



# Les Commentaries de Lavoisier

“She Blinded Me With Science.” ~Thomas Dolby

February 2010

## Letter from the Editor

February has been a cruel month, and not just because of the never-ending heaps of snow delivered by cold, grey skies.

Our friend and fellow WALS associate, Michael V. Murphy, FAIA, died on February 9, in the words of his son, Patrick Murphy, “as a result of an enlarged heart.”

Michael is best known to Wheeling by one of his landmark designs—The Wheeling Artisan Center, where he brought new life to a historic warehouse all but given up for lost. In the words of one observer, Michael had a gift for turning “age-worn places of gravity into renewed communities of light.”

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## Tullamore Dew Profiles Geoff Schoolar

Geoffrey Schoolar was born and raised in Houston, Texas. A talented musician, he began his piano studies at an early age, and he began to compose and perform songs for guitar and piano in his high school years. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance in 1989 from the University of North Texas, where he studied with many fine performing artists and music theorists. Having received a fully funded study award from the University of Houston, Dr. Schoolar had the opportunity to study for one year at the University of Siegen in Siegen,

Germany, during which time he steeped himself in German language and literature, and began his lifelong passion for studying philosophy. While in Germany, Schoolar made a pilgrimage to Weimar, where he visited the Nietzsche archives, the houses of Goethe, Schiller and Liszt, as well as the estate and burial site of his beloved C.M. Wieland. Upon returning to the United States, he took a teaching position at Rice University, where he received his Master



Geoff “bagpiping” with Linsly students

of Arts degree in 1993. In 1994 he moved to Wheeling and began teaching German at the Linsly School. While teaching at Linsly, Schoolar continued to pursue his language and cultural studies, and received his Doctor of Modern Languages degree from Middlebury College in 2002. In Wheeling, Dr. Schoolar has continued to pursue musical composition.

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*Sir Peter Quimsley, FRIAS.*

# Design Champion

*City of Weelainege, Scotland*

I think it may have been fellow Brit Oscar Wilde who said we moderns know “the cost of everything and the value of nothing.” That was in the nineteenth century. Perhaps American Joni Mitchell said it best in the twentieth— “they paved paradise, and put up a parking lot.”

But we had hoped the 21<sup>st</sup> century would see more sensitivity to the historic and cultural treasures of this place we call home.

In our sister city of Edinburgh, where preservation is a focus of the community, our native son Alexander McCall Smith has written that the vista of Edinburg is so beautiful that it “breaks the heart again and again.”

I was then in some quandary when I felt this same breaking of the heart for the opposite reason—a break in the vista—when I learned about the planned destruction of a historically significant building (a corner structure integral to the urban fabric) here in our own town of Weelainege.

Since then, I have learned that it was not so much my heart that was breaking as what has now been identified by psychologists as “solastalgia,” defined as the “pain experienced when there is recognition that the place where one resides and that one loves is under immediate assault... a form of homesickness one gets when one is still at ‘home.’ (New York

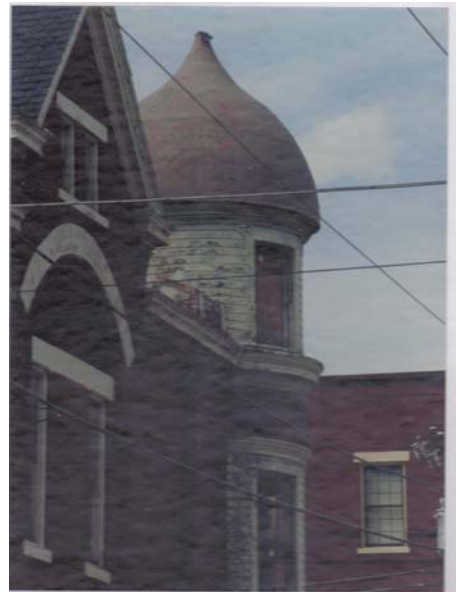
Times Magazine, 1/31/10, “Is There An Ecological Unconscious?”)

It wasn’t just that the owner made the decision to demolish without consultation

with other members of the community.

It wasn’t just the fact that our city accepted and spent tens of millions of dollars in taxpayer money from the Scottish National Parliament by promising in its Weelainege Heritage Plan to preserve

Weelainege’s cultural and architectural heritage and yet not a single official source raised any public concern about the proposed destruction. It was also the real mental jolt of witnessing the



*A proud corner anchor since the 19th Century.*  
Photo by Annie Cassidy



*A shell of its former self.*



*An otherwise quiet Saturday.*



*His-story ends.*

destruction of an architectural gem that has endured for more than a century, which destruction was accomplished nearly surreptitiously on an otherwise quiet, recent Saturday.

Oh yes, I know the conventional wisdom. “Weelaiinge has no laws to prevent it,” “It was not economically feasible to save it” (time and time again this excuse in preservation circles has been proven wrong). “We need more parking,” and anyway, “no one was willing to come forward to save it.”

All of these conventionalities may be true in any given instance, but if the community is never

consulted in the first instance when a historically significant building is to be destroyed, we will never know for sure whether or not a person or other entity, or some group of persons or entities would have stepped forward to assist or save the building or for that matter, offer to assist the owner with whatever needs it felt justified them to make a unilateral decision to destroy a structure long designated a “contributing structure” to the Downtown Historic District.

In fact, the owner in this case just sought and received positive publicity in the local press for its purchase of yet another historic

building in the Downtown Historic District, portraying itself as a good neighbor to downtown development. It was somewhat ironic that that same article did not mention the planned destruction of this other historic structure, even though demolition was in the planning process even then. And even before the article appeared, yours truly was assured by a representative of the owner not to fear its commitment to preservation, because it had a “historically sensitive” architect on its board.

While “solastalgia” has often been discussed in connection with environmental degradation (it seems that philosopher Glenn

Albrecht coined the term to describe the feelings of desperation by residents of the Upper Hunter Valley in eastern Australia due to an exponential increase in “open-pit” coal mining—the Australian equivalent of our own mountain top mining), the connection of environmental concerns to historic preservation has often been ignored on a local level.

While it may be fashionable to speak of “building green,” in new construction, “green” considerations in the preservation of older buildings are just as important, perhaps more so, in determining the future use of a structure. Simply put,

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not only was an old building demolished on that recent Saturday morning, but all the compacted energy that went into its construction and upkeep over more than 100 years—the energy used to make the bricks and other building materials—the energy of the Wheelainge bricklayers at the end of the 19th century—the stone masons, the carpenters, and other local craftsmen—all that contributed to this century old structure – energy that might have been well enough spent to have been good for another 100 years with proper preservation efforts; all was lost in the swirl of dust and destruction of that voracious, banging crane bucket.

It has been proven time and time again that it often makes more environmental sense, more sense to a community, to “retro-fit” a substantially older building,

then to tear down the building and start from scratch for any new construction. But this requires that an owner approach a building important to the urban fabric as a concern of the community, which is to say, with an open mind, and a willingness to discuss their needs and possible alternative uses with the affected community. It requires in a nutshell the opposite of what has sometimes been referred to as an

“arrogance of ownership.”

Yours truly will take some of the blame. Perhaps I could have done more, sooner, to attempt to save this now lost architectural gem. But we all really need to do much better as a community. Much, much better. 

*Any resemblance of the city of Weelainge to any existing city in the United States of America is strictly coincidental.*



**Photo by Annie Cassidy**

The Blackstone Club is not an official bar function, and has no ties to any city, state, federal, professional or political entity or organization; it is solely a project of the Wheeling Academy of Law and Science, Inc, a private corporation.



## Reflections of “sky-light” at The Wheeling Artisan Center

Conceived originally as a retail outlet only, The Wheeling Artisan Center ended up, with the assistance of Michael’s design, not just a tour bus destination, but a community-center utilized by or available to all the residents of Wheeling and its surrounding area.

Michael would have loved the Celtic Festival held there every year, as he exemplified the best of the Irish virtues of courage, loyalty, and generosity, and was proud of his Irish heritage, having hailed from the great Maguire Clan of County Fermanagh.

Although Michael’s reputation in Wheeling was made with the Wheeling Artisan Center, Michael enjoyed a reputation as one of the best architect/

preservationists in the nation. The Baltimore Chapter of the American Institute of Architects awarded his firm, Murphy & Dittenhafer, of Baltimore, Maryland, over fifty awards of excellence in design; and in 2009, the firm won the Baltimore AIA Grand Design Award. Michael was made a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 2008.


If you are ever in Baltimore, you need only stop by the Tremont Grand Hotel, (formerly the Masonic Lodge of Maryland), the historic Hippodrome, the new Student Center at the University of Baltimore, or one of the many places of worship (of all denominations) that he restored, to feel and see that quality of light, that quality of community, that is a lasting mark of his work.

Michael was also a great educator, in the best tradition of the Blackstone Club. Not only did he lecture frequently on architectural issues in academic settings (His father, Frederick Vernon Murphy, was also a well respected architect, and the founder of the School of Architecture at the Catholic University of America), he taught those great virtues of his Irish Heritage, mainly through example.

Your editor had the great fortune to attend with Michael a World Heritage City conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, a few years back, so forgive me one story. During the conference, all the participants were invited to attend an opening dinner in the grand banquet room of that great castle that sits atop the City of Edinburgh.

One of our table-mates, a highly esteemed architect (or so he told us) from Vienna kept complaining about the fact that we had been seated against the wall, far from the main table. Rather than sharing his concern, Michael offered that our new friend

“reminded him of a story,” and proceeded to tell the story of how that great Irish Chieftain, “The Maguire” was once invited to dinner with the then Queen Elizabeth, and how the Chief’s retainers asked The Maguire, “Are you not offended by the fact that the Queen sits you so far away from the head of the table?,”—to which “The Maguire “ was said to have replied: “Wherever The Maguire sits is the head of the table!”

The story, told with a great deal of mirth, brought great bursts of laughter from all at the table, with the possible exception of our dour Austrian friend, who I’m sad to say, failed to grasp that by sitting next to Michael, he was indeed sitting at the head of the table. 

More information on our friend can be accessed at [www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bal-obituary-murphy0212.0.1457155.story;www.catholicreview.org/subpages/storyworldnew-new.aspx?action=7688](http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bal-obituary-murphy0212.0.1457155.story;www.catholicreview.org/subpages/storyworldnew-new.aspx?action=7688).

Your Editor,  


# La Cerca - Chapter 14

It was no surprise, then, that when Gallagher gave up his job at Trinity College Library and returned to Germany from Dublin the first time in 1985, he could not find out any information as to Schmidt's whereabouts, despite numerous inquiries in all the cities known to have been associated with Schmidt's life when Gallagher knew him.

Disappointed, Gallagher had returned to Dublin, and because his position at the College had been filled, and Ireland still harbored dark memories for him, he decided to follow in the footsteps of his lost mentor, and move from Ireland all together, using all the money he had left in the world to make the first payment towards matriculation at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland,

where he decided to pursue a doctorate in Moral Philosophy. He would find another job, anything, to continue his studies.

And he did. Working part time at the university in a student work program, and nights as a bartender at a pub now known as The Standing Order, he had by 1990 earned his doctorate in Moral Philosophy, and had accepted a teaching position at the University in Edinburgh.

He loved the City. Loved to walk along Princess Street and linger at the Monument to Sir Walter Scott, the largest memorial to a literary figure in the world.

He loved to visit Carlton Hill, and walk through the ancient cemeteries where David Hume and Adam Smith slept, those giants of The

Scottish Enlightenment whose ideas on morality he had combed in his course work at the university.

And as the years passed, he grew into his role as a teacher, becoming one of the most popular teachers of moral philosophy at the university, sought out by many of the students, particularly those from Ireland, as if the thought of an Irish intellectual in Edinburgh was too good to be true.

Developments in the early 1990's spurred Gallagher into renewing his search for Schmidt. East and West Germany reunited in 1990. In December, 1993, the Downing Street Declaration announced Great Britain's willingness to embrace a peace process that would



**Statue of David Hume, University of Edinburgh**

allow all of Ireland to determine whether or not Northern Ireland should remain part of the British Commonwealth or reunite with the Republic of Ireland.

In August of 1994, the Provisional IRA, (Gallagher's former allies), announced a "cessation of military operations."

For the first time in many years of "The Troubles," it looked as if peace in Northern Ireland were a real possibility. Having thought his former IRA comrades incapable of transcending their

intractable hatred for the Unionists, Gallagher all of a sudden realized it just may be that better reason was afoot in his homeland, that perhaps some form of “moral philosophy” had reached even the streets of Derry, far from its usual lonely abode in the dry halls of academia.

And as he wished to read everything being printed on the talks and the agreement, he used for the first time the new “search engine” recently added to the University’s computers. Searching from site to site to read of developments in his homeland, his thoughts returned to his past involvement in the IRA, and his guilt, but then, perhaps by way of repressing the worst memories of his past, to more pleasant thoughts—his time in Germany, and his mentor, his true educator—Georg Schmidt.

He started to type into

the search engine:  
**“Georg Schmidt.”**

No Match.

**“Georg Schmidt, German Professor of Philosophy.”**

No Match.

**“Schmidt, Georg: Professor, University of Leipzig.”**

Nothing.

**“George Schmidt, University professor, Germany.”**

Nothing.

**“Schmidt, Nietzsche manuscript.”**

The same thing time and time again.

No matches found.

Then he thought of Fidanzo. Schmidt had given him no details of Fidanzo’s background; just as he had not

given Fidanzo any details of Gallagher’s—for their mutual protection. But Gallagher knew that Fidanzo too had been a professor, and that he had hailed from the United States.

He typed in the words,

**“John Fidanzo, USA.”**

Nothing.

Then,

**“John Fidanzo, college/university professor, USA.”**

Finally, a match:

**“Fidanzo, John, author and college professor; A History of Jesuit Education, published 1989; Wheeling Jesuit College, Wheeling, West Virginia, USA.”**

“West Virginia?”

It seemed an unlikely place for Schmidt to have recruited a scholar to assist him in smuggling out the

manuscript. But could it be? There was an address: “John Fidanzo. c/o Wheeling Jesuit College.”

He thought it a long shot. But he hastily posted a note to the address:

“Fidanzo. If you are the same John Fidanzo, I was your contact for Georg Schmidt in Leipzig, 1984. If so, please write back, Andrew Gallagher, General Post, Edinburgh, Scotland.”

I was thrilled to receive the message from Gallagher in 1994, and wrote him back immediately, telling him of the theft of the manuscript, and my own failed attempts to locate Schmidt.

Finally, we connected by phone. Gallagher described his worse fear...“that perhaps Schmidt was no longer alive.”

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“Perhaps,” I said. “But I too have been thinking of Schmidt. Have you heard that the German government has made public the former Stassi files?” I have been thinking of taking some time off and returning to Germany myself, to study those files, to try to locate Schmidt. Perhaps between the two of us, we could learn one way or the other of his whereabouts, and that of the manuscript!”

“I knew it would be fate to find you! Yes, Fidanzo, Yes! We shall

go again, together, this fall!”


It was surreal to meet Gallagher again in Germany in the fall of 1994. A rush of memory infused our embrace, as if the intervening years had vanished, as if we were back again in that same Moment years ago when our one and only goal was to help Schmidt. It was now our same goal, but now the focus was on Schmidt himself; we wanted to find him, bring him home, though we were not sure just where that home would be. Sure the

manuscript was still of interest to us, but it was now Schmidt’s well being that animated us.

We met in Berlin, and worked nearly a whole month there with a government archivist in the Reichstag building, for hours at a time, pouring over mostly uncategorized files, until one day in early October, we found a lead:

“Georg Schmidt, b.1939, Brest, Byelorussia. Transferred to KGB control, May 1, 1984. Died \_\_\_\_\_. Background: raised in Weimar; Professor,

Karl Marx University 1974-1984; Georg Schmidt was the son of Johann Schmidt, b. Konigsberg (now Kaliningrad), Professor, Albertina University. Mother was Eugenia, of Polish, Jewish background. (Both parents victims of the war effort in Byelorussia).”

It was something to go on, and the missing date gave us hope that Schmidt just might still be alive. 

Prior issues of the Newsletter, including prior chapters of LaCerca can be accessed on the WALs website: [www.firststatecapitol.com](http://www.firststatecapitol.com)


In 2000 he and his good friend and partner, Patrick Cassidy, produced an original musical entitled, “The Good European,” which the authors describe as a “life-affirming musical drama” based on the life and philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. “I couldn’t believe it,” says Scholar, “when

## Geoff Scholar Profile

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Pat told me he had been to Naumburg and Weimar. We both had our stories of traveling to Germany to seek out Nietzsche and Goethe. When he told me he wanted to write a musical about Nietzsche I thought he was kidding—until he sent

me a rough draft in the mail and invited me over to work on the music. “I hope we write another musical one of these days,” he jokes, “maybe a comedy about the law.” In addition to teaching at Linsly, Scholar has several talented piano

students. He continues to write and perform, although on a much more limited basis than he would like. He hopes to make a recording involving his most recent passion, the Theremin. 

# State of the Environment

If you watched the recent televised debate between Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Don Blankenship of Massey Coal on the issue of mountain top mining in West Virginia, there were a lot of statistics and policy issues bandied about, but one argument that Kennedy advanced — that Mountain top removal is a moral issue (echoing the Catholic Bishops of Appalachia)—was never really answered, but only cut off with nervous laughter when Blankenship deftly shifted the discussion back to policy issues—like how important mountain top removal “jobs” are to the economy of West Virginia.

In this observer’s opinion, the “nervous laughter,” was indicative of the discomfort occasioned by the “self-interest” of many in the audience in maintaining the status quo, and the dim (but resisted) realization that they may

be participants in an activity with profound public implications—that in fact this may be one of only a few “real” issues of “public morality” they will face in their lifetimes. Better to laugh off any such considerations, lest someone come to believe that they may be participating in something “dirty.”

By “public morality,” we do not mean Janet Jackson exposing her breast on T.V. Nor do we mean the billion dollar media obsession with the “private morality,” (i.e., mostly meaning “sex lives”) of our politicians and celebrities who have failed to live up to our expectations of conventional propriety, which failures we nevertheless offer up as great issues of ‘public morality,’ when in fact they are mostly petty narratives of tawdry, private affairs.

While we watched the debate here in Northern West Virginia in relative comfort, there are many

people in Southern West Virginia whose every day lives and families have been impacted by mountain top removal, who claim their water has become polluted and their children made sick, by this method of coal extraction.

While the industry denies culpability, it is hard not to be skeptical when we lived through decades of denial from other industries that “tobacco products were safe,” or that global warming was not real, particularly when our economic system neither celebrates “morality” (or for that matter “science”) as a goal, but instead pays homage only to the “bottom-line.”

Many believe we should defer all this unpleasant talk of mountain top removal mining as a “moral issue” until we are convinced that the scientists (as in the case of global warming) have developed a “consensus” that mountain top removal

causes irreparable devastation to the environment, or surrounding community.

Many have hoped that some Supreme Court somewhere or some EPA would have interpreted some law in such a way as to have saved us from having to confront the thought that mountain top removal mining may be something other than a purely “economic alternative,” that it may in fact constitute an act of “public immorality.”

Speaking of “public,” rather than “private” morality is very uncomfortable in these difficult economic times. It causes us to question the fairness of the status quo—of the fairness of treatment of our fellow West Virginians in the southern counties, of the fairness of our state’s economic system, of our national wars and priorities, and ultimately, of our own

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“public” actions as they affect others in the community, the state, the nation.

So is mountain top removal a moral issue or is it just a matter of jobs or money, or for that matter, just a matter of science as to whether or not, in the words of Robert F. Kennedy, West Virginia’s mountains should be “liquidated now for ready cash?”

In this day of partisan and often shrill debate, are we even capable of offering a reasoned analysis about the “morality” of mountain top removal, let alone any other public issue not involving the “flawed-celebrity” type?

*We are going to find out the old fashioned way—with a prize essay contest to be conducted by our sister organization, the WALs Foundation.*

## Does mountain top removal coal mining present a moral issue?

The essay contest will be offered at two separate levels—accepting entries from students in both higher and secondary education in the surrounding community.

For the (higher education) contest, students from area institutions of higher education will be eligible to submit entries, including, but not necessarily limited to: Wheeling Jesuit University, West Virginia Northern Community College, Bethany College, West Liberty State College, Belmont Tech, Eastern Gateway Community College.

For the secondary education contest, students from any public or private area




**Photo by Vivian Stockman -[www.ohvec.org](http://www.ohvec.org)  
Flyover courtesy [Southwings.org](http://Southwings.org)**

high schools will be eligible to submit entries. The essay topic will be:

*“Please answer Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s question: Does mountain top removal coal mining present a moral issue?”*

Entries will be limited to 750 to 1,000 words, and will be judged by a panel of 5 educators (to be announced) from local colleges, universities, and/or high schools.

Entries will be accepted starting March 1, 2010, with an entry deadline of June 30, 2010.

There will be two winners, one at the higher education level and one at the secondary education level. Each winner will receive \$1,000.00 towards their college or university expenses, be recognized at the WALs annual Awards Banquet, and have all or a portion of their essay published in a future edition of “The Commentaries.” 

*All entries should be submitted to Barb Knutsen, WALs, 1413 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003 or [barbaraknutsen@firststatecapitol.com](mailto:barbaraknutsen@firststatecapitol.com)*



# Off the WALS:

*News of the Wheeling Academy of Law & Science (WALS) Foundation*

As we like to say, "If those who believe in the Justice system don't educate the public, those who don't will."

## Mock Trial Program Expands through West Virginia

We just finished another great year with Ohio County 4<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, thanks to funding from The Department of Health and Human Resources and our other erstwhile private contributors.

Over 7,500 students have participated so far in our Mock Trial Program during these past seven years, from public schools in Ohio County, but also from some in Hancock County, Jackson County, and Kanawha County, as well as students from parochial and private schools and after school programs in the surrounding area.


We will be expanding our program this year into new counties which include Marshall, Tyler, Wetzel, and parts of Kanawha, not already covered. Long range plans include 4 additional counties in the fall of 2010 in under-served areas of West Virginia. This, we are able to do, because of



**Eric Schramm, Esq. with students from Elm Grove Elementary School**

some additional funding received from the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Next year, for the first time, we will be moving our usual 4th grade project to the 5th grade due to the fact that part of the 5th grade social standards and objectives includes playing a role in a mock trial. The "scripts" may change, but the topic will remain the same – the abuse of RX drugs - as this issue remains a major problem among the youth of this state.

Once again, area lawyers were so generous in donating their time to be Judges for the program. As you can see from the picture that made front page in THE FOCUS, (Ohio County schools e-newsletter), no attorney can escape our call. It was the first year for "Judge" Erik Schramm (Ohio County Board of Education member) and he LOVED it, as did the students from Elm Grove Elementary who did a fabulous job in their role-playing. 

UPCOMING BLACKSTONE CLUB MEETINGS & CLE's

***BLACKSTONE CLUB Tonight - February 26, 2010***  
***“February Fiesta” by Rose and Brian Humway***



UPCOMING: **April 30, June 25, August 27, October 29**  
& WALS Annual Banquet - **December 9, 2010**

**CLE NOON SERIES - 60 min.**

**Wednesday -March 3, 2010** -Alternative Dispute Resolution by *Larry W. Blalock, Esq.*

**Wednesday -May 19, 2010** - Legislative Update by *Jeff Kessler, Esq.*

**MORNING SESSIONS - up to 3.6 hrs.**

**Friday -March 26, 2010** - Stress Management for Lawyers

INCLUDING 1.0 Ethics, 1.0 professionalism, .50 substance abuse, .25 general  
*DVD presentation with Legal Moderator*

**Friday -April 23, 2010** - Fiduciary Liability, Elder Law and More

*by Kim McCluskey, Esq. AND Drafting Trust Estate Documents by Presenter (TBA)*

**Friday -June 11, 2010** - Morning with the Judges XIV

*by Honorable David Hummel (WV) AND Honorable Julie Selmon (OH)*

Wheeling, WV 26003-3582  
1413 Eoff Street  
First State Capitol

