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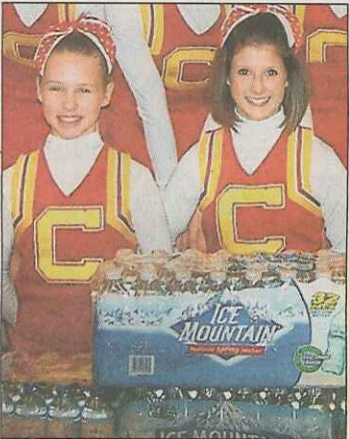
**BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT B1**



Randy Deitz and Chuck Hegland of 314 Cafe.



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**Cheerleaders rally for Haiti relief**

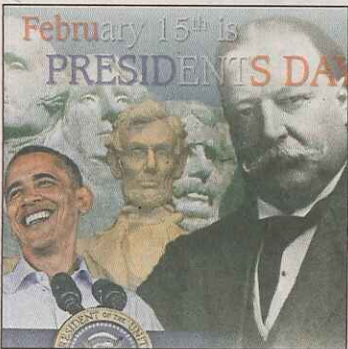
In two weeks Calvary Christian School cheerleaders collected more than 4,000 bottles of water for Haiti relief. The cheerleaders collected 189 24-packs of water from Jan. 25 to Feb. 5. The donations were given to Blue Ash-based Matthew 25: Ministries, which will send the water to Haiti.

SCHOOLS, A6

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- LIFE, B1

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Thursday, February 11, 2010

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# Latonia taking positive steps

By Regan Coomer  
[rcoomer@nky.com](mailto:rcoomer@nky.com)

The Latonia Business Association is growing in numbers as well as in ways to help the community. Last year marked the establishment of the Latonia Beautification & Scholarship Foundation and an increase in meeting attendance.

"A lot of people are coming to our meetings just to get involved. The best way to find out is to come and hear it firsthand," said President Marvin Wischer.

In 2009 membership grew from 30 to 40 members and the

LBA distributed \$2,300 among 13 community events.

"We're working for the betterment of the community," Wischer said.

In the past, the LBA has helped out local schools, worked with Covington on beautification projects and debuted the highly successful Halloween Block Party.

"If we can continue the momentum, we'll be fine," Wischer said.

Projects coming up for the LBA over the next few years include creation of a Latonia Gateway Park — where a vacant gas station is currently located at 3203 Decoursey

Ave. — and fundraising for the new beautification and scholarship fund, which was established in 2009 as a 501(c) nonprofit.

"It's just a way the business community can give back to the residents who purchase our services. Without them we wouldn't be in business," he said.

The fund would award scholarships to local students and grants for beautification of the Latonia neighborhood.

While the requirements for the scholarship haven't been finalized, Wischer hopes the LBA can help out middle-of-the-road stu-

dents, the ones "falling through the cracks," he said.

Wischer thinks it's likely the LBA could start awarding scholarships by this time in 2011.

The LBA hopes to host a reunion event this fall that will benefit the scholarship fund, said Karen Rowe of Catholic Charities, an LBA member.

"It's going to be a great event for the people in Latonia to get together," she said. "More or less it's going to be a reunion gathering — a little more casual than a formal dinner."

For more information about the LBA, e-mail [krowe@covington-charities.org](mailto:krowe@covington-charities.org).

# Drive away cold at chili cook-off

By Regan Coomer  
[rcoomer@nky.com](mailto:rcoomer@nky.com)

Bring your homemade chili to the Botany Hills Chili Cook Off Feb. 20 and you could take home a prize — with a chili pot on top.

This will be the third cook-off for the Covington neighborhood, which awards kudos and a chili-pot trophy to the best, most unique and most popular chilis.

"We have people from around the city enter," said Botany Hills resident Ron Einhaus, whose white bean chicken chili was named "most unique" in 2009.

But the cook-off isn't just limited to neighborhood or Covington residents; anyone can enter, said neighborhood association member Connie Kingsbury.

"We'll take any chilis that are out there," she said. "The chilis that have won the last two years have both been people who weren't from Botany Hills. It's become more of a city event."

There are no chili categories. Any type is welcome, whether it's traditional, white bean or vegetar-



PROVIDED

Botany Hills Chili Cook Off 2009 winners were Ron Einhaus, most unique chili, Mike Bedinghaus, best chili and Ray Kingsbury, most popular chili. This will be the third year for the Covington neighborhood cook-off.

ian, Kingsbury said.

The only chili requirement? The recipe must be "their own kind of special recipe," she said.

"We don't have categories, so we end up with an interesting mix of chilis for people to taste."

And though the community can pay \$5 for a taste of each chili (there are at least 10 entries each

tasting some good chili, Einhaus said.

"It creates a connection with the neighbors," he said. "In the middle of winter it's just something fun to do in the neighborhood."

Nothing's more fun than a little good-natured trash talking between chili entrants, Einhaus said.

"Everyone thinks they make a great chili," Kingsbury agreed. "You hear some very interesting conversations. Everyone pretty much prides themselves on their chili recipes. It's a nice competition and camaraderie."

Proceeds of the cook-off go to the neighborhood fund for beautification, Einhaus said.

To enter your chili in the Botany Hills Chili Cook Off, register with Kingsbury by calling 261-4053 or e-mail at [cschmitt@fuse.net](mailto:cschmitt@fuse.net). The cook-off will take place at 2 p.m. Saturday Feb. 20, at St. John's Congregational Church, 1235 Highway Ave. Cost is \$5 a person to taste chilis and vote for most popular chili.

# Independence sign not welcomed by all

By Regan Coomer  
[rcoomer@nky.com](mailto:rcoomer@nky.com)

A misunderstanding about the cost and type of "Welcome to" sign the Independence City Council plans to pursue in 2010 caused a debate at the Feb. 1 meeting.

The sign, proposed by the Independence Strategic Action Committee, would be a freestanding monument sign on the corner of Pelly Road and Ky. 17.

At the meeting, several residents spoke out against what they thought was the cost of the sign — about \$25,000, a figure City Administrator Dan Groth estimated might be needed depending on the type of sign, lighting and landscaping.

"We the taxpayers don't want

our taxes raised again to pay for this outrageous and irresponsible spending," said resident Bill Cobble, who gave council a petition with more than 150 names against spending so much on a sign.

Mayor Chris Moriconi said he would "set the record straight," explaining that no sign has been picked as of yet, so there is no official price. However, in 2010, the council did budget \$10,000 for the purchase of a "Welcome to Independence" sign.

"Here's the bottom line: We budgeted \$10,000. We may not spend \$10,000. We're going to build a sign there if I have to make it out of Legos," Moriconi said. "We haven't sent anything out to bid yet. We don't have a sign picked out. We're not there. Landscaping,

a flag, we just don't know."

Council Member Carol Franzen said she had no intention to vote for a sign costing \$25,000.

"I understand Mr. Groth might have said \$25,000. No offense to Dan, he doesn't have a vote," she said.

Once city officials explained what their intentions were about the sign, resident Jim Caldwell just asked them to keep citizens in the loop.

"I would like to ask you to please put it out to the public exactly what you're going to do so I can come over here and raise Cain or shake your hand and tell you how good you are," he said, eliciting a chuckle from the audience.

Moriconi assured Caldwell that any decisions concerning the sign will occur in a council meeting,

but first it will have to be bid out and then a schematic drawing of the project will be presented. There will be plenty of time for residents to weigh in on the project, Moriconi said.

"That's what perplexes me. We haven't even gotten that far," he said.

Council member Mike Little explained how the idea for the sign came about, a survey of the citizens during the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission small area study.

"That's the whole reason there was money put in the budget for a sign. We're trying to start applying some of the principles that the citizens said they wanted and needed in the process of the small area study," he said.

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