

# Southeast OHIO

Summer | Fall 2015

Roadside Attractions  
worth the detour



Rural Doctors  
worthy of recognition

It's a

**STARE DOWN**  
performance

**THROW DOWN**  
at amateur wrestling night



Ohio's **abandoned schools** situation

Marietta's **(smart) home** for the brave  
and much, much more inside...

## Notes from the Editor

It's true that the rolling hills of Southeast Ohio are beautiful, that the people are hardworking, and that we have a lot of farm land. Those facts, however, do not accurately define us.

We are not one collective community, but numerous interwoven groups with distinct characteristics. This issue illustrates such rich variation, and our content takes you from the bedside to the ringside.

"Rural Remedy" (pg. 37) shows when it comes to modern medicine, these Athens County doctors go well beyond the regular call of duty. Caring for a family can involve anything from giving birth control advice to helping a pig give birth.

XWE Pro Wrestling (pg. 21) brings theatrical throw downs to Hocking College. Our vivid story and photographs bring this trip to you.

Indeed, enterprise is everywhere in Southeast Ohio. It is the birthplace of aviation and the business of the sky. "Ohio's Star Power" (pg. 47) illustrates why our state produces more astronauts (20+) than any other.

This issue is a reminder that anything is possible here, and in "Pike County's A-Plant plans" (pg. 13), we consider the property's future prospects and challenges.

At the risk of sounding cliché, our region is, was and always will be, alive with promise. We are astronauts, we are wrestlers, we are rural doctors, and we are Southeast Ohioans.

Happy reading,



Na'Tyra Green, Editor-in-Chief




### MISSION STATEMENT

Southeast Ohio strives to spotlight the culture and community within our 21-county region. The student-run magazine aims to inform, entertain and inspire readers with stories that hit close to home.

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 Southeast Ohio Magazine

### ON THE COVER

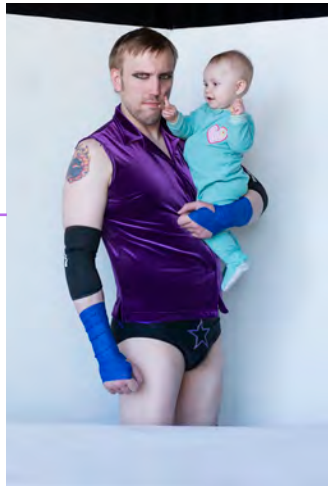
Chris Riley's fans may know him as, "Otto Von Boogiemeister", but his biggest fan, his year-old daughter Savannah, knows him just as plain ol' dad.

*Photo by Royle Mast*

### ON THE BACK

Scenes (and body slams) from a night at the ring.

*Photo by Royle Mast*



# Southeast OHIO

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Staff picks

## "What is your favorite Ohio roadside attraction?"

**Marblehead Lighthouse** Built in 1821, this historic lighthouse still guides the way for sailors amid the sometimes-treacherous waters of Lake Erie. It even made it onto the new Ohio License plate. *-Lucas Dapriole*

**Rendville Art Works**, a working art gallery for developmentally disabled adults located in an historic church in a forgotten coal town that itself has a fascinating history. *-David Forster*

**Jackie O's Taproom** in Athens. Visitors can drink beer from the source and peek into the brewing process! *-Dillon Stewart*

**World's Oldest Traffic Light** in Ashville. *-Alyssa Pasiecznyk*

**Lake Alma** in Wellston. *-Na'Tyra Green*

**Handless Jacques** in Marblehead. *-Dr. Elizabeth Hendrickson*

**World's Largest Basket** *-Will Ashton*

**Portsmouth Flood Wall Murals** *-Ali Shultz*

**Hot Sauce Williams** in Cleveland. Order a Polish Boy. Thank me later. *-Nick Harley*

**Miller's Chicken** in Athens. *-Cassie Fait*

# Growing Once, Growing Twice ... Sold!

The Chesterhill Produce Auction cultivates region's top crops

BY ERIC SINGER | PHOTOS PROVIDED BY RURAL ACTION



ABOVE & BOTTOM RIGHT | Apples, pears, peppers, green beans and sweet corn are just some of the fresh produce that is available at the Chesterhill Produce Auction every week from May-October.

TOP | Prospective buyers inspect the day's available produce during the summer of 2014.

In the mid 2000s, a retired couple by the name of Jean and Marvin Konkle had a vision. The couple had recently retired to the town of Chesterhill in the impoverished, rural area of Morgan County, which was filled with farmers and vegetable growers.

It seemed to Jean that simply selling their products individually at farmer's markets and at stores was not giving the farmers the income they needed. She knew they needed to sell their products in bulk to bring in enough to stay afloat.

She developed the idea of a produce auction. In 2005, the Chesterhill Produce Auction (CPA) was born under a few tents, selling produce from owners of small farms, as well as Amish and Mennonite farmers.

In 2010, a local nonprofit organization, Rural Action bought the CPA from the Konkles, under the conditions that Rural Action would keep the auction moving forward.

"We knew we could really grow the business," says Rural Action auction manager and sustainable-agriculture coordinator Tom Redfern. "The CPA has become another local food institution, one that really stands alone in the greater Athens area in its ability to bring people from all walks of life together."

Fast-forward to 2015, business is booming and it is not hard to see why.

According to a 2014 story from the *Columbus Dispatch*, Rural Action, in the 10 years of operating the CPA, has brought in close to \$2 million in revenue for the local farmers, with business growing each year.

In 2005, the auction worked with about 20 different sellers and 200 buyers, Redfern says, and the CPA grew to over 960 buyers and 121 different sellers in 2014.

"This growth has happened because of committed buyers, sellers, and institutions," Redfern says, "along



**ABOVE** | Craig Ponchak, of Sparling Farms in Washington County, unloads his many crates of tomatoes that are ready to be sold at the Chesterhill Produce Auction. He is just one of over 130 different growers who brings produce to the auction each year.

with a core group of community volunteers who are dedicated to its success.”

A key for the auction’s success is the communication and coordination from the sellers and buyers. The growers meet once a month from November to May to discuss and plan what they will grow and how much for the coming season.

Scanning through the records on the CPA’s website, popular items vary by growing seasons. In May and June, strawberries, flowers and onions are the big draws. In the summer months, corn, blueberries and tomatoes sell fast, and during the late months of the season, peppers, watermelons, squash, and apples bring in the buyers.


While many of the buyers at the auctions are local residents, others are often restaurants and food industry workers, supporting the trend of customers wanting local and fresh items.

One of those is ‘Not Guilty’ food cart owner Jay Wamsley, who had the CPA in mind when he started the cart in 2012.

“That was a part from the start, using as many local products as we could,” Wamsley says. “It’s so doable in a place like Athens. There’s just so many local producers, it would be kind of silly not to use the local products.”

One interesting feature the CPA has is allowing business owners like Wamsley buy produce without even being present the day of the auction.

“They arrange it so that you can place an order, and tell them what you’re willing to bid up to,” Wamsley says. “By the time I get shut down [with the cart], it’s hard for me to get there on time.”

Chesterhill Produce Auction operates on Mondays and Thursdays opening at 4 p.m. from May through October at its location on 8380 Wagoner Road in Chesterhill. 



The scene behind the counter of Circleville's Wittich's Candy Store deliciously blends confectionary eras.

## Keeping It Sweet

Wittich's Candy Store, the country's oldest family-owned confectionary, serves up sugary, salty and tasty delights

STORY AND PHOTO BY NATYRA GREEN

On any given day, in the heart of Pickaway County, the inside of Wittich's Candy Store in Circleville looks like a 1950s ice cream shop and smells like a sugary daydream. On this particular morning, the sweet aroma has a nutty undertone with ambrosial honey perfume. Owner Janet Wittich says she made a batch of honey nougat caramel creams the night before, and those would be cut into edible squares and then dipped in melted dark chocolate. She handed out samples of "undipped" pieces of caramel cream, which tasted delicious and somehow nostalgic, like a sunny afternoon at a grandparent's house. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the homemade Wittich confections are products honed by several generations of practice and passion.

Established in 1840 by German immigrant Gottlieb Wittich, Wittich's Candy Store is believed to be the oldest family-owned and operated confectionary in the nation. From Gottlieb to his son Edward and to his son Frederick and to his wife Frances, the store passed hands until it eventually reached Janet and her late husband, Fred Wittich. Janet continues the legacy and says she runs the business just as her husband and his family did, anxiety included.

"We are trying to keep it going. I would hate for it to close up on our watch," Janet says. "My husband was the same way; he didn't want to be the one to let everyone down."

At 175 years old, Wittich's Candy Store has maintained a constant presence in Circleville. These days, that kind of

track record is more than rare, it's miraculous. Or maybe it's just delicious candy and solid ownership.

"People like it and then it goes down in their families. Their kids come here and then their kids come here," Janet says. "I think there is a lot of tradition, and [the chocolates] taste very good. We try to keep everything the same."

There are no idle hands at Wittich's. Janet and her 12-person team of "chocoholics" labor from morning to night, six days a week to make the best-possible homemade candies. Ginger Sines, a 40-plus-year store veteran and cousin to the Wittich family, is one of the store's "dippers." She and other Wittich's chocolatiers dip candies in chocolate, roast the famous Wittich "house nuts," and make white chocolate buckeyes, among other tasty goodies. There are sugary delights, like 14 cream and caramel varieties in the assorted boxes; there are minty confections, like mint and white chocolate suckers; and there are savory treats like cashew brittle, a Wittich's specialty. Janet and company honor family recipes and incorporate new, chocolaty ideas as well.

"Anything that sits here we are going to try it in chocolate," Sines says. "If we can't sell it, we just try to see what it tastes like. Just anything we bring in; we dip it and see what it tastes like."

When in doubt, dip it in Wittich's chocolate. That is a philosophy everyone can endorse. Wittich's Candy Store provides quality service and quality sweets. After all, if you take sweet in, you put sweet out. 🍫

# Cut and Dry Culinary

How to make your own venison jerky

BY COLETTE WHITNEY | PHOTOS BY CLARE GUCWA

A good, tender piece of jerky, balanced somewhere between sweet and savory can be a superbly satisfying snack. In contrast, a small bag of jerky at the grocery store can be as much as \$10, and there's no guarantee that it will be fresh. Why not avoid that risk altogether and try making your own jerky with this surprisingly simple recipe.

Deer season in Southeast Ohio generally starts in September and ends in February. For many hunters, that means a lot of game. Instead of sticking to the usual venison steaks, give jerky making a shot.

Justin Pettit, a senior at Ohio University, has been hunting for 10 years and he's been making jerky out of his game for just as long.

"It doesn't last us very long when I make it," Pettit says. "My whole family loves it."

Making jerky is a relatively easy process with only four steps to delicious victory. The trick is getting the marinade right and using the correct cuts of meat.

## STEP ONE: FIND THE RIGHT CUT

Pettit says that meat from the leg works best for jerky, as it is a bit too gamey to be made into steaks.

"You have to slice it nice and thin and try to get it even for the strips of jerky," Pettit says. Or, you can invest in a jerky gun, which portions the meat for you. They cost about \$30.

## STEP TWO: MARINATE


Once the meat is prepared, it should be marinated. Pettit says a good jerky marinade for about two pounds of meat consists of a half cup of teriyaki sauce, a half cup of Worcestershire sauce, a third cup of soy sauce, a half cup of brown sugar and hot sauce, salt and pepper to taste, depending on how spicy you want your jerky. Let it sit in the marinade overnight for optimal tenderness and flavor.

## STEP THREE: DEHYDRATE

The next day, place the meat in a dehydrator for four to six hours. If you don't have a dehydrator, put your oven on its lowest setting—usually 170 degrees. Dehydrate the meat, also for four to six hours and check on it frequently.

## STEP FOUR: ENJOY AND STORE

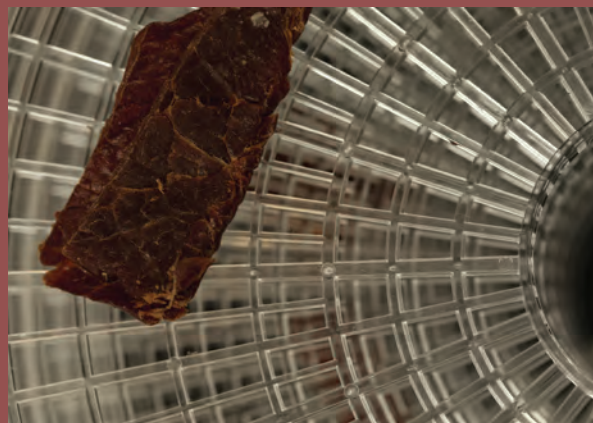
Once your jerky is out of the oven, it is ready to enjoy. If you have any leftovers, place the jerky in a plastic bag with a paper towel to prevent excess moisture and store it in the refrigerator.

That is just one variation of a jerky recipe. Experiment with different rubs, spices and sauce, and even meat. Jerky can be made out of almost any meat, including fish. 



ABOVE | Venison jerky is an inexpensive and delicious way to utilize your game. Make it in a dehydrator or an oven on a low temperature.

BELOW | Experiment with different marinades and types of meat to create new varieties of jerky.





LEFT | Auctioneer Roger Kreis rapidly calls out cattle for sale as Muskingum Livestock General Manager Denny Ruff keeps the cattle moving in the ring.

# Cattle Call

The Muskingum Livestock Auction is big business for Ohio-bred livestock

BY AAREN HOST | PHOTOS BY LUCAS DAPRILE

**R**uminant for a moment on this U.S. Department of Agriculture statistic: Twenty-six billion pounds of beef are produced every year in the U.S.

Muskingum County contributes to this market with its weekly Muskingum Livestock Auction, an event that sells thousands of cattle annually to the highest bidders to be manufactured into beef consumed by carnivores across the country.

The auction itself is a sensory experience. The gravel parking lot fills with trucks of every color. Steel trailers stand empty, waiting to haul cattle away. In the barn, the chorus of mooing cows mixes with the hustle and bustle of the auction.

Fat cattle, ranging anywhere from 1,150 pounds to 1,500 pounds, are sold first. Feeder cattle come next, but their sizes vary compared to their beefier predecessors. Feeder cattle, for the most part, are bought in the hopes of beefing up and being re-sold as fat cattle. They range from as young as three months to a year old at most.

“Feeders, they’ll be any size. They’ll be as small as 200 pounds up to 1,000 pounds. They need fed,” Denny Ruff says, general manager of Muskingum Livestock Auction. “Finished cattle will be big, you know, stout looking. They’ve got to have some fat on them to grade.”

The auction’s livestock comes from Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. But the buyers are usually out-of-state large meat manufacturers. “They come from a long way because we got a good market, so they’re just hauling ‘em a long way,” Ruff says.

Cattle of all shapes and sizes begin to arrive at the auction bright and early on Tuesday mornings and filter in throughout the day and into Wednesday. Workers at the auction have their hands full tagging cattle and coaxing them into pens.

“On any given Wednesday, we move about 2,300 to 2,500 cattle,” Ruff says.

And does the auction move quickly. One by one, each cow enters the ring for auction as the auctioneer rattles off its ideal bovine characteristics. The auctioneer has a job that never seems to cease. In one full breath, the auctioneer in his cowboy hat builds a rhythmic pace that is hard to keep up with. His motor mouth keeps a beat that takes years of practice but is necessary to keep the auction moving and grooving.

“They’re just hollering numbers basically,” Ruff says, unfazed by the fast pace. “There’s a couple of ‘little guys’ who buy on occasion, but usually it’s the big processors buying.”

Livestock sold right out of Muskingum County travels hundreds of miles to make its way onto dinner tables across the U.S. “For the most part, we’re probably the biggest cattle market in the state of Ohio,” Ruff says.

Ruff, who has been at Muskingum Livestock Auction since 1987 and general manager since 1999, is no stranger to the task of caring for and selling cattle. “I grew up on a farm in Fairfield County,” Ruff says. “I just basically started part-time right out of high school.”

Standing tall in work overalls and boots, Ruff has turned his farm upbringing into a career and he knows his business inside and out. “That’s about all I know, livestock,” Ruff says. 🍷



ABOVE | A worker herds feeder cattle towards the front of the barn, ready to enter the auction ring.





LEFT | Ellie's Deli offers fresh produce, Ohio-made snacks and cuts of meat including steak and pork from Ohio's Amish Country.

# Market Forces

Ellie's Deli brings fracking workers and Noble County residents together

BY KALI BOROVIC | PHOTOS BY CLARE GUCWA

Tucked away on the side of Route 78 is a hidden gem that, despite its dark navy blue exterior and green doors, often gets overlooked. But Ellie's Deli, located at 78 Olive Street in Caldwell, is a community staple for the people of Noble County.

The deli's 2013 opening coincided with the area's fracking industry. Named after the owner's eldest daughter, Ellie's Deli's sandwiches and hand-dipped ice cream became a must-have menu, not only for the community's longtime residents, but also for those who may only be passing by for work.

"It's crazy what the oil and gas industry had done to the area," says Ellie's Deli owner Ben Schafer. "Economically-speaking, if it weren't for the oil and gas business in the community, we may be a ghost town."

When fracking industries tapped into Central and Southeast Ohio in 2013, Noble County quickly became a prime location for drilling activity. The fracking of the area's Utica Shale rock formation ushered in an expanding population, and Schafer decided the timing was right to open a food business.

When Schafer began to cater events for the Turner Oil and Gas Properties in 2013, his business took off. And although Ellie's Deli originally offered only pre-made sandwiches, it soon offered made-to-order sandwiches. Today the menu includes hand-dipped ice cream, salads and soups as well.

As a nod to the oil and gas industry, Ellie's Deli offers sandwiches named The Frack and The Pipeliner, along with sandwiches named after Schafer's close friends and family members, such as Claire's Classic and Nanny Kate. The deli's small, eight-person seating only adds to its homey atmosphere.

But Schafer has more than the food business on his proverbial plate. In addition to Ellie's Deli, Schafer is the owner of Ben Schafer Realty, Ed and Ben Schafer Auctioneers and Claire's Corner Fuel Mart, one of the last full-service gas stations in Ohio. Given his diverse small businesses, Schafer says he knew he had to bring in some help when the deli became popular.

"I'll take credit for being the visionary behind it all," Schafer says. "But I saw the writing on the wall that I had to bring someone in who knew what the hell they were doing"

Schafer brought in David Harmon, a longtime friend who was familiar with the grocery and meat cutting industries, and Ellie's Deli continued to expand. From ribeyes to pork chops to chicken breast, the deli now offers fresh-cut meats sold by the pound. Harmon comes in every morning around three or four to get the meat cut and prepared for that day.


Perhaps the deli's success is a word-of-mouth story, as Schafer has not advertised for it, or any of his businesses, in the past year and a half.

Dennis Sutton and his wife are one such example of patrons who stumbled across Ellie's Deli.

"We wanted to try healthy food," Sutton says. "Trip advisor had two great reviews, so we decided to stop."

The deli gets deliveries twice a week, and Schafer takes pride in the fact that most of its products are made in Ohio. He orders meats from Amish Country and tries to sell chips and other snack foods that are made in Ohio.

Serving anywhere from 80 to 100 meals a day, Schafer has plans of possibly expanding locations and doesn't plan on slowing down.

"As long as we take care of people, the money always takes care of itself," Schafer says. "We live by that." 



# Road Reports

## Portsmouth's Bypass Operation

BY ALI SHULTZ | GRAPHIC BY JENNA KENDLE

Construction cost is **\$429** million

Total length is **16** miles

Bypasses **26** miles of U.S. Highway 52 and U.S. Highway 23 though Portsmouth

Avoids **30** traffic signals

Saves a driver an average of **16** minutes

**13,000-14,000** cars a day using the bypass


**7,000** of those cars will be local residents

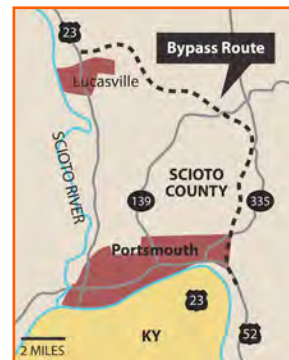
**3,500-5,000** of the vehicles will be truck traffic

That calculates to approximately **1,200-2,000** non-local residents a day bypassing Portsmouth

and a total of roughly **20,000** vehicles using the bypass

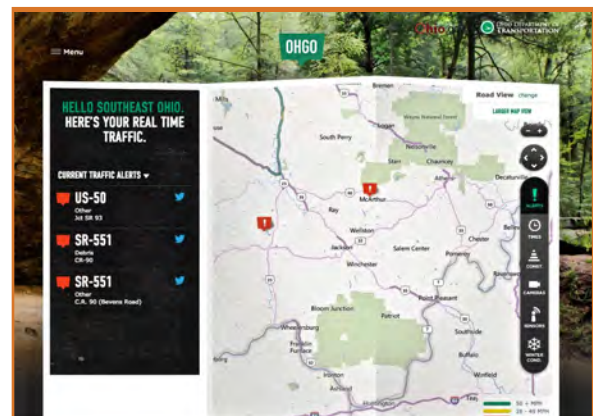
The Southern Ohio Veterans Memorial Highway, a concept first discussed 51 years ago, will bypass Portsmouth in Scioto County. According to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), the highway is the largest project in ODOT history and also the first project to use the concept of public-private partnership, a contract between ODOT and the Portsmouth Gateway Group.

The contract allows the private sector to be responsible for the construction and finances of the project, while the partner is entitled to repay them over a certain amount of time. The highway will provide both easier access to the surrounding area for residents and trucks that are traveling to larger cities. 



LEFT | A map of the Southern Ohio Veterans Memorial Highway project.

BELOW | The Ohio Department of Transportation website offers a realtime traffic map that allows users to search the state by region. <http://www.ohgo.com/dashboard/se-ohio>.



# The Driving Force of Superloads

BY ALYSSA PASICZNYK

Most Southeast Ohio drivers have probably experienced the displeasure of driving disruptions caused by superloads, the gigantic vehicles that haul oversized loads on Ohio highways. To move those enormous loads, the state highway patrol must evacuate the roads to make way. While some see the massive loads as an inconvenience, others acknowledge the delay as a sign of the state's growing economy.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) defines a "superload" as any vehicle or load that is either wider than 14 feet, taller than 14 feet 6 inches or has a gross vehicle weight greater than 120,000 pounds. Like semitractor-trailers, superloads haul a plethora of goods and materials ranging from oil and gas to manufactured products. According to ODOT, more than 63,000 superload permits alone were issued in 2014.

ODOT Public Information Officer Becky Giauque cites 2011 policy changes as one explanation for the increase in superload movement. That year, ODOT decreased the minimum vehicle requirements, which permitted more vehicles to pass through Ohio, instead of routing around it.

Despite the highway closures and inevitable traffic that come with superload moves, Giauque says the department does not receive frequent complaints. "As far as people being stuck in traffic, I think that's a small component of the big picture," Giauque says. "In general, people are pretty tolerant and realize that these loads are moving Ohio's economy forward."

Coordinating a superload move is procedural: Haulers must submit a detailed application of their load, which ODOT then scrutinizes for traffic density, routing and safety to the public. Once the load passes inspection, ODOT determines the necessary equipment needed for safe passage and begins to lay out a timeline for the move. On the day of the move, traffic control must then communicate with State Highway Patrol, local utility companies as well as the hauler to move the colossal load safely through the region's narrow highways.

Superload drivers face different challenges than those associated with conventional trucking. John Scarfo has been a truck driver for 30 years and has worked as a superload driver for Hill Crane for the last 20 of those years. Scarfo says his responsibilities include hauling cranes and making sure his load is secure and meets weight requirements. But unlike some superloads, Scarfo's cargo does not require a highway shut down just a police escort to help maneuver the haul.

Scarfo says the most difficult aspects of driving a superload are navigating detours and maneuvering around sharp



Superload photo provided by ODOT.

corners. He says that parts of Ohio are notorious for small roads and awkward angles. "I like the challenge of it. Being able to move something as big as you're moving," Scarfo says.

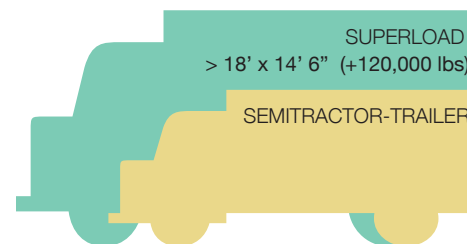
Superload driver Matt Peters echoes Scarfo's love of the challenge, but says the biggest nuisance for him is staying on course with the oversized load. "Sometimes you might have 30 routes just across Ohio," Peters says. "You have to take time and study your route."

Drivers certainly do "take time" to pass through the routes. According to Peters, superload drivers are only permitted to drive about 50 mph, limiting trips to a snail's pace.

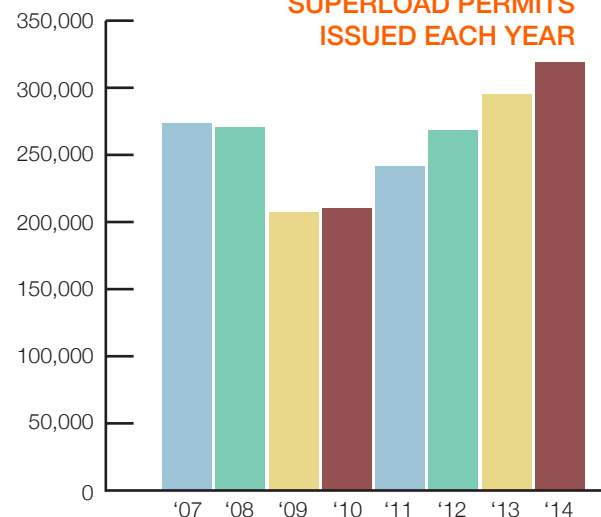
Despite the hassle and headache of transporting over half a ton of materials, both drivers say the most rewarding part of the job is getting from point A to point B.

"I like it a lot," Scarfo says. "I've been going a long time and I really do like it." 🍷

## SUPERSIZE COMPARISON



## SUPERLOAD PERMITS ISSUED EACH YEAR



talking points



# No school left behind?

As school systems construct new buildings, some structures crumble while others find new life

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LUCAS DAPRILE

A bright, red roof seems to float atop the condemned building's ghostly aura. The windows, many of them broken, protect the desolate indoors with metal caging. A sign on the padlocked door warns trespassers to stay out.

Nearby, a lone bulldozer stands silently atop a hill, as if waiting for marching orders.

Throughout Ohio, dozens of old schoolhouses like the New Lexington Elementary School in Perry County await repurposing, remodeling or demolition.

Modern, grant-funded public schools are increasingly leaving much smaller, older structures in their wake largely because schools funded through the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC) come with a stipulation: the old building can no longer be used as a school.

Instead, school districts may sell them to a city to be used as administrative or other government offices, or they may be repurposed as a community center or even a church, says Ohio Department of Education's Associate Director for Media Relations John Charlton.

**LEFT** | The 100-year-old Corning School sits abandoned on a hill in Perry County. The school, closed in 1964, was replaced by another school, which closed in 1993 and later became the Corning-Monroe Civic Center.

Some school districts use OSFC money to simply renovate their buildings. In that case, those buildings can still be used as schools.

And though modern education calls for new technology and updated buildings, in the case of several Southeast Ohio school districts, the construction of new buildings means consolidated districts.

One example is Cambridge Local Schools, which went from seven elementary schools to three in 2003 when the schools consolidated. The merger “Dramatically lowered costs for the district,” says Superintendent Dennis Dettra.

Although Dettra acknowledges that “These buildings are not going to last what the old buildings are going to,” he emphasized the new structures’ adaptability to wiring, broadband and other technological needs.

“We can move walls around. We can change classroom sizes. We can do that relatively easy in our new building,” Dettra says. “In the old buildings, you were drilling through three to four foot of brick.”

Nothing in Ohio law requires school districts to consolidate; some do it because it saves money.

“It’s a local decision based on local determinance: what works best for their community,” says Chief of Media Relations for the Ohio School Facilities Commission Rick Savors.

After Cambridge consolidated its schools, Dettra estimates the school saves about \$150,000 every year from more efficient buildings.

What those modern buildings boast in function they may lack, as some argue, in aesthetics and local history.


“There’s two sides to every story, and there’s two sides to this,” says director of Perry County District Library Melissa Marolt. “You want the best for the children. That’s the bottom line.”

Calling many of those newly constructed facilities “hideous” and “utilitarian,” Aaron Turner documents the fate of Ohio schools on his website, [oldhioschools.com](http://oldhioschools.com). “It’s always after the fact that people wish that they had taken pictures,” Turner says.

Turner says he documents old school buildings for historical purposes, rather than to affect policy changes.

But “There is that subliminal message of ‘these are gone,’” he says.

Turner started his research project while obtaining his master’s degree at Bowling Green State University.

Perhaps not all of those old school buildings are doomed to dwell in obscurity. In the case of the bright red roof atop the old New Lexington Elementary School, it’s new. The owner is staying quiet about plans for the building, but the visible construction equipment, easily mistaken for demolition tools, means that building will stand. 

**For more information about Ohio public school design:**

The Ohio School Design Manual (OSDM):

<http://osfc.ohio.gov/OSDM/2013OhioSchoolDesignManual.aspx>.

“There’s two sides to every story and there’s two sides to this. You want the best for the children. That’s the bottom line.”

Melissa Marolt,  
director of Perry County District Library



**ABOVE** | A new padlock secures the old Corning School in Perry County. The school, built in 1916, was built to replace the original Corning school, which was demolished in 1937.

talking points



LEFT | In 1953, the X-330 Process Building installed its first compressor motor. Two years later, the Atomic Energy Commission acquired the process buildings.

# Regeneration

## The powerful promise of Pike County's diffusion plant transformation

BY DAVID FORSTER

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY PORTSVIRTUALMUSEUM.ORG

For nearly half a century the A-Plant, as it was known by locals, employed thousands of people in a region infamous for its chronic poverty.

Today, nearly 2,000 people are employed to safely decommission it. The Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Pike County, which for decades produced enriched uranium for America's nuclear weapons arsenal and power plants, is now a shuttered relic of the Cold War.

The residents of Pike and surrounding counties, many of whom lost good-paying jobs when the plant shut down more than a decade ago, anxiously hope that new employers will arrive to fill the huge void in the region's economy.

Stephanie Howe is one person working hard to make that happen. Howe, associate director for human capital and operations at Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership & Public Affairs, is leading the PORTSfuture Program, funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. Howe's goal is to identify suitable new uses for the site that can guide the government's cleanup so the real estate can attract new industries.

The first phase of the project was to find out what kind of redevelopment area residents wanted to see. Howe staffed booths at county fairs and visited farm bureaus and civic organizations as she listened to what the people most affected by the plant's shutdown had to say.

What she heard was the closure delivered a devastating blow to a region already struggling with high unemployment, and for those fortunate to since find jobs, few offered similar pay and benefits.

"Everybody wants to see something happen out there," Howe says.

Her job was to listen, but also to make sure the redevelopment ideas were realistic. After rounds of meetings with citizen groups, combined with data analysis and input from national experts, three industries were identified as the most promising: energy, advanced manufacturing, and warehousing and transportation.

Howe is vetting the energy option first to gauge potential interest from industry. She says one idea envisioned by local residents is something along the lines of an energy park, where multiple businesses work on a variety of technologies, such as biofuels, solar and nuclear.

One thing the site offers is plenty of surface area. The old plant, built in the early 1950s, sits on a 3,777-acre parcel near the crossroads of highways 23 and 32. The buildings for the uranium enrichment are so massive they measure in acres. However, some of the existing structures, along with patches of soil and groundwater, are contaminated with radiation, asbestos and industrial solvents. That means tearing down some of the buildings and treating or removing tainted soil and groundwater.

The cleanup effort, funded in part through the sale of leftover stockpiles of uranium, is what currently employs hundreds of area residents. When the market for uranium bottomed out last year, the contractor cleaning up the site warned that without more government funding, it might have to lay off hundreds of workers.

Additional federal funding came through at the last minute, but it is only a temporary fix. The close call prompted a delegation of Ohio's congressional representatives to push for full federal funding for the cleanup effort, which could take at least several decades, saying the process should not be subject to the vagaries of the uranium market.

“Everyone wants to see something happen out there.”

Stephanie Howe, Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership & Public Affairs

In the meantime, Howe said her next step is to determine what the infrastructure needs are for the targeted energy industries. Those findings will be given to the federal government in the hope it can help inform the longterm cleanup plan. For example, if there is something on the site that could be of use and is not contaminated, not removing it will ultimately save time and money.

As for potential new tenants, Howe is hoping that portions of the site can be released for redevelopment as they are cleaned. Her goal is to get at least one big operation on site that will serve as a catalyst to attract others. "It's kind of like a mall," she says. "If you can get those anchors in there—the Macy's, the Nordstrom's—you can get the other businesses." ■

# A Homeland Homage

## Monroe County's hills are alive with European influence

BY NICK REES | PHOTOS BY CALVIN MATTHEIS

Driving around Monroe County's jutting hills and past protruding cliffs of layered limestone, a world traveler might compare the region to Bern, Switzerland.

In fact, the region's geography is exactly what attracted Swiss and German immigrants in the early 19th century. Theresa and Stanley Maienknechts' historical book, *Monroe County, Ohio: A History*, one of very few resources regarding the region, establishes the Ohio River as a migrating point for immigrants.

Much of the Swiss heritage is illustrated today in Monroe County's Salem and Switzerland townships that line the river. Remnants of Swiss and German traditions are evident in the county's architectural style, with Swiss-inspired wood frame houses and farms dotting the lightly populated area. Each home is fastened into the hill's slope and accommodates small residential farms that use terrace farming techniques, or cutting levels into the hillside.

Half bank barns in the county are another representation of the area's rich European heritage. The barns feature carved symbols near the structure's peak, which include small pointed crosses or stars that show religious affiliation and the owner's native language.

"The symbols served as a guide to travelers passing through the area to assist them in locating people with whom they could more readily communicate," the Maienknechts write. The barn's insulation of lath, thin strips of wood, and clay filler is another traditional European building technique.

Lingering Swiss and German influence adorn an array of other area structures built in the 19th century, such as the Salem United Church of Christ, which bears inscriptions in the traditional Swiss-German language.

The Kindelberger Stone House and Barn in Beallsvilles, a private residence, displays the European architectural tradition of building with quarried stone. It is among many Monroe County sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Despite their experience with difficult land, early farmers found the steep terrain problematic and moved away from traditional farming instead utilizing the land for grazing purposes. That transition propelled early settlers into the livestock and dairy industries, a return to their Swiss roots. Dairy farms soon popped up throughout the area.

Early issues of refrigeration pushed German and Swiss entrepreneurs to convert their spoiling milk into various cheeses. Cool, dry cellars with uniform temperature were used to cure the cheese and chill the milk. The entire process was aided by wood and mud plaster walls built by immigrants of Monroe County.

Mary Anne Reeves, who worked for the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, describes the small scale farms as a way of life no longer seen in Ohio. Cows and other livestock lazily peruse the inclines in a manner unfamiliar to most fast-living individuals.

Everything is accomplished at a much slower pace as farmers care for their family plots. "The small hillside farms are a difficult thing [to maintain] but the people are very nice," Reeves says.

A visitor to Monroe County can be transported back to a simpler time by merely viewing an old dairy cellar or religious barn carving. Reeves encourages those intrigued by the area's distinct European heritage to take a road trip along State route 255 and experience it. 🇺🇸

In your neighborhood



The Knowlton Covered Bridge, built in 1887 and recognized by the National Register of Historic Places, is nearly 192 feet long. Although it is the 2nd longest covered bridge in Ohio, its location, a gravel road connecting with SR 26, can be elusive for first-time visitors.





OPPOSITE PAGE | Elman compiled the fears of 180 elementary school students to create a collective fear illustration. Two teachers from McVay Elementary School in Westerville integrated The Fear Project into their curriculum.

“Everyone has fears. And just like anything that’s uncomfortable, if you’re able to talk about it with somebody, it helps.”

Tim  
Fear Project participant

“I do some sketching, and then I just kind of jump in,” Elman says. “It’s almost like this inner compass. I just follow my instincts and come up with something. If I don’t think it’s working, I might cut it up and reconfigure it, but I never start over.”

Elman collects people’s fears either face to face or through an anonymous form on her website, fear-project.com. Although the reported fears range from rare to universally terrifying, Elman says that while illustrating the material, she has successfully separated her own psyche from the work.

“I don’t internalize it. I don’t feel heavy and weighed down. I can’t say it affected me that way,” Elman says. “I feel honored that people would be so open and feel that they can trust me with their fears.”

One of the fears Elman collected came from Tim, a 51-year-old man from Athens. He shared with her the foreboding feeling that he gets while experiencing déjà vu. The quote that accompanies Tim’s illustration reveals his fear that someone may die during his episode.

“I think [The Fear Project] is a very fascinating, creative idea. I’ve never seen anything like it. I can see how it could be beneficial to some people, and I see how it could even take off more so than it has,” Tim says. “Everyone has fears. And just like anything that’s uncomfortable, if you’re able to talk about it with somebody, it helps.”

Last year, Elman collaborated with a group of 180 first and second-graders at McVay Elementary School in Westerville to do a collective fear piece. With the help of two teachers, Elman was given a list of fears that the students reported. She then combined the fears to make one illustration that reflected it all (see illustration, left). As part of the design, she color-coded fears and classified them as physical, imaginary or conceptual.

“I was amazed with what Julie was able to come up with,” says McVay Elementary Visual Arts Educator Katie Wirthlin. “It really solidified what [we] were trying to do in terms of getting the students to really think about things that they were afraid of and to learn how to cope, deal, and move beyond them.”



ABOVE | Elman, in her home studio, adds watercolor to a Fear Project illustration.




LEFT | Elman searches a ball of string for the color she needs to enhance one of her illustrations. Elman’s artwork incorporates many materials to create extra dimension.

Elman also occasionally draws a fear that derives from a national news story. She has illustrations dedicated to the Boston Marathon bombing, the Newtown, Connecticut school shootings, Robin Williams’ death, the Ebola virus, and the killing of Charlie Hebdo’s journalists in Paris.

Today, Elman’s 200-piece series includes pen and ink filled in with colored pencil as well as art that also incorporates gouache watercolors, string and stacked paper to give extra dimension.

Although Elman sells her original illustrations at the Starbrick Cooperative Gallery in Nelsonville, she also offers the customers prints and postcards.

While The Fear Project started as mere table conversation, it now serves a powerful purpose. Elman says participants of the project have expressed positive reactions about seeing their fears illustrated, and many convey gratitude for the opportunity to release it.

And as for the global reach of Elman’s artwork, The Fear Project’s shareable form can help others find solace in knowing that they are not alone. 

in your neighborhood

# New Edition

BY WILL ASHTON | PHOTOS BY JAMES KUEPPER



## Steubenville's BookMarx offers comfort, classics, community and a great story

Step inside BookMarx Bookstore, a double storefront property with event flyers plastered on its front windows, and one might recall a time before free-shipping giants like Amazon took the literary marketplace by storm. Reading couches, placed near the streaming sunlight in the entranceway promises a sanctuary, while aisles of books incite intellectual illumination. Indeed, it seems BookMarx is the kind of store that's a longstanding small-town centerpiece.

Yet BookMarx is a new addition to the town, as the store opened just last December. The idea for BookMarx Bookstore, owned and operated by Peter and Patricia Marx, evolved since 2002 when Peter, an Army veteran and Steubenville native, planned to move back north. Following his passion for literature and reading, he decided to start an online book service. As an online service, BookMarx did fine, but Peter wanted to take it to the next step. He found that when he decided to make BookMarx a more physical domain by opening his own bookstore.

### A CERTAIN AMBIENCE

There's a nice parallel between BookMarx and Peter and Patricia's relationship. Together since 2003, the BookMarx name was incorporated by 2004, back when it was in Atlanta. Peter started BookMarx as a means to sell some books in a pre-Amazon era and soon found it a full-time business. By the time Peter's business transformed, their relationship grew even more serious. Peter continued to work on the book side, while Patricia helped attract customers. It was not

until 2008, however, when they decided to move their work into Peter's original Ohio grounds. He moved his business to Steubenville, while Patricia stayed in Atlanta to continue to sell books online.

Despite an initial boom in business, things did not go well for BookMarx at first. While it attracted some local friends, the bookstore could not drum up enough customer flow to keep the store open. Much like many independent bookstores across the country, BookMarx found its doors closed by the end of December 2012.

"A book store needs a certain kind of ambience," Peter says over the phone. "You can go into any strip mall and open up a store. But it didn't have enough space. It was a bookstore you walk in, and it was shelves and shelves of books."

Thriving again as an online-only resource back in Atlanta with Patricia, BookMarx—the store—was unexpectedly reborn when Peter got a call from Thomas Chmelovski's widow. Tom was a regular customer of Peter's before his passing and the Chmelovskis knew Peter and his love of books and wanted to sell his 17,000 theology books for a reasonable price. The defunct company now housed thousands of antique theology books. They also found an open location in Steubenville. The "stars seemed to align," Peter felt. Peter and Patricia both decided to go to Ohio to bring BookMarx, the store, back.

"We're trying to bring vibrancy to the community as well," Patricia says over the phone. "We want to cater the community. We have an idea, we want to work on that more."

The return of BookMarx Bookstore to Steubenville, however, was not the Marxes' end goal. They want to connect to both the town and the nearby students and faculty at Franciscan University, Steubenville's local Catholic college. Because of that, they are not only back, but also hope to expand. They want to revitalize Steubenville.

### A PLACE WITH SPACE

The biggest change from 2012 to 2014 was the store's location. BookMarx moved down the street from 151 N. 4th Street to 181 N. 4th Street. It is an agreeable location, and while they enjoy their new store, they certainly have bigger ideas in mind. Since its inception, BookMarx remained a homey source to find rare books, CDs, VHS tapes and other assorted items.

But Peter wants to do more than sell pieces of entertainment and resource. He wants to give Steubenville a comfortable source of interconnected activity and kinship. It will utilize the students' desire to find a nice spot to study and unwind and also give older residents the chance to meet together and form their own bonds. Peter hopes to renovate, using some extra space to build an up-and-down stairs fixture to give more room for students to study, while also providing a spot for local authors to read their works and for musicians to perform.

When operating the business, Peter primarily works the book side of things, while Patricia serves coffee and helps manage the store. The store's lovely interior and coffee shop are thanks to her. Peter admits the store would not be what it is today were it not for his wife. She makes sure everything runs smoothly and continues to provide ideas on how to expand BookMarx and captivate Steubenville's revenue.

"Patricia has really been the front-person to put this new store together," Peter says.

Another person to thank for BookMarx's renewed success is Marc Barnes, a Franciscan University senior who founded The Harmonium Project, a student-run organization that works to bring life to downtown Steubenville. Peter saw Barnes and his Harmonium team put up flyers and promotions around local businesses and introduced himself.

After listening to the Marxes' mission, Barnes found Peter and Patricia had similar aspirations and goals in mind

for Steubenville. The three collaborated excessively together over the summer as the bookstore worked on its return. Whether it was setting up the theology room for the store or making an organization system for all of the books in check, The Harmonium Project provided a great deal of help to BookMarx. They do that work because they believe BookMarx can stabilize Steubenville's resurgence.

"I saw in BookMarx a store for revitalization and a source for customers and opportunities," Barnes says over the phone. "I think it's important for a number of reasons. I mainly see it as an active source of hope. It proves local businesses can be profitable and economical, and that gives people inspiration. It also is a real sign of creativity in downtown Steubenville."

While the storeowners are proud to hold such a high number of classic theology books in their collection, thanks to the Chmelovski's family, they have more than such studious books in their quarters. The store prides itself in its wealthy variety of different books, ranging from fiction to how-to texts.

### A WELCOME ADDITION

In the short time they have been in Steubenville, Peter and Patricia connected nicely with their Southeast Ohio quarters. The storeowners extended their good intentions and embraced their feedback and characters. It has paid off handsomely thus far for the business couple, as their reception is warm and accepting.

"They are a very welcome addition," says Susan Probert, president of Steubenville Revitalization Group, over the phone. "I think [Peter has] done a really good job of understanding his market and providing books that meet that market..And it's a great browsing place."

Especially in the post-Amazon age, in which bookstores across the country continuously grow obsolete, both the storeowners, along with Probert, feel it is important to have that place in their town. Not just as a means of getting books, but as a collective source for local events and affairs.

Thanks to its newly found social media sites, the store attracts not just the original residents but also the local college demographic through trivia prizes and other events. Even though they may just call themselves a bookstore, it's no secret both they and Steubenville want BookMarx to remain a vital part of the city.

With BookMarx, Peter and Patricia set out to prove that not only are bookstores still alive and well, but that Steubenville is a fundamental place for growth and prosperity.

"It opens doors for creative minds and for people to see that Steubenville is a place for profit and accessibility," Barnes says. 🍃



**OPPOSITE PAGE** | P.J. Pierce, a student at Franciscan University of Steubenville, sits down to read in the BookMarx lounge area. He's just one of multiple students who use that area to study, read or hang out.

**LEFT** | Patricia Marx, co-owner of BookMarx Bookstore, greets customers at the front of the store.



# Thinking Positive

Coverup contest positively impacts the lives of people with scars

BY ALI SHULTZ | PHOTOS BY KASI REED AND PROVIDED BY ENVY INK

Consider tattoos akin to a personal-and-portable art exhibit. The permanent ink expresses strong emotions for many, reminding people of something or someone they love or have lost.

But with such passions may come regrets. Maybe designs do not turn out like people hoped, or perhaps people simply want to forget those accompanying memories. And sometimes, tattoos themselves work to cover up past pains.

Joshua LaBello and his brother, Michael, two tattoo artists in Gallipolis, are working to help people turn hard memories into beautiful artwork. They recently hosted a tattoo cover-up contest at their shop, Envy Ink Tattoo. Joshua's artwork is diverse and includes illustrating book covers, composing music, and creating tattoos.

"We, [as] humans, have been expressing ourselves through tattooing since before we could express ourselves through language. The reasons are as broad as the differences in personality," Joshua says. "From early Man to the modern era, hunters have derived focus of purpose from illustrating their bodies with the animals or

animal skulls of their favorite prey. Many get images that remind them of the things they love, or things they have lost. And some simply get pleasing images or designs as adornments and nothing more."

But sometimes the expressions lose luster, Joshua says. Such situations motivated him to host a cover-up contest, one he predicted would yield humorous tales of awful body art. But the brothers ended up creating an entirely different experience.

Joshua says more than 60 people entered the contest, many with poorly covered scars from accidents, self-harm, burns, or surgeries. "Each story was more heart-breaking than the last, illustrating how their deeply personal reasons for wanting the tattoos were marred by the shoddy work they ended up receiving," Joshua says.

After the event, the brothers decided to host another contest specifically geared toward people interested in covering up scars. He wanted to help people who had been psychologically affected by some sort of trauma—to help make a positive change in their lives, even if the task might be artistically challenging.

“Tattoo artists, in general, tend to shy away from tattooing over scars and over bad tattoos because there is a high level of difficulty,” Joshua says. “But this difficulty is precisely the reason we enjoy this challenge.”

The contest created a widespread buzz from both people who were interested in winning the grand prize, a free tattoo, and people who began to feel deeply invested in the contestants’ stories of how they got their scars.

Joshua says the brothers have continued their relationships with contest participants, and they report ongoing positive results. “We couldn’t be happier with the contest and the results,” Joshua says. “We will definitely be doing more contests in the future.”

Kristen Shonkweiler Baker, a former addict, used needles to inject drugs into her arms, and now clean, her arm retained an abscess that caused stretch marks. Worrying about her scars during job interviews began to take a toll on Baker. Her arms were a constant reminder of life’s low points and a hindrance to her self-esteem. The cover-up tattoo was a chance to lift the burden from the memories of being an addict.

“Most people, when they would look at my arm, they would have a look of disgust,” Baker says. “But now, you can’t see it, it’s just this beautiful piece of art.”

Baker says her tattoo doubles as a conversation piece. In place of the scar, she now has a colorful group of wildflowers, a plant that has a deeper meaning for her.

“Wildflowers grow in pretty much anything they land in,” says Baker. “I’ve had a pretty crazy life, and I’ve grown

from it.” People now get to know her without first judging her scars of addiction.

Now, four years sober, Baker has turned her life around and has a family with two children. She also works at The Counseling Center, an alcohol and drug addiction rehabilitation center in Portsmouth, Ohio.

Another contest winner was Devon Earles who had a 10-pound benign tumor removed from her stomach, resulting in a thick 5-inch scar. Joshua and Earles decided on a phoenix design, using the tail to cover the scar.

“We endeavored to cover the scar in a feminine and tasteful way that accented her body rather than stealing focus from her figure,” LaBello says.

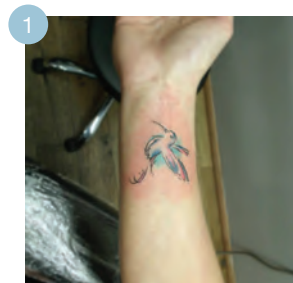
A third winner, Charles Tignor, had a scar from a broken femur he incurred after being hit by a drunk driver. “We decided to combine Charles’ dream of one day becoming a U.S. Marshall and his love of Star Wars by covering his scars with a realistic replica of Han Solo’s ‘blaster,’” Joshua says.

Covering up a scar can give a person a sense of control, taking away the scar’s power to dominate their being. If a tough hand was dealt in life, there are people who are strong enough to never fold, to never give up. Covering up a scar with a tattoo is not necessarily hiding from the past, but instead, embracing the negative and turning it into a positive.

In response to the winners’ stories and how they were positively affected by his cover-up tattoos; “We are healing people through art, and that is very cool,” Joshua says. 🇺🇸

## Tattoo artist Joshua LaBello’s four favorite designs

BY ANJELICA OSWALD



### SKETCH STYLE HUMMING BIRD

Many clients come in with ideas culled from online images. One client came in with an idea for a hummingbird tattoo to remind her of her father. After making an initial sketch, both LaBello and the client decided to go with a simple framework. “It captured the essence of the blur and speed we associate with a hummingbird,” he says.



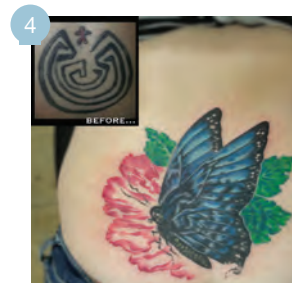
### COLOR SPLASH

The client wanted only a vibrant background design for a featured Bible verse, so Joshua chose a splattered-paint style. But after seeing the colorful design, the client chose not to add the Bible verse on top. “The difficulty in a tattoo of this style is in creating a natural pattern that convinces the viewer of the possibility of its realism,” Joshua says.



### ARMORED SHOULDER

“He was being treated for social anxiety disorder when he came to me,” Joshua says. “This tattoo and the attention he’s getting from it have helped him in a very big way to come out of his shell.” It now covers the client’s arm and consists of an armored gauntlet, an armored elbow piece, and detailed chainmail.



### BUTTERFLY AND FLOWER COVER-UP

This tattoo was designed for the client, a winner in the bad tattoo cover-up contest that Envy Ink held last year. “It is supremely satisfying to have a client tell me that she didn’t ever take her shirt off at the pool because of her bad tattoo or her scar, only to now enjoy the attention that my cover-up tattoo brings her,” he says.



# LORDS OF THE RING

The region's amateur wrestling scene is a throw-down, showdown, blockbuster performance

BY NICK HARLEY | PHOTOS BY ROYLE MAST

Sometimes an evening of live entertainment calls for action, where the personalities are bigger than the stakes. Like you'll find at the Hocking College Student Center, where local wrestlers fighting for XWE Pro Wrestling put their bodies on the line for a live audience. "There's a difference between fake and choreographed," says XWE Vice President Trace Chambers. Once you hear the bodies of grown men smack against the hard wrestling mat, you'll believe him.

Wrestler Rex Ultima (left) looks onward as his tag team partner Flex Jordan (middle) applies a choke hold on lone opponent Matt Vertigo (right) inside Nelsonville's Hocking College Student Center gymnasium last February. Nearly every month, amateur professional wrestling company XWE sets up a ring in the gym and holds events with a full roster of athletic performers.





**ABOVE** | Fan-favorite Otto Von Boogiemeister attempts to pin former XWE Champion and baddie “Prettyboy” Jimmy Malloy during XWE’s Final Showdown opening match. The event happened to fall on Boogiemeister’s birthday, and his family, including his brother Michael, sat ringside to cheer him on. “I bought my brother his first pair of wrestling boots,” Michael says before the match.

**RIGHT** | A fighting glove rests next to XWE’s bell, which rings to signify the beginning of every match. XWE was created in Logan, Ohio in 2002 and moved operations to Nelsonville in April 2011. The company advertises its events at Hocking College, Nelsonville-York School District, and Logan-Hocking School District by offering special discounted tickets for students, and by maintaining a healthy presence on social media sites like Facebook.



**BOTTOM** | Bad guy faction Pretty In Pink hold the ring captive and antagonize the Nelsonville crowd. (In ring, from left) The XWE announcer stands aside as Pink members Jimmy Malloy and “Captivating” Corey Mason egg on the spectators. (Outside, from left) XWE photographer Rita Hoffer captures the drama as Pretty In Pink manager Jordan Anthony wheels toward her with fellow member “Naughty” Nathaniel Woods in tow. XWE builds storylines at their live events and fosters them online using video content on YouTube.







**LEFT** | XWE Vice President Trace Chambers watches the show backstage, ensuring that everything runs smoothly. Chambers used to wrestle, but took some time off before returning in a managerial role. Chambers loves providing the community with live entertainment, especially the kids, which is why every XWE event is kept PG in terms of content. "We try to keep swearing to a minimum, naturally, there's no blood, and seldom there are weapons," Chamber says. "But sometimes they do come into play," he adds with a smile.

**TOP RIGHT** | Owner Corey Mason (left) does a last minute check with his staff before opening the doors. Prior to the event, Mason is tense and hurried, repeatedly calming himself with deep breaths. Later, he'll don pink tights to become his in-ring persona, "Captivating" Corey Mason, completely transforming into a lively, cartoonish villain.

**BOTTOM** | Rita Hoffer (in pink) snaps a photo of "Dangerous" Dane Stratmore body slamming Bryen Douglas in a singles match. "No one in my family likes wrestling," Hoffer says. "I just love it." Hoffer isn't timid about getting close to the action to get her shot. "They let me know if they're flying out of the ring," she says with a reassuring smile. The wrestlers greet Rita warmly before and after matches backstage, and she refers to them as a second family. "I just love watching everyone progress," she says.





# A Town Turns 200

McArthur celebrates two centuries of resiliency and smalltown heart

BY NICK REES | PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JOHN CLINE AND RUTH WILL

Clad in his red Carhartt jacket, jeans and a Buckeyes baseball hat, McArthur's Mayor James "Jim" Wooddell describes the venerable township with a joking familiarity reserved for an old friend. The Mayor, a small antique shop owner and resident since 1973, is now inextricably linked to this town of nearly 1,700 residents.

"It's a nice little place that some people decided to settle down in and call home," Mayor Wooddell says. "And others thought it was a nice little place to drive through."

Village Hall, the location of the Mayor's office, appears to be more meeting place than government office, as residents stop by on errands or merely to chat. There's an ease and laid-back quality to the mechanics of McArthur, where city officials are friends, and each encounter is dotted with first names of mutual friends.

Celebrating its 200th birthday in November, McArthur's singular claim to fame is having appointed Ohio's first female sheriff, Maude Collins, in the late 1920s. Collins was appointed after her husband, Vinton County Sheriff Fletcher Collins, was fatally shot while apprehending a suspect. In a town nearly void of violent crime, the unexpected murder of a sheriff is still gossip-worthy news, even if it occurred nearly 90 years before.

Little danger seems to lurk in today's town, other than an accident-prone intersection. But even that hiccup may

be gone soon, as plans are finalized to improve safety and decrease accidents at the troublesome spot.

McArthur, formerly McArthurstown, was formed in 1815. The original 160-acre parcel was once a piece of Athens County. Named after notable War of 1812 Army general, Duncan McArthur, it's known for its timber industry. The town and its surrounding region were depleted of coal and never fully experienced industrialization despite a railroad's presence.

There is a pride and acknowledgment of history in McArthur that is not seen in most modern communities. Mama Renie's, a local restaurant boasting 6 a.m. breakfast, is still routinely called "the place where Murphey's used to be." Everyone has a story, and with many older residents inhabiting the aging town, the events and celebrations of the past hold even more significance.

Deanna Tribe, retired community development specialist and author of the historical book *Vinton County*, was a young child at the time but still hears tales of the beard contest at Vinton County's legendary centennial celebration in 1915. It was a memorable contest in which the well-known men of town grew beards and were judged based on their quality. The celebration frequently pops up in conversation among older residents, especially after a town meeting.

“Most of us remember the penny candy. [Ethel Cox] would have all of these glass jars lined up, it seemed like a lot but it was maybe 20... you would buy one piece at a time.

Deanna Tribe,  
McArthur resident

Growing up five miles outside of McArthur’s center, Tribe recalls a time when her family lived without electricity and running water and shared a telephone line with neighbors, the latter of which mere decades ago was still the reality in McArthur.

“We didn’t get a telephone until I was in the eighth grade. I remember when we got the telephone, and it was a party line, and it had that old dial,” Tribe says. “There were five or six families on the same thing, and you’d pick it up several times just to make a call.”

Working for the County Sheriff’s department during the ’70s, Mayor Wooddell tells similar tales of McArthur’s past. He remembers being the only on-duty officer and source of emergency support for the entire county and having to rouse the Sheriff from his bed on multiple occasions.

“Back then there was a half-equipped first aid kit in the trunk, and if you came across an accident, you were it. If it was bad enough, you had the funeral home send a hearse out to come get the person and take them to the hospital,” Wooddell says.

Emergency medical care and police support have come a long way since the ’70s, and Main Street McArthur has similarly evolved. According to Tribe, McArthur was once brimming with retail shops including multiple grocery and clothing stores, a hat shop and even a jewelry store on the corner, but now the remaining shops offer a minimal glimpse of the town’s prosperous past.

Fond memories bubble to the surface when a long absent odds-and-ends store called Cox’s, or Ethel Cox’s to those who knew the unofficial matron of McArthur, comes up.

“Most of us remember the penny candy. [Ethel Cox] would have all of these glass jars lined up, it seemed like a lot but it was maybe 20. There weren’t any large bags of candy back then, you would buy one piece at a time,” Tribe says. “[Cox’s] was where I bought my first perfume—my Evening In Paris perfume. It’d be in this tiny little bottle for maybe a quarter, and you’d save up forever.”

Few of those shopping locations remain, as the current Main Street includes only a hardware store, a flower shop, select restaurants and vacant buildings.

Those empty storefronts represent the serious economic hardship that sliced through America in recent years. The closing of locally owned SuperValu in 2013, the only grocery store in McArthur, dealt the town a unique blow—the residents could no longer grocery shop in the county.

Without a source of fresh produce and meat, locals have yet another reason to move or travel outside of Vinton County. The store’s closing eliminated 36 jobs in a town where the loss of two jobs is devastating.

Many McArthur residents travel considerable distances to find employment with decent wages, which Tribe says creates a “bedroom community,” where everything other than the bedroom must be found outside its borders.



OPPOSITE PAGE | In the 1930s, downtown McArthur’s Main Street offered a glimpse of economic prosperity and small town bustle.

LEFT | Today, while some of the storefronts lay vacant, the town’s main intersection remains its busiest spot.



LEFT | An aerial photograph of McArthur from the 1930s


Despite the complications, McArthur remains as tight-knit as ever.

With the annual Wild Turkey Festival, locals have at least one temporary source of income within their own township. The festival, held in McArthur and run entirely by volunteers, was created to bring tourists to Vinton County. In the past, its focus stayed on a local level including booths run by churches, a turkey and noodle dinner and barnyard games for children.

In recent years, the Wild Turkey Festival has expanded into a street fest lined with fair food vendors, amusement park rides and musical acts. McArthur's ties to the street-closing event have loosened due to the festival's relationship with the Ohio Festivals and Events Association. The push toward a full-blown street festival took away that

local feel, but the location keeps the two bound as the festival occurs in the center of town.

The current weekend-long event shares little with past festivals but the tradition of crowning a Wild Turkey Festival Queen has held strong. Residents continue to look forward to the event that takes place in early May. Much of the event's success relies on cooperative weather and its date at the beginning of festival season. The festival and many other community events are planned for the remainder of the year to commemorate the town's Bicentennial.

So although McArthur's physical representation may be changing, the town's true essence stays the same. Its quaint spirit and civic pride remain intact, and its familiar streets and friendly natives create a homey atmosphere reminiscent of a sweet memory from decades past. 



## A YEAR OF CELEBRATION BY ANJELICA OSWALD

To celebrate McArthur's bicentennial, volunteers created a schedule of events throughout 2015. Here are some highlights:

### JANUARY

Christmas decorations come down and banners welcoming visitors to the town of McArthur go up (see photo, *left*). The deep green banner color represents the nature of the surrounding areas and features the sketch of the original courthouse drawn by former resident Lowell Russ.

### APRIL

A tree planting ceremony at Wyman Park marks the beginning of the year's warmer weather activities.

### MAY 7 - 10

The Wild Turkey Festival, a Vinton County tradition, helps celebrate the bicentennial anniversary. With its live musical performances, rows of vendors and influx of visitors downtown, the festival is McArthur's largest annual event.

### JUNE 13

A community picnic is held at Wyman Park.

### NOVEMBER 14

The town celebrates its official birthday with an open invitation party.



# Remains of the Day

How the boom and bust of coal, the “black diamond,” marks Southern Ohio

ABOVE | Coal blends into soil and snow near the the 1930 Millfield Coal Mine Disaster location, which killed 82 people and forced lawmakers to pass legislation improving mine safety.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LUCAS DAPRILE

Ghost towns, as lifeless as the rusty rivers that bleed throughout Appalachia, dot the ancient hills. Tired and empty train tracks function as little more than speed bumps for the few motorists cruising on Perry County’s country roads. Occasionally, a train will rumble by hollow, decrepit buildings that linger near rail crossings. Local folklore values the passing train’s cargo at a million dollars.

Today, it can almost be hard to imagine the area during the decades of the coal boom, between the late 1800s to the end of World War II, when immigrants would get off the boat and head straight to Southeast Ohio.

America was the land of opportunity, and coal country was hiring. In some cases, the only English those new Americans knew referred to a coal town. “Where is Congo?” some would say, referring to the once-quiet company town, says President of the Perry County Historical and Cultural Arts Society John McGaughey.

Congo is now only a fraction of the size it once was, and the era when similar towns thrived survive only as local folk tales and museum exhibits. “When the coal left, so did the people,” McGaughey says.

But not everyone and everything packed up. Personal accounts and physical artifacts remain as relics of human determination and the earth’s exhaustible resources.

## THE BOOM

More than miners rode the coal rush to its zenith. Anyone willing to get his hands a little dirty could make a living.

McGaughey’s father was one of them. When his father lived in Pennsylvania, he worked as a truck driver, hauling coal to steel mills. “Steel mills were just pumping. I mean, 24 hours [a day],” McGaughey says.

When Sunnyhill moved its mining operation to Perry County in the ’40s, his father became a mechanic, which he continued until retirement, fixing trucks that could carry



**ABOVE** | John McGaughey Sr. stands on a Dart truck for the Sunnyhill Mine. McGaughey worked as a mechanic on trucks like these, which could carry up to 100 tons of coal. The trucks were so big they could not even drive on public roads.



**ABOVE** | Larry Mitchell, vice-president of the Murray City Ohio Train Depot and Coal Mining Museum, views artifacts at the museum.

up to 100 tons of coal at one time. These trucks would carry coal from the pit to the tippel, where it was loaded onto railcars.

Those trucks were too big to travel on public roads. “He became a pretty good mechanic,” McGaughey says. Jobs in steel, railroads, brickmaking, technical skills and mining, thrived in the era of coal. “Had we never had coal, how would we have had steam engines?” McGaughey says.

Companies came in and established towns., such as Shawnee, Corning, Congo, New Straitsville, and even Ohio’s smallest town of 36 people, Rendville. “These were boom towns,” says Director of Athens County Historical Society Tom O’Grady. “That was when coal was king.”

The companies established the neighborhoods, built the shops and even paid their workers in the company’s own currency, called script.

Script was good to buy essentials at the local company store, but script was not much use outside the coal town. Script could not get a train ticket; it could not buy stock and it only was worth something if the company was still in business. “A lot of these people were trapped in the coal mining cycle,” O’Grady says.

Eventually, coal workers revolted.

During the Hocking Valley Coal Strike of 1884 and 1885—and after some of the original meetings at Robinson Cave in Perry County—legend has it that a group of

miners filled a railcar up with coal, soaked it in kerosene and pushed it into a mine shaft.

That night, they lit a fire that burns to this day. The underground fire might symbolize the passion of the union.

The disgruntled miners formed the National Progressive Union of Miners and Mine Laborers, which incorporated with another union to become the United Mine Workers of America, a union that is still active today.

“It was a boom to bust legacy. It brought a lot of people here including my great grandparents from Germany,” says local historian and organizer of the annual Little Cities of Black Diamonds Day John Winnenberg. “It had a huge effect on immigrating to the area.”

## THE DAMAGES

The disruptive power and relative convenience of coal came at massive and unforeseen costs. Coal companies took a loan from the environment they could not pay back. When the companies left town or went out of business, the residents of Southeast Ohio held a hefty bill, which they are still paying.

The environmental mutilation arises not so much from the mines themselves, but from the resulting acid mine drainage that leaves waterways biologically dead.

Acid mine drainage causes damage to habitats when sulfuric acid gets into the water and alters the pH. “Algae can’t grow, and that’s the base of the food chain,” O’Grady says.

Sunday Creek, which runs through Athens, Morgan and Perry counties, is one of coal mining’s casualties.

The water acquires a reddish tint because of the iron and rust, which is often a sign sulfuric acid has made its way into the water. “I’ve seen it look like tomato soup,” O’Grady says.

The desolation that follows the coal industry is not limited to the environment. Structural unemployment and deflated populations also follow.

After Peabody Coal Company closed its Sunnyhill mine in 1990—the one McGaughey’s father worked for—the job market took another hit. “When they left, it just went to hell,” McGaughey says. “There was no employment.”

## THE BUST

Coal first started to decline after World War II when the country needed less steel to support the war effort.

Jobs in the industry didn’t really start to drop off until the Clean Air Act, passed in 1970. The act put increasing regulations on the industry. As part of those regulations, the industry had to start washing coal of its sulfur before using or use low-sulfur coal.

The use of more efficient technology caused some of the coal industry’s layoffs, but “overall, the Clean Air Act was the main problem,” says former District 6 President for the United Mine Workers of America Larry Ward.

Problematic as it may have been to coal jobs, the act helped a hurting ecosystem.

Since the early 1970s, the amount of carbon monoxide in Ohio’s air has decreased 80 percent. Other pollutants



ABOVE | Water mixed with iron and sulfuric acid flows from a pipe near the site of the Millfield Coal Mine Disaster. That sulfuric acid kills algae and can devastate a stream's ecosystem, as it has done to Sunday and Monday creeks.

have followed suit, Deputy Director of Communication for the Ohio EPA Heidi Griesmer, says in an email.

"It's easy to see what's wrong in the whole situation," Winnenberg says. "But I also understand peoples' desire to work and have opportunity. It's a real dilemma."

### TODAY

Jobs in the coal industry are tough—miners still run the risk of getting black lung—but it can support a family.

Miners today have a middle-class lifestyle, something that was not possible in the early 1900s during the coal boom. Today, a miner gets paid roughly \$25-\$30 an hour, McGaughey says. Though salaries have increased, workers in the industry still face layoffs.

For example, after the Colorado-based Westmoreland Coal Company purchased Buckingham Coal Company and Oxford Resource Partners for a total of \$64 million on Jan. 1, 2015, the parent company laid off dozens of workers.

A few days after Westmoreland picked up the two Perry County coal mines, the company laid off between 30-35 workers. Then a few weeks later, the company confirmed it laid off an additional 56 workers.

Before the layoffs, Buckingham was the largest private employer in Perry County, with about 250 employees, according to 2012 bond documents, the most recent available.

With the exception of a few mines, coal has left the area.

### ENTER HYDRAULIC FRACTURING?

Like coal, fracking companies extract fossil fuel from an area, offer jobs and are often funded by wealthy investors with little vested interest in the long-term welfare of an area.

The health and environmental concerns neglected in the days of the coal boom now can be asked amid today's

fracking boom. "The lessons we've learned from unregulated coal mining are haunting when you think of fracking not being well regulated," Winnenberg says.

But the lessons learned from unregulated coal might have only limited use when dealing with fracking. The threats to the environment posed by fracking are not the same as those posed by coal. The "potential environmental effects are completely different," says Chief of Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Mineral Resources Management Lanny Erdos. "It's apples and oranges."


The Utica and Marcellus shale formations lay beneath Southeast Ohio, but the fracking boom has yet to make its way there.

In the meantime, those old coal towns plan to move forward by looking back. Those towns, like Nelsonville and Shawnee, are restoring buildings and training local people to be tour guides to promote the history of the town.

Yes, the goal is tourism. But it is not the kind of tourism industry seeking big-money business executives or reckless gamblers. It's the kind of tourism that seeks to connect the curious with a piece of American history. "It's a fascinating story, but it's not an amusement park story," Winnenberg says. "The overall legacy is kind of sobering."

Though tourism has yet to yield large economic benefits for the towns, early signs of success exist. After the town of Shawnee began preserving buildings and beautifying its downtown area, people started visiting town. "We don't think it's going to be a silver bullet, but we think it helps us clean up our communities," Winnenberg says.

A land once fed and abandoned by the boom of the black diamond is now ready to tell its story.

"They're proud of their heritage up there," O'Grady says. "It's a very complex issue. It's a culture." 



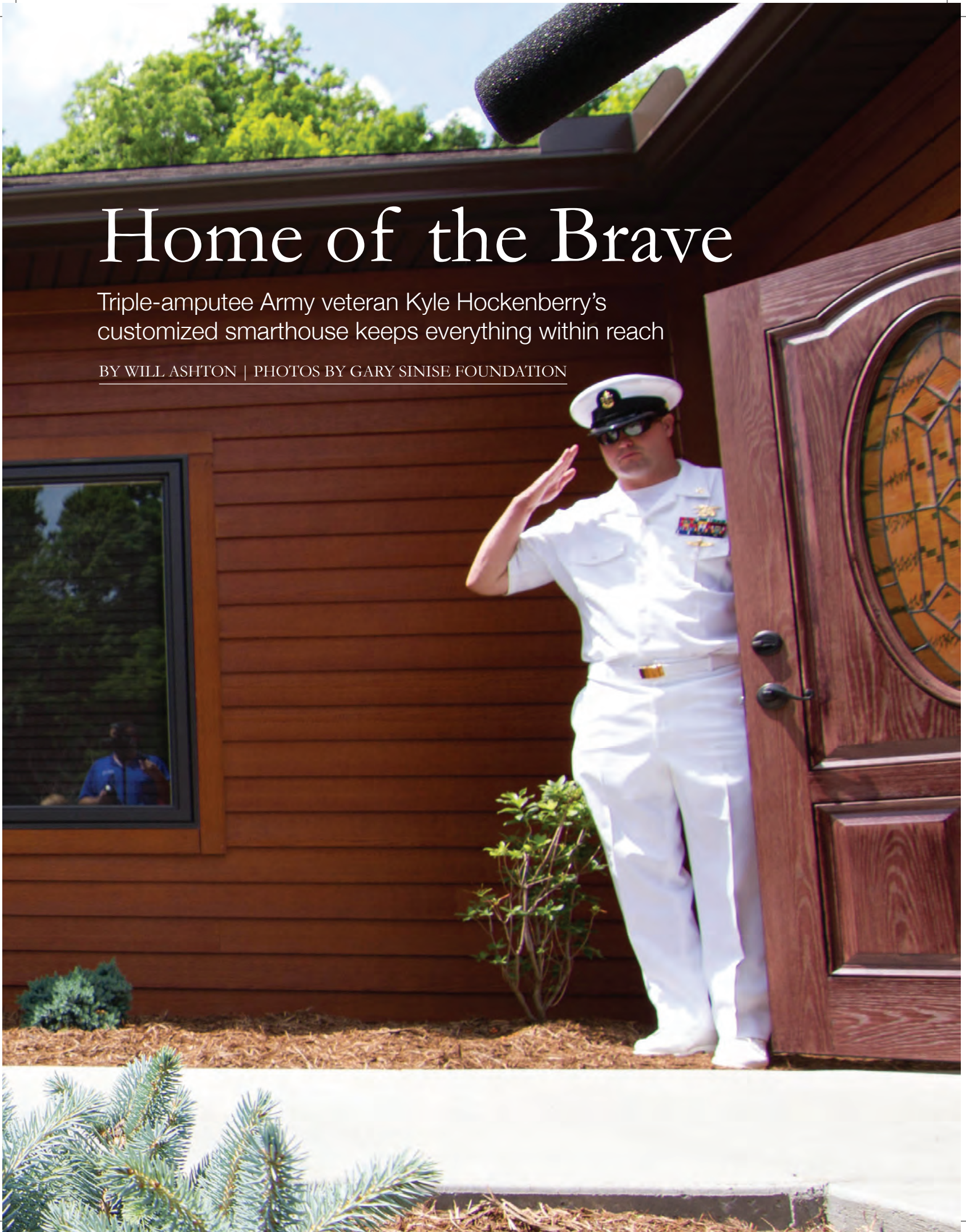
Former Army 1st Infantry Division member and Corporal Kyle Hockenberry and his wife, Ashley, enter their new smart house for the first time in June 2014.



# Home of the Brave

Triple-amputee Army veteran Kyle Hockenberry's customized smarthouse keeps everything within reach

BY WILL ASHTON | PHOTOS BY GARY SINISE FOUNDATION



**O**n June 15, 2011, 1st Infantry Division member and Corporal Kyle Hockenberry was in a medevac military helicopter flying out of Afghanistan to receive medical attention in Germany. His legs were gone, and his left arm was missing, but Hockenberry lived.

Today, nearly four years later, he and his wife Ashley, like many couples that include a veteran, still adapt to civilian life together. What makes Hockenberry's readaptation to his hometown Marietta remarkable is the family's home, a customized "smart house" designed to accommodate his needs as a triple-amputee.

### THE EXPLOSION

Hockenberry, 19, was on foot patrol just outside army base Strong Point Haji Rahmuddin when an improvised explosion device detonated, destroying his three limbs. Ever courageous, but justifiably traumatized, the soldier's initial response was concern about his loved ones.

"When I first woke up and was conscious in the hospital, I wasn't concerned about what had happened to me, I was concerned with how my family was doing with [the news]," Hockenberry says over the phone.

But Hockenberry's own concerns soon were overshadowed by public support and proclamations of his bravery—an element the veteran contests.

"I didn't [join the military] for any kind of attention or

anything like that," Hockenberry says. "Everyone around [Marietta] knows I don't like to be called a hero, because I was doing a job I wanted to do and love to do. I didn't even want to get out of the military. I wanted to keep doing my job, but that, obviously, wasn't possible."

His community wasn't about to let Hockenberry disappear from sight, however.

### FOR THOSE I LOVE, I WILL SACRIFICE

Between his basic training and tour, the soldier made trips home to speak with local school children about the Army. Hockenberry's dedication can best be described by his personal mantra: "For Those I Love, I Will Sacrifice." Tattooed on his left rib, those words are not his own but rather those of the hardcore punk group Indecision. The lyrics are from their 1997 track "Hallowed Be Thy Name."

More than anything else, Hockenberry entered the military with a heart committed to serve and protect. He still speaks highly about the work the Armed Forces do for our country. Such passion and pride can leave an impression.

Similarly striking is the award-winning photo by Laura Rauch showing Hockenberry's ink as the critically wounded soldier lies shirtless and under medical care on the flight out of Afghanistan. The photo was republished in numerous publications, including *Stars and Stripes* and *Time* magazine. Rauch's photo brought Hockenberry's story and recovery into the public's interest.

Before that picture could make its national impact, however, Hockenberry traveled from Afghanistan to Germany to San Antonio's Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in nine days time. He would stay under BAMC's care for the next five months.

"Initially, he was kind of depressed from the nature of his injuries, but over time he grew stronger," C.D. Peterson, a BAMC wound care coordinator who worked extensively with Hockenberry, says over the phone. "We joked quite a bit, but it took probably six to eight months for him to get his sense of humor back."

While Hockenberry describes the pre-physical therapy process towards recovery as "horrible," he pressed on, despite the challenges. When Peterson checks in from time-to-time, he's happy to see how well his former patient recovered.

"When it came to Kyle, we had great concerns early on about [his] being able to get back into a good, functional life," Peterson says. "But when [we] see his pictures on Facebook and hear some of the things that he's done, the nursing staff over here gets really happy."

The veteran also received strength from Ashley, who he met while he was on leave in Ohio in October 2012. "When I met my wife, it got a lot easier, because she was there every step of the way and gave me motivation," Hockenberry says. "When I met her, it all changed."

In turn, Hockenberry's pleased he has so many people by his side. "I'm thankful for the support this has brought on, because so many soldiers get hurt and they go unnoticed," Hockenberry says. "And I was lucky enough to have a town, and even a state, and even a whole country even-



**ABOVE** | The Hockenberrys raise the American flag in front of their house, to welcome themselves into their new home.

tually because of that picture, that supported me. And I'm grateful for it. But, you know, I don't think I deserve it any more than anyone else does."

Among Hockenberry's multiple supporters is Justin Brannan, former guitarist for Indecision, who wrote the

**“ This is just the beginning. We are still working with Kyle and his wife, and helping them through their various stages.”**

Judy Otter  
executive director, GSL

words permanently inked onto Hockenberry's side. Thanks to the published picture, Brannan—now Director of Communications and Legislative Affairs for New York Councilman Vincent Gentile—found a withstanding kinship.

"I felt an instant connection with Kyle, and the first thing I wanted to do was find out if he was alive and how I could get in touch with him to thank him for his bravery and courage," Brannan says. "Lots of people have those words tattooed on them, friends and fans of the band across the world, and I never knew what to say over the years when people would wanna show me their tattoos—it's very humbling—but to see it like that on Kyle ... I was speechless. We [the band] all were."

"Kyle got the tattoo two weeks before he was deployed," Brannan adds. "It was just one of those things where words fall short. Kyle is really just cut from a different cloth than the average human being; a true inspiration to us all."

Another person humbled by Hockenberry's story is Gary Sinise, the CSI: NY actor who created The Gary Sinise Foundation (GSF) inspired by his Forrest Gump character, double-amputee Lt. Dan Taylor. GSF helps war amputees adjust to life as independently as possible. Upon hearing Hockenberry's story, Sinise immediately reached out and visited the wounded veteran at BAMC.

"He's very hands-on," Hockenberry says. "Even being a famous movie star, he's pretty down-to-Earth. [GSF doesn't] just build the house and cut all ties with the veteran. They try to help us in any other way they can."

Sinise worked with Hockenberry and his family to begin the steps towards readjusting to life, beyond his recent handicaps, and GSF continues to work with the Hockenberrys to this day.

### THE SMART HOUSE

For the next two years, the Hockenberrys discussed the plans with GSF to get their own smart house in Marietta, funded and paid for entirely by Sinise's organization. The amputee's long-term hospital stay and eventual discharge from BAMC in 2012, official un-enlistment from the Army—who disapproves their members receiving gifts of a high price—and deciding details for the house like location to paint colors kept the immediacy of the house in check.



ABOVE | Kyle's smart appliances include a height-adjustable rangetop.

During that time, Hockenberry lived in Texas with Ashley in a small bunker of an apartment. The non-handicap accessible location was “a challenge” for Hockenberry and Ashley. So when he officially retired from the Army, they moved back to Ohio in a house that attempted to fit the amputee’s living situation. That also was not what he needed it to be, so they still struggled for years after his injuries. The smart house was most definitely an improvement.

Hockenberry describes the smart house as having “a rustic look.” At six to eight thousand square feet, the two-story house is specifically customized to help the veteran be as independent as possible. The floor adjustments and hallways are wider. The doors automatically open and shut, and there are elevators to the different floors. Also included are lower shelves, taller ceilings, a full-length porch in the front, a half-length patio in the back and other special household appliances. All of those improvements, in addition a downstairs “man cave,” Kyle’s favorite room, make the new home a serviceable and fitting lodge for the couple.

“I’m more than grateful for what they have done,” Hockenberry says. “It’s almost too much.”

The couple moved into the smart house on June 18, 2014. Their welcome-home commencement was a big service. Sinise was there to welcome the crowd with a performance from his band, Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band, and other entertainment and services were available. That was also provided by GSF, in conjunction with the Tunnel for Towers Foundation, which supports those first responders and most severely injured service members.

“We like to be there for all the different stages—the good ones and the bad ones—but hopefully most of the good ones,” executive director of GSF Judy Otter says over the phone. “This is just the beginning. We are still working with Kyle and his wife and helping them through their various stages. We continue to stay in communication with them and make sure they are adjusting to their new living quarters.”

Those services can include getting Kyle in contact with other veterans to help and service members like him to provide assistance with their business or school plans. It can

also be activities such as calling to make sure everything is going well with the house and fixing problems, should they arise.

## NEW BEGINNINGS

Work on the house, however, is not completely done, since Ashley is currently pregnant with their first child due this July. They will need to make sure the smart house is family-safe. Like many new parents, Hockenberry is excited and nervous at the prospect of fatherhood.

“It’s a new thing,” he says. “It’s going to take me awhile to get used to.”


With this new addition to the family, GSF plans to be around for anything the couple needs during that positive adjustment in their lives. Sinise even calls every now and again to make sure they are well.

“We are a full service group,” Otter says. “We continue to give to those who have given so much already, who have given the ultimate sacrifice. The Hockenberrys are pretty special folk, and we’re there to make sure we provide our mantra: serving honor and need. We want to give what everyone in life wants: family, success [and] careers. We want to help them, and they deserve it.”

In addition to being a new father, Hockenberry continues to plan for the future. He hopes to open a gun shop either near his house or in downtown Marietta. Guns have been a hobby and interest for him even before his Army days, and he is still very passionate about them. The details on the veteran’s upcoming business are still in early development.

Meanwhile, Ashley recently took her husband’s passion and surprised him last year with the opportunity to appear on the CMT reality series Guntucky. There, Hockenberry went to a local gun range to try some high-gear firearms on national TV.

With those exciting prospects, this injured war veteran’s future looks quite hopeful.

“I mean, it bothers me, not having legs or an arm,” Hockenberry says. “But life goes on, and you have to get through it.” 

**RIGHT |** Kyle receives a welcoming speech from various friends and military members on his first day living in the smart house.





**LEFT** | Hockenberry's story inspired Staten Island, New York artist Scott LoBaido to paint an American flag mural on the side of a downtown Marietta building in 2012. LoBaido travels throughout America to paint murals that encourage patriotism. To view his work, visit: [www.scottlobaido.com/patriotism-gallery/](http://www.scottlobaido.com/patriotism-gallery/).

PHOTO BY KASI REED

## Other notable support programs for returning serviceman and women

BY NATYRA GREEN

The Gary Sinese Foundation's work illustrates a charitable organization making a positive impact in the life of a returning veteran. Here are other examples of groups that help veterans re-adapt to civilian life.

### HORSES IN MIRACLES

The Florida-based center allows former soldiers to metaphorically trade in Humvees for horses. The signature Horses in Miracles Program, Combat Boots to Cowboy Boots, is a 40-hour vocational program that introduces veterans to horse care and safety, farm equipment and farm maintenance.

"Horses are healing animals," says Jen Elliott, program director of Combat Boots to Cowboy Boots, in a 2013 Florida WUFT-FM news article. "That's how it is."

At the end of the training program, the veterans qualify for an Equine Specialist Certificate. Many of the 600+ horse farms in the Ocklawaha, Florida area support the program by giving these participating veterans priority in hiring for positions.

For more information: [www.ocoos.com/me/horse-in-miracles](http://www.ocoos.com/me/horse-in-miracles)

### WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

The Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP), started in the wake of September 11, 2001, is a nonprofit veteran's service organization that offers veterans both physical and mental support.

One such WWP intervention is the Combat Stress Recovery Program. After returning from combat, many warriors suffer through traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and combat operational stress.

It addresses the mental health needs in a two steps:

"Project Odyssey," an outdoor rehabilitative retreat and "Restore Warriors," an online resource that teaches soldiers about "invisible wounds of war."

"Remember, you are not alone in this journey," the WWP website reads. "Whether you are newly injured or have been on the path to recovery for a while, WWP is here to support you as you define your new normal."

For more information: [www.woundedwarriorproject.org](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org)

### RETURNING VETERANS PROJECT

The Returning Veterans Project (RVP) caters specifically to servicemen and servicewomen in Oregon and Southwest Washington. RVP is a community-based nonprofit organization that offers veterans and their families free and confidential healthcare services.

RVP volunteers are mental health professionals, acupuncturists, naturopaths, chiropractors, massage therapists, and music therapists.

The music therapy includes a drum circle program, and monthly sessions are facilitated by drummer and music therapist Ted Owen of the Aluna Rhythm Project, and offered in collaboration with Earthtones Music Therapy Services.

The drum circle is open to veterans, friends and family. It is designed solely with fun and relaxation in mind, so no previous drumming experience is required.

For more information: [www.returningveterans.com](http://www.returningveterans.com)



# Rural Remedy

Regional doctors are accessible, adaptable and perhaps most importantly, trusted by their patients

BY DAVID FORSTER | PHOTOS BY ROYLE MAST

“William’s leg is infected. I think he’s got gangrene,” the caller says. She is distraught. Scott Anzalone, a family physician in Logan, tells her he’ll be right over. The woman on the phone is one of his patients, and he knows her family. But he doesn’t recall anyone named William.

That’s because William, he discovers, is a chicken. But not just a common bird. The woman and her husband raise show chickens. William is a prized breeder. And now William has a serious problem with one of his feet. What should she do, the woman asks. Call a vet, he suggests. But can’t you take care of him, she pleads.

So the physician agrees, snips off the infected foot and bandages the stub. William lives and adjusts to life as a one-footed Casanova.

Just another day in the life of a rural doctor in Appalachian Ohio. Anzalone and others like him do not just treat medical conditions, they treat families. Those doctors are embedded in their communities, and for better or worse, that means they are on constant call for their patients and their problems, medical or otherwise.

“You go into the city, you’re providing a service,” Anzalone says. It’s different for rural doctors. “If you want to be successful as a physician in a small town,” he says, “you have to be part of the community.”

## COMMUNITY CULTURES

One of the biggest challenges doctors face in rural Appalachia is dealing with the issues of poverty and mistrust, which are deeply intertwined.



ABOVE | Antique furniture, old paintings and vintage medical equipment adorn Scott Azalone's medical practice in Logan, Ohio's, which is housed in a Victorian mansion on Main Street.

“The poverty issues here are tremendous,” says Jane Broecker, an obstetrician-gynecologist and professor at Ohio University’s medical school. “Understanding poverty is essential to being a respectful physician.”

Understanding poverty also helps doctors deal with some of the choices their patients make, without being too judgmental, Broecker says. “They’re not being cynical when they’re smoking a pack a day and then say they don’t have money for their medicine,” she says. “Tobacco is their coping mechanism. It’s not a good one, but that’s what it is.”

“You’re not going to enjoy rural medicine unless you understand where people are coming from, what hardships they face,” Broecker says.

In many cases, people in Southeast Ohio are simply too poor to afford the care they need, or at least not without considerable sacrifice. To that end, rural doctors will sometimes barter for their services, which allows them to provide care and permits patients to preserve their dignity by offering something in return.

### ONE GOOD DEED ...

Anzalone says he has accepted haircuts, horse feed and pies as payment for medical care. In one case, he was going to deliver a baby for a couple that he knew had little means to pay for the birth. The husband pulled Anzalone aside one day to discuss a barter. “I need a fence,” the doctor told him. “I’ll provide the materials, you build the fence, and we’ll call it even.”

“I got a fence for a delivery,” he says.

The Amish, a Christian sect that lives a traditional agrarian lifestyle largely removed from modern culture, do not have health insurance and pay cash for their medical care. Amish communities will pool their savings to help cover the medical bills of one of their own. But sometimes those collections are not enough.

Tim Law, a family physician and professor at Ohio University’s medical school, has built a medical practice niche treating Amish families. Among his Amish patients are a couple who have three children with cystic fibrosis.

“If you want to be successful as a physician in a small town...you have to be part of the community.”

Scott Anzalone  
Physician



ABOVE | Scott Anzalone is a doctor in Logan, Ohio. His is a cradle-to-grave practice, treating patients from their earliest years to the end of life.

LEFT | Randall Longenecker is assistant dean of rural and underserved programs at Ohio University's Department of Family Medicine.

One day he was at the family's house and mentioned that his daughter was getting married. The husband asked Law where the ceremony would be held. Law said he was hosting it in his backyard, and that he planned to build a new deck for the event. The husband instructed Law to pick him up on Saturday at 6 a.m., and he would build the deck for free.

When Law arrived Saturday morning, the man was there with three other Amish men, standing beside a pile of lumber. Law hauled the men and the wood back to this house, and the four got to work at 7 a.m. Nine hours later, which included a one-hour break for lunch, the men had built, from scratch, an 18-foot octagonal deck with a sunken fire pit and a 10-foot walkway connecting it to the existing deck off the back porch. The boards were cut, including the precise angles to make the shape, using only handsaws.

### BUILDING TRUST

Understanding people's life situations and being willing to work within them helps cultivate trust, which can be hard to earn in this region, especially for outsiders. Appalachia's rural communities have a reputation for being insular and suspicious, which is not unwarranted.

"There's a long history of being taken by outsiders," says Randall Longenecker, assistant dean for rural and underserved programs and professor of family medicine at Ohio University.

Appalachia's Amish population, perhaps more than any other, has shut itself off from much of the outside world, living their agrarian lives in a time capsule from the pre-industrial age. The Amish do not reject modern medicine, but earning their trust requires a certain approach.

Law recalls a visit to the home of an Amish family to check on a pregnant woman. He pulled up outside the house in his pickup, dressed in blue jeans, a T-shirt and boots, toting a canvas bag.

The husband eyed him up and down. "You don't look much like a doctor," the man says. "I looked him square in the eye and said, 'Well, thank you,'" Law says. The man paused for a second, then started laughing. Law knew he had made a good impression. "They appreciate you more if you're just a real person," he says.

### LEFT TO FATE

Generations of poverty and struggle also have bred a sense of fatalism that permeates much of rural Appalachia,



doctors say. Suffering and tragedy are woven into the narrative of daily life for many, along with a belief that there is little they can do to alter their fate. “Sometimes young people come in and say if pregnancy happens it happens,” Broecker says. “There’s a sense that they can’t control what happens to them.”

At the same time, many Appalachian parents, like parents anywhere, still hope for a better life for their children. Broecker says she has had 30-year-old mothers bring their 15-year-old daughters to discuss birth control, who say, “I brought my daughter to you because I was a teen mom, and as much as I love her I know how hard it was for me. I’m bringing her to you so that she will not be a mom until she’s ready.”

Such cases illustrate the exception to fatalism, in that the women are choosing elements of their own fate. Yet as census numbers show, much of the rural Appalachian population never stray from their communities. Home is what they know. It is familiar and comfortable. It is where they fit in. Some have a fear of the outside world, and big cities in particular, that is difficult to fathom for people who have not grown up in their world.

“I’ve had patients who’ve never left the county in their lives,” Anzalone says, recalling a patient who had a heart condition he feared would soon lead to a heart attack. Anzalone recommended the patient go to Columbus for treatment, but she would not make the trip. The thought of going to the city was too much for her. “You know doc, you just do what you can do,” she told him.

### HOME VISITS

Working as a rural doctor also means making the occasional house call, which can be a window into a patient’s world that provides valuable insights into their medical care and their decisions. A look inside a patient’s home, at their living situation, may bring into sharp focus why they are not tending to their medical needs with the urgency they should.

“Unless you can identify the problem by understanding the patient’s home situation, you’re not going to meet them where they are,” Broecker says. She cites one patient, a young mother who was breastfeeding her newborn but wanted to stop. It wasn’t until Broecker discovered the girl was living in a trailer with several other family members that she realized there was no private space at home to nurse the baby. Broecker showed the girl how to nurse more discretely with a blanket over her shoulder.

It is easy to forget that a patient’s medical condition is part of a much larger tapestry, that it may be the symptom of something not found through clinical exams, Longenecker says. Medical students tend to focus mostly on the content, on mastering the diagnoses and treatments, he says. “The challenge is not so much the content,” he says. “It’s the context.”

### CULTURE COMPLEXITY

Another barrier to earning trust in rural Appalachia is that many people’s beliefs about medical care are shaped by stories that get passed around among friends and family that may have little basis in science.

“People in Appalachia learn from stories,” Broecker says. “Here people believe what their sister said. ... What they heard from their sister’s best friend’s aunt. What they heard from their neighbor next door.”

Sometimes the best approach is to respond with stories of her own, Broecker says, about how she took care of another patient with the treatment she’s recommending and how well it turned out.

In his work with the Amish, Law has had to learn how to negotiate beliefs and customs that are not only foreign to his own, but sometimes run against his medical instincts.

For example, an Amish father brought his 14-year-old daughter into Law’s office one day. The girl had sliced her index finger on a Mason jar, right through the tendon. The finger was hanging by a flap of skin.

Law said the girl needed surgery. The father balked. Can’t you just stitch up the skin, he asked. Law said he could, but told the man his daughter might never regain full use of her finger. She’s just a girl, the father replied. Does she really need to be able to point her finger?

It was clear the man would not budge, so Law reattached the tendon, secured the finger in a splint and hoped for the best. The finger healed and the girl regained full use. She is now a teacher in an Amish schoolhouse.

Law has also adapted to an Amish custom about pregnancy. He had been caring for pregnant Amish women for some time before a midwife finally pulled him aside one day and politely informed him that the Amish do not use the word pregnant, especially in front of children. The same goes for “with child,” or any other reference to pregnancy. Instead, some will use the letter “P” or say “PG.”

Birth control is another taboo, at least for Amish men. Law typically cannot see an Amish wife without her husband present, so he is not sure how the women feel about the issue. But as he’s built enough familiarity and trust with some families over many years, he has been able to see the women alone. And some of them have taken the opportunity to ask about birth control devices that their husbands cannot detect.

### ALL IN A DAY’S WORK

Rural doctors remain generalists in an age of increasing specialization, sometimes tending to needs that extend well beyond their medical comfort zones—such as chickens or, in Broecker’s case, pigs.

One day a patient of hers, a young woman involved in 4-H, said she had a pregnant sow that was due to have a litter of piglets any day. “I told her I’d never seen a sow give birth, and she and her mother invited me out to the farm when she went into labor,” Broecker says.

Pictured | Anzalone, surrounded by momentos and other meaningful objects, attends to his office paperwork. (Not pictured: the chicken foot.)

When the time came, there were complications. The first piglet was wedged deep in the birth canal and the young woman's mother was trying to pry it free.

"She turned to me and said, 'Well, you might as well give it a try since this is what you do for a living,'" Broecker says. "She showed me how to wash my arm and reach up for the piglet. This is when I discovered that piglets have teeth." She managed to maneuver the trapped piglet out and the rest followed with no problems.

Sometimes, the doctors keep memorabilia to document such adventurous visits.

For example, while Anzalone's two-story Victorian medical office on Main Street features a hallway of baby photos from many of the deliveries he has made over the years, a special memento sits on his antique desk amidst the files and ornate paperweights: a clear vial with a yellow plastic cap.

Inside, floating in formaldehyde, is an amputated chicken foot, given to him by William's grateful owner as a souvenir.

"You know you've had a good day," Anzalone says, "when you've made a baby smile and saved a chicken." 🍗







# Roadside Attractions

Hit the highway for these worth-your-while day trips

**W**hether around a winding corner or atop one of the rising Appalachian hills, the roads of Southeast Ohio are rich with inimitable destinations lying just off those well-worn paths. Sometimes the sites are hidden from the unacquainted eye; others jump out just begging to be explored. Regardless, Southeast Ohio offers countless attractions that serve as the perfect excuse to stretch your legs during long drives. From dolled-up barns to tree-top excursions, check out some of the region's most exciting roadside attractions.



**ABOVE** | The DragonFly Tour offers four enclosed “adventure” bridges and a continuous belaying system, also known as secure rope guidance, to ensure participant safety.

**LEFT** | One of the innumerable perks of flying through the treetops of Hocking Hills is the breathtaking view. Hocking Hills Canopy Tours’ highest platform, which sits at approximately 85 feet above the ground, offers an awe-inspiring panorama.

## Hocking Hills | Bridge, Zip and Zoom

BY NICK REES | PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DANIELLE GODBY

From March until November, twerking bachelorette parties, riotous 60th birthday celebrations and adventurous family trips fly through the treetops of Hocking County. One after another, the fearless attendees zip above the sprawling terrain of one of the county’s most noted features: the Hocking Hills.

Since 2007, The Hocking Hills Canopy Tours has offered visitors a unique and liberating experience—zip-lining. As the first zip-line adventure in Ohio and the entire Midwest, the company has grown its loyal customer base and expanded its offerings.

Three more tours have been built since the original canopy tour, literally, took off, including the “X” Tour, Super-Zip and the DragonFly Tour for children. Then, the beginning of 2014 saw the introduction of an off-road Segway Tour. An all-new escapade for adrenaline-junkies, the off-road Segways boast giant wheels ready to tackle the tough paths weaving between the towering trees of the region. The Segways are the perfect alternative for those too fearful of heights but still thirsting for excitement.

Although the company has expanded, the heart of the tours has not changed. With over 80 guides employed, the personable people rattling off nature facts and throwing tree puns into their witty repertoire are the true lure of the zip-lining adventure.

Two-time attendee Kathryn Cook praised the entire experience with special commendation for the guides. “They did a great job of making sure you were safe...and felt secure up there,” Cook says. “They were so easy to be around.


They knew when to be funny and when to be serious.”

Whether soaring past dangling snakes, pretending to ignore swarming wasps or dealing with the unfortunate gas of a participant, the guides work and live for the Canopy Tours during the busy summer season.

Danielle Godby, a DragonFly Tour guide for The Hocking Hills Canopy Tours, could not have been more enthused about her first season as a guide. “I cannot replace the stories I have in my mind. It teaches you about responsibility. I mean you’re responsible for yourself and nine other people,” Godby says. “This is what you’re going to be talking to your grandchildren about.”

Not only do the guides form a “Canopy family” of sorts, but sometimes they find their significant other. John Orr, a Canopy Tours guide, fell for his current girlfriend while leading a tour; she was his assistant guide. Meeting her is one of many reasons Orr considers the social aspect to be the greatest part of the tour. Scottish tourists with never-ending comedic impersonations and severely perspiring men are a couple of stand-out stories that Orr has accumulated from his time above the Hocking River.

Guides and participants alike can’t stop raving about the experiences they have had at The Hocking Hills Canopy Tours and urge all those visiting the region to indulge in some reckless abandon.

“It’s a completely different experience than you could even expect. You get to fly through the air, which is wicked in and of itself and then meet some crazy people,” Orr says. Reservations can be made starting in March. 

## 📍 Muskie Bucket | Scoop the Site

BY NICK HARLEY | PHOTO BY CALVIN MATTHEIS

The legacy of the coal mining industry in Southeast Ohio is hard to overlook, especially if you stumble across artifacts like the Big Muskie Bucket.

The massive 220-cubic-yard bucket rests in Morgan County, near McConnelsville on Route 78 in Miner's Memorial Park. The bucket is all that remains of the Big Muskie, a Bucyrus-Erie 4250-W walking dragline, the largest ever built and the biggest machine to ever move on land.

A dragline excavator is used to remove land or the rock and soil that rests above a coal seam. Draglines typically consist of a large bucket suspended from a crane-like structure, called a boom, that uses a complex wire system. The sheer enormity of the Big Muskie makes the dragline matchless. According to American Electric Power (AEP), the machine featured a boom that was 310 feet long, an operating house that revolved on a 105-foot diameter tub, and a bucket twice the size of draglines used today.

The most mind-bending aspect of the Big Muskie was that it moved or "walked" using four hydraulic-driven 20-by-65-foot "shoes." At a width of 151 feet, the Big Muskie required a road wider than an eight-lane highway. A 13,000-volt "extension cord," which produced enough power to supply 27,500 homes with electricity, powered the behemoth.

Once the Clean Air Act Amendments in 1990 decreased the demand for high-sulfur coal, Big Muskie took a big break, and it officially sidelined for good in January 1991. Eight years later, the AEP scrapped efforts to keep the machine intact as a historical exhibit, and the Big

Muskie was dismantled in February 1999.

Today, only the Muskie Bucket remains of the dragline, but the size of the enduring piece, all 220-cubic yards, speaks to the massive scale of the entire machine.

Although Miner's Memorial Park is closed during the winter months, curious travelers still stop to marvel at this incredible feat of engineering. Year-round such visitors include Christina and Tony Thorngate, who visited with their two children.

Last February, Tony, a teacher in nearby Crooksville, says the Muskie Bucket is a landmark destination for young students, and he and Christina wanted to let their kids see it for themselves. "It's really fun to climb around in," says their daughter Alyson, as she tries to climb the bucket's walls.

Another park visitor, Dan Gary, says he has his own fond childhood memories. Gary, 58, first visited the Big Muskie when he was about the age of 15. After rabbit hunting with his father, the pair visited the Big Muskie when the dragline still stood, even getting to tour the inside of the operating house. The tour left such a lasting impression that Gary keeps a picture of the Big Muskie on display at home and still frequents the park with his two daughters. "It was a massive thing for man to build," Gary says.

The coal industry helped shape the economy and lifestyle of Southeast Ohio, and the bucket still stands signifying the ambition, fortitude and magnitude of the miner's spirit. Looking back one last time before exiting the park, Gary sums up the Muskie Bucket succinctly, "it's incredible." 🇺🇸



ABOVE | The Big Muskie Bucket sits in Miner's Memorial park, near McConnelsville in Morgan County. The bucket is the last remaining vestige of the Big Muskie, the largest walking dragline ever built.



ABOVE | Guy Boutin, an Alabama native, has toured the country on the back of his motorcycle eight times. He enjoys riding through Ohio the most in the fall.

## 📍 Motorcycle Tours | Ride a Hog Heaven Highway

BY COLETTE WHITNEY | PHOTO PROVIDED BY GUY BOUTIN

Riding through the sloping hills of southeastern Ohio on the back of a motorcycle, feeling the crisp Midwest air on your face—seasoned riders will tell you there is nothing like it. There is a freedom in touring the open road on a solitary vehicle, and Appalachian Ohio is one of the most challenging and gorgeous places to do it.

“Ohio is a clear stand out of all the Midwest states having the most motorcycle roads,” says Bill Belei, founder of MotorcycleRoads.com, a website that lists the best roads for touring. “And if Ohio is a gold mine of motorcycle roads, then southeastern Ohio is the mother load with its plethora of hills, lush woods, rivers and streams, and topped up by mild traffic.”

Guy Boutin, a seasoned motorcycle tourist, documents every trip on his blog BamaRider.com. He has crossed the country on the back of a bike eight times and frequently makes the trip through Ohio.

“I usually come up there in the fall,” Boutin says. “It’s pretty good riding. I like to go to Ohio when the fall comes just to experience it.”

He rides through Wayne National Forest, and along Route 26 in Marietta and state roads 260, 14, 534 and 224 when he travels to Southeast Ohio.

Boutin insists that riding is not for everyone. It can be grueling and tough, full of long hours on the road and, often, nights spent sleeping in a tent. But, if you are up for the challenge, he says, it is worth it.

There are many websites dedicated to detailing roads best for touring on a motorcycle. MotorcycleRoads.us—which is separate from MotorcycleRoads.com—is one of those. It lists a road, defines it as either “scenic,” “sweeping curves,” “twisties,” or “unpaved.” It also includes reviews from people who have ridden on those roads.

“Called ‘Ohio’s Tail of the Dragon’, Ohio SR 555 (‘the Triple Nickel’) is a challenge for any biker on any ride,” writes rider Mark Bamberger, of State Route 555, which goes from Zanesville to Little Hocking. “Many consider this the best ride in Ohio.”

But it also includes less than positive descriptions. “Can’t really recommend this route to anybody on two wheels anymore, hopefully the other Southeast Ohio roads don’t or haven’t fallen victim to this,” writes rider Nick Gee of State Route 556. “Glad for the surrounding community, they have jobs in the area now, but today I mourn the loss of what was a truly nice piece of pavement.”

Those reviews could prove invaluable to new and veteran riders alike. With motorcycle clubs and websites like that popping up everywhere, many agree that motorcycle touring is one of the best ways to see and learn about the region.

“If you’re prone to taking a lot of chances, I recommend it,” Boutin says. “As far as experiences, there’s nothing like it. I’ve been doing it a long time, and just riding with no particular place to go, seeing what you can see, it’s an awesome experience.” 🇺🇸

## 📍 Quilt Barns | See a Painter's Pastoral Patchwork

STORY AND PHOTO BY CASSIE FAIT

The vibrantly painted quilt barns dotting Monroe County's countryside represent Southeast Ohio's culture and family legacies. To get the best view of those gems, visitors should drive along the Patchwork Jewels trail, and passengers should keep their eyes peeled for an eccentric treasure hunt. The 18 quilt barns are hidden like diamonds in the rough.

To find those concealed barns, the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce created pamphlets with descriptions and directions. Many of the barns are tucked away along back roads, but with a bit of patience and skillful map reading, travelers can observe lesser-journeyed areas of Southeast Ohio along the way.

The Barn Artist, Scott Hagan, painted all the aesthetically relevant artworks during the summer of 2004. Hagan, who grew up in Belmont County, is also known for painting the Ohio Bicentennial Barns across the state. But his work goes where the barns are, and that's all over the country.

"I really enjoy the travel with what I do," Hagan says. "I wouldn't have gone to these places otherwise."

Hagan became involved in the quilt barn project about 11 years ago after the Patchwork Jewels of Monroe County Committee contacted him. In fact, one of the organizers, Susan Pollock, taught Hagan music during his adolescence.

And with that, Hagan signed on to the project. But first,

the committee advertised the quilt barn project to find willing participants that would allow Hagan to paint their barns. The barns needed to fit Hagan's specifications and be highly visible from the roadside.

"The quilts were chosen by the [barn] owners. They had about 50 designs to pick from, and occasionally they had an individual quilt in mind," Hagan says.

Paul and Sandy Dietrich, Barn R in the brochure, chose a pattern from a quilt in their family. The Dietrichs decided to display the colorful, exquisitely crafted quilt with the pattern known as Grandmother's Flower Garden. For the pattern, three different octagons form a tri-colored geometric flower.

Most of the patterns posed an easy project for Hagan, except for the Carpenter's Wheel (Barn N); the symmetry of the wheel had to be perfectly sketched, or it would throw off the pattern. The many different geometric shapes proved to be a challenge. Besides that glitch, the one-man-team took about one day to paint each of the quilt barns along the Patchwork Jewels trail.

Hagan says that he hopes one day to have painted a barn in each of the 50 states. Perhaps for a bigger adventure, travelers can visit Hagan's barns, currently located in 18 states across the U.S. 🇺🇸



ABOVE | Barn owners Paul and Marian Sue Brown chose the "Goose Tracks" pattern for their barn to portray the abundant geese populations in Monroe County.



# 📍 The National Road | Take the Historical Route

BY DILLON STEWART | PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SHAUNA HEARING

Route 40 is more than just a road—it is a symbol. It is a symbol of George Washington’s dream of westward expansion. As the first federally-funded road, it is a testament to a productive congress, which, under the guidance of Thomas Jefferson, was able to continue to pursue the dream of a unified, prosperous nation in the midst of a civil war. It is a symbol of the families and legacies created by pioneers who traveled the road and settled across Ohio, the origin of pike towns like Morristown and Old Washington. Most importantly, Route 40 is the National Road, “the road that built the nation.”

“The National Road was very important because it opened up movement to the west,” says Director of Operations at the National Road/Zane Grey Museum, Debbie Allender. “It’s the main street of America.”

Today, the National Road is a historic monument. In June of 2002, the Federal Highway Administration named the National Road one of its All-American roads, to be preserved as a historic site. To qualify, the road itself must be a tourist attraction, have features that make the trip scenic and have various tourist stops along the way. Most importantly, the designation means the National Road is a storied piece of the nation’s history.

Of the road’s nearly 700 miles, 228 cross the southern half of Ohio, one of six states it calls home. The road runs horizontally across the state through 10 counties, beginning in Belmont and ending in Preble County. From gravel, to brick, to concrete, each segment of the road represents different stages of construction, each adorned with a backdrop of Ohio’s beautiful rolling hills and acres of robust farmland.

The road enters Ohio from Wheeling, West Virginia into Belmont County. Belmont is home to the Blaine Hill Bridge, Ohio’s oldest sandstone bridge. It is one of Route 40’s many S Bridges built to bypass glacial formations. The 178-year-old bridge is now a monument to early-industrial architecture. The 385-foot brick-paved bridge was named Ohio’s bicentennial bridge in 2003. The road features many other show-stopping bridges along the way, including Zanesville’s Y-Bridge.

About 40 miles down the road, a stop in Guernsey County is essential. The 133-year-old courthouse is as famous for its annual Christmas light display as it is for its sandstone exterior, mansard roof and monuments to the various U.S. wars. It’s been listed on the National Register since 1973. Guernsey County also features the John and Annie Glenn Historic Site, a living historical museum housed in Sen. Glenn’s childhood home. The house, moved from its original location in Cambridge, is adjacent to the Muskingum College Campus, Sen. Glenn’s alma mater, in New Concord.

“New Concord itself is a good example of a town that was built along the National Road,” Allender says.

Just past Columbus, in Lafayette, visitors can grab a drink at one of the oldest watering holes in Ohio, the Red Brick Tavern. The Red Brick has housed six presidents and



TOP | The Guernsey County Courthouse was built in 1883 by Columbus-architect J.W. Yost and has been featured on the National Register since 1973.

ABOVE | The Peter's Creek S-Bridge was rehabilitated in 2006 to reinforce the bridge's architecture and preserve the classic brick aesthetic.

many weary travelers alike since 1837. Today, it is the perfect place to stop for a steak and a beer, though drivers should just stick to the meat.

A National Road pilgrimage is not complete without an educational stop at the National Road Museum in Norwich. Travelers can learn the history of the National Road, from its origin as Zane’s foot-trail to a modern-day historic attraction.

Those are just a few of the sites to see along Route 40. For more information on driving tours, contact the National Road/Zane Grey Museum or the Cambridge/Guernsey County Visitors & Convention Bureau to get a free traveler’s guide or look online at [ohionationalroad.org](http://ohionationalroad.org). 🇺🇸



# OHIO'S STAR POWER

Explore how the heart-of-it-all state is the epicenter of our nation's air and space history and future

BY DILLON STEWART | PHOTOS PROVIDED BY NASA

In December 1903, Dayton residents Orville and Wilbur Wright harnessed the power of flight and achieved the seemingly impossible.

But the brother's successful engineering of the first three-axis control was more than a technique that made fixed-wing aircrafts possible: it was an enduring industry standard to this day.

Their awe-inspiring discovery served as a spark igniting a flame of innovation in Ohio, and the Wright Brothers legacy defined what it meant to be an Ohioan.

"You could argue that Ohio was the Silicon Valley of

the industrial age," says President and Chief Executive Officer of the Ohio Aerospace Institute Michael Heil.

So while Ohio claimed its spot in the skies, it reached even higher years later when America's goals increased in the 1960s. In 1962, the Cambridge-born fighter pilot John Glenn made history by becoming the first American to orbit earth. Seven years later, Neil Armstrong, of Wapakoneta, followed in Glenn's footsteps by becoming the first man to walk on the moon.

Since then, Ohio has produced 25 astronauts. Those astronauts are responsible for 78 space flights, 22,000 hours and three trips to the moon.

**RIGHT** | One of the Wright Brother's original "flying machines" takes flight. The successful engineering of the three-axis control remains an industry standard to this day.

**OPPOSITE PAGE** | Buzz Aldrin becomes the second man to walk on the surface of the moon. The first, Neil Armstrong of Wapakoneta, Ohio, is visible in the reflection from Aldrin's visor.

"The latest generation of astronauts grew up learning about the history of Ohio and that the Wright Brothers, Glenn, Armstrong and so many industrial and innovation leaders are from here," Heil says. "I think a lot of folks across the state grew up saying, 'I want to be an astronaut too.'"



### IT'S IN OUR AIR

With Ohio's historic roots in innovation and engineering, the state evolved into a hub for the aviation and aerospace industry. As one of Ohio's leading industries, it accounts for more than 130,000 high-paying, full-time jobs and a gross state product of \$4.3 billion.

The Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, located five miles outside Dayton, is the largest Air Force base of its kind in the country. It employs approximately 27,400 people, making it the largest single site employer in Ohio. It also has an estimated economic influence of \$4 billion.

In Cleveland, NASA's premier research laboratory, the John H. Glenn Research Center, employs over 3,400 people. The industry pumps \$1.4 billion into the economy. Overall, about \$10 billion is invested in research and development in Ohio annually.

In turn, these research and development facilities help attract global companies to the state. For example, Ohio is the number one U.S. supplier to Boeing and Airbus, two top-tier companies in aviation and aerospace. The 1,200 private companies in Ohio that provide components for the industry nation-wide nearly double the per-state average across the country, creating a \$14 billion export market.

Similar to other fields, there is a slight crisis brewing. In an industry mostly made up of baby boomers, fresh blood is needed. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the average age of aerospace engineers is 47 years old. In 2013, a survey produced by Aviation Week showed that 9.6 percent of employees are eligible for retirement.

Jobs in the aviation and aerospace industry are typically highly skilled, and the industry depends on people who have strong math and science backgrounds. For example, 83 percent of NASA Glenn employees possess at least a bachelor's degree, and that number is expected to rise.

Heil says one concern within this community relates to the low number of young people majoring in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects. "We need to get the word out that this is a great career path with a lot of people hiring," Heil says.

Heil feels it's important to make math and science ex-

pecting by eliminating the mystique that it's boring or hard. Perhaps another selling point is that in this case, high pay accompanies high skill. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median pay of Aerospace Engineers in 2014 was \$105,380, nearly \$50,000 more than the median income per household.

Glenn Richardson acts as the Managing Director of Advanced Manufacturing Aerospace and Aviation for the non-profit workforce development group JobsOhio. While he stresses the importance of engineers, he also sees mid-level employees as a hole in the work force. He works with high schools, community colleges and vocational schools to find strategies to attract young people to those types of careers.

"This isn't your grandfather's manufacturing, in a dirty, oil covered environment," Richardson says. "These jobs are in a very high tech, very clean environment, where the knowledge to operate the system of machines is not only electrical and mechanical but also has the tech piece and the computing piece and the ability to troubleshoot it."

### A MAN WITH A PLAN

Workforce development was one of the many issues Rep. Rick Perales, of Beavercreek, had in mind when he proposed Ohio House Bill 292. In his mind, Ohio is currently a logistics chain, a supplier of components and parts. To take Ohio to the next level, he wants to build the state into a premier destination for companies seeking locations to build full-scale plants that construct the latest airplanes and machines for both industrial and defense purposes.

"The purpose of 292 was to pull military, academia, aviation and aerospace experts together to make sure that we get enough effectiveness and efficiency from our resources," Perales says. "We have so many resources and we are so fortunate with aviation aerospace that we ought to be number one in the country. We're fading fast, and I think it's because we've gotten a little fat, dumb and lazy, expecting things to come to us."

In 2014, the bill passed, creating the Ohio Aerospace and Aviation Technology Committee. Its members are the "rock n' roll stars in aviation," Perales says.

The committee's purpose is to advise legislators on related policy in the hope of fostering growth. The group's diversity across the industrial spectrum, from experts in academia and industry to military representatives and government officials, illustrates the cooperation its members aim to bring to the aviation and aerospace community.

As a member of the committee, Heil says the first task of the group will be to educate members about state resources. The group will then identify strengths and weaknesses of each entity and ideally create mutually beneficial partnerships.

"This committee, through policy recommendations for the Ohio legislation and Ohio state government, will help Ohio achieve its potential as an aerospace state," Heil says.

Collaboration has been a theme of Perales' career even before his 2012 election to the Ohio House of Representatives. As Executive Director of Facilities at the University of Dayton (UD), he was part of a team that initiated cooperation between UD and GE Aviation, a major industry player in Cincinnati.

The result was the \$51 million Electrical Power Integrated Systems Center (GE EPISCenter), where students and industry professionals work to create advanced electrical power technologies that provide more efficient power systems for aircrafts and cars.

The real world experience that students receive helps prepare them professionally and scholars also benefit. To Heil, it is a perfect example of coordination between industry and academia that the Ohio Aerospace Institute and the OAAT Committee encourages and promotes.


"A company working with a university, particularly a local university, collaborating to create something like a research center, industry members view that as, 'Good for them. I need to find my own university to work with,'" Heil says.

Perales sees such crossover as an improvement, but he would like to see an even wider reach. For example, GE Aviation's headquarters and UD are both located in the Southwest Ohio region, which is where most of the aerospace and aviation activity is based. The Southeast Ohio region could benefit similarly from industry teamwork with entities like Ohio University's Department of Aviation, one of the best in the state.

Such relationships were so crucial during the drafting of House Bill 292 that Perales facilitated both a trip for James Free, director of NASA Glenn, to visit Wright Patterson Air Force Base, and a trip for the Director of Wright Patterson to visit NASA Glenn. Perales says the results further supported his agenda.

"From that one meeting they both decided to place a permanent member in each other's facility, just to be there, get the intel and connect the NASA resources with Wright-Pat and vice-versa," Perales says. "That sounds like a no brainer, but that's what I mean when I talk about connecting the dots."

Richardson says "Innovation is what sustains a business in the long haul." The industry is ever changing. Military and industry interest in Unmanned Aircraft Systems, drones, is extremely high. New aircrafts are in high demand. Common people have their sights set on space travel through space tourism. Many aspire to send the first humans to Mars. Left up to people like Heil, Richardson and Perales, Ohio will be as essential to the new frontier in aerospace and aviation history as it was to the field's early days.

"We're talking in the span of 40 years, 100 years from now, but having a human base on Mars and then eventually even leading to potential colonization of other planets is within the realm of possibility," Heil says. "It's not science fiction." 



**LEFT** | Specialists develop, research and test aeronautical technology at The Glenn Research Center at Lewis Field, a 350-acre campus in Cleveland, Ohio.

**Sunita Williams** ran the Boston Marathon while on the International Space Station.



**Michael L. Gernhardt** logged over 700 deep sea dives.

**Kathryn D. Sullivan** is a captain and oceanography officer in the U.S. Naval Reserve.



## OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD ASTRONAUT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Think astronauts are inherently high achievers? These six Ohians prove whether they are in the sky, water or U.S. Senate, life takes drive and determination.



**Mary Ellen Weber** was with 300 other skydivers in the world's largest free fall record.



After becoming the first American to orbit earth, the fifth man in space and serving 25 years as a democratic U.S. Senator, **John Glenn** became the oldest man in space at 77 years old.

**Terence T. Henricks** has 740 parachute jumps and a Master Parachutist rating.



# What's your story?

Naturalist and blogger Jim McCormac takes us where the wild things are: Southeast Ohio's great outdoors

BY NICK HARLEY | PROVIDED BY JIM MCCORMAC

To be clear, a “naturalist” has nothing to do with nudity. Rather, a naturalist is someone who studies and unearths discoveries about natural history, and in Southeast Ohio, there are always new mysteries to solve. Thanks to the region's rugged topography and abundance of woodlands, many areas remain underdeveloped, creating a wealth of biodiversity. Tourists travel from afar to witness the biological wonders inhabiting Southeast Ohio.

Jim McCormac, a life-long Columbus native, has enjoyed his short commute to experience Appalachian wildlife. McCormac works for the Ohio Division of Wildlife and operates a nature blog, [JimMcCormac.blogspot.com](http://JimMcCormac.blogspot.com), full of breathtaking photos and expert information. We spoke with McCormac about his work, his knowledge of the region, and his unwavering love of the outdoors.

## A NATURAL COMMUNICATOR

“I'm in the ‘Wildlife Diversity’ section, and we do a lot of public outreach about non-game animals. We've done about 15 booklets that tend to be 60 to 80 pages long. We've done four [booklets] about birds, covering most of the groups of birds in Ohio, and we've done them about reptiles, amphibians, and fish. We've given away a million in the last eight years. We've really done a lot of outreach work to help interest people in nature and educate people in nature.”

## A MISSION TO BLOG

“The current iteration is about 8-years-old, and I think I'm nearing 1,500 posts. It's a great way to pipe information out to people. An overarching theme for me that unifies all that is I want people to get interested in nature, because I want them to protect it. You can't get people to protect what they don't know anything about. So I do what I can.”

## SOUTHEAST OHIO SWEET SPOTS

“Adams and Scioto counties, those are my two favorites by a long shot. Adams County has these little heather glade prairies, or short grass prairies; sometimes they call them bluegrass prairies. But they have some of the richest diversity in the entire Midwest,

and they're full of rare species. In Scioto County is Shawnee State Forest. You've got the influence of the Teays River, which flows north out of what's now the [Great] Smoky Mountains National Park and enters Ohio right

around Portsmouth and flows north, northwest through Ohio. Many of the plants it's brought in over the eons of its existence still survive there today, so it's sort of this Bermuda Triangle of weird plants. But it's a goldmine that's really rich in diversity, and it's not that well explored. I think it's the only place in Ohio where knowledgeable people have a reasonable expectation that they might find something brand new to Ohio, or possibly, new to science.”

## PHILOSOPHICAL NATURE

“The way I look at nature, it's an inexhaustible intellectual pursuit. You could never even begin to learn all this stuff; it's just far too ornate. You can become fairly masterful in segments, but when you start looking at all these pieces of the puzzle and all these little things that are out there, you'll just be constantly dumbfounded by what you



ABOVE | Jim McCormac, a blogging naturalist from Columbus, goes to great depths to capture the beauty of Southeast Ohio's wildlife. The native Ohioan's fascination with birds led him to pursue a career in nature.

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