

Dayton City Paper

Miami Valley's Arts, Culture & Events Weekly

WHAT THE FIND?



THE LEGENDARY NATIONAL ROAD YARD SALE

BY JENNIFER HANAUER LUMPKIN // PG. 20

photo: Jennifer Hanauer Lumpkin



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MILES OF BARGAINS

Regional National Road Yard Sale returns

By Jennifer Hanauer Lumpkin

The yard sale to beat all yard sales

It's a juxtaposition of things you never dared dream. A dashboard hula girl standing beside an oil lamp. Flowers made out of dinner plates glinting in the sun under wind chimes made out of forks and brass pitchers. A basket full of dolls with closed eyes sleeping next to a red yarn wig and some polyester tulips. A table full of miniature chairs next to a breastplate obviously made for a Shinigami. A lightly-used wedding dress hanging over a water cooler. Sixteen ladders and a saddle. A bronze bust of Santa Claus draped with white kid gloves and a ferret pelt. Three sinks sprouting flowers but no tap handles, and a spring-loaded rocking horse that just won't stop. A teeny, tiny Hun army covering beneath a mopey-eyed ceramic puppy and his friend, the elephant soap dish/toothbrush holder.

It's like Vladimir Kush and Baz Luhrmann collaborated on an episode of *Hoarders*.

But in a good way. I'm just glad it was daylight. From the useful, practical finds (bookcases, chairs, lamps) to the gimme-gimme-I-will-never-have-enough-of-this-item (jewelry, records, VHS tapes) to the strange trinkets and odd curios (ceramic unicorn collections, moving waterfall "paintings," Victorian-era hairbrushes), it's all here.

The Annual Historic National Road Yard Sale is in its 12th year, stretching over 800 miles from Baltimore, Maryland, to St. Louis, Missouri. Always taking place after Memorial Day, 2015's sale will be held May 27 through 31. Not everyone has their wares out every day, so if you want to optimize a one-day adventure, I suggest going on Super Saturday, May 30, so you can hit the max number of sales.

Patricia McDaniel, owner of Old Store Front Antiques in Dublin, Indiana, is chair of the Historic National Road Yard Sale and has traveled the length of the road marketing the epic event. When she heard people were going to be celebrating the bicentennial of National Road in expensive ways, like car shows, she decided there needed to be something could engage children and those of lesser means.

"I wanted an activity that the whole family could afford to do," McDaniel says of the development of the epic yard sale. "It's a lot of fun."

McDaniel is into the fourth volume of her popular "National Road Cookbook," a collection of local recipes from all along the road that includes directions for sassafras tea, fruit loop bark and roust possum. The continued interest in the cookbook and the national interest the Historic National Road Yard Sale receives speaks to the longevity of the event.

"I'll keep doin' it as long as they're buyin' what I'm sellin'," Bob, a Historic National Road Yard Sale veteran vendor, told me as I pored over his collection of antique farm equipment. "I just set [sic] here all day, talk to folks. Come from all over. I guess people'll buy about anythin' that's for sale."

Allow me to impart to you some interpersonal advice, if you're looking for a tell-all first date with someone, and you don't have the time or means to go camping, I suggest attending an 824-mile long yard sale with your prospective partner. I learned so much about my spouse during this journey. We were talking to a man, who identified himself as "Mr. Spencer," about a collection of Prince Charles and Lady Diana commemorative wedding cups he had for sale. I couldn't say for

certain whether it was a clever part of his sales pitch or his actual family tree he was telling us about, but he did claim to be 34th cousin to the late Princess of Wales. After some impressive haggling, my husband bought all five. I hadn't known he had it in him.

One memorable stop on the north side of the road outside of Springfield was so well developed it seemed implausible that it was a temporary attraction. As we approached, it was unclear whether the lounging humans there were all purveyors, or if some were just road-wearied shoppers taking a break in the shade. Regardless, they were in high spirits and eager to engage us newcomers. I had the presence of the bathtub wearing an '80s prom dresses explained to me sufficiently, but I was

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— Patricia McDaniel,
Historic National Road
Yard Sale Chair



still unsure as to if the outhouse with a dummy dressed as Uncle Sam reading the newspaper was for sale or just a perennial fixture in the yard. I bought a vintage-looking picture frame and a soda (with a sell-by date from last year) to quench my thirst.

In the interest of full disclosure, some of the stops were just a mess. More than one yard forewent the tables and just laid everything out to bask in the sun until the items came to a full boil. I inquired of one vendor, dozing amidst piles of sorted objects, as to the cost of his milk crate filled with Wild Cherry Blossom Suave shampoo bottles. With his backscratcher he tapped a handwritten sign that read "Everything 1\$" before falling back asleep in his indoor/outdoor Barcalounger. A hundred pennies for The Criterion Collection Bottle Rocket? Sold.

Overall, our day-long adventure was a delight, and one I could foresee becoming an annual outing. You'd be hard-pressed to return without at least a couple of items and tales from the sales. Worst-case scenario, you take a beautiful drive along a historic road. You just can't lose.

The Historic National Road

Historic National Road is part of U.S. Route 40. The first federally funded interstate highway, it was constructed in the early 1800s to connect Cumberland, Maryland, with Vandalia, Illinois. Extensions were made through a series of private toll roads and turnpikes to lengthen the road to Baltimore in the east and St. Louis in the west. Designated an All-American Road by the U.S. Department of Transportation in 2002, Historic National Road is being preserved for its historic, scenic



and regionally significant qualities.

"America's Byways are roads to the heart and soul of America," U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta writes in a press release from the Federal Highway Administration. "Byways help create a sense of pride in America. They connect us to this country's beauty, history and culture."

You can do like the pioneers 200 years ago and follow Historic National Road west from Springfield through Vandalia, Englewood and Clayton, out toward Richmond, Indiana. Take in the rolling, wooded hills and farmlands while you compare your expedition with that of those who came before you.

Stops along your way

This weekend is all about the sales, but you're going to see a lot more than price tags as you make your way down Route 40. The following is just a sampling of the gems that make National Road a treasured American byway.

Johnson's Lamp Shop

8518 E. National Rd.
South Vienna, OH 45369
johnsonslampshop.com

This unique shop, owned by Denna Johnson, operates in the former Buena Vista Tavern. Behind the building are several tourist cabins from the 1930s, one of which now operates as the Historic Buena Vista Motel. Open Wednesday through Saturday.

The Westcott House

85 S. Greenmount Ave.
Springfield, OH 45505
westcouthouse.org

Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and built for Burton J. Westcott and his family in 1908. The only representation of Wright's Prairie Style house in Ohio. Guided tours available Wednesday through Sunday.

Clark County Heritage Center

117 S. Fountain Ave.
Springfield, OH 45502
heritagecenter.us

Designed by Charles A. Cregar in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, the Heritage Center features massive stonework, arches and towers. Open Tuesday through Saturday, it features a major National Road exhibit on the first floor.

Davidson Interpretive Center

5638 Lower Valley Pike
Springfield, OH 45502
clarkcountyparkdistrict.org/davidson-interpretive-center

Explore the center and the location of the Peckuwe Settlements Battle Site, the largest Revolutionary War battle to take place west of the Allegheny Mountains. Open Monday through Friday.

Taylorville MetroPark

2000 State Route 40
Vandalia, OH 45377
metroparks.org/Parks/Taylorville



The Historic National Road Yard Sale takes place along U.S. Route 40 from May 27-31

You won't even have to get off the road to cross right over 3,000-foot long, 67-foot high Taylorville Dam. Built from 1918-1921, the dam manages the water coming down the Great Miami River and protects the Miami Valley from floods like the one that devastated the region in 1913. The MetroPark also boasts hiking trails and the ruins of Tadmor, a once-thriving center of transportation that was abandoned 100 years ago.

Aullwood Garden MetroPark

955 Aullwood Rd.
Englewood, OH 45414
metroparks.org/Parks/AullwoodGarden

Donated to Five Rivers MetroParks by Marie Aull, this nationally recognized historic estate garden sprawls over 350 acres and blooms with lilacs, pansies, bluebells and mertensia amongst others.

Englewood MetroPark

4361 National Rd.
Vandalia, OH 45377
metroparks.org/Parks/Englewood

The park features Englewood Dam, the largest of the Miami Conservancy dams, an old road segment at Patty Falls Trailhead, a rehabilitated gravel quarry and the Pumpkin Ash & Swamp Forest, a State National Landmark.

Englewood Government Center

333 W. National Rd.
Englewood, OH 45322
englewood.oh.us

Stop in here to see historic photos of the National Road in their lobby and snap your own photos of the National Road mile marker out front. Open Monday through Friday.

Yard Sale Survival Kit

Sunglasses. I watched a small child struck blind by a sequined tap costume when the sun came out unexpectedly from behind a cloud.

Sunscreen. Let your memories be sparked by the trinkets, not the burn.

Cash. You don't want to get caught in a bidding war with a wily grandma-type over a section of wrought iron fencing and not have the moolah to back it up. I speak from experience.

Water and snacks. Even though many stops have seized the capitalist opportunity before them and had bottles of water for sale, it's a good idea to bring your own just in case. Two places had hotdogs, and one had donuts!

Light layers and maybe some muck boots. We're talking rain or shine, paved driveways or grassy hummocks. Don't let the elements slow you down!

The Historic National Road Yard Sale will take place along U.S. Route 40 from May 27-31, 2015, with the largest number of sales taking place on Super Saturday, May 30. To learn more about Ohio's scenic byways, visit fhwa.dot.gov/byways/states/OH. Keep up with the Ohio National Road Association and check out their *Traveler's Guide* at ohionationalroad.org. For updates on the Historic National Road Yard Sale, visit facebook.com/nationalroadyardsale.

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