

**TODAY'S WEATHER**

HIGH 54  
LOW 36



**TUESDAY'S WEATHER**

HIGH 53  
LOW 21



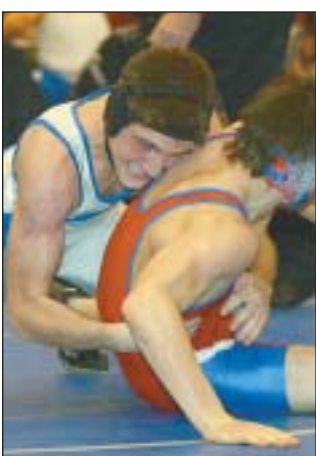
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**INSIDE**



**AUTO**

Hyundai gets back in the game with affordable Santa Fe. Page 7



**SPORTS**

Young pups get exposure. Page 9

**LETTERS TO SANTA**

The *Gazette* is again giving Santa Claus a hand this year by publishing letters to Santa. Children wishing to write a letter to Santa should keep it under 150 words. Please mail your letters to: Santa Claus c/o The Delaware Gazette 18 E. William St. Delaware, OH 43015 or send them via e-mail to [newsroom@delgazette.com](mailto:newsroom@delgazette.com). Letters will be accepted through Monday. Letters to Santa will be printed in the *Gazette* on Dec. 18, 19 and 20, and sent to the North Pole in time for Christmas Eve.



The photos seen in the *Gazette* daily are just a few of the images captured by our staff. Visit [www.delgazette.com](http://www.delgazette.com) to order more photos.

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DELAWARE, OHIO

188TH YEAR  
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# The Delaware Gazette



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MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2006

50 CENTS



Gazette Amy Allan

After the death of their daughter in 1998, Karen and Dave Burton have been raising her son — their grandson Trent.

## LIFE SUPPORT

Delaware's Burton family sticks together in the wake of tragedy

By CONNIE E. CURRY  
Special to the Gazette

Dave and Karen Burton married in May of 1976 with the same dreams that most middle class people have. They worked hard to make ends meet while raising their four children and wished for a modest home to call their own. Dave worked while also doing most of the work on their dream home to replace the crowded trailer in which they lived.

Their home was finally built on Downing Road, and with three rambunctious boys — Shawney, Glenn and Joe — and their daughter, Erica, all just a few years apart in age, it was always full of fun. From riding dirt bikes, fishing and swimming in the family pond to hunting and racing their bikes, life was never boring. Karen was always there to offer a helping hand to someone needing childcare.

“I don't ever recall not having kids here,” Karen said. Their lives changed on a cold Jan. 14 morning in 1998. Smoke woke Karen up. As she walked outside to investigate, she saw fire coming from the attic. By the time the fire department was able to extinguish the blaze, their home and almost all its contents were destroyed.

“Erica's room had the least damage, and the only pictures we had left were in an album from her room,” Karen said. They moved into a house Dave's parents owned as they began the difficult job of rebuilding their home. Some of the family copied pictures for Karen and Dave to help them replace old family photos.

At 18, Erica married and gave birth to the Burtons' first grandson, Trent, in July, 1998. Thirteen days later, Erica fed the baby, lay down beside him and died.

Shawn, Erica's husband, had called her that morning. Karen also had spoken to her by telephone, and had planned on helping her run errands.

Please see LIFE, Page 3

**OLENTANGY SCHOOLS**

## Postponing levy would be difficult for district



By MARK A. CLAFFEY  
Staff Writer

Olentangy Local School Superintendent Scott Davis said the difference to taxpayers would be minimal no matter if the district decides to place a proposed levy on the ballot in November of 2007 or May of 2008.

Boland

The district's finance and audit

committee recommended to the board on Dec. 1 not to go to the ballot in May of 2007 due to a number of unknown factors, including the school-funding situation and the arrival of the new governor and state legislature.

Davis outlined both proposed scenarios to board of education members

Please see LEVY, Page 3



Gazette Amy Allan

## For what it's worth

Tim French serves Mary Fischer some eggs benedict Saturday at the What Is It Worth breakfast held in the upstairs of the Hardware Exchange. This was Fischer's third year attending the breakfast and the Hardware Exchange's 29th breakfast overall.

## Boland to take Pataskala position

**Staff reports**

The man who, since 1999, has headed up Delaware County's efforts to lure new businesses to the area is leaving his post.

Tim Boland, Delaware County's current economic development coordinator, will resign the position effective Jan. 1, 2007. He has accepted a job as administrator of the city of Pataskala, and will start that position Jan. 2, 2007.

An agreement approved by Pataskala officials Nov. 29. will pay Boland \$90,000 annually in his new role. He received an annual salary of \$87,318 this year while in Delaware. He

informed the Delaware County commissioners of his departure last week.

During his time in Delaware, Boland assisted county officials in bringing several new businesses to the area, including a 300,000 square-foot CityGroup financial data center, expected to open in Liberty Township in 2008.

Before working for Delaware County, Boland served as the planning and zoning administrator for Perrysburg, Ohio.

Delaware County officials are expected to begin a search for Boland's replacement this month.

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Gazette Amy Allan

Noah, a 4-year-old participant in Saturday's "Shop with a Cop" day, takes a rest on the shoulders of Delaware County Sheriff Deputy Robert Weidig while his mother looks for a pair of pajamas at Meijer.

## Deputies bring Christmas cheer

By DON E. BRUCE  
Staff Writer

Saturday shoppers in Lewis Center might have thought a robbery or raid was in progress as vehicle after vehicle from the Delaware County Sheriff's Office streamed into Meijer's parking lot at 10 a.m.

However, the deputies and volunteers were actually there to bust the grinch this holiday season as they took more than 60 children from across the county on Christmas shopping sprees.

The event, part of the annual "Shop With A Deputy" program pairs underprivileged youth with a shopping buddy who helps them find clothing that fits and winter gear mixed with some of the children's favorite toys.

"Shop With A Deputy," hosted by the Delaware County Mounted Deputies, combines public donations with money donated by a host store to help make young wishes come true.

"It's helping the kids of the county and these kids are going to run our country one of these days and they need every chance they can get," said Walt Boham, the mounted deputy commander who organizes the annual shopping spree.

The program is designed to help children like Shaun, 5, a young boy whose father, John, a single father on social security, tries to make ends meet with the income they have but who could always use a helping hand. His son's school recommended the family for the program.

Shaun spent his shopping spree with a jolly Deputy Lawrence Bernstorff who helped him find new sweaters and other warm clothing and then led him to the toy department to find the youngster something a child would find more exciting than new clothing.

The program's shoppers spent approximately \$6,000 to \$7,000 dollars Saturday, \$4,000 of which was donated

Please see CHEER, Page 3

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**LIFE**

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"She was always so tired after having Trent," Karen said. "It wasn't the normal tiredness women have after giving birth. I knew something didn't seem right."

Repeat visits to doctors left her misdiagnosed; it was discovered too late that the entire placenta was not expelled from her after Trent's birth, which caused internal bleeding.

Later that morning, when Shawn called her again, he didn't get an answer. He left work to check on her. Dave and Karen arrived minutes behind Shawn.

"When I saw her on the bed, I dropped to my knees and begged God to take the life from me and give it to her," Karen said. Dave hit his head against the wall of the bedroom in shock. "I saw her eyes. They had that glazed look. I knew she was dead," Dave said, recalling that day that changed their lives forever.

After Erica's funeral, Shawn and Trent moved in with Dave and Karen.

"There is nothing worse than burying your child," Karen said. "I knew I had to live. I honestly don't think I would be here if Erica had not left Trent behind. He kept us going."

That fall, the Burtons moved into their rebuilt home. The one surviving photo album with tattered pages and loose pictures became the concrete evidence Trent had of a mother he would never know. Dave and Karen talked and reminisced about Erica, painting pictures in Trent's mind.

Just when life seemed to be getting easier, another tragedy tested their strength and faith.

On Oct. 20, 2002, Dave, his son, Shawney and grandson, Trent, who had just turned 4, were outside. Karen had taken a trip to Indiana with relatives. Dave was working on a family car. Tools were missing from his toolbox. He was upset at his boys for not returning them to their proper place. Shawney was teasing the dog.

Dave glanced up, looking for Trent. He called his name as he raced into the house searching for him. Silence.

Dave ran back outside and looked at the stillness of the pond in front of their home.

"Trent knew never to go near it," Dave said.

Trent was found floating in the water. "I don't remember jumping in to get him. I remember pushing his small body to shore. I was cussing, crying and I prayed," Dave said, tears welling in his eyes. "I knew instantly that if Trent died, I would die, too."

"It seemed time flew by as 9-1-1 was called and I starting pushing on his stomach. His eyes looked just like Erica's. They were glazed over and he was not breathing."

Trent had taken in so much water and was in full arrest when the squad came. The paramedics scooped him up, began CPR and headed for Grady Memorial Hospital's emergency room.

The Ohio Highway Patrol was called and a patrolman was sent to find Karen, who was on a chartered bus heading back to Delaware.

"Time flew for Dave but it stood still for me. I thought I'd never be able to get off that bus and get to my baby," Karen said.

Just as she got in the Trooper's cruiser, another call came.

"Trent was already being transferred from Grady Memorial to Children's Hospital. (We got to) the hospital ahead of the helicopter," Karen said.

Trent was on a respirator and was moved to a critical care room. Survival seemed unlikely and brain damage was obvious if he survived. His lungs were damaged extensively and a machine was keeping him alive. Dave was so upset, he was admitted to Mt. Carmel Hospital. Karen knew she must stay with Trent. Other family members stayed with Dave as his physical condition improved.

Glenn came to the hospital to reassure his mother.

"Mom, Trent is going to be OK. I just know it. He is coming home Friday," he said.

On the first evening that Karen stayed by Trent's side, she said there was a nurse that

constantly cared for him through the night.

"She introduced herself to me. Her name was Erica and I remember her telling me she would care for Trent that night," Karen said. "The next morning I walked to the nurse's station to look for Erica to thank her for the good care she had given Trent."

To her surprise, Karen was told there was no nurse named Erica assigned to care for Trent.

Karen knew she was not losing her mind but she never saw the nurse named Erica again.

"I honestly believe our Erica was there taking care of Trent," Karen said.

The second night, while Karen was alone listening to the machine push air into Trent's lungs, she looked up to God and raw emotions came from her heart and lips. She prayed and scolded God.

"Don't you dare take this child from me," she recalled saying. "It was your call when you took Erica. You took one I loved and raised and left this one behind for me to raise. You can't be selfish. This one is mine!"

The next afternoon, a miracle happened. Trent started taking breaths on his own. The respirator was not doing all the work and he was fighting back. It was time to wean him off the machine.

The medical staff was amazed. A doctor came in to check Trent.

"Do you know where you are?" he asked Trent as he checked him. "Can you squeeze my hand?" Trent squeezed as Karen watched. "Wiggle your toes," the doctor said, and Trent complied. "Give me thumbs up."

"To this day I'll never forget his little thumb sticking up," Karen said, smiling. "I could have jumped through the roof."

Life support was removed as Trent stabilized. "I'll never forget his first words — 'Grandma, I wanna go home,'" Karen said.

Trent was able to recall the near drowning to family and hospital staff. He remembered riding his bike down the hill and trying to steer away from the pond. The brakes weren't working, and he plunged into the cold water. He worried about his great-grandpa being mad at him for being near the pond.

"We are taught to do all we can," the doctor told Karen. "There is only so much we can do. No way should he be sitting up in bed. Someone higher up had a hand in this."

On a Friday, five days after the accident, and just like Uncle Glenn predicted, Trent got to go home.

Dave, along with many friends and relatives, has since drained the pond and filled the hole with dirt. "I had lost my faith," Dave said. "I opened my Bible and read a verse. 'On the third day He rose.' Trent rose on the third day and I got my faith back."

As Trent played with the new beagle puppies and scurried around their home, it was obvious that the 8-year-old's memory of that dreadful day had faded. The strong resemblance to his mom and uncles is obvious.

"I don't know my mom, but I know what she looks like," he said as he walked out carrying the photo album that, like Trent, has survived tragedy.

"We go to the cemetery each holiday," Karen said. "Trent and I put flowers on Erica's grave. The tombstone shows Erica reaching up to the angels. It says, 'God, take me home.'"

The picture above the Burton table says, "With God, all things are possible"; the family now knows how true that is.

# Escape attempts thwarted

**Staff reports**

Authorities thwarted two separate escape attempts by youths at the Scioto Juvenile Correctional Facility.

The first attempt took place Saturday when one male inmate managed to break free from the facility. He was found a mile away from SJCF.

He was captured at about 1 a.m. and

returned to the facility at 5993 Home Road.

A second attempt by five youths took place at about 8 p.m. Sunday. The youths were not accounted for as the facility did a night check and a search ensued.

The five were found on the facility's grounds at about 9 p.m. when they were spotted by a Columbus Police Department helicopter.

Officials with SJCF said they are not yet certain how the six youths managed to escape. They are also uncertain how the one youth was able to get outside of the facility's grounds.

Officials will be conducting an investigation this week to determine what led to the incidents.

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# Rocket launch that would have been first from mid-Atlantic spaceport is scrubbed

By **SONJA BARISIC**  
Associated Press Writer

ATLANTIC, Va. — The launch of a rocket carrying two satellites for the Air Force and NASA was scrubbed early today because of a problem with the flight software, officials said.

The mission, which would have included the first takeoff from the mid-Atlantic region's commercial spaceport, will be postponed until at least Wednesday while the problem is being resolved, said Neal Peck, program manager for the Air Force's TacSat-2 satellite.

Peck described the problem as an "anomaly with the spacecraft flight software." That problem, first discovered Sunday night,

would have prevented one of the satellites from getting enough power in space to conduct all its experiments.

"Rather than me standing in front of you in a few hours saying we have a serious problem with a spacecraft on orbit, we've caught it up before we've gone up," Peck said from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility, where the spaceport launch pad is located.

The 69-foot Minotaur I rocket was to have blasted off at 7 a.m. EST, carrying the TacSat-2, designed to test the military's ability to transmit images of enemy targets to battlefield commanders in minutes, a process that now can take hours or days.

Peck said the glitch occurred in software that controls the pointing of the satellite toward the sun, which helps it use solar rays

for battery charging. The panels are 45 degrees off.

"So we would not be receiving sufficient power to the spacecraft to power all our systems and to conduct all our experiments," Peck said.

Also aboard the rocket was the NASA's shoebox-size GeneSat-1 satellite, which carries a harmless strain of E. coli bacteria as part of an experiment to study the long-term effects of space on living organisms. The results could be useful for NASA's mission to Mars.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport, or MARS, is one of only six federally licensed launch centers in the country. The Air Force will pay the spaceport \$621,000 for the launch, spaceport director Billie Reed said Sunday.

## LEVY

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in a memo dated Nov. 30.

The board is expected to discuss both November and May possibilities during Tuesday's board of education meeting, slated to begin at 6 p.m. at the district's administrative building, 814 Shanahan Road, Lewis Center. The deadline for placing an issue with the board of elections on the ballot for May 2007 is Feb. 22.

Scenario one, outlined by Davis in his memo, states that if the district went to the ballot in November of 2007 and asked for a 6.5-mill issue, the owner of a \$300,000 home in the district would pay \$3,149.47 a year from 2008-2010.

The second scenario projects what it would cost if the district waited until May 2008 and asked for a 9.5-mill issue.

A May 2008 issue would cost the owner of \$300,000 home \$2,552.28 a year in 2008 and \$3,425.10 in 2009 and 2010.

The difference between waiting until May 2008 is actually \$45.93 less than the measure proposed for November 2007.

"Based upon these assumptions as outlined, the total difference in cost to the taxpayer for that time period is negligible," Davis wrote. "However, given these same assumptions, the risk in waiting until May 2008 is not negligible for the school district. In addition, based on the numbers we have today, it would also necessitate the district borrow money in order to remain solvent for the first half of the fiscal year 2008."

Davis said he brought these facts to the board of education's attention to illustrate that the taxpayers will pay now or pay later.

If the district decides to wait until May 2008 for a possible issue, Davis said he

has some concerns with waiting that long.

"While I do not believe that would be a prudent course of action for Olentangy, not to mention the effect of pushing the millage to a very substantial rate, these are the decisions that the board will continue to review and consider in the coming months," Davis said.

Davis said it makes no difference when a levy is passed in 2007 that the district would not begin receiving money from the issue until February 2008.

Davis said he expects Olentangy to have a better handle on some of the unknown factors, such as the state biennial budget process and the projected housing starts in the region next spring.

"In the coming months, the board will continue to monitor these factors and anything else which may affect a future issue," Davis wrote in his memo.

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## CHEER

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

by Meijer and the rest made up of public donations.

"We focus on getting them clothes that fit and ensure that they get no violent toys," Boham said. "It's a joy anytime you can see a smile on a kid's face."

The joy was felt throughout Meijer as wave after wave of children rolled their the girls and boys clothing sections and toy department. Moms and dads, all wearing large smiles, helped find the right size clothing for their little ones and stood by smiling as the youngsters picked out their favorite toy.

"Shop With A Deputy" is just one of the programs area Meijer stores will be participating in this year.

"Stores across the area are working with 'Toys for Tots' or other programs. Every store is doing something different," Weston Brubaker, Meijer store director, said.

Brubaker, who he has worked with other charities in the past, said he is fairly new to Delaware County but when he heard of the SWAD program he contacted Boham to see how his store could help.

Santa Claus arrived just before the children to be in place and hand out candy canes to the youngsters, many of whom wore candy-coated smiles throughout their shopping sprees.

Anyone interested in donating or volunteering to help with the program next year can call Boham at 740-524-6072 for information.

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