

SOMERSET magazine

A homegrown brew

tasty teas grown
in your garden

The return of roller skating

Touchstone celebrates 50

Laurel Highlands arts hub
fosters a variety of trades

Volume 14 | Issue 9

\$1.95



6 74605 00005 7

JUNE 2023

334 West Main St., P.O. Box 638, Somerset, PA 15501

CONTENTS

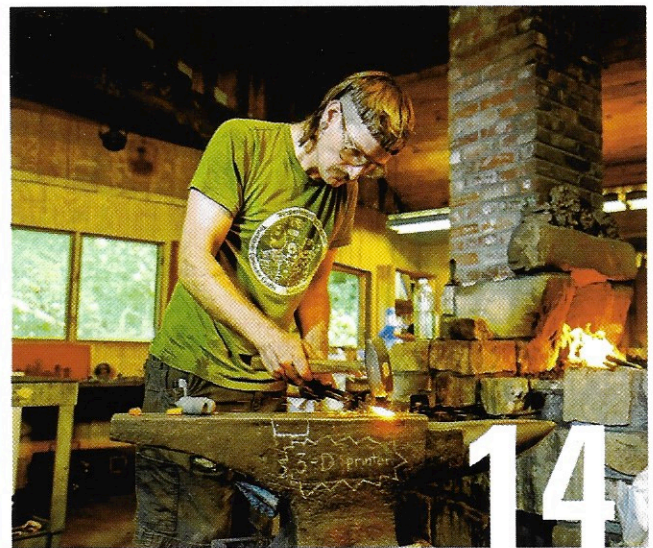
June 2023 • VOLUME 14 | ISSUE 9

Experienced skin care pros open Skindred Spirits.....	5
Let's Eat In: Ginger chicken salad.....	6
Four days of the Fourth of July.....	8
Artolescents encouraged to explore creative side.....	9
A story of good versus evil.....	10
A homegrown brew.....	12
Touchstone celebrates 50.....	14
The soap box challenge.....	17
The return of roller skating.....	18
Longtime UPJ employees reflect on careers.....	21
In The Garden: 'Right plant, right place'.....	23
Calendar of Events.....	25
Photo Club: Bokeh.....	26

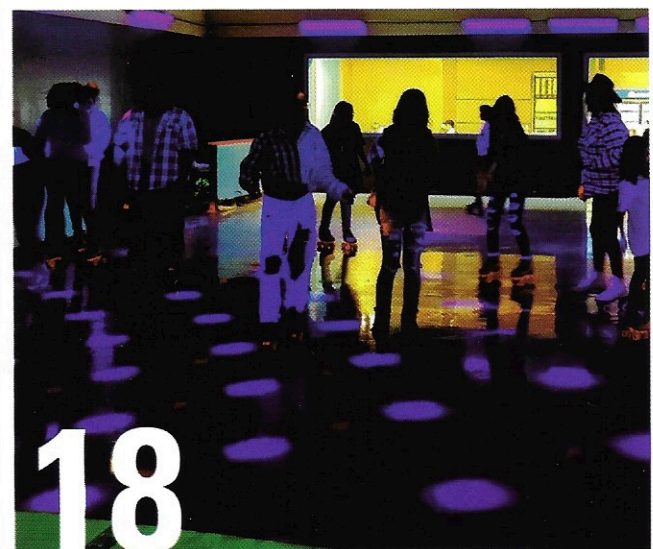
Send all comments to
somersetmagazine@gmail.com



12



14



18

ON THE COVER

Julia Castor in the ceramics studio at Touchstone Center for Crafts.
Credit: Alex Byers

See story on page 14

Touchstone celebrates 50

This Laurel Highlands arts hub fosters development of a variety of trades

By Carole McCray, Correspondent

Touchstone Center for Crafts, located in the scenic Laurel Highlands on 150 acres, is a unique craft school.

Founded in 1972 as Pioneer Crafts Council by a community of artists and supporters, and encouraged by the state, they began sharing their love of traditional Appalachian crafts. Classes in pottery, weaving, quilting and the fiber arts were held in the Mill Run Grange Hall under the name Pioneer Crafts Council.

The new home was eventually founded a few miles away in nearby Farmington, where Touchstone remains today. On June 3, Touchstone is celebrating 50 years of honoring the arts.

Touchstone has evolved into a nationally recognized arts institution with a mission to advance excellence in arts and crafts by educating and encouraging individuals to develop technical skills, good design and innovative artistic expression.

"As executive director at Touchstone since 2018, my goal is to help artists of all ages discover and hone their artistic talents in a welcoming and nurturing environment," Lindsay Ketterer Gates said.

Touchstone's focus is on offering high-quality learning opportunities in various disciplines, such as blacksmithing, ceramics, metal/jewelry, glass, drawing/painting and other topics.

"Having grown up with a passion for making things with my hands, Touchstone brings together everything I love about

fine crafts and allows me to share this experience with others. What I enjoy most is hearing and sharing the stories from instructors, interns and workshop participants about the impact the arts have on their lives. This creative learning atmosphere inspires me every day, and I'm looking forward to the next 50 years," Dean Simpson, marketing manager at Touchstone, said.

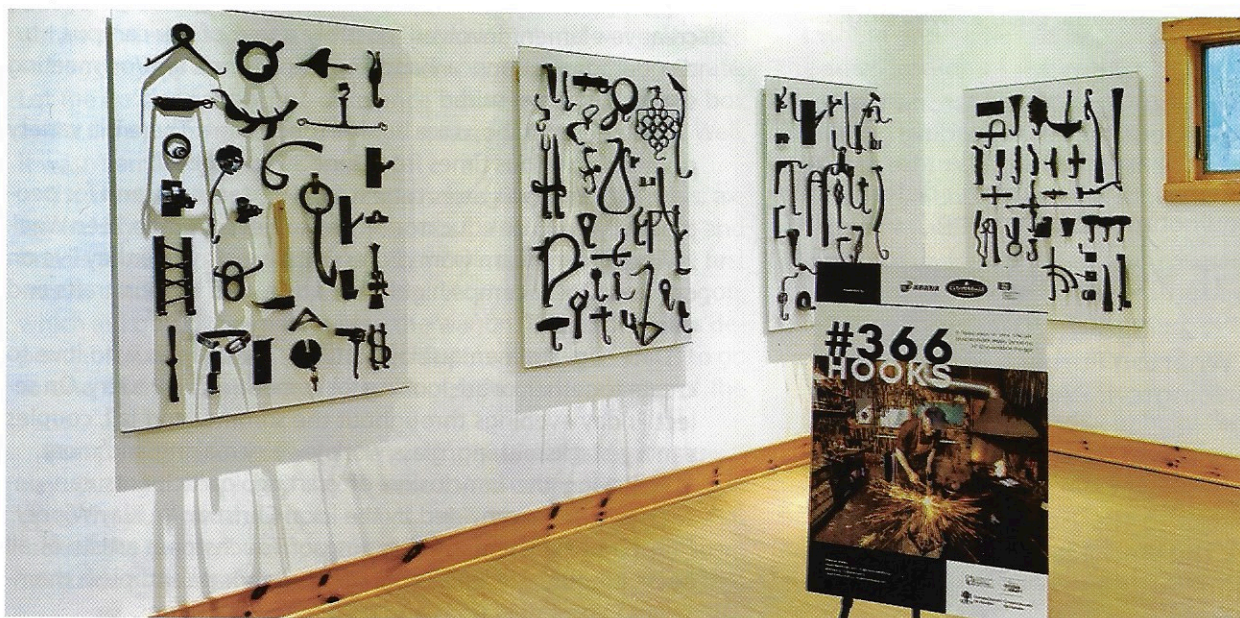
Through in-person workshops, professional exhibitions, artist residencies, video content and studio internships, Touchstone keeps traditional techniques alive while pushing craft techniques into the 21st century.

Participants and instructors come from all over the U.S. and Canada. Touchstone is committed to partnering with organizations to build the creative economy of the region by attracting, training and engaging emerging artists to establish businesses in southwestern Pennsylvania. It is a resource to the surrounding region and the greater Pittsburgh area with community engagement activities in schools, community festivals and by offering exhibition and meeting spaces in addition to Act 48 credits for teachers.

There are cabins, dorms and camping for overnight participants. Touchstone has a chef on staff, and all meals are prepared on site, some with a wood-fired pizza oven. Evening campfires are held, where artists gather from various studios



**JB Jarvi-Beamer and
Rebecca Maasry, in the
Susan M. Brimo-Cox Glass
Studio. Photo by Alex Byers**



**A blacksmithing
exhibition at
Touchstone
Center for Crafts
featuring the work
of Matt Jenkins,
of Cloverdale
Forge in Manitoba,
Canada. Photo by
Dean Simpson**

Nathanael Weiss in the Hart Moore Blacksmithing Studio at Touchstone Center for Crafts. Photo by Alex Byers



THE TEASEL & THE TOUCHSTONE

The logo of the Touchstone Center for Crafts is the teasel, a type of wild thistle. The design was created by Robert W. Little, botanist and instructor for the Pioneer Crafts Council in the art of Gyotaku, or printing from nature. The thistle was used in many lands for centuries for combining handwoven textiles, such as weaving, one of the oldest of the arts.

What is a touchstone? It is a siliceous stone that can test the purity of precious metals, including gold and silver, by the streak that is left on the stone when rubbing with the metal. It is also a test for determining the quality or genuineness of something.

IF YOU GO

724-329-1370
1049 Wharton Furnace Road
Farmington, PA 15437

touchstonecrafts.org

Galleries are open to the public May 1-Oct. 1.
Check the website for hours

to learn together. Internship programs are offered for emerging artists from around the country to live and work on campus.

"They get the opportunity for professional development, building networks, learning from instructors, teaching opportunities and they are paid a weekly stipend, along with meals and lodging. There are artist residencies in the spring. We offer scholarships, and in 2022 we gave over 70 scholarships, and veteran scholarships are awarded on a rolling basis throughout the season. A new group retreat program will provide immersive learning experiences for groups, which could include field trips, corporate retreats, professional development, all with a creative element involved, possibly a tour of our campus, studio demonstrations, a hands-on experience and/or meeting spaces," Simpson said.

Themed workshops are held at Touchstone. There is a variety running at various times from June 30 to Sept. 17.

There's an educators retreat for K-12 teachers, and for people studying to be educators in any subject or grade. Teen Week is where teens learn from professional artists while they live on campus. Other camps highlight nature, and various crafts and arts.

Date Night is a unique opportunity for couples who love to create together, or are looking for something new to try. On select Friday evenings throughout the summer and fall, couples can try blacksmithing, glass work jewelry making and more.

Following the conclusion of crafting, participants can unwind with wine provided by the local Christian W. Klay Winery.

Inspired by the natural setting of Touchstone, artists of all backgrounds, skill levels and ages collaborate and push themselves in new directions and try different mediums. SM