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# The Delaware Gazette

DELAWARE COUNTY'S ONLY DAILY NEWSPAPER



Page 14

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2008

50 CENTS

## WEDNESDAY'S WEATHER



FORECAST PAGE 2

## POLLING BY PRECINCT

For a precinct-by-precinct account of how Delaware County cast its votes in the Nov. 4 election, visit [www.delgazette.com](http://www.delgazette.com).

## INSIDE



OPINION  
Seize your day. Page 4



SPORTS  
Bishops' Wall named NCAC Player of the Week. Page 7

## ONLINE POLL

Visit [www.delgazette.com](http://www.delgazette.com) to answer this week's latest poll question:

Should Delaware County's lame-duck commissioners continue to pursue the design of a new courts building despite opposition from the incoming commissioners?

- A) Yes
- B) No

Readers commenting on this question after voting may have their comments printed on the *Gazette's* editorial page.

## INDEX

- Movies ..... Page 3
- Home ..... Page 6
- Sports ..... Page 7
- Classifieds ... Page 9
- Obituaries .... Page 12
- Veteran's Page Page 14
- Comics ..... Page 22

## Thank You

Thank you, Norm Higgins, for subscribing to *The Delaware Gazette*, and thank you, Columbus State, for your advertising support.

## Myers \$10 million suit against county continues

By ANDREW TOBIAS  
Staff Writer

Despite some aspects of the case being thrown out by a federal judge last week, a lawyer for former county sheriff Al Myers said the "meat and potatoes" of the \$10 million defamation lawsuit he filed against the county are still intact.



Myers

U.S. Judge John D. Holschuh, in a judgment filed last week, found in favor of some aspects of a motion filed by attorneys representing former interim sheriff Mark Wolfe, commissioner Jim Ward and Delaware County to dismiss the case, filed in Aug. 2007.

Please see MYERS, Page 3

## Authorities ID body found in Hoover reservoir

Staff reports

Authorities have released the identity of a body found last week in a vehicle submerged in Hoover Reservoir.

Genoa Township Police Detective Molly Welch said the body was identified as Mohamed Rihani, a Columbus man who has been missing since November 2005. The cause of his death has been ruled a suicide by the Franklin County Coroner's Office, which identified the body after it was removed from a Honda Civic registered to Rihani.

Please see BODY, Page 3

## Hanks declares commissioner candidacy



Hanks

By ANDREW TOBIAS  
Staff Writer

Delaware County Auditor Todd Hanks wants to be the third new face on the county's board of commissioners come January.

Hanks has formally declared his candidacy to complete the remaining two years of commissioner Kris Jordan's term. He requested the party's appointment to the position in a Nov. 9

letter to county GOP chairwoman Teri Morgan. Hanks' announcement confirms what some have privately speculated for months. He said he had been thinking about running for the commissioner seat since the March primary.

Hanks is the first to publicly announce an interest in the party's appointment to the soon-to-be vacant commissioner seat. Jordan will leave the position in January following his successful

Please see HANKS, Page 3



Submitted

Five generations of the Sealey family live in six of the 19 Stratford area homes in the neighborhood known as 'Sealeyville.' (From left) Sandy and Mike Sealey, Richard Sealey, Jean Sealey, Debbie Byus, Ginger Williams and Lindsey Williams are descendants of civil war veteran Luther Sealey and Flora Tuller.

## ALL ROADS LEAD TO HOME

### Five generations rooted in 'Sealeyville'

By CONNIE E. CURRY  
Special to the Gazette

Where is Sealeyville? Maybe it should be on a Delaware map, but it isn't. A section of old homes, all well preserved and neat with much history and family devotion, Sealeyville is actually a small part of Stratford Road where beautiful, restored older homes are located.

Most of the road is in the city limits but this small section of homes on Stratford Road, just off U.S. 23 isn't. It has been surrounded by the Sealey family for 144 years.

Today, five generations of this family are neighbors. From U.S. 23 to Olentangy Street are 19 homes, six of which are owned by decedents of Luther Sealey, a civil war veteran,

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and Flora Tuller, a young, single woman who came riding up a dirt road looking for work.

It was 1862 and Ohio 315 was a dirt road and Stratford Road was then U.S. 23. Coming up that isolated road so many years ago was Flora Tuller in a horse and buggy. Near the bridge and where Carriage Town is today was a paper mill. Tuller sought work there and it was around 1862 that she met Luther Sealey who had just returned home from The Civil War. Luther and Flora married in July 1865 and raised two children, Glenn and Eva.

Luther continued working for the paper mill. Like many of the employees of the mill, the couple

rented a home on Stratford Road to be near their employer. Mike Sealey, great-grandson to Luther and Flora lives today with his wife, Sandy in the old homestead where Luther and Flora began their lives together. Glenn Sealey married Sylvia Piatt in 1924 and took up residency at 2461 Stratford Road just a few houses down from his parent's home. They raised two sons, Richard "Dick" and Robert, "Bob." CD+M Streetcar was just across the street from the string of homes. A fiberglass factory was at the end of Stratford Road just south of where Carriage Towne is today, until it was destroyed by a fire in 1969.

Bob Sealey didn't have to go far to find love when he became smitten for a neighbor girl, Jean Smale, who lived in a 12-room house near the old fiberglass factory. By then, Stratford Road (U.S. 23) was starting to develop. A mechanic shop,

Please see SEALEYVILLE, Page 3

## Task force recommends moving old Orange Road Bridge



Gazette Matt Emmons

A report released by the Orange Road Bridge Task Force this week recommends relocating the old Orange Road Bridge after a new one is built to replace it next year.

By MARK A. CLAFFEY  
Staff Writer

POWELL — Members of a 10-person task force have recommended that the historic Orange Road Bridge, which has been closed for more than a year, should be relocated somewhere else to a new site in the Olentangy Valley before Delaware County builds a new bridge next year.

Construction on the new bridge is scheduled to begin in 2009, with completion scheduled for summer 2009 or possibly 2010. Construction costs for the new bridge are estimated at \$3.2 million.

The recommendation to relocate the old Orange Road Bridge was one of eight made by the Orange Road Bridge Task Force to Liberty Township trustees. The task force group includes Max Holzer, Jim Bresnahan, Dana Freudman, Ellen Hardyman, Chuck Nitschke, Tom Rainey,

Pat Blayney and Frances Rourke.

Delaware County Engineer Chris Bauserman and Robert Riley, from the engineer's office, as well as Liberty Township Administrator Dave Anderson were also members of the group.

The group began meeting earlier this summer after Bauserman announced there was nothing Liberty Township residents could do to stop the construction of a new bridge, with the only question remaining what to do with the old one. Bauserman said it would cost the county \$500,000 to remove the old 1898 bridge in one piece and relocate it to a new site.

The task force is recommending that there be a citizen "Save the Old Orange Road Bridge" organization created by Jan. 31, 2009 to cause the relocation of the

Please see BRIDGE, Page 3



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## SEALEYVILLE

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

five filling stations, Riverview Bar, Garth Auction and a fire department which covered five townships was located very near the Sealey families. "We had four addresses and never moved and our mailbox never moved either," Jean Sealey said. "It was U.S. 3, Mounted Route 3, 1485 Stratford Road and finally 2523 Stratford Road."

Jean Sealey's roots are as grounded as her mailbox. After 57 years of marriage and the death of her husband Bob in 2007, she continues to live in her home, which was built in 1872, with family surrounding her. She has fond memories of living in Stratford her entire life.

"When I was a little girl, Mom would give me a bar of soap and send me to the river to bathe, wash my hair and to brush my teeth," Jean said. "It was ideal and the water was so clean." Richard, "Dick," and Robert, "Bob" worked as volunteer firemen for more than 20 years and Dick recalls many times being picked up by firemen from his home to go fight fires. Dick married Maribelle Shull and bought their first home in 1950 at 2461 Stratford Road, where they raised three children, Mike, Rodney and Kevin. Mike and wife, Sandy have lived at 2461 Stratford Road since buying it in 1988.

The neighborhood is full of family, an extra hand or many hands which are always available when needed.

"We have a doctor that bought a house between some of us and he always says he squeezed in between some Sealeys," Jean said.

Dr. Plummer moved in between the Sealeys in 1983 with two south of him, two north of him and Ginger just down the street.

"They are great neighbors and I hope I am as good a neighbor as they have been," he said.

Robert and Jean Sealey had three children, Deb, Steven and Ginger. Deb Byus, who owns the 2545 Stratford Road home, obviously loves being near family since she bought her home in 1989 and continues to live there with her husband, Wayne. Ginger Williams lives at 2537 Stratford Road and just recently her daughter, Lyndsey, bought 2643 Stratford Road home, making five generations on this block of homes.

"Many kids have learned to ride bikes up and down the sidewalk here," Jean said.

"We all grew up playing near the river," said Deb Byus. "Yep," said Jean.

"Summer, they were in it and in the winter, they were on it."

"I remember always being told to go to Grandma's when an emergency would arise," Deb said. "Everyone just looked after each other."

"And we all are still speaking," Jean said with a laughed.

Seems fitting that the family always gathers at Mike and Sandy's since their home is the original homestead "And no one is late for the traditional cookouts held at Mike and Sandy's home," Jean said. They gather each Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day and on Halloween before they all are inside for another winter.

"Mike always puts up the most Christmas lights," Deb Byus said. "We all help each other," said Jean Sealey. "Instead of joining a gym, I sweep all the way down the sidewalk."

Dick, who is widowed and retired now, enjoys getting out and mowing. Occasionally he even mows his son Mike's yard. Wayne Byus, son-in-law to Jean, mows her yard and everybody borrows from each other. "Yeah, I borrow tools from Dad," Mike said, referring to Dick. "And I go get them sometimes at Mike's," chimed in Dick. "And I just borrowed beef bouillon from Mom," Deb said.

Stratford Road may have changed some over the years but the Sealey family roots seem to live on and on.

"They all get married and just move next door," Jean said. "It's great."

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## VETERANS BACK HOME

# Iraq veteran wrestles with his invisible wounds

By DAVID CRARY  
AP National Writer

On the plus side, David McBee has a fiancée who stuck by him, a 2-year-old son who loves him. They've helped him persevere through dark times — blackouts, anger, confusion — as he struggles with the invisible wounds of his combat duty in Iraq.

As a Marine, McBee engaged in the initial assault on Iraq from Kuwait in 2003 and the often-chaotic battle of Fallujah in late 2004.

He returned to the United States in 2005, worked for a time with the postal service and got engaged. His fiancée, Audra Cardoza, gave birth to a son in 2006.

About a year after his return, McBee began to notice a change in his personality, including what he describes as "blackouts" — periods of time he couldn't account for.

"One day, me and my buddies and fiancée, we went out and started drinking," he said. "I had a meltdown. ... All this stuff that was in my head that I'd never said to anybody started com-

ing out. I couldn't stop crying."

The "stuff" included images of Fallujah residents, children among them, killed by his own unit as it swept through neighborhoods that were supposed to have been evacuated.

"We search houses. We see people in there — they're not supposed to be there. They're considered hostile. We just opened fire," he said.

"We saw a little kid in the middle road. There was no stopping the convoy. We ran him over."

McBee's condition worsened in June, after a friend and fellow veteran committed suicide. He checked into a veterans homeless shelter in Leeds, Mass., and was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder as well as alcohol dependence. He has suffered migraines, hearing loss, various back and shoulder problems.

At the shelter, McBee befriended Army Spc. Andrew Cotrel, also suffering PTSD linked to Iraq combat duty in 2003.

"My first day, Andrew was there. Two different parts of Iraq, two different things going on, and we had so many similarities," McBee said. "As a vet, you can just sit down and talk. You

have something in common, doesn't matter where you were, what you did. You know you both served."

They're among about 1,500 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars identified by the Department of Veterans Affairs as experiencing homelessness. The 120-bed Leeds shelter, run by a nonprofit called Soldier On, serves a handful of veterans who fought in those two wars, mixed with dozens who served in Vietnam.

The mission, says Soldier On, is to assist veterans with "picking up the pieces of their lives."

In August, McBee, now 24, moved in with Cardoza and their son, Aiden, in a small apartment in nearby Chicopee. He plans to enroll soon in six-week VA inpatient PTSD treatment program.

Aiden, says McBee, is the "best thing ever." "For a while, I didn't think anybody really cared for me — I didn't care about myself, so why would anybody else," he said. "To see him running up, his arms out, big smile, 'Daddy, Daddy, Daddy,' It's great."

## HANKS

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

election to the county's state representative post.

Morgan declined to say if anyone else had applied for the commissioner appointment. She said she would identify applicants after the Nov. 15 application deadline.

The party's central committee will appoint the new commissioner at a special Jan. 8 meeting to be held at the Delaware County Career Center North Campus. The party's screening committee is expected to recommend a candidate to the larger central committee for consideration next month.

Hanks said his fiscal background would be a valuable asset on the commission board. With declining revenues and possible budget shortfalls, the county is in an unprecedented economic situation, he said.

"The county is in a direction which is going to need sound leadership," he said.

Hanks said his government experience would allow him to "hit the ground running" and help commissioners-elect Ken O'Brien and Tommy Thompson learn the ins and outs of county governance. Hanks has been the county auditor since 2003.

Hanks has made local headlines as a result of his opposition to the current board of commissioners' efforts to build a \$51 million new county courts facility.

Hanks, whose signature was required to make the bonds valid, refused to certify the sale of \$51 million in bonds to help finance the building the commissioners approved in late August, saying the county couldn't pay for the extra expense.

The bonds have since been revoked and the decision whether or not to build the

courthouse is in the hands of the next board of commissioners.

If appointed commissioner, Hanks said he would maintain his opposition to the project in its present state. O'Brien and Thompson have also said they would not build the project in its current \$51 million configuration.

Commissioners Jim Ward and Glenn Evans, who will both be leaving office in early January, have been championing the need for a new courts building, saying the county's current 1870's-era building is inadequate and unsafe for an ever-increasing case volume.

Evans and Ward have at various points in time questioned Hanks' motivations in blocking the project.

Ward said Hanks' declaration of candidacy confirms his suspicions that his opposition to the courthouse was done for political reasons. The county's finances had been strong and a plan was in place to fund the courthouse, Ward said.

"This county is in very, very good shape financially," Ward said. "There's no reason for anyone to think otherwise."

Hanks denied that he has fought against the courthouse for political gain.

"I'd be against this thing regardless if I was commissioner, auditor or Joe Citizen," he said.

"This is just the wrong time and place for this kind of an expenditure," Hanks said. He said the county needed a new courts building, but said now isn't the right time.

If he is able to attain the appointment, Hanks would take a substantial pay-cut. In 2008, Ohio law dictated that Hanks made \$79,754, while all three commissioners made \$65,620.

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## BRIDGE

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

bridge before the completion of a new bridge. The task force suggests federal funding for the relocation of the old bridge, since it is on the National Registry of Historic Places, coupled with Delaware County and Liberty Township funds as well as funds raised by a "Save the Old Orange Road Bridge" organization from private funds contributed by the community.

"This task force is not planning to lead this effort to save and relocate the Old Orange Road Bridge, so it will be necessary for the advocates of moving the old bridge to organize as soon as possible," the task force report states.

Since 2001, Judith Brozek has lead the group Project Save Our Unique Landmark (SOUL) which has presented an alternative to the county engineer's preliminary plan regarding the bridge.

The group has continued to propose this same alternative for the past seven years, which permits two-way traffic over the river while still preserving the historic bridge and the character of the Olentangy Heritage Corridor.

Bauserman said the first phase of the project will include construction of a new bridge located about 200 feet north of the existing bridge, connecting a realigned Orange Road to Ohio Route 315. A temporary stop-controlled intersection will be built while plans for the proposed roundabout are finalized. The second phase of the project will include construction of a single lane roundabout at the intersection of Orange, Carriage and Ohio 315.

The conclusions and recommenda-

tions made by the task force include:

- Maintaining the natural setting of a new bridge with the reclamation of the post-construction site by utilizing larger caliper trees that are indigenous to the Olentangy Valley and make a maximum effort to make the new bridge as invisible as possible.

- Upon the completion of construction return the site to its natural forest and meadow appearance as it was before the construction of the bridge and the subsequent roundabout is completed.

- Use of guardrails over solid wall construction as a safety guard on both the north and south sides of the bridge.

- Construction of a walkway inside the north guardrail for future pedestrian and/or a bicycle crossing.

- Construction of concrete bridge foundation abutments and bridge deck walls on the north and south sides of the bridge.

- The proposed roundabout should include at least three major trees planted in the roundabout.

Task force members state in the overview section of the report that all of its members, including Bauserman, agreed that maintaining the historic character of the Olentangy Valley and its river takes precedent over preserving any of the individual amenities that are part of the valley's character such as the old Orange Road Bridge.

Delaware County commissioners approved preliminary engineering plans for a the new Orange Road Bridge on Oct. 2. Bauserman said the project has begun seeking contractors for the project.

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## BODY

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In a missing persons report to the Columbus Police Department in November 2005, Rihani was described as suicidal, according to the statement.

Genoa Township Police Detective Molly Welch said Rihani's valuables and personal effects were found on his person

and that there were no obvious signs of physical trauma. The case was consistent with Rihani driving his vehicle into the water, the detective said.

Genoa Township police and fire pulled the vehicle from the water after Columbus Water Shed personnel noticed it while removing docks in preparation for winter.

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## MYERS

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

However, the judge declined to dismiss other aspects of the suit that alleged that Wolfe and Ward, acting as individuals independently of the county, violated Myers' constitutional right to due process.

Claims that Wolfe, Ward and the county allegedly violated Myers' constitutional right to free speech, as well as defamation claims remain. Those claims are currently still pending.

The lawsuit centers around a June 2007 press release issued by Wolfe to various media outlets that said he was launching an investigation after the "horrific discovery" of child pornography on a computer used by Myers, who had resigned the week before following unrelated ethics violations.

An internal memo surfaced shortly afterward indicating that the images were legally there as part of a criminal investigation.

The complaint names Wolfe and Ward as defendants not only in their capacities as county officials but also as individuals, which means they could be held personally liable if the court rules in Myers' favor.

Assuming that all the allegations made in the lawsuit are true, Holschuh wrote "it could reasonably be inferred that Wolfe had both a motive and an intent to injure (Myers) in a way unjustifiable by any government interest."

Further, the judge wrote that if "Wolfe knew that the child pornography found on (Myers') computer was, in fact, related to an official investigation and yet, against the advice of the county prosecutor, in a personal, unwarranted attack on (Myers') character and reputation, used his position as the county sheriff to issue a press release branding (Myers) as a 'child pornographer,' such egregious conduct would, in this Court's view, shock the conscience."

The judge also wrote that, assuming the allegations were true, Wolfe further violated county policy by publicly discussing an ongoing investigation, releasing the county of liability in this specific claim.

The defense attorneys had initially asked that the lawsuit be dismissed entirely, but later limited their motion to only dismiss claims that Myers' due process rights were

violated.

W. Charles Curley, a lawyer representing Ward in the case, said he was satisfied the court was reviewing the matter thoroughly, and expected his client to be absolved.

"I am confident that when the merits of the case are decided, commissioner Ward will prevail," Curley said.

Columbus-based attorney Bob Palmer, who is representing Myers, noted that the judge found the alleged activity by Ward and Wolfe "shocked the conscience," a crucial legal standard for Myers' claim.

"The meat and potatoes of the case are still very viable," Palmer said.

Delaware County Prosecutor Dave Yost has said Wolfe issued the press release against his advice. That aspect of the case is noted in Myers' complaint and creates the potential that Yost could be called upon to testify in the case, a reason why the prosecutor's office is not representing the county.

The case is moving slowly; the dismissal motion was initially filed more than a year ago, and at least one attorney said it would be "a good while" before a trial date is even set.

Wolfe was appointed to the interim sheriff post by the commissioners after Myers stepped down from the position amid ethics violation charges in May of 2007. Myers later pleaded guilty to those charges.

Wolfe and Myers are former political rivals. Wolfe unsuccessfully ran against Myers for the sheriff's position in 2000 and again in 2004. Ward, who himself unsuccessfully ran for sheriff against Myers in 1992, had openly backed Wolfe in both elections.

A message left with Maribeth Deavers, an attorney who is representing Wolfe and the county, was not returned.

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