduated from Penn State University and joined the Army Air Signal Corps so he could serve as a pilot during World War I. After returning from the war, he married and, together with his new wife, started a small lubricant manufacturing business in 1920. That business folded due to the onset of the Great Depression in 1930. After two years of working to raise money, he opened another lubricant manufacturing company that mainly did tolling business for the major oil companies. That business proved unprofitable, so he closed the company in 1937 and went to work selling products for Shell Oil from

1937 to 1942. In 1943, at 53 years old, he founded another lubricant business. The city of Etna, Pennsylvania actually gave him a warehouse by the river as long as he named the business after the town."

"Grandpa cleaned out the old ice house and used the building as a warehouse for lubricants. He knew the customers and formulas but chose to pay someone else to make the product. He really functioned more as a manufacturer's rep," Tripp explains. "Over time, ETNA's largest customer, Chase Brass and Copper of Cleveland, asked my grandfather to move the company closer so they could better serve their customers."

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In 1947, Ike Tripp Jr. packed up the company and moved to Aurora.

In 1955, Isaac "Ike" Tripp III, joined his father's company as a Sales Engineer. At that time, ETNA was having small lots of lubricants and samples produced for it by two local producers – one being Murphy-Phoenix, the family-owned manufacturer of Murphy's Oil Soap. The lubricant company soon relocated to the second floor of Havre's Department Store in Chagrin Falls.

In 1960, Tripp III purchased the company from his father, incorporating the business as an Ohio stock corporation. He also created an innovative business plan to grow in niche markets including lubricants for the production of non-ferrous tubing. Under the second generation, expansion continued. By the decade's end, Tripp III purchased two acres of land in Knowles Industrial Park. "Dad began with one 55-gallon-capacity kettle to make product," laughs the current company president and proud son. "The land soon contained a plant, laboratories and two warehouses."

In 1968, ETNA launched the Mechanical Products Division (MPD) to make systems

for the application of the specialty lubricants produced by the company.

"As the third generation, I began working at ETNA in 1974 and purchased the company from my father in 1990," says Tripp. Expansion to the plant and warehouses continued under his watch, with the addition of a new boiler room, receiving warehouse, maintenance/engineering area and an office expansion.

"In 1983, we launched the Specialty Chemical Division (SCD), which specializes in the manufacturing of products including oil-free, high-solids polyester resins used to formulate coatings, inks and adhesives. Additionally, SCD offers us the capacity to manufacture esters and polymers used in specialty metalworking lubricants," the third-generation business owner states.

Innovation and growth continued.

In 1999, ETNA Products, Inc. and Carl Bechem Lubricants, GmbH embarked on a joint partnership creating Etna-Bechem Lubricants, Ltd. The new partnership introduced a line of specialty greases, copper-wire-drawing lubricants and lubricants for machining, cutting and

grinding. In 2001, Etna-TEC, Ltd. was started to make other specialty polymers for the paint and coatings industry. After this startup was functioning, the company expanded by acquiring the building at 16830 Park Circle Drive. This building was completely remodeled, and the expanded research and development laboratories and a shipping warehouse for finished goods were installed. Beyond adding to the buildings of ETNA, in 2008, Tripp traveled overseas in Hagen, Germany to form Etna-Bechem Europe, GmbH. This joint-venture company produces and sells ETNA products throughout Europe.

Today, ETNA's skilled engineers are working on developing non-mineral, oil-based lubricants to replace oil-based products. The company has also developed and is currently testing a novel additive to replace chlorinated, extreme-pressure agents.

"Our mission continues to be to supply the highest quality products and services that meet and exceed our customers' requirements and to provide our associates with a work environment that fosters pride and a sense of accomplishment," ETNA's President/CEO emphatically states. "I know it sounds cliché, but that's what we're about."

“ETNA’s goal is to offer the highest quality products at a fair price. We serve customer groups that value ‘cost of use’ rather than lowest price. Our products help our customers create less scrap which results in higher productivity and more profitability,” clarifies Tripp.

From its Chagrin Falls location, ETNA fulfills orders from eight ounces to 7,000 gallons of product. ETNA’s diverse products ultimately reach into all areas of life – from automotives, plumbing and commercial refrigeration, to aerospace, metal stamping and medical equipment – including lubricants used to draw the precision wires used in heart catheterizations.

“We serve a broad base of manufacturers and do business in 42 states and 35 foreign countries,” Tripp enthusiastically describes. “When people ask what we do, I tell them we make products that help people make products.”

Tripp says, “My grandfather sold in Asia in the 1950s. ETNA Products sold in Europe, Canada, South America, the Middle East and South Africa in the 1960s. While we do not export product today except to South America, Mexico and Canada, our world-wide network of licensees and joint-venture companies all follow ETNA’s specifications.

“Safety is also a big part of our corporate culture. I am proud of our accident-free record in the plant, office and on the road,” adds Tripp. “ETNA has a great relationship with our local fire department and opens the plant so they can train here. We live in the community. We shop in the community. We go to church in this community. We believe in being good citizens in Geauga County.”

Tripp insists, “When people are happy, they will do amazing things for you and your customers. That’s how we continue to survive. We purposely try to grow our business by creating opportunities for our people. I’m proud to say we have customers that bought from my grandfather in 1943. That is one of our strengths as a company.”

**“Our mission continues to be to supply the highest quality products and services that meet and exceed our customers’ requirements and to provide our associates with a work environment that fosters pride and a sense of accomplishment.”**


*- Isaac “Ike” Tripp IV, President/ CEO, ETNA Products*

ETNA’s president reflects on the company’s family history and looks to the future.

“This is a private business that happens to be owned by the same family for 70 years. This continuity is a big reason for our success. We know our customers and have a complete understanding of their manufacturing business. We can tailor our product to maximize their profitability. Our goal is to keep it in the family and have a sustainable business. My daughter Catharine T. Golden joined the company 11 years ago. She serves as manager of Business Support Operations, which includes information technologies, purchasing and customer service. We’ve worked hard to make it sustainable – for our associates and the family.” Tripp’s son Gardener Tripp works for Community Space in New York

City. That’s all right with ETNA’s president. Everyone must follow their own dream.

“This is a very competitive business,” concludes the gregarious Tripp. “We have competitors as large as Exxon Mobile and as small as a five-customer business in Euclid. We follow something I learned a long time ago as a cross-country runner. You set your goal to pass the next person ahead of you, and you work to move up to try and become the number-one runner. By consistently working to improve yourself, you can create opportunity for yourself and your employees.”

“Solving our customers’ problems is what has gotten our business through many recessions, including this recent one. I know what it’s like to see tough times, how to survive through them, and how to grow after them. When you take care of your customers, they will take care of you.” 

# Reinventing an Industry

## The HF Group & AssureVault Diversify Product Mix to Meet Today's IT Needs

by Margie Wilber

Restructuring, evolving, reinvention – these words best describe The HF Group's history, which dates back to 1821. With the explosion of the digital age, publishing, printing, and bookbinding have become declining industries. To compete and even survive, HF Group (HFG), headquartered in Chesterland, has diversified and altered the company's path in order to address the changing information needs of the 21st century.

Today, HFG includes:

- Acme Binding (Library and Trade bookbinding)
- Etherington Conservation Services (conservation treatment of paper-based historical artifacts)
- Book Partners (short-run and on-demand digital book production)
- Digital Conversion Solutions (book, paper and document scanning and conversion)
- RecordSave (county records restoration and reformatting)
- AssureVault (records and data storage, content hosting, online backup & disaster recovery)

(l-r) HFG Chairman and CEO Jay Fairfield and AssureVault President Dennis Tallerico



HFG operates production facilities in Ohio, North Carolina, Massachusetts and Indiana as well as sales and transportation facilities in Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington and Hawaii. The company employs approximately 325 nationwide, 40 of these at its Geauga County facility.

HFG CEO Jay Fairfield describes the company's methodical evolution. "While the company's origins were in bookbinding – mostly for academic institutions – HFG also offered historical preservation and conservation treatment and repairs, particularly for special collection libraries. Over time, we diversified within some of our core markets as well as outside and focused on completely new markets."

HFG's six diverse divisions are leaders in the fields of trade and edition binding, library binding, pre-binding, digital printing and binding, print-on-demand, deluxe leather hand binding, book and paper conservation, digital conversion of books and paper documents, and records & data storage and management. HFG utilizes 3,000 sq. ft. of office space and 40,000 sq. ft. of production and records storage area at their Chesterland office on Mayfield Road.

"Let's face it, the traditional publishing industry is under assault from many new models and forms of publishing," says Fairfield. "Printing and bookbinding industries are under assault as well from the new methods of delivering content, mostly via the internet and eBook avenues. Even the newspaper industry is struggling with its future direction and model for serving readers and communities. The education market is trying to figure out how they are going to deliver to that market. The whole print world is shrinking. That, in itself, is fascinating," describes Fairfield.

"We've done a reasonable job to find a path beyond our core bookbinding business. On the one end, we have various forms of preservation-type services to save or protect historical information and on the other end, we have scanning and online backup and storage services for digital data. Both the old and new represent growth opportunities for us."

Dennis Tallerico, president of AssureVault, describes this growing HFG division. "In addition to digitizing and web-based content hosting and retrieval, we offer online backup services and hard copy/

paper record storage and retrieval," says Tallerico. "More and more companies are storing their online and paper records offsite for security and so they can use their workspace smarter and more cost-effectively. AssureVault provides a temperature and humidity-controlled environment to best protect and preserve these documents."

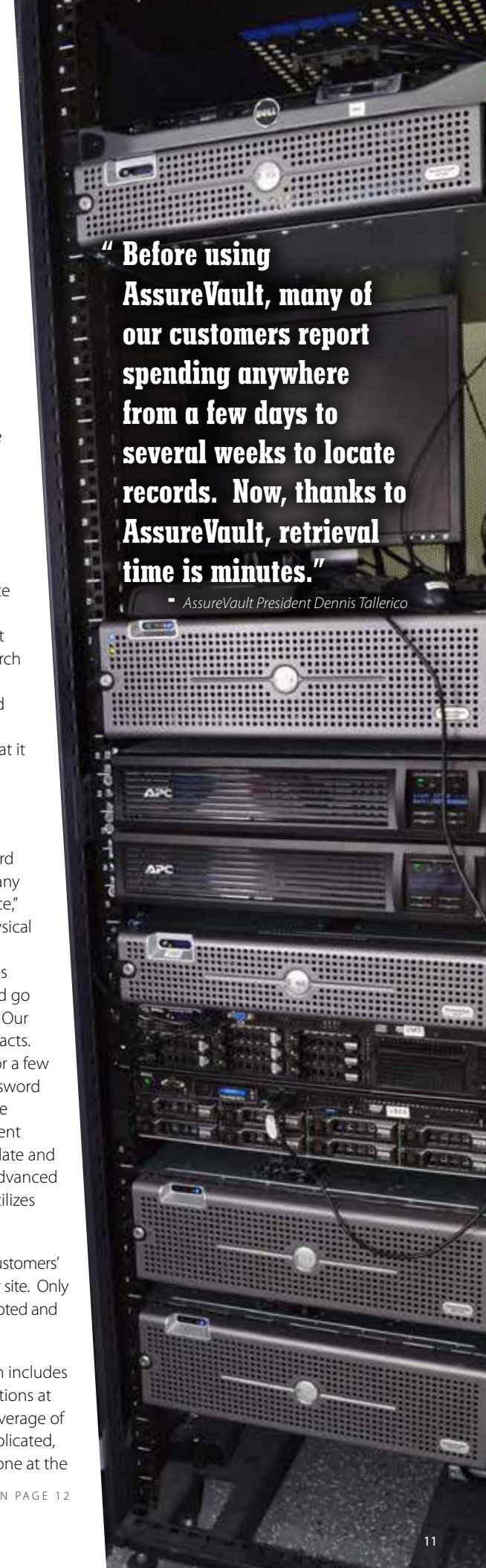
AssureVault's online backup service has doubled in the past 12 to 18 months. "We've literally reinvented ourselves," insists Tallerico. "AssureVault's 2014 business plan calls for expanding both our paper-storage system and online 'Cloud' storage system."

Tallerico is equally proud of their outstanding document retrieval time. "Before using AssureVault, many of our customers report spending anywhere from a few days to several weeks to locate records. Now, thanks to AssureVault, retrieval time is minutes. With document scanning, computer technology and search engines, document storage and retrieval services are very affordable for small- and medium-size companies, not just large companies. In fact, the cost is half of what it was just a few years ago."

The benefits of using AssureVault are numerous. "Your staff can work on other projects while AssureVault does the record search and retrieval – saving your company time, money and staff in addition to space," Tallerico adds. "If you don't need the physical file, we can scan on demand. And our security is exceptional. All our employees sign internal confidentiality contracts and go through a thorough background check. Our customers also sign confidentiality contracts. Our computers lock if they remain idle for a few minutes, and we must sign in with a password each time we get back on. Staff must use personal ID cards to gain access to different areas of our facility, and each access is date and time stamped. For customers desiring advanced security, we have an on-site 'vault' that utilizes biometrics to gain entry."

Tallerico continues, "We cannot read our customers' data. It is all encrypted when it leaves their site. Only at the customer's direction can it be decrypted and only once it has been returned to them."

AssureVault's world-class network system includes state-of-the-art, high-speed communications at the Chesterland facility. Each night, an average of 600 customers' data is backed up and replicated, with AssureVault creating three copies: one at the



**" Before using AssureVault, many of our customers report spending anywhere from a few days to several weeks to locate records. Now, thanks to AssureVault, retrieval time is minutes."**

— AssureVault President Dennis Tallerico

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

client site, one in AssureVault's Canton communication center, and one in Chesterland.

AssureVault also offers disaster recovery services. "This is extremely valuable when computer files turn up missing, deleted, corrupted or infected by a virus," describes Tallerico. "We build a virtual server of the application software and data and can usually have their systems back in operation in an hour or two. Historically, only large companies could afford this service. But today, with lower-cost technology and networks, it has become relatively cost-effective for small and medium-size businesses. Our customers usually say, 'You're kidding. You can do this for us?' Yes we can!"

He says 60 to 70 percent of businesses today do not have a disaster-recovery plan. "They either don't consider it a priority; the IT service is outsourced and these small guys do not have disaster recovery services; or the IT function is internal and reports to an administration office where they never get a voice to talk about 'what if' scenarios," says Tallerico. AssureVault will sit down with clients to develop a customized disaster plan that includes 24/7 support.

What type of customers use AssureVault? According to Tallerico, clients run the gamut – from financial-related industries, to hospitals and physician practices, to county records restoration divisions and legal practices. Businesses with sensitive data and proprietary information find these data storage services invaluable.



AssureVault also provides book-repository services. Kent State University stores approximately 700,000 volumes at AssureVault, with same-day or next-day delivery to all of their clients. AssureVault's techie president says, "Most of our customers come from a 90-mile radius of our Chesterland facility. We are looking at expanding to other areas of the state and country."

While HFG still operates a small bookbinding operation at its Chesterland facility, both Fairfield and Tallerico admit HFG's future is digital record and data storage, retrieval and hosting. "There is a strong likelihood that we will eventually phase out our bookbinding operation in the Chesterland facility. Our employees, many of whom have been with us and binding books for many years, have seen and understand this possibility. But for now, the operation here in Geauga County, despite its smaller size, remains one of the more successful library binderies in the entire country. The plant in Chesterland used to employ nearly 120. Today, it employs approximately 40. Historically and at its peak, the bindery produced 15,000 pieces per week. Today, it produces 3,500 pieces weekly." Regarding the future, Fairfield explains that it's simple math.

"Jay has been a real visionary to where the market was going," states Tallerico. "HFG's success would not have been possible without that vision."

Fairfield explains, "We've done several acquisitions of small businesses, mostly in an effort to grow market share in our core lines of business. However, our entry into the records storage industry was also through an acquisition. Specifically, AssureVault is a very small business, but this industry has excellent growth potential. We are starting to build momentum, approaching local governments to process, store and retrieve their court and government records and receiving requests for proposals throughout northeast Ohio and beyond."

## **AssureVault will sit down with clients to develop a customized disaster plan that includes 24/7 support.**

Tallerico concurs, "Some clients want to do their own day-forward processing with their own staff. Others want AssureVault to do their back files as well as day-forward processing and storage. Whatever their need, we put our service level above any other business in this industry. We've been called 'the quiet neighbor' in Geauga County. Many do not know we are here – right in their own backyard."

Both gentlemen are out to change that.

Fairfield sums it up, "The book manufacturing industry has experienced rapid change with the internet revolution – which, in turn, necessitated new products and services. HFG is not only leveraging our strengths in mature markets but increasing our capacity in growth markets. We will continue to invest and grow in these new markets while continuing to preserve historic treasures; build tomorrow's collectibles; convert paper to digital files for wider access; store and secure data to guarantee privacy; and offer disaster recovery services when the unthinkable occurs."

For more information on how AssureVault or other HF Group companies can assist your business, please call 440.386.4171. Or email:

**Jay Fairfield** at [jayfairfield@hfgroup.com](mailto:jayfairfield@hfgroup.com)  
**Dennis Tallerico** at [dtallerico@assurevault.com](mailto:dtallerico@assurevault.com) or  
**John Boros** at [jboros@assurevault.com](mailto:jboros@assurevault.com). 

**Kent State University stores approximately 700,000 volumes at AssureVault**

# Two Brothers' Shared Dream Blossoms with

# Ornelas Landscaping

by Margie Wilber



Oscar Ornelas, co-owner of Ornelas Landscaping

(far right)  
Abel Ornelas  
supervises one  
of his crews at  
a landscaping  
project in  
Munson Township.



Bobcats, weeders, shovels, gardening hoes, pruners, trowels, rakes, spades, lawn carts, wheel barrows ...these are just a few tools of the trade for Oscar and Abel Ornelas, owners of Ornelas Landscaping. The brothers have come a long way since starting

the landscaping company in 2006. In fact, they hail from Leon, Mexico and happily recall their hectic household of 13 children.

"We were certainly no strangers to hard work," laughs Oscar. "And Leon's hot, arid climate with rare snowfall made our childhood home the polar opposite to our home now in northeast Ohio."

Abel moved to the United States in 1990 in search of the American dream of prosperity. Two years later, encouraged by his older brother, Oscar joined him. The brothers worked for several large landscaping companies, learning the trade as well as sound business practices before opening their own company, Ornelas Landscaping, in 2006.

"Abel really founded the company but asked that I work directly with the customers," Oscar explains with a grin. "I am more of the talker."

One call to Ornelas Landscaping will likely be the only call required for your landscaping needs. "We do a little of everything – from building patios and walls; to weekly landscape maintenance like mowing, pruning and trimming trees; to edging gardens and even gutter cleaning," Oscar passionately describes. "Ask us what you would like to have done around your home, and we will most likely be able to deliver."


Currently, Ornelas Landscaping employs a crew of six, servicing approximately 60 customers in Lake and Geauga counties. Projects on the schedule for spring include waterfall builds, deck installations, power-washing homes and decks, landscape remodeling, with spring yard cleanups and day-to-day landscape maintenance.

The brothers are happy with their business success but hope to land more corporate accounts this year. Word-of-mouth continues to be their best marketing tool. "We have earned a good reputation. I feel we have the best price and deliver the best landscape work in the area," Abel insists. Ornelas Landscaping has enjoyed continued growth each year since its founding, despite the economic downturn the past several years.

"My primary goal for this company is to continue to satisfy our customers so they share our name with their family and friends," Oscar states. "Ornelas Landscaping guarantees customer satisfaction. We will come back to correct anything that someone is not completely satisfied with."

"I love creating and working in nature," Oscar continues. "I think it's the best job in the world." Oscar and his wife of 15 years, Lorena, have three sons, ages 16, 12 and 7. Family values of hard work, respect and excellence are being passed down to the next generation.

"I'd like my sons to continue in this family business, perhaps studying architecture or landscaping in college," says Oscar.

For more information or to schedule a landscape estimate for your home or business, please call Oscar at 440.227.2802. 

**"We have earned a good reputation. I feel we have the best price and deliver the best landscape work in the area."**

- Abel Ornelas,  
Co-owner of  
Ornelas Landscaping



# ANTIQUES ON THE SQUARE

## SURVIVES TEST OF TIME

by Margie Wilber



“Antiques and collectibles are definitely my passion. I wouldn’t want to do anything else.”

- Owner Pat Martin

Despite concern about the fate of small businesses on Chardon Square with the opening of Wal-Mart a few years ago, one family-owned business continues to prosper – Antiques on the Square.

For decades, Antiques on the Square has enjoyed a steady stream of shoppers at its current location at 101 Main Street in historic uptown Chardon. Owner Pat Martin believes her store’s success is partially due to the 20 dealers who contract space from her.

“Many of our dealers have been here since the shop’s inception in 1985. They bring a wealth of experience to our valued customers,” Martin insists.

Antiques on the Square occupies a renovated 1868 building utilizing all three floors, approximately 6,000 square feet. In addition to Victorian, oak, country and Mahogany furniture, visitors will discover plenty of jewelry, prints, paper collectibles, sports memorabilia, vintage clothing, dishes and more for sale. Merchandise turns over quickly, so Martin encourages folks to visit often. Shop hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sundays from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.

“In addition to selling antiques, many of our dealers also appraise and purchase items directly from customers,” she adds. “Several of our dealers have expertise in specific areas such as clock repair, Steiff antique dolls and estate sales. We will give verbal appraisals for free, but there is a charge for written appraisals. Every day we have people coming in and selling items to us.

Inventory is always turning around. We do not believe in letting our inventory sit and become stale.

“Antiques and collectibles are definitely my passion,” the friendly long-time Chardon resident explains. “I wouldn’t want to do anything else.”

Martin and her husband (now deceased) first caught the antique bug while attending the University of Michigan. They visited garage sales and antique sales to furnish their first home. “It was nothing for us to go to four or five garage sales or flea markets in a weekend,” she recalls with a giggle. “I was disappointed with my job at Saks Fifth Avenue and began thinking about starting my own business. That’s when I opened Antiques on the Square.

“Our merchandise is very eclectic – from quarter postcards to \$1,000 pieces of furniture. We are all things to all people. Different dealers have different specialties. We do not deal in high-end antiques but antiques and collectibles for the average person. Our busiest season is Christmas,” Martin says. “Business has been very good. Our best year was 1999, before the economic downturn nationally. Since 2001, we’ve experienced a 2 to 3 percent increase in sales annually. Last year, we saw a 10 percent increase in business and appear to be on the same track this year.”





Owner Pat Martin

Martin says Antiques on the Square has a very strong, loyal customer base. Her typical shopper is between 30 to 40 years old, "with younger collectors geared to that special piece that will make their house a home. They are not buying all the pretty glass and china. They are buying practical – furniture and primitives for their walls; textiles, linens, quilts and old fabrics are still strong as are prints and old advertisements. We also sell a lot of books."

"People collect odd things – from old tobacco pipes to barbed wire." Martin recalls one gentleman who purchased all of her cans, bottles and tins with lids to use at his father's funeral. "He wanted to give well-wishers some of his Dad's cremated remains," she explains with a shrug of her shoulders.


The shop owner says the most unusual item she sold at her store was a demonstration box of various grades of potatoes received from the Ohio State University extension office. "It was a teaching aide. It sold right away for \$75," she recalls with a laugh.

"I am selective in choosing my dealers. This group is harmonious and works together as a team. They take retailing seriously and keep items fresh, clean and rearranged. I have a husband and wife, Ruth and Bill, who are both in their 80s and original dealers from

when Antiques on the Square first opened. My average dealers have sold here between 10 to 15 years. I don't take commission but rent space as well as the windows each month for \$20 so they can showcase their items. The dealers also work one day a week for their space; many have multiple spaces," Martin explains. "These people are terrific."

Antiques on the Square is a four-time winner of the "Best Antique Store" category with Fox 8 Cleveland Hot List. The shop also received The News-Herald "Best of the Best" award in 2009 and 2013. "We've also been recognized by the Chardon City Council, which passed a resolution for outstanding customer service and being a presence on Chardon Square," says Martin. "I think I am most proud of that award."

Martin remains active in her community. She formerly served as president of Chardon Square Association, where she has been a member for 28 years. She is currently also a member of the Geauga Tourism Bureau.

For more information about Antiques on the Square, please contact Pat Martin at 440.286.1912 or visit: [antiquesonthesquarechardon.com](http://antiquesonthesquarechardon.com) 

"This group is harmonious and works together as a team. They take retailing seriously and keep items fresh, clean and rearranged."

- Owner Pat Martin



# Geauga United Way Helps Family Living on the Edge

The editorial staff of Geauga

Business magazine wanted

to share with you this letter

recently received at United

Way Services of Geauga

County. As United Way kicks

off their 2014 fundraising

campaign, it is important to

hear the good work being

done for families throughout

our community. We encourage

you to consider making a gift

this year to this outstanding

nonprofit organization.

I recently heard Kimm Leininger, Executive Director of United Way Services of Geauga County, speak about "living on the edge" in Geauga County. It felt like she was talking to me. I approached her and asked her if I could share with others how United Way has touched my life. I wanted to give a face to a family living on the edge.

I am writing to share how United Way has touched my life and to thank each of you for the work you do for United Way. Because of your efforts and generosity, you helped change my life.

What do I mean when I say "a family living on the edge?" My husband and I have been married for five years. We own our own home in Huntsburg with our four children ranging in age from 6 to 12. It's important for you to know that my husband and I both work full time. I work at a Chardon Community Day Care, which is a non-profit organization supported by United Way. Despite our employment, we struggle with basic necessities.

It breaks my heart to think that when birthdays and holidays come up, we have no extra money to get the things for our children that other children have. We are not considered poor enough to qualify for programs that would assist our family - which means there are some months we don't have enough money to meet our basic needs. This is the first year we didn't get approved for HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) because my husband made a little overtime in his paycheck. Consequently, we have not turned on our furnace all winter.

Other challenges we have experienced: the need for food, medicine and clothing. A resource we have always been able to rely on is 211, a helpline provided by United Way. I recently called 211 when we couldn't afford insulin for my husband. With their help, we were connected to the Community Fund Partnership - a collaboration between United Way and local churches and organizations, which provided emergency funding for my husband's medical needs.

I want each and every one of you to know that 211 is an amazing resource in our community. I encourage you to share this resource with someone you know. It is such a relief to know that there is a place to call when help is needed.

Prior to school starting this year, our four children only had flip-flops to wear to school. We didn't have enough money to buy new shoes, and we certainly didn't have enough money to buy school clothes. An employee from Catholic Charities, an organization supported by United Way, helped get the kids shoes, socks and underwear so they could return to school with dignity. In addition, we received gifts, food, and some basic necessities from them at Christmas and Thanksgiving. I can't say enough about the United Way and the entire system that they support. It is through United Way's commitment to Chardon Community Day Care Center that we can prepare 96 children for their next phase of life. I also view my employment at the Center as an opportunity to give back.

United Way's theme for their Annual Meeting is "Putting Hope into Action." United Way has given me hope for a better future for my children and all the children under my care. I know United Way is working to better our entire community. Rather than teaching our children to use the system, we are working to strengthen our families so that our children can have a better life.

What you do by supporting United Way is you give people like me the confidence to be a better parent, and because of that, my kids benefit. My family has never hit rock bottom, and I know that with United Way in our community, we never will. Thanks to each and every one of you for the help you've given my family, and the hope you've given me. Thank you for supporting United Way.



To learn more about United Way's work in the community, please see [www.uwsgc.org](http://www.uwsgc.org) or follow us on facebook. Donations can be made payable to: **United Way Services of Geauga County**  
209 Center St., Chardon, OH 44024.

# Before



## Prosser Photography:

Phil Prosser, of Prosser Photography, is proud to announce the relocation of his photography studio to 110 Cherry Avenue in Chardon. Prosser Photography offers Geauga County residents state-of-the-art green screen technology, which allows the person or subject matter to appear in a variety of settings – on the ski slopes, in a garden, on the beach, in a warehouse, anywhere!

Prosser has worked as a photographer for more than 32 years, cutting his teeth using black and white film and processing film in his own darkroom. Today's technology offers the seasoned photographer more creative options to enjoy his craft.

"Many photography studios are stuck in the old days and ways of doing things. While Prosser Photography offers a traditional brick-and-mortar location, we have adopted the very latest technologies to best serve our customers," owner Phil Prosser describes.

"Green Screen, or as it is technically called, chroma key, is a process by which

a green (or sometimes less commonly blue) background is placed behind the subject to make the background appear transparent. This allows me to utilize a digital image behind, beneath or around the subject. Think in terms of layers. Only the green is removed, leaving that which is not green in the photograph or video. Considerable editing is then done to make the image look realistic."

While some photographers are dabbling in green screen in northeast Ohio, Prosser believes he has perfected this technology. "I can always tell when it is bad green screen because I can see 'green spill' behind and around the subject," he explains. "Maybe most folks don't notice, but I do."

Green screen can be done in a remote location with rather simple lighting or outdoors under natural light. Prosser warns, "You have to be careful to put the shadow directly behind the subject in this environment. Although, I still have and occasionally use traditional backdrops like black, white and grey. The reason for this is, if someone wishes a pure white or

# After



## On the Move by Margie Wilber

pure black backdrop, then it only makes sense to use that.


"I have the studio configured to allow instant proofing," he continues. "A camera is connected to a wireless video device that outputs to a monitor so the client can see the image immediately. This insures a perfect photograph or video. Subjects tend to relax and enjoy the photo shoot, and it also allows for refining the pose."

This is the fourth move for Prosser Photography, formerly located in Burton and Newbury Townships. "This Chardon studio is as close as I can get to the dream studio I have always wanted. Every bit of my time and resources have been invested in the latest edition of green-screen," he admits. "Chardon is a wonderful community, and I feel like a native."

In addition to personal and family portraits, weddings, school photos, First Communion, etc., Prosser is introducing photo parties to his repertoire – where children can dress up as their favorite Marvel comics character and, through

green-screen, have a superhero back drop. "Just about any kind of theme can work for these parties – even adult or charitable events," says Prosser. In the past, Prosser has volunteered to provide photographs for three "Glamour Nights" to benefit WomenSafe, a shelter for domestic violence victims in Geauga County.

Prosser Photography is currently hiring an individual with superior photo-editing skills and comprehensive knowledge of photography using the manual camera mode. "What I am looking for is a manager that has experience doing actual day-to-day stuff at a studio. If you have studio experience at one of the real photography studios, then I would like to talk to you. I see in the future making the studio a sort of consortium of photographers and videographers, and we share the space much like lawyers and physicians do," says Prosser.

To learn more about Prosser Photography, visit [prosserphotography.com](http://prosserphotography.com). 



by Margie Wilber

**This fall, Geauga County Community & Economic Development hosted an informative workshop, “FOR RENT,” to educate landlords and tenants on the host of laws governing property rental. Panel speakers Hillary Mason King, executive director of the Housing Research & Advocacy Center; Jenniffer Sheehe, attorney with The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland; and Lucinda Sharp Gates, of Real Estate Concepts, LLC were greeted by a host of spirited questions throughout their presentations.**

Topics addressed included:

- Legal responsibilities of parties in a rental agreement
- Advertising guidelines
- Claims of discrimination, administrative processes
- Developing nondiscriminatory application and tenant selection process
- Fair housing enforcement agency services and local fair housing laws
- Familial status issues, occupancy guidelines and housing for older persons (HOPA)
- Reasonable accommodations and modifications
- Religious discrimination, assistance animals, sexual orientation/harassment

Gates began the workshop by listing federal and state fair-housing laws that prohibit discrimination based on race/color, national origin/ancestry, sex, disability, religion, familial status (children present under 18) and military status. She went on to say that local laws may also prohibit discrimination against sexual orientation, marital status, creed, age, gender identity and source of income.

“Stand up if these laws protect you in some way,” Gates asked the audience. Upon looking around at the entire audience on their feet, she continued, “That’s right. These laws protect each and every one of us.”

Gates reviewed signs of discrimination, such as these remarks by landlords:

*“We only rent to people who speak English.”*

*“We don’t want any children here.”*

*“Families with children are put on the first floor.”*

*“I will have to charge you a pet deposit for your guide dog.”*

**“The Fair Housing Organization works on behalf of all residents to eliminate housing discrimination, promote housing choice and equal access, and affirmatively further fair housing,”**

- Hillary Mason King, executive director of the Housing Research & Advocacy Center

“The Fair Housing Organization works on behalf of all residents to eliminate housing discrimination, promote housing choice and equal access, and affirmatively further fair housing,” King explained in her presentation. “For instance, many times people with mental health disabilities experience discrimination.”

King listed several illegal actions on the part of landlords:

- Making housing unavailable
- Setting different terms/conditions/privileges for sale/rental of housing
- Denying that housing is available when it is
- Evicting a tenant who reports a fair housing abuse

“No one can threaten or coerce anyone exercising a fair-housing right,” cautioned King. “Making statements or posting advertisements such as ‘Christians Only’ or ‘No Children’ are illegal. Also, disabled individuals can make reasonable modifications to the rental property.” King clarified that these costs would be the responsibility of the tenant, and landlords could require additional money in escrow to cover the cost of returning the property to its original condition once vacated.

The audience, primarily composed of property owners, bombarded the panel with questions concerning building codes, their ability to choose renters, property damage, collections, feelings of being unfairly targeted by government entities for violations, and bed bugs. At one point, Gates exclaimed, “If you don’t like being a property owner, get out of it.”

“There are upsides and downsides of every business,” the steely, 16-year instructor of civil rights told the audience. “I have my tenants call me a ‘property owner,’ not a ‘landlord,’ because that title infers some form of serfdom.”

Sheehe cautioned landlords, “I am an attorney. Put everything in writing.” The seasoned attorney explained that as long as a tenant does what the rental agreement and/or law requires, they have the right of exclusive possession of the property until the lease expires. Other tenant rights by law include:

- the right to complain to a government agency about your landlord’s violation of housing laws or regulations that affect health and safety.
- the right to complain to your landlord if he or she fails to perform any legal duties. If your landlord retaliates against you by increasing rent, decreasing services or seeking to evict you for taking such action, the landlord has violated the law. There are legal remedies to stop or punish retaliation.
- the right to join with other tenants to bargain with your landlord about the terms of the rental agreement.
- the right of privacy, which the landlord must respect. The landlord may enter your apartment after reasonable notice (at least 24 hours) for certain legitimate reasons and without notice in certain emergencies.
- If the landlord has received a written complaint from you about the premises, you have the right to have repairs made within 30 days or less (depending on the severity of the housing conditions) for conditions that significantly affect health and safety. If the landlord fails to make repairs within a reasonable time, you, as a tenant, may have a right to escrow your rent, get a court order for repairs to be made, and/or ask the court to reduce your rent. You also may terminate the rental agreement and move out.

The panelists also reviewed obligations of tenants such as:


- Complying with the standards imposed by all state and local housing, health and safety codes
- Refraining from and preventing family, friends and guests from damaging the rental premises
- Keeping the premises safe and sanitary
- Keeping plumbing fixtures clean as their condition permits
- Disposing of all garbage in a safe and sanitary manner
- Operating all electrical and plumbing fixtures properly
- Causing no disturbances to neighbors

- Allowing the landlord reasonable access (upon 24-hour notice) to premises to inspect, make repairs, or show the property to prospective buyers and renters

Workshop participants heard that landlords have rights, too – to rent their property for any amount they desire. Unless landlords have a lease (written or oral) that provides for a fixed rent for the term of the lease, they can increase rents in any amount, upon giving adequate notice (usually 30 days). Landlords can evict the tenant for nonpayment of rent or for breaking any significant term of the agreement.

“Written notice of the intent to file an eviction action must be given to the tenant before you file such an action in court,” Sheehe reminded. “For nonpayment and some other reasons, the notice must be given at least three days before the eviction is filed or the court will dismiss the case. In other cases, you must give the tenant 30 days to correct the violation before you can begin an eviction action. Don’t count the day the notice is given, and/ or weekends and holidays, and wait until after the third day.”

Landlords also have the right to have their property returned to them in as good a condition as it was when the tenant took possession, except for ordinary wear and tear. They may also rent to anyone they wish and establish any conditions and terms in a rental contract that do not conflict with federal or state law or discriminate because of the tenant’s race, color, religion, sex, military status, disability, family status, ancestry or national origin.

A properly written agreement will eliminate most of the misunderstandings and problems that commonly arise between a landlord and tenant, Gates advised. A written rental agreement benefits and protects both parties and is a good way to do business. 

# KNOWLEDGE RISING AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY GEAUGA

by Denise Milhollan

The phrase Knowledge Rising was chosen as a theme for the Geauga Campus during its 50-year celebration. When you impart knowledge, you reveal a new understanding: a depth to meaning that may not have been obvious. Rising is defined as ascending to new heights. With regard to education, the administration, faculty and staff at the Geauga Campus know that this concept dwells at the core of their mission. This is what makes Kent State University Ohio's leading public research university.

The Geauga Campus has come a long way. Fifty years of higher education in Geauga County. Fifty years of changing lives. Fifty years of continuous transformation and visionary guidance. Every student who decides to continue his or her education moves within this transformational process.

Enrollment this semester has reached 2800 students at the combined locations of the Geauga Campus and Regional Academic Center in Twinsburg. With higher enrollment comes greater responsibility.

In order to provide comprehensive career support and guidance for the growing student and alumni population, KSU-Geauga recently hired LuAnn Linson Coldwell as their Career Counselor. LuAnn will be helping

students and alumni with self-assessments, major/career exploration, resume/cover letter preparation, job search strategies, graduate/professional school applications, and finding meaningful and relevant career-related internships, volunteer opportunities, and part-time or full-time jobs.

Many of KSU Geauga's students want to stay in this area when they graduate, which contributes to the dynamic growth and development of our communities. If your organization needs a talented KSU-Geauga student to work part time, full time, or as an intern, add "Post it to KSU-Geauga!" to your HR marketing strategy.

Also, mark your calendar for the first "KSU-Geauga Career and Major Fair," Tuesday, March 11. Your organization can reserve a table by contacting Professor Judy Paternite, KSU-Geauga, **440-834-4187**.

For more information on recruiting KSU-Geauga students and alumni, please contact: LuAnn Coldwell, KSU-Geauga & Regional Academic Center, 440.834.4187, [lcoldwel@kent.edu](mailto:lcoldwel@kent.edu).

## 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY INITIATIVES

- Help us reach our goal of 5000 Facebook likes
- Join our LinkedIn Speakers Bureau
- Connect to our Alumni Group



(l-r) *Richard Frenchie, Kent Geauga Advisory Board Member, and Dr. David Mohan at the kickoff celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Kent State University Geauga Campus. David Mohan, Ph.D., Dean and Chief Administrative Officer of Kent State University Geauga Campus and the Regional Academic Center, will be retiring this year after 10 years of outstanding service. The Geauga business community wishes him well and extends our thanks for a job well done!*





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# University Hospitals Gauga Medical Center Fights Substance Abuse Epidemic with Groundbreaking New Medical Stabilization Service

*Three-day inpatient program provides safe,  
clinical supervision; prepares patient for rehab*

University Hospitals (UH) Gauga Medical Center has joined with New Vision™, a nationally recognized medical stabilization service, to create Gauga County's first hospital-based program designed to safely and successfully break a patient's cycle of chemical addiction in order to prepare them for full rehabilitation.

The new inpatient Medical Stabilization service at UH Gauga Medical Center is a voluntary program for adults with prescription or recreational substance abuse issues and related health care concerns. It consists of a discreet, medically supervised hospital stay that typically lasts three days and includes pre-screening, medical assessment, admission, medication-free stabilization and discharge planning.

"As an interventional pain specialist and a member of the Gauga County Opiate Task Force, I am committed to the responsible prescribing of medications," says Lisa Brown, MD, Medical Director, Comprehensive Pain Management Center and Medical Stabilization Program Director, UH Gauga Medical Center. "Unfortunately, along with the increasing occurrences of alcohol and recreational drug abuse in our community, diverted prescription medication addiction is a growing problem as well. In response to this epidemic, our hospital's Medical Stabilization service takes individuals off their substances in a safe, stable, managed clinical environment."




Following an intervention by loved ones or a voluntary admission of addiction, a Medical Stabilization patient is pre-screened by New Vision and then admitted to the UH Geauga Medical Center program, where a multidisciplinary team will assess the patient's needs. The assessment includes a medical history review; physical examination and nursing evaluation; and a complete lab workup.

During the inpatient stay, the individual will receive support and medication-free treatment to get through the stabilization process. "Patients will walk in substance-dependent and they will walk out substance-clean," says Dr. Brown. "At UH Geauga Medical Center we prepare them for the rehab phase, which is so critical. Patients can't join a rehabilitation program if they are on a substance. Our Medical Stabilization service gives them a better chance of progressing to a rehab program that can effectively prevent relapse."

Stabilization patients leave UH Geauga Medical Center with a personalized discharge plan that includes referrals to appropriate, community-based inpatient and outpatient facilities that provide counseling and support to ensure they receive the practical rehabilitative help they need.

"Our new Medical Stabilization service targets a serious, identified community and regional need," says M. Steven Jones, President, UH Geauga Medical Center. "This is the first inpatient substance dependence service in the county, and it is a tremendous resource for families; local employers and employees; and agencies dedicated to the elimination of substance abuse in all its forms."

The confidential, voluntary UH Geauga Medical Center Medical Stabilization service is available to individuals 18 and older. The program accepts most insurance, Medicaid and Medicare plans. To learn more or to arrange a pre-screening, call New Vision at 1-800-939-2273, or UH Geauga Medical Center at 440-285-2960. 

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