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Geauga County

Thursday, July 17, 2014

Maple Leaf

Chardon, Ohio

Vol. 21 No. 29

www.geugamapleleaf.com

\$1.00

Lillibridge Resigns

Longtime Council Member Walks Out after Dahlhausen Appointment

By Josh Echt

Burton Village Council played an uncommon version of musical chairs Monday when the appointment of a new council member apparently precipitated the resignation of another. Council voted 3-1 to appoint Jennell Dahlhausen, with Councilwoman Linda Swaney abstaining and Councilwoman Dianne Lillibridge voting against the measure. Lillibridge then resigned her post abruptly, claiming it was a “good old boy network” before



Dianne Lillibridge

leaving the room. Dahlhausen, who works as an administrative assistant at South Russell Village, was chosen to replace Brian Johnston, who resigned from council earlier this month to fill a Geauga Park District commissioner seat. Mayor Nick Fischbach swore in Dahlhausen. After the meeting, Lillibridge said by phone she simply was “fed up” with the process and declined further comment.

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Bainbridge Fire Chief Given 2-Day Suspension

Phan Accused of Failure to Report Crashes

By Diane Ryder

After discussions in several executive sessions over the last few months, Bainbridge Township Trustees agreed Monday to suspend Fire Chief Brian Phan for two days without pay for allegedly failing to file written reports on most of the 11 traffic crashes involving department vehicles during the last two years. Trustees expressed dismay that details of the disciplinary



Fire Chief Brian Phan

action were brought to light during the public comment portion of the trustees meeting, when a man identifying himself as Phan’s attorney blasted them for their action before the vote was taken. Mike Piotrowski told trustees he is a public sector labor lawyer representing Phan, and said his client is being suspended for failing to file written reports about traffic crashes

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Septic System Problems Haunt Chardon Township Community

By Ann Wishart

As many as 80 homes in an older Chardon Township neighborhood may be affected by bacteria sampling done in April showing high levels of E. coli in the ditches. Geauga County Department of Water Services Director Doug Bowen told county commissioners last Thursday Chardon Township Road Department personnel were digging out ditches along Henning Road when they noticed a foul odor.

Subsequent Ohio Environmental Protection Agency testing revealed samples collected from several homes along Henning — one on Thwing and another at the east branch of the Chagrin River — showed E. coli counts exceeding the EPA minimum allowance by thousands of bacteria per 100 ml of a sample, according to a memo from the OEPA. One test on Henning came back with 1.1 million E. coli per

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Proud Grandpa Present as Local Tennis Pro Plays at Wimbledon

By Danielle Young

Though there are many parents and grandparents who are able to watch their children and grandchildren play sports, not as many can say they have watched them compete at the professional level. Joseph Svete, a Chardon lawyer who resides in Gates Mills, often gets the chance to watch his granddaughter, Lauren Davis, 20, compete at the highest level of tennis. Davis competed earlier this month in the Wimbledon tournament, and Svete and Lauren’s aunt, Jacqui Janke, were able to be there to support her. Lauren’s parents, Traci Davis, who lives in Gates Mills, and William Davis, who lives in Milwaukee, both work fulltime as a nurse and cardiologist respectively, so they make it to as many matches as they can, Svete said. Svete and his wife, Rosalie, try to go to a lot of matches as well, and they often traveled with Lauren

Win or lose, I am always very proud of her effort and determination. — Joseph Svete



Lauren Davis made it to the third round of Women’s Singles at this year’s Wimbledon tournament.

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DANIELLE YOUNG/GCML

The seniors of the Adult Day Services get to use the “social model” program to interact with others and to work on social and cognitive skills.

Adult Day Services Offers Place for Seniors

By Danielle Young

Worried about your loved one being home alone while you’re at work? Want to feel reassured that your senior citizen is safe and well cared for while you’re away? Well, there is a service for you right in your backyard. The Geauga County Department on Aging provides Adult Day Services to any Geauga County senior who is in need of “a caring, positive and structured environment during the day due to memory loss, cognitive impairment or Alzheimer’s Disease,” according to the DOA website. To be eligible for the program, the client must be a Geauga County resident, be age

60 or over, and have some kind of diagnosis of a cognitive impairment, such as Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease or dementia of any kind, said Adult Day Service Program Coordinator Vickie Krueger. The services are available from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday. Transportation can be provided to and from the Chardon Senior Center on Ravenwood Drive via the Geauga County Transit. The senior center provides the only ADS in the county, though there are other department senior centers, located in Middlefield, Thompson, West Geauga and Chagrin Falls. Krueger said the program was created to let seniors live at their home longer, rather than

go to an assisted living facility. It also gives the care providers See Day Services • Page A6

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Tennis Pro

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to pinch myself once in a while to attest that this is really happening,” Svete wrote in an email. “It has been so exciting watching her play some of the great tennis players of the world; and the thrill when she wins a match against a high ranked opponent. Win or lose, I am always very proud of her effort and determination.”

Svete has had a chance to watch Davis perform at all four of the Grand Slam tournaments — the Australian Open, the French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open.

“Of course, watching Lauren play during the course of a match is a great thrill, but it is not without stress that comes with each point and game,” Svete wrote. “As I am sure that all parents and grandparents, having watched their children and grandchildren play sports, appreciate the anxiety associated with watching your child play.”

The Baseline

Lauren grew up in Chardon and Gates Mills, and came to tennis late, at age 9, after playing “every other sport in the book” and especially after seeing how much her mother loved playing tennis.

Svete said her determination and athleticism helped her to not fall behind.

Lauren attended Gilmour Academy and was very successful in tennis. Her high school tennis experience was “just for fun and for the social camaraderie,” she wrote in an email, adding she was very proud to win the state title her freshman year.

She moved to Florida to live with her aunt halfway through her sophomore year to finish her high school education online, after receiving a tennis scholarship to the Evert Tennis Academy.

Svete said the only reason for the move was tennis.

“That was the motivating factor to move to Florida and receive professional training” Svete said, adding Northeast Ohio did not have the facilities and opportunities Lauren needed or she would have stayed.

Going Pro

Davis went pro in 2011 and has since competed in major tennis tournaments, including the four Grand Slam tournaments.

“It was a very difficult decision, as to rather or not she’d go to college or go pro,” Svete said. “After much deliberation, she decided that that’s what she loved doing and that’s what she wanted to do.”

Initially, going pro at 17, Davis had a difficult adjustment period to the “adult arena” and she didn’t know a lot of people, he said.

“Now, she’s very outgoing and she has many friends on the tour, so she loves it now,” Svete said. “Initially, I think it was not a lot of fun being on tour.”

He added, “So far, it’s probably been the best possible decision. The experience that she’s gaining — traveling throughout the world, meeting other professional people — has been a really great learning experience for her that she can’t duplicate anywhere.”

Svete emphasized the love of the sport made it less difficult for Lauren.

“Now that tennis is my profession, I travel all around the world for more than half the year,” she wrote. “I am making a living by playing the sport I love.”

The Game Plan

Being a professional athlete takes a lot of P’s — planning, practice and preparation — and the three C’s — cool, calm and collected.

Lauren’s typical routine involves daily fitness and tennis practice for generally six days a week. Tennis is an 11-month commitment, with November being the only month with no tournaments, Svete said.

Svete also emphasized how important the mental aspect is for tennis, being the only one on the court verses in a team sport.

“You have to have confidence in yourself in order to be successful,” he added.

Svete said Lauren is always very focused and has a strong drive to succeed, which is “something you cannot teach.”

“I am always trying to focus on myself and my game; I focus my mind on the process and in the present moment,” she wrote. “I think that’s what it takes to get in the zone.”

At 5-feet-2-inches, Davis is considered small for tennis standards, but she doesn’t let that deter her.

“I am very fast, strong and athletic,” she wrote. “Movement is one of my greatest assets. I can generate a lot of power and racket head speed. I want it really bad and I fight until the end.”

Davis described her on-court personality as “serious and focused,” and that she gets zoned in on what she has to do.

Off the court, she said she is very friendly and outgoing, and loves being around her friends and family.

“One thing great about Lauren, she is very confident, but not cocky,” Svete wrote. “She handles herself very professionally on the court and modestly off the court.”

He added she is always composed after a match, win or loss.

The Wimbledon Experience

Leading up to this year’s Wimbledon experience, Lauren’s most memorable tournament experience was qualifying for the French Open in 2012.

“It was an incredible, hard fought match on the red clay,” she wrote.

For this year’s Wimbledon, Lauren wrote she was full of excitement and was looking forward to playing since it’s her favorite tournament.

“The grass is one of my favorite surfaces and Wimbledon itself is just an amazing tournament,” Lauren said, adding the tradition and the “strawberries and cream are what really set it apart,” referring to the traditional snack for spectators.

“The ambiance in Wimbledon is probably second to none,” Svete said. “The beauty of the grounds, formality of the staff and the prestige associated with Wimbledon is unparalleled.”

He added it is an experience that is “difficult if not impossible to duplicate.”

Lauren took the seven-hour flight to London, England to compete at this year’s Wimbledon tournament, held June 23-July 6.

“When I first started traveling overseas, I was nervous going to new places where I’ve never been before,” she said.



SUBMITTED

Joseph and Rosalie Svete often get to watch their granddaughter Lauren Davis play professional tennis. Here is the trio at Indian Wells, Calif. in March of this year.

“Leaving home and my family was always hard. But now, traveling to places halfway across the world such as China and Australia is second nature to me.”

Lauren, ranked 58th in the world going into the tournament, had to go through qualifying rounds at the Eastbourne International.

Her Women’s Tennis Association Single’s ranking went up to 55th before the first rounds of Wimbledon, according to coretennis.net.

“Of course, I was nervous going into Wimbledon, but an excited kind of nervousness,” she said. “I am nervous before every match I play, whether it’s Wimbledon or a first round match in a WTA tournament.”

Lauren competed in the Women’s Doubles with Monica Puig of Puerto Rico and lost in the first round.

She does not compete in doubles as much and often has a different partner each time, as doubles partners change a lot, especially for younger players, Svete said.

She also competed in Women’s singles and made it to second round, where she upset Italy’s Flavia Pennetta, the 12 seed, to move on to the third round.

“Beating Pennetta was a great win, especially in a slam,” Lauren wrote. “I know she is older and more experienced, and is known to make it far in the grand slams, so I was very thrilled to beat her. We had a really great, hard fought match. I want to thank God for all of my success.”

Advancing to the third round on her second trip to Wimbledon bested Lauren’s first-round performance last year. It also tied her best performance in the major tournaments, after getting to the third round of the Australian Open earlier this year.

“I am never really satisfied with my performance because I believe I can always do better and there is always room for improvement,” she wrote. “My goal going into Wimbledon was to just stay in the moment, enjoy this amazing opportunity and to do the best I can.”

Svete said that Lauren had an amazing performance and that it helped improve her confidence.

Now ranked 44th in the world, according to tennis.com, Lauren isn’t done yet.

After about a week break spending time with family and friends in both Ohio and Florida, she is now back in training for the U.S. Open, held in Flushing Meadows, New York in late August.

Serving up Success

One might ask, what does it take to be successful at an elite level, as Lauren is?

“The best way to describe Lauren is that she is a very hard worker dedicated to trying to be the best tennis player she can be and, most importantly, she has not allowed her success to go to her head or act any differently than she did before,” Svete wrote, adding Davis is very modest and compassionate, and participates in many charitable organizations and children’s tennis activities.

Svete advised parents and grandparents of athletes to support them by always remaining positive, to give them confidence and to make sure they believe in themselves.

“Under no circumstances should you be critical of their performance,” he said “Always look at the positive aspect of whatever they do ... every play may have some positive aspect. If they have a love for the sport, that’ll give them some additional incentive to excel.”

Lauren gave advice to other aspiring athletes hoping to go pro in sports.

“Being a successful professional athlete is incredibly tough, but can also be very rewarding,” she wrote. “It takes 100 percent of hard work day in and day out, so you really have to love what you do. And you may fail over and over, but it’s the person who continues to get back up and work even harder (who) is the one that’s going to be successful.”

“Always believe in yourself, even when no one else does. Absolutely anything is possible if you are willing to work for it. Ignore the critics.”

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