

Allen County Museum: Ohio oddities on display

By TAIAH DOUGLAS taiahdouglas@thecourier.com LIMA — The Allen County Museum is not your typical historical archive. With a wide range of displays to explore,

> including replica of a 1800s log house, wax figure of 1930s gangster John Dillinger locked behind bars, and a showcase of items that area children accidentally swallowed over the years, it's safe to say hours on

this historical society's oddities. The history of Allen County can

be understood by taking a walk through this 39,200-square-foot building. According to its website, the museum aims to collect and preserve the tangible evidence of Allen County to share with the community. The facility was created in 1954-55 and was expanded three times. Two floors of exhibits can be found at the museum, where visitors can learn about what life was like for early settlers throughout the 1800s and early 1900s, including their transportation, industry, arts, education and agriculture.

Continued on Page 3





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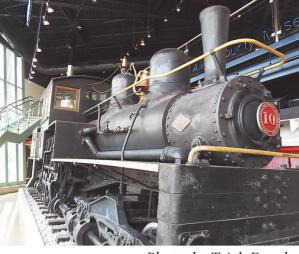


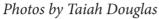
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Continued from Page 1

The museum is also known for its unique collections which feature rocks and minerals, early farming equipment, Native American artifacts and railroad assemblage. Some highlights of the museum include mechanical displays by James E. Grosjean; a fully restored Shay Locomotive engine; a 1800s general store replica; military and firearms displays; a glimpse of Allen County's oil industry history; and a Children's Discovery Center which features crafts, interactive learning and other educational models. The museum also shows off its encased, full-body iron lung.

Located next door to the museum stands a 6,500-square-foot Victorian mansion known as the MacDonell House and The Faze Log House, which are both available for touring. Built in the 1890s, the MacDonell House is a fully furnished historic home with 15 rooms and features a two-story stained-glass window accompanied by a grand staircase. The Faze Log House is dated back to 1848 and was made for two newly wedded pioneers who raised their children and began their lives in the home.

The Elizabeth M. MacDonald Memorial Library is located inside the museum and offers books, maps, microfilm, photographs and files which provide information on Allen County collections as well as other local counties.

The Changing Gallery currently features "Rail Images of a Past Era" by the late Richard Cook. This gallery highlights over 35 photographs of pioneer trains

and the role they played in the daily life of the citizens in Lima. The exhibit will remain in the museum until Nov. 7.

Summer hours for the museum are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays. The museum is closed Sundays, Mondays and major holidays. The library and MacDonell house operate under the museum hours. Admission is a suggested donation of \$5. Tours for the MacDonell House are \$3 for nonmembers, and can be purchased at the museum gift shop.

For more information on The Allen County Museum and Historical Society, visit alencountymuseum.org, see their Facebook page at Allen County Museum and Historical Society or call 419-222-9426.





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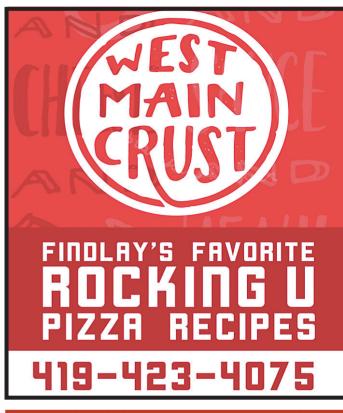
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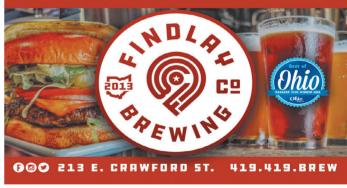
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Tanya Alford Sylvia US Air Force

Dave Morrow is a peacetime veteran of the USAF and Utah Army National Guard. He was an educator and an EMT. Dave is currently a documentary photographer and writer. He created the website https://dogtagsandcombatboots.org/ to share the stories of our Veterans. The site is dedicated to the stories of Vietnam Veterans and to the veteran Women Warriors of Ohio. It is hoped to be a place for healing.

Tanya was the first born to Debra and William Alford on Veteran's Day, 1980 in Findlay Ohio. She was joined later by siblings Jason, Brittany and Jared.

There are several generations of military service in Tanya's life, with her dad serving in Thailand with the Army and her grandfather serving during the Korean War.

Tanya graduated from Marion-Franklin High School in Columbus. She spent most her junior and senior year studying off campus at Eagle's Nest, an equine ranch where she studied Equine Science Management through the Southeast Career Center. In high school she enjoyed her art classes and working with horses.

"I was a great student but a horrible test taker usually getting B grades."

An Air Force recruiter came out to the ranch in December of 1998 and once he mentioned "college benefits" Tanya was all in.

Tanya's choices were to join either the Navy or Air Force as both had regular contact with planes and she "loved being high up." After taking her ASVAB and passing her physical Tanya entered the delayed entry program, taking her oath in May of 1999. Basic training started for her on September 1st, 1999.

"The first week was the hardest as this was the first time I had ever been away from home for a long period."

Tanya was assigned the 3FI Services MOS and moved to Medina AFB for training where she stayed for the next two months. Airman Alford's first permanent duty station was Malmstrom AFB located near Great Falls, Montana.

Tanya shares her experience at Malmstrom,

"I didn't get the opportunity to travel anywhere. I was also quite bummed at the fact that out of all the Air Force Bases in the world, I ended up on the ONLY AFB that had NO planes, an overgrown, unused airfield, and only ONE helicopter of which I never even had the chance to ride in. The only other things that could fly were missiles, which you KNEW YOU were SCREWED if you see them launch!"

Tanya was initially assigned to work at the base gym for two months until she tore a ligament in her ankle that sidelined her. Upon her return to duty she was transferred to the 12th Missile Squadron/341st Operations Group where she served as a Missile Chef for the next 2.5 years. Tanya says the "experience was very positive."

"My only real regret is not hearing about the ROTC program in high school as participation in ROTC would have bolstered my rank and opened other career opportunities for me."

Tanya met and married a fellow airman Nathan Sylvia at Malmstrom. He was still on active duty when her tour was over, so she never left the base after her discharge. "My status went from Active Duty Military to Military Spouse. I lived on the base for another two years before moving to start college."

Tanya used the GI Bill to attend college.

"Not knowing what I wanted to major in I allowed someone else to choose Nursing for me. I did graduate with a nursing degree and have worked primarily in the home healthcare industry. There are definitely things I enjoy in Nursing, but ultimately it hasn't felt like the right career for my personality."

Tanya has a love and talent for art especially for sketching and painting. She attended college to learn more about Art. She is currently close to completing a two-year Medical Coding and Billing certification, hopefully by summer 2020.

Tanya is the mother of three children. Her oldest will graduate early from high school this year and start college in the Fall.

Tanya's summation of her military experience and advice to other young women considering military service as a career option is:

"I will never regret my decision to join the Air Force. I don't know where I would be if I hadn't. You get free training in the military that transfers toward college credits. It is a good time to get away from home and spread your wings while learning what it takes to be an adult, take care of yourself, simultaneously having a net under you, if this proves a little overwhelming.

Being a part of something so important and so much bigger than yourself helps women bolster their feelings of confidence and self-worth. This is something that most women struggle with, especially when hitting that transition between older teen and adulthood. Even if you don't want the military to be a lifelong career, it can be an amazing steppingstone into your future. One that you will never regret when looking at it from behind!"

For women seriously considering the military Tanya suggests,

"If you are still in High School, I would advise you to seek out and learn more about the ROTC programs in your area. If you have already graduated from high school, you can always join the Reserves first and transition into Active Duty later. Finally, if you are currently in college, please still consider joining the military and taking advantage of the GI Bill!"



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