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JOHN DESTERHAFT AND DAVID STURTS began taking guitar lessons at Richland Academy of the Arts as part of the seniors programming. Desterhaft is looking forward to learning acoustic guitar from instructor Diego Santamaria.

It's Never Too Late: Six seniors discover new life through the arts

Photos and Article By Traci Little

MANSFIELD — In a world that often celebrates youth, speed and early achievement, three Richland County sisters are quietly proving that creativity has no expiration date.

Joann Sturts, Helen Mitchell and Mary Ann Desterhaft — all in their 70s — didn't grow up dreaming of watercolor portraits, stretch classes or bucket-drumming sessions. In fact, they admit they likely never would have walked through the doors of Richland Academy of the Arts on their own.

"We probably never would have done that," Joann said with a smile.

But about three years ago, after learning about free classes available through a grant connected with the Area Agency on Aging, curiosity nudged them forward. What began as a reluctant art class has grown into something much bigger — for the sisters and for their husbands, who joined right alongside them.

Today, the six of them are regulars.

Joann and her husband, David Sturts, were the first to visit the Academy, easing into watercolor and drawing classes. Soon after, sisters Helen and Mary Ann came to visit — along with their husbands, David Mitchell and John Desterhaft — followed.

"We started with art," Mary Ann said. "And it was really exciting. We learned a lot." "She's sold a lot of hers," the sisters teased about Mary Ann's impressive artwork.

But the real transformation wasn't about talent. It was about confidence.

The classes weren't intimidating. Instructors meet students at their individual skill levels, offering encouragement rather than criticism.

"No matter what class we try out, the instructors never criticize," Helen said. "They might give helpful suggestions, but they never make me feel like I shouldn't be there."

After some attempted painting, they branched out to drumming — using five-gallon buckets and exercise balls — then stretch classes, floral arranging workshops and David Sturts and John Desterhaft

(Continued on Page 9)

Richland County Foundation awards \$3M in grants in order to help meet local needs

The Richland County Foundation Board of Trustees approved grants totaling \$2,997,083 during its February meeting.

Competitive, field of interest and donor advised fund grants approved by the board included the following grants:

Catholic Charities received a grant to assist Richland County residents struggling with poverty or temporary financial hardship by providing the following assistance to maintain family stability: rent/mortgage assistance, budget counseling/financial workshops, and up to one year of ongoing case management. The grant also will aid the Adult Advocacy Services (AAS) program which provides a court-appointed staff guardian to older adults who have been deemed incompetent by the Probate Court, have a diagnosed incapacity, and do not have family or other appropriate individuals, to advocate on their behalf and protect against abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The North End Community Improvement Collaborative (NECIC) received a grant to develop a neighborhood store and café named "Grow by NECIC" at its Springmill Road location. "Grow by NECIC" will increase access to affordable, healthy food while creating hands-on learning and leadership opportunities for local youth and residents. The store will serve North End residents living in a historically disinvested area with limited access to fresh, nutritious food. The need for this project was identified directly by North End residents through NECIC's Community Platform and community forums, where food access and economic opportunity consistently emerged as one of the top three priorities.

The Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Ohio received a grant for its Helping Hands program. The grant will offset the cost to house Richland County families at the Ronald McDonald House while their severely ill children are receiving care at Nationwide Children's Hospital. The cost to house one family per night is \$100 per room and families are asked to donate \$20 per night to help cover costs. However, the average donation in 2023 was \$4.70 per night.

The board of trustees approved grants from donor advised funds which allow individuals, families, and corporations the opportunity to make grant suggestions to their favorite charities. Donor advised funds are a flexible and convenient alternative to a private foundation and a way to keep charitable contributions anonymous, at the preference of the donor.

Organizations receiving grants from donor advised funds were Alzheimer's Association, Northwest Ohio Chapter; American Red Cross; Buckeye Imagination Museum; Community Foundation of Otsego County; Discovery School; Family Planning Of South Central New York; Fenimore Art Museum; Greater Cleveland Food Bank; Hartwick College; Heartwood; Helios Care; Highlands Nature Sanctuary (DBA Arc of Appalachia); Idea Works Kitchen, Inc.; Killbuck Water Shed Land Trust; Kingwood Center Gardens; NAMI Richland County; North Central Ohio Land Conservancy (NCOLC); North Central State College Foundation; Ohio Bird Sanctuary; Ohio Environmental Council; Pathfinder Village Foundation; Raemelton Therapeutic Equestrian Center; Rails to Trails of Wayne County; Richland Community Development Group (RCDG); Renaissance Performing Arts; Richland County Foundation; Richland County Land Reutilization Corporation; Rubies Women's Group Inc; Springbrook Foundation; The Brookwood School; The Glimmerglass Festival; Third Street Family Health Services; United Way of Ashland County; United Way of North Central Ohio; United Way of Richland County; West Creek Conservancy; and Wooster Community Hospital Foundation.

The board allocated grants from designated and agency funds. Agency funds are established by charitable organizations and can be endowed or non-endowed. The agency benefits from the

(Continued on Page 8)



Mohican State Park • Photo By Mark Shutt

Grant opportunity will address social isolation and loneliness in seniors

The Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc. is offering grant funding to support community efforts aimed at reducing social isolation and loneliness among Richland County residents age 60 and older. This opportunity is funded by the Richland County Senior Services Levy.

Older adults face an increased risk of social isolation and loneliness due to factors such as living alone, the loss of loved ones, chronic health conditions, and sensory impairments. These grants are intended to engage established, local organizations that bring community members together in meaningful ways.

The goal of this grant is for local organizations to expand existing programs and services to be more inclusive of at-risk older adults.

Successful applicants will demonstrate the capacity to incorporate older adults into existing or planned public activities, show the ability to provide a timely intake response and screening process for individuals expressing interest in participation, demonstrate the ability to serve referrals from the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging and other community organizations and administer required pre- and post-intervention screenings to determine the appropriateness of initial participation and to measure participant impact.

Awards of up to \$10,000 are available per project with no matching funds required. The funding period is April 1–Dec. 31, 2026. No subcontracting is allowed without prior approval.

Applications are available at www.aaa5ohio.org/events/social-isolation-grant-opportunity-/

The application deadline is March 13, by 4 pm. For additional information or assistance with the application contact Trae Turner at 567-241-8923 or tturner@aaa5ohio.org.

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THE ENTERTAINMENT EXAMINER

— By Ian Stumbo —

The January release *Primate* is now available on VOD. This movie stars Johnny Sequoyah as Lucy, a young college student returning to her home of Hawaii along with some friends.

Her father Adam (Oscar winner Troy Kotsur) welcomes her home as does their pet chimp named Ben. After Adam leaves for a business event, something terrible happens to Ben as he becomes rabid and he terrorizes Lucy and all of her friends.

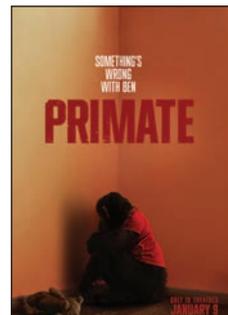
Animal attack movies can be fun, though this movie is set-up more like a horror film and is unnecessarily littered with gore. Of course apes are strong and powerful, though sometimes, the filmmakers go over the top.

Sequoyah does a nice job in the lead performance, though the movie is so predictable it

takes away from anything that the actors are bringing.

Ben does look good and is very convincing and brings the scares, which is effective though part of the movie spends too much time with the characters hiding in the pool and it takes away from some engaging chase sequences this movie could have had.

Primate is not the worst animal attack movie, though with the overt reliance on gore and keeping the characters isolated for a decent portion of the film, it takes away from what could be a minute-by-minute thrillfest instead of a middle-of-the-road horror movie.



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News Briefs

The 20th Annual Road Apple Run 5K Road Race will be held Saturday, March 7, at Crestview Schools, 1575 Rt. 96, Ashland.

The Road Apple Run will be an out and back 5K race on a scenic country road in northern Richland County. Bordered by several Amish farms, the course is mostly flat with some slight upgrades.

Race day registration begins at 8:30 am in the commons area of Crestview High School. The race begins at 10 am.

Online and printed registration forms can be found at <https://sites.google.com/site/roadapple5k/>

First and second place will be awarded in each male and female age class. Classes are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-15, 16-18, 19-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69 and 70 and older. All proceeds will support the school's cross country and track teams.

★

The Savannah Lions Club will serve monthly breakfasts on Saturdays, March 7 and April 11, from 6:30-10 am at Savannah Town Hall, 12 S. Main St., Savannah. Donations are accepted to benefit the Savannah Fire Department, youth activities and scholarships.

A free community lunch will be held March 18 and April 15.

For information about the Lions and details on the monthly community lunch schedules visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/834118952472158/>

★

A recycling trailer will be in the parking lot at Ontario United Methodist Church, 3540 Park Avenue West, Feb. 28 and March 1. 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.

★

A Vietnam Wall, Korean War Memorial and WWII Memorial display will be at Freer Field, Ashland, Aug. 6-9.

The 13th Annual Veteran Appreciation Day Event will be Saturday, Aug. 8, at Freer Field, 1301 Park St., Ashland. The event is sponsored by Ashland County Veterans Appreciation Committee. For information visit www.acvad.org.

★

The Lexington Area Senior Citizens Inc., invites those 55 and older to attend meetings the third Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am at Der Dutchman, Rt. 97, Bellville. Cost is \$17 for the meal, with an additional \$2 for pie.

The next meal will be March 18, and will include chicken. Those attending are encouraged to wear green.

The group will meet for lunch March 4 at Logan's RoadHouse in Ontario at 11 am.

For information visit the Facebook page at Lexington Area Senior Citizens (LASC). Dues are \$10 per year.

★

Fish fry dinners will be held at American Legion Post 16, 747 S. Main St., Mansfield, (rear of Grotto Hall) on the third Friday of each month starting at 5 pm, until gone.

The dinner will include all you can eat Alaskan pollock, fresh cut fries, coleslaw or pea salad and dessert. Cost is \$12. for adults and \$7 for children under 12.

Chicken tender dinners are also available, but not all you can eat. Cost is \$9 for adults for a three-piece meal and \$7 for children under 12 for a two-piece meal. Carry-out is available.

★

All Souls Unitarian Universalist of Bellville, 25 Church St., Bellville, will welcome Anthony Brown on Sunday, March 1, at 10:30 am. The subject will be "Making Room: Redemption, Unity and Healing in a Divided World."

For information visit www.allsoulsuohio.org.

★

The second annual Spring Craft Show to support LifeWise Madison will be held Saturday, March 7 from 9 am to 2 pm at Trinity Grace Fellowship, 1592 Grace St., Mansfield. Numerous vendors and crafters will participate. Donations will be welcome at the door.

For more information or vendor inquiries, contact Pam Adkins at pamelaadkins@lifewise.org or call or text 567-274-8532.

★

Franklin Township Fire Department has announced that commemorative apparel celebrating the department's 75th anniversary, 1951-2026, is now available.

The first round of orders will end promptly at 5 pm on Friday, Feb. 27. All proceeds from the shirts will directly benefit Franklin Township Firefighters Association.

For the order form visit <https://mid-ohio-graphics.square.site/product/franklin-fire-department-shirts/VDN72E6AS77SZ3WW7K-B3VJDV?cp=true&sa=true&sop=false&q=false>

Orders will be available for pick-up at Mid-Ohio Graphics, 1212 Rt. 42, Ashland.

★

U.S. 30 at the east and west bridges over the Norfolk Southern Railroad, just west of SR 98, will be reduced to one lane of traffic in each direction beginning Monday, March 2. Crews will begin median crossover construction and shoulder reconstruction work for the bridge replacement project. One 11' lane of traffic in each direction will be maintained with barrels. Estimated completion is August 2027.

★

Richland County Mobility Management, in collaboration with the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc., Richland County Children's Services and Richland Newhope, will host a free community walk for all ages on Wednesday, March 18 at the Ontario Center (former Richland Mall) from 10 am to noon. Participants can stop by anytime during the event and walk as many laps as they like.

Participants can enjoy door prize drawings, community resource tables and free snacks.

★

The City of Ontario March meeting schedule includes: March 4, 4:45 pm, Finance Committee; 5:30 pm Parks Committee; 6:15 pm, Caucus; and 7 pm, Council

March 11, 1 pm, Civil Service Commission; and 4 pm, Planning Commission

March 18, 6:15 pm, Caucus; 7 pm, Council
Meetings will be held at 555 Stumbo Rd., Ontario.

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Photo by Damon Callis

Day Trippin' With Damon – The Ribbon at Glass City in Toledo is a 1,000-foot loop trail featuring rolling hills and soft curves for a unique skating experience. The Ribbon is connected to a 5,000 square-foot rink called “The Pond” that offers a traditional skating experience for beginners and those taking a break from the trail. Visitors can skate, blade or scooter around The Ribbon in the summer and glide on ice in the winter. For information visit <https://metroparkstoledo.com/theribbon>



Church Directory

All Souls Unitarian Universalist

25 Church St., Bellville
419-886-3497 • www.allsoulsuuohio.org
10:30 am Service and Sunday School
Adult RE Book Club (quarterly)

First Congregational Church

640 Millsboro Rd., Mansfield
419-756-3046 • www.mansfieldfcc.com
Pastor Brad Bunn
8:30 am Chapel • 10:30 am Sanctuary
10:30 am Sunday School (nursery–high school)
10 am Monday Morning Bible Study

Lexington Church of the Cross

236 Otterbein Dr., Lexington
419-884-2150 • Churchofthecrosslex.com
Pastor-Rev. Dr. Edna Stahl
Sunday Worship 9:30 am
Junior Church for 10 and under • Wesley Class 10:45
5th Sunday of the month-Do Something Sunday AA, Girl Scouts,
Yoga, Knotty Ladies and Bible Study.

Ontario United Methodist Church

3540 Park Avenue West., Ontario
419-529-4345 • ontarioumc.com
Rev. J.P. Snyder
9:30 am Grace & Eggs
11 am Sunday Worship and Kingdom Kids

St. John's United Church of Christ

2010 Park Avenue West, Mansfield
(At Hope Lutheran Next to Drug Mart)
419-522-2813 • www.stjohnsmansfield.org
contact@stjohnsmansfield.org
Pastor Faith Proietti • 11 am Sunday Worship
Office hours: Mon–Fri 9 am to 1 pm
AA Meetings M & F 10 am & noon;
Wed. noon Brown Bag and Sat. 6 pm

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

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- Keith Alva Kareff, February 13
- Nancy Mae Haering, February 16
- Jacob “Jake” Paul Lewis, February 16
- Michael Wayne Otey Sr, February 16
- Dennis Ray Stickney, February 17
- Bonnie Jean Knepper, February 20

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Photos By Jenna Wolford

MANSFIELD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL'S IMAGE choir performed for Community Bible Church, 1043 Springmill St., Mansfield, during Sunday services on Feb. 22.

Transportation study underway

The North End Community Improvement Collaborative, Richland County Transit and Richland County Regional Planning have teamed up to conduct a transportation insecurity research study sponsored by the University of Minnesota.

These local organizations are recruiting community members to participate in this study. The Mobility, Access, and Transportation Insecurity (MATI) study aims to understand barriers to transportation as well as the impact of transportation services on people's quality of life within Mansfield.

To study the effects of the targeted program for addressing transportation insecurity, this analysis includes data collection before and after the transportation service (a new early morning and late evening Richland County Transit bus route).

All participants are expected to complete an in-person travel behavior survey with Data Collectors. A smaller number of participants will also be invited to complete a qualitative interview.

Participants will be compensated \$50 for successful completion of the survey. Participants selected for the interview will be compensated an additional \$50.

To participate in the research study, participants must be 18 to 64 years of age, currently working or looking for work, live in Richland County, experience transportation challenges and live within the study area.

Visit https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=lqP-DPi5VbkaHVxbObL7Oag6Ag_y1t2JBt8G1339gXn1UOE03NE-JZSDFFTDZWWERTOENWSDdNNlgwOC4u to check availability.



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Brewing Up Something Bigger: Fresh Grounds and Blackbird Bakery grow together

Photos and Article By Traci Little

ONTARIO — On West Fourth Street, just minutes from downtown Mansfield and right on the edge of Ontario, a locally loved coffee shop is brewing more than espresso. At Fresh Grounds Coffee House, the motto says it all: “Fill your cup & your soul.”

Under the ownership of James and Brooke Boyd, Fresh Grounds is stepping into an exciting new chapter — one defined by growth, collaboration and a deepened commitment to community.

In November 2024, the Boyds officially assumed ownership of Fresh Grounds, celebrating with a ribbon cutting and a warm welcome from local leaders and loyal customers.

For James, a local entrepreneur, the shop had long been admired — not just for its handcrafted drinks and small-town charm, but for the way it fostered connection.



For the Boyds, the transition wasn't simply about acquiring a business. It was about building something meaningful together.

“We're passionate about what we're doing,” Brooke shared. “As long as you have your priorities in order, you can make anything work.”

“It's nice to be able to do what you're passionate about for work,” she added.

Located at 1621 W. Fourth St., Ontario, Fresh Grounds is an independent coffee shop and roastery serving espresso drinks, specialty beverages, single-origin coffees, light pastries, salads and toasts. With a 4.8-star rating and a loyal customer base, it has become a favorite meeting place for students, professionals and families alike.

The shop currently operates Monday through Saturday, 7 am to 3 pm; and Sunday 8 am to 2 pm.

One feature that sets Fresh Grounds apart is its in-house roasting program. James has been honing the craft under the mentorship of a seasoned local roaster with nearly a decade of experience.

“We're hoping to offer roasting classes,” Brooke said. “Small groups where people can learn, taste, and leave with their own bag of beans.”

It's part of a broader vision — not simply selling coffee but inviting the community into the art and process behind it.

And the growth doesn't stop there. Fresh Grounds is expanding into the adjacent space — and bringing a beloved local bakery along for the journey.

Blackbird Bakery, owned by Desra Wells, will relocate from downtown Mansfield into the newly expanded Fourth Street location, with an anticipated opening in late spring or early summer.

Founded in 2012, Blackbird Bakery began as Wells' creative outlet — baking birthday cakes for her children — before evolving into a full-scale bakery known for handcrafted, made-from-scratch pastries, cakes, pies and cookies.

“I would work in a bakery all day and then go home and bake all evening,” Wells said. “I realized how much I loved it.”

Today, Blackbird offers muffins, scones, croissants, custom cakes and cut-out cookies, with gluten-free options available daily. Wells emphasizes careful preparation practices to minimize cross-contamination for customers with celiac disease.

“We do our very best,” she explained. “We're very aware and intentional.”

The partnership between the Boyds and Wells developed organically. Fresh Grounds had carried some of Blackbird's baked goods prior to the ownership transition. When the neighboring space became available in the strip center, the opportunity felt aligned.

“We knew we were growing,” Brooke said. “When that space opened, it felt like the right time.”

The expansion will include a shared, larger kitchen and expanded coffee bar, flexible seating options with couches and study tables, a private meeting room with French doors accommodating 12-15 guests and future roasting demonstrations and small group classes.

The cozy, private room, (Continued on Page 9)



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Hudson & Essex introduces “The Kitchen Counter” experience

By Traci Little

DOWNTOWN MANSFIELD — In the heart of downtown, Hudson & Essex has long been known for pairing upscale cuisine with an unforgettable atmosphere — from its elegant dining room to its historic underground caverns. Now, the restaurant is unveiling a new way for guests to experience the culinary artistry up close.

After closing for two weeks in January, Hudson & Essex completed a thoughtful kitchen renovation designed to improve staff flow while enhancing visibility into its already open-concept kitchen. The result is the debut of “The Kitchen Counter,” an elevated dining experience where parties of up to four can sit directly at the kitchen and watch the culinary team in action.

While the Kitchen Counter has technically existed since the restaurant first opened, the concept was originally delayed.

“The ‘Kitchen Counter’ has always been present and was intended to start as an elevated dining experience,” restaurant management shared. “But when we discovered the underground caverns, transforming those into a unique restaurant venue took precedence.”

With the caverns now thriving as a distinctive destination within the restaurant, ownership felt the timing was right to finally bring the Kitchen Counter vision to life.

A Front-Row Seat to the Action

The recent renovation lowered the kitchen countertops, offering guests an even clearer view of the chefs at work. From precision plating to high-heat sauté techniques, diners are now treated to an immersive culinary performance.

One of the most captivating sights?

“Anything made on our sauté station,” the team noted. “There tends to be a good amount of flames involved when our chefs are tossing the pans around.”

Guests seated at the Kitchen Counter often find themselves interacting with the chefs, asking questions, learning about ingredients,

and experiencing the rhythm of a professional kitchen firsthand. The response so far has been overwhelmingly positive.

“We’ve had weekly reservations at the Kitchen Counter since opening it, and guests are loving the view and being able to interact with our culinary team.”

How to Reserve

The Kitchen Counter is reservable online at www.hudsonandessex.com or by calling the restaurant at 419-513-5151, though walk-in guests are welcome to take a seat if space is available. The intimate setup — limited to four guests — makes it ideal for date nights, small celebrations, or anyone who appreciates the artistry behind fine dining.

For a community that values both innovation and historic charm, Hudson & Essex continues to find new ways to surprise and delight — proving that even in a well-loved downtown establishment, there’s always something new cooking.



ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL held a hot chocolate and coloring contest day recently.

Pond clinic scheduled for March 16

Ponds can create a sense of serenity, a focal point and a source of recreation on a property. They can also be used as a source of drinking water, fire suppression and watering source for crops and livestock.

Many think creating and owning a pond is as simple as digging a hole and letting it fill up with water. There are a lot of factors that must be considered before installing a pond including how to stock and manage a pond.

Those with questions about a new or existing pond can attend a free pond clinic on Monday, March 16 at 6 pm at the Longview Center, 1495 W. Longview Ave., Mansfield. The Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD) is hosting the clinic with Steve Fender of Fenders Fish Hatchery.

Register for the clinic at <https://richlandswcd.net/event/pond-clinic-6/>. For more information contact wallace.matt@richlandswcd.net or 419-747-8687.



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•Richland County Foundation awards \$3M in grants

(Continued from Front Page)

Foundation's professional asset management, which allows the agency's staff and board to focus on providing services to their clients.

Designated funds provide annual support to the charities selected by the donor. They offer the added benefit that if the organization ceases to exist, the Foundation has the responsibility to ensure the donor's original intent is met in seeking a new suitable organization.

The board approved grants from designated and agency funds to American Guernsey Foundation, American Red Cross, Ashland University, Buckeye Council Boy Scouts of America, Catalyst Life Services, Catholic Charities, Children's Dyslexia Center, Children's Theatre Foundation, City of Mansfield, City of Ontario, Clear Fork Valley Foundation, Community Action for Capable Youth, Discovery School, Domestic Violence Shelter, Inc., Downtown Mansfield Inc.

First Christian Church, Mansfield, First Congregational Church, Friendly House Association, Friends of the Richland County Park District, Hospice of Western Reserve, Humane Society of Richland County, Kingwood Center Gardens, Lucas Local Schools, Malabar Farm Foundation, Mansfield 1st Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Mansfield Area Intergroup, Mansfield Art Center, Mansfield Aviation Club, Mansfield Cancer Foundation, Mansfield Christian School, Mansfield City Schools, Mansfield Playhouse, Mansfield Reformatory Preservation Society, Mansfield Richland County Public Library, Mansfield Rotary Club Foundation, Inc., Methodist Theological Seminary, Monsignor Dunn Foundation, NECIC Inc., North Central Ohio Alzheimer's Association, North Central Ohio Land Conservancy, North Central State College, North Central State College Foundation,

Ohio Bird Sanctuary, Ohio Genealogical Society, OhioHealth Foundation, OhioHealth Mansfield Hospital, Ohio State College of Medicine, Ontario Local Schools, Pioneer Career and Technology Center, Plymouth Area Historical Museum, Renaissance Performing Arts, Richland Academy of the Arts, Richland Carrousel Park, Richland Co. Children Services Auxiliary/The New Store, Richland Community Development Group (RCDG), Richland County Children Services, Richland County Habitat For Humanity, Richland County Historical Society, Richland County Sheriff's Office, Richland Newhope Industries, Richland Pregnancy Services, Salvation Army, Shelby Help-Line Ministries, St. John's Church, St. Peter's Parish, The Ohio State University - Mansfield, The Ohio State University Foundation, Third Street Family Health Services, Trapshooting Hall of Fame Inc., United Way of Richland County, Visual Bucket List, Volunteers of America, Wayfinders Ohio, Wayne County Agricultural Society and YMCA of North Central Ohio.

The Foundation Board of Trustees awarded 16 scholarships to students attending a career technical education school. The Scholarship Committee implemented a rolling deadline for CTE scholarships to meet various enrollment deadlines. Aligning with Ohio's Attainment Goal, the Foundation helps to fill the gap between job openings and certified employees as well as lead the way to support workforce development through CTE scholarships.

A special grant also went to Richland Community Development Group (RCDG).

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.

Madison board completes hirings, volunteer approvals

The Madison Local Board of Education met for its regular meeting at Madison Comprehensive High School, 600 Esley Lane, on Wednesday, Feb. 18.

Ram Pride Awards were presented to Toni Shaum, adult education instructor; Katrina Tripp, Madison South Guidance Counselor ; and Deb Hunt, administrative assistant – athletics and cashier.

Christina Clever, Madison Athletic Boosters; and Bill Roth, student services director, gave presentations.

A \$500 donation for the Madison Adult Career Center Job Readiness Fund was accepted from Ben Connelly.

The board reviewed the library material complaint about *Dog Man: Mothering Heights*.

The board approved the monthly financial report and the 2026 mileage reimbursement rate per the IRS rate to be effective July 1, 2026, in accordance with the negotiated agreement and policy 6550.

The board also approved the five-year forecast and appropriation modifications and Certificate of Estimated Resources for FY26 as submitted.

A \$4,653 grant was received from the NEA Foundation to be used by Kate Darnell for the fifth grade Battle of the Books project.

Kalen Oslie resigned as the assistant varsity volleyball coach.

Preston See was hired as the spring fitness coordinator, Breanna Crunkilton was hired as the Eastview/Mifflin musical advisor (1/3 contract) and Jerusha Walker, Eastview/Mifflin musical advisor (1/3 contract). Lynette Keiser was hired for a pupil position as an Eastview/Mifflin musical advisor (1/3 contract).

Hirings for the 2026-'27 school year include Kalen Oslie, varsity volleyball coach; and Jennifer Porter, JV volleyball coach.

Rob Kershner was hired as head girls' soccer coach.

Madison Adult Career Center hiring include James Crider, Industrial Maintenance Technology; Krystal Nolan, Medical Assisting Technologies Instructor; and Diana Hoffman, CNA Instructor.

Substitute teachers hired on an "on call" basis, as needed for the 2025-'26 school year include Kami Baker, Erica Branham, Echo Burgett, Elizabeth Harris, Carson Ingram, Shareese Miller, Caleb Parsons and Madelyn Prise. Substitute cafeteria workers hired include Loretta Shaffner and Cheryl Fisher.

Loretta Shaffner resigned from the 4-hour cook position at the high school.

Volunteers approved were Morris Hill, varsity track; and Zach Glasgo, varsity baseball.

James Ernsberger, 4-hour cafeteria worker at Madison South Elementary, was approved for a leave of absence from Jan. 5-26.

Ohio High School Athletic Association membership was approved for the 2026-'27 school year.

An overnight trip for BPA students who qualified for state competition to attend the BPA State Leadership Conference Feb. 23-24, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, was approved, at no cost to the board.

A payment of \$1,165.36 was approved for Chad Metzger for providing College Credit Plus instruction remotely during the first semester of the 2025-'26 school year to students from South Central Local Schools, at no cost to the Madison Local School District Board of Education.

A payment of \$499.44 also went to Chad Metzger for providing College Credit Plus instruction remotely during the first semester of the 2025-'26 school year to students from Clear Fork Valley Local Schools, at no cost to the board. A student teacher mentor payment was approved from Franklin University to Laura Parsons, in the amount of \$200, at no cost to the board.

The MECLC tuition rate increases were approved, effective April 6.

A resolution was approved for the termination of employment for Abby Radabaugh. The board believes her contact constitutes grounds for termination under O.R.C. 3319.16. She was suspended without pay or other fringe benefits during the pendency of termination proceedings.

The board proposed building name changes for the 2026-'27 school year. With the closing on Mifflin Elementary after this school year, the board is looking to rename Madison South Elementary School to Madison Primary School and Eastview Elementary School to Madison Intermediate School.

The next regular board of education meeting will be Wednesday, March 18, at 6 pm in the Madison Middle School Auditoria.

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A GROUP OF SIX SENIORS have expanded their hobbies and abilities by participating in Richland Academy classes and programs. (Left photo) Joann and David Sturts, Helen and David Mitchell and John and Mary Ann Desterhaft .

•Six seniors discover new life through the arts

(Continued from Front Page)

have recently tried guitar lessons. Somewhere along the way, the hesitant beginners began to feel like, as they jokingly describe it, “rock stars.”

“You quickly discover you’re capable of things you never imagined,” Joann said. “That’s why it’s so important to take chances and try something new.”

The Academy has become more than a creative outlet — it has become a community.

As the sisters describe it, friendships form quickly. People who were strangers at the beginning of a bus ride to the Cleveland Museum of Art were friends by the end of the day. A Starlight Jazz event reunited one husband with a high school classmate he hadn’t seen in decades. Now they’re buddies again.

“We met quite a few people in the art class that we didn’t know before,” Helen said. “Now they’re friends.”

As we age, isolation can quietly creep in. It can be easier to stay home, not ever try and believe the lie that new things are just for the younger generation.

But the sisters say stepping out has been life-giving.

“It’s been a real blessing,” Helen said. “It makes you feel young. You’re out, you’re doing things and meeting people. It’s so much fun.”

They attend church together. They vacation together. They laugh easily and often. The bond between the sisters is strong — but the Academy has widened their circle and strengthened their world.

The group is quick to praise the staff at Richland Academy of the Arts for creating a welcoming environment.

“All of the teachers of these programs — you feel so welcome coming in,” Mary Ann said. “They all are just amazing,” the sisters agreed.

Instructors are described as patient, kind and attentive to every skill level. Whether someone is picking up a paintbrush for the first time at 74 or learning a chord progression at 79, they are treated with respect and kindness.

RAA instructors include Sarah Horrigan-Ramos, stretch; Diego Santamaria, guitar; and Olivia Rayburn, drumming.

There’s even a dedicated section of programming for adults 60 and older, making it easy to find classes tailored to their interests. Registration is simple — online or by phone — and the grant funding has made participation possible for many who might otherwise hesitate.

Richland Academy of the Arts has long embraced the idea of “Building Artists for Life.” That commitment extends far beyond childhood dance recitals and youth theater productions. It includes retirees who are just now discovering watercolor. Grandparents strumming a first instrument. Couples stretching side by side.

“Families attend. Volunteers serve. Staff members go above and beyond to create generational impact. Many start young and never leave,” remarked staff member Pam Madore.

Others begin in their seventies — like these three lifelong Mad-

ison sisters.

And they have a message for the community: “Don’t be afraid.”

“It’s well worth it,” Joann said. “We encourage people to check into it.”

Their message is simple but powerful: creativity doesn’t belong to a certain age bracket. Neither does courage.

Taking a class at 72 may not seem radical. But walking into a new space, trying something unfamiliar and risking imperfection — that takes bravery at any age.

And sometimes, the most beautiful art isn’t what ends up on the paper. It’s the awakening of creativity deep within you — the courage to keep growing, keep learning, and never stop becoming.

•Brewing Up Something Bigger

(Continued from Page 6)

complete with an electric fireplace, will be available for book clubs, business meetings and small gatherings.

“We really want different seating options,” Brooke said. “Different little spaces where people feel comfortable.”

In a region with only a handful of local roasters, the Fresh Grounds team embraces collaboration over competition.

“We are so open to collaborating,” Brooke said. “There’s room for everyone. We each have our own niche.”

That spirit mirrors the heart behind both businesses: supporting local, investing in relationships and building something lasting.

The collaboration is also deeply personal. The Boyds’ 11-year-old son is already getting a firsthand education in entrepreneurship, while Wells’ daughter works as a barista — making Fresh Grounds a true family-centered venture.

Business has steadily increased month after month, and both teams credit word-of-mouth support from the community. Though a few customers initially expressed concern about Blackbird’s move from downtown Mansfield to Ontario, the new location remains just minutes away and easily accessible along the Fourth Street corridor — offering the best of both worlds.

As renovations continue and plans take shape, the vision is clear: more space, deeper collaboration and greater opportunity to serve.

From roasting classes to fresh pastries, from student study sessions to quarterly business meetings, Fresh Grounds and Blackbird Bakery are positioning themselves as a shared hub where craftsmanship and community meet.

“We focus on quality, passion, and community,” Wells said — words that perfectly describe the partnership taking shape.

For the Boyds, it all comes back to the motto displayed above their growing business: “Fill your cup & your soul.”

And through coffee, collaboration and community, that’s exactly what they’re doing — one cup at a time.

Wishes and Weddings



*Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Brown (Mackenzie Brown)
August 30, 2025*

Officiant: Jessie Rider

Ceremony & Reception: Four Seasons Barn, Cardington, OH

Appetizers: Timeless Gatherings

Dinner: Mr. Bills Woodfired Pizza

Photographer: Shelby Miller Photography

Videographer: DiegoFilms

DJ: Nyte-Flyte • Ceremony Music: Stringbeat

Florist: Floral Co. Floral Studio

Cake & Dessert: Mark's Homemade Ice Cream & Eatmor Bundt Co.

Rentals: All Events • Tables: Farmhouse Social

Bartending: Buckeye Bartending Services LLC

Live Painter: Cloud Studio Agency

Gown: True Society • Suit: Men's Wearhouse

Bridesmaid Dresses: Birdy Grey



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Wishes and Weddings



*Mr & Mrs. Vinny Carotenuto (Stephanie Lewis)
September 20, 2025*

Ceremony & Reception: Swan Lake Resort, Galloway, NJ

Officiant: Kevin Harper (Hitched By Harper)

Photographer/Videographer: PSH Photography

DJ: Time Productions

Cake: Kizbee's Kitchen

Gown: Belle Amour Bridal, Toledo, OH

Hair & Makeup: Lauren Witt

Residing: Voorhees, NJ

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Wishes and Weddings



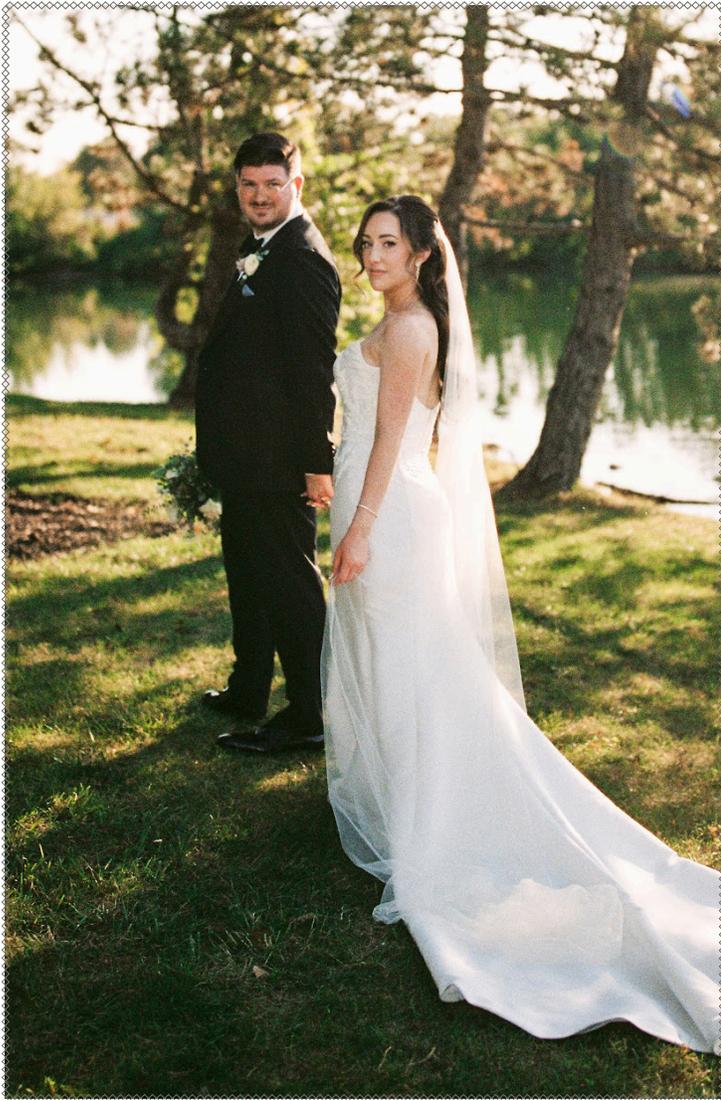
*Mr. & Mrs. Hayden Schrubb (Abigail Knapp)
June 7, 2025
Ceremony & Reception: Westbrook Country Club
Caterer: Westbrook Country Club
Photographer: Emma Edwards Photography
Videographer: NC Films
DJ: OHC Events
Hair: Erika Brooks • Makeup: Taylored Collective
Residing: Piqua, Ohio*

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Wishes and Weddings

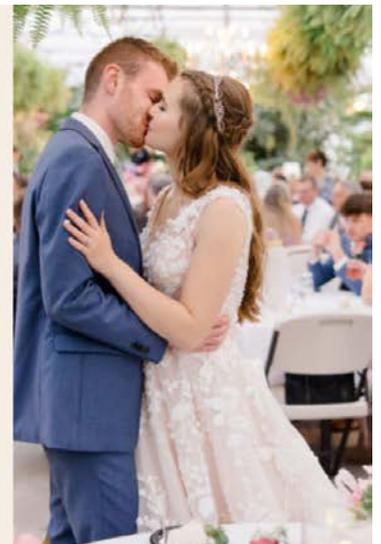


*Mr. & Mrs. Joshua Stevenson (Brittany Smith)
September 27, 2025*

*Officiant: Brad Stevenson, Uncle of the Groom
Ceremony & Reception: Lakeview at WatersEdge
Photographer: Ellen Schibley at Swidrak & Co
Videographer: Hitched Creative
Florist: Fiori Florals Design
Gown: Luxe Redux Bridal, Columbus
Tuxedo: Custom from Pursuit
Hair: Lauren Wolff Hair Design
Residing: Columbus, Ohio*




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Wishes and Weddings



Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hardis (Paige Guldner)
December 6, 2025
Officiant: Rex Ferguson
Ceremony & Reception: Della Terra Mountain Chateau,
Estes Park, CO
Photographer: Taylor Made Photo
Florist: Joyful Poppy, Ft. Collins, CO
Cake: Petal and Thyme, Longmont, CO

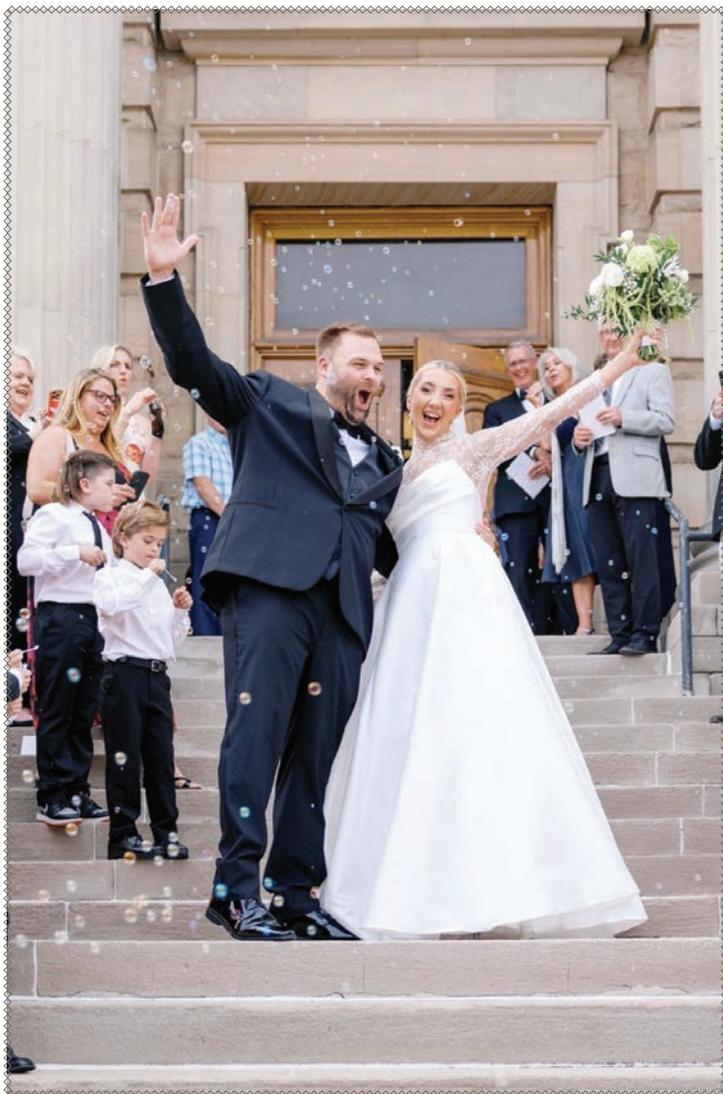


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Wishes and Weddings



*Mr. & Mrs. Paul Hogsette (Lauren Thompson)
September 5, 2025*

Ceremony: St. Peter Catholic Church, Mansfield, OH

Officiant: Father John Miller

Reception: Westbrook Country Club

Day of Coordination: The Pulse Brands

Wedding Planning & Styling: Sara Oakley, Lynn Thompson & Kirsten Elliot

Photographer: The Howard Brand

Content Creation: The Social Recipe

DJ: The Pulse Brands

Dessert: The Happy Chip, Mansfield, OH

Gown, Topper & Veil: La Jeune Mariee

Bouquet: Forget me Not Flower Shop, Lexington, OH

Residing: Ontario, Ohio

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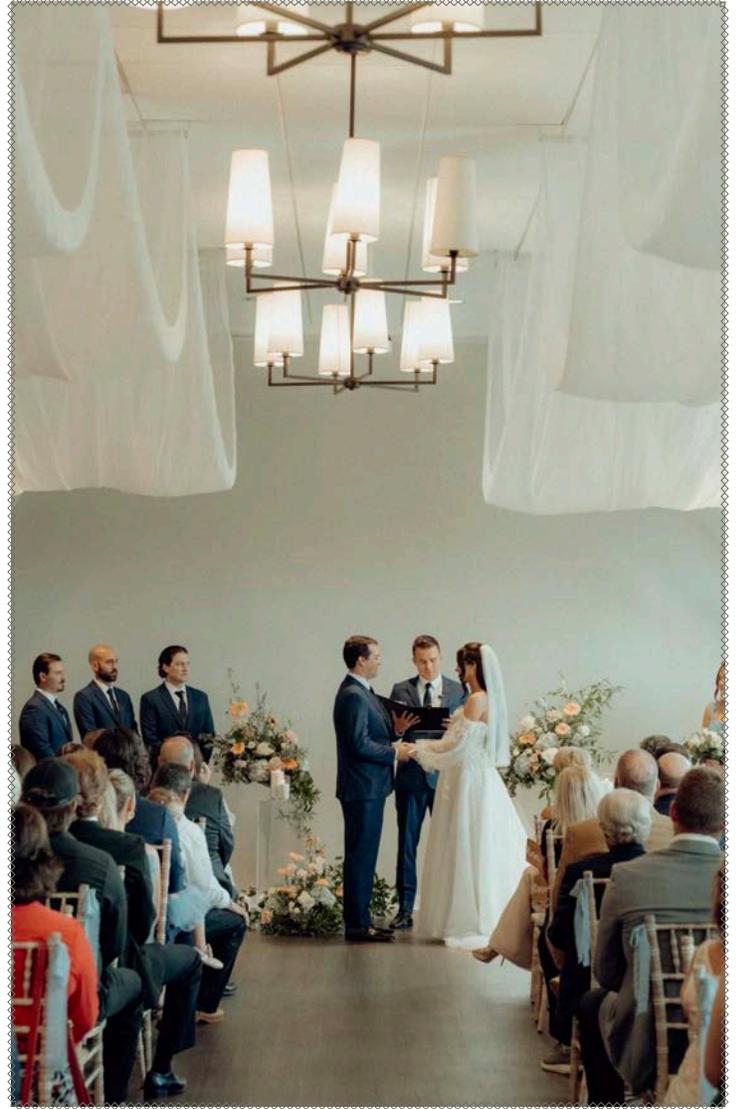
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Wishes and Weddings



*Mr. & Mrs. Matthew Barkett (Hayley King)
August 23, 2025*

*Officiant: Charlie Keller, Friend of the Groom
Ceremony & Reception: The Estate at New Albany,
New Albany, Ohio*

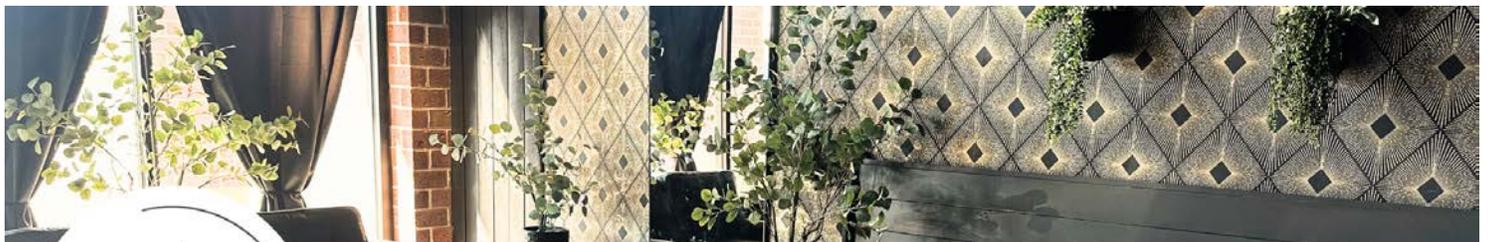
*Photographer & Videographer: CJ Photo & Film,
Caleb Johnson*

Florist: Fiori Florals

Cake & Cupcakes: Alice's Piece of Cake

Gown: Wendy's Bridal

Residing: Mansfield, Ohio



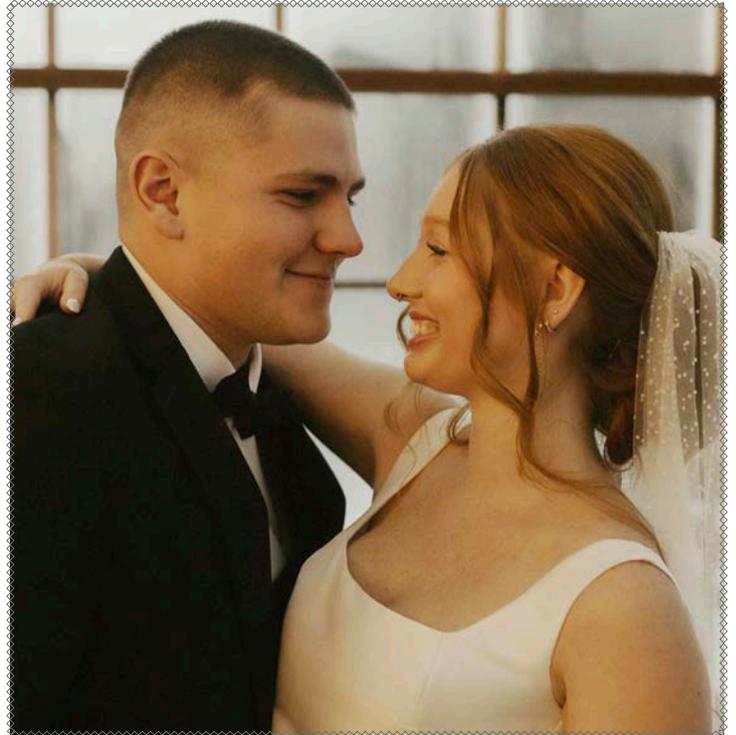
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Wishes and Weddings



*Mr. & Mrs. Braylon McCoy (Kylie Miller)
December 31, 2025*

*Officiant: Alex Pore, Friend of the Groom
Ceremony & Reception: Jorgensen Farms
Oak Grove Greenhouse, New Albany, Ohio
Photographer: Hanna Brown Photography
Gown: Ohio Bridal Outlet
Honeymoon: Dominican Republic
Residing: Sunbury, Ohio*

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Lexington PTO donates \$6,160

The Lexington Board of Education met Wednesday, Feb. 18 and began the meeting by recognizing the Lexington High School Boys State Championship Cross Country Team.

Student Representative Emma Racquet gave a report, followed by an administrative report about the Junior High/SRO.

The financial forecast for FY26-FY29 was approved. The Lexington PTO donated \$6,160 to be allocated based on student enrollment to Eastern (\$2,535), Central (\$1,725), Western (\$1,600) and Lexington Preschool (\$300).

A contract from Mid-Ohio ESC in the amount of \$18,100 for student ESY Speech and IS services was approved.

A leave of absence was granted to Stephanie Coffman for the remainder of the 2025-'26 school year.

Marty Shoup resigned as a high school English teacher and Kevin Richer resigned as an Eastern Elementary sixth grade math teacher, both effective at the end of the 2025-'26 school year.

Judy Hoover resigned as an Eastern Elementary fourth grade math and science teacher, effective Feb. 16.

A payment to Jaime Chambers, mentor to Nikole Ringer, was approved for \$350 for the 2025-'26 school year.

Heather Remy, Megan Shupe and Trish Hughes were hired as third grade tutoring supervisors.

Continuing contracts were awarded to Kevin Morrow and Kristen McPeck. Karson Kimmel was hired as a long-term substitute.

Resignations were accepted from Taylor Thoman, Eastern Elementary nurse; and Ray Cunningham, transportation.

Employment was granted to Pauline Anderson, substitute educational aide, for the remainder of the 2025-'26 school year.

Coaching positions were granted to Joe Thornton, varsity softball coach; Alyson Berg, JV softball coach;

Lindsey Musille, volunteer assistant softball coach; John Murray, strength coach (February-April); Craig Montgomery, volunteer assistant baseball coach; Holly Rice, junior high track and field coach; Nathan Fisher, volunteer assistant baseball coach; and Sonja Clever, volunteer assistant softball coach.

The 2026-27 school year calendar was approved and the board voted to remain a member of the Ohio High School Athletic Association for 202-'27.

Substitute lists were approved as provided by MOESC dated Janu. 9-Feb. 13.



Photos By Jeff Hoffer
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH hosted its annual pancake day on Feb. 17. All proceeds from the event went to benefit Richard and Susan Schullers 38-year-old daughter seeking medical treatment for advanced-stage cancer. Insurance will not cover many of her treatment expenses.

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Pioneer Board of Education has busy February meeting

At the Feb. 16 meeting, the Pioneer Board of Education approved the appointment of Gavyn Bazley to the Richland County and Huron County Tax Incentive Review Committees and Gregory Nickoli to the Crawford County Tax Incentive Review Committee for 2026.

The board approved the annual board member/administrator dinner meeting for March 25.

The board approved the superintendent to accept resignations.

Donations were accepted from Civista Bank, Shelby, \$500 to be deposited and used for the Annual Civista Bank Scholarship; Chief Rich Metzger, Village of Plymouth Volunteer Fire Department, donation of an EMS cot with an approximate value of \$1,400-\$1,900 to be used in the First Responder program; and Lucas Hair Design, Lucas, various cosmetology products with an approximate value of \$3,000 to be used in the cosmetology program.

The board approved student participation in events including the State DECA Competition, Hyatt Regency Convention Center, Colum-

bus, Feb. 24-25; and a Lucas FFA Lock-In, Mansfield YMCA, Mansfield, Feb. 27-28.

Maternity leave was granted to Meghan Haney, medical technologies instructor. This is for up to 12 weeks of maternity leave, commencing Feb. 13, with the possibility of unpaid leave if necessary.

A Google Level One Certification stipend went to Melissa Myers, \$110. Alternative Career Awareness Exploration stipends went to Caleb Alt, \$65; Carey Tocash, \$65; Nate Ganzhorn, \$65; Jesse Meyer, \$65; Melinda Meisse, \$65; Justin Tuttle, \$65; Melissa Myers, \$65; James Rippel - \$65; Bill Dichtl, \$65; Phil Johnson, \$65; Chris Karl, \$65; Fritz Fagan, \$65; Mike Thompson, \$65; Terri Crain, \$65; Skyler Rose, \$65; Mike Millward, \$65; Grant Brocwell, \$65; Michael Messersmith, \$65; Rick Harvey, \$65; Sandy Grau, \$65; Josh Broughton, \$65; Dan George, \$65; and Meghan Haney, \$65.

An unpaid leave request was approved for Ariel Little, attendance secretary; 15.5 hours unpaid leave for March 9, 10 and 11, 2026.

Lora Kuhn, part-time cafeteria worker, resigned, effective Jan. 13.

Part-time adult education hirings included Melissa Keffer, LPN Instructor; and Jacob Lugo, welding instructor.

The board approved the last chance agreements for certificated personnel and classified personnel.

Pioneer Career and Technology Center announced Chloe Kareff and Britney Webb as February Students of the Month.

Chloe, a senior from Lexington High School, is enrolled in the Criminal Justice program at Pioneer. She consistently demonstrates leadership, responsibility and a strong commitment to her training. Outside of school, Chloe works, spends time with her sisters, and is actively involved in her church youth group and music program. In her free time, she enjoys listening to music, cleaning, drawing and relaxing with family and friends.

After graduation, she plans to attend college to pursue a degree in criminal justice or architecture. She is motivated to build a successful future and continue growing both personally and professionally.

Britney, a junior from Shelby High School, is enrolled in the Horticulture program at Pioneer. At Shelby, she was involved in FCCLA and was always willing to help with activities and events. Outside of school, she babysits for families she knows and enjoys sewing, crocheting, painting and drawing.

In the future, she plans to pursue a career as a florist. She looks forward to using the creative skills she has developed in Horticulture to design arrangements and brighten peoples' days through her work.

The Pioneer Career and Technology Center Board of Education will hold a public meeting to discuss the proposed reemployment of retiring teacher Alan Sears. The public meeting will take place on Monday, March 16, at 6 pm, in the Pioneer Career and Technology Center Board of Education Conference Room, 27 Ryan Rd., Shelby.

Sutton Bank welcomes new general counsel and chief legal officer

Sutton Bank has announced the appointment of Frank C. Salamone as its new General Counsel and Chief Legal Officer. With more than 15 years of experience in financial regulation and enforcement at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), Salamone brings a strong background in banking law, compliance oversight and regulatory policy to the organization.

In his new role, Salamone will advise executive leadership and the Board of Directors on legal, regulatory and governance matters. He will support ongoing compliance initiatives, assist with risk management strategy, review policies and procedures, and provide guidance as the bank continues to grow and adapt to changes within the financial services industry.

"We are pleased to welcome Frank to our team," said Tony Gorell, CEO of Sutton Bank. "His experience within federal regulatory agencies provides meaningful insight into the expectations placed on financial institutions. That perspective will help us continue operating in a safe, sound and responsible manner while serving our customers and communities."

Most recently, Salamone served as second-in-command in FDIC's Enforcement Section. In that role, he worked with senior agency leadership to help set enforcement priorities. He led the FDIC's program for enforcement investigations and litigation involving a range of banking, compliance and consumer protection matters.

Prior to joining the FDIC, he spent more than a decade with the OCC, where he advised agency leadership on issues related to consumer compliance, emerging technology, cybersecurity, bank operations and enforcement. He led investigations involving consumer law violations, fraud, unsafe banking practices and regulatory compliance concerns, working alongside federal and state partners on coordinated matters such as the 2010 foreclosure crisis and the Madoff fraud.

A Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist and Certified Fraud Examiner, Salamone has provided training and guidance on consumer financial services, financial crimes compliance and investigative best practices throughout his career.

Salamone earned his Juris Doctor with honors from Hofstra University School of Law in New York and holds a Bachelor of Science in Government and German from Georgetown University. He also completed a year of study abroad at Humboldt University in Berlin.

The addition of Salamone reflects Sutton Bank's continued focus on strong governance, effective risk management and long-term stability as it serves individuals, families and businesses throughout the region. Founded in 1878, Sutton Bank is an independent, community-focused financial institution headquartered in Attica, OH. For more information, visit www.suttonbank.com.



Ontario Police issue scam alert

The Ontario Police Department has issued a scam alert for Ontario and Springfield Township residents.

Individuals from out-of-state are calling local residents who have recently been transported by any EMS service, including Springfield Township EMS.

These scammers are attempting to collect immediate payment over the phone for medical transport services.

At this time, there is no evidence of a data breach. Scammers often use "spoofing" and broad-range dialing to target areas where they know medical services are active.

This warning is a precaution to ensure no one falls victim to these predatory calls.

Springfield Township EMS does not call to collect payment and all legitimate billing is handled strictly through the mail. The department will never ask for a credit card or bank information over the phone.

Those who receive a suspicious call should hang up immediately. Do not provide any personal or financial details.

For information contact the Springfield Township office directly using the official number found on the mailed statement or 513-729-1300.

For more information visit <https://www.springfieldtwp.org>.



PHEAA announces no essay scholarship for college-bound students

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) encourages 2026–27 college students, graduate students, and their parents in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia to enter for a chance to win a \$2,500 no essay scholarship sweepstakes through the Keystone Student Loan Program.

Anyone who opts in to receive communications, which will include tips on planning for and paying for college, between Jan. 5 and May 1, 2026, will be entered into the scholarship sweepstakes. A total of 12 winners will be selected in May of this year.

“Thanks to the Keystone Scholarship, college students, grad students, and their parents in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia can enter for a chance to win a \$2,500 scholarship in mere minutes,” said James Steeley, PHEAA President & CEO. “There’s no essay required so it couldn’t be faster or easier. Since entrants have also opted in to receive information to help them plan for and pay for higher education, it’s really a win-win as they plan for their future success.”

To enter the Keystone Scholarship Sweepstakes visit KeystoneStudentLoans.org/ss to enter.



Ohio State opens doors to new university hospital in Columbus

The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center opened last week as the first of more than 425 patients were moved into 820 private rooms at the new University Hospital, 520 W. 10th Ave., Columbus.

University Hospital is a decade in the making, and it stands out for its patient-centered design, family-friendly facilities and highly advanced technology. It offers care across a range of specialties, including surgery, neurology, neurosurgery, critical care, adult organ transplants and more.

“Thousands of people have been working diligently for years to turn our vision for a transformational hospital that improves lives across Ohio, the nation and the world into a reality,” said Ohio State President Walter “Ted” Carter Jr. “Today is about so much more than opening a building. It’s about honoring our land-grant mission by delivering life-changing patient care, advancing innovative research and providing high-quality education for generations to come.”

The 1.9-million-square-foot, 26-story hospital is the largest single-facility construction project ever undertaken at Ohio State and the largest single-facility hospital project opening in the U.S. in 2026.

Highlights include 24 operating rooms, including two hybrid neurovascular suites for complex stroke care, 10 interventional radiology suites for advanced imaging-guided procedures, 234 intensive care unit (ICU) beds, the region’s only Level 4 maternity care hospital with an express elevator feature for laboring patients, 24/7 dining access with mobile ordering available, 24/7 access to indoor and outdoor spaces for reflection and 148 additional beds for patients of The Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute.



ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL students attended the 2026 JA Inspire Career Exploration Event, featuring JA Inspire Advanced, at Fairhaven Hall at the Richland County Fairgrounds. The interactive event connected students with local employers and industry professionals, giving them valuable, hands-on opportunities to explore a wide variety of career pathways. JA Inspire goes beyond the traditional career fair format. Throughout the morning, students explored high-demand career fields, spoke directly with local business leaders, participated in interactive and hands-on activities, learned about education and training pathways and gained insight into future workforce opportunities.



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Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

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Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

NORTHMOR VS ST. PETERS JUNIOR VARSITY BASKETBALL · FEB. 20
PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

MCS athletes celebrated during senior night

Photos and Article By Traci Little

Cardington High School edged Mansfield Christian High School 47-45 in a tightly contested matchup on Feb. 20, a night that also served as a special celebration of Mansfield Christian's seniors.

The game stayed close from start to finish, with both teams trading baskets and battling possession by possession. Cardington capitalized on key opportunities in the final moments, executing down the stretch to secure the two-point victory. Mansfield Christian remained within striking distance until the final buzzer, but Cardington's late-game composure proved to be the difference in the defensive-minded contest.

The win was a notable one for Cardington, who entered the matchup with a 5-16 record, knocking off a Mansfield Christian squad that came in at 11-9. The final score reflected a physical, hard-fought game where every possession carried weight.

Before the game, Mansfield Christian took time to honor seniors who have contributed to the school's athletic and extracurricular programs. Honored were Grady Heichel, bowling; Emma Docherty, Lillie Mowry and Samantha Roll, cheer; Landin Cyphers, Denver Elliott, Aidan Johnson, Blayne Morrow, JR Reeder, Josiah Schleusener, Hudson Stigall and Bryson Winemiller, basketball.

The seniors were recognized for their dedication, leadership, and the impact they have had on Mansfield Christian athletics and school life.

While the game ended in a narrow loss, the emotional night was filled with appreciation for their commitment and the legacy they will leave behind.



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

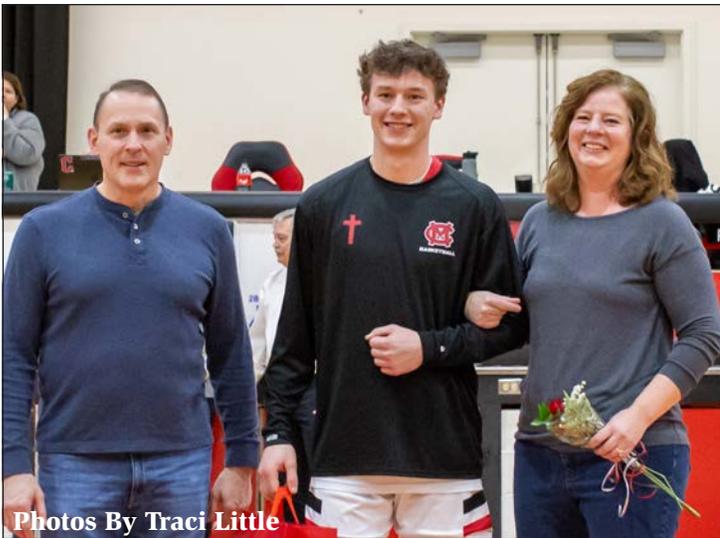


Photos By Traci Little



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

MCS Senior Night



Photos By Traci Little

Madison defeats Big Lex 48-45

By Kris Leiter

What a difference a year can make. Last year, Madison played some really good basketball and although their record may not have been the optimum record, I gave them an "A" for effort.

This year, the Rams have been showing the fruits of their hard work. Even with an 8-14 record, they had a close game with Shelby (58-53) and defeated Lexington on Jan. 17 (64-60).

After last week's game on Feb. 20, the Rams are now two-for-two against Lexington.

In the past few weeks, these two teams have put on a show. Two conference friendly foes have scratched and clawed for the winning score for 32 minutes in each of the two contests they have played.

Next week, the excitement will continue when they spar off on the first round of the post-season of the OHSAA tournament.

Lexington (9-13) has had some challenges in their lineup to this season. Two freshmen and two sophomores have joined the line.

Lex will open with Madison in the first round of the tourney on Wednesday, Feb. 25 at Lexington. The game begins at 6 pm.

You know its hard to beat a team for the third time. This will surely be game you don't want to miss!



Local nonprofits invited to attend Charitable University

Nonprofit organizations are critical in our community. Board members have legal duties to ensure the effectiveness of those groups.

The Richland County Foundation, through its Osborne Meese Academy, will partner with the Ohio Attorney General's Office to provide in-person sessions of Charitable University.

Charitable University is a learning platform developed by the Ohio Attorney General's Office, provides tools for some of the most important elements in leading a charitable organization: board governance, governmental filings, financial operations, and fundraising.

Beth Short of the Ohio Attorney General's Office will facilitate four 3-hour sessions for lo-

cal nonprofit board members on March 17 from 9 am to noon, July 16 from 4-7 pm, Sept. 17 from 4-7 pm and Nov. 5 from 9 am to noon in the Eisenhower Marketplace at Ohio State University-Mansfield.

Registration is free at richlandcountyfoundation.org, but required.

"I want nonprofit leaders and board members to learn the legal and procedural duties needed to ensure effectiveness and to strengthen their boards for long-term impact in Richland County," said Richland County Foundation Senior Community Investment Officer Siera Marth-May.

Nonprofit organizations that complete the training requirements with at least 75% board attendance will be eligible for

a 2-hour session with a consultant to provide specialized board governance training and development. The organizations meeting 75% attendance will also be entered into a chance to win a \$1,000 grant prize during Richland Gives, the Foundation's annual online giving event.

The Osborne Meese Academy (OMA) was established out of a need within the community to build capacity, serve as an informational resource, and act as a catalyst to encourage stronger collaboration among nonprofit organizations.

For more information call 419-525-3020 or email Senior Community Investment Officer, Siera Marth-May, smarth@rcfoundation.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

LEGAL NOTICE

The following is a succinct summary of the legislation adopted by the Council of the City of Ontario, at their regular meeting held on February 18, 2026.

The complete text of this Ordinance may be viewed and copies obtained at the Office of the Clerk of Council, Ontario Municipal Building, 555 Stumbo Road, Ontario, Ohio, during regular business hours.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-02 – A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE 2026 ONTARIO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN, A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE WALKING AND BIKING FOR RESIDENTS WITH INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROGRAMMING, WHILE INCREASING SAFETY, HEALTH, AND EQUITABLE MOBILITY FOR ALL.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-03 – A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE- SAFETY DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE FOR COMPETITIVE BIDS AND AWARD A CONTRACT FOR THE 2026 CITY OF ONTARIO PAVING PROGRAM AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Abbey Beaver
Asst. Clerk of Council
City of Ontario, Ohio
(T-C 2-26, 3-5, 2026) 31L

LEGAL NOTICE

The annual financial report for the Madison Water District has been completed for 2025. The report is available at the office on Wednesdays from 4:30-6:00 P.M. located at 817 Expressview Drive (side), Mansfield, Ohio.

Sue Cook, Office Manager
Madison Water District
Mansfield, OH
(T-C 2-26, 2026) 31L

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news@tribune-courier.com**



OFFICER DAWSON — During National School Resource Officer Appreciation Day, Ontario Schools celebrated Officer Scott Dawson. He was honored for the many times he can be found surrounded by kids, laughing, listening, offering guidance or simply being there when it matters most. Officer Dawson recently helped out in the Stingel cafeteria.

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Branch Manager - Loan Officer