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LOCAL NEWS

Fall Festival to close out Wednesdays in Wintersville

By **ROSS GALLABRESE** August 29, 2026 6 min read



Ross Gallabrese TASTING — Luke Hoover of the Shorac Funeral Home and Jennifer Cesta, public relations coordinator of the Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County, were among the judges of the baking contest held during the August edition of Wednesdays in Wintersville. The event returns to Main Street in the village from 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday.

WINTERSVILLE -- The calendar might show that there are several weeks before autumn actually begins, but there are indications the season is close to arriving.

That makes Fall Festival the appropriate theme for September's Wednesdays in Wintersville.

"There are a lot of fun things planned," explained Joel John, who heads the volunteer committee that puts on the monthly event. "We're going to have the traditional fall festival activities."

Scheduled to run between 4:30 and 8:30 p.m. along Main Street in the village, the September edition will be the last of the outdoor festivals of the season.

"Our baking contest is anything pumpkin," John said. "That could be pumpkin pie, pumpkin cake, savory pumpkin -- I make a pumpkin pasta that I think I might enter. It's really any pumpkin creation."

The monthly contests have attracted a lot of interest this year, he added. There were six entries for the August competition, which featured a Back-to-School theme.

Those competitions have been coordinated by Donna Thomas. Anyone who is interested in participating in this month's pumpkin-themed contest can contact her at 740-381-3261 to register before the deadline of 5:15 p.m. Wednesday. Organizers say they need at least five participants for the competition to happen. Prizes will include gift cards from Exquisite Creations by Joel, the business John owns, and Pastaio Cucina Rustica Italiana.

Judging will begin at 6 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church.

Also drawing attention is the monthly display that is held in the Center of Hope at Wintersville Methodist Church. The theme this month is Anything Pumpkin, and it will be open from 4:30 to 7 p.m. Karen Fante is the coordinator for that segment, and she can be contacted at 740-632-6572.

"There's a pretty broad category this month," John said. "It could be a pumpkin that you have decorated; it can be a real pumpkin or a fake pumpkin; it can be pumpkins that are made out of things that aren't pumpkins. I've seen people make pumpkins out of lids and bands from canning jars. There are people who make papier-mache pumpkins, and I have a collection of ceramic pumpkins -- it's anything pumpkin," John said.

There's no kids' market this month, John said, but there will be activities for children, and the dress-up contest will be built around a scarecrow theme. Kristina Vodvarka is the coordinator, and the deadline to register is 6 p.m. Wednesday. She can be reached at 740-317-5577. Gift certificates to Ice Cream Island will be awarded, John added.

The usual lineup of vendors and food trucks will be present, and the Main Street Farmers Market, presented by the Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District, will be open from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. The market will run through the first week in October.

Entertainment will feature performances by the Brassett Hounds and Faire May, and the Knotty Pint mobile bar will be set up in the lounge area, which is the parking lot at Exquisite Creations. There also will be a group performing German-style dancing. The entertainment, he noted, will run from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

A tent has been added to the lounge area, John said, and it offers a place to sit, relax and get out of the sun -- or the rain. As with any event that is held primarily outdoors, Wednesdays in Wintersville has seen its share of extremes this year, including storms that hit the region just as the Aug. 5 presentation was beginning and chased some -- but not all -- vendors away, and led to the relocation of the baking contest to under the tent.

"We had the first one in May that we had to cancel," John said. "It was cold -- I mean, it was literally cold, and it was rainy and it was damp. We went from unseasonably record low temperatures to the unseasonably warm temperatures we had in July. But we still persevered, and we had the vendors come out. We might have lost a handful of spectators, but the tried-and-true vendors were here.

"So, we're hoping for excellent weather on Wednesday. And, again, we do advertise the event as rain or shine," he added.

With the season ending on Wednesday, John said a special event has been scheduled for Thursday. Called Sip, Sip Hooray, the gathering in the lounge area will offer a thank-you for vendors and a chance for members of the community to discuss things they liked about the presentations and things they'd like to see improved. It will start at 6 p.m.

"We learned from that last year," he added. "We had a lot of people who came who had comments, and we grew from that. Our goal with this is to make it grow better for the vendors and better for the participants -- for the people of the community, because this is truly a community production. This is not just businesspeople -- this is people who care about Wintersville.

"There are people who are on the committee who don't even have a business in Wintersville, and some of them don't even live here, but they care about this event greatly, and it's nice to see that," John continued.

He said the festival has seen great growth during the past five years, and that's because of the efforts of the organizing committee.

"Everybody brings something new to the table, and new insights," John said. "We discuss a lot of the things that happen. From all aspects, every chairperson has exceeded my expectations this year. I have to say thank you, because they blew it out of the water."

Members of the committee are already looking toward the Wintersville Winter Weekend, which will be held from 3 to 9 p.m. Dec. 5 at the Center of Hope. Several food trucks already are committed, he said, as have many entertainment groups. Luminaries again will be sold, and they will be available for purchase beginning Wednesday night.

That will come one day before the village's annual Christmas parade. Contact the village building for information about the parade, he said.

John added the support Wednesdays in Wintersville has received from the village is important.

"We have seen great support, especially from the police department," he said. "Their presence has been great, both on- and off-duty. They know when it is coming, and they put it on their schedule.

"We have people who want to see this," he added. "They want to be a part of it, and it's nice to see that friendly aspect. At one of the events, a little girl came dressed as a cop. She was out with the officers, and they were showing her how to direct traffic. It was something that made it a community, and a community event. I was very happy to see it."