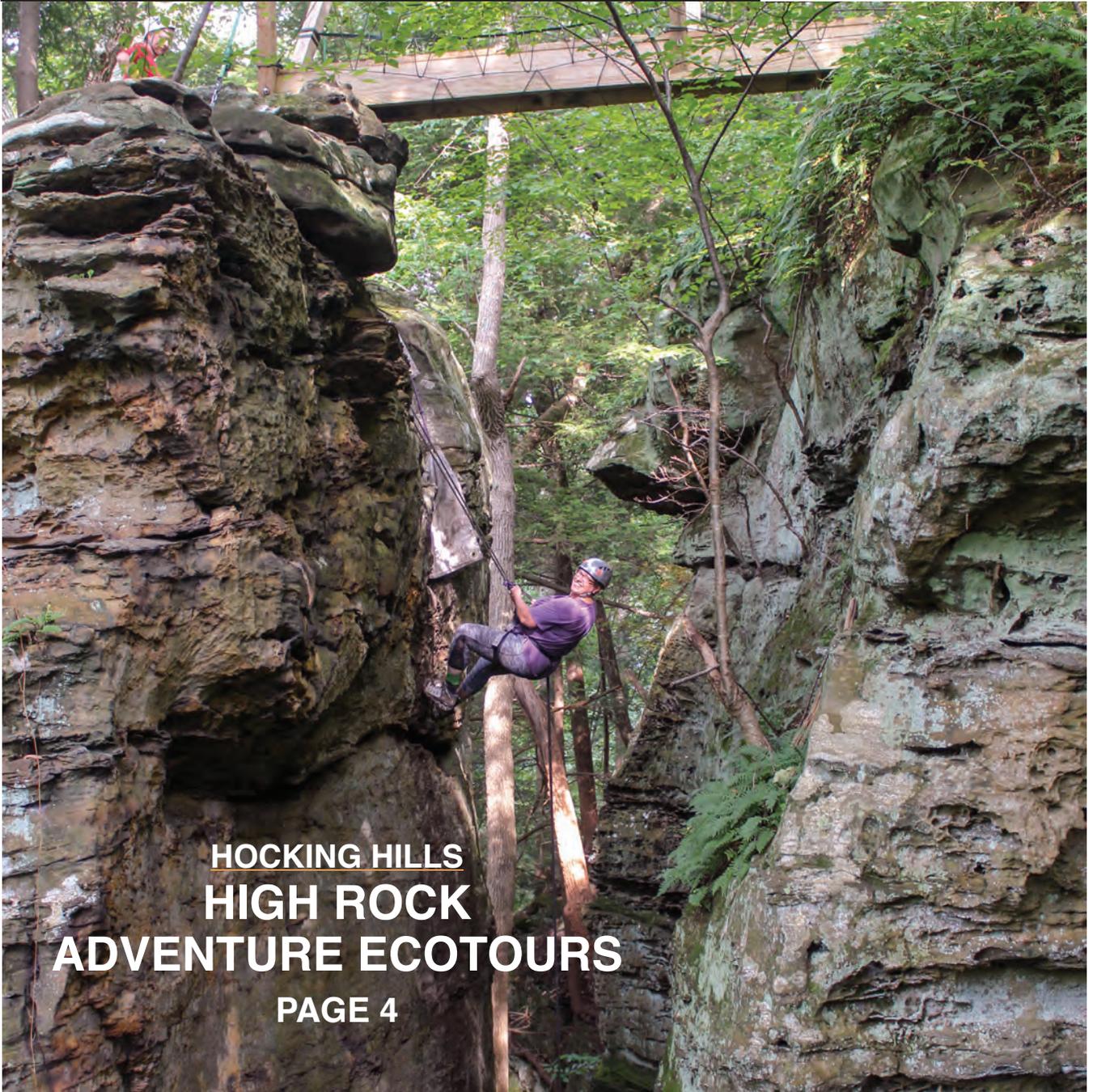


# T SENIOR TIMES

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# For the Love of Travel



Aaron Leventhal

## Hocking Hills, Ohio

An ideal getaway

With the coronavirus still raging, my wife Beth and I chose Hocking Hills as our family vacation destination this past August. We were familiar with the natural beauty and recreational activities in the region, and were sure that our daughters and granddaughter would enjoy a long weekend getaway there.

We checked out dozens of

and streams and numerous moderately-priced attractions for both young and old.

We began each day with a hike through one of the nearby sandstone caves—Old Man's Cave, Ash Cave and Cedar Falls. There are nine trails in Hocking Hills State Park ranging from 1/4-mile and handicap accessible route to a challenging six-mile hike. Returning



Aaron and daughter Dani with her dog Findley paddle down the Hocking River with Fox's Canoe Livery.

affordable vacation rentals online and selected a two-bedroom cabin secluded in a wooded area at the edge of Hocking Hills State Park. It was comfortably furnished, complete with bedding, linens, kitchen ware, TV, hot tub and backyard picnic table.

It's about an hour's drive from our home in German Village to Hocking. There are dozens of hiking trails, canoe liveries, boat rentals, fishing in well-stocked lakes

to our cabin for a leisurely lunch, we plotted out the rest of our day to include a special family activity followed by an early dinner.

The attractions and restaurants listed below are owned and managed by locals who demonstrate entrepreneurial skills and pride in their Appalachian heritage.

**High Rock Adventures** offers ecotours on the pristine, private property of founder, director and train-

er Steve Roley. All of his guides combine nature education with challenging, low-impact experiences, including cliff and canyon rappelling, climbs through natural sandstone canyons and education on edible and medicinal plants. Tours last approximately three hours and are available March-November; reservations are required. On State Route 374 in Rockbridge. [www.highrockadventures.com](http://www.highrockadventures.com), 740-385-9886

**Hocking Hills Fox's Livery**, established in 1996, delivers one of the region's most popular outdoor recreational activities. Visitors are transported by bus about five miles north and then paddle canoes, kayaks and rafts down the Hocking River for about two hours back to the livery. Primitive campsites and rustic cabins are available on the premises. Walk-ins are welcome, but reservations are recommended, especially on weekends. Open April-October. At 33 East and State Route 664 in Logan. [www.hockingriver.com](http://www.hockingriver.com), 740-385-0523

**Butterfly Ridge Conservation Center** is owned and operated by Christopher Kline and his wife Chris on 21-acres where the motto is, "Making the world a little better place, one butterfly at a time." For several years, Chris was known as the "Butterfly Guy" at the Franklin Park Conservatory before opening Butterfly Ridge in 2017 on property owned by his family since 1863. Visitors can join guided tours or go on their own to explore a mile-long, scenic trail through wetlands, prairies and pine forest groves that are home to a wide variety of butterfly species. Dogs and picnic lunches are welcome. Open April 15-October 15. On State Route 374 in Rockbridge, between Conkle's



Hiking on guided High Rock Adventures Ecotour.



Beth and Aaron relaxing at Ash Cave.

Hollow and Rock House. [www.butterfly-ridge.com](http://www.butterfly-ridge.com), 740-204-5372

Due to our limited time, we were unable to experience many other popular attractions, including: **Hocking Hills Canopy Tours** for zipline thrills; **Jack Pine Studio**, where Jack and other skilled crafters create exquisite, blown-glass designs and offer live demonstrations; **Blue Moon Acres**, for guided trail horse rides; **John Glenn Astronomy Park**, where visitors can observe "zillions of shimmering stars," 24/7, 365 nights a year; and **Main Street in Downtown Logan**, where dozens of shops, galleries eateries and attractions line the quaint,

small-town avenue.

Dining: Due to the coronavirus pandemic, we went only to restaurants that had outdoor seating and that also welcomed our Labrador retriever Lily. All were open for lunch and dinner.

**Millstone Southern Smoked BBQ** prides itself on being a locals' favorite, with exceptional BBQ, ranging from Kansas City baby back ribs to Texas beef brisket, along with meatloaf, Portobello mushrooms, char-grilled ribeye steaks, smoked chicken and shrimp, and a variety of salads, sides and desserts. In addition to patio seating, there is a large grassy area with picnic table seating. 740-385-5341

**Urban Grille Pub**, over-

looking the 18-hole Hocking Hills Golf Club, offers exceptional food and service at very reasonable prices. The menu includes dozens of appetizers, fresh salads and sandwiches, flame-grilled steaks and burgers, seafood and chicken, along with homemade desserts and dynamite cocktails. Prime rib is available Friday and Saturday after 5 p.m. 740-385-8766

**Kindred Spirits at The Inn at Cedar Falls** provides a casual fine-dining experience with superb gourmet meals in an 1840s log cabin. The chefs use the finest fresh ingredients, some locally grown in the Hocking Hills. Tucked into the surrounding wooded hillside, the charming restaurant is a short walk to Cedar Falls. 740-385-7489

Hocking Hills Visitor Information. Your first stop should be at the Welcome Center on State Route 664 South for maps, brochures and personalized staff recommendations. Explore-HockingHills.com, 800-462-5464

Columbus travel writer Aaron Leventhal is longtime contributor to *Senior Times*.



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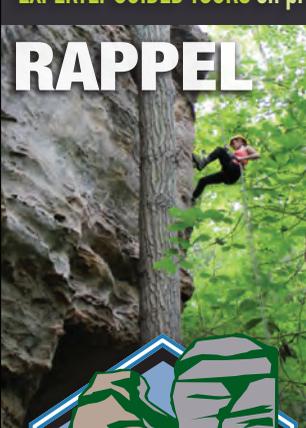
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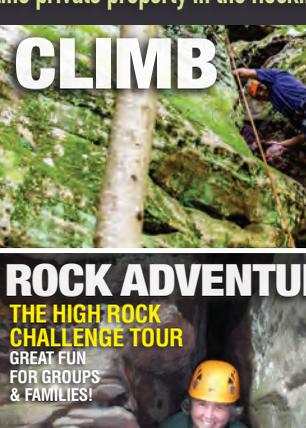

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EXPERTLY GUIDED TOURS on pristine private property in the Hocking Hills!

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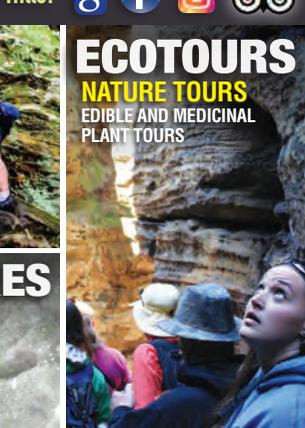


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