



TRIBUNE-COURIER

RICHLAND COUNTY'S ONLY LOCALLY-OWNED NEWSPAPER • SINCE 1961

news@tribune-courier.com

11.06.25



Photo By Traci Little

THE ONTARIO LIONS CLUB held its fall pancake day at Ontario High School on Saturday, Nov. 1. Among those coming out for breakfast were George Lee and his friends from Ontario United Methodist Church. Lee, pictured standing, is the former pastor at Ontario United Methodist and served in the Air Force from 1956-1962. **See more photos on page 8.**

NECIC engages residents to shape future

The North End Community Improvement Collaborative (NECIC) is turning community feedback into action.

Following a successful series of seven community forums held between August and October 2025, NECIC is advancing several key resident-driven initiatives to strengthen the North End, including the Springmill Corridor Cleanup and a Community store project (grocery, café, staffing stop and food pharmacy designed to expand food access and economic opportunity).

Led by CEO Matthew Benko-Scruggs and community organizer Shanican Pender, the forums gathered hundreds of resident votes and conversations centered around seven priorities: housing, health and safety, education, economic development, public infrastructure and transit, land use and community spaces.

"Residents make the road map for our work," said Pender. "We are the car, but they are the engine, and their feedback tells us exactly where to go next."

The top community priorities — housing, safety, and access to resources are now guiding NECIC's 2026 plans. Two projects will anchor this next phase.

The Springmill Corridor Spring Cleanup & Community Beautification Initiative is set for April 22-25. This large-scale cleanup event

will unite residents, local organizations and city partners to restore pride and safety along the Springmill/Bowman corridor.

The effort will focus on litter removal, landscaping, signage improvements and beautification on Springmill from Route 30 to 6th Street and on Bowman Street from the Urban Farm to Harker Street.

Confirmed partners include the Richland County Land Bank, Park National Bank, Men's Garden Club of Mansfield and the City of Mansfield Public Works Department, among others. NECIC aims to make this an annual North End tradition aligned with Dumpster Day and other resident-led events.

The NECIC Community Store will be a local hub for food access and opportunity.

"Building off of the community feedback around health, safety and youth development, NECIC is aiming to launch the NECIC Community Store project at 486 Springmill St. in 2026," said Benko-Scruggs. "The store will increase access to affordable groceries, local produce, new jobs, a café and eventually grab-and-go meals while providing structured workforce and leadership development opportunities for local youth and residents."

"NECIC remains committed to turning community vision into real change," said COO Tionna Perdue. "Our real 'aha' moment

(Continued on Page 3)

UH Samaritan opens wound care center in Ashland

By Traci Little

When University Hospitals opened its new Wound Care Center at UH Samaritan Medical Center this fall, it marked more than the start of a new service line—it marked restored access, comfort, and hope for area residents who've long traveled miles for specialized care that's now just minutes away.

A Much-Needed Service in the Community

Located on the fourth floor of the hospital campus, the UH Samaritan Wound Care Center is the first and only facility of its kind in Ashland County. The center provides comprehensive treatment for wounds caused by diabetes, circulatory conditions, and other serious medical issues.

"This center fills a real need in our community," said Dr. Mary MacDonald, a provider at the UH Samaritan Wound Care Center. "Patients who once had to travel more than 20 miles for wound care can now access the same expert treatment close to home. That accessibility makes an enormous difference, not just in convenience, but in helping patients heal more effectively."

Program Director Brandon Collins said the need was clear from day one. "We had patients visibly emotional our first week," he shared. "They were so relieved to finally have care nearby. One gentleman told us he'd already used all his annual insurance-covered transportation trips simply trying to get to Mansfield or Wooster for wound appointments. Now he can take city or Council on Aging transportation, or a family member can bring him—it's life-changing."

Ashland resident Heath Garrison agreed. "After my abdominal procedure, my recovery wasn't going as planned," he said. "I'm grateful the new Wound Care Center opened when it did. My treatment could take a few weeks, and now I can get the care I need without driving too far away."

Specialized, Ongoing Care

Unlike one-time outpatient visits, wound care is frequently a long-term partnership. "These are patients we'll see over and over because their conditions make healing a constant battle," Collins explained. "It's not just patching someone up. It's recurring, specialized care that improves quality of life and prevents serious complications."

The center offers advanced treatment options including negative pressure wound therapy, total contact casting, bio-engineered tissue, biosynthetic dressings, and growth factor therapies. It also collaborates with specialists across the UH system — including UH Harrington Heart & Vascular

(Continued on Page 6)

Richland SWCD says “leave the leaves” and help the soil

By Theresa Rozic Sutter
Richland Soil and Water Conservation District
Community Relations Coordinator

Fall is officially here! Now we can look forward to cool-crisp temperatures, apple picking, Friday night football games, pumpkin spice and beautiful fall foliage. Let's go back to that beautiful fall foliage though. The color change of tree leaves is one of the many perks we get for living in the northern part of the United States. The leaves of the deciduous trees lose their chlorophyll in the fall, exposing their natural brilliant colors. Unfortunately, those colors don't hang around too long, those same leaves fall from the trees, lose their beautiful colors and become an issue for many property owners.

The most common, socially accepted solution to dealing with dead leaves is to get rid of them. Some people burn them; others bag them and have them hauled away with the garbage while some rake them to the road curb and have a city or township suck them up and haul them away. These are viable ways to rid yourself of these leaves, but I would like to suggest a few alternate and environmentally friendly options for you to consider.

1. Leave them, no rake — This method is self-explanatory. When the leaves fall naturally from the trees onto your lawn or landscaping, it can offer many benefits. Oftentimes people are concerned that the leaves will choke out their grass or plants and kill them. However, when leaves fall naturally, they are not typically thick enough to kill any vegetation. The layer of leaves on the ground will offer habitat to many wildlife species and as they break down over fall and winter, they will provide organic matter and nutrients for your soil, benefiting your lawn and plants.

2. Leave them, mow them — If you're concerned that the leaves will kill your lawn, you can let them fall, then mow over them instead of raking. The mowing (preferably a mulching mower deck) will break up the leaves, freeing your grass from a dense leaf blanket. This might not have as many wildlife benefits as not mowing them, but it will still begin the decomposition process and add organic material and nutrients to your lawn soil.

3. Pile them — Not a fan of any leaves on your lawn? Well, you could still rake or blow them off the lawn into piles. You could place these piles off the lawn and start a compost pile. This pile would have habitat benefits to many wildlife species but would also have the benefit of providing a high-quality compost material that could then be later placed on areas where you may want to improve structure and enrich the soil. You could also add branches or sticks to the pile and offer a complex wildlife habitat.

4. Mulch them — Another option is to rake the leaves and use them as winter mulch on your flower beds. The decomposed leaves will again offer great wildlife habitat, but they will help protect your plants' roots, suppress weeds, preserve soil moisture and when they breakdown they will return nutrients to your soil.

What I like to do in my own backyard is this; I have a large pine tree with a small circular bed constructed around it. When I moved in, my wife and I discovered that the soil in this bed was very hard with no organic material in it. We tried to plant flowers there, but even hardy plants could not survive. So, what I do is blow my backyard leaves into piles and suck them up with my leaf blower/vacu-

um. The leaf vacuum slightly chops up the leaves on their way into a bag. I then empty the bags and pile them on this bed with low quality soil. By the time summer rolls around, the thickness of the leaves has decomposed to only a couple inches thick. My plan is to keep doing this until a nice organic layer has built up and eventually plant flowers there.

My intention is to encourage people to take advantage of a free, renewable and valuable resource. Disposing of leaves can be very expensive and labor intensive, so why not utilize what is already available and at the same time improve soil on your property and benefit wildlife?

If you have questions about leaving the leaves or Richland SWCD programs and services, please call 419-747-8686 or visit <https://richlandswcd.net/>.

DAR offering \$25,000 scholarships

Undergraduate and graduate students studying American history can apply for a \$25,000 scholarship from the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) now through Jan. 31, 2026. The DAR America 250! Scholarship will provide a one-time \$25,000 award to ten students in 2026 and is offered to mark the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of independence.

“We are so thrilled to expand the America 250! Scholarship in its final year of being awarded in order to be able to offer ten \$25,000 scholarships to students,” said Ginnie Sebastian Storage, DAR President General. “We see no better way to celebrate America's 250th anniversary than with these transformative and life-changing scholarships investing in the development of the next generation of American historians who will study our past and help us understand new aspects of the great American story.”

The DAR gives more than 30 scholarships annually awarding close to a total of \$250,000 a year to students across the country, but the organization has never provided a singular scholarship of this size. The significant amount of the America 250! Scholarship, and that it will be awarded to ten separate students, is a testament of the importance of American history education that DAR places emphasis on and in honor of the special celebrations taking place throughout 2026 in honor of the 250th anniversary of the nation.

Applicants should apply through the DAR online scholarship portal, DAR Academic Works: <https://dar.academicworks.com/>

Students currently majoring in American history in an accredited university or college undergraduate or graduate program in the year 2026 are eligible to apply. Recipients must be United States citizens, prove a minimum 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale or equivalent and prepare a one-page online essay either on the founding of our nation or on the applicant's personal volunteer achievements for community and country. Students are urged to apply well ahead of the deadline, as the scholarship application requires transcripts and letters of recommendation that must be submitted by others.

Questions can be addressed to america250scholarship@nsdar.org.

Vol. 65
No. 4

Tribune-Courier

*Serving Ontario, Lexington, Madison, Bellville and Butler Communities in
Madison, Mifflin, Springfield, Troy, Washington and Jefferson Townships*

PO Box 127, Ontario, OH 44862 • 419-529-2847
news@tribune-courier.com • www.tribune-courier.com
© All Rights Reserved

The Tribune-Courier is published by Stumbo Publishing Co., Inc. Advertisers should check their ad immediately. The Tribune-Courier is not liable for failure to publish an ad or for a typographical error or errors in publication, except that adjustment for Tribune-Courier errors is limited to the cost of that portion of the ad wherein the error occurred. Marc A. Stumbo, publisher; Frank A. Stumbo, president/CEO (1961-2018); Betty E. Stumbo, co-publisher (1961-2017); Jenna M. Wolford, managing editor, general manager and feature/travel writer; Teresa Vore, office manager; Traci Little, photojournalist/advertising representative; Kris Leiter, sports writer; John J. Kirschenheiter, editor (1961-2008); Linda Fulmer, columnist (2005-2014). By-lined stories are opinions of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the position of this newspaper.





**Recycling Today
to Improve Tomorrow**

Formerly Milliron Recycling

BUYERS OF:
aluminum . stainless steel . brass . all scrap iron
commercial & industrial pick-up

2384 St. Rt. 39 | Monday - Friday 8 - 5 | Sat. 8 - 12
419 - 747 - 6522 | 800 - 921 - 0054

News Briefs

The Pioneer Career and Technology Center Board of Education has changed its regular November board meeting to Monday, Nov. 24, at 6 pm in the Pioneer Board of Education Conference Room.

A recycling trailer will be in the parking lot at Ontario United Methodist Church, 3540 Park Avenue West, Nov. 29 and 30. 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.

The Village of Lexington's Light Up Lexington is set for Monday, Dec. 1, at 7 pm at Lex Landing.

The Women's Fund of the Richland County Foundation will announce this year's grant recipients during a luncheon Friday, Nov. 7 at Westbrook Country Club. The Women's Fund also will announce the recipient of the JoAnn Dutton Volunteer Service Award.

The award honors women who are leaders and devote a significant amount of time and energy in a meaningful way to local charitable organizations. The award was named in honor of JoAnn Dutton, former executive director of the Mansfield YWCA.

Richland Source Audience Engagement Editor Brittany Schock and reporter Katie Ellington Serrao will be the keynote speakers. They will share information on the Richland Source Series "It Takes a Village: Why Child Care is Everyone's Business."

Tickets can be purchased at richlandcountyfoundation.org, click the donate button then the events tickets tab.

The Lexington Area Senior Citizens Inc., invites those 55 and older to attend meetings the third Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am. February through May, the group will meet at New Life Church of Christ (NLC of C), 195 W. Durbin, Bellville. Cost is \$17 for the meal. Meetings June through December will be held at Der Dutchman, Rt. 96, Bellville. Meals are \$16, with an additional \$2 for pie.

The next meal will be on a special date, the second Wednesday of the month, on Nov. 12 with roast turkey. There will be a program from the Clearfork Vo Ag Department and the election of officers will take place.

For information visit www.lexasc.org. Dues are \$10 per year.

All Souls Unitarian Universalist of Bellville, 25 Church St., Bellville, will welcome Wendy Bartlett on Sunday, Nov. 9, at 10:30 am. The subject will be "How to Fight Antisemitism." For information visit www.allsoulsuohio.org.

First Congregational Church, 640 Millsboro Rd., Mansfield, will host a holiday bazaar Nov. 10-11, from 9 am to 4 pm.

St. Mary's, 1630 Ashland Rd., Mansfield (Madison area) will host a holiday rummage sale on Thursday, Nov. 6, from 9 am to 4 pm; Friday, Nov. 7, 9 am to 4 pm; and Saturday, Nov. 8, from 9 am to noon.

The sale will be held in church basement. The church will also be collecting non-perishable donations for the Catholic Charities Food Pantry.

The west side of Bangorville Road, near the SR 13 intersection, is closed for emergency culvert repairs. SR 13 remains open and is not impacted by the work. Motorists using Bangorville Road will need to seek an alternate route. There is no estimated time for when the road will reopen.

The Richland Area Chamber has announced that its Small Business Saturday will be one week earlier this year — on Nov. 22.

The local Shop Small celebration will take place early to avoid the OSU vs. Michigan football game on Nov. 29. The event is a community-wide celebration of locally owned businesses with Chamber membership not required.

Businesses can register until Nov. 10 to be included in the special day. Each business will host a \$25+ prize drawing on Nov. 22 and invite shoppers to enter while visiting with no purchase required. Businesses then pick a winner and notify them that day, sharing a photo on social media and tagging @RichlandAreaChamber.

Shoppers can also scan a QR code at each store to enter for five \$100 county-wide grand prize drawings. The Chamber will notify grand-prize winners and distribute the winnings.

Register as a vendor by Nov. 10 at <https://portal.richlandarea-chamber.com/events/details/shop-small-richland-county-2025-vendor-registration-6335>.

•NECIC engages residents in plans

(Continued from Front Page)

came when Matthew and I realized that our core mission isn't just about programs, it's about building an economic engine that improves the lives and livelihoods of North End residents. We're bringing those services, that power, and that purpose back home to the North End."

"We'll keep engaging neighbors through events, volunteerism, and partnerships as these projects move forward in 2026," said Benko-Scruggs. "Bringing NECIC back to the heart of the North End isn't just symbolic, it's about recommitting to the work, the people, and the promise of this community."



It's planting your roots in the perfect place.

With new options that could lower your down payment, we make financing your dream home as enjoyable as putting some geraniums in your flower beds. (Excellent choice, by the way.)

MyMechanics.com/mortgages



Subject to credit approval. Additional terms and conditions apply.



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 and TeamKID and Youth Group

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

200 West Third St., Mansfield
419-524-4813 • mansfield1stcc1833@gmail.com
Rev. David Zerby
10:30 am Sunday Worship
Office Hours: Tu., W., Th. 9 am to 1 pm
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
10:30 am Sunday School (nursery–high school)
10:30 am Monday Morning Bible Study
7:30 am Wednesday Men's Breakfast

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.

Grace Episcopal Church

41 Bowman Street, Mansfield
419-524-2661
Rev. Christopher D. Hofer, Priest-in-Charge
Rev. Daniel Orr, Associate Priest
Worship: Sundays, 8 am and 10:15 am
Christian Formation for All Ages: Sundays, 9:15 am
Food Pantry: Thursdays, 9–11 am
2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 4–6 pm
gracemansfield.org • facebook.com/GraceChurchMansfield

G & M Body & Paint Shop

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

Wappner Funeral Home

Mansfield • Ontario • Ashland • 419-522-5211

Lexington Church of Christ

230 Delaware Ave., Lexington
419-884-1532 • www.lccoh.com
Lead Minister Brandon Bogue
9 am Sunday School • 10 am Sunday Worship

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.

Lexington Presbyterian Church

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

Mansfield 1st Presbyterian Church

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

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

Oakland Lutheran Church

2045 Olivesburg Rd., Mansfield
419-571-9920
Pastor Paul Lintern
9 am Sunday Worship

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

68 Park Avenue East, Mansfield
419-522-2813 • www.stjohnsmansfield.org
Pastor Faith Proietti • 10 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
Clothing Ministry by appt: 419-512-9817

Southside Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

2055 Middle-Bellville Rd., Mansfield
419-756-3436
Pastor Paul Lintern
10:45 am Sunday Worship

Trinity Grace Fellowship

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

Mansfield United Lions will host Strides for Diabetes one-mile walk

The Mansfield United Lions Club invites the community to join in the annual Strides for Diabetes one-mile walk on Saturday, Nov. 8, from 10 am to noon at The Ontario Center (formerly the Richland Mall), 2209 Richland Mall, Ontario.

This free, family-friendly community event promotes healthier living and raises awareness about diabetes — a leading health challenge impacting families across Richland County and around the world. Indoor walking space makes this a perfect activity for all ages and abilities.

There will be a one-mile indoor awareness walk, cooking demonstration and food sampling by IdeaWorks, hands-on health information and diabetes prevention resources and a chance to win door prizes from local businesses.

A door prize drawing will be held at 11:45 am. All registered walkers will receive a door prize ticket and must be present to win.

Participants are encouraged to enter through the food court.

Major sponsors are Avita Health System, Alumni Roofing and Richland Public Health with additional support from The Ontario Center, Destination Mansfield, Kelly's Dairy Bar, Pump and Grind, Sasco, MAKE Music Academy of Karate & Empowerment, IdeaWorks and Kimmy's Cucina.

"The Mansfield United Lions Club Strides for Diabetes Walk is an opportunity to learn about one of Lions' key pillars of service — diabetes," said Debra Weaver, President of the Mansfield United Lions Club. "This event is about creating awareness and community engagement."

"Strides for Diabetes is designed to support people living with diabetes as well as those who care about them," said Dr. Cynthia Dorsy, Mansfield United Lion and local endocrinologist. "We hope to see plenty of individuals and families joining us. Let's walk, learn, and take steps toward better health together!"

Registration for the walk is now open and free, and individuals are encouraged to sign up early. To register visit <https://forms.gle/bBfWbbFhPkglL43p9>.

For more information or to learn how to get involved with the Mansfield United Lions Club email mansfieldunitedlions@gmail.com or visit Facebook at MansfieldUnitedLions.

Mansfield United Lions Club is a group of volunteers committed to serving the community through various charitable initiatives.

The club welcomes community members to attend monthly meetings, held on the second Monday of each month at 6 pm at Burton Park, Mansfield.

Red Cross schedules bloodmobiles

The American Red Cross urges donors to give blood or platelets now to help curb a drop in donor turnout this fall. Donors of all blood types and those giving platelets are asked to book a time to donate at a Red Cross blood donation center or community blood drive to help give hospitals the tools they need to care for patients ahead of the holidays.

To say thank you, all who come through Nov. 16, will get \$20 in e-gift cards to a choice of merchant, plus automatic entry for a chance to win one of three \$5,000 prizes. Schedule a time to give blood or platelets by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS or by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App.

November is National Diabetes Awareness Month. In November, successful donations will get free A1C testing, commonly used to screen for prediabetes and diabetes. (One test result in 12-month period; do not fast before donating).

Thursday, Nov. 6, noon to 6 pm, Heartland Church, 2505 Lexington Springmill Rd S., Lexington

Friday, Nov. 7, 11 am to 5 pm, The Ontario Center, 2209 Richland Mall, Ontario; and 8 am to 2 pm, Clear Fork High School, 987 St. Rt. 97, Bellville

Tuesday, Nov. 11, noon to 5 pm, Berean Baptist Church, 2145 Middle Bellville Rd., Mansfield

Wednesday, Nov. 12, noon to 6 pm, The Ontario Center, 2209 Richland Mall, Ontario

Friday, Nov. 14, 11 am to 5 pm, The Ontario Center, 2209 Richland Mall, Ontario



KELLI EDDLEBLUTE'S first grade students at Ontario had a pumpkin-packed week. They learned fun facts about pumpkins, read all about the book character Stumpkin, and even wrote their own steps for how to carve a pumpkin.

Obituary Listings for Wappner Funeral Directors

Lois Ann Caldwell, October 23
Chandice "Chad" O'Brian, October 25
Rosalee Bradshaw, October 28
Penelope Andricia Frontz, Octpber 28
Nellie May Dewalt, October 29
Harland Lewis Groves Jr., October 29
George Washington Zeigler Jr., October 29

View Full Obituaries at www.dignitymemorial.com

Our Family Serving Your Family for Five Generations Since 1872



WAPPNER
Funeral Directors & Crematory

Three Locations to Serve You

Mansfield • 98 South Diamond St. • 419-522-5211
Ontario • 100 S. Lexington-Springmill Rd. • 419-529-2323
Ashland • 308 Claremont Avenue • 419-289-1552

www.wappner.com

•UH Samaritan opens new wound care center in Ashland

(Continued from Front Page)

Institute — to support complex cases such as limb salvage and diabetic ulcers.

Looking ahead, hyperbaric oxygen therapy will be added in mid-2026, allowing wounds to heal exponentially faster by delivering concentrated oxygen to damaged tissues. “We’re evidence-based and data-driven,” Collins said. “Our goal isn’t just to close wounds—it’s to reduce recurrence through prevention and education.”

Revitalizing a Beloved Space

The new center occupies what was once the hospital’s labor and delivery unit, a location that carries emotional meaning for many in the community. “People were heartbroken when that unit closed,” Collins re-

flected. “To see this space revitalized and serving people again—it feels like healing in more ways than one.”

Collaboration and Connection

The UH Samaritan Wound Care Center is operated in partnership with Healogics®, the nation’s largest provider of advanced wound care services. University Hospitals’ Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine Centers have been recognized with the Healogics President’s Circle Award, ranking among the best performing centers in Ohio—and among the best in the nation.

Collins said collaboration is at the heart of their mission. “We’re not here to take patients from anyone,” he clarified. “We partner with local providers. Let us handle the wound care so they can focus on treating the underlying causes—diabetes, lymphedema, pressure injuries. It’s a team effort.”

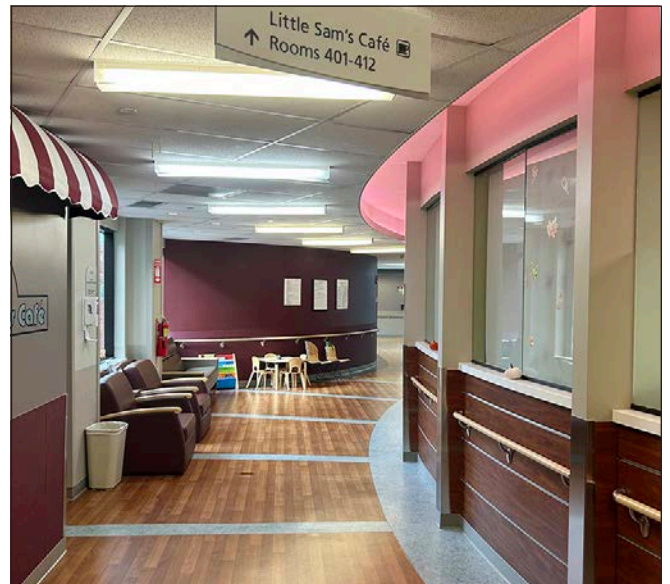
He also stressed that patients can self-refer—no doctor’s order required. “If you have

a wound, you can call us directly,” he said. “We’ll get you in within 24 to 48 hours.”

(Continued on Page 7)



BRANDON COLLINS, MSAH, BS, is the program director, Wound Care Center & Hyperbaric Medicine, University Hospitals Samaritan Medical Center in Ashland



Photos by Traci Liitle

•UH Samaritan opens new wound care center in Ashland

(Continued from Page 6)

Outreach efforts include community education with senior centers, churches, and veterans' groups.

Serving Those Who Served

Several of the center's first patients have been veterans. "We don't have a separate veterans program—but they don't need one," Collins said. "If they have a wound, we'll find it, treat it, and heal it. Many vet-

erans live with chronic conditions related to their service. They shouldn't have to fight for access to care. We're here for them."

A Mission of Access and Healing

For University Hospitals, the new Wound Care Center represents both a community investment and a promise fulfilled—to bring advanced, compassionate medical services closer to home.

"This new center allows us to deliver spe-

cialized care that helps patients heal faster, improve their quality of life, and regain their independence," said Sylvia Radziszewski, Chief Operating Officer at UH Samaritan Medical Center. "We're excited to bring the latest wound care technology and expertise to our patients."

Or as Collins simply put it: "Healing shouldn't depend on how far you can travel. We're proud to bring that healing home to Ashland."

Nationally Recognized Care, Close to Home

AT UH SAMARITAN
MEDICAL CENTER IN ASHLAND



Find a Doctor

Scan the QR code, visit

UHhospitals.org/Samaritan

or call **419-962-9553**.



University Hospitals
Samaritan Medical Center

1025 Center Street, Ashland, Ohio 44805

ONTARIO LIONS FALL PANCAKE DAY



Photos by Traci Little



Your local agent for home & auto

Call me for a quote today



Brian R Gates Ins Agcy Inc
Brian Gates, Agent

2021 Park Avenue West, Suite 100
Ontario, OH 44906-2259

Bus: 419-529-3888
brian@gatesagency.com
www.gatesagency.com



State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company, State Farm Indemnity Company, State Farm Fire and Casualty Company,
State Farm General Insurance Company, Bloomington, IL

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

State Farm Florida Insurance Company, Winter Haven, FL



ONTARIO LIONS FALL PANCAKE DAY



Photos by Traci Little

VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*

Local events will honor Veterans Day

The Fun Center Chordsmen will give a special Veterans Day performance on Monday, Nov. 10, from 7–8 pm at First Congregational Church, 640 Millsboro Rd., Mansfield.

The performance is free and finger foods will follow.

The Mansfield Veterans Day Parade & Program is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 11. At 10:30 am, the parade will step-off from the 5-way light at Park Avenue West, Marion Avenue, Bowman Street, and Sturges Avenue.

The parade route will end at the gazebo on the square where the Veterans Day Program will immediately follow. This year's guest speaker is Charles Kvochick. The ceremony will be held at AMVETS 26 in the case of inclement weather.

City of Ashland Mayor Matt Miller will host the annual Mayor's Veterans Day Breakfast to honor the community's military service members on Tuesday, Nov. 11, at the Fraternal Order of Eagles Club, 400 Eastlake Dr., Ashland.

Breakfast will be continuously served throughout the morning. Veterans and active-duty military members are welcome to stop by the Eagles Club anytime between 7:30 and 9 am for a free breakfast assortment including egg casserole, biscuits and gravy and pancakes.

"We are so thankful to live in the great United States of America, and we are so blessed that in every generation God has raised up a group of men and women to defend our freedom by serving in our country's military," said Miller. "We are so proud of our veterans and current service members and this annual breakfast is one way we can say thank you to these local heroes. Their service was not in vain."



Photo By Jenna Wolford

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY, soldiers from the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment, known as "The Old Guard," stand watch over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. The Tomb Guards, also called Sentinels, are chosen for this prestigious and highly selective post only after rigorous training and a demanding series of examinations. The Old Guard has held this distinguished duty since 1948. The Tomb Guard marches exactly 21 steps down the black mat behind the Tomb, turns, faces east for 21 seconds, turns and faces north for 21 seconds, then takes 21 steps down the mat and repeats the process. The number 21 symbolizes the highest military honor that can be bestowed, the 21-gun salute.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE



Connect / Communicate / Collaborate

Business VoIP Solutions

567-209-5070

Lexington, OH • VersatileVoip.com

Thank You

VETERANS

For your bravery, hard work & dedication to our country.



Pioneer www.go2pioneer.com

CAREER & TECHNOLOGY CENTER 419-347-7744

Proudly honoring those who served.



Thank You



THE OHIO STATE
REFORMATORY

Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present **VETERANS DAY**

A Soldier's Story: Remembering Service, Sacrifice and Brotherhood

By Traci Little

Kenneth Wager graduated from Plymouth High School in 1969. Shortly after, he'd already seen acquaintances be drafted to war, and unfortunately, they didn't survive. He was working at the steel factory in Shelby for about a year, which just seemed like a waiting game. In January 1971, just one day after Wager's 20th birthday, he received news that would change his life — a draft notice from the U.S. Army.

"I got home, and my mom said, 'You got a letter from the Department of something,'" he recalled with a grin. "I said, 'That's not good.' But back then, every young man knew it was coming. Every Sunday, the paper printed the lottery numbers. If your number was below 70, you were going."

He was just 19 when he took his first physical in Columbus and entered the Army lottery. By February 1971, he was officially drafted into service during the Vietnam era — joining thousands of young men who answered their country's call.

After basic training, his orders came for Vietnam. "I had a fiancée then," he said quietly. "I told her, 'Don't wait for me. I don't know if I'll come back.' She gave me my ring back. It was hard, but that's how life was then."

Instead of Vietnam, his orders changed — he was sent to South Korea, where he served with an armor unit from 1971 to 1973. "We were trained to go, and we got as far as Incheon, ready to ship out," he remembered. "Then they told us to pack up and go back to our companies. That was the Army — hurry up and wait."

In Korea, he worked with the Military Police and served as a PT instructor and even a boxer under the leadership of First Sergeant Lowell E. Marsh, a decorated veteran who had fought in Korea at

just 15 years old. "He was 37 then and had already lived a lifetime of service. He took a shine to me," he said. "He taught me a lot about leadership — and life."

From painting a commander's quarters bright pink ("to prove who was really in charge," he laughed) to escorting deserters to the ASCOM prison, his years of service were filled with both discipline and camaraderie. "You learned to follow orders, work as a team, and do what needed to be done."

When his service ended in August 1973 — two years, six months, and two weeks later — coming home wasn't easy. "You go from Quonset huts and barbed wire to TVs and wallpaper," he said. "It didn't feel real. Took me a week just to sleep right with a 15 hour time change also."

He went back to civilian life, returned to work at the copper mill, and eventually met his wife Sharon in 1982 at a Halloween party. "She was dressed as a Playboy bunny. I was Frankenstein," he chuckled. "We've been together ever since."

(Continued on Page 12)

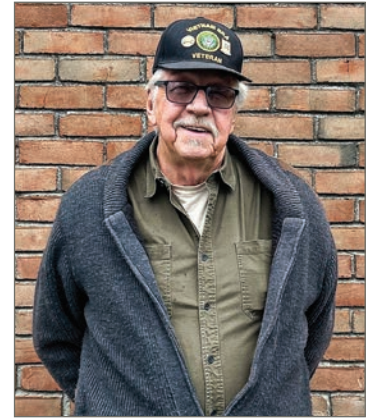


Photo by Traci Little



A Special Thank you
TO ALL WHO HAVE SERVED

SuttonBank
Old-fashioned Innovation

www.suttonbank.com

Member
FDIC

863 N. Lexington-Springmill Rd. • 419-747-7712

Allure
STUDIOS
salon & spa

HAPPY
Veterans
DAY

491 Lexington Ave | (419) 774-9600

Offering 10% off any service for Veterans



VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*

•A Soldier's Story

(Continued from Page 11)

Now, more than 50 years later, he still keeps in touch with his old Army buddy from Mississippi, Ken Murphy. "We talk every couple years and remember those days," he said. "A lot of our friends didn't come back — or came back different."

For him, Veterans Day is more than a date — it's a time of gratitude and remembrance. "You remember your buddies. You remember what it meant to serve. You think about the ones who didn't get the chance to come home."

He also reflects on today's generation with honesty and hope. "I wish they'd bring the draft back—not to send them to war, but to teach them responsibility," he said. "Service changes you. It makes you grow up. You learn what it means to work hard, to serve something bigger than yourself."

"The army taught me a lot; to be on time, how to respect others, earn respect, take care of myself, be responsible and learn from others."

Though time has passed, his pride in his country and his comrades hasn't faded. "It upsets me when people disrespect the flag," he said. "But lately, more young people have come up to shake my hand and say thank you. That means a lot."

As Veterans Day approaches, his message is simple: "We did what we had to do. We stood up when our country called. And I'd do it again."



**Thank You
To All Our
Veterans**

FROM THE HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS AT

**Richland
Public Health**
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



VETERANS, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

RAA has 60+ enrichment trips and classes sponsored by Area Agency on Aging that are FREE to Richland County residents! Classes include dance, visual arts, and music!

REGISTER NOW!

**richland
academy
of the
arts**

www.richlandacademy.com

AREA AGENCY ON AGING
Ohio Division 5 - Serving North Central Ohio

Ohio Arts
COUNCIL

***Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present* VETERANS DAY**

Kenneth Wager during his time in the U.S. Army.

Local veterans invited to breakfast

The Ontario High School Warrior Leadership Council is hosting a Veterans Day Continental Breakfast and Program on Tuesday, Nov. 11, at Ontario High School, 67 Shelby-Ontario Rd., Ontario.

Breakfast will be available from 8:30–9:15 am, followed by a program in the gymnasium from 9:15–10 am.

Students are welcome to join veterans for breakfast, as long as they are included in the RSVP.

To RSVP, call the high school office at 419-529-3969 or email Kayla Cain at cain.kayla@olsohio.org.

**PUMPKIN SEED
MARKET CO.**

DELI • GROCERIES • VITAMINS • AMISH FOODS

1625 EXECUTIVE DRIVE, MANSFIELD
thepumpkinseedmarket.com | 419-525-5500

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VETERANS DAY
HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



**DOUG THEAKER, LARRY CORN,
DEB ROBINSON, JOSH HURRELL, GARY UTT**

**Richland County Veterans
Service Commission**

www.richlandcountyvets.org



VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*

Silent Watch: *Standing in Stillness to Save Lives*

By Traci Little

What began as a simple act of remembrance on a military base has grown into a statewide movement of hope and healing. Silent Watch, founded in the early 2000s by retired Air Force Master Sergeant Tim Chandler, stands as a solemn tribute to the 22–25 veterans who lose their lives to suicide each day — and a beacon of action for those still fighting invisible battles.

A Personal Call to Serve

In 2008, as Chandler returned home from deployment, tragedy struck close to home. Two of his coworkers from the Mansfield Air Base died by suicide within weeks of one another. Around that same time, Michele, a civilian and now one of Silent Watch's core organizers, lost her own brother — a young veteran who took his life just a week after his 22nd birthday.

"His loss changed everything for me," she said. "That's why I'm involved — to help make sure no other family feels this kind of pain."

Raising Awareness

When Michele moved to Ohio in 2009, she joined Chandler's early efforts to visually represent the staggering veteran suicide rate. Each Veterans Day, they held "Silent Watches" — displays featuring 18 to 20 pairs of empty combat boots and a flag-draped casket. The

powerful imagery stopped passersby in their tracks and opened conversations about mental health and military service.

Over time, the display evolved to feature photographs of local veterans lost to suicide, allowing families to honor their loved ones in a meaningful way.

"Now, most of our counties and event hosts use pictures instead of boots," Michele explained. "Every face represents a story, a family, and a community affected."

Silent Watch events are now primarily held in September, aligning with National Suicide Prevention Month, though groups across Ohio host them throughout the year. "There's no right or wrong time," she added. "The important thing is to bring awareness."

From Awareness to Action: The Stellate Ganglion Block

In 2018, Silent Watch expanded beyond awareness to sponsor real treatment for veterans and first responders living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

The group discovered a breakthrough procedure called the Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) — an injection that helps calm the body's "fight-or-flight" response by targeting nerve clusters in the neck. The results can be life changing.

Chandler himself was one of the first in Ohio to undergo the treatment
(Continued on Page 15)







===== ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ =====
*"From the Mansfield Christian Staff,
Faculty, Board and Families"*
MANSFIELD

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present **VETERANS DAY**



•Silent Watch: *Standing in Stillness to Save Lives*

(Continued from Page 14)

in September of 2019, which immediately eased his chronic night terrors and allowed him to rest peacefully for the first time in years. Within weeks, his PTSD assessment scores improved dramatically.

"His story gave us proof that this works," Michele said. "Now, we're helping others get the same chance."

Through generous donations, merchandise sales, and a growing nonprofit network, Silent Watch has covered 100% of treatment costs for more than 100 veterans and first responders, ensuring that cost is never a barrier. The organization recently partnered with a physician in Strongsville, Ohio, through RESET, providing easier access to care that once required travel to Maryland.

Each SGB treatment costs around \$1,600–\$2,000, but for many, it's priceless. One veteran's testimonial captured the impact:

"This shot may have saved my life. It gave my family their father and husband back.

For the first time in years, I could breathe. The darkness lifted — not completely, but enough to stand on solid ground again."

Growing Grief Support

Silent Watch also offers resources for families navigating loss through suicide. Each family receives a copy of "Grieving a Suicide" by Albert Hsu, and organizers hope to expand into semi-annual gatherings for connection and healing.

"Every time we meet a new family, it reminds us why we keep doing this," Michele shared. "We honor their loved ones not just with words, but with action."

How to Get Involved

For more information, to donate, or to host a Silent Watch event, visit www.silentwatch.org or email silentwatch22@gmail.com.

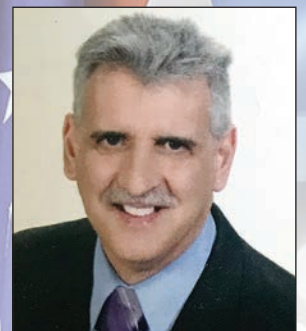
(Continued on Page 16)



*Thank You to All Who Serve,
Past and Present*



www.wilsonfamilyrealty.com
74 Main St., Bellville



Jim Wilson, Realtor
419-564-6676

jamesowilson@hotmail.com

VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*

•Silent Watch: *Standing to Save Lives*

(Continued from Page 17)

Veterans and first responders seeking help can contact Tim Chandler, Retired Master Sergeant, Air Force, directly through the number on Silent Watch's business card.

"If you're struggling — please reach out," the veteran's testimonial urges. "Don't let the system bury you. You matter. I made it back from the ledge — and now I can breathe again."



Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present **VETERANS DAY**



During my six years in the Ohio Air National Guard as a public affairs specialist, I had the privilege of sharing my fellow airmen's stories, documenting missions and learning to lead with compassion. The military built a foundation for the rest of my life.

My service strengthened my discipline, broadened my perspective, and taught me the importance of knowing those in your community personally.

Now, although my uniforms are folded up and tucked away in the duffel bag I received them in, my commitment to service, storytelling, and cultivating community are much stronger.

Whether I am advocating for students with dyslexia or working to find my next big opportunity, the same values that guided me in the Guard continue to guide my life.

Grace Riegel
SSgt Ohio Air National Guard
(Miss Mansfield)

Photo by Traci Little



**BlueScope
Recycling**

2384 SPRINGMILL ROAD

**VETERANS
DAY**

HONORING ALL
WHO SERVED



RESTAURANT + BAR + GRILLE
58 St. Rt. 97, Lexington
419-884-7117

**We Thank
Our Veterans
and Those
Currently
Serving
Our Great Country**



OPERATION HEAL OUR VETERANS

We are honoring our veterans' service and contributions by giving them a day of dental checkups and cleanings.

Grunt Grub food truck, vendors, and giveaways including t-shirts, gift cards, specialty items, and more!

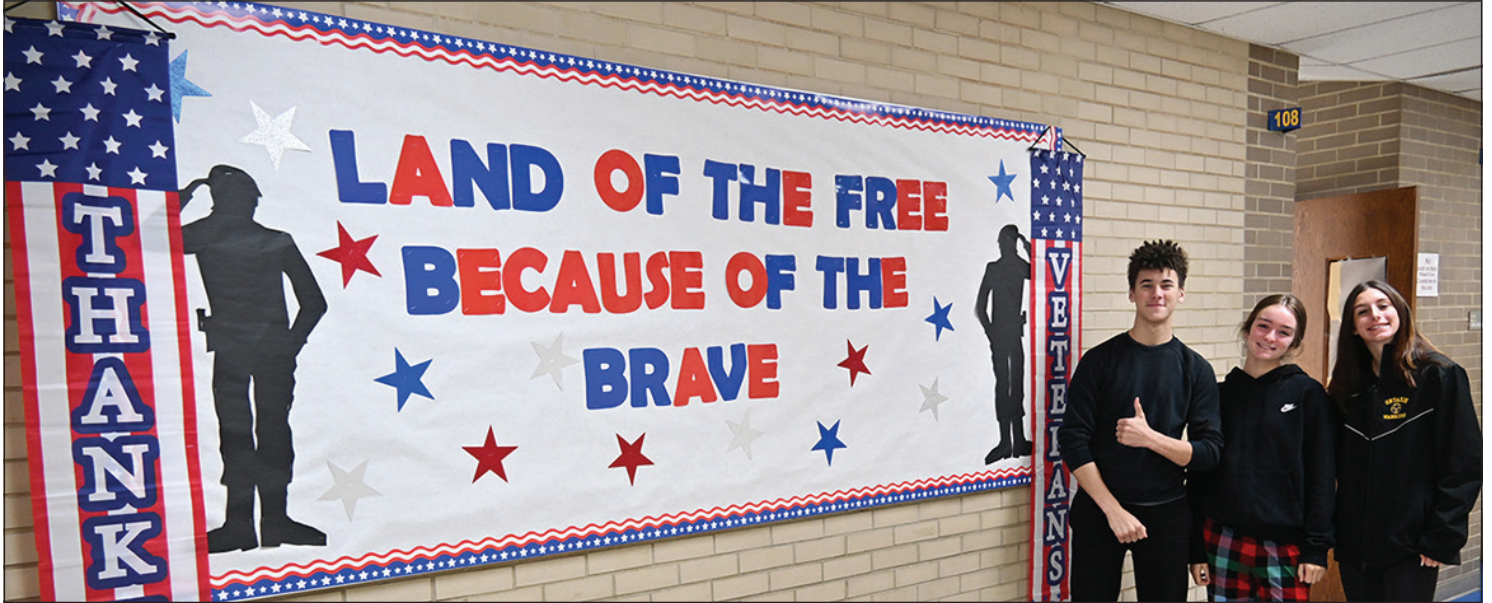
THURSDAY 13 NOV 2025

7:15AM-4:15PM
600 West Third Street
Mansfield, OH 44906

Call to make an appointment
419-522-6191

thirdstreetfamily.org

VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*



THE WARRIOR LEADERSHIP COUNCIL at Ontario High School decorated the bulletin board in honor of Veterans Day, paying tribute to the brave men and women who have served our country. The display serves as a reminder of the courage, sacrifice and dedication of all veterans as the school community comes together to celebrate and give thanks.

THANK YOU to all who have served

Remodeling, Restoration
& New Construction

419-525-3613

info@zaraconstructioninc.com

www.zaraconstructioninc.com

3240 PARK AVENUE WEST, ONTARIO



Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present **VETERANS DAY**



U.S. Marine Corps Photo by Lance Cpl. Rodney Frye

U.S. MARINE CORPS LANCE CPL. PORTER KINKEL, a mortarman with 12th Littoral Combat Team, 12th Marine Littoral Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, loads an M769 mortar round into an M224 60mm mortar during Resolute Dragon 25 at Hijudai Maneuver Area, Oita Prefecture, Japan, on Sept. 13. Resolute Dragon is an annual bilateral exercise in Japan that strengthens the command, control, and multi-domain maneuver capabilities of U.S. Marines in III Marine Expeditionary Force and Japan Self-Defense Force personnel, with a focus on controlling and defending key maritime terrain. Kinkel is a native of Ohio. Porter Kinkel is the son of Joshua Kinkel, a 1991 Madison Comprehensive High School graduate, and Holly Eckstein Kinkel of Grove City. He graduated from Gahanna Lincoln High School in 2024 and is currently serving in Okinawa as Marine Mortarman. Ed Kinkel, a graduate of Madison and the late Deborah Mason, a graduate of Lexington High School, are paternal grandparents and Gary and Sandy Eckstein are maternal grandparents. Porter's aunts, Bethany Kinkel and Abby Kinkel, and uncle Caleb Kinkel are also all graduates of Madison.

Free musical tribute honors local veterans and service members

The community is invited to attend "Veterans' Salute," a free concert presented at the Renaissance Theatre on Sunday, Nov. 9, at 2:30 pm. This event recognizes the courage, service and sacrifice of veterans and their families, and stands as an open invitation to all to join in reflection, gratitude and musical celebration. Tickets are free and available now via the Renaissance Box Office, by phone at 419-522-2726, or online at www.rentickets.org.

"Veterans' Salute" brings together the Local 159's 80-member concert band alongside the vocal strength of the Mansfield Symphony Chorus in a program of patriotic, ceremonial, and reflective works. Under the baton of Local 159 President Michael Grady, the performance will include marches, anthems, choral selections and collaborative ensemble pieces to evoke pride, remembrance and unity.

"This concert is our heartfelt opportunity to recognize the service and sacrifice of our armed forces and their families," said Chelsie Thompson, president & CEO of the Renaissance Performing Arts Association. "We're proud to work alongside our musicians' union and symphony chorus to provide this moving tribute. Together, we hope this performance will serve as both a salute and a reminder that their dedication is never forgotten."

Veterans Day
SALE
buy ★ sell ★ trade



Stratford Guns

85 Main St., Butler, Ohio

419.688.4100

stratfordguns.com



Scan to Subscribe
to the **FREE**
Weekly Issue

Or Visit <http://eepurl.com/hnS9N9>

VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*

Veterans Donut Club marks 10 years of brotherhood and service

Article and Photo By Traci Little

Every Friday morning, the sound of laughter and storytelling fills the Catholic Charities office on Smith Avenue. For ten years, this small corner of Mansfield has become home to the Veterans Donut Club —

a gathering place where men and women who once wore the uniform now find comfort, camaraderie, and purpose among those who understand them best.

"It's been a pleasure for us to be able to provide that space," said Brian Hunt, Pro-

gram Coordinator at Catholic Charities of Richland County. "We benefit from their insights, and it's been a mutual relationship — connecting them with guest speakers, other services, and volunteer opportunities. It's been an honor to walk alongside them."

Founded a decade ago, the club offers veterans a place to meet each Friday from 9 to 11 am at 2 Smith Ave., in Mansfield, to share stories and fellowship over coffee and donuts. What began as a simple effort to give local veterans a safe space to connect has grown into a supportive community of friendship and service.

"These veterans have given so much," Hunt added. "And in return, they continue to give back — helping us reach other veterans, volunteering in the community, and offering support to those who need it most."

Across the table, every story is different — yet bound by a shared sense of duty, loss, resilience, and pride. It was a pleasure getting to know these amazing gentlemen!

Army veteran Chuck Stutz served from
(Continued on Page 21)



**We Honor
All Who Have Served**

Rinehart EST. 1956
WALTERS • DANNER
Insurance Agency

446 Park Avenue West, Mansfield
419-522-9892

**Thank You
For Your Service!**
-STAFF AND STUDENTS

**OHIO BIRD
SANCTUARY**

3774 Orweiler Rd, Mansfield, OH 44903
Phone: 419-884-4295
OhioBirdSanctuary@gmail.com

**Thank You
FOR YOUR SERVICE**

Veterans Receive free admission to OBS

Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present **VETERANS DAY**

•Veterans Donut Club marks 10 years of brotherhood and service

(Continued from Page 20)

1972 to 1974 during the Vietnam era, a period he remembers as both defining and difficult. "We're all brothers and sisters in arms," Stutz said. "We're all family. I don't care what service you were in — we all put ourselves on the line for the people and the country we love."

For Stutz, that spirit of family goes far beyond military ties. Married for 58 years to his late wife — "I loved every hair on her head" — Stutz said faith, family, and music kept him grounded after returning home. "Thirty-nine guys went over, and only five came back," he said quietly. "To cope, it was either booze or drugs. I had to get myself sober or I was going to lose everything. I wore out three pairs of pants begging my wife to take me back."

He worked hard to rebuild his life, eventually working as a maintenance electrician for Mansfield City Schools until his retirement in 2015. Music, he said, helped heal him, as he performed with local bands including Bill Adkins and Miss Flora & The Fugitives and The Top Shelf Band. "Family, faith, and music kept me going," he said. "And being around other veterans — that's home, too."

U.S. Navy veteran Mike Hindman (1970-1974) says his path to service was guided by faith — and a little bit of chance.

"I grew up in a military family," he said. "My dad served in the National Guard for 37 years, and I always figured I'd join the Army. But when I went to enlist, the Navy recruiter was the first door I stopped at. I stood there for fifteen minutes and finally said, 'What the heck!' Best decision I ever made."

After training at Great Lakes and schooling in Chicago, Hindman was assigned to a ship out of Charleston, South Carolina, before

(Continued on Page 22)



**Trusted Roofers in
Mansfield, Ohio
Serving Mansfield, Ohio
and Surrounding Areas**

419.775.6859 | americanhomesteadexteriors.com



THANK YOU

to all who have served

INTERSTATE SIGN PRODUCTS

419-683-1962

Thank you
TO ALL THOSE WHO **SERVED**




**MANSFIELD
BAPTIST**

VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*

•Veterans Donut Club marks 10 years of brotherhood and service

(Continued from Page 21)

heading to Guam for a 14-month deployment that took him across the globe. "We went through the Panama Canal, to Mexico, and all the way to Sydney, Australia — that was the best duty ever."

Now back in Mansfield, Hindman said he's grateful to reconnect with other veterans through the Donut Club after some time away. "It's good to be back," he said. "There's a brotherhood in the service — a friendship you can't quite find anywhere else."

Army veteran George Gombosch (1962–1965) carries a deep gratitude for the country that gave his family refuge. Born in Yugoslavia, Gombosch's early life was shaped by war.

"My family owned a farm, and the Nazis bombed it and took everything," he recalled. "They put my mother, my brother, and me on a train to Austria — and the Americans bombed that train, too."

After a decade in Austria, his family finally immigrated to the U.S., sponsored by relatives in Mansfield. "It wasn't easy — you had to have a sponsor, a physical, a promise of a job and a place to live," he said. By 1950, Gombosch became a proud U.S. citizen and, a decade later, enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving in Germany with the 3rd Armored Division, Patton's Army.

"I loved my time in the service," he said. "I got to travel all over — Austria, Germany, France, Denmark — and I loved the brotherhood that came with it." Today, he says that same sense of camaraderie lives on each Friday at the Veterans Donut Club. "The friendships we make here — that's the same kind of brotherhood I had back then."

U.S. Air Force veteran Cecil Warren (1966–1970) remembers the extremes — from subzero temperatures in Maine to the blazing heat of Vietnam.

"I went to basic in Texas, then to Loring Air Force Base in Maine," he said. "One night it dropped to 52 below zero — I almost died on post."

After volunteering for Vietnam four times, Warren was stationed at Phu Cat Air Base, where calm days quickly gave way to chaos during the Tet Offensive. "At first it was quiet," he recalled. "Then everything changed. We were the first place to get hit — they came within a hundred feet of our perimeter."

Warren was sent on what he described as a "suicide mission" during the attack — but survived when gunships intervened. "Forty years later, I found out one of my best friends was a door gunner on one of those choppers," he said. "I always credited him with saving me."

After the war, Warren finished his service in the Mojave Desert, later returning home to a country that struggled to understand its veterans. "For about 20 years, we were treated terribly," he said. "People didn't understand."

Encouraged by his brother Dale Warren, also a Vietnam veteran, he eventually sought help through the VA. "I thank God I did," he said. "The VA did a lot for me. The people there have been incredible."

Today, the Veterans Donut Club has become his sanctuary. "It's like therapy for us," Warren said. "It's like a college fraternity — but it goes a lot deeper. We can open up, talk to each other, and just be ourselves. We look forward to it every Friday."

As the group celebrates its 10th anniversary, Brian Hunt says the mission remains simple but powerful: to give veterans a space to be seen, heard, and supported.

"They've built something special here," Hunt said. "It's fellowship, it's healing, and it's family — all over a cup of coffee and a box of donuts."

The Veterans Donut Club meets every Friday from 9 to 11 am at Catholic Charities, 2 Smith Ave., Mansfield. All veterans are welcome. For information call 419-524-0733 and ask for Brian Hunt.



Hamloaf Inc. (Formerly V&M)
Catering and Home Delivered Meals
You Know Us - We Know Food

Call - 567-560-4535
Home Delivered Meals —
A thoughtful gift for you or someone special.

★ **THANK YOU** ★
VETERANS

Improve your
brain health...
VOLUNTEER!
Call 567.302.3610
ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION®

Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present **VETERANS DAY**



Photo By Traci Little

THE TRACTOR SUPPLY "HOMETOWN HEROES" program honors and supports America's military service members, veterans and first responders. Eligible participants receive special benefits such as automatic top-tier status in the Neighbor's Club loyalty program and everyday savings — including 2% back on purchases. The program also features regular perks like free standard shipping and exclusive discounts during select events. Beyond individual benefits, Tractor Supply makes community-centered contributions, every store participates annually in giving back to local veteran and first responder organizations and the company donates significant funds to national supporting charities. In short, it's a year-round way for Tractor Supply to say thank you and actively invest in the people who serve. This year, the Ashland Tractor Supply Company location donated \$250 each to local fire and police departments. Tractor Supply officially declared Saturday, Nov. 1, as National Hometown Heroes Day — a day to honor the veterans, service members, and first responders who serve with strength, courage and heart. For information about the program visit <https://tinyurl.com/mryxtken>.

**View & Print Past Issues
at www.tribune-courier.com**



VETERANS DAY

Honoring All Who Served

net2 | services

Networking • Cloud Services • Security

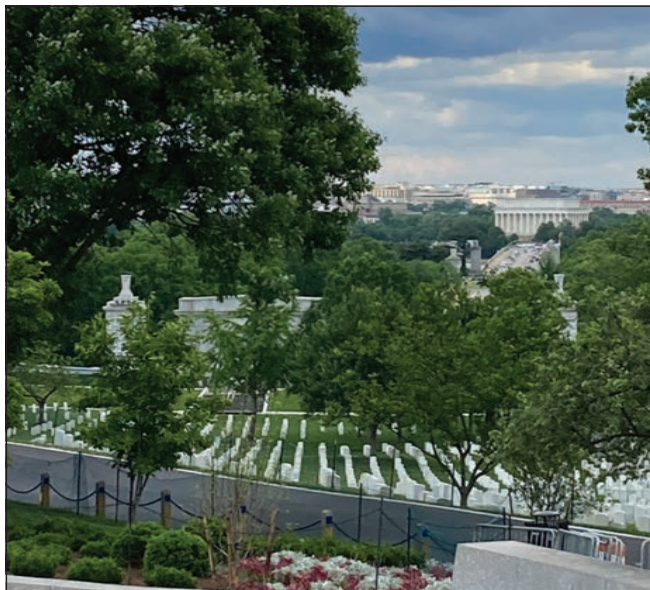
567.209.3999
www.net2serv.com
Lexington, Ohio

Thank You For Your Service

*Specializing in Whole Foods, Supplements,
Pure Body Care, Homeopathy, Aromatherapy
& Gluten Free*

COMFREY CORNER
WHOLE FOODS, SUPPLEMENTS & BODY CARE

Kelley Kovacs, Owner
625 Lexington Ave., Unit 5, Mansfield
Next door to the Old Bag of Nails 419-775-1722
Find Us on Facebook & Instagram

VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*

Photos By Jenna Wolford

THE VETERANS DAY NATIONAL CEREMONY is held each year on Nov. 11, at Arlington National Cemetery. The ceremony commences precisely at 11 am with a wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknowns and continues inside the Memorial Amphitheater with a parade of colors by Veterans' organizations and remarks from dignitaries. The ceremony is intended to honor and thank all who served in the United States Armed Forces. Some 5,000 visitors attend national ceremonies, which are sponsored by the U.S. Army Military District of Washington.

AS A PROUD EMPLOYER OF MILITARY HEROES

*We Salute You
& Thank You for Your Service*



ArcelorMittal

Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present **VETERANS DAY**



Photos By Mark Shutt



1041 Park Ave West | (855) 800-8820

SMOKIN' BROS BBQ

USA VETERAN
OWNED BUSINESS

**Thank You
For Your
Service!**

MACC
MADISON ADULT CAREER CENTER

600 Esley Ln., Mansfield • 419-589-6363
<https://bit.ly/infoMACC>

ENROLL NOW

SCAN ME



**THANK YOU TO ALL
WHO HAVE SERVED
OUR GREAT COUNTRY**

**Lexington
Moose Lodge 2511**
70 Plymouth St., Lexington
419-884-9600
<https://www.facebook.com/lexmoose2511>



VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*

LSS The Good Shepherd serves those who served

Article and Photos By Traci Little

For many local veterans, the call to serve doesn't end when the uniform comes off. At Lutheran Social Services' The Good Shepherd Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation, that service is honored daily through specialized care and support designed for those who have served.

Located at 622 Center St., in Ashland, The Good Shepherd is a Veterans Affairs (VA) provider offering skilled nursing, rehabilitation, and memory-care services to veterans and their families. As part of the LSS Network of Hope, the facility partners with the local Veterans Service Office to help residents navigate the VA benefits process, including eligibility for skilled care, hospice, or respite programs.

I had the privilege of meeting several amazing veterans at The Good Shepherd last week: Marie, Kevin Baldner and Wm. Bill Founds.

Founds shared many stories with me about his memories in the Army. "Story goes; I lived on a farm. My mom and dad took me to a farm when I was 15... Then everything was just fine, just fine, normal and everything. Then mom and dad came back... 'You got to go home, and shake hands with Uncle Sam,'" said Founds. "I did a job, and I was ready to go home," he smiled. He remembers getting home, collapsing on his bed, and truly resting! He proudly showed me his God Bless America crafts and signs around his room, and his Army coffee mug with his name on it. Bill looks forward to flipping his calendar to November each year and celebrating Veterans Day with visits from loved ones and recognition of his time in the service.

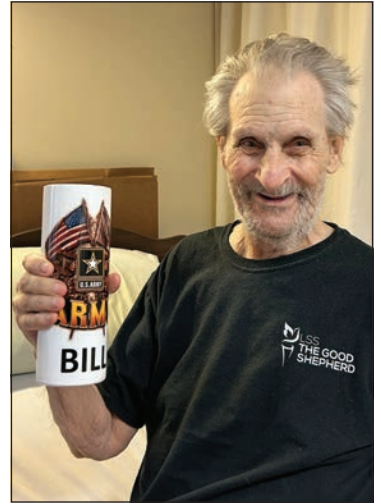
For Life Enrichment Director Alicia Applegate, honoring those who served is more than a job — it's personal.

"When I was little, my great grandpa lived with us. He was a World War II veteran who helped put out fires on airplanes, and even though he passed when I was young, he left a lasting impression on me. That's where my deep respect for veterans began," Applegate shared. "I've been at The Good Shepherd for five years, and I actually started here as an aide. From the beginning, I've loved caring for our residents and hearing their stories. I truly love my job as the life enrichment director and feel grateful to help honor those who have served our country. Every day, I strive to care for our residents the way I would have cared for my great grandpa."

Beyond medical care, veterans have access to a full continuum of rehabilitative therapies — physical, occupational, and speech—along with advanced programs such as ventilator and pulmonary care, on-site dialysis, and the Memory Care Program for those living with Alzheimer's or dementia.

Through LSS's Supportive Services for Veteran Families

(Continued on Page 27)



Wm. Bill Founds



Marie



Kevin Baldner



Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present**VETERANS DAY****Golden Corral offering free meals**

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and Golden Corral have partnered again for Military Appreciation Night on Veterans Day.

The annual event now has a new night. Golden Corral's 24th annual Military Appreciation Night is returning this year on Veterans Day, Tuesday, Nov. 11, from 4 pm to close.

Golden Corral restaurants nationwide will welcome all former and current U.S. service members for a free buffet and beverage.

Military Appreciation Night is Golden Corral's way to show appreciation to those who have served and sacrificed. Thanks to Golden Corral's long-standing commitment, DAV chapters and departments have raised over \$20.5 million as a result of the annual event.

Additionally, nearly 6.7 million complimentary meals have been provided by Golden Corral restaurants. By moving the event to coincide with Veterans Day, they hope to serve as many members of the military community as possible.

•LSS The Good Shepherd serves

(Continued from Page 26)

(SSVF), The Good Shepherd also connects veterans to housing assistance, case management, and public-benefit coordination, ensuring that both health and stability are within reach.

"Our veterans deserve not only quality care but respect, dignity, and connection," said a representative from the LSS Network of Hope. "We're proud to stand alongside those who have stood for our country."

This Veterans Day, The Good Shepherd stands as a reminder that service and compassion go hand in hand — continuing the mission of caring for those who once cared for us all.



Photo by Jenna Wolford

**United States Marine Corps War Memorial
(Iwo Jima Memorial)**

BOB & BOB
DOOR CO.

Family owned since 1969

419 • 747 • 2255

A very special
THANK YOU
to all that
have served!



VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*

“Celebrate the Living” — Air Force Veteran Ian Robinson turns service into a lifelong mission

Article and Photo By Traci Little

For Ian Robinson, Veterans Day isn't a day of mournin — it's a day of motion.

“People mix it up,” he said. “Yes, we remember the fallen — but Veterans Day is about celebrating the veterans who are still here. It's about what veterans do, how they change communities, policies, and everyday lives.”

That forward-leaning mindset has guided Robinson from a restless Hillsdale High School senior to a decorated Air Force veteran, and now a local leader building second chances — for veterans, first responders, and even men serving long prison terms.

From discipline seeker to Air Force crew chief

Robinson enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1998. “I wasn't a great student,” he admits. “I needed discipline and real training.” He found both on the flight line as a crew chief on F-16s, where trust runs on a two-way runway: pilots trust maintainers with their lives, and maintainers trust pilots with their work.

Early deployments shaped him in unexpected ways. Sitting in after-action briefings, he realized the human weight of his job. “I came to understand I was maintaining a killing machine,” he said. “If I didn't believe in the mission that day, I still had my duty. You do the job, and you do it right.”

In 2002, duty demanded an impossible choice. An F-16 returned on fire with an unexploded RPG lodged in the jet. Robinson says he was ordered to wait for EOD (bomb disposal). The cockpit was burning; the pilot was fading. “There's no way I'm going to sit there

(Continue on Page 29)





Honoring All Who Served

Today we pause to remember the courage, sacrifice, and dedication of the men and women who have defended our freedom. Your service inspires us every day.

Thank You, Veterans! —from all of us at—

WIGTON REAL ESTATE & AUCTION LLC
 Wes Wigton, Auctioneer/Realtor
 Larry Wigton, Auctioneer/Broker
 419-864-8417 / 740-816-0049

Thank You For Your Service!




419-526-4747 • schmidtsecurity.com

Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present **VETERANS DAY**

•“Celebrate the Living” — Air Force Veteran Ian Robinson turns service into a lifelong mission

(Continued from Page 28)

and watch him die,” Robinson recalled. He initiated the ejection. The pilot lived. The RPG fell, detonated nearby, and several airmen and firefighters were killed. Robinson survived with minor burns and shrapnel and, for a time, the threat of discipline for disobeying orders—later dropped by base leadership.

“It was the hardest season of my life,” he said quietly. “But I would not change the decision. Duty isn’t theory; it’s the courage you need in the moment.”

After recovering, Robinson transitioned to the inactive reserves and was commissioned as an intelligence officer and was called back several times. Between 2005 and the end of 2009 he supported a joint counter-IED mission, training Afghan and Iraqi K-9 teams while shuttling between Texas training sites and home in Millersburg.



Talking through the pain — and opening doors for others

Robinson is frank about trauma and healing. He watched a beloved pilot, whose lungs were damaged by smoke, lose his civilian flying career and later die by suicide. “PTSD isn’t one shape,” Robinson said. “You didn’t have to be a door gunner to come home changed. Talking about it hurts at first—but it helps someone else find the courage to talk too. That makes it all worth it.”

That conviction — walk through it, don’t avoid it — now anchors his community work. “People get stuck,” he said. “Our job is a hand up, not a handout. The difference is the relationship. It’s not transactional — it’s staying with someone for the whole journey.”

Service dogs, second chances, and safer communities

Robinson’s calling converged around service dogs. What started as fostering during the pandemic grew into Service Dog United, which breeds and trains dogs tailored to a veteran’s needs—mobility support, PTSD interruption, medical alerts, and more. “You don’t

just hand someone a dog,” he said. “You promise a relationship—lifelong training and support—because life changes: a new baby, a move, new meds, a wheelchair.”

To expand capacity and cut costs, Robinson helped knit together a unique collaboration at Chillicothe Correctional Institution: a dedicated veterans unit where incarcerated veterans train Service Dog United’s dogs through a structured, multi-year program (“Level I, Level II, Canine Good Citizen,” followed by advanced tasking). The program—developed alongside Chaplain Otto Ministries—has shown early signs of reduced incidents and better morale, while lowering the overall price of a fully trained service dog.

“It’s purpose stacked on purpose,” Robinson said. “Veterans in custody regain dignity and job skills; our clients get exceptional dogs; taxpayers save money when prisons are calmer and safer. Everybody moves forward.”

Recent placements include “Teddy Roosevelt,” who assists a veteran

(Continued on Page 30)



Saluting
Our military.
past and present



McDonald's Restaurants
of Richland County

**With Great Respect From Your
Richland County Commissioners:**

**Darrell Banks
Cliff Mears
Tony Vero**

VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*

•“Celebrate the Living” — Air Force Veteran Ian Robinson turns service into a lifelong mission

(Continued from Page 29)

with ALS—helping with clothing, doors, and transfers—and “Washington,” matched with a local veteran and Guardsman. Not every dog becomes a service dog: “Scotch,” a stud and emotional-support dog, serves daily in Ashland County’s 911 dispatch, comforting telecommunicators after hard calls; “Scarlett” rotates through firehouses, hospitals, and an equine-therapy farm.

“Every dog needs purpose,” Robinson said. “So do we.”

About Service Dog United: A Paw Up for Our Veterans

Every day, 22 Veterans take their own lives. With more than 12,000 Veterans in our community facing limited mental health and medical support, Service Dog United is stepping in to make a difference.

This 501(c)(3) nonprofit provides fully trained service dogs at no cost to Veterans, offering life-changing support for those living with physical challenges, PTSD, or other service-related conditions.

Service dogs do more than comfort—they assist with mobility, detect medical episodes, and provide crucial emotional grounding. Each partnership restores confidence, independence, and hope.

Through donations, Service Dog United covers every step of the journey—from training and supplies to ongoing care—proving that dogs don’t just change lives—they save them.

Why Robinson keeps going

Since separating from the Air Force in 2010, Robinson has juggled engineering roles, nonprofit leadership, and veteran service—right down to bartending a few nights a week at the local post to keep doors open for those who need a place to land. He also serves with the only American Legion post ever chartered inside a prison, where he helps veterans “behind the wire” reclaim identity and hope.

How does he manage it all?

“You just do the next right thing,” he said. “One foot in front of the other. Don’t obsess over the outcome—show up for people.”

How does he feel about Veterans Day?

“Say thank you if you want,” he said with a small smile. “But make it count. Hire a vet. Mentor a young airman. Support a service-dog team. Celebrate the living by investing in their lives.”

Opportunities To Give Back

Sponsor a dog-and-handler team.
Training is intensive and ongoing.
Sponsorships underwrite vet care, gear
and follow-up training.

Volunteer your expertise.
Trainers, handlers, fundraisers and admin support
are always needed.

Hire veterans, mentor veterans
and celebrate Veterans Day
by giving purpose a pathway.

Donate to Awareness 22
(a lighthouse to Veterans who are still in the storm).
There is love and hope available
<https://www.facebook.com/22Awareness>

Give To Service Dog United Through Richland Gives
<https://tinyurl.com/3xanrxeh>

Give to Chaplain Otto Ministries
<https://www.facebook.com/ChaplainOttoMinistries>



Thank You For Your Service

**FORGET-ME-NOT
FLOWER SHOP INC.**

146 E. Main St., Lexington • 419-884-0909
Order Online: forgetmenotlexington.com



DON'T REPLACE YOUR DRAIN LINES — REPAIR THEM FROM THE INSIDE OUT!

THANK YOU FOR SERVING OUR COUNTRY
★ & ★
PROTECTING OUR Freedom
VETERAN'S DAY
11.11.2025

NO-DIG PIPE REPAIR

SPT
SPECIALIZED PIPE TECHNOLOGIES
WE GIVE OLD DRAINS NEW LIFE

CONTACT US TODAY!
419-834-8366
WWW.SPTOHIO.COM

LESS INVASIVE
SAVES MONEY
WORRY FREE DRAINS

Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present **VETERANS DAY**

Ultimate Veteran Adventures offers free trips to military and veterans

By Traci Little

Joe Wesner, a U.S. Army veteran and Purple Heart recipient, transformed personal adversity into purpose when he founded Ultimate Veteran Adventures (UVA).

After enduring life-changing injuries and overcoming profound challenges, Joe discovered the restorative power of the outdoors — an experience that ignited his mission to help fellow veterans rediscover hope, connection and purpose.

Ultimate Veteran Adventures is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving honorably discharged veterans, active military members, first responders and Gold Star families through cost-free, guided outdoor experiences.

From hunting and fishing trips to wilderness expeditions, UVA's mission is to rebuild camaraderie, strengthen mental wellness, and provide life-changing opportunities for those who have sacrificed for our nation.

Grounded in faith, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to service, Joe leads UVA with the belief that the outdoors heals, community strengthens, and every hero deserves adventure, honor, and support.

Aquarium admission, parking is free

Greater Cleveland Aquarium, 2000 Sycamore St., Cleveland, will offer free admission for military and first responders during Veterans Day weekend, Friday, Nov. 7 through Tuesday, Nov. 11.

General admission and parking (with validation) is free for active duty military, veterans and first responders. Eligible guests must present appropriate ID. Appreciation offer is only available in-person. Please do not purchase tickets online if using this offer. It cannot be combined with other discounts or offers.

Eligible guests include active-duty military, veterans or reservists, police officers, sheriff/sheriff's deputies, correctional officers, state troopers, federal law enforcement officers, career or volunteer firefighters, physicians, nurses, EMTs, paramedics and 911 dispatchers. (This does not apply to accompanying family members or guests.)

For information visit <https://www.greaterclevelandaquarium.com> or call 216-862-8803.



PLEASE CONSIDER
DONATING

2025 VOLKSWAGEN JETTA

2025 NISSAN SENTRA

LOW PAYMENT KINGS

SIGN & DRIVE SALES EVENT

2024 CHEVROLET MALIBU

2023 NISSAN ROGUE

2024 JEEP COMPASS

2023 DODGE HORNET

2024 BUICK ENCORE

0

DOWN! SIGN & DRIVE

TAXES & FEES INCLUDED!

OWN @ ONLY

\$325mo

VIEW INVENTORY

All state taxes, title and fees are included. With Approved Credit. 7% APR @ 34 mos. Offer ends the 30th

Save up to \$40,000 Off MSRP

On Select New Models!

Happy
Veterans
Day

BUCKEYE SUPERSTORE

THANK YOU
FOR SERVING
OUR COUNTRY

★ & ★

PROTECTING
OUR
Freedom

VETERANS DAY *Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present*

From the Streets to the Stars and Stripes: Sergeant William Thomas' Lifelong March of Service and Song

By Traci Little

When Sergeant William Thomas walks into a room, he carries himself with quiet discipline — the kind that can only be forged through hardship, music, and twenty-five years in uniform.

"I came from a very poor household," he said softly. "We ate food out of the grocery store dumpster. If I hadn't joined the military, I probably would've ended up in jail or a gang. The Marines saved my life."

A Different Path Forward

Growing up in Metter, Georgia, Thomas became the first in his family to graduate high school in 50 years. He was a gifted runner and musician, earning scholarships to Florida State, Georgia Southern, and Illinois for both music and track. But fear — and faith — took him in a different direction.

"I saw that sharp looking Marine Corps recruiter, and he said, 'We have a Marine Corps band.' I said, 'Sold!'" Thomas laughed. "That was my ticket out."

He graduated from Metter High School on May 31, 1996, and two months later he shipped off to boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina. "The Marine Corps taught me how to be a man," he said. "I didn't have a father growing up — he spent over half of his life in prison. My platoon sergeant, John Harris, looked me in the eyes one day and said, 'Now you're a man.' That moment changed everything."

A Career in Uniform — and in Music

After training at Camp Geiger, NC and 29 Palms, CA, Thomas was

sent to Okinawa, Japan, in early 1997. There, he auditioned for the III MEF Marine Band and was eventually called up when a flute player went on maternity leave. Within weeks, he was playing for the Queen of England.

"It was surreal," he said. "I had only been in the Marines a few months, and there I was, standing in dress blues, playing for royalty."

Thomas later joined the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing Band at Cherry Point, NC, serving as principal flautist, piccoloist, assistant drum major, and sound tech manager. In 2002, he transferred to the 2nd Marine Division Band at Camp LeJeune, performing for Presidents George W. Bush and eventually later for Barack Obama.

"I loved it," Thomas said. "Music lets us honor our country and bring comfort to people. Every note I played was a salute."

A New Chapter in the Buckeye State

After leaving active duty in 2004, Thomas moved north — first to Ashtabula, then to Columbus — and joined the 122nd Army Band of the Ohio Army National Guard, where he served until retiring in 2019.

"I tell people all the time — the military isn't just a job, it's a life choice," he said. "And if you don't have a family; the military becomes your family. It's the best fraternity or sorority you'll ever be part of."

As drum major and principal flautist, Thomas led the band in countless parades and summer concerts, from the Red, White & BOOM celebration to Veterans Day parades across Ohio. "It's cold, and I love it," he laughed. "When you see the veterans salute as you

(Continued on Page 33)






SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT



RICHLANDPREGNANCY.COM | 1560 West Fourth St, Mansfield | 419-522-8862
 M & W 10 - 4 | Tu & Th 12 - 6 | 1ST & 3RD Friday 10 - 4 | 2ND & 4TH Saturday 10 - 1

Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present **VETERANS DAY**

•From the Streets to the Stars and Stripes: Sergeant William Thomas' Lifelong March of Service and Song

(Continued from Page 32)

march by — that's pride you can't describe."

His final concert in 2019 ended with "God Bless the USA" and his signature piccolo solo in "Stars and Stripes Forever." "The veterans would rise to their feet," he remembered.

"It was the perfect way to say goodbye."

Moments That Stay Forever

Over the years, Thomas played for veterans in nursing homes and met some of the last living heroes of World War II — men who stormed Normandy and served aboard the USS Indianapolis. "One wore a hat that said, 'I survived,'" he said. "I shook his hand, hugged him and just was completely undone."

He also witnessed the somber side of service. "The most humbling moment was in 2016," he said, recalling a ceremony honoring five fallen Ohio National Guard soldiers.

"Watching those flag-draped caskets come off the plane and seeing their belongings brought back... it choked me up. People don't see that part. Those are the heroes."

Patriotism and Perspective

Thomas lives quietly but speaks passionately about honoring the flag and the nation it represents.

"I encourage others to read the Constitution once a year," he said. "On Veterans Day, I tell people — put their devices down, take your hat off, hand over your heart, and remember what that flag stands for. People sacrificed their blood, sweat, and tears so we can live free. That's some seriously invested equity!"

He paused, then added with a smile, "If someone thanks me, I usually tell them, 'your patriotism is noted.' It starts a good conversation."

A Life Redeemed

From a struggling Georgia teen to a seasoned decorated Marine and Nation-

al Guard veteran, Thomas' story is one of transformation through service. "When I joined at 18, I was angry at the world and wanted the easy way out," he said. "Now, I look back and think — I wouldn't trade a single day."

Now, when the piccolo soars during "Stars and Stripes Forever," it's more than music — it's the sound of every lesson learned, every salute returned, every life changed along the way. It's the echo of a young man or woman who found purpose in the uniform, pride in the flag, and peace in knowing he gave his best to the country he loves.

And as the final note fades into silence, Sergeant Thomas stands a little taller — not for recognition, but in gratitude. Gratitude for the journey, for the brotherhood, and for a nation worth every beat of the march.



PRESCHOOL • HIGH SCHOOL • KNOX TECHNICAL CENTER

We are
grateful
for
your service!



BP ELECTRIC

419-884-2261 INDUSTRIAL | RESIDENTIAL | COMMERCIAL

VETERANS DAY Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present

Coming Full Circle: The legacy of a father to his son

By Tom Wogan

The bright silver B-29 Superfortress was named “Dina Might” and featured on its fuselage a buxom girl in a swimsuit, sitting on a lit explosive. It shook and roared as it powered down the Tinian runway, its four big Wright R-3350 engines surging, as the biggest bomber in the world lifted off on its way to attack the Empire of Japan.

In its bomb bay it carried more than a 14,000-pound bomb load, a destructive payload unthinkable even a few years before that. This day’s target would be the Aichi aircraft plant at Eitoku, near the city of Nagoya on Japan’s largest island of Honshu. Fourteen other sites were on the list as alternates.

It was June 26, 1945 and the end of the war was less than 45 days away.

Just four miles away on the Island of Saipan, a young Army PFC from the 77th Division, recovering from his wounds incurred in the Okinawa campaign, was indulging in his favorite new pastime.

PFC Marty Hawkins was from Chicago, and had also fought on Guam and Leyte, where he helped to take those islands from the Japanese Army.

Now that his shrapnel wounds were healing, and lacking any military duties as a patient, he and a few buddies would find a shady spot, maybe grab a Coke, and watch the giant planes take off and land over on Tinian.

The two islands were part of the Marianas Chain and the seasonal, dry sunny weather made for a tropical paradise. That was one of the reasons for building both the airstrips and the hospitals.

“Dina Might” was lead bomber on this mission and was soon joined by 64 other Super Fortresses as it flew toward its target. Its captain was a young West Point graduate (and eventually a three star General) who had grown impatient with the bombing skills of his previous bombardier, and who had used his “West Point status” to get a new lead bombardier.

Lead bombardiers were important: when they dropped their ordnance, everyone else followed. Success or failure of the whole mission hinged on this one man’s skills.

In the nose of the big plane was the new lead bombardier, 1st Lt Gilbert J. Finn, on his second mission with this crew. His previous 23 missions over Japan were with another crew, that one flying in a plane called “Big Boots” and captained by a big man, its namesake, Captain Art Tomes.

Gil was a young husband and father, though he had yet to see his infant son. He had been flattered when the Group Commander recommended him for the lead bomber position, but was reluctant to leave his crew. He and Art talked it over and, largely because Gil had some ambitions to stay in the air service after the war, he moved to the new job.

As the Japanese coastline loomed the flight engineer was digging out the flak suits to distribute to the crew. All hell broke loose as the big plane crossed the coast. A Japanese fighter burst from a cloud,

setting two of the four engines on fire with its cannon fire. Riding in the exposed Perspex nose, Lt. Finn was killed instantly on its first pass. Captain and crew struggled to gain control as other enemy fighters saw smoke and oil pouring from the plane and closed in for a kill. The crew got four fighters before the plane’s luck ran out and the electrical power was lost.

At 9,000 feet it was time for the ten survivors to bail out. The left gunner, crew chief, and other officers went from the bomb bay. The tail gunner made it through his hatch, pulled his ripcord and watched as his chute failed to open.

He began to pull it out with his hands, only to find it riddled with bullets. It opened, but he hit the water with a tremendous impact, and somehow survived. The radar operator and the right gunner went from the rear escape hatch: their chutes were spotted and later reported by the others, but neither was ever seen again.

One other officer, a Major Carr, along for the ride to get his flight pay, moved Gil’s body, beyond help, to an area where he might be aided. He was last seen sitting on his parachute near Gil’s body. He never jumped. Thirty seconds after the crew got out, the big plane exploded. Within a few hours, submarines on picket duty had them safely on board. *(Author’s note: This account was from a letter written by 1st LT Burton Coit, Flight Engineer on that doomed flight.)*

Two months and two atomic bombs later, the war ended. Art Tomes and his remaining crew, PFC Marty Hawkins, and millions of other GI’s, airmen, marines, and sailors found their ways back home. Back to Chicago for Marty, where I would later become his son-in-law and friend; back to Minnesota and a career in commercial aviation for Art. They knew they were lucky to have made it, and they carried the fierce pride of having done their job, and done it well.

They were finished with their war, but the war wasn’t quite finished with them. Most spent years trying to make some sense out of it, to get answers that would never come, to wait for the nightmares to fade. Many tried to reconnect with the families of the lost to express their sorrow, and perhaps seek at least temporary release from the curious guilt one feels to have survived when the man next to you did not.

Gil’s widow, Rita Finn, shattered by the loss of her husband, went back to work as the crack secretary she was. Like so many other young war widows, she found love again after a few years. She married a young fireman named Tom, himself a widower with a child, and both forged a new life out of the ashes of the old. Her infant son, Gil, Jr., and Tom’s young daughter Maureen would become the start of a new family.

Gilbert J. Finn, Jr., the infant son now 55 years old, picked up the phone to hear Art Tomes’ voice. Art had been trying for years to locate Gil’s mother, Rita Finn (now Wogan), but was having no luck. In those “pre-internet” days, simply remarrying and changing your

(Continued on Page 35)



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VETERANS DAY
 HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

Honoring Those Who Serve – Past & Present **VETERANS DAY**

Coming Full Circle: The legacy of a father to his son

(Continued from Page 34)

name could create a pretty big dead end for anyone trying to find you, particularly in a city the size of Chicago.

Art had found Gil's name, spelled exactly as his fathers', in an Aurora, Illinois phone directory and gave it a try. And so a few weeks later, I found myself driving my mother and Gil to a house in Merrillville, Indiana, owned by Art's daughter.

It was an uneasy ride for my mother and, I think, for Gil. We were about to reconnect with one of the last living persons his father had known, a man who had flown 23 missions with his dad. What would we learn, what would we say? How to begin?

As I pulled into the driveway, the big man, now old and a bit stooped but looking every inch the command pilot he once was, came out to greet us. He looked at me a bit confused. My brother and I look nothing alike; Gil has his father's slight build and my genetic award was my father's square one.

He must have been wondering how Gil's son could look so different than he expected. Once he saw Gil emerge from the other side of car, he smiled and went to him, draping him in a huge bear hug. I could see the tears forming at the ends of his closed eyes and I wondered if he was making good on a 55 year-old promise to hug Gil's child if the worst happened. Then he saw my mother, whom he had met those many years ago when the crews trained together across Florida, Nebraska and Texas as they moved toward combat. They knew each other immediately, and both reached out their hands to each other. They didn't say anything for a few moments, but both of their eyes were glistening. The silent flood of emotions was almost palpable.

They talked at the kitchen table for hours, Gil and I mostly listening. There were details and subtext to the story that we had never heard. Names of crewmen, the nature of that final mission, did this person survive, where does he live now? And then both Art and my mother did something extraordinary. They each produced a letter and gave it to each other.

My mother's letter was from Art, expressing his sorrow and relating the circumstances of that final deadly flight, as he knew them, and what the wartime censors would allow. It was written in 1945 in his classic cursive style. The letter Art produced was from my mother, dated a few weeks later, thanking him for letting her know the circumstances of Gil's death. I could see the familiar feminine cursive style of her writing and the fragile paper and envelope. Both letters had the word "free" where a stamp should have been. The postal service didn't charge for letters to servicemen during the war.

We began to wrap things up when Art made one final comment that still haunted him and in a way maybe haunted all of us. His gaze shifted to some unknown point in the distance and he said, "I'll never understand how a fine young man like Gil lost his life so many years ago, and I got to live out the rest of mine."

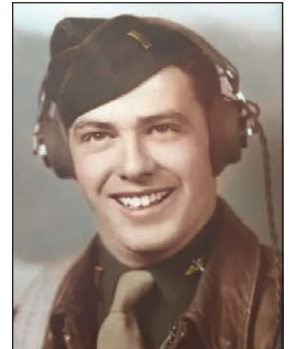
Handwritten letters are rare now, at least as a common means of

communicating. If I see one in my mail, I tend to open it first, I am that curious. We exist in a transient trivial world of texts, emails, Twitter feeds, and Facebook postings. Our written communications seldom outlive a single day.

The careful crafting of sentences and paragraphs and the framing of a message has fallen into disuse, as has the Palmer Method of cursive writing. Keyboarding, not handwriting is taught today in schools. But I still marvel at the enduring power of those two letters, the emotional commitment it must have taken to write them, and how, once written, they attained great value, something to be kept throughout the years.

Those letters that were exchanged that day somehow closed the circle surrounding this tragedy. More than 50 years they had both kept those letters, and neither could have foreseen a day such as this. Somehow, when they made their way back to their original authors, it was as if we could finally lay 1LT Gilbert J. Finn to rest. During the ride home I don't think anyone said a word; we were each in a private, personal place. A place of remembrance, a place of solemn pride, maybe, at last, a place of peace.

<https://uncletommyonline.com>



1LT Gilbert J. Finn

pediatric dentistry

dentistry from infancy through adolescence

KIDS ARE OUR SPECIALTY

Put Your Child At Ease with Our Child-Friendly Environment



**THANK YOU
VETERANS!**

245 Sterkel Blvd
Ste. 101
Mansfield, OH 44907
419-522-5437



www.rnewhope.org
Supporting children and adults with disabilities throughout their lifetime.

Richland
newhope

Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

Shelby and Lexington will jump into post season play this week

By Kris Leiter

Lexington and Shelby are both having another successful season. Both had the week off from game play for the first-round of post-season play.

As you know, the deeper in the playoffs you go, the stiffer the competition becomes and the cream will rise to the top.

Home field advantage will definitely be a bonus for both teams this week, as each team will be facing a stout opponent who have a reputation that speaks for themselves.

Lexington, Division III (3-seed) will host Toledo Central Catholic (6-seed). As sometimes records can be deceiving, TCC had four losses during the regular season. As I dug a little deeper, I found out that all four losses were from teams from Michigan. They play some pretty stiff competition in the state up north.

Shelby, Division IV (1-seed), will play host to Orrville (9-seed).

As the old cliché goes, get there early, as these games will be well worth the price of admission!

Division III — Region 10

No. 8 St. Marys Memorial (8-3) at No. 1 Medina Buckeye (10-0)

No. 7 Lima Shawnee (8-3) at No. 2 Wapakoneta (10-0)

No. 6 Toledo Central Catholic (7-4) at No. 3 Lexington (9-1)

No. 5 Rocky River (9-2) at No. 4 Richfield Revere (8-2)

Division IV — Region 14

No. 9 Orrville (7-4) at No. 1 Shelby (10-0)

No. 10 Lodi Cloverleaf (7-4) at No. 2 Galion (9-1)

No. 6 Sandusky Perkins (8-3) at No. 3 Napoleon (8-2)

No. 5 Bellevue (8-3) at No. 4 Lima Bath (8-2)



Photo by Jenna Wolford

MANSFIELD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL senior Riley Patrick finished ninth at the OHSAA Division IV Cross Country State Championships on Nov. 1 at Fortress Obetz. She ran a time of 18:45.64.



THE LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL BOYS cross country team was crowned state champions at the OHSAA Division II State Cross Country Championships Nov. 1. Latrell Hughes placed ninth with 15:43.31, followed by Lincoln Rice 15th, 15:59.00; Will Hooper 35, 16:20.42; Luke Haring, 53rd, 16:30.51; Christian Estep 70th, 16:39.91; Gage Devaney, 112th, 17:00.11; and Finn Devaney, 122nd, 17:05.97. Lady Lex brought home a third place finish.

Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

ONTARIO VS TOLEDO VARSITY FOOTBALL · OCT. 31 · TOLEDO WINS 35-0



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

LEXINGTON VS ONTARIO GIRLS VARSITY SOCCER · OCT. 29
WARRIORS WIN 2-1 · PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



CLASSIFIEDS

ROGER J. BAKER ESTATE AUCTION

3.01 ACRES
MINIMUM BID ONLY
\$180,000

Thursday, November 20th
@ 4 pm

7425 Township Road 49,
LEXINGTON, OH 44904
(just East of ST RT 314)

AUCTION- Great wooded setting on 3 acres. 3 bedroom one-story home w/single bath, large family room w/wood burning fireplace, living room & kitchen. Country living at its best! **TERMS:** The property is selling in **AS-IS** condition, was appraised by the Morrow Co. Probate Court for \$225,000.00 & must bring 80% of the appraised price. **Terms:** \$10,000 non-refundable down, balance due at closing by 12/30/2025. OPEN Nov. 10th 5-6 pm & 16th 4-5 pm & 1 hr. prior to the auction. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING the real estate, a small amount of personal property will be sold. Visit www.wigtonauctions.com for full terms/info/photos. Morrow Co. Probate #2024 ES 19834.

ROGER J. BAKER ESTATE
Ronald A. Baker, Executor

WIGTON REAL ESTATE & AUCTION LLC

Wes Wigton, Auctioneer/Realtor
Larry Wigton, Auctioneer/Broker
419-864-8417/740-816-0049

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing will be held before Village Council of the Village of Lexington at 7:30 p.m. on Monday November 17, 2025 at the Village Hall, 44 West Main Street, Lexington, Ohio upon the following proposed zoning variance request:

A change of zoning at 85 South Mill Street in Lexington, Ohio from Residential - R2 to Light Industrial - I1

All residents are invited to attend and express their views on this request..

Brenda Barton
Clerk of Council
Village of Lexington, Ohio
(T-C 11-6 '25) 16L

**View & Print
Past Issues
of the Tribune at
www.tribune-courier.com**

Sutton Bank welcomes new chief financial officer

Sutton Bank is pleased to welcome James (Jay) VanSickle, Jr. as Chief Financial Officer, Executive Vice President, effective Monday, Oct. 20. VanSickle brings more than 30 years of financial and executive leadership experience in the community banking industry, most recently serving as President and Chief Executive Officer of Main Street Financial Services Corp. and Main Street Bank Corp. (formerly Wayne Savings Bancshares, Inc. and Wayne Savings Community Bank) in Wooster, Ohio.

During his tenure at Main Street Bank, VanSickle implemented transformative growth strategies that elevated the institution into a top-performing community bank, while also enhancing shareholder value through profitability growth, share buybacks, and dividend increases.

Prior to his CEO role, VanSickle served as Senior Vice President and Chief Risk Officer at Farmers National Banc Corp., where he developed enterprise risk management programs and played a key role in merger integration activities. He also served as Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer at National Bancshares Corporation and First National Bank, overseeing finance, IT, operations, and human resources functions. Ear-

lier in his career, VanSickle spent 15 years with Crowe LLP in its Financial Institutions Group, providing audit, regulatory, and consulting services to financial institutions and helping establish new office locations in Cleveland, Ohio and Nashville, Tennessee.

"Jay's extensive background in financial management, strategic planning, and risk oversight - combined with his proven success leading high-performing community banks - makes him an exceptional addition to the Sutton Bank leadership team," said Tony Gorrell, CEO of Sutton Bank. "We are excited to welcome Jay to the Sutton Bank family and look forward to his contributions as we continue to strengthen our financial foundation and serve our communities with excellence."

A graduate of Miami University, VanSickle earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a major in Accountancy. He is a Certified Public Accountant and an active member of the Ohio Society of CPAs.

An engaged community leader, VanSickle has served on numerous nonprofit and civic boards, including the Wooster City Schools Business Advisory Council, the Viola Startzman Clinic and the Wooster All-Sports Boosters, among others.



HEAP assistance being made available to Ohioans

The Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc. has announced that assistance is available to help with 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 eight members and 60% of State Median Income for a household of nine or more members to pay their heating bills.

The benefit is applied directly to the customer's utility or bulk fuel bill. Older Ohioans may go to their local Area Agency on Aging office for help with assembling the required documents and com-

pleting the application or visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov to apply online or to download a copy of the application. Applications must be received by May 31, 2026. For information call 419-524-4144.

When applying, individuals need to have copies of 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 energy bills after Jan. 1.

**Scan to
Subscribe
to the FREE
Weekly Issue**

Or Visit
<http://eepurl.com/hnS9N9>

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

**First Federal
Bank of Ohio**

THE RIGHT LOAN. THE RIGHT BANK.

1728 W. Fourth Street
Mansfield, Ohio 44906
Phone: 419-529-4687
Fax: 419-529-4154
landerson@firstfederalbankofohio.bank

Lisa Anderson
NMLS 618735
Branch Manager - Loan Officer