This bi-annual publication of selected experiences is brought to you by the WINDING ROAD, a collaborative network of experience producers, creative persons, organizations, and civic leaders. These “stakeholders” are working to create a brand that represents authentic cultural and natural assets in nine Ohio counties in the Muskingum and Hocking River valleys stretching from Athens to Zanesville, and from Lancaster to Pomeroy along the banks of the Ohio.

The goal of EXPERIENCES is to connect residents and visitors to many engaging opportunities taking place along the Winding Road throughout the year as we work together to build the “experience economy” in southeastern Ohio. For more detailed information and even more experiences, we encourage you to contact individual vendors and local Convention and Visitors and Tourism Bureaus.

EXPERIENCES is organized into three sections. In “Experiences,” we highlight guided tours that represent the creativity of local residents and honor the region’s land and people. In “Stories,” we focus on two successful businesses that represent the spirit of the Winding Road. And finally, in the “Calendar,” we provide a broad overview of exciting activities taking place here this spring and summer.

We are part of a “Rising Appalachia” where the arts, history, outdoor recreation, local foods, and authentic lodging and shopping create an improved quality of life here in the foothills of southeastern Ohio. Together, we are making our region a great place to live and visit for those seeking nature, culture, and creativity as part of their daily experience!

WWW.OHIOSAPPALACHIANWINDINGROAD.ORG
BIRDS IN THE HILLS FESTIVAL

EVENT: APRIL 26-28
WARBLERS, FAMILIES, HEMLOCKS...

Join Rural Action, Camp Oty’Okwa, and the Athens Area Birders for this affordable festival that features activities for adults, families, and children. The event welcomes anyone with even a remote interest in birds and the outdoors, including those who have never picked up a pair of binoculars. Meals and camping are available Friday through Sunday.

Field trips to Crane Hollow Nature Preserve, Zaleski State Park, and bird walks through Camp Oty ’Okwa’s extensive groves of Eastern Hemlock are available. Participants can expect to witness up to 20 species of warblers, including the Black-Throated Green and Blackburnian Warblers that prefer the cool hemlock gorges here. Expect to also see Cerulean Warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, and Rose-Breasted Grosbeaks, and a plethora of other migratory songbirds. Festival attendees will also have the opportunity to meet other nature enthusiasts, listen to a local band, the Coal Cave Hollow Boys, and enjoy local beers, a Saturday evening chicken & hog roast dinner, and much more!

Can’t make it for the whole weekend? Come Saturday evening for the keynote speaker, Dr. Jarrod Burks, an archeologist with a passion for the study of ancient earthworks, who will teach us about the use of bird effigies during the Hopewell culture period. Music, food and microbrew, too!

REGISTER:
ruralaction.org/birdsinthehills
COST:
$10 Event Fee (plus food, camping, guided field trip fees)
INFO:
sally@ruralaction.org
LOCATION:
24799 Purcell Rd., South Bloomingville, OH 43152

INFO:
krepss@hocking.edu
LOCATION:
3301 Hocking Parkway, Nelsonville, OH 45764

HOCKING RIVER ECO TOUR

EVENT: MAY 18 (9:00 AM - 6:30 PM)
CANOES, HISTORY, FOOD...

Eco-Guide Scott Kreps will lead this adventure tour, an experience presented by Hocking College Leisure Learning. The tour features a full day exploring the origins, natural history, and ecosystems of the widely utilized Hocking River. Highlights include: touring Rock Mill, brunch at Rock Mill Brewery, canoeing a beautiful section of the river, engaging with Shawnee (post contact) living history, fresh local fare, and a wildflower and native plant walk. Participants will finish the day with a scrumptious dinner at Rhapsody restaurant in Nelsonville, with live music and lore from the Appalachian Storytellers Guild.

Basic/beginner canoe experience is encouraged. The canoe paddle will be two to three miles at a relaxed pace with multiple stops. Transport, safety, instruction, boats, gear, water, food, and all aspects of guided tour are included. Participants need only their own weather and river appropriate attire. This is an all-inclusive package.
RENDVILLE
RELIVE & REVIVE!

EVENT: JUNE 1 (10:00 AM - 2:00 PM)
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Take a deep dive into Rendville history at several locations in this important mining town where African Americans and European immigrants lived side by side creating a fascinating outcome. Hosts will share the town’s rich story with visitors, including five occasions where African Americans from Rendville broke the color barrier in state and national history. Local filmmaker and musician Burr Beard will screen his documentary about the town. Author Frans Doppen will share the life of union organizer Richard L. Davis whose many letters to labor journals in the late 1800’s led to African Americans to inclusion in the United Mine Workers.

Residents, past and present, of Ohio’s smallest incorporated village (pop. 32) will share their own stories about growing up in Rendville, including All-American Basketball player Jerry Jackson. A traditional Rendville lunch featuring collard greens and sweet potato pie will be served. Tour the Rendville Art Works, Rendville Cemetery, a future history museum, and the historic Town Hall.

Space is limited and pre-registration is required. The day will conclude with plans and pleas for supporting the saving of this dynamic story for future generations.

REGISTER:
On-line at rendvillehistory.org or check to Rendville Historic Preservation Society; 58 Elmwood Ave.; Athens, Ohio 45701 by May 24.
COST: $35/person
INFO: rendvillehistory@gmail.com or 740-707-1775
LOCATION: Rendville Town Hall, 6050 Main Street, Corning, OH

BURR OAK LAKE
HISTORY CRUISE

EVENT: MAY 24 - 27 (12 to 2PM), JUNE 16 (5-7 PM), JULY 12-20 (TBD)*
MEMORIAL DAY, FATHER’S DAY, OHIO BREW WEEK*

Sit back and enjoy an informative 2-hour guided pontoon cruise on Ohio's Burr Oak Lake and State Park. Learn why and how the lake was created, listen to unique stories about the people who lived here in the past, and see an abundant amount of wildlife in, around and above the lake. Some days bald eagles and osprey can be seen swooping down to pluck fish from the surface!

Guests will enjoy light refreshments during the cruise. This is a low-impact activity and is suitable for all ages. Tours may sometimes stop on shore for a quick wade in the water as weather permits. Your guide Mark Brunton is a United States Coast Guard Licensed Captain, Nationally Certified Interpretive Guide, and has spent many years working as a professional journalist and outdoors writer. Come see how Burr Oak Lake has transformed the region!

REGISTER:
On-line at BurrOakGetaways.com
COST: $40 per person (Maximum six passengers per tour); Group rate to reserve all seats: $160. *Ohio Brew Week Lake Cruise & Brews Tour subject to special pricing.
INFO: burroakgetaways@gmail.com or (740) 331-1198
LOCATION: The boat launches from Burr Oak Lake's Dock Area #2 (other dock pick-ups available.), Glouster, Ohio 45732
SUNDAY AFTERNOON: PERRY COUNTY FARM TOURS

EVENT: JUNE 2

CHEROKEE VALLEY BISON RANCH

Cherokee Valley Bison Ranch (1:00 PM) has over thirty bison on their fifty acre farm. Visitors will be able to see our national mammal close up, hear the history of the farm and bison in the area, as well as facts about bison. The ranch has many artifacts to display guest enjoyment. Visitors will be transported on a hay wagon ride around the beautiful farm, where they will observe the bison roam, graze, and play. Customers will have an opportunity to purchase bison to take home or prepare on site in the picnic area. The tour will last about an hour and then people will have time to sit in our creekside observation area and watch the bison, birds, bees and butterflies, take photos, and chat with the owners, Carie and Jarrod Starr, or move on to Primaterra Farm for a 3:00 tour.

PRIMATERRA FARM

Primaterra Farm (3:00 PM) is a first generation farm in a beautiful setting. It is focused on growing a diverse array of vegetables and herbs, as well as raising pasture-raised, non-GMO poultry and eggs. Join farmer Henry Jochem as he shows visitors how he shows how poultry can be raised sustainably, giving deeper meaning to the terms “free range” and “pasture-raised.” Learn how the farm’s produce is grown naturally, and how they grow crops without chemical sprays or fertilizers. Farmer Jochem will share his methods with fellow farmers and homesteaders and anyone interested in these methods. He hopes to inspire others to raise their own food using similar systems and techniques in order to improve local pastures, increase access to high quality local food, and further stimulate the local economy.

ANCIENT TRAILS OF SOUTHEASTERN OHIO

EVENT: UPON REQUEST

CUSTOMIZE YOUR LEARNING

Have you ever wondered why roads, railroads, and canals run where they do? Or where and how the first peoples the region traveled? Or if there were Indians trails near where you live? Or even when and who first penetrated the wilds of Ohio as the glaciers receded? If so, let certified interpretive guide Pat Anderson (aka Crazy Loon Woman) share what she has learned in her 60+ years of seeking the answers to these and other questions. She has developed two adaptable programs about the trails and the ancient ones who made them.

Each program will be tailored to your specific interests about trails, peoples, and even plants and animals of the area, and can be done indoors or outdoors at your preferred location, at times best suited to you and your group. Pat is sponsored by Little Cities of Black Diamonds. Prices are negotiable, based on time, content, and distance traveled. Included in the prices are map handouts, a possible Shawnee meal as listed above, and, if desired, use of spear throwers and darts.

REGISTER: ahhonikana@yahoo.com or 740-394-2095
COST: Negotiable
INFO: lcbdohio@gmail.com or 740-277-5030
LOCATION: Shawnee, Ohio 43782

REGISTER: squarespace.com/store/cherokee-valley-bison-ranch/
COST: $10
INFO: 740.403.3763, wild-wooly-horny.blogspot.com
LOCATION: 12320 Lonesome Road
Thornville, OH 43076

REGISTER: primaterrafarm@gmail.com
COST: $10
INFO: 614.915.4145, primaterrafarm.com
LOCATION: 6475 Township Rd, 154 NE
New Lexington, OH 43764
DIGGING DEEP INTO COAL

EVENT: JUNE 15 (9:30 AM-3PM)
OFF THE BEATEN PATH COMMUNITIES

Local historian Rob Dishon leads this unique view of the coal mining region of southern Perry County. Visit several boomtowns and hear about the pre-history, boom-history and post-boom period. The tour will begin in Shawnee and travel north to McCuneville, a town that has become a small collection of trailers and older homes, then travel to the ruins of St. Peter's Church. Those wishing to view the actual ruins will need to be able to walk up a small hill to reach the church yard. The next stop will be Shawnee, one of the largest towns in the area during the boom period.

Following lunch the group will head through the eastern edge of the Hocking Valley Mining region and the sites of several towns where there is now no trace of their existence. The tour then passes into the Sunday Creek Valley where the mines were opened several years after those in the Hocking Valley and constituted a whole other boom in that region. Members of the Corning Museum will meet with the group and tell the story of Corning, Rendville, and San Toy, with time permitting, a visit to Rendville.

REGISTER/INFO: Robdishon@gmail.com or (917) 453-7203
COST: $45 or $80/Couple
LOCATION: Tecumseh Commons, 116 W. Main Street, Shawnee, OH 43782

HISTORY BEHIND THE MYSTERY

EVENT: JUNE 22 (9AM-4PM)
HISTORY EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS CAST BY EERIE SUPERNATURAL STORIES

On lists and locations of haunted and supernatural regions, southeastern Ohio seems to frequently rise to the top. From the Moonville Tunnel, the eerie structures at the Ridges, and the “spooky” graveyards, the Hocking Valley has drawn attention from New Age practitioners and “ghost hunters” alike. But what about the documented history of these places scattered throughout the woods, abandoned company towns, railroads, and structures. This guided tour will journey to those legendary places, and hear from historians and authors who have researched and lived in them. Our excursion will include visits to the extinct village of Moonville, the former Athens Lunatic Asylum, and the site of the Mt. Nebo homestead that became nationally known as part of the Spiritualist Movement in the late 1800s. Participants will travel by van to the various locations and be treated to on board and walking tours. We will enjoy lunch and may even be treated to a surprise or two at these places! What are the stories of the generations of people who lived, worked, and raised families here? Beyond the fragmented claims of the supernatural, there are tangible links and remnants of history.

REGISTER/INFO: www.ohiosappalachianwindingroad.org; kbowald@yahoo.com
COST: $65/person
LOCATION: Begin @ The Ridges, Athens, Ohio 45701
THE WINDING ROAD

EVENTS: ONGOING

RIDE AMONG SPECIES & OTHER MUSKINGUM COUNTY TOURS

Led by professional trained guides, this one hour tour consists of a relaxing horseback ride along beautiful hillsides in Muskingum County overlooking animal species that call the Wilds home, from antelope to zebra. The tour is designed to excite anyone with the love for wildlife and a bit of adventure. The Winding Road also appreciates this tour and others at The Wilds because they travel over reclaimed land once used for strip mining, which allows participants to think about how the region can be revitalized and used in new ways!

Throughout Muskingum County, there are many experiences where participants can see for themselves the history and successes of the region. For example, the “Made in Ohio” tour features local products, from pottery to potato chips. And the “Friends of Freedom” tour highlights the men and women who played a significant role in the anti-slavery movement. For more information, contact the Muskingum Convention and Visitors Bureau (visitzanesville.com).

REGISTER:
reservations.thewilds.org
COST:
$30/per person
INFO:
thewilds.columbuszoo.org
LOCATION:
14000 International Rd.
Cumberland, OH 43732

OHIO ART CORRIDOR

EVENT: UPON REQUEST

MEET THE ARTIST

Art is a form of creative human expression and a way of enriching the human experience. The Ohio Art Corridor is committed to enriching the experiences and ultimately the lives of those in Southeastern Ohio through the artistic sculptures and beautiful parks that will be placed along the corridor.

Make your reservations to meet the artist of the first original art installation, The School of Fish, in McConnelsville. David Griesmyer of DG Welding & Design, created, manufactured, and generously donated the School of Fish specifically for The Ohio Art Corridor. The School of Fish is over twenty-five feet tall, seventy-five feet in length, and twelve hundred pounds!

The Ohio Art Corridor is a relatively new non-profit committed to promoting art, heritage, tourism and revenue through HUGE public art. At over 200 miles, The Ohio Art Corridor serves as the largest outdoor art gallery in the world with new pieces being added regularly.

REGISTER:
www.theartcorridor.org
INFO:
theartcorridor@gmail.com
or call (512) 746-8428
LOCATION:
McConnelsville Boat Ramp
River Road, McConnelsville, Ohio

HORSEBACK SAFARI

AT THE WILDS & MORE

REGISTER:
reservations.thewilds.org
COST:
$30/per person
INFO:
thewilds.columbuszoo.org
LOCATION:
14000 International Rd.
Cumberland, OH 43732

SCHOOL OF FISH

EXPERIENCES
Driving down Route 60 from Zanesville to McConnelsville, the Muskingum River is always to your right, snaking beside the road. And in late winter the river is swollen, churning, and a little angry: it is a presence to be reckoned with. The river is beautiful, too, and as you enter town, it takes place of honor, centered between McConnelsville and its neighbor Malta, with enough gentle hills flanking either side to make you feel snug in the river valley.

I came to McConnelsville to visit Adam Shriver, the executive director of the Twin City Opera House. Continuously operating since 1892, the Opera House sits prominently in the town square. The Opera House serves as both a community arts center for local theater and music performances such as the Ohio Valley Opry, and as a movie house, showing first run films for the people of the town. I am here as part of the Winding Road, a network of people and businesses and organizations all dedicated to connecting with each other to build up strong local economies in Appalachian Ohio.

Shriver shows me around the Opera House. As we step between construction materials and scaffolding, he tells me about the ups and downs of current restorations taking place. “You can’t get someone to invest in fixing up the Opera House by traditional means,” Shriver says. Banks tend to shy away from small town projects, where it is often hard for them to see the value in saving old buildings. Instead, Shriver and the Opera House’s board of directors decided to reach out to the community around them. With many small donations ranging from twenty to one hundred dollars, they raised an initial $80,000. In doing so, they created the ground work to show that local residents are invested in the building and are motivated to save it. With the town rallying behind the Opera House, they were able to secure larger loans and grants to restore the building.

As Shriver shares this story, he also tells me of his ties to McConnelsville. In many ways, Shriver is the exception to the rule: many young people are forced to move away from the area in search of better jobs. After graduating from Ohio University, he was ready to move away, too. But the Opera House job became available, and he decided to come back.

This initial commitment helped foster other opportunities and connections that might not be available elsewhere. Over the past fifteen years, Shriver has continued to strengthen his ties to this place, and he is now raising his own family here, is a county commissioner, and teaches a local vocational class. His family has owned a nearby farm for several generations, and he looks forward to taking care of that place, too. When I ask about the history of the Opera House, Shriver excitedly recounts all of the different managers of the building since its opening in 1892. He is proud to be a part of a lineage that links past to present. All of these accomplishments are reminders of the ties that can anchor you to a place, encouraging a stewardship to it and to the people that live there.

“People often don’t find things interesting until they’re gone,” Shriver says, “and when they’re gone, it’s too late.” This points to the struggles of preserving and being a steward to the Opera House: it is hard to generate interest in the past before it disappears. Shriver noted, for example, that there weren’t very many projects, where it is often hard for them to see the value in saving old buildings. Instead, Shriver and the Opera House’s board of directors decided to reach out to the community around them. With many small donations ranging from twenty to one hundred dollars, they raised an initial $80,000. In doing so, they created the ground work to show that local residents are invested in the building and are motivated to save it. With the town rallying behind the Opera House, they were able to secure larger loans and grants to restore the building.

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Sunflower Bakery sits on a busy Nelsonville Public Square. There is a sense of vibrancy here: as I walk down the street, older and younger couples pass by, workers are cleaning up the square’s central fountain, and cars slowly drive past. I step into the bakery, and it is bright and warm. The smell of fresh bread hits me as soon as I open the door. I am greeted by many historical artifacts from the building that have been saved over the years. But rather than lament this loss, he sees it as an opportunity to create something new.

Shriver and the board for the Opera House have taken this sense of opportunity in preservation and applied it to their programming. Instead of reproducing an exact replica of the past, they are instead creating authentic experiences that also make the building come alive. Showing movies, for example, is primarily for local audiences, but it also provides an opportunity for younger generations to create their own memories, and carry them throughout their lives. At the same time, plays and performances bring in a wider audience. This two-tiered approach shows how to simultaneously preserve and grow, keeping the Opera House rooted in the community and a space everyone can enjoy.

Before I left, our conversation turned back to the Muskingum River. In the past, the river was central to the town, and there were hotels and river boats along its shores. Soon, Shriver hopes, the river can continue to recover from pollution and everyone can use it again, helping to revitalize the entire town. Even though McConnelsville does not have a main tourist attraction and is often overlooked, Shriver notes, it is exactly the kind of place that can benefit from the relationships being fostered with the Winding Road. When connected with other small towns nearby, tourists can visit several towns in a day, moving from place to place, and enjoying distinct experiences in each.

The Twin City Opera House is first and foremost a space for the local community to enjoy, but this doesn’t mean it is closed off to visitors. As McConnelsville and other regional cities along the Winding Road continue to create vital places to live and work, our hope is that it will naturally attract the interest of others. A thriving local community is an important way to build a tourist economy that reaches out to invite others in.

I am here to collect stories for the Winding Road, a network of people and businesses and organizations all working to help each other build strong and sustainable economies in Appalachian Ohio. The newest business on the square, Sunflower Bakery offers all kinds of goods, from breads and cookies to a frozen line of veggie burgers, hand pies, and quiches. As we sit down together to talk, a steady flow of customers stop in, and every time they do so, Florentino seems delighted and a little astonished as they enthusiastically buy up pastries and soups and pies and even doggie treats.

We begin talking about the business, and I ask Florentino how she got the bakery started. “I knew that I needed to do something on my own. I was working in other people’s kitchens for so long, I just wasn’t satisfied,” she states. There is a sense of urgency and a humble ambition in her work, and this helps her face the ups and downs of opening a new business.

She had very little start up money, and could not find traditional loans. And like so many others in rural places, she instead turned to the community around her for support. After running two crowdfunding campaigns, securing loans from friends, and
enduring several delays and moving storefronts, she was able to open this past November. And perhaps the biggest surprise came when an anonymous donor paid the bakery’s rent for a couple of months when it first opened. These challenges for small rural businesses are common along the Winding Road, and require a lot of perseverance, patience, generosity, and creativity to solve.

I ask Florentino why she chose Nelsonville. For her, there are particular opportunities here that might not be available elsewhere. She loved the town and the people she met. The rents are lower than in bigger cities, and her bakery could fill a niche that no one else was doing. Just as importantly, Florentino notes, there is a lot of cooperation between the businesses on the square, such as Fullbrooks Cafe, the Nelsonville Emporium, Starbrick Gallery, and Stuart’s Opera House. Rocky Boots, for example, sent out a company-wide email promoting the bakery, encouraging employees to visit. Down the block, the owners of Nelsonville Quiltare big supporters of the bakery, too, and their shared tourism helps both businesses thrive. In a place like this, competition is less of an issue because there is a common goal: to help rebuild and revitalize the town together. These businesses are rooting for one another, and holding each other up.

The innovation, experimentation, and flexibility in Florentino’s business plan can also be seen in the products she makes. The menu changes frequently, and she is continually developing new recipes. Her “Fudgedoodle” cookies, for example, are a gluten-free mash up of a snickerdoodle and a chocolate crinkle, a novel combination already a hit with local customers. And after a customer gave Florentino a recipe for Oatmeal Pie, she developed it into a dessert bar, one that is both new and traditional.

It takes time to build trust, and food is a good way to do it. It takes time to build trust, and food is a good way to do it. Florentino’s experimentation and openness have proven helpful in crossing cultural divides between herself and other local residents. This began even before she opened the storefront on the square. After moving to Nelsonville, she sold baked goods from her house. Regulars would stop by to pick up a pastry or loaf of bread, and the relationships she build there carried over to the new store. Now, Florentino continues to navigate the push and pull between challenging her customers to try new flavors, and adapting to their requests. Because she has built up trust, however, her customers are willing to try something new. Her “Persian” cookies, for example, have been an unexpected hit. Made with chickpea flour, they at first seemed unusual to her customers, but she quickly won them over. “I thought, ‘no one’s going to go for them,’ but now people are addicted to them.”

Even with these successes, it is hard to manage the pressures of running a small business in Appalachian Ohio. When I mention how I’ve met other people struggling with similar issues, such as a strong sense of isolation, Florentino recognizes this feeling. “I often feel alone when working here,” she says. “It’s nice to know there are other people trying to make a go of it, too. I enjoy talking about it with other businesses, and to share our different challenges. It’s nice to connect with other people who are working their butts off, like you are.” For Florentino, and for the Winding Road, it is crucial for these different people and businesses to connect with and recognize each other, and to see how they are all making their own way in the region. It is an important way for everyone to help each other and have a shared sense of purpose.

Just before I left, another customer stops by. He is a regular, and has helped Florentino over the past few months by putting shelves up, moving equipment, and even fixing a water leak. As he leaves, he says, “I’ll see you again tomorrow!” Florentino turns to me, amazed, and says, “Did he just say, ‘see you tomorrow?’ Wonderful!”

“It’s very surreal around here,” she continues. “I feel like I’m in a dream.”

WINDING ROAD STORIES: SUNFLOWER BAKERY

HOURS: Thursday - Saturday
8:00AM - 4:00 PM
INFO: facebook.com/forgramps/
LOCATION: 19 W. Columbus St.
Nelsonville, OH

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I ask Florentino why she chose Nelsonville. For her, there are particular opportunities here that might not be available elsewhere. She loved the town and the people she met. The rents are lower than in bigger cities, and her bakery could fill a niche that no one else was doing. Just as importantly, Florentino notes, there is a lot of cooperation between the businesses on the square, such as Fullbrooks Cafe, the Nelsonville Emporium, Starbrick Gallery, and Stuart’s Opera House. Rocky Boots, for example, sent out a company-wide email promoting the bakery, encouraging employees to visit. Down the block, the owners of Nelsonville Quiltare big supporters of the bakery, too, and their shared tourism helps both businesses thrive. In a place like this, competition is less of an issue because there is a common goal: to help rebuild and revitalize the town together. These businesses are rooting for one another, and holding each other up.

The innovation, experimentation, and flexibility in Florentino’s business plan can also be seen in the products she makes. The menu changes frequently, and she is continually developing new recipes. Her “Fudgedoodle” cookies, for example, are a gluten-free mash up of a snickerdoodle and a chocolate crinkle, a novel combination already a hit with local customers. And after a customer gave Florentino a recipe for Oatmeal Pie, she developed it into a dessert bar, one that is both new and traditional.

It takes time to build trust, and food is a good way to do it. It takes time to build trust, and food is a good way to do it. Florentino’s experimentation and openness have proven helpful in crossing cultural divides between herself and other local residents. This began even before she opened the storefront on the square. After moving to Nelsonville, she sold baked goods from her house. Regulars would stop by to pick up a pastry or loaf of bread, and the relationships she build there carried over to the new store. Now, Florentino continues to navigate the push and pull between challenging her customers to try new flavors, and adapting to their requests. Because she has built up trust, however, her customers are willing to try something new. Her “Persian” cookies, for example, have been an unexpected hit. Made with chickpea flour, they at first seemed unusual to her customers, but she quickly won them over. “I thought, ‘no one’s going to go for them,’ but now people are addicted to them.”

Even with these successes, it is hard to manage the pressures of running a small business in Appalachian Ohio. When I mention how I’ve met other people struggling with similar issues, such as a strong sense of isolation, Florentino recognizes this feeling. “I often feel alone when working here,” she says. “It’s nice to know there are other people trying to make a go of it, too. I enjoy talking about it with other businesses, and to share our different challenges. It’s nice to connect with other people who are working their butts off, like you are.” For Florentino, and for the Winding Road, it is crucial for these different people and businesses to connect with and recognize each other, and to see how they are all making their own way in the region. It is an important way for everyone to help each other and have a shared sense of purpose.

Just before I left, another customer stops by. He is a regular, and has helped Florentino over the past few months by putting shelves up, moving equipment, and even fixing a water leak. As he leaves, he says, “I’ll see you again tomorrow!” Florentino turns to me, amazed, and says, “Did he just say, ‘see you tomorrow?’ Wonderful!”

“It’s very surreal around here,” she continues. “I feel like I’m in a dream.”
MAKE YOUR PLANS

Whether a First Friday in Zanesville, a Second Saturday in Shawnee, or a Thursday Chesterhill Produce Auction, residents of the region, and an increasing number of visitors are heading to “destination days” along the Winding Road in southeastern Ohio (see listing inside back cover). They are taking note of the abundance of authentic experiences available in Ohio’s Rising Appalachia in the Hocking and Muskingum River valleys. Enjoy this quick summary of featured events and explore web sites for details and tickets. Watch for 2019 Mid Summer-Late Fall of this “sourcebook” to plan your journey through the hills later this year or visit www.ohiosappalachianwindingroad.org for details. We are the Winding Road!

APRIL

EVENT: APRIL 20
OHIO MUFFINS VINTAGE BASEBALL
Little Cities of Black Diamonds Appalachian Spring Series features the Ohio Village Muffins vs. the Nelsonville Old Timers at Crabtree Field in Nelsonville to celebrate “Sports in the Little Cities theme. 2PM. Free. littlecitiesofblackdiamonds.blog.

EVENT: APRIL 26-28
BIRDS IN THE HILLS FESTIVAL

EVENT: APRIL 28
BACKROADS & BRIDGES TOUR
Coach tour from Lancaster’s Alley Park takes you to six covered bridges, canal locks and on a tour of Rock Mill on the Hocking River. $40. Register at 866-334-6446 or visit visitfairfieldcounty.org.

EVENT: MAY 4
TOUR DE FOREST BICYCLE RIDE
Gravel, road & bikeway routes departing Hocking College to benefit history efforts in the Little Cities. Lunch. $30. tourdeforest.wordpress.com.

EVENT: MAY 12
NATURAL RHYTHMS ECO FOREST TOUR
Forest Meditative Drumming experience among the towering rocks & whispering Hemlocks of High Rock Valley near Rockbridge. Bring your own drum or percussion. $75. highrockadventures.redzy.com.

EVENT: MAY 18
HOCKING RIVER ECO TOUR
Canoe your way up the Hocking from Nelsonville with great guides & programs. hocking.edu/leisure-learning. Story page 5.

EVENT: MAY 18
RIVER CITY SYMPHONY POPS
Enjoy the restored Peoples Bank Theater in Marietta as the RCSO features pops favorites, with ties to the Mid-Ohio Valley. Tickets $15, $20, $25. peoplesbanktheatre.com

EVENT: MAY 18
WADE HAYS AT OHIO VALLEY OPRY
Two shows are booked for the popular Wade Hays at this monthly gathering at the Twin City Opera House in McConnelsville. ohiovalleyopry.com.
May

Event: May 25-Sept 2
Quilt National 2019 Exhibition
Quilting far beyond its traditional parameters, quiltmaking as what it always has been — an art form. National at Dairy Barn Arts Center, Athens.

Event: May 22
Relive & Revive Rendville

Event: June 1
Sunday Farm Tours
Spend a relaxing Sunday on the farms of two entrepreneurial Perry County families. Story pg 8.

Event: June 6-9
Nelsonville Music Festival
National and regional acts on five stages, camping, food, art. Nelsonvillemusicfest.org.

Event: June 14-15
Duck Creek Log Jam
Small by design, off the beaten path music festival and camping. Logan. DuckCreekLogJam.com.

Event: June 16
Deep Into Coal
Visit southern Perry County coal towns with historian Rob Dishon. Story page 9

Event: June 22
History Behind the Mystery Tour
A tour to get the facts behind haunted SE Ohio. Athens. ohiohillcountry.org. Story pg. 10.

Event: June 23
Fort Glenford Walk
Perry County opens the ancient native site to public. 10am-2pm Glenford. perrycountyohcas.org

Event: April 26-28
Eggs Solstice hike
Extreme all-night hiking with on the Buckeye Trail. Burr Oak State Park. buckeyetrail.org

Event: April 26-28
Quilt National 2019 Exhibition
Quilting far beyond its traditional parameters, quiltmaking as what it always has been — an art form. National at Dairy Barn Arts Center, Athens.

Event: May 25-Aug 18
Selections from the Pizzuti Collection
The Decorative Arts Center of Ohio in Lancaster features pieces of contemporary art and design showcasing contemporary masters and emerging faces. decartsohio.org

Event: May 23-27
New Straitsville Moonshine Fest
Legal moonshine, country music, history at Robinson’s Cave. Carnival, parades & more in this history rich village, once the bootleg capital of America.

June

Event: July 7
Red, White & Blues Festival
Blues, Jazz & Folk Music Society of the Mid Ohio Valley fest at Lafayette in Marietta. bjm.org

Event: June 22
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July

Event: July 7
Red, White & Blues Fest
Blues, Jazz & Folk Music Society of the Mid Ohio Valley fest at Lafayette in Marietta. bjm.org

Event: May 25-July 7
Burro Oak Brew Week

Destination days

Going to town isn’t what it used to be in our modern society. And we know that cherished routines and regular hang outs are a part of good living. In response local “creative partners” around the region are organizing street fairs, farmers markets and cultural programs on a regular day of the week or month during the warm months so that artists and farmers can share their goods and talents. Citizens and visitors know that shops are open and their neighbors or visitors may be around for a chat, a cold beer or a cup of coffee. Check out our current, growing, but we imagine-to-be incomplete list. Look them up on Social Media or the interwebs for details.

Every Wednesday & Saturday
Athens Farmer Market
Every Thursday
Chesterhill Produce Auction
First Fridays
Marietta • Glouster • Zanesville
Second Saturdays
Shawnee
Third Saturdays
Amesville Coonskin Saturdays
McConnelsville Ohio Valley Opry
Final Fridays
Nelsonville

The Winding Road Network as a producer, entrepreneur, organization, leader, customer, or audience member! We organize Winding Road Sector Meet Ups for socialization and learning, and Winding Road Work Groups that take on tasks such as organizing tours, marketing, and grant writing. It’s all about what “we” can do for one another! If you are interested or have an idea, and want to involved, just drop us a line at: thewindingroadohio@gmail.com

And follow our activities on social media & at: ohioappalachianwindingroad.org

The Winding Road Coordinating Group
Joyce Barrett, Heritage Ohio; Andrew Bashaw, Buckeye Trail Association; Ken Rovald, National Association of Interpreters; Joe Brein, Rural Action Environmental Education; Mark Brunton, Burr Oak Getaways; John Glazer, OU Voinovich Center; Amy Grove, Morgan County CVB; Brian Koscho & Melissa Wales, Stuart’s Opera House; Tracy Kunkler, Circle Forward Consultants; Weston Lombard, Solid Ground Farm; Dawn McCarty, Wayne National Forest; David Mizel, Appalachian Hills of Ohio Territory; Mary Naity, OU Center for Campus & Community Engagement; Leslie Schaller, ACENet; Michelle Robinson, Hocking College; Brian Vadakin & Eric Smith, Rural Action; John Winnenberg & Brian Harnetty, Ohio Hill Country Heritage Area.

The Winding Road
Winding Road
Ohio's Rising Appalachia