



ALL ABOUT *fall*

a special supplement to
STAR BEACON

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

- 
- 
- **Upcoming Events**
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Plenty to do in the fall in Ashtabula County

BY BRIAN HAYTCHER

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There are a number of attractions in Ashtabula County in the fall, from viewing the changing colors of leaves to organized events like the Covered Bridge Festival.

Ashtabula County Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Stephanie Siegel said the Covered Bridge Festival has been an immensely popular fall event. "That event has proven

popular regardless of COVID restrictions because you can experience that in the bubble of your car, since it's a self-driving tour," she said.

The Covered Bridge Festival includes a number of events at the county's covered bridges, Siegel said.

The Ashtabula County Covered Bridge Festival takes place on the second weekend in October, according to the festival's website. This year is the 37th annual Covered Bridge

Festival.

The festival includes crafts, a quilt show and entertainment, according to the festival's website.

Siegel said vineyards in the area are pressing grapes about this time of year. "If you haven't been out to where any vineyard is and breathed deep to smell that sweet smell of grapes in the air, then you're missing out, go now," Siegel said.

The Grand River Valley winegrowers host an event where



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Ryan Ribblett [back to camera] takes a picture of his wife Kelly and their two children (Max, 3, and Quinn, 1, at the Smolen-Gulf Bridge in Plymouth Township during the 2019 Ashtabula County Covered Bridge Festival.

they pair wines with popular Thanksgiving dishes.

There are fewer festivals in Ashtabula County in the fall, and more things that can be done at people's own pace, Siegel said. "It's less organized and it's more relaxed," Siegel said.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau is thrilled with the number of people visiting the area, and thrilled with how many people are coming to the area outside of what was previously the traditional tourist season, Siegel said.

"This is no longer a

community that sees people coming from Memorial Day to Labor Day," she said.

"It's really stretched much later into ... November, and earlier now, we're starting to see it trending earlier, like April, May, the season starts to pick up."

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Brant's a popular autumn attraction

BY BRIAN HAYTCHER

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SHEFFIELD TOWNSHIP — Brant's Apple Orchard, a popular fall attraction, will likely be even busier than usual this weekend.

Jenn Diehl, co-owner of Brant's Apple Orchard, said October is a pretty big month for the orchard. Brant's will be hosting its annual Fall Festival this weekend, Diehl said.

"We have horse-drawn hay rides, bounce houses, craft show, a photographer is coming out taking family pictures, we have a 5K run that we do ... through the orchards, through the woods," Diehl said.

The race raises funds for a scholarship, Diehl said.

October is generally the busiest month for Brant's, Diehl said. "That's when people think of going somewhere for the fall," Diehl said.

'We have horse-drawn hay rides, bounce houses, craft show, a photographer is coming out taking family pictures, we have a 5k run that we do ... through the orchards, through the woods.'

Jenn Diehl

Co-owner, Brant's Apple Orchard

Diehl said the orchard has been busy this year. "I think people are just anxious to get out," she said. "It's been good weather, actually, so I think that has helped a lot."

Last year, COVID-19 restrictions were lifted about when Brant's opened, Diehl said. At the time, people were anxious to get outside, and some restrictions eased about when the



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Diesel Vojacek of North Perry prepares to launch an apple at Brant's Orchard Fall Apple Festival in Sheffield Township in 2019.

orchard opened, Diehl said.

Many visitors to Brant's this year are coming from an hour or two away, Diehl

said.

"I don't know if people are just looking for local destinations that are only a couple hours away, rather

than traveling somewhere far," she said. "That is a weird thing about this year, is it's a lot of outside the county people that

we're getting."

Diehl said the orchard's website, brantsappleorchard.com, has a full list of upcoming events.



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Saybrook's Big Oak Nature Park beckons to autumn aficionados

BY SHELLEY TERRY

sterry@starbeacon.com

SAYBROOK TOWNSHIP — Fall is the perfect time to visit Big Oak Nature Park, where visitors will find a variety of colorful leaves, but a beast of an oak tree, as well.

The park's giant swamp white oak is the Ohio State Champion, measuring 236 inches in circumference, a height of 96 feet, and a 93-foot crown spread for a total of 355 points, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry.

"It's an amazingly old monster," said Marc DeWerth of Big Trees Ohio, who along with Alistair Reynolds of the Division of Forestry, measured the mighty oak.

The former champion was a white oak in Bay Village, but it fell this past spring, opening the door for Say-

brook's white oak to take the honors. "If going to the park to see the champion tree, it's a 10- to 15-minute walk into the forest," said Michelle Hallman, fiscal officer.

The park's trails lead to the swamp white oak tree that is estimated to be between 100 to 150 years old, based on a biological survey done several years ago.

The best time to visit the park to see nature's fall splendor, should plan for the second full week in October. People interested in finding eye-catching leaves throughout the region should check out fallcolor.ohiodnr.gov, Ohio's official guide to the changing colors.

The 30-plus acre Big Oak park was originally a small farm and contains wetlands, small streams and forest with a tall tree canopy.

More than 10 years ago, the Ashtabula Foundation gifted the

property to Saybrook Township Park.

Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*) is a frequent inhabitant of wet woods, swamps, wetlands and near bodies of water, although it is drought tolerant and can be planted in soils that are dry in summer, according to ODNR.

Of all the members of the white oak group, the undersides of its leaves are the most white, according to ODNR.

Big Oak Nature Park is open dawn to dusk, weather permitting. No hunting is allowed.

Park officials warn the trail is uneven so hikers should use caution and wear appropriate footwear. This park is being kept in its natural state to protect the vegetation and animals and park officials ask walkers stay on the trails.

Big Oak Nature Park, 5210 Route 45, is on the east side of Route 45 just north of North Bend Road.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Marc DeWerth from Big Trees Ohio stands beside the state's biggest swamp white oak tree — found in Big Oak Nature Park, 5210 Route 45, just north of North Bend Road in Saybrook Township.

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Peak fall colors predicted for mid-October in Ashtabula County

BY SHELLEY TERRY
sterry@starbeacon.com

Pumpkins, scarecrows, apple cider and colorful leaves — what's not to like about fall?

If you're planning to take advantage of the sights of autumn, schedule your outing for mid- to late-October, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

ODNR foresters predict the peak time to catch autumn colors is the week of Oct. 18, according to the ODNR website.

"Autumn in Ashtabula County is absolutely beautiful to see," said County Commissioner Casey Kozlowski. "The colors of the fall season complement the many beautiful aspects of our county with the covered bridges, lakes, wineries and so much more."

It's September's shorter days and longer

'Fall is definitely the most beautiful with our fall foliage. It's great to incorporate it into a tour of our wineries or covered bridges.'

J.P. Ducro IV
Ashtabula County Commissioner

nights that's the biggest trigger of color change, according to ODNR.

As of Monday, September temperatures in northern Ohio are ranging about normal, although late September and early October are predicted to be warmer than average, according to Nick Greenawalt, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Cleveland.

Precipitation, meanwhile, is also about average for the year,

although so far, rainfall in September is below normal.

As in years past, ODNR color trackers will monitor fall color throughout the state, with color watchers at two dozen state parks, preserves and forests updating an interactive map every week, starting this Thursday (see fallcolor.ohiodnr.gov).

County Commissioner J.P. Ducro IV said area residents are fortunate to experience all four seasons.

"Fall is definitely the most beautiful with our gorgeous fall foliage," he said. "It's great to incorporate it into a tour of our wineries or covered bridges."

Some of the best places to see fall colors in northeast Ohio include:

- A tour of Ashtabula County's covered bridges or local wineries;
- Ashtabula County Covered Bridge Festival,

Oct. 9-10 in Jefferson;

- Rocky River Reservation in North Olmsted;

- The Holden Arboretum in Kirtland;
- Virginia Kendall Ledges in Peninsula;
- South Chagrin Reservation in Bentleyville, and

- Wade Park in Cleveland's University Circle.

For a full season of fall activities in Ohio, check out the TourismOhio's "100 Things to do in Ohio this Fall," at ohio.org.

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Local wineries lure visitors to fertile Grand River Valley

BY **SHELLEY TERRY**
sterry@starbeacon.com

Wine aficionados don't have to travel to California or France to find their favorite wine — the Grand River Valley wine region has them all.

The Grand River Valley wine region, which consists of vineyards in Harpersfield, Geneva and Madison townships, has everything in vinifera grape wines from dry reds to sweet ice wines. Practically every variety is available, thanks to the region's location between the Grand River and Lake Erie, which provides sandy soil and keeps the area warmer in the fall.

There are more than a doz-

en wineries in the Grand River Valley Region and the surrounding area, including Kosicek Vineyards, South River Winery, St. Joseph's Vineyards, Debonne Vineyards, Ferrante Winery, Virant Family Winery, Laurello Vineyards, Grand River Cellars Winery, Deer's Leap Winery, Harpersfield Vineyard, Hundley Cellars, M Cellars, Laurentia Vineyard and Winery, Old Mill Winery and the Lakehouse Inn & Winery.

Donniella Winchell, executive director of the Ohio Wine Producers Association, said the region has garnered awards from around the country and carved itself a special niche for ice wines and pinots.

The Grand River Valley region

is part of the world-wide "Pinot Belt" — which begins in Burgundy, France, and travels across the United States through the Grand River Valley in Ohio, west to Oregon — where the best conditions exist for producing world class Pinot Grigio and Pinot Noir.

For those who want to indulge in wine but know they should not be driving while impaired, shuttles depart regularly for wine destinations, Winchell said.

There are more than 20 different shuttle buses — four based at the Lodge at Geneva State Park.

For more information, visit ohiowines.org, or call the Ohio Wine Producers Association at 440-466-4417.



STAR BEACON FILE PHOTO

Brad Indoe was hired as wine maker at Laurello Winery in Austinburg after his 2019 graduation from Kent State University at Ashtabula, where he earned a viticulture and enology degree.



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G.O. Community Development plans boot, apparel giveaway for needy

BY SHELLEY TERRY

sterry@starbeacon.com

ASHTABULA — The G.O. Community Development Corporation is giving area residents the boot this fall, in preparation for winter weather.

A non-profit organization since 1999, G.O. CDC will distribute winter boots to the needy from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 23 at 3703 Station Ave. (the former Thurgood Marshall Elementary School).

“Winter weather is coming soon,” said G.O. CDC Director Frances Norman. “We want to help anyone in need to stay warm. We will order you boots if your size is not in stock.”

Potential recipients can preregister at <http://forms.go-cdc.org>.

Coats, hats, gloves and winter

apparel also will be available, while supplies last. Adults must bring identification and must be present to receive items.

Free COVID vaccines also will be available.

G.O. CDC also plans to provide a free, take-out-style from 10 a.m. to noon on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25. Volunteers will deliver 250 meals to folks in need of a holiday meal.

“We will have our annual free Thanksgiving dinner,” Norman said.

G.O. CDC is the result of the research, planning and coordination of John and the late Mae Salters and the Salters family. The Salters’ vision is to provide a family center committed to providing food, clothing and help for the community.

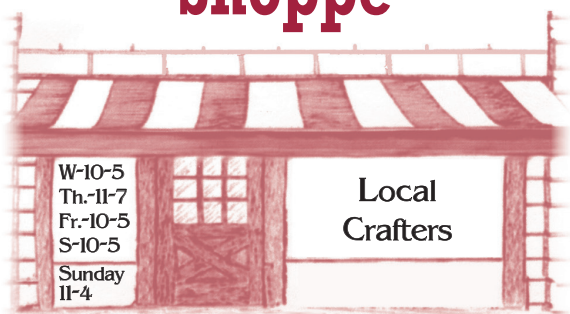
For more information, call Norman at 440-344-8278.



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

G.O. CDC Director, Frances Norman, displays shoes and winter boots available for those in need at G.O. CDC in Ashtabula. Boots and winter apparel will be given away on Oct. 23, before northeast Ohio’s fall turns to winter weather.

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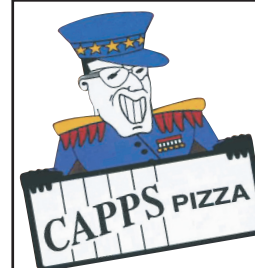
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Visit a northeastern Ohio pumpkin patch

BY SHELLEY TERRY

sterry@starbeacon.com

There's nothing quite like heading to a local farm to pick a pumpkin from the pumpkin patch, finding your way through a corn maze or going on a hayride in the crisp autumn air.

During October, some area farms open their doors to visitors. This guide will help you find a pumpkin patch near you.

• Lake Metroparks Farmpark Corn & Pumpkin Festival
Explore the 3-acre corn maze and enjoy a farm-themed play-



In this file photo, 15-month-old Lucy Myers looks for the perfect pumpkin at Patterson Fruit Farm Oct. 18, 2011, in Chesterland.

AP FILE PHOTO/TONY DEJAK

ground and live animal demonstrations. Enjoy harvest-themed crafts and more.

Where: 8800 Euclid Chardon Rd., Kirtland,

OH 44094

When: October 9-10 & 16-17, 2021

Contact: 440-256-2122

• Ma & Pa's Horse Drawn Hay Rides & Fall Harvest

Enjoy a horse-drawn hayride through the woods. Pick a favorite pumpkin and paint it. Hayrides include a maple cookie.

Where: 15161 Main

Market Rd. (Route 422), Burton, OH 44021

When: Saturday-Sunday, through Oct. 31, 2021 and NEOTA Day, Oct. 8.

Contact: 440-548-5521

• Patterson Fruit

Farm

Play in the farm activity area and take a nature hike through the ravines and hills of Geauga County.

Where: 8765 Mulberry Rd., Chesterland, OH 44026

When: Daily, through November

Contact: 440-729-9809

• Regal Vineyards' Corn Maze Family Fun Days

Where: 2678 County Line Rd., Madison, OH 44057

When: Saturdays and Sundays, through Oct. 31, 2021

Contact: 440-812-4936

Finally, if you are really into pumpkin patches, Good Housekeeping's No. 1 rated pumpkin patch in Ohio can be found three hours south of Ashtabula at Leeds Farm in Ostrander, open now through Oct. 30.

Visitors will discover a cow palace and tractor tire tower among other attractions like hayrides, mini zip lines, pig races and a pumpkin jump. General admission to the patch is \$15 for ages 3 to 54 years old, and \$5 for those 55 and older, while kids 2 and under get in for free. Pre-purchased tickets are required.

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Savory sandwiches for tailgate fun

Fall marks the start of football season. Game day experiences are made even more enjoyable by hosting or attending a tailgate in the parking lot of the stadium.

Tailgate supplies must be brought to the tailgate the day of the game. That includes food, which is often prepared at home and then cooked on-site. This recipe for "Ultimate Steak & Mushroom Sandwiches" from Laurie McNamara's "Simply Scratch" (Avery) can be prepared at home and

then put together at the stadium lot.

Ultimate Steak & Mushroom Sandwiches

(Makes 4 6-inch sandwiches)

1 1/4 to 1 1/2 pounds rib-eye steak
1 cup Balsamic Herb Dressinade (see below)
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large sweet onion, halved and thinly sliced
1 pint cremini mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper (optional)
1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese

1 1/2 cups grated provolone cheese
4 6-inch hoagie bungs, split
Mayonnaise

Balsamic Herb Dressinade

2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried
2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary, or 1 teaspoon dried
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme, or 1/2 teaspoon dried
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

6 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 cup grape-seed or olive oil

In a 1-pint glass jar, combine all the ingredients. Secure the lid and shake until combined. Let stand for 30 minutes before using. Refrigerate any unused dressing.

Place the steak on a small rimmed baking sheet and freeze for 20 minutes so it's firm and partially frozen. Holding a sharp knife on a slight angle, going against the grain of the meat, slice into very thin strips.

In a large resealable bag or a medium bowl, marinate the steak in the dressinade for 30 minutes.

On a griddle or in a 12-inch cast-iron skillet, melt the butter with the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion, toss and spread out in an even layer. Once the onion starts to soften, add the mushrooms. Cook until soft and slightly caramelized.

Using tongs, remove the steak from the marinade (allow excess to drip back into the bag or bowl) and place on the griddle, toss with the

onions and mushrooms, then spread in an even layer. Allow the steak to sear, forming a crust, for 4 to 6 minutes, then flip and cook for 4 to 6 minutes more.

Season with a pinch of salt and pepper, if desired, and sprinkle with the blue cheese and provolone. Turn off the heat on the griddle or remove the skillet from the heat and cover with a domed lid or tented foil to allow the cheese to melt quickly.

Toss one last time so the cheese is mixed throughout. Divide the steak mixture among the crusty hoagie buns.

How to roast pumpkin seeds

Carving jack-o'-lanterns is a Halloween tradition that both adults and children enjoy. It's hard to resist an opportunity to carve a funny or scary face into a pumpkin that will soon make its way to the front porch, but there's another irresistible element to carving pumpkins as well.

Roasted pumpkin seeds make for a tasty, tempting treat. Seeds must be removed before carving pumpkins, so turning them into a savory snack is a great way to make use of them and cook up some fuel for family carving sessions.

Roasting pumpkin seeds is a straightforward

process, though some people may have their own techniques to make seeds more flavorful. The following recipe for "Pumpkin Seeds" from the Food Network reflects various ways to prepare this beloved snack.

Pumpkin Seeds

1. Seed the pumpkin: Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F. Using a spoon, scrape the pulp and seeds out of your pumpkin into a bowl.

2. Clean the seeds: Separate the seeds from the stringy pulp, rinse the seeds in a colander under cold water, then shake dry. Don't blot with paper towels; the seeds will stick.

3. Dry them: Spread the seeds in a single layer on an oiled baking

sheet and roast 30 minutes to dry them out.

4. Add spices: Toss the seeds with olive oil, salt and your choice of spices (see below). Return to the oven and bake until crisp and golden, about 20 more minutes.

5. Sweet Toss with cinnamon and sugar (do not use salt in step 4).

6. Indian Toss with garam masala; mix with currants after roasting.

7. Spanish Toss with smoked paprika; mix with slivered almonds

after roasting.

8. Italian Toss with grated parmesan and dried oregano.

9. Barbecue Toss with brown sugar, chipotle chile powder and ground cumin.

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TURKEY BURGERS WITH ROSEMARY AIOLI

These turkey burgers have a light rosemary flavor and a little zing from the red wine vinegar and Dijon mustard in the aioli. Serve on a kaiser roll with tomato, pickles and onion, and you have one tasty burger.

INGREDIENTS:

BURGERS

- 1 pound lean ground turkey**
- ½ small yellow onion, grated or finely chopped**
- 1 clove garlic, grated or minced**
- ½ teaspoon fresh rosemary, finely chopped**
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce**
- Dash of fresh ground black pepper**
- Salt, to taste**

ROSEMARY AIOLI

- ⅔ cup light mayonnaise**
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary, finely chopped**
- 1 clove garlic, grated or minced**

- 1 to 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar (to taste)**
- 1 to 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil (to taste)**
- 1 to 2 teaspoons dijon mustard (to taste)**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**

- 4 pub buns or kaiser rolls**

BURGER TOPPING

- Butter, softened, as needed for buns**
- 4 slices of cheese**
- Sliced tomato, pickles, onion and lettuce leaves**

DIRECTIONS:

- 1.** To make aioli, combine mayo, rosemary, garlic, vinegar, olive oil, dijon, salt and pepper in small bowl. Cover and refrigerate while you prepare the rest of the meal.

ate while you prepare the rest of the meal.

- 2.** For burgers, combine turkey, onion, garlic, rosemary, Worcestershire, pepper and salt in a medium bowl. Form into four patties.

- 3.** Grill over medium-hot heat for about 5 minutes per side.

- 4.** Place a slice of cheese on each patty 3-5 minutes before it's done.

- 5.** Butter the cut side of each bun and grill until golden, about 1-2 minutes.

- 6.** Allow burgers to rest a few minutes before serving. Assemble topping with lettuce, tomato, onions, pickles and aioli. Enjoy!



YUMMY APPETIZER

FRIED ZUCCHINI WITH DIPPING SAUCE

We could eat plates of these simple fried zucchini chips. The batter is light but crunchy at the same time. Panko gives an extra crunch to the zucchini, too. Pan-frying in just a bit of oil makes the coating super crunchy. Yum!

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 to 4 medium fresh zucchini**
- 2 large eggs**
- 1 to 1½ cups Panko bread crumbs (plain or Italian)**
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley**

- 1 teaspoon black pepper**
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt**
- Vegetable oil or butter for frying**

FOR DIPPING

- 1 cup ranch or blue cheese dressing or marinara**

DIRECTIONS:

- 1.** Slice the zucchini into medium-thick slices. Place them on a paper towel to absorb some of the moisture.
- 2.** Crack the eggs into a bowl and whisk together.
- 3.** Add remaining ingredients (minus dip) into another bowl and mix together until well blended.
- 4.** Take zucchini slice and dip into egg. Shake off gently and then place into the Panko bread crumb mixture and dredge it or take a handful of mixture and pat on the top

of zucchini until nicely covered. Repeat with all pieces until finished.

- 5.** Heat pan on medium and add 1 tablespoon olive oil or a pat of butter, whichever you prefer. When hot, place zucchini slices in pan.

- 6.** Fry until nicely browned on each side, 4-7 minutes.

- 7.** Remove and place on plate with paper towel to absorb any extra oil. Repeat until finished with the slices.



ADULT BEVERAGE

WATERMELON MARGARITA

Say goodbye to summer while sipping this frosty margarita. It's a refreshing way to enjoy fresh watermelon in a drink. Make a batch of these sweet and tangy beverages while you're sitting poolside. This is definitely an adult-only cocktail.



INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups watermelon, cubed and frozen**
- 1 ripe banana, peeled and frozen**
- 2 tablespoons agave nectar or maple syrup (the nectar works the best)**
- Zest from 2 limes**
- Juice from 2 limes (about 4 tablespoons)**
- ½ cup water**
- Silver tequila for margaritas: add 3-4 shots**

DIRECTIONS:

- 1.** Add all ingredients to blender and mix until smooth.
- 2.** Add more water (or alcohol) as needed to keep the mixture moving.
- 3.** Garnish with fruit slices and serve.

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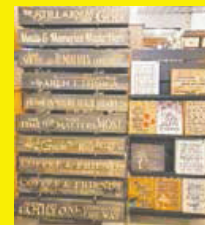
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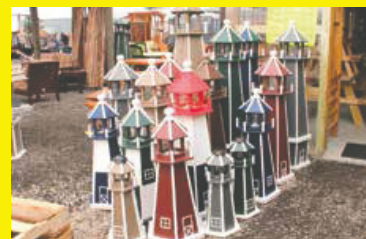
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