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THURSDAY

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Big Picture, Local Focus.

XENIA ■ BEAVERCREEK ■ JAMESTOWN ■ CEDARVILLE ■ YELLOW SPRINGS ■ SPRING



Charles Caperton/Greene County Dailies

Bill Hagenbuch helped make rope for more than 40 years with the Hooven & Allison Company in Xenia. Now he's the subject of "Ropewalk," a documentary about the role of rope in the history of Xenia and the world.

Take a 'Ropewalk' through history

By AARON KEITH HARRIS
Staff Writer
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BEAVERCREEK — The site of Xenia's Hooven & Allison Company was destroyed by fire in 2005, a year after the rope-making company closed.

But the company's former chief engineer and president, Beaver Creek resident Bill Hagenbuch, is still telling the story of Xenia's historic role in America's rope industry and the effect of rope on human history. Hagenbuch, 89, is the subject

and narrator of a soon-to-be-released documentary film called "Ropewalk," a nonprofit production of the Engineers Club of Dayton Foundation, the Cordage Institute, and Ohio filmmaker Steve Fetsch.

The idea for a film started with a talk Hagenbuch gave to the Engineers Club, which developed into a lecture and slide show given at area historical societies and community groups.

See Rope, Page 2A

Former Wil College at guilty to in

By AARON KEITH HARRIS
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XENIA — A former Wilmington College soccer player was sentenced Wednesday for coming to Xenia in hopes of meeting a fifteen 14-year-old girl for sex more than a year ago.

Greene County Common Pleas Court Judge Timothy Campbell put Jonathan V. Wightman, 20, of Clayton, on probation for five years.

Wightman was also classified a sex offender, which means for 15 years he must register each change of name, address, employment or student status with law enforcement.

Shakro ente plea in deat

By MARY BETH LEHMAN
Staff Writer
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XENIA — A Fairborn woman surprised many in Greene County Wednesday when she entered a plea of no contest to an involuntary manslaughter charge nearly eight years after the suspicious death of her seven-month-old son in 2000.

Det. Lee Cyr of the Fairborn Police Department said police responded to a call in 2000 that brought them to an unresponsive baby who was not breathing. Jannell Dear-Shakro's son was then taken to Children's Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead.

Six years, later prosecutors officially charged his mother with causing his death.

Cyr said the coroner's report came back that seven-month-old Dillon Hilbun died of asphyxiation. He said the woman explained the child's death as a result of a plastic bag she found near him under a daybed after leaving him alone to smoke a cigarette.

Based on her own account, Cyr said Hilbun died as a result of his mother's actions.

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Photo by Timothy Hearsum, courtesy of Engineers Club of Dayton Foundation

The producer's of "Ropewalk: A cordage engineer's journey through history" are attempting to identify the woman in the photo slated to be the cover of the film's DVD. The photo was taken in 1973 at the Hooven & Allison Company plant in Xenia. If you know who the woman is, please call the Engineers Club of Dayton at 228-2148, or email info@StoryOfRope.org

Rope

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Hagenbuch didn't think the talk, if limited to only his career, was entertaining enough, so he decided to start with man's first attempt to twist fibers together to make rope and work his way up to current efforts to make carbon nanotube ropes that could support "space elevators" to satellites in orbit.

"The way he tells a story, doesn't it just make you want to make a movie?" said daughter Kate Hagenbuch, who tried to record her fathers talk by herself with one camera before concluding a more professional touch was needed.

Fetsch and began taping interviews with Hagenbuch in December 2006, relying heavily on his subject's ability to tell a good story or teach a good lesson, on topics ranging from technical aspects of the business to his experiences as an Army radar expert at Wright Field and near London in WWII.

After the war, Hagenbuch went to work at Hooven & Allison Company, where his father served on the board. And even though he had earned a Bachelor's and a Master's degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Hagenbuch had to learn the rope business "pretty much from scratch."

His first job was unloading 275-pound bales of manila hemp and bales of sisal hemp weighing 400 to 500 pounds that arrived via the trains that

converged on Xenia, then a regional rail hub.

Eventually he got to use his degrees as the company began the transition from making only natural fiber ropes to adding synthetic ones made from materials like polypropylene.

"Ropewalk" will have a premier showing at the Engineers Club sometime later this year, when finishing touches like an original music score, closed captioning, and DVD extras and packaging.

Through the end of January, the producers are offering the \$20 DVD at a pre-order price of \$10 in order to help pay for those touches. Copies of the DVD will also be made available to schools and libraries.

"I hope that they develop an interest in the technology and the real importance of this idea of a space elevator," said Hagenbuch of what he hopes Ropewalk viewers will take from the film. "The future of this world may depend on our ability to exist in space."

For more information or to order the "Ropewalk" DVD, contact the Engineers Club at 228-2148, or visit [StoryOfRope.org](http://www.StoryOfRope.org) for more information.

The Engineers Club of Dayton Foundation is sponsoring the film as part of its educational mission for research and education in science and technology. A film trailer, as well as a photo gallery of the original Hooven & Allison Co, may be viewed at <http://www.StoryOfRope.org>.

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The Greene Jury indicted De in 2006 on two untary manslaughter with evidence a gering, after six ing evidence, in case and cons before bringing grand jury.

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Participants w ing passport at t ed hike and after of each hike, h initial the pass miles have been any combinat offered, particip the opportunity Greene County stick for \$15. walkers will hav add a variety of

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