

Dear Santa...

THIRD-GRADERS
WRITE LETTERS TO
THE MAN IN RED.

SEE PAGES A5 AND A8

3 DAYS
UNTIL
CHRISTMAS



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WEEKEND EDITION DECEMBER 22-23, 2012

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35/21

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edge Tigers
* * *

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2 Sections, 16 Pages
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Circleville, OH 43113

Good Day,
Thomas Egbert
Thank you for
subscribing to the
Circleville Herald



Schools: armed officers better than armed teachers

BY KRISTI MURPHY
STAFF REPORTER

PICKAWAY COUNTY — Local school superintendents agree that having armed officers in each of its schools would be a better option than arming teachers.

Although no decisions have been made in any of the school districts regarding this security measure, discussions about it in the new year are likely to take place.

“Everything that has happened in the news has been very emotional. We’ve got to make intelligent decisions and see what stance the Ohio Department of Education has.”

Jeff Sheets, Teays Valley superintendent

“We will most likely discuss that in our Jan. 9 meeting in executive session,” said Kirk McMahon, Circleville superintendent. “We are open to enhancing our school security, and if that means hiring a

school resource officer, then we will definitely discuss it.”

The Buckeye Firearms Association and the National Rifle Association, both gun-lobbying groups, made separate

announcements this week about how schools should address gun violence in schools.

The BFA announced a new pilot program to provide free firearms training to teachers, while the NRA called for all schools to have armed police officers.

When asked which option they would prefer in their schools, each of the superintendents said a school resource officer would be the better choice.

See SCHOOLS, A2



A little messy, Lauren Sowers cringes as she covers her gingerbread house with frosting.

PHOTOS BY
NANCY RADCLIFF/
CIRCLEVILLE
HERALD



(Above) With her hands dripping in frosting, Alyssa Conley counts to 100 while holding the roof of her gingerbread house together.

(Top) Landen Colon finds one way to get the frosting off of his fingers.



A SWEET LESSON

BY NANCY RADCLIFF
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

No matter how it looks, it’s incredibly delicious. Using lots of frosting and plenty of candy, first grade students at Atwater Elementary recently made their own gingerbread houses. As part of a class lesson, the students used their math skills and learned about patterns as they designed their own house. As the kids covered their houses with gum drops, licorice, chocolate bars and other pieces of candy, they were allowed at times to eat some of their favorite candy pieces.

EMAIL @ NRADCLIFF@CIRCLEVILLEHERALD.COM

Ashville to move railroad crossing

BY J.D. RIVER
STAFF REPORTER

ASHVILLE — After two years of discussion on creation of a safer railroad crossing in the village, Ashville has secured funding from five sources in order to move the existing crossing from Griggs Street to West Station Street.

“We have the funds needed and we hope to have the project completed by early 2014 at the latest.”

Franklin Christman, Ashville village administrator

The move is in response to the high 60-mph speeds at which the trains from the Rickenbacker Intermodal facility travel while moving through Ashville. Prior to the initiation of the Intermodal program, trains would cross Ashville at no faster than 40-45 mph.

Ashville has partnered with the Ohio Public Works Commission, Ohio Rail Development Commission, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and Norfolk Southern to raise \$773,750 for relocation of the rail crossing as well as installation of gates and refurbishment of West Station Street.

The current plan for the move is to dedicate the funds allocated from the partners of the railroad crossing improvement project solely to West Station Street, creating the safest and most up-to-regulation crossing for both vehicles and pedestrians, according to Franklin Christman.

See RAILROAD, A2

Ohio insurance plan to help children with autism

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOLEDO — Ohio is joining 32 other states that require health insurance plans to cover therapy and treatment for children with autism.

The change comes as the number of children diagnosed with autism continues to grow and after unsuccessful attempts to increase help for families in Ohio.

Gov. John Kasich pushed for the plan announced Friday after state lawmakers weren’t able to agree on a similar proposal over the last months.

“We’re doing the right thing,” said Kasich, who said mandating the coverage is a lifeline for parents.

Parents will be able to get coverage beginning in 2014 through health insurance sold in the private market and in

the upcoming federal health insurance exchange along with the state employee health insurance plan, state health officials said.

While the requirement will extend into private coverage, self-insured and group insurers are not included, officials said.

Most private carriers currently don’t offer coverage for children with autism, said John Martin, director of Ohio’s De-

partment of Developmental Disabilities.

Insurers will be forced to pay for assessments, treatment plans, speech and occupational therapy and treatment aimed at improving communication and social skills.

The number of visits and hours will be limited to keep costs down so that health care costs don’t spike.

See INSURANCE, A2

Merry Christmas from The Savings Bank

All offices of The Savings Bank will close at noon on Monday, December 24th and resume regular business hours on Wednesday, December 26th, so our employees may enjoy Christmas with family and friends.



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Circleville Herald | Community

SCHOOLS

Continued from A1

"I think it's important to have individuals who are trained, whether it's the local law enforcement agencies or a resource officer that is hired via the school," said Tim Williams, Logan Elm superintendent. "Those individuals would be more apt to handle a situation than a trained teacher."

Westfall superintendent Cara Riddel had the same stance. "A school resource officer is the better approach because they would be able to help us with implementing our safety plan," she said. "It would be more appropriate since they are trained."

Teays Valley superintendent Jeff Sheets said, although he is open to the idea of adding an

armed officer to schools, he does not want a decision made based on emotion.

"Everything that has happened in the news has been very emotional," he said. "We've got to make intelligent decisions and see what stance the Ohio Department of Education has."

He further stated that adding a school resource officer would not eliminate all the risks.

"We've got a problem in our society that needs addressed," he said. "It's not just a school issue. It's a society problem."

School security has been a major topic within the last week after a gunman killed 26 students and faculty at a Connecticut elementary school.

Each superintendent said their districts will continue to look at ways to enhance the safety of their students.

KMURPHY@CIRCLEVILLEHERALD.COM. GET UPDATES FROM THE CIRCLEVILLE HERALD ON TWITTER AND FACEBOOK.

RAILROAD

Continued from A1

Ashville village administrator. "We have the funds needed and we hope to have the project completed by early 2014 at the latest," said Christman.

Once the West Station Street crossing is completed, the current crossing at Griggs street will be abandoned.

"It's just not feasible to invest funds into a crossing that would still remain a risk," Christman said. "The Griggs Street crossing has served us well in the past, but making the West Station Street crossing as safe and modern as possible is a much better option."

Have a photo or news story to share? If so, we'd love to hear about it. Send an email to: news@CirclevilleHerald.com

Williamsports News

Hi, readers:
From our home to your home, Ronnie and I wish you a very Merry Christmas!
Linda

CINDA JUSTICE NEEDS INFORMATION

"On Thanksgiving night when the dogs were out for some run time, we heard barking and thought they were chasing squirrels or cats on the other side of the fence. Later when we went out, we noticed they had all pushed on the gate with enough force to slip through. Two of the three had come back, but the youngest, who is 6, had not come back. She is a black miniature Schnauzer, and she had on a thin red collar with an old vet tag on it. We have left the gate open every night since, but she has not returned. We think she has been caught by someone or is dead.

We have gone up and down the roads calling her and stopping at many houses, but with no sign of her. She was on medication and will have to have more, but we are at a loss to know where to look next.

We will reward anyone bringing her back. Our number is 986-4535.

Thanks!



Linda Waugh

Cinda and family"
* Please readers, if you have any info whatsoever, please give Cinda a call. My heart goes out to Cinda and Larry. This is a very sad situation not knowing if their dog is OK. The "not knowing" part has to be so difficult for them!

MAYOR'S CORNER

We closed our Sewer Rehab project that was a grant funded project making repairs to the northeast side of town. Now we are turning our focus to the Catch Basin project and getting those 10 catch basins installed.

Our operators had their EPA inspection on the sewer plant and operations, there were no

major findings. This is the first year that our employees are the actual operators of the plant. The last several years we had contracted that role out. We are very happy with how are two operators have handled the transition.

Soon some goals and initiatives set for 2013 to improve our community will be released.

Edward P. Cox
Mayor
Village of Williamsport

REQUEST FOR PRAYER

Doris Ritchie, a former resident, contacted me to ask the readers to please remember her in prayer. If you would like to send her a card, she would be so thankful to you.

Cards may be sent to her at Circleville Care and Rehab, 1155 Atwater Ave., Circleville, OH 43113.

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISHES

Mr. Cody Johnston will be 24 on Dec. 20. He is the son of Tracy and Dennis Johnston of Circleville and the grandson of Bea Smith of Circleville. Ronnie and I consider him our grandson, too. Oh, what fun we had as he was growing up; he went on vacations with us when he was only 6 years old. Oh,

what wonderful memories!
So I want to say to my special "Buud" ... Happy Birthday, we love you!!

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEERCREEK TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES

"Merry Christmas and a Healthy 2013 — Cindy, Charles, Randy and Wayne."

Please remember that the trustees meet the second and last Monday of the month at 7 p.m.

Have a beautiful week!
Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and every-where,

Go tell it on the mountain,
Our Jesus Christ is born.
When I was a seeker

I sought both night and day,
I asked the Lord to help me,
And he showed me the way.
Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and every-where,

Go tell it on the mountain,
Our Jesus Christ is born.
He made me a watchman
Upon a city wall,

And if I am a Christian,
I am the least of all.
Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and every-where,

Go tell it on the mountain,
Our Jesus Christ is born.

Federal judge upholds Ohio's new exotic-animal law

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBUS — A federal judge upheld Ohio's new restrictions on exotic animals on Thursday after several owners sued the state over the law, which was enacted after a man released dozens of his wild creatures including lions and tigers last year and then committed suicide.

U.S. District Court Judge George Smith in Columbus sided with the state, saying the court recognizes some businesses may be negatively affected and some owners may not be able to keep their beloved animals but the owners failed to prove constitutional rights were violated.

The court said the case came down to the public interest and protecting the public from potential dangers of exotic animals.

"While the named Plaintiffs may be responsible dangerous wild animal owners, there are some that are not," the ruling said.

Ohio officials have defended the law as a common-sense measure to address the growing safety problem of private ownership of exotics animals.

The state "felt all along like this law was in the best interest of the public and public safety, and in the health and the welfare of these animals, and the judge reaffirmed that," Ohio Department of Agriculture

Ohio officials have defended the law as a common-sense measure to address the growing safety problem of private ownership of exotics animals.

* * *

spokeswoman Erica Hawkins said.

The seven owners who sued the state were disappointed by the decision and plan to appeal, said their attorney, Robert Owens.

Those owners said the new regulations force them to join private associations and possibly give up their animals without compensation. They also challenged a requirement that animals be implanted with microchips before being registered with the state, so the creatures can be identified if they get lost or escape.

The Humane Society of the United States, which joined the case to defend the law, praised the ruling.

Lawmakers worked with a renewed sense of urgency to strengthen Ohio's regulations after a suicidal owner released dozens of creatures last year from an eastern Ohio farm in Zanesville. Authorities killed 48 of the animals, including black bears, Bengal tigers and African lions, fearing for the public's safety.

Owners, animal experts and state authorities were among those who testified before the judge during a three-day hearing in mid-December.

Owner Cyndi Huntsman told the judge the microchip requirement amounted to a death sentence for some of her creatures because of the anesthesia required for the procedure. She feared animals with health problems or those that are older won't wake up from sedation.

The state argued in court documents that a microchip is "no larger than one or two grains of rice" and is typically injected in a minimally invasive procedure no different than vaccinating.

While the law took effect in September, some aspects have yet to kick in. For instance, a permit process for owners won't begin until next October.

Current owners who want to keep their animals must obtain the new state-issued permits by Jan. 1, 2014. They must pass background checks, pay fees, obtain liability insurance or surety bonds and show inspectors they can properly contain the animals and care for them. Otherwise, they will be banned from having them.

The law exempts sanctuaries, research institutions and facilities accredited by some national zoo groups, such as the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the Zoological Association of America.

Ohio marks 1 week since Conn. massacre

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBUS — The somber sound of bells tolling 26 times resounded across Ohio on Friday as the state joined the rest of the nation and Connecticut in observing the one-week mark since a massacre at an elementary school killed 20 children and six adults.

Places of worship from Cincinnati to Cleveland and beyond tolled their bells 26 times at 9:30 a.m., the time the shooting began at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown on Dec. 14.

The Rev. Richard Burnett, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in downtown Columbus, said a tolling of the bells can be a memorial, a call to prayer or a call to action.

"I think all of those things at one level or another can speak to people in our community a week after the tragedy of the massacre," he told the Columbus Dispatch.

The Rev. Virginia Lohmann Bauman of St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church told the newspaper that the goal was to let the people of Newtown know they're not alone.

"We are standing in solidarity with those

who weep and grieve," she said.

As Ohio rang its bells, Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy stood on the steps of Newtown's town hall as a bell there chimed 26 times.

Malloy had asked other states to participate.

Schools across Ohio also marked the moment, including at Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School in Cleveland. Students, teachers and community members there walked the track around the football field for about 45 minutes to remember those killed.

INSURANCE

Continued from A1

That was a concern of business groups.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce said Friday that Kasich's decision will increase health care costs for small businesses.

"Their options for controlling these costs are limited, and

today's decision jeopardizes the health benefits many families count on," said Keith Lake, a lobbyist for the chamber.

Health experts say that one out of 88 children has autism, which usually shows up in early childhood. It restricts a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. There is no cure for autism, but early treat-

ment can make a big difference.

"With early intervention, kids with autism do better at school, find employment, and become more independent, connected adults," Kasich said in a statement.

Several states, including Michigan, have approved changes mandating autism coverage within the past year.

Advocacy groups and health organizations were thrilled that Ohio has joined the other states.

"Thousands of Ohio children will have access to services to help them learn, and keep or improve skills and functional abilities that they may not be otherwise developing," said John Stacy, executive director of the Autism Society of Ohio.

HOLIDAY HOURS
Mon-Fri 9-6
Sat 9-5

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