



TRIBUNE-COURIER

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

news@tribune-courier.com

09.18.25



BELLVILLE FAIR QUEEN Addison Johnson, 17, was crowned on Wednesday Night of the Bellville Fair. She is the daughter of Gary Jr. and Melissa Johnson.

Bellville Street Fair celebrates 175 years of community

Photos and Article By Traci Little

The streets of Bellville were alive with energy this past week as the community celebrated the 175th Bellville Street Fair, affectionately known as the "World's Fair." Since its founding in 1850, the fair has been a hallmark of local tradition — blending agriculture, family fun, and small-town pride — and this milestone year was no exception.

From livestock shows and the junior fair auction to colorful art exhibits at the Bellville Public Library and the crowning of a new Fair Queen, the fair once again showcased the talents and dedication of local youth and families. Crowds gathered daily to see rabbits, sheep, cattle, goats, and hogs on display, while vendors and concession stands kept the midway bustling with the tempting aromas of classic fair food.

On Wednesday evening, the Clear Fork High School Marching Band set the tone for opening night, following the crowning of Fair Queen Addison Johnson. Johnson, a Clear Fork senior and first-time competitor, impressed judges with her confidence and communication skills. Active in numerous clubs — book, Spanish, science, history, project support, and art — she also plays varsity tennis and serves as a leader in the kids' ministry at Storyside Church.

Johnson competed alongside Gwen Jones, Chloe Steward and Makenna Wuertz. Contestants earned half their score from a pre-interview held on Sunday before appearing on stage in elegant gowns to answer questions about agriculture, the importance of representing the fair, and how they envisioned making a difference in their community and beyond. Each also responded to a lighthearted question chosen by their fellow contestants, adding personality and charm to the evening.

The Budweiser Clydesdales stole the show midweek, parading through town after hitching up at Elzy Milling & Trade. Their majestic appearance drew huge crowds and plenty of photos.

Evening performances brought additional excitement to the main stage, including a lively Friday night concert by The Shootouts and Saturday's bluegrass showcase featuring Blue Highway.

(Continued on Page 10)

Ontario board completes hirings at September meeting

The Ontario Local School Board held an organizational and regular meeting on Sept. 9.

Cathleen Johnson and the Drug Free Seniors group opened the meeting with a presentation about the important work they do and why they chose to become part of this initiative.

Additionally, Mike Ream presented the preliminary state testing results from last school year, providing valuable insights into the students' performance and areas for growth.

The board approved the employment of staff for the 2025-'26 school year including Lavon Danals, Stingel 2 1/2 hour cook, \$8,874; Meghan Whisler, Key Club Advisor, \$704; Kelly Conn, LPDC committee member, \$704; Annalee Stover, LPDC committee member, \$970; Mindy Leach, LPDC co-head chair, \$1,292.50; Molly Calhoun, LPDC co-head chair, \$1,292.50; Scott Drozda, Volunteer OHS assistant cross country coach, \$0; Rebecca Gregg, OHS assistant cross country coach, \$3,401; Tracy Byrd, OMS head cheer advisor, \$1,783; Samantha Ball, freshman cheer advisor, \$1,783 and JV cheer advisor, 50% stipend, \$891.50; Ron Skelton, OHS football assistant coach, three sharing two stipends, \$3,402; Grady Taylor, OMS volunteer football assistant coach, \$0; Heath Sager and Karen Kaufman, OMS winter facility coordinator, 50% stipend, \$1,532.50 each; Ethan Pensante, OHS winter facility coordinator, \$5,103; Jerry Moton, OHS varsity boys basketball head coach, \$10,057; Benji Hall, OHS boys basketball assistant coach, \$5,531; Tyler Coley, eighth grade boys basketball head coach, \$4,675; Matt Lautanen, seventh grade boys basketball head coach, \$4,675; Jeremy Bise, OHS girls basketball assistant coach, \$4,019; Ryan Tinsley, OHS girls basketball assistant coach, \$5,531; Troy Sapp, seventh grade girls basketball head coach, \$3,570; Deb Henry, OHS volunteer swim co-head coach, \$0; Brooke Trumpower, OHS swim co-head coach, \$7,955; Deanna Weithman, OMS concessions, \$3,065; Alex Hertensteiner, OHS boys golf assistant coach, \$2,453; Jamee Burke, softball head coach, \$5,804; Scott Kreger, softball assistant coach, \$4,675; Meredith Remy, softball assistant coach, \$4,675; David Wolbert, percussion coach, \$2,451; Brooke Trumpower, OMS swim head coach, two sharing one stipend, \$1,838; Justice Holmes, OMS swim assistant coach, two sharing one stipend, \$613; Evan Trumpower, OHS/OMS volunteer swim assistant coach, \$0; Kenton Cordrey, OHS swim assistant coach, two sharing two stipends, \$2,652; Wes Turnbaugh, OHS Wrestling head coach, five sharing four stipends, \$4,333.80; and Monty Ohl and Jason Perry, OHS wrestling assistant coach, five sharing four stipends, \$4,333.80.

Eric Barrison, John Heydinger and Steven Rowe will be three people sharing two stipends as OHS boys basketball assistant coaches earning \$3,544.67 each.

The board approved a Memorandum of Understanding with OFT for the hiring of a wrestling assistant/girls coach.

The board approved the employment of substitute classified staff personnel and new substitute teachers for the 2025-'26 school year.

The board approved the FCCLA Fall Leadership Conference Field Trip for Oct. 20-21, 2025.

Transportation contracts in lieu of bus transportation were approved for JP and Karen Wyer; and Christian and Stefanie Kuntz.

The board adjusted the 2025-'26 salary notices for classified staff and approved the 2025-'26 school year salary notice revisions for certificated staff personnel who have completed additional college credit hours.

Donations were accepted from Charities Aid Foundation America as recommended by their client, State Farm. These included \$750 for football, \$500 for the weight room, \$250 for substance abuse prevention, \$500 for Tyler Gates/Stingel PE and \$500 for marching band.

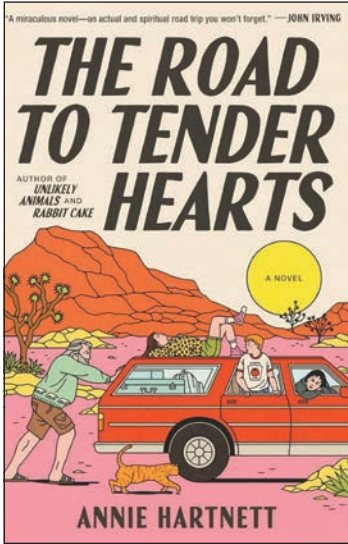
Ohio Health Corporation donated \$20,000 for athletics.

The next meeting will be held on Oct. 14.

LOST IN A BOOK



A Book Review
By Mandy Belczak Gurney



The Road to Tender Hearts by Annie Hartnett was truly brilliant and original. PJ is the town's lottery winner who used to be a mailman but now spends most evenings passed out drunk on the same bench.

Through a series of unexpected tragedies and misunderstandings, PJ inherits two children as he is the last known relative to keep them out of foster care.

He is determined to "get it right this time" raising these two. What unfolds is a road trip across the country with PJ, his reluctant adult daughter, two fourth grade kids working through grief and a cat with a murder record.

This story has an odd start,

but it is laugh out loud funny and full of surprises.

I came to love the characters as if they were my friends who invited me along for the journey.

It's about hope long lost, but the possibility of redemption. It's about facing painful memories and not letting them stop you from enjoying the beauty that's left in life. I truly loved it. Annie Hartnett is a true original. Her novel *Unlikely Animals* is also a riot.

Just the cover art line makes it worth purchasing.

My rating: ★★★★★

Follow my blog at GreenGurneys.com

Mobility and falls prevention will be promoted at walking and biking event


To promote mobility and falls prevention, a walk and bike event will be held Monday, Sept. 29, at the B&O Bike Trail, North Lake Park, 625 Hope Rd., Mansfield.

The event is free and open to the public from 9–11 am. There will be an opportunity to win a free wellness basket.

This event is an opportunity for social engagement and physical activity and will have information and resources provided by the Area Agency on Aging, Richland County Mobility Management and other community partners. Participants can bring a bicycle for individual and/or group riding opportunities. Water will be provided.

Free RCT bus rides will be available to and from the walking event by calling 419-522-4504.

This event will be cancelled for inclement weather. No registration is required and for more information call 567-247-6487.



THE ENTERTAINMENT EXAMINER

— By Ian Stumbo —

The Long Walk is an emotional ride that shows the story of a group of young men who enter a contest to see who can walk the longest distance. At the end, they will win more than they could have ever dreamed, if they fall behind, they pay the ultimate price.

Based on a novel by Stephen King, Cooper Hoffman (the son of the late, great Philip Seymour Hoffman) stars as Ray Garraty, a young man who enters the walk and gets to know the young men around him including Peter played by David Jonsson.

Each person is given a number and warned three times if they fall behind. They are constantly ridiculed by the commander in charge played by Mark Hamill.

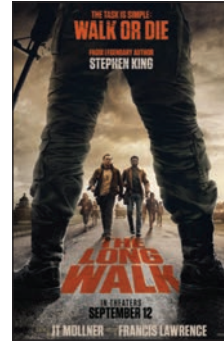
Ray, Peter and several other characters become focal points of the movie and its difficult not to get invested in them and their stories. Director Francis Lawrence does not shy away from the brutality and graphic nature of events that happen. Mile

after mile they walk and the audience can really feel all the fear and pain and psychological breakdown.

As good as Hoffman is, Jonsson is the stand out. His character of Peter is so giving and wants his new friend to succeed.

This is very much a Stephen King story and for a movie essentially about a group of guys walking for almost two hours, it works on many levels and there are many moments that will have an emotional pull.

The Long Walk is a terrific though difficult to watch Stephen King adaptation. The actors and characters really elevate what may have seemed like an unfilmable story and filled it with moments that will connect with people's emotions and casts actors that give terrific performances. This is one to see.



Diamond Beach, Iceland • Photo By Mark Shutt

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Serving Ontario, Lexington, Madison, Bellville and Butler Communities in
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News Briefs

The City of Ontario will have its Trick or Treat night on Thursday, Oct. 30, from 5:30–7:30 pm.

★
Richland County EMA will host its 2nd Annual Community Preparedness Fair in partnership with Avita Ontario and the Ontario Center.

Last year, the Richland County EMA partnered with Avita Health Care and The Ontario Center to host a Community Preparedness Fair, which included 24 community partners. This year, the event has expanded to include not only preparedness information but also other valuable community resources and information.

The fair will be held Saturday, Sept. 20, from 1–4 pm in the Avita parking lot at The Ontario Center, formerly Richland Mall.

★
Final preparations are being made for the annual rummage and bake sale at Trinity Grace Fellowship, 1592 Grace St., Mansfield.

The sale will be held Wednesday through Saturday, Oct. 1–4. Hours are 4–7 pm on Oct. 1; 9 am to 7 pm on Oct. 2; 9 am to 2 pm on Oct. 3; and 9 am to noon on Oct. 4.

Sales are by donation and proceeds and the remaining items will be donated to the community through other local ministries. Food will be available for purchase to eat in or take out.

★
A recycling trailer will be in the parking lot at Ontario United Methodist Church, 3540 Park Avenue West, Sept. 27 and 28. 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.

★
All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Bellville, 25 Church St., Bellville, will welcome Wendy Bartlett on Sunday, Sept. 21, at 10:30 am. The subject will be “Autumn Equinox.”

Join Hayley Young and Wendy Bartlett for a morning of ritual, celebration and remembrance. This service will be off-site.

For information visit www.allsoulsuohio.org.

★
The Lexington Area Senior Citizens Inc., invites those 55 and older to attend meetings the third Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am. 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 Oct. 15, with roast beef. Jane Horton, country western singer, will perform.

The group will also meet for lunch on Oct. 1, at El Campesino Mexican Restaurant, 1593 W. 4th St., Ontario.

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

★
Trinity Grace Fellowship Church, 1592 Grace St., Mansfield, will hold community prayer meetings from 6:30–7:30 pm, Oct. 12 and 19. The public is invited.

★
Richland Early American Center for History will host the 9th Annual American Heritage Days at Southpark, 100 Brinkerhoff Ave, Mansfield, Oct. 4 and 5, from 10 am to 4 pm. Living history reenactors will demonstrate life in America in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Throughout the day there will be crafts, trades, demonstrations and activities, including blacksmithing, games and children's activities, open hearth cooking demonstrations and civilian and military reenactments. Admission and parking are free to the public. A food truck will be on-site.

★
Beginning Tuesday, Sept. 16 and extending through Friday, Sept. 19, Columbia Gas of Ohio will close Lexington Avenue's northbound lanes between S. Main Street and Florence Avenue in Mansfield. Mendota Street will also be closed at Lexington. Motorists will be able to traverse the area utilizing the two southbound lanes on Lexington. One southbound lane will remain open, and the other south-

bound lane will temporarily run north.

The closure is necessary for roadway restoration following the gas line replacement project.

★
For the fourth year in a row, the Hastings Group is sponsoring a special needs event at the Richland Carousel Park, 75 N. Main St., Mansfield, Friday, Sept. 19, from 5–7 pm.

Refreshments will be provided and attendees will receive unlimited rides on the carousel. The carousel will be modified for this one evening to address the concerns of the special needs community.

This year's attendance is expected to exceed last year's, which saw more than 80 members of the Mansfield special needs community enjoy time at the carousel on behalf of the Hastings Group.

For more information or to register call 419-522-4223.

★
A free family fall festival with trunk-or-treat will be held at Mansfield 1st Presbyterian Church on Sunday, Oct. 5, from 2–4 pm.

There will be games, prizes, snow cones and more.

Kirkin O' the Tartans will be held at the church, Sunday, Oct. 26, at 10 am. A shortbread social will be held after the worship service featuring piper Jesse Tucker.

Children can participate in a kid-friendly version of the traditional Highland Games.

The church is located at 399 S. Trimble Rd., Mansfield. For information call 419-756-7066 or visit www.mansfield1st.com.

★
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 10:30 am to 12:30 pm or until supplies run out. This comes with a 15 lb. box of fresh produce 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.

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, Sept. 23.

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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



ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL'S Key Club helped to place flags for the 3rd Annual Field of Honor Ceremony at the Area Agency on Aging at Hawkin's Corner in Ontario.

Women's Fund seeks nominations for award

The Women's Fund of the Richland County Foundation is accepting nominations for the JoAnn Dutton Volunteer Community Service Award. The award celebrates and honors women leaders who devote a significant amount of time and energy in a meaningful way to local charitable organizations.

This award sponsored by the Women's Fund of the Richland County Foundation was named in honor of JoAnn Dutton.

As executive director of the YWCA, Dutton was known as a strong collaborator who initiated new programs and opportunities within the organizations she served. Her personal and leadership approach was always inclusive, and she sought to enable all members of our community to achieve their full potential. In addition to serving 10 years at the YWCA, she enjoyed a lifetime of volunteer community service.

The award honors Dutton and all women in our community who demonstrate that individual volunteer service makes a community a better place to live. A nomination form is available at <https://www.richlandcountyfoundation.org/community-impact/womens-fund>. The deadline is Oct. 5.

The winner will be honored during the Women's Fund annual grant awards lunch Nov. 7 at Westbrook Country Club.

Voter registration deadline nearing for November election

The deadline to register to vote or change an address or name for the Nov. 4, general election is Monday, Oct. 6.

The Richland County Board of Elections office will be open that evening until 9 pm. This office is located at 1495 W. Longview Ave., Suite 101, in the Longview Center. After 4 pm, visitors must use the entrance at the lower-level back parking area at the southwest corner of the building.

Those registering to vote must be either a native U. S. citizen or a naturalized citizen of the U.S., be a resident of the State of Ohio 30 days before an election and be a minimum of 18 years of age on or before the date of the general election on Nov. 4, 2025.

Registered voters who have moved or changed their name must notify the Board office in writing or in person. Voters currently registered in Ohio may change their address online at VoteOhio.gov, but must do so by the Oct. 6 deadline.

In addition to the board of elections office, citizens may register or complete a change of address/name at the following locations in Richland County:

- Any library branch
- All city and village hall offices
- The Bureau of Motor Vehicles office
- The Department of Human Services
- The Richland County Courthouse (recorder or treasurer offices)
- All area high school offices

Registration forms may also be obtained from the Board of Elections website at vote.richlandcountyoh.gov or requested by mail. Contact the board office at 419-774-5530 to have a form sent by mail. Completed voter registration forms must be postmarked 30 days before election day.

Obituary Listings for Wappner Funeral Directors

Darlene Jeanette Mann, September 6
Leah Jean Simmons, September 6
Justine King, September 7
Frederick "Fred" Martin Bocka, September 9
Rebecca Sue Hallabrin, September 9
Leslie John Brinkerhoff, September 10
Monte Gordon Voelp, September 11
Leo Arnett, September 12

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Ontario • 100 S. Lexington-Springmill Rd. • 419-529-2323
Ashland • 308 Claremont Avenue • 419-289-1552

www.wappner.com

Field of Honor Ceremony honors service, sacrifice and unity

Photos and Article By Traci Little

Rows of American flags boldly rippled across the lawn at the Area Agency on Aging — Ohio District 5 on Thursday, Sept. 11, as the Kiwanis Club of Mansfield hosted its 3rd Annual Field of Honor Ceremony — a moving community tribute to veterans, servicemembers, and first responders.

Emcee Bob Miller welcomed guests and introduced an invocation by Rev. El Akuchie, who urged the crowd to remember both the loss and the hope bound up with the day. “We thank you for the opportunity to be here today to remember those who have sacrificed much for this nation,” he prayed. “Help us never to forget... We are one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” He closed with this, “Bless the United States of America... in the name above all names, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The 179th Cyberspace Wing presented and later retired the colors. Jaslyn Lopez (Miss Ontario 2023) led a stirring National Anthem, then invited the crowd to join her for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ontario Mayor Kris Knapp welcomed attendees to the host city: “We live in a country with freedom like no other,” he said. “Today we pay tribute to our military and first responders—our dispatchers, police officers, firefighters, EMTs—who make our community safe and are there right away to help. Thank you.”

Knapp also highlighted support for those injured in the line of duty: “I want to thank Senator Romanchuk for introducing Senate Bill 229 so wounded police officers may receive a Purple Heart.”

Mansfield Mayor Jodie Perry reflected on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001: “It was a day much like today—blue sky—and none of us had any idea what would unfold,” she said. “We pause to remember the folks who were just going to work or getting on an airplane, and the first responders who rushed in when everyone else was fleeing.”

“There’s a before September 11 and an after September 11 for all of us who lived through it,” Perry added. “May we let that spirit of unity continue to guide us forward. May we never forget the sacrifices made.”

Longtime broadcaster and veteran Doug Theaker asked the crowd to consider, “Where were you on that fateful day?” and offered a sweep of history from Lexington and Concord to Iwo Jima, Vietnam, and 9/11.

“God help us that we never forget what took place on that day,” he said. “We are the home of the free because of the brave.”

Recalling the courage of firefighters on 9/11, Theaker noted, “As people poured out of the burning buildings, who was going in? The firefighters.”

He spoke tenderly of local hero Pfc. David Winder, a Mansfield Senior graduate and Medal of Honor recipient: “I’m free because of the David Winder’s; you are free because of men and women like him.”

Gesturing to the sea of flags, he added, “It’s only a piece of cloth, but it’s a symbol—of sacrifice, of unity. God, how I love my flag.”

A roll call of flag dedications honored and remembered servicemembers across generations and branches—from WWII U.S. Army veteran Herbert Gerald Atkins (five Bronze Stars) to A1C William Hamilton and Col. Darren Hamilton of the 179th; from Sgt. Maj. Christopher Sellers (U.S. Army, ret.) to James Schmitz (U.S. Marine Corps) and Jeff Wampler (U.S. Coast Guard); tributes to the 179th Cyberspace Wing and 200th RED HORSE Squadron; and remembrances for “Our Unknown Heroes.” The audience answered each name with grateful applause.

Kiwanis thanked the presenting sponsor Schmidt Security Pro / Schmidt Fire; Red Sponsor Huntington Bank; Stars & Stripes Sponsors Directions Credit Union, YMCA of North Central Ohio, and KM&M CPAs; and additional supporters Park National Bank, Mechanics Bank, Sutton Bank, Warren Rupp, and Ritter’s Office Outfitters.

The Field of Honor display remained up throughout the week at the Area Agency on Aging campus for quiet reflection. As Theaker summed up, “Like you, I love America... If there’s anything I could wish upon our country, it’s that we remember who we are—and the sacrifices that keep us free.”





Love Our Hero's breaks ground on "The Ron Project"

Photos and Article By Traci Little

On Sept. 9, at 490 Tracy St., Mansfield, shovels turned the soil on a project that will transform one veteran's future. Love Our Hero's, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting U.S. veterans, hosted a ground-breaking ceremony for The Ron Project — a new, fully ADA-compliant home being built for U.S. Army veteran Ron Bigelow.

The story began when Tami Robinson, founder of Love Our Hero's, first met Bigelow while delivering food assistance. What she discovered inside his home was heartbreaking—an unsafe structure plagued by a collapsing foundation and a raccoon infestation.

"After I toured Ron's home, I became deeply concerned for his safety," Robinson recalled. "The house was in such poor condition that contractors determined it was beyond repair and should be torn down. I feel very strongly that no veteran should be sleeping on the streets or living in unsafe conditions."

That moment sparked a mission. Robinson, alongside project manager Gina Stillion, began to study the home-building process from the ground up. For years, they fundraised, learned, and rallied support. Local partners, including Steve Thomas Builders and numerous businesses donating materials and labor, eventually joined forces.

As the shovels hit the dirt, it marked the launching of this long awaited and prayed for project. Robinson spoke with emotion, reflecting on the years of obstacles and faith that led to this milestone.

"This has been such a long time coming. I never thought bringing this gentleman food would turn into this. But I couldn't leave him in that situation. He deserved better," she said. "We've done a lot of things wrong, a lot of things right, but everything led to this moment. I am honored to be here standing beside Ron and all these people. Everybody here has had a part in what we are doing."

Stillion added her gratitude: "From tearing it down in 2021 to this point, I've come down here countless times. Every time, I thought, one day we're going to start. And now, here we are. People have donated anywhere from \$5 to \$100,000 — it just shows how many hands and hearts are in this project. It's not just for us; it's for all of us."

For Bigelow, who served in the U.S. Army from 1983 to 1989, the day represented more than construction — it represented hope.

"Love Our Hero's is not only changing my life, but the lives of my entire family," he said. "They have given us hope."

Until the project is finished, Bigelow is staying in a mobile home. Once complete, his new residence will stand on his family's homestead, built free of charge and designed to ensure safety, accessibility, and comfort for decades to come.

The Ron Project has already seen extraordinary community investment. In March 2024, Love Our Hero's raised more than \$24,600 during a purse bingo fundraiser. Since then, businesses, individuals, and volunteers have continued to step forward with donations of

time, talent, and treasure.

Robinson summed it up best: "This project represents what can be achieved when people come together to honor and support our veterans who sacrificed so much and fought for our country. My hope is that The Ron Project will inspire more opportunities to serve those who have sacrificed so much for us."

Construction is set to move forward immediately, with completion expected by the end of 2025.

Community members can continue to play a vital role in The Ron Project and other veteran support initiatives by donating household items at Love Our Hero's thrift store, 24 Bell St., Bellville, to help fund veteran programs; make monetary contributions via PayPal, Facebook, or by becoming a monthly supporter; volunteer at the thrift store, events or on future veteran housing projects; and spread the word by sharing the Love Our Hero's mission on social media or with friends and family.

For more information visit loveourheros.org. The months ahead will bring hard work and progress, but the goal remains simple: to provide a safe, lasting home for a man who served his country. The Ron Project reflects not just the generosity of many, but a community's shared belief that no veteran should ever face hardship alone.



Tami Robinson of Love Our Hero's

Walk to End Alzheimer's inspires hope, honors loved ones

Photos and Article By Traci Little

Sunshine, smiles, and a few wiped away tears set the tone at Richland Carrousel Park, where the community came together on September 13 for the 2025 North Central Ohio Walk to End Alzheimer's. Families, caregivers, survivors, and supporters gathered wearing purple, raising flowers and voices in the fight to end the disease that touches so many lives.

DJ Ed kept the atmosphere upbeat with family-friendly music as participants checked in, decorated their Promise Garden flowers, and shared stories of their loved ones.

Walk manager Denise Pauley, who recently joined the Alzheimer's Association team, expressed gratitude to the community:

"Every dollar raised brings us closer to a cure and supports families right here in North Central Ohio. Together, we are making a difference."

The opening ceremony began at 10 am with the National Anthem sung by Amanda Sloiven, followed by welcoming remarks from Chelley Kemper, who reminded the crowd of the urgency of the cause.

"Currently, more than 7 million Americans — including 236,000 in Ohio — are living with Alzheimer's," Kemper said. "But today, we are the spark. We fuel the progress toward a future without this disease."

Edward Jones was the National Presenting Sponsor. Cara Howard of Edward Jones in Shelby spoke about the company's commitment, noting that Edward Jones has helped raise over \$55 million nationwide for the cause since 2016.

Local advocate Noah Bolen delivered a heartfelt speech:

"Alzheimer's has touched my life deeply. I lost my grandmother, and three of my aunts are currently living with this disease," Bolen

said. "But within this heartache, we find hope. Hope for better treatments, for a cure, and for brighter tomorrows."

During the Promise Garden Ceremony, participants lifted flowers into the sky — blue for those living with Alzheimer's, yellow for caregivers, purple in remembrance of those lost, and orange for supporters. As the colors rose above the park, a hush fell, followed by cheers of determination. One day, organizers said, a white flower will join them, symbolizing the first survivor.

With upbeat music playing, Doc Stumbo, a longtime supporter, cut the starting ribbon, and walkers set off through downtown Mansfield. From children to grandparents, every step was a statement of unity, remembrance, and hope.

This year's Walk has already raised \$76,989 toward a \$115,000 goal, with fundraising continuing through December 31. Donations support critical research, advocacy, and local caregiver programs.

From heartfelt speeches to the vibrant display of the Promise Garden, the Mansfield Walk to End Alzheimer's carried both the weight of loss and the power of hope. As Kemper reminded the crowd, "Alzheimer's is not stopping and neither are we. Together, this community showed that every step, every voice and every dollar moves us closer to a world without this disease."

To donate visit https://act.alz.org/site/TR?fr_id=18832&pg=entry





Photos By Traci Little

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175TH BELLVILLE STREET FAIR • 2025

• Bellville Street Fair celebrates 175 years of community

(Continued from Front Page)

Families enjoyed carnival rides, the kiddie pedal pull, a gymnastics 'exhibition from Heart of Ohio Athletics, and a pet show. Special pricing nights ensured children could enjoy the rides without breaking the bank, keeping the fair both accessible and family friendly.

Beyond the rides, shows, and food, the fair once again proved to be a place where neighbors of all ages reconnected — on front porch steps, wooden park benches, and in the heart of the village itself. For many, the fair is as much about community spirit as it is about the exhibits or entertainment.

For 175 years, the Bellville Street Fair has been where tradition meets celebration — where families pass down stories, where children make memories, and where the heart of the community beats strongest. As this year's 'World's Fair' ended, one thing was clear: the heart of Bellville continues to shine through its people, carrying on timeless traditions for generations to come.



Photos By Traci Little



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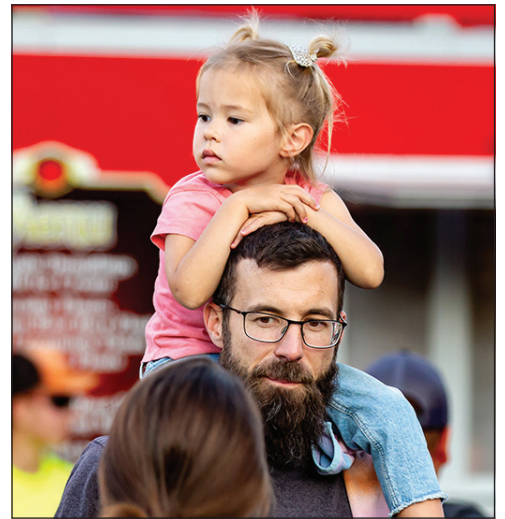


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Photos By Traci Little



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175TH BELLVILLE STREET FAIR • 2025



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Grant Freeman won reserve grand champion breeding heifer at the Bellville Street Fair.



Clear Fork FFA

Gunner Dill won grand champion market goat.



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Photos By Mark Shutt



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Wishing You A Great Time At The Fair



MADISON COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL'S 2025 Homecoming Royalty members are top photo, Maci Hergatt, Madison Berry, Sanaa Davis, Courtney Cyrus, Emma Reynolds, Myla Blankenship, Lillian Symsick, Campbell Kiser and Caleigh Cook; and bottom photo, Timothy Ellis, Evan Cyrus, Randy Jamieson, Grady Spurlock, Kaleb Gordon, Taylor Steffey, Carter Branham, Julius Walker and Colton Adkins. Not pictured is Liam Stone. Out of these students the homecoming king will be announced at an all-school pep assembly and the homecoming queen will be announced during the half-time show of the homecoming football game, both on Sept. 19. Homecoming festivities will end with a dance at the high school on Sept. 20.

Retired Lexington coaches' book signing will celebrate new release

By Kris Leiter

The book *Game Set Life: A Conversation on Character, Grit and the Power of Sports*, co-authored by Lexington retired coaches Mike Kathrein and Jay Harris, was officially released on Aug. 25.

The authors will host a book signing, promoting the newly released work, on Monday, Sept. 22, from 6–8 pm in the Lexington High School cafeteria.

The book, which sold 500 copies in just two days, is a conversation about the education embedded within athletics. Through real stories, honest reflections and meaningful insights, readers will discover how to use sports as a vehicle for developing character, leadership and a strong athlete mindset.

The book is available for purchase on Kindle, as well as hardback and paperback at <https://www.amazon.com/Game-Set-Life-Conversation-Character/dp/B0FLBH48YK>. Copies will be available at the signing event.

During a past interview with Mike Kathrein he spoke about collaborating for the book. “We were both athletes, parents and coaches. Jay had more of the college aspect — being a coach at Brown University and Bowling Green. I had insight on the high school aspect of it and we just kind of hashed it out.”

As the two were collaborating, technology was advantageous as the two lived in completely different states.

“He (Jay) now lives in New York and I’m here (Ohio), and we were just sharing it back and forth. It was a good project. I’m very excited about it. We started about three, maybe four years ago. It was a process.”

Renowned national sports figures John McEnroe, retired professional tennis player, and his brother, Patrick McEnroe, endorsed the book.



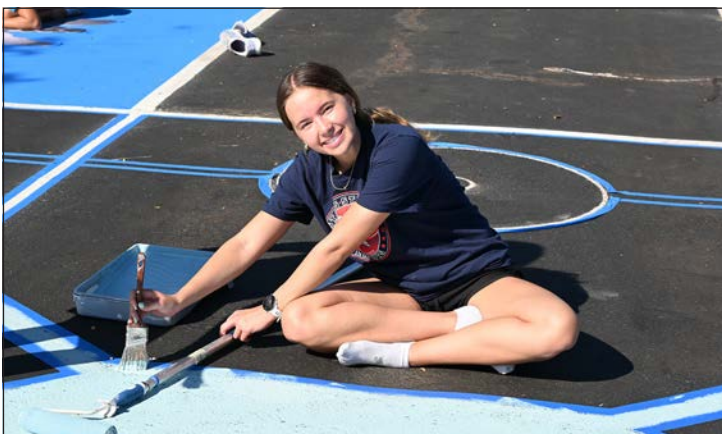
TONYA WELCH'S Environmental Science class at Ontario High School learned about methods wildlife ecologists use to estimate population sizes with a “mark and recapture” lab.



ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL'S 2025 Homecoming Court members are Mike McClenathan, Sydney McManes, Michael Ward, Tessa Crum, Jace Young, Sasha Bulakowski, Brady Baumgard, Addisyn Pittman, Rylan Baker, Kaylee Lynch, Anson Yan, Brinlee Kreger, Eli Baumgard, Briella Hall, Kasen Pittman and Emma Preuninger. The court and attendants were selected by their classmates on the basis of their kindness, leadership, school spirit and school and community involvement. Freshmen attendants are Emma Preuninger and Kasen Pittman. Sophomore attendants are Briella Hall and Elias Baumgard. Junior attendants are Sydney McManes and Michael McClenathan. Seniors are Rylan Baker, Brady Baumgard, Michael Ward, Anson Yan, Jace Young, Sasha Bulakowski, Tessa Crum, Brinlee Kreger, Kaylee Lynch and Addisyn Pittman.



ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL students bid on parking spots and came together to paint them in support of the CamStrong Foundation. This year the event raised over \$1,500 for the fund. The family of Cameron Friend began the fund with Ontario Local Schools to honor his memory by helping students with costs associated with participating in extracurricular sports. Cameron was a 14-year-old Ontario freshman who died of complications from a bone marrow transplant. Those who would like to donate to fund can contact Ontario High School.



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

LEXINGTON VS ASHLAND BOYS VARSITY SOCCER · SEPT. 9
ARROWS WIN 3-2 · PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

ONTARIO VS MADISON COMPREHENSIVE FRESHMAN FOOTBALL · SEPT. 4
WARRIORS WIN 22-13

Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

CLEAR FORK VS MANSFIELD CHRISTIAN · SEPT. 11
COLTS WINS 4-0 · PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

LEXINGTON VS NORTH SCHOOL AKRON · SEPT. 12
MINUTEMEN WIN 70-0 · PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

Clear Fork defends home field with 14-10 win over Warriors

By Kris Leiter

We are blessed to have some great sports in Richland County. It's hard to know what game to attend, and that's a good problem to have.

I attended a great showdown for week four. MOAC varsity football teams Ontario and Clear Fork tangled it out in the Valley with identical records.

The Warriors rolled down the warpath into Bellville but went home with a 14-10 loss to the Colts.

In some ways, this game was a normal rivalry — the hype, the crowd and two great teams. However, this game would be far from the normal fare. This was a game that brought some “unusual-suspects” to the party.

A great defense game was had by both teams with turnovers, interceptions, fumbles and penalties. There were nine turnovers total, six against the Warriors, and three against the Colts. Neither defense would allow the opponent's offense any consistent drive down the field.

As the first quarter showed 8:32 on the clock, Ontario struck the first tally. They lit up the crowd and the scoreboard with a field goal for Ontario, 3-0.

As the Colts received the kick-off after the Ontario field goal, they would return the favor by one-upping the Warriors by scoring a touchdown and successful extra point. The battle was on! Clear Fork was leading 7-3.

As time would expire in the first quarter, both defenses were still holding their ground.

At the opening of the second quarter, the scoring needle remained 7-3 with the Colts still holding the upper hand.

Then, a surprise came from Ontario with 11:27 left in the second quarter. The Colts had a third-and-3 with the Warriors stout defense dropping the Colts for a loss which put them back on the 27-yard line.



Clear Fork was now facing fourth and 27-yards and attempted a 37-yard field goal. If the Colts would make this, they would go up by seven and spread the lead to 7 points.

As Clear Fork kicked the ball, the Warriors weren't done yet and put pressure on the Colts, as they would miss the field goal to the left! Kudos to the Warriors again!

As the second quarter would come and go, neither team added points to their respective scores. The Colts were still leading 7-3 at the halftime horn.

Moving into the third quarter, would the Colts squeak out the victory? It was too early to tell, as the Warriors weren't ready to take the bus ride home quite yet.

As the third quarter clock began,, Clear Fork would be kicking to the Warriors. Ontario's Trey Remy returned a 91-yard kick-off. The Warriors were now leading 10-7 in this tight-knit scoring scenario.

The Colts countered at 5:33 with another touchdown and extra-point as the Colts took the lead 14-10!

As the fourth quarter commenced, it was time for Ontario to play the chess game and they needed at least six points to cover the 4-point deficit.

As Ontario retrieved the ball back from the Colts touchdown, fumbled at 9:44. Ontario's defense had been holding their own and there was plenty of time on the clock for anything to happen.

The Colts had to punt after a stingy Ontario stood their ground once again.

Ontario took over and went up with a fourth-and-1, on their own 29-yard line, moving down the field.

One yard is all the Warriors needed to notch another first-down, however, the Colts would say “no way” and would hold their ground, not allowing the Warriors that one yard!

It was now 5:28 and both defenses would continue to prevent any substantial drives.

Back and forth the see-saw would go and Ontario would score another tally! However, there was a penalty that would prevail and negate the score by the Warriors.

With :05 seconds left, Ontario passed trying to find the end zone, but just as quick the Colts' defense intercepted the pass as time would expire.

Hats off to both teams as they brought a great game to all!



ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL BAND



Raffle basket will include signed jersey

The Friends of the Galion Public Library has a Cincinnati Bengals raffle basket worth approximately \$450 and features Bengals and other football items.

Items include a Bengals t-shirt, blanket, key chain, tumbler, Joe Burrow Hat, cups, a M&S Pizza gift certificate for a large three-item pizza, three books, flag and snacks and utensils for game day.

The basket also has a signed and authenticated Ja'Marr Chase jersey. The basket will also be on display during the fall book sale Oct. 9, 10 and 11.

Tickets can be purchased at the library, 123 N. Market St., 419-468-3203, through Oct. 11. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5 with the drawing on Oct. 13. All proceeds go to the library.

CLASSIFIEDS

LEGAL NOTICE

The following is a succinct summary of the legislation adopted by the Council of the City of Ontario, at their regular meeting held on September 3, 2025.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 25-09 – A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES AND CERTIFYING THEM TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR.

Cathy VanAuker
Clerk of Council
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(T-C 9-11, 18 '25) 22L



Photo By Jeff Hoffer

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