

Chagrin

VALLEY TIMES



Photos by John Reid

Ashley Carocci, 29, of Niles, right, helicopter pilot John Marstellar and Ms. Carocci's friend, Fred Mahan (not pictured) land in an M44 helicopter behind Chagrin Valley Farms in Bainbridge on Monday. As a Christmas present, Mr. Mahan and another friend, Tommy Ross, gave Ms. Carocci gift certificates for a helicopter ride and a horse riding lesson, so that she could check the items off her bucket list.

Riding high

Dreams come true thanks to a horse and a helicopter

By **KRISTA S. KANO**

Back in November, three friends filled out a "Have You Ever?" questionnaire.

Fred Mahan, Tommy Ross and Ashley Carocci have been friends for years and they thought it would

be fun to find out what each other had done. Each item on the list had a point value, and the three friends wanted to see who would come out on top.

Ms. Carocci, 29, of Niles was able to check everything off the list except two items: riding in a helicopter and riding a horse.

As of Monday afternoon, Ms. Carocci can now check off both of those items, when she boarded

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Ashley Carocci meets Melvin the horse in his stable. The one-hour riding lesson, as well as the helicopter ride that brought her from Pittsburgh to the farm, were a gift from her best friends.

Residents upset over plans to clear 420 trees at LaDue

By **JOAN DEMIRJIAN**

Proposed logging of 420 trees around the 42-acre LaDue Reservoir in Auburn is drawing protests from some neighbors of the property owned by the city of Akron.

Auburn residents John and Tracy Clark asked Township Trustees during a Monday meeting for assistance.

There are about 20 acres of farm field where logging will not take place and 12 acres of water, Mr. Clark said. "So 420 trees will be

removed on about 15 acres that are left."

The assumption is that the city will use an existing road to the property to get to the trees. Mr. Clark said he has tried to talk to Akron city officials, but cannot get any answers.

City representatives were invited to a meeting of neighbors last week at the Bainbridge Library but they did not show up, he said.

The Clarks said they live across from the property that is bounded

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Man sentenced to four years in prison for felonious assault

By **JOAN DEMIRJIAN**

It was standing room only last week in the courtroom of Geauga County Common Pleas Judge Carolyn Paschke as defendant James Reed, 71, of Bainbridge was sentenced in a case involving a shot fired at police officers last spring. No officers were injured in the May 9, 2017 incident at Mr. Reed's house on Kingsley Drive.

Judge Paschke on Jan. 31 sentenced Mr. Reed to four years in prison, giving him credit for the 266 days he has already served in

the Geauga County jail awaiting his trial.

Gauga County Prosecutor James Flaiz had asked for a five-year sentence. "If you shoot at police, you should go to prison, and the judge agreed," Mr. Flaiz said.

Seven Bainbridge officers attended the sentencing last week in support of police and more than 20 friends and family members were in the courtroom to support Mr. Reed.

Charges against Mr. Reed stem

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a helicopter in Pittsburgh, flew to Chagrin Valley Farms in Bainbridge and had a horse riding lesson.

On Monday, Mr. Mahan explained that he and Mr. Ross had no further intentions when they asked Ms. Carocci to answer the questionnaire, but when they started thinking about Christmas presents, they remembered the list and knew they had to act.

Mr. Mahan enlisted the help of his helicopter pilot friend, John Marsteller, who owns a helicopter touring business, Stellar Copters, and then he started using Google to find riding lessons in the area. He found Chagrin Valley Farms and sent them an email, asking if they could land a helicopter at the Bainbridge farm, and take a riding lesson to fulfill Ms. Carocci’s two desires.

“It was an oddball request,” said Chagrin Valley Farms instructor Sue Ford of Auburn. “It was crazy good fun. I’ve been doing this a long time, and I’d never had a request like that. Making people’s dreams come true, how cool is that?”

Once the plans were set, Mr. Mahan and Mr. Ross then had to keep the secret, though they teased it leading up to Christmas. They put the helicopter and riding gift certificates in a big box and gave it to Ms. Carocci the day after Christmas at a party.

“I was shocked,” said Ms. Carocci, who works for the Mahoning County Board of Developmental Disabilities. “Shocked that they did it, shocked that they remembered. It was a big surprise and they really hyped it up until Christmas.”

Leading up to Monday, Ms. Carocci said that she was not at all nervous to be in a helicopter or to ride a horse.

“You think it’s not a big deal, until you get in the helicopter and the wind catches up,” she said. “And then that first little swirl, your stomach drops.”

Sitting in the front seat next to Mr. Marsteller, Ms. Carocci quickly eased in to the ride and enjoyed a new view of her hometown, Pittsburgh. Mr. Mahan also enjoyed the helicopter ride, especially trying to locate the stadiums.

When the M44 helicopter landed behind Chagrin Valley Farms, Ms. Carocci stepped out wearing, fittingly, riding boots. Ms. Ford met her in the stables, where Ms. Carocci was introduced to her horse for the day, Melvin, a former race horse who is frequently used as a training horse at the farm.

Ms. Carocci mounted Melvin in the newly heated riding arena, and according to Ms. Ford, took to horseback riding immediately, giving Melvin a gentle squeeze with her legs and confidently saying, “Walk on.”

“She’s kind of a horse whisperer,” Ms. Ford said. “Most people can’t do this that fast. To find that rhythm to stand up and sit down with their trot is very unusual.”

Ms. Carocci said that she hopes to return to Chagrin Valley Farms with her mother, who lives in Southington, and sister for another lesson with Melvin.

“I thought I’d be one of those people who, you know, a 6-year-old could show me up, so it was exciting to know I can do this,” Ms. Carocci said.

New Geauga County probate magistrate named

Gauga County Probate and Juvenile Court Judge Timothy J. Grendell swore in former Geauga County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Abbey King, welcoming her as a part-time magistrate.

Prior to her appointment at the court, Mrs. King was an assistant prosecuting attorney in the Geauga County Prosecutor’s Office for more than six years, where she gained

experience in multiple realms, including criminal, civil and juvenile law, and had the opportunity to prosecute various appeals. For the past five years, Mrs. King represented Geauga County Job and Family Services, and handled the child abuse, neglect and dependency cases in juvenile court.

Judge Grendell said the addition of Mrs. King to the staff “facilitates the court’s ability to address the

needs of Geauga County families and youth, and expedite the adjudication of cases before the court. “This will allow me, as probate judge, more time to address the needs of seniors and the county’s most vulnerable; and as juvenile judge, focus on the rehabilitation efforts of youth who come before the court, which combined will result in improved services for Geauga County seniors and families.”

Police briefs

Woman charged with theft

On Friday, a Bainbridge police officer was driving north on Chillicothe Road (Route 306) when he saw a southbound vehicle that was known to be involved in thefts. The owner had a warrant for failing to appear in court for a theft incident. The car was found by the officer in

the Giant Eagle store parking lot. The woman driving was not the owner of the vehicle but also had a warrant for theft, according to police.

Items valued at \$118.05 were found in the car that had been placed in Giant Eagle grocery bags and taken from the store. The incident was viewed on security videos in the store. Police charged Diamond Evans, 21, of Maple Heights with possession of criminal tools and theft. She was transferred to Geauga County jail based

on a previous warrant. A 14-year-old male in the car was transferred to the Portage County Detention Center, according to the police report.

Walker finds package

A Bainbridge resident found an Amazon package while walking her dog Jan. 27 on Hawksmoor Way. She gave it to Bainbridge police. They contacted the Solon Police Department where there were recent thefts of such packages.

Logging continued from Page 1

by Bartholomew, Taylor May, Thorpe and Auburn roads. “We bought our property some 20 years ago knowing there was a reservoir there, and it would remain a reservoir. What the city is going to do is change it from an ecosystem that buffers the water before it enters the watershed and turning it into a cesspool.”

They first learned about the logging while walking around the area. The trees were all marked with paint. They noticed again later that the trees were marked with fresh paint. Up to 90 percent would be destroyed, the Clarks said.

Later, the Clarks received a notice from Akron about the logging that would generate from \$50,000 to \$75,000 in revenue for the city. Mrs. Clark noted that the logging will have an impact on all the surrounding areas. Flooding could be a result, she said.

The Wendell R. LaDue Reservoir is in Auburn and Troy townships. It was completed in 1962 after the Black Brook and Bridge Creek were dammed for the reservoir. Akron owns 8,791 acres in Auburn and Troy in Geauga County for the reservoir. About 1,477 acres are under water.

Mr. Clark noted that the Akron Watershed Superintendent Jessica Glowczewski issued a letter last August to neighbors reporting that a patrol of the property in the Auburn, Bartholomew and Thorpe roads neighborhood revealed that a large portion of the Akron property was identified as being illegally used for all-terrain and other off-road vehicles.

The city considers criminal trespass, especially with motorized vehicles, as a serious offense and actively prosecutes offenders, she said. It causes erosion, and ATV use increases the amount of sediment and pollutants that can make their way to Bridge Creek, as well as destroying valuable sensitive natural areas.

Bridge Creek flows into LaDue Reservoir, which empties into the Cuyahoga River and

then to Lake Rockwell, which is the water supply for Akron. The city purchased upstream properties to act as natural buffers to reduce the amount of sediment and pollutants that reach the Lake Rockwell Reservoir.

During the patrol, there was evidence of illegal timber cutting and maple tree tapping, Ms. Glowczewski said in the letter, and the city takes those offenses seriously.

A second letter that was circulated to neighbors of the area last fall noted that Akron would be logging the site, the Clarks said.

“They will log, and our taxes will pay,” Mr. Clark said referring to the money Akron would make from the felled trees. “We will have to pay for any repairs to the roads from the logging trucks, and they don’t pay a single dime to the township.”

In addition, he said, they will be removing the black cherry trees that are used by the Indiana bat for nesting.

In a phone conversation he had with a representative of the city, Mr. Clark said he was told the logging was a pilot program. “So that means there is the potential to log the 9,000 acres.”

Auburn Road Superintendent Emerick Gordon said the township can ask the Geauga County Sheriff’s Office to put out scales to weigh the logging trucks. While the township can’t stop the logging, “we can make them honor the weight limit,” Mr. Gordon said.

The site is zoned passive open space, and Auburn Zoning Inspector Frank Kitko noted Monday that logging is considered agriculture and is exempt from zoning.

Mr. Clark said, “I don’t have an issue with logging, but when you do it in a manner with a pilot program and don’t want to talk to anyone that is very concerning. It doesn’t pass the test of what is better for the environment. There should be a plan in place by Akron that covers the recovery of disturbed soils to prevent those soils from going into water sources or on roads where the soils will get washed back to the water source.”

Mr. Clark said he has not found a

storm-water protection plan for the proposed logging. A plan should be in place to minimize run-off water after the trees are removed. The run-off water can cause algae in drinking water, he noted.

“The reason is to protect the water source for everyone and especially where everyone is on a private well.”

With the nesting period for the Indiana bat in March, Akron has to do the logging before the nesting season starts otherwise it will have to wait until October, Mr. Clark said.

He said logging has the potential for destroying the water’s ability to seep back into the aquifer. It can increase the erosion that can cause the blue green algae growth. It eventually ends up down river in Lake Erie, he said.

Auburn Trustee Patrick J. Cavanagh suggested that residents contact Ohio Rep. Sarah LaTourette, R-Chester, as a public voice in the issue.

Trustee Michael Troyan said they can send a letter to Akron and contact the Geauga County Prosecutor’s Office as well.

He said Tuesday, “The trees are part of the rural atmosphere. You don’t want it to turn into a mud hole. I understand their concerns.” He said the township will be looking into working with the Geauga County Engineer to put a performance bond in place regarding the weight limits on the roads.

“We take it seriously. They are our constituents and if there is a problem we will help them out,” Mr. Troyan said. Akron can’t be forced into any action because they have a right to log the property, “however many people don’t want trees removed in Auburn and turning it into a desert,” he said. “And if they get away with this, where do they stop?”

Mr. Clark said he will be busy making more calls. “If someone can prove to me that it involves the best forest management practices, I’m all for it. My experience and expertise tells me however that is not the case.”

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