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IN THIS ISSUE

Amish Country Christmas

+

Cut Your Own Christmas Tree

+

Holiday Light Displays

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A Message from The Editor



It's the holiday season again. That time of year we look forward to visiting with family and friends, sharing holiday foods and seeing festive holiday light displays.

In this issue we have information about light displays at Oglebay in West Virginia, Holiday Lights at the Akron Zoo, Coney Island's Nights of Lights in Clermont County, and numerous locations at Shores & Islands Ohio. Visiting these amazing displays with your family, you won't be disappointed and may very well start an annual family holiday tradition.

Small Town Christmas is alive and well, especially in nearby Amish Country. Check out some of their local holiday traditions, visit the local shops, and get your holiday gift shopping done. Original artworks and one-of-a-kind handmade gifts are treasures that will be handed down from generation to generation in the future.

And let's not forget the delicious pastries and meals that, for some reason, are only made during the holidays. Wouldn't it be great to have a Christmas in July celebration just to enjoy the holiday food?

Whether you stay close to home and cut your own Christmas tree, or venture out of northeast Ohio to experience something you have never seen or done, make some lasting memories with your loved ones this holiday season.

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Douglas M. Kish, M.A.

Editor

Compass Ohio strives to be a thought leader in Fitness, Health and Recreation information to educate and inspire readers through print, digital, mobile, social media, strategic marketing campaigns and trade shows throughout Ohio and beyond.

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Frankenmuth: A Holiday Wonderland



By **Candy S. Collins, BS**

Nestled along the banks of the Cass River, there exists a place where Christmas comes to life in a way that is nothing short of magical. Welcome to Frankenmuth, Michigan, a charming Bavarian city that transforms into a winter wonderland. Frankenmuth is the perfect place to celebrate the most wonderful time of the year with its old-world charm, unique traditions, and warm-hearted spirit.

Frankenmuth's storybook charm is year-round, but it adds an extra layer of enchantment during Christmas. As you stroll down the town's picturesque streets it transports you to a quaint Bavarian city with half-timbered buildings adorned with twinkling lights and festive decorations. It's as if you have stepped into a Hallmark movie.

Stop by Frankenmuth's Visitor Center first to begin your incredible journey. Observe the captivating 40-foot Christmas tree lit with 23,000 synchronized lights that sing and dance. The daily light show runs from the week of Thanksgiving through the first week of January.

For a sense of nostalgia, take a horse-drawn carriage ride through Frankenmuth. Snuggle under a cozy blanket and let the clip-clop of the horse's hooves set the pace for a romantic journey through the city. Enjoy the illumination of more than 175 trees lit on Main Street.

Experience a graceful glide on the ice beneath the shimmering lights and festive decorations that enhance the atmosphere at the Frankenmuth Ice Rink. The ice rink welcomes individuals of all ages and skill levels, offering a space for families and friends to unite and create lasting memories. Skate rentals are available.

If you are looking for unique and thoughtful gifts, Frankenmuth's downtown and River Place Shops are a treasure trove of holiday shopping opportunities. From quaint boutiques to specialty stores, you will find one-of-a-kind gifts, including handmade ornaments. Look for unique pieces of German Christmas Traditions such as Schwibbogen (Candle Arch), German Nutcracker, and a Weihnachtspyramide (German Pyramid). Locally crafted items make for a memorable present for loved ones or yourself.

No visit to Frankenmuth would be complete without a trip to Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland, the World's Largest Christmas Store. As you step through the doors, the scent of fresh pine, the twinkle of lights, and the jingle of bells greet you. The store is a maze of holiday treasures, each corner overflowing with ornaments, decorations, and gifts.

One of the store's highlights is the vast collection of ornaments. From classic glass baubles to whimsical and personalized designs,



there is an ornament for every taste and style. Whether you want to decorate your tree with traditional red and green or add sparkle with crystal and metallic embellishments, Bronner's has it all.

As you prepare to depart from Bronner's, be sure to embark on a mesmerizing journey down Christmas Lane. Witness the enchanting transformation of the surroundings into a dazzling spectacle, with over 100,000 lights illuminating the lane. Adorned with thousands of twinkling lights and animated decorations that grace lampposts and trees, 25 Christmas Lane makes the perfect half-mile scenic drive that captivates year-round.



Visit the Silent Night Memorial Chapel, an impressive 56-foot-tall landmark located at the southern tip of Bronner's 27-acre property. This chapel faithfully replicates the one found in Oberndorf/Salzburg, Austria, where the timeless hymn "Silent Night" was first sung on Christmas Eve in 1818.

Make sure to savor a meal at one of the town's famous restaurants, like Zehnder's of Frankenmuth or Bavarian Inn Restaurant, for a traditional family-style chicken dinner. During the holiday season, these establishments pull out all the stops with special holiday menus featuring roasted turkey,

stuffing, cranberry sauce, and all the fixings one would expect for a holiday feast. Or indulge in craft-centric comfort food at the Frankenmuth Brewery.

Children can send their heartfelt letters to Santa and keep a watchful eye because Santa is always keeping tabs. You never know when he might make a surprise visit. Join the festive fun with the "Stop and Snap Challenge," capturing cherished moments around town. And don't miss the chance to enjoy a self-guided tour of Little Bavaria's "Little" driving light tour. Just follow the map, and have a fellow passenger recite the accompanying poem for the complete experience. To get your map, visit the Visitor Center.

At Christmas, Frankenmuth is a truly magical experience that transports you to a world of holiday wonder and joy. Whether you come for the shopping, the food, the festive ambiance, or simply to create lasting memories with loved ones, the charming Bavarian city has something for everyone. For more information, visit the Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce and Convention Visitors Bureau Christmas Experience page at [https://www.Frankenmuth.org/christmas/](https://www Frankenmuth.org/christmas/).

Experience Christmas in Hocking Hills

By Candy S. Collins, BS

When it comes to experiencing the magic of Christmas, there is no place quite like Hocking Hills, Ohio. Nestled in the heart of Appalachia, this extraordinary region transforms into a winter wonderland during the holiday season.

From the enchanting Bakecation to the thrilling Holiday Treasure Hunt, the Logan Christmas Parade, and the old-world charm of Glenlaurel's Dickens Dinners, Hocking Hills offers a variety of festive activities for a memorable holiday experience.

Kickstart the holiday season by joining the Holiday Treasure Hunt from November 1 to December 12. As you explore the charming local stores in the area while searching for that perfect gift, don't forget to collect stamps along the way for prizes.

To throw your hat into the ring for these fantastic rewards, simply turn in your treasure map with six stamps. The participating shops generously offer these prizes, including the grand prize: a weekend retreat for four amidst the enchanting landscapes of Hocking Hills. To be considered for these prizes, make sure your entries reach the Hocking Hills Regional Welcome Center in Logan, Ohio, no later than 5 pm on Monday, December 12.

For those seeking an old-world holiday experience, Glenlaurel, a Scottish Inn, offers a truly magical escape. Throughout December, Glenlaurel invites you to embark on a six-course culinary journey within a traditional Scottish setting showcasing modern worldly cuisine. During dinner,

Victorian-attired performers read selections from the classic Charles Dickens story, "A Christmas Carol."

Transform Hocking Hills into your ultimate Bakecation destination this holiday season. Gather your nearest and dearest for a delightful baking adventure. Many of the cabins and lodges are equipped with spacious, gourmet kitchens, providing the perfect canvas for all your holiday baking endeavors.

Each Bakecation kit, which is free to use, comes fully stocked with essential tools to fuel your culinary creativity. Expect to find a stand mixer, cookie sheets, cooling racks, measuring cups and spoons, muffin tin, cake pan, cookie cutters and stamps, mixing bowls, cutting board, rolling pin, spatula, and zester. With these tools at your fingertips, you will have everything necessary to make delectable treats sure to bring joy to the special people in your life.

For recipe inspiration and a convenient shopping list, visit <https://www.explorehockinghills.com/hocking-hills-bakecation/>. To secure your Bakecation kit, simply call 740-385-9706.

Whether you are seeking outdoor adventures, festive traditions, or an old-world holiday experience, Hocking Hills has it all. Make this year's holiday season unforgettable by experiencing the magic of Hocking Hills.

For more information about Hocking Hills, visit www.explorehockinghills.com.



Happy Hunting!



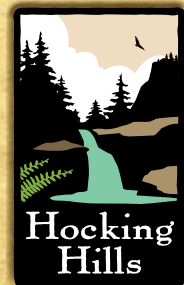
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Need a change of scenery but also want to be close to home and safe? Head for the Hills, the Hocking Hills. This is the place for fresh air, the vibrant colors of fall, frozen waterfalls, outdoor adventures, small town charm and a much needed winter break.

Shop for one-of-a-kind holiday gifts at the **8th Annual Hocking Hills Holiday Treasure Hunt**. Hunt for treasures in shops and galleries November 1 through December 12, collect six different Treasure Hunt stickers and enter to win one of more than 25 prizes and a Grand Prize Getaway for 4. Download your Treasure Map at ExploreHockingHills.com

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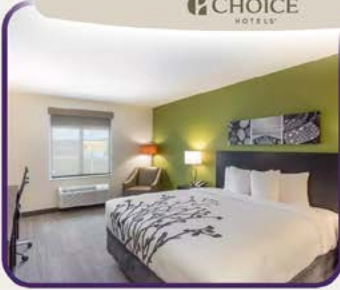
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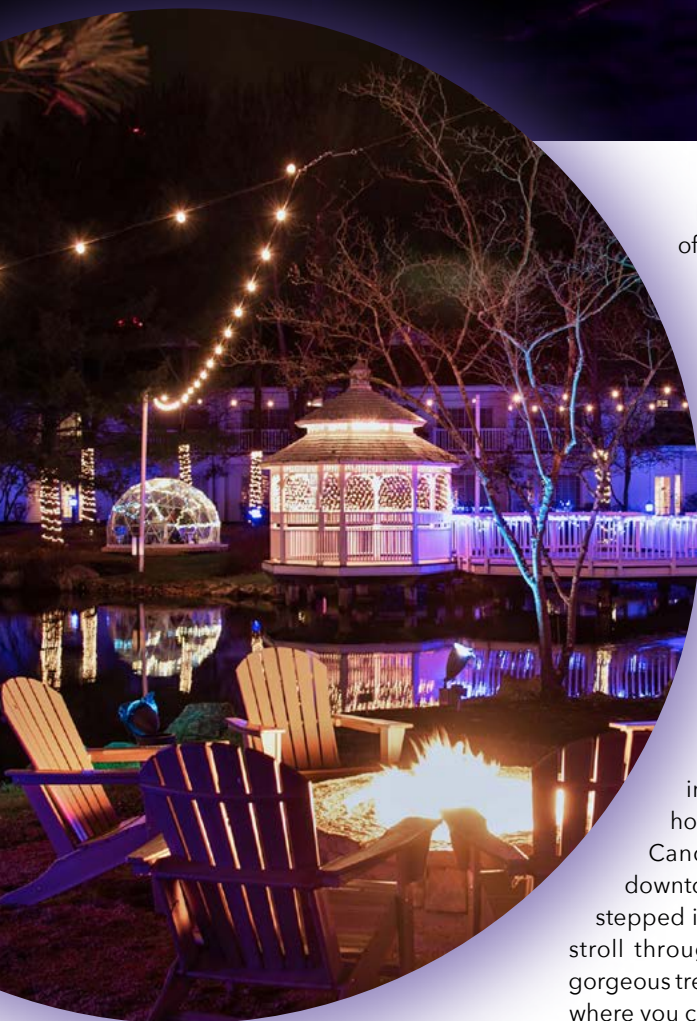


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A Holiday Wonderland in **Licking County**

By Sadie Stringer



It's the most wonderful time of the year again - Christmas. Boasting the largest number of Christmas tree farms per capita in the state of Ohio, Licking County, which should from here on out be known as Ohio's penultimate Christmas County, is back at it again with fun filled events for the entire holiday season. Two cities in the heart of Licking County, Granville and Newark, are leading the festivities.

On the first Saturday in December, Granville will host its 38th Annual Christmas Candlelight Walking Tour in downtown. You'll feel as if you've stepped into a Hallmark film as you stroll through the streets lined with gorgeous trees from nearby local farms, where you can also cut down your very

own picturesque tree. Local businesses and collectives along Broadway and Main Street will feature various activities, such as mailing letters to the North Pole and taking pictures with the main man himself, Santa Claus. Local breweries and coffee shops will also be joining the festivities with classic winter drinks to keep your body and spirits warm as you peruse the pop-up European-inspired craft market sponsored by the Granville Area Chamber of Commerce. You can purchase this year's commemorative ornament to remember all the fun you had on the Walking Tour frolicking through downtown from several local shops.

Also, near Granville this year will be the return of the new and wildly popular igloo dining series brought to you by the Cherry Valley Hotel. Who needs to travel to the Arctic Circle when you can get those scenic views right here in Ohio. Cherry Valley Hotel's "Winter Glow Experience" offers an absolutely delicious prix fixe menu featuring in-



It wouldn't be the holidays without Christmas movies; that would be like Halloween without Jason or New Year's Eve without a ball drop. One of the most quintessential holiday movies, *Elf*, departs the silver screen and makes its way to your hearts in stunning fashion. This December, the Weathervane Playhouse in Newark will step outside of their usual summer season to bring audiences *Elf the Musical*. If smiling is also your favorite, bring yourself and your buddies to watch Buddy the elf journey from the North Pole to bustling New York in search of his estranged, naughty-list native father, Walter. Will they be able to help Santa - I know him - save Christmas? You can see Buddy's venture through the land of swirly twirly gumdrops to the "Big Apple" December 19-29. Don't forget to get the world's best cup of coffee beforehand.

season accouterments and stunning views of the ponds, waterfalls, and decorative lights along their botanical gardens, all while staying warm and cozy cuddled up with your holiday boo in the heated igloo. The experience will be available for reservations Wednesdays through Sundays, and don't forget to post your pictures basking in the winter

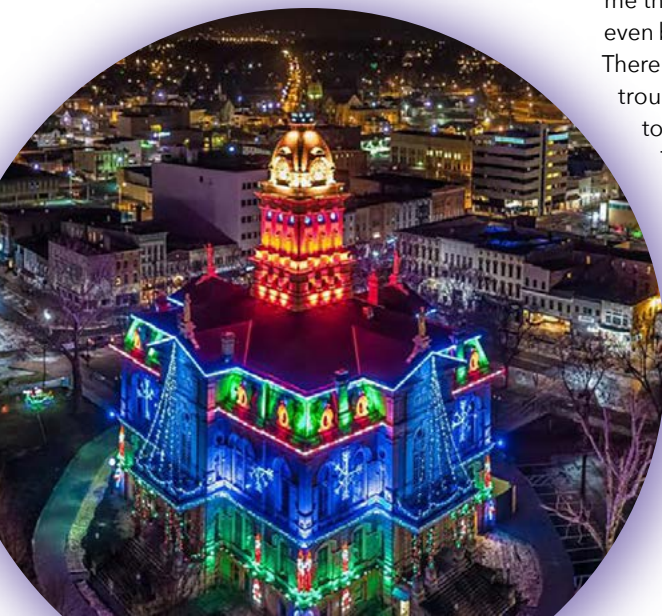
glow for a chance to win prizes from Cherry Valley Hotel.

Not to be outdone by Granville, Newark will play host to this year's 75th Annual Licking County Courthouse Lighting. Each year, thousands of people flock to Newark's downtown the evening after Thanksgiving to watch as Santa and city officials light up the county courthouse, and this year a little elf told me that it will be an event to remember, even bigger and flashier than years prior. There will be live music and performance troupes stationed around the square to enhance the festive atmosphere.

The courthouse square and streets surrounding it will be blocked off so viewers can enjoy as the area lights up for Christmas. Just a few blocks away, Canal Market District will be open that afternoon for patrons to browse local artisan crafts and goods all while supporting the revitalization of their community.

There's something superbly magical about trees and snow during the holidays, which is probably why flocked Christmas trees are so popular. Where else is there to go for an immersive nature experience than Dawes Arboretum? Spanning 2,000 acres with over 5,000 plant species, Dawes Arboretum does the holidays right with their annual Winter Wonders Walks on December 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, and 16 where you can explore their grounds under the decorative lights complete with an appearance from Santa Claus. Continuing through December will also be their wreath making classes and their "Preschool Storybook Science" series where families can enjoy a fun and educational experience exploring areas of the Arboretum. Stay tuned to their website and Facebook for information on all upcoming events.

In the heart of Ohio, you'll find the heart of the Christmas season. From courthouse lightings to Christmas trees, Licking County has what you need to feel the holiday spirit. Stay on the nice list and visit Granville and Newark this winter.



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LOOKING FOR THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT



By Leo Jennings

At Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA), we've spent the past year observing our 25th birthday. During our "SARTAversary" we spent hundreds of hours and traveled thousands of miles to talk to and thank the thousands of people who travel with us each week, community leaders, and the general public for supporting us since the first passenger took the first trip on December 1, 1997. Since then, millions more have climbed aboard, taken a seat, and enjoyed the ride. And here's something we're really proud of: riding doesn't cost much more today than it did back then.



As our Silver SARTAversary celebration draws to a close, we want to shift gears and focus on the road ahead and the exciting projects we're undertaking as we begin the next quarter century of providing the safe, affordable, convenient, and reliable service that has made SARTA one of our community's most trusted and valued assets.

So, take a moment to take a journey with us into the future of public transit--a future that will make using

SARTA to travel to and from thousands of destinations in Stark County and beyond easier and more enjoyable than ever before and enhance the quality of life in our region, our state, and our nation.

Let's start our trip with a look at the state-of-the-art transit technology that is improving our user experience today and will make it even better tomorrow--beginning with exciting new ways to pay our low, low fares.

We were among the first systems in the nation to offer the EZfare mobile ticketing app and full implementation of SARTA's SCORE card fare payment system is near the goal line. Both use "tap and go" validators that make riding as smooth and seamless as a newly paved road.

While we're talking EZ, we must mention EZConnect, the innovative project that will provide one-call/one-click centralized reservation, ride scheduling, dispatch, and customer relations services for transit systems across the state from an ultra-modern call center located at SARTA's Gateway Boulevard facility.

And there's more to come, including a new, tech-driven point-to-point on demand service powered by VIA that will be like Uber only better because it will be operated by the transit experts Stark County residents know and trust: SARTA.

The future is equally bright for the award-winning sustainability programs that have removed thousands of tons of dangerous emissions from the region's air over the past decade. In addition to constantly expanding its fleet of zero emission vehicles, the system and its visionary CEO Kirt Conrad are playing a lead role in the effort to convince the U.S. Department of Energy to cite a clean hydrogen hub in a four-state region that includes Ohio. Along with hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding, the hub will attract billions in private investment, spur clean energy R&D, create thousands of good-paying jobs, and ensure that Stark County benefits from the hydrogen-powered economy of the 21st Century.

We have much, much more in store for the years ahead--more than this space can accommodate. To keep up with everything SARTA, we invite you to add www.sartaonline.com to your favorites bar and visit us often on the web--it will be well worth the trip.

Happy SARTAVERSARY!

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Wrap the Holiday Season in a Little MEDINA COUNTY MAGIC

Warm sweaters? Check. Thermos filled with hot chocolate? Check. Trusty four-wheel-drive "sleigh" with plenty of horsepower? Check. You're all ready for a great holiday excursion! But where to go? This year, treat the family to a grand tour of beautiful Medina County. Within daytrip driving distance of Cleveland and Akron, Medina offers that rare combination of small-town coziness and big-city flair.

Christmas Every Day

Start your expedition at Castle Noel, 260 South Court Street, Medina, Ohio 44256. Touted as America's largest indoor, year-round Christmas entertainment attraction, Castle Noel has the world's largest privately owned collection of Hollywood Christmas movie props and costumes. Guaranteed to put you in the holiday spirit.

Ready to refuel? Enjoy the cuisine at one of Medina's many eateries, like Miss Molly's Tea Room, 140 West Washington Street, Medina, Ohio 44256, where the Victorian age is deliciously on display on a menu replete with pastries and other fare. Or brush up your Irish brogue and raise a glass at Gandalf's Pub & Restaurant, 6757 Center Road, Valley City, Ohio 44280. If you're looking for some holiday cheer, visit Medina County wineries, including Filia Cellars Winery, 3059 Greenwich Road, Wadsworth, Ohio 44281, and Jilbert Winery 1496 Columbia Road, Valley City, Ohio 44280.

Shop Til You Drop

Next, find that perfect present at one of the many boutiques, gift stores, specialty outlets, antique shops, or fashion emporiums found throughout Medina County.

You can also take part in several candlelight walks. The City of Medina and A.I. Root Candle Company will host the annual

Medina Candlelight Walk November 17-19 around Medina square. This three-day affair annually attracts up to 40,000 people and includes holiday light displays, the lighting of the Christmas tree in Medina's lovely gazebo, fireworks, a parade, and much more.

Likewise, Wadsworth, Ohio, holds the Wadsworth Candlelight Walk on November 17 starting at 5:30 pm. You can take a horse and carriage ride, watch the Christmas tree lighting ceremony, visit Santa, view ice sculptures, win the raffle and sample the delicacies they offer. You can also attend Christmas in the Valley, an annual holiday festival including a parade held in Valley City, Ohio, December 9-10. Say "Hi" to Santa in his horse-drawn carriage!

To end your day, retire to one of Medina County's welcoming B&Bs or hotels to recharge your batteries for tomorrow's fun. The award-winning Spitzer House Bed & Breakfast, 504 W Liberty Street Medina, Ohio 44256, features private baths in all guest rooms. Or try Reutter's Roost Bed & Breakfast, 2267 Columbia Road, Valley City, Ohio 44280. Nestled in a 1913 Queen Anne style house with a wraparound Victorian porch.

Start planning your holiday getaway today. Download our visitor's guide at visitmedinacounty.com.





Experience Medina County Magic this Winter

Stroll streets lined with boutiques, cafes and restaurants, all adorned in holiday lights. Heat up your evenings with one-of-a-kind attractions and events that will renew your sense of wonder. And then get cozy and unwind at any number of comfortable hotels, bed & breakfasts and beautiful home rentals.

Start planning your trip and check out these holiday attractions and events.

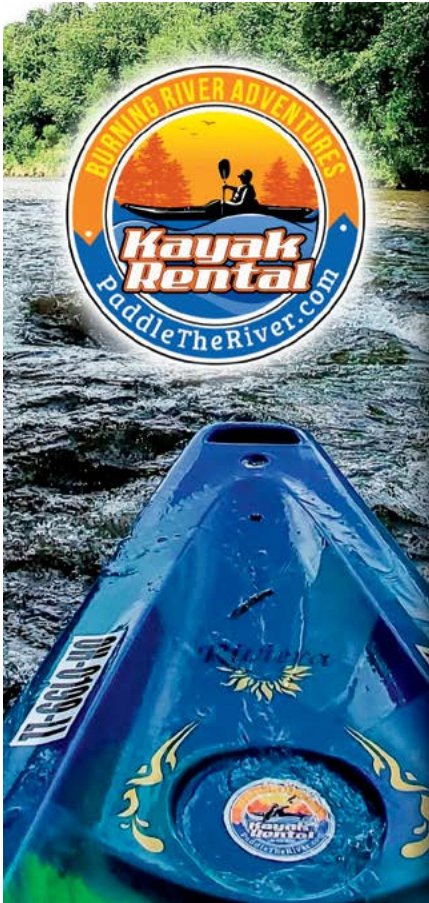


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A photograph of a runner's legs in mid-stride, wearing black shorts and green sneakers. In the background, other runners are visible on a paved road. The logo for the Pro Football Hall of Fame Race Series is overlaid on the bottom half of the image. The logo features a stylized building with a dome and the text "PRO FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME CANTON OHIO". Below the logo, the text "RACE SERIES" is written in large red letters, followed by four black boxes containing the race distances: "10K", "5K", "6K", and "13.1". At the bottom, the text "2024 RUN / WALK - HALLOFFAMERUN.COM" is written in white.

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Laughter in the Pines

WITH A FAMILY'S QUEST FOR THE PERFECT TREE



By Trish Mann

In an era where convenience rules and we can order anything from a gourmet meal to a holiday decoration with the tap of a screen, the tradition of cutting one's own Christmas tree feels like a delightful detour from the norm. It's an experience that offers an enchanting blend of nostalgia, family bonding, and the beauty of nature. For many, the pilgrimage to a Christmas tree farm and cutting down a tree is more than just a festive ritual; it's a cherished, time-honored tradition that symbolizes the very spirit of the season.

Today is the day. The Saturday after Thanksgiving, when my family gathers to get our Christmas trees. The excitement is palpable as we bundle up, drive to the countryside, and trek through rows of evergreens, searching for the perfect tree.

The perfect tree. That idea has caused some lively discussions as we all have our own idea of what that ideal tree looks like. Is it tall and conical? Or is it short and stout? And to this day, the whole family does not agree which style is "perfect."

The journey itself, often accompanied by holiday tunes on the radio, is reminiscent of simpler times. Festive preparations were more than just a transaction but an act that involved time, effort, and love. Watching the landscape change, noticing the first signs of snow, and catching glimpses of evergreen forests build anticipation.

Upon arriving at the tree farm, the crisp, refreshing scent of pine, fir, and spruce welcomes us. Pure and natural, this scent is often far richer than any store-bought Christmas tree air freshener—the smell of the forest, winter, and countless holidays past. To this day,



that fragrance alone can bring back memories - of past Christmases, loved ones, and childhood days spent in wide-eyed wonder.

Our numbers have grown over the years as siblings have married and kids have come along. But the tradition has only grown just as the family has increased. The kids wearing reindeer antlers or Santa stockings scamper through the trees, with squeals of joy and laughter echoing among the pines. Grownups reminisce about their childhood memories, knowing all too soon that the years will fly by, and those same children now laughing will share their memories.

Cutting the tree is a ritual in itself. There's something profoundly satisfying in the act. It combines manual effort and the high point of the day's search. All the kids want a chance to help cut the tree down. The sound of the saw, the feel of the bark, the gentle fall of the tree, and the triumphant cheer that often follows are all part of the day's joy. However, it isn't just

about the tree. It is so much more - sipping hot cocoa, warming hands by a makeshift campfire, sharing cookies or treats brought from home, and sometimes even the playful snowball fights - all add to the magic. More than anything else, cutting your own Christmas tree is about togetherness. It is a tradition that is as old as the Christmas tree itself.

Tree farms are scattered across Ohio, from The Young Christmas Tree Farm in Yellow Springs, The Farms at Pine Tree Barn in Wooster, Howling Pines Christmas Tree Farm in Chagrin Falls, and many others. Many tree farms also offer hayrides, wreath-making

workshops, and carolers, enriching the experience. There is bound to be one by you. To help you find one near you, visit ohiochristmastree.org to see a list of tree farms, advice on the different types, and how to care for your tree once you get it home. There is an interactive map and database by location at www.pickyourownchristmastree.org.

As the sun began its descent, casting the sky in hues of gold and crimson, the tree was securely tied to the roof of our car. This day was more than just searching for the perfect tree; it was the laughter, shared memories, and creating new ones. The children, cheeks flushed from the cold, recounted their adventures, each claiming their tree was the most magnificent of them all.

By the time we reached home, stars had begun to twinkle in the winter sky. We unloaded the tree and set it up in the living room's corner. As we began decorating, each ornament told a story, and each light string brought warmth. The tree stood radiant, glowing with fairy lights, adorned with memories, and crowned with a vintage homemade star. We gathered around, cups of hot cocoa in hand, and marveled at its beauty, each silently reliving the journey to bring this symbol of nature and tradition into our home.

That evening, as my children nestled under the tree, looking up at its twinkling lights, a realization settled among my husband and me. Today wasn't just about a tree. It was about preserving a legacy, intertwining the old with the new, and celebrating the season.

It doesn't matter if your memories are like a Hallmark movie or a spin on *The Griswolds* in Christmas Vacation or if you visit, cut your tree, or buy from a lot. What makes the season special is spending time with the ones you love. *Merry Christmas!*

A Holiday Guide to the New River Gorge

Article Courtesy of the New River Gorge CVB

Cross Off Your Holiday Shopping List

Before you can kick your feet up and enjoy the festivities that this month brings, be sure to mark off all the names on your holiday shopping list. Luckily, shopping the local businesses in the New River Gorge is equally productive and fun.

From fine art and antiques to outdoor gear and apparel, the New River Gorge is a one-stop shop for everyone on your list. Peruse through West Virginia-inspired artwork and handmade



jewelry, hunt through a wonderful lineup of antiques, then browse eclectic boutiques for a stylish gift.

Or go big this holiday season and surprise the thrill-seeker in your life with the gift of adventure. With whitewater rafting, mountain biking, aerial adventures and rock climbing. Make this year one to remember with a gift certificate for their favorite outdoor activity.

If you still can't decide on a foolproof gift from the Gorge, buy a Love Local Fayette County eGift Card that can be used at many participating businesses in the area.

Savor the Tastes of the Season

If your shopping works up an appetite, stop by one of the tasty restaurants in the New River Gorge. From charming cafes scattered across hip foodie towns to iconic chains that are around every corner, the local flavors of the New River Gorge are part of what makes the area so unique.

Warm up with a gourmet espresso drink at one of our countless coffee shops. With seasonal flavors like peppermint mocha, gingerbread and sugar cookie, allow your tastebuds to usher in the holidays first. Whether you are in the mood for an early bird breakfast, Instagram-worthy brunch, on-the-go lunch or a date night special, there are plenty of festive fares to go around.

Explore the Winter Snowscapes

The adventures in the New River Gorge are year-round. From zip-lining through the snow-covered canopy to taking in the sweeping views on a wintertime hike, discover the incredible beauty that each season brings to the Gorge.

Wintertime transforms the Gorge into a treasure trove of unseen beauty. Beat the winter blues and head out on a snowy hike. Spend a day exploring the snow-covered forest and dozens of frozen creeks at Babcock State Park. End your day at Babcock with a photo of the frosted Glade Creek Grist Mill.

For a short trek that is easily accessible, hike the Park Loop Trail. The loop is just over a mile long and begins at the Town Park in Fayetteville and includes a connection to the Fayetteville Trail.

For more family-friendly hiking options, check out the White Oak Rail Trail or easy trails located in the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve. Looking for a winter waterfall tour? Check out our favorite frozen cascades.

Want a more adventurous activity? Soar through the sky on a zipline trip. Immerse yourself in nature and get an incredible view of the icy wilderness from above. ACE Adventure Resort, Adventures on the Gorge and River Expeditions all offer aerial trips throughout the winter months.

Enjoy Seasonal Events

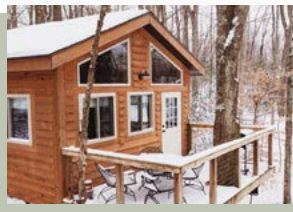
There's always something going on in the New River Gorge, especially around the holidays. Grab the kids and bundle up for local Christmas parades in Montgomery (December 2), Fayetteville (December 3), and Oak Hill and Ansted (December 10). Escape the hustle and bustle of the holidays and enjoy a getaway with your family at Fayetteville's Gingerbread Festival on December 3. The festival includes breakfast with Santa, a craft show, an art holiday sampler, a gingerbread decorating contest and more.

Limber up for Active Southern West Virginia's Winter Wonderland Fun Run/Walk on December 4 at the Fayette County Park. And of course, don't forget about the park's Holiday Light Display, which runs from December 1 through December 30 from 6 to 10 pm. Find more upcoming events on our calendar.

Stay Cozy

Escape to the Gorge this winter and recharge after a day of adventure at one of our cozy and convenient accommodations. From charming cabins and vacation rentals to hotels and bed-and-breakfasts, our lodging options range from rustic to luxurious and are suitable for groups of all sizes.

All the accommodations in the Gorge come with a wide range of amenities. From hot tubs and fireplaces that keep you warm on chilly nights to high-speed Wi-Fi to keep you connected, find all the luxuries you may need here. Plus, take in the beauty of winter and enjoy all the comforts of home while staying in the Gorge. Many lodging partners are even running discounted rates or specials so be sure to call and ask about seasonal deals. Find the perfect lodging for your upcoming trip.



Make this holiday season one to remember with a winter getaway to the New River Gorge. Request a free travel guide to start planning your trip or check the website NewRiverGorgeCVB.com for more information.

EG Gorge



Spend a weekend exploring the snow-covered forest and the frozen lake at Babcock State Park in the New River Gorge. The state park is home to miles of scenic trails, cozy cabins and one of the most photographed structures in the state — the iconic Glade Creek Grist Mill.



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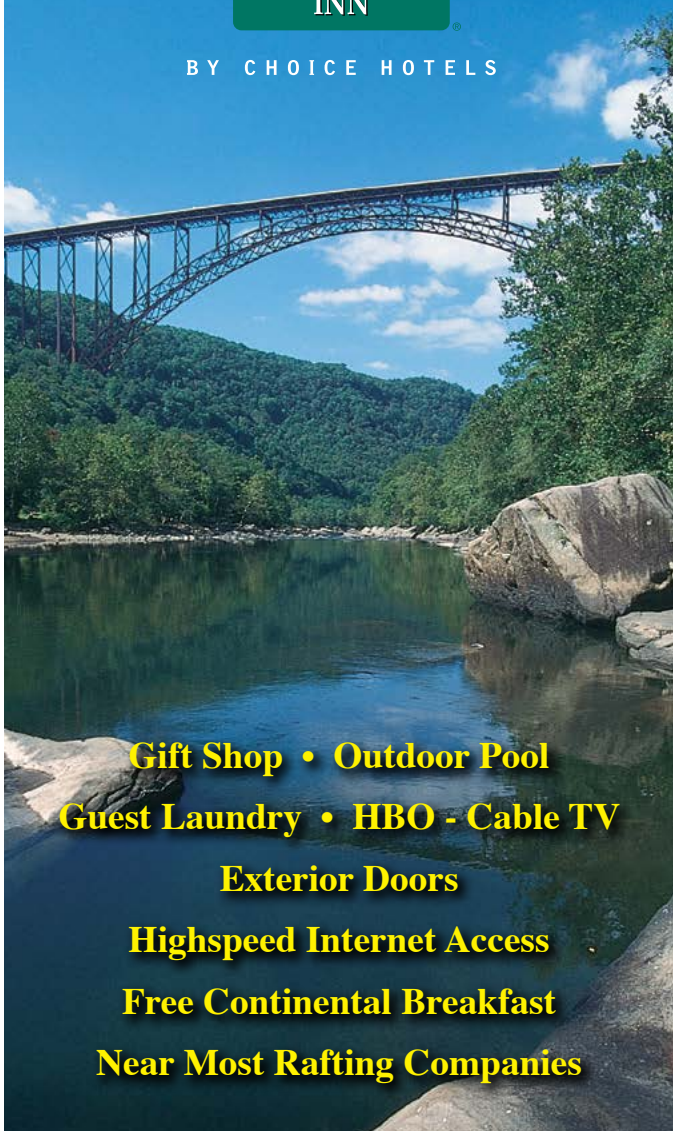
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Photo credit: Linda Stager

FROM Victorian Festivals TO Shiny Brights: *Christmas in Potter-Tioga*

By Trish Mann

Once upon a time, in the charming Potter-Tioga region of Pennsylvania, the magic of Christmas was in the air. Events and festivities were about to unfold in festive cheer. As the sun rises on December 3, Main Street in Wellsboro transforms into a Victorian Wonderland for "Dickens of A Christmas."

The air fills with the scent of roasted chestnuts and children's laughter. Vendors in elaborate period attire offer their wares – handmade crafts, tempting food, and cozy quilts that seem to whisper tales of bygone days. Strolling street performers dazzle with their acts, and as if by magic, musicians and carolers appear, serenading the crowd with familiar holiday tunes.

Rumor has it that even Scrooge might make an appearance. Whether he'd arrive with a "Bah, humbug!" or a newfound love for the season remains to be seen. And, of course, Santa himself is expected to make an appearance, ready to illuminate the town with the annual tree lighting ceremony. The joy in the air is palpable, and even the most hardened hearts can't help but be swept up in the nostalgic revelry. The festive holiday season continues the following week for "Christmas on Main Street."

The historical significance of Wellsboro's connection to Shiny Bright Ornaments, which has graced countless Christmas trees across America for decades, is celebrated with pride. Local shops showcase the unique bulbs that can only be found in this charming town. Once lovingly crafted at the Corning glass plant, the story of

these ornaments resonates with visitors as they stroll through 30 historical displays that tell the tale of shared joy and simpler times. It is a poignant reminder that the most ordinary objects can hold extraordinary significance and unite communities.

However, the festivities don't stop there. On November 25, the "Mansfield Home for the Holidays" event starts with a heartwarming afternoon gathering. Families flock to The Mansfield Foundation to meet Santa Claus himself. Laughter echoes through the air as children whisper their wishes, and a sense of shared nostalgia envelops the scene.

As the sun dips below the horizon, the crowd migrates to Smythe Park, where an enormous Christmas tree stands tall and proud.

The countdown to the tree lighting brings a hush over the gathering, broken only by the sweet harmonies of a chorus group singing carols. Hotdogs and music add to the merriment. The event encapsulates the essence of coming together as a community, creating memories that will warm hearts for years.

And so, in magical Potter-Tioga, these three distinct Christmas events weave together a tapestry of joy, nostalgia, and unity. The streets come alive with the spirit of the season, reminding everyone that no matter the era, the traditions, or the ornaments, the true magic of Christmas is in the moments shared with loved ones and the warmth of the community. For more information on these and other area events, go to www.visitpottertioga.com.



Photo credit: Linda Stager



Photo credit: Linda Stager



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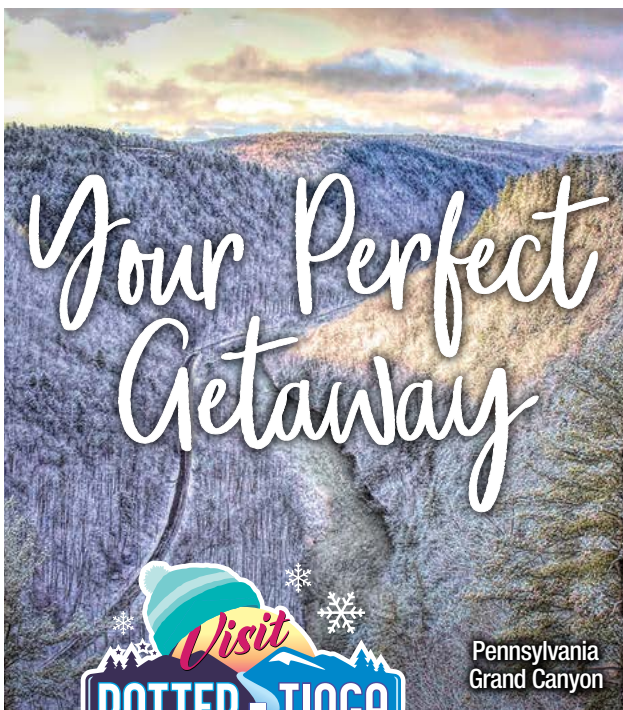
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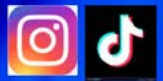
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— By Lynee Bixler —

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As you board at the Akron Northside Station, prepare to be whisked away on a 90-minute, 26-mile round trip filled with sheer joy and holiday spirit. Departures are available at 5:00 pm and 8:00 pm from November 8 through December 21.

The train itself is adorned with Christmas trees and festive decorations that sparkle and glitter in every corner. The atmosphere is filled with wonder as you settle into your personally selected seats; there's something for everyone on this magical ride. Every moment is infused with Christmas magic, leaving you awestruck at every turn.

Kids of all ages are encouraged to wear their pajamas, adding an extra touch of whimsy to the journey. Imagine the delight on everyone's faces as they embark on this unforgettable expedition to the North Pole.

But the excitement doesn't stop there. After everyone has boarded and settled in, children can write a letter to Santa, pouring out their hearts' desires. And guess what? The onboard Postmaster will ensure it's personally delivered to Santa's workshop at the North Pole! It's an experience that will leave every passenger feeling like they're part of something truly special.

And fear not, Santa keeps a watchful eye on his nice list throughout this unforgettable journey. You may just find yourself rewarded with a special surprise for your impeccable behavior.

So, gather your loved ones and immerse yourselves in this treasured family tradition. Let the Christmas carols fill your ears as you sip hot chocolate and savor a delicious cookie along the way. Prepare for an adventure unlike any other, one that will ignite your holiday spirit and create memories that will last a lifetime.

The North Pole Adventure™ is more than just a train ride; it's an opportunity to create cherished memories and embrace the true spirit of Christmas. Embark on this extraordinary family tradition that will leave everyone feeling merry and bright. To reserve your seats, visit <https://www.cvsr.org/npa-info/>.





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Oglebay's Festival of Lights is a Delight for all Ages

By Trish Mann

The holiday season is upon us, which means everything and everywhere is getting all gussied up in their finest string of lights and brightly colored baubles to celebrate the season in style. But nowhere is this truer than at the Oglebay Festival of Lights in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Returning for its 38th year, the 6-mile drive is entertaining young and old with enchantment and magic through more than 100 lighted displays across more than 300 acres, making it one of the country's largest illuminated shows. As spectacular as the drive is, there is so much more to the Oglebay Festival of Lights. This year, take time to step outside the car and experience Oglebay's wonder, joy, and spirit.

Reflections on Schenk Lake was introduced last year and wowed the crowds with its delightfully lit candy canes dancing around the lake's perimeter. In the center stands a 15-foot-tall, animated globe set to music. Guests staying at Wilson Lodge on one of the package plans will take home a commemorative ornament resembling the enchanting globe.

The Hilltop greets visitors with a 70-foot-tall tree encased in LED lights and set to music. Encircling the tree are pathways decorated with more than 150 hanging baskets, flowers, and trees, all with twinkling lights that lead to the animated light show at the Oglebay's Mansion Museum, where guests can tour the inside and enjoy 13 historical rooms adorned in holiday splendor. Outside the Carriage House is where you will find the life-size nativity. This crowd favorite depicts the scene of the Messiah's birth, mesmerizing guests with its depiction in intricate detail.





The Levenson's Shelter hosts the family-friendly Winter Carnival. Children love taking rides on the snowflake express train. Wagon rides are always a big hit. New additions this year include an ice rink with skate rentals, a decorated Christmas Tree Trail, and a 32-foot climbing wall. Various food concessions are available and include freshly made doughnuts. Don't forget to get a warm cup of hot chocolate. It's not a holiday without a hot mug to chase away the winter chill.

Oglebay's Good Zoo is the place to be if you love snow. Every night, there is a Wish for Snow experience, and even if you don't love snow, there is so much going on here that you won't mind a little of the white stuff. A riveting Holiday Laser show is held inside the Benedum Theatre/Planetarium,

accompanied by B.E. Taylor and Brad Paisley music.

The zoo encompasses over 30 acres of woodlands and features more than 50 animals. The Good Zoo is the perfect place to enjoy animals like the two-toed sloth and the red river hogs up close. At the same time, a rocking Holiday Light Show keeps the party going on the outdoor patio with 40,000 LED lights choreographed to music legends like Led Zeppelin and the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. Make sure to visit between 6-8 pm. The big man in red also likes to stop by for pictures with the kids.

Route 88 Burgers and Brews is the place to be if you are hungry. Open all year, their signature-style burgers and New Jersey-style rippers (deep-fried hot dogs) served with a craft beer or a delicious malt will tackle any appetite.

Jingle All the Way is Oglebay's dinner show, offering a more intimate experience. Enjoy performances of classic holiday songs and stories while relaxing and enjoying a delicious meal. Shows run Thursday through Sunday during the Festival of Lights season. Call 877-436-1797 for a full schedule and to purchase tickets.

The Speidel Christmas Shop at the Speidel Golf Club offers holiday decor, apparel, and unique gift items for your shopping pleasure. While The Carriage House at The Hilltop is where you will find stunning handmade glassware.

Some are made right on the property. Among other delightful finds are Fiesta Tableware, Oglebay's famous hyacinth flowers, and beautiful items from Boise Glass (Idaho), Mosser Glass (Cambridge, Ohio), and Blenko Glass (Milton, WV).

Each year, over 300,000 visitors from all over the country will drive through the Festival of Lights, many returning year after year to enjoy the splendor and thrill of Oglebay.

Guests receive over \$500 in coupons redeemable at various attractions at Oglebay and Wheeling Park through 2024, including a complimentary one-night stay, free green fees, ski lift tickets, and dining specials for a \$30 donation at the Festival of Lights ticket booth. The suggested donation helps keep the lights shining bright for visitors all season. The Festival of Lights runs from dusk to midnight from November 9 through January 8, 2024.

The holiday season is a time for family, friends, and making beautiful memories. Fill your car with your closest people this year and visit the Oglebay Festival of Lights. It encompasses all the beauty of the season while inviting guests to linger over hot chocolate, listen to some carols while enjoying thrilling light shows set to the music, and simply slow down and savor time with those you hold dear and experience all the magic Oglebay has to offer. Check out www.oglebay.com to begin planning your holiday memories.



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Discover Unique Holiday Treasures at

Studio's Arts & Glass

By Candy S. Collins, BS

As the holiday season approaches, the search for the perfect Christmas gift begins. Instead of giving something like another tie or gift card, shop for your loved ones at Studio Arts & Glass in North Canton, Ohio. This charming studio and gallery offer a unique holiday shopping experience that will make your gifts stand out.

Studio Arts & Glass is renowned for its exquisite, handcrafted glass art. When you choose gifts from this studio, you are selecting pieces that are meticulously crafted by skilled artisans throughout the United States and Canada. Each item is a work of art, ensuring your gift is a unique and thoughtful expression of your appreciation.

You can find various items to suit every taste and style, whether looking for elaborate jewelry or delicate glass ornaments like red birds, angels, bells, and more. This variety guarantees you can find the perfect gift for everyone.

From November 3 to November 22, there will be an open house where you will marvel at the Christmas Wonderland room.

There are several beautifully decorated trees on display. Each one will include various elements, such as snowflakes and Santas. Hand blown glass balls are a popular choice for tree ornaments and are often used throughout the new year as home décor.

During the open house, shoppers may enjoy up to 20% off their purchases and receive complimentary gift wrapping. The best part, besides finding the one-of-a-kind gift, is beating the holiday rush.



In search of personalized creations? Whether you desire custom front door decorations, stained glass suncatchers, stained glass images, etc., the studio embraces custom requests. However, planning ahead and placing your order is crucial to ensure your item arrives in time for the holiday season.

Studio Arts & Glass boasts a rich history of over four decades of crafting exquisite and one-of-a-kind glass pieces. Their specialty lies in creating stunning stained-glass windows. Their work grace churches, businesses, restaurants, and finer homes across the United States. They have notably undertaken expert restorations, including commissions from the Ohio State House and Frank Lloyd Wright's home.

For additional details about the studio's store and upcoming events, visit their website at www.studioartsandglass.com. To stay current about their classes and special offers, follow them on Facebook at facebook.com/Studioartsandglass. They warmly welcome tour groups but request you call ahead and schedule your visit.



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IT'S A NUTCRACKER CHRISTMAS IN STEUBENVILLE

By Judy Bratten

There's nothing like visiting a local Christmas event to get into the holiday spirit and Steubenville, Ohio has one of the best for you.

Since 2015, the town transforms into a Christmas wonderland. Its main feature is the Steubenville Nutcracker Village. Starting with just 35 life-sized original nutcrackers depicting characters from literature, art, music, and entertainment, the collection has grown each year, and with the addition of 5 new nutcrackers this season there will be over 200 on display 24/7 throughout the historic business district on 4th Street from November 24, 2023 through January 6, 2024.

All the nutcrackers are designed and produced locally by the creative elves at Nelson's of Steubenville. From the members of the *Rat Pack* to the characters of the *Nutcracker Ballet* and a huge variety of figures from history and the professions, the nutcrackers provide excellent opportunities for making family memories and taking selfies. A map and contest for finding the Nutcrackers will be available to involve all the family. Check the website www.steubenvillanutcrackervillage.com.

The community has developed other attractions to add to the event including a Holiday Market and Christmas at the Fort. Set up under a canopy of lights and music in Fort Steuben Park, the weekend Market offers gifts, décor, and foods of the season. Choirs and singers entertain and two scale model trains chug-chug around the 32' Christmas Tree while St. Nicholas strolls among the visitors. Lights and music in the "forest of animated trees" in Fort Steuben Park add to the fun. The 18th century Historic Fort Steuben is open for tours at a nominal fee. Inside the Visitor Center, there is a model train village on display, a show and sale by local artists, and the Fort Gift Shop stocked with holiday items as well as books, toys, and souvenirs. See the website www.oldfortsteuben.com.

The downtown streets are decorated with 25 live Christmas trees with a tree decorating competition for local non-profits that viewers can vote for. Students from the local schools have decorated store fronts to enhance the holiday spirit. The Jefferson County Courthouse glitters with a holiday light show on Friday and Saturday evenings. Hayrides and Trolley Rides will carry visitors around the historic downtown and City of Murals.

The Public Library of Steubenville & Jefferson County offers a Nutcracker Storywalk among the trees and nutcrackers on 4th Street, so visitors can search for pages and enjoy a seasonal classic while they walk.

The Children's Corner on 4th and Market Streets will be open on weekends with free crafts, games, performances, and photos with Father Christmas. A Sanctuary Garden with a beautiful Nativity creche will be located at St. Paul's Episcopal Church.



Leonardo's Coffeehouse on N. 4th Street will have a Museum of Classical Christmas Masterpieces displayed on their 2nd floor. North 4th Street will also be the site of the German Gluhwein Garden, where visitors can sip on mulled wine and bask in Bavarian charm. Other shops along the street will have special holiday sales and offerings.

No holiday event is complete without a parade and the Steubenville Sights and Sounds of Christmas Parade will process down 4th Street at noon on December 2 with bands, dancers, and floats to celebrate the season.

Another popular way to join the fun is to participate in the Saint Nicholas Day Lantern Parade. St. Nicholas and companions will begin at First Westminster Presbyterian Church and lead lantern-bearers, bellringers, angels and mortals to the Creche at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, singing hymns and spreading the joy of the Christmas season.

Other holiday events include Christmas concerts and music workshops, a Nutcracker Ball, a Nutcracker Tea Party, and a Holiday Hike at Beatty Park.

For information on these as well as lodging and dining options in Steubenville, contact the Steubenville Visitor Center by phone (740.283.1787), email info@visitsteubenville.com, or stopping by 120 S. 3rd Street, Steubenville OH 43952.



By Vicki VanNatta

Ohio Star Theater in Sugarcreek has been given the opportunity to present original Sight & Productions on their stage. The 2024 season will begin with the powerful story of Ruth. The musical score, dialogue, and script will be provided by Sight & Sound and brought to life on the Ohio Star Theater stage. More information and tickets for Ruth are available online at www.ohiostartheater.com.

For 2023, Ohio Star Theater has a fantastic lineup of holiday entertainment. Be sure to check out their entire schedule and make plans now for a trip to Sugarcreek.

Combine live entertainment with dinner at Dutch Valley Restaurant, and shopping at Dutch Valley Gifts and Dutch Valley Market, and you have all the ingredients for memory making.

At Ohio Star Theater, the season of celebration begins November 9 with the musical *The Christmas Tree Ship*, running through December 30. The holiday months are peppered with a variety of concerts and special events. Scheduled concerts include The Hoppers, Dailey and Vincent, River City Brass, a Trans-Siberian Orchestra Tribute, and more. See the entire schedule and purchase tickets online at www.ohiostartheater.com.

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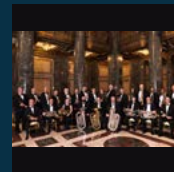
The Hoppers Christmas
November 30



Dailey & Vincent Christmas
December 1



It's a Wonderful Life Radio Play
December 2



River City Brass Christmas Brassstacular
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An Amish Country Christmas

By Trish Mann

Amish country's allure is timeless, but its communities become even more enchanting during the Christmas season. With over four decades of visits, I've seen this region evolve into more than a destination for famous Troyer's Bologna or exceptional cheeses. While these favorites, various crafts, and local products persist, there's a new world to explore here, especially during the magical holiday season.

As the air turns crisp and farm work takes a pause, the shops and towns adorn themselves in Christmas finery. The atmosphere buzzes with holiday anticipation, creating an exceptional experience. While the Amish and Mennonites remain an integral part, the region's offerings have diversified. Beyond traditional favorites, a tapestry of boutiques, eateries, entertainment, and lodging adds a dynamic layer to the rural landscape.

In the heart of Walnut Creek lies *befearless*, a boutique that marries art and fashion, showcasing contemporary brands like Crocks and Fossil while empowering patrons to discover their

distinct styles. Venture to Sheiyah Market, where a repurposed farm barn has blossomed into a haven for everything from coffee and pastries to home goods and garden decor. An enduring personal favorite, my visits always yield exciting decor and gifts, often requiring multiple trips to the car to carry my finds. A trip to Millersburg calls for a visit to Three Feathers Pewter, a workshop/gallery renowned for unique gifts perfect for your Christmas shopping list. Offering lead-free pewter treasures that merge the decorative with the functional, this emporium's silhouette-cut Christmas ornaments are especially popular. Amid your explorations, leave room for captivating holiday events. Walnut Creek brings to life the "Journey to Bethlehem" on December 1-2 from 4-8 pm. This immersive experience weaves the Nativity story through seven engaging stops, offering personal encounters with biblical figures and fireside chats with shepherds. Experience a live nativity parade in Berlin on August 24, followed by candle lighting and caroling on the square in Berlin.



For entertainment seekers, the Amish Country Theater is a haven for tribute performances, original comedy shows, and foot-tapping variety acts. This season, revel in the award-winning holiday tribute to Kenny and Dolly or treat your family to the hilarity and harmonies of the 3 Redneck Tenors Xmas Spec-tac-yule-ar show. These classically trained tenors toggle between laughter and stunning melodies, but the theater is bustling year-round with diverse performances. Don't miss the schedule—visit the Amish Country Theater for details. Venturing to Sugarcreek, The Ohio Star Theater is your year-round destination for gospel performances, comedic showcases, and musical spectacles.

Amish Country's homestyle food is an unmissable delight for newcomers—there's nothing like it, from succulent oven-roasted chicken to melt-in-your-mouth roast beef. But if you think that's all the culinary scene offers, you're in for a tasty surprise. While cherished staples like Mrs. Yoder's in Mt. Hope and Boyd & Wurthmann in Berlin continue, contemporary dining options have also emerged. Rebecca's Bistro in Walnut Creek is the place for omelets, homemade soups, sandwiches, tea, espresso drinks, and smoothies. Historic Downtown Millersburg is home to The Cider Press, a treasure trove for those seeking bright, crisp, hard ciders paired with a refreshing dining experience. Focusing on seasonality and local sourcing, The Cider Press crafts dishes that honor the palate and the region's fare.

Amish Country might not be the first place that comes to mind when thinking about breweries and wineries. However, the region has quietly cultivated a scene that blends tradition with modern craftsmanship. From Breitenbach Wine Cellars, known for its Dandelion Wine, to Millersburg Brewing Company, breweries and wineries in Amish Country have found a unique niche. Each offers visitors a chance to savor handcrafted beverages amidst picturesque farmlands and rolling hills.

Visiting Amish Country is an experience that keeps giving, offering a blend of tradition and charm that captivates visitors.



And what better way to fully immerse oneself in all this region has to offer than by extending the stay for a night or two? The diverse range of accommodations ensures that every traveler can find the perfect haven to complement their journey. Whether it's a whimsical treehouse, a snug and rustic cabin, a charming bed and breakfast, or even a luxurious hotel, the options are as memorable as the experiences they facilitate. These retreats provide a restful sanctuary, ready to rejuvenate weary explorers for another day of sightseeing, shopping, and embracing the timeless allure of Amish culture.

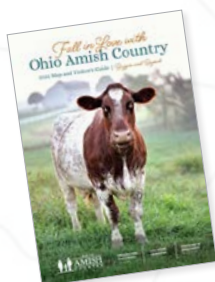
From distinctive shopping to heartwarming entertainment and mouth-watering dining, Amish Country's Christmas season offers experiences rich in tradition and innovation. Whether savoring classic flavors or exploring new delights, this region's holiday spirit is a treasure waiting for you to discover. To plan your next trip, visit www.visitamishcountry.com or call 330-674-3975 for more details on all the fun and exciting things to do and see in Amish Country this Christmas season.



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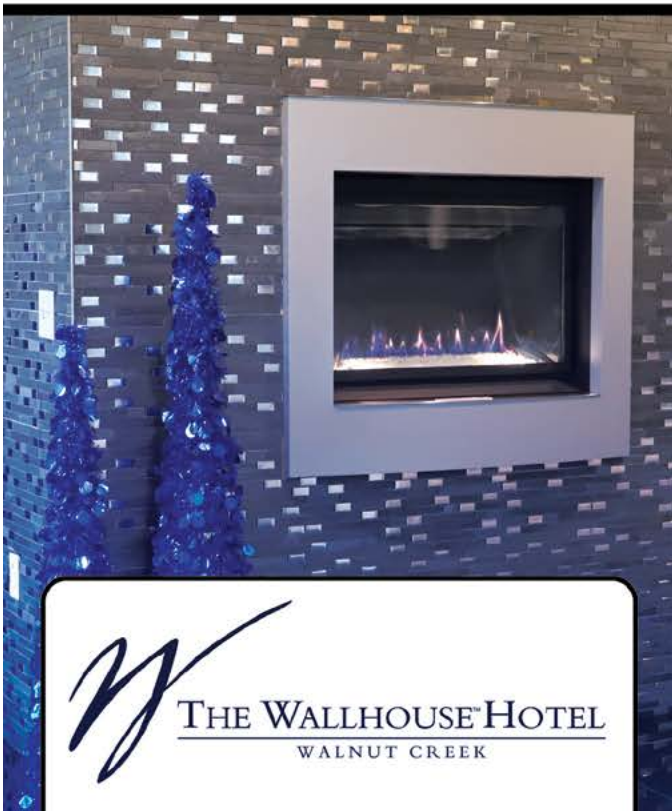
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Celebrating the MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS in Zanesville, Ohio



By Candy S. Collins, BS

Zanesville, Ohio, is a charming city that truly comes alive during Christmas. With its rich history, beautiful landscape, and a warm sense of community, Zanesville offers a wide range of festive events and activities that make the holiday season special. Whether you are a resident or planning a visit, Zanesville's Christmas events will fill your heart with joy and holiday spirit.

"Christmas is a special time of year for families and friends to reconnect and make heartfelt memories," said Kelly Ashby, Director of Visit Zanesville. "We encourage those memories to be made right here in Muskingum County - shopping, exploring, riding a horse-drawn carriage, viewing the Christmas Lights, attending the holiday shows at Secrest, and so much more. Enjoy the magic of the season in Muskingum County."

The annual Christmas parade will start the holiday season featuring colorful floats, storybook characters, marching bands, and Santa himself on Wednesday, November 29, at 6 pm. It is a joyous event that brings the community together and fills the streets with laughter and holiday cheer.

Make sure to pause and appreciate the downtown sights of Zanesville, including Ohio's only 26-foot LED ornament tree.

A visit to Santa's House is a must for families with young children. This enchanting experience allows kids to meet Santa Claus, share their Christmas wishes, and take photos. It is a heartwarming experience that creates cherished memories for children and parents. The Santa House is outside the Secrest Auditorium from 5:30 - 8 pm on December 1, 2, 8, 9, 16, and 22.

As you stroll through the streets, enjoy the carolers and horse-drawn carriage rides (December 8 and 15). Be sure to make a delightful detour to Zane Landing Park to capture a captivating holiday light display. Cap off your evening with mesmerizing courthouse music and a light show.

For more festive fun, consider participating in the Storybook Christmas Gingerbread Contest hosted by the Muskingum County Fairgrounds. You can also embrace the winter spirit by enjoying ice skating and mingling with cheerful Christmas characters as they roam the downtown streets on December 8 and 15.

Reserve your seats for the Holly Jolly Trolley Ride scheduled for Friday, December 8. Enjoy a leisurely ride through downtown Zanesville and Zane Landing Park, where you will have the pleasure of admiring the beautiful streets, storefronts, and parks. Reservations are required and pickup and dropoff will take place at the Muskingum County Senior Center.

The Senior Center will also be holding a craft show, offering a variety of vendors and DIY crafts options suitable for families, children, and individuals to either take home or enjoy right there at the center.

Sign up for the Storybook Christmas 5k and 1-Mile Fun Run on Saturday, December 2. This year brings a new course winding through the beautifully decorated downtown Zanesville, adorned with festive Christmas lights and holiday decorations. The first 250 registered participants will receive a custom finishers medal and a race day swag to commemorate this joyful event.

Come and enjoy the magic of Christmas in Muskingum County, where the spirit of the holidays is alive and thriving. For more information, visit www.visitzanesville.com.

LUMINOUS TRADITIONS...

SANDUSKY COUNTY COURTHOUSE'S ROCK & AWE HOLIDAY LIGHT SHOW!

Every year, as the days grow shorter and temperatures drop, communities across the United States come alive with holiday spirit, transforming their neighborhoods into magical wonderlands of twinkling lights and festive decorations. Fremont, Ohio, has carved out its own unique niche with the "Rock & Awe Holiday Light Show." This is a fully immersive light show that synchronizes over 20K lights, choreographed to beloved holiday songs, creating a breathtaking visual feast. From cascading waterfalls of light to intricate patterns that seem to come alive, the courthouse is transformed into a radiant canvas that tells a story of holiday joy and merriment.

This free show will run nightly from Thanksgiving Eve to New Year's Day, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, Sun-Thurs, 6:00 pm to 11:00 pm, Fri & Sat. This show is a collaborative project between the Sandusky County Visitors Bureau, The Sandusky County Chamber of Commerce, the Sandusky County Commissioners and our premier sponsor, Croghan Colonial Bank.

There are also wonderful restaurants, boutique shops, pubs and sports bars and of course, a beautifully decorated downtown district.

SANDUSKYCOUNTY.ORG/calendar.

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THE *Wildest* HOLIDAY LIGHT DISPLAY AROUND

By **Doug Miller**, PR & Content Coordinator, Akron Zoo

Lions and tigers and Santa, oh my! The Akron Zoo is lighting up the holidays with more than one million lights during this year's family favorite event, Wild Lights presented by Akron Children's Hospital. Guests will see everything from fun animal displays to a Rockin' Lighted Spectacular set to holiday music.

Wild Lights at the Akron Zoo is a tradition like no other in Northeast Ohio. Festivities kick off the day after Thanksgiving on November 24 and take place every weekend until December 29.

Holiday lights aren't the only reason to celebrate the holiday season at the Akron Zoo. Stop by Mrs. C's Sweets for s'mores and other treats, take a picture with the man in the big red suit and hang out with some other holiday characters, like the Grinch.

Wild Lights is fun for the whole family, which means adults too. Buy a glass of beer or add an adult jolt to your hot chocolate or coffee. Oh yeah, and guests will be able to get nose-to-nose with more than 1,000 animals from around the world!

Putting on an event like this is no easy task. It requires meticulous planning and takes months to set up. Planning for the next year's event begins almost immediately after Wild Lights ends, and some conversations even begin while the current show is already going on.

Once the displays are planned, the set up begins. Crews begin setting up

lights at the end of August and ramp up in September. After all is said and done, the team spends more than 5,000 hours stringing up the lights. This doesn't include time spent checking every strand once they are up. The team does this every single morning to ensure all of the sets are looking their most "merry and bright."

The best part about Wild Lights is seeing all of the new displays each year. "We have exciting new changes coming to the show this year including a change to our hill display and some great new photo opportunity areas," said Senior Facilities & Grounds Manager Amber Acord. "I don't want to say too much though, but it's going to be great!"

So, grab your coats, mittens and scarves because Wild Lights at the Akron Zoo is going to be a "beary" good time. We'll see you there!





Visit GREENE COUNTY



Greene County has your holiday spirit all wrapped up...

Greene County is a natural if you like to have fun. You have a wide selection of outdoor activities to choose from. Everything from the region's best hiking and biking trails, plus thousands of acres in protected park lands and reserves. Experience some great holiday fun when you visit Historic Clifton Mill and downtown Yellow Springs.

Historic Clifton Mill's – Legendary Christmas Light display will definitely get you in the holiday spirit. The display runs from November 27th through December 30th. Four million lights decorate the mill, gorge, water falls and the grounds.

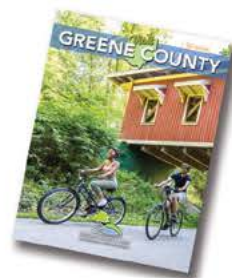
The Village of Yellow Springs – Offers the shopper a unique and unexpected experience with over 50 specialty shops, boutiques, and galleries. Finding that one-of-a kind special gift for that special someone on your list is easy in Yellow Springs.

Mills Park Hotel – is newly constructed Victorian style hotel with 28 rooms located in the heart of Yellow Springs. The gorgeous historic design and luxurious feel gives you the best of over-night stays. The hotel is decorated with window wreaths and lights on the outside and a huge Victorian decorated Christmas tree in the lobby.

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Holiday Wonders of Clermont County

By **Candy S. Collins, BS**

As winter whispers its first chill, Clermont County, Ohio, transforms into a festive haven, becoming the epicenter of holiday celebrations. Imagine a place where nature's serenity meets the sparkle of a thousand lights, where the joyous melodies of the season fill the air, and every corner offers a new adventure waiting to unfold.

From captivating pathways to icy delights, various experiences beckon locals and visitors. Step into this winter wonderland and embrace the magical charm.

And what better way to truly immerse yourself in the season's spirit than by marking your calendar for November 1? That is when the Cincinnati Nature Center in Milford, Ohio, unveils its unique event, "Light in the Forest."

This winter walking tour showcases a mesmerizing display of seasonal lights designed to evoke feelings of peace, nature, and contemplation. Wander along the 1-mile illuminated trail that guides visitors past captivating ponds, open fields, and tranquil woodland settings.



2.5 miles, this drive-through extravaganza dazzles with brilliant twinkling displays that weave tales of Christmas, enchanting winter landscapes, and jubilant celebrations. Families will be captivated by the region's grandest synchronized holiday light spectacle. Immerse yourself in a radiant sea of over two million lights, dancing in harmony with classic and upbeat holiday tunes. From towering Christmas trees and shimmering snowflakes to twirling candy canes, luminous tunnels, and more, it promises a spectacular experience for visitors, young and old.

For the optimal experience, turn off your headlights, set your radio to 97.5, and let the magic unfold. Nights of Lights welcomes visitors rain or shine starting November 10. And while you are

in line, ready to dive into the luminous world, consider downloading the activity pack in advance. This pack boasts a fun-filled scavenger hunt, writing a letter to Santa, coloring sheets, and a festive crossword. This activity pack, times, dates, and ticket information is available at www.coneyislandpark.com (under the events tab).

Whether it is the whispers of history from the Krippendorf Lodge, the melodies of live music echoing through the forests, or the thrill of skating amidst snowflakes and cinematic delight, Clermont County weaves together traditions and innovations for an unforgettable festive experience.

For more information about Clermont County and all their events, visit www.discoverclermont.com.

This unique showcase features artistic light installations by regional artists from the creative agency OBLSK, renowned for their contribution to BLINK art. The experience is enriched with live music, warming bonfires, festive shopping opportunities, engaging children's activities, and a walk-through of the historic Krippendorf Lodge. For more ticket information and times, visit www.cincynature.org.

Located in Eastgate, the RJ Cinema Distillery Taproom is more than just a cinema and taproom. During the holiday season the venue transforms with a combination of movies and drinks that offer a one-of-a-kind experience. Visitors and locals can indulge in seasonal movies, craft beers, and specially distilled spirits that capture the essence of the holidays. Warm up with hot cocoa or try one of the winter-themed cocktails. More details are available on their website at www.rjcinema.com.

For holiday specials (and year-round deals), download the Discover Clermont Savings Pass to your phone. This digital pass offers exclusive deals and discounts on local establishments and attractions. Whether dining at restaurants, catching a show at RJ Cinema, staying at hotels, or shopping, this app promises significant savings during your holiday adventures.

Coney Island's Nights of Lights is an iconic event. Spanning an impressive





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| 11.22 - Christmas Tree Lighting | 12.10 - Tour of Churches & Christmas Cantata |
| 11.22 - Ice Skating Rink Opening Night | 12.14 - Santa’s Reindeer Night |
| 11.22 - Historic Jail & Museum Tours | 12.15 - Hallmark Holiday Hustle |
| 11.22 - Wind Up Wednesday! | 12.16 - Breakfast with The Grinch |
| 12.02 - Christmas Parade | 12.16 - Little Roaming Train |
| 12.03 - Ball-Caldwell House Tours | 12.16 - Christmas Carnival & Market |
| 12.03 - Wreathmaking Workshop with Wildroot Flower Co. | 12.16 - Old Country Christmas Square Dance |
| 12.03 - Christmas Donkeys at the Ball-Caldwell Barn | TBA - Trolley Rides |
| 12.03 - Tree Remembrance Lighting | TBA - Carriage rides |
| 12.03 - Holiday Tea at the Ball-Caldwell Hospitality House | |

For full information on events, visit us at www.caldwellohio.org/a-village-christmas-to-remember/



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Photo: Leanne Lee



Welcome the Holidays!

IN YOUNGSTOWN

The holiday season is upon us, and the Youngstown area is celebrating with a multitude of special holiday events to put you in a festive mood.

The ever-popular **Memories of Christmas Past** exhibit at Arms Family Museum opens for its 15th season at the Arms Family Museum, 648 Wick Avenue in Youngstown, Ohio. Opening day is Saturday, November 18, 2023, and the exhibit will run through New Year's Eve. The beautiful 1905 Arts & Crafts-style residence of Olive and Wilford Arms will once again be transformed into a holiday wonderland as seven period rooms will feature festive vintage decorations and traditions that will have you reminiscing. The exhibit will also feature a gift shop experience of both new and vintage holiday merchandise.

Holiday hours for Memories of Christmas Past are Tuesday–Sunday,

Noon–4:00pm. Hours are extended for Twilight Thursdays in December until 7:00pm. The museum will be closed on all Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day.

Many holiday events are being held at DeYor Performing Arts Center, 260 West Federal Street in Downtown Youngstown. Mark your calendars for December 1st when **Jim Brickman A Joyful Christmas** comes to town. This Grammy nominated piano sensation will be performing the sounds and spirit of the season. Ballet Western Reserve presents the timeless holiday classic, **The Nutcracker**, on December 2nd at 7:00pm and December 3rd at 2:30pm, complete with The Sugar Plum Fairy, Clara and the Mouse King.

Youngstown's original Christmas Spectacular, **Miracle on Easy Street**, returns to DeYor Performing Arts Center for three performances, December 15-16, 2023 at 7:30pm,

and a matinee on December 17th at 2:30pm. No need to head to Radio City Music Hall—with over 100 singers and dancers, this musical revue is sure to help you catch the holiday spirit! On December 22nd and 23rd, The Youngstown Symphony Orchestra will perform John Williams delightful score live as the holiday classic, Home Alone is shown on the big screen.

Our calendar is packed—Create some new holiday traditions! Visit www.youngstownlive.com/events for a complete listing, or please call 800-447-8201 for more information.



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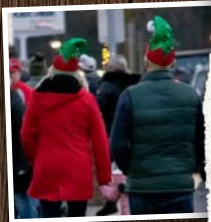


Belmont
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A VILLAGE



CHRISTMAS



TO REMEMBER



IN CALDWELL, OHIO



By Candy S. Collins, BS

As the crisp winter air descends upon the charming village of Caldwell, Ohio, it is time to kick off the most magical season of the year. From tree lighting to parades, petting miniature donkeys to enjoying a New Christmas Carnival, Caldwell is the place to be this holiday season.

Mark your calendars for November 22, when the heart of the historic Noble County Courthouse will come alive with twinkling lights and cheer at 6 pm. The annual tree lighting ceremony is a beloved tradition that officially ushers in the holiday season. Gather your family and friends to watch the Christmas tree come to life, casting a warm glow over the square. This day is also Wind-Up Wednesday, where early bird specials begin at 6 am at businesses around town.

December 2 promises to be a day full of excitement as Caldwell hosts its annual Christmas parade at 6 pm. The streets will be adorned with festive decorations and lined with eager spectators. You can expect colorful floats, marching bands, and a special appearance by the man in the red suit, Santa Claus. Stay for the Buckeye Travelers and carriage rides.

Bring the little ones out on December 3 between 3 pm and 5 pm to visit the Christmas donkeys from White Oaks Farm dressed in their holiday attire. Santa will be joining the fun, too!

For those looking to add a touch of nature to their holiday décor, December 3 offers a unique opportunity for Christmas wreath making with designer Lyndsay Biehl from Wildroot Flower Company. Get creative and craft your own wreath using live flowers and fragrant pine branches. It is the perfect way to infuse your home with the scents and sights of the season. For more information on times, locations, and reservations, visit <https://www.wildrootflowerco.com>.

On December 16, enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast with the Grinch himself from 8 am to 11 am at the Caldwell Fire Department. This is a fantastic opportunity for the little ones to have a fun-filled meal with a holiday character straight from the pages of Dr. Seuss.

If you are in the mood for a more serene holiday experience, consider taking a tour of Caldwell's beautiful churches during the day on December 9. Explore the stunning holiday decorations and soak in the peaceful atmosphere. In the evening, make your way to St. Stephen Catholic Church to enjoy a heartwarming cantata that will truly touch your soul.

December 16 is packed with fun activities for all ages. Lace up your skates and head to the skate party, where you can participate in games and contests with the chance to win prizes. Later in the evening, dance the night away at the square dance with the Buckeye Travelers, a local favorite. An evening of lively music and twirling skirts will put everyone in the holiday spirit.

Also, on December 16, don't miss Caldwell's first-ever outdoor Christmas Carnival and Market. Explore handmade crafts from local vendors, kettle corn, carnival games, and more.

Caldwell is gearing up for a spectacular holiday season filled with cherished traditions and exciting new experiences. For information about all the holiday events, times, and locations, visit www.caldwellohio.org.



Gift Ideas From the Treasures of the Forest Shopping Trail

By Trish Mann

The Allegheny National Forest, situated in northwestern Pennsylvania, beckons visitors with its natural beauty and blend of tranquility and slower-paced way of life. But there is more to see and do just beyond the forests and winding roads. Small towns dot the landscape with their unique charm and character. This holiday season is the perfect time to explore the local shops, bakeries, and galleries that make up the heart of these small towns.

Treasures of the Forest Shopping Trail is a collection of quality retailers throughout the Allegheny Forest Region. Locations and descriptions of the shops are presented in an easy-to-follow holiday map. From any direction, there are numerous fun places to visit and explore.

If you want something unique, stop by Artworks on the Summit in Kane. This co-op of local artists features fiber art, pottery, glass, and many other fine crafts. The Main Street Mercantile in Bradford also offers local artwork, collectibles, and antiques.

A must-stop on the trail is in Smethport at America's First Christmas Store. Established in 1932 at a prior location, the store gained national attention for Doc Johnson's hand-crafted Christmas decorations. Today, visitors enjoy the area's largest selection of Old World Christmas ornaments, snow globes, hand-crafted Christmas decor, and more. It truly is a holiday sensation.

For the outdoor enthusiast on your list, check out Sportsman's Outlet. This family-owned business offers discounted brand-name clothing, kayaks, fishing, and hunting equipment.

Zippo/Case Museum & Flagship Store is an entertaining experience. Interactive displays and videos tell of Zippo's long-time connection with Hollywood and rock music. There is also a display of the world's most extensive collection of rare Case knives, and be sure to check out the brilliant "knife in motion" Audio Kinetic Machine.

For the person with everything on your list, visit CJ Spirits Craft Distillery for a Bloody Mary gift basket or a bottle of Wild's Leek Vodka. The distillery is the only place in the US to find this one-of-a-kind vodka. Fill all your culinary needs with a stop by Jack Bell's Meat

and Poultry. This family-owned country store has been around since 1971 and features sausages, fresh-cut meats, a full line of in-house smoked meats, and many specialty items. Many more retailers and boutiques are just waiting in the forest for you to discover.

Towering trees adorned in frost and a delicate layer of snow capture the season's magic and enchantment of the Allegheny National Forest. This year, take the road less traveled and explore the beauty and serenity waiting just beyond the bend.

Visit www.visitanf.com/visit-our-stores for your Treasures of the Forest Shopping Trail map and plan your visit today.



America's First Christmas Store,
Smethport, PA



Main Street Mercantile
Bradford



Sportsman's Outlet, Bradford



Marilyn Horne Museum Gift Shop
Bradford



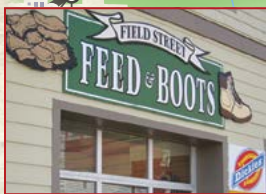
Little Fabric Garden, Bradford



Zippo/Case Museum Gift Shop
Bradford



America's First Christmas Store
Smethport



Field Street Boots
Kane



Jack Bell's Meat Market,
Kane



Flickerwood Wine Cellars,
Kane



Artworks on the Summit,
Kane

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Create
Memories
this Holiday
Season in
**Shores
& Islands
Ohio**

This holiday season, don't stress out over your home decorations, being the best host, or even finding that perfect gift. Instead, relax and expERIENCE the season in Shores & Islands Ohio.

There are a number of community festivals to attend where there are generally kids' activities, entertainment, and local vendors to support. Coming up in December is Port Clinton's Community Christmas, Huron Winterfest, Light Up Vermilion, Lakeside Christmas (no gate fees outside of Chautauqua season), Milan's Hometown Holidays, and Sandusky's Winter Wonderland event at the Jackson Street Pier. The Holiday Market at Gideon Owen Wine Company is an old-world European-style Christmas market and takes place for three weekends, November 24-December 10.

Explore and enjoy a number of local light displays, including several free light shows synced with holiday music. Sandusky's Washington Park is filled with decorations and lights and the adjacent Merry-Go-Round Museum offers a nightly light show on the exterior of its building. Ghostly Manor Thrill Center has a similar show, synced to a radio station so you can enjoy the entertainment of dancing lights from the cozy comfort of your car. Be sure to also drive through the amazing outdoor decorations at the Sawmill Creek Resort in Huron. They offer a "Twelve Days of Christmas" display along the drive from the resort to Mulligan's Pub, where you'll find not only an amazing light show on the exterior, but a fun pop-up Christmas bar inside with special holiday drinks and trivia.

If you enjoy a drive-through light display, the Erie County Fairgrounds in Sandusky offers Lake Erie in Lights, sponsored



by Ability Works, Inc., a holiday drive with more than a million twinkling lights. The display will be open Thursday-Sunday from November 16-December 31. There will also be two weekend Christmas Workshops at the fairgrounds, December 2-3 and 9-10 featuring food, hands-on crafts for children, and community booths. The downtown regions of Port Clinton, Vermilion, and Milan have fun holiday decorations as well, and you can also enjoy browsing the store windows for their unique and festive displays. Milan is particularly interesting because the entire town square is enveloped in classic Edison-style lightbulbs, an homage to the town's most famous resident and inventor of Christmas lights, Thomas Edison.

Instead of throwing money away on gifts that will be unused and end up in your donation pile next winter, consider a holiday getaway where you can enjoy each other's company, create life-long memories, and really relish in the joys of the season. Here are a few Shores & Islands Ohio holiday getaway ideas:

Firelands Adventure Tours - If you've only got one evening to get away, consider letting someone else do the driving and load the gang into Firelands Adventure Tours' secure and relaxing bus, seating 18 passengers comfortably. Nightly Holiday Lights Tours depart from Sandusky's Jackson Street Pier and includes holiday music onboard as well as complimentary hot chocolate and holiday goodies. The tour will take you throughout Sandusky's sparkling light displays - the best the city has to offer.

Great Wolf Lodge - Families, especially those with young children, will delight in the wintertime activities offered as part

of a stay at Great Wolf Lodge during their Snowland celebration. Complete with whimsical décor, daily snowfall showers, and festive activities, families can escape the chilly winter weather and soak up the holiday spirit. Seasonally-themed crafts and story times will be offered, as well as visits with Santa.

Season of Joy at Sawmill Creek Resort - Sawmill Creek by Cedar Point Resorts is going all-out again this holiday season with their festive Season of Joy which includes a number of fun activities both for the young and the young-at-heart crowd. Catch the spirit of the holidays with live music, comedy showcases, holiday decorating workshops, specialty food and drinks and more bringing together the sights, sounds, and tastes of the North Coast.

Wrap up your 2023 with a bow and welcome the New Year at the area's most unique event, the Walleye Drop! Wylie Walleye, a 20 ft. long, 600 lb. fiberglass walleye is dropped from a crane to usher in the new year. The event, also known as Walleye Madness at Midnight, has been held annually since the late 90s. Annually, thousands fill downtown Port Clinton for the evening to enjoy the event that provides a boost to local restaurants, pubs, hotels, and retailers. Live music and DJ's entertain, vendors and food trucks fill the area, and an amazing fireworks display concludes the midnight countdown. The event also includes a kids' early countdown, known as the "Minnow Drop."

So, gather your family and friends together this season and enjoy a couple of Shores & Islands Ohio ways to make Ho, Ho, Ho-liday memories, for sure!

Visit Roscoe Village for Holiday Charm

By Mindy Brems

Take a step away from the hustle and bustle of the holidays on a getaway to Coshocton, Ohio and Historic Roscoe Village, located within a few hours of Columbus, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. It's the perfect hallmark-movie setting to make new holiday memories.

Roscoe Village is a canal-era neighborhood filled with charming historic buildings, many of which were built in the 1830s, but are now home to modern shops, restaurants and pubs. Shops are all locally owned and filled with hand-made items including leather, woodworking, pottery, art and home decor items. Fine jewelry, ladies clothing, farm-to-table and specialty pet items can also be found. Take a break at one of four restaurants for a craft cocktail, specialty coffee, glass of wine or delicious meal.

While exploring the shops and restaurants, guests may also explore the designated Living History buildings on the Roscoe Village Self-Guided Living History Tour, which is available daily from

10 am - 4 pm. Step back in time and hear from the village's residents in their homes and stores. Tickets may be purchased at the Roscoe Village Visitor Center or online at roscoevillage.com.

For more than 50 years, Candlelighting Days has marked the start of the holiday season. "The first Christmas Candlelighting Ceremony took place in

1968," said Roscoe Village

Director Casey Brown, "and has been a yearly tradition ever since." Enjoy a day of shopping and special activities that may include carolers, roasted chestnuts, crafts for kids and visits with Santa, followed by the Christmas Candlelighting Ceremony, which begins at 6 pm in the center of the village.

Gather at the base of the village Christmas tree with friends old and new to remember times past, hear stories, and see the

30-foot tree be lit. The passing of the candlelight from one person to another is magical. As the light illuminates the darkness, so does the sound of *Silent Night*, which is sung throughout the crowd. Following the ceremony, guests are invited to share hot apple cider and cookies prepared by the village's shop owners.

Holiday Packages are available at the Coshocton Village Inn and Suites and include a room, use of the swimming pool and hot breakfast, along with vouchers for pottery painting at RUST, \$25 meal voucher, a Roscoe Village Tour and more. Call (740) 622-9455 to reserve your holiday getaway today.

For details, lodging information and a complete list of shops and restaurants, see VisitCoshocton.com.



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Stroll the brick sidewalks of Historic Roscoe Village and find several restaurants and more than a dozen charming shops, all locally-owned and filled with unique items, many made in Ohio. From handmade leather goods, wrought iron, locally-made American flags, candy, women's clothing, fine jewelry, home decor, wine, coffee and organic treats for your furry friends. Self-guided living history tours are available year-round.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE.

Holiday Packages available!

One night stay at Coshocton Village Inn & Suites, two Roscoe Village Living History Tour Tickets, Two coffee mugs/hot chocolate, \$25 Gift card to Coshocton Supply Co., \$25 Dinner Voucher, \$50 Voucher to Rust Decor "Pop in and Paint" experience.

Available November 1 - December 31, 2023.
Call (740)622-9455 for reservations.

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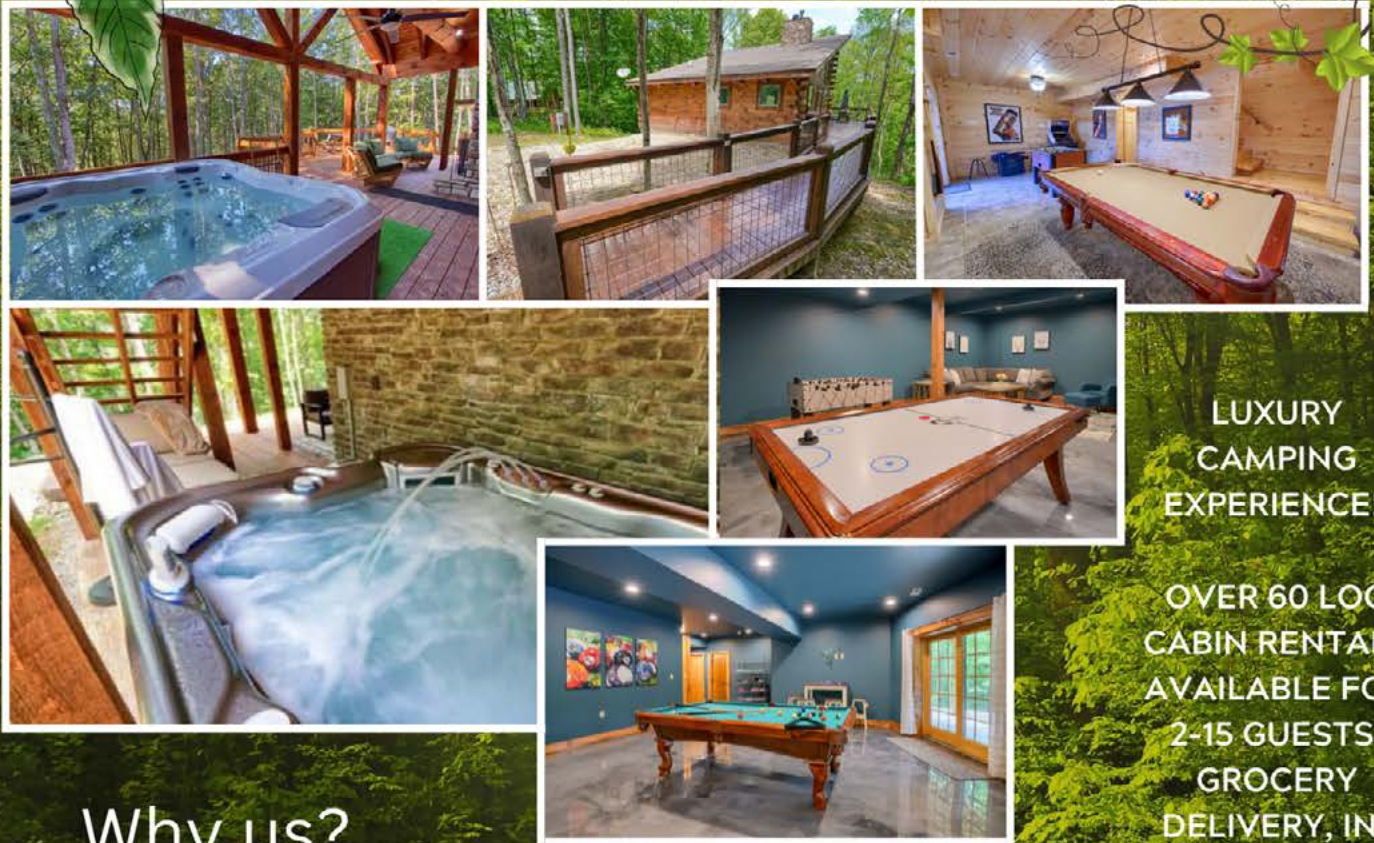

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