

Southeast OHIO

Winter | Spring 2023

INSIDE +

Black in Southeast Ohio
and Beyond

Wine, Dine and Recline

Knights of Amphibian Waters



Southeast OHIO

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

When we first started production for this issue, one word kept making its way into our discussions: community. It's easy to generalize an entire region or group of people as a "community," but the word erases the nuance of individual experience.

A community can look like hunters guiding others with disabilities to enjoy stalking turkeys in the hills (38), or the staff and patrons at a Scooby-Doo themed bakery in Byesville (8). Communities of people support one another by sharing and showing up to help, like the cancer treatment center created for Amish and Mennonite women in Washington county (44) or TLV, a restaurant in Marietta whose owners organized the city's first pride parade after centuries of KKK rallies overwhelmed the town square (46).

Community can also mean having to preserve one's Black ancestral history in Appalachia (24), a region that most mistakenly believe is exclusively white. From family bowling alleys (10) to communal conservation efforts (40) to a museum dedicated to preserving the history of Jackson county at one woman's request (12), one thing is certain: Southeast Ohio is only as good as the people who make it so. And I think they're pretty remarkable.

Abby Neff



Editor-in-Chief



Find us online: www.southeastohiomagazine.com

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.

On The Cover

Ari Gold poses with the mural of George Floyd that he spray painted on the side of his restaurant.

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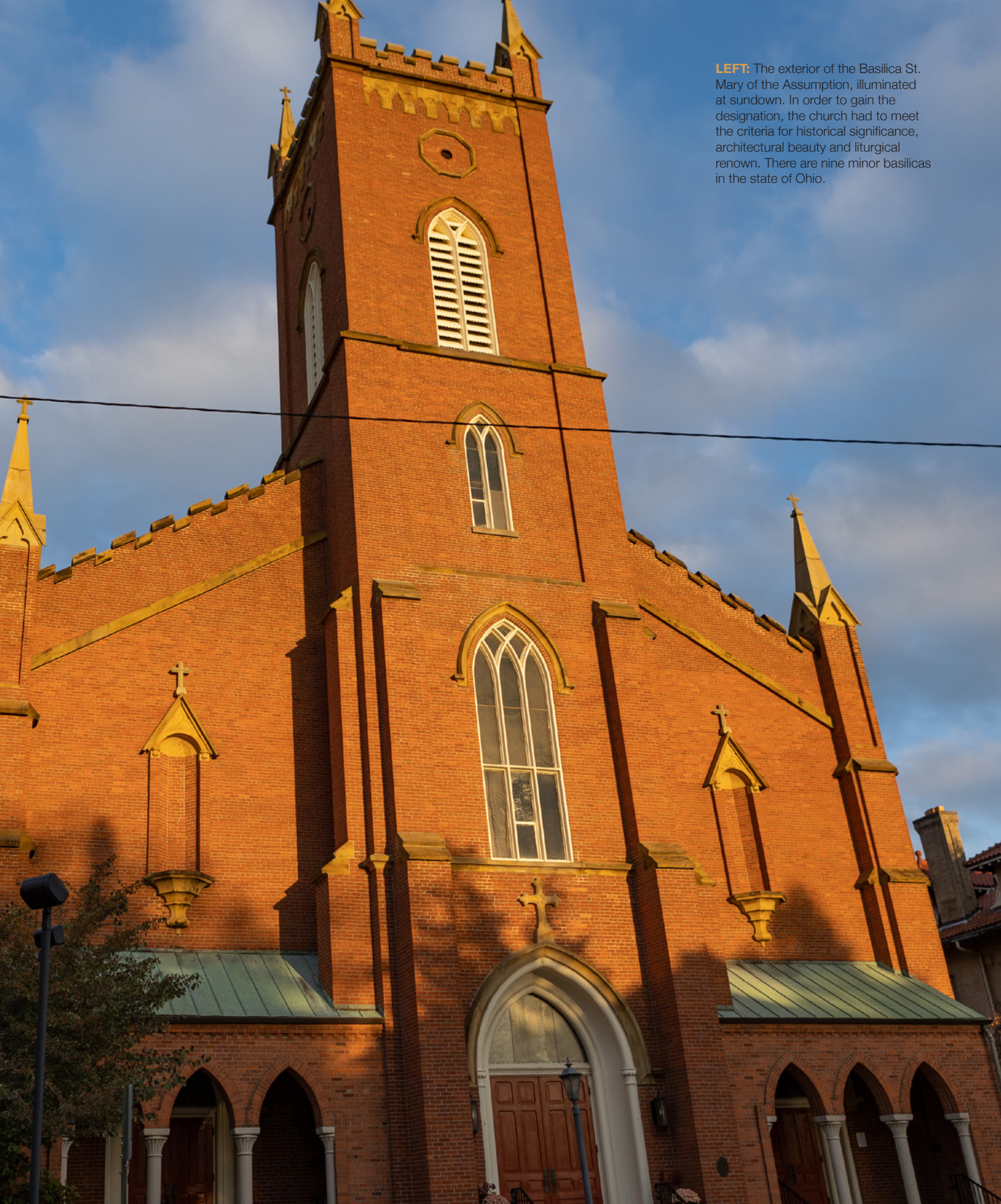
STORY AND PHOTOS BY
HANNAH FOWLER

In Lancaster, the daily chimes of church bells ring throughout the town. On top of a hill along Chestnut Street, the tall, American Gothic style brick tower of a Catholic church stands high. In August 2022, the parish had a little more reason to ring the bells and celebrate, when the culmination of an almost two-year-long application process finally led to a new designation for the church, now titled the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption.

Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption is the seventh minor basilica in Ohio and 91st in the U.S. The designation of a minor basilica is based on three factors: history, architectural beauty and liturgical practice. The church traces its history back to the original Catholic church in the Fairfield County area, which was founded in 1819 and is located near what is now the intersection of Chestnut Street and Memorial Drive. Amid the American Civil War, construction of the church's current location on High Street faced struggles and delays due to the war and was almost never finished, but was finally completed in 1864 with help from donors and parishioners.

"It becomes a place of special visit for Catholics and for the larger community," Father Craig Eilerman, the rector for the basilica, says. "It would be somewhat akin to being put on the National List of Historic Buildings."





LEFT: The exterior of the Basilica St. Mary of the Assumption, illuminated at sundown. In order to gain the designation, the church had to meet the criteria for historical significance, architectural beauty and liturgical renown. There are nine minor basilicas in the state of Ohio.



ABOVE: Owners Nicole and Patrick Mitchell enjoying time together at the bar inside Manchester Hill Winery & Vineyard.

Wine, Dine and Recline

Pickaway County vineyard owners won't rest until you relax

STORY BY **CURTIS FEDER** // PHOTOS BY **KAYLA BENNETT**

Between the trees of the hilly roads of Circleville, Nicole Mitchell can be found with a wine glass in one hand and her husband Patrick holding the other as they watch their dog, Poe, play in the fields of Manchester Hill Winery & Vineyard.

The couple walks around the vineyard, seeing the rows of crops they planted when starting the business together.

Patrick and Nicole established the business in 2012. Before they made wine, Patrick was an environmental scientist who worked as an inspector, and Nicole was in theater for 25 years.

Then they decided to change career direction and pursue their dreams instead.

"[Patrick] always had a passion for making wine. He [would make] one that tastes really good, and I said, 'keep doing this, keep doing this,'" Nicole says. "Eventually we decided to throw away our past and focus all of our everything on what we were doing here."

After buying and renovating a building on Tarlton Road, they began the process of making their own wine. Nicole and Patrick pride themselves on having all their

wine grown, harvested, fermented, bottled and labeled in-house. Once the wine they sold became popular, they decided to expand the business.

"We're trying to get a broader variety of wines for different palettes, and as more people came, I said that we have to start doing food," Nicole says. "That became very popular, and then people kept saying, 'What else do you have?' So, I started a food truck."

The food truck never leaves the vineyard, and it features a wide variety of options, including pesto pasta along with barbecue brisket and potatoes that are slow-cooked in a smoker.

"We've been doing the smoking for the past five years and we serve barbecued brisket on Friday and Saturday," Patrick says.

The smoker is a short distance away from the winery adjacent to the food truck. Shortly after the smoker got up and running, Nicole had another idea on how to serve the needs of Pickaway County.

"The local pizza place in town went out of business, and with us being from New York and New Jersey, one thing we

know is pizza," Nicole says. "So we're doing our own handcrafted wine and barbecue, and now we're going to handcraft our pizza."

Manchester Hill Winery once again expanded its workload, but the owners both continued to demonstrate their desire to stay local. Although the business imports its dough from Naples, Italy, the winery grows most of its ingredients on-site, including tomatoes and basil.

"One problem we've been having is that people love the food so much [that] they come here just to eat and have a water or soda with it," Patrick says. "As good as it is that they like what we serve, we are a winery first."

Even with unexpected difficulties such as the coronavirus pandemic, Nicole and Patrick have managed to adapt by establishing a four-bottle requirement for orders and free delivery for places less than 20 minutes from the winery. As a licensed alcohol manufacturer, the winery also made its own hand sanitizer.

As Manchester Hill grows each year, the Mitchells continue to find new ways to bring in revenue. They have a beehive to help pollinate the crops and a fire pit outside the building.

"The cabin was a greenhouse/office, and as it sat there, we thought that this was kind of a waste of space," Nicole says. "I'm like 'well, I can make the bed and do this,' and I listed it the next night. Now we're pretty much booked solid."

Patrick has already ordered several new fermenting tanks to expand the room where the wine is processed. Meanwhile, Nicole wishes to expand the space where people can take a tour behind the scenes to see how the winery's products get made.

Despite Manchester Hill Winery's rapid growth, both Nicole and Patrick wish for the winery to remain a local gathering place.

"We want kids outside playing cornhole, with their family playing frisbee," Nicole says. "It's a nice social gathering, it's a good time. And we want it to be all-inclusive as much as possible."



ABOVE: Grapes that can be plucked by customers on outdoor patio.

MELODIES AT MANCHESTER

As Manchester Hill Winery became more well-known as a good place to eat, drink or stay the night, many different artists and musicians saw the establishment as a great venue for performances.

What started as a volunteer operation on Saturday nights became a well sought-after gig that has made the owners a bit more selective.

"I'm already almost completely booked for 2023, and [this year] I had a rotation of 15 different local musicians ranging from bluegrass to diverse covers," Nicole says.

For musicians on the outside looking in trying to perform at the winery, Nicole began "Manchester Muse" as an open mic opportunity on Friday nights between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. for people to get a chance to perform. Some who impress the owners get into the rotation for Saturday gigs.

With both Nicole and Patrick's musical backgrounds, this new addition to the business was seemingly effortless.

"My husband plays, I play and our friends play, so why not get together and just jam?" Nicole says. "Let's get some bookings in here, let's do that. It kind of happened pretty naturally."

With a bonfire in the firepit outside as the sun sets, listening to music with a wine glass in your hand can be a normal weekend at Manchester Hill.

MANCHESTER HILL WINERY & VINEYARD

Contact: (845) 893 - 8724

**Address: 13160 Tarlton Road,
Circleville, OH 43113**

Facebook: @ManchesterHill

Spring Hours:

Yoga Mondays: 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Tuesday - Thursday: 12 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Friday - Saturday: 12 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Scooby-Doo and Cookies, Too

Tara Hupp's Pure Love Bakery specializes in creative confections

STORY BY **NATHAN BLACKBURN** // PHOTOS BY **ABBY NEFF**

Tara Hupp has her blonde and blue hair tied up, talking with other bakers as she works to complete a small chocolate cake with strawberry filling. To her left the youngest member of the team, her 8-month-old son Dax, sits in his bouncer seat smiling behind a pacifier. Her duo of bakers take the time to spray silver pans with Pam, preparing the oven to house raw, doughy treats.

The space is tight, but everyone works together to craft the baked goods for sale up front.

Scooby-Doo is everywhere. The walls are green and purple color, reminiscent of the Mystery Machine. A glass case displays Scooby-Doo frosted sugar cookies, glazed donuts and small flower-topped cakes.

Pure Love's variety of pastries ranges from super-size donuts to "adult conversation cookies" iced with mature humor. One such icing inscription is, "some days, I want to push you in front of a bus." The quip is quite the opposite tone from Hupp's warm and inviting demeanor, inspired in part from "Ace of Cakes" star Duff Goldman.

"He's my idol," Hupp says. "I absolutely love him, I love his personality. He's just very easy going. His work, that's my goal."

Chocolate chip cookies are the most consistent sellers and seasonal items tend to be popular, such as pumpkin bars and maple bacon donuts. Hupp wants to introduce gluten free options next, with time. Pure Love's Facebook presence helps customers see what is on the menu for the day and people will come into the bakery to taste Hupp's creations for themselves.

As Hupp leans over to show Facebook posts that have gotten a lot of reactions, the bakers laugh and Dax giggles. Hupp looks over to them with a warm smile that reaches her

eyes, before putting her phone back in her pocket, washing her hands and returning to her strawberry chocolate cake.

Hupp started baking 14 years ago from her home. She discovered she had a flair for creativity and decided to turn the part-time hobby into a full-time job. In 2021, she decided to open her own bakery. One question remained: Where?

"Byesville has so much potential," Hupp says. "We had to find a building that would actually work and unfortunately there's not a whole lot of buildings in Byesville, so you have kind of a limited pick."

January 2023 will mark two years since Pure Love's opening and the expansion of the town has made Hupp feel more confident in her own business.

Thinking of starting a small business of your own? Hupp advises finding the small business association in your area, as they will help you with paperwork, pricing and anything else you need to succeed.

"When you do get started, don't let your struggles be your downfall," Hupp says. "You're going to have your downs, right? Everybody does. But you have to grow. The ups will outweigh your downs."

Her staff takes care of the baking so Hupp can focus on the decorating. Hupp continuously takes on the most creative cakes she can curate. A multi-layer cake held up only with toothpicks? Not a problem; Hupp is up for the challenge. As long as it is not a standard sheet cake, Hupp will take on what other decorators may keep only as ideas.

"I'm willing to try anything," Hupp says.

"There's so many things you can do," Hupp says. "It may frustrate me, the entire process, but when I'm down to the end and I see it all, it turns out awesome."

Hupp tells a story about a time a former employee came

BELOW: (L-R): Stephanie Back, Carla Carpenter, Tara Hupp and Dax Hupp stand in front of Pure Love Bakery.



with their little daughter. The daughter asked what she was doing and Hupp said, "I'm fighting a cake. It's winning."

Hupp has been able to maintain a first name basis with her loyal customer base; some even come in daily to survey the new additions in the glass cases.

"I definitely want them to walk in, whether it's your first time or your 50th time, I want you to feel like you belong here," Hupp says. "Kinda like it's a home. We're not going to rush you."

Hupp finishes pressing together the chocolate cake as a chime echoes through the bakery, signaling a customer. She takes off her gloves, wipes her hands on her apron and walks to the front, all while calling out in a kind, southeastern twang: "Hi, what can I do for you today?"



ABOVE: Tara Hupp works on a strawberry chocolate cake.



ABOVE: Scooby-Doo sits among canine-friendly cupcakes topped with dog treats.

**Address: 142 S. 2nd Street
Byesville, OH 43723**

**Closed Monday
Tuesday-Friday 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Saturday: 6 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Sunday: 8 a.m. to noon**

Pure Love Peanut Butter Cupcakes

INGREDIENTS:

Chocolate cake mix
Reese's Peanut Butter Cups
Butter
Pure vanilla extract
Confectioners' sugar
Milk

CAKE:

1. Follow directions on box for cupcakes.
2. Coat peanut butter cups in a bowl of flour. This coating helps keep them from sinking.
3. Shake off excess flour from peanut butter cups. Place in center of cupcakes. Push the peanut butter cups about half way in. Do not push all the way down.
4. Bake at 325 degrees for 15 minutes. Poke center of each cupcake with toothpick. Make sure toothpick comes out clean and cool.

ICING:

1. Take ½ cup of room temperature unsalted butter, two cups confectioners' sugar, sifted, one and a half teaspoons pure vanilla extract, two tablespoons milk and three drops food coloring.
2. Cream butter in the bowl of a stand mixer, fitted with the paddle, attachment until smooth and fluffy.
3. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar until fully incorporated. Beat in vanilla extract as well.
4. Add milk and beat for an additional three to four minutes until smooth. Make sure to add milk one tbspc at a time, you do not want the icing to be too thin.
5. Add creamy peanut butter to buttercream icing until flavor is to your liking. Add more milk if the icing is become too thick.
6. Using a spoon or decorator bag, ice cupcakes with peanut butter icing. Top with peanut butter cup.

Last, eat and enjoy!

Spare Time

Russell Family Bowling Center brings Monroe County together, one pin at a time

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
KAYLA BENNETT

When Walter Russell walks into his business, it is so dark and quiet you could hear a pin drop; a bowling pin, that is. Then, Russell makes his way around the tall, red-top counter, turns on the lights, and brings the bowling lanes to life.

All of Monroe County loves the bowling alley, with no one more appreciative than Russell himself. When the establishment was relinquished from its previous ownership, he bought it.

Russell's commitment to bowlers and bowling itself has been his driving force. It all started when he was younger, when his dad taught him to love the sport.

"He was in the Navy and retired and came back home, and he bowled leagues here; but I used to go with him even in Pensacola to bowl and learn how to keep score at a young age—in fifth grade," Russell says. "The bowlers were excited they didn't have to sit down there and keep score."

Russell Family Bowling Center coined its name from Russell's love for not only the sport, but his family. His dad, who recently turned 92, has been a support system throughout not only his life, but his time as a business owner. His dad even has a tall, glossy red seat reserved for him behind the counter.

Residents Richard and Diana Yoho have known the bowling alley as a staple of Monroe County since before Russell's ownership.

"I don't know exactly when the bowling alley opened up the very first time, but I do know it has been there since 1965," Richard says. "And a lot of the people that are there started there when they were kids and their parents were involved, so it has been a figure of Monroe County here ... for decades."

What keeps the Yohos coming back? The answer is simple—Russell.

"It's easy to get enthusiastic when you've got somebody like Walter behind the drive," Richard says.

The Yohos say everyone knows the name "Walter Russell," not just avid bowlers. Some may know him from church or from his time coaching the local high school bowling teams.

Addason Tomlin is a sophomore at a local high



ABOVE: Walter Russell stands by the red, vinyl chair his father sits in to greet costumers at the alley.

school and has been bowling ever since she was younger. It is an activity that has brought her closer with her brothers. Tomlin says Russell Family Bowling Center is one of her favorite places.

"I've accomplished so many things in bowling—learning how to be patient, talk to people," Tomlin says. "It also helps with stress."

Russell, like Tomlin, believes bowling is so much more than the sport itself.

"It's important to find something to do outside instead of sitting around on technology," Russell says. His drive for coaching comes from this ideology and the hope that many of the students will continue to bowl after high school, in the adult leagues.

"Everybody just tries to help everybody out as far as if you need a replacement, if you need a fill-in, if you need guidance, it's just one big group of people that come together," Diana, who currently plays in adult leagues, says. "We definitely have a lot of fun."

Every year, on top of hosting birthdays and daily bowling games, the alley hosts a bowling tournament and collaborates with local businesses to help sponsor and provide cash awards to the winners. The tournament lasts about 30 weeks and consists of head-to-head games. This year, Russell says, there will be a guaranteed \$200 cash prize every week for the winner.



For Russell, the space has evolved into a centralized location of togetherness. Today, he says, families don't spend enough time together. He sees kids dropped off by their parents who then drive away.

"Not enough families now get out with their kids," Russell says. The business was built off the back of family and the future of the beloved bowling alley depends on the next generation.

"[I'm] hoping for the longevity of it that remains open well after I'm gone, whether I own it, till I pass or whatever," Russell says. "I'll get people [who] have asked me, especially the league, 'Are you tired of it yet?' Nope, [I] enjoy it too much."

“
I'll get people [who] have asked me, especially the league, 'Are you tired of it yet?' Nope, [I] enjoy it too much.”

– Walter Russell



ABOVE: Bowling balls await to be picked by bowlers, new and experienced.



ABOVE: The alley is comprised of 12 lanes, all cared for by Russell.

RUSSELL FAMILY BOWLING CENTER

Contact: (740) 472-9004

Address: 926 Eastern Ave., Woodsfield, OH

Visit www.facebook.com/russellfamilybowlingcenter to learn more.

Jones Museum Houses Jackson County History

Lillian E. Jones Museum suspends Jones family legacy and hometown history in time

STORY BY HELEN WIDMAN // PHOTOS BY MAYA MEADE

Perched atop a hill near downtown Jackson, the white house that hosts the Lillian E. Jones Museum overlooks the street, almost as omnipresent as its namesake. Lillian Jones traveled the world but always returned, dedicating time to her Presbyterian Church, as well as collecting bits and pieces of her beloved hometown history.

"She took pictures of everything and so many random people," Ashley Aldrich, the museum's current director, says. "And she was also known for crashing weddings and showing up. The people that do talk about her [say] she was a force and she kind of did what she wanted and everyone else just accepted that."

Upon entering the museum through the teal front door, the open space invites guests to take a closer look at Jackson County history. Dressers and alcoves clad with faded photos, worn papers and objects once used in real-time beckon from each corner.

One room to the right, dedicated to artist Fletcher Benton, contains old letters from his longtime friendship with Jones and even some of his moveable sculptures. In the back of the house, a Globe Iron factory whistle sits idly by while a soda can, infamous for causing \$30,000 worth of damage at a factory, glints through its case across the room.

The house also served as the Jones family home from 1921 to 1991, until Jones died in 1991. The house became a museum in 1995, as her will specifically outlined that the home be turned into a museum dedicated to the place she grew up.

Megan Malone, who served as the museum director for 10 years until August 2022, also grew up in Jackson and knew Jones through church. Malone says people knew not to mess with Jones.

"She was not prone to letting people into her life," Aldrich says. "You were very trusted if she let you into that circle, so those people feel very guarded of her legacy."

Despite her wealth, Jones was known for being frugal, and she rarely disclosed details of her own life.

The Jones Museum website outlines some of Jones's path, stating that she studied voice in France after graduating from boarding school in Indianapolis and later she "took music" in New York. She cared for her ill mother in Jackson and spent winters in Florida when she wasn't traveling.

Women's clubs in Jackson, from literary clubs to study clubs, provided a sturdy backbone for recordkeeping before digital technology.

"Women do seem to be the ones that are the keepers of history; they're the ones saving the clippings, pictures and putting them together in scrapbooks," Aldrich says. "I love that we've got strong women and smart women carrying on the legacy of a very strong, forceful woman."

As an accidental yet seemingly appropriate testament to Jones, the museum has only ever had women serve as the director.

Although Jones never married or had children, she traveled solo around the world four times, road-tripped to Florida in her signature Cadillac often and kept a close circle of friends. The Jones Museum honors its namesake by maintaining a close-knit group who work and volunteer.

The Jones Museum remains prominent in the community just as Jones intended.

"I always say the museum exists because Lillian had a gift to give, and she put a bow on it, and she double-knotted the bow," Malone says.





THE LILLIAN E. JONES MUSEUM

Contact: (740) 286-2556

Address: 75 Broadway St.
Jackson, OH 45640

Instagram & Twitter: @lejmuseum

Visit jonesmuseum.com to learn more.



ABOVE: The Lillian E. Jones Museum Director Ashley Aldrich stands wnext to the museum sign dedicated to Jones's parents on the front lawn.

LEFT: A framed photo of Jones sits atop a desk in the front room of the museum that once was her home.

Sign of the Times

The Markay connects culture to Jackson County

STORY BY **KAYLA BENNETT** // PHOTOS BY **KAYLA BENNETT**



PHOTO: The Markay resides at 269 Main Street, Jackson County.

Over the years, the Markay has been a place that is a different attraction for different ages of the people in Jackson County. For some, it was a movie theater where they had their first kiss, and for others, it was where they saw the showing of their first Disney movie.

“*A lot of the people that are connected to the Markay are the ones that donated to bring it back to life. It’s been in Jackson for years. It’s this super nostalgic place.*”

– Julz Stewart

The Markay Cultural Arts Center was founded in 1930. Since 2015, it has become a home for artists throughout Southeast Ohio.

All of its programming runs through the Southern Hills Arts Council and the Markay receives grants from the United Fund. The business also has memberships available for purchases and often receives donations from members.

Bringing new sounds to Southeast Ohio is essential for the center, such as when Taikoza performed at the venue. Taiko is the Japanese word for drum and refers to the modern style of playing drums: a high-energy performance art that combines music, dance, martial arts, athletics and culture.

Director of Taikoza, Marco Lienhard, said their performances can be life-changing for the audience.

“It’s just emotions are welling inside them and they just don’t have control over themselves,” Lienhard says.

Ryn Spriggs, the Markay’s box office attendant, says she never sees anyone leave without a smile on their face and that people are always excited to come back because there’s always going to be something different.

“When we have things like this [the Taikoza performance] where people [have] never seen anything like it before, they go in and it’s anticipation, but everybody’s just kind of like ‘Well, let’s see what this is,’” Spriggs says.

The Markay hosts movies, plays and performances throughout the year. The venue also features an art gallery that displays work by various local artists such as the Apple County Quilters.

Recently, the Markay received the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce Community Pride Award. The Markay found its forever home at 269 Main Street, where it will continue to bring exciting performances and experiences for everyone in Southeast Ohio.



ABOVE: Taikoza prepares to preform at the Markay.

MARKAY CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

Contact: (740) 577-3841

Address: 269 Main Street, Jackson, OH 45640

Visit markayjackson.com to learn more.

BELOW: Ryn Spriggs, the Markay’s box office attendant, awaits greeting show attendees.



“There’s nothing around here that you can do [something like this] and we rent this space too,” Spriggs says. “You can rent the gallery or the theater for private stuff and anybody can get in the gallery. Anybody can have their art out there.”



ABOVE: Actors perform "The Wind in the Willows"

Second Family

60 Years of the Zanesville Community Theater

STORY BY **JOSEPH STANICHAR** // PHOTOS BY **HANNAH FOWLER**

Zoom, zoom, ZOOM!" a young boy in a green costume yells, circling the stage wildly while surrounded by young kids in various animal costumes. Family members and friends smile and laugh in delight. It's another day at the Zanesville Community Theater.

The performance is "The Wind in the Willows," a children's play where Toad, played by Porter Rouan, continually gets into trouble while his friends bail him out. The kids delight in inhabiting a varying cast of characters, from a kind badger to police officers to snow and a river.

"We don't do these shows to pack the audience," says show director Angel Palmer. "We do these shows to help kids learn that they have a voice and learn that they have power inside who they are, and they've found it."

Palmer and producer Pam Smith say one of the most rewarding things about leading a children's play is seeing the kids come out of their shell. Palmer says she was worried about two actors who had trouble speaking loud enough, but by the time of the performance, they both found their voices and acted their hearts out. Smith says one of these actors is now the "loudest one onstage."

The Zanesville Community Theater does more than just

children's plays. Each season, typically from September to July the following year, consists of six plays of various genres and casting ages. The 2023 season is the 60th since their first in 1963. The theater is performing "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever," "A Twisted Christmas Carol," "The Great Gatsby," "Once Upon a Mattress" and "Cabaret."

Jillian B. Von Gunten, the president of the Zanesville Community Theater, has been a member of the theater since she was 3 years old. Her parents were involved with the group in the '70s and '80s and brought her onstage for a performance. Von Gunten never stopped her involvement with the theater and has now been president of the organization for nearly a decade.

All performances from the Zanesville Community Theater take place in a historical district in the same brick building, which was formerly a Jewish synagogue, a Baptist church and a Mormon chapel. The building is no longer home to a religious institution, but there remains a shared belief among many members that spirits still exist within its walls.

Palmer says there is a male ghost who lives in the wig closet, a little girl and her mother who reside in the men's

dressings room and another girl that hides away in the basement. Many members have had what they describe as encounters with these spirits, either in the form of paranormal activity—objects moving or shaking from unknown forces— or a deep internal feeling that someone else is there.

The Southeastern Ohio Paranormal Investigators examined the theater and concluded that there are ghosts within the establishment. Palmer says all the ghosts are friendly and that they don't get in the way of them putting on shows and don't intimidate the kids.

"All of us have [a] 9 to 5 or some kind of other job that we have to do to pay the bills and hopefully we really love it too," Von Gunten says. "But there's obviously a part of me that needs something more creative than being a lawyer can give me."

Von Gunten says the biggest reason people love being involved with the Zanesville Community Theater, or any community theater group, is the love of acting and putting on a performance among people considered a second family. The Zanesville Community Theater is a family that has now been around for 60 years.

"We have to continue doing art," Palmer says. "It's not an option. It's how our soul breathes."

Zanesville Community Theater

Contact: (740) 455-6487

Address: 940 Findley Avenue Zanesville, OH 43701

Visit www.zct.org to learn more.

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ABOVE: A group of young actors await direction.

More than a Market

Millcreek Market in Junction City offers baked goods, fresh foods and connection.

PHOTOS BY **HANNAH FOWLER**



Millcreek Market sits atop a hill on Flagdale Road in Junction City, the narrow road winding along the farms and forests in the eastern edge of Perry County. Stocked with fresh baked goods, a deli counter, bulk baking supplies, jams and jellies, canned goods and other essentials, the market recently celebrated three years in business. The owner, David Miller, is New Order Amish. Many New Order Amish in Ohio utilize electricity, tractors for farming, electric bicycles, and telephones.

Although the store is Amish owned and staffed, Miller hesitates to call the market an Amish store. As the only grocery store for miles in the rural area, Miller says about 90% of the market's customers are English, meaning not Amish. While many products sold in Millcreek Market are Amish-made, Miller said locals have been very supportive. His goal, Miller said, is to be of service to the community.

PHOTO: David Miller, owner of Millcreek Market, rides his electric bike home for lunch. Members of some New Order Amish use electric bicycles instead of horse-drawn buggies.





TOP RIGHT: Miriam Hochstetler, left, of Bremen, portions dough for bakery items. Millcreek Market employs several women from the local Amish community.

TOP LEFT: Mary Jane Miller, left, of Junction City, and Lynn Yoder prepare a variety of fruit hand pies and pastries.

RIGHT, THIS PAGE: Freshly-made baked goods line the shelves. The market offers breads, cookies, hand pies, pull-apart breads, and other pastries.

NEAR RIGHT, OPPOSITE PAGE: Late fall squash and gourds on display.

FAR RIGHT, OPPOSITE PAGE: Fresh cut flower bouquets await new homes.







TOP LEFT: Owner of the market, David Miller, stands in front of the deli counter. Miller says that people who visit the market are happy with the selection of meats and cheeses, as Millcreek Market is the closest grocery store for many who live in the rural area.

TOP CENTER: Canned goods, baking supplies, bulk items, jams and jellies, and other essentials line shelves. The store carries a variety of products including those from Walnut Creek Foods, a popular brand from the small community of Walnut Creek, in northeastern Ohio's Amish Country.

TOP RIGHT: An electric bicycle sits outside.

BOTTOM: Flagdale Road, which runs in front, winds up and down the hills of Perry County.





Black in Southeast Ohio and Beyond

Black Appalachians share their experiences and the ways they preserve the past to build the future

STORY BY **MAYA MEADE** // PHOTOS BY **PATRICIA PORTER, HELEN WIDMAN AND PROVIDED**



PICTURED: Tony Mayle with Sankofa, an East African symbol from Ghana that Mayle finds significant to Black history.

The experience of being Black in Appalachia is too vast to truly capture by one person, but the roots of its history run deep in the region. Although some might consider the history of Black Appalachia to be scarce, it is everywhere if one looks hard enough.

Three people sit around a dining room table, sharing their knowledge and experience of Black Appalachia with one another. Ada-Woodson Adams, president of the Mount Zion Baptist Church Preservation Society (MZBCPS), sits across from William Isom II, the director of Black in Appalachia, an organization that highlights the history and contributions of African Americans. Between them, at the head of the table, sits Trevellya “Tee” Fordahmed, Ph.D., a Black Appalachian from West Virginia and current citizen of Athens.

“I’m also connected with The Multicultural Genealogical Center in Chester Hill,” Adams says to Isom. “There’s an escape room that has to do with the Underground Railroad and how people saw their way to freedom.”

The center serves as a tourist attraction and research center for Black history and the Underground Railroad. The Multicultural Genealogical Center, along with the MZBCPS, are major contributions to the region, thanks to the Adams family.

According to the MZBCPS website, the preservation society is a non-profit organization with goals to restore the Mount Zion Church, hopeful that it will serve as a vibrant community center. In the early 2000s, the church disbanded, leaving the Black community in Athens with nowhere to gather. In 2013, the MZBCPS was formed by Ada-Woodson Adams, Ron Luce, Linda Philips and Henry Woods to recreate the community space for people all over the region and became a non-profit organization in 2016.

The goal of the MZBCPS is to serve as a space for people to learn and connect with one another. The board of the church works hard to educate and provide programming that supports the Black community and other marginalized groups in Southeast Ohio. Fordahmed points out the motto of the church that says, “Building our future by preserving our past.”

Fordahmed has dedicated herself to this motto and mission through her connection to the MZBCPS and Appalachia. She was born in West Virginia and says that



“ I think that being a mascot or whatever really helped to establish my view of myself. I felt very valued. My feeling of self-worth and everything was pretty high. It stayed that way, I think, until integration happened.”

– Tee Fordahmed, pictured above

people don’t think that Black people live in Appalachia. She thinks ideas of Appalachia circulate around the “Coal Miner’s Daughter” and Loretta Lynn, a singer-songwriter from Kentucky.

“But there were a lot of Black coal miners,” she says. “My dad was a coal miner and he was a union man, and we lived in what you call ‘the bottom.’”

People called it “the bottom” because it was a flat area located in the hills of West Virginia between two mountains. Fordahmed says the middle-class white people, lived further away, separated by a railroad track and a river. The bottom was home to people of lower income. The Black school was also in the bottom, enriching the experiences she had growing up there.

Fordahmed’s family was the only Black family that lived in her area. There were around 40 coal mining houses and all of her neighbors were white. The Black families from other hollers came to her neighborhood to attend school. Fordahmed says when she was 3 years old the other Black kids would come to her house and take her to school.

“We do everything we can to grab these pieces and parts of Black history that are scattered all over the place to quilt those together to tell our narratives.”

— William Isom II

“I was kind of like the mascot that they would bring to school,” Fordahmed says. “I think that being a mascot or whatever really helped to establish my view of myself. I felt very valued. My feeling of self-worth and everything was pretty high. It stayed that way, I think, until integration happened.”

Eventually she was enrolled in a school of about 500 students where she was one of roughly 12 Black students. Fordahmed says that this is when she realized that things were different than she thought they were growing up. Even though she grew up around white families, her father was revered for being a union man, so going to this school was different for her. She began to see the ways that the color of her skin influenced the way she was treated by others.

She explains that her teachers were almost always mean. The French and choir teachers were the only ones that were nice, which she credits to them being “of international orientation” and having the job of bringing voices together.

“I had a history teacher that would erase my answers and even change my answers so that I would not make an A on a test,” Fordahmed says.

Tony Mayle, the associate dean of students and director of diversity and inclusion at Marietta College, is committed to his ancestry and roots. Mayle grew up in Morgan County, deep in the hills of Appalachia. As the son of an interracial couple, his family’s experience is unique.

The Mayle lineage begins in Philippi, West Virginia, extending into Michigan and other parts of West Virginia, making up one of the biggest multiracial families in Southeast Ohio. Mayle’s mother, who is German, and his father, who is African American, left their home in Morgan County to get married legally. He was raised in a household of women, by his mother and the family of his father.

He says that being a person of color in Appalachia is not just about identifying as one, but about the cultural and family aspect of it. Growing up, Mayle lived off the land by foraging and planting, a tradition that has been carried on through generations and a practice that he still participates in today. The Mayle family is so large, however, that the name and traditions do not always look and sound the same.

“There are many reasons for that,” Mayle says. “Some people want to escape the racism that they’ve been involved in. So, some will change the spelling or pronunciation. Some can pass quote-unquote, pass for another race, whether it be white or whether it be Native American.”

Mayle points out that he is lightly complexed and identifies as Melungeon, a term that describes people from the Eastern United States with Western European, African American and Native American ancestry. As a triracial family, the members of the Mayle lineage fall on a spectrum in terms of skin tones and hues, allowing for the choice to “pass” as another race. This creates a space for each member of the family to have different cultural beliefs and practices.

The Mayles are connected to many other families, including the family of Benjamin Banneker and Henry Louis Gates Jr. According to the Harvard University website, Gates is an “Emmy and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker, literary scholar, journalist, cultural critic, and institution builder,” as well as a professor

Saturday, Feb. 27, 2021 THE TIMES RECORDER, Zanesville, Ohio

Last Civil War vets in Zanesville were black soldiers

Slavery may have been the spark that ignited the conflagration of the Civil War, but for the first two years it was almost exclusively a white man's fight.

Some Union commanders tried to arm escaped slaves to fight against their former masters, but President Lincoln overruled them, fearing that the time was not yet ripe to add a crusade to free the slaves to the war to ransom the Union. But when authorization was finally given to recruit African-American soldiers, free blacks in the north and escaped slaves in the south flocked to the colors.

One black veteran, Charles Brock Hunter, grandfather of David Matthews of Morgan County, told his children to tell their children “no white man gave them their freedom, he (Hunter) fought for it.”

Eventually, approximately 200,000 black men deserted the Union blue and fought for their freedom and the preservation of the Union.

Three of them eventually became the last Civil War veterans living in Morgan County: John B. Reynolds, Noah Norris and John H. Parker.

They were born into an agricultural society where railroads were just beginning to bind the nation together with ribbons of steel. When they died, automobiles were replacing the railroad, airplanes were crisscrossing the country and the world was entangled in its second world war.

John B. Reynolds of 123 Chapman St. died Aug. 7, 1941, at the age of 96. When he was born in Meigs Township, James E. Fulk was president. According to his obituary and Signal, Reynolds did not attend school, but learned the trades of a horse-dressing and shoe-making.

In 1863, at the age of 18, he enlisted in the Union army. He was assigned to the Fifth U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery and was stationed at Vicksburg and Jackson, Mississippi.

Although designated as artillery and used primarily in garrison duty, the regiment also saw action in infantry and participated in expeditions from Vicksburg to Rodney, Miss., and Yazoo City and marched out of service on May 28, 1866.

Reynolds married Malinda Simpson four years after leaving Meigs Township. The Signal reported, they came to Zanesville in 1875 and lived in Putnam a short time before moving to Chapman Street, where he lived the last 66 years of his life. He is buried in Greenwood Cemetery.

Noah Norris (also known as Morrie) of 1530 Railroad St. died July 20, 1942, at the age of 98. According to obituary information compiled by Ben Bain of Marietta and provided by Glenn Burnett of Columbus, Norris was born Feb. 28, 1844, at Padgett in Barbours County, Va. (now West Virginia). John Tyler was still president.

He was 19 when he enlisted in Company C, Fifth U.S. Colored Infantry, on June 22, 1863, in Washington County. The unit marched at Camp Delaware and was originally designated the 127th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. It was the first black regiment recruited in Ohio, although individual black Ohioans were already serving in other regiments, including the 54th and 55th Massachusetts.

Norris was described as being about 5'6", weighing 140 to 170 pounds. He was of mixed race, including Delaware Indian. According to Jerry Devell, who provided information on Norris' war record and the Fifth Infantry, Norris originally enlisted in a white regiment, the 2nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry, in October of 1861. He was discharged in “disability” two months later, but Devell has been unable to determine if that was because of illness, injury or other reasons.

When he enlisted in the Fifth, a mistake occurred which would affect the rest of his life. The recruiting officer apparently misheard his name and recorded it as “Morrie.” When Noah later applied for a pension, he was told his name would have to be Morrie to receive his pension. As a result, he often went by Morrie, which is on his tombstone at Woodlawn Cemetery.

As part of the Third Brigade, Third Division, 18th Corps in the Army of the James, the Fifth Infantry saw a lot of action in Virginia and North Carolina and recorded 280 deaths. Norris took part in fighting at City Point, Petersburg, Black Swamp, Bottom's Bridge, Fair Oaks, Deep Bottom, Fort Clinch, Fort Harrison, Dutch Gap and Chapin's Farm. However, at the end of September 1864 he was disabled by chronic rheumatism and spent the remainder of the war in various hospitals, missing the expedition to Fort Fisher in February and the spring campaign in 1865.

After the war Norris returned to farming, living at various times in Washington and Athens counties and in Taylor County, W.Va., until moving to Zanesville in 1905. His first wife, Harriet Gibson, died in 1882. In Zanesville he lived at State Street and Licking Road, then on Beech Street and in 1936 moved to his final home on Railroad Street.

The final Civil War veteran in Morgan County was John H. Parker of 604 Baker St., who died Dec. 28, 1943, at the age of 96.

The obituary in the Signal and the Times Recorder do not say where Parker was born, but state that he spent the greater part of his life in Zanesville.

He may have been as young as 16 or 17 when he enlisted in the Civil War. Like Reynolds, he was assigned to the Fifth U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery, serving in Company M.

A Memorial Day banner in the Signal in 1934, when Parker was living on Mc Auburn Street, said “He enjoys good health and when weather conditions warrant, enjoys nothing more than to patter about the garden near his home. He smokes a pipe in moderation and scolds at the idea that tobacco is harmful.”

He was active in veterans' events. An item in the Signal on Aug. 24, 1941, reported he attended a Civil War reunion in Xenia over the weekend.

Clark Martin is the Times Recorder historian. Larry Zambler and Jeff Cornett of Ohio University-Zanesville and Joyce Hill of the city's Fair Housing office provided valuable assistance in finding some of the information used here.

Photo supplied by Pauline Cronin

The last two Civil War veterans living in Morgan County are buried next to each other at Woodlawn Cemetery. The graves of Noah Norris (listed as Morrie in army records) and John Parker can be found near the Civil War statue close to the Peabody Road entrance to the cemetery.

CHUCK FANER/TIMES RECORDER



Photo supplied by Pauline Cronin

The last two Civil War veterans living in Morgan County are buried next to each other at Woodlawn Cemetery. The graves of Noah Norris (listed as Morrie in army records) and John Parker can be found near the Civil War statue close to the Peabody Road entrance to the cemetery.

CHUCK FANER/TIMES RECORDER

Sheriff's mother made best hamburgers

Who remembers when Black Jack chewing gum was manufactured at Rowville by Adam Colwell?

Who remembers that Cookbook Pottery at Rowville was in business 49 years and Cookbook Restaurant was in operation 25 years? Our thanks to Ronald Cookson for a most interesting letter.

How about Penn-Ohio Trowel on Jefferson Street, Ultra Marker on Shanon Avenue, Mayflower Sandwich Shop on North Seventh, Chat Maxwell Treaco on Putnam Avenue, McNoe's Meat Market at Main and Brown Streets and Wilbur's...

John Hoopes
DOWN MEMORY LANE

Brand Store in Dresden, McGo's Restaurant in Coshocton, A & P Store in McConeville and New-Tony Icey Barber Shop in Rowville?

A tribute to the best little hamburger shop in Zanesville: I recently had the privilege of speaking with Mrs. Mildred Gibson, mother of the facility, including principal Leola Bone.

Today, we proudly salute Mildred Gibson and her former young customers thank her for the years of devoted service. I wish just one more time I could say “Please pass the mustard, Mrs. Gibson.”

Stop and smell the roses for Martha Roberts of Clemons Hardware, Tony Grogan of General Electric, Be Butcher of Bumbach, Paul Rambo of Columbus Cement, Harry Cramer of McCauley Island and Warren Pugh of Armaco.

Pushing Road across from Gover Cleveland Junior High School. Back in those days the school didn't have a cafeteria, just walking distance and time made impossible for many students to return home for lunch.

The shop lacked golden arches but featured hot and delicious hamburgers priced at only 15 cents. Sorry, Ronald McDonald. Thousands of my checked kids missed her establishment to enjoy those tasty burgers, all prepared with tender loving care in her modest kitchen.

Senior news/Margaret Sowers

The Risk Management Team at bego gift certificates, Feb. 27 - 10



PHOTO: Adams and Isom share conversations about their histories around Ford-Ahmed's dining room table.

at the university. He focuses much of his time and energy on creating cultural competency and sharing Black stories.

Mayle firmly believes in this kind of education of Black life and culture. The African word Sankofa translates to, "Always remember the past for therein lies the future, if forgotten ... we are destined to repeat it." Mayle has reminders of this word around his office. The Sankofa is also an East African symbol from Ghana that Mayle finds significant to Black history.

"The bird—if you see the bird's body—the body is facing forward, the head's facing backwards, symbolizing [that] in order for us to go forward, we have to reach back and grab what we lost," Mayle says. "We have to know our history. We have to know our ancestry."

He also points out the egg in the bird's mouth, symbolizing that the youth should know their genealogy and ancestry. It is easy for people to trace their white ancestry all the way back to Europe, but it is much harder to trace African and African American ancestry. Mayle and many other Black people rely on Revolutionary War and Civil War records to trace their bloodlines. Even that presents challenges, however, because slaves who were in servitude were considered property.

Mayle shares similar stories as Fordahmed about teachers in his community making assumptions about the Mayle family and other Black families based on their name. Each last name had certain connotations to them, which led teachers to assume that a child would be smart or was poor.

One of his childhood memories sheds light on the negative side of the Black Appalachian experience, similar

to Fordahmed, when the Ku Klux Klan committed a hate crime in his yard.

"One of my earliest remembrances growing up with my mother and father being together was looking out the back door, seeing a bright light and looking at my mom," Mayle says. "I asked her what that light was as she was cooking in the kitchen and seeing tears run down her eyes. It was a cross being burned in our backyard."

He points out that this occurred in the 1970s and shared that things like that still happen today. Students still receive threats for dating outside of their race. There are also many Confederate and derogatory Native American mascots in the area, Mayle says.

Adams and Isom echo the same ideas of Mayle and Fordahmed. Through *Black in Appalachia* and being the chair of the Appalachian African-American Cultural Center, Isom is able to connect with Adams and Fordahmed and the history they each strive to uphold.

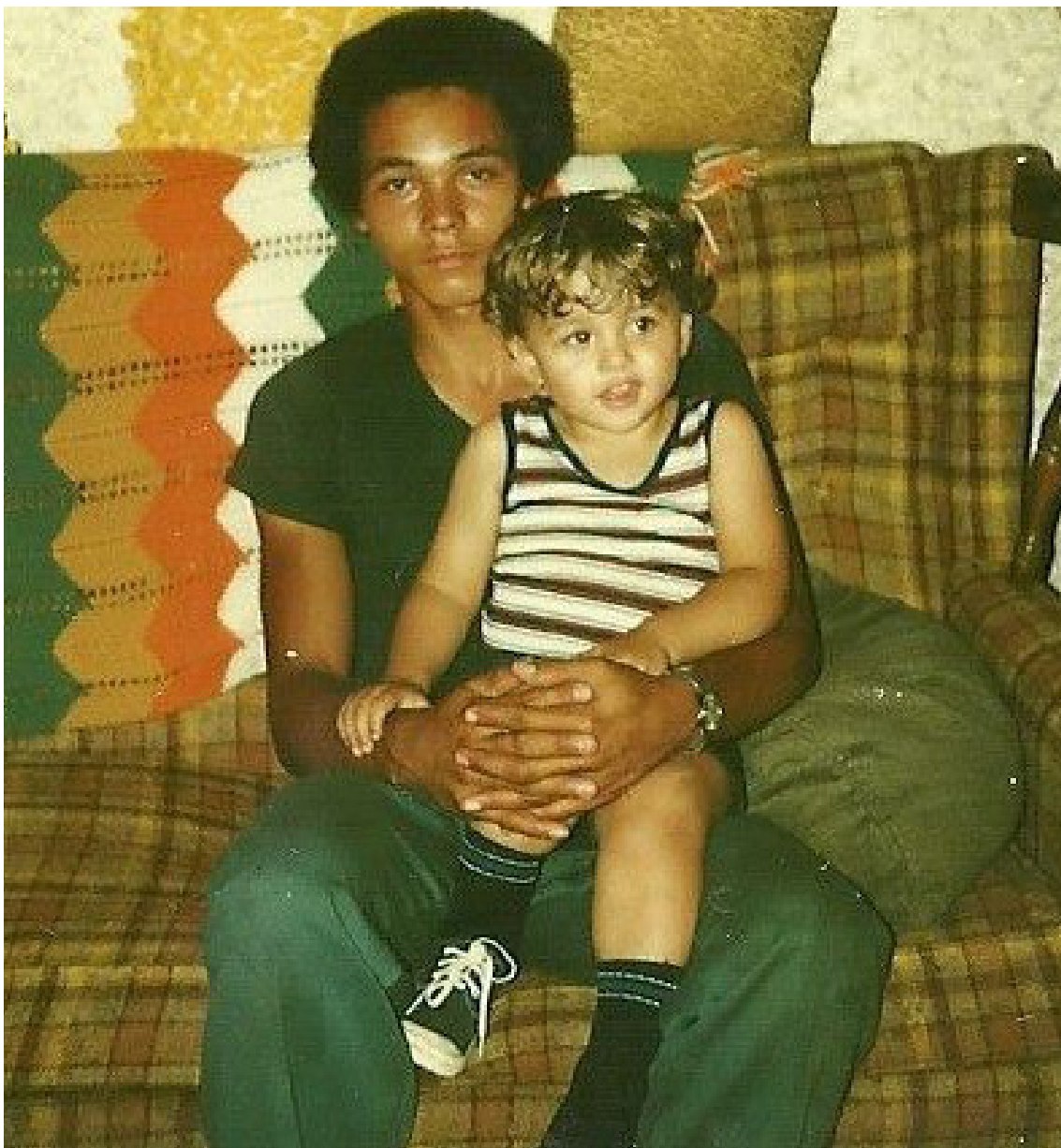
Isom grew up in rural Eastern Tennessee, playing in the creek and messing with the neighbors' cows. There was a spattering of Black families in the rural areas, he says, but he went into Morristown to spend time with the majority of his friends. He didn't realize how much his upbringing impacted him until he left his hometown for Middle Tennessee State University.

"Growing up in Appalachia has shaped my identity. It's everything that I am," he says. "I didn't fully realize it when I went off to college, I didn't understand. I didn't understand that where I was from was unique."

He knew his accent set him apart and some of his experiences wouldn't be the same, but he didn't anticipate



ABOVE: Tony Mayle smiles with pride in his office as he stands in front of posters hanging on his wall.



LEFT: Tony Mayle held by his father, Tony Mayle Sr.

some of the treatment he received. People pointed at him and laughed, didn't understand terms like 'holler' and couldn't relate to stories of growing tobacco. At first, he wanted to rid his identity of these things for the sake of fitting in, but then he realized that those things make him who he is.

This year, Black in Appalachia celebrates its 10-year-anniversary. "We do everything we can to grab these pieces and parts of Black history that are scattered all over the place to quilt those together to tell our narratives," Isom says.

There is not a lack of information, he says. The challenge is that it is hard to find. People are not considering Black mountaineers or Black people in the mountain south. There is a lot of rich history to discover

and the goal of Black in Appalachia is to compile the information and assist communities in telling their own stories. Isom says that the top-notch reward of his job would be an eighth grader using the research that the organization has compiled to write a paper for school.

Isom, along with Mayle, Fordahmed and Adams, is deeply connected to his roots. Each of them spend their days researching, preserving and advocating for the Black history of Appalachia. These roots connect them with their individual histories and with each other.

"It's important for me to be connected to my roots because that's all I got," Isom says. "You know, I'm ripping and running and having fun, but at some point, I think things get kind of stripped away, and you start to be able to see, over time, what's valuable."

“The bird—if you see the bird’s body—the body is facing forward, the head’s facing backwards, symbolizing [that] in order for us to go forward, we have to reach back and grab what we lost. We have to know our history. We have to know our ancestry.”

– Tony Mayle



Ohio's Lost Highway

Discovering the historical path of Zane's Trace
Ohio's earliest road

STORY BY JORDAN ELLIS
PHOTOS BY JORDAN ELLIS AND
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PICTURED: Bridge spanning Rushville Creek in Perry County.

ighway



Monuments, taverns and gravestones. The echoes of the past are entombed in granite. They dot the valleys of Southeast Ohio like the grave markings of an aggrandized serpent. These relics denote what's left of Zane's Trace, the earliest road into Ohio.

Like a great artery, Zane's Trace pumped settlements into the Ohio Country following the American Revolution. The federal government sought to expand by making good on promised "bounty lands" to veterans in return for service. Zane's Trace (also known as Zane Trace) turned America's first borderland into the heart of the Midwest.

Zane's Trace is Ohio's lost highway. Petitioned to the U.S. Congress by Ebenezer Zane in May 1796 and finished in the summer of 1797, the road was created by connecting already existing Native American footpaths and bison trails. Its primary purpose was to open the Ohio Country up to settlement and mail delivery. Constructed in what was the western frontier, few records depicting the original route remain. As such, documenting the 225-year-old road has its complications.

A Search for the Trace

Lisa Uhrig, an archivist for Ross County Historical Society, became interested in Zane's Trace after a local resident donated photos of their familial home. The donor said Zane's Trace ran behind the house. This sparked Uhrig's curiosity. She had grown up in the area and knew about the frontier road for some time. Now confronted with it as an historical archivist, she decided to map it out.

Uhrig found documentation of the road in Ross County east of the Scioto River. Documentation west of the river, however, was not well-maintained. This section was part of the Virginia Military District, which was created to divide the area up into bounty lands. Historical maps for the area exist, but they never labeled a specific road as Zane's Trace.

The road grew like the tunnels of an ant colony. Locals would manipulate it for their needs; they brought it closer to their homes for easier access or widened and graveled more traveled sections. In turn, these widened and channeled paths became roads in their own right.

"All these early roads, I think, were very interchangeable with Zane Trace," Uhrig says. "The State Road, the Post Road, the Limestone Road."

Where documentation fails, historians must investigate. William Hunter, a regional historian for the National Park Service, wrote his master's thesis on Zane's Trace in 1998. During a 17-day-walkabout, William walked the breadth of the trail. He used old taverns, gravestones and the advice of

locals to guide himself. Most residents received the stranger walking around their homes with kindness—other than a well-aimed beer bottle tossed at his head in Cambridge.

William believes the road was created from the culmination of human tendencies. If an individual were to walk Ohio Country today without modern infrastructure, they would recreate the same road. The geography would speak to them, and they would move along the natural path.

"The landscape is the clue to culture," Hunter says. "If you can look at landscapes ... if you're really keen and really wise and approach the landscape on its terms, it will open itself up to you."

The most enduring legacy of Zane's Trace are the towns of Zanesville and Lancaster. In return for creating the trail, Ebenezer was given his choice of "bounty lands" to claim by Congress. He cherry-picked lands that made excellent river crossings for ferries and later communities.

Muskingum County History hosted a series of symposiums in 2022 to celebrate the 225th anniversary of Zane's Trace. The symposiums gathered speakers across Southeast Ohio, Indiana and Virginia. "People want to find it," Peter Cultice, president of Muskingum County History says. "They want to preserve it. They want to bring it back to life."

The Enduring Legacy of Ebenezer Zane

Peter Cultice, the president of Muskingum County History, rolls a copy of a 640-acre deed for Zanesville out on the coffee shop table in Starbucks. He walks with a limp, recovering from a recent hip-replacement surgery. Despite the discomfort, he is transfixed when speaking of his town's history.

"Probably as a thank you, maybe as a payment, Ebenezer Zane and his wife for \$100 deeded these 640 acres to John McIntire and to Jonathan Zane for probably helping out on the trace," Cultice says, jabbing the document with his index finger.

The Zane's Trace Commemoration, formerly a large celebration in Zanesville, is being revived for June 2023. The John McIntire Education Fund, named after Ebenezer's son-in-law and a founder of Zanesville, entrusts scholarships to graduating seniors in Muskingum County every year.

Many Americans often view their local community as unceded from time. There might be an old schoolhouse or church here or there, but those monuments only echo the near past. Zane's Trace is born of the paths tread by Native Americans and bison hundreds of years ago. It moves through pastures and croplands as easy as a gentle breeze following the natural contours. It takes the right state of mind to see the shadow of this ancient past.

"The landscape is the clue to culture. If you can look at landscapes ... if you're really keen and really wise and approach the landscape on its terms, it will open itself up to you."

-William Hunter,

Regional historian for the National Park Service



ABOVE: The road was already 50 years-old when this nearby tombstone entered the picture.



RIGHT: Zane's Trace is thought to run from Wheeling, West Virginia, through Zanesville and Chillicothe to Kentucky, as illustrated on this State Department Map from 1914.

BELOW: Stage Coach Road, a possible segment of Zane's Trace.





ABOVE: A group photo of volunteers and hunters showing their harvested turkeys.

Thunder in the Hills

Weekend-long event provides hunters with disabilities turkey-hunting, fishing, raffles, meals and more

STORY BY **JOSEPH STANICHAR** // PHOTOS PROVIDED BY **BEN KELLEY**

“That’s a big bird,” a man whispers. A turkey struts across a field while two men hide out in a hunting blind, which is a small tent with openings meant to conceal the hunters. The other man holds a gun, breathing heavily. The turkey walks up to a decoy of another turkey, circles around it, then kicks it over. Their cover is blown. The turkey dashes back across the field.

“Kill him, kill him!” the first man whispers again. The turkey stops in the middle of the field and gobbles. “It’s alright, it’s alright, calm down. Take a breath,” he says.

A loud gunshot rings out.

These hunters are part of the Thunder in the Hills annual event that takes place at Pike State Forest in Pike County every Spring, as recorded by a YouTube video documenting the 2021 event. The event, which started in 2017, became a place for people with disabilities to hunt turkeys and participate in other activities over a weekend.

Ben Kelley, forest manager of Pike State Forest, thought of the idea for the event because of the forest trails’ accessibility to all-terrain vehicles, which could transport disabled people to their hunting spots without them needing to walk there.

“We try to make it so they have a weekend so they don’t have to worry about anything,” Kelley says. “They have no responsibilities aside from waking up in the morning and kind of gathering themselves to go out and partake in what we do.”

The main event, turkey hunting, starts at 3:30 a.m., when hunters wake up in order to get in position just as the

turkeys wake up. In the middle of the night, participants get on their all-terrain vehicles along with a guide, who gives the hunters direction in hunting the bird and performs bird calls to coax the turkey to their location.

Aside from the hunt, participants are also able to fish for rainbow trout at Pike Lake. Lodging and meals are provided for everyone involved, including a highly anticipated steak dinner on Saturday. There are also raffles for anything from hats to firearms.

“There’s always somebody’s first turkey, and somebody’s first turkey is like the largest trophy you’ll ever see, especially for those who are unable to get out into the woods on their own, when they’re able to harvest a bird or have a close encounter, it makes everything worthwhile,” Kelley says. “We take it for granted that we can take off and go hiking and do whatever we want to do, but when you take somebody out who is unable to do so without a little bit of assistance and see their reaction to what we can encounter, it’s pretty joyful.”

One participant in the Thunder in the Hills event is Jeff Legg, a veteran with a disability who served in the Navy from 1978 to 1982. Legg joined the event in 2019 after hearing about it from a friend and has participated every year since.

“From daylight to dark, they have something going on for all of us,” Legg says. “There’s a whole lot of camaraderie. The people with us are unbelievable. By the time you leave, you have a couple hundred new best friends.”

Another participant is Leroy White, who calls through

Google Meet wearing his full hunter attire, a camouflage shirt and hat, in his “man cave,” which contains heads of deer, turkeys, a bobcat and a bear—trophies of his previous hunting conquests.

White served in the army during the Iraq War, where he was injured in combat in 2007. Now, he works as a warrior leader for the Wounded Warrior Project, an organization that provides support to wounded veterans.

“I suffered quite a few injuries and suffered with PTSD, but of course now I do pretty good,” White says. “And I just teach other soldiers ways that I know how to deal with some of the issues that come up and triggers and everything there for their PTSD. And we take it one day at a time and we try to make it in this new society to us.”

Many other participants in the event are veterans, which makes it a great networking opportunity as well, Kelley says. Many at the event enjoy having the company of fellow veterans, which can be therapeutic and helpful for them to be around people with similar experiences and mindsets.

Many at the event enjoyed hunting before becoming disabled and being able to reconnect with one of their favorite pastimes can be an emotional experience.

“It takes you out of the everyday hustle and bustle you’re in. Being in the cities and being around people and I just have a lot of time to reflect on my life,” White says. “And where I am in life ... I get peace when I’m out in the woods. There’s nobody; I can just relax. There’s no telephone ringing, there’s nobody saying ‘Leroy, come do this,’ or ‘Leroy, can you help me with this?’”

As far as improvements for future Thunder in the Hills events, Kelley says he wants to bring more people in through local advertising. He would also like the weather to cooperate more.

“The only thing you can control is the quality of the food and the quality of the fellowship,” Kelley says.

Legg, however, only has one idea for how the event could possibly be more accessible: tying the turkeys to the trees.

As for White, he intends on hunting, both as part of Thunder in the Hills and outside the event, for a long time to come.

“I know there’s gonna come a day when I’m not going to probably be able to get out there, but until that day comes, I’m gonna keep going,” White says. “If I can’t walk that far, then I guess I’ll have to get me a track chair ... I’ll go any length to be able to get out in the great outdoors.”

White also expresses his thanks to the care and respect shown to him and his fellow veterans during the event, citing the posting and retiring of the colors and the raising and lowering of the American flag in a formal ceremony, as emotional moments.

“By the time you leave, you have a couple hundred new best friends.”

- Jeff Legg

“I wish there was more people to offer veterans these opportunities,” White says, commenting on how both physical disabilities and mental disorders such as PTSD can prevent veterans from participating in the activities they enjoyed before serving. “They want to do these things, go back to the woods and try to hunt but they have issues that they are dealing with that sometimes prevents them from doing it.”

The turkey goes down, and the two men scream in delight.

“YES!” the hunter’s guide yells. “Good job, brother, good job!”

The hunter is ecstatic, the skin of his nose slightly bleeding from the recoil of the gun. “I got my first turkey!” he yells in delight.

BELOW: A hunter and his guide hold a harvested turkey.



Knights of Amphibian Waters

Captina Conservancy Guards the Natural Resources of Belmont

STORY BY **JORDAN ELLIS** // PHOTOS BY **JORDAN ELLIS**

Something lurks in the waters of southern Belmont; it has a flat spade-shaped body that can grow to two feet long, small beady eyes that look like pen pricks through a sheet of black paper, slimy rock patterned skin that sucks oxygen out of the water and a wide gaping mouth inviting to small fish. But rather than horror, the Eastern Hellbender salamander invites a certain curiosity to the waters of the Captina Creek Watershed, one of the most pristine groupings of waters in Ohio. It is so striking that local members have taken up the cross of protecting its habitat, forming the Captina Conservancy.

"They're kind of a unique animal," Ron Preston, an honorary board member of Captina Conservancy and former aquatic biologist, says. "It captures the imagination of a lot of people to see that big salamander."

In the late 2000s, Greg Lips began research on the hellbender population in Captina Creek Watershed. Lips is a herpetologist, someone who studies amphibians and reptiles. With the help of teachers and students at Olney Friends School, plus local and state environmental agencies, he surveyed the region, steadily spreading awareness of the salamander.

This study came to a head in 2010 when the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency did a comprehensive survey of the Captina Creek Watershed. They found it possessed outstanding state water based on exceptional ecological values.

Preston says the community quickly became concerned with maintaining the health of Captina Creek Watershed. They pitched possible actions during a series of meetings hosted by Belmont County Soil and Water Conservation District in 2010. Finally, Lips suggested the community form a conservation agency.

Thus, Captina Conservancy came to be founded in 2010 as a non-profit land trust. Its primary method of environmental protection is conservation easement: a voluntary agreement signed with a private landowner restricting development of the land.

"Once they're signed, they get recorded on the deed to the property, then they apply to everyone who owns the property after that," Ellie Ewing, the executive director of Captina Conservancy, says. "So, if someone inherits it or it's sold, that agreement applies no matter what."

Ewing says that the terms of the easement vary depending on the landowner. The most common stipulation prevents the land from being divided and sold in small parcels. Another common stipulation limits the construction of structures on the property to two units. Combined, these



ABOVE: Small creek in Rock River Refuge.

restrictions discourage large-scale housing development on the property, which can be damaging to Captina Creek Watershed. Restrictions on clear cutting and maintaining water quality are also present. These measures help restrict the flow of sediment into the water. Captina Creek Watershed has so far escaped this fate due to its heavy forest coverage preventing sediment drainage.

"Wherever you have a significant amount of forest cover in the watershed, the stream maintains itself in a pretty good high-quality water," Preston says. "So, somewhere in the range of 60 to 70% of the watershed being forested is typical of high-quality streams, especially in Southeast Ohio."

Hellbenders are extremely sensitive to water quality. The water must have the right mixture of dissolved oxygen, temperature, pollutant density and flowrate. Captina Creek Watershed is the only watershed in Ohio with a population of juvenile hellbenders.

"In other watersheds they may have very old hellbenders or very young, but they aren't surviving through to become juveniles like they are here," Ewing says.

Captina Conservancy's easement projects have been so successful they have extended beyond the original watershed. Ewing says the conservancy has been approached by landowners in Monroe, Harrison and Jefferson counties.

Landowners normally come out of their own volition after learning about Captina Conservancy through its educational outreach programs. Preston says these landowners are primarily seeking to protect property or farmland that has been in their family for generations. Through a conservation easement they can protect the land from development, even if it ends up outside familial ownership. However, not every



ABOVE: Group photo of Captina Conservancy members at the entrance to Rock River Refuge.



ABOVE: Captina Conservancy member, Marvin the hellbender.

perspective property obtains an easement.

“For every three or four landowners that approach us and are interested, we may end up with only one or two conservation easements in the end,” Ewing says.

Rock River Refuge is an example of one of these properties. Rock River Refuge was donated to the Captina Conservancy by Wayne Mayson in 2015 and is located in southwestern Belmont County. Wayne had purchased the property in the 1990s with the intent of maintaining the natural resources there.

Rock River Refuge covers approximately 200 acres of land. It is formed primarily of forest and reclaimed farmland. Its opening is dotted with white pipes protecting native trees from the rough tongues of curious deer. The Captina Conservancy maintains a hiking trail and small gathering site open to the public at Rock River Refuge.

A Slimy Representative

Captina Conservancy has one unique member. Named Marvin, she is an Eastern Hellbender donated to the conservancy in 2021 by the late herpetologist Ralph Pfungsten. For most of her life, she was assumed to be a male. It was not until Marvin received blood work that she

was discovered to be female. However, the name Marvin had been around too long to be changed.

Marvin is currently the oldest domestic hellbender that is known. She is estimated to be over 40 years old and kept in a tank at the Captina Conservancy headquarters in Barnesville. Those who visit the Captina Conservancy’s Facebook page, Friends of Captina Creek, will be treated to short videos of Marvin lazily meandering around the rocks in her tank.

She’s immobile and log-like, emanating that languid aura which most cold-blooded creatures possess.

Wildflower Hikes and Duck Dashes

Aside from protecting the watershed, the Captina Conservancy is a strongly community-oriented organization. Captina Conservancy hosts various events throughout the year. There is a wildflower hike with a focus on plant identification. There is also a duck dash, an event where rubber ducks can be purchased and raced down a river for cash prizes.

A group like this requires an A-team of members. Even more challenging, it requires an A-team of members willing to donate their time. After all, Captina Conservancy only has one paid member with the rest being volunteers. Luckily, community members have stepped up to fill the need.

Sylvia Bowen is a walking lexicon of herbal knowledge. With long gray hair tied in a bun, glasses, a teal windbreaker and a boisterous personality, she is an integral member of the Captina Conservancy. During hikes she can be seen investigating various plant life and gathering others around her to explain the mysteries of the herb in her hand.

During a hike at Rock River Refuge, Bowen informed participants on the plant’s native to the area. There was Goldenrod, a tall, yellow-flowered plant that used to synthesize artificial rubber. There was Indian Hemp, a thick, fibrous plant used by Native Americans to make rope. She passed around leaves of spicebush, which when crumpled up in the hand released a strong mint-like fragrance.

Gary Wershing, a board director for Captina Conservancy, acts as something of a local historian for the conservancy. He is a tall man with a long beard and thick shoulders due to his career as a blacksmith. Wershing owns property adjacent to Rock River Refuge and used to walk the property with his kids before it turned into a hiking trail. He pointed at different clearings and recollected the different farm structures and pastures that once dotted the land. “Somebody said there was still in every one of these hallows at one time,” Wershing says.

The Captina Conservancy demonstrates that the local population is not distinct from the environment. In fact, inconspicuous decisions made, such as building a new barn or shed, can damage the local aquafauuna, preventing future generations from witnessing the grandeur of nature in the form of a Hellbender. It takes dedicated effort to preserve the area for future generations.



PHOTO: Captina Conservancy members hike Rock River Refuge.





ABOVE: Dr. Melissa Thomas created HOPE 25 years ago. Grants, donations, and community support have been vital to this project.

Nonprofit provides cancer outreach and education to Amish and Mennonite women

STORY BY **KIRSTEN THOMAS** // PHOTOS **PROVIDED**

As a child, Dr. Melissa Thomas' favorite pastime was going to her grandparents' house. She created games with her sister, such as tying yarn to clothespins and throwing the bundle up into the limbs of a strong maple tree. Her grandmother encouraged her curiosity, especially her interest in science.

Melissa's grandmother died when she was 14. She struggled to find the "why" behind the loss of her hero—who died of a cancer that could have been prevented through education and access to healthcare.

"It was a devastating loss to lose her," she says. "That was a moment in my life that stuck with me and that I needed to make some reason out of her death. I didn't want her death to be in vain."

With this inspiration in hand, Melissa was the first of her family to leave town and attend college. She discovered her passion for public health and realized that she and her colleagues had information that could save people's lives. Her challenge was trying to communicate that information and provide lifesaving care.

Melissa made it her personal mission to make sure "no other little girl has to lose that hero in her life."

In her 20s, Melissa was awarded a grant that addressed cancer disparities in minority groups in Appalachia. She drove past Amish homes on the way to a mobile

mammography clinic and realized none of those women had attended the screening. In fact, people at the screening told her the Amish community didn't believe in healthcare.

"We found some shocking data that Amish women were dying at higher rates of breast cancer compared to white women in local and state national averages. In fact, the leading cause of death among Amish women under the age of 60 was breast cancer," Melissa says. "This really started my 25-year journey of why."

So, Project Hoffnung (HOPE) was born. It provides cancer outreach and research programs to Amish and Mennonite communities and serves the state of Ohio by delivering culturally competent breast health information, free women's health screenings, and assisting in navigating the health care system. The program has provided services to over 7,500 women.

Hoffnung is a reference to the old English definition of the word hope, representing the common language many Amish and Mennonite communities share. The intent is to create respect and bridge the cultures with modern breast care advancements.

Melissa launched and still sustains the community-led project with the support of grants.

In addition to HOPE, Melissa launched The Center for Appalachia Research in Cancer Education (CARE), which

received nonprofit status in 2011. CARE is a nonprofit reducing the burden of cancer in Appalachia and rural communities by providing culturally competent health care, health education, educating health care professionals about cultural and health care needs of communities, and researching, planning, implementing and evaluating health interventions to achieve health equity.

When HOPE was formed 25 years ago, culturally sensitive breast cancer education didn't exist. So, Melissa and her team of community members led the way, creating content and initiatives that have increased knowledge and changed behavior through the programs.

To help, Doretta "Doe" Thomas, Melissa's mother, stepped up and became trained as a Certified Community Health Worker (C.CHW).

"At the time, it was really not something that I wanted to do," Doe says. "But it was so educational and so valuable. I had to remind myself that it wasn't about me. It was about what I could do for my ladies, for the community, and if I could do something to make our program stronger then it was what I needed to do."

Treatment and culturally sensitive health education is provided to women today through a mobile unit and partnerships with facilities like clinics and churches.

The team is also launching a new education piece this year. It took five years to develop and incorporates approximately 475 pieces of data gathered at screenings, allowing women to have a voice in the tool's content.

"We told [the women] that it would be used in a new education piece and their input would be in this," Doe says. "We're excited to take it back to them and let them see what we did."

Scheduling and planning, another key aspect of the project, is tackled by Janet Miller, C.CHW, and program coordinator for HOPE. She met Melissa at her church, where the nonprofit was holding a conference.

Miller personally grappled with the reality of Amish women dying of breast cancer at disproportionate rates having an Amish mother-in-law.

Now, she joins the fight by doing everything from contacting churches to see if their space can be used for screenings and scheduling mobile mammogram units to checking women in when they arrive and managing records regarding patient follow up.

If it's discovered during care that a woman does have breast cancer, the program provides a follow up component that walks the woman through next steps and ensures she has access to training, skills, as well as a local connection to go through the processes with her.

Serving on the front lines means Miller sees the raw emotions and reactions from women, some of which are not excited about undergoing a mammogram. But plenty are excited despite the discomfort because they know how life saving the care can be.

Miller recalls one woman who approached her after the project was briefly paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The woman was thrilled to see the team because during that pause, she performed an at-home breast exam like she had been taught by the program's nurse practitioner.

During that exam she found a lump. Knowing the potential danger, she had the lump biopsied and later removed because it was cancerous.

"To me, it's about showing God's love to them," Miller says. "... There are people out there, there's help out there, and they don't have to be afraid or ashamed if they can't afford a doctor or anything like that. We're there to help them and we want to catch anything early because we want them to live on for their children and grandchildren and have a healthy life."

Although HOPE and CARE are focused on breast cancer, the care provided goes much beyond that.

"Many Amish women want time to pray and talk to their families before making a decision," Melissa says. "We've had to work very closely with hospitals to make sure they're not rushing care or rushing treatment and that we're giving that cultural respect to the decision-making process that Amish and Mennonite communities have."

Melissa's grandfather died in 2002 and unbeknownst to her, he left his home, the one he designed and built brick by brick, and she holds so many childhood memories at—to her. Sitting on 12 acres of land in Whipple, her family's home now serves as the headquarters of the nonprofit.

The maple tree Melissa and her sister threw yarn and clothespins in still stands, and the memory of a storm rolling through and seeing all the yarn she thought was lost in that tree come to life still lingers in her mind.

That image inspired CARE's logo, a tree with ribbons wrapped around the limbs.

All the pieces of Melissa's life—from loss, her interest in science, encouragement from her grandmother, and becoming the first in her family to move away and earn a college degree—have turned into her purpose.

All she has left to think is, "It's funny how life comes full circle, right?"



LEFT: Rather than a parking lot filled with cars, spots for buggies are available.

Ari's Golden Rule

Marietta's part-time restaurateur, full-time advocate

STORY BY NATHAN BLACKBURN // PHOTO BY MAYA MEADE

The windows of each establishment display a classic small-town sensibility, from boutiques to an American flag gallery. Located amongst these businesses is TLV, a Mediterranean-Israeli restaurant and bakery owned by Ari Gold. Gold not only serves up homemade babka and shawarma; he has become a lightning rod for social justice. Southeast Ohio sat down with Gold to dish on his restaurant and the backlash he's faced for his advocacy.

Where are you from, how did you grow up?

I was born in Israel and lived there for about 25 years before I came to America. My parents grew up in a traditional Jewish family; they are both doctors.

What kind of foods do you serve?

The concept is divided into two sections. The first is what we call our international menu; you can have individual items or discounted packages of dishes from around the world. You can decide, "Today I am going to South America, then, I can go to Japan and on the way back, I am going to stop by Morocco." The other section is Middle Eastern food. We are also a bakery, so all our bread that we use is made here. We serve cocktails, beer and wine from Israel.

On your social media, you advocate for being a leader instead of a boss. Where did that come from, and how does it impact your decision making?

If I had to visualize it, a boss is somebody who says, 'You need to move these tables.' They stand on the table and point towards where it needs to move. A leader would be the one in front of the table pulling it [and] everybody else is helping him push. You need to ask yourself if you are going to lead the employee to their goal. If not, you are going to lose an employee because they will not have time to deal with work. That individual is going to be in a worse position than they were before. If a small act of yours can change it, the course it has for you is minor compared to the benefit they achieve.

You have talked about how you do not necessarily consider your work activism. What all have you experienced that makes you want to do that?

Back in 2016, in Parkersburg, West Virginia, I found out that West Virginia has an ordinance to allow employers and landlords to discriminate members of the LGBT [community] by telling them, "Because you are gay, I am not renting you property. Because you are gay, I am not hiring you." So, I put a big sign on my building saying that this is unfair. Council members came to me and said, "You need to take it down or nobody is going to come here." I said, "No, I cannot sit quietly. You treat people like this for no reason."

Why did you paint the mural on the side of your restaurant?

I told my wife, I am going to put George Floyd on my wall. Not because George Floyd was a hero, but because what happened to George Floyd was wrong. The guy was on the ground for nine minutes. Somebody was kneeling on his neck. The guy died. It happened because of the color of his skin. It has been one year and one month, I believe, since I put it on the wall and it means a lot.

If you knew someone had been mistreated because of the color of their skin, their sexuality, whatever it may be, what would say to them?

I believe that people should speak about it immediately. When people say, "Do not take stuff too personally," ... we all take it personally. You cannot let them bully you for one main reason: you are not the only one they are going after. If they get to you ... they are going to do it to other people. So, by thinking about it [and] by acting on it, you saved somebody else's life from being bullied.



ABOVE: Ari Gold stands in front of his Marietta restaurant, TLV, which serves authentic Israeli and Lebanese food.

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BELOW: Poe (named for Edgar Allen Poe) greets guests with a smile at Manchester Hill Winery & Vineyard. **PHOTO BY** KAYLA BENNETT

