

TODAY'S WEATHER



HIGH 70
LOW 33

SUNDAY'S WEATHER



HIGH 42
LOW 28

FORECAST PAGE 2

INSIDE



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Faulty spiritual doctrine has led to wrong political doctrine. Page 4



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Bishop baseball starts season with huge win, two losses to Oshkosh on Sunday. Page 9

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“

I distrust those people who know so well what God wants them to do, because I notice it always coincides with their own desires.

— Susan B. Anthony, American feminist (1820-1906)

”

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MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2006

50 CENTS

Freezin' for a reason



Gazette Amy Allan

The 4th annual Freezin' for a Reason Polar Bear Plunge took place Saturday in the frigid waters of Alum Creek State Park. About 50 people collected donations and took the plunge, which benefits the Special Olympics.

Held keeps family business rolling



Gazette Amy Allan

Bob Held, affectionately known to many of his customers as "Taxi Bob," is the owner of the Delaware Cab Company. Held's family has owned the local business since 1896, making it the second-oldest family-owned cab company in the United States, behind Pennsylvania's International Taxi Cab Service.

Meet 'Taxi Bob'

By CONNIE E. CURRY
Special to the Gazette

OUR NEIGHBORS

• Submit your nominee to newsroom@delgazette.com.

Numerous taxicabs circle New York City. The chaos and the fast pace as the drivers make u-turns, accelerate and hit their brakes are like watching a stock car race.

Cab drivers subcontract, competing among other cab drivers to make a decent salary. The personal touch gets lost in big cities.

Many smaller communities have a cab service. Locally, Bob Held, affectionately known as "Taxi Bob," is the owner of the Delaware Cab Company. Customers share laughs and receive a personal touch, as Bob knows most by their first names. As he drives, he regales riders with humorous stories and jokes.

The Held family has owned the business in Delaware since 1896, making it the second oldest family-owned cab company in the nation, behind the Pennsylvania-based International Taxi Cab Service.

William Held, Bob's grandfather, was a train engineer until controversy over joining the union surfaced and he lost his job. He opened a livery stable and hotel in Delaware on the corner of Winter and Union streets. An 1890 horse-drawn Studebaker carriage that hauled between four and six passengers was the first mode of cab service

for the Helds until the automobile was invented.

William Held bought a house at 23 E. William St., making a home for his wife, Anna Marie, and their four sons. The cab office was in the front of the house, while living quarters were in the back.

When William Held died in 1934, Anna Marie and William's son, Walter, continued running the business.

Joe Held, the youngest son of William and Anna Marie and a World War II veteran, took a huge interest in the family business and became manager in 1947. Joe married Jessie Humes and they raised three children — Joe Jr., Ann and Bob.

In 1956, the Sohio Company

Please see TAXI, Page 3

POWELL SAFETY CONFERENCE

Speaker offers advice about protecting your children

By DON E. BRUCE
Staff Writer

When his young daughter, wearing a blanket over her head, tottered into his and his wife's bedroom, Ed Smart thought the girl's story about a stranger taking her sister was just a bad dream.

He shoed her back to her room, but when she refused he slid from bed, took Mary Katherine by the hand and led her back to her bedroom.

Even when he entered Mary Katherine and Elizabeth's bedroom and found Elizabeth missing, he wasn't concerned. He quietly walked down the hall checking the bedrooms of his other children, fully expecting to find his oldest daughter asleep in one of the other children's beds.

By the time he had peeked into the second bedroom, his heart was pounding. Elizabeth was nowhere to be found.

Once the police were notified, Smart called everyone he knew, begging them to help him search, while his family flooded his daughter's bedroom looking for any signs that might give them a hint of Elizabeth's whereabouts.

Smart told a crowd of 400 people Saturday at the Powell 2006 Safety Conference held at Olentangy Liberty High School that both of those steps were mistakes.

Smart was the featured speaker at the conference, which offered advice about protecting children online and in the real world, and offered an inside look at how an online sexual predator can engage in explicit conversations and exchange explicit photos with a young child.

His daughter's abduction in 2002 was publicized nationally after she was taken at gunpoint from her bedroom while her family slept nearby.

Elizabeth was missing until March 2003, when callers tipped off law enforcement officials to the location of her abductor, Brian David Mitchell, aka Emmanuel, a self-described wandering preacher who



Smart

Please see SAFETY, Page 3

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Man posing as agent

Staff reports

The Delaware County Sheriff's Office is seeking information about a man who has been posing as a federal agent to gain entry into several Delaware County homes.

No one has been hurt in the incidents and no items have been stolen.

Friday evening, a man approached Galena resident Jeff Van Loon's home and forced his way inside after flashing a badge and claiming to be a federal agent.

"He said I was being placed under arrest for drug trafficking," Van Loon told NBC 4 Saturday. "I told him he must be out of his mind. He was at the wrong residence. There's no drug trafficking going on here."

The man, who Van Loon said identified himself as Lt. Ferguson, was wearing plain clothes and what appeared to be a Drug Enforcement Administration baseball cap.

The man led Van Loon to a back room, handcuffed him and questioned him.

The man asked Van Loon about several people, including a neighbor the man said faced drug charges.

The man eventually removed the handcuffs from Van Loon and ran to a red vehicle, believed to be a Ford Mustang that was parked across the street.

Authorities said a woman might have driven the man away.

Delaware County sheriff's deputies arrived on the scene a few minutes after receiving a call about the incident.

"He's not affiliated with our office or any other law enforcement agencies at this point," Sgt. David Butler said.

The suspect is described as a 35- to 40-year-old white man with a dark complexion, a goatee and dark hair.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Delaware County Sheriff's Office at 740-833-2800.

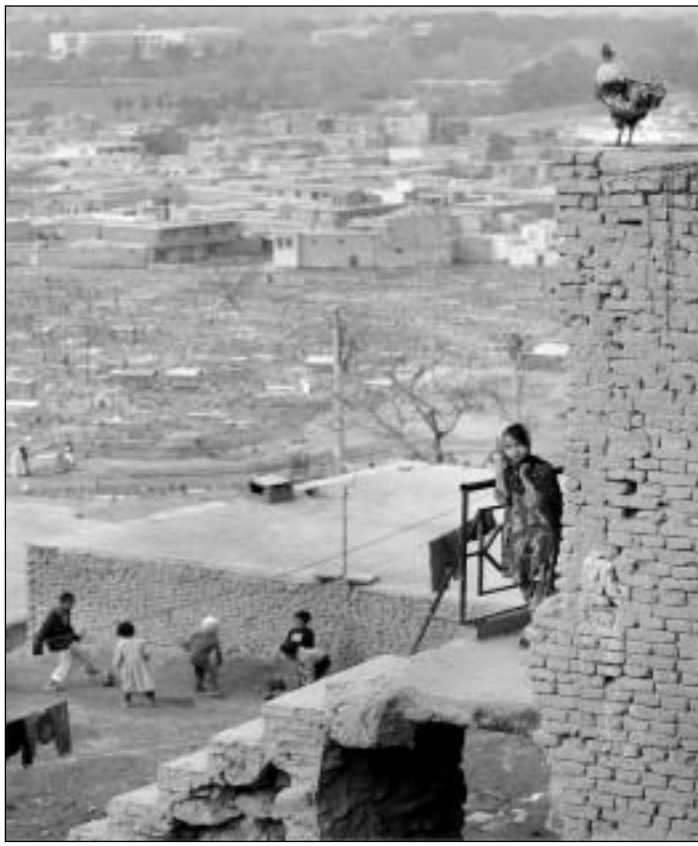
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Milosevic had drug in system

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — A Dutch toxicologist said today he found traces of an unprescribed antibiotic in Slobodan Milosevic's system earlier this year after the former Yugoslav leader did not respond to blood pressure medication given at the U.N. detention center.

Donald Uges said he found traces of rifampicin, an anti-tuberculosis drug that "makes the liver extremely active" and thus breaks down other medications very quickly, possibly taking away their effectiveness.

Roof rooster



Associated Press David Guttenfelder

A rooster stands on the roof of a house in Kabul, Afghanistan, as Afghan children play soccer on a hillside above the city's main cemetery today. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization said five swab samples from backyard poultry farms in Kabul and the eastern city of Jalalabad tested positive today for the H5 strain of bird flu, and that tests were under way to discern if it is the deadly H5N1 virus.

SAFETY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

claimed to minister to homeless people at shelters across the country.

Smart, dressed in a black suit and yellow tie, told attendees that his daughter's room was "the most unsecured criminal scene ever," but like most families, neither he nor his family had any idea of how to react in the event of an abduction.

Smart said that like many other unsuspecting parents, he believed that abductions and crimes of that nature simply would not happen where he lived.

"I never thought that anything like what happened could happen. It was always that other person, that this horrible thing happened but that's just not going to happen to me," Smart said. "Even that morning I couldn't believe it."

When police initially questioned Smart and his wife, Lois, about what they had done to their daughter, Smart said the two were very offended, but he told the audience that was a necessary step in the process of determining what had happened to his missing daughter.

Smart said the Amber Alert system, which sends out statewide media alerts when children are abducted and expected to be in danger, is a tool that helps bring children home. He chastised politicians, whom he did not name, who he said dragged their feet on nationalizing Amber Alert due to their own political agendas.

Smart said he told one politician prior to the nationalization of the program that "the blood of those children will be on your head."

Applause broke out a moment later when Smart again spoke against political maneuvering involving the enactment of laws designed to protect children.

"(Politicians) are to speak on our behalf, on our children's

behalf, not have so much of a personal agenda ... not to be playing politics so that these laws that can really make a difference — they can't cure but they can make a difference — can happen," Smart said.

The conference also featured a taped presentation by members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation of an online interaction between an adult female and a young female who engaged in an online chat through a popular Internet chat program.

The chat, which began with simple pleasantries, quickly led into an exchange of explicit digital images sent from the adult female to the minor child and inquiries as to the sexual orientation of the girl.

A publication distributed at the event, "Internet Safety: What you don't know can hurt your child," details ways parents can protect their children.

According to the publication, parents should watch for specific warning signs that their children might be at risk online.

- Some of those signs include:
- Time spent online
 - Finding pornography on your child's computer
 - Phone calls for your child from numbers you do not recognize
 - Unsolicited mail or gifts
 - Concealing computer content
 - Your child has multiple e-mail accounts

An online version of the booklet can be found in Adobe .pdf format at www.ag.state.oh.us/citizen/pubs/06internet_safety.pdf.

dbruce@delgazette.com

TAXI

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

bought the cab company's location, and Joe Sr. moved the cab company to 9 N. Union St., where it stands today.

"My mom dispatched the cab calls when we were young. Brother Joe and I played cab games and pretended we worked on the cab long before we were old enough to drive," Bob said.

Reminiscing with fond memories of his father, Bob recalled many times when his dad would drop him off or pick him up at St. Mary School in between hauling customers.

By 1987, when Bob's dad died of a heart attack, Bob had relocated and was teaching history at a high school in Cincinnati.

"A school levy had failed and things looked bleak for the school district anyway," Bob said. Determined to keep the family business operating, Bob came home to manage the cab company.

"My dad worked so hard in this place," Bob said. "There wasn't a doubt I had to keep it going."

Bob has managed the family business for 29 years, and he remains enthusiastic. His customers aren't just fares; many are friends.

Proudly hanging in the office are numerous pictures, validating the generations and different modes of transportation of the Held family's cab service. The original hack owned by William Held is among much of the memorabilia that Bob has kept.

Bob puts in long, strenuous hours, often driving 500 miles a day to accommodate his regular cab riders. Many days, he has gone to Columbus six to eight times before noon, transporting his clients. It is typical for his day to start at 3 a.m. and he doesn't close the office until midnight, six days a week.

He still finds time to help coach his son, Cory, in soccer, basketball and baseball. Bob has coached baseball teams through the Delaware Parks and Recreation Department for 30 years. He is always there to help children that might need a father figure in their lives.

As Delaware grew, Bob's workload became hectic and full. He was aware that his cab service could not accommodate every customer's need in Delaware, so he formulated a plan.

Held saw an enormous need for inexpensive transportation service in the community. He recognized that many low-income residents and those on fixed incomes needed daily rides, many times into Columbus or farther. He knew people would be able to be employed if inexpensive rides were available daily for them to reach their employers.

Transporting people with special needs in a standard

vehicle became a liability and a huge insurance expense that became complicated for the cab company. Nonetheless, knowing it would increase his already busy workload, Bob decided to help those less fortunate by creating a public transit service.

Held and Bob Horrocks, executive director of the Council for Older Adults, mapped out the goals of the service with help from Bob Morgan, superintendent of the Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities. The Ohio Department of Transportation jumped on board to provide funding for the project.

"This service was clearly needed," Held said. "People should not have to work and spend a day of their salary for cab rides to Columbus."

Held supplied the first van to improve the public's accessibility to transportation. Additional handicapped-accessible vehicles were purchased to help those needing to go to the grocery store or a doctor's appointment.

Many loyal employees worked long hours without pay as the new service was organizing. Lori Poling was one such person who worked side by side with Bob Held as business increased and evolved into the Delaware Area Transit Authority. In 2003, DATA became a separate identity, and Poling continues to work there today.

"I observed (Bob Held's) kindness and patience when I worked for him at the cab company," Poling said. "When he picks people up from out of town, he doesn't just hurriedly drop them off at a motel. He tells them all about Delaware and loves to show them around. I miss not seeing Bob on a day-to-day basis. He was great to work for."

Competing with DATA has not been easy, even though Held is proud that DATA exists to help those in need.

"I'm not complaining. I am thrilled it is available," Held said. "I appreciate each contract that I have and the inexpensive rides DATA offers. We have plenty of contracts to share," Held added that while DATA does not operate in the evenings, the cab company does.

Today, the Delaware Cab Company has six cabs and two vans. A special charter service is available and the vans are used for group functions to reach their destinations.

Discounts are given when several people are heading to the same location. A courier service also is offered.

Cab drivers work for themselves but contract work through Held.

"They are his extended family," Poling said. "They all love working with him."

After nearly 30 years, Held still is motivated and energetic about improving the cab service. "Soon, I hope to assist people on Sundays so they can go to church," he said. "I also want to start a 'Tippy Taxi' service that will operate until 2:30 a.m. so people can get safely home after a night out."

"It isn't all about making money for Bob," Poling said. "When I think of Bob Held, I think four stars should be behind his name. I don't know anyone that doesn't love him and laugh when they think about his humor and compassion for people."

"Do you know that Bob gets up during the nights on a regular basis to take a dialysis patient to Doctor's North Hospital for treatment?" Poling continued. "He is always saddened when his customers are sick or die."

From helping people get connected with Meals On Wheels to giving someone in need a coat, Bob's generosity never stops. He is a great Dad and Wendy, his wife, is just as special. After all, one phone call at any hour and he leaves to help someone. Wendy and Cory share him with the entire community.

Bob regularly transports four co-workers home daily from their jobs in Westerville. James, Paul, Matt and Dan have nothing but the best to say when it came to Taxi Bob.

"Bob is the easiest guy in the world to get along with," James said.

"He's a cut-up and so ornery," Dan said with a chuckle.

"He's a swell guy," Matt added.

"He's hilarious!" Paul concluded.

Delaware residents can be thankful Held quit his teaching job and came back home so many years ago. His personality shines through as he deals daily with numerous people. For Held, being outgoing and funny comes naturally.

"I used to want to be a comedian," Held said.

To learn more about the cab company, visit www.DelawareCabCompany.com.

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