

# Era archive now available digitally at Oldham libraries

BY JAI/MICHAEL ANDERSON  
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The Era's history just got more accessible. Thanks to newspapers.com, the Oldham County Library's archive of past Era editions is now available online. Newspapers.com, owned by Ancestry, is focusing its efforts on digitizing the histories of local newspapers across the nation. As part of this initiative, the website asked OCPL to add the library's Era microfilm collection to its database. It only cost the library shipping and a few months of waiting.

Anyone interested in peeking at the past can visit one of OCPL's three branches and access over a century of editions for free. No library card required, any visitor can log in to a computer and click the desktop icon labeled "Oldham Era".

The collection spans back to 1904 and is searchable by keywords. Another box lets users filter their search by date, and every mention of the keywords is highlighted for better scanning. Results can be printed, shared, downloaded or saved to the user's Ancestry account straight from the website.

Want to uncover a little family

history? Type a loved one's name into the search box and browse every mention of their name. It worked for Julie Wilson, the director of Oldham County Library; she searched for her grandfather, John Dawson, on the website and found her parents' wedding photo.

"It makes you feel connected to the past," she said.

Before the website, those looking to peruse the archive needed to dig through cabinets of poorly organized microfilm. Wilson says this database greatly simplifies that process.

One of her best library stories, she said, was when a man who lived

out of state emailed looking for an obituary.

All he gave was a name and a date range, but she found the article after hours of looking through microfilm.

"I emailed him the article, and I got a response, I don't know, maybe a week or so later," said Wilson. "And he says, 'I'm crying as I write this:'"

The man explained that his wife was adopted as a kid and never knew her biological father. They found his name in the article she sent, giving the wife information about her once unknown father, though he had already passed.

Now, those hours of digging have been turned into seconds with the click of just a few buttons at local libraries.

"You just never know, like what kind of piece of history is going to, you know, mean something to somebody and help them feel connected to their, their past," said Wilson. "We never want to lose those ties to the past."

The service is only accessible for free on library computers. Those with a subscription to newspapers.com can access it anytime. The archive is expected to stay up to date with new Era editions.

## School board accepts land donation for new arts center

New facility slated for Clore Station development in Crestwood

BY GRANT GERSTNER  
EDITOR

After returning from executive session, the Oldham County Board of Education unanimously voted to accept a donation of 4.57 acres of land in budding Crestwood development Clore Station to become the site of a new Oldham County Schools Arts Center during a June 8 special meeting.

According to brief documentation shared with the Era, the board previously approved a "letter of intent" from Carla C. Jones regarding the donation, which is currently undeveloped farmland located at the northwest corner of Veterans Memorial Parkway and Dovefield Drive.

"After completing necessary site evaluation due diligence and legal review of each agreement, the district has determined to enter into a Charitable Donation Agreement, Shared Use Agreement, and acceptance of the donation ... subject to the terms of the agreements."

The Era has requested for several records surrounding the donation, but has yet to receive a response as of press time.

In other news, the

board also voted to finalize the evaluation for Superintendent Claudette Herald's first school year, giving her an overall score of three, or "Accomplished."

"Mrs. Herald is a dedicated and thoughtful leader who has demonstrated clear strengths in cultural and human resource leadership while making steady progress in strategic and operational areas," said Board Chair Carly Clem on behalf of the board.

"As she continues to build systems, strengthen communication and deepen instructional focus, she is well-positioned to elevate her leadership to an accomplished and exemplary level across all standards ...

"Her goals for [next] school year will focus on continued improved communication to all stakeholders as well as developing a plan of action to focus on students who fall in the category of 2 or more grade levels behind in reading and math ...

Further, Clem said that Herald will also continue to strive to "build leadership capacity within our current staff while intentionally focusing on PLCs [Professional Leadership Communities] within our schools ...

"We could not be more pleased and grateful for her leadership this year and look forward to the next year ahead."

The board also voted

unanimously to approve two funding allocations featured in last year's larger package of recruitment and retention initiatives: \$100 per student enrolled to each school to support technology needs and \$100 per free/reduced lunch student for resources that reduce barriers to learning, such as intervention programs, instruction materials and stipends for extra instructional time.

The board also unanimously approved a bond resolution to possibly refinance a 2015 bond that funded renovations to South Oldham Middle School.

The remaining balance of the bond is over \$18.6 million. The refinancing will not extend the final maturity and will be no cost to the district if the refinancing is ultimately not pursued, which is based on meeting a 3% savings threshold set by the state.

The board also unanimously approved fundraising requests from the district for the upcoming school year, with a gross total of over \$4.4 million and a net total of nearly \$3.3 million.

The board also unanimously approved new students fees for schools and athletics, which Herald said high school and middle school level directors have begun streamlining.

The Oldham County Board of Education's next meeting is scheduled for July 27 at 4:45 p.m.

## Youth sports are becoming the province of the wealthy

Having a teenage son has taught me many things. One uncomfortable truth I've learned

is when he's shopping for clothes, I need to find a way to kill time. He can agonize over the most minute details, sizes, colors, patterns and the clock seems to stop entirely once he disappears into a fitting room.

The other day, he was shopping at a nearby sporting goods store. In the interest of impartiality, I'll leave it anonymous. But let's just say it's the kind of place that becomes a risky Google search if you forget the apostrophe in its name.

While my son agonizingly debated whether he wanted a fishing shirt with a hood or without, I wandered through the rest of the store and found myself in the baseball section. The inventory itself didn't surprise me, but the price tags sure did.

I picked up what looked like an ordinary youth mitt and nearly dropped it when I saw the sticker price. \$329. Thinking it had to be some kind of premium model, I checked others nearby. Out of about ten options, the cheapest ran \$189.

That's when I started doing the math. What does it actually cost to outfit a kid for baseball these days? Bats ran about the same as mitts. Cleats were roughly half that. Batting helmets hovered around \$75, batting gloves another \$50. Even assuming the team provides uniforms, you're looking at a minimum of \$750 just to get a kid on the field.

I couldn't shake those numbers as I kept walking. I didn't even stop in the football and soccer sections. I'm sure those numbers would've been just as sobering. But when I reached the basketball aisle, I felt a small moment of hope. Surely basketball, the sport that needs almost nothing but a ball and a hoop, would break this pattern of astronomical prices.

Then I picked up a ball. Granted, it was top-of-the-line, but the price was \$229. Even the mid-range options routinely hit \$100. And we all know basketball shoes aren't exactly cheap.

But this doesn't even touch the travel team culture that's exploded over the last decade. Team fees, hotel rooms, tournament admissions, parking passes. It adds up fast. I recently shelled out \$40 per day just to watch my daughter and her 11-year-old teammates play volleyball for a weekend.

That's when the reality hit me. In chasing opportunities and better equipment, we've effectively priced out entire segments of the population

from youth sports altogether.

I've heard the nostalgia expressed often enough that it rings true. Baseball was better when kids played for the local American Legion in sweatpants and a t-shirt, competing against neighbors rather than traveling to corporate-sponsored tournaments wearing expensive gear. That argument likely has some merit.

I looked into the research and found some revealing numbers. Youth sports participation overall has climbed over the decades, though much of that growth reflects expanded opportunities for girls. The economic data, however, paints a starkly different picture.

According to 2022 figures, 70% of children from families earning more than four times the poverty level play organized sports. Meanwhile, only 31% of children from families below the poverty line do.

Certainly, other factors contribute to that gap. Transportation challenges matter. The reality that many teenagers must work to help support their families matters. But I'd wager a lot of it comes down to simple affordability.

What troubles me most gets at the core contradiction. Sports have always held a special place in American life because they promised meritocracy. It's supposed to be the one arena where your background doesn't matter; where connections and family income are irrelevant. Theoretically, winning depends solely on who performs best.

But somewhere along the way, we've turned that promise on its head. We've created a system where the starting line isn't the same for everyone. Where talent alone isn't enough if you can't afford the entry fee. The child born into a wealthy family gets the opportunity to discover if he has genuine talent. The child born into poverty never even gets that chance.

We tell ourselves we're investing in our children's futures, and perhaps we are for those who can afford it. But we're constructing barriers around the very institution we claim should transcend privilege and economic status. We're undermining the fundamental promise that talent and hard work matter more than family wealth. That's not the American ideal we've long celebrated in sports. And honestly, I'm not certain it's a game worth playing.

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TOMMY DRUEN



Photo by Grant Gerstner

The Oldham Chamber & Economic Development Board of Directors announced June 9 that President David Bizianes is departing from the organization and that Vice-President Sandy Hamilton will take the reins.

## BIZIANES

FROM PAGE A1

built over the years, and was glad to have worked with the "high achieving, just really talented" people of different industries.

One example he gave was C & S Machine and Manufacturing, which he saw from start — around 2022 — to finish in the last few months. "And now they're partnering with the Arvin Center to try to create a manufacturing career track ... It wraps everything up in a bow."

As to the future of Oldham County, Bizianes said he is hopeful. "I think they're in a really good position to move forward." He mentioned specifically seeing promise in the widening of I-71 and in the development of Oldham Reserve, now that many utilities have been installed.

"We have multiple purchase agreements that are happening," Bizianes said regarding Oldham Reserve. "We approved one today. We have a real big 134-acre land

sale that is teed up — maybe it doesn't work out, but it feels good right now ...

"I've had the benefit of — the whole time I've been here in the presidential role — working with Sandy ... She's one of my best friends, and we have done every single thing together. So, they're not missing a step today."

Hamilton told the Era that she was born and raised in La Grange and is an Oldham County High School and University of Kentucky graduate. She has been the vice-president of OCED since 2017.

"I had a 35-plus-year career in the shopping center development world — pretty much all over the country ..." Hamilton said. She also confirmed that one of the many projects she was involved in was the Oxmoor Mall in Louisville.

As to goals in the new role, Hamilton said she wants to maintain the county's momentum.

"I think Oldham County is reaping the benefit of a lot of painful conversations that we've had over the past 10

years ... from investment from the state, locally and some federal with I-71," Hamilton said. "Oldham County is blossoming."

Hamilton also said she sees promise in the Kentucky I-71 Economic Development Alliance, and praised KIEDA Executive Director Jessica Moore. Noting her background, Hamilton said she likes that each county is at a different point of development — "the diversity keeps the juices going."

As to her time working with Bizianes, Hamilton said "it's been great ... We're best friends and we have worked together like a glove ... He's taught me a lot, I've taught him a little bit, and it's just been a great partnership."

Bizianes said that his last day will be on June 30, after which Hamilton will have taken the reins.

OCED plans to host a farewell and recognition ceremony for Bizianes as part of the Leadership Oldham County Graduation and Alumni Reunion, which is being held at Chapel 1888 from 4 to 6 p.m. on June 18.

## INDICTED

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Court records show that he was approved for temporary release to receive drug rehabilitation at the Sobriety, Peace, Awareness, Recovery, Center in Jamestown, Ky., starting May 27. Johnson is required to receive six months of inpatient treatment.

Robert Gueltzow, 40, was indicted on nine charges. All Gueltzow's alleged crimes took place on or around March 19, according to the indictment.

Gueltzow is accused of three counts of wanton endangerment. The indictment says that while "manifesting an extreme indifference to the value of human life," he engaged in conduct that created substantial danger, death or serious physical injury to others.

His other charges

include endangering the welfare of a minor, two counts of menacing, criminal mischief in the first degree for property damage, harassment with no physical contact and a careless driving violation while driving on the highway.

His \$10,000 bond was

partially secured with a \$1,000 payment, according to a receipt from the Circuit Court Clerk's office. The Kentucky Court of Justice website shows that Gueltzow had a preliminary hearing on May 20, but the page has not been updated with more information.

# LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

You are hereby given notice that there will be held at the Fire Station of the South Oldham Fire Department located at 6310 Old LaGrange Road, in the City of Crestwood, Oldham County, Kentucky, an election for a Firefighter Trustee for the South Oldham Fire Protection District. The election will be conducted between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., on Saturday, June 27, 2026. Candidates for the Firefighter Trustee position are: Eric Norris, 6600 Brookmont Court, Crestwood, KY 40014. The term of office for the election as a Firefighter Trustee of the South Oldham Fire Protection District is four (4) years.

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