

Celebrating 50 Years!



West Life: ONA 2009 General Excellence Award Winner



1959-2009

West LIFE

October 28, 2009 - Vol. 69, No. 50

The Award-Winning Westshore Weekly 75¢



Bubble boys

Brothers Theo, 4, and Max Hoelker, 6, blow a bubble from inside a giant bubble during an event Saturday evening at Lakewood Public Library. As part of Family Music and More night, Sue Durante, the Bubble Lady, demonstrated how to blow bubbles with all kinds of items found around the house. As the Hoelker brothers can attest, she also made bubbles big enough to stand in. (West Life photo by Larry Bennet)

Kennedy, Lasko in different political places

By Jeff Gallatin

NORTH OLMSTED

For both mayoral candidates, it's all a matter of placement in the city political system.

City Council President Kevin Kennedy cites his four-and-a-half years experience in that post after he was appointed to succeed Thomas O'Grady when he took the mayor's post. Kennedy proudly points to his endorsement by all seven of the current ward and at-large council members as well as a number of prominent former city officials.

School Board member and current Municipal Planning and Design Commission Chairman John Lasko is happy to point out that while he is knowledgeable about the city and its issues because of his long involvement in the community, he is not a member of city council nor considers himself a member of that panel's group.

Both candidates see their positions as what makes them best suited for becoming mayor for the next four years.

"We have had major problems between administrations and city councils the last few administrations," Kennedy said. "That's got to stop if we're going to get anywhere in this city. We have to be able to work together to get

See **MAYOR**, p. 16

BOE incumbents fend off Cross

By Kevin Kelley

WESTLAKE

Three candidates are running for two seats on the Westlake Board of Education in Tuesday's election. Incumbents Andrea Rocco and Joe Marinucci are running together for re-election, while challenger Nate Cross is trying to oust one of them. The top two vote-getters will be sworn in for four-year terms in January.

Rocco, 44, told West Life that returning her and Marinucci will maintain continuity on the school board. Appointed to an unexpired term and then elected to two full terms on the school board, Rocco points to "dozens and dozens of achievements" the

district has obtained in recent years.

A Republican, Rocco points to the schools' top academic marks on the state report card while also protecting the district's bottom line.

As the current board president, Rocco said she has enjoyed her time on the board and wants to serve to see the district accomplish additional goals.

Top among those goals is a solution to the district's problem of aging and overcrowded school buildings. The district's 20/20 Vision committee, which in January called for four or five new school buildings, including a new high school, has recently expanded

See **BOE**, p. 16

Firefighters train to be swift rescuers

By Danielle Toth

WESTSHORE

Bay Village, Fairview Park and Rocky River firefighters participated in swift water rescue training last week. The training is a specialized water rescue program paid for by the Assistance to Firefighters Grant the Bay Village Fire Department requested for equipment and training, totaling \$198,005.

"Our guys are getting certified as operations level swift water rescuers," said Lt. Christopher Lyons, of the Bay Village Bureau of Fire Prevention & Safety.

The training was led by Firefighter Mark Bender, of the Brecksville Fire Department.

"He's very involved with water rescue," Lyons said. "He's a rescue diver and a member of the Southwest Emergency Response Team, which is a regional team. He has a lot of experience and knows quite a bit."

The state fire marshal's office delivered a trailer with water rescue equipment, and firefighters spent time in Lake Erie, the Rocky River and the



A firefighter participates in swift water rescue training on Lake Erie Oct. 21. (West Life photo by Larry Bennet)

Black River in Elyria learning various rescue techniques, Lyons said.

"We have five or six miles of coastline on Lake Erie," Lyons said. "And we have some smaller tributaries. A couple can get a little rough, especially for the kids. Whenever there's a situation where there's an emergency, people always call us, no matter what that emergency may be. We have to stay ahead of the curve and be prepared for anything. If somebody's stuck in a river or flood, we know people are going to

call us. We know we have to help. That's what we're here for."

Bay Village applied for and was awarded the federal grant money to pursue a number of different types of training for firefighters, including emergency vehicle operation training, elevator rescue training and replacement of extraction equipment, Lyons said.

Bay Village's previous extraction

See **TRAINING**, p. 19

