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AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

SATURDAY, February 5, 2011 A B C

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Affidavit triggers suspicion

Schools case against mother begins with claim grandfather had girls



Williams-Bolar

By John Higgins
Beacon Journal staff writer

When school officials and parents disagree about where a student lives, either side in the dispute can ask the state to referee.

The rarely used process has a big advantage: It avoids the

BeaconFirst

courts.

So why wasn't the Kelley Williams-Bolar case decided that way?

It could have been - if Williams-Bolar hadn't gone to

court first.

Instead, the 40-year-old Akron mother was convicted last month of a felony for falsifying documents to keep her two kids in Copley-Fairlawn schools.

Process for disputes

The state statutes governing

where children attend school span nearly 10 printed pages, but a single sentence describes how to resolve such disputes: "In the event of a disagreement, the superintendent of public instruction shall determine the school district in which the parent resides."

Last year, state Superintendent

Please see **Affidavit, A4**

Sparkling looks are deceiving



ED SUBA JR./Akron Beacon Journal

Icicles hanging from the downspout of a home in Akron indicate heat loss in the roof area and ice dams in the gutters.

Pressure grows on Mubarak



SCOTT NELSON/The New York Times

An Egyptian man in a wheelchair is hoisted above a crowd of anti-government protesters Friday during a rally against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo's Tahir Square. Hundreds of thousands of people filled the square to chant slogans, wave flags and bow in prayer.

Journey home from Cairo spans 5 days

By Jim Carney
Beacon Journal staff writer

Scott Thomas Hamed was back at his furniture company's Aurora office Friday.

His weeklong odyssey to return to his job after a trip to Egypt came with the help of his family in Akron, his business partner in Alexandria, Egypt, and a mystery man known only as Jamal.

"It's good to be back," said Hamed, 44, president of Scott Thomas Furniture. The company has operated a high-end furniture manufacturing factory in Alexandria since the late 1990s.

His family operated R.A. Hamed Oriental Rugs in the Akron area for 30 years.

The political crisis in Egypt - thousands of protesters objecting to the continued reign of President Hosni Mubarak - led to a nightmarish lesson in the value of the Internet and the importance of a functioning communications system for Hamed's family this week.

With no cash in his pocket, ATMs at the airport not working, useless credit cards, food shops closed and no way to

Please see **Journey, A5**



ED SUBA JR./Akron Beacon Journal

Scott Thomas Hamed, president of Scott Thomas Furniture, talks about being stranded for days in Cairo, Egypt, during an interview at his Akron home on Thursday.

PRESSING MUBARAK

Obama urges Egyptian to heed his people. **Page A6**

Egypt, U.S. pondering exit strategy

By Lee Keath
Associated Press

CAIRO: A new rally Friday by nearly 100,000 protesters in Cairo and behind-the-scenes diplomacy from the Obama administration piled more pressure on President Hosni Mubarak to make a swift exit and allow a temporary government to embark on an immediate path toward democracy.

Two days of wild clashes between protesters and regime supporters that killed 11 people this week seemed to have pushed the United States to the conclusion that an Egypt with Mubarak at the helm is potentially more unstable than one without him.

For the first time in the 11-day wave of protests, varying scenarios were being put forward by two opposing camps in Egypt and by the United States on how to usher the country into a post-Mubarak era after nearly 30 years of his au-

Please see **Egypt, A5**

Icicles are the bearer of an ugly message

By Mary Beth Breckenridge
Beacon Journal staff writer

Icicles hanging from your eaves could be warning signs.

Often they indicate problems with your home's air sealing or insulation, and they could be a precursor to leaks.

Icicles can mean heat is escaping from your house into your attic and warming all or part of your roof, said Matthew Pickston, a home energy auditor with Pro Energy Consultants in Sagamore Hills Township.

Snow that melts off that warm roof can refreeze when it reaches the colder eaves, forming icicles or ice dams. Clogged gutters can make the problem worse.

Ice dams are masses of ice that can block melted snow from draining away. With nowhere else to go, the trapped water can back up under the shingles and leak into the house.

A home-energy audit can pinpoint the trouble spots inside your home that are contributing to the ice buildup. Typical issues are inadequate insulation or gaps in insulation that allow warmth from the house to enter the attic, Pickston said. Warm air can also enter the attic through leaks, including gaps in the framing, spaces around ceiling-mounted fans or light fixtures, and air leaks around the chases that accommodate vent stacks,

Please see **Icicles, A4**



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Forecast, Page B8

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ED SUBA JR./Akron Beacon Journal

Icicles can form beautiful patterns in unique places around the home, but there usually is a heat-loss problem lurking somewhere above the temporary winter art creation.



ED SUBA JR./Akron Beacon Journal

The purity of the individual icicle belies the impurity of its origin – heat loss in the home.

Icicles

Can lights in the attic need to be retrofitted

Continued from Page A1

electrical lines and the like.

Pickston said recessed can lights that protrude into an attic are a particular problem, because they can send both heat from the light bulb and heated air from the house into the attic. He recommended enclosing the part of the fixture that extends into the attic with a box, and sealing the box to the attic floor with either caulk or sealing foam.

The box can be made from drywall or Thermo-Pan, a foil-faced cardboard. Or just cover the fixture with a foam bait box, Pickston suggested.

Unless you're sure the fixture



PAUL TOPLER/Akron Beacon Journal

The intriguing formation of a multitude of icicles on the top of a house in Akron creates potential problems in the gutters and downspouts. There could be a large amount of heat loss in the attic.

is IC rated, meaning it's safe for insulation contact, make sure to leave at least 3 inches between the fixture and the box, he said.

As an alternative, a can light can be retrofitted with an air-tight insert from a home center, but that's a slightly less effective sealing method, he said.

Attic hatches are another notorious source of air leaks. Pickston recommended lining the edge of the opening in the attic side with quarter-inch foam weatherstripping. When the hatch cover is in place on top of

the foam, it will cause a compression seal.

Pickston said gaps in the home's structure – for instance, a gap between a floor joist and a chimney – can be covered with drywall or metal flashing. Adhere the patch to the joist with caulk, and then caulk around the edges of the patch to seal. In the case of a chimney, use fire-rated caulk, he said.

In addition, make sure bathroom exhaust fans vent to the outside and not into the attic, he said. Steam from a bathroom not

only warms the attic air but adds moisture that can cause mold and rot the wood in the attic.

Mary Beth Breckenridge can be reached at 330-996-3756 or mbrecken@thebeaconjournal.com. You can also become a fan on Facebook.

Affidavit

Mother claims she only acted to protect girls

Continued from Page A1

ent Deborah Delisle was asked to decide seven residency cases throughout Ohio, including one from Streetsboro and one from Woodridge near Akron.

Delisle decided that a parent in the Streetsboro case actually lived in Ravenna. She didn't have to decide the Woodridge case. The father presented paperwork to local school officials proving the child lived in the district.

"That entire situation went away before Dr. Delisle would have had to rule on it," said Woodridge Superintendent Walter Davis.

Williams-Bolar's case wasn't so easy to resolve.

Temporary resolution

In August 2006, Kelley Williams-Bolar enrolled her two daughters in the Copley-Fairlawn district under her father's address in Copley.

By early 2007, the district was getting reports that Williams-Bolar and other parents were sneaking their children into Copley-Fairlawn.

The district held a hearing on Oct. 26, 2007, and Williams-Bolar was told she would have to find another school for her children.

Williams-Bolar could have appealed the decision to the state superintendent, according to John Britton, the lawyer hired by the Copley-Fairlawn district.

Instead, Williams-Bolar and her father went to Summit County Juvenile Court and filed a grandparent power of attorney affidavit, which allows grandparents to stand in for the parents in legal and medical matters.

The juvenile court handles about 100 caretaker and grandparent affidavits a year, said Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio.

Typically, the affidavits are used when a parent is seriously ill, in prison, receiving drug or mental-health treatment or deployed in the military.

"There's a lot of really, really good reasons that this affidavit exists," Teodosio said. "It allows a parent to make temporary arrangements for their child without giving up custody."

But Ohio law bars using the document simply to justify switching schools.

"It indicates specifically in the affidavit that it's not being signed solely for the purposes of enrolling a child in a different school district," Teodosio said.

Above the parents' signature line is a warning in capital letters that falsifying information is a crime.

Teodosio said the law doesn't require proof that the parents' claims are true – just an Ohio notary's seal.

"The grandparent is required to file it with the court, but we don't have a hearing," Teodosio said. "They bring it in, they file with the court and the court more or less acts as the custodian or the record keeper for the affidavit."

The affidavit was accepted by Copley-Fairlawn schools.

"We got it, and we agreed to let the kids stay because we now had a document from the Juvenile Court," Britton said. "It was over."

WILLIAMS-BOLAR EVENTS

Key dates in the residency case against Kelley Williams-Bolar:

August 2006: Kelley Williams-Bolar enrolls her two daughters in Copley-Fairlawn school district.

Oct. 26, 2007: District officials hold a hearing and confront Williams-Bolar and her father, Edward Williams, with evidence the children don't live in Copley. The district tells them to withdraw the children, but within 48 hours, they return with a grandparent affidavit from Summit County Juvenile Court allowing them to stay.

Jan. 17, 2008: The Ohio Department of Education informs both sides that it will not decide the validity of the grandparent affidavit.

June 3, 2008: Summit County Juvenile Court Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio rules the affidavit is void because Williams-Bolar and her daughters live in Akron, contrary to documents Williams-Bolar signed.

June 2008: Williams-Bolar's daughters finish the 2007-08 school year and do not re-enroll in Copley-Fairlawn schools.

November 2009: A grand jury indicts Williams-Bolar on felony record tampering and other charges.

Except it wasn't.

"The reports came back that they were still bringing the kids every day to the bus stop and Mom was driving them in from Akron," Britton said.

Doubts swirl

After school official questioned the validity of the affidavit, Williams-Bolar asked the state superintendent to intervene. It was too late.

The state asked each side to submit arguments. Williams-Bolar's attorney responded; the district didn't.

A few weeks later, in a letter dated Jan. 17, 2008, the state informed both sides that it considered the matter "closed at this time."

Williams-Bolar testified in court last month that she understood the letter to mean that the residency dispute had been decided in her favor.

She was wrong. Ohio Department of Education spokesman Patrick Gallaway said the affidavit took the case out of the hands of the superintendent.

"The school district was challenging the validity of the affidavit, which is a legal question that belongs in court," he said.

District officials were convinced that Williams-Bolar had lied to the Juvenile Court.

Affidavit overturned

During the investigation, district officials said they discovered that Williams-Bolar was living in a home on Hartford Avenue, paying subsidized rent through the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority.

She received an additional discount because she had signed papers claiming her daughters lived with her.

"All this stuff was brought forth to the Juvenile Court judge

in a hearing," Britton said. "There was a trial. It's the first of its kind, I think, in Ohio."

Judge Teodosio said she could not comment about confidential records regarding the case, but she said she has never had an affidavit challenged before.

When she ruled in a hearing on June 3, 2008, that the children were living in Akron, she had in her hands an AMHA investigative report. The report showed that Williams-Bolar told AMHA police that the children had always lived with her in Akron – in direct conflict with what she told the court.

The ruling voided the affidavit and meant the girls could no longer attend Copley-Fairlawn schools, although they were allowed to finish the 2007-08 school year.

Britton said that could have been the end of the story.

"We got what we wanted," Britton said. "We were not there to prosecute a crime."

Trail of documents

The Summit County prosecutor wanted more.

Britton said he doesn't know exactly how or why Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh got involved, but he wasn't surprised.

"When you go down a path like this and you tell these kinds of lies and you put them on paper, this gets people's attention," Britton said.

Walsh posted a statement on the prosecutor's website explaining why she pursued felony charges against Williams-Bolar.

She said Williams-Bolar lied about where she lived to Copley-Fairlawn schools, the county Bureau of Elections, the state Bureau of Motor Vehicles and juvenile court.

"She falsified documents, engaged in many different acts of deception to four different governmental agencies, and continued to do so over a two-year period," Walsh said.

Walsh said she didn't offer Williams-Bolar a chance to plea to lesser misdemeanors, saying she lacked remorse. "She has publicly stated that if she had the opportunity to do it all over, she would do the same thing again."

A mother's concerns

But why did she do it in the first place?

Williams-Bolar's father, Edward Williams, declined to discuss the case Friday. "We've said what we've had to say. We're not going to rehash this," he said.

Williams-Bolar could not be reached for comment, but she clearly stated her motive, both at her trial and after:

The problem wasn't that she was dissatisfied with the education her daughters were getting in Akron schools – a statement she has made repeatedly.

Williams-Bolar wanted her children to go to Copley-Fairlawn schools so they wouldn't be alone at her Akron home while she was at work as a teaching assistant for special-needs children at Akron's Buchtel High School.

Her attorney told the jury at her criminal trial that her home had been vandalized and broken into three times. He said she called police more than a dozen times.

If her daughters were enrolled in Copley-Fairlawn, they could get on and off the bus near their grandparents' Copley home and stay with them.

"I didn't feel they would be safe as latchkey children. They were too young to be left alone," Williams-Bolar said this week. "I'm not perfect, and I'm not a Rosa Parks. I'm just a mom

looking out for her kids."

John Higgins can be reached at 330-996-3792 or jhiggins@thebeaconjournal.com. Read the education blog at <http://education.ohio.com/>.

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