

METRO/STATE

Home mortgage rates heading upward
Business
B5

Schools seek \$15 million grant

Hope is to increase student achievement

BY ADAM WEINTRAUB
The Cincinnati Enquirer

Officials of Cincinnati Public Schools will be in Washington next week to make a pitch for a \$15 million grant to improve student achievement.

Cincinnati is one of 25 cities eligible for the "Urban Systemic Initiatives" grants from the National Science Foundation because it ranked 23rd of 25 in the number of children in poverty. Eleven cities, including Cincinnati, will be considered for the first wave of awards. Six to eight will receive grants, said Kathleen Ware, director of quality im-

provement for Cincinnati Public Schools.

Cincinnati is seeking the maximum grant, \$15 million over five years, starting in October. It will make its presentation Wednesday.

"Getting this grant will help us accelerate and expand the reforms we've started and help us reach our vision of the district," Ware said. "The real reform is in what's going on in the classrooms — how are we going to go about helping children learn?"

The district's request is laid out in a 177-page grant proposal, which adds new goals and expands on steps the district has already taken, or will begin in the experimental Pilot Mini-District. Among its highlights:

► Changing all schools to "multi-

age" grouping, where a team of teachers works with the same students for several years, in groups based on demonstrated ability rather than age. Teams would have access to resources to bring in counselors, psychiatrists and other support staff, more teachers or equipment as needed.

► Continuing to change science and math courses to emphasize problem-solving and experimentation; revising curriculum to integrate different subjects and to make science a focus.

► Expanding teacher coaching in the classroom by experienced "lead teachers."

► Working with the Urban League and the Minorities in Mathematics, Science and Engineering program to increase parents' involvement in educa-

tion and close the gap in black and white achievement in math and science. In 1992-93, 42% of black students taking Algebra I passed the course, while 66% of white students passed.

► Increasing classroom use of calculators, computers, spreadsheet programs, videodiscs and other technology.

► Cooperating with area universities to increase the number of teachers prepared to teach math and science. One University of Cincinnati program would aim at helping current instructor assistants earn degrees and become teachers, in part to beef up the number of minority teachers in the district.

"What we have to show them is we're not planning business-as-usual, and we're not just going to tweak the system here and there," Ware said.



Mark Purdy

'American citizen' turns 90, cherishes multiple heritage

OXFORD — On St. Patrick's Day, so they say, everyone is Irish. There is a woman here on Elm Street who heartily agrees.

Of course, Jennie Elder Suel really is part Irish. And part African-American. And part Native American.

And today, she will celebrate her 90th birthday by keeping her personal 90-year fashion streak alive.

"I've worn a green dress on my birthday since I was 1 year old," she says. "I've never missed. This year, I'll be wearing green all day long."

She is standing in her small, tidy living room. On one wall hangs a picture of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. On the couch sits an embroidered Irish shamrock pillow. She is proud of both. But how does it all fit in the paperwork? Is she African-Irish-American? Native-African-Irish-American?

"People ask me, 'How would we classify you?' she says. 'And I tell them: 'American citizen.'"

It is not a bad answer. In fact, it is the best of all answers. It is one reason why Suel, after living in this college town for more than 60 years, has become a local icon.

She has served as a campus nurse and a preschool care-giver and an all-around natural resource. Back in the 1930s, when Miami University forbade black students to eat in the school cafeteria, Suel and her husband took them in as boarders.

"Otherwise, they would have had to eat in the cafeteria kitchen," she explains. "So demeaning."

Those days are gone. Racism isn't and might never be. Yet as Suel talks about her remarkable life, she makes you believe all things are possible. She was raised in a multiracial family, was taught by George Washington Carver, became one of America's first African-American nurses, then opened her Oxford home for day care long before the term "day care" existed. Why don't Phil and Oprah ever book guests like this?

Suel is at her riveting best when speaking of her ancestors. Her mother's grandparents were Kentucky slaves and became "free people of color" after the Emancipation Proclamation. Her great-grandfather fought on the Union side in the Civil War, then settled in Covington.

Pain paved journey

The Irish portion of Suel's lineage, meanwhile, comes from her paternal grandfather.

"Grandpa's name was Jacob Elder," she says. "His family settled in Nebraska. They visited an Indian reservation in Oklahoma. A Cherokee girl came home to live with them as a housemaid. Grandpa fell in love with her. My great-grandma said, 'You can't marry her — she's an Indian and you're white.' So they ran away to the river. They rode on a coal barge and worked their way to Cincinnati. The ship captain married them."

Jacob Elder eventually opened a business in Walnut Hills, where Jennie's father, James, was born. James met his wife through a neighborhood church. Jennie, their first child, attended Withrow High and then enrolled at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, where Carver was one of her professors. Riding the train into town, she saw a young black man's body hanging from a pole, the victim of a lynching. Her teachers said to grit her teeth and ignore it. She couldn't.

"It has taken me many years to get over it," she says. "It's just a memory now. But there was a time when tears came to my cheeks when I think about what happened."

She went on to earn her nursing degree in New York City, then returned to Cincinnati and worked at a public health center, treating tuberculosis patients. She moved to Oxford after marrying a university chef. She adopted a daughter who became an honor student at Miami but, tragically, died of meningitis before graduating.

Change through love

Heartbreak has scarred Suel. Bitterness hasn't. In the 1960s, furious African-American students at Miami would come by her house and rail about discrimination.

"I would say, 'Let's have a quiet hour. Let me get the Bible. Let's read some passages and think quietly and see how you feel then,'" she says.

"After all these years, what I would like to tell people is, we can only bring about change through love, not through anger. I've learned in all my years that you are responsible for your own actions. You make the decision within yourself whether to love or hate."

This was also the theme of her speech March 1, when a Miami organization gave her its "Distinguished Woman of Color" award. Suel stood up, spoke about her life, then recited a favorite Paul Laurence Dunbar poem from memory. She received a standing ovation. This morning, on her 90th St. Patrick's Day, she would seem to deserve a toast.

So let me be the first: To American citizen. Happy birthday.

Mark Purdy's column appears in The Enquirer on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday.



The Cincinnati Enquirer/Gary Landers
Jennie Elder Suel, of Oxford, Ohio, celebrates her 90th birthday on St. Patrick's Day.

Mariemont residents waste not

Community tops list in efforts to recycle

BY JANET C. WETZEL
and SUE KIESEWETTER
The Cincinnati Enquirer

Higher-than-average disposal fees and a willingness among residents to pitch in have made Mariemont the recycling champion in Hamilton County.

Mariemont residents recycled more than half of their solid waste in the last quarter of 1993, far surpassing any other local community.

The Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District recently released a report on the recycling efforts of 24 cities, villages and townships. Those 24 will share a \$350,000 grant to help set up, promote and pay for recycling programs.

The next-closest community in the solid-waste management district's report was Forest Park, which recycled 17.1% of its residential waste. The average among the other 23 was 9.4%.

Besides an annual trash fee ranging from \$30-\$50, Mariemont residents pay \$1.75 per container to have trash picked up. Trash haulers in other communities using the so-called volume-based fees typically charge 75¢ to \$1 per container.

"It's had a dynamite effect," Mayor Don Shanks said. "The less solid waste they put out and the more they recycle, the more they save."

People like Barbara Blum are another reason for Mariemont's success.

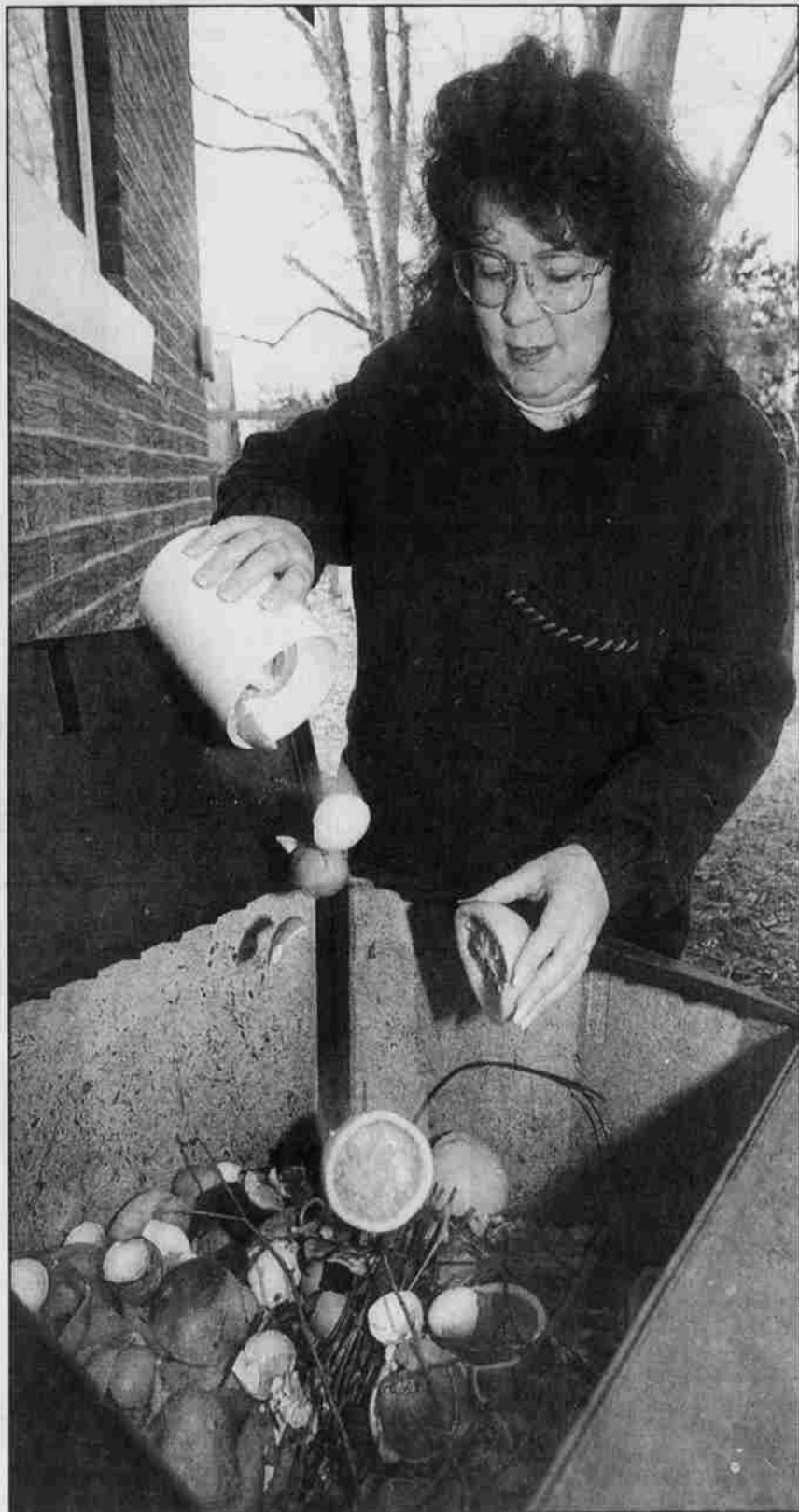
Before recycling bins were available through the village, Blum said, she kept bins in her car and dumped them at collection sites in other communities.

"I was that serious about it," Blum said. "When we went to buy a new car, I first tried my recycling bins to make sure they would fit in the trunk."

She said her family of four has cut its solid waste in half through recycling and a yard compost pile.

Shanks also credited the village recycling committee, co-chaired by Bobbie

(Please see RECYCLING, Page B4)



The Cincinnati Enquirer/Patrick Reddy
Barbara Blum dumps kitchen scraps into a compost bin in the yard of her home in Mariemont. The Blum family has cut its solid waste in half.

Tons of solid waste recycled by communities throughout area

A comparison of the amount of residential waste generated vs. the amount recycled during the last quarter of 1993. The figure is in tons.

COMMUNITY	WASTE GENERATED	WASTE RECYCLED	PERCENT RECYCLED	COMMUNITY	WASTE GENERATED	WASTE RECYCLED	PERCENT RECYCLED
Mariemont	404	206.0	50.9%	Green Twp	6,835	498.1	7.3%
Forest Park	2,414	412.1	17.1%	Springdale	1,378	93.4	6.8%
St. Bernard	693	113.5	16.4%	Harrison	975	4.5	0.6%
Amberley Vlg	403	65.0	16.1%	Cincinnati	47,223	2,817.7	6%
Madeira	1,186	191.3	16.1%	Sharonville	1,706	98.8	5.8%
Wyoming	1,054	164.0	15.6%	Mount Healthy	983	56.2	5.7%
Blue Ash	1,538	220.2	14.3%	Cheviot	1,247	70.2	5.6%
Montgomery	1,265	160.5	12.7%	Sycamore Twp	2,604	147.1	5.6%
Deer Park	802	89.0	11.1%	Delhi Twp	3,924	216.0	5.5%
Loveland	1,296	140.1	10.8%	Harrison Twp	600	10.1	1.7%
Fairfax	263	26.5	10%	Golf Manor	539	4.2	0.8%
N. College Hill	1,427	132.3	9.3%				
Reading	1,562	145.5	9.3%				

Source: Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District, Recycling Incentive Program

Suspension Bridge closed for 5 days

The Cincinnati Enquirer

Warm, mostly sunny weather predicted in the Cincinnati area over the next several days apparently is responsible for what could be a traffic headache: the five-day closure of the Roebling Suspension Bridge.

Covington police announced Wednesday afternoon that the bridge, connecting downtown Covington and downtown Cincinnati, will be closed to vehicles at 9 a.m. today. It will reopen Tuesday.

Construction on the approach ramp on the Cincinnati side, next to Riverfront Stadium, requires the bridge closing. It will remain open to pedestrians.



The Cincinnati Enquirer/E.Wetenkamp

guess they decided this was the time to do it, but they didn't let us know in advance."

Officials of the Kentucky State Highway Department were not available for comment Wednesday night.

Motorists who would normally use the Suspension Bridge can take the Clay Wade Bailey Bridge at Fourth and Main streets in Covington or Third Street in Cincinnati. Another option is the Interstate 75 Brent Spence Bridge.

"We had known this was coming for a couple of weeks, but the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet was waiting for some good weather," said Lou Ethridge, spokesman for OKI (Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments). "I

Viewing Stacks will cost

Autumn '95 event to add admission fee

BY PATRICK CROWLEY
The Cincinnati Enquirer

The 1.4 million people expected to attend Tall Stacks next year will have to pay a first-ever admission fee.

They will also probably shell out more money to get on the boats.

The Cincinnati Recreation Commission, which controls the riverfront venues where Tall Stacks is held, has approved an admission charge. The exact amount hasn't been set.

During the inaugural Tall Stacks in 1988 — the city's bicentennial — and again in 1992, visitors were charged to tour and ride the boats but could view boats free by walking along the Serpentine Wall and in Yeatman's Cove.

The admission fee is needed to offset rising costs, hire staff and extend the event from four to five days, said Rick Greiwe, executive director of the Tall Stacks Commission. The 1995 Tall Stacks is Oct. 11-15.

"The community is always sensitive to charging for access to a public area," said Marian Lindberg, recreation commission vice president. "But it's reached the point we just can't afford everything anymore."

The Tall Stacks Commission will determine the admission fees. The range of fees approved by the Recreation Commission are:

► \$2 to \$3 for adults on weekdays.

► \$4 to \$5 for adults on weekends.

► \$5 to \$7 for advance purchase of multi-day passes.

► Children under 12 free.

Lindberg said other public parts of the riverfront, such as the recreation and playground areas, will not be closed off during the event.

Greiwe does not think the fees will hurt admission.

"It's a national trend to charge for these types of events," he said. "By letting kids under 12 in free, we're not cutting out the families."

The admission will help finance \$450,000 needed to pay for city services, such as security, traffic control and sanitation; a bigger advertising budget, which will increase from \$100,000 in 1992 to \$300,000 next year; and to hire supervisors to manage the 7,000 volunteers who work Tall Stacks.

"We're hiring supervisors for the first time because the event has gotten so big that we need people to oversee all the volunteers," Greiwe said.

Tickets to tour and ride the 18 riverboats expected for the Tall Stacks event are likely to increase 5% to 7%, said Greiwe.

"We have to pay these riverboat captains to bring their boats," Greiwe said.

Tickets to tour, ride and dine on the boats cost \$10 to \$42 during the 1992 Tall Stacks.

Cincinnati will not contribute money for Tall Stacks in 1995.

The extra day is being added to accommodate crowds.

"One complaint we have heard is that it can get crowded down around the boats," Greiwe said. "By adding another day, we hope to bring some more people in, but also spread the crowds out a little more."

The event attracted 960,000 in 1988 and 1.2 million in 1992.