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Photo Lara Newman

RUBIES WOMENS GROUP was the Small Non-Profit Winner at the Richland Area Chamber and Economic Development Small Business of the Year Awards Ceremony on Dec. 10.



Photo Lara Newman

EICHINGER BRAFFORD MCCLEAN GROUP was a 2024 Finalist for the 14 & Under Employee Category at the Richland Area Chamber and Economic Development Small Business of the Year Awards Ceremony.

Chamber hosts Small Business of the Year Awards Ceremony

By Traci Little

On Wednesday, Dec. 10, the Richland Area Chamber and Economic Development celebrated its Small Business of the Year Awards Ceremony, spotlighting nine local success stories that embody the community's heartbeat.

"On behalf of our entire Richland County community, we thank all the nominees and finalists for making a lasting impact," said a representative of the Chamber. Started by the late Norbert Peiker 27 years ago, these annual awards honor some of our best local small businesses & nonprofits.

Together, these businesses employ over 200 local people, generate over \$10 million in revenue, and contribute significantly to charitable causes. The commitment of these nine small businesses to Richland County is truly commendable.

2024 Small Business of the Year Award winners are Small Non-Profit: Rubies Womens Group; Large Non-Profit: The Friendly House; 14 & Under Employee Category: Bookwalter & Skulski Orthodontics; and 15 + Employee Category: K.E. McCartney & Associates, Inc.

Finalists were 14 & Under Employee Category: Eichinger Brafford McClean Group - Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, Local Project Pro; 15 + Employee Category: ES Consulting, Southern Title of Ohio; and Entrepreneurial Spirit Award: Allison Pence Art.

City of Mansfield Mayor Jodie Perry, said, "Small businesses are what make each community unique! I am proud to share that many Mansfield businesses were recognized this year with awards."



Photo Lara Newman

BOOKWALTER & SKULSKI ORTHODONTICS received a 2024 Small Business of the Year Award during the Richland Area Chamber and Economic Development Small Business of the Year Awards Ceremony. This was received in the 14 & Under Employee category. (More Photos on Page 2)

Foundation funds social services and other community needs

During its December meeting, the Richland County Foundation Board of Trustees approved \$602,225 in grants to nonprofit organizations.

Projects at area nonprofit organizations that received grants from a combination of unrestricted, and field-of-interest funds include:

The Domestic Violence Shelter received a grant to fund the Safe Haven for Kids program which serves infants, children, and teens up to 18 years old. Richland County has a significant number of children who are survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Financially the DVS is facing a shortfall due to cuts in crucial federal and state funding.

The Salvation Army was awarded a grant for its Emergency Social Services Program. Households that teeter on the edge of poverty

are forced to choose between transportation, housing, and food expenses. The program includes the soup kitchen, food pantry, direct financial assistance for utilities to prevent homelessness, and seasonal assistance. The funds will be used towards utility and food assistance. This program attempts to aid in self-sufficiency for vulnerable populations and reduce reliance on public assistance.

Raemelton received a grant to provide scholarships for equine-based therapies to individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities. This therapy engages and strengthens a student's muscles, improves motor skills, encourages core academic skills, and appropriate communication.

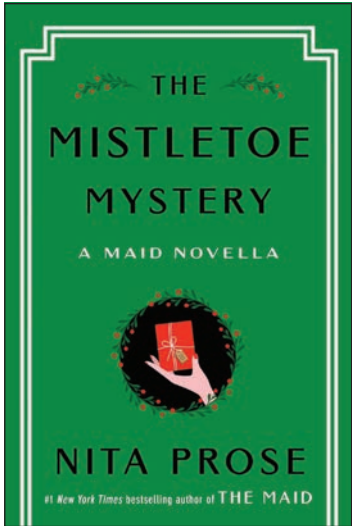
The Richland County Historical Society was awarded a grant to
(Continued on Page 3)

LOST IN A BOOK

Richland Area Chamber and Economic Development Small Business of the Year Awards Ceremony



A Book Review
By Mandy Belczak Gurney



The Mistletoe Mystery is the third part of *A Maid Novella* book series. If you know books one and two you will understand how eager I was to read this for Christmas.

Molly the maid is back in a charming short story at The Regency Grand Hotel.

True to form, Nita Prose gives us a little mystery, a little romance and plenty of endearing moments with Molly.

This was far more predictable than the other two books, but that was just fine for this short little novella. You can read it in just one afternoon.

My rating: ★★


Follow my personal blog at Green Gurneys at GreenGurneys.com



Local Project Pro was a 2024 Small Business of the Year Finalist



Allison Pence Art received the Entrepreneurial Spirit Award

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News Briefs

A recycling trailer will be in the parking lot at Ontario United Methodist Church, 3540 Park Avenue West, Dec. 28 and 29.

Acceptable items include steel and aluminum cans, crushed milk jugs, detergent bottles, plastic bottles with number 1 or 2 on the bottom, broken down cardboard, all papers included with the newspaper but no other magazines or paper. Please remove caps from bottles and rinse all containers well.

★

Richland County adults 60 and older are invited to penny bingo games on Mondays from April to December at the Lincoln Highway Event Center, 1361 Park Avenue East, Mansfield (Madison area). Bingo starts at 11:30 am with doors opening at 10 am.

Fifteen games of penny bingo and full house will be played. Cost is a penny a card for 15 games and a nickel a card for full house. This is a 100% payout. Snacks are provided.

To RSVP, call Kathy Boyle at 419-543-1813.

These events are supported and funded by the Richland County Senior Services Levy, administered by the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc.

★

Trinity Grace Fellowship, 1592 Grace St., Mansfield, will hold a hymn sing during its regular 9:30 am worship service on Sunday, Dec. 29.

• Foundation funds social services and other community needs

(Continued from Front Page)

convert the building at 64 Surrey Road into a tiled plaza park on its upper open-air level. The Oak Hill Terrace project is across the street from Oak Hill Cottage. The space will become a venue for events and a gathering space for the community.

The Mansfield Richland County Third Grade Spelling Bee received a grant for this year's event. About 200 students from across the county participate each year. The Spelling Bee helps prepare students for the state testing required to advance to fourth grade by improving their reading comprehension.

The board of trustees awarded 10 scholarships to students attending a career technical education school. The Scholarship Committee implemented a rolling deadline for CTE scholarships to meet various enrollment deadlines. In aligning with Ohio's Attainment Goal, the foundation wants to help fill the gap between job openings and certified employees as well as lead the way to support workforce development through CTE scholarships.

Ohians can receive help from Home Energy Assistance Program

The Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging wants to remind older Ohioans that assistance is available to help with their home energy bills. The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps Ohioans at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for a household of up to seven members and 60% of State Median Income for a household of eight or more members to pay their heating bills.

Older Ohioans may go to their local Area Agency on Aging office for help with assembling the required documents and completing their HEAP application. Those in need of assistance may also visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov to apply online or to download a copy of the application.

When applying, individuals need to have copies of the following documents most recent utility bills, a list of all household members (including birth dates and Social Security numbers), proof of income for the past 30 days for all household members (12 months for certain income types), proof of U.S. citizenship or legal residency for all household members and proof of disability (if applicable).

HEAP benefits are applied to an individual's energy bill after Jan. 1, 2025. Applications for the HEAP program must be received by May 31, 2025. For information call 419-524-4144.

Richland SWCD snowman paint party slated for Jan. 14

Next year's Conservation Creation Arts & Crafts Workshop will be hosted by Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (Richland SWCD) on Tuesday, Jan. 14, at 6 pm.

The evenings are filled with laughter, fun, learning about interesting topics related to nature and conservation and creativity.

Richland SWCD provides the materials and tools needed to make the project. Reservations are requested and the workshops cost \$12 per person.

The first workshop of the new year will be a snowman paint party. It will be held at the Longview Center, 1495 W. Longview Ave., Mansfield.

Participants will paint a cute and festive snowman under the direction of Becky Williams and learn about the Precipitation Monitoring Program at Richland SWCD.

Reservations are due Jan. 7 at <https://richlandswcd.net/events/> or call 419-747-8685.



The board of trustees approved grants from donor-advised funds which allows individuals and families the opportunity to make grant suggestions to favorite charities. Donor Advised Funds are a flexible and convenient alternative to a private foundation. It is also a way to keep charitable contributions anonymous, at the preference of the donor.

The board of trustees approved grants from donor-advised funds to meet emerging needs at the following organizations 4 Leaf Rover, Catalyst Life Services, Discovery School, Domestic Violence Shelter, Downtown Mansfield Inc., El Central De Servicios Sociales, Friendly House, Habitat for Humanity, Healthnetwork Foundation, Island Safe Harbor, Lucas Community Center, Lucas Local Schools, Make A Wish Foundation, Malabar Farm Foundation, Mansfield Art Center, Mansfield Playhouse, Mansfield Reformatory Preservation Society, MOSAIC Mansfield, North Central Ohio Land Conservancy, North End Community Improvement Collaborative, Project Hope, Richland Academy of the Arts, Richland Veterans Mentor Program, Rubies Women's Group, SoundWaters Coastal Education Center, Scouting America Buckeye Council, St. James Episcopal Church, St. Peter's School, Taking Root Farms, The New Store, United Way of Richland County and Wayfinders Ohio.

The Richland County Foundation, a not-for-profit 501c3, was established in 1945 as a way for individuals to pool and invest their gifts for the long-term good of Richland County and its residents.

Reasons to Support a No-Cost Pregnancy Center



- ① No Cost or Insurance Required for Services
- ② A place of calm in the middle of a storm
- ③ Practical, every day help to navigate life



www.friendsofrichlandpregnancy.com

to make your Year End Donation

Your year end donation is tax deductible



Pioneer CTC board accepts Penguin Fund donations

Pioneer Career and Technology Center Board of Education held its regular meeting on Dec. 16.

Pioneer Penguin Fund Donations, used for students in need during the Holiday Season, came from Jamie Wagers, \$50; Leanne Bauerdick, \$100; Preston Foy, \$50; Alice/Dennis Teynor, \$100; Dan George, \$25; American Legion Bucyrus, \$500; Emma Jenkins, \$25; Jennifer Verspoor, \$25; J. Colton Penwell, \$20; anonymous, \$100; Katharine Sabourin, \$20; Jerry Mingus, \$20; Cassandra White, \$30; Col.Crawford Post #181, \$500; Amanda Snipes, \$25; Jeremiah Howe, \$100; Tina Hurst, \$50; Rene Phillips, \$100; Mary Cosker, \$50; Christina Niese, \$50; Anne Kurtzman, \$35; Cassandra White, \$10; Shannon Sprang, \$50; Lost & Found, \$28.86; Jeff Payne, \$100; Don & Melissa Paullin, \$50; Meghan Haney, \$50; Mary Cosker, \$50; Marianne Ritchie, \$100; Dave Such, \$60; Crystal Escalera, \$50; Brandi Jensen, \$50; anonymous, \$150; Mary Ritz, \$50; Sandy Grau, \$25; Luke Brenneman, \$200; Kip Stevens, \$40; Katie Fiske, \$50; Stephen Raphael, \$100; anonymous, \$100; Morgan Schumacher, \$30; Ellen Huffman, \$100; Amy Law, \$50; Amvets Ladies Aux.Post 27, \$500; Aaryn Evans, \$25; Matt & Tina Parr, \$50; Molly Belcik, \$25; Amcrete LLC, \$800; Deb Sallee, \$50; Mary Lee Barr,

\$100; Greg Nickoli, \$100; Dala Greenslade, \$100; Karen Donahue, \$50; Phil Johnson, \$100; Julie White, \$100; anonymous, \$50; Sherry Young, \$50; Caleb Alt, \$20; EAP, \$1,500; Ellen Shifley, \$100; and Kelly Purvis, \$50.

The board approved supplemental contracts for certificated personnel Terri Crain, STNA Clinicals; and Meghan Haney, STNA Clinicals. Stipend contracts were approved for chaperones Mary Cosker, Bill Dichtl, Beth Heinlen, Crystal Black and Karrie Davisson.

Employment of Adult Education part-time LPN instructors included Tamara Arnold and Theresa Roth.

The board approved an agreement with Ontario Estates Senior Living and an affiliation agreement with Fisher-Titus Medical Center.

The board approved an organizational meeting for Wednesday, Jan. 22, at 6 pm in the Pioneer Board of Education Conference Room. The January regular meeting will follow.

The board elected Douglas Theaker as board president pro-tem for the Jan. 22, organizational meeting.

Resolutions of Appreciation were adopted for board member service as follows including Royden Smith for nine years of service to Pioneer CTC Board of Education.

Church Directory

Clay Memorial Lutheran Church

1601 Amoy East Rd., Mansfield
419-747-6882
Pastor Carol Kilgore
Sunday School 9:15 am
Sunday Worship 10:30 am

Clear Fork Alliance Church

1008 State Route 97, Bellville
419-886-4333 • www.clearforkalliance.org
Rev. Matt Merendino
Rev. Mike Stine, Associate Pastor
9 am Sunday School • 10 am Sunday Worship
Sunday Evening 6 pm Home Groups
Monday Men's Group 7:30 pm
Wednesday evenings: 6:45 pm Prayer Meeting
6:30-8 pm TeamKID and Youth Group
Wednesday Ladies Bible Study 6:30-8 pm

Community Bible Church

1043 Springmill St., Mansfield
567-560-8011
www.DiscoverCommunity.org
Pastor Sam Belsterling
10:30 am Sunday Worship
Live stream at <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityBibleChurchMansfield>

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

200 West Third St., Mansfield
419-524-4813 • mansfield1stccc1833@gmail.com
Rev. Gregory Bibler
Office Hours: Tu., W., Th. 9 am to 1 pm
10:30 am Sunday Worship
Christian Builders, Sunday, 9:30 am
www.FirstChristianChurchMansfield.com
FB: FirstChristianChurch,Mansfield,Ohio

First Congregational Church

640 Millsboro Rd., Mansfield
419-756-3046 • www.mansfieldfcc.com
Pastor Brad Bunn
8:30 am Chapel • 10:30 am Sanctuary
Sunday School 10:30 am

First English Lutheran Church

53 Park Avenue West, Mansfield
419-522-0662 • www.felc-mansfield.org
Pastor Jay Jackson
9 am Sunday School • 10 am Sunday Worship
Call about Prayer Groups, Small Groups, Bible Studies, Book Clubs, Pub Theology, Community Meals, Free Produce distribution and Senior Boxes.

Hope Lutheran Church

(Formerly St. Paul & St. Timothy)
2010 Park Avenue West, Mansfield
419-529-4351 • www.lutheranhope.org
Pastor Jonathan Stuftt
9:30 am Sunday Worship
10 am Thursday Bible Study
Free Breakfast 2nd Saturdays 9 am
Free Dinner 4th Sundays 5 pm

Lexington Presbyterian Church

35 Church St. West, Lexington
419-884-1330
Pastor Denny Nezrick
10:30 am Sunday Worship
<https://www.facebook.com/Lexington-Presbyterian-Church-117768414915815>

G & M Body & Paint Shop

1689 West Fourth St., Ontario
419-529-2747

Mansfield 1st EPC

399 Trimble Rd., Mansfield
419-756-7066 • www.mansfield1st.com
Rev. Joseph Yerger
9 am Adult & Youth Sunday School
10 am Sunday Worship
ADA Accessible Nursery
and Children's Programming Available

Mansfield Baptist Temple

752 N. Stewart Rd., Mansfield
419-589-5413 • www.mbt.org
Pastor Rob Kurtz
9:30 am Sunday School
10:30 am & 5:30 pm Sunday Worship
7 pm Wednesday Service

Ontario United Methodist Church

3540 Park Avenue West., Ontario
419-529-4345 • ontarioumc.com
Pastor George Lee
10:15 am Sunday Worship
10:15 am Kingdom Kids

St. John's United Church of Christ

68 Park Avenue East, Mansfield
419-522-2813 • www.stjohnsmansfield.org
Pastor Faith Prietti
10 am Sunday Worship
Office hours: Mon-Fri 9am to 1pm
AA Meetings M & F 10 am & noon;
Wed. noon Brown Bag and Sat. 6 pm
Clothing Ministry by appt: 419-512-9817

Trinity Grace Fellowship

1592 Grace St., Mansfield
419-589-5890 • trinitygracefellowship.org
Pastor Larry Carnes
9:30 am Sunday Worship
11 am Sunday School
Bible Study Mondays 2 pm

Wappner Funeral Home

Mansfield • Ontario • Ashland
419-522-5211

Rotary Club of Mansfield promotes literacy through dictionaries

Third-grade students in Richland County have new dictionaries from the Rotary Club of Mansfield. Each year, club members label and deliver the books to elementary schools. They have been doing this project for over 30 years.

Rotary Club of Mansfield Member Dave Petska, a retired Crestview School District educator, has led the service project for years.

"The dictionaries are meaningful gifts to the children. In some cases, it is the first book they own. The Rotary Club looks forward

to continuing its vision to support the literacy of young students," Petska said.

The Rotary Club of Mansfield partners with The Dictionary Project, a nonprofit organization. Its mission is to assist all students in becoming good writers, active readers, creative thinkers, and resourceful learners by providing them with their own dictionaries.

Dictionaries are a gift to each student to use at school and home for years to come. Educators see third grade as the dividing line between learning to read and reading to learn.

This year, the Rotary Club of Mansfield delivered 1,057 dictionaries to 15 elementary schools and spent about \$3,200. The Ohio State University at Mansfield and North Central State College have contributed money to this project for the past three years.

Other service projects of the local club include the McGowan Courage Awards, Strive program, Medical Equipment and Supplies Abroad (MESA), High School 4-Way Test Speech Contest, Stream Cleanup, Litter Pickup, United Way Day of Caring, and Salvation Army Bell Ringing.



ROTARY CLUB OF MANSFIELD President Kyle Swigart and members John Reidl and Gary Stroup label dictionaries before delivery to third-grade students.

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Obituary Listings for Wappner Funeral Directors

- David Francis Laug, December 11
- William O. Brimager, December 14
- David Anthony Metzger, December 14
- Lora Ann Fife, December 16

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www.gatesagency.com



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State Farm County Mutual Insurance Company of Texas, State Farm Lloyds, Richardson, TX

State Farm Florida Insurance Company, Winter Haven, FL



Photos By Traci Little
CHRISTMAS AT KINGWOOD continues at Kingwood Center Gardens through Dec. 30. The event includes a Community Tree Walk, a decorated Kingwood Hall and outdoor light trail. Festive shopping, seasonal dining and a variety of special events are offered, including visits from Santa and his reindeer, model train displays and live performances. Presented by Mechanics Bank, Christmas at Kingwood tickets can be purchased at <https://kingwoodcenter.org/christmas-at-kingwood/>. Tours are held from 3-9 pm and are closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.



SHRIMP AND SAUSAGE OVER POLENTA

Ingredients

- 1 lb peeled and deveined shrimp
- 1 lb loose Italian sausage
- 1 medium onion — chopped
- 3 cloves garlic — minced
- 28 ounce can crushed tomatoes
- Olive oil
- Salt & pepper
- Polenta prepared according to instructions
- Parmesan cheese

Instructions

In a large saute pan add 3-4 Tbsp. olive oil, add garlic and onions and saute for 3-4 minutes over medium heat, being careful not to burn the garlic, if it begins to brown turn down heat. Add the shrimp and sauté until shrimp is cooked not more than 5 minutes. Remove shrimp and onion mixture from the pan. Add sausage to pan and cook sausage, breaking up any large pieces. When sausage is cooked, add tomatoes and bring to a boil, when you are just about ready to serve add the shrimp and onion mixture back in and quickly heat. (you don't want to add shrimp back in too soon or shrimp will become overcooked). Serve in bowls over the prepared polenta.

LIKE Kimmy's Cucina on Facebook & Instagram



Photo by Damon Callis



Day Trippin' With Damon – Rochester Michigan hosts The Big, Bright Light Show each Christmas season. The buildings in downtown Rochester are covered with more than 1 million lights and will be on display every evening (5 pm - midnight) through Jan. 19.

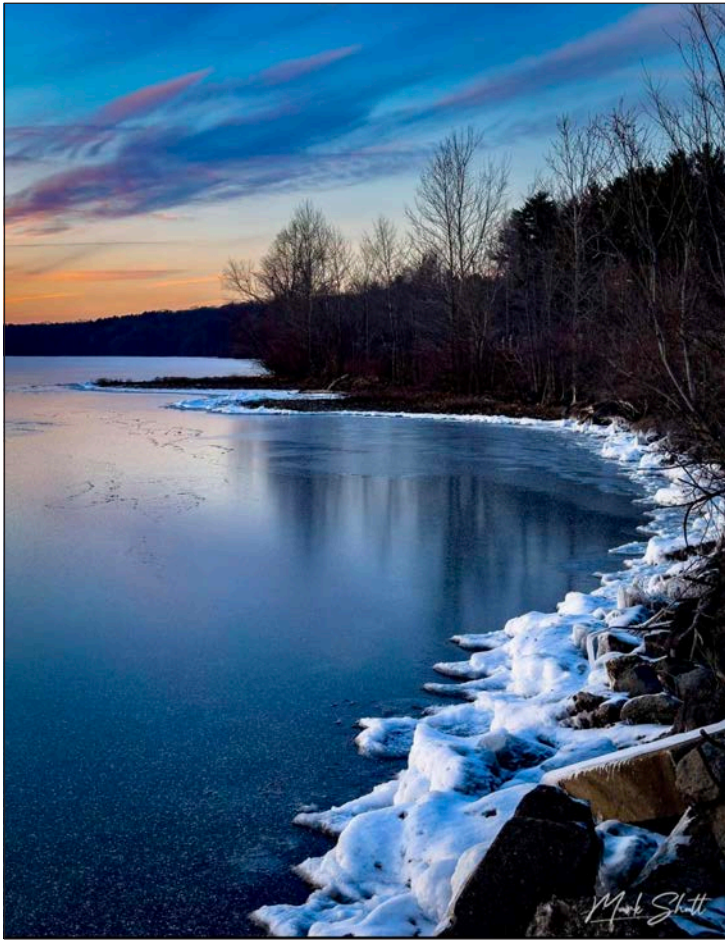


Photo By Mark Shutt

Sutton Bank Partners with Children's Hunger Alliance

For the fourth consecutive year, Sutton Bank has partnered with Children's Hunger Alliance (CHA) in support of CHA's Weekend Meals program. Through a recent donation from Sutton Bank, the initiative will continue to help provide weekend meal packs for children facing food insecurities within the local communities.

Recently, staff members from Sutton Bank's Ontario branch helped distribute weekend meals through CHA to students at John Sherman Elementary School in Mansfield. The program helps ensure students have access to nutritious food over the weekend when school meals are unavailable.

"A food insecure child who is of school age can get two meals through the school during the week and potentially a third meal from an afterschool program, but when the weekend hits that child may not have anything to eat until they go back to school Monday morning," said Jamie Harter, PhD, Director of Development, Northwest Ohio, CHA. "For this reason, CHA started offering ready-to-eat meals for children to have on the weekend to address this issue. We could not provide this critical program without the generous support we receive from corporations like Sutton Bank."

According to CHA, 400,000 children across Ohio live in food-insecure households, meaning one-fifth of children are unsure where their next meal is coming from.

"Food insecurity remains a prevalent issue facing our local communities," said Tony Gorrell, CEO of Sutton Bank. "We're grateful for the resources and partnership provided by Children's Hunger Alliance. The program enables many young students to have a consistent supply of nutritious food as part of their diet. We are happy to help improve the well-being of families in the Mansfield area."

The weekend meal packages consist of a variety of food options, with each package consisting of meals and snacks that meets USDA nutritional requirements. This ongoing partnership between Sutton Bank and CHA will ensure the 600 children attending John Sherman Elementary have access to meals beyond Monday to Friday.

Sutton Bank is a community bank established in 1878, and headquartered in Attica, OH. Sutton Bank has consistently been named one of the top small business and agricultural lenders in the State of Ohio. Member FDIC. For more information visit suttonbank.com.

Founded in 1970, Children's Hunger Alliance is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to ending childhood hunger in Ohio. Through their work, Children's Hunger Alliance provides healthy meals to hungry children, advocates for the welfare of Ohio's youngest citizens and teaches nutrition and physical education to those they serve. For more information visit childrenshungeralliance.org.



STUDENTS IN MRS. RHODES' personal finance class at Ontario were tax experts using sample W-2 forms to prepare a 1040 tax form for clients to determine if the person would get a refund or owe a tax payment.



RECENTLY, TEAM MEMBERS from Sutton Bank's Ontario branch had the privilege of joining Children's Hunger Alliance (CHA) at John Sherman Elementary School in Mansfield, to help pass out weekend meal boxes as part of CHA's mission to combat childhood food insecurity.



LEXINGTON EASTERN Student Council made meals, decorated lunch bags and served lunch in downtown Mansfield with People Helping People on Dec. 3.

Teddy Bear Concert set for February 16

The Renaissance Theatre will present a Teddy Bear Concert on Sunday, Feb. 16, at 2:30 pm.

This performance features an original script by artistic director Michael Thomas, bringing the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* to life through engaging audience participation, interactive storytelling and live music by the Mansfield Symphony's Woodwind Duet.

Teddy Bear Concerts take familiar stories and present them through interactive acting and music. Children are able to get up close and personal with symphonic instruments and participate in the storytelling. Geared to children ages 2-10, each concert offers an interactive element as well as a relaxed environment. Small audience sizes, lights up, and low sound levels create safe sensory spaces for audience members with autism and other sensory-processing needs.

Performances are held at the Renaissance's Theatre 166 venue. Tickets are \$5 and are available at the Renaissance Box Office, at 419-522-2726, or at www.rentickets.org.





Temple Christian School presents “Joy to the World” Christmas concert

Photos and Article By Traci Little

Temple Christian School captivated its audience with a heartwarming Christmas concert, “Joy to the World.” The evening of Dec. 17, was a celebration of the season, featuring performances from the school’s various choirs and speech classes, each delivering messages of hope, joy and Christ’s love.

The program began with a powerful Reader’s Theater performance titled “Joy to the World! Christ Has Come!” by the speech class, setting a reverent and celebratory tone for the evening.

Following this, the junior and senior high choir performed an impressive lineup of songs that spanned cultures and traditions. The choir opened with “That the World May Know,” featuring soloist Halina Humble. They continued with “Away in a Manger,” highlighted by soloists Ashlynn Knepshield and Jackson Thompson, and “Heavenly Host,” which featured multiple soloists, including Ashlynn Knepshield, Alivia Carroll, Halina Humble, Evan Carroll, Kaleb Wray, and Richard Wray. The choir also performed “Rejoice!” with Evan Carroll as the soloist and guitar accompaniment by Kyran Farley and Drake Kegley. Their segment concluded with a beautiful duet performance of “What Child Is This” by Ashlynn Knepshield and Halina Humble.

The elementary choir then took the stage with an energetic and joyful presentation of songs. Their set began with “Go Tell It on the Mountain” and included “Two French Carols” and “Ring the Bells” by the K3-K5 Choir. The children also performed “Joy to the World”

and closed with a beautiful rendition of “A Still, Silent Night.” Their sweet voices filled the room with Christmas spirit.

All choirs then joined together for a powerful performance of “Nkosi Jesu,” featuring soloist Jesslyn Sprague. This stirring piece, combined with the unity of voices, left a lasting impression.

The evening concluded with a thoughtful devotional by Pastor Kurtz, reminding every one of the true reason for the season - God’s

love for the world. Perhaps the most famous verse in the Bible sums up the Christmas season perfectly ... “For God so loved the world that He GAVE.” He gave the world the greatest gift of all - the gift of eternal life. God sent His sinless Son Jesus to pay the sacrifice for our sin so that we may experience true joy.

A special thanks to the following: Anna Harris (sound), Abby McClelland (audio visual), Kayla Custer (keyboard), and Levi Stephens (narration), Danielle Ash (kindergarten director), Alicia Porter (elementary), Madison Knepshield (junior/senior high) and Nikole Boyke (speech class).





SIXTH GRADE STUDENTS at Ontario Middle School were recently visited by Dr. Kochheiser, who is part of an archeological team that has been investigating a site in Jordan for several years. Students learned about how historical sites are excavated, and how artifacts are used as clues to understand the past. They even got to see and touch artifacts that are 4,000 years old.

Mansfield Symphony to host The Orchestra Rocks Program

The Renaissance Theatre proudly announces the return of Link Up: The Orchestra Rocks, a program developed by Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute, to be held on Wednesday, Feb. 12. This immersive educational event will feature two performances at 9:45 am and 11:45 am at the Renaissance Theatre, located at 138 Park Avenue West in Mansfield.

Designed for students in grades three through five, with kindergarten through second grade also encouraged to attend, Link Up connects the classroom to the concert hall, giving students the opportunity to explore, perform, and experience the power of orchestral music.

In collaboration with the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra (MSO), this initiative invites local schools to participate in a special concert titled “The Orchestra Rocks”. Students in grades 3–5 engage in an interactive musical journey, singing and playing along with the orchestra from their seats, exploring fundamental music concepts learned in class.

Partnering with Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute, the Renaissance joins over 100 organizations nationwide to provide this enriching educational experience. Led by Maestro Octavio Más-Arocas, the concert features dynamic narration by Renaissance Education Manager and Teaching Artist Dauphne Maloney, offering students their first live orchestral performance in a welcoming environment.

Schools receive comprehensive curriculum resources for teachers, including repertoire for singing, playing the soprano recorder or violin and engaging lesson plans; access to audio and video resources, professional development for educators, and Carnegie Hall’s online teaching tools; and tailored suggestions for incorporating age-appropriate activities for younger students (K–2).

Complimentary coffee and donuts will be available for bus drivers during the event.

Carnegie Hall’s Link Up is a nationally recognized initiative that pairs orchestras with local schools, offering free, high-quality resources for educators and students. The Renaissance Theatre’s participation in Link Up is generously supported by the Rupp Donor-Advised Fund of the Richland County Foundation, the Gimbel Foundation, and other local sponsors.

Space is limited, with each concert accommodating approximately 1,400 attendees. Schools are encouraged to register early to ensure their participation. The registration deadline is Friday, Jan. 31, 2025.

For more information or to reserve seats visit www.rentickets.org/series/carnegie-halls-link-up.

For more information email dauphne@mansfieldtickets.com.



MADISON MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL musicians Declan Maddy, AJ Dillon, Natalie Smith, Chris Manley and Emily Bogner participated in the District 10 Honors Band at Mount Vernon Nazarene University on Dec. 7.



LEXINGTON JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL band students who were named to the OMEA District 10 Honor Band held at Mt. Vernon Nazarene University on Saturday, Dec. 7, were front, Emma S., Ezra M. and Preston L.; and back, Sammy H., Chayton W. and Logan B.

Bellville Character Meet & Greet · Photos By Jeff Hoffer



Ontario Christmas Concert



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

**MADISON VS WOOSTER GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL · DEC. 14
MADISON WINS 42-35 · PHOTOS BY LILLIANA ALLEN**



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

MADISON VS WOOSTER GIRLS JUNIOR VARSITY BASKETBALL · DEC. 14
WOOSTER WINS 43-40 · PHOTOS BY LILLIANA ALLEN



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

Mid-Ohio Athletic League matchup is on the warpath as Warriors defeat Clear Fork 50-39

Photos and Article By Kris Leiter

Jerry Moten, in his second year as head coach of the Ontario Warriors, (2-1 overall, 2-0 (Mid-Ohio Athletic League) is doing quite well after defeating first year Clear Fork Colts head coach Brandon Baumgartner (2-3 overall, 2-1 MOAC)

Baumgartner has been a part of the Colts coaching staff for years and is now manning the boys basketball team.

I would imagine Moten walked away with a smile last Thursday, Dec. 12 after taking down Clear Fork in the O-Rena in Ontario 50-39.

Ontario handled the first quarter without much resistance from the Colts and by end of one quarter, the Warriors were leading 12-6.

As the second quarter commenced, the Colts gave some spark and kicked-up some dirt to add to their tally.

At 7:12 in the second quarter, the Warriors fouled Colts 6' 1" sophomore Marcus Hoefflich. He dropped both free throws, making the score to 12-8, the Colts only trailing by 4.

For the next few minutes, the Colts would gather the troops and add four more points in the scoring column. 6' 1" sophomore, Carter Coale would drop a 2-banger at 5:43, as well as another Colt household name, Garrett Hotz. He would pour in back-to-back baskets at 4:28 with a 3-pointer and at 4:05 would add another two points. This would put the Colts in the lead 15-14.

For the next few minutes, both teams would trade baskets. At 3:15 and 2:30, Warrior 6' 1" senior Grayson Ambrose and 6' 0" freshman Trindon Flenoury added two points apiece. The Warriors increased the score 21-18.

With the clock showing less than a minute until halftime, Warrior 6' 0" freshman Cardae Brown added another two points to end the first half. The Warriors were left holding the lead by five points, 23-18, going into halftime.

As the third quarter would ring in, the Warriors kept the fire burning by adding another two points from Flenoury, the score now 25-19, Warriors.

As the third quarter ticked away, the Warriors kept the Colts at bay, only allowing the Colts to get within five points at any given time.

By the end of three quarters, Ontario was holding the lead 31-26.

The fourth quarter would see Brown shine as he would dominate the scoring for the Warriors in the final period by adding to the tally and contributing a big 3-pointer at 6:41, two free throws at 6:33 and another 2-banger at the 5:00 minute mark.

The Warriors would hold the lead quite handedly at 42-26 with five minutes remaining. As the next minutes would continue, so would the Warriors scoring.

At 1:41, Remington Schroeder dropped two points as well as Flenoury with back-to-back visits to the charity stripe and making all four free throws.

To close out the fourth quarter with eight seconds left, Flenoury again made 1-2 free throws, and as the final horn sounded, the Warriors sealed the deal 50-39.

Leading scoring for the Warriors was Cardae Brown with 22 points and two bombs from 3-point land along with Trindon Flenoury, also with double figures from the field, with 16 points as well as 5-6 from the free throw line.

For the Colts, leading the scoring pack was two players, both in double figures. Carter Coale rang in 12 points as well as 3-4 from the foul line.

Garrett Hotz would also chime in with 12 points, dropping three 3-pointers on the night.

The Warriors are cruising quite nicely at 2-1 on the warpath, thus far with their only loss to Norwalk on the road back on Dec. 7 They also handed Galion a defeat on Dec. 14 of 79-47 on the Tigers home court.



ONTARIO JUNIOR Remington Schroeder (20) blocks Clear Fork sophomore Trey Sellers (5) during a game at Ontario on Dec. 12.



CLEAR FORK'S Segno Ault

Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

CLEAR FORK VS MANSFIELD SENIOR GIRLS BASKETBALL · DEC. 17 PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

ONTARIO VS GALION BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL · DEC. 14



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

ONTARIO AT NORTHMOR WRESTLING · DEC. 12



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

Never Alone Act passes General Assembly, now heads to governor

The Ohio House of Representatives concurred with the Ohio Senate on the Never Alone Act, sponsored by State Representatives Melanie Miller (R-City of Ashland) and Beth Lear (R-Galena).

House Bill 236 passed with a unanimous vote of 89-0 in the Ohio House. The legislation ensures every patient has access to an advocate to be with them in a hospital, nursing home, or other congregate care setting - especially during a health emergency.

"I am grateful for the support of my colleagues in the General Assembly for their support of the Never Alone Act," said Miller. "We are one signature away from ensuring that we are able to protect the rights of patients to have access to a loved one or advocate to act on behalf of their best interest while in a hospital or care facility.

Specifically, the Never Alone Act requires a congregate care setting to inform a patient or resident that the patient or resident may designate an individual to serve as an advocate and to provide the patient or resident the opportunity to make a designation. It prohibits a congregate care setting from denying a patient or resident access to an advocate and 2: prohibiting an advocate from being physically present with a patient or resident.

Prohibits a political subdivision, public official, or state agency from issuing an order or rule, or enforcing on behalf of the federal government a federal order or rule, that would require a care setting to violate the bill's provisions.

Requires the Department of Health to create a Never Alone information sheet and each congregate care setting to provide each patient or resident with a copy at the time of admission.

The Never Alone Act now heads to the governor's desk and awaits his signature.

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ONTARIO juniors Hattie Yugovich (3x) and Addi Pittman (2x) were recognized by the Ohio Scholastic Soccer Association as All Ohioan's within Division III. Assistant Coach Greg Atkinson was recognized as the Assistant Coach of the Year within the State of Ohio in Division III.

Ontario Middle School Swim wins MOAC Championship

This past weekend the Ontario Middle School Swim team won the MOAC Championship at Ashland University for the second year in a row! All swimmers have worked hard this season, and it was a team effort

on Saturday. In middle school, boys and girls compete against one another. Swimmers that medaled individually include:

Ella Manns placed third in the 50 meter backstroke with a time of 32.66 seconds

Alex Morabito placed second in 50 meter breaststroke with a time of 34.69 seconds and 3rd in the 25 meter freestyle with a time of 12.67 seconds

Penny Wilging placed third in the 50 meter freestyle with a

time of 27.69 seconds

Levi Walter placed second in 100 meter freestyle with a time of 57.02 seconds, and second in the 200 meter freestyle with a time of 2 minutes and 7 seconds.

Logan SESCO placed second in the 25 meter freestyle with a time of 12.10 seconds and second in the 50 meter freestyle with a time of 26.53 seconds.

In the 200 Medley Relay, Ontario A placed third with a time of 2 minutes and 8 seconds. This relay included Ella Manns, Alex Morabito, Zoey Shaffer, Nathan Xiao

In the 200 freestyle Relay, Ontario A placed first with a time of 1 minute and 49 seconds. This relay included Alex Morabito, Logan SESCO, Levi Walter, and Penny Wilging.

In the 400 freestyle relay, Ontario A placed first with a time of 4 minutes. This relay included Logan SESCO, Zoey Shaffer, Levi Walter and Penny Wilging.





Columbia Gas of Ohio shares safety tips for winter weather

As the weather turns colder and the potential increases for hazards such as ice, snow and plummeting temperatures, Columbia Gas of Ohio is reminding customers to prepare now so they can help keep their families safe and warm this winter.

Outside the home:

•Clear snow and ice from your intake and exhaust vents. Keeping those vents clear can help you avoid carbon monoxide buildup and operational issues with your appliances.

•Keep the natural gas meter clear and visible at all times so it is accessible for maintenance or in the event of an emergency; never let snow completely cover the meter and don't use a shovel or hammer to hit the equipment to break up snow or ice.

Outside the home:

•Use space heaters with caution. Place them on hard, level surfaces and keep anything flammable – bedding, curtains, rugs, etc. – at least three feet away.

•Ensure heating appliances and equipment are inspected and operating properly. Operate all pieces of equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions.

•Never use a stove or oven as a source of heat in your home; ovens are designed to heat food and should only be operated with the door closed.

•Don't burn charcoal or run a generator indoors or in an enclosed space.

•Clean your chimney and check for blockage at least once a year before using your fireplace.

What to do in case of a potential gas leak:

•If you smell the "rotten egg" odor of natural gas or think there may be a gas leak, stop what you are doing, leave the area immediately, then call 911 and Columbia Gas at 1-800-344-4077.

For more safety tips, visit columbiagasohio.com/safety/home-safety. To find out more about the resources available to help manage energy bills and pay down past due balances, call 1-800-344-4077 or visit columbiagasohio.com/bills-and-payments/financial-support.

STUDENTS IN AMY KROLL'S American Studies class at Ontario completed USA Graham Cracker Houses for the end of the grading period project.

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