

Letters to the editor

I am writing you because of the offer that was made to Mrs. Jenney today (Jan. 2), about the old Galion High School. I understand there are legal avenues that have to be followed but, if Mr. Hedges wants to make good use of this building why not at least look into the possibilities.

A vocational school would bring in more revenue, new residents and maybe other businesses. This seems like an opportunity of a lifetime that the school board should look into before they pass it up. This offer would bring so much promise and open doors for people who may not have had the means otherwise.

**Sincerely,
Samantha Anderson
215 N. Union St
Via e-mail**

This letter is in regard to the controversy concerning the Galion High School, and the proposed demolition of same.

The first part of this letter is about misinformation that is being disseminated by Galion School officials.

The first bit of misinformation is found in the Mansfield News Journal dated Dec. 17, 2007. And I quote: "Galion Superintendent Kathy Jenney said the board is obligated by the state to demolish the building."

That statement is false. The board of education can, in fact, sell the building at auction.

If the BOE sells the building at auction, the BOE immediately gains \$192,000 that would otherwise have been used for demolition costs. This \$192,000 is local tax-payer money.

More misinformation was disseminated in the Tiger School News dated December 2007, Vol. 1.

This misinformation is found on page 5 in the column called "Future Focus." And I quote: "If the board had decided not to demolish the building the funds could not be redirected, or used for operating costs."

The first half of that sentence is false.

In fact, according to an Ohio School Facilities Commission official that I talked to, Rick Savors, the \$192,000 or local tax payer money can be used to pay on the principal of the Galion Schools' bond indebtedness.

The second topic of this letter is about *money*. All figures are approximate.

We are now paying 4 percent interest on the bond indebtedness previously mentioned. If we pay down \$192,000 of the principal on these bonds, we no longer have to pay interest on that \$192,000.

That interest is \$7,680 per year.

These bonds are in force until the year 2030. We will be paying interest on these bonds for the next 22 years.

If one multiplies 22 years times \$7,680 per year, one comes up with \$168,960. \$168,960 is the amount of interest money saved for the Galion tax payers.

Now if one adds \$168,960 (interest money Galion tax payers don't have to pay on the bonds) to \$192,000 (proposed demolition money saved because of auction) one comes up with \$360,960.

Add \$100,000 (that is what Jim Hedges said he would give for the high school) to \$360,960 and the final figure is \$460,960.

\$460,960 would be the total net gain for the tax payers of Galion if the BOE puts the high school up for auction.

If the BOE demolishes the high school, the net gain for Galion tax payers is zero.

It is quite apparent that selling the high school at auction would be a very wise financial decision, and would be of great benefit to the tax payers of Galion.

**Dave Smith
Former Galion Middle School
Science Teacher (1968-1995)**

Continued Letters to the editor from 1-5-08

Dear Fellow Galion Taxpayers,

I am being overwhelmed by cliché's: "something is rotten in Denmark" and "there is more to it than meets the eye," to name a few.

Am I the only one who is beginning to think that the school board is "maybe" hiding something?

They turned down \$58,000 for the old GHS; now they have turned down \$100,000 for it, yet they are more than willing to spend \$192,000 to tear it down.

Is there something about the old GHS that they don't want us to know?

Let's talk about what the board does want — after they tear down the 1917 GHS building. They want to taxpayers of Galion to pass a bond issue to build a new fine arts center. I am not opposed to this, but I get the feeling the board is afraid if they let the 1917 GHS building "live" they worry we will want all our performing arts to be done there. Not so. Anyone involved in the performing arts knows that the old auditorium is not an effective location for performances (not in December, no wings, stage too small, etc.) Also at a board meeting, it mentioned it would like to see "meeting rooms" built. Gosh, isn't the 1917 GHS building just full of meeting rooms?

Here is what I predict will happen in the future, if the board remains unmoved, unwilling to rethink their decision about the 1917 GHS building, at least granting a few months for the conference center to present its ideas and funding sources to the public:

New levy for monies to operate the schools — a big "no."

Bond Issue to build the new fine arts center — a big "no."

Re-election of present board members — a big "no."

Long tenure for superintendent — a big "no."

So Galion will continue to live with history repeating itself. How many school boards and superintendents can you remember coming and going? A bunch.

Then we will have "not so new schools" and a 4.2 acre crab grass field right in the middle of town, with a lot of sad memories of a beautiful building that couldn't be saved, thanks to five school board members and several administrative staff members who wouldn't take the democratic route and let the community decide after hearing *all* the facts.

How about the rumor that the school board and the superintendent are "not worried" about the alumni that have signed the petition to save the 1917 GHS building?

Attention: Many of those same alumni are the ones who donated and raised over \$50,000 to building the entrances and message board for the Galion city school campus.

Does anyone think they will be interesting in donating funds for more improvements at our new campus?

How about the walking bridge over Portland Way North? Would have been a nice "alum" project — not now.

The contract to demolish the 1917 GHS building goes into effect on Jan. 7, 2008. Now is the time for the Galion school board to step up and step back. Let's cool all tempers and make sure everyone knows everything before the final decision is made. I, like others, will stop campaigning if I know the citizens of Galion have been allowed to view *all* options and to *vote* on the saving or the demolition of the 1917 GHS building.

**Sincerely,
Marty H. Cecil
218 Grove Ave.**