



City Hall Coffee Shop operator Don Ash mourns loss of best cigar customer

## City Hall workers sorry to see Ballard step down

By RICK REIFF  
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When John Ballard steps down as Akron's mayor in January, Don Ash will lose one of his best customers.

Ash, who operates the concession stand in the basement of City Hall, has supplied Ballard with his favorite Daily Monitor, cigars for 15 years, as long as Ballard has been mayor.

"I bet a little sad about it," Ash said of Ballard's decision Wednesday not to seek re-election to a fifth term. "He's the best."

CUSTOMER Jose "Tex" Washburn recalled conversations he's had with Ballard during the past seven years, often as the mayor walked by as Washington closed the shops in City Hall.

"We don't see him," Washington said. "Last recently when he came back from Florida, he talked to me about the vacation."

Ash, Washington and other City Hall employees interviewed Wednesday described the mayor as a man of few words, able to convey a feeling of friendliness with a brief greeting or "Hi, how are you?"

"He's always got a 'Hi, how are you?' He's very friendly," said Fry, news analyst John Whelan.

"There we've talked," said city planner Bob Fry. He said Ballard complimented his painting of the mayor's office a few years back. "I see him two to three times a week. He always exchange hello."

Fry, a Democrat and union man, said he valued the Republican mayor as not stepping down.

"He's been here a long time. He knows what the heck he's doing," Fry said.

Fry, a member of Local 186 of the American Federation of State and Municipal Employees, said Ballard has dealt fairly with city workers.

MOST PEOPLE interviewed said they were surprised that Ballard was not seeking re-election, but Washington said he sensed that the mayor would step down.

"The last time, to me it seemed he didn't even campaign hard," Washington said of Ballard's 1975 re-election campaign. "I figured he was going to hang up his gloves."

The tradesmen and laborers interviewed said a change in mayors for many of them their first would not affect their jobs.

But most of those with desk jobs expressed concern that their responsibilities would be altered or their jobs eliminated.

A SECRETARY to one of Ballard's aides said she is afraid a Democratic mayor would hire her. "I sure hope a Republican wins," she said.

Shirley Pryor, a secretary in the finance department, said her job is protected by civil service, but she said a new mayor might bring a lot of changes. She said she preferred leaving the status quo.

"What I see coming is Ray Kasper's going to look," said training specialist John Vinson.

VINSON predicted that Kasper, the Democrat city council president who is considered a front-runner to succeed Ballard, would make major changes in management, resulting in an overhaul of working procedures.

Margaret Bookner, who has worked in the supply room for six years, said she liked the way her department operated, but that new ideas could bring an improvement.

She said a new mayor won't affect her job.

"City Hall still has to work. You need the people who are here to do it," Matt Bookner said.

### January snowy, cold

For the first time in three years, there were no blizzards in January, but the month was still cold and snowy.

Recorded in January was 23.9 inches, making it the fourth snowiest January in the Akron area since records were started in 1887. That was more than twice the normal 10.4 inches of snow in January.

The heaviest fall in 24 hours was 5.4 inches on Jan. 7. The greatest amount on the ground at the National Weather Service station at Akron-Canton Airport was eight inches on Jan. 31.

JANUARY'S average daily high temperature was 27. The average daily low was 12.5. The monthly average temperature was 19.9 degrees, 4.3 degrees below normal, according to statistics kept by weatherman Bob Albo.

There were two record low temperatures set last month — six below zero on Jan. 3 and nine below on Jan. 11.

Albo said this was the fourth consecutive January without a "January thaw." Although that is not an every-year occurrence, records goer a long period show a high probability of a thaw.

Albo said.

Liquid precipitation last month was 3.17 inches, 48-inch above normal. Measurable precipitation fell on 39 days, the normal is 45. There was freezing rain on 19 days.

There were two sunny days (normal is three), five partly cloudy days (normal is six) and 24 cloudy days (normal is 32).

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