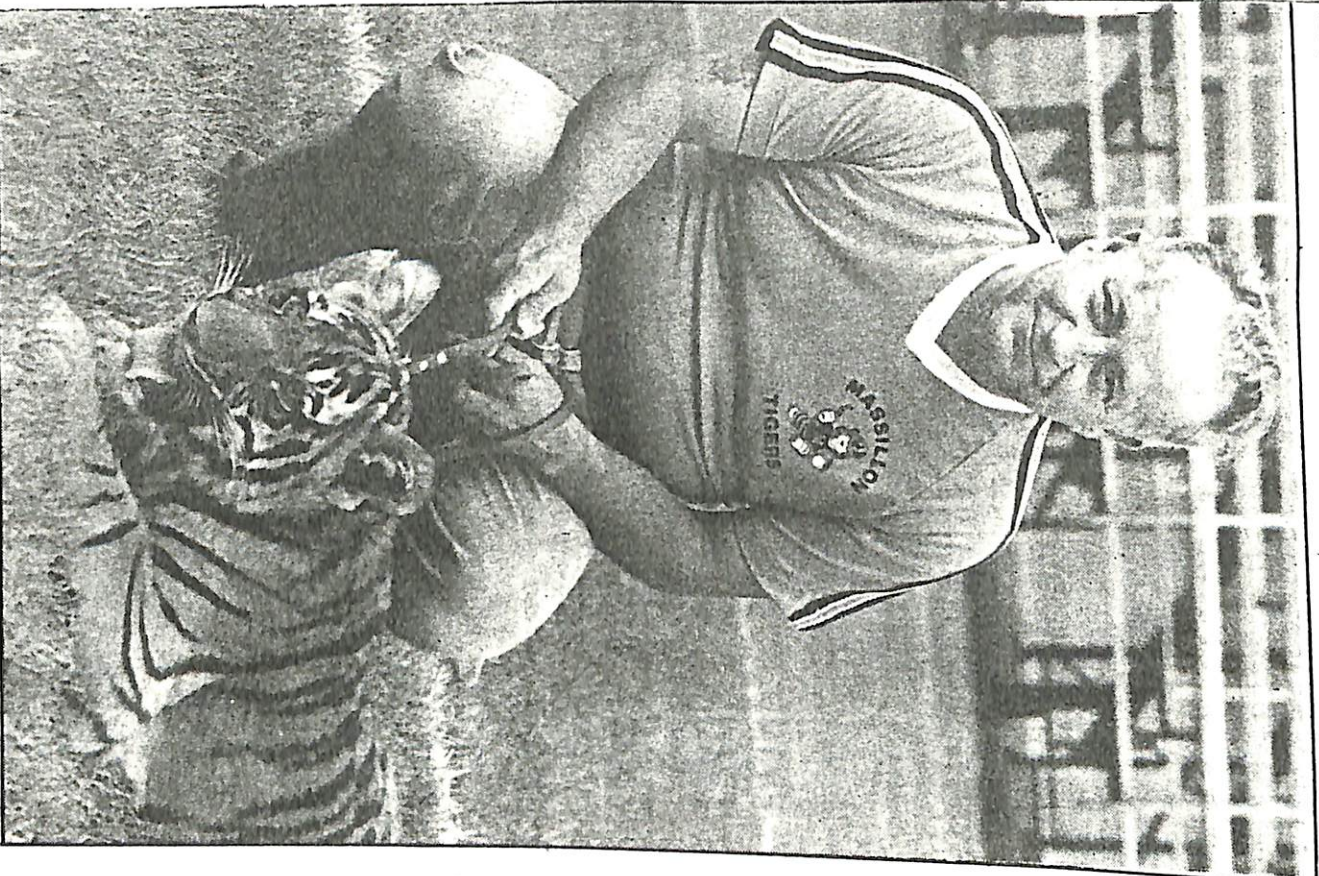


## Obie's dream

What is Obie, the Massillon Tiger mascot, dreaming about? His favorite food, of course, chicken. Tiger fans can help make Obie's dream come true when they attend Friday's Massillon-Perry game at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium. Volunteers will be stationed at all gates before and after the game to accept donations that will go to help feed Obie. Any money not used to pay Obie's "chicken bill" will go toward continuing the Tiger Booster Club's live tiger program.



Ed and Obie



Jack Worthington/FOR THE INDE  
Ed Annen pauses during a stroll across the Paul Brown Tiger Stadium gridiron with Obie XVII. Annen is caretaker for the live tiger that serves as a mascot for the Washington High football squad.

# Tasty fowl keeps mascot on prowl

By STEVE DOERSCHUK  
Independent Sports Editor

1986

MASSILLON — Ed Annen isn't one to chicken out; rather, he'll be out a lot of chicken.

Annen is the brave soul who is caretaker for Obie the Tiger, this year's version of which made its debut at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium Friday night.

"We got this one, Obie XVII, from the same outfit we got last year's," said Annen, a 56-year-old Massillon native whose hobby is taking care of the Massillon Tigers' football mascot.

"Ringling Brothers Circus gets its tigers from the same place," he said. "The one we got is a male that weighs 50 pounds. He's 5 months old."

Annen is in his seventh year as Obie's caretaker, having taken over for Wilbur Arnold, who now lives in Washington, D.C.

Obie is always a hit with Tiger fans, and the beast has traditionally been like that great Boston Red Sox hitter, Wade Boggs, in that he simply adores chicken dinners.

## Sluggish Tigers win scrimmage

— Page 9

"They feed 'em red meat where we get 'em, but we feed 'em chicken here," Annen said.

Obie eats a lot more chicken than Wade Boggs, and fans will be asked for contributions during an as-yet unspecified game night.

Obie might weigh more than 50 pounds by the time you read this. Last year's tiger, a female, grew to 150 pounds. The biggest Obie grew to a somewhat unmanageable 375 pounds, in 1976.

"That was the year we wound up keeping the same tiger we'd had the year before," Annen said. "He was kept in the large cage."

Obie XVII probably will wind up in the circus, where Obie XVI now is a contender for rookie-of-the-year laurels.

It's hard to say whether Obie XVI wishes she was back in Massillon to catch next Friday's season opener against Akron Buchtel, but real tigers seem to like the football Tigers, Annen said.

"They see people moving around, and they like that, although they're not real thrilled by the band noise," Annen said.

Obie is a rent-a-tiger financed by the Tiger Bogster Club. Annen won't say how much is being shelled out, but it's a lot more than you'd pay for a poodle at the pet store.

Obie XVII will appear at all eight Massillon home games and both road games, Annen said.

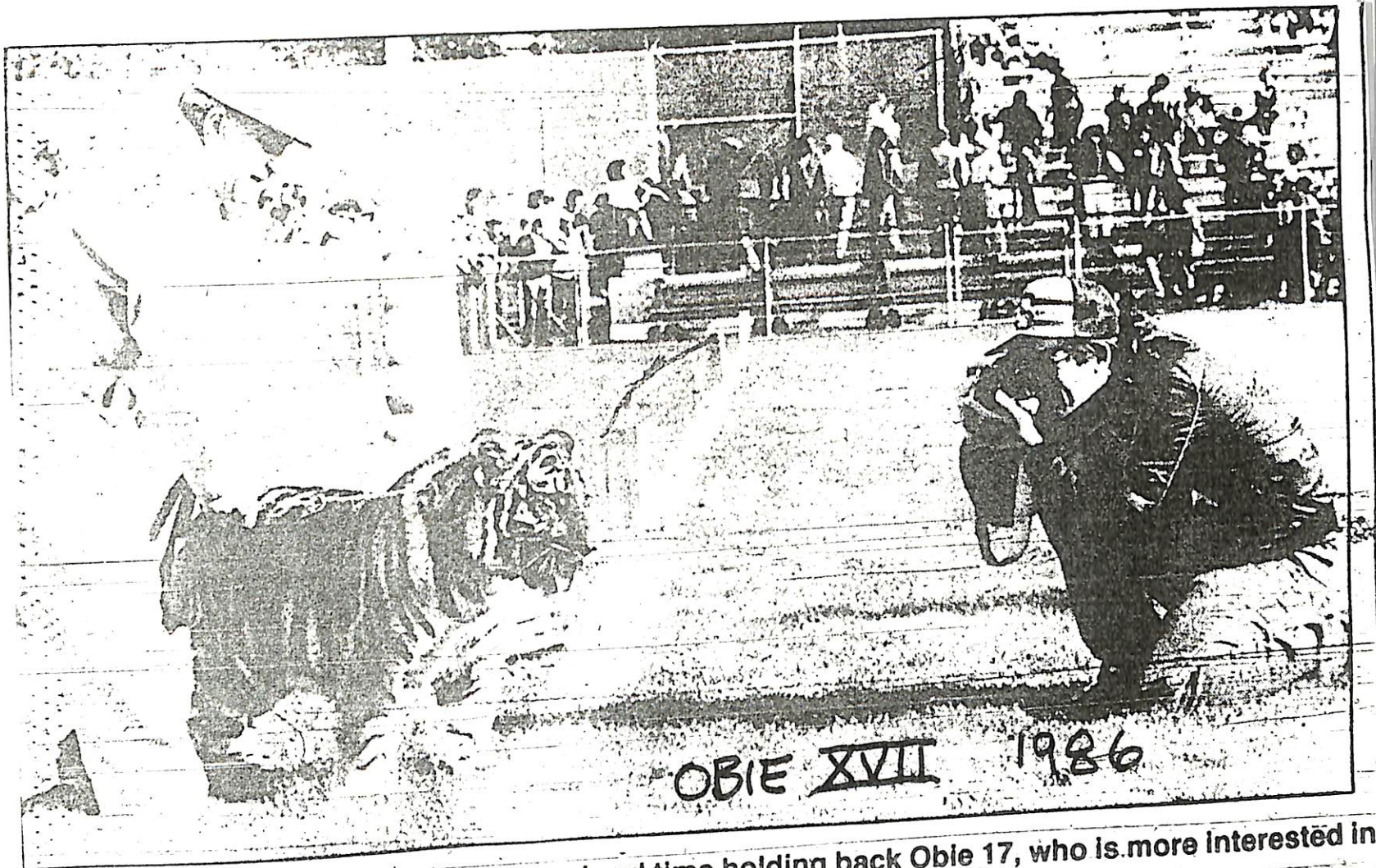
His home will be a building at the north side of Tiger Stadium. If he should happen to escape, he can probably be found by the nearest Colonel Sanders sign.



Ed Annen, left, has a hard time holding back Obie 17, who is more interested in playing than having his photo

taken by line judge Terry Belty of Massillon.





Ed Annen, left, has a hard time holding back Obie 17, who is more interested in



OBIE  
XVIII  
1987

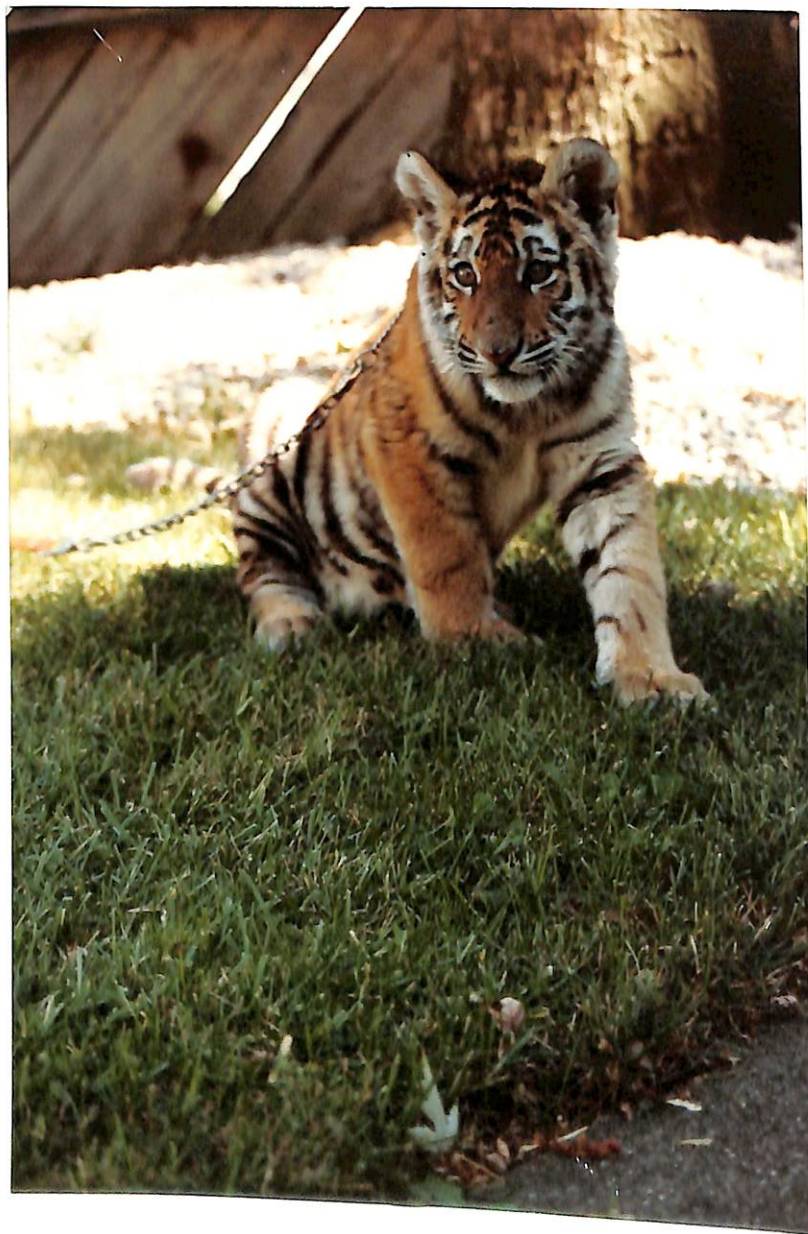
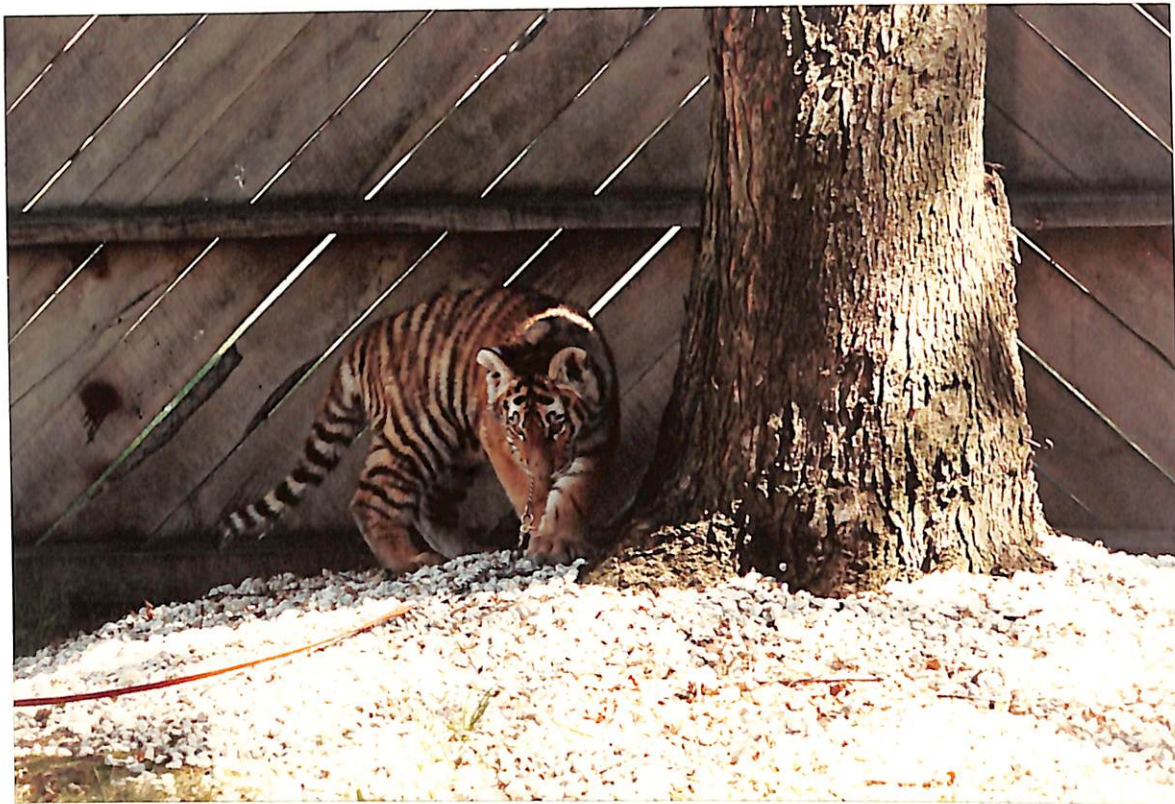


1987



Obie, the Massillon Tiger mascot, wasn't much happier than handler Ed Annen

1987



OBIE  
XVIX  
1988



JOY

HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
ED AND JO ANNEN

OBIE XVIX

1988





**MISCHIEVOUS MASCOT** — Dianne Owens, wife of Massillon head football coach Lee Owens, seems a bit taken aback by the "attention" she's receiving from Massillon mascot Obie the tiger. One can hardly blame Obie for his aggressiveness this week.

After all, with McKinley heading in Saturday, every Tiger in town is ready to roar. Obie may have given Mrs. Owens a playful nip, but he's saving his big bites for the Bulldogs.

Tom Prusha/INDE

1988

OBIE XVIII

1989



## Obie backers

Wives of the trainers of Obie the Bengal tiger mascot for the Washington High School Tigers say donations are needed to help continue the Tiger Booster Club's live tiger program. The women, from left, are Mrs. Ed (Jo) Annen, Mrs. Don (Rhona) Shonk and Mrs. Bob (Kay) Hollender. Boosters will seek donations Saturday at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium before the Moeller game.

Tom Prusha/INDE

One hungry tiger

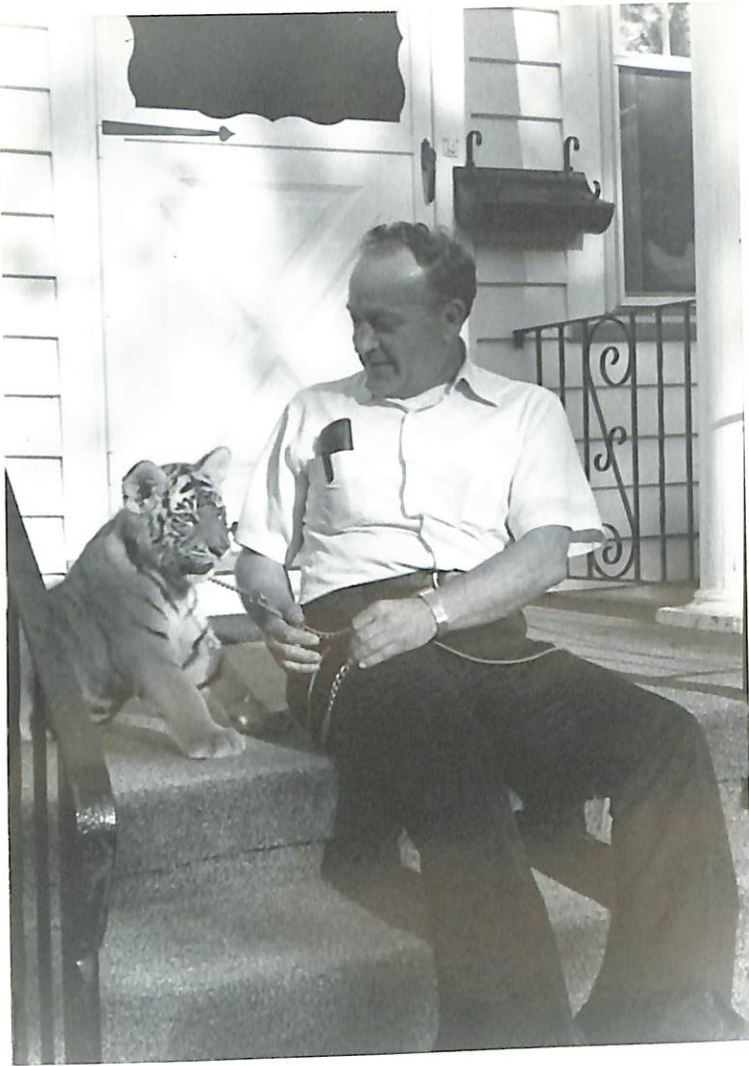
1989



OBIE  
XX

Tom Prusha/INDE

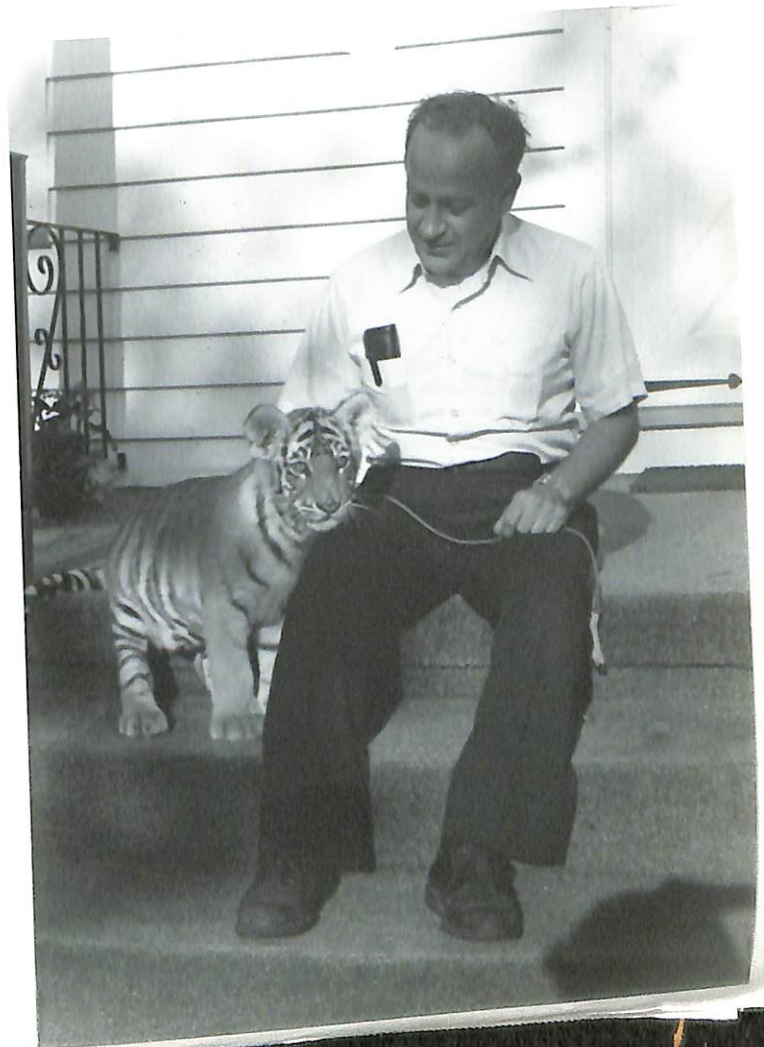
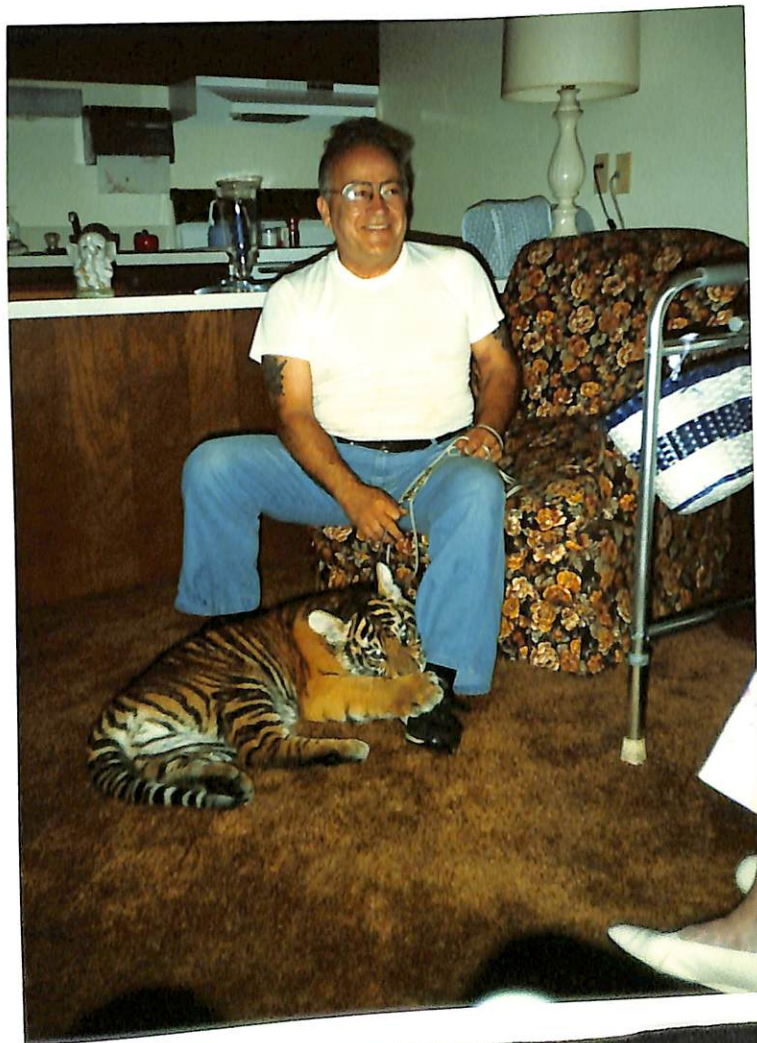
As this photo attests, Obie XX is one hungry tiger. Money collected will be used to pay for the current



OBIE XXI 1990



GRANDMA ARNOLD      OBIE XXI      ED ANNEN



# OBIE XXI 1990

Who's this guy, anyway?



Tom Prusha INDE

Obie XXI, left, isn't quite sure what to make of Obie, the Tiger Swing Band mascot, played by senior Bryan Weller. Members of the Tiger Booster Club will be accepting monetary donations Saturday at the Tiger-Moeller game to help feed Obie — the real Tiger, that is — who is

cared for by the Booster Club through the football season. The tiger has gained almost 20 pounds since he first arrived here and eats about five pounds of chicken a day.

*Let's shake...*



Tom Prusha/INDE

Emerson School sixth-graders Robert Hickey and Daniel Gordon encounter Obie

Obie is a "she") friend Ed Annen have been touring Massillon school's this week, helping students gear up for Saturday's showdown against the McKinley Bulldogs:

OBIE  
XXI  
1990

OBIE XXII

1991



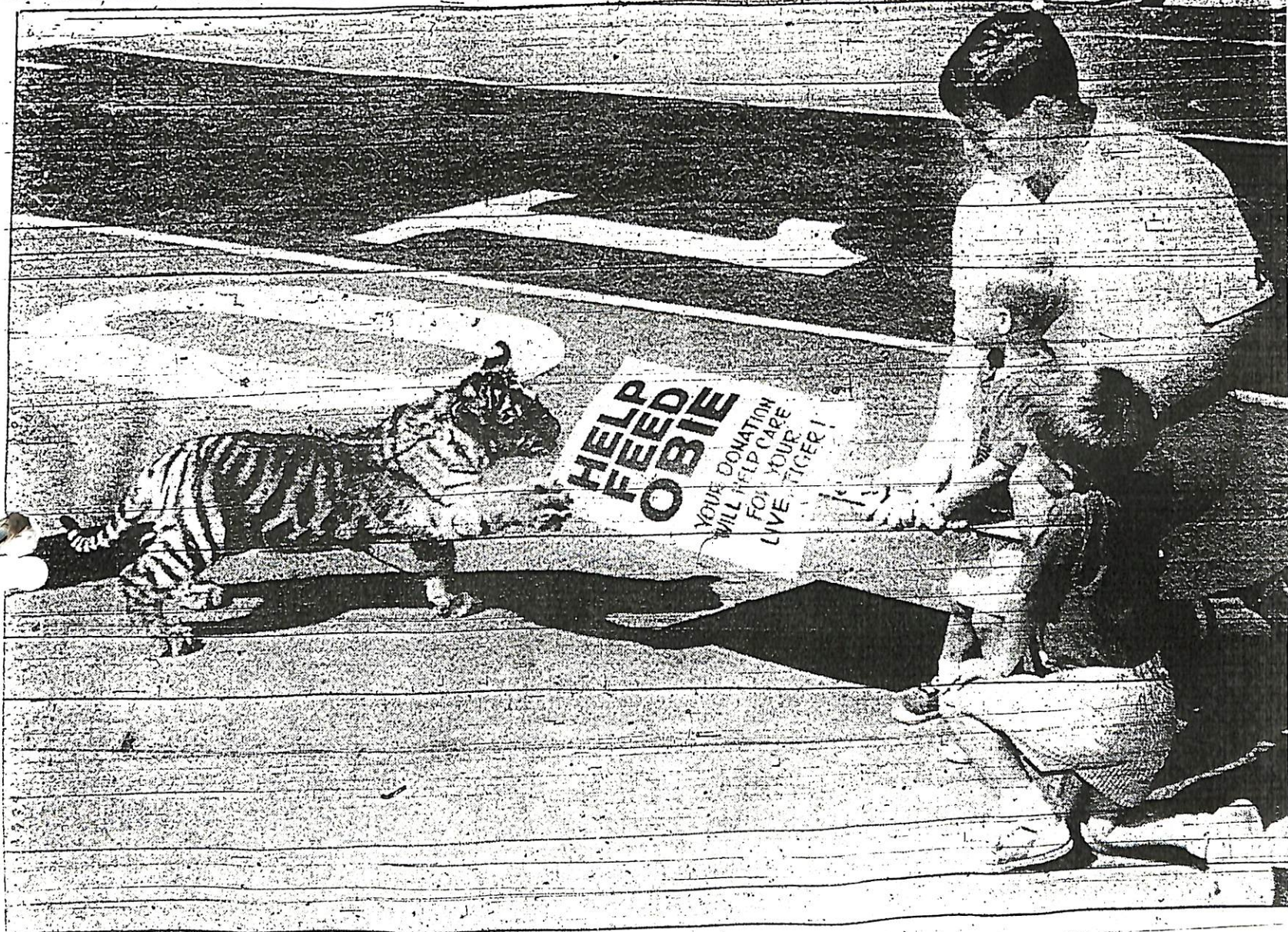
**GAME FACE** — Obie, the Massillon Tigers' mascot, shows his colors during a photo session at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium.

Larry Berarducci/FOR THE INDE

OBIE XXII

1991

6 The Independent, Thursday, September 12, 1991



## A sign of hunger

Obie, Massillon's live tiger mascot, came to Paul Brown Tiger Stadium Wednesday for publicity pictures with Booster Club President Glen Werich and his two sons, Tim, closest to Glen, and Tom. All went well until Obie decided to play with, tear and eat the sign asking for money to pay for Obie's food. Obie generally eat chickens, which will be paid for by donations to be collected during the Garfield game Friday night.

Tom Prusha/IND





## Obie backers

1992

Wives of the trainers of Obie the Bengal tiger mascot for the Washington High School Tigers say donations are needed to help continue the Tiger Booster Club's live tiger program. The women, from left, are Mrs. Ed (Jo) Annen, Mrs. Don (Rhona) Shonk and Mrs. Bob (Kay) Hollender. Boosters will seek donations Saturday at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium before the Moeller game.

Tom Prusha/INDE

OBIE XXIV

1993



### 'Hungry, Obie?'

There appears to be a lean and hungry look to Obie XXIV these days. Certainly, it's nothing a little serving of Bulldog wouldn't satisfy. Obie will get an opportunity to go eye to eye with Chauncy, the McKinley High mascot, when the Tigers and Bulldogs do battle for the 99th time this Saturday at Fawcett Stadium in Canton.

Lisa Berarducci/FOR THE INDE

1993



## Where's Obie?

Obie XXIV's cage was empty for Friday night's "Beat McKinley" parade through downtown. But his handlers, Ed Annen, left, and Donnie Shonk still had something to smile about. They managed to get a substitute Obie for today's 2 p.m. game against McKinley in Canton's Fawcett Stadium.



OBIE XXIV 1993

*Weekender  
edition*

Saturday/Sunday  
Nov. 6-7, 1993

# The Independen

## Obie bites rabid Pup fan, lives



Obie XXIV

By DOUG BENNETT  
Independent Staff Writer  
Put Obie XXIV on the disabled list for today's game, but add Obie XXIV½, a substitute bengal-picked-up on waivers.

An ill-timed nip at a Canton McKinley fan Friday forced Obie XXIV into quarantine for the rest of the football season. That looked like bad news until a breeder in Akron offered the second-stringer, a 5-month-old cub, late Friday night.

The good news is Obie hasn't shown any ill effects from the incident.

Obie XXIV, who apparently saw red, nipped a Bulldog fan's hand at a Rotary Club luncheon in Canton, said handler

Ed Annen. The wound was superficial, but state health officials ordered Obie under wraps for 30 days.

A man was waving his hand near the tiger and got caught by a playful nip, Annen said. The damage: a small cut between his thumb and index finger.

"It barely broke the skin and there was hardly any blood," Annen said. "He was just playing with him like everyone else."

Word of the incident traveled fast — a little too fast, according to some Tiger faithful. Normally, animal bites that happen on Fridays aren't followed up with quarantine

orders until Monday or Tuesday, Annen said. Others think Obie didn't even cause the cut.

"We were told late (Friday he had to be quarantined.) happened so fast people are wondering if it's a setup," he said.

Obie has had standard feline vaccinations, but rabies shot aren't effective on big cats, according to Annen.

A bad omen? No way, said those huddled around the empty cage Friday night.

"I thought someone was pulling my leg at first," said Bob Yund, the Massillon Rotary president. "It's not ba

■ See OBIE, Page A-1

luck and it won't matter a bit."

Like a true substitute, Saturday Massillon-McKinley game in Canton's Fawcett Stadium will be Obie XXIX½'s only appearance.

"He's going back after the game, but at least there'll be a tiger at the game," Annen said.

While one tiger was going, another was coming.

A 2,500-pound wooden tiger carved from solid beech was unveiled during Friday night's "Beat McKinley" parade. The 16-foot-high statue was bought

by the Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club. It will be put on display in the high school.

"We thought it was time to do something really special," said Junie Studer, a club member. "We've got something very unique."

The artist, Conrad Sandoval, cut the tiger from a solid log using a chainsaw. In March, he carved a trio of redwood grizzlies at a wood fabricating shop overlooking the high school.

"I had a feeling a tiger would be next," he said.

## 'Sub' Obie ready for playoff duty

By DOUG BENNETT  
Independent Staff Writer

Obie XXIV<sup>1/2</sup> has been reactivated for Saturday's playoff game.

The stand-in mascot will travel to Parma with the Massillon Tigers for the football showdown with Mansfield, said tiger handler Ed Annen.

The substitute cub will be picked up today at Rolling Valley Animal Farm near Ravenna, Annen said. He'll be in Parma to pump up the crowd, but he won't see any of the game. The Ohio High School Athletic Association's so-called "Massillon rule" — enacted in response to Tiger mascots' playoff appearances in past years — prohibits live mascots inside a stadium at playoff games.

Meanwhile, efforts are under way to free Obie XXIV. The cub was quarantined for 30 days after nipping a Canton McKinley fan's hand on the eve of that game. (So far, Obie XXIV has shown no sign of ill effects from the bite.)

The Tiger mascot was quarantined as a precaution because rabies vaccinations are ineffective on big cats. Earl Lindsay, a Lawrence Township veterinarian, has asked state health officials to reduce the "sentence" to 10 days.

"The normal quarantine is only 10 days and we want Obie back as soon as possible," Annen said.

He was unsure when health officials might act on Lindsay's request.

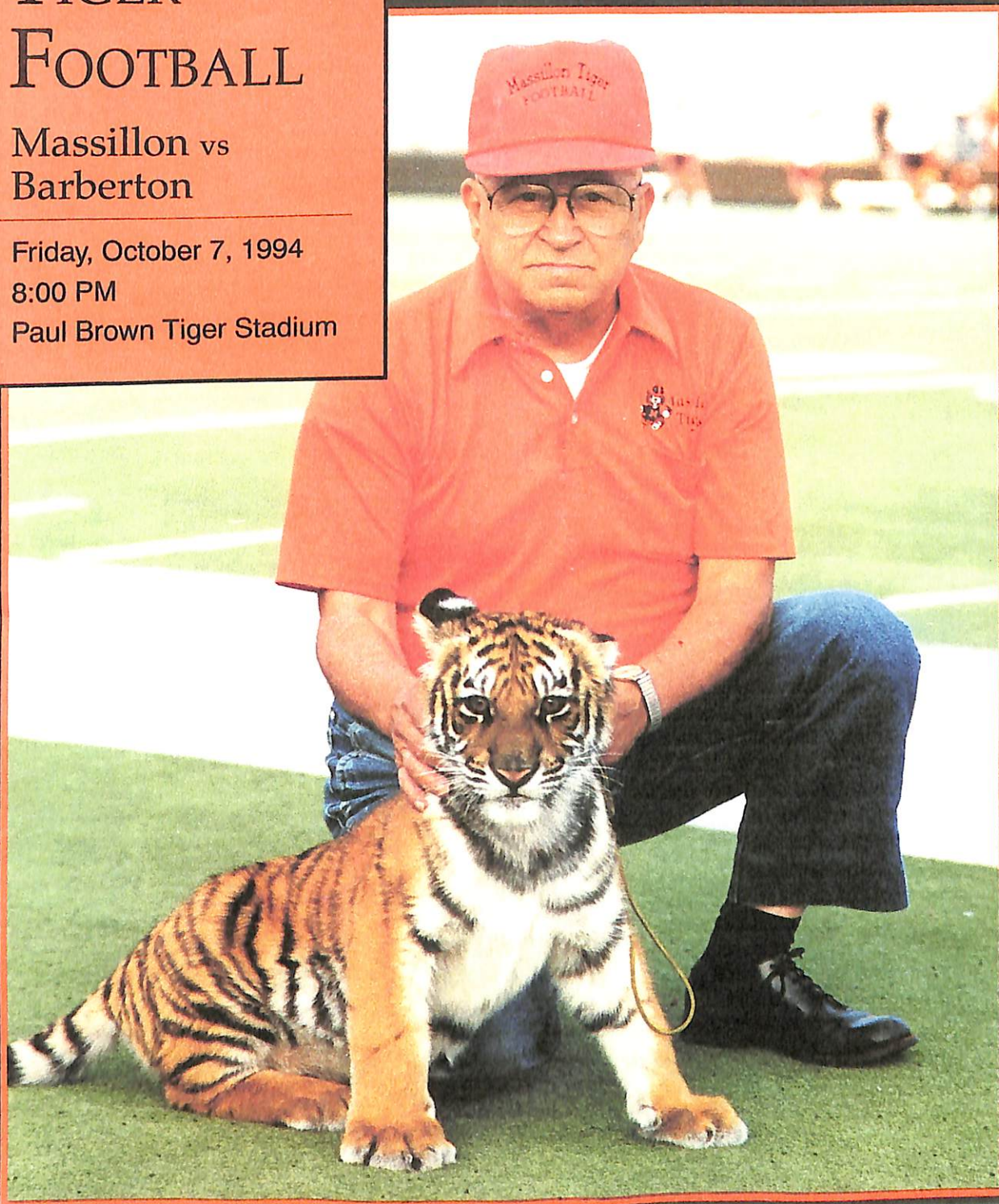
1994

# MASSILLON TIGER FOOTBALL

Souvenir Program \$2.00

Massillon vs  
Barberton

Friday, October 7, 1994  
8:00 PM  
Paul Brown Tiger Stadium



OBIE XXV



## Thanks, fellow Tigers

Dear friends:

I am writing this to you in order to express my gratitude to the thousands who made my stay in Massillon such a memorable one.

The only thing I regret is having to leave. What better place for a tiger to reside than in Tigertown? I'll remember it always.

I want to take this opportunity to thank a number of people who made my stay a comfortable one. Geez, did I ever get attention! I loved it!

The one person who truly deserves a big paw on the back is my good buddy Ed Annen. Ed really took care of me, treating me like I was a daughter. He did everything humanly possible to make me feel like one of the family.

Oh sure, Ed swatted me a few times across the chops. But heck, I did get feisty with him on occasion. That orange jump suit of his made a fine target for my paws, I will admit.

Gosh, I never had it so good. Those folks out at Bordner's supplied me with that delicious chicken. Did I prosper? You betcha I did, growing from 20 pounds to almost 85. That chicken was paw-licking good!

I also want to thank Progressive Chevy for letting me ride in the back of their pickup truck. Could they paint it orange, though?

And I also want to thank all those people who donated money and volunteered their time to collect the funds during the "Help Feed Obie" night. It was a growling success, and assures that my brothers and sisters may one day call Massillon their temporary home.

Well, I guess that's about it. I'm sorry if I missed anybody, but I'll be thinking about you.

One last thing, 'Go Tigers.'



Yours truly,  
Obie the XV

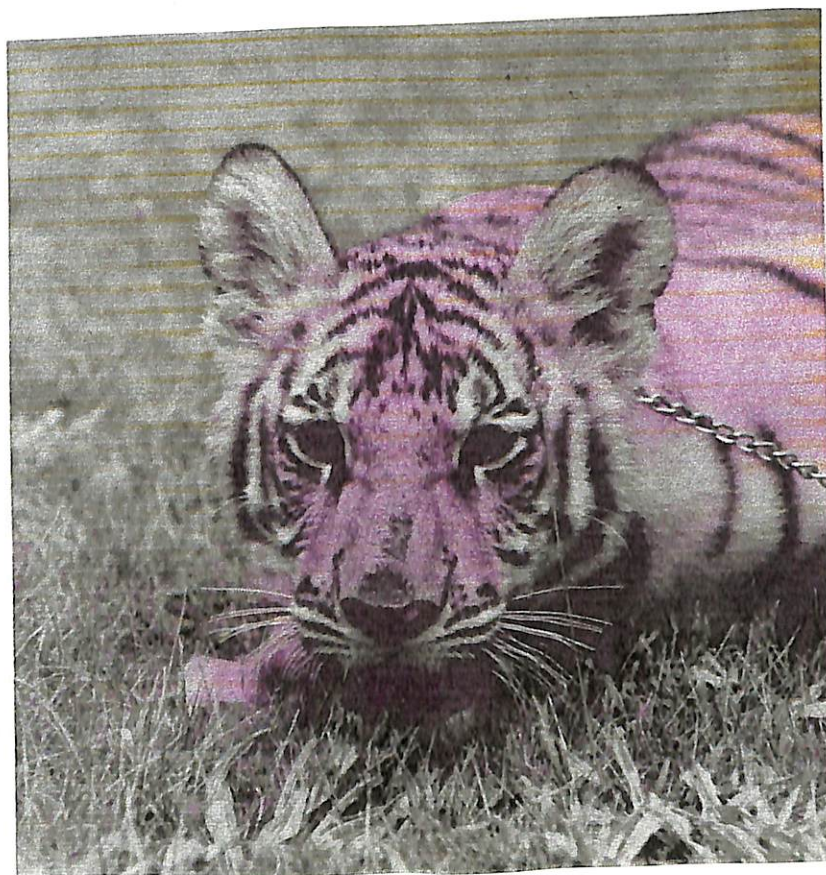
OBIE XV 1994





OBIE XXV

1994



OBIE XXVI

1995

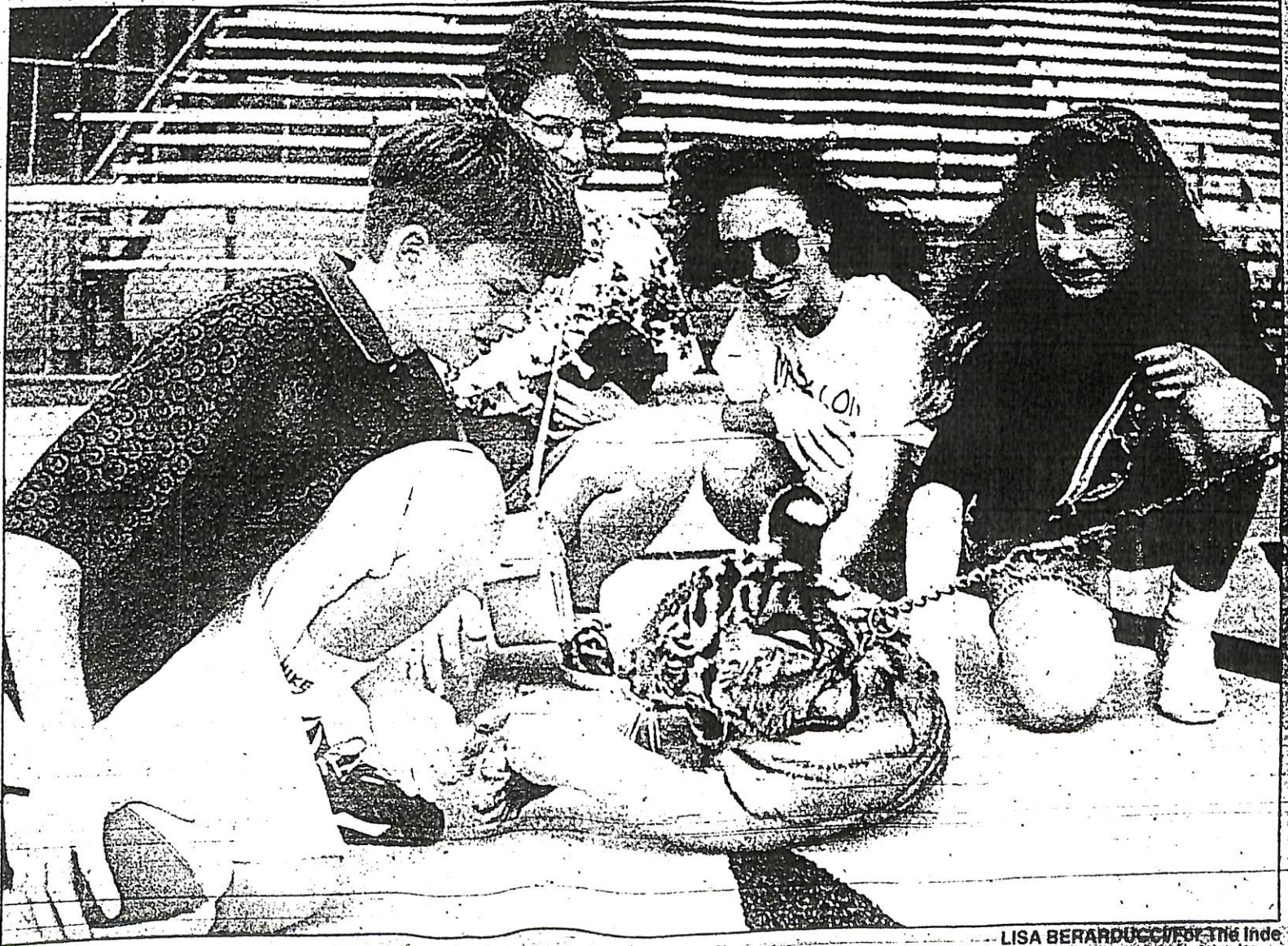
# OBIE PICTURE DAY

9, 1996

Massillon, Ohio

133rd Year

## A visit with Obie



LISA BERARDUCCI/For The Inde

Obie XXVII, the Massillon Tiger mascot, is surrounded by fans during Sunday's Obie Picture Day at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium. The event gave Tiger fans a chance to take photos of the popular mascot or have their pictures taken with him. Among those taking advantage of the opportunity for a close-up look at the tiger cub were, from left, Jason Close, Fran Blogna, Jennifer Crenshaw and Allie Cox.



## Tiger food funds sought

Saturday night, when the Massillon Tigers will battle the Cincinnati Moeller Crusaders at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium, has been designated as "Feed Obie Night." John Hauser, Tiger Booster Club president, is shown playing with a hungry Obie XXVII while his son, Brad, and daughter, Katie, hold signs soliciting contributions. The 75-pound Obie mascot consumes 6 pounds of chicken, hamburger and turkey a day.

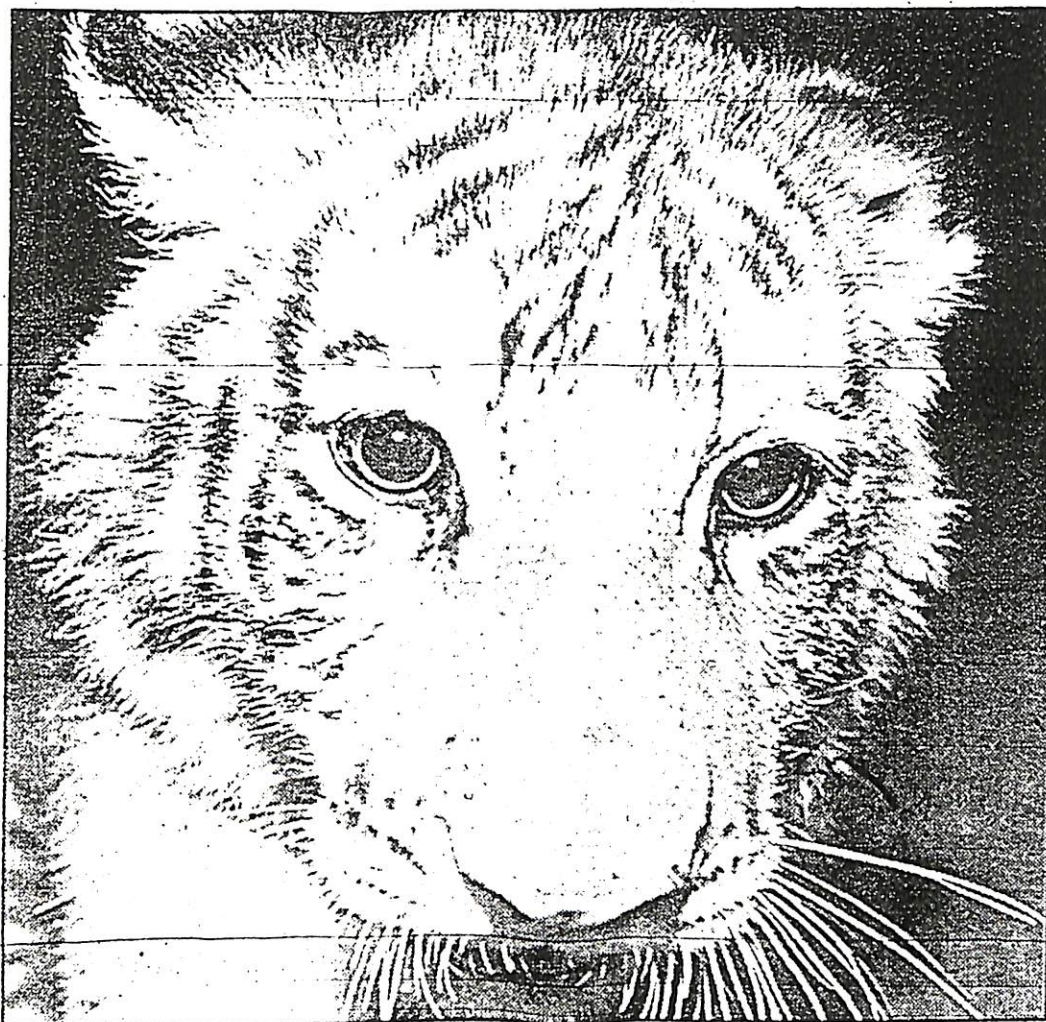
MARK ROGERS/The Inde



Obie XXVII watches the Beat McKinley events.

OBIE XXVII

1996



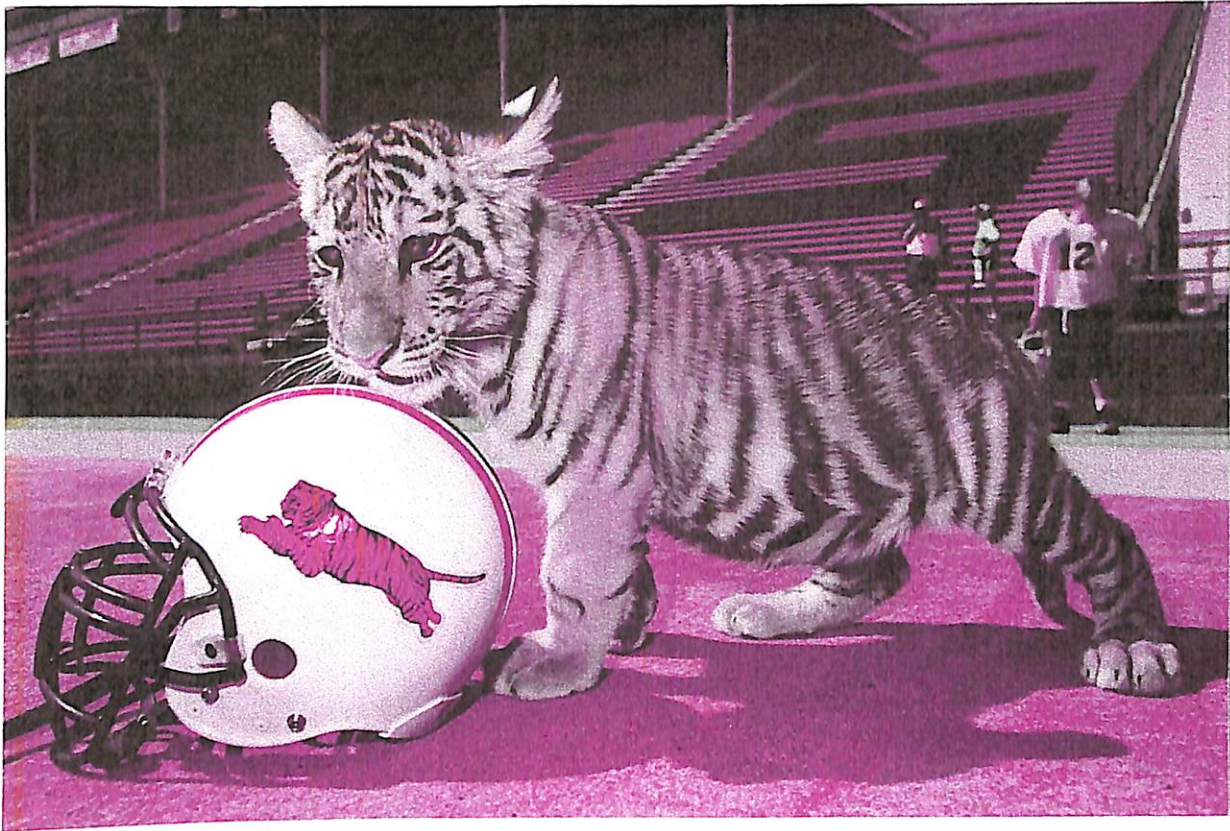
Obie XXVII watches the Beat McKinley events.



OBIE XXVIII

1997

Tuesday night was the annual Massillon Tiger Booster Club's "Beat McKinley" rally in the Washington High auditorium. In the top photo, the cheerleaders, band and majorettes welcome team members shortly after their arrival. At left, head coach Jack Rose addresses the crowd. Above, Obie appears ready for the gridiron battle.



OBIE XXIX

1998

"ONIYA"

1998



**CAUTION: HUNGRY TIGER**

KEVIN MAZUR FOR THE POST  
Obie the XXIX is ready for the 105th gridiron battle between Massillon and McKinley, Saturday at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium

**OBIE XXIX**

## She's ready to play



JAMES ZEMKO/The Inde

Obie XXX will make her debut at the 17th annual Massillon Fourth of July Picnic in the Park at Stadium Park. The 3½-week-old tiger will be at the Stump Hill Farm petting zoo in the park. The picnic begins at 11 a.m. July 4 and concludes with a \$12,500 fireworks display at 10 p.m. Live musical entertainment, games, food concessions are planned. Admission is free.

OBIE XXX

1999

"AMBER"



1999

## Funding Obie



JAMES ZEMKO/The

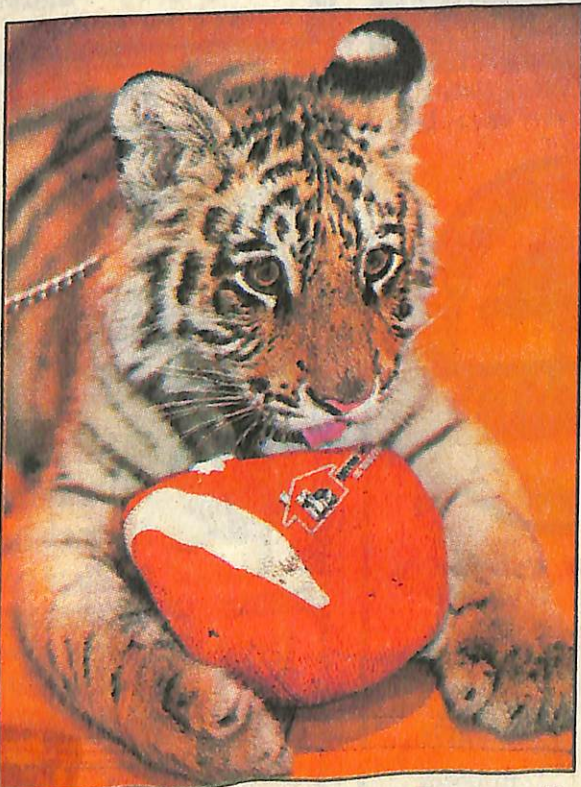
Tony Shiplett, left, of Massillon, makes a donation to the "Help Feed Obie" campaign. J McArthur, right, and other collectors stood at the gates at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium before Friday's game between the Massillon Tigers and Perry Panthers to collect money to help support the live tiger program. For 30 years, a live tiger cub has been on the sidelines as a mascot for the football team.



GARY W. GREEN/Akron Beacon Journal photos

A Massillon youngster checks out Obie the tiger cub, the Massillon football team's live mascot, before a game against St. Edward last Friday. Massillon gets a new Obie every season. Obie XXXI has been leased from Stumphill Farms in Richville.

# Truth about cats and dogs



Obie, the mascot for the Massillon Tigers, can't seem to get enough of high school football.

Stark County football rivals still use rambunctious pair of bulldogs, tenacious tiger cub as live team mascots

By Tom Reed  
Beacon Journal staff writer

They will come together again tomorrow afternoon at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium, united by a football rivalry they have come to represent, but not understand.

Watch them as they proudly patrol the sidelines - photogenic as runway models and possessing an animal magnetism that the world's top perfumers only wish they could bottle.

We're talking, of course, about Obie, the Massillon tiger, and Abbygale and Sabastian, the Canton McKinley bulldogs. Live mascots that in Stark County will never be your beasts of burden.

"Obie is a chick magnet," said Massillon booster club President George Mizer as a crowd gathered outside the Wendy's restaurant on Lincoln Way East on Monday afternoon to see the playful 45-



## MORE IN SPORTS

Massillon coach won't be fooled by McKinley.

Former coaches recall legendary rivalry.

Page C1

pound Bengal tiger cub.

"People just love her."

The same can be said of Abbygale and Sabastian, a pair of personable 60-pound bulldogs who are recognized wherever they travel in Canton.

"They love the attention," said owner Bud Steigerwald, a Canton native and 1957 McKinley graduate. "They like people and would be disappointed if they weren't petted."

Please see *Mascots*, B4

# Mascots

## Massillon gets new tiger cub every season

Continued from Page B1

The 106-year-old rivalry - which Massillon leads 55-46-5 - is about much more than intense football.

It is color, pageantry, history and tradition. It is a 365-day-a-year obsession that culminates with a weeklong celebration leading up to the big game.

Live mascots add to the flavor of those festivities.

"They promote good will and help bring people together," said Fran Steigerwald, Bud's wife.

### Fewer mascots around

But the live mascot is becoming an endangered species on the Ohio high school sports landscape. Each year finds fewer animal acts, in part because of stricter regulations governing them and the ever-present threat of litigation.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association bans mascots at all tournament games. Abbygale and Sabastian were not part of McKinley's 1997 or '98 state championship runs.

During the regular season, however, their presence seems ubiquitous.

On team photo days, McKinley players and coaches often have their pictures taken with the bulldogs. The dogs' mugs can be spotted on newspaper-box placards and pictures throughout the city.

McKinley's tradition of live mascots can be traced to 1921, when a bulldog named Two Bits roamed the sidelines, team historian Charlie Bowersox said. Abbygale and Sabastian have held the honor for the past six years.

"People have gotten to know us a little better," Bud Steigerwald said. "But it's not about us, it's all for the dogs and the school."

Being a team mascot is more than just mugging for the cameras and controlling your bladder for several hours on a Friday



GARY W. GREEN/Akron Beacon Journal

Canton McKinley cheerleaders Jennifer Smith (left) and Mindy Pastrokos pray at the Canton Baptist Temple on Wednesday.

or Saturday night. Both bulldogs have played hurt this season.

The brindle-colored Sabastian is nursing a staph infection, while the fawn-and-white Abbygale has had an eye infection.

Of course, the 1974 bulldog remains the one by which all others are measured in terms of combat valor.

As the Bulldogs and Tigers were preparing for kickoff, the mascots were brought together for a brief, yet memorable encounter in Massillon. This was in an era before the tiger was declawed or confined to a cage.

"We told the dog handlers not to get too close, but they kept coming," said Bob Hollender, one of Obie's three caretakers.

The tiger cub took a swipe at the bulldog, cutting its lip. Bloodied but unbowed, the bulldog never left the sidelines during Massillon's 20-15 victory.

The Steigerwalds don't expect any trouble this year, but train their dogs for the unexpected. Their favorite chew toy? What else - a stuffed tiger.

### New cub each year

While the bulldog mascot has

no term limit, Massillon gets a new Obie every season - a tradition started by former booster club President Wilbur Arnold in 1970.

Obie XXXI has been leased from Stumphill Farms in Richville, where she will return after tomorrow's game. The tiger cubs spend only a few months in Massillon, but get round-the-clock attention from Hollender, Clarence Rambaud and Don Shonk.

Obie is housed in a spacious pen inside a garage next to the stadium. Her days consist of sleeping, lounging, playing with the caretakers and inhaling five to six pounds of hamburger and chicken.

Good work if you

can get it.

At her size and without claws, Obie does not present a major risk to humans, Rambaud said. Although he admits some caution must be exercised.

"In the morning, she likes to rub her face against mine," Ram-

baud said. "But I only do it for about 30 seconds or I'd wind up like Evander Holyfield."

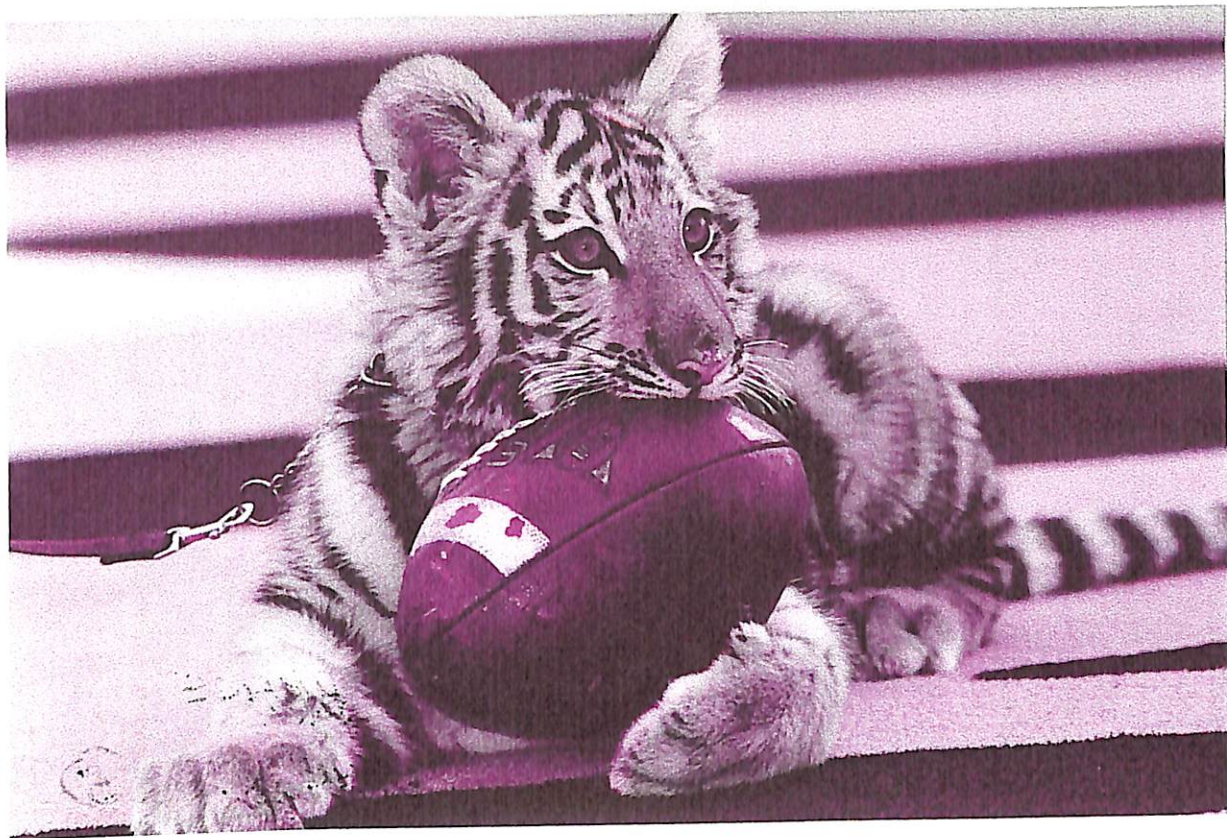
The current Obie is 5 months old and was a celebrity before arriving in Massillon. Stumphill Farms lends tigers to renowned zoologist Jack Hannah, who has taken Obie on several television shows, Mizer said.

"One of our Obies was also in the movie *Gladiator*," Mizer added.

For the past four days, the cub has been touring grade schools, nursing homes and businesses throughout Massillon. This is Obie's busiest week of the season.

"The greatest thing about Obie is the joy she spreads," Mizer said. "We just love to see the reaction she gets when we take her into the schools. That's what makes everything worthwhile."

OBIE  
XXXI  
2000



OBIE XXXII

2001

"DRAKE"



OBIE XXXI

2000

"ABBY"

2002



JAMES ZEMKO/The Inde

**IN GOOD HANDS?** – The Massillon Tigers mascot for 2002, Obie XXXIII, is pictured during a recent event. Animal rights activists are protesting the use of a live tiger during the grid season.

August 20  
Tuesday  
2002

# The Madependent

Your hometown newspaper

## PETA cries 'hold that tiger'

### School officials to side with tradition

By R.J. VILLELLA  
City Editor

Massillon Superintendent Al Hennon refuses to cave in to demands of an animal rights organization that wants Washington High to abandon use of a live tiger cub as a mascot.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), an organization that claims dedication to the worldwide protection of animals, said Stump Hill Farms, where the tiger mascots are obtained each year, has been cited for violating minimum standards of care.

Those violations, said PETA's Amy Rhodes, an animals-in-entertainment specialist, include "failure to provide veterinary care, mistreating primates, failure to provide shelter from inclement weather and keeping animals in filthy, foul-smelling cages."

Rhodes also said it is "unrealistic to believe the tiger cubs Massillon uses and then discards year after year" make it to a reputable zoo. She also insists there is a safety risk associated with keeping tigers in captivity.

Additionally, PETA claims that crowd noise at the game causes the animals stress and the only time the animals are let out of their cages is during games.

"PETA will be happy to donate a tiger costume that would make a wonderful, humane replacement for your school mascot," wrote Rhodes in a letter to Hennon. "Massillon is a Mecca for high school football and the pride the community shows for its football team is immense. We are certain your fans would embrace a compassionate switch to a costumed human mascot. May we please hear from you soon?"

Hennon said he questions PETA's claim that the letter was sparked by complaints from Massillon citizens.

"I haven't had one," he said. "I think this whole thing is ridiculous. That tiger is cared for so well, it's unbelievable. Obie is well fed, exercised and coddled."

"I believe the school district is being used as a pawn in a battle PETA is having with Stump Hill Farms. I will not deny the citizens of this community and our fans a tradition

which has more than a 30-year history based on these allegations."

Hennon said he stands behind the Massillon Tiger Football Boosters handling and treatment of all the tiger Obies. He also said he believes Stump Hill Farms is doing a good job.

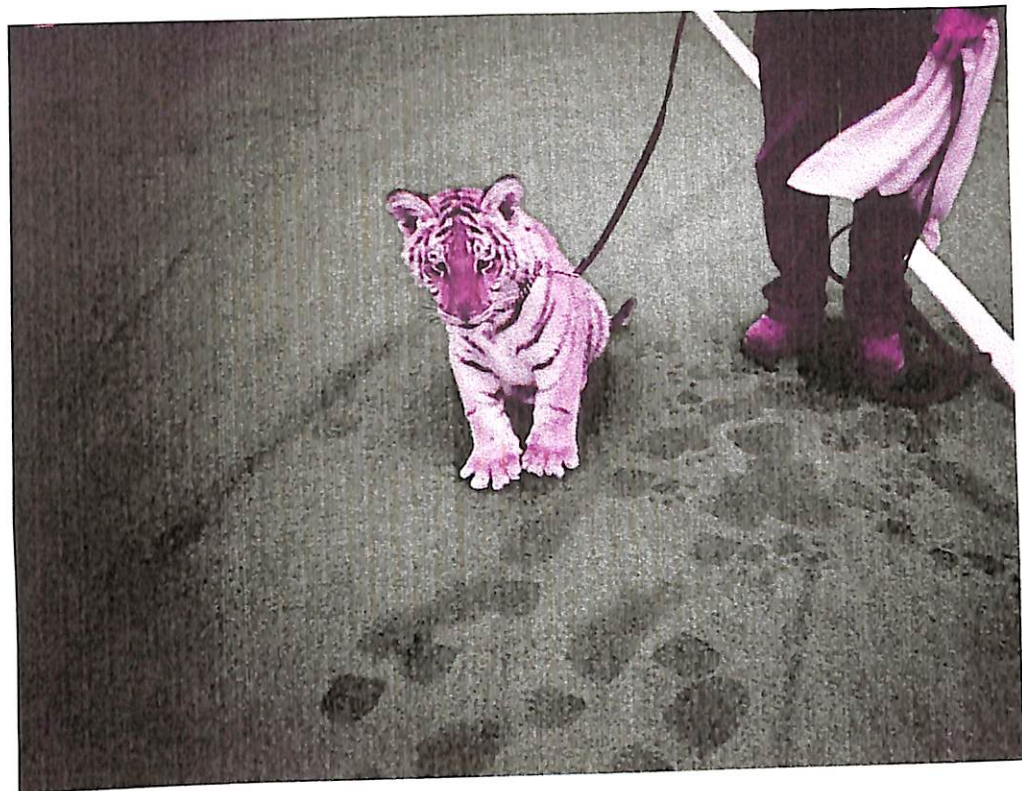
Lee Huntsman, owner of Stump Hill Farms, said PETA is after his

"We have a clean bill of health from our last USDA inspection six months ago," Huntsman added. "Any problems that were brought to our attention we fixed immediately. This is a serious way of life for us. We rescue animals from all over. We care very much for all animals."

2002

Perry Township facility.

"PETA is misportraying any violations and taking them out of context," he said. "It is an extremist type of organization. Just last week they came out with a campaign aimed at all the state parks in the U.S., trying to get fishing outlawed. They said it was cruel to make fish suffer pain."



OBIE XXXIV      2003  
"ZANDER"



OBIE XXXII      2001  
"DRAKE"

# OBIE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

pounds now."

Hollender gets Obie from Stump Hill Farm owners, Lee and Cyndi Huntsman.

"About 10 years ago, Bob saw us out with a baby tiger at a festival," Cyndi said. "He asked if we could get him a tiger to be the real-live Obie. At first I told him no because I'm particular about our animals. But he contacted me again and I finally agreed. Then our 10-year-old Siberian tiger became Obie and since then, we've gotten a tiger to be Obie."

All the tigers come from licensed breeders, Cyndi said.

"Most of the animals come to us because their mothers won't take care of them," she said. "So we bottle feed them and as the cats get older, it's easier to work with them. They won't work with us if they're raised by their mothers. So most tigers we get are orphans or bottle-fed."

Once a tiger is chosen to be Obie, both the Obie crew

and the Huntsmans work with the animal.

"Since it has to be out in public, it has to be trained," Cyndi said. "Bob works with it so it gets to know him and even during the football season, we go and work with it so it is still familiar with us since it does come back to us when the season is over."

Cyndi said they get the tiger used to noise since he'll be out in crowds. They also get the tiger used to different types of people.

The Huntsmans' first tiger came from Iowa when an older woman could no longer take care of her.

"That was Sasha, who is now 12 years old," Cyndi said. "We then bought Con to be a playmate for Sasha, but he then became Obie 10 years ago. We now have the two adults, Sasha and Con, and one bengal tiger that is about 9 weeks old that we're raising for someone else."

Hollender said Obie eats about 6 to 7 pounds of meat a

day. "He eats chicken, turkey necks - just about any kind of meat to put the right vitamins in him," he said. "This is probably going to be the last week that Obie is with us at the stadium, though. He becomes my little buddy during the season."

Cyndi said both her family and Bob get attached to Obie. "When he leaves the farm for the season, my daughter cries," Cyndi said. "And when Bob brings Obie back after the season is over, he cries."

Massillon Superintendent Al Hennon said he still gets chills when he sees the Tiger cheerleaders bring out Obie followed by the football team.

"He's part of the football game itself, along with the band, the cheerleaders and the football team," he said.

"In the traditional sense, you always see little ones being carried down to see that tiger. People know he'll be there and expect him to be



PHOTO BY LAURA VAN HOUTEN/THE INDEPENDENT

Cyndi and Lee Huntsman play with a 9-week-old baby bengal tiger they are raising.

there." Hennon said he believes the presence of Obie at the games gets fans pumped up for the game. "I don't know where we

would be without a real-live Obie," he said. "He's a fixture in what we call 'The Greatest Show in High School Football.' That is Massillon and he's a part of that."

# Obie gets first-class treatment

By LAURA VAN HOUTEN  
Laura.VanHouten@IndeOnline.com

One sure thing Massillon Tiger fans can count on at Saturday's game against McKinley is the presence of Obie XXXIV, the real tiger mascot.

"I think people would be disappointed if there was no Obie," said Bob Hollender, who cares for Obie during football season. "The fans love seeing him at the games and he goes to all of them, both home and away. Wherever the people go, he goes."

The live mascot program began in 1970.

"I've helped with Obie for about 20 years with two helpers, Donnie Shonk and George Mizer," he said. "I've always liked animals and he's definitely a pretty animal. He stays at the stadium during football season. He's probably about 90

● Please see **OBIE**, Page A-7

TIGER  
CREWS  
&  
LIVE  
TIGER  
OBIE XXXIV

October 23  
Thursday  
2003



PLAIN DEALER AUGUST 03

## Bennie vs. Obie: Tail of the Tape

**A**t Benedictine on Cleveland's East Side, "Bennie The Bengal" rules as the mascot for the "Home of Champions." The cub is affectionately referred to as Benedictine's "Goodwill Ambassador."

In Massillon, the mascot for the legendary Massillon Washington Tigers is named Obie. As they say in Stark County, Obie is like Santa Claus.

The children of Massillon are sometimes scared of Obie. And while Santa delivers presents, Obie helps Massillon win football games.

With Benedictine, The Plain Dealer's top-ranked team, playing the vaunted Tigers at Massillon's Paul Brown Tiger Stadium tomorrow night, we take a look at the "Tail of the Tape" of the two mascots who'll be on hand at the game.



### Bennie

- This is Benedictine's sixth Bennie. The cub just turned 6 weeks old yesterday. Bennie is 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  pounds and is 25 inches from the nose to the tip of the tail.
- Adopted and named by the students of Benedictine, Bennie made his debut at the varsity football game against University School on Oct. 17, 1998.
- Bennie's caretaker, Brother Ted Girard O.S.B. (Class of 1966), will attend his 321st consecutive Benedictine football game when the Bengals take on Massillon tomorrow night. Girard's streak began with the Massillon game in 1973, a 0-0 tie.
- Experts estimate there are only about 7,000

tigers roaming in the wild today.

- Utilizing the curriculum provided by the "Save the Tiger" program, Benedictine maximizes the educational value of Bennie's many visits to schools and community groups.
- Instrumental in bringing Bennie to the "Home of Champions" were Victor Hill (Class of 1976) and The Rev. Gary Hoover, O.S.B. (Class of 1974).
- The Benedictine Alumni Association pays for all fees, licenses, food and all of Bennie's other necessary expenses. Benedictine's science classes study and chart Bennie's development, behavior, growth pattern, habitat and nutritional needs.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

# TIGER CREWS & LIVE TIGER

## OBIE XXIX

Obie 29 should arrive at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> week of August, 1998. It is not certain at this time if we will have a Bengal or Siberian Tiger. We are hoping for a baby female Bengal (14 weeks) like we had last year. They don't grow as fast or get as big as males or Siberians. The Tiger should be here in time for Team pictures. Obie travels to all away games where there are no restrictions against here attendance. Obie normally travels in front of the team buses.

Obie makes pre-scheduled visits (by calling Bob Hollender) throughout the football season. As well as her visits to Obie Doc - Dr. Mark Christine. Obie has all her shots. Feed three times daily AM-Noon-PM. The diet consists of measured amounts of raw hamburger & raw chicken parts - bones in. Obie is exercised several times daily. Obie's home is the Booster Club garage located outside the Tiger dressing room. The doors are usually left open so the players can visit after practice.

McKinley Week Obie travels to Massillon schools (k-thru 6<sup>th</sup> grade). She makes a number of visits to nursing homes and other related events that week.



Obie crew

(left to right)  
Don Shonk,  
Bob Hollender,  
George Mizer

2003



## Obie just a baby cat

Tiger mascot makes  
first appearance

*Page A-2*

OBIE  
XXXV

June 1  
**Tuesday**  
2004

## Learning to growl



PHOTO BY JAMES ZEMKO/THE INDEPENDENT

St. Clement's School fifth- and sixth-graders get an up-close look at a week-old Bengal tiger destined to be Obie for the 2004 version of the Massillon Tigers. The children got to see the tiger during a visit to Stump Hill Farm in Perry Township last week.



OBIE XXXV  
2004  
FEMALE BENGAL  
"MARGO"





# Obie Crew

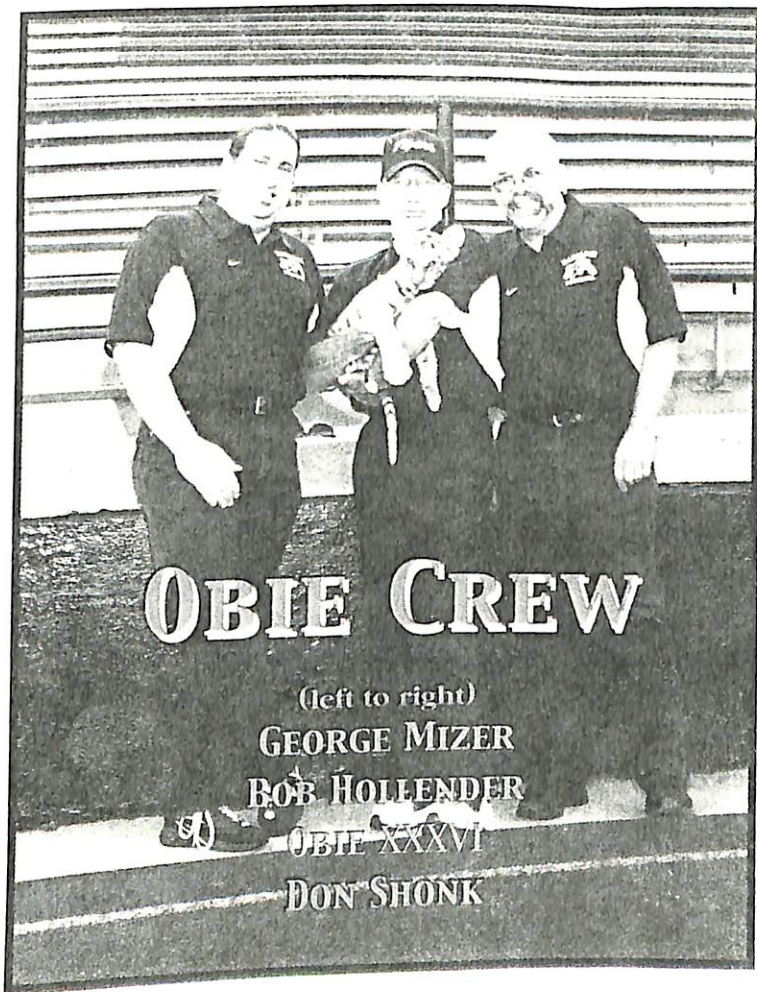
(left to right)

**Bob Hollender**

**George Mizer**

**Don Shonk**

2004



# OBIE CREW

(left to right)

**GEORGE MIZER**

**BOB HOLLENDER**

**OBIE XXXVI**

**DON SHONK**

2005

2005

OBIE XXXVI

# TIGER tales

**TODAY'S STORY**  
is the first in a weekly  
series of on-and-off-the-field  
features leading up to the  
Tigers' Aug. 25 kickoff.



Kon, the first Obie mascot  
Stump Hill Farm provided for  
the Tigers 13 years ago.





PHOTOS BY  
KEVIN WHITLOCK/  
THE INDEPENDENT

Cyndi Huntsman, top left, holds up the latest Obie, a 5½-pound tiger cub with a big growl. The cub loves playtime, and sure can drain a baby bottle, Huntsman says.



## New Obie on the prowl, working on her growl

By **LORI WILLIAMS**

Lori.Williams@IndeOnline.com

As the Massillon Tigers are flexing their gridiron muscles for another chapter in a storied high school football tradition, their smallest supporter is doing her conditioning, too.

That would be rolling in the grass, sleeping, chewing on everything in sight and drinking from a baby bottle.

And oh, yes, learning to chuff and growl.

The 2005 incarnation of Obie the Tiger mascot is a 5½-pound ball of striped fluff with a high-pitched growl that promises more bravado than bite. She doesn't like to lose

sight of her littermate at Stump Hill Farm and the pair can't be left alone in the house because they tend to favor activities such as chewing cords and eating things not exactly good for growing girls.

Obie also keeps busy shedding her brownish baby fur and growing some thicker adult orange to contrast with her stripes.

Chugging down a bottle of goat's milk laced with vitamin supplements, she closes her eyes in an ecstatic pose.

"She knows how to drain a bottle," said Huntsman, who along with her husband, Lee, runs Stump Hill.

● Please see **OBIE**, Page A-5

The exotic animal farm has supplied Massillon's Obie for the past 13 years.

When the Tiger Booster Club and the Huntsmans first met up at a Fourth of July Picnic in the Park, "I said no at first," Huntsman said. "I had to check out their facilities and feel at ease with how they handled a cub." Booster Club Obie Crew Bob Hollender, George Mizer and Don Shonk are varsity-level handlers and caretakers, she said.

The work is divided into morning, afternoon and evening shifts, Mizer said. Each man feeds, exercises and cleans the tiger's home.

"They're practically housebroken by the time we get them," he said, praising Stump Hill for the gentle personality all the cubs have had. That's not say, he added, they're not still playful kittens.

"They like to chew up the hose," he said. "Of course the night guys always 'forgets' to tell the morning guy and there's some soaking."

The Obie team bonds with each new cub. Over the course of each football season "they get to know us really well," Mizer said. "Last year's would rub her head on my leg and I'd have to carry her to get her to go outside. She was always like, 'What are you doing? What are doing?'"

Since Obie travels to schools and rest homes, she has to be open to being touched. A lot. Everyone, it seems, loves the warm, fuzzy mascot.

"Obie gets lots of attention," Huntsman said.

Just like each tiger has its individual "fingerprint" of stripes, each has its own personality, Hollender said.

"It's hard to take them back at the end of the season," he admitted. "You definitely get attached to them."

By that point, it's all 80 pounds of them.

While Massillonians anticipate a new Obie's arrival in mid-August, Obie's getting ready for Massillon.

She's graduated from eating every two hours around the clock to every four. In a couple weeks she and her sister - headed to Benedic-

**"It's hard to take them back at the end of the season. You definitely get attached to them."**

- Bob Hollender,  
booster club member

tine High - will be noshing on ground meat. Obie's already met 5,000 schoolchildren and is getting used to noises so she'll be prepared for the touchdown cannons at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium. Today she'll be at Stump Hill's booth at Massillon's Picnic in the Park.

Before you know it, she'll be big enough that leopards, eagles, hawks, vulture and male tigers won't consider her prey.

"Adult tigers have no predators," Huntsman said, pointing out the white spots on the back side of Obie's still-little ears that enemies see as "eyes in the back of the head."

And, of course, there's a tiger's full-grown size. Massillonians might remember Kon, one of the first Obie cubs from Stump Hill. Still a resident there, he now weighs in at a mammoth 600 pounds. Kon's paws are the size of dinner plates, his head as big as the largest barbell in the Tiger weight room. He eats 20 pounds of raw meat each day.

"He's a gentle giant," Huntsman said, pointing out that at 80 pounds a tiger has the jaw strength of a Rotweiler and a tiger the size of Kon could break your neck with just his tail.

"I can make it to the fence in 1.8 seconds," the sign on Kon's cage reads. "Can you?"

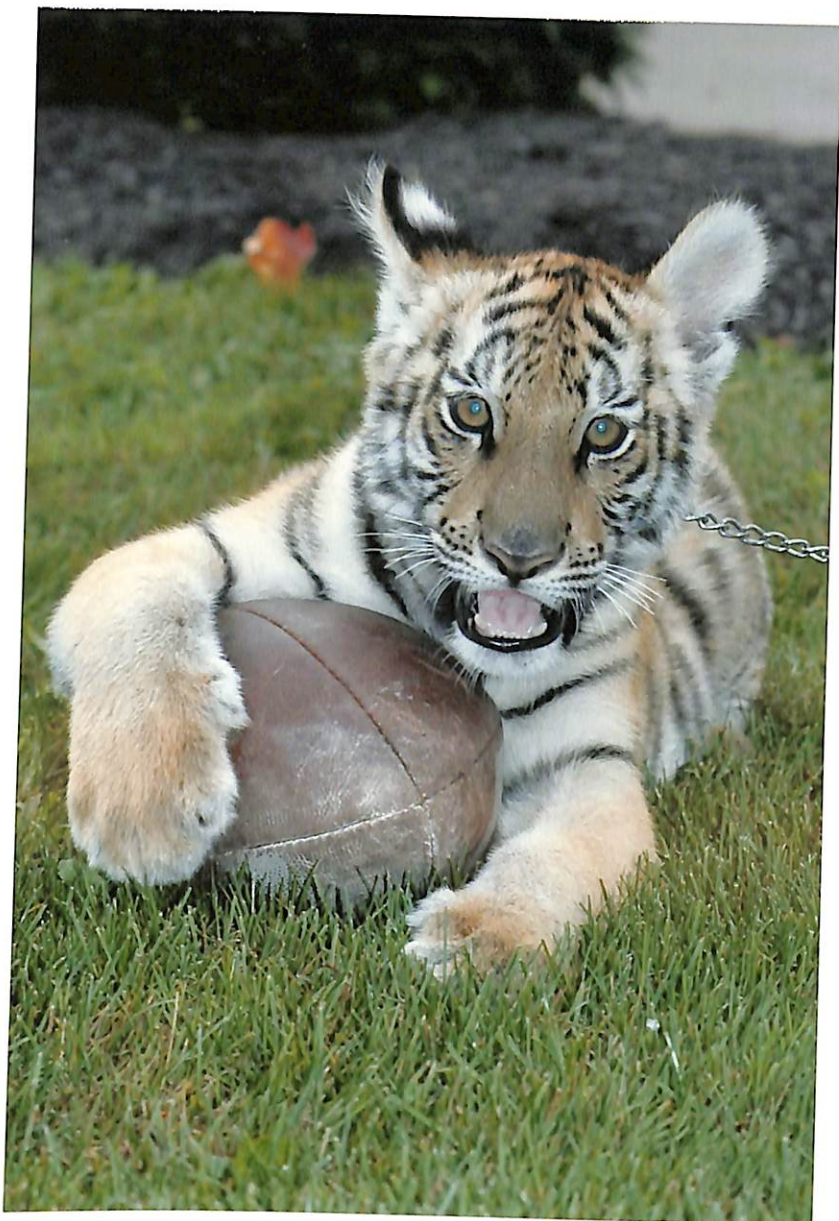
The live Tiger cub is a Massillon mascot tradition since 1970.

"Tradition is important," Mizer said. "We lose too many of them."

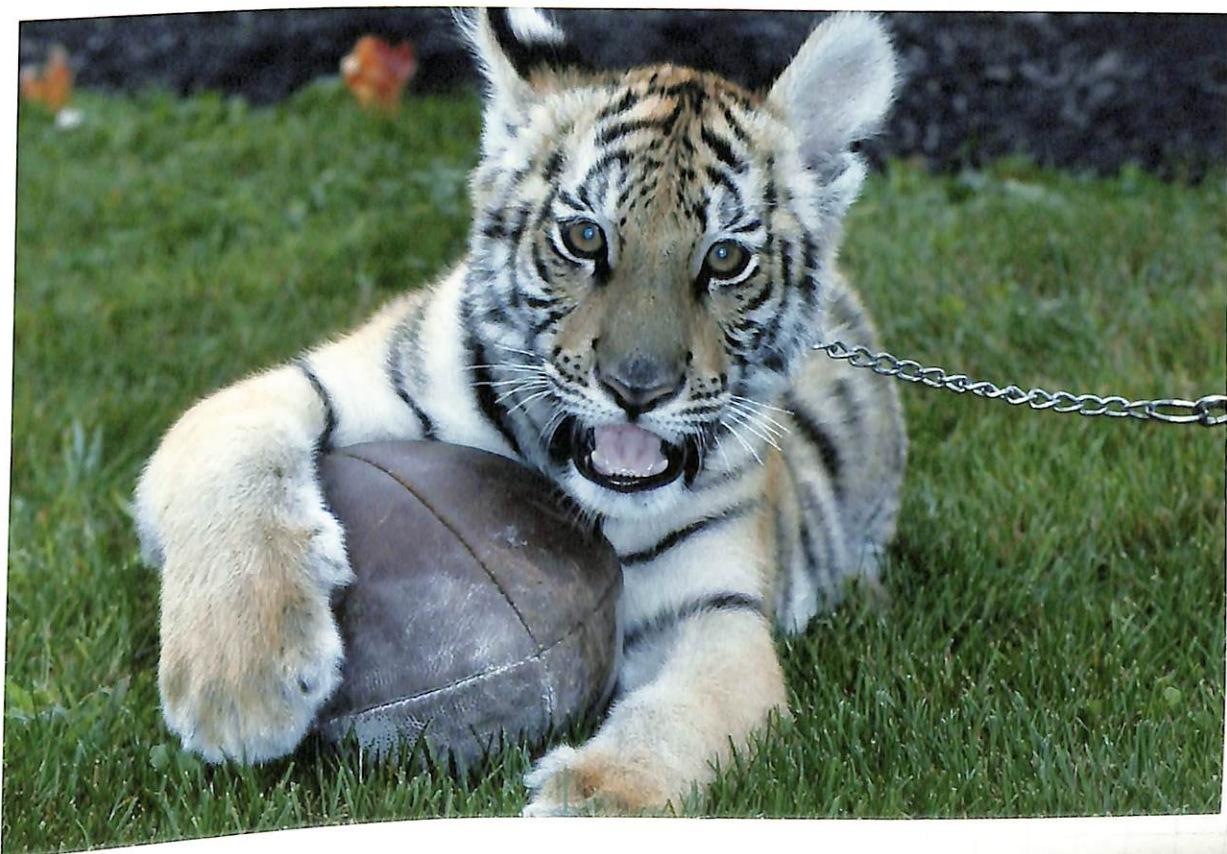
It's a big day in the city when Obie takes the field for a new season, Huntsman said.

"Big cats make a real good tackle," she said. "Too bad she can't be on the team."





OBIE  
XXXVI  
2005





Obie Crew handler- George Mizer lets Gorrell Elementary first-graders Ben Bondi, Noah Gore and Victoria Houser get up close and personal with Obie

36 in the gymnasium Monday as she and crew visited as part of Massillon vs. McKinley week festivities. ■ Blood Battle coverage / Page A-5.

PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITLOCK/THE INDEPENDENT

HISTORY 2005

Wilbur Arnold

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From: "Lee Vogelgesang" <Leevog@zoominternet.net>  
To: "Wilbur Arnold" <wvarnold@sssnet.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, July 05, 2006 6:23 PM

## GROUP TARGETS ANIMAL FARM

STUMP HILL DEFENDS ITS OPERATION, HOME TO FUTURE TIGER MASCOT  
*Mary Kay Quinn, Beacon Journal staff writer*

An animal-rights group has filed federal complaints against three Ohio exotic-animal farms, including a Stark County farm that houses both former and future mascots of the Massillon Tigers.

The Animal Protection Institute, which last year sued Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, contends that Stump Hill Farm in Perry Township has violated the Animal Welfare Act. Its representatives shot video there in June 2005 and at facilities in Lawrence and Cuyahoga counties, where violations are also alleged.

The API, of Sacramento, Calif., contends that Stump Hill Farm violated the law by allowing visitors to touch or put their hands in the cages of a tiger, a wolf, bears and small wildcats.

It also alleges that some enclosures are too small and that the spare and isolating enclosures for a chimpanzee, baboons and other primates do not promote their psychological well-being.

Cynthia Huntsman, co-owner of the Klick Street Southwest farm, says the group's claims are distortions. U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors found no problems in the last three years, she said.

The USDA takes all claims seriously and will send an inspector to the facilities, said Darby Holladay, USDA spokesman. If the claims appear to be legitimate, they will be referred to regional officials for a formal complaint, he said.

Ohio has captured the attention of animal advocates in recent weeks – first when an Ashtabula County woman was mauled by a bear from a neighboring business and then when a Copley Township man's home burned down, killing tiger cubs and other animals.

The Animal Protection Institute, which filed the USDA complaints Thursday, wants Ohio to ban private ownership of dangerous wild and exotic animals.

The Humane Society of the United States also is urging the ban, citing the Ashtabula County incident and the May 24 fire at Lorenza Pearson's L&L Exotic Animal Farm.

Stump Hill Farm, home to 250 animals, is a nonprofit organization. Its mission, according to forms filed with the Internal Revenue Service, is to rehabilitate injured animals and educate the public.

A current resident is a 4-week-old tiger that is destined to be named Obie and adopted by Massillon Washington High School boosters as a mascot at Tigers football games. A tiger who filled the Obie role 13 years ago when he was a cub currently lives at the farm, Huntsman said.

Another resident is Toot, a chimpanzee.

"He has a gym set on the outside, he has a 30-by-30 play area, he has a jungle gym, plus he has cable TV," Huntsman said.

Toot enjoys watching shows and movies featuring children. During the 1998 movie Paulie, he cries along with the little girl who is forced to give up the parrot, Huntsman said.

Toot and the other animals who have come from the movie industry, circuses or private homes "live 100 times better than they did before they came here," she said.

Nursing home residents and children from day-care programs and 12 school systems have visited Stump Hill, Huntsman said. Its animals are frequently at fundraisers and community festivals, according to Beacon Journal files.

Animal Protection Institute representatives gained access to the farm by making an appointment to visit, as anyone from the public can, said Zibby Wilder, API's media relations director.

"API's investigators were taken right up to the cages of dangerous wild animals and allowed, even openly encouraged, to stick their hands through the bars to pet or feed the animals," the complaint says.

Huntsman said the API representatives posed as German exchange students.

She confirmed that visitors can pet some of the animals and even feed them marshmallows.

"It's with supervision, and no one here is allowed to walk around on their own," she said.

The Animal Protection Institute's complaint follows last week's USDA hearings in Akron, where officials detailed 900 alleged violations involving Pearson.

Huntsman is acquainted with Pearson, having visited his farm several times.

"Granted the aesthetics weren't real nice, but you know what, there wasn't one animal there that's not been fed well or cared for properly," she said.

A USDA administrative law judge is expected to decide Pearson's case in November or December.

**Illustration:**PHOTO: JOCELYN WILLIAMS / Akron Beacon Journal: 2; MAP: Akron Beacon Journal map showing the location of Stump Hill Farm

(1) Lee Huntsman, co-owner of Stump Hill Farm, with Kon, 14, a retired tiger mascot for Massillon's high school football team. (2) Red kangaroos Ezra, 4, and Reba, 5, appear in the enclosure outside their barn at Stump Hill Farm in Massillon.

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2006



PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITLOCK/THE INDEPENDENT

Obie XXXVII is restrained by handler Bob Hollender, left, as Anthony 'The Tyger' Hanshaw squats next to her.

## 'The Tyger' meets up with the tiger

By **DAVID HARPSTER**  
David.Harpster@IndeOnline.com

It was a match made in marketing heaven.

In one corner was Tony "The Tyger" Hanshaw, the undefeated (20-0-0, 13 KO) super-middleweight contender who has called Massillon home for the last several years.

In the other was Obie, the feline mascot of the Massillon Tigers.

Since he's been in Massillon for the last four years, Hanshaw has been to several Tiger games, but he's never met the team's young Tiger mascot, Obie. Massillon

Tiger Booster Club president Ben Bradley knew Hanshaw's uncle and helped set up a meeting between the two Tigers during Thursday's freshman game at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium.

Although he was born in Warren, Tigers have seemingly always been a part of Hanshaw's life.

"I left Warren before sixth grade and went to Mansfield," Hanshaw said. "I've always been a tiger from day one I started in boxing and it's just a coincidence that I moved to Mansfield and then to Massillon and they're both Tigers."

● Please see **TIGER**, Page C-5

SEE NEXT PAGE

## ● TIGER CONTINUED FROM PAGE C-1

Mansfield Senior's team nickname is Tygers, which is also how Hanshaw spells his nickname.

"My dad called me Tony the Tiger ever since I was a little kid and I've lived in two areas where there are lots of Tiger fans," Hanshaw said.

Hanshaw is creating more of a fanbase for himself by giving the town some recognition following his fights. After his last win, a 10-round decision over Esteban Camou on Aug. 4 in the first round of the ShoBox super-middleweight elimination tournament, Hanshaw made sure to give his adopted hometown some love.

"My last fight, my girl works at Amvets Post No. 6, and I gave her and Massillon a shout out on TV," Hanshaw

said. "I try to give the town some good publicity."

That's one reason why Bradley wanted to get the two tigers together.

"I've seen him on TV and saw that he moved here and I knew his uncle," Bradley said. "Him being a Tiger and I'm president of the Massillon Tiger Booster Club, we decided we had to hook up. He's been really good about giving Massillon some great publicity when he fights on television."

Hanshaw will get his next chance for national exposure when he meets LaFarrell Bunting (16-1-1, 16 KO) in Santa Ynez, Calif. on Oct. 6 in the semifinals of the Showtime tournament.

"He fought on the undercard of my last fight," Hanshaw said. "We used to

spar together in Mansfield and we had a little argument there that we were going to finish in the street. Instead, now we'll finish it in the ring on Oct. 6."

Hanshaw got a little scare when he came out of his last fight with a bruised left hand. Following an X-ray it was determined that he didn't suffer any broken bones.

"I hurt it early in my last fight. I was still using it but no one knew that it was hurt," said Hanshaw, who will leave for Las Vegas and go into training for the Bunting fight within the next couple weeks. "I just had to deal with it and finish the fight."

"It's just bruised. I've been icing but it's all right and everything should be ready to go by October."

OBIE XXXVII 2006  
Help feed Obie

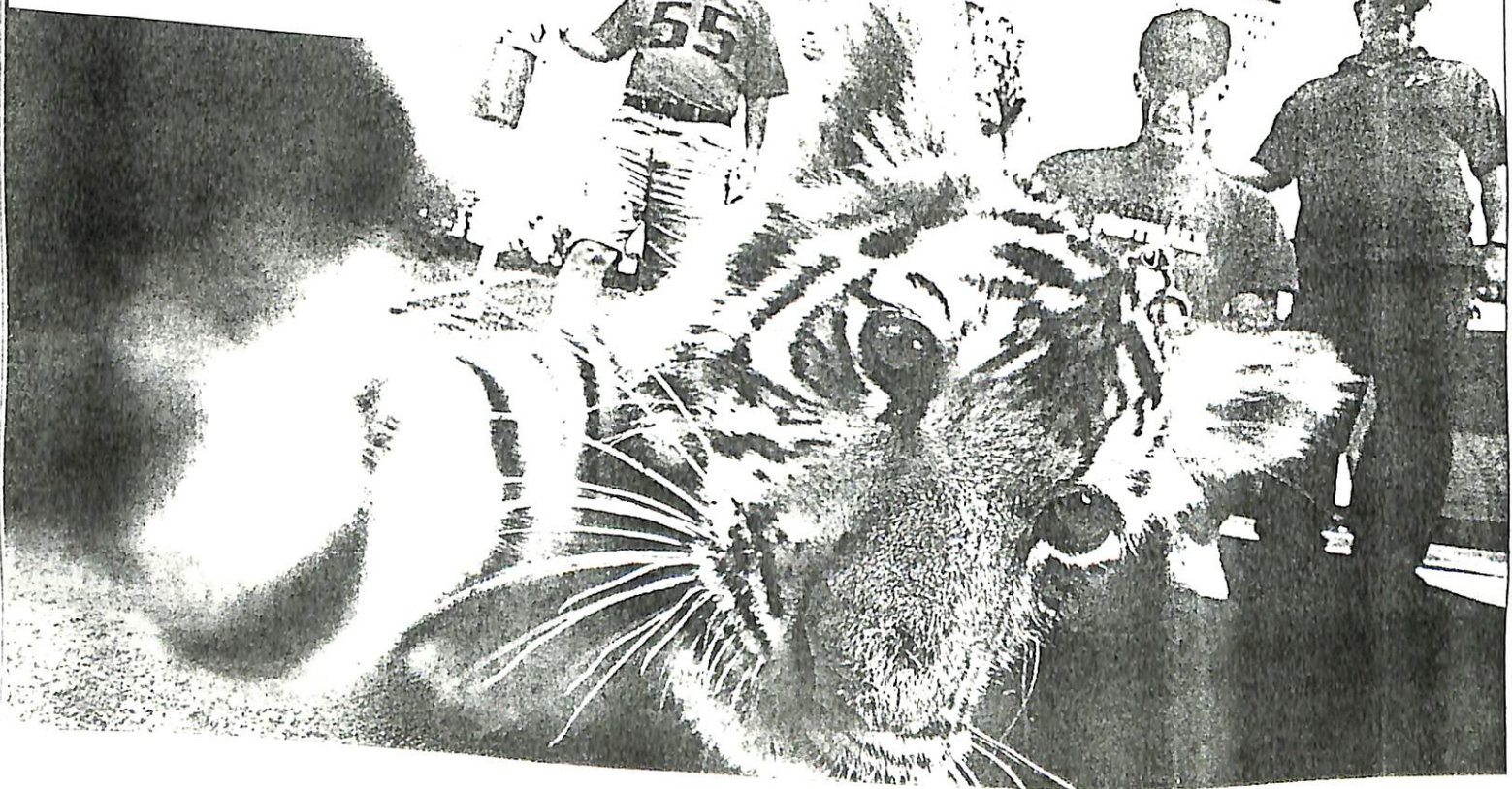
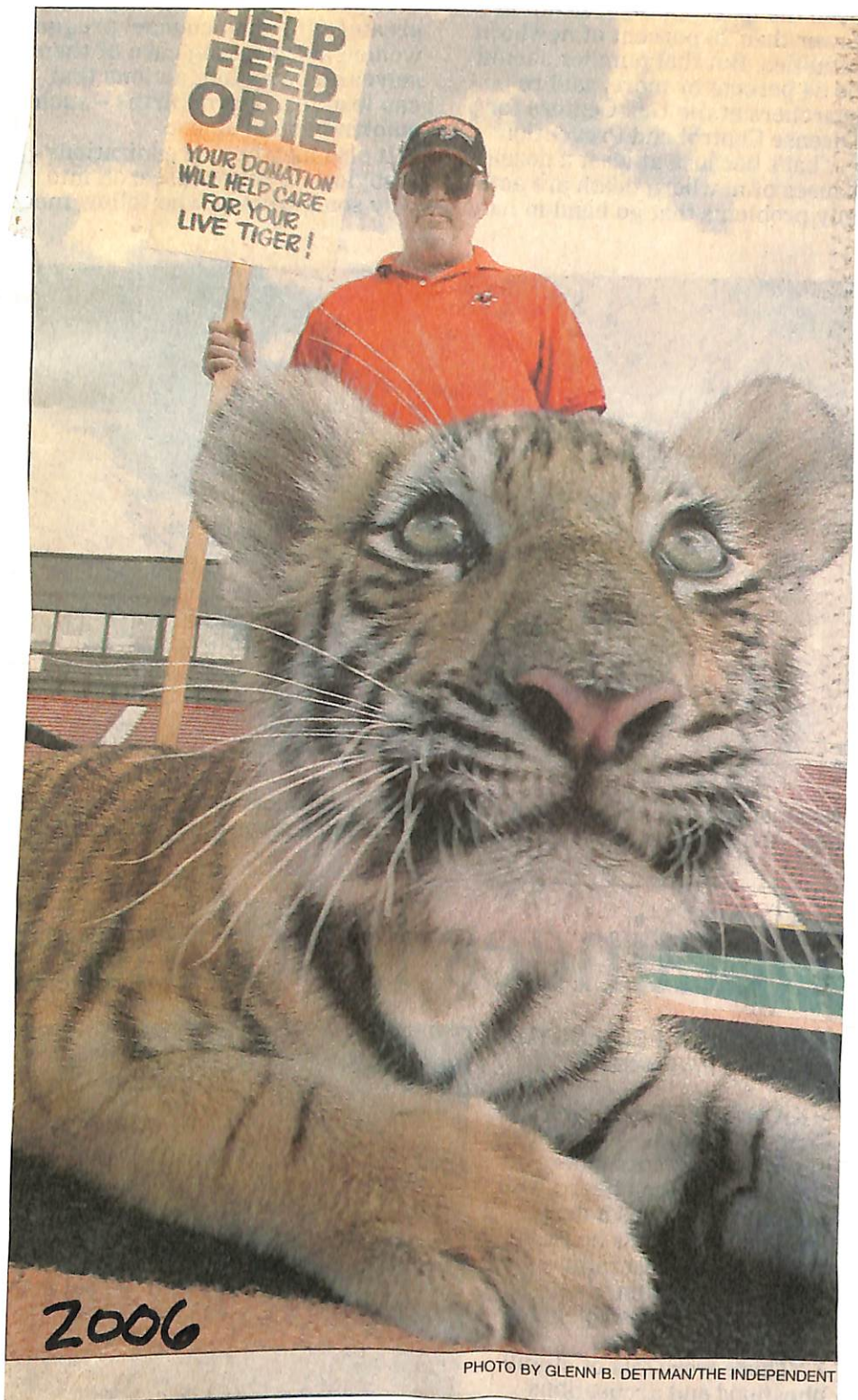


PHOTO BY GLENN B. DETTMAN/THE INDEPENDENT

Obie XXXVII paws at the camera as, from left, Ron Prunty, Jim Matthews, Bob Hollender and Roy Blair look on. Members of the Massillon Tiger Booster Club will be outside the Paul Brown Tiger Stadium gates prior to this Friday night's game between the Tigers and St. Ignace seeking donations to help with the live tiger program. This money helps to feed and care for Obie throughout the year.



2006

PHOTO BY GLENN B. DETTMAN/THE INDEPENDENT

# Taking good care of Obie

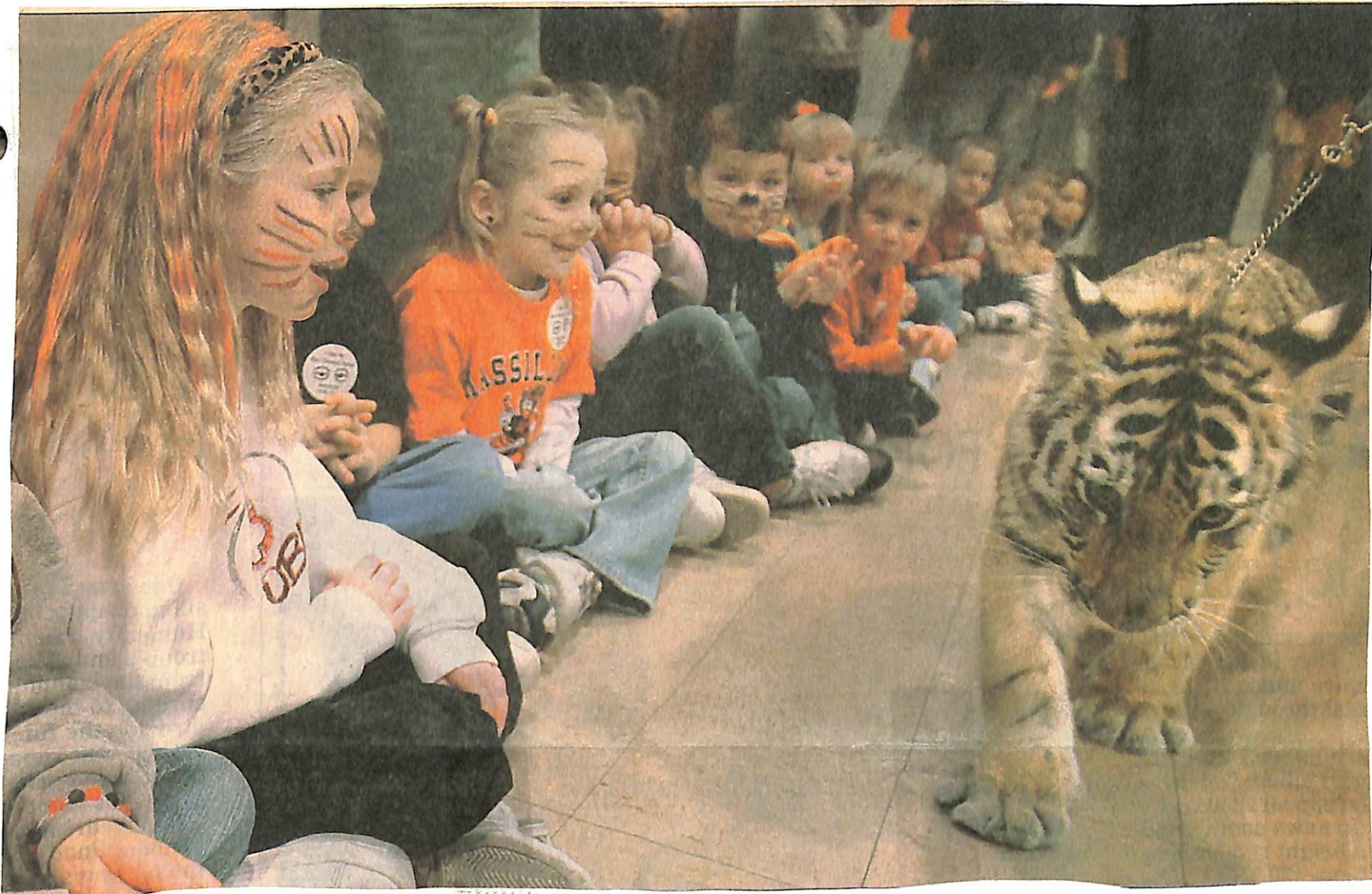


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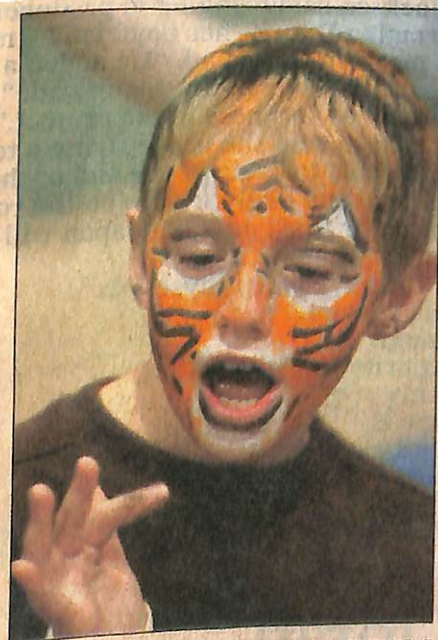
Obie XXXVII plays with trainer George Mizer during a visit with students Tuesday at Franklin Elementary.

2006



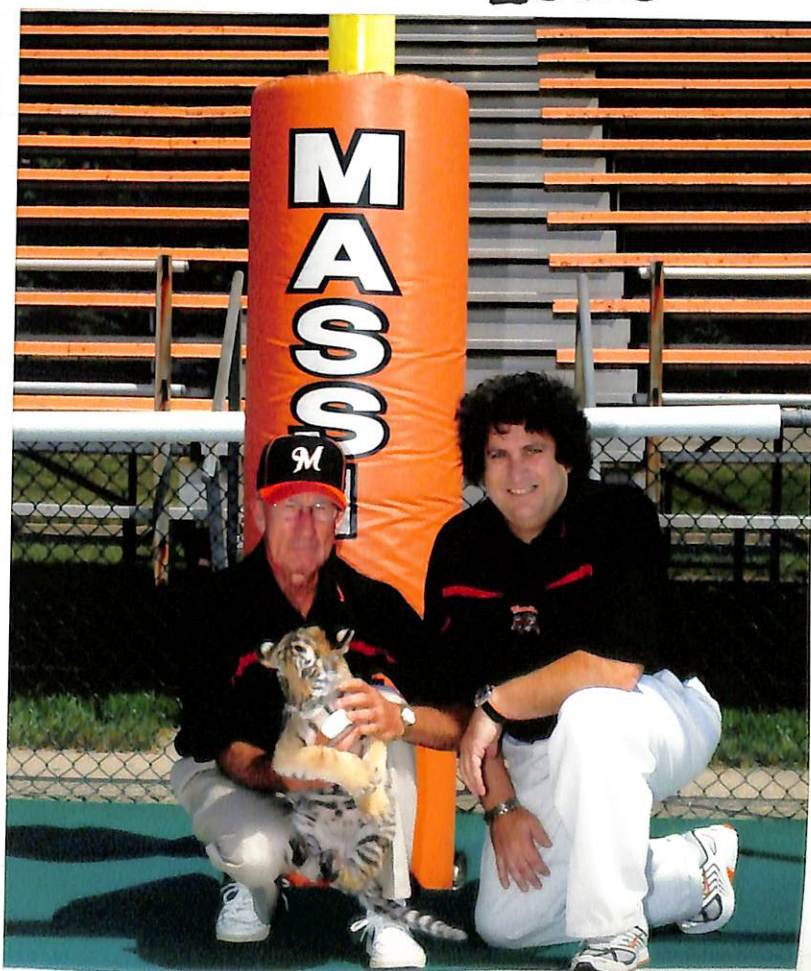


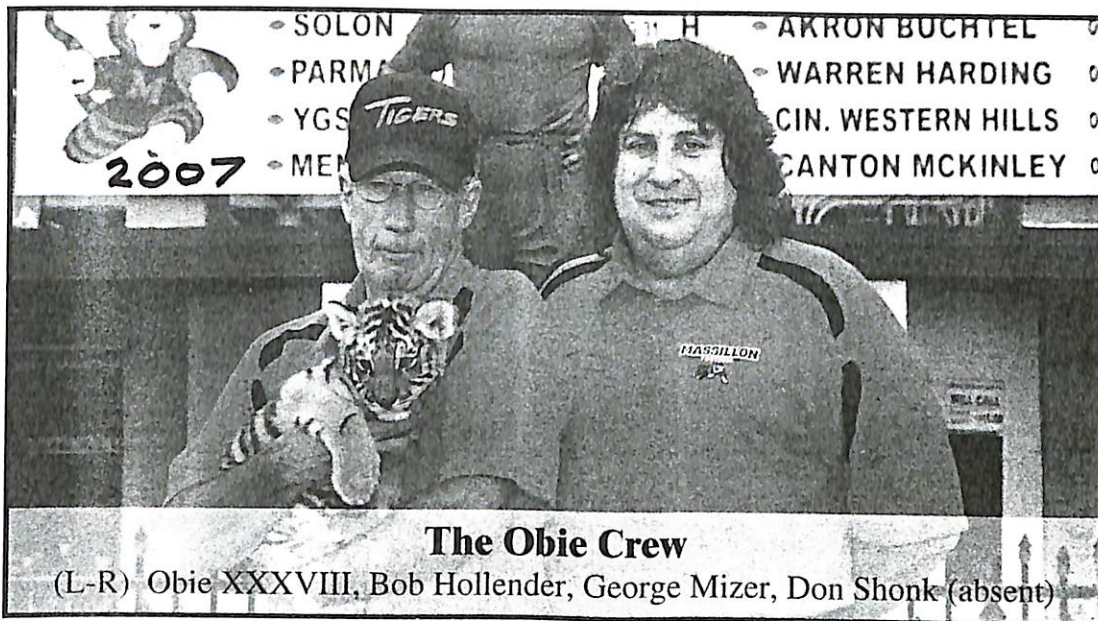
2006



PHOTOS BY KEVIN WHITLOCK/THE INDEPENDENT

Top, Obie the Tiger prowls along the gymnasium floor to the delight of Bowers Elementary students as a kickoff to Massillon-McKinley Week at the school. Students were encouraged to dress up and paint on Tiger faces for the day. Above, Dakota Lamborn, a Bowers Elementary third grader, shows his Tiger spirit.





**The Obie Crew**

(L-R) Obie XXXVIII, Bob Hollender, George Mizer, Don Shonk (absent)



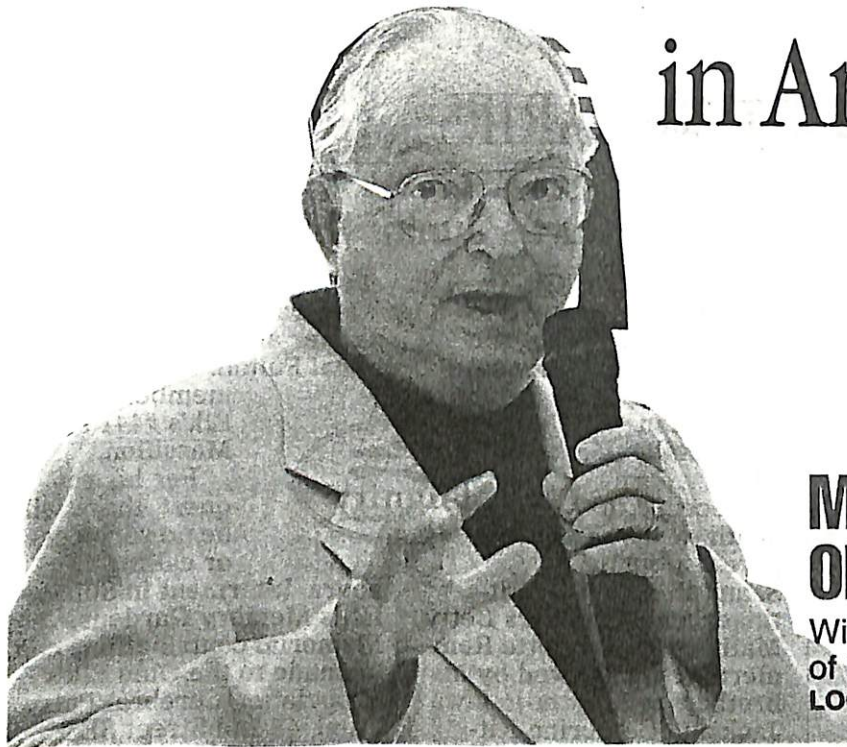
**The Obie Crew**

(L-R) Bob Hollender,  
Obie XXXIX,  
George Mizer,  
Don Shonk (absent)

2008

JULY 2007

# Original 'Obie' always No. 1 in Arnold's heart



## MEMORIES OF ORIGINAL OBIE

Wilbur Arnold shares stories of Massillon's first live mascot  
LOCAL / Page A-8

By **ERIN PUSTAY**  
Erin.Pustay@IndeOnline.com

This year, the striped little ball of fluff that roams that sidelines at each and every Massillon Tiger football game will roar with the crowd and chomp happily on a snack. But that little Obie - No. 38 - will have a long legacy to live up to.

Tuesday at the Massillon Museum's monthly brown bag lunch, Wilbur Arnold, former president of the Massillon Booster Club remembered the very first tiger who proudly wore the title "Obie." He smiled thinking about the lessons that the very first live tiger mascot gave the booster club members and he laughed thinking about how little they knew about raising a baby tiger.

The idea of bringing a live tiger mascot to the Massillon program started one Saturday afternoon when Arnold was watching a Louisiana State University football game. If they could have a live tiger, he thought, so could Massillon.

"When I (told my wife), 'we are going to have a baby tiger,' she said, 'not in this house.'" Arnold remembered. "Later, she did relent and



PHOTO BY GLENN B. DETTMAN/THE INDEPENDENT

Wearing an orange and black tiger tail, former WHS cheerleader Tig Swartz listens to Obie trainer Wilbur Arnold during the Brown Bag Lecture Series at the Massillon Museum on Tuesday.

SEE NEXT PAGE

## UPCOMING TOPICS FOR THE BROWN BAG LUNCHEON SERIES:

**Aug. 28** - "Public Art," Jim Bowling, Assistant Professor, Ceramics, Otterbein College  
**Sept. 25** - "History of Massillon Tiger Booster Club", combined lunch with the Touchdown Club.

*The Sept. 25 Brown Bag lunch only will meet at Amvet Post 6.*

**Oct. 23** - "Gravestone Symbolism and Superstitions," Sherri Brake Recco, Paranormal Investigator and Cemetery History Specialist.

when we were feeding (Obie) off the bottle, she loved it."

In 1970, after a year of sweet-talking booster club members, school board representatives and city officials, the town was ready to embrace its very first tiger cub. Everybody was ready, Arnold said, in terms of excitement, but no one was sure how to care for a wild animal.

For advice, Arnold turned to the director of the Cleveland Zoo. The director agreed to offer some tiger care tips and the Booster Club was on its way to bringing the very first live Obie home.

Before they could get the cub out on the field, they had to find a tiger with the perfect personality. As Arnold discovered when he went to pick Obie up from the International Animal Exchange, not all tigers are

the same.

"They brought us to this tiger cub and it was mad," Arnold said. "That tiger was unhappy. It bit the bars and hissed at us. It made it known it wanted nothing to do with us."

Fortunately, fate had another plan. When Arnold voiced concerns about the tiger's temper he was introduced to a small, 3-month-old cub who purred warmly from her little box. Arnold's daughter, who accompanied him to pick up Obie, fell in love immediately.

"Oh, daddy," she said, "let's have that one."

Just as a little girl looks up at her father with puppy dog eyes and begs to bring a kitty cat home, the parents discovered that caring for the pet is harder than expected.

The little Obie, who started on

milk from a bottle quickly graduated to hamburger and full chickens.

"We constantly have to tell people not to put their hands in the cage," Arnold said. "If you have seen a tiger put down a chicken neck, you would not put your fingers in the cage."

When Obie was too big to continue as the school's mascot, the International Animal Exchange found her a home at a small California zoo. On one business trip to the area several years later, Arnold had a chance to connect with his famous, little cub one last time.

"When I walked into view she recognized me immediately," Arnold said. "I reached out and put my hand in the cage and (the zoo official) damn near died. That tiger, she put her paw on top of my hand and looked up at me like, 'get me out of here.'"

When he left that zoo, Arnold knew in the back of his mind that it would be the last time he would see that precious, little tiger. The one who won his heart and kicked off a tradition for an entire town.

"It was tough to look back," Arnold said of leaving her behind.



**The Obie Crew**  
 (L-R) Obie XXXVIII, Bob Hollender, George Mizer, Don Shonk (absent)

2007

127<sup>th</sup>

## OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY



2007-2008

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Building, 180 East Broad St., Columbus.

**As Introduced**

**127th General Assembly  
 Regular Session  
 2007-2008**

**H. B. No. 45**

**Representatives Distel, Brown, Seitz, Fende, Okey, Setzer, Collier, DeGeeter, Harwood, Sayre, Gibbs, Combs, Yuko, Evans, Foley, Webster, Williams, S., Healy**

**A BILL**

**To enact sections 1534.01 to 1534.14 and 1534.99 of the Revised Code to require persons who possess dangerous wild animals or exotic animals to obtain a personal possession permit and to establish requirements regarding the possession and care of dangerous wild animals and exotic animals.**

[Definitions for this](#)

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**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1. That sections 1534.01, 1534.02, 1534.03, 1534.04, 1534.05, 1534.06, 1534.07, 1534.08, 1534.09, 1534.10, 1534.11, 1534.12, 1534.13, 1534.14, and 1534.99 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:**

**Sec. 1534.01. As used in this chapter:**

**(A) "Dangerous reptile" means all of the following:**

**(1) A species in the family Atractaspidae;**

**(2) A species in the family Colubridae with rear fangs, including, but not limited to, tree and mangrove snakes, boomslangs, Argentine blackhead snakes, South American false water cobras, montpelier snakes, African grass and sand snakes, keelback snakes, culebra listrada, African tiger snakes, and twig snakes;**

**(3) A species in the family Elapidae;**

**(4) A species in the family Helodermatidae;**

**(5) A species in the family Hydrophiidae;**

**(6) A species in the family Viperidae;**

**(7) A species in the order Crocodylia.**

**(B) "Dangerous wild animal" means a coyote, black bear, mountain lion, wolf, bobcat, or wild boar or a hybrid of such animals.**

**(C) "Exotic animal" means any of the following animals, including hybrids of them, that due to their inherent nature may be considered dangerous to humans:**

**(1) A lion;**

**(2) A tiger;**

**(3) A cougar;**

**(4) A leopard;**

**(5) A serval;**

**(6) An ocelot;**

**(7) A nonhuman primate, except a nonhuman primate that provides support or assistance for a mobility impaired person;**

**(8) A jackal;**

**(9) A hyena;**

**(10) A martin;**

**(11) A coati;**

**(12) A civet;**

**(13) A genet;**

**(14) A mongoose;**

**(15) A binturong;**

**(16) An anteater;**

**(17) An armadillo;**

**(18) A sloth;**

**(19) A kangaroo;**

**(20) A wallaby;**

**(21) A rhinoceros;**

**(22) A tapir;**

**(23) An elephant;**

**(24) A prairie dog;**

**(25) A hippopotamus;**

**(26) A giraffe;**

**(27) A camel;**

**(28) A dangerous reptile.**

**(D) "Humane society" means an organization that is organized under section 1717.05 of the Revised Code.**

**(E) "Law enforcement agency" means any organization or unit that is comprised of law enforcement officers.**

**(F) "Possess" means own, keep, harbor, or have in a person's custody.**

**(G) "Serious physical harm to a person" means any of the following:**

**(1) Any physical harm that carries a substantial risk of death;**

**(2) Any physical harm that involves some permanent incapacity, whether partial or total, or that involves some temporary, substantial incapacity;**

**(3) Any physical harm that involves some permanent disfigurement or that involves some temporary, serious disfigurement;**

**(4) Any physical harm that involves acute pain of such duration as to result in substantial suffering or that involves any degree of prolonged or intractable pain.**

**(H) "Veterinarian" means an individual who is licensed under Chapter 4741. of the Revised Code.**

**(I) "Wildlife sanctuary" means a nonprofit organization as described in section 170 of the "Internal Revenue Code of 1986," 100 Stat. 2085, 26 U.S.C. 170, as amended, that operates a place of refuge where abused, neglected, unwanted, impounded, abandoned, orphaned, or displaced exotic animals are provided care for their lifetime or released back to their natural habitat and, with respect to an animal possessed by the organization, that does not do any of the following:**

**(1) Use the animal for any type of entertainment;**

**(2) Sell, trade, or barter the animal or the animal's body parts;**

**(3) Breed the animal.**



**Sec. 1534.02. (A) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, no person shall possess a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal.**

**(B) This chapter does not apply to any of the following:**

**(1) The division of wildlife;**

**(2) A facility that is an accredited member of the American zoo and aquarium association or that is under mentorship of the association;**

**(3) An accredited member of the American zoo and aquarium association or an entity that is under mentorship of the association that is conducting educational or other activities with dangerous wild animals or exotic animals outside of the facility that is operated by the member.**

**(4) A humane society;**

**(5) A veterinary hospital or clinic;**

**(6) A wildlife sanctuary;**

**(7) A research facility as defined in the "Animal Welfare Act of 1966," 80 Stat. 350, 7 U.S.C. 2131, as amended;**

**(8) A vocational school, college, university, or other educational institution;**

**(9) A traveling public show or circus that uses dangerous wild animals or exotic animals as an integral part of the show or circus performance and that keeps the animals in this state only during the time period when the traveling public show or circus is performing in this state;**

**(10) An individual who does not reside in this state and is traveling through this state with a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal, who has the animal confined in a cage at all times, and who is in this state not more than ninety-six hours.**

**Sec. 1534.03. (A) No person shall possess a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal on or after the effective date of this section without a personal possession permit issued by the chief of the division of wildlife under section 1534.05 of the Revised Code.**

**(B) A person who possesses a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal on the effective date of this section shall apply for a personal possession permit not later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. If such a person subsequently is issued a personal possession permit, the person shall not be found guilty of violating this section during the period of time beginning on the effective date of this section until the issuance of the permit.**

**Sec. 1534.04. (A) An applicant for a personal possession permit shall file an application for a permit with the chief of the division of wildlife on a form provided by the chief. An applicant need apply for only one permit regardless of the number of dangerous wild animals or exotic animals that are possessed by the applicant. The application shall include all of the following:**

**(1) The name, date of birth, address, and telephone number of the applicant;**

**(2) If different from the information provided under division (A)(1) of this section, the name, address, and telephone number of the location where each dangerous wild animal or exotic animal will be confined;**

**(3) A description of each dangerous wild animal or exotic animal, including the scientific name, the name that the applicant has given the animal, the animal's sex, age, color, and weight, and any distinguishing marks or coloration that would aid in the identification of the animal;**

**(4) Any additional information that the chief determines is necessary to administer and enforce this chapter.**

**(B) The applicant shall submit with the application a permit fee in an amount established by the chief in rules adopted under section 1534.10 of the Revised Code. If a permit is not issued, the permit fee shall be retained by the chief as payment for the reasonable expense of processing the application. The fee shall be deposited in the state treasury to the credit of the dangerous wild and exotic animals fund created in section 1534.14 of the Revised Code.**

**Sec. 1534.05. (A) Not later than ninety days after receipt of an application, the chief of the division of wildlife shall issue or deny a personal**

possession permit. The chief shall issue a permit to an applicant only if all of the following apply:

(1) The applicant is eighteen years of age or older.

(2) The applicant has submitted the permit fee required under division (B) of section 1534.04 of the Revised Code.

(3) The applicant has submitted a complete application that meets the requirements established in section 1534.04 of the Revised Code.

(4) The facility and the conditions in which each dangerous wild animal or exotic animal will be kept are in compliance with this chapter and rules adopted under it.

(5) The applicant has complied with the liability insurance requirements established in section 1534.07 of the Revised Code.

(B)(1) A personal possession permit shall contain all of the following:

(a) The name, date of birth, address, and telephone number of the permit holder;

(b) If different from the information provided under division (B)(1)(a) of this section, the name, address, and telephone number of the location where each of the permit holder's dangerous wild animals or exotic animals will be confined;

(c) The number of dangerous wild animals and exotic animals that are possessed by the permit holder at the time that the permit is issued;

(d) The species of, age of, sex of, and name that the permit holder has given to each dangerous wild animal or exotic animal that is possessed by the permit holder at the time that the permit is issued together with any distinguishing marks or coloration that would aid in the identification of each animal;

(e) The name, address, and telephone number of the veterinarian who provides veterinary care for each dangerous wild animal or exotic animal that is identified on the permit;

**(C) Any additional terms, conditions, or**

**(2) If the information contained in the permit changes, the permit holder promptly shall notify the chief. The chief shall issue a revised permit containing the new information.**

**(C) Not later than the first day of December of each year, a permit holder shall apply to the chief, on a form provided by the chief, for a renewal of the permit if the holder intends to retain possession of the animal or animals that are identified in the permit. Not later than thirty days after receipt of an application for renewal, the chief shall renew or deny the renewal of the permit. The chief shall renew the permit if the permit holder meets the requirements of this chapter and pays a renewal fee in an amount established by the chief in rules adopted under section 1534.10 of the Revised Code. If a renewal permit is denied, the renewal fee shall be retained by the chief as payment for the reasonable expense of processing the application. The fee shall be deposited in the state treasury to the credit of the dangerous wild and exotic animals fund created in section 1534.14 of the Revised Code.**

**(D) If the chief denies an application for a permit or a renewal of a permit, the chief shall notify the person of the denial, the grounds for the denial, and the person's right to a hearing under Chapter 119. of the Revised Code. Notwithstanding section 119.12 of the Revised Code, the decision of the court under that section is final and nonappealable.**

**(E) If a person does not appeal the determination of the chief or if the court affirms the determination of the chief, the person shall do one of the following regarding the dangerous wild animals or exotic animals that are possessed by the person:**

**(1) Transfer the dangerous wild animals or exotic animals to a humane society, wildlife sanctuary, or facility that is an accredited member of the American zoo and aquarium association;**

**(2) Have a veterinarian euthanize the dangerous wild animals or exotic animals.**

**The person is responsible for all costs associated with the transfer or euthanization of the animals.**

**(F) The chief shall maintain records for each holder of a permit that is issued under this section.**

**Sec. 1534.06. (A) On and after ninety days after the effective date of this section, the chief of the division of wildlife shall confiscate a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal if the person that possesses the animal does not have a personal possession permit issued under section 1534.05 of the Revised Code or has not submitted an application for a permit under section 1534.04 of the Revised Code. The chief immediately shall send written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the person stating that the person has five business days after the receipt of the notice to deposit money with the chief in an amount determined by the chief in rules adopted under section 1534.10 of the Revised Code to pay all reasonable expenses expected to be incurred in caring and providing for the dangerous wild animal or exotic animal for ninety days.**

**(B) After depositing money in accordance with division (A) of this section, the person shall submit an application for a personal possession permit in accordance with section 1534.04 of the Revised Code.**

**(C) If the chief denies an application for a permit and the person files an appeal pursuant to division (j) of section 1534.05 of the Revised Code that extends beyond the time for which money is required to be deposited under division (A) of this section, the person shall deposit additional money in an amount determined by the chief in rules adopted under section 1534.10 of the Revised Code to pay all reasonable expenses expected to be incurred in caring and providing for the dangerous wild animal or exotic animal for thirty days.**

**(D) If the chief approves an application for a permit, the chief shall release the confiscated dangerous wild animal or exotic animal to the person. The person immediately shall comply with divisions (A)(1) and (2) of section 1534.04 of the Revised Code.**

**(E) If the person that possesses a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal that is confiscated under this section does not submit an application for a personal possession permit under section 1534.04 of the Revised Code, if the person that possesses a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal that is confiscated under this section cannot be located by the chief, or if a confiscated animal remains**

unclaimed for more than fifteen days after its notification, the owner shall do one of the following regarding the dangerous wild animal or exotic animal:

**(1) Transfer the dangerous wild animal or exotic animal to a humane society, wildlife sanctuary, or facility that is an accredited member of the American zoo and aquarium association;**

**(2) Transfer the dangerous wild animal or exotic animal to a person who has been issued a personal possession permit under section 1534.05 of the Revised Code;**

**(3) Have a veterinarian euthanize the dangerous wild animal or exotic animal.**

**Sec. 1534.07. (A) No person applying for or holding a permit issued under section 1534.05 of the Revised Code shall possess a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal in this state unless the person has obtained and maintains a liability insurance policy with an insurer authorized or approved to write such insurance in this state that covers claims for injury or damage to persons or property caused by such an animal. The policy shall be in an amount of not less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars.**

**(B) The insurance policy shall not be canceled by the permit holder or the insurer except upon notice to the chief of the division of wildlife by certified mail, return receipt requested. The cancellation shall not be effective prior to thirty days after the chief receives the notice.**

**Sec. 1534.08. (A) The holder of a permit issued under section 1534.05 of the Revised Code shall do all of the following:**

**(1) For each dangerous wild animal or exotic animal, comply with the American zoo and aquarium association's husbandry guidelines for animal care and maintenance for that animal;**

**(2) Comply with rules adopted under section 1534.10 of the Revised Code;**

**(3) Post and display at intervals of ten feet along the boundary of the property where each dangerous wild animal or exotic animal is confined signs warning the public that a dangerous wild**

animal or an exotic animal is on the property. The signs shall comply with standards established in rules adopted under section 1534.10 of the Revised Code.

**(4) Have a plan for the safe recapture of a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal if the animal escapes from the permit holder's control. The permit holder also shall have a plan for the destruction of an escaped dangerous wild animal or exotic animal if the recapture of the animal would endanger the life of the person who is trying to capture the escaped animal.**

**(5) If a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal escapes from the permit holder's control, immediately inform the nearest wildlife officer employed by the department of natural resources under section 1531.13 of the Revised Code. The permit holder is responsible for all costs associated with the recapture or destruction, if applicable, of the dangerous wild animal or exotic animal.**

**(6) Keep a log of all dangerous wild animals or exotic animals possessed by the permit holder. The log shall be kept in accordance with rules adopted under section 1534.10 of the Revised Code.**

**(7) Notify in writing each law enforcement agency and the department with jurisdiction over the property where the permit holder keeps dangerous wild animals or exotic animals of the species of dangerous wild animals or exotic animals possessed by the permit holder and the number of each species possessed by the permit holder;**

**(8) Not later than thirty days after receipt of the permit, publish notice of the receipt of the permit in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where the permit holder keeps dangerous wild animals or exotic animals. The notice shall include information concerning the species of dangerous wild animals or exotic animals possessed by the permit holder and the number of each species possessed by the permit holder.**

**(B) No person shall fail to comply with this section.**

**Sec. 1534.09. If the holder of a permit issued under section 1534.03 of the Revised Code no longer can care for a dangerous wild animal or an exotic**

animal identified in the holder's permit, the permit holder shall notify the chief of the division of wildlife of the permit holder's desire to transfer the animal. The permit holder may submit the name or names of persons who hold a valid personal possession permit and who are determined by the transferring permit holder to have the necessary facilities to care for the animal. The chief shall investigate those persons to verify that they have the necessary facilities to care for the animal and that they are in good standing with the division of wildlife. The chief shall approve or deny the transfer.

If the chief denies the transfer of a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal to another permit holder, or if the transferring permit holder does not request such a transfer, the permit holder shall transfer possession of the animal to a humane society, wildlife sanctuary, or facility that is an accredited member of the American zoo and aquarium association. If that transfer cannot occur, a veterinarian shall euthanize the animal. The permit holder is responsible for all costs associated with the transfer or euthanization of the animal.

Sec. 1534.10. The chief of the division of wildlife shall adopt rules in accordance with chapter 119. of the Revised Code that do all of the following:

(A) Establish the amount of the fee that must be submitted with an application for a personal possession permit under division (B) of section 1534.04 of the Revised Code. The fee shall not be more than one hundred dollars for each dangerous wild animal or exotic animal identified in an application, but shall not exceed one thousand dollars for each person applying for a permit regardless of the number of dangerous wild animals or exotic animals possessed by the person.

(B) Establish the amount of the renewal fee for a personal possession permit that is required under division (B) of section 1534.04 of the Revised Code;

(C) Establish the amount of money that is required to be deposited under section 1534.08 of the Revised Code. The amount shall be based on the cost of feeding and providing medical care and housing for a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal for each of the time periods specified in that section. The chief shall review the rules in accordance with chapter 119.

(D) Establish the content and size of the signs



that are required to be posted under division (B)(1) of section 1531.03 of the Revised Code;

(E) Establish requirements regarding perimeter fencing around the primary enclosure facilities that are used to house dangerous wild animals or exotic animals. The rules shall require that perimeter fences be at least eight feet in height for all dangerous wild animals and for those exotic animals that are determined by the chief to be dangerous. For all other exotic animals, the rules shall require perimeter fences to be not less than six feet in height. The rules shall require perimeter fencing to be constructed in a manner that prevents an animal from going through, under, or over the fence in order to function as a secondary containment system should animals escape from the primary enclosure facilities that are used for housing. The rules shall require a perimeter fence to be constructed at least three feet in distance from those primary enclosure facilities. Finally, the rules shall authorize the chief to issue written exemptions from the requirement to install perimeter fencing in any of the following situations with respect to a dangerous wild animal or exotic animal:

(1) If the outside walls of the primary enclosure facility that is used to house the animal are made of sturdy, durable material, such as concrete, wood, metal, or glass and are high enough to and constructed in a manner that restricts ingress and egress by animals and unauthorized persons;

(2) Where the primary enclosure facility that is used to house the animal is protected by an effective natural barrier that restricts ingress and egress by animals and unauthorized persons;

(3) If appropriate alternative security measures are employed;

(4) If the animal that is being housed in the primary enclosure facility does not constitute such a threat to people or other animals that perimeter fencing is necessary.

(F) Establish a requirement that the primary enclosure facility that is used to house a dangerous wild animal or exotic animal be not less than five hundred feet from the property line of the property on which the enclosure facility is located;

(G) Establish the form of and procedures for

keeping the log that is required under division (A)(5) of section 1534.08 of the Revised Code;

(H) Establish any other provisions that are necessary to administer and enforce this chapter.

**Sec. 1534.11. (A)** At least annually, the chief of the division of wildlife or the chief's designee shall inspect each premises concerning which a personal possession permit has been issued under section 1534.05 of the Revised Code in order to determine whether all dangerous wild animals and exotic animals at the premises are being cared for according to the standards and requirements that are specified in or established under this chapter and rules adopted under it. In addition, the chief or the chief's designee may enter any premises where dangerous wild animals or exotic animals are confined in order to determine if the animals are being cared for according to the standards and requirements that are specified in or established under this chapter and rules adopted under it. If refused entry, the chief or the chief's designee may apply for and the court of common pleas having jurisdiction may issue an appropriate warrant.

**(B)** The chief may suspend or revoke a permit issued under section 1534.05 of the Revised Code after a hearing in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code for any violation of this chapter or any rule adopted under it. If the chief revokes a permit, the dangerous wild animals or exotic animals that are possessed by the permit holder shall be confiscated and transferred to a humane society, wildlife sanctuary, or facility that is an accredited member of the American zoo and aquarium association. If a humane society, wildlife sanctuary, or facility that is an accredited member of the American zoo and aquarium association refuses to accept a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal, a veterinarian shall euthanize the animal. The permit holder is responsible for all costs associated with the transfer or euthanization of the animal.

**Sec. 1534.12.** No person shall do any of the following:

**(A)** Allow another person that does not have a permit issued under section 1534.05 of the Revised Code to possess a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal on the person's property;

**(B)** Tether, leash, or chain a dangerous wild

animal or an exotic animal outside a cage or allow a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal to roam;

(C) Mistreat, neglect, or abandon a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal or deprive a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal of necessary food, water, shelter, or veterinary care;

(D) Except for visits to a veterinarian or veterinary clinic, bring a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal to a commercial or retail establishment or onto real property owned by, or under the supervision of, a state agency or political subdivision;

(E) Transport a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal in a motor vehicle without keeping the animal in a secured cage or enclosure in the vehicle during the period of transport;

(F) Release a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal into the wild;

(G) Keep a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal in an unsecured environment at any time;

(H) Fail to notify in writing the chief of the division of wildlife, a wildlife sanctuary, or a facility that is an accredited member of the American zoo and aquarium association prior to euthanizing a dangerous wild animal or an exotic animal.

Sec. 1534.13. If the chief of the division of wildlife determines that any person has violated or is violating this chapter, a rule adopted under it, or a term or condition of a permit issued under it, the chief may request in writing that the attorney general, the prosecuting attorney of the county, or the city director of law where the violation has occurred or is occurring bring an action for civil penalties in a court of competent jurisdiction. The court may impose on the person a civil penalty of not less than two hundred dollars and not more than two thousand dollars with respect to each animal concerning which there is a violation of this chapter and for each day of each violation of this chapter, a rule adopted under it, or a term or condition of a permit issued under it.

Money resulting from civil penalties imposed by an action brought under this section shall be credited to the dangerous wild and exotic animals fund

created in section 1534.14 of the Revised Code.

**Sec. 1534.14. The dangerous wild and exotic animals fund is hereby created in the state treasury. The fund shall consist of fees collected under this chapter and all money resulting from civil penalties imposed pursuant to section 1534.13 of the Revised Code. All money in the fund shall be used to carry out the purposes of this chapter and rules adopted under it.**

**Sec. 1534.99. (A) Whoever violates this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree. However, if the violation results in serious physical harm to a person, whoever violates this chapter is guilty of a felony of the fourth degree.**

**(B) If a person is convicted of or pleads guilty to a violation of this chapter, the court may order the dangerous wild animal or exotic animal that is the subject of the violation to be euthanized by a veterinarian or an appropriate animal control authority.**

**(C) A violation of this chapter is a nuisance.**

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THE FIRST TIGERS WERE PURCHASED AND SOLD

1972 TIGER PURCHASED FROM ROBERT BAUDY 1000.<sup>00</sup>  
SOLD FOR 850<sup>00</sup>

1973 PURCHASED FROM INTERNATIONAL ANIMAL EX. 1400.<sup>00</sup>  
SOLD FOR 1400.<sup>00</sup>

1974 TOLEDO ZOO 1500.<sup>00</sup>. TIGER RETURNED AND  
CHECK VOIDED AND REDEPOSITED.  
JULIUS VON UHL 300.<sup>00</sup> TIGER RENTAL FEE.

75 JULIUS VON UHL 156.36 AIRLINES TICKET  
RENTAL 593.64 TOTAL 750.<sup>00</sup>

1976 JULIUS VON UHL 9/3 RENTAL 460<sup>00</sup>  
1/17-77 SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT 100.<sup>00</sup>

1977 JULIUS VON UHL 800<sup>00</sup> RENTAL

1978 JULIUS VON UHL 854<sup>00</sup> RENTAL

1979 INTERNATIONAL ANIMAL EXCHANGE 1000.<sup>00</sup> RENTAL

1980 DAVE Mc MILLEN - PURCHASED - 500<sup>00</sup>

# Help feed Obie

2007



PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITLOCK/THE INDEPENDENT

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Obie Crew members, from left, Don Shonk, Bob Hollender and George Mizer, as well as team manager Rachel Wolford stand with Obie prior to last Friday's game with Ursuline. The Massillon Tiger Football Booster Club will have its Help Feed Obie Night on Friday prior to the Tigers game against Mentor. Volunteers will be collecting donations outside Paul Brown Tiger Stadium. The money that is raised will be used for food, insurance, any medical bills, permits, rental of the tiger and other miscellaneous items. The money raised will help keep our live tiger program going.



Franklin first-grader Jasemine Jacquet

## Growing, growling tiger cub thrills tots with visit

Bad news, Bulldog fans: Obie's found his growl. And he's feisty, too. "He's learning right now to growl," Obie Crew member Don Shonk said. "This is early for him. He usually doesn't learn this early to growl."

Obie No. 38 had the chance to strut his stripes and show that guttural growl Tuesday afternoon. He and his friends - Obie Crew members Bob Hollender, George Mizer and Shonk - visited the Tiger Cubs at the Franklin Learning Center for the annual "Beat McKinley" pep rally.

As the students filed into the gymnasium, Obie fumbled with the football and wrestled with the Obie Crew members. Children laughed as the tiger cub rolled between Mizer's feet and applauded when he tugged hard on the leash, leading Hollender around the gym.

Obie, an 18-week-old cub, is bulking up for Saturday's big game, weighing in at 35 pounds, according to Shonk. The striped ball of fluff is also putting away 4-6 pounds of raw chicken, turkey and hamburger each day, so he'll be good and ready come Saturday.

2007



PHOTOS BY KEVIN WHITLOCK/THE INDEPENDENT  
VIEW PHOTO GALLERIES AND ORDER PRINTS ONLINE AT [WWW.INDEONLINE.COM](http://WWW.INDEONLINE.COM)  
Obie No. 38 may have found a new chew toy in Franklin second-grade teacher Joe Hug's foot. Above left,

2007



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2008

Stump Hill Farms' tiger cubs have had a few brushes with fame.



## Obie's ready for his closeup

By **STEPHEN HUBA**  
Stephen.Huba@IndeOnline.com

Obie, we hardly knew ye. The Massillon tiger cub that was last year's Obie is now rubbing shoulders (and paws) with New York glitterati. The

6-month-old Bengal tiger recently traveled to New York with handlers Lee Huntsman and Tricyn Huntsman for a *Cosmopolitan* photo shoot.

Obie, who now goes by Mason, appears in the February

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issue of *Cosmopolitan* with Animal Planet host Dave Salmoni. The caption reads, "This cute creature is perfect for snuggling. Oh, and the tiger's not bad either."

Who knows where his career will go from here?

It all depends on where Lee and Cyndi Huntsman, owners of Stump Hill Farm in Perry Township, want to take him next.

The non-profit farm for exotic animals has been providing Massillon's Obie cubs for 17 years, as well as hosting educational programs at its Klick Street Northwest site. But more recently, the Huntsmans have become animal providers for the stars.

"We consider (the TV and movie appearances) to be part of our educational programs because it's a learning experience for people," Cyndi Huntsman said.

The Huntsmans have been operating Stump Hill Farm for 26 years as a refuge for injured and abused animals. Today, they have about 300 animals - everything from chimpanzees, camels and parrots to lions, tigers and bears.

About 10 years ago, the Huntsmans began providing animals for Jack Hanna's ap-

pearances on "The Maury Povich Show," the "Late Show with David Letterman" and "Good Morning America."

From there, word got out that the Huntsmans' animals were well-behaved and good around people. "The animals we offer generally like the interaction," Cyndi Huntsman said. Obie was used to being around people in Massillon, so he did well in the *Cosmopolitan* photo shoot, she said.

Interest has grown to the point where the Richville couple had to hire an agent to help them with all the requests for their animals.

"It's just that over the years, we have a very clean track record," Cyndi Huntsman said. "The people know the circumstances, where the animals come from, and they know we are a non-profit organization. They like to support that kind of organization."

The money from the animals' appearances goes back into Stump Hill Farm. Last year's feed bill alone was \$50,000. The cost of heating five buildings with propane is \$2,200 every three weeks.

Lee Huntsman, his daughter, Tricyn, and farm volunteer Maria Tilton, recently traveled to Providence, R.I.,

with their skunk Flower to shoot scenes from the upcoming Richard Gere movie "Hachiko: A Dog's Story."

"It's about trying and never giving up," Lee Huntsman said, describing the movie.

Flower, the skunk, is de-scented and was perfect for the scenes with the canine hero of the picture, he said. The hard part was getting Flower into Rhode Island because of state regulations.

The farm also recently supplied lion cubs for photo shoots with super model Heidi Klum on the set of "America's Next Top Model."

"It was something that we were really happy with," Cyndi Huntsman said.

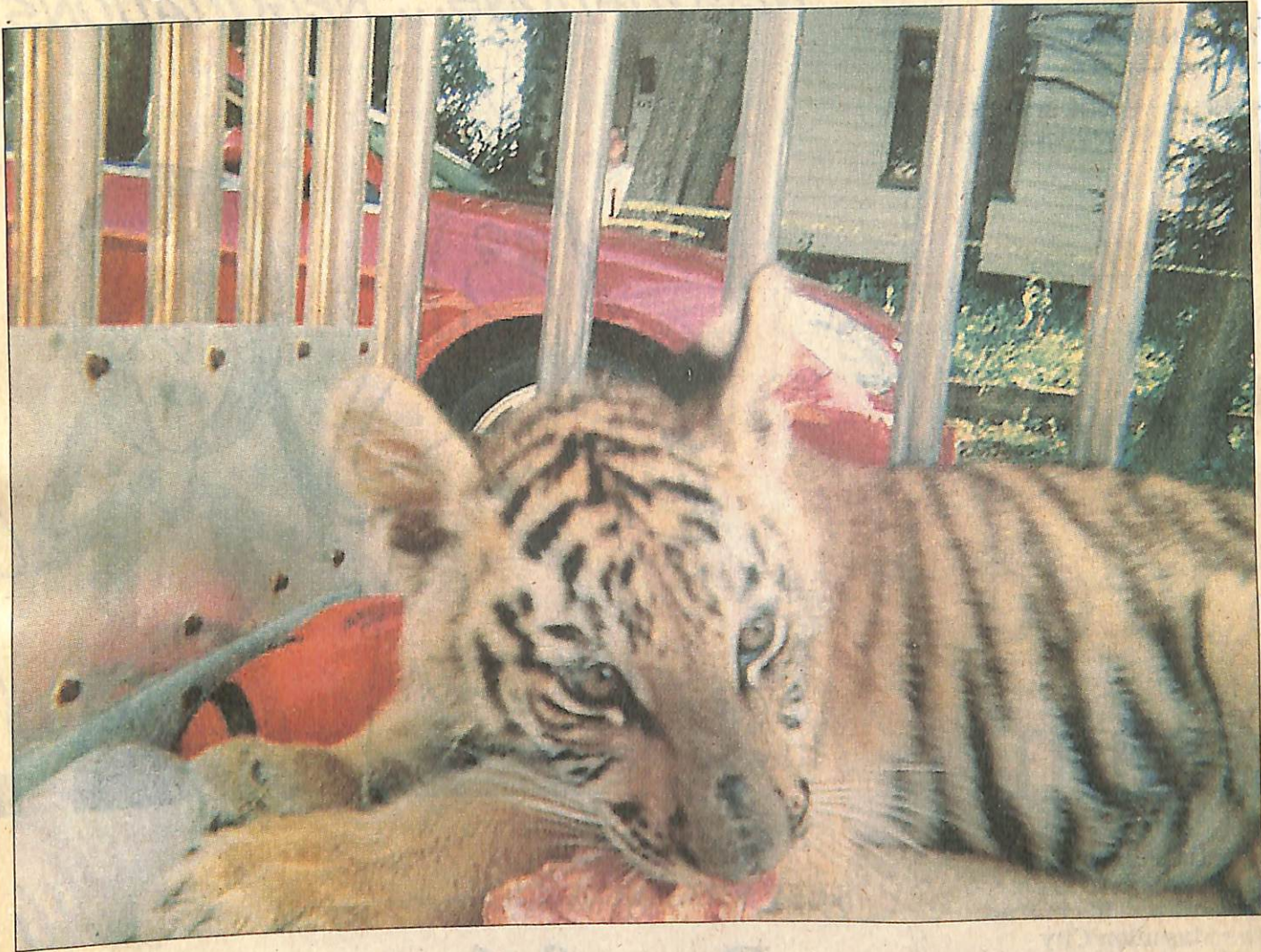
"(Klum) did very well with the animals that we took."

Other "famous" Stump Hill Farm animals include two peacocks that appeared in a Super Bowl Sunday commercial for the Sharp Aquos LCD TV, and a goose that appeared on a commercial for the Sony PlayStation 3, Lee Huntsman said.

A leopard named Riley will appear in magazine ads this spring for a new line of Ralph Lauren clothing, and the lion cubs will appear in lingerie ads in a German magazine.

2008

Picture provided by Sue Kirkpatrick



OBIE 39

## Lunch time

Obie, the Massillon Tiger mascot, was caught chowing down on some raw meat during the Hall of Fame Parade last weekend.

2008



The Obie Crew  
(L-R) Bob Hollender,  
Obie XXXIX,  
George Mizer,  
Don Shonk (absent)

## Help feed Obie



PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITLOCK/THE INDEPENDENT  
VIEW PHOTO GALLERIES AND ORDER PRINTS ONLINE AT [WWW.INDEONLINE.COM](http://WWW.INDEONLINE.COM)

The Obie Crew, from left, George Mizer, Don Mason, Bob Hollender and Don Shonk stand with Obie XXXIX prior to last week's game with Garfield. Individuals will be collecting donations from fans attending Friday night's game against St. Ignatius at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium in order to help with the costs of food and other items needed for the continuation of the live tiger program.



PHOTO BY JULIANNA FRANTZ FOR THE INDE

Obie handlers, Bob Hollander and Don Mason, hang on to Massillon's tiger as Rev. Hank Harris blesses the big cat at St. Timothy's on Sunday afternoon.

## Obie among blessed pets

By ERIN PUSTAY  
Erin.Pustay@IndeOnline.com

Crouched low in the grass, Obie raised her behind just off the ground and gave a quick wiggle before pouncing – springing toward an unsuspecting dog sitting by his owner's feet.

She didn't get far before running out of leash.

Undaunted, she turned her attention instead to the cool grass, where she flopped and rolled around before bounding back toward the members of the Obie Crew for a bit of rough housing.

Every year for the past six years, the Obie Crew has brought Massillon's most-precious mascot to St. Timothy's Episcopal Church to be blessed.

● Please see **PETS**, Page A-2

## ● PETS

"Obie's real special," crew member Bob Hollender said. "You fall in love with him. You sure do miss he when he's gone."

There have been 39 tiger cubs who have proudly served as Massillon's mascot and each one of them are truly special, Hollender said. Obie XXXIX is no different.

It makes sense that Obie should be blessed, she has, after all, blessed the city with honest to goodness Tiger spirit.

Sunday, like her predecessors have for the last six years, Obie received a blessing.

Raising his hand above Obie's furry ears, Rev. Hank Harris let it hover there as he poured a shower of blessings on the tiger and the town she proudly represents.

"May you be blessed in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit," Harris said. "May the Massillon Tigers be strengthened and guided in your care and may you both enjoy the life together and find joy with God who created you."

Annually, St. Timothy's blesses all the animals who enrich the lives of Massillon-area residents. From the smallest ball of fluff to grandest of guard dogs, animals are a gift from God.

According to Harris, the church holds the ceremony in recognition of St. Francis of Assisi Day, which falls every year on Oct. 4.

"Let us give thanks to God our Father for the gift of life and especially for the gift of animals that he has so freely bestowed upon us," Harris said during Sunday's service. "We thank you, Lord, for creating all living things that breathe and move and have life and inhabit the earth. We thank you for the beauty and wonder of creation."

Sierra Brady, 7, said she

found her gift from God in a local pet store. Holding tightly to a small plastic carrier, Sierra's eyes twinkled as she talked about her hamster Sammy, "who is probably like 6 or 7 (years old)" even though she's had him for "probably about a year."

"I always wanted a hamster and my mom said I could get one, so one day when we went to get fish food she said I could get him," Sierra explained. "As soon as I saw him, I knew I wanted to buy him because he was just so cute."

When you have a hamster as special as Sammy, you also just know that he should be blessed, Sierra said.

"I knew he had to be blessed because he had never been blessed before," Sierra said. "I bought him at a pet store and I'm pretty sure he wasn't blessed there, so I wanted him to be blessed (here)."

Ashley Locy held 4-week-old Piper, a tiny tabby kitten, tightly to her chest. The kitten's tiny little features were dwarfed by the massive Obie, who bounced around on the lawn.

But Piper, Locy said, is a fighter. She discovered the little kitten in her garden, all alone, infested with fleas and sickly. She took the kitten to the vet and watched as Piper gradually regained her strength. All she needed was a whole lot of love, Locy admits, noting that Piper is still bottle fed.

"She's our little miracle," Locy said.

More than a dozen dogs joined Obie, Sammy and Piper for the blessing on Sunday. Two frogs, Little T and Michael, also received blessings, while several other animals – mostly cats – who were unable to attend received blessings as well.

# Obie prowls local schools

By ERIN PUSTAY

Erin.Pustay@IndeOnline.com

A 100-pound tiger cub goes wherever she pleases. She mills around the playground at Gorrell Elementary, tugging hard at the leash in hopes of climbing up the sliding board.

At Bowers Elementary, she plops to the ground for a rest taking in the coolness of the wooden gym floor and the cheers of the children who chant her name: "Obie, Obie, Obie ..."

Life is good when you're a big Bengal tiger. It's superb when your Massillon-McKinley

Every year, during Massillon-McKinley Week, Massillon's most beloved mascot steps out to visit the kids at each of Massillon's elementary schools and get them fired up for the big game on Saturday.

"What are we going to do on Saturday?" Obie Crew members asked Monday morning. "BEAT MCKINLEY!" the Bowers students roared back.

## WEB VIDEO

Log on to [www.IndeOnline.com](http://www.IndeOnline.com) to watch videos of Obie's visits Bowers and Gorrell elementary schools.

## MEET MASSILLON'S MASCOT

♦♦♦

**FAVORITE COLORS:** Orange and Black.  
**FAVORITE TIGER COACH:** Paul Brown.  
**BEST FRIENDS:** Bob Hollender, Don Shonk, George Mizer, Don Mason and John Helm - The Obie Crew.

**VET:** Dr. Mark Christine.

**FAVORITE SNACK:** Bulldogs ... Actually, Obie chows down on raw chicken - bones and all - every chance she gets.

**FAVORITE SPORT:** Football, or course.

**FAVORITE TOYS:** A football and whole slew of empty plastic jugs.

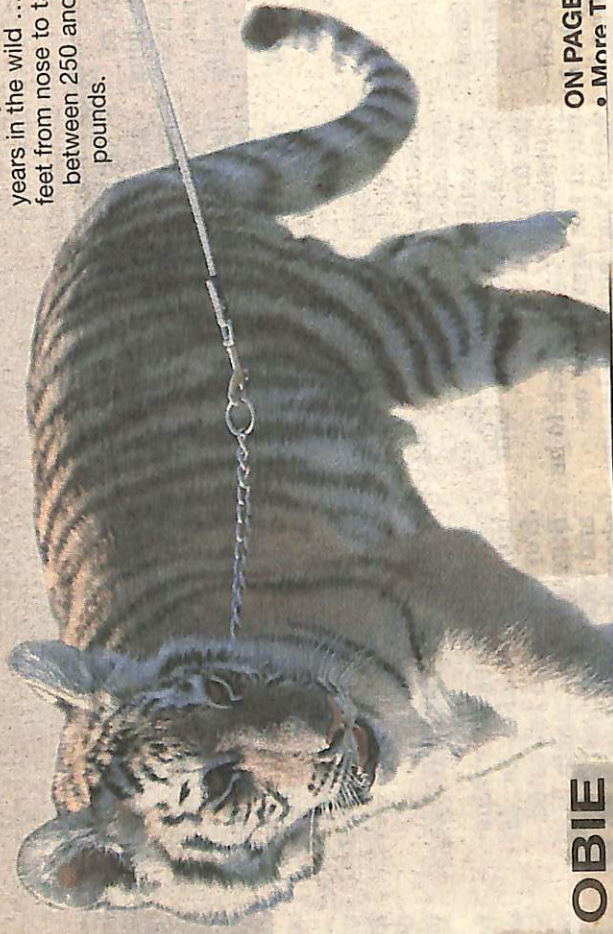
**NAME:** Obie.  
**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** Bengal Tiger ... or Panthera tigris tigris.  
**BIRTHDATE:** April 14, 2008.  
**AGE:** 6 months.

**GENDER:** Female.

**WEIGHT:** About 100 pounds.

**HOMETOWN:** Massillon, though Bengal Tigers are usually found in India.

**AVERAGE BENGAL TIGERS** ... usually live up to 8 to 10 years in the wild ... are 7 to 9 feet from nose to tail ... weigh between 250 and 500 pounds.



## ● OBIE

There's no denying that the best part of Massillon-McKinley Week - aside from a big win over the Bulldogs - is coming nose to whisker with Obie. It's a once in a lifetime chance that these kids can't get enough of.

"The coolest part was seeing Obie," Bowers student Brittany Cooley, 9, said. "He's a jungle animal and you don't get to see that everyday."  
Being a Massillon Tiger

is the best feeling in the world, according to Ashton Paul, a 10-year-old Bowers student. You just know that being a Tiger is something truly special.

"I like that his name represents 'Orange and Black is Everything,'" Paul said, "because orange and black is everything."

Gorrell students believe that nothing tops Massillon football in terms of ferocity and nothing beats Obie when it comes to adorable.

ON PAGE A-2:  
e More Tiaer Tidbits

"I think he's really cute," 9-year-old Abigail Decker said. "I really like animals, especially Tigers because they have the cutest faces."

Bethany Elbert agreed that Obie is 100 pounds worth of cute. Although this particular tiger cub can be a bit rambunctious, she's definitely better than any old Bulldog ever will be.

"I don't like Bulldogs," Elbert said with a grin. "I think they're horrible."

OBIE 39  
2008

# Say 'ahh,' Obie

## Tiger doc keeps fur fluffed, growl hearty

By ERIN PUSTAY

Erin.Pustay@IndeoOnline.com

Behind every healthy tiger cub is very brave, very proud veterinarian. Each of Obie's hearty growls and playful pounces are possible because of the care of Dr. Mark Christine.

For the last 14 years, Christine has been taking care of Massillon's most beloved kitty. It's an honor he is proud of. His license plates – "OBIE DOC" – prove it.

### WEB VIDEOS

**LOG ON TO INDEONLINE.COM** for videos from Massillon-McKinley Week, including Obie's visits to local elementary schools, and WHS cheerleaders at nursing homes.

"It's kind of exciting," Christine said. "It's an honor to be the vet that cares for Obie. I get a lot of pleasure out of it because I know it's a unique opportunity."

● Please see **OBIE**, Page A-2



PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITLOCK/THE INDEPENDENT

With Obie crew handlers in tow, Dr. Mark Christine greets Obie for her weigh-in at the Massillon Animal Hospital. She weighed 88 pounds.

### ● OBIE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

... Most people never have the chance to work with a baby tiger, but I get to do it every year."

While it may seem like a daunting task, fitting an appointment for a 100-pound feline into a schedule chock full of mild-mannered house cats and over-friendly puppy dogs, Christine insists it's not that bad.

"From a medical standpoint," Christine said, "it's really no different than treating the little guys."

In fact, Obie receives many of the same medications that Massillon family cats receive – only in larger doses.

"(Vaccinations and medications) are administered on a pound-for-pound basis," he said. "And we've got a big one this year."

At only six-months old, Obie is already outweighing some of her predecessors by 20 or 30 pounds. Usually, by this point in the season, Obie weighs around 60 or 70 pounds, Christine said. This year, she's pushing 90.

Still, no matter how big the Bengal tiger cub may get, the treatment strategies never change. You roll with the growls and nips at your fingers. You learn

from your mistakes.

"Obie likes to chew," Christine said. "I learned quickly that if I wear gloves so she can chew on my hands and fingers, it helps. She'll let you look at her teeth, eyes and ears that way."

A lot of the check-up involves distracting the big cat. From administering the vaccines to trimming her super sharp claws, Christine has learned that patience and decoys are his greatest assets.

"We find a way to get her to do what we need her to do. We will distract her with a toy so we can trim her claws," Christine said. "You just sort of trim them as they go flinging past."

Mascots are a part of the practice for Christine, who, 10 years ago, treated both Obie and McKinley's bulldog mascot. Just because the pup walked through the door and got the best treatment possible, that didn't mean the English bulldog won over Christine's heart.

"I'm a Tiger fan," Christine said. "We have been going to Tiger games for years. I even have a place in my closet that is reserved just for clothes that are orange and black."



PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITLOCK/THE INDEPENDENT

2008

Obie 39 visits Gorrell elementary Monday as part of spirit week.



# Can't stand the heat?



PHOTO BY KEVIN  
WHITLOCK/  
THE INDEPENDENT

**ABOVE:** Obie #40, the Massillon Tiger mascot, leaps out of the pool while playing with Layla, a white Bengal tiger, at Stump Hill Farm in Perry Township on a hot Wednesday afternoon.



2009

OBIE XXXX  
40

# THERE'S A NEW OBIE

# IN TIGERTOWN

2009



Obie - the 40th live mascot of the Massillon Tigers - debuted at Zoo Camp this week



PHOTOS BY KEVIN WHITLOCK/THE INDEPENDENT; VIEW PHOTO GALLERIES AND ORDER PRINTS ONLINE AT [WWW.INDEONLINE.COM](http://WWW.INDEONLINE.COM)



2009

PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITLOCK/THE INDEPENDENT

VIEW PHOTO GALLERIES AND ORDER PRINTS ONLINE AT [WWW.INDEONLINE.COM](http://WWW.INDEONLINE.COM)

Handler Bob Hollender tries to lure Obie, Massillon's live mascot, off head coach Jason Hall's foot with a snack while the team poses for photos during Media Day at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium.



**The Obie Crew**  
 (L-R) Don Shonk,  
 George Mizer,  
 Bob Hollender  
 & Obie XXXX

# MEET OBIE XL

**AGE:** Six months

**GENDER:** Male

**WEIGHT:** 75 pounds

**FULL GROWN WEIGHT:** Between 350 and 500 pounds.

**FAVORITE PASTIME:** Playing with footballs, though he's better at popping them than passing them.

He also enjoys running in the yard with the Obie Crew.

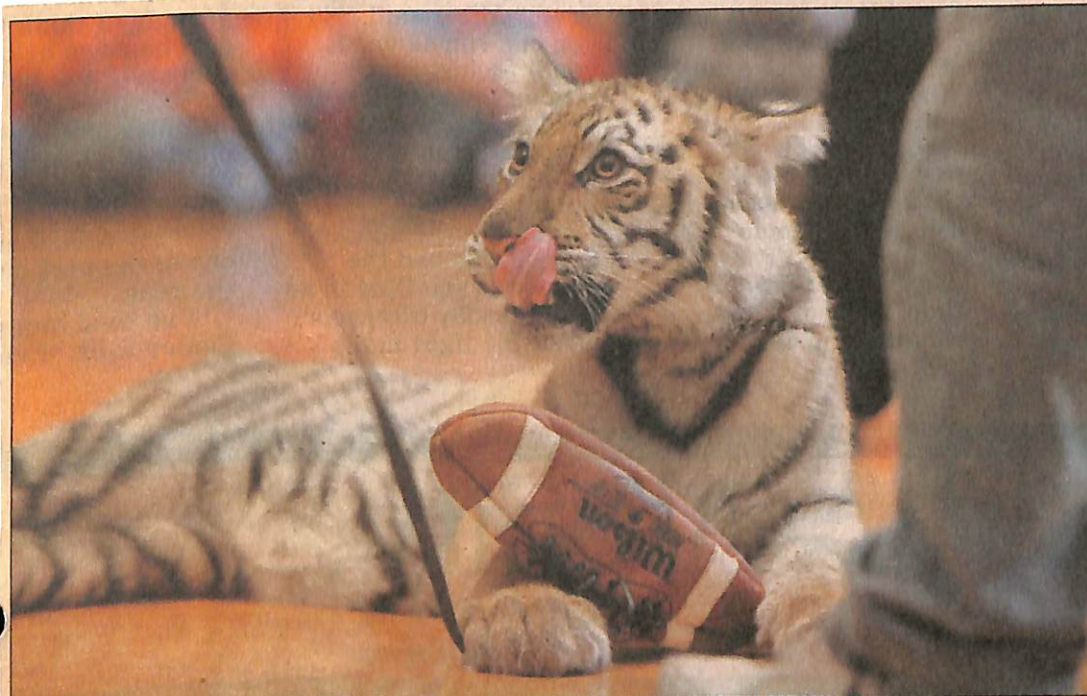
## FAST FACTS

- Bengal tigers like Obie are endangered. Scientists estimate that only 3,000 Bengal tigers are left in the wild.
- Most of the baby tigers that serve as Obie mascots are Bengal tigers. A large majority of the mascots over the years have also been female.
- A full-grown tiger can eat as much as 88 pounds of meat in one sitting. Baby Obie is scarfing down 10 pounds of meat a day.
- Tigers hunt mostly at dusk and dawn when they are easily hidden in the shadows.

They stalk and pounce on their prey because they can't run long distances.

- Male tigers are territorial and usually travel alone, marking the boundaries of his territory with scratch marks to warn other tigers.
- The backs of the tiger's ears have small white spots that look like eyes. It gives tigers the appearance of having eyes in the back of their heads.
- Bengal tigers are one of only five sub-species of tigers remaining in the world today. Three sub-species are extinct.
- **SOURCES:** seaworld.org, akronzoo.org

2009



## Obie prowls local elementary schools

By ERIN PUSTAY

Erin.Pustay@IndeOnline.com

Obie was all tuckered out.

His two-day tour of Massillon elementary schools left him sleepy and just a tiny bit cranky, according to Obie Crew member George Mizer.

"He's had a long day," Mizer said as Obie settled into his crate in the back of the van.

Long, yes, but Obie certainly has the fans to show for it. Obie Crew member Don Mason held up a crayon-colored tiger drawing that a little girl wanted to give to the 6-month-old kitten.

● Please see **OBIE**, Page A-2

## ● OBIE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"It's fan mail," Mason said. "We'll hang it on the wall in the Obie garage."

Turns out, Obie gets a lot of those things. Children across the city write letters and color pictures for Obie all the time.

"Adults love him, too," Mizer said with a smile, "they just don't always admit it."

For the crew who helps to care for Obie during the football season, the tiger cub becomes a part of the family. They've discovered that each tiger has a different personality and each one has

favorite things to do.

Obie No. 40 happens to love running and darting around in the grass, chasing Mizer and Mason.

"He can only run about 40 yards before he gets tired," Mizer said. "So if you can run 42 yards, you'll be just fine."

"Don't stop at 42 yards," Mason added with a laugh. "If he's chasing you, just keep on running."

Franklin Elementary School kids had the chance to see Obie in action Tuesday afternoon when the tiger made his

annual stop to pump them up for the big McKinley game.

"When the guy (Mason) ran out, Obie got up and chased him," 9-year-old Caitlyn Conley said with a laugh. "I think Obie is cool because he can do cool stuff and he's funny."

Conley said she's had plenty of chances to see Obie. Every year, she said, Obie makes sure to visit her school and that's one of the best days of the year.

"I've seen him a lot," Conley said. "I've seen

# Obie Book

2010



**The Obie Crew**  
(L-R) George Mizer,  
Bob Hollender,  
Don Shonk  
& Obie XXXXI

# The Obie Crew - 2011



**The Obie Crew**  
(L-R) Terry Bonk,  
Bob Hollender,  
Don Shonk &  
George Mizer

And this is  
Obie XXXXII!

# Three Obies Book



## THE OBIE CREW (L-R):

Terry Bonk, George Mizer, OBIE XLIII,  
Bob Hollender, Don Shonk

# Live Tiger Book



## THE OBIE CREW

L to R: George Mizer,  
OBIE XLVI,  
Bob Hollender,  
Terry Bonk

2013



2014

# OBIE CREW



L to R: George Mizer, Bob Hollender, OBIE XLV, Terry Bonk

# OBIE CREW



L to R: Terry Bonk, Bob Hollender and George Mizer

2015

