

Traffic flowing thanks to new street cameras

By SUE REID

Glitches with traffic signal timings and detection cameras may soon be a thing of the past.

Solon city Engineer John J. Busch told the Public Works Committee last week that 74 cameras were replaced and have been performing much better than those from two winters ago, which resulted in complaints flooding City Hall.

“Calls are decreasing,” Mr. Busch noted.

Faulty infrared detection cameras were discovered during the winter two years ago not to be working properly and needed replaced.

“These are totally redesigned cameras,” Mr. Busch noted.

He also reminded the committee that action has been taken to replace the cabinet at Cannon and Harper roads, which was destroyed following a car accident, causing about \$60,000 in damage.

In addition, the light at the Burger King on Aurora Road has been fixed after a wiring issue was discovered.

“I think everyone is frustrated throughout the city when a system is promised to do something and doesn’t work as designed,” said Councilman Robert N. Pelunis, chairman of the public works panel.

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Now’s time for leaf collection

By SUE REID

The city’s annual curbside leaf collection program, a labor intensive effort that results in nearly 16,000 yards of leaves rid from the city before the first snow falls, began Monday.

The program, weather permitting, runs to Dec. 22, Mark Hawley, assistant service director and acting solid waste division manager, explained.

As part of the program, residents are asked to place their leaves 3 feet from the curb, before crews pass the 7,500 city homes a couple of times through the program’s duration, collecting piles in a uniform fashion.

They follow the same routes as garbage and recycling collection.

“We basically go clockwise through the city and have six trucks with loaders on the back,” Mr. Hawley explained.

He said that residents are cautioned to not place leaves in the road due to danger of creating slick road surfaces or clogging catch basins. Residents are also asked to keep the leaves in long, thin piles at the curb.

Per the city’s ordinance, the piles should be free of brush or small branches as they can clog and damage the service department equipment. Brown yard bags will be collected with that type of debris, Mr. Hawley noted.

The leaves are taken from the curbside to a compost leaf staging site at the service department on Cochran Road. About 15,000 to 16,000 raw yards of leaves are accumulated by program’s end.

At the service department, the leaves are

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Photo by John Reid

Lea Bogdan, 4, of Solon learns the game of tennis at the Little Racquets Tennis Program at the Solon Community Center last week. Rona Brody, not pictured, heads the program to help youths both master and enjoy the game.

Tennis for tots

Smaller rackets, lower nets make game easier for kids

By SUE REID

It was your ordinary tennis match, but with a twist. Balls were oversized; nets were low and rackets were small. But for a group of 6- to 8-year-olds gathered at the Solon Community Center last week, that is just the way they like it.

And it is just the way their instructor, Rona Brody of Solon, planned it.

In fact, for Mrs. Brody, 58, tennis was not enjoyable at all when she first gave it a try at 7 years old. The nets were high, the balls too small and the racket too big.

“Honestly, I hated it,” she said with a laugh. “All I did was chase balls around.

“Everything was so difficult for me,” Mrs.

Brody recalled. “Every time they said it was tennis time, I was miserable, and it was awful.”

Mrs. Brody’s experience with the game began at summer camp on the East Coast. It wasn’t until she reached about 11 years old that tennis held an appeal. She would hit balls against a backboard, having rallies with herself and imagining she was at U.S. Open.

At that point, “the fire inside of me was lit, and I loved it, and played as much as I could.”

She was a member of her high school team in Grandview Heights in Columbus and then later played at Ohio University.

“It’s always been a part of my life,” she said.

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So when an opportunity arose to purchase the Little Racquet Tennis Program business in the fall of 2015, it seemed like a natural fit.

The program involved combining the sport of tennis with other stimulating activities, such as imaginative obstacle courses, short court rallies, relay races and more.

“They learn the basics of tennis along with different activities, agility, game playing and lots of fun stuff,” Mrs. Brody, a Solon resident since 1995, said.

Mrs. Brody brought the program to daycare centers, preschools and afterschool programs throughout Northeast Ohio, instructing upwards of 60 children a week, before embarking on a recent offering at the Solon Community Center.

The six-week program is aimed at 3- to 8-year-olds and registrations piled in before the program began in late September. It is currently filled and runs through early November. Mrs. Brody said she plans to continue to find locations throughout the city to hold future classes. She also presents the program at Le Chaperon Rouge and Pioneer Presbyterian Church preschool.

“We are giving these kids athletic skills,” Mrs. Brody said. “Tennis is a microcosm of everything in life.” It teaches such things as hand-eye coordination and footwork, which carries forward to other sports, like baseball, basketball and soccer, she explained.

The program also teaches life lessons like patience, as kids are taught the skills of waiting their turn or waiting in line.

“We do a little light competition, and children learn sometimes you win and sometimes you don’t,” Mrs. Brody said.

On Saturday, she moved from court to court, offering gentle guidance and a fair share of high fives.

“It’s what I call organized chaos,” Mrs. Brody said with a laugh, as she looked across the gymnasium with balls flying and children laughing.

Bentley Carpenter, 7, of Solon said he enjoys being a part of the Little Racquets program.

“I like tennis,” Bentley said, “and it is easier because the balls are bigger.”

This is his first year playing, he noted.

“We get to hit lots of balls,” added 6-year-old Vivian Kunkle of Solon.

“The funnest part is to volley,” Drew Kelly, 7, of Solon said.

Mrs. Brody added that her husband Scott often asks her what she loves about the game and she responds, “Everything.”

“If there is something about tennis, I’m on it,” she said. “Even the gossip.”

Mrs. Brody is assistant tennis coach for Orange High School, and she and her husband are active members of the Chabad Jewish Center of Solon.

“Tennis has always been a part of my life,” Mrs. Brody concluded, “and it will always be in one way or another.”



Photo by John Reid

Isabel Patrizi, 5, of Solon takes a swing at the ball during a session at the Little Racquets Tennis Program at the Solon Community Center.



Children learn the basics of tennis through different activities such as agility in the tennis program. Jordan Glazier, 4, of Solon works on his skills during a session at the Solon Community Center.

News brief

Updated theater to be unveiled

The Solon Center for the Arts will unveil next month its newly renovated theater and tie in the opening with the first concert of the Solon Philharmonic Orchestra’s season.

The unveiling of the theater will take place at 4 p.m. on Nov. 12 and feature the new seating, freshly-painted walls and newly refurbished floors, all made possible through the assistance of the Solon Rotary Club.

As part of the festivities, the SCA Dance Ensemble and Spotlight Youth Theater will perform on the stage, and light refreshments will be served.

The event is free and open to the public.

The opening will last until 5:15 p.m. and then be followed by a 6 p.m. performance by the SPO.

For more information, call the art center at 440- 337-1400.

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wind rowed, meaning they are placed in long rows that are similar to the way people put them out, but on a much larger scale.

There will be eight to 10, 500-foot rows of leaves.

The materials of these wind rows then get composted, which involves grinding them and breaking them down into a finished product, Mr. Hawley explained.

The raw leaves then turn into leaf humus. Once that product is broken down, it takes 8-9 months for that product to be a sellable product, he said.

That dark, rich compost is then sold back to the residents for \$10 a yard, beginning in April. The compost is often used to enrich soil in the garden, for example. Also, compost is used at city properties.

Leaves cannot be dumped in a landfill, but instead have to be given to a facility that will process them into compost or humus material. Solon is fortunate to have its own site right in the city, he said.

It makes the program much more economical that crews can bring the leaves to the service department and off load them there.

Each year, the start time differs for the program, but it is typically mid-October, Mr. Hawley continued. This year the date was moved up due to the dry weather of late.

“The lack of rain resulted in the trees going dormant,” Mr. Hawley said, “so we moved the program up a whole week.”

The program is challenging in that crews try to pick up as many leaves as they can each week, and prior to the first snow fall.

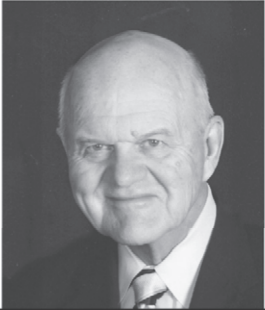
“We do it Monday through Friday and will work overtime,” Mr. Hawley said. “The dryer the weather, the better. Leaves are easier to pick up and there is less wear and tear on machines.”

Residents with questions should call the service garage at 440-248-5834.

BENEFIT

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