

LOCAL & STATE

Device makes patient ‘more independent, more confident’



**Rick McCrabb**  
My Opinion

Seventeen months ago, Donald Cortner, suffering from end-stage heart failure, was a man struggling to breathe, walk, live.

In fact, he had been removed from Cleveland Clinic’s heart transplant list due to liver complications.

“Not well at all” is how Cortner described his health. “Not much longer to live.”

But now the 71-year-old Dayton man exercises daily at a fitness club, rides his Harley-Davidson three-wheeler, takes ballroom dancing classes and has fallen in love again.

All because of a medical device the size of a dime that makes Cortner feel like a million bucks.

“I’m a healthier person,” he said during a tele-



Donald Cortner, 71, of Dayton, had a CardioMEMS device implanted on Jan. 29, 2021 at Miami Valley Hospital. He has returned to regular activities, he said.

CONTRIBUTED BY WILL JONES / PREMIER HEALTH

phone interview. “I feel more independent, more confident. I have a smile on my face and I thank the Lord for waking me up this morning.”


When Cortner was first seen two years by the Heart Failure Clinic at Miami Valley Hospital

in Dayton, he had been hospitalized eight times during the previous 14 months. A palliative drip stabilized his heart failure. But he said the central line inserted into his chest was uncomfortable, embarrassing.

Mckenzie Mason, who

coordinates Cortner’s care in her role as an advance practice nurse for the clinic, prescribed a higher dosage of water pills to reduce the excessive fluid on his lungs.

Then Mason suggested an innovative idea: an emerging technology,



**Dr. Himad Khattak**

the CardioMEMS device, which is implanted into the pulmonary artery. It measures blood flow pressure, heart rate and lung pressure.

Cortner had the surgery on Jan. 29, 2021, at Miami Valley Hospital. Dr. Himad Khattak recently performed the same procedure, the first at Atrium Medical Center in Middletown.

Khattak said the home monitoring system contains a portable electronic unit and a special pillow with an antenna whose daily sensor readings determine elevated levels of pressure in a patient’s pulmonary artery.

If a patient’s pulmonary artery pressure is too high, Atrium’s heart failure team is electronically notified through a secure web site and can intervene through medication adjustments and work

with the patient on lifestyle changes before physical changes occur, according to Khattak.

He said the device can alert the medical staff two to three days before a possible heart incident.

Khattak said clinical studies have shown patients with CardioMEMS have fewer heart failure hospitalizations by up to 40% and lower mortality. He said providing this level of care can be “foundational for improving their quality of life.”

Cortner, a retired carpenter and GM employee, was asked to explain the CardioMEMS.

“All I know it works,” he said with a laugh.

He said he’s looking forward to marrying his fiancée, Diane Byrd, and spending more time with his five children, 11 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

“I feel like a different man now,” he said. “There was the man before, and the man now.”

Then he addressed the Man Upstairs.

“God isn’t done with me yet,” he said.

MIDDLETOWN

Balloon event to have flyovers, giant screen

By Rick McCrabb  
Staff Writer

Those who attend the 19th annual Ohio Challenge Friday and Saturday at Smith Park will have two more attractions to grab their attention.

While the hot air balloons, skydivers and fireworks are the main attractions, organizers have added a jumbo 17-foot by 10-foot video board to the festival that will give spectators a close-up view of the activities shown live on-site and on social media, said David Pearce, event coordinator.

Pearce said live interviews with performers, vendors and spectators will be broadcast on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter and shown on the video board that is owned by Trace Fowler and Shaun Spurlock of Epic Image in Hamilton.

“We can use this to show people who can’t be everywhere what’s happening inside the park,” Pearce said of the video board that’s transported on a trailer. “This allows us to raise the bar and the profile of the event. We can send a positive message about our schools and business community. This is a chance to sell Middletown.”

Pearce called the Ohio Challenge, in its 19th year after 2020 was canceled due



Sean Askren stands with grandson Asher Motley inside his hot air balloon “Bohica” as it is inflated. The Ohio Challenge is Friday and Saturday at Smith Park in Middletown. NICK GRAHAM / STAFF

to COVID-19, Middletown’s “signature event.”

The production technology and cameras attached to the helmets of skydivers will give spectators a behind-the-scenes look at Team Fastrax, the Middletown-based professional skydiving team, from the time they prepare to board the planes until they land, Pearce said.

In addition to the video board, four to six planes will perform flyovers at 5 p.m. Saturday at Middletown Regional Airport. Pearce said their stunts will be “just short of aerobatic.”

The Butler County War-

birds will display two vintage planes and guests will be able to purchase ride tickets, he said. Tethered hot air balloon rides will be available for \$20.

There will be carnival rides and craft vendors both days and a car show on Saturday.

Pearce said the Ohio Challenge will feature 20 balloons, four special shapes. Team Fastrax will perform both nights. Balloonists will perform balloon glows both nights, followed by fireworks at 10 p.m.

There won’t be a shortage of food and drinks, according to Pearce.

**OHIO CHALLENGE**

**WHERE:** Smith Park, Middletown  
**WHEN:** 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Friday; 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Saturday  
**COST:** Walk-ins \$5; children under 12 are free. Parking at airport is \$15 per vehicle and includes admission for all people in vehicle and free shuttles to Smith Park entrance.  
**MORE INFORMATION:** ohiochallenge.com

He said there will be 24 food vendors, a mixture of local and regional favorites. Some of those vendors include Brent’s Smokin’ Butts, Combs Barbecue, The Jug, Traveling Cheesecake, Domino’s and Chick-fil-A.

“One of the best varieties we ever had” is how Pearce described the food lineup.

Soft drinks, water and Miller Coors and Budweiser products will be available, he said.

At last year’s Ohio Challenge, the Friday scheduled was rained out, then 14,500 people, a record one-day crowd, attended on Saturday.

Contact this reporter at 513-483-5216 or email Rick.McCrabb@coxinc.com.

DAYTON

New electric bikes for rent coming soon to downtown

By Cornelius Frolik  
Staff Writer

After a roughly six-month delay, Link: Dayton Bike Share has received its shipment of 140 new electric bikes that are expected to start hitting the streets in a week or two.

The bike-share group will more than double its supply of popular electric-assisted bicycles, which it first introduced a few years ago.

Link originally was supposed to get its order of e-bikes (called eLink) in December, but the organization has been affected by supply-chain issues, which also has led to fewer bikes at its 37 hubs.

Link hopes to put about 100 of its new eLink bikes in circulation as soon as possible and then add to that based on demand, said Laura Estandia, executive director of Bike Miami Valley.

The expansion was funded with \$286,000 in federal grant money that went through the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission.

Here’s what you need to know about the new bikes:



**A new shipment of electric bikes will allow Link: Dayton Bike Share to more than double its supply of bikes for rent.** CORNELIUS FROLIK / STAFF

- eLink bikes are rented or checked out about twice as often as Link’s standard green pedal bikes.
- E-bikes help riders travel faster and go up hills much easier.
- Every Wednesday in July, Link is hosting a program called Free Ride Wednesdays.
- The \$1 fees to unlock bicycles will be waived, and the first 60 minutes of trips will be free.
- Riders unlock and pay for the bicycles using their smartphones.

Contact this reporter at Cory.Frolik@coxinc.com.

PIQUA

Longtime city engineer leaves Piqua after separation agreement approved

By Nancy Bowman  
Contributing Writer

PIQUA — The city of Piqua and its longtime city engineer have parted ways with a separation agreement.

The agreement between the city and Amy Havenar, an employee since 2001, and her voluntary resignation were approved by the Piqua City Commission in late June.

The commission-approved resolution did not

name the city employee and the employee was not identified during the commission public vote. A public records request was filed with the city to obtain that information.

The resignation and agreement followed disciplinary action initiated against Havenar in the spring by City Manager Paul Oberdorfer, according to documents obtained from the city. The resignation was submitted

June 17 and effective July 1.

A letter in Havenar’s personnel file outlined 10 alleged violations of city personnel policy and procedure manual including failure to cooperate with other employees, discourteous treatment of the public, wanton or willful neglect in performance of assigned duties, committing violations of safety rules or common safety practices, interfering with the work performance of subordinates/

other employees or causing other disruptions of workplace and providing false testimony, statement or information in any official employer ... investigation, hearing or proceeding.

In addition, the letter states that an investigation into email records, phone records and computer files found Havenar, against city policy, used city email and employer-owned equipment to conduct secondary employ-

ment for a personal business, Havenar Engineering and Survey Inc.

“Ms. Havenar on numerous occasions has demonstrated a lack of willingness to cooperate with the administration and several department directors over the past year,” Oberdorfer wrote in a May letter. “Ms. Havenar’s recent behavior the last three months has become increasingly problematic and, as a result, she was placed on a performance

improvement plan.

“... A thorough investigation of the facts established Ms. Havenar was providing false testimony, statements and information in the administrative investigation ... The overreach, dishonesty and covert actions uncovered have altered the corrective actions originally considered.”

The letter stated the violations alleged were “grounds for termination.”

SPRINGBORO

Mayfield Brain & Spine planning new Springboro facility

By Ed Richter  
Staff Writer

One of southwestern Ohio’s top medical providers will be entering the Dayton region.

Mayfield Brain & Spine Center has purchased 4.25 acres on undeveloped land at the western terminus of Pin-

nacle Point Drive in Springboro for a new medical office building.

Springboro City Council approved the sale of the property to Synergy REIT, the assignee of Synergy Austin Place, LLC, for \$233,750, or about \$55,000 an acre.

Preliminary site plans for the proposed 16,147-square-

foot building are scheduled for review at Wednesday’s Planning Commission meeting at 6 p.m. at the Springboro City Building.

The property is about 400 feet west of the intersection of Pinnacle Point Drive and West Tech Boulevard in The Ascent portion of the South Tech Business

Park. The building will face Interstate 75 and is near the Dayton Children’s Hospital South Campus.

City officials said submitted plans also include a surgery center, but that portion of the plan for the site is not included in this review.

In his report, City Planner Dan Boron said the Plan-

ning Commission may authorize this item to be placed on a future regular meeting agenda for formal approval. The earliest date that could occur would be Aug. 10.

Mayfield Brain & Spine is a Cincinnati-based independent physician practice that provides care for patients at 14 of the region’s hospitals.

A West Chester Twp. office is among its locations, according to its website.

The Mayfield Clinic was founded in 1937 by Dr. Frank H. Mayfield. Internationally recognized as a leader in neurological surgery, the full-service patient care provider treats 25,000 patients from 30 states in a typical year.