

Parkland Community Library plans to renovate in future

by Michelle Moore

As one walks into the Parkland Community Library on Walbert Avenue in Allentown he or she will notice one thing, while the library is tremendously organized it is also crowded. There are books and other materials covering all areas of the library and there is not enough room to hold all of the wonderful events that take place at the library such as book clubs for adults and teens and story-time for kids. The growing population of the Parkland School District has increased the concern of this problem. With more children in the district it means there will be even more library members. The library needs more room to hold all these people and have more rooms for activities to suit their needs.

There is so little space for the library's materials that there are books being held in storage areas and in some schools' libraries. This problem has led to a practical solution. In the coming months,

it is planned that the Parkland Community Library will be fully renovated.

The new library is going to be on a piece of land 165-acres large bought by the library in Upper Macungie on Grange and Ruppsville Roads about five miles from the current location. The new building will be approximately 32,000 square feet. This is about five times as big as the current community library.

"The existing library isn't big enough

for all the programs we want to be able to have available for library members," said Parkland Community Library Director Karen Gartner. Right now the library holds many activities for members of the library, but the new library will be able to hold even more materials and activities beneficial to the community.

"The upcoming library will contain much more. It will contain meeting rooms, study spaces for students,

tutoring opportunities, a separate room for teens and even a café," said Gartner. The café is estimated to hold around 20 people and the library will even contain a separate children's area. This will have a story-time room, a craft room and a separate reading area. Also included in the new facility will be a parking lot big enough to hold over 100 cars.

Right now it is not known when the library will be completed. It may be anytime from a few months to a year or two. The ground still has not been broken and that is not to be completed for a while still. Also, the new library will need community support in order to be completed. Without community support the current library staff will not have the ability to complete this new library. Although it will be a while until the new Parkland library is completed, one can help quicken this time by supporting it in its effort to try to make the community a bigger and better place.



photo by Katie Sheinberg

Current location of the Parkland Community Library

11th grade English teacher wins Geo Club's Green Makeover

by Aanand Shah

This past December, the Geo Club promoted their ideals in a new way, by awarding the teacher staff at Parkland with a Green Makeover. By a simple nomination process, teachers were selected and voted on during all lunch periods. In the end, 11th grade Honors and College Prep English teacher, Miss Rachel Livesey, was awarded the Green Makeover.

Miss Livesey's interest in the green-friendly way of living stems way back into her high school years. "My reasons for being green stem back to volunteer work in high school. We adopted a highway for NHS, and I was astounded by the amount of garbage and pollution man inflicted on society. I began to recycle and make small strides to do my part, but I was still highly uneducated."

It was during her graduate studies that she fully realized the effects that a person has on the environment around them.

"The major realization came to me when I visited Sweden during my graduate program. Sweden is impeccably clean and environmentally aware. There were men fishing off of the bridges in Stockholm and not a bit of garbage lined the streets. They also did a great job conserving water with showers that provided water

in short bursts and toilets that had the option for full flush and half flush. The pre-service teachers were obsessed with the novelty of the toilets, and I even convinced my parents to install one when they remodeled their bathroom. The toilet uses 1.6 gallons for the full flush and uses a high pressure system," she said.

After Miss Livesey won, as a part of the Green Makeover, the Geo club awarded her with some common alternatives to classroom and household items that she never thought to be so detrimental to the environment.

"Some of the items that I won included recycled toilet paper, paper towels, napkins, bamboo plates, laundry detergent and household cleaning supplies. The

event made me aware of alternatives to the products I use that have always caused me trouble breathing and have caused

unknown detrimental effects on the environment," she said.

Miss Livesey also lauded the increased use of Turnitin.com in the school. "I began to move towards a greener lifestyle in the classroom by minimizing the amount of paper and printer ink my students use. In an effort to lessen our paper consumption,

they submit all formal written assignments online for a grade. This saves time (printing, collecting), money (paper, printer ink, staples) and the environment—let's do our part to keep our world green!"



photo courtesy of Miss Livesey

Miss Livesey holds up her winnings from her makeover.

Obama refuses to drop health care issue in wake of GOP

by Aaron Spikol

On Tuesday January 19, Republican senator elect Scott Brown was elected to the senate seat left vacated by democrat Ted Kennedy's death. The election was widely considered an upset, considering Massachusetts's democratic voting record and was seen as a repudiation of both the Democratic Party agenda and that of the Obama administration. The election breaks the sixty-member filibuster proof majority in the Senate, giving Republican senators the ability to filibuster legislation with which they do not agree. The most immediate impact of this will be on the ongoing effort to pass a health care reform bill. Separate versions of the bill have been passed in both the house and senate but a combined bill still needs to be formulated and approved. With a Republican filibuster in the senate all but guaranteed, it is certain that the bill will need to be changed drastically in order for it to pass. "I don't see the votes for it at this time," said Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi,

after the results of the special election.

The health care bill has already lost many of its major components over the past months, including a public option, in concessions to conservative leaning democrats. These changes still did not induce a single Republican senator and only one representative to vote for the bill. In its current form, the bill is mainly designed to create a government run cooperative to help group small businesses and the uninsured together in order to negotiate better prices from insurance companies. Other major components included expanding Medicaid, outlawing unfair insurance practices and taxing high end medical plans in order to curb cost inflation. The plans were estimated to cost between 800 billion and 1 trillion dollars but were expected to cut roughly 200 billion dollars from the federal deficit by the end of the decade.

The eventual bill though will most likely be much smaller. Republicans, concerned about the cost of the bill and government involvement in the private

sector, have generally opposed health care reform as a matter of principle. The two biggest sources of agreement are on imposing laws on insurance companies for denying coverage for preexisting conditions and assisting small businesses with providing health care for their employees. John McCain reportedly suggested to the Obama administration that congress "should start from the beginning" on health care reform.

While both parties may be tempted to drop the health care issue, the impending deficit crisis may be too serious for the parties to avoid it. Health care is currently one of the biggest contributors to the national deficit, which is reaching record percentages of the GDP. The United States has not seen a level of debt this high since World War II. The United States government currently provides more than forty million people with health care coverage through the Medicare and Medicaid programs and as baby boomers reach 65, the number is expected to increase by around thirty

million. Since the programs are backed by the federal government, statistics show that hospitals tend to charge for care based on what the highest amount an insurance company would pay, leading to an estimated ten-twelve percent extra being paid for each patient. If more Americans are insured, theoretically the average price of health care will be lowered and the government will be not be forced to pay as much. How to cover more Americans though is a contentious issue.

In his state of the union address on Wednesday January 27, Obama indicated that there would be a priority shift within his administration and congress to focus more on job creation. While jobs were the focus of his speech, President Obama did not stay mute about the health care issue. He again called upon congress to tamp down on bipartisanship so that they can finish health care reform.

"Do not walk away from reform," said Obama. "Not now. Not when we are so close. Let's find a way to come together and find a way to finish the job for the American people."