



SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

# The RECORDER

**Death Notices:** (see page 3)  
PERRY LEON KIDDER, 88 of Three Rivers.

**AREA SPORTS IN THIS WEEK'S RECORDER**

- Concord High School**  
Boys and Girls Cross Country, page 8  
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- Marshall High School**  
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Grammy nominated Koryn Hawthorne headlines Gospel line-up at Albion College

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Forks Senior Centers hosts Albion's first Senior Fair

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SnapChat threat prompts closure Tuesday at Concord High School

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Healthy Babies Day Brings in Higher Numbers than Last Year for 2019!

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## Volunteers unite for a great Community Unity Day

By SYLVIA BENAVIDEZ  
Contributing Writer

Albion- About 120 people gathered in McIntosh Park on a warm September morning for the first Community Unity Day. Mayor Dave Atchison, who spearheaded the plan to create the day of service in Albion, called out work details on an early Sept. 14 morning. At first, people were a little timid to commit to a location. Then one or two people stepped up to paint fire hydrants and retaining walls. More volunteers followed suit and chose to pick-up trash, clean gravestones, freshen up Weatherford Park and other tasks in the city.

Groups from Starr Commonwealth, business representatives like Ramona Kidder of Dickerson Music and Staci Stuart of Stirling Books & Brew, members of the American Legion, Cub scouts, community residents, and many more came to make a difference in their city. Calhoun Commissioner, 7th District, Gary

Tompkins handed out donuts before people left McIntosh Park for their assigned areas. Tompkins, heartened by the number of young people participating said, "Hopefully, this carries on through generations. That this becomes the norm for us to do on this day or every day."

Sheridan Township Supervisor and American Legion volunteer, Richard Porter, was impressed by the variety of people that came to the McIntosh Park shelter to sign up to volunteer. Porter noted, "I think it's wonderful to see all the youth helping and all the older people. I think we're going to get a lot done. It's going to be worthwhile for the community."

While other people were going to paint or clean, others were still coming in to help. No job was too big or messy to tackle. The group from St. Paul's Lutheran Church painted the men and women's bathroom walls at the bandshell in Victory Park.

Recently installed at St. Paul's Lutheran

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Photo by Sylvia Benavidez

Stoffer Plaza's wall in Albion gets a facelift from Community Unity Volunteers

## The remarkable journey of Albion's Harry Bonner told in new collaborative biography



Photo by Kathy Palon

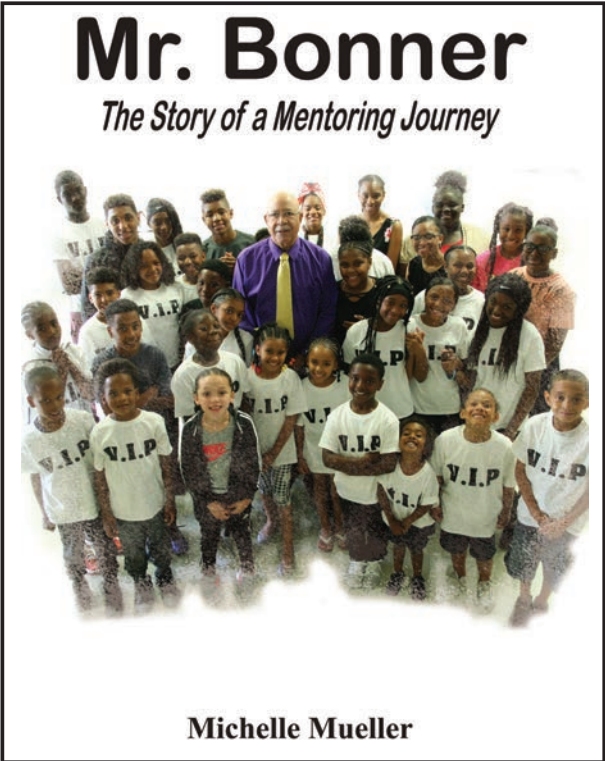
The writer and the subject of her new biography, Harry Bonner Sr.  
By Michelle Mueller  
Contributing Writer

In the works for six years, a new biography of Harry Bonner Sr. on which we've teamed up is hot off the press and will be available in Albion starting this Friday.

Both Harry Bonner and I will be on hand to autograph books during Albion's 2019 Festival of the Forks. On Friday, September 21 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., we'll celebrate the launch of the book "Mr. Bonner: The Story of a Mentoring Journey" at Stirling Books and Brew, located at 119 N. Superior St., in downtown Albion. The Festival's Car Show will also be happening in the same area from 3-7 p.m., so both events can be enjoyed. Then, from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Sept. 21, the Saturday of Festival, Bonner and I will have a booth set up in the lobby of the Courtyard Marriott, located on Superior Street in the heart of downtown.

It was in 2013 that Harry Bonner asked me if I would like to write his biography, and I didn't hesitate to answer an enthusiastic "yes!"

The pair of us had met in 1997 when I was a fledgling journalist, writing for the Albion Recorder, and under Bonner's tutelage, I developed a passion for covering the work of non-profit organizations like his and also became deeply immersed in learning about the history and culture of Albion's African-American community. The newspaper had long put out an annual bridal issue in the spring, and that year I was supported in my efforts to make the issue more inclusive: for the first time, care was taken to ensure we also featured photos of Black brides, and I researched and wrote stories on the tradition of "jumping the broom" and where grooms and groomsmen could find kente cloth cummerbunds.



The front cover of Harry Bonner's new biography.

Bonner was also the first person I consulted when I was offered the position of executive director of the then Albion Civic Foundation. Could I make as much or more of a difference in the community of Albion – particularly to the African-American community – in such a position? After all, it would mean giving up my 25 year career as a commercial interior designer. In a moment of déjà vu Bonner also didn't hesitate to answer an enthusiastic "yes!" and my professional life, which had been spent flying around the country creating new food court-style dining halls for colleges and universities, sometimes having to leave my young son, Hayes, with his dad for days on end, became focused on the children my son was growing up with and working to make life in Albion better for all of these Albion kids and their families.

What followed was a key time of growth for the foundation during which the organization's board agreed to change the name to the Albion Community Foundation, and with Bonner's guidance, its first African-American endowment fund (The Bogan-Holland African American Endowment Fund) was established and a massive grant program to help Albion youth was launched.

By 2013, though, I had retired from the foundation, and was back writing part-time for the Recorder, which was now published once a week, rather than six times weekly. For the

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## Dancer fulfills a dream at Stirling Books & Brew



Photo by Sylvia Benavidez

Kristy Clement shows her athleticism while balancing on a chair gracefully during Stirling Books & Brew Performance.

By SYLVIA BENAVIDEZ  
Contributing Writer

Albion- Think of Stirling Books & Brew and most likely you want to grab a good book and a latte or smoothie. Saturday, Sept. 14, however, Stirling Books & Brew hosted Triplet, a performance combining movement, music, and poetry.

Modern dancer Kristy Clement, a current resident of Albion, produced and performed in the small, but intimate space. Clement commented at the beginning of the program that it was the smallest space she has ever danced in during her career. She met the challenge with inspiration and ingenuity using a chair, the music, and poetry to convey emotions and moods such as reflection and loss. Filling the limited area with graceful modern dance moves and straight lines in her poses, the crowd of 25 to 50 people clapped in appreciation.

Several people participated in bringing this artistic endeavor to life in Albion. Musician Dan Palmer and Stirling Books & Brew co-owner Jim Stuart played the interlude music between the three pieces: "Ode," "Heartbeat," and "Triplet." Along with background music tracks, Clement danced during the final of the three performances as Albion resident and poet Octavia Crawford Turner read her poetry. Palmer strummed a guitar and Stuart played a muted trumpet to complete the collaboration.

In a post-performance interview, Clement stated, "I am glad

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## Albion may see some fresh art around town and the restoration of a classic mural

By ANN DWYER  
Freelance Journalist/Writer

Linda Kolmodin spoke to the Albion city council on Monday about the restoration of the Coca-Cola sign located downtown Albion. If the Albion Community Foundation is able to raise \$50, 000, a matching grant will be donated that will allow not only for the restoration of the mural, but also art reflecting Albion's culture and history.

According to Kolmodin, the group has already raised \$25, 000.

A kick-off For the "Restore Our Coke Sign" fundraiser will be held Thursday from 4-6 p.m. at the downtown Ludington Center, 101 N. Superior St. Attendees will learn how to

donate and about the two other commissioned art installations planned. There will be snacks, music, displays and Coca-Cola available for the public.

Other art planned for the city include a life-size statue of Albion Tee-ball inventor, Jerome Sacharski. This statue would be placed at the lot on the corner of S. Superior and W. Elm St.

A mural on the backside of Malleable Brewery is also planned. The mural would celebrate Albion's foundry history.

Much of the cost of restoring the Coke mural is based on environmental and OSHA regulations. Because the mural is located directly over the river, safety of those working on the mural is a concern. Environmental factors such

as scraping possible lead paint into the river is also an issue.

The sign was last painted in 1983. Kolmodin said the new sign would be sealed and last generations to come.

"We do need art, and we do need beauty. And we do need to make sure our town is the kind of town we are proud of," Kolmodin told the council.

The city council also voted to approve putting a path through the former Dalrymple school site. The lot connects Dalrymple St. with Ann St. Many residents cut through the lot as a shortcut. The former Dalrymple school was torn down after it was determined to be contaminated with asbestos. Trespassers were entering the abandoned building, making it a

danger to the community.

Because of a lack of funds, the site has yet to be cleaned up from toxins that may be in the soil.

Councilperson Sonya Brown moved to have a maintained path put in across the site, along with signage and garbage cans on both ends of the path. All attending council members passed the resolution. Councilmember Marcola Lawler was not in attendance. Construction for the path should be finished about two weeks into October. The path will be maintained through the winter months, along with regular mowing.

Council also agreed upon the contract for

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