



THE MIRROR

SERVING WATERVILLE, WHITEHOUSE & MONCLOVA SINCE 1990

Vol. 32, No. 18

Issue No. 1443

2 Sections - 32 Pages

\$1.25

May 4, 2023

Monclova Creates Panel In Search For New Fire Chief

BY KAREN GERHARDINGER
MIRROR REPORTER

A national search is on for a new Monclova Township fire chief.

During their May 1 meeting, Monclova Township trustees approved a separation agreement with Kevin Bernhard, who has served as fire chief since 1992. Township administrator Harold Grim said that Bernhard decided to retire, with his last day on April 30.

During the meeting, the trustees appointed a six-member panel to seek out a new fire chief. The panel includes Jeff Anderson, Nate Burtscher, Dave Dustin, Luis Santiago and Mike Wolever – all with current or past fire experience – along with Grim. A similar panel was formed last year to select the nine full-time firefighters who were sworn in on January 23.

Trustee Chuck Hoecherl met with employees on April 27 to inform them of the decision and to answer questions. He confirmed to fire personnel that trustees have no plans to merge with any other department but to move forward with a new chief.

“The hiring committee will conduct a search in a fair and open process,” Hoecherl said. “We have no timeline set. We want to get the best possible candidate available.”

Assistant Chief, Matt Homik will be in command of the department during the process – just as he has done while the chief was on vacation.

The fire service has been a part of the Bernhard family for generations, the retired chief said.

“My dad (Larry) was a firefighter with Monclova for 35 years,” he said. “When I was really young, he started taking me down to the station for equipment check nights.”

Bernhard joined the township’s fire cadet program when he was 17 and obtained the training he needed to become a volunteer firefighter at 18, going on to take his EMT and advanced EMT training.

Monclova didn’t have full-time paid staff at the time, so Bernhard decided to pursue a career in law enforcement. Encouraged by his uncle, Whitehouse police officer Tom Sutton, and his friend, sheriff’s



Monclova Township Fire Chief Kevin Bernhard retired on April 30.

deputy Jeff Summers, Bernhard finished the police academy, joined the sheriff’s auxiliary and was hired by Holland Police Department. It’s a position he kept for 10 years.

While he was appointed Monclova’s assistant fire chief in 1991 and chief in 1992, those were unpaid positions that he continued in his spare time. In March

1995, he became the first full-time chief, after the retirement of volunteer fire chief Carl Boyd.

“Chief Boyd did a good job of grooming and training me to be ready. It was a lot of learning, but we had good officers. It’s not one individual, it’s a team. Through all the growth, especially in the last 15 to 20 years, having good people

has made all the difference,” Bernhard said.

When he first joined the department in 1984 as a volunteer, the run volume was just 100 per year.

“We got kind of bored,” he admitted. “In the early 1990s was when we reached 365 runs – an average of a run a day – and it’s exploded since then. Last year’s run volume was 1,864 and the department is on pace for 2,000 runs this year.”

The training requirements have also expanded from the 36 hours to become a firefighter to 160 for Firefighter I and 240 hours for Firefighter II. The department started reimbursing firefighters who completed their paramedic training, and in the mid-1990s, the model grew from a Basic Life Support (BLS) model to Advanced Life Support (ALS) model and took on additional roles such as preparing to respond to biological or chemical threats and terrorism.

The department has also grown to now include full-time and part-time staff available 24/7 as well as a full-time assistant chief and

(continued on page 4)

GENERALLY SPEAKING

Whitehouse Police

Host Bike Rodeo

The Whitehouse Police Department and CycleWerks will host a bike rodeo on Thursday, May 18 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Whitehouse Primary School, 6510 Texas St., Whitehouse.

Participants can check bike safety knowledge, ride the bike rodeo obstacle course, have your bike inspected by a certified bike specialist and learn simple bike maintenance.

A bicycle and helmet are required to participate. For more information, contact officer Ken Scheuerman at (419) 877-9191 or kscheuerman@whitehouseoh.gov.

Farmers Market

Seeks Vendors

The Whitehouse Farmers Market will begin on Saturday, July 15 and will continue every Saturday until August 26. The market will be located in the center of Whitehouse at the bike path. Hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Organizers are presently seeking vendors (continued on page 4)

Sabrina Wilson Prepares To Attend Ohio State University

BY KAREN GERHARDINGER
MIRROR REPORTER

Sabrina Wilson, like many high school seniors, is both excited and nervous about going to college.

At The Ohio State University, she’ll live on her own in a dorm, take classes and navigate her way around a campus that’s the size of a small city.

“It’s kind of scary,” admitted Sabrina, adding that she’s looking forward to making friends.

For many teens with Down syndrome, college isn’t usually considered an option, but over the past decade, OSU has joined a growing number of universities to offer programs to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Now, over 300 universities nationwide offer programs that give students an opportunity to engage in academic coursework, gain meaningful work experience, develop independent living skills and participate in campus and community organizations, social activities and



Sabrina Wilson, an Anthony Wayne High School senior, has been accepted into The Ohio State University’s Transition Options in Postsecondary Settings (TOPS) program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She will live in a dorm and navigate the OSU campus while taking classes, working and volunteering.

MIRROR PHOTO BY KAREN GERHARDINGER

events. (See related article.)

“Going to college has not been a choice for any of our kids,” said Sabrina’s mom, Liz Swantack. She and her husband, Mike Wilson, have three adult children in college: Juney, Samantha and Tara. “Once I found out

there’s a program for people with intellectual disabilities, I started researching.”

Last summer, Sabrina participated in a weeklong camp at OSU to test it out: living in a dorm, going to the cafeteria for meals and completing classwork.

Afterward, Sabrina created a PowerPoint presentation as part of the application process to get into the OSU program.

In addition to her good academic standing at Anthony Wayne High School, Sabrina’s resume

includes numerous activities that showcase her talents and interests.

With eight years of dance lessons, Sabrina landed roles in junior high and high school musical performances, including Santa’s helper in *Elf Jr.*, a law student in *Legally Blonde*, Little Shrek in *Shrek Jr.* and a lady in waiting in *Once Upon a Mattress*. She was a member of the bowling team for two years, averaging about 100 in her games. And during her sixth-grade year, she was recruited to the cheerleading team.

Outside of school, Sabrina works at the Perrysburg Chick-fil-A cleaning trays, making kids’ bags and greeting guests in the dining room. She works out twice a week with a personal trainer and has an agent to represent her in modeling and acting. She’s pursued all sorts of interests: seeing Justin Bieber and Taylor Swift in concert, traveling, modeling and absorbing as much as she can about ancient Egypt and

(continued on page 4)

POSTAL PATRON

sku 203608





Waterville Police Host Cops & Coffee

Coffee, donuts and bagels were on the menu on April 29 as the Waterville Police Department hosted a gathering at Shawn's Irish Tavern. Citizens and officers from Waterville and neighboring departments stopped by to chat and check out the department's new golf cart. Above, pictured are (from left) Waterville police officer Kelly Milewski, Ohio Highway Patrol Sgt. Christopher Seambos, Waterville Lt. Todd Shelton, Waterville Township officer Miami Box, Waterville officer A.J. Glover, Waterville Police Chief Joe Valvano, Lucas County Sheriff's Sgt. Mike Shrewsberry, Whitehouse Sgt. Brad Baker and Whitehouse officer Muhammad Bilal.



Kathleen and John Metzger enjoy the opportunity to meet with the officers and have a cup of coffee.

Monclova Begins Search For New Fire Chief

(continued from page 1)
fire prevention officer.

In retirement, Bernhard said he'll continue to serve as the Region I coordinator for the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association emergency response system, in which area fire departments can be called together quickly for large disasters such as floods or the 2014 algal bloom that impacted the water supply.

Bernhard plans to move with his wife, Sheila, to Florida within the year. They'll also spend time visiting their son Todd – a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army stationed at Fort Bliss – and his family. Their son, Kevin, is an engineer and their youngest, Zachary, is also in the fire service.

"Fire service is a deep tradition with the family," Bernhard said, adding that his brother Troy is a firefighter/

paramedic with Perrysburg Township and that Sheila was on the Monclova Township department in the 1980s.

"It's been an enjoyable career. I've worked with many good people over the years," he said. "I'm looking forward to taking it easy for a little bit."

During the meeting, the trustees also:

- Approved the \$3,100 purchase of windscreens for the pickleball courts.

- Heard that vandals ripped up a handicapped parking sign and threw it onto the pickleball courts. Trustee Trudy Vicary suggested looking into cameras for Keener Park and the maintenance areas.

- Heard trustee Barbara Lang say that the Maumee Monclova Township Toledo Joint Economic Development Zone (JEDZ) board met

and agreed to dissolve its jobs creation grant and instead look at other tools to encourage investment in the area.

- Discussed concerns about the placement of self-storage facilities in the JEDZ and other development districts, which are designed to benefit from income tax. Storage facilities do not often have employees. Maumee recently placed a moratorium on self-storage facilities but townships have limitations on moratoriums. Legal counsel is looking into options.

- Heard that a new GameTime fitness rack has arrived and will be installed at Keener Park after edging and playground-approved mulch are in place.

- Learned that the second meeting of June will be on Tuesday, June 20 due to the Monday, June 19 Juneteenth holiday.

Sabrina Wilson To Attend OSU

(continued from page 1)
Harry Potter.

Standing in front of an Egyptian sarcophagus at the Toledo Museum of Art last month, Sabrina read aloud an interpretation of the hieroglyphics.

"I studied the sarcophagus and Egypt in social studies," Sabrina said.

She spent spring break in Toronto, attending a performance of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, visiting the Royal Ontario Museum and dining at the top of the CN Tower. Last year, she traveled to Barcelona and Paris with a group of her aunt's friends, but she'd like to someday travel to Rome to see the Coliseum.

"She has so much stored up here," her mom said, pointing to her head. "Sometimes it takes a little longer for it to come out."

Swantack, a registered nurse who founded Circle 47 to help other parents advocate for their children with intellectual disabilities, knows that a lifelong pursuit of encouraging independence, exploration and inclusion is the reason why Sabrina is ready for college. The family didn't settle for just teaching Sabrina life skills; they pushed her to continually learn alongside peers.

"The first thing I do when I'm working with kindergartners and first-graders is to tell them, 'You will go to college,'" Swantack said.

It takes a commitment from parents to not give in and do too much for their child – as well as working with the schools to ensure inclusion in the general

population – to prepare kids with intellectual disabilities for succeeding in the world, Swantack said.

"We're trying to help Sabrina grow to be an independent woman with a job of her choice so she can support herself," she added.

She acknowledges that the first few years of introducing this idea to the district were challenging, but it's paid off. In school, Sabrina has had an educational assistant to help her learn alongside her peers as she took geometry, French, Spanish and other courses.

"They supported her in the least restrictive environment with regular kids," she added. "That filled her brain up with knowledge."

Along the way, she also made many friends, including Myles Eckert, Anthony Materro and Lily Croy, who drives Sabrina to school.

When Sabrina moves onto campus this fall, she'll have a resident assistant down the hall and some help from the TOPS (Transition Options in Postsecondary Settings) program in learning the ropes, but she'll be gaining independent skills while taking classes and working. She won't have an aide to help her in classes. Her parents plan to move to Columbus to be nearby in case she needs support, and her sister Juney will also be in town as she finishes up her master's degree in social work at OSU. Samantha, who just finished her degree at Ohio University, is heading to Maine to work as a camp counselor. Her oldest sister, Tara, is enrolled with Southern New Hampshire University.

GENERALLY SPEAKING

(continued from page 1)

dors for the market. Those interested may contact Sheri at srluedtke@aol.com.

Food Truck Events

Sign Up Vendors

Anthony Wayne Area Arts Commission will host three Eats & Beats Food Truck Tuesdays in Waterville this summer and is currently lining up art and craft vendors, farmers market vendors, and nonprofit organizations. There is no cost to participate. Bring your own table and chairs. Sell your crafts, artwork or farm produce, or get the word out about your nonprofit.

The events will be held on Tuesdays, June 13, July 11 and August 8 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. in Conrad park, Waterville.

You can participate in one, two or all three Food Truck Tuesdays. However, you must register so organizers know what dates you are coming.

The park, located near the Waterville Branch Library, is a wonderful venue with a playground for kids, picnic tables and a gazebo for live music performances.

To reserve a vendor spot, contact Lisa Exner by email at lisaexner23@gmail.com or by text at (419) 378-0935.

AW Kindergarten

Registration Open

Anthony Wayne kindergarten registration is now open for the 2023-24 school year.

In order to begin kindergarten next fall, children must be 5 years old by September 30.

AWLS does not participate in open enrollment, so families must reside within the district to register at AWLS.

Parents can start the registration process, see what documentation is required and find dates for parent nights, open houses and screening at <https://www.anthonywayneschools.org/Kindergarten>.

For questions or difficulties completing the online registration, parents can call (419) 877-5377 or email enrollment@anthonywayneschools.org.

★

Readers interested in submitting items to this column may do so by sending an email to info@themirrornewspaper.com or by sending a typed press release to The Mirror Newspaper, 113 W. Wayne St., Maumee, OH 43537.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE MIRROR TODAY!

Traditional Print and Online Subscriptions Available!

THE MIRROR
NEWSPAPERS

Call (419) 893-8135 or visit
www.themirrornewspaper.com



TOPS Programs Provide Experience For Grads With Intellectual Disabilities

BY KAREN GERHARDINGER
MIRROR REPORTER

The toddler with Down syndrome and the grade-schooler on the autism spectrum need to hear “you can go to college” from their parents just as often as any other child.

“Research shows that the higher the expectations shared with a child – no matter what their disability status – the better their outcomes will be,” said Jessie Green, Ph.D., program manager for The Ohio State University’s Transition Options in Postsecondary Settings (TOPS) program.

The program, launched in 2011, is one of 317 TOPS programs nationwide, providing students with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to earn certificates, prepare for the workforce and live independently.

Sabrina Wilson, an Anthony Wayne High School graduate, is heading to OSU this fall, where she will live in a dorm, navigate campus with an app on her phone, take classes, volunteer and work. She will be one of more than 25 TOPS students at OSU this fall. Sabrina is considering all of her course options, including computer science, with a goal of getting a job after college.

“This doesn’t only benefit Sabrina. She brings value to students, staff and faculty at the university,” Green said. “I’d like to think that as an entire institution, we are building leaders, and these leaders will go out into the workforce and hopefully use their experience with TOPS to make their workplaces more diverse and more inclusive.”

Sabrina’s mom, Liz Swantack, is on a mission to spread the word about TOPS programs and the opportunity for students like Sabrina, who has Down syndrome, to set and achieve their goals. As the founder of Circle 47, Swantack advises families of



Sabrina Wilson, right, will be heading to The Ohio State University this fall, as part of the Transition Options in Postsecondary Settings (TOPS) program – where students with Down syndrome, autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities are able to earn certificates and prepare for the workforce. Sabrina is joined by her sisters including Juney Wilson (left), who is earning her masters in social work at OSU, and Samantha Wilson, who is a 2023 graduate with a degree in social work.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LIZ SWANTACK

children with intellectual disabilities on how to navigate school, work and life. She encourages parents to talk about college as a goal at a young age, and then take incremental steps to boost independence along the way.

Think College, at www.thinkcollege.net, has information on all 317 programs, including the nine in Ohio: Bowling Green State University Firelands, Cleveland State University, Columbus State Community College, Kent State University, Marietta College, Sinclair Community College, The Ohio State University, University of Cincinnati, The University of Toledo and Youngstown State University.

For most parents, the idea of their graduate heading to OSU – which is the size of a small city – is daunting enough. Yet students with intellectual disabilities are guided on how to get around campus alone using a phone app, stay safe on and off campus, and structure their time. Students can live in a dorm,

participating in social activities, maintaining their living space and going to the dining hall.

Working and employment is a priority. Students audit courses from the course catalog and take classes with TOPS staff, learning about independent living and career development, building resumes and interview skills, job shadowing and completing paid or unpaid internships. Community service on or off campus is also part of the program.

“Students are building their self-determination and self-advocacy skills to lead what they consider their best life,” Green said.

For some, that best life is graduating, getting a place to live and having a job lined up. For others, it might be working toward an associate degree. Some of the TOPS graduates have gone on to earn certification as a vet tech or even work at OSU, making \$15.00 an hour and – if working more than 32 hours a week – earning health insurance and other benefits.

“For individuals with intellectual disabilities, this can be life-altering,” Green said. “For years, many of these people have had to be reliant on the system. Now, our graduates who are working are paying into the pool with their taxes and will be able to retire and draw on their own pensions.”

So far, the OSU TOPS program has had 43 graduates with eight more crossing the stage in a few weeks. Of those who graduated, 90 percent are employed and making \$13.00 an hour working 28 hours a week on average, Green said.

“We’re talking about a population that might not be able to work 40 hours a week,” Green explained.

Nationwide, the graduation rate is 75 percent, and of those, 15 to 30 percent are now employed.

“When we look at these numbers, while small, it’s a huge difference, especially considering that this movement is not even 15 years old,” Green said. “We’re seeing a shift in outcomes and looking to the future. Expanding this program to other universities and letting families know about it is a priority.”

Also a priority is expanding funding, which is the biggest deterrent to enrollment. OSU students pay \$17,000 a year for the TOPS program, which doesn’t include living expenses. That’s why students typically come from wealthier families. She encourages families to begin a 529 plan early to get started saving.

“Getting a job, going to college, living alone – these are all indicators of quality of life,” Green said. “It’s different for every person. It doesn’t mean they’re not going to falter along the way. We all do. We allow the student to have the dignity to take risks and falter but with the higher expectation to keep going.”

Dental Health Associates of Whitehouse

Where it Never Hurts to Smile!

New patients who mention this ad will receive \$100 off their first out-of-pocket expenses!

5934 Finzel Road, Whitehouse • 419-877-0382
(Across from Anthony Wayne High School)

Providing Personalized Vision & Medical Eye Care For The Entire Family.

Anthony Wayne Vision Services, Inc. • COMPREHENSIVE EYE AND VISION CARE
CONTACT LENSES • SPECIALTY LENSES
FASHION & DESIGNER FRAMES
TREATMENT OF EYE DISEASES
REFRACTIVE SURGERY MANAGEMENT

Dr. Daniel J. Robinson, Optometrist

419-878-EYES 3937 Most Insurance Plans Accepted

8245-A Farnsworth Rd., Waterville • anthonywaynevisionservices.com

— Established in 1981 —

Cyclewerks

Three Locations To Serve You:

Whitehouse
6760 Providence St.
419-877-1000

Bowling Green
248 S. Main
419-352-9375

Sylvania
7510 New West Rd.
419-517-7577

www.shopcyclewerks.com

Mercy Health Community Forums Slated For Maumee, Waterville

Bob Baxter, president of Mercy Health Toledo, will share information about Mercy Health’s rich history and commitment to the future with community forums in both Maumee and Waterville. The focus of the forums will be to engage the public as Mercy Health continues to build a vision for Maumee, Waterville, Perrysburg and the surrounding communities.

As operations at McLaren St. Luke’s come to an end on May 8, Mercy Health is poised to offer a continuum of care for area patients, Baxter said.

Local officials and community members are invited to hear about Mercy Health and ask questions at the following forums.

In Maumee:

Tuesday, May 16, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Elks Lodge, 139 W. Wayne St.

In Waterville:

Tuesday, May 9, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Zion Lutheran Church, 22 N. 2nd St.

Open for wellness

OPEN FOR YOU

Whether you need preventive and wellness care or help managing a complex health condition, The University of Toledo Medical Center’s internal medicine providers are the healthcare leaders you want on your team.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO MEDICAL CENTER

utmc.utoledo.edu