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# The City of Towers Signature Monument

written by: Alsey Gwinn Wheatley

Stretching towards the sky in Eiffel Tower Park stands a shining homage to Paris, Tennessee's French sister city. Surrounded by a playground, picnic tables, tennis courts, and soccer

fields, the scaled down Eiffel Tower stands proudly in view of all the park guests.

The landmark was originally constructed by the engineering depart-

ment at Christian Brothers University to commemorate the 1990 Memphis in May festival who's theme country that year was France. Coming in at sixty feet tall, the tower was

an almost perfect 1:20 scale model of the Eiffel Tower. It was made of five hundred pieces of douglas fir as well as six thousand individual steel rods, and took over ten thousand hours to initially build.

Almost a year later in April of 1991, Brother Patrick O'Brian who was the public relations official for Christian Brothers University contacted then Paris Chamber of Commerce director Virgil Wall. Brother O'Brian had seen the promotional material for "Paris U.S.A", an event created to celebrate the fifteen US cities named for the French capital. Brother O'Brian inquired whether the City of Paris would be interested in having the model tower donated to it, and the city was eager to accept.

Director Wall traveled to Memphis with then City Manager George Moore and Mr. Harold Plumley to meet with officials from the university and, upon their report, the Paris City Commission

voted to accept the donation. In February of 1992 the dismantled tower was loaded onto a flatbed truck and driven to Paris by the City's Public Works Department.

The model tower's many thousands of pieces were diligently painted as the City Commission debated on the best location to erect it. Eventually a decision was made to put the tower up in what was then Memorial Park, recently renamed to Eiffel Tower Park. The idyllic public space off of Volunteer Drive was the perfect choice to display the tower to the people of Paris. The City's Public Works Department set about reassembling it, complete with a short circular brick wall around it's base.

Dedicated on January 29th of 1993 in the presence of City of Paris officials, delegates of Christian Brothers University, and a crowd of local

Parisian citizens, the tower still stands in the park for public view today. On the surrounding brick wall is a plaque that recognises the university's altruistic gesture. It reads "Tower Donated By Christian Brothers University, Memphis, TN 1993".

After the original wood began to deteriorate, Kieth Jackson, owner of Precision Grinding and Metals, recreated the damaged pieces out of steel. The monument was put back together in three parts, and boosted an extra ten feet to its current height of seventy feet tall. Paris TN's very

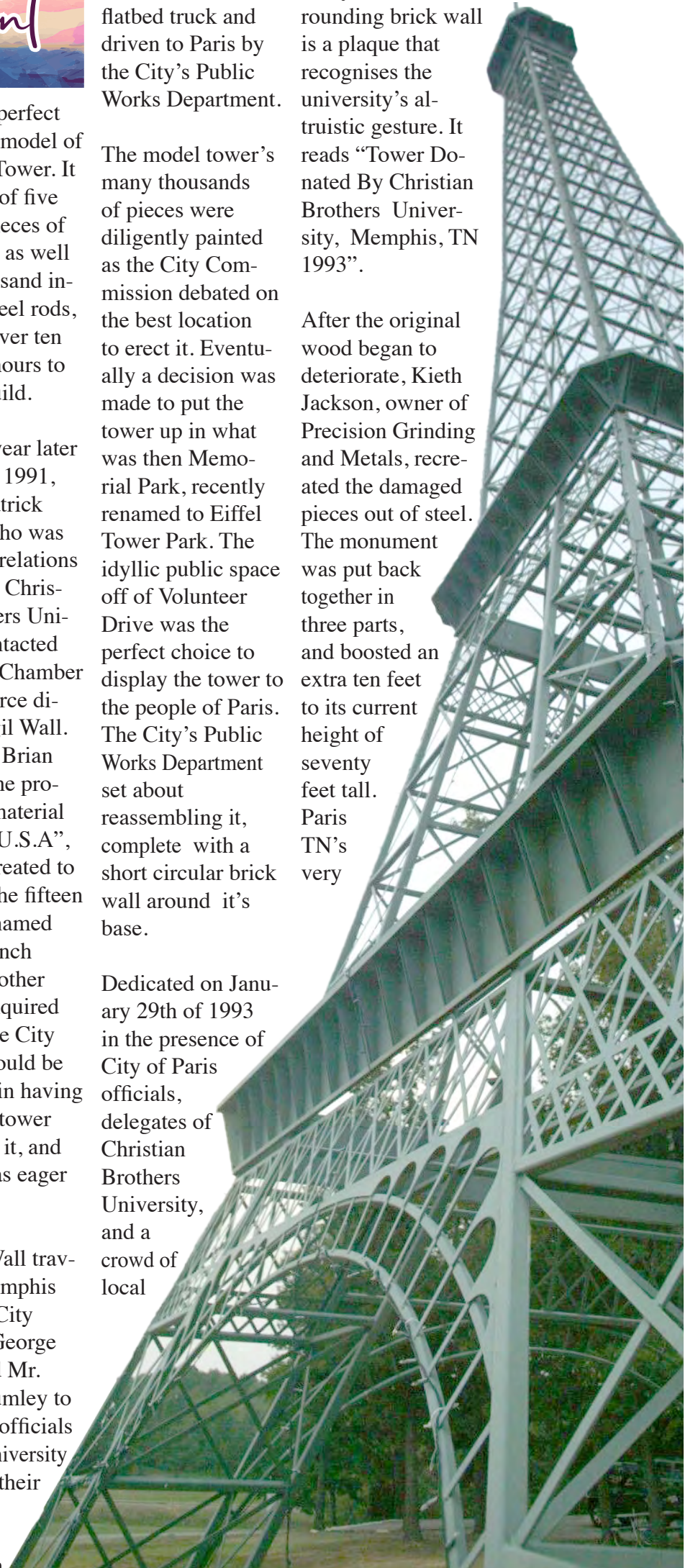
own Eiffel Tower stands as a testament of community and generosity to all who see it.

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The Elk and Bison Prairie at Land Between the Lakes is a glimpse back in time at the native lands of the past. A publicly observable habitat made up of native grassland, it is a look at what would have been commonly found throughout Kentucky over a century ago. Visitors are welcome to drive along a three and a half mile looping road in their own enclosed vehicle to see not only the grasslands, but the many types of wildlife that call it home.

One such animal that calls the grasslands home is the elk, which are among the largest species within the deer family. They are also called 'wapiti', an Algonquin word that means 'light colored deer'. Their shaggy heads, underbelly and legs tend to be of a darker color than their

light brown sides. Weighing in at up to 1,100 pounds, elk stand between four and five feet in height. A male elk's antlers can grow up to four feet tall, letting them tower up to nine feet tall before the antlers are shed in March of each year. They begin to grow them back in May, during the lead up to the elk's summer breeding season, when they are used in dominance battles for mates as well as dominion over the herd. Like bison, elk were once found across much of North America but were largely killed off by European settlers, their numbers falling from an estimated ten million to a scant fifty thousand. Through conservation efforts their numbers have risen in recent years. The elk that can be seen at the Elk and Bison Prairie are one such conservation herd.

Another animal you'll be able to see on your drive are bison. Characterized by the hump over their front shoulders that lead into slimmer hindquarters, bison have thick shaggy hair that covers their head, neck, forelegs, and - in the male's case - an often foot long black beard. Additionally, both male and female

bison have a pair of sharp, hollow horns that curve out from the sides of their heads. The heaviest land animal in North America, bison typically stand between five and six and a half feet tall, and can weigh in at over a ton. Typically calving in April or May, guests can often see mother bison with their rambunctious

calves during the spring and summer months. While they are most commonly thought of as roaming the Great Plains, American bison once made their homes from the eastern United States all the way to parts of modern day Mexico. Hunted for sport to the brink of extinction, bison have seen a resurgence in numbers due to intense conservation efforts. The herd on display at The Elk and Bison Prairie is a conservation herd.

Though they get top billing, elk and bison are not the only animals guests can see when they visit this attraction. In addition to the several migratory birds that travel through Land Between the Lakes during the year, wild turkeys can often be seen roaming the Prairie. In addition, the Monarch butterfly migration can be observed on Land Between the Lakes, adding their lovely orange and black wings to the fall forest foliage.

All in all, a visit to Land Between the Lakes isn't complete without taking a good look at the Elk and Bison Prairie. Whether you're watching the bison calves romp through the wildflowers, or the elk bugle as they display their majestic antlers, or just want to see the beauty of butterflies migrating en masse across grasslands just as the would have for centuries, it is well worth slowing down to take in the sights on offer.

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# Come Celebrate The Iris, Tennessee's Beautiful State Flower

*written by:  
Jennifer Wheatley*

“There’s a picture there that lives in memory when it’s iris time in Tennessee...” Willa Waid Newman

The Tennessee Iris Festival is planned for April 24 – May 1, 2021, in historic downtown Dresden, Tennessee, continuing the tradition of opening ceremonies on the last Saturday in April and a parade on the first Saturday in May. The days in between are filled with activities for all ages.

The Iris Festival celebrated its 41st anniversary in 2020. Started by the Dresden Business Association in 1979 as an annual community Easter Parade, its first two grand marshals were Dresden native and Tennessee Governor Ned Ray McWherter and Governor (and later Senator) Lamar Alexander. Parade entries often exceed 100.

Dresden is the county seat of Weakley County and the town motto

is “The Heart of Weakley County.” Dresden named its “rails to trails” project the Iris Festival Park and Green Rail Trail.

The parade became the Tennessee Iris Festival in 1985 and has grown into a thematic (“Where Kindness Blooms”) annual week long event designed to highlight the best of Weakley County. It showcases local art and music and welcomes public figures, as well as celebrating the iris, the state flower of

Tennessee. Tennessee Home and Garden says the Tennessee Iris Festival is one of “one of Tennessee’s best loved small town festivals” and “paints the town purple.” Murray, Kentucky’s NPR radio station, WKMS, refers to the festival as “bountiful flowers and family fun.”

Past events have included a Governor’s Luncheon, 5K race, barbecue cook off, fashion show, golf tournament, antique toy

show, antique tractor show, Scouts Cubmobile derby, pageants, pancake supper, community health fair, fairy tale feast, corner cafe, arts and craft show, city-wide yard sale, bingo games, gospel music sing-along, baking contest, tasting party, music fest, parade yard party competition, Power Wheels race, pet show, prayer breakfast and, of course, the Iris and Horticulture Show. The Horticulture Show usually features judged entries for plants, flowers and mixed arrangements, along with a public viewing.

Each of these events requires the commitment of a chairperson and the support of local government, which shows the community dedication necessary to stage an annual event. Festival attendance typically exceeds 5,000 guests.

Community leaders are recognized for their contributions during the festival as “Golden Irises.” The Tennessee Iris Festival also uses varieties of the flower to categorize various levels of sponsorship, such as Champagne Elegance, High Profile, Tennessee Gentleman, Social Graces and Proud Tradition.

The iris was adopted by the Tennessee General Assembly as the state flower in 1933, but no specific variety was named. The purple iris is the one most associated with the Volunteer State. The problem soon arose that the passion flower had already been chosen as the state flower. A compromise was reached in 1973 when the iris was designated as Tennessee’s state “cultivated” flower

and was used on license plates and other marketing materials.

Tennessee is not the only part of the world that loves the beautiful iris, the Giardino dell’Iris is a botanical garden in Florence that has specialized in the cultivation of iris flowers since 1251. The word iris is Greek for rainbow, referring to the many colors of irises. The iris is the flower used to celebrate 25th wedding anniversaries and the symbol of Brussels, Belgium.

For more information and to plan your trip, call 731.364.2270. The web address is [www.tennesseeiris-festival.net](http://www.tennesseeiris-festival.net). There is also an active Facebook page for updates. Given the impact of Covid 19 on events and entertainment, always check prior to travel.

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# A Beloved Establishment Is Back and Better Than Ever

written by Jennifer Wheatley

The fire which ravaged Patti's 1880s Settlement restaurant in Grand Rivers, Kentucky, in February 2018, did more than destroy a local eatery. It impacted a community and a region. Grand Rivers has only 350 people, but Patti's served more than 350,000 guests annually, from all over the country.

Patti's was recognized by Southern Living magazine as the best non-chain restaurant in the southeast and served as the central tourist attraction for Grand Rivers. It employed hundreds and served as a regional landmark for families and tour buses. Known for its two inch pork shop, decadent pies and stellar service,

the restaurant lived up to its reputation. Surrounded by shops and attractions, it was easy to spend a day at Patti's 1880s Settlement.

Started by Bill and Patti Tullar in the 1970s, the restaurant is still owned by son Chip Tullar, who showed up at Chamber of Commerce meeting the week after the fire and informed the room that he would do whatever was necessary to rebuild. As the work progressed and it was time to break ground, Tullar invited everyone in attendance who had ever worked for Patti's to join him behind the shovel. The majority of the crowd, which included several hundred people, stood to become

part of the ceremonies.

During the construction, Patti's operated from a portable building with outdoor seating. Essentials from the menu were available, many dinners converted to sandwiches. The ice cream was cold and people visited and talked about how excited they were. The construction site was only a few feet away and everyone speculated about how Patti's would look in the future.

A bus group on a food tour was scheduled to visit Grand Rivers during the downtime, including a lunch. The staff fed their visitors in an annex and offered a demonstration of

how to make the incredible eight inch (at least!) tall meringue that tops their amazing pies. While some were sorry to have missed dining at the famed Patti's, no one was disappointed by the experience. The staff made do with the available space and focused on making each guest feel welcome and special. It is the heart of the Patti's experience.

Many fans worried that Patti's could not be rebuilt as it had been, a series of small rooms, and they were right, the

new Patti's is different. The rooms are more spacious, the kitchen is bigger and there is a large outdoor space where tour bus passengers can load and unload. The gift shop is more accessible.

What has not changed is the sense of family and hospitality. Each room is themed, with memorabilia, including family photos, and décor designed to charm and intrigue. The new version of Mr. Bill's features signed letters from a large group of US Presidents. Patti's

has a special spirit, a sense that each customer is a guest, being fed and welcomed by a family. The original building reflected that spirit and the new one has lost nothing.

The weekend of the soft opening for the new restaurant showed how generous and community minded Patti's management is. They chose to allow two local non-profit organizations, the Friends of Land Between the Lakes and the local fire department, to share in a fundraiser. The day

was chaos, with phones ringing incessantly, invited guests showing up early and a tour bus arriving, but it didn't matter. Patti's was opening again and everyone was excited!

Unfortunately, the Covid 19 pandemic has had a negative impact on many restaurants, limiting seating capacity and causing shutdowns. But Patti's is nothing if not resilient. The doors are open again and the menu features all your favorites. Grand Rivers is ready to welcome you back.



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Lots of Trip Advisor users write rave reviews about the shows and performers at Badgett Playhouse, located in Grand Rivers, Ky, which is a 6000 square foot facility owned and operated by Bill Minihan and his family. Dedicated in 2005, Minihan and his staff have been entertaining people from all over the US for over 15 years. Frequently compared to the shows in Branson, Missouri, the offerings are clean, family-friendly and full of music and humor. The theater seats 240 and there is not a bad spot in the house. The shows range from gospel and country to the awesome 80s, with musical murder mysteries, fundraisers and special Christmas productions.

A bus tour group which attended a matinee was thrilled when the words to one of the songs in an Italian mobster inspired murder

mystery had been changed to the name of their tour company. Several clapped their hands and it was clear they liked being acknowledged as special guests for the performance. They were even more impressed when Minihan boarded the bus after the show, in full costume (which included a curly wig and outrageous moustache!), and thanked everyone for making the Badgett Playhouse and Grand Rivers, Kentucky, part of their tour. His appearance and sincerity were talked about long after the bus headed back to the hotel.

Badgett Playhouse recently asked their Facebook followers to tell how many shows they had seen multiple times and which ones. A particular fan said he had seen the 50s musical at least a dozen times, the Christmas variety show at least ten times and Sounds of Memphis at least

half a dozen times. He also mentioned that he would probably see all of them again!

Covid 19 has had a serious impact on most entertainment venues, but the Badgett has received permission to have shows without the performers wearing masks, so long as they are distanced from one another on stage.

The offerings include musicals

based on songs from the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s, comedies, dueling pianos, the Sounds of Memphis, a Big Band show and four different Christmas shows, which include three musicals and a live radio play version of "It's A Wonderful Life." There are also lots of country music shows and an Elvis all request evening. Attendees at a recent "Awesome 80's" show included several 50 year olds who were

there to hear their college music, a young couple who were both born in the 1990s and a great-grandmother who was 80, all at one table. The crowd danced and sang to almost every song, from U2 to Michael Jackson and all the one hit wonders in between. Everyone had a great time and enjoyed the show and the atmosphere of the Badgett Playhouse. Crowds for most performances include tourists who are eating at Patti's Settlement and locals who just know the Badgett is always a fun place to visit.

The management also seeks ways to give back to their community and will often host fundraisers with other local non-profits, including schools,

environmental education groups and a food pantry. Cast members also occasionally travel to other locations for special performances.

Tickets usually range from \$17.99 to \$22.99 a person. Visit [www.badgettplayhouse.com](http://www.badgettplayhouse.com) to check availability and make

reservations. The site is easy to use and clearly shows which seats are available, so small groups and families can be seated together. There is also an option for larger groups. Want a sneak peek? The Badgett has a YouTube channel where you can watch sample songs!

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## The Delicious Strawberry Brings Family and Visitors to Humboldt, TN

The West Tennessee Strawberry Festival, held annually in Humboldt, Tennessee, is planned for May 2 – 8, 2021. Founded in 1934, it is described as “Tennessee’s largest and longest running festival.” Over 75,000 people visit each year to attend over 20 events spread over nine city blocks. The Only in Your State website says “The West

Tennessee Strawberry Festival is the oldest festival in Tennessee, and it’s an absolute blast,” adding “Tennessee is known for its hospitable nature as a whole, for its kind people and welcoming atmosphere.” The site encourages families to bring their children to experience the festival, especially the Shortcake in the Park event.

The Jones Family of Companies, which manufactures technical and engineered non-woven and floor care products, is the title sponsor for this year’s Strawberry Festival. Gold levels sponsors include Centennial Bank, the Opera House Event Hall and Tyson Foods.

The 2021 calendar includes the events below:

A team of community leaders works hard year round on the Strawberry Festival, including Amanda Love, executive director of the Humboldt Chamber of Commerce, who says her favorite part of the festival is “the Grand Floats Parade. It highlights so many talented West Tennesseans, from bands to float builders; it’s the best part of the week.” Other team members include Beth Culpepper, who is events coordinator for the Chamber. She highly recommends the fried pickle chips from Big O Concessions. Other staffers and say their favorite festival foods are shrimp on a stick

and homemade ice cream.

Humboldt was facing economic challenges over 80 years ago when the West Tennessee Strawberry Festival began and wanted to invite everyone to visit. The festival was a creative way to encourage friends and neighbors to experience their city and its strawberries. The first festival included a baseball game

and hot air balloon rides. Growing to become a treasured part of Humboldt, the event inspired a museum filled with West Tennessee Strawberry Festival memorabilia, which opened in 1979 and later moved into the restored Humboldt City Hall.

Festival President Betty Langley says “The Festival does such a great job provid-

ing a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere where everyone feels like this is home!” Homecomings and family visits are now a big part of the event.

For more information, to check pricing for some events, or to determine if Covid 19 has impacted the festival this year, visit [www.strawberryfestivaltn.com](http://www.strawberryfestivaltn.com).

### Sunday, May 3

2 - 4 pm - West Tennessee Regional Art Center Invitational Art Exhibit

### Monday, May 4

7:30 am - Prayer Breakfast  
6 pm - Opening Celebration  
8 pm - Fireworks Extravaganza

### Tuesday, May 5

6:30 pm - Recipe Contest and Taste of West Tennessee

### Wednesday, May 6

5 - 7 pm - President’s Reception (invitation only)  
6 pm - Shortcake in the Park  
6:30 pm - Entertainment by Bandstand Revue

### Thursday, May 7

10 am - Junior Floats Parade  
Noon - Strawberry Classic Golf Tournament  
4 pm - Junior Miss Territorial Revue

5 pm - Hall of Fame Honoree Reception

6 pm - Miss Teen Territorial Revue

7 pm - Entertainment by Party Planet

### Friday, May 8

10 am - Grand Floats Parade  
Immediately Following Parade - Queens Luncheon (invitation only)  
Noon - 5 pm - Strawberry Market on Main  
12:30 pm - Governor’s Luncheon  
1 pm - BBQ Cook Off  
5 pm - Junior Hostess Princess Revue  
6:30 pm - Horse Show  
7 pm - Hostess Princess Revue  
8 pm - Entertainment by No Time Flatt

### Saturday, May 9

7 am - 5K and 10K Run  
8 am - Car Show  
9 am - Tractor Show  
9 am - 2 pm - BBQ Cook Off  
10 am - 3 pm - Strawberry Market on Main  
11 am - Little Miss Territorial Revue  
6 pm - Territorial Queens Revue

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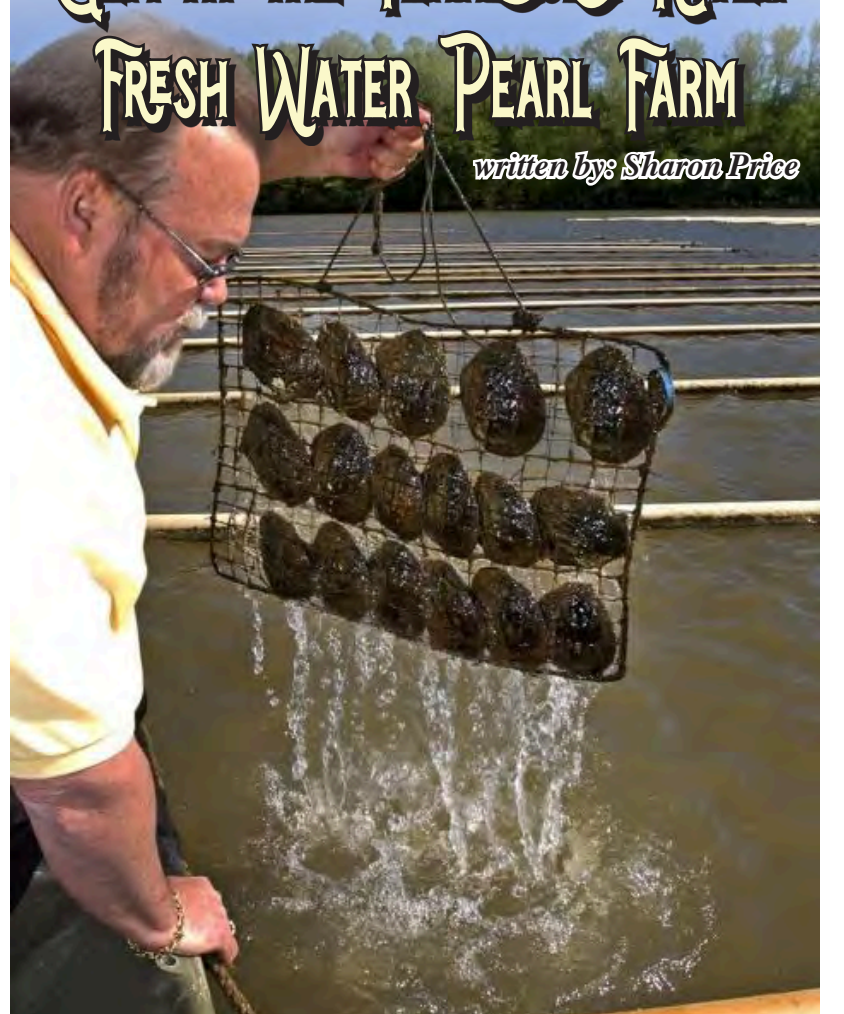
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*written by Sharon Price*



A visit to Birdsong Resort won't disappoint when you see the beautiful iridescent pearls grown at the Fresh Water Pearl Farm. Grown in the indigenous Washboard mussel, the freshwater pearl is known as Tennessee's Offi-

cial State Gem. The organic gemstone-culturing farm operation is located in the Birdsong Creek embayment just off the scenic Tennessee River's beautiful Kentucky Lake in Camden, West Tennessee.

Owned and operated by Bob Keast, a second-generation owner since 1961, Birdsong Resort, Marina and Family Lakeside RV Campground is a 58-acre recreational complex and is a major tourist attraction ranked in





the top 40 in Tennessee featuring guided tours, a 150 slip marina, twenty six rental accommodation units, annual leased lots, RV and wilderness camping, community center, pool, and boat sales and service. "The best part of fishing and hunting is the camaraderie, away from the daily grind and enjoying the greatest of the outdoors which is God's gifts to man. Relax and enjoy the largest man-made lake in America, Kentucky Lake in Western Tennessee" is Bob's theory.

90% of Kentucky Lake is located in the great state of Tennessee. Quiet, yet conveniently located 9 miles north of I-40 at exit 133, halfway between Jackson and Nashville, Birdsong Resort, Marina, Campground and Pearl Farm is the ideal stop for an overnight, weekend or week stay. Call 731 584 7880 to make an appointment to visit the Pearl Museum and Jewelry Show-room. 'A Pearl of a Tour' does require reservations. Tour bookings require 15 or more persons, but singles or small groups may add on in existing tour bookings. Make plans now to visit this extraordinary Tennessee tourist attraction!



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# Even More FISH-N-FUN 2021

## Everyone Needs and Out of This World Experience

*written by: Alsey Gwinn Wheatley*

You take a seat in the upholstered high backed chair. Around you the lights dim and then, through the blackness, celestial bodies take form before your very eyes. That is the experience given seven times a day at the Golden Pond Planetarium and Observatory.

Situated at the visitor's center in Golden Pond, Kentucky, the Planetarium is a NASA Educator Resource Center that offers educational and entertaining programs. Qualified staff supplement the presentations with live, personal interaction

with viewers and the roughly forty minute programs are sure to delight anyone who ever looked up at the night sky and wondered about what lay beyond the bounds of our own blue planet.

Presentations take place in a temperature controlled dome. The high backed setting allows guests to see the forty foot viewing area in comfort, letting them experience the majesty of the universe with 360 degrees of surround sound. Seats are first come first serve, and during Covid years have been cut down to allow for social



distancing. The wearing of face masks is not only recommended but required while in the theater for the safety of guests and staff alike.

Although shows differ throughout the year, Tonight's Sky Live is a staple of the Planetarium. It is a presentation that allows viewers to learn about the planets, stars, and constellations in

the night sky of the very same evening as the presentation. Another current program on offer is Laser Legends of the Night Sky, a lighthearted recounting of the Greek myths behind many of the most well known constellations. There is also staff favorite From Earth to the Universe, a brief history of the last century of astronomical

advancements preceding a tour of the solar system and the deep space beyond it. The Planetarium offers a calendar of events that list times for these shows as well as many others that they have on offer.

The area around the Golden Pond Planetarium and Observatory is a designated dark zone, meaning there is little to no

man-made light to naturally brighten the sky. This makes all the difference when visiting the observatory's sixteen inch computerized Meade telescope. The Observatory, famous for its summer Star Parties where guests are provided with their own telescopes to use for the night, plays host to the West Kentucky Amateur Astronomers.

This club, united by their ceaseless love for the night sky, holds monthly meet ups at the Observatory where they make use of the dark zone and the superior viewing conditions that it provides.

The Golden pond Planetarium and Observatory provides ample learning opportunities and highly entertaining programming for everyone. Guests can find an up to date calendar of programming at, [www.landbetween-thelakes.us/seendo/attractions/planetarium/](http://www.landbetween-thelakes.us/seendo/attractions/planetarium/) along with their admission pricing and phone number.



# Take a Step Back In Time at the Tennessee River Folklife Museum

written by: Sharon Price

Pilot Knob overlook is 669 feet above sea-level, the highest point in West Tennessee. Where for many years stood a two-level rock structure built by local residents of Eva, now is the Tennessee River Folklife Interpretive Center and Museum. Located within the Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park, the museum is dedicated to the life of the people who lived

in the region at the turn of the century. Mussel fishing is represented by the centerpiece of the museum, a rustic wooden boat used by mussel fishermen on the Tennessee River. Many artifacts are on display showing how life was lived in a simpler time, such as quilts, baskets, and vintage photographs of the area. There is also a gift shop where a variety of souvenirs may be purchased.

From Pilot Knob is a breathtaking view of Kentucky Lake, New Johnsonville and the surrounding area. The view was much different on November 4, 1864 when only a narrow expanse of water, the Tennessee River, separated Eva and then Johnsonville, Tennessee. On that day in history, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest captured Federal gunboats during



the Civil War in what is known as the Johnsonville Expedition.

Whether looking for a walk back in time or simply breathtaking

views, the Tennessee River Folklife Interpretive Center and Museum at Pilot Knob will not disappoint. Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park began as a local park constructed by the Works Progress Administration, a Depression Era work recovery program. The park contains more than

20 miles of hiking trails. Overnight lodgings include luxury cabins overlooking Kentucky Lake and a choice of RV camping or pitching a tent at the primitive campground. A third campground site is reserved for supervised Youth Groups. It is located near the park office.

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## Residents of Erin Say You Can Be Irish Every Day

Settled by Irish immigrants in the 1850's, Erin Tennessee has always been proud of its heritage. The town itself is named for the Emerald Isle, one of only five towns in the country to take the name. Its legacy of tenacity lives on, from the original settlers who came to build the railroad around the town to the people still living there today.

In 1963 two residents of Erin came up with the idea to celebrate their town's rich history and immigrant roots. Together Beverly Price and O.S. Luton hatched a plan to petition the Chamber of Commerce into creating a festival that would promote their little town along with Houston county, where Erin is located. Although there was initially some concern over how well a town of then less than a thousand people would be able to pull off such a grand vision, the annual Irish Day festival went off without a hitch and has grown every year after. Taking place every third Satur-

day in March, the annual Wearing of the Green has become one of the top ten Saint Patrick's Day celebrations in the United States.

This town of around fifteen hundred people draws a crowd of nearly twenty thousand spectators during the event, the main attraction of which is the festive Grand Parade. Stretching from the Houston County Middle School to the Houston County Community Hospital, the parade is a whirlwind of cheery floats, outrageous costumes, and people dressed in green for as far as the eye can see. Candy is often thrown from the floats, which are decked out in balloons, bunting, and other decorations that celebrate that year's Irish Day theme. Of course the floats of the Grand Parade aren't the only attraction. There is also the miniature Leprechaun's parade, a children's event where they can show off their costumes and win prizes. It's always a treat to watch them walk ahead of the Grand Parade or be

pushed in decorated strollers and wagons by their parents, their little faces beaming with pride as the gathered crowd cheers them on down the parade route.

Further up the road in the town square visitors are treated to even more delights. There is a carnival that springs up on Front Street every year, complete with rides

and games. Walking between the attractions you'll also find arts and crafts booths set up by a menagerie of vendors, along with a plethora of food stalls. Later on in the afternoon there is a children's event where they are encouraged to bring Power Wheels and compete to be the last car standing fol-

lowed by an actual demolition derby that takes place at the Perdue Acoustics Show Grounds. Live music floats through the air for most of the day, as bands perform for the crowds around town.

Although the 2020 festival was canceled as the Covid 19 pandemic spread, the Wearing

of the Green Irish Day Parade and Arts & Crafts Festival will be held this year on May 8, 2021. This will be the 59th for the Irish Day festivities. For the Irish and the Irish-at-heart it is a touching reminder that one always takes a little bit of their home with them when they move to a new place.



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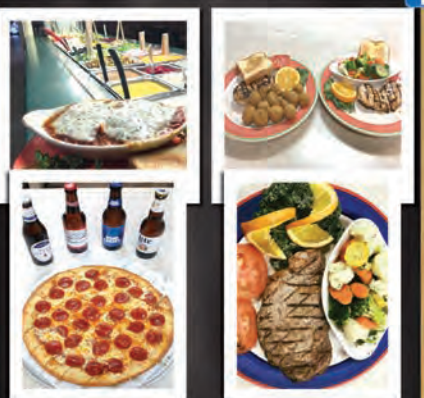
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# Engraved Stone Memorializes Country Music Legends

written by: Sharon Price

'Leavin' On Your Mind', a song in heavy rotation at Country Music radio stations across America was the final release of America's sweetheart, Patsy Cline. Born Virginia Patterson Hensley, September 8, 1932, her music career spanned the years of 1948 to 1963.

Considered as one of the most influential vocalists of the 20th century, she was one of the first country music artists to successfully cross over into pop music. However, her illustrious career came to a tragic end in the early morning hours of March 5, 1963. Boarding a

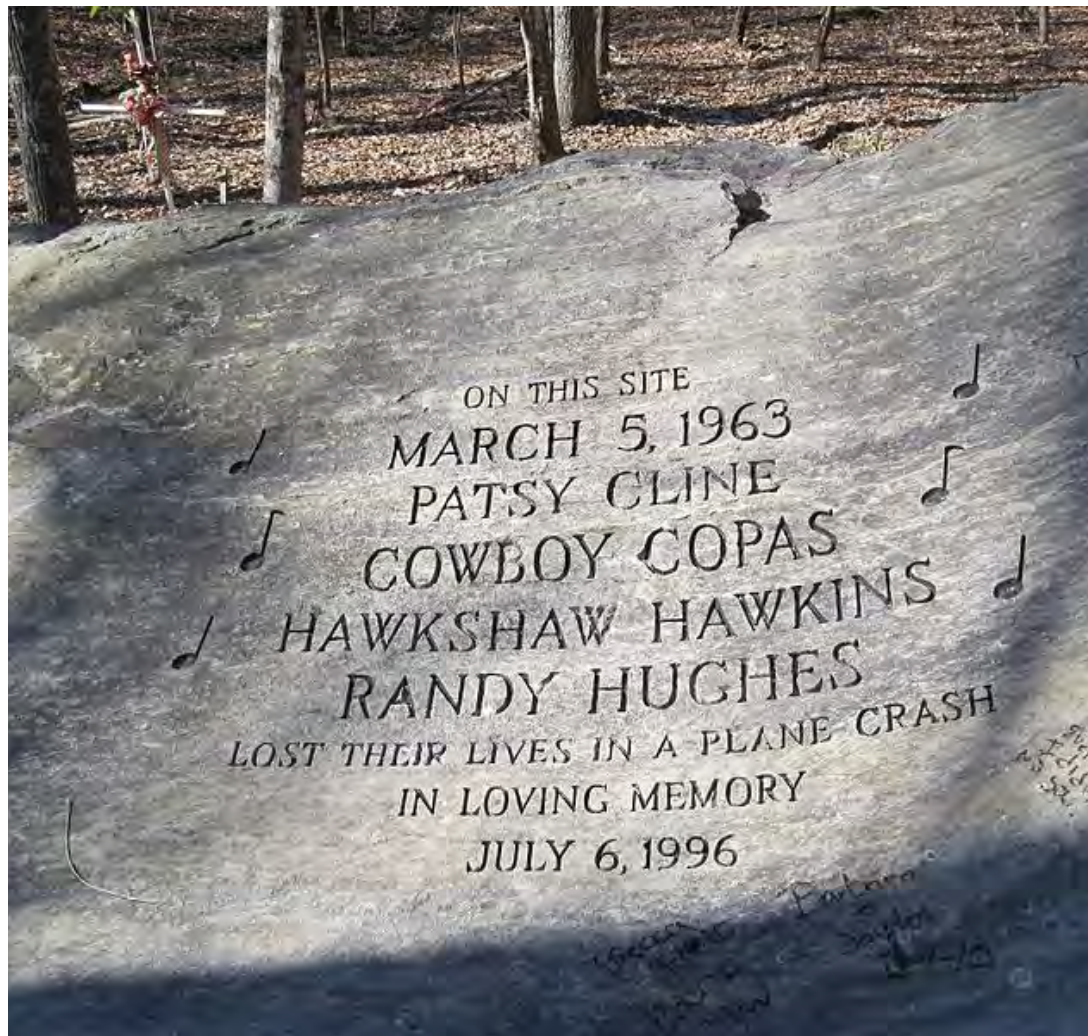
small Piper PA-24 Comanche plane along with Cowboy Copas, Hawkshaw Hawkins, and Cline's manager and much-sought-after studio guitarist Randy Hughes who was piloting the aircraft, the group was returning to Nashville from Kansas City where they had

performed a benefit concert. A later investigation determined severe weather contributed to the fatal plane crash which took all lives on board. The plane crashed in Camden, Tennessee. On July 6, 1995, property owner and life-long resident of

Benton County, Mr. James Peach had this Memorial created at the crash site in honor of Patsy Cline and her fellow passengers who all died at this spot in the woods in Western Benton County on Mt. Carmel Road. Recently improved, the site now boasts easier access to the

memorial stone from the road. A kiosk, and a cross rest along the walkway where many fans leave their own memorials in honor of the group. It is somber place, a quiet and respectful place. Thousands of fans from across the country visit each year to pay respect to these

beloved, fallen artists. Admission is free, dogs on a leash welcomed. Roughly 2 hours from Memphis, a little under 2 hours from Nashville, travelers should take Exit 126 off I-40 onto Hwy. 641 N. 18.1 miles then turn left onto Mt. Carmel Rd. in Camden.



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Nestled in the woods of Land Between The Lakes, The Woodlands Nature station is the gateway to the 8,500 acre Nature Watch area. Located between Honker and Hematite lakes, The Nature Station allows guests to get up close and personal with captive wildlife and the handlers that care for them.

There are a wide slew of animals that call The Nature Station home, but don't let that fool you; this isn't a zoo. Every wild animal that is taken care of by the staff have in some way been deemed to be unreleasable back into their habitats. Some, like Dragon, a turkey vulture who was hit by a car as a fledgling and is now unable to fly, would not be

able to survive on their own. Others like Ferrous, a red tailed hawk who continuously approached humans for food, are simply too accustomed to people for them to safely live out their lives in the wild. Instead they are looked after by the staff of the Nature Station, who use them to educate the public. Each rescued animal acts as an ambassador for their species, helping people learn about why they are special and deserve to have their natural habitats protected.

The staff of The Nature



Station are routinely coming up with new ways to allow guests to interact safely with the animals they care for. In addition to tours, they host many events throughout the year. Currently they have many homeschool and virtual activities on offer via Zoom, where people can still see and learn about the animals in their care despite the ever looming COVID 19 pandemic. They also have recently

created a YouTube channel, Friends of LBL Outreach, which provides free educational content.

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, The Nature Station offers kayak and canoe rentals, and a sunset guided tour of the banks of the river. On these tours guests are encouraged to be on the lookout for wildlife. It is not uncommon to see eagles, ospreys,

turtles, and many other types of animals while out on the water. There are also several hiking trails through the Nature Watch area that guests can walk. Binoculars are encouraged, as it is easy to spot song birds and more elusive wildlife while on the trails.

As of this printing, The Nature Station remains closed to the public. They plan to reopen in March of 2021.

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# KENTUCKY LAKE ALWAYS HAS AN OPEN INVITATION FOR ADVENTURE

*written by Alsey Gwinn Wheatley*



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Formed by the completion of the Kentucky Dam in 1944, Kentucky lake is an over 160 thousand acre gateway to the Tennessee river waterway. Instrumental in Kentucky Dam's ability to lower the flood crests in the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, Kentucky Lake is also rife with activities for nature lovers of all kinds.

Fully bordered on one side by Kentucky lake, the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area is a 170 thousand acre peninsula. Created by President Kennedy in 1963, Land Between the Lakes has hundreds of miles of hiking trails, along with several wildlife attractions and a living history farm. Visitors to Kentucky lake should

be sure to admire the three hundred miles of undeveloped shoreline that are home to stellar wildlife viewing.

Bird watching is a popular pastime in this area. Every August hummingbirds can be found migrating south, and there is an annual Hummingbird festival celebrated at the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area's Woodland Nature Station. During the winter months many boaters take to the water for a superior view while bird watching. The nesting of eagles in and amongst the tall trees that line the shore make it easy to spot them when they swoop down to feed on the fish in the lake. Geese and ducks also migrate through the area,

two favorites of game hunters.

Anglers are kept busy year round on Kentucky Lake. In the late winter months there are crappie galore, the fish moving from the deeper creek channels towards the more shallow water as April approaches. By then the largemouth bass are restless, swimming along the shoreline for the spring and summer months. Bluegill and redear also call Kentucky lake home, ready to stretch the line of fishermen young and old. If those fish aren't to your liking, there are always catfish ready to be found on Kentucky Lake. Blue, channel, and flathead catfish can all be found in its waters, especially in the summer months. Because of the vast selection of fish that call it home, Kentucky lake plays host to many fishing tournaments. From the prestigious Bassmaster Elite Series to the Wal-Mart Bass Fishing League, anglers have their pick of bass fishing tournaments throughout the year. In addition to these are the yearly Crappie USA and Crappie Masters tournaments which take advantage of the outstanding crappie fishing to be had on the lake.

Although there are ample camping opportunities in the area, visitors to Kentucky Lake should consider staying at Kenlake State Resort park. This beautiful lake-front pet-friendly property boasts forty eight rooms and thirty four cottages, along with colorful flower gardens and outstanding views of the water. In addition, the Kenlake marina offers boat rentals, covered and transient slips, and excellent food from Cindy's on the Barge. With picnic and playground facilities to round out the tennis and golfing spaces, Kenlake is a wonderful spot for the whole family.

Kentucky Lake is a siren's song to vacationers and fishermen from all across America, receiving around 17 million visits each year. It's close to 2,300 miles of cove-studded shoreline make it a must-see destination for those that are fond of the beauty only nature can provide. Kentucky lake is without a doubt one of the most lovely areas in West Tennessee. Nature lovers and outdoors enthusiasts of all kinds will be sure to enjoy the many activities on offer throughout the year.



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Located eighty-four miles north of Memphis, Trenton is a small city in Gibson county with around five thousand residents. Established in 1824 as the county seat, the town is best known for two things; it's 31 mile per hour speed limit, and it's collection of rare teapots. The Trenton Teapot Museum in Trenton, Tennessee boasts a truly marvelous number of them. In fact, it

is the largest collection of teapots in the world!

Within the glass cases of the Trenton Teapot Museum is a rotating display of over five hundred individual teapots. Collected by the late Dr. Frederick C. Freed and donated to the city in 1955, no two articles within the museum are the same. What makes this such a special collection is that it is entirely made up

of veilleuse-théière style teapots.

'Veilleuse' is the French word for 'night-light' and 'théière' is French for 'teapot', but these beautiful and unique creations aren't meant for tea parties in the dark. Rather they are teapots with matching warming stands. Although warming stands for tea are not uncommon today, what sets this collection apart is the artistry of the

veilleuse-théière and the side of the warming stands. Nowadays stands only come up a few inches, enough to allow a tea light to sit beneath a pot and keep the drink inside of it warm. However, the stands on display at the Trenton Teapot Museum are often-times twice as tall as the teapot itself, which are usually on the smaller side, averaging a scant two cup volume.

Ranging in dates between 1750 to 1860, the collection at the museum is full of artistic talent. The rotating display of teapots are all marked by the styles of the time in which they were created, making for a dazzling trip back in time. As the art world transitioned from Rococo to Neoclassicism to Romanticism so too did the designs of the veilleuse-théière. The teapots themselves reflect a wide range of designs, some

so intricate that it can be difficult to tell where the stand ends and the actual teapot begins. The city of Trenton embraces it's museum's claim to fame as the largest collection of veilleuse-théière in the world. Every May they host their annual Teapot Festival with, among other things, a parade, beauty pageant, carnival, tractor pull, and hall of vendors selling crafts. Although they were forced to postpone the 2020

festival due to concerns over COVID 19, the 40th annual festival is set to go on in 2021 with the theme "For-TEA Years of Teapot Tradition".

The Trenton Teapot Museum is an undeniable local treasure. With a collection valued at over three million dollars and embodying over a century of artistic trends, these teapots are worth raising a glass to - or at least a cup and saucer.



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# The “New” Eva Beach Is More Accessible and Family-Friendly

written by Sharon Price

Eva Beach is a popular park and recreational area for swimming and boating along the Tennessee River. Now a part of Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park, recreational features of the area include swimming, launch site for vessels up to 26 feet, onsite fishing, and convenient parking.

University of Tennessee archaeologists excavated the site in 1940. It was a favored living site for thousands of years during the prehistoric Archaic Period, now known to date circa 8000

to 1000 B.C. A prehistoric Native American encampment included 180 human burials. A stone marking the dig that uncovered ruins is located inside the park owned by Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.

The unsupervised, sandy beach area is open to the public at no charge. No lifeguards on duty and parents are urged to closely supervise children. Pets on leashes welcome. Stand-up paddleboards and kayaks may be rented online, at

the park office or at Eva Beach for use on Kentucky Lake. The price for a kayak or stand-up paddleboard is \$30 per day plus tax. Rental includes one adult life jacket and one child-size life jacket, and paddles. The park is implementing additional safety and sanitation protocols to protect park staff and visitors and encourage social distancing.

The primary accessible cultural feature is the N.C. & St. L. Railroad Trestle Bridge substructure. The bridge once

spanned the Tennessee River from (Old) Johnsonville to Eva. Railroad commerce caused these areas to flourish with passenger, freight, and mail cars running daily. The remnants of the bridge are located near Eva

Beach, appearing like an island across Kentucky Lake. Adjacent to the Eva boat ramp there is an interpretive wayside that gives the history of the bridge and the Eva Depot and features a replica of a bridge sec-

tion, a mail crane, a railroad bed, and a signal light. Additional cultural features along the trail include the Battle of Johnsonville Site, Trail of Tears (Benge Route and Water Route), and the Eva Archaic Site.

Make plans now to visit Eva Beach where history and recreational fun meet to provide a truly unique destination. Eva Beach Recreational Area is located off Hwy. 191 N. on Eva Beach Drive in Eva, Tennessee.



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# SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY ALWAYS BEGINS WITH a glass of sweet tea

written by: Jennifer Wheatley

Held annually the fourth weekend in August, McKenzie's Southern Fried and Sweet Tea Festival is following the standard rule of West Tennessee festivals – it's all about the food! But while other events focus on okra or tomatoes, strawberries or catfish, the folks in McKenzie decided to celebrate the southern tradition of frying food, all kinds, and washing it down with sweet tea! Fried chicken, fried green tomatoes, fried pickles, corn dogs, Twinkies,

peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, kudzu chips and fried candy bars are just a few of the offerings.

McKenzie Mayor Jill Holland told WBBJ television, Jackson, Tennessee, that “Fried food is southern, this is the Southern Fried and it's everything southern, southern fried music, southern fried food and southern hospitality.”

Founded in 2012, McKenzie's signature festival is growing from its two day begin-

nings toward a week long event, featuring live entertainment, craft vendors, circus performers, face painting, a carnival, an exotic animals petting zoo, a car show and fireworks along with its main attraction – fried food and sweet tea!

The festival was mentioned as part of a competitive writing contest during the Tennessee Department of Tourism Development's National Travel and Tourism Week. McKenzie's Monica Heath, Jennifer Waldrup

and Mayor Holland were named the winners for West Tennessee. Their essay chronicled McKenzie's loss of industry and the challenges faced by the community as it was forced to re-imagine its own economic success. Much of that process was a new focus on quality of life and travel tourism, concepts which helped create the Southern Fried and Sweet Tea festival, along with other new endeavors, such as Nights on Broadway, Freedom Festival, Boo Bash and Scarecrow Grove. Over 10,000 new visitors have been documented at these events.

An excerpt from the essay stated that “a community which attracts tourists will also open doors to recruit new industry, business, families and retirees. Our city re-imagined and embraced a holistic approach of travel tourism which requires open minds thinking out of the box, creating new opportunities, while enhancing those than already exist.”

One of those existing assets is that the city is home to Bethel University, founded in 1847, and located in McKenzie since 1872. Bethel's Renaissance performers frequently provide entertainment

for the festival. The timing of the event in late August is no accident. The community is also welcoming back all of the Bethel students and many of their visiting parents.

The essay also recounted two personal anecdotes from the festival. The first was an incoming Bethel freshman from New York State who tasted his first sip of sweet tea, warily, only to discover that his friend had been brave enough to try the kudzu chips. A second was a comment from a four year old who visited McKenzie's splash pad, darted among the sprinklers and declared

it “the best place in the world!” City officials agree.

Folks from multiple states have attended. Mayor Holland also stated to WBBJ that she knows “a lot of people will use this as a hometown reunion. And they come back and see old friends and family. So that's a lot of fun.”

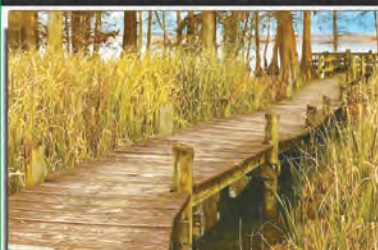
Held in downtown McKenzie, Southern Fried and Sweet Tea is family friendly and shows off the charm of McKenzie and Carroll County. Given the threat of Covid 19, call 731.352.2292 or email [info@growmckenzie.com](mailto:info@growmckenzie.com) to get more information.

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# There's No Place Like Homeplace

written by Alsey Gwinn Wheatley

Tucked away in the woods of Stewart County, The Homeplace 1850's Farm is a charming step back in time. Situated on the more than 170,000 acres of the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area, this living history museum is staffed by interpreters in period garb who give visitors an idea of what it was like to live the life of a frontier person in the early days of this nation. The Homeplace is a working farm that still maintains crops and animals that would have been reared by Americans in the lead up to the Civil War.

During the growing season interpreters work the farm in period clothing and with historical practices. These hard-working people tend to the daily tasks that would have kept a farm running in the mid nineteenth century. Those chores include taking care of a slew of animals that can routinely be found on a farm - namely cows, sheep, pigs, chickens, mules, and horses - as well as upkeep of the

many structures on the property. Guests can watch fence rails and furniture being made by hand in the woodworking shop on site, or observe a meal being made over a wood burning stove in the cabin's kitchen.

Beyond the historical buildings, guests can also admire the heirloom gardens. There are several period accurate crops being grown on site through the seasons, including cabbage, beets, carrots, potatoes, and much more. These vegetables are grown with seeds that would have been available to settlers of the time. These open pollinated varieties are more genetically

stable than more modern crops, and though they produce smaller yields they are an important link to our past. The conservation of heirloom crops is an ongoing effort among farmers and gardeners alike, and because of their considerable efforts heirloom seeds are becoming easier to find today. The efforts of farms like The Homeplace that take care to preserve them are massively needed to maintain crop biodiversity.

The Homeplace also practices row cropping for tobacco and flint corn. Historically a cash crop, tobacco harvests provided much of the money used to buy needed

supplies from the barges that would have carried cargo up and down the surrounding rivers. On the other hand, the flint corn grown would have been a dietary staple, especially in the winter months when fresh greens and game would have been harder to find. It's low water content makes it less susceptible to both freezing and rot, and the homeny that can be made from it would have been less costly to settlers than buying flour in addition to the other supplies they would have needed.

Beyond all the work done to maintain the living history farm, The Homeplace also has annual events. In June they host the Pickin' Party, a musical event that celebrates folk songs and traditional music. Visitors to the event are encouraged to

bring lawn chairs and their own instruments, with food and open mic opportunities available throughout the evening. There is also the Trades Fair that is held during Labor Day weekend. Celebrating traditional crafts, this event makes a point of being child friendly. Children are exposed to historical trades and crafts through vendors as well as several demonstrations provided to the public for free. In the fall The Homeplace throws a historical wedding. Guests can view the wedding dress, hope chest, and historic wedding gifts before sampling the traditional wedding cake and home-made cider.

Currently The Homeplace 1850's Farm is closed for construction work, but it is planned to be reopened in March of 2021.



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