

## **Chris Cerenilli scripts for the AP award entry.**

### **1. WOMAN HITS BEAR IN NEW CASTLE**

East Washington Street in New Castle is a busy one. And there's not a lot of wiggle room to avoid someone or something darting in front of your car. So you can imagine what one unwitting woman was thinking when - not a dog, not a deer - but this bear crossed her path around 9:00 Monday night.

#### **STANDUP**

<THE BIG BEAR BUMP-INTO HAPPENED HERE ALONG EAST WASHINGTON STREET NEAR HAZEL AND TEMPLE AVENUES 6 THEN THE BURLY BEAST - BRUISED AND BATTERED - BUMBLERD ITS WAY A FEW BLOCKS OVER TO CLARENCE AVENUE - WHERE IT ENDED UP IN A BIT OF A STANDOFF WITH RESPONDING OFFICERS>

The roughly 200 pound bear caused quite the scene - between neighbors coming to get a glimpse - and authorities blocking off that the road for a good hour or so. Pennsylvania Game Commission officials eventually came and tranquilized the bear and gave it the once-over. Then they loaded it into a truck to take it back to where it belongs.

One neighbor told me there have been a few other bear sightings in this area lately - but officials don't know if it was the same one that got hit. Fortunately the woman driving the car wasn't hurt.

### **2. STRUTHERS DAM PROGRESS**

#### **\*\*NAT OF TRAIN\*\***

Train traffic in Struthers is a symbol of its industrial past. While the tracks that run along the Mahoning River still carry engines and freight cars...the river itself carries nothing more than the occasional kayakers. But that tide seems to be turning.

<155906 WE'RE VERY EXCITED TO FINALLY GET THIS GOING>

Now that the dam in Struthers is set to become the second to be demolished along the river - plans for development there are starting to flow freely.

<155947 OURS IS ESPECIALLY UNIQUE BECAUSE THE DAM IS RIGHT IN DOWNTOWN STRUTHERS...56 THERE'S A HUGE CHUNK OF LAND WE'RE TRYING TO WORK WITH JUST TO DEVELOP THAT, BUT THERE'S SO MANY DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES>

Which Miller says include an eco-friendly, walkable setting, along with a boat launch.

Any type of business will be welcome.

<160044 I WANT TO MAKE SURE IT'S SOMETHING MY KIDS CAN ENJOY WHEN THEY'RE OLDER>

The anticipation goes beyond Struthers itself.

The Friends of the Mahoning River - a group of advocates working to improve the quality of the river - say they're happy to see the work get underway.

<228 THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WILL IMPROVE WATER QUALITY, FISH HABITAT AND IT'LL IMPROVE RECREATION AROUND THE AREAS>

It'll take a couple months for all the extractions, dredging and stabilizing work to be done.

Work to turn the river into an opportunity to thrive that Struthers can take to the bank...the river bank, that is.

<155914 IT'S GOING TO DO SO MUCH NOT JUST FOR STRUTHERS BUT FOR THE ENTIRE MAHONING RIVER AREA>

### **3. COVID HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL IMPACTS**

Perhaps the only thing hitting harder than the linemen on area high school football fields...

<NATS OF GAME>

...is COVID dropping the boom on some teams' seasons.

COVID-related issues have forced the cancellation of four local games this week - and it's only Tuesday. Among them - Jackson Milton versus Mineral Ridge.

<122748 THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR CALL BACK>

The situation has forced contact tracing measures into overdrive.

<123221 WHEN YOU GET TO SPORTS, IT BECOMES A WHOLE OTHER SITUATION - IF YOU'RE INDOOR, IF YOU'RE OUTDOOR, ALL THOSE THINGS COMBINED, IT IS VERY COMPLICATED>

STANDUP

<CONTACT TRACING IS DONE BY EACH SCHOOL IN EACH DISTRICT - WHICH THEN REPORTS THE RESULTS BACK TO THE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT.>

<MAHONING COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH TELLS ME KIDS HAVING TO QUARANTINE BECAUSE OF EXPOSURE IS WHAT'S DRIVING THESE CANCELLATIONS.>

<0649 WE JUST HAD TO SHUT DOWN THE JUNIOR HIGH VOLLEYBALL PROGRAM BECAUSE OF A POSITIVE CASE>

<0702 I THINK WE'VE GOT 25 KIDS ON QUARANTINE IN THE PAST TWO DAYS>

Sebring also had to cancel this week's football game against Lowellville.

But for as taxing as all this is for administrators and staff - experience has been a valuable teacher.  
<0840 REFLECTING BACK TO LAST YEAR WE...2 0846 GOT PRETTY EFFICIENT AT CANCELING AND RESCHEDULING>

21 Sports Director Dana Balash tells me the cancellations likely won't affect teams' playoff chances. The minimum number of games to qualify is five - and no area team is close to that number.

#### **4. OHIO GOLD PLATES PHASED OUT**

Books, classic toys and even fountain pens - all have stood the test of time. Around here - the "Ohio Gold" license plate could make that list. First issued in 1996 five governors ago - it seems they've finally worn out their welcome.

<0454 THE NATIONAL STANDARD FROM THE AMERICAN ASSN. OF MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINS SAYS WE SHOULD RECYCLE PLATES AROUND EVERY 10 YEARS>

That goes more than double in the case of the Gold plates. Never mind that the reflective sheeting they came with is mostly gone within five years.

<0524 WE'VE GOT A LOT OF COMPLAINTS FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT THAT, HEY, WE CAN'T READ THESE PLATES>  
<1009 IT'S REALLY A PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUE FOR US>

Which is why the Ohio BMV says now is the time to pull the plug on the plates. We couldn't find any drivers at this bureau who had one - but we heard from a few on social media. Barbara was a bit bummed. Debra was down on their look. And Slovak said he smelled a money grab.

<0731 Q: THERE'S THE STIPULATION THAT YOU CAN'T RENEW YOUR REGISTRATION IF YOU HAVE ONE OF THESE OLD PLATES UNTIL YOU GET A NEW ONE. WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THE FOLKS WHO TAKE ISSUE WITH THAT? A: IT DOESN'T REQUIRE AN ADDITIONAL TRIP TO THE BMV, YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME IN EARLY>

Fortunately it won't cost you much - seven bucks or so - to swap out the old plates. So whenever it's time to renew, you know what to do.