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03.12.26



Maple Syrup Festival continues sweet tradition at Malabar Farm

Photos and Article By Traci Little

The annual maple syrup tradition is back at Malabar Farm State Park as the 49th Maple Syrup Festival continues this month, inviting visitors to experience history, nature, and one of Ohio's sweetest seasonal treats.

Held on Saturdays and Sundays, March 7, 8, 14 and 15 from noon to 4 pm, the festival offers a glimpse into both historic and modern maple syrup production. Guests can watch demonstrations at the sugar camp, where sap is boiled into syrup much as it was by early settlers and Native Americans.

Visitors can also enjoy horse-drawn wagon rides, explore the sugar bush, and take self-guided tours of the historic Big House, once home to celebrated author and conservationist Louis Bromfield.

Local food vendors and artisans will be on hand offering maple products, homemade goods, and warm treats to enjoy while exploring the scenic grounds.

The event is free to attend, though some activities may request a small donation. With its mix of history, education, and family-friendly entertainment, the Maple Syrup Festival remains one of the region's most popular spring traditions.

(More Photos on Pages 8 and 9)

Poll workers needed for primary

The Richland County Board of Elections is seeking dedicated community members to serve as poll workers for the upcoming May 5, 2026, Primary Election. Poll workers are essential to ensuring that all registered voters have a smooth, secure and accessible Election Day experience.

"Poll workers are the backbone of democracy," said Matt Finfgeld, director. "Their service helps make sure every voter can cast a ballot with confidence. We welcome individuals of all backgrounds to sign up and support their neighbors on Election Day."

Poll workers are compensated for their training and service, with pay ranging from \$170 to \$ 215. Responsibilities will include assisting voters, operating voting equipment, and closing the polls at the end of the day. Training will be provided prior to the election.

To be eligible, poll workers must be at least 17 years old, be a registered voter in Richland County and be able to attend mandatory training prior to Election Day.

"Free, fair, and secure elections are made possible through the active participation of our community," added Jane Zimmermann, deputy director. "Whether you're serving for the first time or returning for another election, your contribution matters."

Interested individuals should visit vote.richlandcountyoh.gov, call 419-774-5530 or email boardofelections@richlandcountyoh.gov to learn more and complete an application.

Legislation targeting human traffickers passes Ohio House

State Representatives Marilyn John (R-Richland) and Johnathan Newman (R-Troy) announced the Ohio House of Representatives passed House Bill 507, legislation to strengthen Ohio's human trafficking laws.

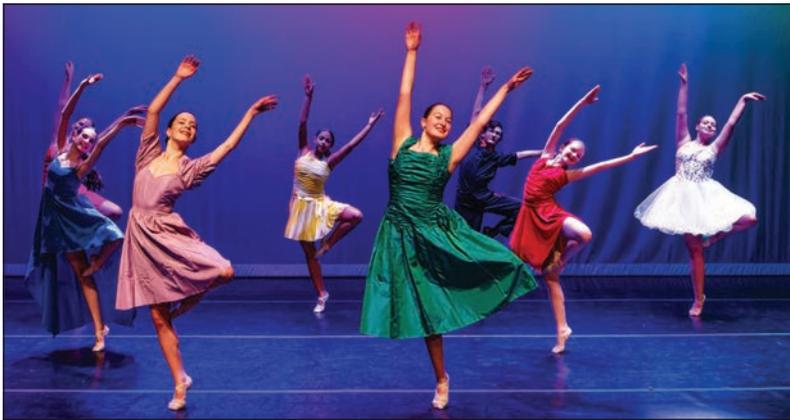
House Bill 507 prohibits individuals from receiving or acquiring money or anything of value when they know those proceeds were earned through sexual activity for hire or as a result of human trafficking. The offense applies when a person profits from, conceals, collects on behalf of a third party or uses those proceeds to encourage or facilitate criminal activity. Additionally, the bill makes clear that a prostitute receiving proceeds from their own activity is not subject to the offense.

"This legislation targets the individuals who profit from exploitation while preserving protections for victims," said Rep. John. "By closing gaps in current law, Ohio is reinforcing its commitment to combat human trafficking and organized criminal activity."

Under the bill, violations are classified as a third-degree felony, with enhanced second-degree felony penalties when the proceeds involve a minor under the age of 18. It also adds the offense to Ohio's Corrupt Activities Law, giving prosecutors stronger tools to target organized criminal networks that profit from exploitation.

"House Bill 507 closes loopholes that have allowed bad actors to profit from exploitation," said Rep. Newman. "By strengthening our laws, we are sending a clear message that those who benefit from prostitution and human trafficking will be held accountable."

The bill now advances to the Ohio Senate for consideration.



Richland Academy to present spring dance concert

Richland Academy of the Arts (RAA) dance department will present the 2026 spring dance concert on Friday, March 13, at 7 pm at Lexington High School in the Robert H. Whitney Performing Arts Center.

RADE (Richland Academy Dance Ensemble) is one of the Academy's pre-professional dance groups, where members undergo hours of weekly training to enhance their skills, improve technique, and pursue their passion for dance. RAA has 4 dance company groups: Rade, Rade Jr., RadKidz & a brand new group of our youngest company members, RadKidz2.

This is RAA's fourth year performing their spring dance concert at the beautiful Lexington High School theatre. "The Lexington auditorium is a perfect venue for our March dance performance; the dancers love the stage & the audience has a great view no matter where they choose to sit! We are grateful for Jacob Poiner who designs the lights and makes our time in the theatre so wonderful," says dance department chair Sarah Horrigan-Ramos.

In this performance, attendees will enjoy a variety of dance styles; ballet, jazz, tap & contemporary, including Broadway's "Hot Honey Rag" from Chicago "Sit Down Your Rocking the Boat" from Guys & Dolls and "You Can't Stop the Beat" from Hairspray. It will also feature classical ballet excerpts from Swan Lake, Paquita & Giselle. Original & new choreography by Marden Ramos, Erin Wolford and Sarah Horrigan-Ramos showcases Academy dancers' full range of ability and talent. Dancers will perform excerpts from Marden Ramos's Women Behind the Window which is always a favorite of the dancers & audience.

This year the Academy is celebrating seven high school seniors in our dance company: Angelina Blankenship, Goal Digital Academy; Trevor Grimes, Wooster; Ava Irwin, Mansfield Christian; Olivia Laux, St. Peter's; Eva Rietschlin, Ontario; Esther Stanfield, Madison; and Mia Wilson, Clearfork. Each of our senior company members has danced at the Richland Academy for many years; their final RADE show performance is the culmination of their dedication, hard work and training. Isabella Oster, Knox County Career Center; is also a HS senior in RAA's dance program & a guest performer in

the RADE show. All the dancers are looking forward to performing for their friends, family & community!

Many of the Academy's dance company alumni have gone on to study dance in college, perform in various dance companies, and pursue a career in teaching dance. The Academy believes that their dance programs not only teach students proper technique but also mental and physical discipline, time management, problem solving, and performance skills.

Tickets for this in-person performance are on sale now at <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/32617682/2026-rade-show> Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for seniors, students, and Veterans. Join us for this one night only performance celebrating dance & Richland Academy of the Arts talented students.

For more information about Richland Academy, call 419-522-8224 or visit www.richlandacademy.com.

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News Briefs

The annual Madison Community Easter Egg Hunt will be held at 3 pm on Saturday, March 28 at Trinity Grace Fellowship, 1592 Grace St., Mansfield. The event is for children through sixth grade and will be held rain or shine.

★

The covered bridge in Mohican State Park, over the Clear Fork Mohican River, will close Wednesday, April 1 for bridge repairs. Motorists will be detoured to SR 97 west to McCurdy Road north to Goon Rd/County Road 3006 east to County Road 939 into the Mohican State Park and reverse. Estimated completion is April 30, 2026.

★

Ontario UMC, 3540 Park Ave West, Ontario, will host exercise/walking led by an instructor for various age groups every Thursday at 10 am. This is open to the community at no charge. This will include chair yoga, dance exercise, resistance bands and walking

★

The Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) will host a community visit in Ontario to share information about the Next Generation MyCare program.

This is an improved healthcare program for Ohioans who have both Medicaid and Medicare. It is currently available in 29 counties across the state. On May 1, the program will roll out to include Richland, Ashland and Knox.

The program will be held Friday, March 13, from 10 am to noon at the Area Agency on Aging, 2131 Park Avenue West, Ontario.

No registration is required. For information visit <https://medicaid.ohio.gov/families-and-individuals/citizen-programs-and-initiatives/mycareohio/mycare-ohio>

★

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

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

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

★

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

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

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

★

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

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

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

★

All Souls Unitarian Universalist of Bellville, 25 Church St., Bellville, will welcome Aurelio Diaz on Sunday, March 15, at 10:30 am. The subject will be "Home is Where the Heart Is." For information visit www.allsoulsuohio.org.

★

First English Lutheran Church, 53 Park Avenue West will be offering senior boxes of non perishable food provided by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank from 10 am to 12 pm or until supplies run out.

This comes with a 30 lb. box of non-perishable food and a two lb. box of cheese. These items are free to those who qualify by age (60+) and low income guidelines. Recipients must have at least one person age 60 or older in the household. The minimum income begins at \$1,995 per month for a one-person household.

These items are available on the fourth Tuesday of each month, year round. The distribution is held in the South Mulberry Street parking lot. The next distribution is Tuesday, March 24.

★

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

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

★

A special meeting of the Ontario Board of Education will be held in the Ontario High School Library, 467 Shelby-Ontario Rd., Ontario, on Thursday, March 12, at 6 pm. The meeting will be to discuss the development of tax policy with Rockmill Financial.

★

A recycling trailer will be in the parking lot at Ontario United Methodist Church, 3540 Park Avenue West, March 28 and 29. Acceptable items include steel and aluminum cans, crushed milk jugs, detergent bottles, plastic bottles with number 1 or 2 on the bottom, broken down cardboard, all papers included with the newspaper but no other magazines or paper. Please remove caps from bottles and rinse all containers well.

★

There are a lot of factors that must be considered before installing a pond.

Those with questions about a new or existing pond can attend a free pond clinic on Monday, March 16 at 6 pm at the Longview Center, 1495 W. Longview Ave., Mansfield. The Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD) is hosting the clinic with Steve Fender of Fenders Fish Hatchery. Register for the clinic at <https://richlandswcd.net/event/pond-clinic-6/>. For more information contact wallace.matt@richlandswcd.net or 419-747-8687.

★

Franklin Township Firefighter's Association will host a pancake breakfast on Saturday, March 14, from 7-10 am. The breakfast will be served at the fire station, 505 Boyce Rd., Shelby.

Baseball and softball sign-ups will also be held at the event.

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Mansfield Playhouse seeks community push to secure \$1 million gift

The Mansfield Playhouse non-profit organization has reached a pivotal moment in its \$7.5 million capital campaign to build a new, fully accessible theater in downtown Mansfield, a project that will mark the Playhouse's 100th anniversary and become the first major downtown construction project in more than 30 years.

The campaign, "Mansfield Playhouse: Building the Next Stage Together," seeks to ensure the long-term future of one of Ohio's most historic cultural institutions.

Founded in 1925, the Mansfield Playhouse is the second oldest

continuously operating community theater in the state and a cornerstone of arts, education, and economic vitality in north central Ohio.

Unfortunately, the Playhouse's old building at 95 E. Third St. is surrendering to age.

For its campaign, the Playhouse has submitted a new \$1 million funding request to a local institution, a transformative investment that would accelerate construction of the new Playhouse building. That request, however, will not be considered until the campaign reaches \$3.7 million raised, creating an urgent call for community support.

"This is the moment when the community can truly shape the future of this historic institution," said Chriss Harris, campaign director for the Mansfield Playhouse. "It's a challenge to help us raise the necessary funding that will encourage this particular donor and others to support the Playhouse as a 100-year-old community treasure and performance venue."

Already, the campaign that was kicked off last summer has generated more than \$2.2 million in gifts and pledges and is well on its way. Large donations and pledges of donations have been made by the Taylor Family Foundation Fund of the Ashland County Community Foundation, the Robert and Esther Black Foundation Fund of the Richland County Foundation (RCF), the John, Miriam, and Melodie Gross Fund-RCF, Hire Family Foundation, Milton and Beulah Young Foundation, Gorman Family Foundation, Richard and Arline Landers Foundation, Justine Sterkel Fund, Mechanics Bank, Charles Hahn, Rand and Mary Smith, Randy and Lisa Payne, Edith Humphrey, Bill and Kathy

Heichel, Donald and Jennifer Dewald, Vincent Fanello, Nick and Sally Gesouras, and many more individuals, families, businesses, and foundations.

The new facility will be fully accessible, removing long-standing physical barriers and welcoming audiences, performers and volunteers of all abilities. The project also represents a major investment in downtown Mansfield.

"This campaign is about more than a building," said Doug Wertz, Playhouse president. "It's about honoring our organization's past, serving today's community, and ensuring that future generations can experience the magic of live theater in a modern, inclusive space."

Community members, businesses, and arts supporters are encouraged to contribute now to help the campaign reach the \$3.7 million milestone and help the Playhouse build a new building.

Gifts to support the 100th Anniversary Capital Campaign may be sent to the Mansfield Playhouse at 95 E. Third St., Mansfield, OH 44902 or mansfieldplayhouse.com.

Church Directory

All Souls Unitarian Universalist

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

First Congregational Church

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

Lexington Church of the Cross

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

Ontario United Methodist Church

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

St. John's United Church of Christ

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

Trinity Grace Fellowship

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

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MRCPL and CHAP launch community baby supply drive

The Community Health Access Project (CHAP) is partnering with the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library to host a county-wide Baby Supply Drive throughout March to support new and expecting mothers.

From March 9–28, community members can donate new baby care items at participating library locations across Richland County. The Mansfield/Richland County Public Library locations accepting donations include Bellville, Lexington, Lucas, Madison, Mansfield (main), Ontario, Plymouth and the library’s bookmobile, making it easy for residents throughout the county to participate.

The drive is designed to help families who may be navigating financial stress, unexpected circumstances, or other barriers during pregnancy and early childhood. Essential baby items are often some of the most immediate needs for new parents, and even small contributions can make a meaningful difference.

Requested donation items include diapers, pull-ups, baby wipes, baby shampoo or wash, baby-safe laundry detergent such as Dreft and safety items, such as outlet covers.

All donated supplies will be distributed through CHAP’s programs serving pregnant women, infants, and families across Richland County. CHAP’s Community Health Workers work directly with families to identify needs, connect them to healthcare and social services and help remove barriers that can affect the health of both mothers and babies.

“For more than 25 years, CHAP has walked alongside families in this community to help give every baby the healthiest possible start in life,” said Brice Eyerly, Executive Director of CHAP. “Our Community Health Workers see firsthand how something as simple as diapers, wipes, or baby supplies can relieve real stress for a new parent. When our community comes together to support families in those early moments, it sends a powerful message: “you’re not alone, and your neighbor’s care.””

In previous years, The Mansfield/Richland County Public Library hosted a similar drive supporting CHAP during Women’s History Month, and both organizations are excited to continue the partnership this year by providing a simple way for residents to support local families.

Community members are encouraged to stop by any participating library location during the drive to donate items or learn more about the initiative.



Shelter has 24-hour helpline available

The Domestic Violence Shelter in Mansfield has a 24/7 hotline available at 419-774-5840.

Caller safety and well-being are a priority and the hotline is a confidential resource for everyone impacted by violence.

The line is not just for survivors. Any family member, friend or loved one of a survivor who needs support, guidance, or someone to talk to, are invited to call the hotline.

The Shelter now has positions open. They are posted at Indeed.com. The Shelter can also be contacted at shelter@thedvshelter.com.

Obituary Listings for Wappner Funeral Directors

- Marla Kay Wert, February 22
- Betty Lou Korol, February 27
- Timothy “Tim” Poth, February 27
- Janet Lutz Grogoza, February 28
- G. Irene Hunter, February 28
- Lewis A Workman, March 1
- Richard Thomas Horning, March 2
- Robert James Foulks, March 3
- Heather Lynn Paxton, March 3
- Bobby Joe Price, March 3
- Sandra Lee Richardson, March 4
- Jennivee “Jenny” Ruckel, March 4

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PRIZES GIVEAWAYS DON'T MISS IT!

“Day Trippin’ With Damon” inspires readers to explore the beauty within a short drive

By Traci Little

For many readers of the *Tribune-Courier*, the phrase “Day Trippin’ With Damon” has become an invitation to explore.

Through scenic photographs and thoughtful travel reflections, local writer and photographer Damon Callis encourages readers to discover waterfalls, trails, small towns, and hidden attractions scattered throughout Ohio and the surrounding region — often within just a few hours of home.

For Callis, the journey into local travel writing began during an unexpected moment of stillness.

“When Covid hit, I was cooped up working out of my home and needed something to occupy my time,” Callis said. “I’ve always been interested in hiking and nature photography.”

But as with any passion that take root deep inside us, the seeds of his curiosity were planted long before.

Childhood trips to places like Mohican State Park and the Mohican Covered Bridge left a lasting impression, sparking an appreciation for Ohio’s natural beauty that would eventually grow into a passion for exploration.

While many travelers dream of far-away destinations, Callis has found that remarkable places often exist closer than people realize.

“Ohio is full of amazing locales, parks and trails to visit,” he said. “It’s something that can be done every weekend — and most weekends I do try and visit a new location or perhaps revisit a favorite.”

That philosophy shapes the foundation of his *Tribune-Courier* column. Callis generally focuses on destinations within about a two-hour drive, making them accessible for day trips or easy weekend getaways.

“Ohio is extremely underrated,” he said. “We have hilly terrain, hundreds of waterfalls, meadows, coastline, rivers — so much to see and do.”

From historic landmarks like Serpent Mound to quirky roadside attractions and scenic parks, Callis believes the state offers an incredible variety of experiences.

Every year, Callis begins planning his travel list on New Year’s Day, researching potential destinations across Ohio and neighboring states including Michigan, Pennsylvania and Kentucky.

“I make a list of about 25 places I’d like to see that year,” he explained.

Some locations come from personal research, while others are suggested by friends and acquaintances across his wide network in Richland County and beyond.

Occasionally, the most memorable discoveries happen by accident.

While visiting Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Callis said he unexpectedly found additional scenic spots nearby that expanded the trip. Another time, he made an impromptu detour to see a Bigfoot statue in Celina, Ohio while traveling home from viewing the famous giant troll sculpture near Dayton.

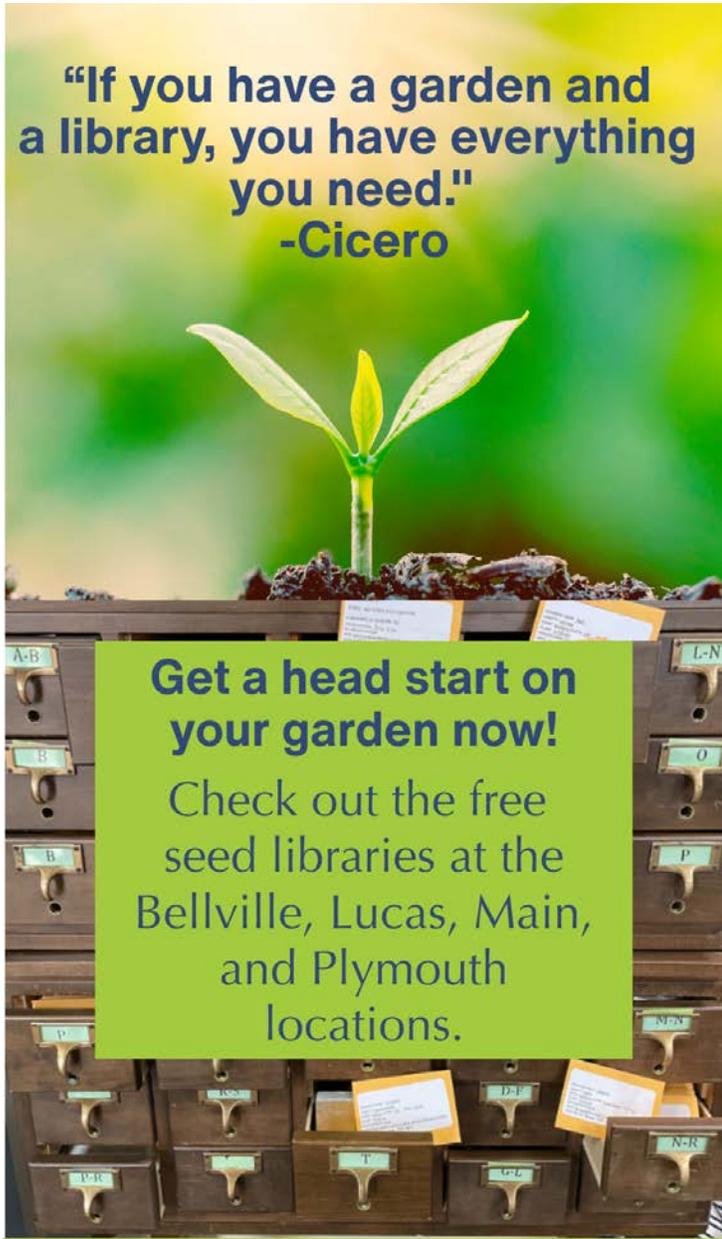
“These surprises are part of the fun,” he said.

Although Callis enjoys exploring historic sites and cultural landmarks, it is often the natural scenery that leaves the biggest impression.

“Most any sunset or waterfall can make you stop and say ‘wow,’” he said.

One of his most surprising trips took him to Ludington, Michigan, where the coastal scenery reminded him of the Atlantic shoreline.

(Continued on Page 7)



“If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.”
-Cicero

Get a head start on your garden now!
Check out the free seed libraries at the Bellville, Lucas, Main, and Plymouth locations.



Mansfield/Richland County Public Library

mrcpl.org



Damon Callis at the Mentor, OH, sand sculpting competition in 2025

•“Day Trippin’ With Damon” inspires readers to explore

(Continued from Page 6)

Another memorable destination was Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania, a picturesque mountain town known for its stunning autumn colors and scenic train rides through the fall foliage.

Callis says moments like those reinforce a simple truth.

“Any place can be beautiful,” he said. “You don’t necessarily have to go far to experience it.”

Beyond sharing beautiful photographs and travel ideas, Callis hopes his column inspires readers to step outside their routines.

“A vacation is really just a break from the norm,” he said. “It doesn’t mean you have to go halfway around the world to enjoy something new.”

Local travel, he believes, can also strengthen appreciation for the region while supporting small businesses along the way.

“Sometimes I’ll shop or eat in the town I’m visiting,” he said. “I probably never would have gone there otherwise.”

Callis also tries to make his recommendations practical for readers, noting trail difficulty levels and highlighting destinations that offer enough activities to make the drive worthwhile.

“My main focus is time,” he explained. “I don’t want people to feel like they wasted their time.”

After years of exploring, Callis has developed a list of places he believes deserve more attention.

One standout is Mill Creek Park near Youngstown, which he describes as an overlooked treasure compared to better-known parks like Mohican or Hocking Hills.

“It’s massive,” he said. “There are lakes, trails, a fairy bridge, and even a covered bridge right next to a waterfall.”

Other unique destinations he recommends include Umbrella Alley in Louisville, Ohio and the annual sandcastle competition at Mentor Headlands along Lake Erie.

While most of Callis’ travels stay within day-trip range, he occasionally ventures farther.

This year he hopes to visit Bethlehem, Pennsylvania during the Christmas season to photograph the city’s famous holiday lights and festive displays.

But whether he’s exploring Pennsylvania, Michigan or a quiet trail in Ohio, Callis returns to the same philosophy that guides his column.

“We’re only on this planet for a short amount of time,” he said. “It’s best to experience new things from time to time.”

And sometimes, the most memorable adventures are waiting just down the road.



McCONNELL’S MILL in Pennsylvania has a big park and is located near New Castle. It is about a 2-hour drive.



MILL CREEK PARK: Lanterman’s Mill and Mill Creek Gorge is Damon Callis’ second favorite place, after Mohican State Park. Pictured is the bridge and waterfall, which are located on 2,882 acres in Mahoning County in the Youngstown metro-area. A restoration was completed in 1985, and the historic mill is now fully operational. For a small fee, a local guide will explain the mill’s operation and history, and visitors can then explore the interior of the mill. In addition, corn, wheat and buckwheat flour that was ground at the mill can be purchased in the mill’s gift shop. Nearby the mill is a waterfall, a covered bridge and trails that take visitors on both sides of the gorge created by the creek. Lanterman’s Mill is located at 1001 Canfield Rd. (SR 62) Youngstown, OH. For more information and seasonal hours visit <https://www.millcreekmetroparks.org>.

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49th Annual Malabar Maple Syrup Festival



Photos By Traci Little



For Information Call:
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\$15 Ticket - pick up tickets at
DeSanto & Kellogg (limited seating)
(432 Center Street, Ashland)

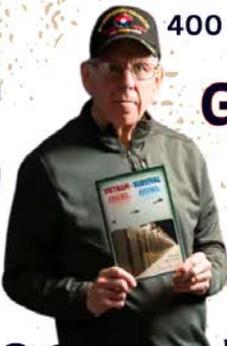
★★★★★  ★★★★★

Ashland Area Vietnam Era Veterans

Recognition DINNER

Guest Speaker, Ashland Native

Saturday March 28, 2026
5:00 PM-8:00 PM
Ashland Eagles
400 Eastlake Drive, Ashland



Greg Gorrell
9th Infantry
Army Division
Combat Veteran

photo credit: Ashland University

49th Annual Malabar Maple Syrup Festival



Photos By Traci Little



Sign up with QR code, or email Kerry Snyder with name, email and number of attendees is encouraged .
kerrysnyder@lifewise.org

Spaghetti Dinner

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SATURDAY,
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PIONEER CAREER & TECHNOLOGY CENTER National Technical Honor Society members are front, Bridget Belcik, Hadleigh James, Chloe Howell, Audrey Shaffer, Isabella Kimberlin, Neveah Hall and Kylie Mosley; and back, Cadren Ring, Donovan Wintersteller, Tyce Lisle, Johnna Tolley, Maelyn Webb, Macie Witherell, Kinsley Van Dine and Dixie Carroll. Not pictured is Kelley Kurtz.

Pioneer CTC recognizes students at NTHS ceremony

Pioneer Career & Technology Center recently celebrated student achievement during its annual National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) Ceremony, recognizing students who demonstrate excellence in career-technical education, leadership, and character.

The National Technical Honor Society honors students who have distinguished themselves through strong academic performance, technical skill development and a commitment to service and responsibility both in the classroom and in their career programs.

During the ceremony, students participated in the traditional candle-lighting ceremony, representing the seven attributes of NTHS: Skill, Honesty, Service, Responsibility, Scholarship, Citizenship, and Leadership.

Pioneer recognized eight returning two-year NTHS members, students who continue to exemplify these qualities while advancing their career-technical training.

Two-year members include Dixie Carroll, Bucyrus, Early Childhood Education; Neveah Hall, Willard, Dental Assisting; Isabella Kimberlin, South Central, Medical Assisting; Kelley Kurtz, Lexington, Exercise Science & Sports Medicine; Tyce Lisle, Colonel Crawford, Engineering Design Technologies; Kylie Mosley, Willard, Dental Assisting; Audrey Shaffer, Buckeye Central, Horticulture; and Donovan Wintersteller, Colonel Crawford, Engineering Design Technologies.

The ceremony also welcomed eight new inductees into Pioneer's chapter of the National Technical Honor Society.

New inductees include Kinsley Van Dine, Shelby, Homeland Security; Bridget Belcik, Crestline, Teaching Professions; Chloe Howell,

Shelby, Health Assisting; Hadleigh James, Colonel Crawford, Dental Assisting; Cadren Ring, Bucyrus, Engineering Design Technologies; Johnna Tolley, Northmor, Teaching Professions; Maelyn Webb, Colonel Crawford, Medical Technologies; and Macie Witherell, Northmor, Dental Assisting.

Students selected for NTHS membership must maintain high academic standards in their career program while demonstrating leadership, responsibility, and strong character.

Special recognition is extended to NTHS advisors Emma Jenkins and Cassie White for their dedication to mentoring and supporting Pioneer students. Their guidance helps students grow both academically and professionally while preparing for future careers.

Pioneer Career & Technology Center congratulates these students for their dedication and commitment to developing the skills that will prepare them for success in the workforce, higher education or military service.



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REPULS® Defense Spray developed as next generation water-based irritant spray redefining personal safety

In today's unpredictable world, personal safety has never been more critical. One of the biggest challenges with most traditional self-defense options is the risk of personal injury due to combat-style defenses or the known health risks and limitations associated with the use of pepper spray.

Crotega Safety Solutions is setting a new standard with the expansion of its award-winning REPULS® Defense Spray line, now available in keychain and jogger/hiker models designed for everyday protection.

Already trusted by thousands of law enforcement and private security officers, REPULS® Defense Spray is now being introduced to consumers through www.repulsdefensespray.com, a new online destination for personal protection solutions that are safe, effective, and eco-conscious.

Unlike traditional pepper sprays, REPULS® is a non-aerosol, water-based ocular irritant. This patented formula causes immediate involuntary eye closure and disrupts an attacker's ability to focus, giving users valuable seconds to escape safely. This next-generation design eliminates the respiratory risks, environmental contamination, and blowback hazards associated with capsaicin-based pepper sprays.

The key advantages include eco-friendly ingredients formulated with water and chemical agents approved for use in food, animal feed and cosmetics. No capsaicin or hot chili pepper oils are used which can cause severe breathing problems.

Devices include a soluble blue dye to help easily identify the assailant. REPULS uses a controlled liquid stream — not an aerosol mist — ensuring accuracy with no cross-contamination or self-exposure. REPULS is the only deterrent spray approved for indoor and in-vehicle use. It is already being used in hospitals, emergen-

cy rooms, courtrooms, schools and offices where traditional pepper sprays are prohibited.

Building on years of field-tested reliability, the newly launched keychain model and jogger/hiker models make self-defense simpler, safer, and more accessible than ever before.

The keychain model has a quick-release design perfect for purses, backpacks or keyrings and ideal for everyday carry. It is available in solid black, pink, rhinestone and multiple glitter colors. Keychain models are priced at \$16.95-\$17.95 each.

The jogger/hiker model is lightweight and ergonomic, featuring a secure hand strap for on-the-go protection during outdoor activities. Available with a pink or blue hand strap, the jogger/hiker model is priced at \$17.95 each.

"REPULS provides quick and dependable results without the intense drawbacks of pepper spray. Everyone should take advantage of this revolutionary new standard in personal safety," said Beth Warford, Founder of Pretty Loaded, a Leader in Personal Safety and Situational Training.

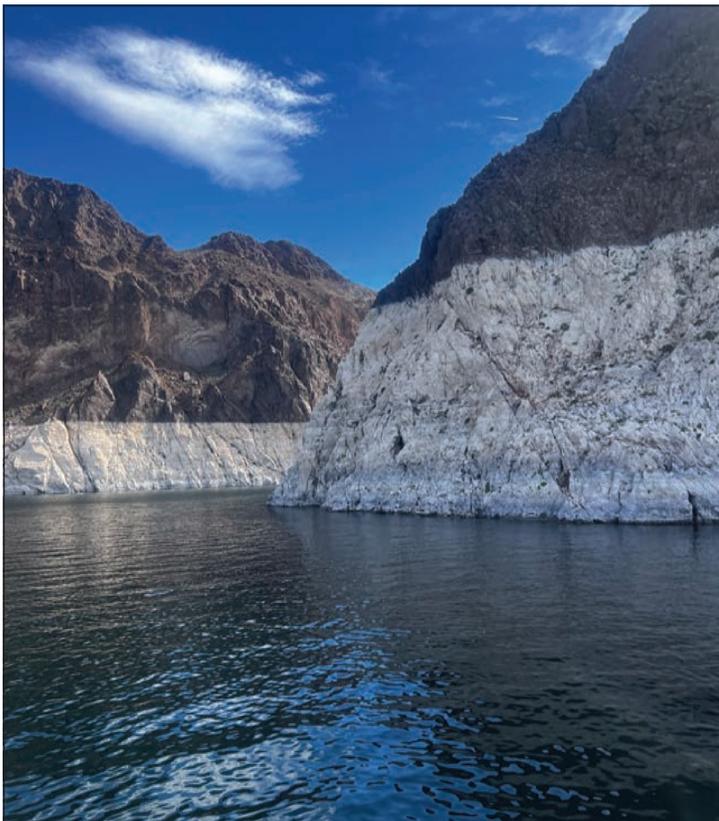
For more information and to purchase REPULS Keychain or Jogger/Hiker products, visit: www.repulsdefensespray.com.

Crotega LLC, was formed with a vision of saving lives and enhancing personal safety. Inspired by the need to find a better way to "Deter, Disrupt and Delay™" active assailants and threatening perpetrators, Crotega brought together chemists and engineering experts to design, test and patent a next-generation eco-friendly water-based irritant spray named REPULS®.

REPULS is an ASTORS Platinum Award Winner which is the pre-eminent U.S. Security Awards Program highlighting the most cutting-edge and forward-thinking security solutions.

In addition to handheld canisters, REPULS is utilized in Crotega's ceiling mounted SentiZone™, an innovative building intruder defense shield for protecting building occupants which has the potential to change building infrastructure safety in the same manner that fire sprinklers have done for fire safety and control. The company has also developed a ruggedized REPULS Spray SentiPak™ for crowd control and a discreet unmanned remote drone-like vehicle called Senti-Launch™.

For information on Crotega's law enforcement and building safety solutions visit www.crotega.com. To explore the Crotega consumer self-defense online store visit www.repulsdefensespray.com.



Lake Mead, Nevada • Photo By Teresa Vore

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MADISON CAREER TECH students Nick Maglott, Alaina Washington, Olivia Penrod, Kaylie Carroll, Aubrey Conn, Jamelyn Mays and AJ Studer.

Madison Career Tech students to attend BPA National Leadership Conference in Nashville

Students from Madison Comprehensive High School's Business Professionals of America (BPA) chapter will attend the 2026 BPA National Leadership Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, May 6–10.

The conference will bring together an estimated six thousand delegates from across the country to vie for top honors in business and information technology skills competitions, attend leadership and professional development workshops, receive awards for community service activities and elect BPA's 2026–'27 national student leadership team.

"The National Leadership Conference is more than just a competition—it's a celebration of dedication, growth, and achievement," said Patrick Schultz, BPA's Executive Director.

"We are thrilled to bring together BPA's best and brightest to showcase their talents, build lifelong connections, and take the next steps in their leadership and career journeys."

The students from the MCHS's BPA chapter attending the conference are Aubrey Conn, Jamelyn Mays, Olivia Penrod & AJ Studer, State Champions, Administrative Support Team; Alaina Washington, State Champion, Fundamental Word Processing; Nick Maglott, third place, Payroll Account-

ing; and Kylie Carroll, eighth place, Health Administration Procedures.

The 2026 National Leadership Conference is presented by Certiport, a Pearson VUE business, the leading provider of certification exam development, delivery, and program management services. Conference attendees can obtain valuable industry certifications during the event.

While in Nashville, participants will also have opportunities to network with other BPA members and business leaders, visit iconic Nashville attractions, and participate in community service activities. The conference's opening session on May 6 and awards ceremonies on May 9 will be streamed live online.

BPA is the premier Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) for middle, high school and college/university students preparing for careers in business and information technology. BPA provides opportunities for growth through education, competitive events, leadership development, and community service. The organization has more than 60,000 members in schools across the United States and in Canada, China, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Singapore, South Korea and United Kingdom. Learn more at www.bpa.org.

Pond fish sale orders now being accepted

The Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (Richland SWCD) has announced orders are being accepted for the Pond Fish Sale until April 2. Customers may order Bluegill, Yellow Perch, Largemouth Bass, Fathead Minnows, Channel Catfish, Hybrid Bluegill, Redear Sunfish and White Amur. Pond conditioner, optimal fish food and plastic bags and ties may also be ordered.

Orders may be placed online at <https://richlandswcd.net/event/pond-fish-orders-due-2/> or at the March 16 Pond Clinic. A minimum order of \$30 is required.

All orders must be picked up April 10 from 8:30–10 am at the Richland County Fairgrounds Horse Barn. Customers should bring appropriate containers to transport their fish safely. Five-gallon buckets work well but must have an unscented poly liner to ensure fish have enough oxygen during transport. Customers should also have their containers filled one-third full with the pond water the fish will be transferred into.

Free Kindness eWalls available for all Ohio K–12 Schools

The Ohio School Counselors Association (OSCA) and YouUplift have announced that it will once again sponsor access to the YouUplift platform for K–12 schools across the state of Ohio for the 2026–'27 school year. This marks the second consecutive year OSCA has invested in providing schools with expanded tools and resources designed to support student well-being, mental health awareness and positive school culture.

Following the launch of its initial sponsorship in early September of last year, OSCA has already onboarded nearly 400 schools in just the last six months, reflecting strong demand from districts and school counselors statewide.

The rapid adoption underscores a shared commitment among Ohio educators to proactively support students' social-emotional development and create safe, connected learning environments.

Through this continued partnership with YouUplift, K–12 schools will maintain access to a comprehensive digital platform called YouUplift, that equips counselors, administrators, teachers, students and families with tools focused on encouragement, awareness and engagement. YouUplift is a web-based platform that empowers participants to share positive, encouraging messages about one another within their school and local community. The YouUplift team reaches out to every K-12 school across Ohio to inform them that The Ohio School Counselors Association has fully sponsored the platform for the entire school year at no cost. After a school is onboarded, a designated administrator reviews and approves only uplifting, positive comments, which are then displayed on monitors throughout the school. The sponsorship removes financial barriers for participating schools, ensuring equitable access regardless of district size or funding capacity.

OSCA's investment reinforces its mission to advocate for and support school counselors while advancing initiatives that prioritize student success. By extending this statewide sponsorship for a second year, the association continues to lead in providing proactive, scalable solutions that empower schools to strengthen student well-being across Ohio.

Schools interested in participating in the 2026–'27 sponsorship initiative are encouraged to onboard through the provided instructions below.

Schools located throughout the state of Ohio that wish to participate can onboard their school by visiting Youuplift.com, selecting "Get Started" and choosing their state during registration.

Once onboarded, schools receive immediate access to the YouUplift platform and implementation support.

For more information about the partnership or onboarding visit Youuplift.com or contact info@youuplift.org.

Second deployment of automated trucking technology advances midwest logistics

March 9 marked a major milestone for Midwest freight innovation as three trucks with automation technology hit the road between Ohio and Indiana, delivering shipments for Nussbaum Transportation. This deployment is the latest in a partnership between the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)'s DriveOhio initiative and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), aimed at accelerating the adoption of truck automation technologies and transforming the logistics industry across the region.

Ohio and Indiana have long capitalized on their geography and robust transportation networks to become leaders in logistics. Until now, most of the automated freight testing has occurred in regions with milder, more predictable climates. Looking to the future, ODOT, INDOT, and Nussbaum will evaluate the technology's performance in a real-world Midwest environment that includes rain, snow, and everything in between. Testing in these conditions is a critical step toward ensuring vehicle automation delivers consistent safety and reliability benefits wherever it's deployed.

"As modern vehicles increasingly integrate advanced safety features like lane-keep assist, automatic braking, and blind-spot detection, we are seeing a fundamental shift in roadway safety," said ODOT Director Pam Boratyn. "While infrastructure engineering remains a cornerstone of our work, technology is the essential partner that will help us reach the goal of zero deaths on Ohio's road."

"INDOT continues to partner with DriveOhio to explore automation technology in commercial trucking here in the Crossroads of America. Features being deployed will assist the driver and represent another innovative step forward to make our highways safer," said INDOT Commissioner Lyndsay Quist.

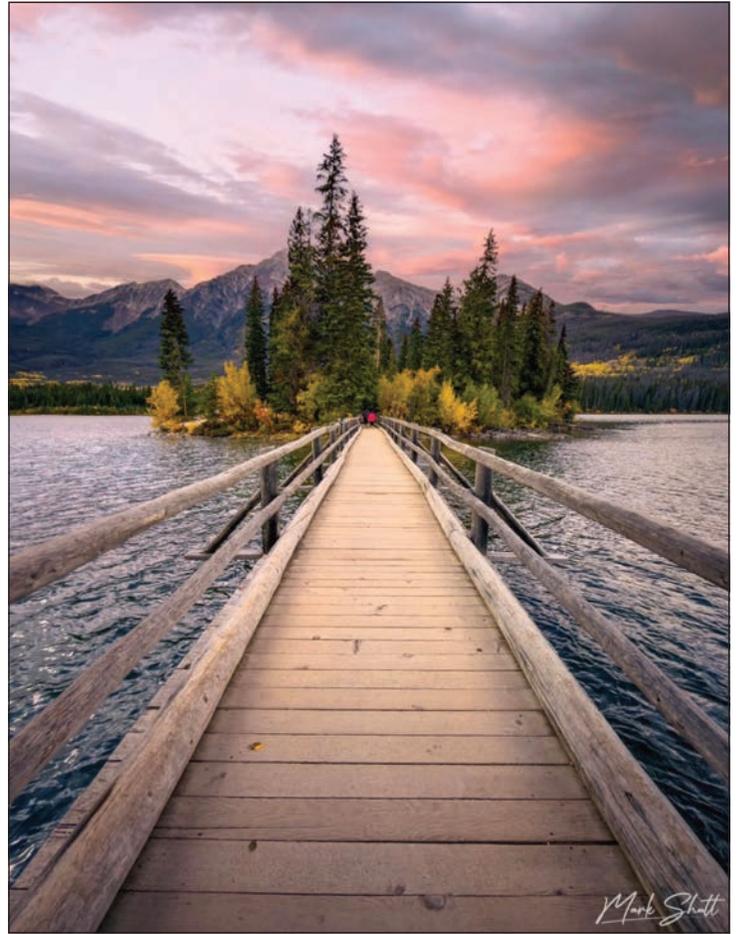
The Nussbaum trucks are equipped with a suite of safety features designed to decrease the risk of collision and ease driver stress. Many functions are similar to the driver assist features in cars on the road today including automatic emergency braking, lane keep assist, and lane departure technology. Additional technology includes sensors capable of detecting vehicles or people on all sides of the truck. The system provides an audible warning to the driver when an object's detected and prevents turning movements until the path is clear.

"Our drivers operate in many different environments, including adverse weather conditions, busy traffic, and road construction, and each presents unique driving challenges," said Doug Bradle, Chief Operations Officer at Nussbaum. "We value these new technologies and how they can aid our drivers in navigating these environments safely. We want to do our part in testing and improving them."

The automated features also include advanced blind spot technology that steers the truck back into its lane if it's attempting to enter an occupied lane. In the unlikely event that the driver suffers a medical emergency and becomes unresponsive, the system will safely bring the truck to a stop and activate the truck's hazard lights. Professional drivers will be in the driver's seat of the trucks throughout the deployment, aided by the automated system.

"Truck drivers face demanding conditions every day, and our mission is to make our roads as safe as possible," said Charles A. Jones, Ohio State Highway Patrol superintendent. "This technology helps prevent crashes, protect lives and reduce the risks drivers face on the road. Every life lost is one too many, and using proven safety tools is one of the most meaningful ways we can keep people safe."

Funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, this multi-year \$8.8 million project aims to deploy varying levels of automation and integrate these technologies into truck fleets' daily freight-hauling operations. More information about these efforts is available at https://drive.ohio.gov/programs/av-cv/truck-automation?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.



Pyramid Lake, Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada
Photo By Mark Shutt

March of Prayer continues

The Mansfield area's March of Prayer is a month-long, city-wide initiative centered on prayer, revival and collaboration.

It is one of the first major efforts under Godsfield, a nonprofit created to help put "feet to the vision" of prayer for Mansfield by unifying local churches under the name of Jesus.

Throughout the month of March, 31 different churches will host one night of worship.

The schedule includes March 11, Oasis of Love; 12, The Arc; 13, The Way (at Freedom Ridge); 14, Foursquare Gospel Church; 15, Potter's House; 16, Mansfield Alliance Church; 17, TBD; 18, Avenue Church; 19, The River Church; 20, Belmont Community; 21, First UMC/Jesus Outreach; 22, Open Bible; 23, Latter Rain; 24, Paradise; 25, Abundant Life; 26, TBD; 27, Gracepoint Lexington; 28, TBD; 29, MIMA; 30, Southside Christian; and 31, Welcome Home Fest.

The March of Prayer will conclude on March 31 with a collaborative worship gathering hosted by The Welcome Home Fest, a partner of Godsfield. The location for that final night will be announced as plans are finalized. A full, updated calendar of host churches and locations is available online.

Organizers say the unity formed through Godsfield is already bearing fruit. Monthly Brown Bag Lunches have resumed, bringing pastors and ministry leaders together on the fourth Thursday of each month to continue building relationships and encouraging collaboration.

Additional city-wide efforts are already in motion, including the National Day of Prayer Parade on May 7, followed by a large community worship gathering known as the Festival of Hope.

Those interested in learning more, participating, or staying up to date on upcoming events can visit www.godsfield.org or follow Godsfield Mansfield at facebook.com/godsfieldmansfield.

Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

**ONTARIO VS SHELBY VARSITY BASKETBALL · MARCH 3
WHIPPETS WIN 43-41 · PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER**



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

**ONTARIO VS SHELBY VARSITY BASKETBALL · MARCH 3
WHIPPETS WIN 43-41 · PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER**



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

MANSFIELD CITY VS SHAWNEE VARSITY BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS · MARCH 7
TYGERS WIN 64-61 · PHOTOS BY LILLIANA ALLEN



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

MANSFIELD CITY VS CLAY VARSITY BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS · MARCH 5
TYGERS WIN 55-47 · PHOTOS BY LILLIANA ALLEN



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

MADISON VS CRESTVIEW VARSITY BASKETBALL · FEB. 18
COUGARS WIN 72-65 · PHOTOS BY LILLIANA ALLEN



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

**MADISON VS TIFFIN COLUMBIAN GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL · FEB. 24
RAMS WIN 48-29 · PHOTOS BY LILLIANA ALLEN**



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights



Top placers Isaac Smith and Emma McCarron

Crestview Schools host 20th Annual Road Apple Run 5K

The 20th Annual Road Apple Run 5K Road Race was held Saturday, March 7, at Crestview Schools. The top male and female placers were Issac Smith (19:08.85) and Emma McCarron (19:01.24). They received a certificate for a free pair of shoes donated from Ashland Bike Company. The top two placers of each category received finisher's medals.

Female award recipients were ages 1–10, first, K. Webb (24:20.96) and second, B. Chapman (30:23.78); 11–12, first, M. Brennan (31:41.61) and second, B. Pirc (39:51.31); 13–15, first, Bristol Collins (25:57.76); and second, Lauren Zehner (29:12.41); 16–18, first, Audrey Wolford (23:41.67) and second, Alina Durbin (24:54.87); 19–29, first Kylie Brockway (25:02.28) and second, Madalynn Aumend (32:26.96); 30–39, first, Nicole Suter (31:52.93) and second, Kayla Marshall, (32:26.96); 40–49, first, Michelle Skidmore (26:05.57) and second, Abbey Korbas (26:06.72); 50–59, first, Jennifer Ewing (37:06.12) and second, Lisa Bernard (39:31.81); and 60–69, first, Kitty Consolo (30:33.94); and second, Denise McCarron (34:21.21).

Male award recipients were 1–10, front, L. Barber (27:35.88) and second, R. Shaw (28:43.97); 11–12, first, J. Cable (25:51.33) and second, O. Keith (28:04.56); 13–15, first, Easton Smith (20:22.63) and second, Landon Hickinbotham (21:49.18); 16–18, first, Isaac McFarland (19:57.98), and second, Brant Leidigh (21:04.92); 19–29, first, Kameron Goon (26:02.66) and second, Larry Hufstetter (26:59.57); 30–39, first, Cody Mabry (22:35.33) and second, Jerod

Ramsay (26:26.94); 40–49, first, Jonathan Zehner (22:49.45) and second, Eric Webb (23:03.91); 50–59, first, Chad Lemon (25:36.45) and second, Scott Wise (26:17.17); 60–69, first, Keith Napier (30:13.47) and second, John Smith (36:33.14); and 70–99, first, Robert Henery (27:28.33) and second, David Clark (31:57.53).

For a full list of results visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/161440#resultSetId-631391;perpage:100>.

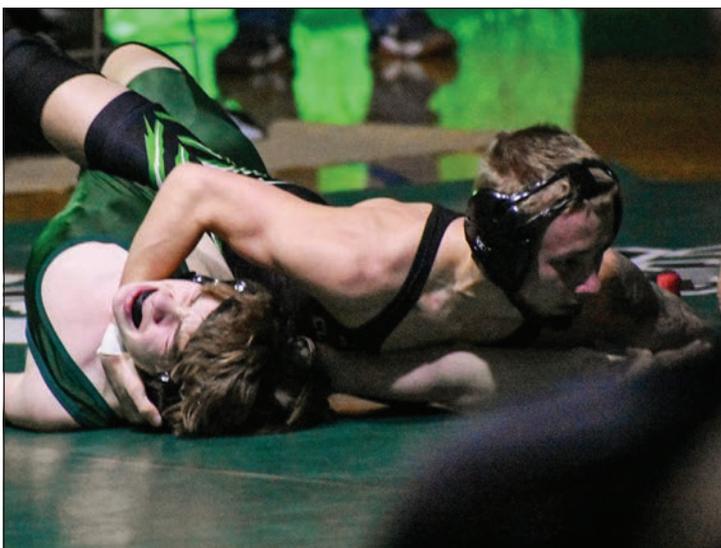
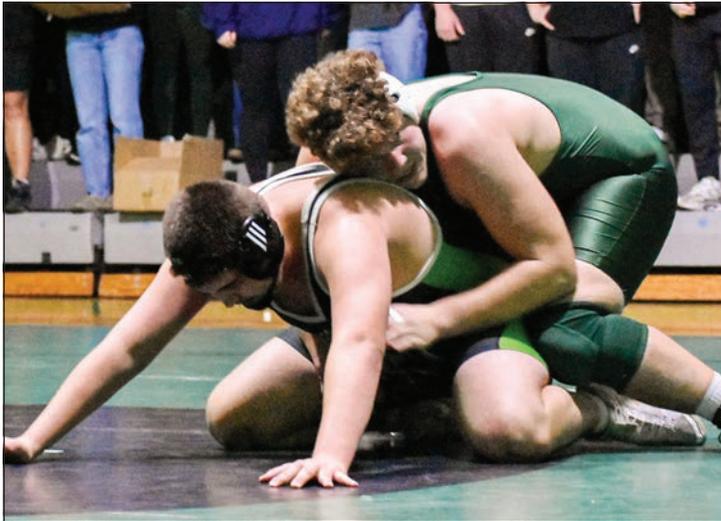


Photos By Jenna Wolford



Sports Highlights

MADISON VS CLEAR FORK WRESTLING FEB 13. PHOTOS BY LILLIANA ALLEN



Annual tree seedling sale benefits Clear Fork FFA program

The Clear Fork FFA Alumni in partnership with Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD) will hold the annual tree seedling sale to support the Clear Fork FFA program and local environmental efforts. Trees play an important role in maintaining a healthy environment by improving air quality, preventing soil erosion, reducing runoff, and providing habitat for wildlife. Planting trees not only adds to the beauty of our communities but also promotes biodiversity for future generations.

The sale will be held Friday, March 27 at Richland County Fairgrounds Nature Park from 9 am to 4 pm or until all seedlings are sold and at Planktown Market, Shiloh, from 8 am to 1 pm, or until all seedlings are sold.

Seedlings will also be sold at Elzy Milling & Trade, Bellville, from 8 am to 5 pm, or until all seedlings are sold; and Saturday, March 28, from 8 am to noon, or until all seedlings are sold.

Seedlings are available on a first-come, first-serve basis, while quantities last. Accepted payment methods are cash or checks. Seedling packs come in quantities of 5, 7 and 10. All packs are \$15 each, except for the American Chestnut seedling pack, which is \$25 each. A wide variety of tree types are available for purchase. Customers may visit <https://richlandswcd.net/event/clear-fork-ffa-alumni-tree-seedling-sale-4/> to view species and descriptions of available seedlings.

Athletes will compete at OHSAA State Wrestling Championships this weekend

Ohio High School Athletic Association will host the 2026 State Wrestling Championships March 13-15, at the Jerome Schottenstein Center at The Ohio State University, Columbus.

Local male athletes competing will be: Division I, Tommy Bauer, Ashland; Division II, Nick Allarding, Clear Fork, Wes Turnbaugh, Ontario and Bryan Mosier, Madison Comprehensive High School; and Division III Trent Hovis, Crestview.

Local female athletes competing will be: Hope Timko, Shelby, 115 Weight Class; Estella Koppert Smith, Madison Comprehensive, 130 Weight Class; and Naomi Gearheart, Crestview, 145 Weight Class.



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