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ARCADE SQUARE COULD BE KEY TO DOWNTOWN RETAIL -- Arcade Square drew an estimated 130,000 shoppers during its temporary reopening, an encouraging sign for downtown merchants and city planners working on downtown retail plans. University of Dayton political science professor Norman Fogel, who has studied the city's downtown retail strategy, believes the Arcade has promise as the building block for a bold new downtown retail plan. Fogel cites the Columbus downtown mall as a model Dayton should adopt. "I see no reason why the city of Dayton can't have the same thing. The facility is there."

The biggest stumbling block may be financial, Fogel says. Will citizens consider reopening the Arcade a high priority for tax dollars? "If you spend money on reopening the Arcade, then that’s money you cannot spend on hiring police, planting new trees, improving more roads or on other projects," says Fogel. "Whenever a city is planning to spend tax money there will always be naysayers -- people who do not welcome change." Fogel would like to see the doors reopen if the city can fit the Arcade into the budget.

Call Norman Fogel at (513) 229-2338 or (513) 294-2012.

HOCKEY AT UD'S FIELDHOUSE? -- They're not the Bombers. In fact, they don't even have ice. But hockey is one of the most popular intramural sports at the University of Dayton, says Dave Ostrander, who directs intramural programs. Four-person teams face off in the Frericks Center fieldhouse Sunday through Thursday nights in some fiercely competitive "floor hockey" matches, Ostrander says. "It's a very strong sport here," Ostrander says. "Some teams are very experienced and have excellent stick skills. Others -- well, you just have to see it to believe it. They're out there hacking away." Players must wear mouth guards and eye protection. They use plastic sticks and a plastic puck, and don tennis shoes instead of skates. Co-ed and all-male teams enter the league, and some of the hottest contests take place between fraternities.

Unlike Dayton's professional team, floor hockey matches don't involve fights. And Ostrander's proud to say that in eight years of contests, "no one's been hit with a stick yet."

Call Gary Ostrander at (513) 229-2396.

A GOOD DAY FOR POETRY -- Along with a precision lawn chair marching team and an Elvis impersonator, an original poem will be included in inaugural festivities in Washington. The poem is being written by Maya Angelou, an African-American woman and an Arkansas native. "She's a good poet, and one who believes in the American process and the American dream," says University of Dayton English Professor Herbert Martin, UD's poet-in-residence. "What everyone will be waiting for is what the poem will be like and how it will speak to the conscience of America." On the good side, the poem will elevate the place of poetry in American culture. However, UD couldn't afford to bring Angelou to campus for a speech a few years ago, "and now her price will probably triple," Martin says.

Contact Herbert Martin at (513) 229-3439 or (513) 278-6654.