



The **Off the Beaten Path Studio Tour** is one of those hip, cool, fall events that “Annie” discovered in the Center Hill Lake area while visiting the Stella Luna Art Gallery. The 11th Annual Off the Beaten Path Studio Tour will be at the end of October - a perfect time of the year to marvel at the blanket of color draped across the mountains surrounding the deep blue azure of Center Hill Lake. (Please see the www.OffTheBeatenPathTour.com website for downloadable maps and brochures, and additional information on the artists.) The Hospitality and Art Exhibit Center takes place at the Stella Luna Art Gallery in Smithville, TN where you will find light refreshments, maps and directions available if needed. I had the great pleasure of meeting with sculptor William Kooienga and wife, Sharon, one beautiful Saturday morning (picture on right). Sharon is a very accomplished fiber artist weaving with angora and mohair fibers, just to name a few. Her tapestry work and rugs adorn their rustic home and bring color to their living area. The Kooienga’s moved from Asheville, NC several years ago and fell in love with the area, buying 100 plus acres. They live simply on their expansive acreage, and have lovingly built their log home of the trees from the forest around them. They have a solar powered home with water from the creek that lines their sprawling tree-lined gravel road. William’s expansive studio where he sculpts wood and stone masterpieces overlooks the home place. He has been commissioned to sculpt some fine pieces and loves the creativity that he feels in his lovely environment. William also creates custom furniture, art pieces made out of interesting lengths of wood that are found in their forest, and other custom pieces which display his talent. The Off the Beaten Path Studio Tour covers a wide realm of artists from potters, glass blowers, furniture makers, quilters, jewelers, and wood turners. The tour takes you through the beautiful back roads of Tennessee and allows you to see the countryside at its best; showcasing the vibrant autumn colors and wonderful aromas of the season. Being able to see the artists at work in their studio is so interesting and one can learn so much about their particular style of work and wonderful personalities along the way. One artist, Tim Hintz, has been constructing ladder-back chairs for many years and is a former Tennessee Arts Commission fellow. Tim’s award winning work has been showcased at many festivals and events across the country. Folks from all over have ordered these top quality chairs. He starts with the highest quality middle Tennessee red oak and collects his own hickory bark for the woven seats. You could say that his chairs are ergonomically designed, as the back posts are steam-bent to give a supportive curve. If you have a

love of the arts, want to be inspired, enjoy adventure and want to drive down some of the most scenic roads in Tennessee or are vacationing at Center Hill Lake and are looking for something to do, this is a perfect day or weekend trip. For more information about this year’s Off the Beaten Path Studio Tour, studio stops, and profiles of the artists, visit their website for up-to-date information, www.OffTheBeatenPathTour.com or call Stella Luna Art Gallery at (615) 597-4004 for information and map/brochure.

