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THE MORNING JOURNAL

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CRIME

Dimacchia pleads not guilty to OVI

By Heather Chapin
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Lorain City Councilman-at-Large Tony Dimacchia pleaded not guilty April 4 in Lorain Municipal Court to charges of drunk driving.

Dimacchia was cited by Lorain police for allegedly driving while drunk at 7 p.m., April 2, after running his pick-up truck into a pole at a gasoline station in the 5300 block of West Erie Avenue near

Kolbe Road, according to a police report.

Dimacchia is director of operations for Lorain City Schools and also is running as a candidate for a Lorain County commission seat in November.

Dimacchia was in the driver's seat of the vehicle when officers arrived at the gas station, the report stated.

He showed signs of impairment while speaking to officers and was unsteady on his feet when he ex-

ited the truck, according to the report.

Officers also detected an odor of alcohol emanating from Dimacchia's breath and noted that his speech was slurred, the report stated.

When he got out of the vehicle, officers noted Dimacchia left the truck in gear and it was stopped in place by the pole it struck, according to the report.

While Dimacchia refused to submit to a breathalyzer test at

the police station, officers didn't ask him to perform a standardized sobriety test for his own safety as he had difficulty walking, according to the report.

"It should be known that despite standing at least five feet away from Dimacchia, I could still smell the odor of alcoholic beverage(s)," the officer wrote in his report.

Dimacchia was released to a sober party after receiving citations on operating a motor vehi-

cle while impaired as well as refusal to submit to chemical tests after conviction, both first-degree misdemeanors, according to police and court records.

Dimacchia has a prior conviction for operating a motor vehicle while impaired April 7, 2005, in Avon Lake Municipal Court.

His driver's license was seized by police and his license were suspended.

A visiting judge has been re-

PLEA » PAGE 5

AMHERST

HEALTHY OPTIONS



Doc Watson's Market owners Kelsey and Jeremy Watson celebrate the first anniversary in business offering fresh food to the community.

Doc Watson's celebrates first anniversary

By Larissa Beriswill
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Doc Watson's Market, 275 S. Main St. in Amherst, celebrated a milestone over the weekend as the business turned a year-old.

Doc Watson's is an organic market and café aimed at offering food made from quality, lo-

cal ingredients efficiently while being enjoyable, according to owner Jeremy Watson.

Watson, who owns the market with wife, Kelsey, also owns Watson Wellness and already was incorporating healthy lifestyle promotion into his work there when the couple decided last year to take that aspect and

create another business.

The couple wanted to bring healthy food options to the community, he said.

With a small retail section with snacks, dairy and meat items, Doc Watson's offers fresh-made food such as paninis, salads, wraps and bagels as well as a lengthy drink menu featuring smoothies, organic coffee, lattes and cold brew coffee, Kelsey Watson said.

"A lot of people, they want to make healthier decisions, but in our fast-paced world, we're trying to make it simple for people to make healthy food choices," Jeremy Watson said. "Originally, I thought it was going to be more market, fruit and vegetables and things, but people want the healthy food. It's really delicious food, but we're doing it in a way that's actually healthy."

OPTIONS » PAGE 5

LORAIN COUNTY

Event to raise funds for visually impaired

To be hosted by Cleveland West Shore Delta Gamma

By Martin McConnell
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The Cleveland West Shore chapter of the Delta Gamma Foundation will host one of its largest charitable events of the year, according to Susan Elder, chapter vice president and lead fundraising official.

The chapter and the Delta Gamma Foundation annually host multiple events, Elder said.

Currently, the foundation is preparing for its Sips and Dips for Sight event May 2, which will include an evening of wine and various appetizers.

It will take place at Red Tail Golf Club, 4400 Nagel Road in Avon.

This particular event will help benefit multiple different organizations, Elder explained.

The Cleveland Sight Center, 1909 E. 101st St. in Cleveland, helps those in need of visual aid all around the area, including Lorain County, she said.

"We are hosting this as a fundraiser for two different charitable organizations," Elder said. "The first one is the Cleveland Sight Center, which provides individualized support and different tools to help visually impaired people."

The other nonprofit is Guiding Eyes that helps to raise guide dogs for blind and visually impaired people, she said.

"This is an organization that raises guide dogs to serve people with vision loss," Elder said.

EVENT » PAGE 5

ENVIRONMENT

EPA: Chemical plants must reduce emissions

More than 200 chemical plants nationwide must reduce toxic emissions likely to cause cancer. PAGE 82



MARKETS

Another uneventful day on Wall Street

Traders made their final moves ahead of some potentially market-moving reports. PAGE 46

POINT-COUNTERPOINT

Is the game of golf really a sport?

As players get ready to tee off at Augusta National, columnists weigh in on the merits of the game. PAGE 44

TRAVEL

Fiji offers lush foliage, beaches, traditions

For most travelers, nothing rivals Fiji's sandy beaches, palm-shaded gardens and starry nights. PAGE 81

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In Loving Memory

Obituary & Remembrance Tribute Feature

During a family's time of sorrow, we want to reflect on the lives of those who have recently passed. On April 14, 2024 The Morning Journal will publish a special feature to commemorate and honor those we have lost in January, February and March of 2024.

Though you are no longer with us, you will never be forgotten. May your memory be forever held in the pages of this book.

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SOUTH PACIFIC

Island escape

Lush foliage, dazzling beaches, deep traditions put Fiji on the map

By Anne Z. Cooke
Tribune News Service

NADI, FIJI ISLANDS » "That's Tom Hanks' island, in *Cast Away*," the movie," said the passenger sitting nearby, on the rear deck. We'd seen him standing in line, a college kid in a red shirt, packing and repacking a knapsack while we waited to board the early morning ferry out of Viti Levu, largest of Fiji's 330 islands. Leaning over the railing, he pointed at the horizon and a faint grey-green shape.

"Its real name is Modriki, and it's small, just 100 acres," he said. "But the beach is awesome. Tourists can't wait to go."

No surprise there. For most South Pacific travelers, nothing rivals Fiji's sandy beaches, palm-shaded gardens, starry nights and Melanesian hospitality. We'd island-hopped over the years, tried a dozen different beach resorts, and liked most of them. Until 2019, when we joined a hiking group for a long look at the island's mountains.

Finally last fall, with COVID in decline and Fiji open for tourists, we hopped a plane and headed back, this time for another look at what makes the country tick. Finding hotels wasn't easy; Fiji is to Australians what Hawaii is to Americans. But we crossed our fingers, found five with rooms and struck gold at a repeat visit.

The Fiji Orchid, a stately manor house near Viti Levu's northwest shore and the former home of Hollywood actor Raymond Burr, star of the detective series "Perry Mason," felt nothing like a hotel and everything like a home away from home. With an inviting living room and framed memorabilia, it beckoned at the end of a very long day.

Hotel Manager Deepika Dimlesh arranged an authentic Fijian dinner, and co-owner Gordon Leewie told tales of Fiji life in the early days. Though Nadi (NAN-dee) at International Airport was 20 minutes away, our bure (BOO-ray, room, house), one of six in the lush tropical garden, was as quiet as a cemetery.

Curious about Lautoka, Viti Levu's second-largest town on the northwest shore, we hired our guide and driver Kesho Goundar, who (like many Fijians) speaks Fijian, English and Hindi. Stopping at the town's huge covered market, he bought a couple of kava "sticks," the gifts we would need — for the chief — if we visited a village. Then it was on to the Sabeto Mountains and the

Garden of the Sleeping Giant. A popular park, it was founded by Burr, a world-wide orchid collector. Hundreds of orchids, planted along the trail to the summit, a huge head-like rock, are the highlight of a visit. And the adjacent forest — a tower of vines, shadowy branches and strange flowers — was a set waiting for a movie.

The next day we headed upcountry to Navala Village, the country's last thatched village, driving past barnyards, sugarcane fields, villages, the occasional manufacturing plant and Methodist, Baptist, Sikh, Hindu and Catholic-oriented primary schools.

At first glance Navala looked empty, until guide Mark Navaroka came out to collect our \$25 entrance fee and a kava stick for the chief. "This is how we used to build houses," he said, leading us inside the chief's feast house, where a couple of village leaders sat cross-legged, talking. They built it in 1954 when five dying Catholic villages joined together," he continued, leading the way to the school and church.

Turning onto the Nausori Highland Road — not another car in sight — we lurched uphill over a rocky, pot-holed track for more than an hour, each hill steeper than the one before, until we rounded the top, a photographer's delight. Finally, around the corner, we passed two hunters on horseback with rifles and dogs.

Moving to Viti Levu's southwest corner, we checked into the Intercontinental Fiji Golf Resort Spa, a 55-acre landscaped property on Natadola Bay. And instead of salesmen in suits, the hotel was as busy as a country club on a holiday weekend. Dads and kids played volleyball; moms worked out at a fitness center. We spotted kids racing hermit crabs, and others learning Fijian words and Polynesian dances. Menus at the hotel's several restaurants listed continental and some Fijian dishes, and our favorite, the lively Toba Bar Grill, took our order in five minutes and served the food in 10.

Coaxed into trying the Jet Ski "experience," we flew over the waves, riding tandem behind two watersports guides. But the skies were trumped by the hotel's Coral Planting project, headed by marine scientists Lavaci Koroyawa and Lake Romatanaababa. Joining them in the water, we learned how to plant healthy corals onto damaged reefs.



PHOTOS BY STEVE HAGGERTY

Folklore says that ancient spirits left the world from Uluvnavatu Mountain, on Viti Levu's northeast shore, Viti Levu, Fiji.



Natadola Bay's public beach, beside the Intercontinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa, is one of Viti Levu's best.



Fiji's farming families grow vegetables year around to sell at Nadi's Outdoor Market.



Navala Village, Fiji's last traditionally thatched village, is an hour from the Fiji Orchid Hotel and welcomes visitors.

Most memorable was the river cruise with Singatoka River Safari. Wide and long, the river winds through an endless valley, weaving past rocky hills, farms and meadows. Children splashed in it and men scrubbed their horses, waving as we passed. Pastoral and peaceful, it was a nod to an older century.

The 35-mile-long trip ended at a village, with a tour, lunch at the community center and a kava ceremony with the chief and town fathers. Kava is calming, some say. Just more weak tea, say others. How many villages are there, we wondered. "Hundreds, but that's not all," said the hotel's desk clerk. Each indigenous Fijian family belongs to a village that owns the land its on. It's like a clan, she explained. And only indigenous Fijians can own land. So add all the villages and their land, and it's nearly 90% of the country. "The government makes Fiji's laws, but the villages rule themselves. That's why they're important."

As our last week approached, we took the ferry to Lomani Island Resort — yes, an adults-only beach resort — on Makilo Lalala island, a single boat's ferry ride to the mainland and Nadi International Airport. You can stay overnight and still make it to the airport on time. But it wasn't the beach that earned the gold star.

It was the charming cottages, each with a private yard and plunge pool. The smiling waiters and creative, chef-designed meals, served at candle-lit tables. The "double-X" swimming pool and the water sports center. "It's peaceful here," said Shelley White, the general manager, when we met at the cocktail hour. "And quiet. But with Nadi next door, we stay busy with weddings and anniversaries, and lately, even business retreats. We can order everything we need and get it delivered the next day," she said. "Still, we love to have visitors like you, people who know this place and like it," she added, with a puckish smile. "Let me know the next time you travel. I might decide to come along."

Momma and Me

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<p>6-12 (Wed) Rivers Only \$47pp...rec \$20</p>		

If you are interested in a trip, please book early so the trip isn't canceled

Snacks & games on the comfy coach bus! Tons of FUN! We Love Seniors!