

Travel



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Off-turnpike treat: Pennsylvania's highlands

Perfect for weekend trip

By Mary Augusta Rodgers
special writer

FOR MANY of us in Michigan, the Pennsylvania turnpike is simply part of the route leading to Washington, D.C., or on to Philadelphia and New York City. There are few who know that this was the first major limited-access highway built in the country, an engineering marvel of its time.

The rolling countryside of southwestern Pennsylvania is hardly noticed as the miles go by; there's the Laurel Mountain tunnel, an occasional Amish barn painted dark red and decorated with hex signs, and some dreary rest-area restaurants that inspire customers to plan a picnic next time.

But take a look at what lies past the Donagel exit on the turnpike, a little more than an hour's drive past Pittsburgh.

This is pastoral country made up of gentle valleys and hills that are the remains of an ancient mountain range, far older than the Rockies or the Alps. There are some appealing small towns, covered bridges along the back roads, parks and nature preserves, two reconstructed forts from the days of the French and Indian wars, and an unusual vacation house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and built over a waterfall.

FA. A wonderful place for a weekend retreat.

In the winter, there's downhill skiing at Laurel mountain, a wealth of cross-country ski trails, and a variety of activities — ski touring, backpacking, snowshoeing, etc. — available at the Bear Run Nature Reserve (between Fallingwater and Mill Run on Route 381) and other locations.

But it's in the spring that this area comes into its own, with rushing

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streams and rivers and Appalachian wild flowers, mountain laurel, rhododendron and wild cherry trees bursting into bloom. Some of the best hiking trails in the state are here.

There's also fine trout fishing, many places offering canoes and kayaks for rent — I'll mention Obiopolis and Confluence for the pleasure of the names and whitewater rafting on the Youghiogheny River, commonly called "The Yough".

THE RIVERS are graded on the international scale, from 1 or Easy ("moving water with small riffles and waves, course is easy to find") to VI or Limited of Navigability ("nearly impossible and cannot be attempted without risk of life; for teams of experts only"). So the point is obvious: pick your river, as well as the kind of boat, with care.

Fallingwater, one of the most celebrated of Frank Lloyd Wright's works, was built as a weekend and vacation house for Liliane and Edgar J. Kaufmann of Pittsburgh and their family in 1936. (A guest and servants wing was added in 1942.)

Elements of this beautiful and secluded site — the swift stream, the waterfall, the massive sandstone boulders, and trees and beautiful and secluded site — the swift stream, the waterfall, the massive sandstone boulders, and trees and flowers — are reflected in the dramatic design.



FALLINGWATER — one of the most celebrated of Frank Lloyd Wright's works, this house was built as a weekend and vacation retreat over a natural waterfall. The secluded site includes massive sandstone boulders, myriad trees and flowers. Giant stepping stones across a stream are concrete bases forming living and bedroom levels of the house, cantilevered over the stream. It now belongs to the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

WHAT LOOK at first glance like giant stepping stones across the water are concrete bases forming living and bedroom levels of the house, cantilevered over the stream.

In 1963, Edgar Kaufmann Jr. presented the house — with all its furnishings and art objects — to the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in honor of his father and mother. "Its beauty remains fresh, like that of the nature into which it fits," he said then. "It has served well as a home, yet has always been more than that: a work of art."

Nature lovers and photographers should also note that the Conservancy's

Bear Run Nature Reserve, 3,700 acres of wild mountain land, with 20 miles of trails — begins only a half mile north of Fallingwater.

NOT FAR away, in the small town of Farmington, is the Fort Necessity National Battlefield, the site of the first battle of the French and Indian Wars in 1755 — a defeat for the British under General Braddock and the first experience under fire for a young man named George Washington.

Part of the land, then known as the Great Meadows, was later bought by Washington, who owned it until his death. There's a visitor's center — Mt. Washington Tavern, restored as a sta-

gecoach inn, and a replica of the original fort, all open year-round.

In 1758, the English forces began another campaign to drive the French from their strongholds along the Ohio River, and Fort Ligonier was built as a supply station for troops on their way to attack the French at Fort Duquesne (the settlement that became Pittsburgh).

THE LAND was then covered by a dense forest; the site of Fort Ligonier, at Loyalhanna Creek, was a former Indian Village, and one of the few cleared places where the sky could be seen.

Fort Ligonier survived a surprise attack by French and Indian forces in October 1758 — with George Washington and his Virginia regiment helping in its defense and another siege by Indians under Pontiac in 1763.

Today, Fort Ligonier consists of a small but rewarding museum, and an accurate reconstruction of the British fort. The museum ranges from an unusual collection of artifacts from the French and Indian wars to dioramas, two elegantly furnished period rooms — there's a portrait of Lord Ligonier by Sir Joshua Reynolds in the Ligonier room — and a copy of the hunting manuscript by Logan, chief of the Mingo, for his vanished tribe, which ends: Who is there to mourn Logan? Not one.

THE FORT brings history to life with a striking collection of life-size manikins to illustrate various activities among the soldiers: a short recorded explanation is available in each room by pressing a button, and children are usually entranced.

Many special events are planned during the summer, coming to a climax with the annual Fort Ligonier Days celebration, the second weekend in October. This includes a parade, reenactment of the October, 1758 battle, and displays of frontier crafts.

Other annual events in the Ligonier

area include the Highland Games and Gathering of the Clans of Scotland in Idlewild Park in September; for information, write Highland Games, 1208 24th Ave., Altoona, Pa. 16601. And there are steepchase meets at the Rolling Rock Club on Wednesday and Saturday, the second week of September.

Best places in highlands

● **FALLINGWATER**, built by Frank Lloyd Wright, is half way between Mill Run Pennsylvania and Obiopolis. Telephone (412) 329-8501. It is on Pa. Route 381, about a two-hour drive from Pittsburgh. Open daily, except Monday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission \$4. Children under age 10 must remain in a supervised child care center; the fee is \$1 an hour.

Reservations advised. For information, write to the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, 316 Fourth Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222.

● **FORT NECESSITY NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD** is open year-round in Farmington, Pa., 11 miles east of Uniontown on U.S. 40. No admission charge. Picnic area is open in the summer.

● **FORT LIGONIER**, in the town of Ligonier, Pa., on U.S. 81, 12 miles north of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Open daily April through October 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission. Contact Fort Ligonier Memorial Foundation, Inc., South Market St., Ligonier, Pa. 15658

Plan ahead for summer Olympics in Los Angeles

Despite rumors to the contrary, discount air fares are available to Los Angeles during the summer Olympics.

While Olympic contenders are skating and skiing across your television screen, it is a good time to think ahead to other sports-related travel opportunities. Especially the summer Olympics in Los Angeles.

You have probably been told that there is no discount air fares available to Los Angeles during the summer Olympics. Don't believe it. The major air carriers did agree to eliminate discount fares for the period covering the games, but American

Airlines has already broken the agreement. American's fares are still not real discount fares however. For that, try Canada.

Air Canada still has space on its flights from Windsor via Toronto during the July 24-August 12 period that would interest most Olympics travelers. Regular fare is \$662 plus tax in U.S. dollars, but B-class fares are much cheaper.

You can fly Monday through Thursday Windsor to Los Angeles for \$430 plus tax round trip. Friday,

Saturday, Sunday flights will cost \$497 plus tax round trip. Both quotes are in U.S. dollars.

I asked Ron Patterson, Michigan Sales Manager for Air Canada, whether there was any advantage to buying the ticket in Canadian dollars in Windsor. He said that the savings were too small to be worth the trouble.

There are restrictions on these fares. You must buy the tickets 14 days ahead of flight time, you must stay over at least the first Sunday before returning, and you must return before 60 days are up. For information contact your travel agent or Air Canada.

LOS ANGELES HOUSING, a private organization selling various kinds of accommodations in Los Angeles during the summer Olympics, is also offering an unusual ticket-swapping service.

If you have tickets to Olympic events you don't want to see — and if there are events you want to see, but don't have tickets for — Los Angeles Housing will act as a free clearinghouse and exchange service for those people using its housing service. Los Angeles Housing has several hundred bed accommodations listed in its computer, including five-bedroom houses. Their press releases say that the average cost is \$50 per person per day.

They have two-week rental minimums for accommodations, that include separate bedrooms, kitchens, linens, television and weekly maid service. It is not inexpensive: four people will spend \$3,400 to \$5,000 for a two-bedroom place for two weeks. Five bedrooms can cost \$7,000 to \$10,000.

If you want to know more, contact Los Angeles Housing at 461 Prospect Ave., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 or telephone (213) 376-0994.

OLYMPICS VISITOR HOUSING is also worth a look. The organization has 3,000 beds in the residence halls of Claremont College and Biola University July 20 through August 20, for seven, 11 or 21 days. For information send a stamped self-addressed envelope to ASTRA Tours and Travel, 10929 Weyburn Ave., Los Angeles CA 90024.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLES can be rented for the Olympics through the Good Sam Club by calling toll-free 1-800-423-5061.

— Iris Jones

Bid for a vacation?

Make your bids, ladies and gentlemen. Twelve days in Italy? A hot air balloon ride? A week on Hilton Head or 10 days on Sanibel Island? A tour of Detroit on a harbor boat, in a helicopter? Two seats at the Indianapolis 500? A weekend in Toronto?

These are just a few of the items that will go on the auction block when Brookside School Cranbrook holds its benefit auction Feb. 25 in Bloomfield Hills. The auction will include 350 items, including sculpture, paintings, jewelry, furs, clothing, and lots of luxurious services.

The auction will be held in conjunction with an evening of entertainment: open bar, Italian buffet supper, "desert extravaganza." The tax-deductible admission ticket is \$25 per person.

For ticket information, call 645-3500. The event will be held at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25, at Brookside School Cranbrook, 550 Cranbrook

Road, Bloomfield Hills. Free parking at the Congregational Church with shuttle service to the school. Proceeds will be used for the restoration and educational extension of Brookside School.

There will be a catalogue for advance viewing of auction items, and both silent and live auction bids. The 12-day tour of Italy, contributed by Mr. and Mrs. Tony Marocco in cooperation with Alitalia Airlines, has a minimum bid of \$3,500. The auction will be conducted by DuMouchelle Galleries.

A tourist enjoys feeding pigeons in the main plaza in Florence, Italy. A 12-day Italian vacation is one of 350 items to be auctioned Feb. 25.



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