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Stories and information about people, places and organizations that make Clintonville great



Trophy hunters

Bishop Watterson High School boys lacrosse players hold up the 2025 Division II state championship trophy after a thrilling 9-7 victory against Wooster High School at Historic Crew Stadium June 8. It was the school's first boys lacrosse state title. Story, Page 13. Additional photos, Page 12 and online at ClintonvilleSpotlight.com. (Spotlight photo by John Hulkenberg)

CAC preps for 2025 elections

By SETH CROWELL
Spotlight Contributor

Elections once again are on the horizon for many Clintonville area residents.

The Clintonville Area Commission heard a report June 3 from Melissa Doll, chairwoman of the CAC's Elections Committee.

Doll said elections for several commission seats are scheduled for Aug. 23. Representation for districts 2, 3, 6 and 8 will be decided. Voting will take place at the Whetstone library.

"The annual election for Clintonville will be on Saturday, Aug. 23. Early voting is scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 19," Doll said.

Winners of the district 3, 6 and 8 elections will serve 3-year terms beginning in January 2026.

The race in District 2 will be to replace former commissioner Gregory Nutter, who died April 27. Nutter, 68, began serving in January 2024 and so the winner of this special election will fill out the remainder of that term, for 16 months.

"The election for District 2 is technically a special election, but we're absorbing it into the general election cycle pro-

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Library branch continues to evolve as it turns 40

By PRESTON HARMON
Spotlight Contributor

The Whetstone branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library will celebrate its 40th anniversary this fall.

The building, 3909 N. High St., on Sept. 23 will mark four decades of providing Clintonville residents with books, movies and services.

On Monday, Aug. 25, the branch will host an afterschool open house highlighting programs for youth and adults, including a birthday cake and a slideshow of historical Whetstone branch pictures.

Wendy VanScheetz, Whetstone branch manager, said libraries are an asset to

communities and she hopes the branch keeps thriving.

"We are friendly faces, we are entertainment, we are learning, we are support," she said.

"You just can't get that for free anywhere else, and I think that's why we will continue to be invaluable to the community."

The Whetstone branch opened on Sept. 23, 1985, although CML's history in Clintonville goes back nearly a century to when the first four branch libraries were opened on May 4, 1928.

The original Clintonville branch was built along with the Linden, Parsons and Hilltop branches in response to Main Li-

brary's growing pains, in particular parking issues. There were not enough hitching posts for horses, said Megan Sheeran, adult librarian in history and genealogy for the CML.

Columbus City Council provided \$40,000 in funding to build the branches after the Columbus and Franklin County Federation of Women's Clubs marched to urge the creation of branches.

The Clintonville branch opened at 3317 N. High St. before moving to the planned location at 14 W. Lakeview Ave., now home to the Clintonville-Beechwood Community Resources Center. This location had about

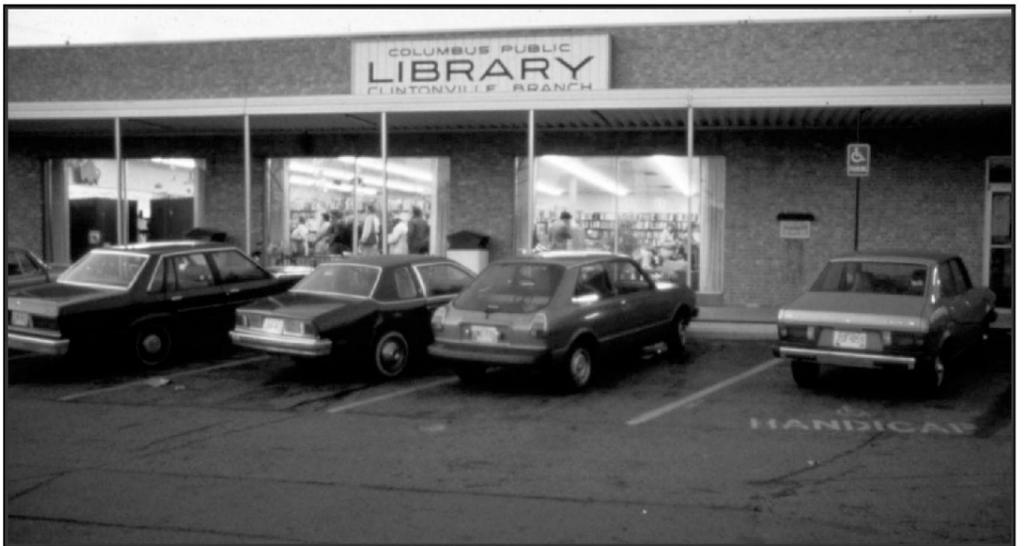
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Turning the page

While the history of public libraries in the community is longer, the Whetstone branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library will celebrate its 40th anniversary this year. Story, Page 1.

LEFT: Library patrons circulate in front of Whetstone. (*Spotlight* photo by Preston Harmon)

BELOW: Clintonville residents once were served by two branches – the Beechwold branch, on the northwest corner of North High Street and West Weisheimer Road, and the Clintonville branch, located where Lucky Dragon is now situated in the shopping center which is home to Lucky's Market. (Submitted photos)



Some of the more popular initiatives found at the Whetstone branch throughout the past four decades include the annual Duckling Day Parade, inspired by the children's book *Make Way for Ducklings* and held every spring, and the Summer Reading Program which encourages people of all ages to enjoy books during summer. (Submitted photos)



LEFT: Clintonville's library once was located where the Clintonville-Beechwold Community Resources Center's Food pantry now operates. (*Spotlight* file photo)

LIBRARY,

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3,000 square feet of floorspace compared to the Whetstone branch's current 23,000 square feet.

As demand for library services grew in Clintonville, a Beechwold branch opened in 1954 at 4555 N. High St., now home to T.Y. Fine Furniture, with a larger footprint of 4,500 square feet. In 1969, the Clintonville branch moved to a larger building of 4,000 square feet at 2800 N. High St., now home to Lucky Dragon, a Chinese restaurant.

"For a long time, aside from Main Library, the Beechwold and the Clintonville branches were some of our top circulation," Sheeran said. "They were both very popular."

The branches needed to expand to keep up with Clintonville's demand, but both locations were hemmed in by other buildings.

"It was densely surrounded by other buildings, both of those. So, there wasn't really any room to grow," Sheeran said.

Efforts began to create a new, larger branch to serve Clintonville and the surrounding area.

"(The Columbus Metropolitan Library) had been sort of moving into a model of these area branches to cover a larger amount of the community ... So, they proposed the Whet-

stone branch as sort of a combined version of the Clintonville and the Beechwold branches," Sheeran said.

At first, some in the community were worried that the new branch would disrupt the community center next door, the Columbus Park of Roses and traffic. One poll of residents showed a little more than 50 percent of respondents were in support of the new branch, Sheeran said.

But with time, consensus was built and construction of the new branch was approved by the Clintonville Area Commission.

The 'Mini Main'

Dedicated on Sept. 21, 1985, and officially opened two days later, the Whetstone branch had a larger collection than other branches and was lovingly dubbed "Mini Main" as the services offered were up to par with the Main Library.

"The Clintonville community has a lot of pride in what we do here and in the neighborhood feel that we have," VanScheetz said.

The Whetstone branch hosted its first one-of-a-kind Duckling Day event on April 18, 1987. Every year since then, on a spring Saturday morning, the branch invites children to join the duckling parade in their homemade duckling costumes led by the Whetstone High School band. Modern Duckling Day also has live ducklings for



Wendy VanScheetz is the branch manager for Whetstone. (Spotlight photo by Preston Harmon)

attendees to see.

"We've been doing it so long that people who came as children are now bringing their own children ... It's really special and really community-filled, which is wonderful," VanScheetz said.

On Dec. 16, 1993, the Whetstone branch became the first CML branch to circulate 1 million items in a year and continually circulates more than a million items every year, with 1.07 million circulated in 2024.

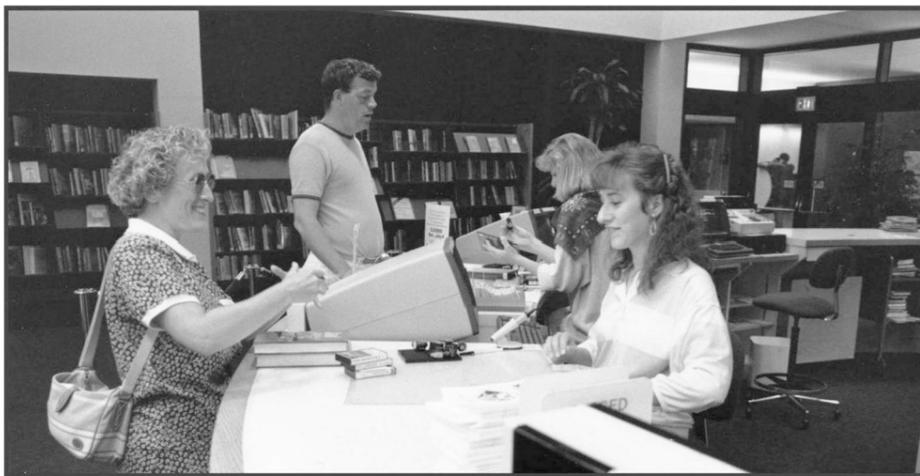
VanScheetz said the Whetstone branch encourages an already "voracious" Clintonville reading population through a "pipeline to adult readers" where they transition readers through different reading programs to keep them engaged in literacy.

"We have kids who come in for story time, and we snag them as they get old enough for our Reading Buddies program, and then we snag them as they get old enough for our volunteering program," VanScheetz said.

While the library still focuses on books and reading, VanScheetz said they have had to adapt to the times and "look for what the community needs" with services such as the Job Help Center which was launched in 2010 to help people find jobs in the aftermath of the 2008 recession. The Job Help Center evolved into the Community Support Center where anyone can come in for an hour a week and get help with technology, their career or applying for social services.

"We still take pride in serving our readers; you know, books are our business," VanScheetz said.

"We have needed to be nimble in order to stay relevant. A lot of people might think that the library is books and 'Shh' and that's not who we are anymore. We are a community gathering place. We are a third place for many people, where they come to spend time outside of their home and outside of their work, and we pride ourselves in that."



The front desk was close to the exit in the original Whetstone branch when it opened. (Submitted photo)



Patrons of the Beechwold Branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library gather for a story time. (Submitted photo)

Whetstone renovations still are not on horizon

The Columbus Metropolitan Library has been renovating or rebuilding many of its branches since 2013. The work is part of a multi-phase effort to, "bring 21st century libraries to our community," according to information on CML's web site.

With several property tax increases during that time, the library system has completed 14 new or transformed locations with four more set to be finished within a year: the Linden, Barnett, Marion-Franklin and Canal Winchester branches.

A new West Case Branch is planned for 2027. It will be CML's 24th branch, and part of Phase II of the initiative.

However, there are currently no concrete plans to renovate the Whetstone branch, although library leaders are developing a new long-range plan which should guide the system through the next 15 years of service.

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“So, all of that needs to get done, and then they’ll be looking toward what’s our next project, and maybe Whetstone will be on that list,” Wendy VanScheetz, Whetstone branch manager said.

The Whetstone branch has not been remodeled since March 1997, when it gained 6,250 square feet in floor space and several areas were upgraded.

One of the challenges to any sort of major work for the Whetstone facility is its shared wall with the Whetstone Community Center. But after 40 years of service to the community, those obstacles will need to be solved in order to allow the branch to properly serve residents well into the 21st century.

“We are one of the last older buildings,” VanScheetz said. “Many of the buildings around town have been either renovated or completely reconstructed, and so I think our branch ... offers a cozy feel in the neighborhood,” VanScheetz said.

Whetstone is mentioned in a Request for Qualifications document released by the library in anticipation of the new long-range plan: “Four buildings (Franklinton, South High, Southeast and Whetstone) should be assessed from the perspectives of location, size, infrastructure, and functionality,” the document states.

“We’re aware that many of our Whetstone branch customers are eager to know when they can expect a shiny new library,” said CML spokesman Ben Zenitsky. “Any such planning would require us to work closely with the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, as we share a wall with the Whetstone Community Center. It is not included in our immediate plans.”

“When the time comes – and it will – Whetstone customers will have an opportunity to tell us what they’d like to see in a new Whetstone branch.”

—PRESTON HARMON and CLIFF WILTSHIRE