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Adventures

Ozark Adventures

May 25, 2022

Supplement to the Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Buffalo Reflex, Cedar County Republican, Christian County Headliner News and The Marshfield Mail

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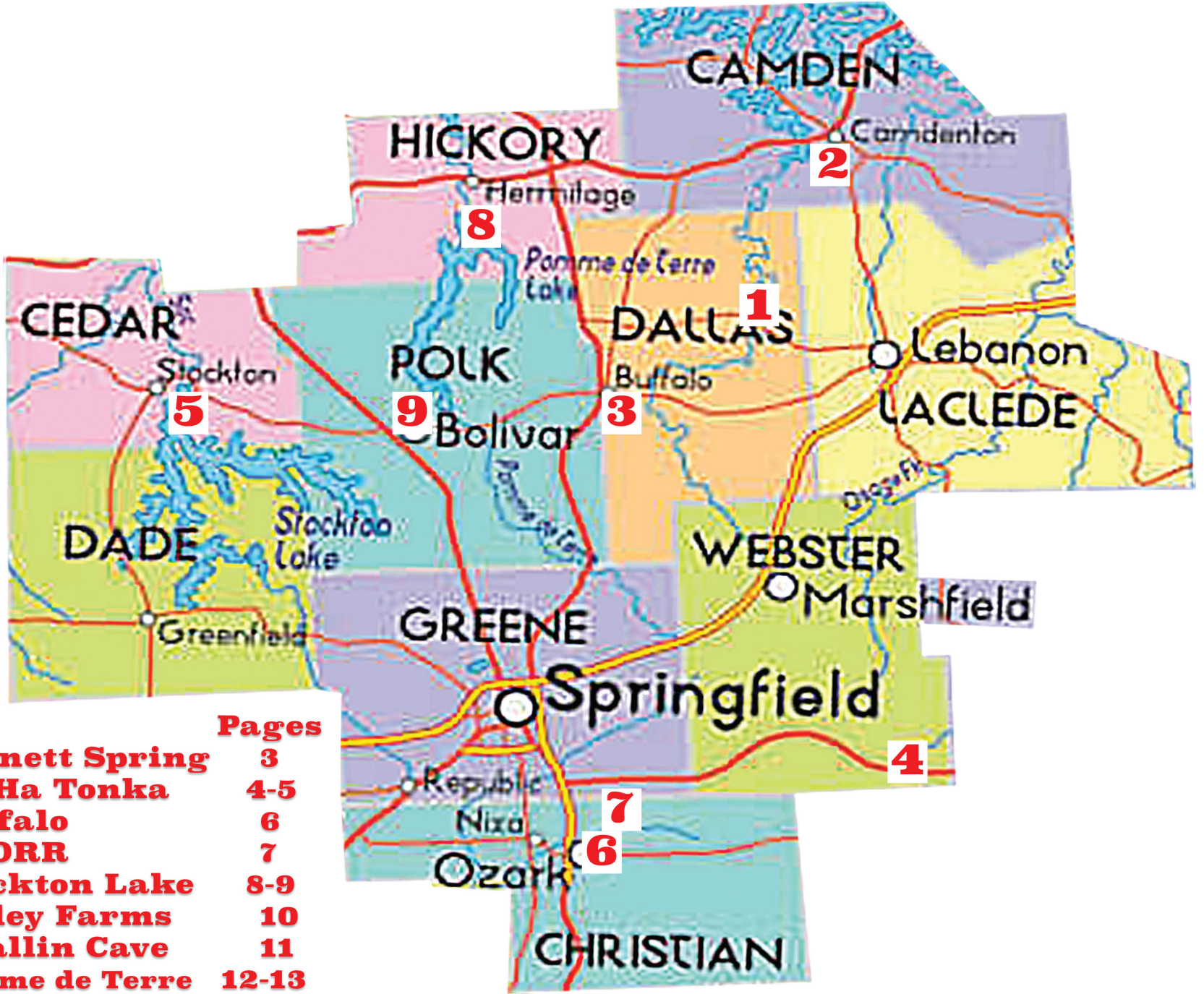
Bennett Spring State Park

Ha Ha Tonka

Smallin Civil War Cave

Pomme de Terre





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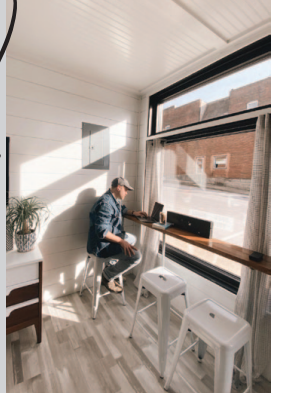
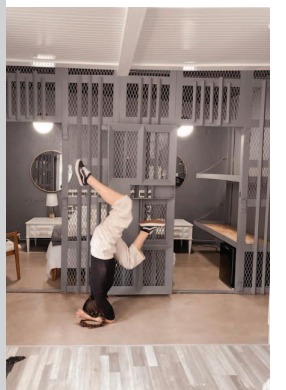
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Bennett Spring *State Park*

From the public swimming pool to nature appreciation hikes, the park has something everyone will enjoy.



Anglers fly fish for a trophy catch on opening day of trout season at Bennett Springs. PHOTOS BY STEVE JOHNSON

BY JOY BEAMER
joyb@buffaloreflex.com

Have you been to Bennett Spring State Park?

The state park is in the county's backyard, providing a great place to bring a picnic and have a family outing. If you enjoy eating at a restaurant, the dining lodge is available with a variety of food choices. The historical, rustic building features stone walls and a beamed ceiling.

The real appeal of the park is the trout hatchery and fishing in the cold, spring-fed river. The Bennett Spring Store, in the center of the recreation area, sells tags for fishing. The store can also take reservations for camping spots and cabin rental. Primitive campsites to RV hook-ups are available if you want to make a long weekend out of the trip.

The park has 3,216 acres owned and operated by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and the Missouri

Department of Conservation manages the hatchery.

From the public swimming pool to nature appreciation hikes, the park has something everyone will enjoy. Many visitors enjoy floating on the adjacent Niangua River, and several outfitters have canoe rentals available.

The nature center provides exhibits, teaching about springs and the natural environment. The naturalists are offering programs again since the pandemic subsided. The center offers nature walks, wildflower hikes, fall foliage hikes, plus a variety of other presentations at just the right price — free.

If hiking is your passion, try the hike on the 2-mile Spring Valley Trail. The best Ozarks backcountry scenery and a longer trail is available on the 7.5-mile Natural Tunnel Trail. Hikers will discover rock skipping again when they find small streams.

A day trip down to Bennett Spring could cost as little as a few gallons of gas and a picnic basket.



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Ha Ha Tonka

— here in our back yard

BY STEVE JOHNSON
stevej@buffaloreflex.com

When I think of all the places I have visited, there is no place I would rather live more than right here in the Missouri Ozarks. It is an area full of natural beauty and resources. I have seen great wonders like the Grand Canyon, the giant redwoods, Yellowstone National Park, Niagara Falls and the east and west coastlines. I can tell you they are impressive, my friend, but so is our little neck of the woods smack dab in the middle of the Midwest. You just have to look closer.

My wife and I are planning to do just that this year during our summer vacation. With gas prices skyrocketing, we have decided to stick closer to home and revisit some of our favorite areas — taking a road less traveled and absorbing the sights and atmosphere of our surroundings. Every time I return to these areas I see something new or things that I overlooked before.

One such place we love to visit is Ha Ha Tonka State Park

The first time I ever saw the castle ruins at Ha Ha Tonka, I felt as though I had discovered one of Missouri's best kept secrets. This was my senior year in high school and Ha Ha Tonka hadn't been inaugurated as a state park yet. That would happen a year later.

I loaded up my 1971 Ford Fairlane with yearbook staff friends, and we set out, on a Saturday, to search for places that would make great cover photos for the 1976-77



Silhouetted against a bright blue sky is the Ha Ha Tonka castle ruins.

Buffalo yearbook. The Hayes twins, Carolyn and Cathy, told us of a mystical place that they had recently visited with their dad. They thought they could remember how to get there so we headed up Mo. Hwy. 73 toward Camdenton. When we got to the "Y" junction at 73 and Hwy 54, we stopped at the station/store that is known as Bates Grocery and stocked up on chips and sodas. We were set for a day's adventure.

I drove the fully loaded car (eight teenagers; some sitting on others' laps) across the bridge over the Niangua arm of the Lake of the Ozarks at Camdenton, and at the



The five-story-tall water tower was built with sandstone brought to the construction sight by mule-pulled iron carts on tracks from the property's quarry.

first road to the right the twins yelled turn here. So I turned down State Road D and a couple of miles later they bade me to stop at an overgrown lane. I thought, uh, sure, I'm not driving my car up that, besides the gate across the drive was locked — thank goodness, I wouldn't have to make any excuses. We parked the car and piled out to start our trek up the forrest covered hill. I began to wonder what kind of a wild goose chase these girls were taking us on.

A short distance up the lane, one of the Hayes twins said, "I think we're on top of it." Again, my mind ques-

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The Ha Ha Tonka castle ruins sit at the top of a big cliff overlooking Ha Ha Tonka Spring and the Niangua arm of the Lake of the Ozarks. PHOTOS BY STEVE JOHNSON



It was like something out of a medieval legend. Back then you could still wander among the ruins, climbing through the windows and over fallen stones. **STEVE JOHNSON**



From the castle bluff, visitors are offered a bird's-eye view of the Ha Ha Tonka Spring and the Lake of the Ozarks.

tioned her sanity as I looked down at the road. The road dropped off on both sides and I realized we were on a high ridge. What I didn't know was we were standing on the Natural Bridge. We followed them down to the bottom of the sink hole and observed a large tunnel passing through the rock escarpment. I heard the intake of breath as some of my friends took in the wonder of nature. The bridge cave is 70 feet wide, spans 60 feet and reaches more than 100 feet in the air. The Colosseum, a theaterlike sinkhole that was formed by the collapse of a giant cavern, is the beginning of the trail just beyond the natural bridge.

Ha Ha Tonka's topography

Ha Ha Tonka is a vast display of karst geology. Karst topography is created by the dissolving action of water on the bedrock and is characterized by caves, sinkholes, springs and natural bridges. You can discover all the beauty of these features by hiking any distance of the 31 miles of trails and boardwalks within the park's 70-acre Ha Ha Tonka Karst Narual area.

Missouri's 12th largest spring is located in Ha Ha Tonka State Park. It discharges more than 48 million gallons of water daily into the stream that flows into the Lake of the Ozarks. There is a small steep island, featuring an intriguing Balanced Rock formation and several small caves, that is where the spring run meets the lake.

The visitor center features a large relief map of the park.

Although the karst landscape may provide the most dramatic features, the park preserves one of the best oak woodlands in the Missouri Ozarks, with almost 3,000 acres of post oak, black oak, white oak and black hickory, some that are more than 300 years old. Several trails lead visitors through woodland and grassy areas. The park's woodlands are managed and restored by carefully planned prescribed burns, that maintain an open landscape.

The castle ruins

After our group had seen the bridge, Cathy asked, "Are you ready to see the castle?"

I was still amazed at the spectacular glimpse of natural landscape I had just witnessed.

"You bet! Lead on," I said, both excited and eager to see what was next awaiting us. Remember, I had never even heard of

this place before that. We walked on about another quarter of a mile and up ahead we could see a stone structure rising up out of the trees.

"Whoa, look at that," said my buddy, Dale Chastine, "Is that real?"

It was like something out of a medieval legend. Back then you could still wander among the ruins, climbing through the windows and over fallen stones. Of course we didn't consider the risk of another stone dislodging and falling on one of us. We were too intrigued that something like this existed in Missouri.

Castle and lodge history

In 1904, Robert McClure Snyder, of Kansas City, purchased Ha Ha Tonka Lake and spring. He begin construction of roads and set forth a plan to build a European-style castle with 60 rooms and a center atrium rising three and a half stories to a skylight. The property would also include the addition of a water tower, a large stable/carriage house and several greenhouses.

The sandstone to build the three structures were quarried from the grounds nearby. Construction on the castle began in 1905 but was halted a year later when Snyder was killed in an automobile accident. The castle was finished in 1922 by Snyder's sons and eventually it was used as a hotel. In 1942, sparks from one of the chimneys set the roof on fire and the castle-hotel was gutted and the carriage house burned also. The wooden stairway and interior of the water tower building burnt in 1976.

Still the remains of the castle and out-buildings offer wonderful photographic opportunities along with spectacular views.

So after 45 five years of day trips to one of my most favorite spots, I still get a thrill whenever I see that part of my Ozarks.



Axe Throwing in Buffalo Missouri

Family-friendly entertainment and great food! Welcome to Buffalo's newest entertainment venue; Axetreme Throwing! We have ten custom-built lanes for axe throwing, and two for throwing knives and blow guns. We are a family friendly establishment, and have a kids section at the front with axes perfectly safe for the little ones to join in the fun! In the back, we have numerous arcade games, pool, and air hockey available.

As well as displays showing some of our custom knife fabrications. Come hungry! We have a full-service kitchen with a number of popular favorites at great prices.



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Visit where the *Buffalo-ians* roam

BY JOY BEAMER
joyb@buffaloreflex.com

When family or friends come to stay over for a week or a weekend, what sites do you take them to see? A day trip to Buffalo may be what you are seeking. However, overnight stays at one of the AirBnBs may be a bonus. Buffalo offers several unique stays, including Sabbath Stables, a horse ranch south of Buffalo, The Lofts, a gorgeous space on the second floor in downtown Buffalo or go to The Jail for the night and sleep in the town's old jailhouse.

No one can deny that Dallas County is a beautiful place with huge hayfields, whispering streams, grand landscapes and colorful people. Take a rambling drive on country roads. It's hard to get lost because all the roads connect to a state highway or U.S. Hwy. 65. Take a map with you. Free maps are available at the newspaper office, 114 E. Lincoln. The 2022 Dallas County Community Guide advertisers might help you pick out the stores you want to shop.

Restaurants

Restaurants in Buffalo are abundant, including steak, pizza, Mexican, American, smoothie bar/cafe, coffee houses, BBQ and chains. There's a restaurant for any budget and dietary requirements.

Start your day off with freshly baked doughnuts from the Donut Palace or Woods Supermarket on the U.S. Hwy. 65.

If it happens to be Tuesday afternoon, go to the Buffalo Farmers Market for some fresh food to cook and serve up to guests and the family. They are open from 2 to 6 p.m.

Shopping

Do you have bargain shoppers or flea market connoisseurs? Buffalo offers an opportunity to window-shop and day-dream at several Buffalo flea markets. Bison Acres, Country Folk Flea Market, Engles Senior Resale Shop and A-Frame Antiques provide a bounty for old-timer items. In downtown Buffalo, money from The Engles Senior Resale Shop supports the Montgomery Senior Center in Buffalo.

Take your time and ask one another if you've ever seen this object or that. Some will ask, "What does it do? Did you use that as a kid? Didn't I get this for your wedding gift?" Flea market shopping is a great day to share family history and memories with the children and learn something new among yourselves.

New to You resale store is located off



The old Dallas County Jail has been transformed into an AirBnB lodging facility. REFLEX PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON

Ash Street to the south of Dairy Queen, with profits going to community service. So why not feel good about spending money, too? The store's profit from selling donated items goes to the Dallas County Neighborhood Center — OACAC in Buffalo. The center spends on local investments in Dallas County.

Silver Lining Consignment is open in Kay's Courtyard. The business also rents tuxedos. If you wanted to make one of your dinner meals fancy, rent a tux, wear an evening gown and paint the town red.

Unique Boutique on Mo. 32 across the street from The Cutting Edge always has an abundance of clothes for women.

Market 116 in downtown Buffalo offers home decor specializing in the farmhouse look and unique apparel for various sizes, from children to plus-size women. In addition, the store refurbishes old furniture on-site and then provides the pieces for sale. From branded Market 116 coffee to wall signage, there is something for everyone in this shopping adventure.

Shady Oak Marketplace is a collective of store booths with over 30 vendors selling new items. Shoppers can find cowhides, children's clothes, bras, baked goods, signage, corn hole, custom wood decor, women's clothing, candles and so much more. Right off US Hwy. 65, beside Subway, the store is easy to stop when you're driving through the area, too.

Recreation

Buffalo offers three city parks with one more on the horizon. The community park offers Lawrence Holt Memorial



This aerial view of Buffalo was taken before the replacement of the old water tower with the new one. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Walkway, extending from Main Street to the Dallas County Community Park with smooth, concrete pathways. Along the way, several exercise stations appear on the trail for additional workout burn.

Go over to the old Buffalo City Park and bring a Frisbee. Park visitors can play a round of disc golf beside the Dallas County Fairgrounds.

Then, if daylight is still burning, go to Dream Valley Golf Course for 9 or 18 holes of golf south of town. If that's not your style, try Buffalo Bowl or Axtreme As Throwing to learn something new.

Nestled between Dallas and Laclede county is Bennett Spring State Park. If one has never seen the park, make plans to get at least a drive-through on your calendar. The gentle ripples of the water, the wind rustling the leaves, the greenery enhancing the surroundings and the deep, mesmerizing spring itself is an experience that must be seen at least once in a lifetime.

A float trip around Bennett Spring is also a great way to spend the day. Several outfitters are ready to rent the equipment and work out the drop-off and pick-up. Kayaks and canoes make a great outdoor adventure. Bring along food, sunscreen and life jackets to make this an unforgettable day. Swimming, rowing and a day in the sun will make you very tired. The family may want a night of carry-out pizza from Hip Pocket, Casey's or Axtreme.

Amish/Mennonite Community Stores

Dallas County is unique in having several sects of Mennonite groups. Travel south of town and look at Headings Brothers Feed and Hostetler Dutch Country Store on Ash St. (old U.S. 65). From Hostetler's, travel down Kelly Road to Kropf Feeds, where the business displays a huge toy tractor museum. Backtrack to Wildlife Road and go north. Shrock's Meat Market and Shrock's Custom Butchering sell all types of meat and deli sandwiches. Baked goods are also available.

From Buffalo, travel six miles north on Mo. 73 to Mo. 64. Our Orchard Store, originally a Mennonite-owned bulk store, can be a stop on the way or when coming home to Buffalo. Find old-fashioned candy, a greenhouse, canning supplies, 50-pound bags of flour or vitamin supplements.

Travel down Mo. 64 about nine miles to find Plaid Pantry on the left side of the road. Fresh produce, discounted groceries and soft-serve ice cream are available here.

Backtrack to Route T, drive north and enjoy the country view. Watch for signs that mark Route YY; go east and find the Lead Mine Country Store. Watch for bicycles and horse-drawn carriages in this neck of the woods. A restaurant is attached to the store that sells thimbles,

oilcloth, books, etc. Mennonite ladies cook homemade meals, including German Wienerschnitzel. There is no electricity; thus, the lights, ceiling fan and stoves work with gas.

Drive back to Route T, then drive a little farther to the north. On the left, you will see the consignment auction. In season, produce is auctioned for canning, restaurants and stores for resale.

There are a couple of furniture makers and Meadowview Dutch Market in this area. The market sells bulk basics, discount food and sundries, plus a fresh deli with meats and cheeses cut to order. The store also sells modest sewing materials by the yard.

Ozarkwinds Bake Shop offers homemade cookies, loaves of bread, brownies, pies and other favorites in season. There is an outdoor shop, Niangua River Outdoors, too.

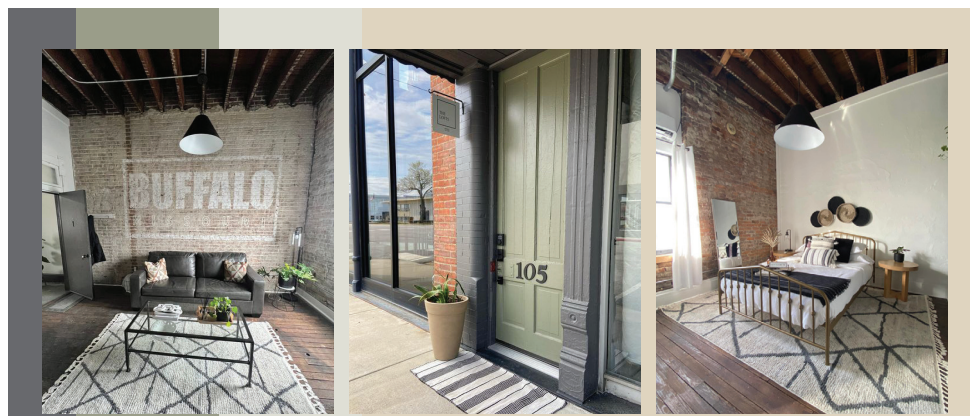
After a day of exploring the Mennonite communities, drive slowly to find your way home and take in the simple sights and sounds of country life.



Anglers line the banks of Bennett Spring on opening trout day, March 1. REFLEX PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON

A Day to Remember

Don't forget to take pictures from these roads less traveled. Keep in mind that cellphones don't always have coverage in the boondocks of Dallas county. Plus, GPS might not get you where you want to go. So take a map, a camera and phones to drive off and find family adventure. Visit other great communities of the county, including Long Lane, Louisburg, Urbana, Charity, March, Foose and Dog Town. Stop to take photos of whatever catches the eye. Flowers, cattle, streams, and gravel roads can make great photography subjects and chronicle the Buffalo trip, a surprising vacation paradise.



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SMORR *fun in the Ozarks*

“

A cool head and four wheels is all it takes at SMORR, I've been coming here since I was 17 and have been hooked ever since. **Ethan Andrews**

BY **ALYSSA ANDREWS**
alysaa@marshfieldmail.com

“**K** eep on going” were the famous last words of Thelma and Louise, as they refuse to surrender and drive their 1966 Thunderbird over the Grand Canyon. This cinematic scene, remarkably, is reenacted at the Southern Missouri Off-road Ranch (SMORR) on the regular. However, instead of Thunderbirds and the Grand Canyon, its Jeep wranglers driving over jagged ledges and rocky terrain.

Located just 5.6 miles outside the city of Seymour, the 940 acre park, A.K.A. SMORR, is located in one of Webster County's highest points. Nestled along the Salem Highlands, the elevation offers terrain for the beginning off-roader to the experienced rock-crawler. Countless trails spider web across the park with each trail marked for its level of difficulty; Class 1 to 6. Class 6 being the most difficult.

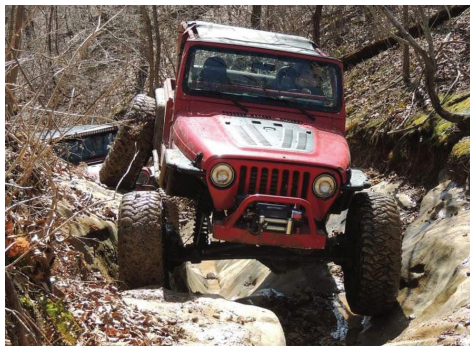
“A cool head and four wheels is all it takes at SMORR,” laughed Ethan Andrews. “I've been coming here since I was 17 and have been hooked ever since. I may not have had the nicest rig at the park, (referring to his '96 Jeep Cherokee), but I've made it up some really tough trails. The adrenaline rush is enough to keep you coming back.”

An adrenaline rush may be an underwhelming description for what goes on during Class 5 and 6 trail rides within the park. Large modified vehicles wrapped in brightly colored roll cages can be seen bouncing their way up Class 6 trails, as well as classic jeep wranglers strategically climbing up and down waterfalls. To brave these trails, drivers not only need a modified ride, but nerves of steel.

“There have been some close calls, where people have rolled over or broke (their vehicle) in the middle of the park,” explained Andrews. “But people at SMORR are like family. Friendly faces are as common as trees out there. People are always willing to lend a hand or cheer you on when tackling a tough trail.”



Often visitors “get lost” out in the trails, enjoying beautiful scenery and on occasion wildlife; deer, bears, turkeys and more.



Where the road ends, the fun begins! With over 940 acres to explore, visitors are guaranteed “good times and friendly faces” abound at SMORR.



Keep calm and hold on! Driving up and down waterfalls, steep hills and rocky terrain is a must for beginners and seasoned drivers.

Andrews, now 31, continues to visit the park using his 2020 Kawasaki side-by-side. Andrews has witnessed the park's expansion over the years, attracting crawlers from all over the country.

On occasion they host special events for clubs, families and holidays.

SMORR has become a house-hold name for off-road enthusiasts nationwide. Not only is the park praised for its numerous trails, but the picturesque views, wildlife and amenities. With 8 rustic cabins, 45 electric RV sites and an abundance of space for campaigning, the park makes for an exciting weekend getaway for families, friends and off-road enthusiasts.

Visit SMORR.net for reservations, rules, hours of operations and more.



Pictured are, left to right, Eric Middleby, Adam Sissel and Derek Weldy hitting the trails on the regular. The bunch frequent “hardcore” trails throughout the park. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS BY ANDREA WELDY



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Lake season is in full swing

Things to do at Stockton Lake

BY KATHRYN SKOPEC

kathryns@cedarrepublican.com

With an estimated 1 million visitors each summer, Stockton Lake — a 24,900-acre U. S. Army Corps of Engineers reservoir located in Cedar, Dade and Polk counties — is a favorite vacation destination for families, fishermen and boating enthusiasts alike.

Here are some of the various opportunities the serene lake and the area can offer:

Sailing

Stockton Lake is one of the premier sailing lakes in the United States due to its location on the Ozark Plateau. The plateau provides the lake with wide channels and strong prevailing winds, which creates perfect conditions for recreational and racing sailing.

Since there are no residential homes along the shore due to the lake's non-developmental policy, the water stays exceptionally clear. There is plenty of room for turning a sailboat, and the wind blows almost every day.

About one-third of the 300-mile lake is accessible to sailboats. The bridges across the lake on Highway 215 and 245 prevent most sailboats from going farther on the lake, but this section of lake is still an ideal location for sailing.

For more information, the Lake Stockton Yacht Club is an excellent resource. This club holds annual races on the lake that usually draw large numbers of boats, with the most prestigious of these races being the Governor's Cup Regatta.

LSYC has a 40-plus year history and hosts many social events out of the lake's two marinas, Orleans Trail Marina and the Stockton State Park Marina. A third marina, Mutton Creek Marina, is also located south of the Mo. 215 bridge on the Big Sac arm.

Visit stocktonyachtclub.com/events/category/event/ for a calendar of events.

Camping

Ten campgrounds are conveniently located around the lake. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maintains Cedar Ridge, Crabtree Cove, Hawker Point, Masters, Orleans Trail, Ruark Bluff East



An aerial view of Stockton Lake. PHOTOS/CEDAR COUNTY REPUBLICAN

and Ruark Bluff West Campgrounds.

User fees are charged for camping in all of the parks. Reservations can be made at www.recreation.gov.

In addition to the Corps of Engineers maintained campground, Mutton Creek Marina, Orleans Trail Marina and Stockton State Park also offer camping opportunities on the lake.

To make a Stockton State Park camping reservation or view campsites details, photos and availability, go to the reservation website at icampmo1.usedirect.com/MSPWeb/Default.aspx. Reservations may also be made by calling toll free at (877) 422-6766. Printable campground maps are available at mostateparks.com/campgrounds/stockton-state-park.

Skydiving

Looking for an adrenaline rush in the Stockton Lake area? Look no further than The Dam Skydivers, a full service skydiving training facility owned and operated with the intent of availing to clients the sense of adventure and aliveness parachuting has brought into the experience of the owners, Dr. Chase Lancaster and Steve Anderson.

The Dam Skydivers are located at

16210 S. 1425 Rd. in Stockton. Book a skydive by calling at (816) 865-6787 or email thedamskydivers@gmail.com.

Fishing

In particular, Stockton has become known as one of the best walleye fishing lakes in the Midwest. A quiet cove or secluded shoreline is not hard to find at Stockton Lake, which creates excellent fishing conditions. You can also expect to catch a variety of fish including bass, white bass, crappie, walleye, catfish or bluegill.

According to angler reports, white bass fishing was excellent on Stockton Lake in 2021. White bass fishing in 2022 should continue to be good, as white bass recruitment has remained consistent throughout the last few years, according to the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Fishing is not allowed near the boat ramps or the marina area. There are no motor restrictions on the lake.

Black bass and crappie regulations are specific to Stockton Lake. All other fish fall under statewide regulations.

Black bass: minimum 15-inch large-mouth or smallmouth, 12-inch spot-

ted. Daily limit: six combined.

Crappie: minimum 10 inches. Daily limit: 15.

White bass: Only four larger than 18 inches. Daily limit: 15.

Walleye: minimum 15 inches. Daily limit: four.

Catfish: Daily limit, 10 channel, five flathead.

The Stockton Lake Fish Attractors Map is available through the MDC at https://mdc.mo.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/Stockton_Lake_FA_Maps.pdf.

Stockton Equestrian Trail

Stockton Lake features an equestrian trail that is 15 miles long and travels in close proximity along the lake shore from Hawker Point to Orleans Trail Campgrounds. This is a multi-use trail for hikers and mountain biking. There are no motorized vehicles allowed on this trail.

Stockton Lake has a pond just for children

An area known locally as the Old Mill Pond is officially the Kid's Fishing Pond below the Stockton Dam.

The pond is about 4-1/2 acres surrounded by a one mile multi-purpose trail. The pond is open for kid anglers, as

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During a sultry spring sunset, boaters enjoy fishing on Stockton Lake. Due to the lake's non-developmental policy on the shoreline, a quiet cove or secluded shoreline is not hard to find at the lake, which creates excellent fishing conditions. STAFF PHOTO/KATHRYN SKOPEC



Skydivers leap over Stockton Lake with The Dam Skydivers, a full service skydiving training facility.



Saddle bronc riding champion Dawson Dahm from Tomahawk, Alberta, Canada, rides for another win at the Stockton Lake PRCA Rodeo in 2021. The rodeo is set to return next month.

is the trail.

The project was made possible through cooperation between community groups, the corps and Missouri Department of Conservation.

MDC assisted with the overall design, contributed in-kind labor, materials and supplies.

Rangers from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers patrol the pond to ensure safety. The open acreage next to the pond includes ballfields used for youth baseball.

More resources

To check out even more of the lake and what it offers, visit either the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers website <https://www.nwk.usace.army.mil/Locations/District-Lakes/Stockton-Lake/> or the Stockton State Park's website at <https://mostate-parks.com/park/stockton-state-park>.

These two websites offer a bounty of information on water activities – boating, swimming and fishing, as well as land-based activities such as camping, hiking, trails and wildlife.

To check out the Sac River and its meanderings through the Ozark region for both floating and fishing, go to missouricanoe.org/rivermaps/sac.html.

Visit the City of Stockton

The city of Stockton, with a population of 1,683 and a rich history, offers many amenities and events for lake visitors.

The majority of the commercial businesses are located near the downtown area, which is surrounded by residential homes. The majority of the downtown area was reconstructed after an high-end F3 tornado devastated the community in 2003, causing three deaths, 37 injuries and \$49 million in damages.

With restaurants, an excellent school district and various small businesses,

Stockton emerged unbroken from the rubble and continues to thrive and grow, offering various lake events and opportunities for visitors and locals to enjoy.

For upcoming events in the city's area, read further:

Wildlife Challenge Triathlon returns

The Stockton Lake Triathlon & Duathlon Wildlife Challenge was first held in 2014 and is set to continue this year Aug. 14, 2022, after a three-year hiatus due to flooding and the coronavirus pandemic.

The event will be part of the Heartland Open Water Triathlon Series and Heartland Summer Triathlon Series.

For more details about the race or to register, visit StocktonLakeMoTri.com.

Stockton Lake PRCA Rodeo

Thousands of visitors are primed to visit Stockton in June for the return of the Stockton Lake Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association Rodeo.

Set for Friday and Saturday, June 17 and 18, at the Ray Zumwalt Expo Center and Outdoor Arena, the rodeo will feature bronc and bull riders from across the nation, as well as international participants from four other countries.

The event will also feature merchandise vendors, food, concession, drinks, gun raffles and more for "clean family fun." Additionally, there will be a rodeo dance nightly with live music.

Visit stocktonlakeprcarodeo.com for tickets and more information. The Expo Center is located at 15075 East RB Road, Stockton.

Stockton Veterans' Memorial Park

This brand new park's creation has been a conglomeration of Stockton community members and fundraising efforts working together to create a serene

veterans' memorial close to home after Stockton received a piece of the traveling Vietnam War memorial, "The Wall That Heals", in 2017.

The park's front wall displays the panel gifted by The Wall That Heals Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. Wall No. 2 consists of plaques with donor names, brick purchasers and a legend showing brick name placement.

Wall No. 3 displays all service, prisoner of war and missing in action emblems, as well as Purple Heart emblems.

Paver bricks are being installed in the middle of the area with benches and pathways among the bricks for easier viewing.

The Stockton Veterans' Memorial Park is located by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Office of Stockton Lake Dam between the pavilion and the Eagle at the head of the NEAT trail, 16250 Mo. 32, Stockton.

Swing into the spring, summer seasons

The 9-hole "Stockton" course at the Stockton Country Club facility features 3,194 yards of golf from the longest tees for a par of 36. The course rating is 75.0 as it has a slope rating of 126 on Bermuda grass. Stockton golf course opened in 1970. Rusty Maggard manages the course as the General Manager.

As for rates, during weekdays, Monday-Thursday, the course charges \$15 for green fees and \$10 for cart rental per person. On the weekends, Friday-Saturday, the Stockton Country Club offers green fees for \$20 and cart rentals for \$15 per person.

Memberships are also available. Inquire at the Stockton Country Club Pro Shop.

Where to eat in the lake area

Feeling hungry after a long day on

the water? The Stockton Lake area has a wide selection of dining venues, from burgers featured on television programs to authentic Mexican food. Local eateries include:

Amvets Post 116, four miles west of the square – Friday night dinners at 6 p.m.

Boathouse Restaurant and Lounge, 16100 S. Highway 39, Stockton – lunch and dinner.

Country Corner Café, 1225 S. Highway 39, Stockton – breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Enrique's Authentic Mexican Grill, 1225 S. Highway 39, Stockton – lunch and dinner.

Hammon's Emporium, No. 2 Public Square, Stockton – breakfast, lunch and dinner, specialty coffees.

Ken's Kafe, 978 N. Highway 39, Arcola – breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Korth Senior Center, 309 W. Englewood Drive, Stockton – lunch.

No-Wake Café, 18 Mutton Creek Loop, Greenfield – breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Orleans Trail Restaurant and Lounge, 15828 S. 1525 Road, Stockton – lunch, dinner and bar.

Simple Simon's Pizza, 600 W. St., Stockton – lunch and dinner, buffet.

Sonic Drive-In, 1409 S. Highway 39, Stockton – breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Squeeze Inn, 404 RB Road, Stockton – lunch and dinner.

Stockton State Park Marina Snack Shack, 186100 E. 2000 Road, Stockton – breakfast on weekends and holidays, lunch and dinner.

Subway, 500 W. Highway 32, Stockton – breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Sundae's Drive-In, 117 RB Road, Stockton – lunch and dinner.

Wood's Supermarket deli, South Mo. 39, Stockton – breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Woody's Fast Stop, 809 E. Highway 39, Stockton – hot deli and fried chicken.

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Finley Farms, *Ozark*

BY LEAH GREENWOOD
leah@ccheadliner.com

Conservationist and businessman Johnny Morris is well-known, especially throughout Missouri. He is usually associated with his Bass Pro Shops flagship store in Springfield and his expanse of businesses and destinations in Branson, just south of Ozark. However, with a newer project that he delegated to his daughter, Megan Stack, Morris has put Ozark on the map, as well, elevating it beyond just the small town that you pass through between Bass Pro and Branson.

Finley Farms has taken root along the Finley River in Ozark, located at 802 Finley Farms Lane. With this new destination experience, Morris and Stack combine preservation of history and a modern experience with a nod to the simple way of living.

Morris restored the historic Ozark Mill and opened it to the public as a riverfront restaurant. The Ozark Mill Restaurant features a menu focused on pizza, pasta and seasonal dishes, and provides a stunning view overlooking the Finley River.

The redesigned Ozark Mill also houses a General Store and offers a variety of event venues. The Hawkins Room and The Riverside Room are available to rent for events. Coming soon is The Garrison, which will be a cozy speakeasy event venue. For an outdoor venue there is the restored Riverside Bridge, which was built in 1909 and Morris saved from its original location on Riverside Road.

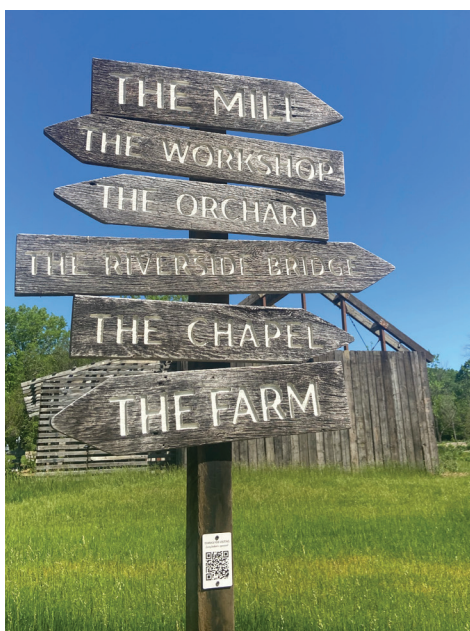
The Workshop at Finley Farms is a coffee shop during the day and a craft space during the night. The Workshop hosts a number of crafty workshops such as baking, gardening, mixology, yoga, etc. A full list of upcoming workshops can be found online.

During the summer, The Workshop also hosts a Farmers Market every Thursday from 3-7 p.m. These markets begin in May and go through September. They showcase local produce, crafts, food trucks, live music and much more.

One of the staples of both The Workshop and the Ozark Mill Restaurant is their farm-to-table dining. The Farm on the property is high-yielding and provides seasonal produce for the restaurants and materials for the workshops. It even includes an apiary and a wooded mushroom yard.



The historic Riverside Bridge stretches high across the Finley River and looks out at the Ozark Mill. LEAH GREENWOOD/HEADLINER NEWS



The Farm at Finley Farms provides farm-to-table dining for all on-location restaurants.

Finally, The Chapel at Finley Farms provides an open-air venue right on the banks of the Finley River across from the Ozark Mill, and can be booked for weddings.

Whether you're looking for a fine-dining experience right on the river or for a place to grab a good cup of coffee or



Coffee shop by day and crafts workshop by night, The Workshop is a must for your caffeine cravings and crafty hands.

something in between, Finley Farms has you covered.

Morris and Stack have even more plans for Ozark. According to the website, you'll soon "be able to extend your visit with overnight accommodations and equip yourself for an adventure at a river outfitter come morning. Or, you'll have the



The Chapel at Finley Farms sits on the bank of the Finley River and provides idyllic views for an open-venue wedding.

option to spend an afternoon traversing nature trails and unwind at a brewery."

Finley Farms is an experience that you can keep coming back to, whether you live in the area or are just passing through.

For more information, visit finley-farmsmo.com.

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Smallin

Civil War Cave



The endangered bristly cave crayfish can be found in the waters of Smallin Cave.

BY LEAH GREENWOOD
leah@ccheadliner.com

Christian County is rich with history, from Native Americans to the Civil War to Bald Knobbers. One particular location in Christian County has ties to all three: Smallin Civil War Cave.

Smallin Cave is located off of Smallin Road in Ozark at 3575 North Smallin Road. It is a must-see for anyone traveling through the area — or even for those who live in the area and want to get outdoors.

Explorer Henry Rowe Schoolcraft documented the cave in 1818, and it is said to be the first documented cave in the Ozarks. Smallin Cave has one of the largest cave openings in Missouri: the entrance is 55-feet tall and 100-feet wide.

At one point, the cave was home to Osage Indians, and it is likely that members of the Cherokee tribe also lived there.

As it is so aptly named, there is strong evidence that Smallin Civil War Cave was used for war related activities during the Civil War since the town of Ozark was a centralized location of Union activity.

In December of 2009, a document was submitted to establish the cave as a historical landmark. According to that document, “A popular bit of folklore which we have chased after, but have never been able to nail down as documentable history or fact, is the story of ammunition and artillery storage in Smallin Cave. The occupying Union troops supposedly did this to amass lots and lots of artillery equipment for the planned battle of Wilson’s Creek, 12 miles to the west, and

to hide it from the ‘dog gone Rebs’ who kept stealing them blind!”

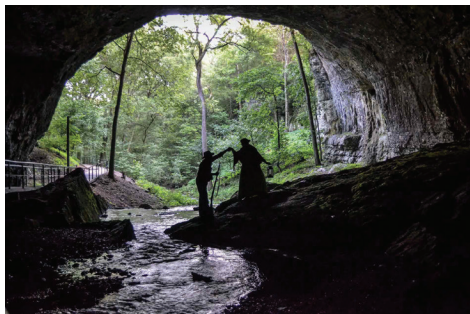
Additionally, Smallin Road is named after Jonathan Tipton Smallin, who used to live in the area and fought for the Union Army in the Civil War.

Although there are currently no known documentations of Bald Knobber meetings in the cave, it is not a far stretch of the imagination to think that the cave would have lent itself as a meeting place for the Bald Knobbers since it was a centralized location.

Smallin Cave is also home to blind cave salamanders and bristly cave crayfish, which the Missouri Department of Conservation lists as being vulnerable to extinction.



A dam found inside Smallin Cave.



Smallin Cave has one of the largest cave openings in Missouri: 55-feet tall and 100-feet wide. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

If you’re in the mood for a nice, relaxing way to take in the natural beauty, history, folklore and geology of the cave, the one hour guided tour is for you! This tour takes you on a 1/2 mile walk on a concrete walkway through the cave. There are no stairs — just gentle inclines and ramps, and handrails. The adult rate is \$25.95, the rate for children 4-12 years old is \$14.95 and kids under 3 are free.

If, however, you are more of a hardcore spelunker, there is a Wild Tour option. This tour provides you with two hours of underground adventure through water and mud. Lace-up shoes, headlamps and helmets are required for the tour. (Helmets and headlamps are available to rent.) There are some climbing obstacles along this tour, so it is not recommended for those who would not be able to undertake normal caving challenges.

Anyone 12 years old and up can go on the Wild Tour, but one parent must accompany anyone 17 years old and under.

The rate for a group of 4 or more is \$85.00 per person, plus tax. For a group of 2 or 3, the rate is \$100.00 per person, plus tax.

Smallin Cave also has a visitor center and gift shop on site with souvenirs and historical and educational merchandise.

For more information about Smallin Civil War Cave and to book a tour, call 417-551-4545 or visit the website at www.smallincave.com.

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Pomme de Terre

unspoiled beauty



Campsites right along Pomme de Terre Lake are available at Nemo Park. This photo was taken from Nemo Bridge. PHOTO BY ANDREW C. JENKINS

BY ANDREW C. JENKINS
andrewj@buffaloflex.com

I have lived my entire life near Pomme de Terre Lake, save for a few years when attending college. As it so often goes, I take for granted the wonders in my own backyard. I rarely go out on the lake itself and only occasionally pass through one of the local parks on a Sunday drive.

When my parents visited New York City in the '90s, several local New Yorkers had no clue how to reach various tourist traps (or at least that was the residents' claim). Even some of those who had lived in the city their whole lives seemed oblivious to the location of well-known sites.

Simply put, when we live somewhere for an extended period of time, we become desensitized to our surroundings. When we pass by a spot every day, it becomes commonplace, unremarkable, overlooked. I don't know the proper names of any county roads around the lake — I just know you turn left by the storage units or you go past the little cemetery. Visitors to the lake will often ask how to reach such and such cove, and more often than not, I've never even heard of the cove, let alone know how to get there. Once we discover the cove's location, I then recognize it as near the subdivision where so-and-so whom we used to go to church with lived.

Even more problematic is when the directions you give are based on landmarks that no longer exist. The pink motel build-



To escape the summer sun and heat, take a walk along the shaded roads and trails at Outlet Park below Pomme de Terre Dam. Pleasant views of the water's edge, such as this one of a sycamore tree hanging over the bank, are plentiful.

ing, which once sat between Nemo and Mr. Ed's Drive In on Route NN, hasn't been around for many years, but we still refer to it as a geographic reference point. The same goes for the concrete water slide that Mother Nature has almost completely reclaimed east of the Nemo Bridge.

Many people feel like they aren't really "doing something" or "going somewhere" for the night or weekend when staying in their own local area. After all, it isn't any-

thing special if it is just down the road, right? Ozarkians might think a day trip is really only to Kansas City or St. Louis, or a summer vacation is only to the beaches of Florida or Texas. But they would be wrong. And with soaring inflation and skyrocketing gas prices, a "staycation" seems all the more enticing this year.

All our local communities have attractions, however big or small, we can patronize, support and take pride in. Practice some quid pro quo this summer,



Photographers can discover delightful nature scenes at Pomme de Terre Lake. Even a dead tree, like the one pictured, can provide a striking composition for a photo.

and keep your tourism dollars local. Your friends and neighbors will then have funds to spend at your place of employment or your small business — continuing the cycle of reciprocity.

I pledge to "resensitize" myself this summer to all the things my hometown area of Pomme de Terre Lake has to offer — to see the natural beauty, to hear the songbirds' calls, to taste the local eateries' fare, to feel the warm breezes

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Walks along the lakeside reveal a multitude of wildflowers, such as these ox-eye daisies at the Pittsburg side of Pomme de Terre State Park.



Don't forget to enjoy the journey to Pomme de Terre. An abundance of pastoral scenes like this one can be found. Here, buttercup flowers blanket a field in yellow at Mohawk Corner.



Visitors to Nemo Park have a view of Nemo Bridge, which spans Pomme de Terre Lake.

and sand at the beach, and to smell the wildflowers' aromas. You, too, can rediscover all the immediate region provides to locals and out-of-town visitors alike.

Unspoiled beauty

Pomme de Terre is known for its unspoiled beauty. Unlike some other lakes in the region, the Pomme de Terre area retains much of its natural environment and hasn't experienced widespread man-made development.

The lake was formed in the early 1960s as part of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project on Pomme de Terre River. "Pomme de Terre" is French for "apple of the earth" (or "potato"), and the river's name likely derives from plants that resembled potatoes growing on the riverbanks. Missouri was, after all, part of the Louisiana Purchase, the 1803 sale of a large swath of French-claimed territory to the U.S. Much of the land involved in the sale was inhabited by Native Americans.

The lake itself is picturesque in all four seasons, so multiple trips to the area are worth the drive. In summer,

the lake is encircled by the lush green of deciduous forests. In fall, the trees turn all shades of yellow, orange and red. The frost and ice of winter transform the lake into a glittering wonderland, complete with snow-dusted cedars. And spring ushers in blooming redbuds and dogwoods that dot the banks of the lake.

Don't forget to enjoy the journey to the lake, as well. Whether arriving from the north, south, east or west, the drive is part of the splendor. Plan ahead and take the scenic route to enjoy the rural landscapes and native flora and fauna.

Plenty to do

Once you've arrived at the lake, a smorgasbord of activities awaits people of all ages.

Thrill-seekers can hit the lake to partake in watersports, such as boating, tubing, waterskiing and riding Jet Skis. Watercraft rentals are available from various marinas and outfitters at the lake. Those who want to take it a little easier but still enjoy the water can swim or sunbathe at one of the lake's beaches, or even go fishing.

There is no shortage of places to stay at the lake. Several motels are available, as are many cabins and other rental properties. Camping is also a popular pastime for many visitors to the lake. According to the Corps of Engineers website, 10 campgrounds are offered at the lake — six operated by the Corps of Engineers (Nemo Park, Damsite Park, Outlet Park, Wheatland Park, Lightfoot Park and Pittsburg Park), two operated by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Division of State Parks (the Hermitage side and the Pittsburg side), and two operated by marina concessionaires (Harbor Campground and Marina, and Hickory Ridge Highway 83 Campground). Depending on the location, both traditional camping with tents and RV camping with hookups might be available. Other RV parks also can be found across the lake area.

An unexpected way to camp at Pomme de Terre was developed in the past decade — yurts. Most people probably picture yurts as those circular, hut-like structures in National Geographic profiles of Mongolian nomads. But now yurts can be rented year-round at Pomme de Terre State Park.

I spent this past Christmas Eve at one such yurt in the Pittsburg area of the park. My sister and her family rented it for our Jenkins family Christmas get-together. Thanks to the unseasonably warm temperatures, the outing to the yurt was idyllic. I was a bit skeptical when I first heard my sister's plans, but the yurt and its surroundings were more spacious than I thought they would be, and we had a prime vista of the lake at sunset.

Beyond the lake itself, visitors can partake in games at the tennis and basketball courts below Pomme de Terre Dam, hike numerous trails throughout the parks, or swing by the golf course near Galmey.

For those who prefer indoor activities,

nearly every community around the lake has restaurants, boutiques, flea markets and antique stores to frequent. A bowling alley also is available at Nemo.

Wheatland, of course, is home to Lucas Oil Speedway, known as the "Diamond of Dirt Tracks," with races throughout the summer season.

The Hickory County Museum in Hermitage offers a glimpse into the past at the John Siddle Williams House, built in about 1855. Several historical markers and memorials can be found throughout the lake area, including at the Hickory County Courthouse in Hermitage.

Annual festivals, fishing tournaments and other events are held during the year at Pomme de Terre, such as the Fireworks Over the Water, which will be July 2 this year.



Pomme de Terre is known for its unspoiled beauty. Unlike some other lakes in the region, the Pomme de Terre area retains much of its natural environment and hasn't experienced widespread manmade development.

Additionally, a wide array of churches invites both new attendees and faithful members to services.

Whether a first-time visitor, a yearly sojourner or a local wanting to get reacquainted with their hometown, the Pomme de Terre area welcomes everyone.

For more information about Pomme de Terre, go to the Pomme de Terre Chamber of Commerce website at pommedetterrechamber.com, the Missouri State Parks website at mostateparks.com/park/pomme-de-terre-state-park or the Corps of Engineers website at www.nwk.usace.army.mil/Locations/District-Lakes/Pomme-de-Terre-Lake/.

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— the place to play Bolivar parks and recreation

The Frisco Highline Trail, a paved walking and bicycle trail, extends 1.5 miles into Bolivar city limits and heads south, connecting Bolivar to Springfield. BH-FP FILE PHOTO BY DAVID TALLEY

BY JILL WAY
news@bolivarmonews.com

What draws visitors to Bolivar?

Bolivar's Parks and Recreation Superintendent Todd Schrader has one idea — youth sports. “Thousands of people throughout the year are in our community because of youth softball tournaments, youth baseball tournaments, youth football games, youth basketball games, youth soccer, project graduations held at the aqua zone and daily use of the aqua zone,” Schrader said.

Those looking for a variety of recreation, sports and fitness opportunities can turn to the Bolivar Recreation and Aquatics Center.

The building — located at 1710 W. Broadway Ave. — houses indoor fitness and aquatic centers and is the hub for local youth sports.

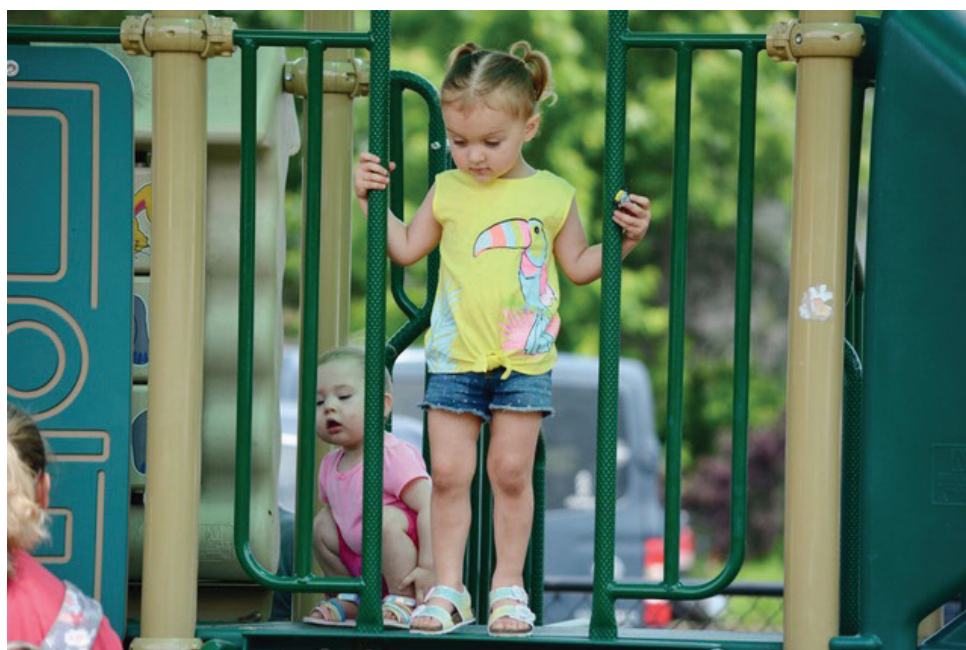
“Our main goal is to serve the community,” Schrader said.

The center does that by offering community members a laundry list of sports, he said — youth tackle football, youth flag football, youth soccer, youth basketball, cheerleading, youth volleyball, youth softball, youth baseball, adult co-ed softball, men's league softball, adult volleyball and a youth swim team. In June, the center is adding a new sport to its repertoire — pickle ball.

At the fitness center, adults can join in an abundance of fitness classes, including boot camp, yoga, zumba, cross training, power hour, body sculpt, zumba gold, splash and rise and grind. Some classes, Schrader said, also focus primarily on senior citizens — Silver Sneakers classic, Silver Sneakers circuit and Silver Sneakers pound.

The seasonal aquatic center opens in April for water aerobics, open swimming, lap swimming and river walking. The pool also features a rock climbing wall, zero-depth entry leisure pool, diving board, slide, zip line, lily pad crossing, lazy river and vortex and several play and spray elements. The aquatic center also offers swim lessons and a swim team.

Childcare for the fitness center, as well as room rentals and special event rent-



Lilliana and Mya find a little shade while playing hard at the Polk County Hope Fair and Community Play Day on Saturday, June 5, at Cribbs Family Youth Park. BH-FP FILE PHOTO BY LINDA SIMMONS

als, are available.

Schrader said the center also hosts seasonal community events throughout the year.

The benefits of Bolivar's recreation center are undeniable, he said. “It provides physical activities for our individuals and families, contributes to our families' health and wellness, provides youth sports and activities and allows our community members and guests to engage in recreational activities.

The expansive youth sports program is also a boon to the local economy, he added.

Schrader credited the center's staff for “helping make this train run.” In addition to Schrader, the staff includes Shania Francka as sports coordinator, Shawna Cheney as aquatics coordinator, Mary Sullivan as wellness and fitness coordinator and Hannah Vodicka as the administrative assistant.

“These ladies put in a lot of time so we can offer quality programs to our community,” he said. “They love serving our community.”

And while the Bolivar Recreation and Aquatics center has a good thing going, Schrader said his team is always “looking at other improvements and offerings to enhance our park and rec department.”



A young swimmer learns the ins and outs of water safety during classes at the Bolivar Recreation and Aquatic Center. BH-FP FILE PHOTO BY JILL WAY

Recent history of the center

The Ozarks Regional YMCA shuttered the doors of the former Roy Blunt YMCA in the wake of ongoing financial struggles and the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The City of Bolivar finalized its purchase of the lease on the building and its fitness equipment for \$575,000 in October 2020. The city formally unlocked the

building's doors and welcomed the community to use the re-opened fitness center in January 2021.

For more information

Find more information about the Bolivar Recreation and Aquatic Center, including hours of operation, online at bo-

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The Aqua Zone offers water aerobics, open swimming, lap swimming and river walking. FILE PHOTO BY BH-FP STAFF



Eli Bryan, center, makes a break for the basket during the Polk County KLife 3-on-3 basketball tournament at Cribbs Family Youth Park in May 2019. BHFP FILE PHOTO BY DAVID TALLEY

livar.mo.us/parks-recreation3/ and on the Bolivar Recreation & Aquatic Center Facebook page. The center's phone number is 417-777-1215.

Other Bolivar area parks

Cribbs Family Youth Park: Bolivar's newest park, located at 410 W. Madison St., includes a renovated historical bathhouse with a community room and concession stand, a splash pad, two basketball courts, a playground and a pavilion. For more information, call the Bolivar Recreation and Aquatics Center at 417-777-1215.

Dunnegan Memorial Park: Located on 60 acres, Dunnegan Memorial Park includes a 5-acre lake, picnic tables and barbecue pits, restrooms, four playground areas and four large shelter houses with water and electricity.

A walking trail surrounds the park, allowing safe and peaceful walking away from traffic. Reservations for the shelter houses can be made at the Bolivar Recreation and Aquatics Center or by calling 417-777-1215. The park is at 601 W. Forest St.

Elmwood Park: Located at 117 S. Dunnegan Ave., near Greenwood Cemetery, Elmwood Park includes picnic tables, swings and playground equipment.

Fullerton Ball Fields: The sports complex, located at 1700 E. Aldrich Road, includes ball fields for baseball, softball and T-ball, as well as a nature trail.

The complex features stadium lights, a storm safe room, concessions, restrooms and an extra wide sidewalk.

Keeling Park: This historic park is located at 329 S. Springfield Ave., behind the Bolivar post office and north of the Free Press Plaza.

Keeling Spring is a historical point of interest, marking the Butterfield Stage Company stop in Bolivar. A cover over the spring, a picnic table and a sundial



Some feathered friends look on as the fountain in the center of the Dunnegan Memorial Park lake sprays water. BH-FP FILE PHOTO BY DAVID TALLEY

make up this small park. Hours for Keeling Park are from sunrise to sunset seven days a week.

Neuhart Park: Located at 711 S. Springfield Ave., Neuhart Park is the home of the statue of Simon Bolivar presented to the citizens of Bolivar by the citizens of Venezuela in 1948. The park also contains park benches and a historical marker.

John Playter Rotary Park: John Playter Rotary Park, located at 1700 S. Meadow Lane, is a 3.1-acre park created in honor of John Playter, a Rotarian and survivor of the Bataan Death March in World War II.

Designed to offer relaxation and recreation, the park consists of a memorial, a large gazebo, picnic tables and benches and a lighted walking trail winding through the park.

Bolivar Golf Course: The Bolivar Golf Course, located at 1506 W. Broadway St.,

is a city-owned 9-hole course with grass greens open to the public by annual membership or daily green fees. Golf carts and clubs are available. For more information, call 417-326-6600.

Citizens Memorial Hospital Exercise Course: This walking path and exercise trail, located at 1500 N. Oakland Ave., leads to Dunnegan Memorial Park. For more information, call 417-326-6000.

Other recreation options

Nestled in the heart of the Ozark mountains and surrounded by lakes, rivers, parks and trails, Polk County is known for exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities.

Two local lakes — Stockton and Pomme de Terre — have access points less than 15 miles from Bolivar. Combined, the two lakes offer more than 33,000 acres of water.

The Frisco Highline Trail, a paved walking and bicycle trail, provides another recreation option for residents and visitors. The trail extends 1.5 miles into Bolivar city limits and heads south, connecting Bolivar to Springfield.

The trail, which sits where Frisco Rail Line railroad tracks formerly ran through the area, celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2019. The City of Bolivar has developed the northern end of this Ozark Greenway Trails system. The trailhead is at 800 W. Jackson St., at the corner of Jackson Street and Claud Avenue near Bolivar Middle School.

The trailhead building has seasonal restrooms, a covered picnic area, bike lock rack and two parking lots. For more information, call 864-2015 or visit FriscoHighlineTrail.org or OzarkGreenways.org.

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