

# THE KENTUCKY ENQUIRER

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2008

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**Inside:** There were nine fatalities on Kentucky highways over the four-day Memorial Day weekend. **B1**

## Up Front

Must reads inside today's Enquirer

### Mixed message in new-home sales

Sales of new homes rose in April for the first time in six months, but it wasn't all good news.  
**BUSINESS A12**

### Covington pleads for pension fix

Covington wants a special session of the General Assembly called to ease the pension burden on local governments.  
**NORTHERN KENTUCKY B1**

### Valedictorians still inseparable

Ludlow High School's co-valedictorians have been best friends since third grade.  
**NORTHERN KENTUCKY B1**

### Tornadoes setting records — why?

This year is already the deadliest tornado year in the United States since 1998 — and meteorologists can't explain it.  
**NATION A5**

### Supreme Court does about-face

Workers got more leeway to sue over retaliation for complaining about workplace discrimination.  
**NATION & WORLD A2**

### Also ...

A distinctive ad heralds the Year of the Frog at Newport Aquarium.  
**BUSINESS A12**

### WEATHER



High 66°  
Low 47°  
Partly sunny

**COMPLETE FORECAST: B10**

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# Club treasurer charged again

By Cindy Schroeder  
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**VILLA HILLS** — The former Villa Hills Civic Club treasurer is facing additional charges, and a prosecutor says others at the club are being investigated for possible wrongdoing.

Earlier this month, Steven R. Sparks, the club's former treasurer, was sentenced to one year and one month in

## Villa Hills civic group's ex-officer faces tax indictment

federal prison for pilfering the nonprofit group's money to feed his gambling addiction.

In the latest development, Sparks, a 36-year-old Villa Hills resident and mortgage broker, was indicted by a Kenton County grand jury Thursday on six counts of filing false tax returns. The charge is a Class D felony, and each

count carries a possible sentence of one to five years in prison and a fine of \$10,000.

Sparks has not entered a plea on the latest charges. That likely will happen as soon as Sparks can be "loaned to state custody" for an arraignment, Kenton County Commonwealth's Attorney Rob Sanders said.

"Our investigation into wrongdoing at the civic club is still ongoing," Sanders said. "I certainly would not rule out the possibility of additional people facing charges."

Civic Club President Ernie Brown was not surprised by the new developments.

Although he hadn't heard anything official from Sand-

ers' office, Brown said: "We understood that that was going to happen after Steve's sentencing."

Sparks pleaded guilty in January to one count of wire fraud and admitted that he stole roughly \$325,000 during a four-year period starting in 2002, The Enquirer previously reported. He paid back a

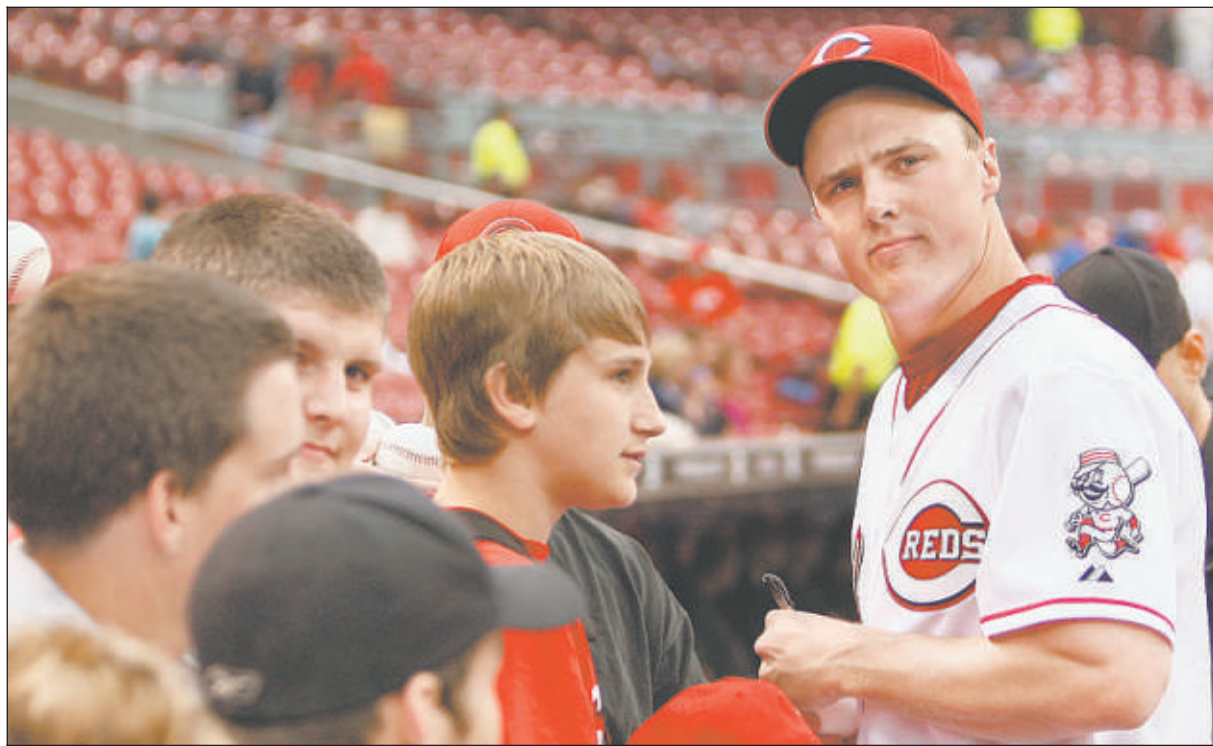
large portion of the money before the theft was discovered, according to federal prosecutors, but he still owed the club \$102,467 at the time of his arraignment.

Brown said Tuesday that the club is still missing "roughly close to \$100,000."

Sparks served as the club's elected treasurer from March 2002 through Feb. 7, 2007.

See **VILLA HILLS**, Page **A7**

## BRUCE A HUGE HIT IN DEBUT, WITH FANS AND ON FIELD



Photos by Jeff Swinger/The Enquirer

**Reds outfielder Jay Bruce**, called up Tuesday from the minor leagues, signs autographs before taking the field against Pittsburgh at Great American Ball Park. Bruce lived up to fans' expectations by slamming three hits.

Jay Bruce went 3-for-3 and had two walks Tuesday night in his Major League debut as the Reds beat the Pirates 9-6.

Bruce lined a 1-ball-2-strike pitch from Ian Snell into left for his first big-league hit in the third inning. He hit a single in the sixth inning and a double in the seventh.

Bruce walked on four pitches in his first plate appearance and stole second on the back end of a double steal.

**DETAILS IN SPORTS**



**Bruce gets a** pregame hug from his dad, Joe, of Beaumont, Texas, before his Major League debut Tuesday. He had been playing for the Triple-A Louisville Bats, hitting .364.

**MORE COVERAGE ONLINE AT NKY.COM. SEARCH: REDS**



See photos from Tuesday's game ■ Get updates on John Fay's blog ■ Join the discussion in our Reds forum

## Study: Levels of lead, crime rise together

### Exposure in kids tied to arrests

By Cliff Peale  
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LaQuisha Graber remembers that as a child, she chewed on peeling lead-based paint in the Over-the-Rhine apartment where she lived.

Since then, Graber has been in plenty of trouble. She's been in fights at various jobs, dropped out of school after the eighth grade and spent two years in state prison at Marysville for drug possession and assault.

A new study from the University of Cincinnati suggests that there's a connection between young children with high levels of lead in their blood and whether they commit crimes as adults.

Researchers have followed Graber since before she was born, testing prenatal lead levels in her mother's blood and then testing her quarterly until almost age 7.

The new study is to be published today in the Public Library of Science Journal.

"It's like a disease. I can't control it," Graber, now 23 and living in Silverton, said of her temper. "I just can't control it, no matter how much I try."

Researchers established years ago that lead poisoning can cause brain damage and even be deadly to children, and it can cost billions of dollars in lost work pro-



The Enquirer/Amie Dworecki

**LaQuisha Graber**, who was exposed to lead as a child, says her temper is "like a disease."

ductivity and medical care. The same UC team concluded several years ago that high lead levels were linked to delinquent behavior in children.

The researchers now have taken that study to the next step.

Kim Dietrich, a professor of environmental health at UC and one of the lead researchers, said almost all of about 250 participants in the study showed lead levels that would concern the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Of those participants, 55 percent, most with higher lead levels, have been arrested at least once.

See **LEAD**, Page **A7**

## Ohioans to get their own 'summer' gasoline

By Margaret A. McGurk  
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Southwest Ohio drivers soon will pay a few extra cents for a gallon of gasoline — beyond the recent stunning increases — as the price for cleaner fuel and cleaner air.

From Sunday through Sept. 15, Ohio will require stations in Hamilton, Butler, Clermont and Warren counties to sell gasoline that evaporates more slowly, so it releases fewer of the chemicals that lead to ozone pollution. The cleaner gas also is being required by federal officials in the Dayton area, including Montgomery, Clark, Greene and Miami counties.

The new summer gasoline replaces the unpopular E-Check program, which required biannual physical inspections of exhaust systems at special stations and ended in 2005. It is one of several mea-

### What's in the price?

A look at the expenses that go into the cost of a gallon of gasoline, based on Tuesday's average price of \$3.97 a gallon in Northern Kentucky:

SEGMENT	COST (%)
Cost of crude	\$2.90 (73%)
Refining the oil	\$0.43 (11%)
Distribution and marketing	\$0.27 (7%)
Federal, state taxes	\$0.37 (9%)

The proportion of the price you pay made up by crude is the highest since the government started keeping records in 2000. Last year it was half, based on \$3.21 per gallon, and in 2001, it was just 35 percent of the \$1.80 monthly average

Source: Energy Information Administration  
The Enquirer

**NKY.com:** See an interactive graphic about the fuel.  
**Search: gas**

asures adopted by the state, which is under pressure from the federal government to move Southwest Ohio off the

### We're driving less

Americans drove 4 percent fewer miles in March 2008 compared to the same month in 2007, according to government estimates Tuesday. The drop in driving was the sharpest drop for any month since the federal Highway Administration started keeping the data in 1942. The 245.8 billion vehicle-miles estimated for March was 11 billion miles fewer than March 2007.

federal list of places targeted for poor air quality by June 15, 2009.

In Northern Kentucky, Boone, Kenton and Campbell counties have been using a cleaner-burning gas, known as RFG (reformulated gasoline), since 1995. Although using different approaches, the summer gasolines in both

states are designed to limit the days when ozone reaches dangerous levels.

Ozone, an ingredient in smog, is formed when certain pollutants react with sunlight and heat. It can harm lungs, hearts and immune systems, plants and trees, and painted surfaces and other materials.

John Gowins, a Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection spokesman, said that since adopting the summer formula, the commonwealth is in compliance with one of two federal ozone standards. Computer models indicate that Kentucky will be in compliance with the second, more stringent standard by the end of this year.

"Can we attribute that entirely to RFG? No. Has it helped? Certainly. How much? I wouldn't know how to quantify that," Gowins said.

Exactly how much the spe-

cial requirements add to the price of gas is the subject of debate, although there is wide agreement that there's some additional expense.

"It isn't easy to track and definitively say this is the amount extra that it's costing," said Doug MacIntyre, a senior oil market analyst with the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

"We've always said the difference between winter grade and summer grade is probably a few cents, somewhere around five, give or take a few cents. More than one or two? Probably. Is it a great deal more? Probably not."

Travel has more to do with the cost of gas in summer than requirements to use less polluting fuels, MacIntyre said. "The seasonal pattern usually far exceeds the difference in fuel specification" as a cost factor, he said.

### China, Russia talks

## McCain wants to negotiate fewer nukes

Republican presidential candidate John McCain wants to work with China on a temporary halt to production of nuclear-weapons-grade material and with Russia on a new treaty to destroy more nuclear weapons.

It's part of McCain's plan to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world, although he said the number would be consistent with U.S. security and global commitments.

McCain is proposing a bipartisan push to strengthen various international arms treaties and nuclear monitoring. He also criticized both parties for not doing a better job on the issue.

**NATION A6**

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