

**Andrew B. Hoke**

Age: 38

Lives in: Dormont

## My Life As A...

**Guinness World Record Hopeful****Q: When did you first learn to play the guitar?**

A: I was 11. I think it was the day Ronald Reagan took office.

**Q: You broke the record for longest guitar marathon in February 2008 and are attempting to break the record again at the Thunderbird Café in Lawrenceville Oct. 23 to 26. What's the point in breaking your own record?**

A: Actually, in June, someone else broke the record by playing for 53 hours straight. I want to reclaim the title.

**Q: Are there any physical side effects to playing the guitar for 46 hours straight?**

A: A muscle in my right arm swelled considerably [in February]. You'd think I'd be really tired, but there's something about making music. It seems to return as much energy as it demands.

**Q: What did you do about food, water and bathroom breaks?**

A: The Thunderbird Café supplied me with great sandwiches, and I ate energy bars. I drank some water, but not a lot due to limited restroom access. You get a five-minute break after each hour of activity.

**Q: How do you prepare for something like this?**

A: You imagine you'll be playing for a couple of weeks instead of a couple of days.

**Q: What kind of music do you play and what kind of guitar do you play it on?**

A: I love rock. It is inherently progressive. I play Van Halen, ZZ Top, Led Zeppelin and Van Morrison to name a few. I own a Strat and a Les Paul.

**Q: Do you sing while you play?**

A: Not if I can help it.

**Q: What are some of the rules for disqualification?**

A: No jamming allowed, and the repertoire must be recognizable. Going over the allotted break time or repeating the same song within four hours will also invalidate the attempt.

**Q: At your last attempt, did anyone stick around for all 46 hours?**

A: I was the only one there from start to finish, but many people stayed for an entire day, and many came back. Truthfully, that was the best part, the people who came out to support me.

**Q: How many hours do you hope to play for this year?**

A: 72.

—Kelly Herendeen

**Thunderbird Café, 4023 Butler St., Lawrenceville.  
Info: 412/682-0177, thunderbirdcafe.net.**

Photo by Brandon McChesney

**BY THE NUMBERS****29** Years that Allen's Haunted Hayrides in Smock, Pa., has been in operation.**45** Average amount of time in minutes that it takes to travel through the attractions at Cheeseman Fright Farm in Portersville, Pa.**1894** Year in which investigators allegedly disappeared inside the McCue Mansion in Monongahela.**2004** Year that the supposedly haunted McCue Mansion was re-opened as the "Demon House," a haunted house open to the public throughout October.**1863** Year that Freddy McCune, a man who legend says lived in Independence Township, and family allegedly journeyed into a cave and never came out.**1974** Year that Tom Reinhold, another character in the McCune legend, and son were said to be lost in the same cave.**0.5** Miles of the same cave now open to the public Sept. 26 through Oct. 31 as "Freddy's Haunts."**\$10** Price of "Freddy's Haunts" admission for visitors over 12.**2006** Year of the first Monroeville Mall Zombie Walk.**894** Number of people dressed up as zombies present at that walk.**DRIVE UNDER FIVE: Foliage Driving Tour, Emporium, Pa., to Lock Haven, Pa.****Info:** fallinpa.com | **Driving Distance From Downtown:** 4.5 hours

→ There you are, driving along the back roads of rural Pennsylvania, gazing through the windshield at the golden hills. Everyone loves seeing the leaves at their zenith, burning yellow and orange in our wild valleys—but the state's foliage doesn't change all at the same time. Up toward Scranton, the leaves are already changing in early October. In Philadelphia, you'll have to wait until almost Halloween. And here in Western Pennsylvania, the leaves change smack dab in the middle of the month. Thanks to fallinpa.com, a state-funded tourism site, you can find exactly where to take the most scenic autumnal drives. One of the more outstanding road trips and the one we recommend is from Emporium to Lock Haven, a 75-mile stretch of country highway that winds through the Susquehannock State Forest, where the densely packed ash and cherry trees form a fiery wonderland. The two towns are quaint Victorian settlements nestled among scenic hills, and camping and bed-and-breakfasts abound. (Try Partnership House Bed and Breakfast Inn or Victorian Inn Bed & Breakfast.) While hiking and ATVing are common pastimes at Susquehannock, the park is also a popular leaf-peepers' delight.—Robert Isenberg