

Submitted photos  
Northridge Principal Mark Selvaggio posed for a picture with fourth-grader Courtney Sheek on the last day of school this year. Sheek is a member of the final fourth-grade class to attend Northridge. Her mother, Karen Brentlinger, took a similar picture with Roger Kantner, the first principal of Northridge Elementary School, when the school opened.



## Family tradition arises at Northridge

By MEGAN VEIT  
Staff Writer

For one Wapakoneta family, Northridge roots run deep.

The Brentlinger family's involvement with the school spans three generations.

In early 1968, Karen Brentlinger was riding her bike around the dirt hills that would become Northridge Elementary. Her father, Charles Brentlinger, was president of the Parent Teacher Organization and was to have his daughter be among the school's inaugural students.

"I didn't realize that he'd had been part of it," Karen Brentlinger said. "I was busy being a third grader. I had my sports to

do!"

These early days were brought back to life for the family when they found out that Northridge would be closing.

"I remember playing when there wasn't a school there and riding bikes on mountains of dirt," Karen Brentlinger said. "During the summer, we went through the school."

Karen Brentlinger posed for a photograph with the school's first principal, Roger Kantner, on this special school tour of her new school. The photograph was added to this the Northridge 2009-2010 yearbook.

Next to Karen's black-and-white photograph is a picture of Courtney Sheek, Karen's daughter, posing with Principal

Mark Selvaggio. Courtney was a member of the last fourth-grade class to attend Northridge.

Among the festivities planned to mark the school's closing was a music program in which Courtney participated. The program included special recognition for retired teachers and administrators. Roger Kantner was among those recognized. "Mom and Dad came," Karen Brentlinger "They wanted us all to be there.

It was an emotional night for the family."

Karen's older daughter, Courtney Brentlinger, is a freshman at the University of Northwestern Ohio and also attended Northridge Elementary School.

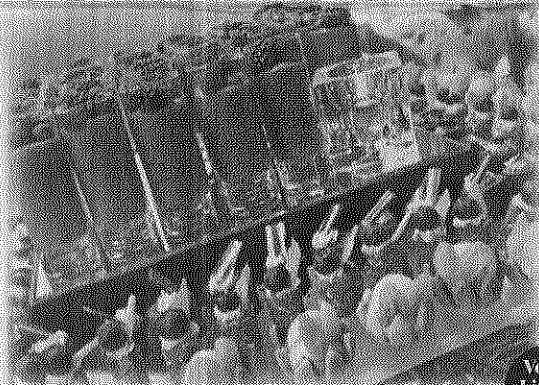
"It was kind of weird being back in the building," Courtney Brentlinger said. "These were memories from my childhood."

Karen Brentlinger also said the experience "was kind of weird," from seeing her children attend

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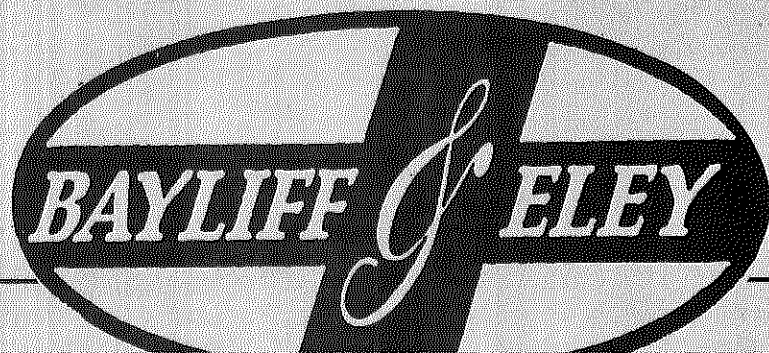
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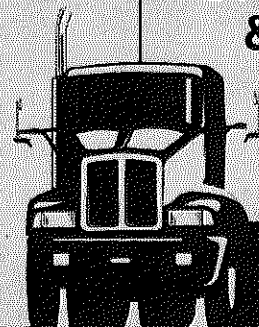


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## Family From Page 2C

the same schools, see several of the same teachers, and walk through the halls for the last time.

"It seemed huge because I was young," Karen Brentlinger said.

Now, it seems like home, a familiar, comfortable size compared to the new Wapakoneta Elementary, she said, where Courtney Brentlinger is already practicing basketball.

Similar to her father, Karen Brentlinger has taken an active role in her student's school experience. This year, she will serve as the Vice President of the Parent Teacher Team (PTT). Her growing involvement has mirrored the growth of her younger daughter.

"I wasn't too involved until Cassie got to fifth grade," Karen Brentlinger said.

Her work schedule kept her busy, but with changes

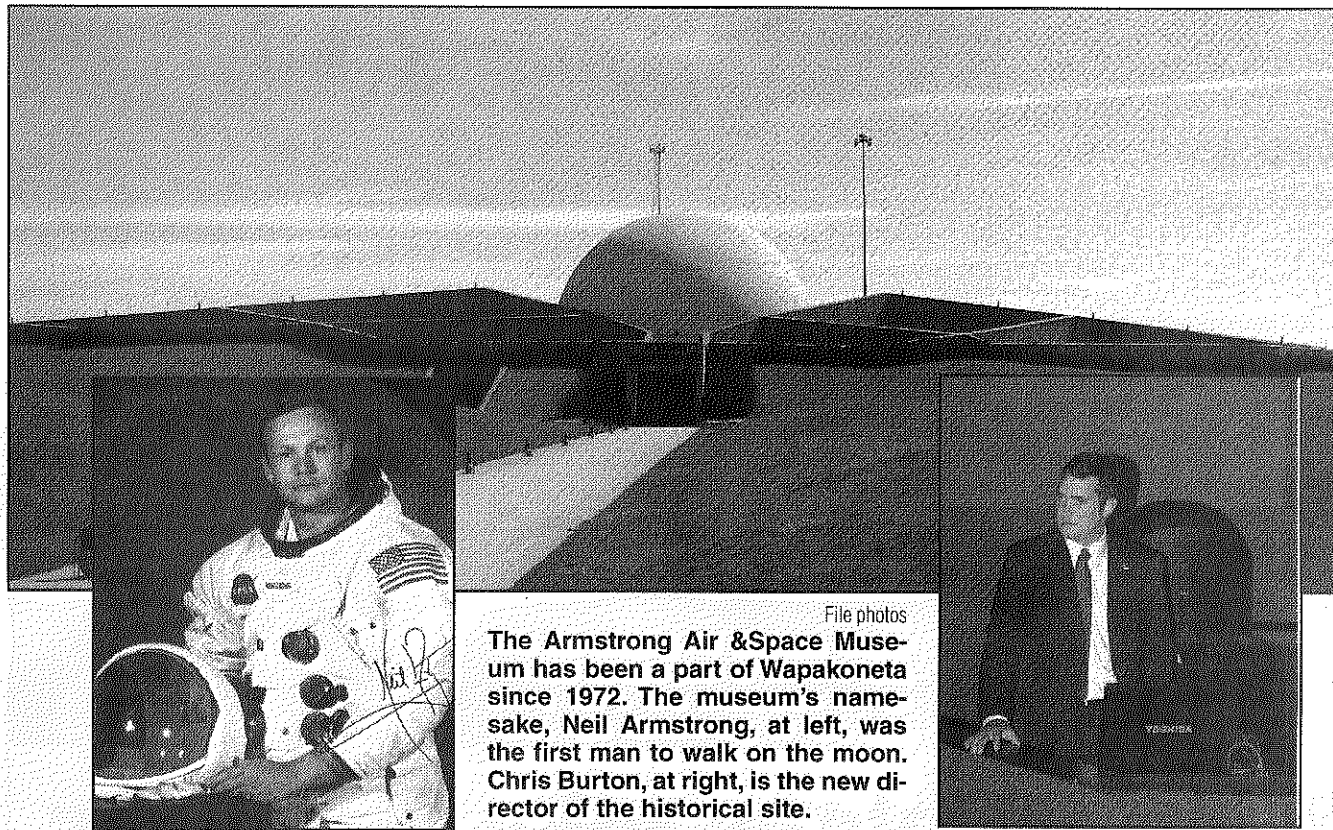
at home she was able to become more active in the schools.

Now with Courtney in fifth grade, Karen Brentlinger said she thought, "This is my last one. I've been through [the process]. Maybe I should run for an office."

With the new position, Karen Brentlinger will be learning how to work in the new elementary school set-up, with students from kindergarten through fourth grade together.

The PTT works with students through seventh grade, and she is unsure how her involvement will continue when Courtney reaches eighth grade.

For now, the Brentlinger family is enjoying the black-and-white memories, the last-time memories saved on digital cameras and cell phones, and the new memories that will come with a new school.



File photos  
The Armstrong Air & Space Museum has been a part of Wapakoneta since 1972. The museum's namesake, Neil Armstrong, at left, was the first man to walk on the moon. Chris Burton, at right, is the new director of the historical site.

## Armstrong Air & Space Museum — a part of history and learning

By ANGELA WEAVER  
Staff Writer

In 1972, Ohio wanted to honor one of its citizens — three years after he became the first man on the moon — so it opened a museum to commemorate his and other Ohioans' achievements in flight.

Today, the Neil Armstrong Air & Space Museum sees approximately 30,000 visitors a year.

"They're from all over," Museum Director Chris Burton said. "So far this year, we've seen people from 49 different states, from over 40 different countries."

The museum opened in 1972 to commemorate Wapakoneta resident Neil Armstrong as well as Ohio's other flight endeavors and their pilots.

John Zwez, who started

out as an AV technician in 1972, two weeks before the museum opened, took over as the museum manager after three years, retiring in 2004.

"While Neil Armstrong was still on the moon, the governor at the time — James Rhodes — proposed a museum be built in honor of Neil Armstrong and all 'Ohioans who attempted to defy gravity,'" Zwez said. "They started fundraising soon after that — one-half million dollars locally and one-half million dollars from the state of Ohio."

The Ohio Historical Society was in charge of the operations of the museum and has operated the site since it opened.

"When it first opened, it started off with very early attempts of flight — before the Wright brothers' landing," Zwez said.

"It underwent a major renovation in the '90s — beginning with the Cold War to the space shuttle program today."

Zwez said Wapakoneta isn't Armstrong's original hometown.

Zwez said Armstrong's father was a state auditor, and the family moved around a lot.

"They settled in Wapak when Neil was a freshman — they were living there when he went into the space program," Zwez said.

The section of Wapakoneta where the museum is located, Zwez said, noticed a boom with its opening.

"When the museum first opened, it was just the Lucky Steer, a motel and a gas station, that was it," Zwez said. "It was built

in a cornfield. Look at it now, there's businesses lined up next to one another — there are a lot of businesses, a lot of tourists."

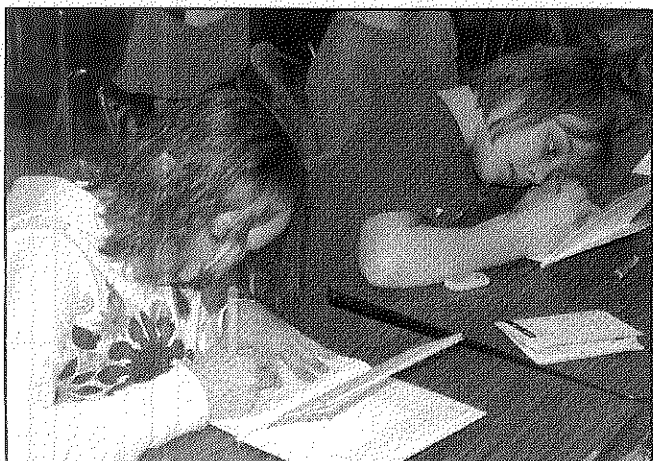
The museum recently reopened — it was closed from December 2009 to April 1 — for a renovation. During that time, Burton was also hired as a director to operate and manage the site.

"We put in a new restroom facility," Zwez said. "They weren't handicapped accessible."

The closing came after the Ohio Historical Society talked about closing a variety of its sites because of funding.

"The job of the OHS is to maintain the history and archives for the state of Ohio," Zwez said. "Be-

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Staff photo/Karen Campbell

Carlee Hosterman, 9, at left, and Jozie Hoelscher, 10, write poems about turtles and hamsters, respectively, as they write and design poetry books.

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