



File photo

Mark Selvaggio, at left, is not only devoted to his duties as principal, but he serves as president of the civic organization, KAPOW, a group devoted to children.



## Principal based on principles: History

# Selvaggio takes on new role

By MEGAN VEIT  
Staff Writer

As his first year in a new school approaches, Northridge Elementary School's final principal is finding himself feeling more sentimental than expected.

"It's funny — when you're a kid you want to leave," Mark Selvaggio, now co-principal of Wapakoneta Elementary, said, who noted when he finished school, he was ready to head back to a smaller town. "Part of it was the small-town feel."

After graduating from Bowling Green State University, Selvaggio and his wife, Deb, knew they wanted to head home. It was 18 years before that was possible.

Selvaggio followed his job opportunities and

moved to Houston, Texas. He taught elementary physical education, interacting with more than 1,000 students each year.

Later, he moved to the third grade classroom, but he missed the opportunity to get to know all the students. After 12 years of teaching, Selvaggio decided to switch to administration.

"I wanted to switch to be with all the kids, work with and see all the kids," Selvaggio said.

He spent six years as a vice principal before receiving a position back home.

Selvaggio is originally from Shawnee, Ohio. His wife grew up in Wapakoneta and attended Northridge Elementary the year it was opened.

When Selvaggio became principal of the school,

they never imagined he would be its last.

"When I started watching Northridge get torn down, I got a little sentimental," Selvaggio said.

Selvaggio came face-to-face with the demolition every day as he walked into his new office. The front entrance of Wapakoneta Elementary looks out onto the grounds of Northridge.

"Now it's just rubble," Selvaggio said.

The area is soon to be paved for parking. Selvaggio has been document-

ing Northridge's transformation, taking pictures almost daily.

The demolition is the tangible end of a long goodbye for the whole community. When word spread about the Wapakoneta City Schools Board of Education decision, Selvaggio said he heard more about Northridge's past than ever. As part of the agreement in accepting Ohio School Facilities Commission money, the former schools could be used or had to be torn down.

**“It's a good time to get together. Everybody who went last year said they would all be back.”**

— Lee Sudman

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## History

From Page 4C

cause of state cutbacks, they were losing funding — they were looking for local groups to take over the operation of many sites.

As the Neil Armstrong Air & Space Museum was considered one of those sites, a partnership group developed to take over the museum.

"The building belongs to the state of Ohio," Zwez said. "We signed a management agreement to operate it on a daily basis."

The partnership group — Armstrong Air & Space Museum Association — includes 15 people, including Zwez who serves as president.

"They are folks who have a vested interest in making sure the museum remains open, remains a resource for all of Auglaize County," Zwez said, adding the museum is valuable to people of St. Marys, Minster and other area cities. "It's not just a Wapak group."

He noted the group includes officials such as the Wapakoneta mayor, a Minster village official, of-

ficials from St. Marys and Wapakoneta schools.

"It's important to keep it open," Zwez said. "Not only for visitors, but to keep the educational aspect going."

He said the museum has made an impact on him — a place where he spent 32 years of his life.

"I spent the majority of my time there, seven days a week, especially in the summer months," Zwez said. "That amount of time, energy into the museum, it's been a major portion of my life."

Today, Burton said the museum offers exhibits beginning from the first concept of space exploration.

"From science fiction until the international space station and space shuttle, basically to modern spaceflight," Burton said.

The museum is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Information about the museum is also available online at ArmstrongMuseum.org.





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## New From Page 3C

The new school is a sign of the community's willingness to look forward, beyond the good, and see great opportunity.

"We needed to grow," Frame said.

Frame supported the building of a new school and worked with members of the Wapakoneta City Schools Board of Education to gain community support. She credits their success to "the way they've organized [and] the tremendous number of active, hard-working volunteers."

Frame attended Northridge's music program and was honored along with several other retired teachers.

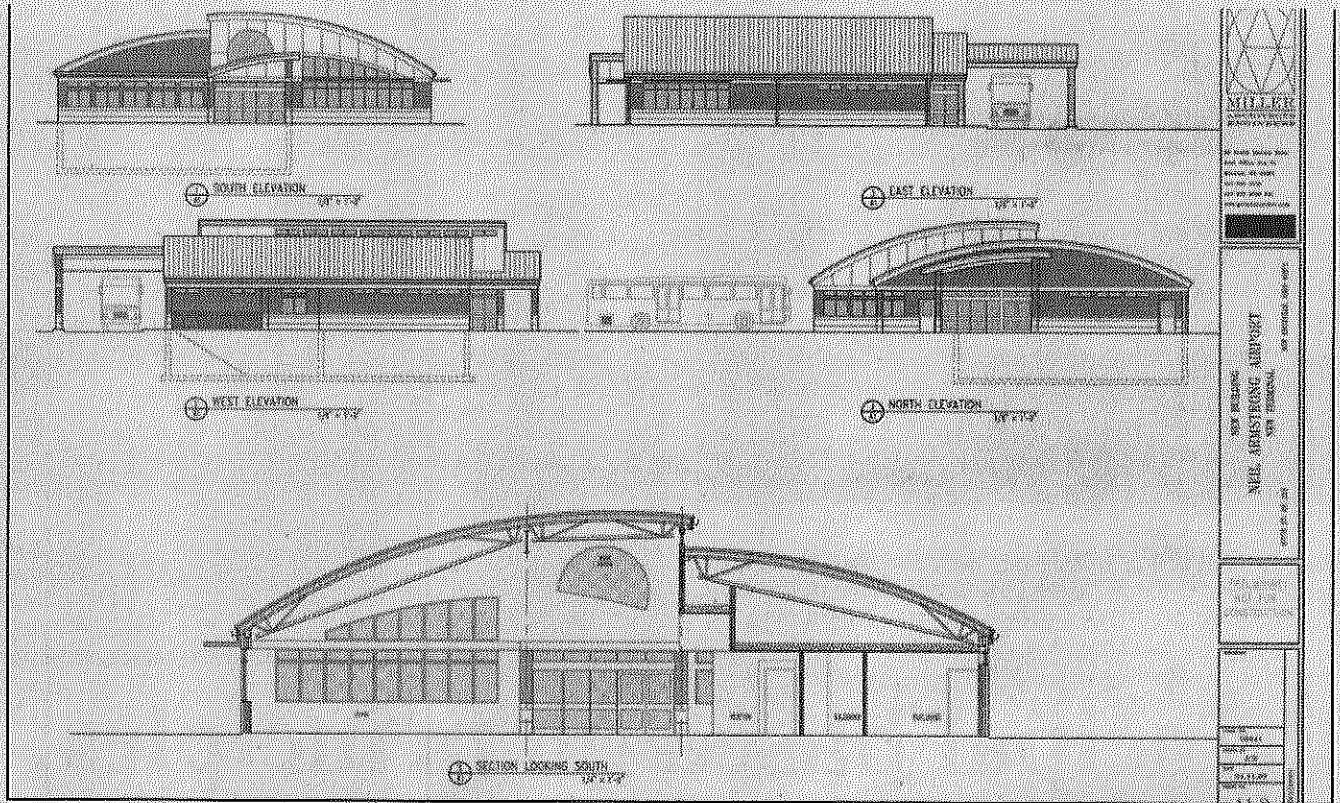
She enjoyed being back in the school, which she had also visited for her grandchildren's programs. Frame said she is anxious to see the inside of the new school.

"Having lived through the heat of Northridge," Frame said she is excited for all of the new luxuries Wapakoneta elementary school teachers will have.

Frame has stayed in touch with her teaching friends since her retirement in 1995, getting together for lunches.

She stayed connected to the schools by volunteering with reading programs and supporting the push for the new elementary school.

## Airport From Page 3C



## Role From Page 6C

"Parents and community members were coming and telling stories," Selvaggio said. "A lot of people didn't want it knocked down."

As time passed, he could feel them gaining community support.

While Selvaggio enjoyed to the intimate feel of his 400-student elementary school, he said he is ready to greet the 900 students coming in the fall.

"It will just take time to build a rapport with kids that I haven't worked with before," Selvaggio said. "My top priority is to build trust with the students so that they can come up to me."

Selvaggio has had experience with such large groups of students. While working in Houston, Texas, student population

numbers reached 1,300. The difference, Selvaggio said, is the discipline.

"We really appreciate teacher's help with that," Selvaggio said.

He said he sees far fewer discipline problems and sees more teachers trying to work with students to keep problems from arising.

He said he believes it is this dedication among staff members that will make the new school a success. Many of the custodians, maintenance workers and teachers have spent a part of each day at the new school.

Selvaggio said that he appreciates the community's support.

"I am looking forward to working with Wes Newland, former principal of Centennial," Selvaggio said.

recreational."

Stroh said he hopes the residents in Auglaize County will start to recognize what all the airport offers to the region.

"Most of all that Auglaize County does have an airport," Stroh said. "It's one of the county's best kept secrets and from my perspective that is a bad thing."

"We are a major economic tool — we are one of the largest airports in northwest Ohio," he said. "We are at a pivotal point in the area and a lot of times their (travelers) first impression of Auglaize County is going to be here."

Stroh said as reported by the state of Ohio, the airport contributed \$7.3 million in 2004 to the economy.

"In 2004, the state conducted a stay wide survey of all the airports in Ohio,

that full report is available through the Ohio Department of Aviations website," Stroh said.

Stroh said daily air traffic varies but on average the airport sees 20 to 25 flights a day.

"Of course the weather is a main factor in the recreational usage," Stroh said. "Some days will be in the 30s and some will be less."

The frequency of flights and foot traffic contribute to location and the facility itself.

"Take our geographical location, we are right in the middle of all he major cities — Dayton, Toledo, for recreation and for business travelers," Stroh said. "The quality of the facility we have, we truly have one of the finest general aviation facilities in Ohio."

Stroh said he started at the airport in 1998 as a part-time employee work-

ing under Gary Katterheirich and has moved up to manager. He has been in that position for three years. He said he has enjoyed aviation throughout his tenure.

"The aviation community in general is very compassionate," Stroh said. "They are well-rounded individuals and you get to meet new people every day."

He said throughout his experience at the airport he has seen a number of NASCAR drivers travel through and government officials.

"Some of the other aspects people don't realize is the medical aspect," Stroh said. "A lot of transport patients are taken through here going to hospital from hospital, organ transplants. We take viable organs and fly the organs through this facility so for some people, this

is a critical lifeline."

He also mentioned the airport is part of the emergency response for the area.

"If there would ever happen to be a natural disaster, we can handle many of the military aircraft that would normally be responding in those times of need," Stroh said. "We are sort of a central point that emergency officials can use to respond to."

From NASCAR drivers to organ transplants, Stroh said the airport is used to reach all areas of the world.

"We invite people out to the airport, come learn about the quiet little airport that sits in your back yard — it's not small anymore," Stroh said. "Build a mile of road you can drive a mile, build a mile runway you can go anywhere in the world."

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