

Constant snowfall eating up cities' cash and salt

LAURA JOHNSTON
Plain Dealer Reporter

City service departments are hoping for an early end to winter.

Even though they're using salt more sparingly, thanks to shortages and high prices, this winter's constant snowfall is quickly exhausting supplies. Some cities can't immediately get the salt they have ordered. And overtime for plow drivers is adding up.

"We've already used probably what we did the entire winter last year," said Solon Service Director Thomas Bandiera. "You have to respond to the snow events when it snows." Cleveland has seen 44 inches

of snow this winter, 14 inches more than normal; Akron has received 34 inches, 11 more than normal.

But it's not the total snowfall that depletes salt stockpiles and city budgets. It's the number of times it snows. So far, statewide, the Ohio Department of Transportation has responded to 1,700 events this winter, compared to 1,100 during the same period last year.

Those "everyday nuisance snowfalls" have cost Akron about 21,000 tons of salt this year, said Joe Asher, deputy public works manager. That's half of their annual supply. And that's after instructing drivers to conserve salt. ODOF is trying to reduce salt

use by 30 percent by calibrating equipment to account for road and air temperature, so salt is applied only where needed, said spokeswoman Jocelynn Clemings.

"It's not just going out and running the spitter and letting the salt fall out of the truck," Clemings said. "It's calculated." Cities are conserving by waiting to salt until the snow has stopped falling, not salting roads during the late night or by mixing salt with sand, or by concentrating on main arteries, intersections, curves and hills.

"Had we not done that, I think we'd be in a dangerous situation right now," Asher said. "We've still used more salt, but we've had a lot more incidents." Road salt costs between \$40 and \$190 per ton.

bor depleted their stock during last year's record snowfall in March, said David Akers, president of the Northeast Ohio Sourcing Office. They never got a chance to catch up.

"We're starting to see that folks are having a hard time getting deliveries when they're placing orders," Akers said. "They can only pull so much salt out of the mine every day."

Cargill has been mining at record levels since last winter, spokesman Mark Klein said. The weather has spiked demand seemingly everywhere.

The demand could mean even more expensive salt prices next year, officials said.

Meanwhile, service depart-

ments are exceeding their overtime budgets for plow drivers

"Every snow event has been a holiday, on a weekend or night," said Don Clanner, Westlake's director of public service. "We're really trying to control our overtime because of the way economic times are, but I can't control when or how much snow there is."

So when it snows, cities continue to plow and salt, trust that they will have enough about it," said Higgins of Parma. "You're at the mercy of Mother Nature here."

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Man sues Akron club for a shoe in the face

PHIL TREXLER
Akron Beacon Journal

AKRON —Yusuf Evans says he still bears the pain of his first visit to an Akron strip club.

He says he got the boot — right in the nose, from the wicked flick of a dancer's foot.

It happened, he said, as he sat near the stage with friends inside the XTC nightclub on Brittain Road.

Evans, 37, has filed a lawsuit against the club and an unnamed dancer. He is seeking more than \$25,000 for injuries he claims he suffered during his visit a year ago. The case has been assigned to Summit County Common Pleas Judge Brenda Burnham Umrah.

Representatives of the club did not respond to a request for an interview.

"I got injured and I shouldn't have gotten injured just going out and trying to show somebody a good time," Evans said in a phone interview. "I have to live with this the rest of my life probably."

Evans said he doesn't normally frequent strip clubs, but he made an exception when an out-of-town cousin visited Akron. He said he wanted to be hospitable to his guest and another friend.

The three men were seated

near the dance stage while a stripper nicknamed "Tiana" performed her routine. The dance

included a demonstrative kick, which Evans said caused the stripper's boot to fly off her foot.

Evans said he never saw the boot coming. The thick-heeled shoe, similar to the platform style worn in the 1970s, smacked him squarely in the face.

He said he was treated at a local hospital for injuries to his nose. Doctors have recommended surgery.

"That was my first time ever there. Isn't that crazy?" he said. "My nose got chipped on one side and I constantly lose the ability to breathe out of one nostril; the passageway gets clogged up."

The lawsuit claims XTC management allowed improper attire to be used by their dancers. The dancers are required to wear certain articles of clothing and "actively participate in stage dances" and that during these routines, "the stage becomes a hazardous area."

Evans' attorney, John Brooks Cameron of Medina, could not be reached for additional comment.

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BUCKEYE

FROM B1

Bakery may close doors

The lore of Cleveland being called a "Coneback City" drew him back.

The shop has a 1950s-like atmosphere: The original display cases fill a wall. An antique cash register rests on the counter. Black-and-white photos and half-century-old calendars, a reminder of yesteryear, sit on a shelf. Framed articles about the shop from national publications hang on another wall. The bakery has a few cafe tables covered with beautiful Hungarian embroidered cloths. It also offers wireless Internet for today's tech-savvy customer.

"I always wanted a bakery like this," he said. "I take pride in what I do."

Customers just don't walk in like they did decades ago for over-the-counter sales. Feigenbaum said. He does the bulk of his business during Christmas, Hanukkah, Easter and Thanksgiving and summer months at

the North Union Farmer's Market. Most popular is the strudel — layers of crisp dough wrapped around apple, cherry, cheese or poppy-seed filling.

After the Food Channel featured the bakery a few years ago, he began a mail-order business for his treats. He noted that a 94-year-old woman from Hawaii once paid \$75 to ship \$20 worth of sweets.

"She wanted nut rolls and had left the city more than 30 years ago," he said. "I have extremely loyal customers."

He is also struggling to keep open his Collinwood restaurant, Marika's Cafe, on East 156th Street in Cleveland. Feigenbaum is disappointed that the Buckeye Road neighborhood hasn't been revitalized to attract newcomers like the Ohio City and Tremont areas.

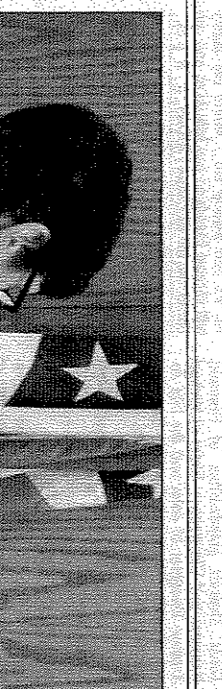
He yearns for that day but doesn't know if he can wait. If he can raise the money, he is exploring moving to the suburbs.

He feels like the city has abandoned him.

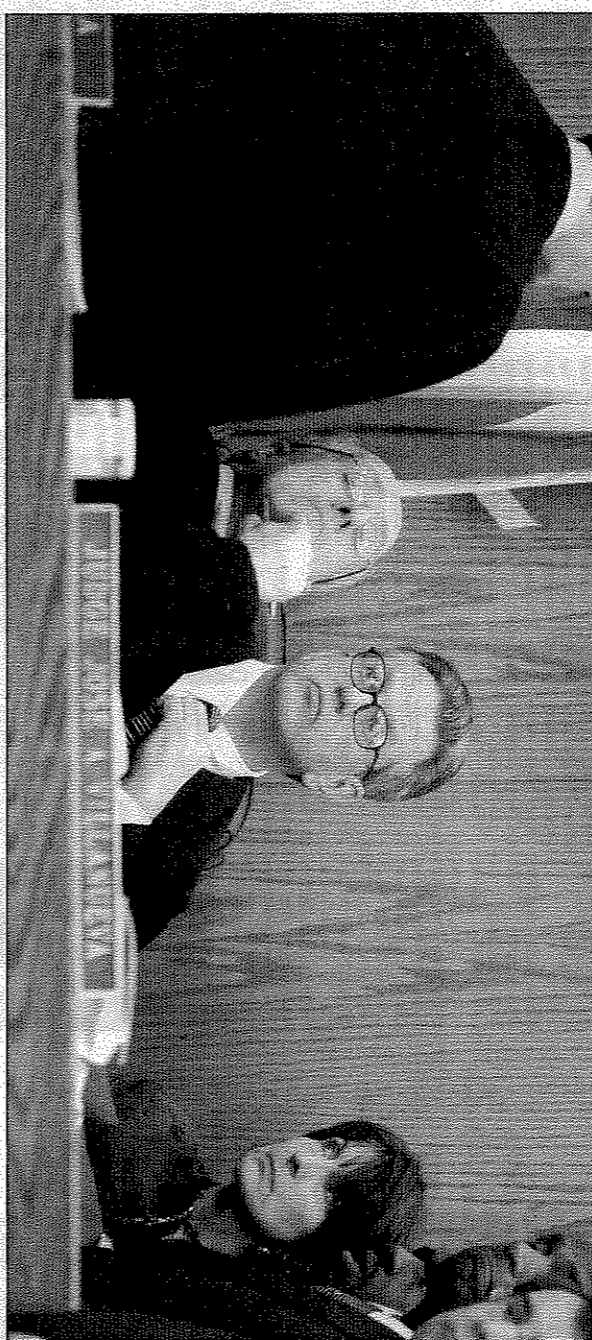
"We have to make a living and feel safe doing it," he said.

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orders because salt companies, primarily Cargill in Cleveland and Morton Salt in Fairport Har-



SCOTT SHAW / THE FLANDERS



Amber Hill waived her right to a jury trial, leaving her aggravated murder case to a three-judge panel composed of Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judges Nancy Fuest, back to camera, Jose Villanueva and John Sunila, who are flanked by Assistant County Prosecutor Ronni Ducoff, defense attorneys Myron Watson and Fernando Mack, and Assistant County Prosecutor Mark Mahoney.

Mother's troubled thoughts described in trial

LELIA ARASSI
Plain Dealer Reporter

Amber Hill suffered from bouts of depression, hallucinations and suicidal thoughts for four years before she drowned her two daughters in a bathtub in her Cleveland apartment.

A psychologist hired by the defense and a court psychiatrist testified Thursday before a three-judge panel in Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court that Hill was so deeply depressed the day she killed Janelle Chitron, 4, and Cecess Hill, 2, that she did not understand that what she was doing was wrong.

Hill, 23, is charged with aggravated murder in the girls' deaths and could face the death penalty if convicted. She pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. As part of the plea, Hill's lawyers are not contesting that she killed the children.

Prosecutors rested their case against Hill Thursday morning — the third day of the trial, which is being decided by the judges not a jury. The prosecution did not call any witnesses to testify to Hill's sanity. But they have indicated they plan to call two rebuttal witnesses this morning.

Reading from a transcript of his interview with Hill, psychologist John Fabian said Hill saw the children as an extension of herself and Hill wanted to put them all out of their misery.

First she held Janelle's head underwater. The girl kicked and thrashed, Hill said, until her little body went limp.

As she held Cecess down in the tub, the toddler looked up through the water at her mom, Hill told the psychologist. But she was smaller than her sister and struggled less.

Hill said she killed her two girls as a way to get help for her deepening depression without killing herself.

"I thought this was how I could get help," Hill said during the psychological analysis. "And I needed to know that people loved me. I felt like part of my brain was gone."

Dr. Sherif Soliman, a court psychiatrist who evaluated Hill, told the judges that Hill's severe depression spurred psychotic symptoms, such as auditory hallucinations.

Hill struggled with the delusions and believed that because she was suffering, her daughters were suffering, too, Soliman said. She wanted her children to feel the peace she could not. She did not expect to be punished for her actions and was surprised to learn that the police detective who interrogated her was not

there to help her, Soliman said. Hill told Soliman during psychiatric evaluation that she returned to her apartment calling Chitron from a pay phone to tell him what she had done. She stopped at the mailbox to pick up her mail.

"She saw a check in there, thought about cashing it that day," Soliman said. "I didn't know that what she was doing was wrong."

Prosecutors pointed out that their cross-examination of the doctors that Hill shut her eyes to after showing her children, indicating that she didn't want to see them and disgraced by her actions.

Fabian said Hill explained to him that she didn't want to see her girls exposed and closed curtain to keep them safe.

"There is a theme of mercy and of benevolence — of saving them from her own psychotic and depressed demons that was struggling with," Fabian said.

"She thought she had to protect her children from her own psychotic side."

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LAW & ORDER

CUYAHOGA COUNTY

Free Legal Advice Clinics

The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland's Volunteer Lawyers Program is inaugurating its fifth year of free Legal Advice Clinics at several Cleveland neighborhood locations. Upcoming clinics include: Saturday at St. Martin de Porres Center, 124 East 123rd St.; Feb. 7 at Antioch Baptist Church, 8869 Cedar Ave.; and Feb. 21 at West Side Catholic Center, 3135 Lorain Ave. A clinic in East Cleveland will be held Feb. 14 at Helen S. Brown Center, 16100 Euclid Ave. The clinics run

School. The Mentor public schools set up the Josip Grigic Memorial Fund. Donations may be made at any Charter One Bank branch more information on the fund, contact Justin Maynor, Mentor schools' community relations coordinator, at 440-974-5249. The incident is still under investigation.

WICKLIFFE

Woman accused of sex abuse