

In today's BeaconNews

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The Beacon News

A Sun-Times Media Group publication

Office
101 S. River St., Aurora, IL 60506
Lobby hours: 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Monday-Friday. Closed holidays.

Newspaper delivery
Customer service
(630) 844-5800 or (800) 244-5844; e-mail customerservice@scn1.com.

Customer service hours
6:30 a.m.-6 p.m. weekdays
7 a.m.-11 a.m. Saturdays
8-11 a.m. Sundays and holidays

Home delivery times
6:30 a.m. weekdays
8 a.m. weekends and holidays
If you do not receive your paper by our delivery deadline, please call customer service before 10 a.m. weekdays (or 11 a.m. weekends) and we will deliver your paper by noon.

Pricing
Home delivery: \$3.25 weekly; \$2.25 Friday-Sunday; \$1.50 Sunday (plus intermittent holiday issues). **Mail subscriptions:** \$4 weekly. **Newsstand prices:** 50 cents daily, \$1.50 Sunday.

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Beacon Blog
http://blogs.suburbanchicago.com/beaconblog/

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The Beacon News
USPS 037-800

Published daily by Fox Valley Publications Inc., 3101 U.S. 30, Plainfield, IL 60544. Periodical postage paid at Plainfield, IL 60544. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Beacon News, 101 S. River St., Aurora, IL 60506.

Wiggins steps aside from Kane GOP post

BEACON NEWS STAFF

In response to negative comments made against him by the Jim Oberweis campaign, Kane County Republican Party Chairman Dennis Wiggins has announced he will take a leave of absence.

Bill Pascoe, a spokesman for Oberweis, a 14th Congressional District Republican candidate, asked for Wiggins' resignation earlier this week after the chairman accepted a paid position with Sen. Chris Lauzen's campaign. Lauzen also is running in the 14th District.

In a press release issued Wednesday evening, Wiggins announced his leave of absence, which will be in effect until Feb. 6, 2008. The chairman said he had intentions of resigning when he joined Lauzen's campaign, "to make a clean break" with the issue of accepting the position.

However, after being attacked, Wiggins said such a resignation would be admission of error. In-

stead, Wiggins will step down temporarily while working with the Lauzen campaign.

"I hope that this decision ends the negative posturing from the Oberweis campaign and returns this race to a discussion of the issues..." Wiggins said.

Pascoe had said that because Wiggins took the job with Lauzen after talking to the Oberweis campaign about a similar position, Wiggins "sold himself to the highest bidder."

"Republican County chairmen shouldn't be serving as paid staff on any campaign at any level," Pascoe said.

In his release, Wiggins wrote that Oberweis still has "hard feelings and sour grapes over his (2006) defeat." Wiggins beat Oberweis by tens of thousands of votes in the 2006 election for party chairman.

He announced to township committee chairmen last week that he will take the \$5,000 a month paid position with the Lauzen campaign.

COPLEY

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Web site.

It was Alderman Stephanie Kifowit, who represents the 3rd Ward in which the old hospital sits, who raised the issue this week. She contacted Revere Healthcare officials in September, asking questions about their plans, and was referred to Dr. Nayak. This was the first time, she said, she had heard Nayak's name in an authoritative capacity regarding the property.

City officials have pointed to Revere as the face of the trust since September 2006, when the company held a press conference to discuss plans for the site. However, Tim McGonagle, the lawyer who represented the Nayaks through the sale, said this week that Revere was never the owner of the property but served as a development consultant to the Nayaks.

McGonagle said plans for the site include an outpatient surgery center, medical offices and senior housing.

"They need time to get their development in order before coming to the city of Aurora with plans," McGonagle said.

Neither Nayak nor Revere CEO Grant Shumway could be reached for comment.

For months, city officials have touted the two decades of experience Revere Healthcare has in the medical field. Formed in 1985, the company has offered consulting, business and management services in more than 40 states.

But it is Nayak's background, as well as his identity, that has remained unknown. That concerns Kifowit, who said she was hoping for more concrete plans, and more communication between the owners and the residents, in the past six months.

"It seems like we're going down the same path with a different owner," she said, referring to the decade of inaction by the former property owners, Guiding Light. "It's been six months, we've seen minimal correspondence and no plans. It's disappointing."

City officials said that since taking ownership of the property in February, the Nayaks have spent more than \$250,000 on landscaping and indoor renovations. The city is in negotiations with the owners to provide park space on the property as well.

"The point," Weisner said, "is that we finally have someone de-

veloping the thing."

But the secrecy surrounding the owners has Kifowit concerned. Like Weisner, she would like to see something productive done with the site, and she believes the key to achieving that is to communicate with the people in the surrounding neighborhoods, and find out what use would best serve the community.

"The key is working with the residents," she said, "and I haven't seen that kind of communication yet."

Nayak's background with this type of project is extensive. In addition to the surgical center, he owns several health-care facilities throughout Illinois and Indiana. Last year, Nayak opened Hind General Hospital in Hobart, Ind., which now employs more than 200 people from the surrounding community.

That project was a redevelopment, similar to the old Copley property. Nayak purchased a dilapidated medical building, rehabilitated it and opened it for business. According to McGonagle, Mayor Linda Buzinec of Hobart wrote a letter in support of the Nayaks when they were negotiating for the old Copley site.

Weisner pointed out that very few developers for the old hospital site have come along during the 10-plus years since Rush-Copley Medical Center relocated to Route 34.

He said he met Raghuvver Nayak through his association with the Indian-American community, and when searching for developers for the site, his name came up.

Weisner has previously said he was involved with the deal "since day one," but now says his contributions were limited to bringing the Nayaks to the table and working to resolve the schism on the Guiding Light board. He said he was not involved in the negotiations and, though he was aware of the \$5,000 campaign contribution, it did not influence his decision to ask Nayak to look at the property. "The campaign contribution had nothing to do with this deal," he said.

The Nayaks are frequent contributors to political campaigns. Since 1999, they have given more than \$83,000 to mostly Democratic candidates, according to campaign finance Web sites.

Weisner said he will not benefit personally from this deal. Rather, he said, the community will see a run-down property restored and rehabilitated.

BRITNEY

From page A1

paper. "Unlike Britney's place, his seven-bedroom mansion is a real home for him and his children."

Narain, who moved to Los Angeles more than four years ago to pursue a modeling and acting career, admitted to Britain's News of the World that K-Fed told her he once saw Britney breast-feed her son while she was drunk.

"I'd see her walking around the house guzzling vodka and Coke and looking very tipsy," Narain recounted Federline as saying. "Then a few moments later, I saw her pick up (son)

Jayden and start breast-feeding him. That sent me up the wall."

She said K-Fed told her that he yelled at the former pop princess, "If you really wanna drink, then make sure the baby gets bottled milk, not yours."

Narain, who once admitted to The Beacon News that she loved "being in the public light; every bit of exposure helps," is not without controversy herself.

The last time she made headlines was in 2005, when a Los Angeles Superior Court judge extended a temporary restraining order, barring Narain from marketing a sex tape she made with then-boyfriend Farrell.

The Chicago Sun Times contributed to this report.

VERDICT

From page A1

because of the threat to his sister.

"This gang thing is a smoke-screen," he said. "It's not there."

In the end, the jury didn't believe Hernandez's version, and he was the only person who testified about the circumstances of the shooting.

After the verdict was read, Torres' family and friends hugged in the hallway. They clapped when Carroll came out, and he responded with a small bow.

Torres was not immediately released — he is awaiting sentencing on a separate 2006 aggravated battery case.

Carroll said it was a mistake to bring charges in Dieppa's murder after 10 years and insinuated the sweep was done for political motives.

"It certainly makes good press," he said. Kane County State's Attorney John Barsanti said it would be "silly" not to bring charges when a grand jury found enough evidence to indict Torres.

Barsanti said his office will examine this trial for lessons to be learned or different tactics to take in future trials. Even after a tough day, Barsanti had no regrets. "Not one," he said.

"This was something that the Aurora Police Department worked on for years and years and brought to us," Barsanti said. "What do you do at that point? Back away? Back away because you think you might lose? I think that's irresponsible."

The effect this verdict will have on other cases is murky. Each case is separate, and juries are not supposed to consider evidence from other trials.

But prosecutors will face the same challenges — witnesses with baggage, shaky memories and complicated motivations.

They'll also face the same attorney — Carroll is hired on four other cold cases — and the same witness. Hernandez is expected to testify in five cases.

Barsanti knew the trials would be difficult and understood they might lose some.

"If there was a smoking gun, we would have charged it (in 1997)," he said. "In every one of these cases I have confidence that we have proof beyond a reasonable doubt. We believe in what the Aurora police have done. You have to stay aggressive."

Barsanti said his office will examine this trial for lessons to be learned or different tactics to take in future trials. Even after a tough day, Barsanti had no regrets. "Not one," he said.

mhanley@scn1.com




Coming Friday The sweet life

Fox Valley natives turn a passion for art into cupcake creations. **Voice**

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For the Record

The Beacon News tries to be accurate and fair in every story it publishes. When a mistake occurs, we want to fix it. To report errors, call Associate Editor John Russell at 844-5902.

■ The original building that housed Yorkville Congregational Church United Church of Christ — now home to Chapel on the Green, 107 W. Center St., Yorkville — is owned by the Kendall County Historical Society. This was incorrect in a church profile published Friday.

Recent Deaths

Obituaries / Page A11

- Brandl, Norman E.**, 65, Yorkville
- Cheek, Ruth M.**, 80, Aurora
- Counts, Roger Lee**, 58, formerly Aurora
- Davidson, Stephanie S.**, 61, Minooka
- Gates, Michael Lee**, 47, formerly Somanauk
- Hayerman, Meridith L.**, 96, Aurora
- Nelson, Donald David**, 82, Batavia
- Sheridan, Kenneth Smith, Carla Dillow**, 53
- Sorenson, Jackie**, 47, Montgomery
- Unruh, Kenneth C.**, 77, Montgomery