

## GO!

## GET ACTIVE

# Sorry, these outdoor adventures are just for the ladies

By **Debbie Juniewicz**  
Contributing Writer

The transformation from domestic goddess to outdoor adventurer was physically and emotionally demanding, but unbelievably rewarding for Christina Simmons.

"I'm a domestic princess," Simmons said, smiling. "So, having to limit the clothing I pack and not washing my hair every day was tough, but if I can live out of a backpack for six days, there's no telling what I can do."

Simmons, 56, recently completed a 51.6-mile section hike of the Appalachian Trail.

"It was so empowering," the Beavercreek woman said. "You meet so many incredible people and they all have their goals and their success stories."

Simmons' success story includes coming back from two ACL surgeries - most recently in 2015.

"I basically had to learn to walk again," she said.

She stumbled upon the Dayton Hikers by accident while talking with some paddlers she knew and the rest is history as she has been enjoying the trails and the challenge of hiking ever since.

## Women's outdoor adventure trips

According to the Outdoor Foundation 2016 Outdoor Participation Report, more than 142 million Americans - approximately 48 percent of the United States population - participated in an outdoor activity in 2015. More than 46 percent of those participants were women. Women's outdoor adventure trips are increasing in popularity and participation across the country. Locally, Outdoor Adventure Connection offers several such programs including an



Outdoor Adventure Connection offers programs including an upcoming backpacking trip and women's wellness retreat. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



This women's adventure at Carter Caves State Resort Park, Kentucky focuses on fitness, relaxation and fun.

upcoming backpacking trip and women's wellness retreat.

"Our ladies-only trips are very popular," said Andy Niekamp of the Outdoor Adventure Connection. "Women tend to be much more social than men and wish to be out in nature with like-minded ladies. They feel less intimidated without men around as men often take charge on adventure outings."

Candy Arndts, of New Carlisle, has loved the great outdoors for as long as she can remember.

"When I was 10 years old, my grandma lived in Kentucky and when I'd go visit her, I'd climb up the hills and just go walking all day," she said. "I just loved to go hiking."

That love hasn't diminished in the more than five decades that followed as Arndts, now 64, has hiked more than 100 miles of the Appalachian Trail and has her sights set on another section hike soon. She occasionally leads hikes with the Dayton Hikers and shares her passion for all things outdoors

## APPALACHIAN TRAIL BACKPACKING WORKSHOP & TRIP

**When:** Sept. 20 - 24, 2017

**Where:** The AT in the Roan Highlands of Tennessee and North Carolina

**What:** Increase your backpacking expertise on this 4-day, 3-night Appalachian Trail backpacking adventure. The hike includes panoramic views of the Roan Highlands, a stay at the highest shelter on the Appalachian Trail and educational workshops.

**Cost:** \$380

## LADIES ONLY BACKPACKING WORKSHOP AND WEEKEND TRIP

**When:** Oct. 6-8

**Where:** Red River Gorge, Kentucky

**What:** Two-night trip for first-time or beginner backpackers includes eight workshops on backpacking essentials.

**Cost:** \$200, includes Friday night motel lodging, Saturday breakfast and Saturday dinner on the trail.

## WOMEN'S WELLNESS ADVENTURE RETREAT

**When:** Oct. 20-22

**Where:** Carter Caves State Resort Park, Kentucky

**What:** This women's only wellness retreat focuses on adventure, fitness, relaxation and good nutrition. Feel the power of adventure - nature, hiking, rappelling, cave exploring, yoga, healthy eating, wellness and fellowship.

**Cost:** \$390 (early pricing ends Sept. 1).

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ALL THESE EVENTS, VISIT [HTTP://OUTDOORADVENTURECONNECTION.COM/](http://OUTDOORADVENTURECONNECTION.COM/)

with her sons and six grandchildren.

"I just want to be outdoors as much as I can," she said. "I feel better and I sleep better, even if I get out and walk for just an hour. And I have met such wonderful women."

Fall - with its vivid, colorful display - is among her favorite times to take to the trails.

"In fall, I'm just in awe of all of God's beauty," she said.

That is another difference Niekamp has observed between men and women.

"Women are more likely to immerse themselves in nature, where men have a tendency to want to conquer nature," he said.

Arndt's advice to reluctant outdoor adventurers is simple.

"Just try it, even just a short hike," she said. "It doesn't have to be fast, just one step at a time. Breathe in that fresh air and you'll want to be back."

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## Things

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**SlayRestRepeat:** Yvette "Diva" Williams presents this album release and cancer benefit. Schuster Center, Dayton. 7 p.m. \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. [www.yvettedivawilliams.com](http://www.yvettedivawilliams.com).

### SEPT. 29 & 30

**Monster Jam:** The high-octane motorsports show brings its current tour to the Nutter Center, Fairborn. 7 p.m. Friday, 1 and 7 p.m. Saturday. Doors open one hour before start time. Tickets start at \$18. Free for children under 2.

**Brian Scolaro:** The actor-comedian from New York performs at Wiley's Comedy Joint, Dayton. 7:15 and 9:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$10.

### SEPT. 30

#### Drive Less Live More River

**Ride:** The 14-mile round trip cycling adventure along the Great Miami River to Franklin begins and ends at Riverfront Park, 3 N. Miami Ave. Miamisburg. Staggered start 8:30-9:30 a.m.; finish by noon. Free. Activities, refreshments, bike safety, bike inspections and more. Pre-register at [www.drivelesslive-more.org](http://www.drivelesslive-more.org).

**Aaron Lewis:** The rocker-turned-country singer performs in concert. JD Legends, 65 Millard Dr., Franklin. 5:30 p.m. \$32.50. 937-746-4950 or [www.jdlegends.com](http://www.jdlegends.com).

#### Suicide Prevention Awareness Charity Concert:

Witness, Cinema Century, GeeGee's Punk Rock All-Stars, Weathervein, Eternal Voids and others perform. Rockstar Pro Arena, Dayton. Doors open at 6 p.m. \$10.

#### "The Music of Prince: A Rock and Symphonic Tribute":

Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra will be joined by vocalist Mackenzie Green and music director Nisan Stewart for this Rockin' Orchestra Series concert. Schuster Center, Dayton. 8 p.m. \$21-\$81. Ticket Center Stage.

**The Boxcar Suite:** The local group performs at the Trolley Stop, Dayton. 9:30 p.m. \$5.