

# Southeast OHIO

SUMMER | FALL 2017



## LPGA LEGEND RENEE POWELL'S DRIVE TO THRIVE

### ALSO INSIDE

Millersburg residents  
rally for rights

Nelsonville's Fun Barn  
a family operation

Dale King, Portsmouth's  
hometown hero

Circleville B&B's mystery  
night hijinks

And MORE!



## EDITOR'S NOTE



All my life, I've been a nostalgic person. I'm a sucker for traditions and exploring who or what keeps those alive. In a place like Southeast Ohio, traditions are often as deep-rooted as the Appalachian soil, adjusting to society's climate, while other emerging customs promise a presence in seasons to come. This issue features both.

Our feature stories includes family outings at the Fun Barn (Page 26), encores of community support for the Zanesville Concert Association (Page 24) and even a real-life version of a whodunit mystery at Circleville's Castle Inn Bed and Breakfast (Page 42).

This issue also includes stories about our Southeast Ohio neighbors who are turning their passions into flourishing businesses. From Sheri Helon crafting homemade soap and lip balm (Page 10) to Janet Bowers making Old World European-style chocolates in her family farm's kitchen (Page 6), these individuals are committed to putting out the best products for locals like you.

I'm truly going to miss this wonderful region that's been my home away from home for the past four years. But I take comfort in knowing these traditions will be waiting for me when I return.

Enjoy!

Emily McIntyre

### MISSION STATEMENT

*Southeast Ohio* strives to spotlight the culture and community within our 21-county region. The student-run magazine aims to inform, entertain and inspire readers with stories that hit close to home.

### EDITORIAL OFFICE

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**ON THE COVER** | Golf legend Renee Powell dials in on opportunities for others. Photo by Robert McGraw.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

 Southeast Ohio Magazine  
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**LEFT** | Dale King works out at his gym, the Portsmouth Spartan Kettlebell Club (PSKC), a CrossFit gym in Portsmouth, Ohio. Read about how he and business partner Renee Wallace help veterans — and why they were invited guests on ABC's *Shark Tank* (Page 38).

# Southeast OHIO

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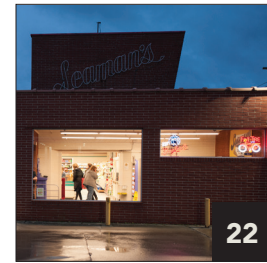




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# Inside Out

Zanesville's former YWCA now serves as an event space, furniture salesroom and dining room

Story by ALEXANDRA GREENBERG | Photo by JORGE CASTILLO

From the outside, Bryan Place in Zanesville looks like many distinguished, old buildings. White columns and archways support its brick exterior and multitude of windows.

But behind the black, iron fence and through the trees and flowers is a seemingly out-of-place sign that advertises its Sunday brunch, furniture sale and monthly comedy show. And really, that's what makes Bryan Place so special.

The building previously served as The YWCA of Zanesville from 1926 to 1993, and during that time, many young women called one of the 36 rooms on the second and third floors of the building home during the week.

"They would come to town and they would work or they would go to the Meredith Business College over here or the Ohio Bell next door," Carol Bryan, owner and lead designer of Bryan

Place says. "... They lived here and their parents would come and get them and take them home for the weekend."

The YWCA merged with the YMCA in 1993 and left the location, but the building listed on the National Register of Historic Places wasn't vacant for long.

That same year, it became Bryan Place, and it now hosts luncheons, dinners, receptions, club meetings, comedy shows and weddings. In addition, nearly all the furniture in the building's bedrooms and hallways is for sale.

Bryan, who also owns Bryan's Furniture Interiors located at 1812 Dresden Road in Zanesville, uses the space to stock furniture for the company. When potential customers go to Bryan's Furniture Interiors, the staff often directs them to Bryan Place to view the merchandise in context.






But perhaps the most extraordinary room of the former YWCA is the dining space that formerly served as the gymnasium. Several years ago, Bryan decided to renovate it to resemble traditional Zanesville buildings, and the idea evolved into what it is today.

"I just found the old stuff, just architectural things, and we tried to make it into little houses and make it look like the courtyard," she says.

Bryan's history with flipping houses came in handy during the gymnasium renovation. Her 40 years of experience allowed her to appreciate the antique pieces she repurposed to make up the house facades that face the round tables, pictured above. Bryan remembers the story behind each exterior feature.

"This building over here was from a house that was kind of behind this; they tore the house down, and I'm over there salvaging the front door and the windows. And the stuff from the shutters up there came from an old house up on the river," she says.

**I** just found the old stuff, just architectural things, and we tried to make it into little houses and make it look like the courtyard."  
**CAROL BRYAN**, Owner

While someone might stroll through downtown Zanesville for its nostalgic appeal, they could obtain a similar feel while sitting in this indoor courtyard having lunch. But at Bryan's Place, they'd have the option to buy a sofa afterwards. 

**PHOTO** | The former YWCA gymnasium now features walls that resemble traditional Zanesville buildings.

### BRYAN PLACE INFORMATION

Lunch: Tuesday - Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Sunday brunch: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

49 North Sixth Street  
Zanesville, Ohio 43701  
(740) 450-8008

[www.bryansfurnitureinteriors.com/bryan\\_place](http://www.bryansfurnitureinteriors.com/bryan_place)



# CONFECTION PERFECTION

Truffle artisan creates chocolate experience to savor



**PHOTO** | The Aztec Chili Truffle has a creamy center with hints of orange zest, roasted habanero chilis, coffee liqueur, cayenne pepper and cinnamon. Photo by Erin Fausel.

Story by ERIN FAUSEL

**R**etirement usually creates an opportunity to follow passions otherwise untouched, and for Janet Bowers, a move from Colorado back to her family farm in Hocking county was the perfect chance to pursue a longtime love: chocolate.

Wren Valley Truffles was established in 2012. The company's concentration is in chocolate truffles, but it has dipped into different facets of sweet treats over the years, including caramels, chocolate molds, crème filled chocolates, candy bars, and assorted confections gift packages.

The name comes from Bowers' great-grandmother who named the family farm Wren Valley. The wren was her favorite bird, and their property is tucked away in the valley of Hocking Hills, which has been in the family for over 150 years. Bowers felt it was intimate and appropriate to bring the family farm name into her new company.

## PURSUING THE PASSION

Janet Bowers was born and raised in Chillicothe, Ohio and attended Bowling Green State University for her undergraduate studies in Geology and American Literature, and Ohio State University for her graduate work. Years later she earned a Doctorate in Clinical and Forensic Psychology.

Bowers opened a private practice Evergreen, Colorado that she operated for over 30 years. There she worked closely with hospitals and court systems. Upon inheriting her family farm in Ohio, Bowers closed up her practice so that she and her husband Rodger could move back to her home roots.

After working as a psychologist and supervisor at the Ohio Department of Correction and Rehabilitation for a few years, Bowers decided 2012 was a fitting time to close this career chapter.

To Bowers, her retirement was liberating. Finally, she had the time to explore her other interests. She remembers thinking to herself, "I want to do what I've always wanted to do... and that was to learn more about chocolate and do something with it."

Bowers says after moving back to Ohio she struggled to find the fabulous piece of chocolate she craved, and ultimately came up at a loss. She took it upon herself to craft her own Old World European-style artisan chocolates.

## PERFECT PAIRINGS

Bowers creates each truffle in her farm house kitchen at Wren Valley, and attributes her psychology background to the playful names of each treat.

The Chai Dreamer is a blend of milk and dark chocolates, candied ginger, cinnamon in local cream, and topped in organic dried sweetheart rose petals. Aztec Chili comes from her deep love for central American dishes and includes the sweet tang of glazed oranges and dark chocolate with the kick of habanero chilies, cayenne and cinnamon to create the ultimate sweet heat truffle.

"I love looking at someone's face when they first take a bite, it's like the sun comes out!" says Bowers.

A special concoction from Wren Valley Truffles is the springtime Woodland Creature gift box, which features rich hollow chocolate mice filled with silky peanut crème, chocolate bunny molds, and chocolate





**ABOVE AND BELOW** | Truffles, chocolate molds, caramels, and other assortments are available for purchase at Nelsonville Emporium. This page photos by Cayla Liebold.

“ I love looking at someone’s face when they first take a bite, it’s like the sun comes out!”

**JANET BOWERS,**  
Wren Valley Truffles

beehives bursting with locally sourced honey. It’s the perfect tribute to Hocking County’s great outdoors.

Dressed in dustings and drizzles, and topped with candies and sugars, these truffles showcase the effort put into each batch. And the people who help create them were picked purposefully. Cutting, rolling, and wrapping: the work behind the presentation of the chocolates and caramels is immensely important.

“It takes patience, and skill, and speed to make that work,” Bowers says. “It really took me pushing me to begin the search for the right people.” Several friends and some contracted workers help Bowers to regularly turn out orders for weddings, showers, corporate gatherings, and restocking purchase location supply.

Beyond her drive to create beautiful, traditional chocolates, Bowers says it has been essentially important to use locally sourced and organic ingredients every chance she gets. Snowville Creamery, Sticky Pete’s pure maple syrup, and Silver Bridge Coffee Company are a few of the local vendors behind her creations.

Dozens of flavors and fillings line the Wren Valley Truffle menu, but often times Bowers lets her customers call the shots. “Tell me what you like,” she says. “I get really inspired by people who love chocolate.” She recently had a special order that resulted in a new layered orange and raspberry crème truffle.

The Nelsonville emporium, located in Public Square in Nelsonville, Ohio is one shop invested in selling local craftsmanship, artwork, and chocolate confections. Owner Jennifer L’Heureux says Bowers is centered on local ingredients and local economic opportunity. “She likes to make sure people can grow. She is very supportive of the arts” says L’Heureux.

“We want to support local agriculture and entrepreneurs,” says Bowers. “I go out of my way to do that whenever I can.”

#### WHAT’S NEXT

Although the success of Wren Valley Truffles might lead other owners to consider opening a store, Bowers believes it would tie her down too much.

Besides, Bowers says she is working on starting beginner and advanced classes to teach others about creating their own chocolate confections. She says the courses will include demonstrations on how to make the truffles, how to source ingredients, and tips for what makes a good product.

However Bowers decides to organize her classes, students will undoubtedly enjoy taking their hand-crafted confections home. And perhaps this strategy might also alleviate some of the business’s supply-and-demand matters. “We’ve outgrown where we are, and that’s a good problem,” Bowers says. 🍷



#### WHERE TO FIND WREN VALLEY TRUFFLES

Glenlaurel A Scottish Inn & Cottages  
Gift Shop (Rockbridge)

Hocking Hills Winery (Logan)

Hocking Hills Dining Lodge (Logan)

Nelsonville Emporium

<http://www.wrenvalleytruffles.com>





# CAFÉ SOCIETY

## Sophie's Tea Room hits the sweet spot

Story by DOTTIE KRAMER | Photos by NICK OATLEY

Midway down West Main Street in Somerset, a village in Perry County, is a shop that stands out among the rest. It's a gray color, with a big white porch covered in cut flowers. The sign hanging above the door reads, "Sophie's Tea Room."

The inviting exterior suggests what lies inside, but the real comforts radiate via your other senses. The smell of baked goods wafts through the air and the sound of laughter bounds through the front room from the back room.

If this environment instills contentment in the customer, the owner's strategy is a success. "When [customers] say they're happy, that's what it's all about," Sophie's Tea Room owner, Laura Riffle, says.

Riffle, a woman in her mid to late 50s, sports a salt and pepper-colored pixie cut, a round face adorned with blue-rimmed glasses and a smile that seems eternally etched on her face.

[A man] just walked in, gave us \$40 for lunch and walked out, a customer says of a complete stranger's random act of kindness.

The customer who received the free lunch left the \$40 as a tip for the waitress. The waitress pays for a young couple's lunch and pockets the change. Smiles all around.

Sophie's Tea Room is the creative endeavor of Riffle, who wanted to put "an extension of herself" into the world. She (loosely) named the shop after her 12-year-old granddaughter, Sophia.

Ironically enough, the Tea Room doesn't host tea parties regularly. "I'll do tea parties on the weekend for groups if they're booked in advance," Riffle says, "but I don't do many tea parties."

Sophie's Tea Room started simply as an idea from Riffle and blossomed into a full restaurant and tea room hybrid two and a half years ago. Riffle, a former nurse, created the menu herself and does a lot of the cooking. There are five full-time employees who help Riffle and her husband.

[My husband and I] would be divorced if we worked together every day," Riffle says, laughing, "He does a lot of the maintenance, the cleaning and the yard work. He helped with a lot of the structural concepts."

The house was in complete disarray when Riffle purchased it. The structure was sound, but there was no insulation. There were gas ovens in every room to heat the house, the carpet was old, the roof was caving in and the walls were sunken in.

The inspector told my husband it'd be cheaper to divorce me than to buy this house, Riffle laughs.

But Riffle is not one who hides from the challenge. And this days, with little external help, Riffle's days are jam packed with various activities. She works 10-12 hours a day, despite the tea room only being open between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

"I do mostly everything: all the shopping, all the cooking, the menu prep, making most desserts," Riffle says. "7 a.m. daily I come in and start prepping."





**OPPOSITE PAGE** | A couple eats lunch at Sophie's Tea Room.

**LEFT AND ABOVE** | Sophie's Tea Room menus feature sandwiches, wraps and soups in addition to scones, sweet treats and teas.

**BELOW** | Owner Laura Riffle is done for the day.

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“ There’s nothing else like this in Somerset. I put my heart and soul into this place.”

*LAURA RIFFLE, Owner*

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Riffle buys fruits and vegetables local whenever she can and buys her loose leaf tea, which is the only type of tea sold, from two companies: one in Colorado, one in Minnesota. So buys the rest from different wholesale retailers.

Riffle is a self-proclaimed “food lover,” and recommends the tea room’s soups to all patrons. (Her favorite is the potato soup.)

Somerset doesn’t have copious dining options, and Riffle really wanted a place that she (or someone like her) would want to go. “I really liked the idea that people would say ‘Let’s go to Sophie’s!’” Riffle says.

In addition to the main seating area, the tea room features a small private upstairs area with two larger tables with chairs. The natural light bathes the room in a warm glow, even in winter.

“There’s nothing else like this in Somerset,” Riffle says, “I put my heart and soul into this place.” 🍷

#### **SOPHIE’S TEA ROOM INFORMATION**

*Open:* Tuesday - Saturday: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

*Closed:* Sunday, Monday

120 W Main St. — Somerset, Ohio 43783

(740) 743-1945 — Facebook: @sophiesteahouse







**ABOVE** | A Pup and A Cup business owner, Mashell Brown, weighs tea to bag at the Nationwide Insurance office where she spends her Sundays preparing merchandise. Photo provided.

# A SPOONFUL OF WELLNESS

Gallia County couple scoops only natural ingredients for tea time

Story by LAURA GAROTTI

**M**ashell Brown and her husband, Dan are quite literally two for tea. During the summer, they serve samples of tea and medicinal knowledge at the Chillicothe farmers market, an hour from their Gallipolis home.

Each Sunday throughout the year, the couple are busy at the high wooden table in Dan's Gallipolis Nationwide Insurance office bagging and labelling the floral and fruity blends of black teas they sell.

Perhaps the only thing that rivals their work ethic is their dedication to natural health. A Pup and a Cup teas feature all-natural ingredients and only one, the pumpkin spice, includes flavor preservatives. The Browns also buy cotton tea bags from a supplier who uses only natural ingredients as well.

"There's a gentleman who comes to the market — he'll buy three (tea bags)," Mashell says. "He takes them, after he drinks his tea, he rinses them out and puts them in his dish drain to dry."

The business, now in its third year of running, has earned enough regular customers to stay busy between October and May. Shops in both Gallipolis and Chillicothe sell the teas throughout the year, and Mashell also receives orders by phone and through the business's Facebook page, where customers can make online purchases through the Square platform.

Mashell says she receives tea requests for a variety of reasons other than simply sipping the beverage. For example, Becky Pasquale, the director of Our House Museum in Gallipolis, has used historical recipes and substituted steeped tea instead of water.

Momma Duck Creations' goat milk soap and sugar scrubs also integrates A Pup and a Cup teas into its product, and owner Jennifer Littlejohn says the partner-

ship helps her sales. "During the holiday time, (customers) are more apt to buy the soap because of the tea," she says. "I don't know why, but maybe it's because of the holiday smell. It smells like home."

In other cases, the teas are used to improve health. Mashell cites as example her friend who was battling cancer. Her doctor advised her that she "needs good things going into her body along with the chemo drugs," Mashell says.

Her friend began using matcha powder in a recipe for icing, which she now puts on her bran muffins. The powder, made from baby tea leaves that are grown only in the shade, has 137 percent more antioxidants than regular green tea and doesn't react with the chemotherapy drugs.

Because her customers trust her advice on the medicinal value, not just the flavor profiles of the teas, Mashell consults medicinal books and trusted website sources before advising customers.

One customer even brings her prescriptions to the farmers market with her. "We're going through the prescription sheets that come with her medication to make sure that we don't have any drug interactions or anything like that," Mashell says.

She says most of her customers commend her commitment to improving her medicinal knowledge, which in turn, allows others to develop their own understanding. 🍵

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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 @APupinACupTeaCo

**A Pup and A Cup**

Tea Company





# SPOKES AND WORDS

## Book a Bike program a smart movement for local libraries

Story by MADISON EBLEN

Photo by ABOLFAZL JARRAHI

**T**oday's public libraries in Athens, Gallia and Meigs counties provide patrons a wealth of information options that range from books and magazines to access to internet, music, movies and even video games. But bicycles? Yes, just check it out.

The Book a Bike program, started in 2014 by James Hill, former assistant director of Athens County Public Libraries, allows a card member to use a bike for a set number of hours for errands, exercise, or sight-seeing. "Since we've had the program, it's been the most popular item," Hill says. "It's a little bit skewed because they're only out for three hours, whereas the book goes out for two weeks, but still."

Other libraries are taking note of this success, and Hill says he receives weekly phone calls and emails from people seeking more information about starting a similar program. For example, a library in Iowa City, Iowa, is designing a program based on Athens' model, and Northeastern Ohio's Stark County libraries have partnered with commercial company Zagster to start its own bike sharing system.

Meigs County's program is rooted in collaborative funding, thanks to Laura Cleland, Meigs County Health Department's Creating Healthy Communities project director, who approached Chelsea Poole, the Meigs County District Public Library assistant director, with the bike sharing idea. Cleland wanted to apply "Together on Diabetes" grant funding toward community health projects that included exercise; an important element of the Book a Bike program.

"When we did a needs assessment in our area, we recognized that transportation is an issue," Cleland says. "We have patrons that don't have vehicles, and we wanted to look at an alternative way to provide transportation for those who don't have it."

The Meigs County District Public Library offers bicycles at three of its four locations, with plans to implement the program at Eastern Library. One of its distinct features is patrons can check a bike out from one location and return it to another. Poole says people on foot have checked out a bike in Middleport and returned it at Pomeroy to help cut back on travel time.

A commonality among county programs is its popularity with family members who visit from out of



**ABOVE** | A variety of bikes await checkout at The Athens Public Library, including hand trikes, recumbent bikes and cargo trikes. Card holders are encouraged to borrow one of the bikes and ride it on the Hockhocking Adena Bikeway.

“We have patrons that don't have vehicles, and we wanted to look at an alternative way to provide transportation for those who don't have it.”

**LAURA CLELAND,**


Creating Healthy Communities Project Director

town. Athens Public Library librarian Greg LaVelle says it's pretty common to have one person with a good standing library card come in and either check out bikes for their whole family or for their out-of-town visitors.

However, bicycles are just one example of an “alternative item” available to check out at libraries. Other branches across the country offer guitars, vegetable seeds and even, cake pans.

“We check out a few other unique things, like we have a handheld projector, infrared thermometer, energy use monitor for appliances, those kind of things,” Hill says. “But nothing as big as a bicycle, of course.”

The region's programs continue to introduce new items to its bike roster, such as Athens' introduction of recumbent bikes that allow the rider to recline and hand trike bicycles to Meigs' inclusion of location and safety flags.

Suffice to note, as local libraries strive to better serve community needs, their influence on the leisure, health and transportation of the region goes well beyond words. 





# SO FRESH and SO CLEAN

**ABOVE** | This Buttercup Lotion Bar medallion is packaged and is ready for sale.

## Cutler's Not-Just Soap Company keeps its products real

Story by MICHELLE JACOBSON | Photos by CAROYLN ROGERS

One step into Sheri Helon's home and immediately aromas of fresh herbs, oils and honey fill the air. The scents welcome guests into the warm, cozy atmosphere. There are baskets of soaps that cover the countertops of the kitchen, each product hand wrapped and uniquely created.

But it's not just soap.

Located in Cutler, at Not Just Soap Company, only the purest ingredients found in nature are used in every skin product they sell. Everything, from soaps to lip balms to oils, lotions and scrubs, is handcrafted and made with pure ingredients.

"I use therapeutic essential oils because in my world everything needs to be natural and I try to heal everybody pretty much with essential oils and as naturally as I can," owner and founder Helon says. "So, I try to give that to my customers because there is not a lot of choices for this type of thing out there."

Helon's soap company developed out of her interest in herbal healing and essential oils. As a student at Hocking College (Nelsonville), Helon studied wildlife with a concentration in herbal plants.

This knowledge helped Helon create her first handcrafted product—a lip balm called Love Your Lips. The balm included plant-based ingredients such as olive, hemp seed, almond oils, beeswax and essential oils of peppermint, lavender and tea tree.

"I wanted to make something that I could give to friends and family for Christmas and the lip balm seemed like a great choice," Helon says. "I never thought back then that it would be the start of something that I would be doing for more than half of my life now."

Helon's next project was learning to create soaps, and she spent two years reading books about natural products before initializing her business in 2001. In the years since, Helon has consistently formulated soap recipes that exclude contain petroleum, alcohol or synthetic dyes. Everything in the products, down to the base of soaps, is made from clays, teas, spices and other natural ingredients.

"I do a lot of research on everything that I put into my products," Helon says. "If I find that something is not good any more, then I would take it out. I have a lot of essential oils and they are organic, therapeutic grade, which is a very good product to have in because you are getting benefits of an essential oil."

For example, Helon cites the peppermint in her lavender mint soap, which contains healing agents that can relieve headaches, stomach pains and can help the body cool down.

According to Helon, oils are more beneficial than commercial products because they moisturize and protect the skin. The skin is the largest organ that



makes up the body, so Helon believes it's important to be cautious about what is being absorbed.

Helon's products are made in her home and sold at various venues and festivals across Ohio, such as the Toledo Farmer's Market, the Great Trails Festival, Algonquin Mill Festival and the Oak Ridge Festival. Later this year, Helon plans to sell her products at the Yankee peddler Festival, a venue that will push Helon toward her goal to create 10,000 soaps in one year.

In addition, Not Just Soap Company products are sold in select health food stores and wellness centers, such as Health Plus in Sandusky, OH. According to manager Caren Allen, several of her customers come to the store specifically in search for one of Helon's products. The store carries Not Just Soap Company's sugar scrub, lip balms, shea body butter, lotion bar and soaps.

Helon and Allen have done business together for ten years, and Allen cites the product as top-shelf for many different reasons. "I loved that it [the products] were made by her and that she grew her own herbs" Allen says. "I'm really proud of her for expanding her operation. We go out of our way to pay for shipping so that we can still get her products."

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“ I try to heal everybody pretty much with essential oils and as naturally as I can.”

SHERI HELON, Owner

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As for Helon's future products, she hopes to create a natural sunblock, as well as a mosquito repellent. In addition, she wants to make changes to her work environment to increase its sustainability. Such improvements would include solar panels for her workshop and a greenhouse to grow more herbs.

But Helon's mindset seems to reflect that of an increasing sector of Americans who care what is included in their personal health products. And for Helon, it is part of her civic duty to create all-natural products and provide them to those in the rural community.

"It's definitely a very natural community," Helon says. "People want to buy local and they want to help small businesses grow and be successful. So, I think that is a very good part of having a business in a unique area like this." 🍷



#### HOW THE SOAP IS MADE:

1. Lye water and sodium hydroxide crystals are poured together and heated to 250 degrees, then removed from heat.
3. While the mixture cools, oils (palm, coconut, olive) are added to beeswax and other ingredients and heated until it melts, then it is poured into soap molds.
4. After the lye cools down to 100 degrees, it is poured over the oil mixture in the molds.
5. The molds go through a saponification process over the next 24 hours, which means that it heats itself up, turns into a jelly substance and then cools down.
6. The soap is cured for two months before it is ready to be wrapped, packaged and sold.

**LEFT** | Sheri Helon pours liquid soap into a mold lined with wax paper for cooling and cutting.





## Athens locals build a *boulder* community

Story by GRANT PETERS | Photos by ROBERT MCGRAW

Ted Welser pushes aside a vacuum plastic curtain and climbs a set of steep stairs that lead to the loft of his garage on the residential east side of Athens. In actuality, the room is much more inside-out turtle than it is loft. The plywood walls are barely visible under a shell of nearly interlocking nobs and bits. Chalk dusted polyurethane climbing holds make up the majority of the suspended clutter, but a great deal of the mimic rock resembles cleverly reconstituted construction scraps.

Sydney Welser, 12, hangs upside down from a suspended length of PVC piping covered in fine grain sandpaper as her father says, “Yeah, this room has been a work in progress since we moved here. We finished this wall first, in 2013.” Dismounting by way of acrobatic flip, Sydney chimes in, “and then that one was next, it was the easiest,” gesturing toward a technicolor jumble under one of the room’s only two windows.

The Welser garage loft, affectionately named The Dojo, is small by almost every metric. The Dojo is the personal climbing space of Ted Welser who, with the help of two other Athens locals, Bryant Noble and Jesse Stock, founded Climb Athens LLC. in September 2016.

Welser and existing members of Athens climbing community have managed to fit more than 105 planned “routes” and 1500 holds into a space that might be better suited for storage than for sport.

“Climbing gyms in Japan have to be like this [cramped],” Welser says pointing at an empty space between holds. “This would probably have a hold here.”

In that way, Welser reflects the personality of many climbers: tenacious. In the past year Climb Athens LLC. has attracted about 30 funding members.

Climb Athens is a non-profit organization dedicated to spreading the cornerstone tenets of rock climbing in the Athens area. Currently, the organization is in the process of applying for a 501(c)7 non-profit “Social Club” tax exemption license, and operates as such. Some of its ultimate goals include, “Building a supportive, cooperative community,” “Encouraging healthy, lifelong active lifestyles,” and establishing, “high quality, accessible, and inspiring climbing facilities.” Climb Athens began receiving members in the fall of 2016, but was established long before that.

Welser, now at Ohio University, moved to Athens in August of 2007 from Seattle, Washington. Though Welser climbed less frequently in Washington, a fresh start and relative geographic proximity to some of the best climbing on the continent rekindled Welser’s interest in the sport. Though not his first home wall Welser fondly calls The Dojo his best.

In 2013, Welser met Bryant Noble, another climber, at the Athens Bicycle shop. “I had been so focused on biking that I didn’t climb for about a year,” Noble says.



Noble moved to Athens with a group from Illinois to found the Brookfield Church, which is located on Court Street in Athens. Welser's garage project tipped the scales for Noble. Together, with the help of the disparate, but pre-existing climbing community, Climb Athens began construction on its bouldering wall in Noble's more spacious garage.

Noble's garage, named "BetaFish," (a pun in reference to climbing slang "beta" which helps climbers understand how to climb a prescribed route) is located on Vore Ridge Road off of 682 from the University Estates. The wall stands about 12 feet tall and is wide enough for five people to climb simultaneously. The floor is plastered with couch cushions, fall mats, and two newly acquired gymnastic mats that, together, cost Climb Athens about \$2000 — money raised from membership fees.

"Running this kind of thing can be expensive. We are just trying to break even at this point, but that's kind of what climbing is about," Welser says. "The more regular climbers we can get to sign up, the more we can offer."

Today, in addition to Noble's garden tools, fishing gear and car, a wood stove is stoked during hours of operation and heats the large indoor space — a graciously Appalachian twist on gym normalcy.

As their program grows, Welser and Noble hope they can expand the climbing space in BetaFish. Continued efforts to improve the routes, ensure climber

“ We are just trying to break even at this point, but that's kind of what climbing is about.”

*TED WELSER*, Founder of Climb Athens

safety, and keep the conversation interesting are reliant on continued funding. The addition of another location in a commercial space has also been discussed, which could accelerate the capacity for development.

For now, BetaFish is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The space provides Climb Athens members an opportunity to help develop the goals set by the organization: offering community, support and affordable climbing. 🇺🇸



**OPPOSITE PAGE** | Eli Hajjar clings to a rock climbing wall at BetaFish, an indoor gym space kept by Climb Athens, a non-profit organization for promoting indoor climbing in the area.

**RIGHT** | Ted Welser has been rock climbing since college. Now, he spends time with his daughter, Sydney Welser, teaching her the techniques and excersizes necessary to climb at a competitive level.

**BOTTOM** | Bryant Noble tightens rock climbing holds in his garage which doubles as a training gym for Climb Athens LLC.







# PAY-TO-PLAY

The financial facets of funding public and private high school athletics

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Story by KELLEN BEACOATS | Photo by ROBERT MCGRAW

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**A**s the band played during freshman Michael Kelly's first game as an Alexander High School football player, he locked arms with his teammates and allowed the adrenaline to wash over him. Kelly is one of the thousands of high school football players who suited up this past fall, but he is different in one respect, Alexander doesn't require its athletes to pay a preset price before said athlete can play a sport.

The concept of "pay-to-play" requires students in both public and private schools to fund their own participation in school-related extracurricular activities. Often students opt to play high school sports and hope the school keeps the price under \$100, though that price differs between sports and regions of Ohio. But if a student has aspirations of playing sports for more than just fun, that price can skyrocket.

## Costs May Vary

Figuring out which high schools charge for sports and how much each one charges is difficult in southeastern Ohio, as many schools neglect to report such information to the Ohio High School Athletic Association, Associate Professor and Khandas Nandala Professor of Sports Administration David Ridpath says. Club sports and the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) — an organization that showcases many of the best high school basketball players in the country — are more open about such things and those sports require payments that could reach \$300 and more per sport, not including travel expenses and other costs.

"If you truly love a sport and can't afford to play it, it's like being deprived of an equal opportunity," Kelly says. "Everyone should have an equal chance to excel and enjoy your high school opportunities in a sport."

In Washington County's Marietta College, which counts former MLB pitcher Matt DeSalvo as an alumnus, student athletes bring assorted high school experiences. Liz Nedved, a soccer player who grew up in Pickaway County's Circleville, says although her high school experience was relatively inexpensive, some aren't as lucky.

"At my high school I had to pay \$50, but I went to a pretty small high school," she says. "My sister went to a high school in Columbus, and her pay to participate was anywhere from like \$250 to \$350."

## Travel Expenses Hit Home

All around southeastern Ohio the finances can be back-breaking, especially if their children play more than one sport. Nedved chose to quit playing club soccer after her freshman year of high school mainly because of the financial and travel requirements for tournaments and competitions.

Brooke Borich, a Marietta College women's basketball player from Washington County's Beverly, played AAU for six years, traveling as far as Missouri and

**“**If you truly love a sport and can't afford to play it, it's like being deprived of an equal opportunity,**”**

**MICHAEL KELLY**, Alexander High School football player

North Carolina to compete at a higher level. Borich says she was fortunate that her parents and grandparents were so helpful in financing her travels.

"I didn't really run into [a financial] issue," she says. "We did a lot of fundraising for people who couldn't afford it."


However, countless other players are sidelined by the high prices or extensive travel requirements. For the families who struggle to keep food in pantries and clothes on their children's backs, the burden is massive.

For families such as Borich's, who have multiple student athletes, other challenges emerge. In her case, Borich's parents actually asked her younger sister to wait until the elder Borich graduated to start playing AAU because of the potential financial strain. The additional costs from playing club sports, such as meals, gas and hotel, often accompany high level athletics.

"Obviously cumulative it was pretty expensive for hotels and obviously meals and gas," Borich says.

## Players Gonna Play

High school athletes such as Alexander's Kelly, who plays in Athens County, have another three years of paying such costs and trying to recreate that feeling he felt on the first Friday he walked out with the Spartans. Kelly also dreads for the future of those who can't afford to pay to play and what could await them in the future.

"If there was a pay-to-play policy, and a student couldn't afford the cost and couldn't play, they're more likely to fall down the wrong path in life," Kelly says. "And that could be avoided if a sport was there to keep them busy and keep them away from bad influences." 

## AVERAGE PAY TO PLAY COST PER OHIO DISTRICT

Central	\$143
East	\$98
Northeast	\$153
Northwest	\$93
Southeast	\$66
Southwest	\$141

—Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA), 2014 survey





## TALKING TRASH (and more)

Annie and Jay Warmke extend their sustainable efforts beyond their home at Blue Rock Station

Story by EMMA JENKINS | Photos by JORGE CASTILLO

**D**own a winding back road in Philo sits the home of Annie and Jay Warmke. But this isn't an average house made of brick, siding or stone.

The Warmke's house is made of trash.

The walls are filled with mud-packed tires and covered with a limewash finish. Cans, bottles and other reusable items are also employed in the structure. The home uses a combination of thermal mass and passive solar. Thermal mass means the structure's material absorbs and stores heat energy, while passive solar refers to the sunlight coming through the windows. The only other heat source is a small fireplace in the living room, which warms up the space where Annie works.

At Blue Rock Station, Jay and Annie use grey water recycling, solar electricity and composting toilets. Grey water recycling is the reuse of water from sinks, showers, tubs and washing machines. The process allows the Warmkes to raise plants in an indoor wetland. The solar ray provides electricity for their home, and the composting toilets allow waste to be used as a nutrient-rich fertilizer.

"The idea is that you can provide all of these systems for yourself, and then why not build the structure itself out of things people are throwing away?" Jay says.

There are 14 other buildings on the site, all created with similar reusable materials. The Warmkes, interns and monthly workshop visitors built each structure from scratch. During the summer months, Annie and Jay invite people to come work on the tiny house, their latest project. During the workshops, participants learn basic construction skills such as building insulation and plastering.

This year, they are creating what looks like cement blocks that are actually made of straw and mud. Those will be used as the insulation of the building.

One former intern, Eduardo Sandavol, still returns to Blue Rock Station to work on the tiny house. The house is going to be two stories with a sleeping place, a small kitchen, a shower and a porch. Sandavol wants to build his own home to live in and is using the sustainable construction and carpentry skills he's learned from Annie and Jay to make that happen.

"If I can temporarily stay in something like this while I construct my final home, something I don't have to invest that much money into, something that is easy to put together, something that can stay on my property as a guest home—that's really ideal," he says.

Sandavol is also a part of a group of interns that created the Blue Rock Station free school. Alongside





**LEFT** | Annie and Jay Warmke in front of their Blue Rock Station home.

**ABOVE** | Eduardo Sandavol stands next to the mud-packed tires used to build the foundation of the tiny house.

the Warmkes, the interns instruct skills that aren't taught in today's culture. Among those skills are basic carpentry, self-care, basic sewing, car maintenance and bread making. The idea behind the free school is those who take part will form a community by working on a local level and looking out for one another. The two- to three-hour sessions are held on the third Saturday of each month at Blue Rock Station.

Creating a support system in Southeast Ohio was difficult for the Warmkes at first, but they have involved themselves in many groups. Jay is on the board of Green Energy Ohio, a nonprofit organization that promotes environmentally and economically sustainable practices. Annie created Women Grow Ohio, a group that connects women who are producing food on a small scale. The two also work closely with Rural Action in Athens, a nonprofit agency that works to ease poverty in the region.

Exchanging re-usable resources, sustainable skills and friendship among likeminded people is what keeps Annie and Jay interested in sustainable living. The two are especially inspired by the young interns who live and work at Blue Rock Station.

Oftentimes, Jay and Annie see physical and intellectual changes in those individuals by the time they leave. They hope that the interns can take the skills

“ ‘I don't need a big house; I can have a smaller house. I don't need a new thing, I can have a used thing.’ Then you begin to find that these choices are not hardships.”

**JAY WARMKE,**  
Blue Rock Station Proprietor

they learn and apply them to their own lives. “If you can say, ‘I don't need a big house; I can have a smaller house. I don't need a new thing, I can have a used thing;’ Then you begin to find that these choices are not hardships,” Jay says. “They're more like living life aware.”

Those choices have proven successful for the Warmkes. They plan to continue offering opportunities for others to learn and contribute. Their home at Blue Rock Station has become more than a house—it has become a community, an ideology and a lifestyle.

“I was dreaming of it for many years of my life,” Annie says. “I couldn't imagine it would look like this, but I knew it would feel like this—where people feel safe and happy and get some courage within themselves. That's what I thought it would feel like. I achieved that.” 🍋



# EARTH, WIND, INSPIRE

Environmentally conscious community challenges business stereotypes



**ABOVE** | The winding gravel roads of Wisteria were originally used to transport mining equipment and coal in and out of the area.

Story by KIRSTEN KUESER | Photo and artwork PROVIDED

**H**idden in the winding roads of Meigs County, Wisteria serves as a nature preserve, a venue for private and public events, a campground and a residential community. It is a corporation that seven families call home, but these fields were once hills much like the rest of Appalachian Ohio. The land's journey to this point started in the coal boom of the early 1900s.

In the '50s the area that is now Wisteria was rich with coal and its hillsides were torn into for strip mining. After the region was depleted of its coal roughly ten years later, without legally being held accountable for restoring the land, the company left the area in ruins. Locals who lived in the area during the time remember the fields looking like the surface of Mars—covered in rocks and devoid of life.

It wasn't until coal taxes were implemented to fund the reclamation efforts and land began to erode alarmingly close to the main roads that the state of Ohio started to administrate reclamation on the land—a process that cost more than \$1 million.

Thus, Wisteria was born. Charlene Suggs and her former husband Todd Alan, the founding presidents of Wisteria, sought to restructure the corporate business model to foster community and environmental

growth. With a little faith and a lot of physical labor, Suggs, Todd Alan and 20 like-minded individuals came together to make that dream a reality on this reclaimed land in 1996.

“When we came here it was a field—there was nothing—we had the remnants of the logging roads that we threw gravel on and used, but everything we did—every time we had an event, we just piled that money back into the land, and after a while it should give us dividends. We’ve been free labor because that’s the only way we could afford it,” Suggs says.

What makes Wisteria so different is its combined business structure and product. While many corporations are criticized for depleting land and resources, Wisteria is founded on the principle of restoration and land-stewardship: a philosophy fueled by Suggs’ experience in corporate America.

Throughout the latter part of the ‘80s Suggs worked as the manager of a Kinko’s print shop in New Haven, Connecticut, and later as a General Manager for a software developer corporation, Hammerlab. During her time at Kinkos she was sent to manager training at the corporation’s headquarters in California. This was when she recognized how useful the business structure of a corporation was. Her manager training



“...we’re transforming ourselves as well as the land because we’re beings of this land too.”

CHARLENE SUGGS, President, Wisteria

experience is where she first began to conceptualize using the same model to provide a legal umbrella for a collection of households to increase their wealth and protect their collective interests.

Suggs left corporate life in 1987 to finish her BA in Writing/Editing and Biological Sciences. After she graduated, she met her former husband and learned they shared a common interest in establishing a sustainable community. Around the time they met, Todd Alan started a band, which Suggs helped manage and toured with throughout the early ‘90s. Together they headlined various events on the festival circuit for five years. While on tour they would host and attend workshops on land-based community. She and her husband blended these experiences to create Wisteria’s business model.

“There’s a lot of ways we are creating value—because value is more than just money—value is reflected in money, but it’s really not the only measuring stick. We’re trying to create value as the quality of life that we want, what we’re putting out there, which is respecting land,” Suggs explains.

The stereotypes surrounding corporations usually include unsustainable practices and profit-seeking ventures, but Wisteria flips this notion on its head.

“This is a long term vision—and it wants to be profitable—but not at the expense of the future and I think that’s part of the value we’re creating,” Suggs says.

Most of the permanent houses utilize solar panels and collect rainwater in order to reduce not only the cost of living, but also the environmental footprint left behind. To make the campsite a more sustainable venture, the members of Wisteria have incorporated an environmentally friendly waste-water system.

Without this system processing thousands of gallons of shower water, Wisteria would have to have the waste water pumped out of a septic tank, put onto a truck, use fossil fuels to transport it to a plant, and then pay to have it chemically processed. Instead, the water goes into a settling tank, flows through a system of pipes into a waste stabilization pond—where the water is treated by natural processes such as respiration.

Looking toward the future, Wisteria has plans to add solar panels to the campground’s café and dining area and install a pond energy system for incoming permanent residents. The corporation also plans to continue hosting workshops on how to live sustainably and use the land resourcefully with hopes of inspiring visitors to challenge the unsustainable practices ingrained in society today.

Ultimately, Suggs’ mission is well underway: “We are reclaiming ourselves as we reclaim this land because we’re undoing a lot of that negative programming ... we’re transforming ourselves as well as the land because we’re beings of this land too.”



LEFT | A groovy weekend is always in the forecast when Wisteria hosts the Color Dance Music & Arts Festival.



## THE PLACE

Wisteria is a community-based event site and nature preserve, located in southeastern Ohio, that specializes in outdoor events and spiritual retreats.

## CONTACT

740-742-4302 39825

State Route 684

Pomeroy, Ohio 45769



# BUILT TO LAST

Although today's increasingly global marketplace seems to favor the most innovative and novel businesses, we wish to celebrate our region's enduring successes. We believe these four organizations represent businesses that evolve according to community needs, which offer a lasting impact far deeper than any trend du jour.



"J" Seaman co-owner of Seaman's Super Market, located on West Union Street in Athens, Ohio.



# Market Stability

Story by ERIN FAUSEL | Photos by DRAKE WITHERS

## Seaman's Super Market supplies regional demand for locally sourced goods for more than 60 years

In 1951, Jesse Seaman, also known as “J,” purchased an auto service station with two service bays, several gas pumps out front and an attached, tiny grocery store. He intended to turn the structure into a west side neighborhood grocery. Over the decades and through several facelift renovations, Seaman's Cardinal Supermarket continues to thrive as a staple grocery for Athens County residents.

Seaman's emerged in an era where corner groceries were a common, quick stop for cooking essentials. John Seaman, current co-owner and son of the original J Seaman, says the first grocery store was long and narrow. “There was a 6-foot meat case and we sold Longhorn cheese and lunch meats, hot dogs and stuff like that,” John says.

The first expansion of the grocery space took place in 1960. The gas station and service bay portions were torn down, and the grocery store was expanded, says John. He says the narrow room was replaced by the full-time grocery approximately 40-by-60. After a sequence of more expansions in 1965, 1968 and 1972, the store was finalized in 1975 and has remained the same ever since. Today, John and his wife, Penny, co-own the grocery with their sons J and Jon Seaman.

Inside Seaman's, one particular corner has kept customers loyal for generations: the meat counter. RL Valley beef, JB King's local chicken and Willow Wood local lamb are only a few of the local farmers who collaborate with Seaman's. John says customers have been satisfied with the selection for a long time. “Someone always says, ‘You can't get better meat anywhere than at Seaman's.’ No matter where you go, our reputation ... has always been the best meat,” he says.

A custom that is unique to Seaman's is the accessibility customers have to whole carcasses of beef and pork. “We are the only store that I know of south of Columbus that has been or is doing hanging beef or whole pork carcasses or definitely local lamb. We're the only store that's doing all three for sure,” says J Seaman, third generation co-owner and grandson of Jesse “J” Seaman, whom he was named after.

Jerry Russell, the meat department manager, has worked at the family business for more than forty years. He has trained every deli clerk that has walked through Seaman's doors since his start in 1975. Russell says handling and getting the carcasses from delivery to meat cases is a process.

“It's a lot more work, but the quality is so much better, plus it's a local product,” Jerry says. The farms are right in town, and Jerry says he visits them to ensure the products they are selling meet the Seaman's standards of quality.

Beyond selling whole carcasses, J says the spacious refrigeration system is key to their business, especially for their local meat products. Recently the store upgraded all outdoor and indoor lighting to LED lights, and J says they also plan to change their refrigeration lighting to LED.

These upgrades reflect Seaman's long game. “We compete for the food dollar in Athens, which is spread from any restaurant through your convenient stores to your grocery stores... Hopefully we are offering a fresher, healthier, more local product than 98% of the people we compete with,” he says.

J says approximately 25 percent of their overall products are locally harvested or produced. For example, the store offers a selection of Amish cheeses from Walnut Creek Foods, Herbal Sage local teas, Gillogogy Orchard apples and High Bottom Farms eggs.

J says Seaman's has become a “destination store” for customers looking for a quality, homegrown product. However, J is quick to emphasize that is just one element of Seaman's success. “If we were not offering a quality product with good service at a reasonable price, then local wouldn't matter,” J says. 🇺🇸

### Seaman's Cardinal Supermarket

305 W Union St, Athens, OH 45701

Hours: Monday - Saturday: 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Sunday: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Phone: (740) 594-2238







# Zanesville's *Classic* Community

The Zanesville Concert Association brings renowned music and new culture to the community for 79 years and counting

Story by JESSICA SEES | Photo by ROBERT McGRAW

**T**ony Bennett, Art Garfunkel and the Russian National Ballet have one thing in common. These internationally known artists have all performed at the Secrest Auditorium in Zanesville. While the unassuming city may not seem like a hub for the arts, the Zanesville Concert Association has been putting on concerts featuring widely-known entertainers since 1938.

"There are some people that think you can't have a quality event in Zanesville. You have to go to Parkersburg West Virginia, Wheeling West Virginia, Columbus or Cleveland, you have to go to some big city," says Jim McLaughlin, the Zanesville Concert Association's current booking agent. "Yet, some of the artists had their first performance in the United States in Zanesville."

## ITS ROOTS

The association grew out of the Thursday Music Club (formed in 1909) and supported a community concert series, McLaughlin says. It began as a way for members to actively support local musical opportunities for their community. As the club grew, members decided to include interested businesses and community leaders in the process of establishing a fine arts presence in their town.

This resulted in the formation of the Zanesville Concert Association, giving it independence from the Thursday Music Club. The association credits much of its success to the Thursday Music Club for granting it the freedom to develop into a separate fine arts organization.

## BOOKING TOP PERFORMERS

Over the last 79 years, the Zanesville Concert Association has developed a reputation that allows McLaughlin to book performances up to two years in advance. He says it's easier to reserve classical musicians, especially if they're international.

"The hilarity of it is the phone call or email [to book a show] can come at any time of the day because they're in different countries," McLaughlin says.

Frequently, he has artists and other booking agencies contacting him to set up a show. For example, a concert featuring the National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine was offered to McLaughlin through Columbia Artists Management Incorporated (CAMI), a booking company McLaughlin works with. CAMI brings a foreign orchestra to the United States every year. Between himself and CAMI, McLaughlin works out pricing and program logistics.

## PAYING THE TAB

With the association holding a non-profit status, the board's members give their time on a volunteer basis. Ticket and membership purchases, donations through the Zanesville Concert Association Foundation and support from the city and chamber of commerce help fund the associated costs with putting together the show, such as: production cost, artist booking fees, auditorium rental and food for the performers.

The city recently put nearly 2 million dollars into the 1,776-seat auditorium, which is owned by the city of Zanesville itself. The money went toward a new roof, wall repair and new heating and cooling systems.





**PHOTO** | The National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, conducted by Theodore Kuchar, playing for the February 27 audience at Secrest Auditorium.

## COMMUNITY CULTURE

As a public school music teacher of 31 years, McLaughlin understands the kind of impact this sort of access has on a community.

“When I came to Zanesville after graduating from Ohio University, I was amazed to know I could take my students to a concert with real live artists in this town,” he says. “So that is a wonderful tool to have.”

Each year a free concert is held at Secrest Auditorium for fourth grade children in the community, and McLaughlin noted that not one school in the county has a dedicated auditorium for the arts.

“Our community is blessed to have such events taking place so close to home; a great experience for all who attend. We were amazed.”

JENNIFER SNOOK, Patron

A major asset to the community implemented this year is the free tickets provided to children attending with an adult as well as free admission for college students with valid identification. The association is able to provide free tickets because of a grant obtained by the Muskingum County Community Foundation. The association is hoping to renew the grant for the following year to continue providing free admission to students.

Aside from benefiting the community financially, the association aims to expose the area to cultures it may be unfamiliar with. They do this by booking international artists such as the Russian National Ballet, the National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, and symphony orchestras from Moscow, Mexico, Poland and Scotland.

Jennifer Shook, a pediatric physical therapist and Zanesville community member echoes that sentiment. Shook attended the National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine show on February 27 with her children, Alex (13), Jaden (9) and Madeline (6).

This was their first experience with the Zanesville Concert Association. With this year’s implementation of free child admittance, parents like Shook are able to expose their children to an unfamiliar culture with more ease.


“I think it’s wonderful to add outside culture into the community. It’s definitely a rare opportunity for my children,” Shook says. “Our community is blessed to have such events taking place so close to home; a great experience for all who attend. We were amazed.”

## SUPPORT COMES FROM...

The community support doesn’t stop with encouraging statements and ticket sales. Yan Sun, a professor of fine arts at Muskingum University, donated two paintings to the Zanesville Concert Association so they could be sold in a silent auction fundraiser during their February 27 concert.

The monies from the silent auction will go into the Zanesville Concert Association Foundation to help fund future concert series as well as support the annual free concert for fourth grade students in the area.

The Zanesville Concert Association brings culture and arts into the community with the help of the community itself. Ticket and membership sales, donations through the foundation, volunteer work done by the association’s board of directors, and support from local businesses make it possible. These rare opportunities to view world-renowned artists benefit the community, help the arts flourish and inspire youth to expose themselves to new cultures.

For more information in regards to the Zanesville Concert Association, visit their website at [www.zanesvilleconcertassociation.com](http://www.zanesvilleconcertassociation.com). 





**Photo** | The family of Maisy Ward, 8, celebrates her birthday with a pizza party at the Fun Barn.

## THE BUSINESS OF FAMILY

The founder of a Nelsonville arcade and movie theater built a home for his family and a Fun Barn for his community

Story by KAYLA BEARD | Photos by MARLENA SLOSS

**G**lowing from streetlights at the side of Route 33 in Nelsonville, an indoor entertainment complex resides amidst the farmland. The beige blocky structure belies the energy inside.

And if you aren't from around the area, you might be surprised to see the massive parking lot—which winds around the building—packed nearly every night of the week.

Located in the front of the building is The Fun Barn, an arcade and eatery. When you open the wide double doors, the use of the word “Barn” begins to make sense. The layout of the game kiosks is reminiscent of horse stalls in a stable, straight back and adjacent to one another on the right side of the center aisle. In a corner on the left side lie the remains of a small yet impressive, out-of-commission bumper kart rink nearby larger games like mini-bowling and Guitar Hero.

Located in the building's back half is the custom-built Movies 10 in the building's back half. The facilities have the aesthetic of a small-town business, but on some nights it receives the foot traffic of a big-city theater.

At \$4 a ticket, though, it'd be hard to mistake a trip to this place with a trip downtown. The snacks, popcorn, movie tickets and games are all notoriously inexpensive, making the Fun Barn a favorite hangout spot

for community members of all ages and a go-to activity for Ohio University and Hocking College students.

The theater's history starts with one man, Joe Edwards, and his desire to care for his family. “That's his main motivation: keep the family,” says his daughter, Sharon Elliott.

It's no secret the Fun Barn is a family business. If the warm familiarity between the staff doesn't make that clear, the large Jay Edwards campaign sign advertising the owner's grandson might. Family comes first for the theater's founder, and it has since the beginning.

“It was just up the road on Elmrock—it used to be 33—he built a block building,” Elliott says. “Me and my two brothers and mom and dad lived in the upstairs, very small quarters, and he had his business downstairs.”

At that time, Edwards worked as a TV repair man. Elliott remembers her father did everything he could to look out for them, but things weren't always easy. “I can remember hearing a knock on the door and he told us to all be quiet,” Elliott says. “There were bill collectors at the door. We were in there hiding.”

The son of a coal miner, young Edwards moved with his family from West Virginia to Ohio. Here, his father farmed for New York Coal Company, Inc. In the '60s, his family had the opportunity to buy the farm, and the land has been in their name ever since.



The family raised pigs, chickens and cattle. They grew corn on the land—which had four silos, three barns and a pond—and the kids played on the property. “It was a working farm,” Elliott says.

Her father, however, was not a fan of the family business. In fact, Elliott says, her dad “hated” farming. In the 1950s, Edwards left for the military. From there, she says he began working in telecommunications—the start of a new chapter.

In 1952, Edwards founded Nelsonville TV Cable, a business that started small and has persisted through the years, transforming with the digital times.

“When he first opened the cable company there were seven or eight of them,” Elliott says. “He whittled it down to just him.”

Today, Nelsonville TV Cable is one of just a few cable and internet providers in the county and remains one of two providers who offer coverage to most of the area, next to AT&T U-verse.

Edwards had a knack for keeping his businesses running. Ultimately, though, the goal was to keep providing for his kids. When Elliott was young, her father opened a drive-in theater. It was only one screen, and due to legal restrictions, Edwards’s first theater could only play one film at a time, but for multiple days. Edwards soon bought another business, a multi-screen Majestic chain theater, and started making plans for the future.

“When they had the Majestic, he’d take my kids on Saturdays and go to different movie theaters everywhere to look at tilling and, you know, just trying to design this place,” Elliott says.

The Movies 10 was Edwards’ idea and after his father passed, leaving the farm behind, his plans took shape. “He had this land and he wanted to find a way of making a living,” Elliott says.

Her father loves movies, and his decision to open the Movies 10 was the product of dedication and hard work. “Everything here he built ... He designed where it is, how it works,” Elliott says.

Though he hired contractors to do the dirty work, such as hanging drywall and laying concrete, he designed everything himself. He drew the plans for the strips of flashing red, green and white lights that rim the theater ceilings. He cut trees down from a friend’s land and stripped the wood himself to build the theater’s first screen. Using his research from other theaters along with his skills as an electrician, Edwards finished the Movies 10 in 1998, and a couple of years later he added the Fun Barn.

“When he built the Fun Barn on, I said ‘Dad, there isn’t room,’” Elliott says. But no amount of discouragement could stop the vision. Elliott says her father has always been “a little hungry.”

“He was always looking for a way of making money,” Elliott says. “Still is.” After nearly 10 years, the Fun



**ABOVE** | Sanaiah Allen, 5, of Lancaster, Ohio, cheers on her bowling ball roll at the Fun Barn.

Barn has been a reliable money-maker for Edwards and his family. A big reason for the theater’s success in an area plagued by economic struggle may be the consistently affordable prices.

“He had this theory: If you sell a hot dog at one price and sell a certain number, then if you lower the price, you’ll lower your profit margin a little, but you’ll sell more,” Elliott says.

By selling more at a lower price, Edwards figures he can provide for his family and to provide a service for the community. “He doesn’t want to be a millionaire,” Elliott says. “He just wants to make a living.”

Even now, at age 88, Edwards and his wife Betty, 79, spend every day at the Fun Barn. They work anywhere from 10 to 12 hours, seven days a week, Elliott says. They can be seen working the popcorn counter, handing out prizes to arcade-goers and taking ticket stubs from movie patrons.

When Edwards sits down on his wooden stool to collect guests’ tickets, in a voice like the scratchy energetic call of an aging umpire, he greets each patron with a “Hello” or a “How are ya?”, as if each new customer is a family friend. And, in a way, they are.

“He could never be a CEO-type person because he has to be hands on,” Elliott says. The strategy may not be exceptionally lucrative, but so far it seems to work.

“We’re not rolling in anything,” Elliott says. “But we’re okay. We’re okay.” 🍷

## Movies 10 & The Fun Barn

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# Local Legacy of Loyalty

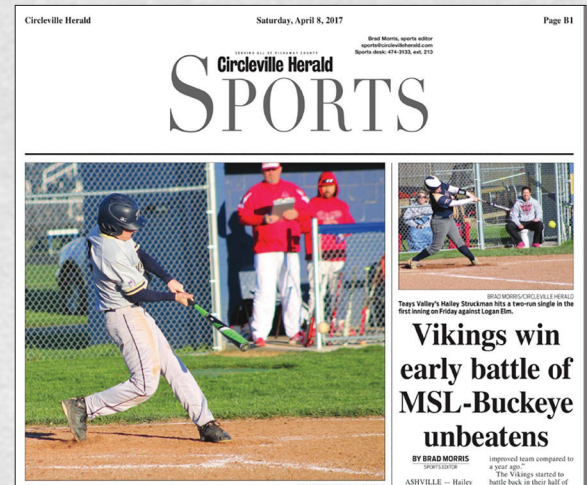
Serving Pickaway County 1817-present

In its 200th year of publishing, hometown newspaper Circleville Herald continues to print close-to-home stories

Story by AUSTIN LINFANTE

On Dec. 2, 2016, a three-vehicle accident occurred on U.S. Route 23 that killed Sabrina Briggs, 38, of Circleville and severely injured two others. Nancy Radcliff, a reporter for the Circleville Herald, reported on the incident with the idea that it would sit as a somber story. It wasn't until a member of the Circle Area Humane Society got involved that the story transformed beyond a conventionally sad news report.

Pamela Mount came to the Herald's offices in Circleville to report she found an injured dog near the accident site that would later turn out to be Briggs' dog, Toto. The Herald's managing editor, Jennifer Bahney, originally had the police report of the accident in hand to contest what she thought was criticism of the newspaper's coverage. Mount was able to contact Briggs' grieving mother to set up a reunion between the two. The story, titled "A little bit of light dawns following



fatal accident" ran on the front page the next day and brightened a tragic story.

"It was one of those feel-good stories after a terrible tragedy, and we were all just like, 'What a great story, and it just fell in our laps,'" Bahney says.

Toto's story exemplified the power of small-town connections that go through the Herald, which is now celebrating its 200th year of circulation. The paper was originally established in 1817 as The Olive Branch and has published daily since 1894. Today, the paper has a circulation of 6,600 and a readership of 12,500, which might not rival the Columbus Dispatch and The Cincinnati Enquirer, but it stands rock solid in a media landscape that favors national, digital-first media organizations over daily, small-town newspapers with local community needs.

The Herald's newsroom is situated in a modest two-floor house just blocks away from downtown Circleville. The six-person staff moved in at the start of the bicentennial year, vacating the newsroom they had occupied on South Court Street since 1935. The reporters cover the entirety of Pickaway County, which has a population of 55,698, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The newspaper's printing press is an hour southeast



**PHOTOS** | Images of issues of the Circleville Herald are courtesy of Adams Publishing Group. The newspaper, in its 200th year of publishing, covers all of Pickaway County and can be found at [www.circlevilleherald.com](http://www.circlevilleherald.com).



from Circleville, through the Ohio division of Adams Publishing Group in the city of Athens. But Bahney says the paper, along with Circleville and Pickaway County, is only getting stronger.


"There's a lot going on, and there's a lot of people that care about developing this area and bringing back the heyday and making it a wonderfully livable area," Bahney says. "With Columbus being so close, I think a lot of people are taking a second look at this area."

Bahney came to the Herald in February via a circuitous route. She had previously worked as a producer for ABC/CBS/CW affiliate WENY in upstate New York, a writer for CNN Headline News in Atlanta, and a morning news producer for CBS affiliate KLAS in Las Vegas. She met her husband in Atlanta, and the two moved back to their birth state of Ohio to raise their now-teenage daughter and so her husband could work at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Piketon. However, she had a hard time breaking into the Columbus media field. After taking on public relations jobs in Columbus, she was happy to join the Herald and return to her journalism roots.

Although her main duties include editing and making executive decisions, she still does write stories for the Herald due to the small staff. Those stories can range from feature stories (like the one about Toto) to bimonthly city council meetings.

"Working for a small-town newspaper, there's something to be said about it," Bahney says. "I think that when I was 25, it would have been different. At that time, I enjoyed working for the hustle-and-bustle of bigger-time journalism. But now, at this stage of my life, I love being in a small town."

The Circleville Herald has seen some downgrades because of the media industry's shift to digital-first, mainly from downsizing its actual newsroom and putting a paywall on its website. But as written by its former publisher Brown Publishing Company in the 1995 book "Commitment to Community: Pickaway County," the Herald has "gone about its business; reporting a world war and subsequent conflicts, the Great Depression, rock 'n' roll, and, yes, the famous Circleville Pumpkin Show for decades."

The paper reported on the events happening in Pickaway County for 200 years, and if community support and engagement is an indication, the staff at Circleville Herald will be reporting for many years to come. 

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# Circleville Herald

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PAGE A2 A-C hosts biddy tournament

"This is a great opportunity to reduce sewage pollution of our ground and surface waters and prevent sewage nuisances in our county. We encourage interested homeowners to contact the Health District to get more information."

Kelly Dennis, Environmental Health Director

## General Health District seeks homeowners needing sewer repairs

BY STEVEN COLLINS  
STAFF REPORTER

CIRCLEVILLE — Pickaway County homeowners with failing sewer systems may be able to qualify for assistance from the General Health District.

Kelly Dennis, Environmental Health Director for the Pickaway County General Health District, says money is available from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for local residential sewer projects.

"The Ohio EPA provided a funding opportunity for local health departments to coordinate repair or replacement projects for home owners who have failing household sewage treatment systems," Dennis said.

To qualify for consideration, Dennis said applicants must currently own and be living in the home with the sewage problem.

"The funding has income-based eligibility and is for repair or replacement of failing sewage systems that potentially are contaminating surface or ground water within the county or are a risk to public health," he said.

The income-based eligibility has three tiers, Dennis said. Low-income households that are a high-risk priority may receive 100% of their project paid for by the funding; medium-income applicants may receive 85% of their project paid for by the funding; and moderate-income households, if eligible, may receive 50% of their project funded by the EPA program.

Dennis said Pickaway County has \$200,000 in funds that must be used on residential sewer projects by November 2017. The county has applied for an additional \$300,000 that must be used by November 2018.

"Any funds allocated for Pickaway County will be lost if not spent on replacement sewer system projects by the expiration of the grant periods," he said.

"This is a great opportunity to reduce sewage pollution of our ground and surface waters and prevent sewage nuisances in our county," Dennis said. "We encourage interested homeowners to contact the Health District to get more information."

SEE REPAIRS ON PAGE A2

## Spring Blooms in the Greenhouse



ON the outside, it has been a rough start to spring, but inside, spring is starting to bloom. Rennie Stevens takes care of impatiens as they begin to grow from strawberry jars inside a greenhouse at Royal Gardens on US 23, south of Tartan Rd. While flowers are starting to mature under cover, Tony McCammon, owner, says now is not the time to be planting outside. He says typically around May 10, after the last frost, is when you can begin to do your planting.

BY NANCY RADOLFF-CHEFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## Local teacher shows students meaning of water

BY STEVEN COLLINS  
STAFF REPORTER

CIRCLEVILLE — This week marked United Nations World Water Day and Circleville Middle School Teacher Brenda Palm used the occasion to teach her students about a well she is working to have built in Northern Uganda.

"More than 600 million people lack fresh, safe water each day," Palm said.

Palm travels to Uganda when she can in an effort to combat the water shortage that the people there are faced with. Already, she has helped raise funds for two wells and wants to build a third.

"The two wells have meant a lot to the people there," she said. "They didn't have to go searching for water. They just people lack fresh, safe water each day," Palm said.

Palm said placing the jar there helps people understand the value of safe and fresh water inside their homes.

"It's pretty amazing to think about that when I have a pool in my back yard," she said.

"I challenged members to place a jar by each faucet and agree on a price for using water each time the faucet, toilet, and shower are used," she said.

Palm said she brings her Ugandan experiences into her classrooms to help teach her students about third-world realities.

"I build it into the lessons. It's real-world writing and thinking," she said.

With one project, the students wrote to 1,000 pen pals and received response photos and letters about the children's daily lives in Africa.

"The kids know there are things they can do if they find people with similar goals and they work together. It's planting seeds for their future," Circleville Middle School Teacher Brenda Palm said.

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Circleville Middle School Teacher Brenda Palm

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Circleville Middle School Teacher Brenda Palm

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SEE WATER ON PAGE A2



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# POWELL'S PREMIERE LEAGUE

Inside Renee Powell's  
Drive to Thrive

Story by ANDREW COHEN  
Photos by ROBERT MCGRAW

When it comes to 70-year-old Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) legend Renee Powell, any assumptions would likely be proven wrong. For example, to presume her latest trip to the Bahamas was filled with relaxation and leisure would be a mistake.

**Photo** | In her 13 years on the LPGA tour, Renee Powell competed in more than 250 tournaments and won the 1973 Kelly Springfield Open in Brisbane, Australia.





In reality, Renee was there on business as a guest of ministry and tourism to help host the fifth annual LPGA Pure Silk Classic. But such events are only the latest chapter in her lifelong golf expedition. In 1967, Renee became the second African-American to compete on the LPGA tour.

Since retiring from professional golf in 1980, Renee's life has been dedicated to helping others discover the game of golf—just like her father did before her.

## Building the Course

Bill Powell opened Clearview Golf Club in 1948, just two years after he returned home from World War II and one year after Jackie Robinson broke Major League Baseball's color barrier. At the time, Clearview became the first integrated golf course open to all races. Bill Powell holds the distinction of being the first African-American to build, own and operate a professional golf course in the United States. He is remembered as a historic legend in the African-American golf community.

"He grew up 30 years ahead of me," Renee says. Her father died in 2009 at the age of 93. "When my father and mother were growing up, there was so much racism," she says. Martin Luther King came in the '60s and my dad built a golf course in 1948."

Segregation was the driving force behind Bill's determination to open a golf course. He fell in love with golf at the age of 9 and was the captain of his high school team in Minerva, about 10 miles east of Canton. But by the time Bill returned to the states after

his deployment spent across England and Scotland—which happens to be the birthplace of golf—he found he wasn't welcomed at golf courses on the soil of the country he just spent years fighting to protect.

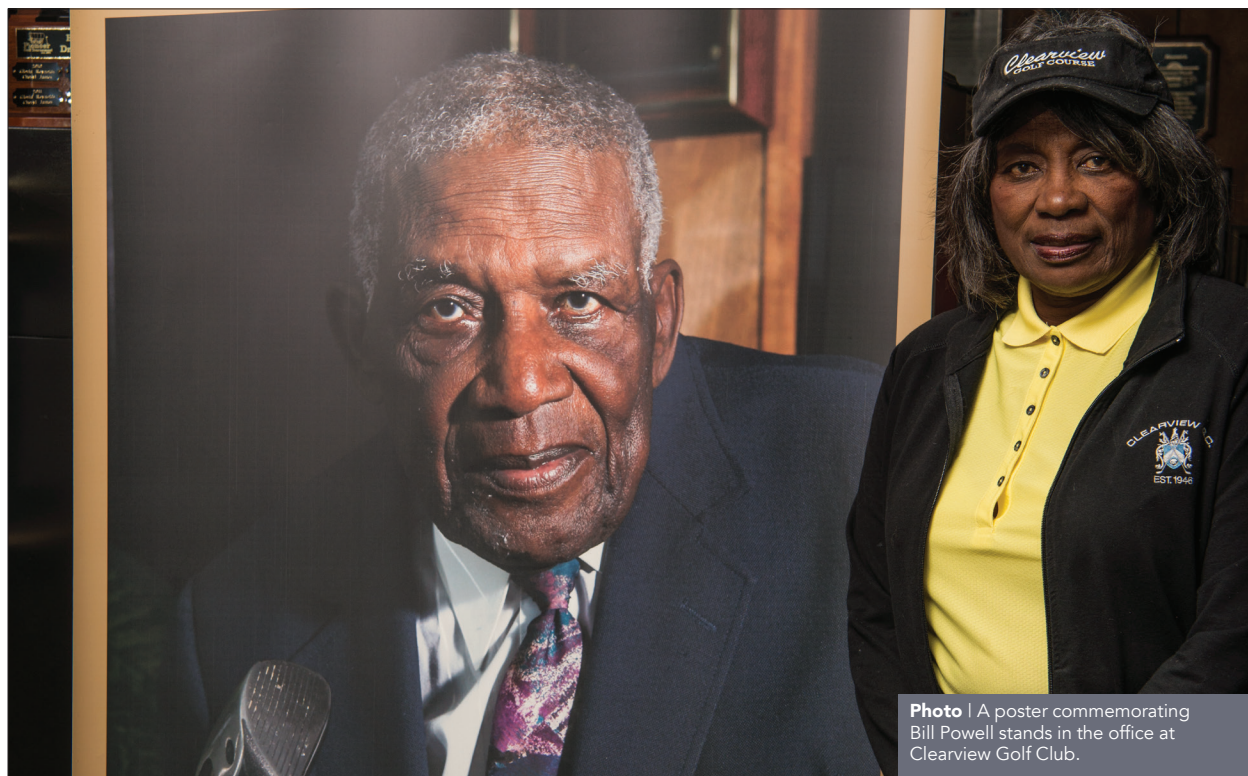
Funding the course was another obstacle. First, Bill tried to get a loan from the government, but was rejected. He worked as a custodian at Timken, a bearing and steel company, before becoming the company's first black security guard. With financial help from two local black physicians and a loan from his brother, Bill bought 78 acres on a dairy farm in East Canton that he would transform into Clearview Golf Club. In 1978, Clearview expanded from nine holes to 18 holes.

## Battling Prejudice

"My dad had a real love of getting youth involved in the game," Renee says. "We happen to be black people, but [Clearview] was not meant to open a black golf course—he despised segregation."

Despite her father's trailblazing efforts to integrate the game, Renee still felt the effects of racism throughout her golfing career. She recalls one instance at a hotel while playing at a tournament in Idaho. "They had my reservation, but when I got there, they saw my face and they didn't have a room for me," she says. "Another pro on tour named Kathy Whitworth, the winningest player ever on the LPGA and PGA tour, came in, and she told the desk, 'We all stay or we all walk.'"

Those effects were also sometimes felt during college at Ohio University, where she spent two years as the captain of the women's golf team before transfer-



**Photo** | A poster commemorating Bill Powell stands in the office at Clearview Golf Club.



ring to Ohio State University in 1964. At OHIO, she was not allowed to travel with the team when it would play in southern states, which ended up playing a role in her decision to transfer schools.

Looking back on it, Renee is still grateful for her time spent at OHIO. She still keeps in touch with her roommates today and, just like every other challenge Renee has been through during her life, she credits those experiences for making her into the strong and successful person she is today.

Renee received golf's highest honor in 2015 when the Royal and Ancient Golf Club in St. Andrews (Scotland) invited her to become an honorary member, placing her among the first seven female members ever inducted. Founded in 1754, the club is known as the "home of golf" and is one of the oldest golf clubs in the world.

Renee and her brother Lawrence "Larry" Powell, who is the longtime head supervisor of Clearview Golf Club, credit their father for instilling in them the strong work ethic that has never wavered over the many challenges thrown the families way. "Finding ways to get to the other side, whether you have to go around, through or over the problem. 'You just have to get to the other side,'" she says.

Renee returned the OHIO campus for the first time since leaving 50 years ago through her connection with Kelly Davidson, an academic advisor within the Patton School of Education at OHIO. Before Davidson accepted her current position at OHIO, she worked in the office of multicultural development at the University of Akron where she first took an interest in Renee's story.

Clearview Golf Club is just 30 miles from Akron's campus, and Renee was honored at the school in 2006. The two have remained friends ever since. When Davidson, an OHIO alumna herself, returned as an academic advisor, she knew she had to reach out to Renee to bring her back to Athens.

"I made it my personal mission to keep in touch with her and get her back on campus because I felt it was important for her and her story," Davidson says. "It was a way for her to evolve. This is where she started, and she's back again to tell current students her story."

During her return to Athens, Renee also met with the OHIO women's golf team. Many players were brought to tears after listening to Renee's story. Renee and her family have done so much to make golf more accessible for women and people of color that many current Bobcat golfers felt they wouldn't have their opportunity to play if not for the Powells determination to diversify the game.

"It's important to me that they know the history of golf and everything Renee has been through," says Kelly Ovington, OHIO women's golf coach. "It definitely was not easy for her and I think it opened their eyes to the opportunity they have now."

Ovington says she hopes to bring the OHIO women's golf team to Clearview Golf Club in the near future.

## Hope for the Future

Renee is leaving a legacy far more significant than tournaments won or lost. In 2011, she founded the Clearview HOPE (Helping Our Patriots Everywhere) foundation at Clearview Golf Club. Her passion for helping veterans comes from her background as the daughter of Bill, who served in the U.S. Air Force during WWII.

Clearview HOPE is a free-of-charge program that allows female veterans, many of whom are battling post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), to use golf as a therapeutic remedy. There are currently more than 50 women enrolled in the program.

"It's been absolutely amazing," Renee says. "Some [female veterans] hadn't come out of their house for several years except to go to work. It's given them courage to go back to school and confidence to get better jobs."







“Some [female veterans] hadn’t come out of their house for several years except to go to work. It’s given them courage to go back to school and confidence to get better jobs.”

*RENEE POWELL*

Preserving the legacy of Clearview is another major aspect of Renee’s life. The Clearview Legacy Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 2001 by the Powell family. The foundation operates off fundraising and donations and welcomes events such as the LPGA Pro-Am, when various LPGA members of past and present come to Clearview for a round of golf and dinner on a Sunday evening.

The event is hosted by Pro Football Hall of Fame running back Franco Harris, who was a close friend of Bill’s. “My dad loved the game of golf and to create an opportunity for all people,” Renee says.

Boys and girls, old and young, regardless of race or religion. Here at Clearview, it both feels and looks like an extended American family. 🇺🇸

**OPPOSITE PAGE** | Clearview was recognized and put on the National Register of Historical places in 2001 and remains one of three black owned or black operated golf courses in the United States.

**ABOVE** | The Clearview Golf Club was established in 1946, one year before Jackie Robinson broke Major League Baseball’s color barrier.

**RIGHT** | Before transferring to Ohio State University in 1964, Renee Powell captained the OHIO women’s golf team for two seasons.







# GROWING CONSCIOUSNESS

Portsmouth students help create Human Rights Garden to promote positivity, sustainability and equality

Story by KYLIE SOUDER | Photos PROVIDED

In today's politically and socially charged environment, educators may find it challenging to find substantive longterm projects for both children and teenagers.

However, Portsmouth City Schools students took inspiration from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights to create a dynamic garden project that incorporates themes of community, health and wellness and fundamental rights. The entrance to the garden features the phrase, 'I have the right to.' The bricks students engraved line the garden pathways through the garden and include positive words relating to human rights, such as 'Equality,' 'Safety,' 'Liberty' and 'Respect.'

"I think that we have kids who really were unaware of what their basic human rights are," Portsmouth High School art teacher, April Deacon says. "And I think it's really important for people to be aware of those things so that they can protect them and the rights of others."

For years, Deacon envisioned a Human Rights Garden and she regularly applied for funding grants. While she did receive small grants, the funding fell short of the project's budget.

That changed early last year when the Ohio Arts Council called Deacon to tell her the Portsmouth City School District had been selected for the TeachArt-Ohio Initiative, a two-year pilot program created in 2016 that endeavors to bring together schools and communities with artists to learn about sustainable arts learning experiences. The initiative is currently involved in 36 schools within 16 school districts.

The first phase of the Portsmouth project, which broke ground last September and is slated to be completed this summer, involves creating an outdoor sculpture and plant garden in Applegate Green that are permanent fixtures of the Human Rights Garden. The garden occupies only 50 feet of a much larger

green space at the high school, giving it room to grow into other plans Deacon has been dreaming up.

"I think the project under April Deacon's leadership in Portsmouth is so important for the students, and the people who are involved from the very youngest children to the high school students to the maintenance staff, community members," says Donna Collins, Executive Director of the Ohio Arts Council. "It's just really such a dynamic and rich program."

The Human Rights Garden is the first of a multi-dimensional learning program for children slated for the coming years that includes projects to increase overall wellness, such as physical fitness areas, vegetable gardens and plant-based, outdoor art. The project teaches students in and out of the classroom about topics that aren't always on the curriculum.

"I think it's really important in education to be moving in a direction where we are making these connections between art and science and social studies, I think that's a much better way to learn than teaching to a test," Deacon says.

Teachers in various subject areas decided how they want to cover issues of human rights; some teachers decided to incorporate coursework about refugees, Black History Month, and other overarching themes of human rights topics.

"For me, I'm trying to do a little bit of international, national and then local issues related to human rights, and I think it's an important time right now to be talking about human rights, and I think the local part is really going to connect them," Deacon says.

Some "topics" can be difficult to process depending on the grade level of the students, so Deacon has aimed her material to bring the meaning closer to home. "It's harder for them to understand things that are going on across the world, but they understand the drug epidemic that is surrounding us and poverty and things like that," she says.



“ I think that we have kids who really were unaware of what their basic human rights are ”

APRIL DEACON, Portsmouth High School Art Teacher

However, the next phases of this project depend on continued external funding similar to the TeachArtsOhio Initiative. “I hope that they turn it into a full project and we can continue to apply for money through them, but if not, I’m going to be seeking other ways to continue to expand,” Deacon says.

For now, the individual parts of the student-produced project will be permanently displayed in the garden. Contributors from the Portsmouth City School District include students from the elementary, middle and high school studying Science, Social Studies, Gifted, Art, Woodshop, Buildings and Maintenance. 🇺🇸



**OPPOSITE PAGE** | Portsmouth City School District students pose to communicate the Human Rights Garden’s message of equality.

**ABOVE** | The Human Rights Garden located on Applegate Green at Portsmouth High School will feature three large scale sculptures as well as various art projects from students in the district’s elementary, middle and junior high schools.

## Human Rights Garden highlights from the 2016-2017 school year

### ARCHEOLOGY

In September of 2016, the eighth grade students at the junior high school completed an archaeological survey of the land with partnership with the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park. The Social Studies students at Portsmouth elementary worked to grid the garden and also sifted through found artifacts during the soil tagging process.

### FIELD TRIPS!

Deacon facilitates the partnership extensions for the three schools involved in the project and organizes field trips for students to learn from other educators across the state. The eighth grade students took a trip to the Southern Ohio Museum to view the Art of the Ancients exhibit to learn about objects and tools that were used by the Adena and Hopewell tribes that once lived in the Scioto river valley. Students in fourth grade also took a trip to Hopewell Culture National Historical Park to learn about Native American cultures. Students in the junior high and high school viewed a travelling performance on the lives of Anne Frank and Harriet Tubman to delve deeper into historical human rights issues of the past.

### CASTING AND SCULPTURE

Some of the tiles, paper castings and other materials showcased in the garden were molded from architecturally salvaged pieces of old buildings in

the city. High school Three-Dimensional Art students and seventh grade gifted students designed the sculptures, and the group traveled to the University of Rio Grande to watch their designs become physical through lost-wax bronze casting. This casting method duplicates a metal structure in compounds such as silver, gold, brass or bronze. The student-designed aluminum, bronze and stone structures will pose as the main features of the garden.

### BUILDING BEAUTIFUL BENCHES

Students studying building and maintenance will be creating benches for seating in the garden that will feature some of the tiles created by the Three-Dimensional Art students. Students in the woodshop program will create the box molds for paper casting and tile casting for the Three-Dimensional Art students.

### PLANTS AND ECOSYSTEMS

Garet Martin, a Horticulture Designer and former student of Deacon’s is partnering with the students during the spring semester of school. Educators and designers from the Franklin Park Conservatory will meet with elementary and high school students to discuss the importance of plants, ecosystems and to select plants to be used in the garden that are native to the region.





**ABOVE** | Lavonne Rathacher, 89, grandmother of co-organizer Greta Monter, holds a sign during the February rally that references her husband's time in the army and women's rights.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN MILLERSBURG



# Generations of Millersburg families fuel a drive for progressive politics and women's rights

Story by HEATHER WILLARD | Photos by DENICE HAZLETT

Holmes County, traditionally both reserved and politically red, might seem an unlikely location for a political protest. Yet, on this cold February morning, it's county seat Millersburg is home to a small group of citizens raising their collective socially progressive voices via peaceful rally.

"I have never been actively engaged in politics. If someone had said a year ago 'you're going to organize a rally and talk to your congressman,' I would not have believed them," says Greta Monter, a resident of Millersburg and member of the local Democratic party. "I'm incredibly introverted."

According to city statistics, Millersburg is almost 70 percent Republican, making it one of the more conservative towns in the state, and voted overwhelmingly in support of Trump. Holmes County has a large Amish population whose religious culture is part of Millersburg's society.

Monter says that following the presidential election of Donald Trump in November, she became disheartened by the country's changing political stances, especially those related to women's health issues.

She wasn't alone; Monter says the Democratic party meetings that in previous years had less than a dozen members in attendance now seats nearly 50 people.

But Monter says her spirits rebounded after her daughter, Emma, convinced her to go to the Women's March in Washington D.C. "It kind of gave us the inspiration to do this rally," Monter says. "It gave me a lot of hope. Instead of being angry, we're going to be proactive and just try to resist."

Monter credits her lineage for giving her drive, especially her mother, whom she called a "very progressive feminist," who was willing to stand out in such a conservative community. At the rally Monter helped organize, there were four generations of women in her family in attendance. Monter's 89-year-old grandmother, mother, daughter and aunt all made an appearance and supported women's rights among other causes.

"In a sense, there were actually five generations," Monter says. "(My grandmother) was wrapped in a blanket made by my great-grandmother, so she was there in spirit."

Other women who helped organize the February 25th rally at the Holmes County Courthouse included Denice Hazlett, a resident of Millersburg and member of Holmes County Democrats, who cited political divisiveness as her rationale for participation.

"During the past year, I've witnessed such a disheartening spread of misinformation, anger, mockery and outright hatred," Hazlett says. "I've seen people choose politics over people more than I've experienced in my lifetime. So, for me, I wanted to send the message that I love my neighbors."

The rally was designed to not be antagonistic toward local Trump supporters, and according to Hazlett around 120 people from various professions came together from Holmes County, District 7 and neighboring counties.

Even though only "positive signs" were present at the rally and no mention of Trump was used, a few anti-protesters showed up. "It wasn't a lot of people protesting against us, just really a couple of loud young kids," Monter says.

However, as is often the case today, other community pushback emerged online, such as the man who posted on Facebook a photo of Hazlett's 14-year-old daughter holding a sign that said "Protect Trans Kids" with a caption that called the protest a "sad day" for America.

Yet Hazlett, who went with all three of her daughters, as well as her husband, remains undaunted. "We were inspired by women who are leading the charge in other counties and districts," she says.

As for Monter, perhaps the most poignant moment involved her pre-rally preparation of making signs for the rally alongside her mom, aunt and grandmother.

When Monter asked her grandmother what her husband, a WWII vet, would have thought about Millersburg residents rallying around these issues, Monter says her grandmother responded, 'well, that's what he fought for.' 🇺🇸



ABOVE | Four generations of women from the Monter family pose for a portrait during the February rally, holding signs in support of various political causes.





# PORTSMOUTH'S HOMETOWN HERO

Story by KYLIE SOUDER  
Photos by ROBERT MCGRAW

US Army veteran, CrossFit trainer  
and entrepreneur Dale King  
won an offer from *Shark Tank*.  
Next up? Tore-energize Portsmouth.



**B**orn and raised in Portsmouth, Ohio, Dale King moved to Columbus in 1999 to attend Capital University and study international relations and affairs. After college, he spent four years in the U.S. Army as a military intelligence officer, which included two tours in Iraq. When he returned to Portsmouth afterwards, he was dismayed to find his hometown ravaged by drugs and economic instability.

Committed to making a difference in his community by offering a positive outlet to create strength, he opened the Portsmouth Spartan Kettlebell Club (PSKC), a veteran-run CrossFit gym, in August of 2010. With his history of serious physical fitness, training knowledge and heart for service, he desired to help his community in the only way he knew how—turning weakness into strength.

“I felt the skills and experience I gained in the military uniquely qualified me to attempt to make a difference,” King says. “When you serve overseas it provides you an incredible lens to view the world and America. You realize what a blessing it is to live in a free country: you don’t take that for granted and it makes you want to make your community better.”

King found an old warehouse in the heart of downtown Portsmouth—the former location of the Portsmouth Casting Company. The building, once used to create indestructible supplies, now facilitates the creation of indestructible individuals. The old building symbolically represented everything he wanted to provide in a gym, so he spent \$8,000 of his retirement money to transform the inside.

When the gym officially opened, there was no air conditioning, no towels and no fancy trimmings. But the gym offered an abundance of something better: positive energy. PSKC became a place of community and encouragement, not by happenstance, but by pure intention.

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“ I felt the skills and experience I gained in the military uniquely qualified me to attempt to make a difference.”

*DALE KING, Veteran & Business Owner*

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No one works out in the gym alone; all workouts are done in groups ranging from youth programs, rigorous CrossFit exercises, fitness programs for adaptive athletes and also classes for the elderly. “It’s so incredibly rewarding to help people lose weight, get off medication, and watch them do things they never believed they could do,” King says.

King has experience working with children, high school and college athletes, military units, people with disabilities and even senior citizens; any person, no matter his or her background is welcome. He strongly believes putting people through physically rigorous challenges in the gym will lead them to tackle any challenges that face them outside of the gym.

After renting the gym for some time, King took the financial risk of purchasing the building and establishing his official residence in Portsmouth. Even though the city wasn’t fully economically stable at the time, he didn’t see the risk as a deterrent. Instead, he saw the need for community and positive outlet as a return on investment.

“The main thing that keeps me going is to leave a legacy that my kids would be proud of,” King says. “More than anything, the message we want to deliver is that you can do it in Portsmouth. With enough hard work, energy, laughter and the right team, you can create a business that can do a lot of good.”



**ABOVE** | A young teenager participates in one of the many CrossFit classes.

**ABOVE RIGHT** | PSKC trainer Kendra Coleman teaches a class called “CrossFit Kids” for young children.



In 2011, King connected with Renee Wallace, who was a regular at the gym and made her own natural lotions and hand creams for women who came to PSKC. He approached her with an idea of a product he knew could change lives—he just needed the right person to concoct it.

With his go-getter attitude and her personal know how, the team created a prototype within a week and then decided on their best product. The all-natural ointment was called Doc Spartan as a testament to the old Portsmouth Spartans football team of the '30s. The team was comprised of players from teams that no longer existed in the tri-state area, and it was the second-smallest city in the NFL.

Although they weren't projected to perform well, they fought their way to become second place in the league. Economic instability forced the purchase and reassignment of the team, and much like the Portsmouth of today, King was looking for a comeback story.

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“With enough hard work, energy, laughter and the right team, you can create a business that can do a lot of good.”

DALE KING, Owner

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The ointment was sold in the gym to combat ailments obtained in workouts as well as to adaptive athletes who suffer abrasions from competing. Wallace developed just the right formula and customers were seeing incredible results. A man who suffered from opened, itchy wounds for over six months had closed the wounds and eliminated the itch in just a week of application. A woman battling stage four cancer was dealing with extremely cracked feet and hands from the chemotherapy and saw dramatic soothing results from the ointment.

Doc Spartan was a force to be reckoned with from the beginning and caught the attention of ABC's "Shark Tank" via social media. The show was looking for veteran-run companies, and it fell in love with Doc Spartan and the infectious attitude of King.

Expanding was never something that had crossed their minds originally, but just as King accidentally fell into gym ownership, he was now falling into accidental entrepreneurship. The show was too good of an opportunity to pass up, so he channeled his energy into how he would get a deal.

For a while, his life revolved around Shark Tank; he watched every episode, read every book and talked to anyone he could get in contact with. He poured his heart and soul into his dream and the hope that it could help even more people.

The casting producer of the show looks for a variety of traits in potential cast members. Among the



**ABOVE** | Doc Spartan co-founder Renee Wallace and Kim Clevenger, the "mom" of the office, measure out exact recipes by hand for their all-natural products.



**ABOVE** | Kim Clevenger, left, and Carmen Longmire, right, were hired to help with the growing Doc Spartan business. They make various products in what was once the gym's kitchen.



**ABOVE** | Caroline Mauk, daughter of Doc Spartan's designer Sara Mauk, helps label products in the office.

most important are personality and realistic goals. King has no shortage of personality; he's got a rugged voice and a laugh that can brighten anyone's day. He makes everyone feel the genuine connection he wants to form with others. With polite humility, he is extremely passionate about his product and the values that lie behind it.

Helping other veterans succeed when they leave the military and helping athletes who have lost limbs or adages in their journey is a cause very close to his heart.





**PHOTO** | The Doc Spartan line has increased from one original ointment to a product line that includes items ranging from men's care and women's care. The products with the red label were featured on the ABC show *Shark Tank*.

His compassion for service led to the co-foundation of a non-profit lovingly named Team Some Assembly Required (SAR).

"Team SAR was born in 2010 when I visited my Army buddy Derick Carver in Walter Reed. Derick lost his leg in an IED attack in Afghanistan and now had a long road to recovery," King says. "He used fitness as his main recovery tool and upon exiting the military I helped him open up his own gym and compete in CrossFit competition against able-bodied athletes."

The organization's message, "Always adapt, always overcome," is a testament to its commitment in developing those with physical struggles to challenge expectations and to shatter pre-conceptions of what people who suffer with disabilities can accomplish.

"Shark Tank" judge Robert Herjavec felt strongly pulled to the message and product that King and Wallace were offering and put forth an offer of \$75,000 to help expand their company. The duo understood that was an offer they couldn't refuse and quickly accepted the partnership.

After dedicating such a significant portion of his time to this show and after receiving an offer, King felt nothing short of elation and relief. "When we received the offer, it was the greatest professional accomplishment of my life," King says. His dedication and positive message sparked national attention, and within a week after the show aired, their sales matched the sales from 2016.

Since the show, Doc Spartan has increased its product assortment, been in the hands of people all around the country, and was recently picked up by CrossFit retailer Rogue Fitness. The company has been featured in monthly subscription services and has also served as the sponsor for several fitness, powerlifting, adaptive athletes and Olympic Lifting events/competitions.

After all that big-time success, many entrepreneurs might be on to the next venture. But King doesn't let a cent of his found successes go to his head. He fully aims to stay local and plans to keep the Doc Spartan headquarters in the front office of his gym for as long as he can. Eventually, his next big plan is to build a small facility in his hometown of Portsmouth and continue to serve his community.

For King, it's not about solving all of Portsmouth's problems economically; it's about carrying a message of fighting weakness with strength and instilling a strong sense of community that will create positive, long-lasting impact. 🇺🇸



**ABOVE** | Dale King, left, and Renee Wallace, right, joined forces in 2011 and created the all-natural Doc Spartan ointment product line. Named after the old Portsmouth Spartan's football team, their number one purpose is to try to help anyone who is suffering.





# Murder, They Wrote...

Story by HEATHER WILLARD, AUSTIN LINFANTE  
Photos by DRAKE WITHERS, HEATHER WILLARD

Circleville bed and breakfast's mystery nights filled with on-the-fly improv from its guests



The Castle Inn Bed and Breakfast maintains a tall and imposing figure in Circleville's landscape, and on the last Friday of every month, it offers a role-playing event that Agatha Christie would likely approve of: a murder mystery.

On this particular evening, 12 guests gathered in the sitting room—lit only by one electric chandelier—to discuss the main business of the evening: the death and last testament of recently deceased billionaire Jones Claythorne. It seems that every guest has a good reason for why they should receive Claythorne's inheritance.

As guests cluster in small groups, their separate conversations grow in volume. Some learn that "Norton Claythorne" is a struggling artist, "Cassandra" and "Wilma" are modern-day gypsies who travel to exotic places, and "Rutland" (the lawyer who's in charge of reading the will) is coming off of many failed cases. At one point, "Victoria," a journalist hoping to sell a book about the family, cries out in frustration, "Stop, stop, stop. This family is killing me!"

"This is how we get along," Norton says.

#### ACTING AT MURDER

Of course, this is not a real murder, nor are guests relatives gathering to read a will. They also are not

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**//** It's very fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants; you make it up as you go along."

JEN KRAFT, General Manager

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trained actors putting on a play. Rather, these individuals have traveled far and wide to participate in the bed and breakfast's long-running mystery events. On this evening, two of the guests came from central Indiana just for this experience.

"All the guests are actually the characters in the murder mystery... you actually interact with the other guests; you have a character, we dress you up, we tell you who you are," says Jen Kraft, the general manager of the Castle. "We don't give you a script, though. It's very fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants; you make it up as you go along."

To start, guests come from their rooms on the second and third floors to have appetizers in the sitting room at 8 p.m. There, they get acquainted with each other and learn about the other players. At 9 p.m., dinner is served in the dining room, followed by dessert. After dinner, the story reaches its climax as the will is finally read out loud. When everyone



**PHOTO** | Guests at the Castle Inn pose for a portrait in their costumes for the murder mystery. Photo by Drake Withers.





**PHOTO** | Halfway through the evening the guests move to the dining room, continuing the improvisation and fun over a meal. Photo by Drake Withers.

wakes up the next morning, the mystery is solved over breakfast.

Those are the only guidelines for the murder mystery; the staff is basically detached from the story outside of announcing when dinner is ready and bringing out plates of food. All of the story progression happens at the will of the guests.

#### IS THE CASTLE HAUNTED?

The castle was built in 1895 by businessman Samuel Ruggles as a present for his wife. She lived there all her life and died in the castle. Since then, the rumors about the castle being haunted have circulated, and the story has been featured on A&E network's "Psychic Kids: Children of the Paranormal."

"[The Ruggles] had kids here, and people say that they see ghosts of kids," Kraft says. "And she had a cat. We don't tell people that, that's not part of the tour. But we have guests that leave the next day and say they heard our cat in the hallway. Things like that just make you think."

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**//** Stop, stop, stop. This family is killing me!"

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*"VICTORIA," Mystery Participant*

Kraft says guests regularly ask her if the castle is haunted, but she deliberately doesn't give a clear answer. She lets the guests decide if the rumors are true. "It's just what you make of it, I guess," Kraft says.

#### A REAL TOWN MYSTERY

However, Circleville certainly offers more than its fair share of chilling stories based on real events. Beyond the rumors of hauntings, an actual mystery involving Circleville has endured since 1976, including a series of threatening letters and ominous events centered around Mary Gillespie, a local bus driver who was rumored to be sleeping with the school superintendent. Her husband died under what some





**TOP** | "Cassandra" and "Victoria" compare notes during the evening. Photo by Heather Willard.

**BOTTOM** | Julie Shadinger (Aunt Hilda) laughs as another guest prepares a drink at the bar out of character. Photos by Heather Willard.



**ABOVE** | Guests of the Inn pause to take a selfie with the "corpse," breaking character to commemorate the moment. Photo by Drake Withers.

claim to be mysterious circumstances, and she was almost killed by a booby-trapped sign. The letters stopped in the mid 1990s and no one has solved the mystery of who the writer is.

An article in Southeast Ohio's 2013 spring issue noted that a trial in 1983 found Gillespie's brother-in-law, Paul Freshour, to be guilty of attempted murder and was sent to prison, but the letters did not stop after his incarceration. He was exonerated in 1994 after additional evidence was found and an ominous letter was sent to him that said: "Now when are you going to believe you aren't going to get out of there? I told you 2(sic) years ago." He died in 2012, and there have been no clear leads in the case since his release.

However, the Castle Inn's murder mysteries in no way reflect the Circleville letter incidents, and Kraft says although some may question any overlap, the Inn's mystery is not based on the actual events.

#### KILLER FUN

Inside the castle, fun was the word of the night. Julie Shadinger, aka "Aunt Hilda," was very pleased with her experience. "It's too fun," she says with a laugh. She had traveled from central Indiana to spend the night at the castle and thoroughly enjoyed her stay, just as many others have before her. 🇺🇸



#### Spend a KILLER night in the Castle

The Castle B&B Inn offers Murder Mystery weekends the last Friday of each month, January through November, and on New Year's Eve. Groups of six couples can contact the Castle to arrange special dates.

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LEFT | Jonathan Steiner, Ohio University undergraduate student and Delta Zeta house boy.

# The Glamorous Job of a Sorority House Boy

Story by ANDREW COHEN | Photo by ROBERT MCGRAW

### **Tell us a little about your background**

I am an information and telecommunication systems major from Virginia Beach, Virginia. I have a brother who is three years older than me.

### **Which sorority do you work for and how did you hear about the house boy job?**

My buddy Conor and I went to a buffalo chicken dip philanthropy event at Delta Zeta. We were eating the dip when one of the sisters asked us if we wanted food in exchange for light work. Obviously, we said yes.

### **What do your parents and friends think about your house boy job?**

My parents were happy I was making money instead of spending money. My friends think it's a great gig. There is tons of food and good conversation at the Delta Zeta house.

### **Was there an adjustment period for your job or were you comfortable there from day one?**

The first day was a little rough, but it was made easier with all of the ladies being so kind and welcoming at their dinner table.

### **What are the best and worst parts of your job?**

The best part would have to be meeting the girls. Yeah the food is nice and free, but there are 50 girls in that house and there are only two house boys.

### **Is the job different than how you imagined it being, or has it met your expectations?**

The job was pretty much what you would expect. Cleaning isn't hard, it just takes time. I'd rather do it in a house full of women than at 7-Eleven.

### **Do you have a favorite meal at the house?**

The parmesan chicken is pretty awesome.

### **What is your relationship like with your co-workers, the other house boys?**

Conor and I work together on Mondays and Wednesdays. We get along well, we're good friends.

### **What do you think are the biggest misconceptions that others have about being a sorority house boy?**

Often I'm asked, 'Do you have to be in a frat?' No. A lot of people think house boys are fraternity men. But many of them are because of the close ties to Greek life.

### **Are you in a fraternity?**

I am no longer in a fraternity.

### **How might your job be different if you worked as a fraternity house boy?**

I can imagine a fraternity house being a little bit different than Delta Zeta's. A little more unruly, but a little more fun. 🇺🇸





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**PHOTO** | Kim Clevenger sprinkles a secret ingredient to a new Doc Spartan product. Story on page 38. Photo by Robert McGraw.