



Perhaps the main attraction on South Bass Island, Put-In-Bay has been called the Key West of the Midwest. Photographs courtesy of Lake Erie Shores & Islands

Celebrate summer by planning a getaway to one of our Lake Erie Islands

By PARIS WOLFE

Get your island vibe in Lake Erie this summer. The western basin has four main Islands: South Bass, Middle Bass, North Bass and Kelleys Islands. South Bass is, perhaps, known by its tourist town – Put-in-Bay. Pick one (or more), slide into your flip flops, slather on sunscreen, and arrive island-side by ferry, private boat, or small plane.

On Kelleys, South and Middle Bass islands rent bicycles or golf carts to power your way to attractions. North Bass is fairly primitive, requiring private boat or plane for access, and permits for camping.

Stay for the day or longer. Lodging is mostly small properties and bed and breakfast operations. Boaters can reserve space at marinas on various islands and use associated bathhouses and other amenities. If the lake is calling, fishing folk can charter fishing boats to catch perch or walleye.

Home to much of Ohio’s wine-making industry before prohibition, each island has a different energy and varied attractions. Grapes are still grown on several, with wineries on South Bass and Kelleys Islands. Middle Bass was once home to Lonz Winery, but the historic structure is no longer producing wine.

Bars, restaurants, and retail – which open when weather warms around late May through September – are part of the attraction at Put-in-Bay and on Kelleys Island. Waterfront activities and parks put nature lovers in their element.

Following is a short sample of what’s possible. For more information visit www.shoresandislands.com.

SOUTH BASS

Home to the village of Put-in-Bay (population 128), South Bass is the busiest of the islands. It attracts 1.5 million people annually to its 1,588 acres, mostly during warm summer months though ice fishing is a thing in winter.

Start your visit by pedaling or puttering to Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial, a 325-foot Doric column on the eastern edge of the island. Built in 1936, it honors those who fought in the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812 and it celebrates the long-lasting peace among the United States, Canada, and Britain. It is named for U.S. Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry.

Get that altitude adjusted with Put-in-Bay Parasail



The Glacial Grooves on the north side of Kelleys Island were carved into limestone bedrock about 18,000 years ago. They are the largest, easily accessible grooves in the world.



Travelers arrive at South Bass Island by private boat or ferry for a day or longer. Time slows down as most travel about by golf cart or bike to enjoy the lively town of Put-In-Bay or several nearby attractions.



Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial honors those who fought in the Battle of Lake Erie, during the War of 1812. It celebrates the long-lasting peace among Great Britain, Canada, and the U.S.

(www.putinbayparasail.com). You’ll get 600 feet of line for an adrenaline-pumping 300 feet of flight height.

Then, put on the brakes with a pause at Heineman Winery, founded in 1888 and run by fifth-generation family members. While there, crowd into the Crystal Cave and marvel at the sparkly formations in the world’s largest geode.

If you prefer beer or distilled spirits, Put-in-Bay Brewery & Distillery is the island’s only brewery and distillery. Open for 25 years, it serves food and beer and sells Island Rum and Island Vodka.

MIDDLE BASS

The iconic and historic Lonz Winery property was acquired by the state of Ohio in the 2000s and reopened in 2017 as part of Middle Bass Island State Park. The 124-acre state park is now home to the restored building shell, open-air plaza, and wine exhibits inside the preserved cellars. This is one of many places to explore while visiting the 805-acre island.

Hazards Microbrewery and Restaurant is next to the Middle Bass Marina. In festive island style it offers free pool and hot tub use for customers. The appeal here includes a tiki bar from Bali with Caribbean-style landscaping, and teak furniture.

KELLEYS ISLAND

Home to 313 permanent residents, Kelleys Island is the largest of Ohio’s Lake Erie islands. The atmosphere is different from the Bass islands. You’ll want to rent a golf cart or bicycle and visit natural areas including beach and forest.

Traveling the 2,800-acre island you’ll find the Glacial Grooves, the largest, easily accessible grooves in the world. Glacial ice left grooves 400 feet long, 35 feet wide and up to 10 feet deep scored into the limestone bedrock. The stone contains marine fossils dated 350 to 400 million years ago.

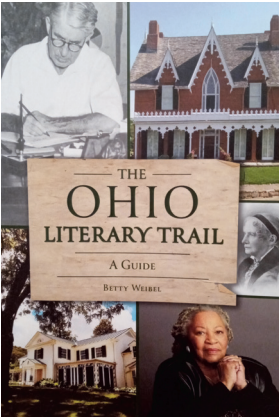
If you prefer a guided tour, consider two-hour kayak, hike/bike or golf cart adventures organized by Kelleys Island AdvenTours (kelleysislandadventours.com). You can see highlights, sunsets and/or learn history during these treks.

Wind down the day at Kelley Island Wine Company. Started in 1982, the winemaker Kirt Zettler makes wines from local grapes. Food is also available at the winery.

Ohio’s Literary Trail gets an upgrade from author Betty Weibel

By SARAH JAQUAY

“The accomplishments of Ohio’s writers and illustrators are undeniable. We aren’t aware of the depth of our own literary heritage,” notes local author and public relations professional Betty Weibel.



Local author Betty Weibel’s new book, “The Ohio Literary Trail: A Guide” (Arcadia Publishing 2021), provides readers and history buffs with lots of road trip ideas to discover our literary heritage.

“promote, preserve and increase awareness of Ohio literature.” It’s a venerable organization founded in 1929 by Ohio First Lady Martha Kinney Cooper. The Ohio History Connection “is in the business of preserving and

sharing Ohio stories.”

When Weibel was discussing the 90th anniversary of Toledo-based author Mildred Wirt Benson’s work with Ohioana Executive Director David Weaver, she brought up the idea of expanding Ohio’s existing literary trail map and making it digital. Benson penned 23 of the original, wildly popular Nancy Drew mysteries under the pseudonym Carolyn Keene. Ohio’s had a literary trail map since the 1950s, but it was cumbersome and had limited listings. Weibel’s book divides Ohio into five regions across 35 counties and boasts 72 sites, making for countless day trips.

“The Ohio Literary Trail” features an interesting mix of historic homes (such as Harriet Beecher Stowe’s house in Cincinnati); museums such as The McCloskey Museum in Hamilton, where visitors may see a reproduction of Homer Price’s donut machine and the drawings and paintings of renowned children’s author and illustrator Robert McCloskey (“Make Way For Ducklings”); historical markers—the text of each marker is contained in Weibel’s listings. So even if it’s precipitating, travelers can still read what’s on them; and collections or permanent exhibits at “libraries for tourists,” such as the Nancy Drew Collection at the Toledo Lucas County Public Library.

Via its useful set of appendices, this guidebook also pays tribute to breathing literary luminaries such as Cleveland native and Pulitzer Prize-winner Anthony Doerr (“All the Light We Cannot See,” Scribner 2014) and Lyndhurst resident Mary Doria Russell, one of this reporter’s favorite historical fiction writers, including “Dreamers of the Day” (Penguin 2008) in which a grieving Cleveland school teacher winds up meeting Churchill and “Lawrence of Arabia” in Cairo in 1921. The guidebook also contains a chapter on “Literary Festivals Around Ohio” that provide opportunities to connect with



Betty Weibel is a Cleveland author and public relations professional who’s written a new book about Ohio’s rich literary heritage. Photograph by Michelle Wood

authors who may be from Ohio or have written books about our state.

When asked how Ohio’s literary trail compares to other states, Weibel notes the wide-ranging and eclectic contributions of Ohio’s literati. “There was Natalie Clifford Barney, who wrote openly as a lesbian. She wrote love poems to and for women. Look at how Harriet Beecher Stowe influenced race relations in this country. Newberry Medal

winner Virginia Hamilton’s depiction of African-American children in her books was truly groundbreaking.”

Weibel also imagines other states’ trails may feature a few marquee names. Ohio is bursting with marquee names and influencers (f.k.a. literary critics and editors.) Sure we have Harriet Beecher Stowe, James Thurber, Sherwood Anderson, Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Toni Morrison; but Ohio can claim the likes of William Dean Howells, a.k.a. “the Dean of American Letters” and famed former editor of “The Atlantic Monthly.” Mark Twain might have remained a regionally-known writer if Howells hadn’t promoted his work and perhaps few would know the work of poet, novelist and short-story writer Paul Lawrence Dunbar without Howells’ praise.

It’s hard to underestimate Ohio’s literary contributions and well-read travelers will be thrilled with the contents of “The Ohio Literary Trail: A Guide.” But Weibel wants everyone to know this guidebook isn’t just for the well-read. “It’s written for people who don’t know what an incredible literary heritage we have to discover. So much was sparked in Ohio.”

So follow these simple directions to become one of the Buckeye State’s literary cognoscenti: Get “The Ohio Literary Trail: A Guide.” Put it in your car’s glove compartment and pull it out whenever you’re planning a road trip. When you see an Ohio historical marker matching an entry, pull over and linger in the author’s universe that inspired great literature. You may be inspired too.

To purchase “The Ohio Literary Trail: A Guide,” visit Fireside Book Shop in Chagrin Falls or Loganberry Books on Larchmere Blvd. near Shaker Square. You can also order via Amazon or Arcadia Publishing’s websites. To download or print out the digital map of Ohio’s Literary Trail, visit ohioana.org/resources/the-ohio-literary-trail/.