



A FIRM FOOTHOLD

Jeff Podolsky does much more than kick for Ursuline

SPORTS, B1



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LEBRON WINS (BUT NOT WITH FANS)

Former Cavs star and Akron native LeBron James, playing in Cleveland on Thursday for the first time since his defection to Miami, tuned out a continuous chorus of boos and showed a hot hand with a game-high 38 points as the Heat coasted to victory. **Sports, B1**

YSU targets historic places

Razing of Thompson, Peck houses planned

By DENISE DICK
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YOUNGSTOWN
Youngstown State University plans to demolish a historic home and is considering demolition of a second one.

The trustees' finance and facilities committee at a meeting Thursday voted to demolish the Thompson/Sacherman House.

Gene Grilli, vice president of finance and administration, told committee members that his office, with concurrence from the office of the provost, recommends demolishing both the Thompson/Sacherman House and the Peck House.

With difficult economics and the deteriorated state of both buildings, it's in the university's best interests to demolish them, he said.

Trustee Harry Meshel said he'd like the board to wait and decide later on the Peck House.

"It's on Wick Avenue, and it's a [Charles H.] Owsley House," he said, referring to the Youngstown architect who designed it.

People have approached him with their hopes that the house can be saved, Meshel said.

Thompson/Sacherman is a 2,300-square-foot, single-family home on Lincoln Avenue. It was built in 1882



Meshel

See RAZING, A4

Youngstown nonprofit organization helps answer couple's prayers

MISSION of LOVE

By KRISTINE GILL
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YOUNGSTOWN
FELIX RIVERA LAY IN BED AS A PRIEST recited the communion rite in the cramped, makeshift bedroom of his East Side home.

Rivera, 71, has been in bed since a golf-cart accident left him paralyzed in 2005. He cannot walk. He can barely move his arms. His hands are forever balled into weak fists that rest on top of his blankets.

"Sometimes I think I can work," said the former GM employee who retired in 2001. "Late at night, I remember I can do nothing."

On Wednesday, Felix and his wife, Lourdes, 64, received communion amid the buzz of a power saw. A few paces from their bedroom, past piles of bedding and neglected chores, a crew worked to finish an addition to their home.

The Mission of Love, a nonprofit based in Youngstown, raised money to pay for the labor and supplies needed for Felix's new bedroom, which will include a handicapped-accessible shower. Lourdes usually fetches water from the basement to bathe her husband in bed.

Her caregiver responsibilities fell to one of her daughters recently when Lourdes spent two weeks in the hospital after a heart attack. She points to the scar along the right side of her neck where doctors cleared a blocked artery.

"Welcome to the house of the cripples," Lourdes said, laughing as a family friend, Phil Gonzalez, translated.

The Riveras originally are from Puerto Rico, and Gonzalez met them 30 years ago through their church, St. Rosa de Lima on Tenney Avenue in Campbell. Gonzalez asked Kathy Price, founder and director of Mission of Love, for a vehicle to help transport Felix to doctor's appointments.

But after meeting with the Riveras and presenting them with a free van, Price knew her work wasn't done.

"I looked around and said, 'We need to do something,'" Price said.

A Cleveland company donated the wheelchair ramp that leads from the Riveras' front door, and Price raised funds through the mission to pay for the addition to the home.

"I feel happy," Felix said. "I have to wait and see when I move in there. It's like living another life."

See MISSION, A4



WILLIAM D. LEWIS | THE VINDICATOR

The Rev. Gerardo Hernandez, a visiting priest to St. Rosa de Lima Church in Campbell, prays with paraplegic Felix Rivera and his wife, Lourdes, in their home. Mission of Love is helping to build an addition to their house.

HOW TO HELP

♦ **To donate** or volunteer with Mission of Love, visit its website at www.missionof-love.org.

♦ **The mission** accepts cash and supply donations year-round including bedding, clothing and medical supplies among other items.

♦ **To inquire** about volunteer opportunities, e-mail director Kathy Price at amission-oflove@sbcglobal.net.



Construction workers, who did not wish to be identified, added trim to the door frames in the new addition. Mission of Love paid for the materials and labor.

McNally expects up-or-down vote on CSB raises

By PETER H. MILLIKEN
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YOUNGSTOWN
Mahoning County Commissioner John A. McNally IV said he expects the commissioners to vote the proposed 3 percent annual pay raises for the county's unionized Children Services Board workers up or down before the Dec. 17 action deadline.

He said, however, he is undecided as to how he will vote.

The commissioners have two more scheduled meetings — Thursday and



I THINK IT'S FAIR AND APPROPRIATE THAT THE PUBLIC HEAR FROM THE COMMISSIONERS IN TERMS OF A YES OR A NO VOTE."

JOHN McNALLY, county commissioner

Dec. 16 — before the deadline. If Dec. 17 comes and goes, and the commissioners do nothing, the raises automatically take effect.

The other two commissioners had spoken previously against the raises.

Anthony T. Traficanti,

chairman of the commissioners, called them "unconscionable" under current economic conditions.

Commissioner David N. Ludt called for a county wage freeze and said it would be unfair to give the raises.

After meeting with CSB members Wednesday, McNally said Thursday he understands that board's rationale for the raises. "Quite frankly, I don't find the raises or the issue to be unconscionable," he said.

"That's a well-run agency, financially," McNally said, adding that funds are available to cover the pay increases.

"I haven't made up my mind one way or another," McNally said about how he will vote.

See CSB, A5

inside today

TOYS FOR TOTS BENEFIT

Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots benefit will be Sunday in Lake Milton.

LOCAL & STATE, A7

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