



LOCAL



ABOVE: Aaron Fox and Christian Englehaupt show each other their presents at the Alliance Rotary Club's annual children's Christmas party on Wednesday. **RIGHT:** Emily Pittman receives her present from Santa.



Clown, Santa delight children at annual Rotary Christmas party

By LAURIE HUFFMAN
The Review

Children wiggled and giggled the afternoon away as members of the Alliance Rotary Club held its annual children's Christmas party on Wednesday, and the event appears to have had record attendance. Club members had anticipated about 50 children would attend, and they were pleasantly surprised when 71 children were seated around the room at First Christian Church of Alliance to have lunch and enjoy a special lineup of entertainment.

Joyous, high-pitched squealing began right after lunch once Stark County Park District's FeLeap the Frog arrived, and it continued to mount when Alliance Park Department mascot Skippy came out to greet the kids. Music was played by Rotary members Bill Bowman, on keyboard, and his son, Bruce, on drums, and the children's furry friends danced with the breathless

youngsters until the next entertainer set up on the stage.

Jeffrey Potts, better known as Bungles the Clown, trudged across the stage toting a small Christmas tree and a large, old brown leather trunk. He told the children he had received the clown gear inside the trunk for Christmas from his parents, and the kids happily called out advice as he tried to figure out how to use it. The supplies included makeup, clown shoes, a hat, a clown nose, and balls and pins for juggling. The children were engaged and full of zeal as Bungles flubbed one after another "magic trick" and tried to figure out how to put together a juggling act and blow up a miniscule balloon.

Once Bungles arrived at success, which he obviously could not have done without the help of the children, Santa and his helper strolled onto the scene. The youngsters could not have been more wound up as Santa called each child, one by one, and

presented them with a special Christmas present from a pile of gifts that had been placed on a long table by Rotarians.

Rotarian Art Garnes and event organizers Jason Jarvis and Lisa Garren explained the party is held each year to give children with physical, developmental or other challenging situations a chance to participate during a special holiday celebration with their peers and staff members from their school. The Alliance Health Department works with schools in the area to develop an invitation list made up of children who would most benefit from a social gathering during the holidays. This year, students from Parkway, Rockhill and Northside elementary schools in the Alliance City school district and Lexington Elementary in the Marlington Local school district were included.

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Jeffrey Potts, as Bungles the clown, performs a magic trick Wednesday at the Alliance Rotary Club's annual children's Christmas party.



ABOVE: Aubreeana Lott and Cor'zon Thomas dance with Skippy from the Alliance Parks and Recreation Department. **BELOW:** Chesley Rickman is hugged by FeLeap the Frog of the Stark Parks Department at the Rotary Christmas party.



Review Photos/Kevin Graff



Santa talks to children attending the party.

Central Allied makes final plea to Stark commissioners for Marlboro sewer project

By LAURIE HUFFMAN
The Review

The Stark County commissioners were shocked by the sheer number of people in their offices when they arrived for a regular meeting Wednesday to find an estimated 50 or more employees of Central Allied Enterprises who showed up to challenge the fact the company wasn't awarded the bid for the Marlboro Village Storm and Sanitary Sewer Project. Three county sheriff's deputies were called in to ensure crowd control, and then the board president, Commissioner Tom Bernabei, advised the workers they could leave because they had already made their point by showing up at the county administration building. The staffers accommodated, and all employees exited, except two spokespersons who remained to state the company's case to the board.

Central Allied, a Canton-based company, is a leading northeastern Ohio producer of sand, gravel, asphalt and paved asphalt surfaces. Gerald Orn, chief executive officer of the company, and Terry Seeburger, an employee at Central Allied for close to 20 years, told the commissioners they believe their company should have been

awarded the bid for the Marlboro Village project, estimated to cost in excess of \$2.5 million. Orn and Seeburger said their main reasons included the fact that Central Allied was the lowest bidder, they believe their staff is capable of doing the work, and the company that was awarded the contract gave a higher bid for the job and is not located in Stark County. They also indicated if Central Allied didn't get the bid, the workers who had been present at the start of the meeting would be laid off for the winter.

"These Stark County guys will be laid off without this project. This is the kind of work that we can do now, and it will keep our county workers employed," Seeburger told the commissioners. He also said while the Stark County Sanitary Engineering Department recommended the contract be awarded to Wenger Excavating of Dalton the commissioners don't have to follow that recommendation.

"I understand we do have discretion over who the contract is awarded to, but we have a recommendation from the sanitary engineer, and I rely on his expertise and his experience with these kinds of jobs," Bernabei responded. "I have worked with our sanitary engineer, Jim Jones, on projects in the past, and I trust him in these

situations."

Bernabei further stated the last two jobs Central Allied performed for the county were fraught with problems, including issues with groundwater and missed deadlines, among other things. Orn stated he received a letter of explanation from the Sanitary Engineer's Office that cited reasons for the contract denial, and he said there were some inaccuracies in the information contained there. "Wenger was identified as having no OSHA violations, and we found a couple of serious violations in their history dating back to 2009, including employment issues. The information in the letter was also one-sided. When working on a project of this size, especially an underground project, it is impossible not to have change orders, not to have to re-engineer due to surprises, and not to need extra time," said Orn.

Following the discussion, Commissioner Janet Weir Creighton moved to award the contract for the Marlboro Village Storm and Sanitary Sewer Project to Wenger Excavating, and a unanimous vote followed. Afterward, Bernabei said he has great respect for Central Allied, but must rely on the sanitary engineer's opinion. Creighton and Commissioner Pete Ferguson echoed the sentiment. A bid for the wastewater treatment

control portion of the project was previously approved at a cost in excess of \$1 million.

Other important matters handled at the meeting included accepting a letter of resignation from Stark County Administrator Mike Hanke, who will retire effective March 1. Advertising for the position was approved, and it was noted all applications must be received by Jan. 9. A Sanitary Engineer's Office employee, Fred Theis, will also retire after working in the department since 1979. His position as maintenance electrician will also be advertised and refilled.

The Stark County Sheriff's Department's labor agreement was approved with salary increases built in at zero for now, 1.5 percent in 2013, and 3 percent in 2014. Increases in health insurance co-payments were also set at 8 percent of gross pay in 2013 and 10 percent in 2014. The current co-payment is set at 3 percent.

A three-year contract was approved for supervision for the 911 call center by the sheriff's department and authorization for it to remain in its location in the sheriff's radio room at a cost of \$4,617.02 per month.

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