



THE GROUNDHOG

“Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain”

Serving the Mentone, Valley Head, Hammondville, Cloudland & Menlo Communities since 1982

13-Year Cicadas to Emerge in Late April

How to turn this rare event into a close encounter with nature
by Stephen V. Smith

Mark Twain was only halfway right when he purportedly said, “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.” Natural history will indeed repeat itself in late April when the 13-year periodical cicadas emerge across Alabama and several surrounding states. The resulting cacophony will be a roaring, rhyming replay of the chorus we heard in the spring of 2011.

This emergence, a marvel of nature, will fill our woods with countless winged, red-eyed creatures — as many as 1.5 million per acre on average. The singing — which is part of the male’s mating ritual — will typically begin in the late morning, building into a louder call in the heat of the afternoon. As a survival mechanism, the sound will subside as the sun goes down, decreasing the likelihood of the cicadas becoming a late-night snack for nocturnal predators.

While the volume rises and falls depending on the time of day and concentration of cicadas in a given location, the sound has been measured as high as 96dB — loud enough to drown out the sound of a nearby lawn mower, or that of a plane coming in for a landing at an airport.

But cicadas are about much more than sound. The upcoming emergence of what is classified as Brood XIX is a natural wonder that gives us an opportunity to observe up close a spectacle first documented on this continent by early European settlers (Governor William Bradford noted their appearance in 1634, just 12 years after the Mayflower landed at Plymouth).

What to Expect

In late April, cicada nymphs that have been underground for 13 years will begin emerging around the base of trees. “They come out of holes in the ground about the size of your pinky finger,” explains Dr. Gene Kritsky, Professor Emeritus of Biology at Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati, Ohio, and an expert on cicadas.

The nymphs will immediately find something to climb, from trees to brick walls. “I’ve seen them on tombstones, on tires,” says Kritsky. “They just need to find a nice vertical surface.”

What happens next is straight out of a David Attenborough documentary. The cicada splits open across its back, exposing its milky white adult body. Kritsky explains what follows:

“The adult cicada’s tendrils start pulling it out of the shell. Eventually it’s almost hanging, almost upside down, being held in place just by the tension of that small opening in the nymphal shell. Then it does a sit-up, grabs hold of the shell, and wiggles its abdomen free. Now its wings are all shriveled up. It’s all white with blood-red eyes, with two black patches behind the head. It pumps fluid through the wings to expand them to be that tent-like shape that you see with cicadas. Once the wings are totally expanded, it will continue to darken as it hardens its exoskeleton. After it’s completely dark, it crawls up to the top of the trees where it sits for usually four or five days.”

After those four or five days, the flying and singing start. The males gather in trees known as chorusing centers that attract the females. Once the mating process is complete, females look for suitable



A cicada frees itself, leaving behind its shell on the tree.

branches to deposit some 500 eggs. They land on terminal twigs of branches, where new leaves are growing. “She has an ovipositor, an egg-laying structure, which she uses to literally saw in just below the bark and deposit pairs of eggs — anywhere between 20 to 40 eggs per cut,” says Kritsky.

After depositing eggs in a half-inch cut, the female will move another half of an inch down the branch and make another cut to deposit more eggs. “She keeps doing that,” says Kritsky, “until she runs out of twig, in which case she flies to another branch, or she runs out of eggs. When she’s out of eggs, she’ll die in the next few days.”

These eggs will hatch in six to 10 weeks, at which

point the nymphs will propel themselves into the air and drop to the ground. “That’s critically important because they are extremely vulnerable to ants, spiders, and beetles,” says Kritsky.

Once they hit the ground, the tiny nymphs find openings, such as holes around blades of grass, and quickly burrow their way underground and get to work. “They’re not sleeping. They’re not hibernating,” says Kritsky. Rather, the young cicadas are feeding on tree roots. They also tunnel around, but never

(continued on page 15)



Cicada Identification •

To describe the periodical cicada’s appearance as “notable” is an understatement. Compared to the insects we typically encounter — including the annual cicadas that come out in small numbers each year — the periodical cicada has striking features:

- Large, black bodies
- Bulging red eyes
- Orange legs
- Four clear wings through which you can see orange and black veins

Despite their dramatic appearance, cicadas pose no threat. They have no mechanism to bite or sting humans or animals.

You can distinguish between the male and female cicada by looking at the insect’s underside. At the tip of the female’s pointed abdomen you will find a slit-like opening that houses her ovipositor, the structure she uses to saw into trees and lay her eggs. There is no such structure on the male abdomen, which has a blunt ending.



TASTE of the MOUNTAIN & ART AUCTION

HOSTED BY MENTONE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION

Art Auction Drawing Near

by Anna Mae Horn

A few tickets are still available for this year’s Taste of the Mountain and Art Auction! It’s less than a week until the big event, so don’t miss out.

Tickets for the annual event include fabulous food and your chance to bid on unique local art items and experiences.

This year’s artists include Scott Thomas, Lydia Randolph, Joan Byrum, Barbara Umland, Max Mitchell, Frank Kenney, Shannon Goshorn and more in a variety of mediums. Don’t forget, we have some adorable art from student’s in MERF’s Fine Arts Program at Valley Head School led by Ms. Paula Easter!

We also have unique experiences to bid on — a stay in a castle, and an elegant dinner. See page 16 for photos of the artwork and more details.

Once again, we’ve had generous support from the community for the fundraiser, including several sponsorships from local businesses. All funds raised support MERF’s goal of promoting lifelong learning in our schools and greater community. Besides enabling the Valley Head School fine art program, including live theater and musical performances, we also coordinate resourced funding for field trips, library items, teacher appreciation, and other needs at the school. In addition, MERF provides scholarship opportunities, senior lunches, and other community programs.

MERF would like to let everyone know we are truly grateful and encouraged by the tremendous support. Many artists have donated fabulous unique items for auction, and we have a buffet line full of delicious food that is being given for the fundraising event. It would not be possible without the fantastic volunteers that bring it all together. Taste of the Mountain is truly a community event. 🍷



Some of Ms. Paula Easter’s art students with their art.

To subscribe to The Groundhog, please use the form on Page 14.



The Groundhog

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The Groundhog has been in publication since 1982. MERF is honored to continue this community tradition.

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Groundhog woodcut courtesy of Meg Justice/Bee Spring Studio

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MENTONE

has been voted as one of the
**BEST SMALL TOWNS
IN ALABAMA**
by readers of
**SOUTHERN LIVING
MAGAZINE**
and will be listed in the April
issue of the popular magazine!



Mentone Matters

by Mayor Rob Hammond

The town has been notified that Mentone has been voted one of the best small towns in Alabama by the readers of Southern Living! The April issue of Southern Living will be on newsstands by March 22. Thanks to the readers of Southern Living for confirming what we already knew!

We have recently had several different meetings concerning Moon Lake Village. We have had the initial meeting with an electrical engineer from Ladd Environmental concerning the wiring of the Moon Lake School. Representatives from TARCOG (grant writers) travelled to Mentone to discuss a grant application for improvements to the school through an Appalachian Regional Commission grant. We have had a meeting with a potential tenant for the lunchroom who is considering a restaurant.



Reminder: April 6 is our annual litter pick up day. Meet at the parking lot of Mentone Inn at 9:00 a.m. Lunch around noon at Linger Longer Pavilion, Mentone Inn. Also on April 6, MERF's Taste of Mentone Art Auction will be at 6:00 p.m. at Camp Skyline; tickets are still available as of press time. 🍷

From the Editor Springtime: A season of renewal

by Anna Mae Horn

Even though the calendar flips to a new year on January 1, spring is the annual renewal for the Earth. It happens at various times across the globe, but it is a common symbol of rebirth and fresh starts.

As we compiled this month's issue of The Groundhog, I personally began feeling a sense of renewed energy. I am always encouraged to see the Mentone community come together for clean up day. Trash collects all too frequently on the roadsides of this beautiful town. Generous members of the community give their time and sweat equity to clean it up. Each year, the wish is made that the ditches stay cleaner a little longer than last year.

Earth Day is a celebratory time for all things nature and spring related. It is especially enthusiastic at the Valley Head Park each year. Elementary science teacher Tammy Cooper coordinates with the town and plans an afternoon of family activities — from making bird feeders to hosting scavenger hunts. The most anticipated part of the afternoon by far is the duck race!

Have you ever watched the duck race on Earth Day? Oh my! Hundreds of people buy the number of

a matching duck prior to the event, with funds going to the school. Then at Earth Day in the Park, kids of all ages gather on the upstream end of Will's Creek to watch the giant bags of rubber ducks be dumped into the creek. As the ducks start racing the rapids, kids of all ages follow along the creek banks trying to keep up with the front duck. The most fun is watching the kids go in to help out the stragglers that become stuck on the banks of the little creek. I always think how cold that must be! The kids do not care. Most people lose excitement once a winner is declared, but there are always a few children who want to make sure each duck makes it to the finish line. It is certainly a sight to behold!

Plant sales make this time of year even more fabulous. It's a wonderful time to find plants that are native to and thrive in our environment. I have been watching my little birch grow for several years. I bought it for \$2 as a sapling, and now it is over 6 feet tall. Check out the event calendar so you do not miss any of the plant sales or fun springtime events.

There is also an eclipse, a free Labyrinth Retreat, a fun singing, and a great auction fundraiser happening this month. Enjoy this season! 🍷

Grammy-nominated engineer shares insight with area musicians

by Stephen V. Smith

Songwriters heard from a music industry veteran last month as he shared insight into the world of a professional artist.

David Hammonds was the featured speaker at the Music on the Mountain Songwriter Series in Mentone, hosted by local resident and singer/songwriter Craig Hendricks.

The event opened with performances by gifted songwriters Cliff Abbot, Jon Kinsey, and Mike McCarrell. Hammonds followed with an acoustic rendition of his song "Crazy Me." He then shared how his love of music at an early age led to the formation of Wildwood, a band he would travel with for years across the United States and Canada after winning the Alabama Talent Search in 1980.

While the group eventually stopped touring and Hammonds pursued other careers, music remained part of his life. He continued to write songs and play music on occasion, becoming a skilled recording producer and engineer at Cook Sound Studios, owned by Alabama's Jeff Cook.

The day acoustic music legend Norman Blake walked into the studio would prove to be life-changing for Hammonds. After discovering that a world-class studio was only 30 minutes from his home in Rising Fawn, Blake would go on to record several albums there with Hammonds at the helm.

Blake had a few Grammy nominations under his belt, along with a win for his work on the soundtrack for the movie "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" With Hammonds as producer and engineer, Blake would receive another Grammy nomination for Best Folk Album for "Wood, Wire & Words" in 2016. Hammonds shared in that nomination and represented Blake at the awards program in Los Angeles.

After sharing the story of his musical journey, Hammonds offered some practical advice for working artists:



- Use technology to your advantage. Include complete lyrics and descriptive metadata when uploading digital song files. Use a service such as taxi.com to increase the chances of being found by those looking to license music for movies and TV shows.
- Don't shy away from co-writing with other songwriters. Networking can lead to the creation of quality songs while opening opportunities for growth.
- Create quality demos to pitch your songs, but don't feel pressured to pay for full studio productions. Your song will stand on its own merit, from its lyrics to its melody, as long as your basic demo is a quality recording.

The next event in this series is scheduled for Tuesday, April 2, at the Mentone Arts Center. Doors open at 6 p.m., with music beginning at 6:30 p.m. There is no admission charge. Area artists are encouraged to come participate in an open mic session following the featured artists.

Hendricks, the event host, is an award-winning full-time touring singer/songwriter and performer. He recently released his second EP, "Prison Ain't Just Bars & Stone." 🍷



What kind of job?

From an anonymous reader

I recall my Dad telling how he “got his start” in construction work. Dad noticed some of his buddies had more card-playing money than he had, so he asked how to get a job in their line of work — construction.

The buddies told him where to go and who to see. They also emphasized that he should say he was a “rod buster.” Dad had never heard such a thing, so he thought it was a joke.

Nevertheless, he went in and spoke with the foreman. When asked what position he was interested in, Dad hesitantly said he was a rod

buster, and nervously waited on the foreman to laugh or throw him out of the room.

Dad was caught off guard when the foreman said, “Great! You can start today.” Without missing a beat, Dad said “Let me get my tools from the car.”

As an experienced card player, Dad had a good poker face. He went to his car, raised the trunk, and fumbled around a bit. He went back in the office empty handed, telling the foreman, “I’m sorry, but my son has been into my tools again!” He borrowed a few tools from friends and started work the next morning as a rod buster.

Send in stories about your life moments to GroundhogNews@yahoo.com, or mail to P.O. Box 107, Mentone, AL, 35984. We look forward to being entertained. 🍷



The Moon Lake Baptist Church is inviting the community to an old fashion singing on Sunday, April 28th at 6 p.m. There will be performances by the Mentone Messengers, the SilverTones, and several soloists, as well as congregational singing. Refreshments will be served after the singing. Come join us for this special event.

Mentone American Legion Around Town

by Barry Morton

At the March Mentone Town Council meeting, Mayor Rob Hammond presented Don Highfield with a letter of appreciation for carving “Chip,” the statue overlooking the Shigley Amphitheater at Moon Lake Village. The mayor stated, “People have really enjoyed the carving, and if you have not seen it, please do so”.

During the council meeting, I gave a report as Commander of the Mentone Post.

The Post is, once again, hosting Brow Socials on the third Thursday of each month starting one hour before sunset. On March 21, the American Legion 105th birthday party will serve as the Brow Social.

I also reported that the American Legion is having a \$1,000 giveaway. Tickets are now available, and the award will be announced on Memorial Day. Please see me to buy your tickets. You’ll be comforted to know that my wife, Lynna, who won two of the three previous raffles, will not participate. She has donated all of her winnings to fund new windows at the Post.

Finally, I reported to the council that on Memorial Day we will host a Picnic at the Post, offering free lunch to all veterans. It will be open to the public with a \$10 charge for a hamburger plate and \$5 charge for a hot dog plate. At the picnic, Don Highfield’s “Patriots Pole,” located in front of the Post, will be dedicated.

To see the progress of the Patriots Pole, or to make a donation toward expenses, visit the Mentone American Legion Facebook Group page. For more about the Sunset Brow Socials, visit the Mentone Sunset Social on the Brow Facebook Group page. 🍷

Barry Morton is Commander of the American Legion Post 215.



(L-R) Post Commander Barry Morton, Member and Carver Don Highfield, and Mayor Rob Hammond



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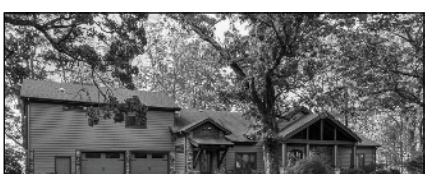
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April is the Passageway to Spring

by deJoly LaBrier

Spring rises from the frozen winter earth. April brings the hope of warmer weather, as colors begin to flicker amidst the barren slopes of the mountain. Already daffodils and hyacinths have pushed their way out and lay their faces toward the sun.

Butterfly bushes are blooming and attracting the first pollinators of the season. My peach trees, with their gorgeous pink blooms are standing tall with the promise of fruit in a couple of months.

Spring is the time when many of us are sifting through the seeds we have from last year, dreaming that soon we will have our hands in the dirt and make way for new seedlings. It's a time to literally and metaphorically plant seeds and a time to cultivate new beginnings.

As the days are on their way to increasing light, having experienced the Spring Equinox in March, we find ways to bring more light and balance into our bodies, minds, and relationships, through connecting with nature. We might also hone-in on our daily practices of meditation that bring us a sense of peace and resilience.

Just like in nature, the budding flowers and the kaleidoscope of greens that cover lawns and mountainsides are symbolic of our infinite possibilities for transformation. These changes in our mindsets, and how we perceive our peaks and valleys of life, are budding with promise. We breathe deeply and rest; we slow down and really take in the beauty that is popping up around us.

Spring can be a time of rebirth and renewal of

the beautiful lives we imagine for ourselves. As Fall and Winter allowed us to shed our old self-talk and behaviors, Spring allows us the opportunities to start fresh, nurturing the new ideas and actions we will take to have the abundant and vital life we deserve.

Some people call Spring our "reset button" for starting anew. We find more reasons to be grateful.

I suggest making a daily gratitude list of at least five things. By doing this, you may find more joy in life than you previously thought you had. Often the negative things overshadow the positive things unless we consciously make an effort to see the myriad of things and people who brighten our worlds.

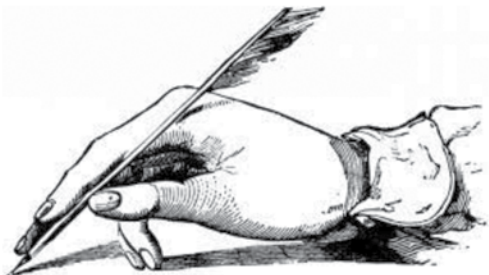
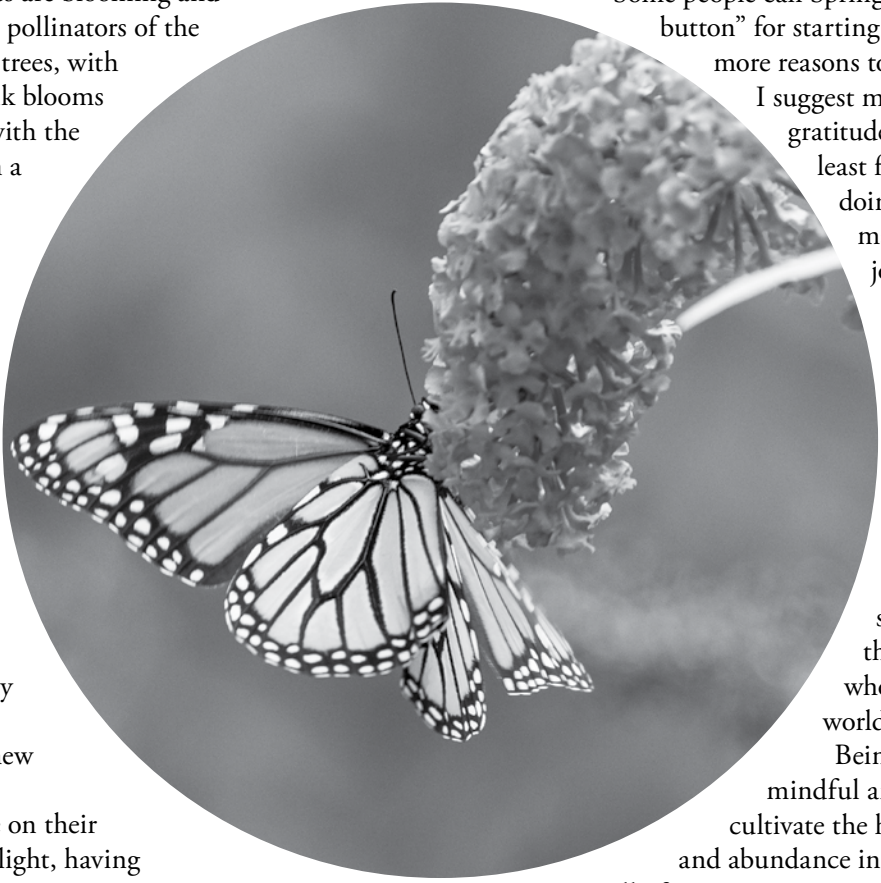
Being conscious and mindful are sure avenues to cultivate the hope of growth and abundance in our lives. Use all of your senses to give yourself the full

experience of Spring. Let the fragrances, colors, and melodies of the birds around you lighten your load and bring a bounce to your steps.

As a writer, I have a love for the power of poetry, especially those related to nature and the seasons. One of my favorite poets, Mary Oliver, wrote many poems about the seasons. For National Poetry Month, I share with you "Spring".

Have a lovely month filled with promise, hope and renewal. 🍀

deJoly LaBrier is a life coach and a writing coach, based in the Mentone area. You can find her at www.dejoly.com, on Facebook, Instagram, and Email: dejolylabrier@gmail.com



Set Your Words Free

"Poetry is the renewal of words, setting them free, and that's what a poet is doing: loosening the words."

—Robert Frost

April is National Poetry month initiated by the Academy of American Poets in 1996. This was to raise awareness of the rich history of poets and their work. Also to encourage people to read poetry, and to provide support to teachers who bring poetry into classrooms.

The origin of poetry was thousands of years ago; it began as a form of storytelling. The ancient oral tradition of recording and narrating the history and events of the time from victorious battles to journeys and adventures of courageous explorers was the only way to ensure these deeds were remembered. These stories were told in ballads, odes, and epics.

Poetry is a form of literature, one of the many arts in which people can participate. Poetry gives intensity to the expression of feelings and ideas using distinctive style and rhythm with words. It is a form of art that everyone has access to.

The short poem form known as haiku originated in Japan. Haiku began in the thirteenth century as the opening phrase of renga, an oral poem, generally a hundred stanzas long. The Japanese phrase haikai no ku, translates as "light verse." The current form of this writing was mastered a century later by Matsuo Basho, who wrote the classic haiku, An old pond.

**An old silent pond
A frog jumps into the pond —
Splash! Silence again.**

"The Old Pond" by Matsuo Bashō



Haiku contain three verses, using a specific phonetic pattern of five syllables, seven syllables, and five syllables. Originally, they captured a scene in the natural world but today haiku can be written to illustrate anything one is drawn to.

Here's another example of a haiku:

*Stark, the branches wait,
not dead, but in quiet song.
Blossom's kiss to come.*

So, what do you think about writing your own haiku? This column is being started to bring you, the writers of our communities, together on the pages of the Groundhog. Each month there will be a "topic" to write about. Submit your haiku to groundhognews@yahoo.com before the 15th of the month to meet the deadline for printing. Adults and kids alike are encouraged to submit. Set your words free!

May topics: Mother's Day, Memorial Day 🍀

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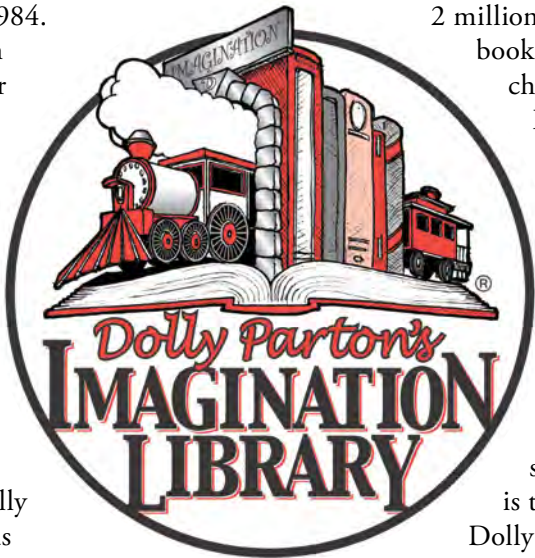
Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library

by Anne McLeod

The Friends of Moon Lake Library are thrilled to announce that they will partner with Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library to provide free books to children ages 0-5 who live in the Mentone zip code 35984. We hope to begin sign-ups at an event in May so please watch for additional information next month.

The Imagination Library mails free high-quality, age-appropriate books to registered children. Books are selected by an expert panel in early childhood literacy for content that is informative, age-appropriate and inspiring.

Since launching in 1995, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library has become the preeminent early childhood book gifting program in the world. The flagship program of The Dollywood Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has gifted over 200 million free books in the United States, Canada, United



Kingdom, Australia, and The Republic of Ireland. This is achieved through funding shared by The Dollywood Foundation and Local Program Partners.

The Imagination Library mails more than 2 million high-quality, age-appropriate books each month to enrolled children from birth to age five. Dolly envisioned creating a lifelong love of reading and inspiring children to Dream More, Learn More, Care More, and Be More®. The program has been widely researched and results demonstrate the positive impact on early childhood development and literacy skills. Penguin Random House is the exclusive publisher for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.

For more information, please visit imaginationlibrary.com or contact Moon Lake Library. 📧

Anne McLeod is the librarian at Moon Lake Library.

Support Alabama’s Libraries

by Holley Midgley

As many of you have probably heard, some libraries in the state are seeing a number of book challenges, as a few people object to books they believe are “inappropriate.” They claim that libraries are placing “sexually explicit materials” in the children’s sections, leading some elected officials, including Governor Kay Ivey, to propose certain changes to the administrative code, that is, the regulations that determine how state funds are awarded to public libraries.

Most of the changes are unnecessary because they are based on the assumption that “inappropriate or sexually explicit” books are available to children in libraries across the state when that’s simply not true.

Part of libraries’ mission is to serve all members of their communities. Librarians have always been sensitive to community norms, and the fact is the explicitness of the children’s books that have been challenged is wildly exaggerated. What’s being challenged are often the ideas some books contain, including ideas about gender identity. Young adult books sometimes do contain mild sexual content, but that is a separate section in most libraries, including at Moon Lake.

Most libraries in the state have had no books challenged in years, which suggests their communities are perfectly fine with what’s available for check out. In recent months, we’ve seen more

families coming into the library, checking out books with their children. That’s the way it’s supposed to be. The books children and teens choose to check out from the library are up to them and their parents. Something one family might find objectionable may be perfectly fine for another family because of their interests or circumstances.

Friends of Moon Lake Library will hold an informational session for the public on Sunday, April 14, at 2 p.m. to explain the proposed changes and to encourage citizens to write letters to the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS). We’ll even provide paper, envelopes, and stamps so you can make your voice heard.

All letters must be received by 4:30 p.m. on April 29, 2024, at the following address:

Vanessa Carr
Executive Secretary
Alabama Public Library Service
6030 Monticello Drive
Montgomery, AL 36117

The APLS will accept public comments by postal mail or hand-delivery only. There will be a public hearing at 10 a.m. on April 30, 2024, at APLS. Members of the public can sign up to speak by emailing Vanessa Carr at vcarr@apls.state.al.us by 4:30 p.m. of April 29, 2024. Speakers will be heard in the order their emails are received. 📧

April 2024 at Moon Lake Library

Weekly Meet-Ups: CHESS on Tuesdays at 1; KNITTING and CROCHET Tuesdays at 2; SCRABBLE Wednesday at noon.

April 11 • 4 p.m. Friends of Moon Lake Library Board meeting

April 13 • 1 p.m. Mentone Ukes offer free ukulele lessons for all experience levels.

April 13 • 10:30 a.m. Book Club - Our theme for this month’s discussion: Banned Books - Read a book that’s been challenged. Need suggestions? Stop by the library.

April 14 • 2 p.m. Friends of Moon Lake Library are sponsoring a letter-writing campaign to offer public comment on proposed changes to the state’s administrative code that affect libraries

April 16 • 6-8 p.m. Little River Arts Council and Moon Lake Library are sponsoring an event for the authors and photographers of the book Hidden Mentone. Books will be available for sale and autographing.

April 18 • 3 p.m. Municipal Library board meeting

April 19 • 6 p.m. Family Game Night - Bring a snack to share and we’ll enjoy board games and cards at the library.

April 20 • 10:30 a.m. Little Library Learners, children ages 3-7

April 27 • 1 p.m. Mentone Ukes offer free ukulele lessons for all experience levels.

April 26 • 6 p.m. Friday Night at the Movies: Yesterday (PG-13) A struggling musician awakens to discover that he is literally the only person alive who knows who the Beatles are.

Moon Lake Library

4607 Hwy 117 • Mentone, AL • 256-634-2127
Tuesday-Friday 12-4:30 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
moonlakelibrary.org • books@moonlakelibrary.org

Informational Session and Letter Writing Campaign

Sponsored by Friends of Moon Lake Library

Sunday, April 14, 2024 at 2 p.m.
Moon Lake Library



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Mentone Arts Center

Gary and Shane Baker to perform;

Saluting Artist of the Month Mitzi Roess

Getting ready for some great music and fun classes in April

by Randy Grider

Highlighting the month will be a performance by Grammy-winning songwriter Gary Baker and multi-talented musician Shane Baker. The father-son duo will perform at the Chuck Sennett Center for the Arts on Sunday, April 28 at 5:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 per person.

Gary's musical roots begin in the 1970s when he was a musician with the LeBlanc and Carr Band. He was also a singer with country-pop band, The Shooters. Gary has written songs for John Michael Montgomery, Alabama, and many others. He has been writing with his songwriting partner, Frank J. Myers, since 1988, both having played in Marie Osmond's band. Baker and Myers' most successful song as songwriters is "I Swear", recorded by both All 4-One and John Michael Montgomery. The song sold more than 20 million copies internationally and won the 1995 Grammy for "Best Country Song". In 1995, he and Myers recorded one album on Curb Records as the duo Baker and Myers. Gary also wrote the hit "I'm Already There" for Lonestar, the band's seventh Number 1 single. It spent six weeks at the top of the Billboard Hot Country Singles and Tracks chart.

Shane's musical roots run deep, having grown up in the legendary music hub of Muscle Shoals. With his Grammy-winning songwriter father, Shane was seemingly destined for a music career. However, it was his own passion that drove him to pursue music or be consumed by it. Shane has fronted multiple bands, including daughter and American Idol contestant Cadence Baker as well as his own self-titled group. Shane has also worked as a writer for Brentwood Benson Nashville and Noiseblock Music. In 2009, he wrote, recorded, and produced a full-length album, touring the Southeast and opening for/ headlining festivals. After starting a family and pursuing a "real" job, Shane's love for music and entertainment remains unwavering. He pours his heart and soul into every performance, whether it is for 10 or 10,000 people. Shane's genuine passion and dedication create an unforgettable experience for his audience. Simply put, Shane loves music and loves performing for anyone who will listen.

Speaking of songwriters, we kick off the month on Tuesday, April 2 with the Music on the Mountain Songwriter Series at 6:30 p.m. This free regular event features local/ regional songwriters performing original music. This month's round will feature three singer/songwriters who will share their songs individually and allow questions from the audience. Organizers will then finish the evening with an open mic, a chance for songwriters who have not participated to come and share a song or two and get scheduled for future events.



As for art classes, we welcome back visiting artist/ instructor Lisa Opielinski for two one-day acrylic classes April 20 and 21, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Each class is \$100 plus a \$30 supply fee.

The first class is "Sol-vibe, Pixi Sticks 1" where students will learn to build texture with a bespoke plaster of Paris mix, combine acrylic colors to achieve depth and glow, collage with textured materials, apply multiple layers of acrylic paints and gilding. Students will also make a color reference guide for this painting.

In the second class, "Fluorescent Fishes", students will learn masking techniques to control fluid acrylic paints, scratch techniques to highlight and add details, make a color reference guide for this painting, and layer washes of acrylic paints. Wear gloves and learn why.

For more information about any of the classes or events or for registration, please see contact information at the bottom of this article.

Our April Artist of the Month is Sarah "Mitzi" Roess.

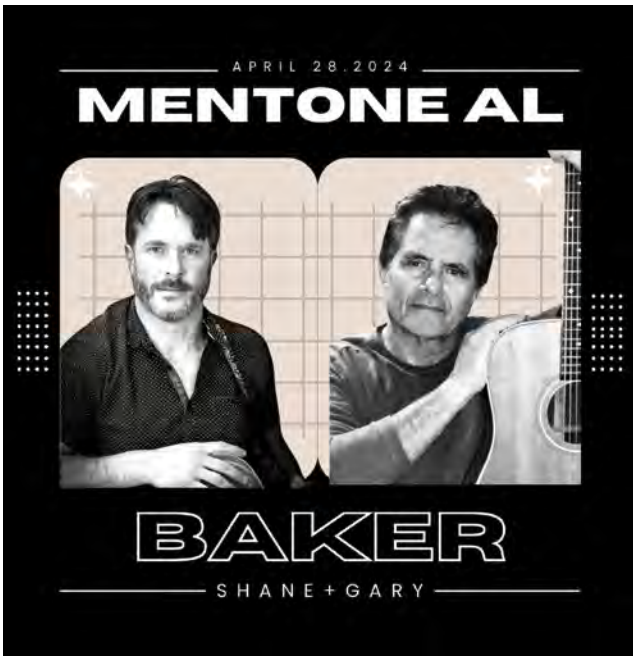
The self-taught artist is a native of Florida. Her childhood was spent on a salt-marsh island at the mouth of Withlacoochee River in the 1950s. The family lived a simple existence supported by hunting and fishing in the Florida wilderness without electricity or running water.

Roess excelled in school. Her observation and appreciation of nature developed.

Roess said, "what could not be bought at the dime store for entertainment was a love for the outdoors and natural beauty of (my) everyday surroundings." A passion sustained throughout her life, her highly detailed botanical drawings have captured and lovingly portrayed the flora and fauna of fast-vanishing Florida. Roess did a three-year residence program in Sewanee, Tennessee, where she specialized in the unique ecology of the Cumberland Plateau.

Along with her original drawings, Roess offers giclee archival images as well as a hand-color series that involves a patient, much-labored process of applying layers of colored pencil to giclee renderings.

Randy Grider is executive director of the nonprofit Mentone Arts and Cultural Center. He can be reached via email at mentoneartscenter@gmail.com or by phone at 256-674-3366.



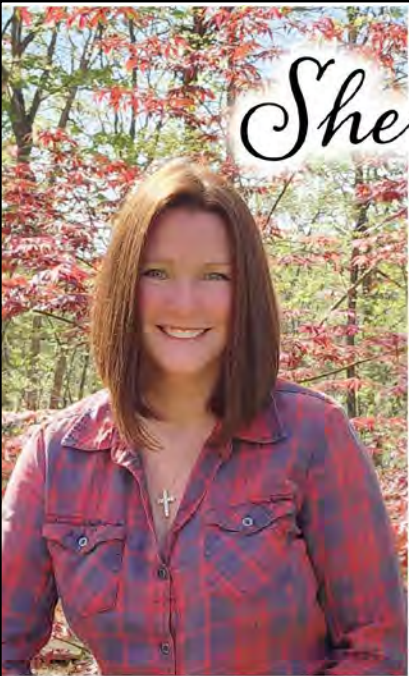
Baker Father and Son Duo



Artist of the Month — Mitzi Roess



Mitzi Roess Artwork



Sherry Schoenheit



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3745 County Road 166, Fort Payne, AL 35967 • \$265,000

Rustic Stone Cottage on the Brow near Desoto State Park and Mentone. Stone walls, exposed log beams and stone wood burning fireplace with the "Old Mentone Look". Detached pavilion and detached carport/shop included. New roof and bath updated. Great view from this 2.3 acre lot. Great for weekend rentals!

6512 County Road 78, Fort Payne, AL 35967 • \$212,000

Brick Home on Lookout Mountain. Home has 3 BR and 2 BA. Features 1.3 acres w/ shaded trees and fenced yard. Home has an attached double carport, covered porch and covered deck. There is a detached storage building in the fenced area of the yard with ample space to store or work

**126 County Road 1010, Fort Payne, AL 35968
\$45,000**

Watch the sunrise over Lookout Mountain from this Wooded Brow lot in Pell's Gap Development near Fort Payne. Public water, paved streets, restricted to site built homes.

**4140 Citadel Rock Road, Fort Payne, AL 35967
\$95,000**

DeSoto Bluffs - Brow lot on Citadel Rock Road on Lookout Mtn. 2.6 Acres overlooking North Fort Payne. Septic Tank already installed. Restricted Community with large lots.

**5508 Martin Avenue NE, Fort Payne, AL 35967
\$540,000**

36 acres of beautiful open land Zoned M-1 Light Industrial in North Fort Payne, AL. Over 2300 ft. of road frontage along 55th St. and Martin Ave NE. 3 Phase power, water, sewer and natural gas available on site and ready for a new business!

721 County Road 116, Fort Payne, AL 35988 • \$1,900,000

A true Gem. 9 BR 9.5 BA Greek Revival style home. Located on 57 +/- acres with two well stocked ponds. This home is well appointed with a full commercial style kitchen, marble floors, lounge with bar, and wine cellar. There is also a newly constructed 36x20 outdoor living area with fireplace and kitchenette. The property is beautiful with rolling pasture land that is fenced and well maintained. This property offers a working barn and utility buildings that will serve many purposes.

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Rhododendron Garden Club News

by Mellanie Tuttle



On Wednesday, April 13, the Rhododendron Garden Club hosted the MERF senior lunch. A slight dichotomy - with a meal of Italian food, lasagna and all the fixings, in conjunction with an Irish St. Patrick's Day theme. Shamrocks, gold coins and three fresh floral designs with boxwood and daffodils brought sunshine to the tables. Three succulent dish gardens were happily donated by a member who was stuck with them after the last plant sale fundraiser. Succulents are supposed to be low-maintenance plants, needing six hours of sunlight, temperatures no colder than 50 degrees and watering once a week. Hope springs eternal for keeping them alive.

The business meeting on Tuesday included a field trip to Sharon Harris' sandstone glade and a power point presentation by Brittney Hughes about one of Lookout Mountain's diverse ecosystems. On May 11 from 1 to 3 p.m., Desoto Park is offering a Sandstone Glade Hike. The website alapark.com gives all the details and explains that "A glade is an open area where the bedrock is at or near the surface, and where soils are so thin, trees and shrubs find it difficult to grow, yet you'll find thriving, rare, and unique plant communities that depend on the chemistry and conditions the environment provides. Learn about this unique environment and the wondrous rock formations among the natural clearings dotting Lookout Mountain's porous cap."

Steven Jones' photography and blog about the Desoto Park sandstone glade is worthy of a perusal. His blog from April 2019 posts: "...We found several sandstone glades at DeSoto, painted spectacularly with multiple hues deepened and intensified by the prior night's frog-strangling cloudburst. Var-riotous (my new word combining var-iety and riotous profusion) lichens and mosses flourish in spring's abundant moisture. What a joy it would be for a non-flowering plant specialist to drop to the knees with hand-lens and notebook to journal what lies unknown to my forester's eye and mind. I can merely marvel at the beauty, magic, wonder, and awe of an other-worldly ecosystem." (stevenjonesgbh.com)

He also recommended Southern Wonder, by Dr. R. Scott Duncan, who discusses the vast



Sandstone Glade on the Blue Trail at DSP
Photo by Steve Jones

biodiversity of Alabama. A 2002 report by The Nature Conservancy listed Alabama as #5 behind California, Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico. Jun Ebersole from the McWane Science Center argues that recent fossil finds move Alabama to the number one spot for biodiversity and paleodiversity. Alabama can always claim to be the most diverse state East of the Mississippi. Whoo hoo.

When you visit the sandstone glades or are enjoying nature:
*May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sunshine warm upon your face;
The rains fall soft upon your fields
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.* 🍀

Mellanie Tuttle is a member of the Rhododendron Garden Club.

Upcoming Events

April 9 — The annual trek to the Shirley Miller Wildflower Trail/ The Pocket/ Pigeon Mountain.

Meet at the MERF House at 9:00 a.m. for the adventure. All are welcome and the boardwalk trail is easily accessible for those who aren't mountain climbers!

April 27 — The RGC will be one of four participating clubs in the Northeast Alabama Federation of Garden Clubs plant sale in Henagar.

Offerings are mostly home-grown, tried and true annuals, perennials, natives, shrubs and vegetables. Hours are from 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

Join us!

The RGC meets each month on the second Tuesday. We are currently meeting in the Moon Lake Library and gather at 10:00. Please join us for connection and conviviality.

RGC is a member of the National Garden Club, Deep South, Garden Club of AL, District II, and NE AL Federation of Garden Clubs.



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After Little River Escape Tiny Home Community was named one of the top six communities to downsize in by *U.S. News & World Report*, this community has become fully occupied and folks have come from 12 different states to live within our community.

With Little River Escape being such a success, we have decided to embark on a new journey by creating River Ridge Escape Tiny Home Dealership. At the dealership, tiny homes are available to tour and purchase. RRE is now delivering across the nation and also developing other communities to bring more folks to Lookout Mountain.

River Ridge Escapes now has nine tiny home communities near and atop Lookout Mountain in NW Georgia and NE Alabama. There are several Airbnb Tiny Homes in our various locations to come experience tiny home living, downsizing, the community, and explore the surrounding areas.

Come Experience Tiny Living on Lookout Mountain!

Tours of River Ridge Escape's Tiny Homes — Mon-Fri 10-5 ET or by appointment.
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Artists Share Vision for Chalk Art Project

LRAC will have a public space to further engage with the community

by Stephen V. Smith

We're just a few weeks away from the launch of "Make Your Mark on Mentone," the chalk-based public art display funded in part by a grant from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. The Little River Arts Council hosted a meet and greet with the artists last month at the Mentone Arts Center. A large crowd turned out to hear the featured artists talk about their ideas for the work they plan to create on the chalkboard.

See the photos below for a glimpse into what's ahead. Also, be on the lookout for activity on the corner of Highway 117 and Scenic Drive (on the grounds of the Mentone Inn) as we build the chalkboard structure for the installation.

A special thank you to Builder's Supply Co, Inc. of Fort Payne for their generous donation to the Make Your Mark on Mentone project!

We had a great ARTalk this month, with the incredible Colleen Duffley sharing her experiences as a photographer and consultant for major brands. Her work has taken her across the U.S. and to several

countries, including Ireland and Italy. The next ARTalk is set for April 16 and will feature David and Lesa Cummings. These accomplished photographers are part of the Hidden Mentone book project. The event, with conversations led by photographer and LRAC board member Mikel Yeakle, is held each third Tuesday from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Moon Lake Community Library. It is open to the public.

We have some big news to share — LRAC will soon have a public presence! Renovations are underway on the space in Moon Lake Village formerly occupied by Meg Tannehill Justice. It's on the right side of the main building, between The Gallery by Andiamo Lodge and Leonard Design. Look for updates on our social media channels and in The Groundhog.

As you can see, the arts community is thriving in the Mentone area. Don't miss any of the news. Subscribe to our email newsletter at www.littleriverartscouncil.org/events.html.

Stephen V. Smith is a board member of the Little River Arts Council.



BIG ART

Pop-Up Show

SATURDAY, MAY 18 • 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

MENTONE INN GROUNDS

6139 AL-117 • MENTONE, AL

Interested in being a vendor?

Visit LittleRiverArtsCouncil.org and fill out a form.

This fun event will showcase local artists & makers in a small-festival setting in beautiful Mentone, Alabama. Grab some good eats from the Fontastic Food Truck and browse through many original works of art.



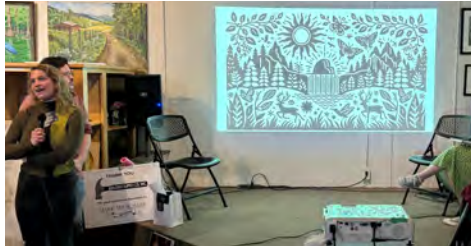
Ivann Garc of Clarksville, Tennessee, will kick off the project as May's featured artist. His works of 3D and realism astound viewers and encourage interaction with his artwork.



Sonya Clemmons of Scottsboro, Alabama, is June's featured artist. Sonya is known for her vibrant murals highlighting special features of local communities.



July's featured artist is **Lacy Dobbs** of Fort Payne, Alabama. A popular muralist and art workshop leader in the area, Lacy will shed light on the history surrounding Tinker Hollow in her chalk project.

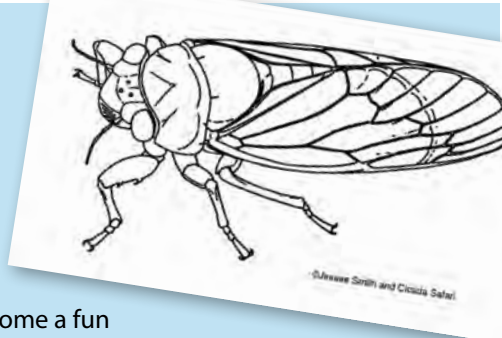


Caroline Moore of Mentone, Alabama, is August's featured artist. She has deep connections to the Mentone area through several generations of her family. Caroline's work will focus on the region's Cherokee heritage.



The project will celebrate its grand finale in September with **Jessi Queen** of Atlanta, Georgia, as our featured artist. Jessi plans to promote an inclusive and diverse society by selecting a portrait of a female important to the history and traditions of the Mentone area.

Help Your Child Bug Out Over Cicadas!



The coming emergence of the 13-year cicadas (see article on Page 1) can become a fun art project for your child.

- Visit the Cicada Safari website at cicadasafari.org
- Under "Cicada Activities," click on "Color a Periodical Cicada."
- Print the page and have your child color it using crayons, colored pencils, or markers.
- Take a photo of the finished artwork. Make sure your artwork is in focus and that the image fills most of the screen.
- Email the creation to info@littleriverartscouncil.org. Be sure to include your name and phone number, as well as your child's name, age, and grade in school.

Then watch our Facebook and Instagram channels, where we'll share cicada artwork across several weeks!





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Mentone Ukes

My Uke Journey... so far

by Lila Roberts

I was raised in a family that loved to sing. Some of my fondest memories are of times we spent at my grandparents' house sitting around the fire singing gospel songs. My grandfather taught shape note singing schools all over Western North Carolina, and I regret that I was too young to realize that I should have paid attention. I have always loved music: folk, rock, classical, gospel, musical theater. If you ride in the car with me, it is like carpool karaoke. I have been blessed to have opportunities to sing in some volunteer community choral groups and church choirs. Since moving to Fort Payne in 2020, I missed my weekly fix of singing with a group.

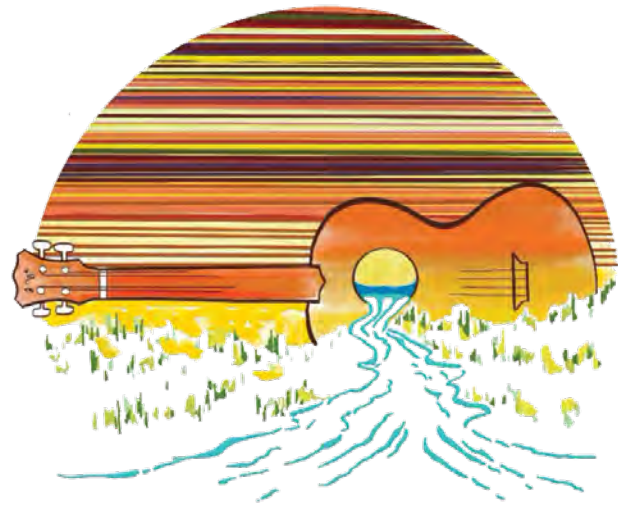
I spent thirteen years of my career at Clayton State University, home of world-renowned Spivey Hall. I was fortunate to be able to attend performances by many famous musicians, such as violinist Joshua Bell, piano virtuoso Emmanuel Ax, a cappella ensembles such as The King's Singers and Chanticleer, and bluegrass/ folk group Mark O'Connor Family Band, just to name a few.

When I learned that The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain was coming to Spivey Hall, my first thought was that this was a show I could miss, but since I had season tickets I decided to go. The performance was sold out. Some audience members brought their ukuleles. I couldn't stop smiling—it was so much fun! I was able to see them in concert three times at Spivey Hall, and each time brought such joy. I thought "what fun they must have!"

One day last year, my husband and I had lunch at the Menlo Restaurant. As he was paying, I saw a stack



Lila Roberts and her ukulele.



of free newspapers, The Groundhog. I picked one up and read it on our way home. I saw an article by Debra Fey about the Mentone Ukes. The article mentioned that free lessons were available. As a child, I didn't learn to play an instrument or read music. It wasn't until many years later that I took piano lessons for a while and realized I didn't have too much talent in that area, but I thought maybe I could learn to play the ukulele and sing along. I found an inexpensive soprano uke and learned to tune it before I went to my first practice. The Mentone Ukes members were so welcoming, and Jerry Megli was very patient as he taught the beginners a few basic chords and strums. I started practicing daily and before long I "graduated" to playing with the group. I am still very much a beginner, but I love our practice sessions. Each member brings his or her own level of expertise, and each experienced member is encouraging to those of us who still have a lot to learn. Our music is familiar and fun! You will be surprised at how many songs use similar chords and strumming patterns. We would love to have you join us!

I am now the proud owner of THREE ukuleles. So, the next time I go to see The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain in concert, I will be able to bring my own ukulele to play along! 🎸



JOIN US for our FREE ongoing sessions on April 13th and 27th at 1:00 p.m. CT at the Moon Lake Library. For more information please contact Debra Fey (debrajfe@ gmail.com) or Hank Allen (hank.d.allen@gmail.com) Find us on Facebook or on the web: www.mentoneukes.com

1598 Alabama Hwy 117, Mentone

This beautiful, custom-built log home is located on 3.3 lightly wooded acres on the middle fork of Little River. With over 150 feet of river frontage, this property has plenty of wonderful views! Features 4 bedrooms and 4.5 bathrooms and is being sold completely furnished. Currently used as a vacation rental and sleeps 20. The property has a solid rental history with many repeat renters. Already has several bookings reserved for 2024 and will transfer with the sale, and a detailed rental history is available on request. Call us for a showing today!

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Earth Month & Art

April featured artists...

Melinda Dodd
Moons & Turtles Pottery – Jewelry & Home Decor – \$35 - \$350

Aaron Stiles
Field Guide for Useful Weeds – \$15
Trail Journals and Sketch Books – \$8-\$18

Gina Locklear
Zkano Organic Cotton Socks – Spring 2024 – \$19-\$22

Nature & Outdoor inspired art and photography by **Ann Roberts, Courtney Kinneman, Michele Anderson, Bev Bates, John Dersham**, and more...

Make plans to attend...

Courtney Kinneman Art - Painting Lessons for Beginners Thursday, April 18 at 5:30 p.m.

Jessica Haigh - Animal House Pottery Class Thursday April 25 at 5:30 p.m.

Plant Sale and Exchange - Saturday April 20 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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A Single Path, A Serene Setting

by Kat Griffith

St. Joseph's On-the-Mountain Episcopal Church of Mentone invites you to a labyrinth workshop, titled "Walk in Peace" on Saturday, April 20th from 1p.m. to 4 p.m. in celebration of Earth Day. We welcome Reverend Myra Ryneheart Corcoran, a Veriditas Certified Labyrinth Facilitator, who comes to offer her knowledge and insight. We will begin inside in the St. Joseph's parlor, followed by a meditative walk on the labyrinth in the Sacred Garden, and have a time of reflection afterwards. This is a community offering and free of charge.

St. Joseph's Sacred Garden is located on the south side of St. Joseph's church. It has been a work in progress for some years, as we have incorporated multiple varieties of hydrangeas, ferns, hellebores, perennials, and native plants, offering our community a spot of respite and beauty. The labyrinth was one of the first projects

in the garden, designed to offer anyone visiting our garden a chance to experience a connection to creation, a spot of prayer, and a moment of quiet self-reflection. A labyrinth has a single path winding toward the center, which is visible anywhere from the circuit's perimeter. Each step takes you closer to its center. Representing growth and transformation, a labyrinth can confer a sense of clarity, peace, and serenity. Melissa Gayle West, author of Exploring the Labyrinth: A Guide for Healing and Spiritual Growth, describes the labyrinth experience as walking toward one's own core and the center of one's soul. Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress calls a labyrinth a watering hole for the spirit and a mirror of the soul. We hope you will join us to experience the peaceful and healing properties of our labyrinth at St. Joseph's in Mentone. 🍷

Walk in Peace Labyrinth Retreat

Saturday, April 20, 2024
1-4pm

in recognition of Earth Day
St. Joseph's-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church
21145 Scenic Highway, Mentone, AL

free and open to the public

led by The Rev. Myra Ryneheart Corcoran
Veriditas Certified Labyrinth Facilitator



Valley Head Happenings

by Karen Vest

Welcome to the April edition of Valley Head Happenings. Published within each monthly edition of The Groundhog, I hope to bring more awareness to the Town of Valley Head and all we have to offer our citizens, neighbors, and visitors to this beautiful corner of Northeast Alabama.

Our 7th Annual Memories of Mayberry Festival will be held on Saturday, May 4, 2024. The festival will take place around Valley Head's town square and will begin at 9:00 a.m. and run until approximately 5:00 p.m. Right across the road from town hall, live music will be on the festival's main stage featuring The Sharps, a Christian gospel group, and the band Stranded, a country and rock band. Once again, we will also feature a square dance club who will be performing in front of the pavilion on Commerce Avenue.

Mayberry's favorite characters, Floyd the Barber (Alan Newsome) and Deputy Barney Fife (Anthony Wood), will be strolling the streets of Mayberry. Have your photo taken with them and have one taken in front of Barney's sheriff car. We may even have a visit from dear old Aunt Bea herself.

You will love this year's festival t-shirts featuring the new slogan of "Reminiscing about Mayberry in Valley Head, AL." With either dusty pink or bright blue to choose from, you are sure to find a favorite. They will be for sale for only \$15 for sizes small through extra-large and \$20 for sizes 2X through 4X. All previous years' shirts will be on sale for only \$5.

Numerous food truck and vendors will be selling a variety of delicious options including Valley Head's very own Mi Pizza. The Tiger's Inn will be open for lunch that day. We also have many craft and retail vendors signed up, but it is not too late to swing by town hall and fill out

an application! The vendor fee is only \$25. This year's festival will also once again feature a classic car Cruise-In which will take place all along Commerce Avenue and Winston Street.

If you plan to enter the pie baking contest, please have your pies at town hall by 9:00 a.m. that morning. Judges will award first, second, and third place to the lucky winners. Don't forget to also enter the Aunt Bea's Homemade Dill Pickle contest. You may bring your pickles any day prior to the festival or by 9:00 a.m. on that Saturday. Ribbons will be awarded for the top three. There are no fees to enter the pie or pickle contest.

We will feature numerous children's activities including pony rides, children's train ride, blow-up slide and bouncy house, Stacy Moon the balloon man, and so much more.

Bring your entire family for a day that's sure to be filled with fun! For more information, please check out our Facebook page, Memories of Mayberry Festival. This year's proceeds will go into the Town of Valley Head Events and Festivals Fund.

Earth Day will take place on Monday, April 22, 2024, from 3:30 to 5:30 at the Valley Head town park located on Alabama Highway 117. Please join us, as we will have several activities to celebrate this important day. Ms. Tammy Cooper from Valley Head School is our sponsor.

Valley Head holds their Town Council meeting the first Monday of each month beginning at 6:00 p.m. The public is always welcome to attend.

In closing, I am so excited to share our news with you. I am so proud to call Valley Head home and hope you will come visit our town soon. 🍷

Karen Vest is a member of the Valley Head Town Council.



Memories of Mayberry

—VALLEY HEAD • ALABAMA—

Saturday, May 4, 2024

Starting at 9 a.m.

Proceeds benefit the Valley Head Events and Festivals fund.

For more information, Call 256-899-3776 or 256-635-6814 or Email VHTownHall@farmerstel.com

www.ValleyHeadAlabama.com

Y'all come on out for a day of fun!





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DeKalb County Master Gardeners Host Annual Plant Sale

by Mary Gresham Barr

The DeKalb County Master Gardeners are pleased to announce their annual plant sale on April 13, 2024, at the VFW Fairgrounds in Fort Payne, Alabama. The sale will open at 8 a.m. and continue until 11 a.m. A wide variety of plants from perennials to annuals, herbs, and vegetables will be available. Many of the plants are “pass along” plants grown by Master Gardeners themselves that have thrived in DeKalb County. In addition to plants, there will be garden accessories. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer questions and offer tips on caring for your lovely new plants.



The plant sale is not only a great opportunity for garden enthusiasts to stock up on new plants for their gardens but is a fundraiser for the DeKalb County Master Gardeners. The funds directly support the wide array of volunteer sites in DeKalb County, educational programs, and scholarships for college students in horticulture fields of study. We look forward to seeing you Saturday, April 13, 2024, from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m. Be sure to arrive early for the best selections, as plants are known to sell quickly. Thank you for your continued support! 🌱

Please join us for the

Plant Sale!

April 13, 2024 from 8am-11am
at The VFW Fairgrounds in Fort Payne, AL

Rain or Shine

We have hundreds of plants to choose from along with knowledgeable Master Gardeners on hand to answer any questions you may have!



ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS
ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

DeKalb County MGA



New music project celebrates our Appalachian heritage

by Anna Mae Horn

The influence of Appalachian culture can be seen across Northeast Alabama, from our foods and dialect to our customs and traditions. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in our music. An old log cabin on County Road 89 is the site of a new project that aims to explore the influence of this heritage on today’s artists. Known as “The Lookout,” this 200-year-old cabin was disassembled in Tennessee some three decades ago and brought to its new home in Mentone, perched on the mountain’s edge. “This is home to the YouTube series ‘The Lookout Sessions,’” says Stephen V. Smith who, along with his wife Michele, owns the cabin and Rare Life Media, the company that produces the series. “With it’s exposed hand-hewn beams and back deck offering views of three states, it’s the perfect environment to explore our heritage.” The first performance for The Lookout Sessions was a collaboration with the Mentone Arts Center, which brought Anya Hinkle and Finn Magill to Mentone for an intimate

performance earlier this year. “Anya’s incredible voice, accompanied by her guitar and Finn’s masterful fiddle playing, brought her songs to life inside the walls of the cabin,” says Smith. “It was a special experience.” The audio was captured and mastered by Lucas Smith of Lucky Sound Studio. “This video is a great opportunity to hear some beautiful music that the Mentone Arts Center presented live,” says Ben Shurett, Mentone Arts Center board member. “MAC looks forward to collaborating with Stephen and Michele to bring more top shelf entertainers to Mentone and to share them in this format.” With the first video now live on YouTube, the Smiths have plans to welcome more artists — musicians, authors, and even visual artists — to The Lookout Sessions this year. “We want to showcase the creativity of artists who have been inspired and influenced by our Appalachian traditions,” Stephen Smith says. “This promises to be an engaging and entertaining series.” 🎵



“**Hidden Mentone**” is a book featuring photographs of Mentone’s architectural and natural beauty — scenes often overlooked by the casual traveler. The book is available for purchase at the Mentone Art Center, Mentone Market and The Hatter Cafe.



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Friday–Saturday 5–8PM



(256) 634-2018



Anya Hinkle and Finn Magill - The Lookout Sessions - Mentone, Alabama - an Appalachian arts project



April Community Events

All times are central unless otherwise noted.
Calendar entries are subject to change.

April 1 • April Fool's Day • Enjoy the laughs!

April 2 • Music on the Mountain Songwriter Series • This free, regular event features local and regional songwriters performing original music. This month's round will feature three singer/songwriters who will share their songs individually and allow questions from the audience. Organizers will then finish the evening with an open mic, a chance for songwriters who have not participated to come and share a song or two and get scheduled for future events. 6:30 p.m. Mentone Arts & Cultural Center. Contact Randy Grider via email at mentoneartscenter@gmail.com or via phone at 256-674-3366.

April 4 • Nature Journal Journey Hike • Join naturalists and artists for this creative nature observation hike, combining art & nature! The focus of this nature walk is to reflect your observations of nature using a personal journaling style, in many different ways! Learn how to keep your own nature journal while strolling along trails in DeSoto State Park. Will hike in about ½ mile to the West Fork of Little River and hang out for a while working on our nature journals with provided materials. For ages 8 to adult, we encourage all ages to join! About the hike: the hike is considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. Total 1 ½ mile loop. What to bring: Backpack with plenty of water, and a lunch or snacks. Closed-toed shoes. A favorite journal if you have one, and we will supply watercolor paper, watercolor pencils, clipboards, etc. Bring something to sit on if you prefer: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. (CST) Meet at DeSoto's Lodge. \$5 includes all supplies. Class space is limited to 10, pre-registration is required for attendance in this class. Due to the nature of this hike, rain or high winds will reschedule this hike.

April 5 • Book Signing: Author & Chef Sheri Castle • Come meet Sheri Castle, host of The Key Ingredient, an Emmy-winning cooking show from PBS NC. She's also an award-winning food writer, recipe developer, cooking teacher, and storyteller. Sheri will be sharing stories and signing her cookbooks at the Gallery by Andiamo! 4-6 p.m.

April 5 • Family Game Night • Let's play games! We usually have people interested in Rummikub, Mexican Train Dominoes, Hearts, Scrabble, and more. You're invited to bring a family favorite or try a new game. Bring a snack to share if you can. We also have some on hand, so don't let that stop you if you want to try Game Night! Moon Lake Library at 6 p.m.

April 6 • Annual Litter Pick Up Day • Help keep Mentone clean and beautiful. Meet at the parking lot of Mentone Inn at 9 a.m. Lunch around noon at Linger Longer Pavilion, behind Mentone Inn.

April 6 • MERF Taste of the Mountain and Art Auction • Join us for a night of great food creations provided by local food providers. Excitement bills during the silent and live auctioning of amazing artwork by Valley Head School elementary students, pieces from local artist friends of MERF, and unique experiences. Don't miss out on a special evening that celebrates and supports all of MERF's programs enriching local students, Mentone senior citizens, and the community. MERF.mentone@gmail.com, 256-635-8775, MERFhouse.org.

April 6 • Plant Discovery Hike-Spring Blooms • Join DeSoto State Park Staff for a meandering journey within the forest, taking in every opportunity to learn more about the natural world. On this hike we will identify many native plants of the southern Appalachians and will be teaching you how to recognize the species found in the park. Bring a notebook/camera if you wish and discover what can be seen along the trails. About the hike: Approx. 1 1/2 miles round trip, utilizing red trail & blue trail moderate due to slightly rocky terrain. Meet at DSP Country Store on County Road 89. Free. Open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256-845-5380 beforehand to check on status of hike.

April 6 • Serve Day • Event by Marked for Life Ministries. We are thrilled to invite you to a special Serve Day at our newly acquired building! God has truly blessed our ministry with this building, and now we need your help to make it a place of growth and expansion for our mission. There are tasks available for everyone. During this Serve Day, we will be painting, cleaning, tearing up carpet, installing vanities, organizing clothing and storage items, landscaping, and so much more! By joining us on this special day, you will be a part of creating a welcoming and functional space that will enable us to better serve our community. Together, we can make a difference! 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

April 6 • Autism Walk and Bike Show • Come to support and help with Autism awareness. VFW Fairgrounds in Fort Payne. Walk starts at 9 a.m. with a bike show afterward. Contact Bobbi Wallen for more information 256-997-7046.

April 6 • Throwing a Stellar Cocktail Party • Throwing a Stellar Cocktail Party, Andiamo Style. A practical guide to a preparing and serving a memorable cocktail party. Beyond sharing the recipes, Sheri and Colleen (Andiamo Owner and Creative director) will show you creative ways to serve and display your delicious bites, ensuring that your next party spread will look like it came out of a magazine and tastes better than ever. Contact Andiamo Lodge.

April 6 • Brian Free and Assurance at The Pickin Post • Tickets \$15 info 256-657-3817

April 7 • Fly Fishing 101 • The Little River Canyon Center is excited to offer the workshop, Fly Fishing 101. Join Dr. Tim Lindblom will discuss gear selection, knots, fly selection, and casting instructions. Participants will get hands-on experience and the opportunity to make that first catch! Please bring water, sun protection and a snack. All equipment will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own. Ages 14 and over are welcome. Register today! Spots are extremely limited! 2-5 p.m. \$75 per participant or \$35 for JSU Students with Student ID.

April 7 • Cooking Class: Rise and Shine - A Soufflé Experience • In this hands-on Andiamo Lodge Cooking Experience, Sheri will lead you through two soufflé recipes that she thinks are keepers. The secrets to soufflé success are simple techniques that are easier than you might think. 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

April 8 • Eclipse Viewing party at the Canyon Center • Come view the 2024 Solar Eclipse with the JSU Field School at Little River Canyon Center. We'll learn about the science behind solar eclipses through STEM activities and crafts. Enjoy music, snacks, and more. We'll have eclipse viewing glasses for sale in the gift shop, while supplies last. Watch the total eclipse live broadcast Through the Eyes of NASA in English and Spanish. The Canyon Center will be open from 12 - 4 p.m. for this exciting event.

April 12 • Mosaic Bee Watering Station • The Serious Skills series is a variety of classes and workshops that provide opportunities to discover a hidden talent or learn a new skill for personal enrichment. DSP Staff will teach design, techniques, and the skills of class cutting, gluing, and grouting with special emphasis on safety. Participants will mosaic a wide, shallow tray for use as a watering station for bees & other pollinators. Not only will this project be beautiful, but it will also serve as a crucial and safe water source for our important pollinator allies. Ages 8 to adult. DeSoto State Park Nature Center next to DeSoto's Country Store & Information Center on Co. Rd. 89. Fee is \$45 and includes all supplies. Class space is limited to 10, pre-registration is required for attendance in this class.

April 13 • Master Gardeners Plant Sale • DCMG annual plant sale featuring area natives, veggies, and herbs with Master Gardeners on hand to help answer any questions. 8 - 11 a.m. VFW Fairgrounds in Fort Payne.

April 13 • Landscaping with Native Plants • This is sometimes called "naturescaping." Native doesn't have to mean wild, though! You can have a garden that is just as refined and glamorous as anyone else's. Many species of birds, pollinating bees and insects, butterflies and moths rely on our landscapes for homes, nest material, protection and food, so come and learn about our native wildflowers, trees, grasses and shrubs and how they play a key role in our ecosystem. Will include presentation & a meandering walk-about to see native plants around the park. DeSoto State Park Benefield Nature Center, next to the Country Store & Information Center. 2 - 5 p.m. Free & open to everyone. RSVP is appreciated.

April 14 • Support Alabama Libraries • Friends of Moon Lake Library will hold an informational session for the public to explain the proposed changes and to encourage citizens to write letters to the Alabama Public Library Service. We'll even provide paper, envelopes, and stamps so you can make your voice heard. Moon Lake Library in Mentone at 2 p.m.

April 18 • Strength Through Adversity Forum • At this year's Arts and Humanities Speakers' Forum, we will hear from Katy Simpson Smith, Michael Farris Smith, and Silas House. The general session is free and open to the public! 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It will be followed by a Master Class in the English Building.

April 19 • Family Game Night • Let's play games! We usually have people interested in Rummikub, Mexican Train Dominoes, Hearts, Scrabble, and more. You're invited to bring a family favorite or try a new game. Bring a snack to share if you can. We also have some on hand, so don't let that stop you if you want to try Game Night! Moon Lake Library in Mentone at 6 p.m.

April 20 • Pancake Day • The 45th annual event sponsored by the Fort Payne Kiwanis Club. All you can eat pancakes. \$7 donation. Fort Payne Rotary Pavilion 6 a.m. to 11 a.m.

April 20 • Lattes & Flowers • We will be having a special event at

The Food Pantry at St. Joseph's on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church is open every Wednesday to Mentone/Valley Head/ Hammondville residents 9-11 a.m.



We do close four Wednesdays a year. (Holy Week, World's Longest Yard Sale Week, Thanksgiving Week and Christmas Week.) We also welcome pantry volunteers and donations. For questions, call (256) 634-4476.

The Spot. We have partnered with Town Creek Field and Farm to create something special for all of you! Purchase a spring latte & get a small bouquet of flowers with it! It will be a bundled price! We will begin this event at 9 a.m. until we sell out of the bundles.

April 20 • Let's Go! Leather 101 • In this introductory class, Jeni Bailey will lead guests through the process of creating their own custom leather piece through techniques including setting holes, hand stitching and setting metal hardware. 2 - 4 p.m. Andiamo.

April 20 • Third Saturday Cruise-In • Enjoy an afternoon of family fun activities in the Main Street District of Fort Payne. This public event will include food, live music, motorcycles, antique car show, and much more. 5 – 9 p.m.

April 20 • Earth Fest 2024 • Celebrate Earth Day with the JSU Field School at the JSU Little River Canyon Center. Join us for live music from Dad Company & Jess Goggans! All activities are free. This will be a full day of fun. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

April 20 • Sol-vibe, Pixi Sticks • Artist and instructor build texture with a bespoke plaster of Paris mix, combine acrylic colors to achieve depth and glow, collage with textured materials, apply multiple layers of acrylic paints and gilding, and make a color reference guide for this painting. Class cost \$100 plus a \$30 supply fee. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Mentone Arts & Cultural Center. Contact Randy Grider via email at mentoneartscenter@gmail.com or via phone at 256-674-3366.

April 21 • Fluorescent Fishes • Lisa Opielinski will teach students masking techniques to control fluid acrylic paints, scratch techniques to highlight and add details, how to make a color reference guide for this , and how to layer washes of acrylic paints. Wear gloves and learn why. Class cost \$100 plus a \$30 supply fee. 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Mentone Arts & Cultural Center. Contact Randy Grider via email at mentoneartscenter@gmail.com or via phone at 256-674-3366.

April 22 • Earth Day at Valley Head Park • Come out to Valley Head town park located on Alabama Highway 117 to enjoy free activities for all ages or buy a rubber duck and watch it race down the creek. Sponsored by Valley Head School science teacher Ms. Tammy Cooper. 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

April 25 – 28 & May 2 – 5 • Anastasia the Musical Presented by NACC Theatre Department • This musical will showcase the full strengths of our crew and cast's technical and performance capabilities! The set is poised to provide the grandeur of a Royal Russian palace turned to ruble during the Bolshevik revolution all the way to the streets and Ballet stages of Paris. The cast prepares to sing a complex musical score built with large ballads and intimate solos while also working to learn the specific dance styles of the 1920s ballroom and ballet. Tickets are \$8 each. The Theatre Box Office is located on the 2nd Floor of the Tom Beville Lyceum. To order tickets by phone with a credit card call: (256) 638-4418 ext. 2218. To order tickets online visit NACC.edu/theatre.

April 27 • 2nd Annual Meet a Machine • This event is designed to provide the public with the opportunity to see, touch, and learn about vehicles used by public service agencies and local businesses. These vehicles include emergency response vehicles, planes, aircraft equipment, construction equipment, etc. All proceeds will benefit the DeKalb County Children's Advocacy Center. Isbell Field at Fort Payne Airport. 9 a.m. Adult tickets are \$5. Children are free.

April 27 • Killer Beaz at The Pickin Post • Celebrating his eighth season on Discovery Channel's hit series "Moonshiners", comedian Killer Beaz is touring the nation when not filming. Family friendly Show at The Pickin' Post in Fort Payne. 6:30 p.m. Tickets and information for the tour are available at KillerBeaz.com.

April 28 • Gary & Shane Baker Live at the Mentone Arts Center • Father-son duo of Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Gary Baker and multi-talented musician Shane Baker will perform at the Mentone Arts Center. Tickets are \$25 and seating is limited. Call 256-674-3366 for reservations. 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

April 28 • Old Fashion Singing • Performances by the Mentone Messengers, the Silvertones, several soloists, and congregational singing. Refreshments afterward. Moon Lake Baptist Church at 6 p.m.

In Memoriam

Please email your loved ones Memoriam information to GroundhogNews@yahoo.com. They will be printed as space allows.



Mr. Jackie L. Smith
May 25, 1952 – January 13, 2024
Mr. Jackie L. Smith, age 71, of Mentone, Alabama, passed away at his residence on Saturday, January 13, 2024.

Mr. Smith is survived by siblings Sharon (Tom) Becker, Robert Smith, Houston (Anita) Smith, Tracy (Joe) Burt, Tina Smith, Melinda Miller, and Chastity Smith; sister-in-law Mickie Lemaster and several nieces and nephews.

Mr. Smith was preceded in death by his parents Jesse L. Smith and Sarah McCreless Smith, his wife Carol Ann Blalock Smith, and sister Sheila Meadows. In lieu of flowers, the family requested donations to your favorite charity.



Mr. Robert Glenn Baty Jr.
September 1, 1941 – March 8, 2024
Mr. Robert Glenn Baty Jr., age 82, of Mentone, Alabama passed away on Friday, March 8, 2024, at his residence.

Bob Baty, 82, was a member of one of Mentone's oldest multi-generational families and nephew of local author John Baty. His father's sawmill was a local landmark for decades. Bob will be remembered by many for his sense of humor.

Mr. Baty is survived by his sons Scott Baty, Steve Hawkins, and Jon Hawkins, granddaughter Caroline Baty, and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mr. Baty was preceded in death by his wife Alma Maxine Baty, parents Robert Glenn Baty Sr. and Pearlie Mae "Sis" Lusk Baty. The family is accepting donations to a local hospice organization of your choice on behalf of Mr. Bob Baty.

Mrs. Louise Hulgan
November 1, 1938 – March 13, 2024
Mrs. Louise Hulgan, age 85, of Valley Head, Alabama passed away on Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at her residence.

Mrs. Hulgan is survived by her sons Mike (Libby) Hulgan and Scotty (Anita) Hulgan; special caretaker Carol Kerby; grandchildren Josh (Kasie) Hulgan, Kevin Hulgan, Taylor (Adam) Stanford, and Haley (Dillon) Demarco; and eleven great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Hulgan was preceded in death by her husband, William C. (Billy) Hulgan, son Clay Hulgan, and granddaughter Gina Kilgore. She was laid to rest in Head Springs Cemetery.

1	Michele Kincer Angie Miller Calvin Lanier Kayla Cronnon Cayson Hughes Stan Dowiat Josh Miller	7	Shannon Chappell Kansas Lee Kyle Miller Dori Reed Will Stephens Drew Ashley Jeffrey Beckery	13	Brian Blalock Tessa Gravitt	19	Taylee Keith Adam Dupree Kinsley Brown Mariah Shannon	25	Cooper Kirby Jennifer Hamilton Jennifer Manning	31	Raymond & Sharon Coots
2	Milton Chambers Ellie Cox Jayken Lawton Nancy Lawton Amanda Patrick Dee Dee Hendricks Marcus Ledford Riley Shae Burt	8	Angie Kirby Jackson Eli Rosson Ruby Jo Miller Sharon Coots Madissen Chitwood Hayden Knowles Robert Williamson Jedidiah Lawton Jr.	14	Zoey Chambers Carl Tubberville Jason Baber Cooper Hill Tucker Smith Austin Frost Jessica Chisenhall	20	Molly Manifold Eloise Lance John Moore Phyllis James Cindy Carden Zack Payne Wesley Flarity Karson London Bankston Stone Karan Bolton Jay Martin	26	Chris & Jennifer Collins Steve & Sandy Tate Tim & Allie Cowart	32	Milton & Gail Chambers
3	Ray Padgett Jessica Battles Jalen Gregory	9	Josh Goss Justin Kahler Mickey Smith Cody West Brenda Goggans Weston Nowak	15	Kailee Johnson Barbara Busby Rape Craig Hendricks Sherry Dehn	21	Kaden Brody Johnson Emily Miller Kaylee Sims Tommy Stephens Ben Shurett	27	Robert & Bridget Arnold	33	Robert & Bridget Arnold
4	Mildred Crouch Jamie Vest Sherry Barkley Coty Powell Cameron Thompson Lindsay Thompson Bonnie Blalock Storm Kurts	10	Brittany Dixon Newly Ingram Paul Ethan Blackwell Lindsey Webb Lisa Moore Emily McElhaney Debra Rhodes Stanford Carson Conner Barkley Robert Tillman Pam Gibson	16	Preston Kirby Danny Hopper Al Blackburn Sandy Johnson Waker Moore Shelley Williams Abigail Yerke Gail West Mallory Williams	22	Stacey Bowman Austin Reed Vaelyn Heinrich Maria Moreno	28	Ronnie & Leslie Bowman Kevin & Kerri Puckett	34	Nick & Shinice Stout
5	Kaitlyn Tedder Jana Sharp Kenny Chamlee Steve Rhodes Chris Black Andi Runnels Donna Busby Jamie Pannell Gene Justice Jaxon Smith Glenn Miller	11	Jordan Beasley Joey Garrett Josie Goss Jerri Ann Tidmore Austin Simpson Ashton Simpson	17	Ann Cash Harrell Scott Guinn Hannah Drain	23	Linda Stephenson Katie Hester Dawson Kincer John Kincer Ezra Underwood Lila Dupree Cooper Dupree Tiffany Berry Lauren Highfield	29	Corey & Abby Davis	35	Josh & Brandi Rosson
6	Felicia Harrison Jazz Chambers John Chambers Ethel Manifold Sydney Ingram Jennifer Cruse Fisher Posey Josh Burt	12	Corey Davis Kyle Coots Tiffany Baker Jeff Stephenson Liam Cooper Mary Shurett Leslie Day Stella Rae Highfield	18	Taylor Verdon Shan Smith	24	Mandi Goza Anita Meadows Shane McMahan Jaimee McGee Doug Powell	30	Josh & Brandi Rosson	36	Preston & Chelsey Owen Nick & Mallory Williams
				24	Courtney Meadows					37	Will & Jennifer Stephens
										38	Ian & Larissa Allen
										39	Don & Dena McKee
										40	Ross & Jessica VanPelt
										41	Todd & Angie Godwin



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Cicadas (continued from page 1)

move much more than a yard from where they dropped to avoid losing their food source.

“If they go the wrong direction and don’t find a root, they’re dead,” Kritsky says.

This is the life of the periodical cicada for the next 13 years. The nymphs that hatch and fall this spring will busy themselves eating and tunneling until their time comes to emerge from the ground and begin the cycle all over again — in the year 2037. For perspective, that is more than three presidential election cycles from now. Put another way, children starting kindergarten this year will be high school seniors when Brood XIX emerges again.

Engage With the Emergence

Kritsky encourages people to create memories and build stories around this emergence, instead of sitting inside and letting it pass them by. “It would be great if people would enjoy this,” he says. “It’s a real gateway to get kids into science and nature.”

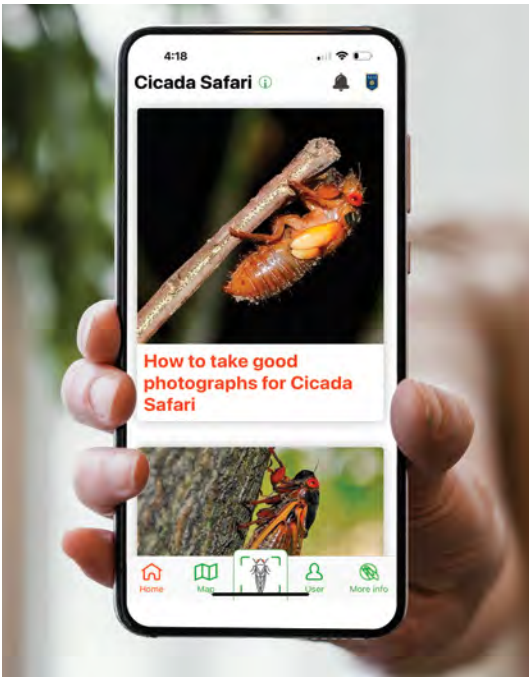
In fact, grandparents have told Kritsky that the cicada emergence got their kids interested in natural history and science, “and now they have a medical doctor in the family.”

Following are some tips for engaging with the cicada emergence:

- 1) Begin observing trees and other vertical surfaces in late April, looking for the first cicadas to emerge.
- 2) Once spotted, go outside after dark with a flashlight and look for cicadas as they emerge from the ground and climb trees.
- 3) Spend time observing the approximately 90-minute process of the nymph splitting open and freeing itself from its shell.
- 4) Make notes of what days you observe the cicadas and on which sides of trees you discover them. The full emergence of the brood can take up to two weeks.
- 5) Don’t limit yourself to your own backyard or neighborhood. Visit friends and neighbors, or public lands such as state parks and Little River Canyon National Preserve.
- 6) Involve your friends in fun ways. Host cicada watch parties and expeditions.
- 7) Take photos and videos to document the emergence.

8) Most of all, involve young kids in these activities when possible and explain to them the full life cycle of the cicada.

“It’s a really wonderful and memorable experience,” says Kritsky. “It’s making memories with the kids because they’re outside. It’s night. It’s dark. You have flashlights, and these bugs are all over the place. Just enjoy this.”



Be Part of the Research

Not only can you engage with the cicada emergence as suggested above, but you can also participate in its scientific documentation.

Begin by downloading the free app Cicada Safari, available for iPhone and Android phones. Check your phone’s settings to ensure location services are enabled for the camera. This adds important metadata to your photos that will help researchers map where submitted cicada photos were taken.

Before the emergence, familiarize yourself with the app. Read the helpful resources,

especially the article about taking good photographs for Cicada Safari.

When the emergence begins, take photos of the various stages. Submit them with the app, either from within the app itself or by uploading images captured previously outside of the app.

“The photograph is sent to us and examined,” says Kritsky. “If it’s verified and approved, it goes on a live map.” As reports come in, the map comes alive with cicada data.

When Brood X emerged in 2021, the Cicada Safari app was downloaded more than 200,000 times. Kritsky and his team received 561,000 photographs from users.

Activity could be even greater this year, as interest in cicadas is running high due to the emergence of two broods.

A Rare Double Emergence

As Alabama and several surrounding states observe the emergence of Brood XIX, residents in portions of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan will see the emergence of Brood XIII — cicadas that operate on a 17-year cycle.

It has been 221 years since these two broods last emerged in the same year. It was 1803, and Thomas

Jefferson was president. The year’s biggest news was the significant increase in the U.S. land mass through the Louisiana Purchase.

This alignment will not happen again until the year 2245.

While this is creating heightened interest in cicadas this year, Kritsky says there will be very little overlap of the two broods. In fact, the areas where overlap does occur will be on the edges of the emergence regions where cicada populations are lower.

“What is really exciting, though, for those of us who study cicadas, is that you will, for the first time in many, many years, be able to be in a 13-year cicada brood and drive about an hour and a half and you’ll be in a 17-year cicada brood,” says Krisky.

To learn more about the coming cicada emergence, the broods involved, and historical observations about cicadas, read Kritsky’s book “A Tale of Two Broods: The 2024 Emergence of Periodical Cicada Broods XIII and XIX.” 🦗



Environmental benefits of the periodical cicadas

“Cicadas do a lot of good for the Eastern deciduous forests,” says Dr. Gene Kritsky, an author and university professor. Among the ecological benefits:

- The tunnels from which cicadas emerge act as natural soil aerators, which helps prevent rainwater runoff and provides trees with more water for their root systems.
- The large number of adult cicadas provides a food bonanza to several predators, which has a positive impact on those populations. For example, wild-life officials told Kritsky that turkeys harvested in the fall following a cicada emergence had a larger body weight than those harvested from areas with no cicada emergence.
- When the female cicada lays her eggs in trees, sometimes the branches snap. “They’ll dangle from the tree, the leaves will wither and die, and it looks like the tree’s been hit by hail,” explains Kritsky. “We call that flagging.” This acts as natural pruning, resulting in healthier trees that produce more flowers and fruit the following year.
- When the cicadas die and fall to the ground, their decaying bodies contribute a tremendous amount of nitrogen and other nutrients to the soil.

Source: cicadasafari.org

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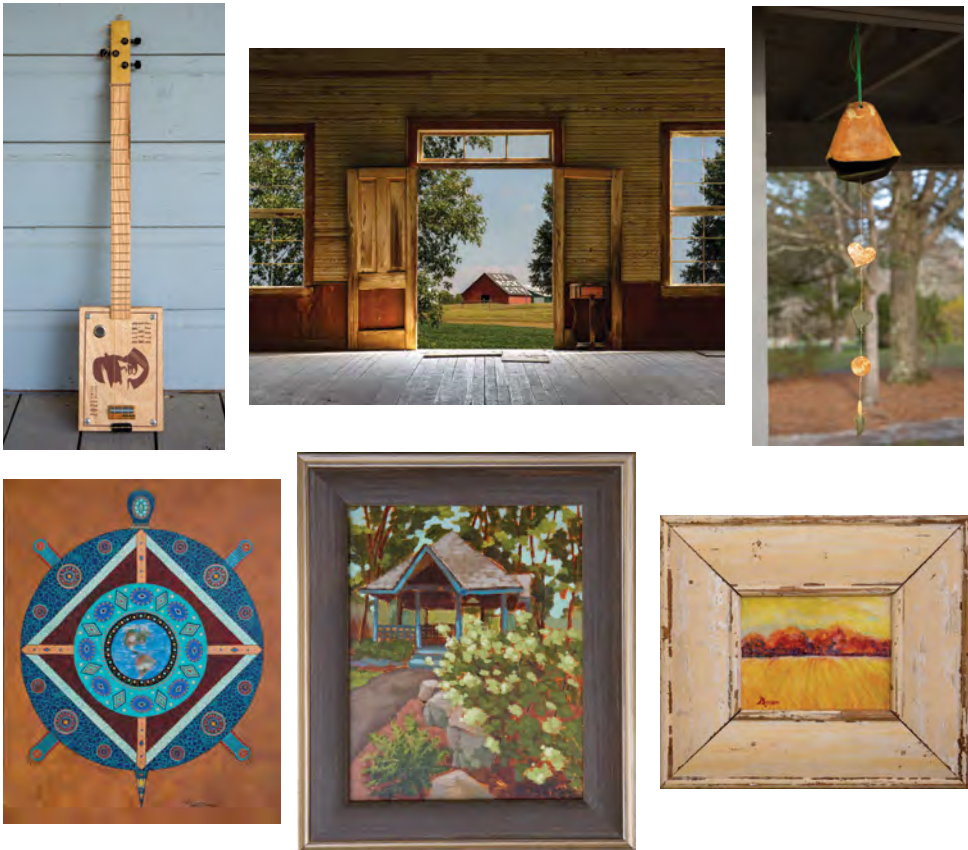
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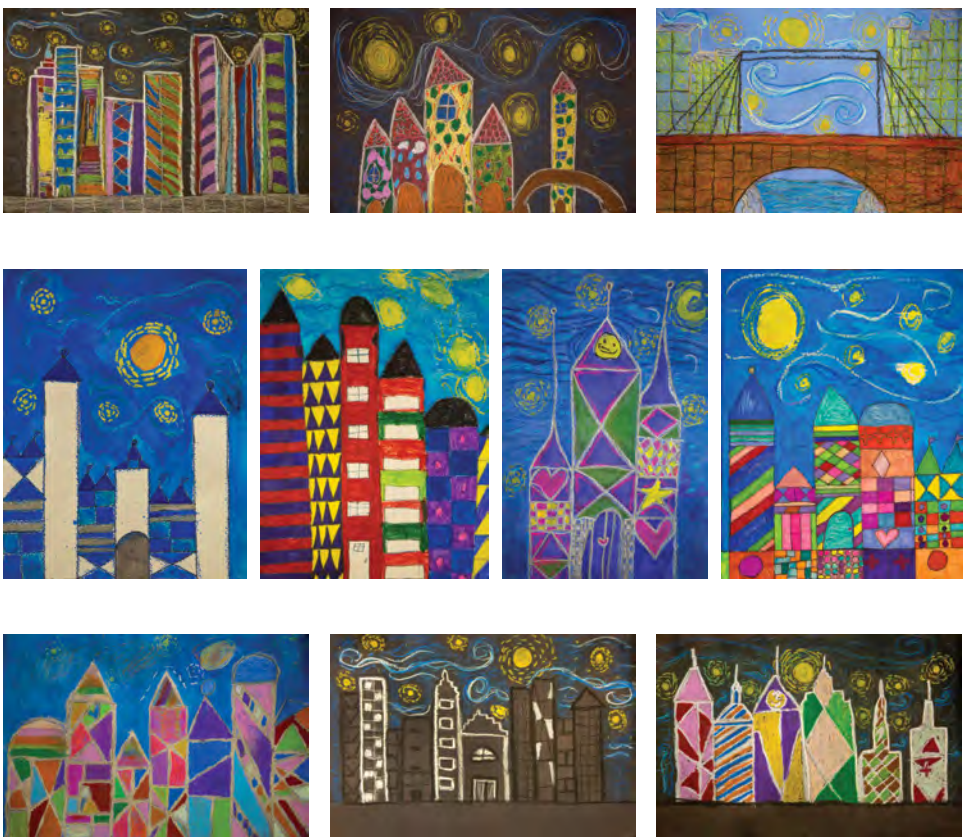
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