

2019  
**Best of the BEST**  
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# The Barberton Herald

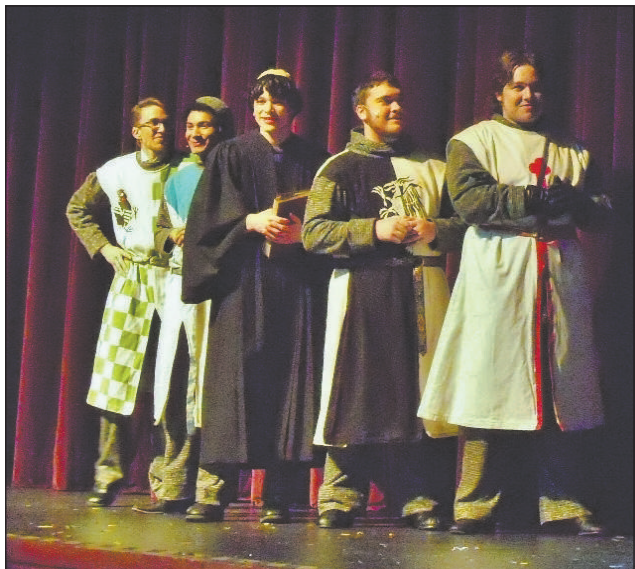


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Thursday, April 11, 2019

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## Chase Owen follows his dreams to New York



HERALD PHOTO/Karen Hornyak

Chase Owen, pictured fifth from left, performs as one of the lead roles in "Spamalot."

**Karla Tipton**  
Herald Staff Writer

Barberton High School senior Chase Owen applied to a famous New York school for the performing arts with alumni such as Tyne Daly, Erik Estrada and many stars of Broadway. He feared he didn't have a chance of acceptance.

But the student who earned standing ovations for his performance last month in the school's production of "Spamalot" needn't have worried.

"I was accepted into the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in New

York City," Owen said with a smile in his voice.

"The AMDA has a 21% acceptance rate," he said. "I thought I had a small shot, and wasn't expecting to get accepted at all."

The school arranged for Owen to audition at Playhouse Square in Cleveland, which he said was fantastic. "It was a wonderful experience," he added.

Owen will be pursuing a bachelor of fine arts in the musical theater program. Singing is his strong point, he said. Since seventh grade, it's all he's ever wanted to do.

"I tried out for the role of Genie in Aladdin Jr. at

Barberton Middle School, and after that, it was something I knew that I loved," he said. "I wanted to spend the rest of my life pursuing it, and getting better at it and trying to get more roles."

His passion for musical theater contained within it a gift. Owen has a speech impediment--except when he's performing. "I have a stutter," he said, "but when I'm on stage, I don't stutter. It helps me out with my speech impediment. It's truly a blessing in disguise."

Although the high school doesn't have a drama club, the school puts on an

(See OWEN, Page 2)

## Who let the chickens out

**Cierra Thompson**  
Herald Staff Writer

While Barberton may be known for its signature chicken, the city does not take kindly to backyard chickens. There have been multiple sightings around the city that have residents asking about the guidelines.

According to the Barberton Development Code Chapters 1140 and 1360, only domestic animals are permitted on residential single-family, two-family and multi-family lots. The code defines domestic animals as cats, dogs or other small animals commonly maintained as household pets. Chickens are not common household pets, making it a violation to have them.

Ward One Councilwoman Shannon Wokojanec explained how the lots within city limits are small, bringing the neighbors closer in proximity which could create an unfit environment for chickens. Rather than complicating the guidelines, it was elected in 2003 to prohibit animals that don't meet the guidelines.

(See CHICKEN, Page 12)

## Tour the Gardens

The Master Gardeners of Summit County invite the community to attend the annual Tour of Gardens Saturday, June 29, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., rain or shine.

Six private gardens will be featured on the tour. Ticket holders are also invited to visit the Posie Shoppe, which will be filled with garden items and Master Gardener grown plants. Offered new this year is an opportunity for patrons to check-in early at the Posie Shoppe. Patrons will be provided with their tour materials, a grab-and-

(See TOUR, Page 12)

## Vote allows tattoo, piercing parlors downtown

**Cierra Thompson**  
Herald Staff Writer

Barberton City Council adopted the ordinance authorizing the mayor to enter into an agreement with the city of Akron to make improvements to portions of Romig Road. Based on the estimates, the city will use about \$530,000 in grant funding for the project.

They adopted an ordinance to enter into a contract with Spano Brothers Construction Company, Inc. for the 2019 concrete street rehabilitation program. As for the 2019 street

resurfacing program, they contracted with Barbicas Construction.

"Being able to contract with Spano Brothers and Barbicas shows that even in tough times we still have a road program. We're still paving the roads because we still have dedicated sources. Over the past five years, we've touched over 140 streets," said Mayor William Judge.

An ordinance to contract with a sanitary sewer easement for property at 3440 Clark Mill Road in Norton with William and Jane Dodd for a subdivision development was adopted.

Jeremy Flaker, director of finance, was authorized to send an invoice to the Oriana House for \$5,343. Council heard the first reading of an ordinance that would add part-time firefighter, paramedic and EMT positions to the pay scale. Council noted, if the ordinance passes it does not mean they will fill these positions. This ordinance is set to go three readings covering the span of six weeks.

As for health, a resolution declaring September as Prostate Cancer Awareness Month was passed. According to the resolution, approximately 174,650

men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in the U.S. each year. Roughly 31,620 men die a year because of the disease. Men with relatives who have a history of prostate cancer are twice as likely to develop the disease.

Council heard the final reading of ordinances to amend code for yard obstructions and special convenience retail uses. The

(See PARLOR, Page 12)

## Drop off unwanted medication

Police Chief Vince Morber has registered Barberton to participate Saturday, April 27 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. in the drug take back program at the old FirstMerit parking lot, 480 W. Tuscarawas. By driving in the Wooster Road entrance, you will be greeted by an officer who will receive your pills as you drive through, and then exit onto W. Tuscarawas Avenue. Everyone may participate in this event regardless of address. If the Barberton site is not convenient, this link will direct you to other locations for pill drop off at the same times on the same day:

[https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback/](https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/).

There are safe pill drop boxes every day in front of the Barberton Main Fire Department, 580 Wooster Road W. or in the Police Department basement in the City Building, 576 W. Park Ave.

## Man brandishes gun while riding stolen bike

**Cierra Thompson**  
Herald Staff Writer

Officers responded to a call of threats made around the area of the Slovene Center in Barberton.

The victim said he had two bicycles stolen out of the bed of his truck, and while driving near the center he spotted two men with one of the bikes. He stopped his truck and confronted the men. He told them to put the bike in the bed of his truck and he would go. One of the men pulled out a black 9mm handgun and put a round in the chamber. He told him the bikes are not going anywhere.

The victim drove to a safe place to call police, giving them a description. Officers identified Erik R. Green, who was still riding the stolen bike near West Hopcan Ave. Green had a syringe in the front pocket of his hoodie and had prescription drugs in his pants pocket. He was found to have drug abuse and DUS warrants out of Bratenahl, Ohio, a village in Cuyahoga County. Green was arrested and taken to jail March 30.

The other man said he didn't know the bike was stolen and told officers he didn't see any guns. He said he just got out of prison 13

days ago and is trying to turn his life around. He said he doesn't want to be around bad people, drugs, guns or thieves.

He admitted they were riding around after visiting a friend on 21st Street who gave them the bikes.

Officers went to the house of the friend, but he didn't answer the door. He called the police department later, asking why officers were at his door. He confirmed the men did stop by, but did not comment on where the bikes came from. He said Green went up to his bedroom and started acting weird.

He said Green was still mad at him from an incident that happened over a year ago with his niece. Green thought he (the man) was getting intimate with his niece but instead he was just doing drugs with her.

He told officers Green showed him his gun and threatened to shoot him in both of his kneecaps. He told him to leave, but before Green left, he tossed two bullets onto the bed and told the man they were for his kneecaps. He turned the bullets over to police and they were tagged into evidence.

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Annual fire report is out

Car show announced

**Cierra Thompson**  
Herald Staff Writer

According to the statistics in the Barberton Fire Department annual report for 2018, fire and EMS calls for 2018 dropped to 4,829 from 5,050 in 2017.

The department attributes it to a decrease in overdose calls from 2017. The majority of the calls, 3,679, were for EMS with 1,150 for non-EMS.

“I believe part of the cause for the decrease in opioid-related calls is still due to our Quick Response Team which is a partnership between Summit County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health board (ADM), Oriana House, Barberton police and fire and the Norton police and fire departments which began in 2017,” explained Fire Chief Kim Baldwin in the report.

The department received grants in 2017. Baldwin said the department is fortunate for the firefighter assistance grants they apply to because without them they would be in poor condition in regards to their equipment needs. With the grants, in 2017 they were able to purchase a new ambulance and in 2018 they got a self-contained breathing apparatus.

The department continues to expand mutual

aid and automatic aid with its surrounding departments. It enables them to put more resources at a fire scene in response to the initial alarm in order for them to accomplish critical tasks in an efficient manner.

Between the two facilities, the Barberton Fire Department maintains a staff of 46 regular full-time employees including one fire chief, a captain/fire marshal, an administrative lieutenant, an administrative assistant, three captains, 9 lieutenants and 30 combined firefighters and paramedics. The report gives a description of the duties of these positions. They are staffed 24/7 and operate under a three-shift schedule (A,B,C). Each shift is compromised of one captain, three lieutenants and 10 firefighter/paramedics.

The department installed approximately 52 smoke detectors in homes of residents who were in need through the Fire Prevention Bureau lead by the Fire Marshal Richard Hardgrove. The Prevention Bureau is also responsible to determine the origin and cause of a fire in buildings and vehicles. Fire investigation helps to determine the origin and cause of fires. When they know what caused them, they can try to prevent them from occurring.

Barberton Historical Society will have the First Annual Car, Bike and Truck Show, May 5 (rain or shine). The event will be at the Barberton Historical Society Piggery Barn, 248 E. Robinson Ave. Registration will start at 10 a.m. with show beginning at noon-3 p.m., There is a \$5 per-entry fee. Several awards will be given, best of show, best truck, best original, and best modified. Entertainment will be provided by Magic Cruiser Car Club D.J. Jermey, food by Big Mack Barbecue and Erie Depot Ice Cream. For information call 330-807-1374.

**Barberton Fire sick time nearly \$6K per week**

According to records provided by the city of Barberton, sick time for the Barberton Fire Department in 2018 totaled 10,583 sick hours earning firefighters \$294,606.

The average sick pay was \$5,665 per week. That total includes 1,480 hours sold back to the city. That is a yearly average of 246 sick hours per the 43 employees.

By comparison, the rest of the city averaged 78 sick hours per employee. The other 22 city departments, totaling 173 employees, had 13,534 sick hours and \$329,974 in sick pay. Research by PwC shows that the average U.S. worker takes 4.9 sick days or about 40 hours per year.

The fire contract states: “An example of abuse/patterned use is an absence due to personal illness or injury... for more than four days in a four week period.

A firefighter could call off once a week for four weeks with no repercussions. Since they only work eight days in a four week period, according to the contract, it is acceptable to be sick for half of the time they are scheduled.

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**FROM THE FRONT**

**Owen**

(Continued from Front Page)

On March 21-24, Tyler Jensen, a 2013 graduate, teamed up with Petrarca to produce and co-direct “Spamalot,” which cost \$30,000 to produce. “Spamalot” is a musical comedy based on the movie, “Monty Python and the Holy Grail.”

Owen said this musical was chosen because there were many male vocalists in the senior class. “Spamalot” is a male-heavy show, and she wanted all the senior boys to have a shot at one last lead role before graduating.

To put on such an expensive show took a lot of fund-raising, and Owen participated in the door-to-door effort to raise donations. “Because our program is self-funded, this was harder than usual. A lot of people don’t answer their door.”

Owen said friends and family have supported his career and have never suggested he pursue a more pragmatic field. “If I’m just meeting them, they say, ‘That’s awesome. You’re following your dreams.’ It’s been overwhelming how much support I’ve been receiving.”

He believes that if more courses in the arts were offered it would benefit students. “Statistics actually say if a student is in any kind of arts at school, like painting, band, choir, musical theater, all that stuff, they’re more likely to do all their work and be more motivated. In high school, you really don’t have a solid creative outlet for your mind. These programs have helped me, and have helped all my friends to do better in school.”

If Owen hadn’t made it into the academy, he admits he had a Plan B: “I actually had a backup plan to go into a culinary arts program at a school in Ohio to become a chef.”

He enjoys watching cooking shows and expanding his food palette. “It makes me more excited to go to New York City to try a bunch of new foods.”

Owen will begin classes at AMDA in the fall.

City street sweeping

The city of Barberton will begin sweeping streets April 14 and end Dec. 5, (weather permitting). The street sweeping schedule is as follows:

EAST SIDE/AUSTIN ESTATES.....	SUNDAY (ALTERNATING WEEKS)
NORTH END.....	MONDAY
NEAR WEST.....	TUESDAY
FAR WEST.....	WEDNESDAY
DOWNTOWN AREA.....	THURSDAY

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