



THE GROUNDHOG

“Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain”

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

The Oral History of Bob Baty

by Kelly Leavitt



Bob Baty

The allure and quality of life in a community are intrinsically tied to its forebears. Pioneer families who arrived in the Mentone area during the decades following the removal of the Cherokee were hardy folk who relied on themselves and their land for survival. With the opening of the Mentone Springs Hotel in the 1880s and its proximity to the railroad depot in Valley Head, visitors began to travel from afar to enjoy the area’s beauty, peace, mineral spring waters, and mountain air. Mentone is a bit unique among area towns due to the “blending” that occurred between the generational locals and those who visited or had second residences. It became a symbiotic relationship which continues today.

As Mentone’s population is growing in the 2020s with an influx of people from across the country, it is especially important for residents to know something about the past and respect those whose ancestors helped create the community so many now call home.

Oral history is a valuable technique for capturing personal reflections of experience and knowledge. In recent years, the former Mentone Area Preservation Association recorded the oral histories of siblings Walt Pullen and Linda Pullen Burns, Gerald Bailey, Bill Berry, and Evelyn Graves. Early this year, Bob Baty contacted me and said he was interested in his oral history being recorded. Bob’s family history is interesting and important because his father, Glenn, had founded the Baty Lumber Company in 1948. “Baty’s Mill” was a local landmark until it ceased to operate in 2000. Bob and I had a few discussions, and Max Mitchell volunteered to facilitate his interview which was scheduled to be videotaped on March 19 at Moon Lake Baptist Church. Sadly, Bob Baty passed away on March 8; his funeral was held on March 18.

A lesson Bob has taught us all is that every day counts. If we are to capture the memories of old-timers in the area, we cannot hesitate. Mentone has lost many citizens, this year especially, with rich stories to share.

Fortunately, Max had met with Bob on February 28 to prepare for the scheduled interview. Max made a



Top: The Baty sawmill in 1953.
Bottom: An aerial view of the mill in 2000.

(continued on page 12)

Valley Head’s First Female Mayor

by Anna Mae Horn

History was made at the Valley Head Town Council Meeting in April as Madam Mayor Karen Vest was sworn in by Probate Judge Ronnie Osborn. Mayor Vest is the first woman to serve as mayor in the Town of Valley Head. She stated, “I am very honored to represent all Valley Head citizens and excited for the future.”

Karen Vest has been a member of the council since 2020. She was asked to run for a council seat; being voted in was an honor. Karen thoroughly enjoys serving the community and helping people. Her favorite part of being on the town council was being involved and knowing what was happening in her community.

In order to better represent her constituents, Mrs. Vest took the personal initiative to begin Certified Municipal Officer training in January of this year. She felt the training would make her a better council member and more aware of the laws and guidelines cities must adhere to. Now that she is Mayor, Karen feels this continued training will help her be a better leader.

Mayor Vest plans to attract more businesses to Valley Head. Mayor Vest feels that more family-oriented events would strengthen our community. Town beautification is also a priority: reducing litter, starting a regular community clean-up day, encouraging all businesses to work together to beautify the streets, and promoting pride among residents for their yards.

Wasting no time, Mayor Vest announced vacancies on the zoning and planning commissions at the April town council meeting. She also informed the public on the process requirements of filling



Madam Mayor Karen Vest is honored to serve her community

the vacancies; zoning members are elected, while planning membership is by appointment.

Steps have already been taken to update and modernize the Town of Valley Head website with a link to a calendar and updated personnel biographies. Town resolutions, zoning guidelines, and other official information will eventually be available online for citizens to access at their convenience.

Karen Vest is accustomed to collaborating with others to make things happen and is no stranger to positions of leadership. She will bring this experience to the mayoral seat. Her past positions include Kiwanis of Birmingham, teaching Sunday school and VBS, President of the Heart Association (in the Carolinas), President of the Art Association, and Region I Director of Alabama Association of Paralegals, Inc.

As a retired paralegal, Mayor Vest is great at research and learns all the facts and information before making a decision. She graduated with honors in Business from College of the Albemarle

(continued on page 3)

Three Strings and the Truth

by Frank J. Kenney

The original phrase, “three CHORDS and the truth” was coined by forklift operator and prolific Nashville singer/songwriter Harlan Howard to describe the “necessary ingredients for country music”. He went on to write 4000+ songs and was able to be true to his word in most of them. You may know Harlan by his biggest songwriting hit, “I Fall to Pieces”, recorded by the legendary Patsy Cline, but there were many, including “Busted” sung by Johnny Cash AND Ray Charles, “Heartaches by the Number” with Ray Price on vocals, and “Why Not Me” by The Judds, a song he (or they) managed to slip a fourth chord into. But I digress. This is not a story about Mr. Howard. This IS a brief history and description of the Cigar Box Guitar.

Not all cigar box guitars have 3 strings, though it is the most common. Some have 4, some 2, and then there’s the Diddley Bow; a one-stringer. Refer to the image above to help you picture the elemental nature of this wonderful instrument.

Stringed instruments have been around for a very long time, but the cigar box guitar was the invention of Americans in the mid-1800’s. The regulation of cigar manufacturing, shipping and box sizes for the standardization of taxes created the perfect vessel for the homemade guitar. A cigar box, a broomstick, some wire, some basic tools, and, most importantly, the desire to create music in a situation of little or no money ... well, that was the recipe for some down-home, front-porch music. The first known image of a cigar box instrument is a lithograph from the Civil War (circa 1864 but not published until 1876) of a cigar box fiddle being played



Three string cigar box guitar by Frank Kenney.

(continued on page 4)



Judge Ronnie Osborn swears in Mayor Karen Vest, Valley Head’s first female mayor, as her family stands by her side.

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



The Groundhog

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**Groundhog woodcut courtesy of
Meg Justice/Bee Spring Studio**

Mentone Matters

by Mayor Rob Hammond

Thanks to Lyle Nicely for once again heading up the annual spring litter pick-up. There was a good turn out and over 100 bags of litter were picked up. Thanks to all who volunteered. The sheriff’s work crew had previously picked up the litter along the side of the mountain on AL 117. As always, thanks to Mentone Police Chief Gene McKee and Officer Mike Langston for their assistance during the pick-ups. Thanks to Joseph Lee for taking the litter to the dump. The effort to keep litter under control is ongoing. Thanks to all individuals and organizations who have adopted miles in the Mentone area. Mentone Public Works Director Paul Nail continuously picks up litter within the town limits and mows the right of way on AL 117.

Following the litter pick up, Cynthia Stinson hosted a community lunch at the Linger Longer Pavilion at the Mentone Inn. Thanks to all who brought food and thanks to Larry Joe Hall for playing music.



I was able to attend the MERF art auction later that day. Our local food establishments provided a ‘Taste of Mentone.’ It was a fun evening and a great way to raise funds for MERF’s programs. Those two events held on April 6 showcased Mentone’s community spirit. 🍷

From the Editor Community

by Anna Mae Horn

Community bonds run strong in this area. Neighbors help neighbors. People pitch in and pick up when it is needed. We carry each other through the storms. As you read the words of this issue, look at the different ways you are reading the word community. Sometimes it is disguised as ‘gathering’, other times as ‘volunteer’, but many times you just see the result — a renovated building perhaps. What about the ‘city limits’ or boundaries of the community? They are flexible like an amoeba, extending outwards to pull in others who want to join. Notice all of the places that our ‘community’ paper represent. If you attend any of the community events you read about this month, I challenge you to see how many different towns and communities are represented there. Currently, there are 75 distribution points for The Groundhog in four incorporated towns,

one city, and numerous communities and neighborhoods. The Groundhog subscriber community is a collection of 78 different postal cities. Community is even more than people and places, it’s a feeling of being connected to others. The Groundhog has been connecting us (a lot of us) for over 40 years! Think about how these printed words among the pages make you feel about the world around you and consider how many others in all these other places are feeling the same because they share the love of The Groundhog and of our little place on this big world. Read this paper and know you are part of a greater community that is filled with caring people striving to make this greater community a better place. I hope you enjoy reading this month’s issue of “neighborly news from the heart of Lookout Mountain.” 🍷

Funds from Mentone Fall Festival used to renovate Moon Lake School

by Stephen V. Smith

Residents and visitors converged on the former Moon Lake School campus last October to enjoy the inaugural Mentone Fall Festival. Not only was it a great event for the town, artists, and visitors from surrounding areas, but it also raised needed funds for preserving an important cultural asset. Led by a volunteer planning committee, the Mentone Fall Festival is a town-sponsored event that began with a focus on renovating the former Moon Lake Elementary School. Deeded to the town by the DeKalb County Board of Education after it closed in 2021, the school has been reimagined as an artisan village and event space. It is home to retail shops, an architectural firm, and a gallery. The building will soon be home to the Little River Arts Council, and work begins this month on a major public art exhibit that will honor the town’s founding and future. The 2023 festival raised \$25,000, which the

town invested into renovations at the campus. These included:

- Heating and cooling system for the community room: \$4,655
- Cleaning under the building and installing a vapor barrier: \$5,625
- Foundation repair under the community room and porch: \$12,377

These projects total \$22,657, with more renovations planned for the campus. “The festival was a huge success, and we’re already working on making this year’s event even better,” says Deedee Morrison of the Mentone Fall Festival Planning Committee. “We encourage all residents, businesses, and non-profits to get involved in this important event for our town.” To pledge your support, message us and keep monitoring our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MentoneFestivals. 🍷



KEEP BEARS WILD

- Never feed or approach bears.
- Secure food, garbage and recycling.
- Remove bird feeders when bears are active.
- Never leave pet food outdoors.
- Clean and store grills.
- Alert neighbors to bear activity.

Source: bearwise.org



Using State Health Insurance Programs (SHIP)

by Lynn Hixson

State Health Insurance Programs provide education, counseling and information concerning your Medicare Health Insurance. SHIP Volunteer Counselors are not affiliated with any insurance company and will not attempt to sell you insurance or endorse any one company. That is the senior’s choice. All counseling is kept strictly confidential. Counselors can help you determine which Medicare Health Plan or Medicare Drug Plan best fits your needs.

Your costs for health services and items will differ, depending on whether you have Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan. If you need help paying for the cost of Medicare, you may qualify for assistance. Call your local SHIP counselor at the DeKalb County Council on Aging at 256-845-8590 to see if you are eligible for any assistance programs that help cover Medicare costs. 🐾

VHS Students Study Six Flags

by Carley Collins, VHS Sophomore

On Friday, April 5th, a group of high school students were able to travel to Six Flags for Education Days. The Education Days at Six Flags offers knowledge and fun all in one sweet deal. Students explored math, science, and physics by observing (and riding, of course) the mechanics of world-class

coasters, thrill rides, and so much more. With discounted admission, meal package, and workbooks, Six Flags gave everything needed to inspire this next generation of scientists. Thank you MERF for your generous donation that helped make this trip possible. 🐾



Mayor (continued from page 1)

in Elizabeth City, NC. Karen also spent 2 years in art school. Her first job was as a paralegal, and she made a career of it. Karen was born in Dayton, Ohio, and lived in “a tiny white house”. Her Dad was an Air Force Chief Master SGT and a skilled airplane mechanic in charge of the flight line at Wright Patterson AFB. Karen spent her primary school years in Germany. She stays in contact with siblings and places family time as a top priority. She has been happily married to Charley Vest for over 22 years. They both share a Cinco de Mayo birthdate. (Be sure to say “feliz cumpleaños”!) Charley works for the National Park Service at Little River Canyon National Preserve and Russell Cave. He is also retired from Alabama Power where he enjoyed working with interns to instill good business practices in the next generation. Charley and Karen have five children and nine grandchildren who have fun visiting the Valley Head farm. The farm chores keep both Charley and Karen busy. She particularly enjoys caring for the animals and flower farming. When they have time, they enjoy traveling and seeing new places. 🐾



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LOTS & LAND

GREAT POSSIBILITIES WITH AN AMAZING VIEW! This 2.3 BROW lot is a great location for your dream home. \$350,000. #21844211

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GREAT POSSIBILITIES! This Mentone property offers road frontage on Hwy 117 in the business/alcohol district. A rare opportunity as this is one of very few vacant lots in this area! \$75,000. #1801221

AMAZING POSSIBILITIES! This property offers road frontage on Cove Road in the business/alcohol district. A rare opportunity as this is one of very few available vacant lots in this area. Adjoins a lot that fronts AL Hwy 117. #1801378

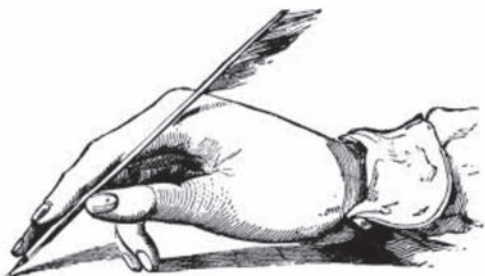
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Set Your Words Free

“Painting is silent poetry, and poetry is painting that speaks”
—Plutarch

May is here and life is abundant. According to the Farmer’s Almanac, the name for this month is named after the Roman goddess Maia, who oversaw the growth of plants. The flower of May is Lilly of the valley and symbolizes sweetness or the return of happiness.

This column came to life last month to invite and share the haiku writing talents of our readers. This is your column! Be yourself and express yourself or be anonymous, it matters not. Just try haiku. It is only 3 lines! Surely, we all have time for 3 lines!

****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.

“Poetry can be a kind of meditation”, explains Rashid Hughes, a Mindfulness and Yoga Teacher, Restorative Justice Facilitator. He explores how the art of haiku can bring a sense of peaceful, awe-inspired expressiveness into our daily lives. “The gift of haiku is the patience that is invoked and the wonder”.

Here are three submissions for May from Groundhog readers:

*Bird song in treetop
Makes me turn off radio.
Daily free concerts – (A bird lover)*

*The grass is now green
Goodbye to the cold winter.
Mower needs gas soon. – (FKJ)*

*Mother, gave me life.
Always caring, always kind.
Mother, full of love. – (May B.)*

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 for others to enjoy!!!!

JUNE TOPICS: Father’s Day, Fishing, Picnics, or anything that you wish to write about! 🐿

Three Strings and the Truth (continued from page 1)

by a soldier for a brother-in-arms, by the illustrator Edwin Forbes. The first plans for building such an instrument appeared in The American Boy’s Handy Book by Daniel Carter Beard in 1882 and was later included in the Boy Scout Handbook.

For my first attempt at building a stringed instrument, I referred to the article penned by S.H. Samuels in a 1917 edition of Popular Mechanics entitled “A Homemade Hawaiian Ukelele”. I was drawn to the simplicity of the article: the basic wording, the hand-drawn images, and the assertion that construction costs would run about 30-cents. That was build number one. In the 62 that I have made since, mistakes and changes are frequent, but I try, like Harlan Howard, to remain true to my spin on his words. My mission is simple: “make your own instrument, play your own tune.” That is the simplest way I can put it. Back at’cha Harlan.

Cigar boxes are of similar size and shape, but vary by dimension, construction materials, and quality. These characteristics clearly affect the sound. For instance, a handmade Spanish-cedar box will possess a warmer tone than an inexpensive machine-made cardboard one. There are metal boxes and paper-covered fiberboard boxes as well. Some have magnificent graphics, and some are quite plain. Though not technically a cigar box guitar, other incarnations of similar stringed folk instruments are made using cans (old gallon-sized fuel and chemical cans), hubcaps, shovels, canoe paddles, and boxes that once held tools, tea, or as one that I recently built and sold, popcorn. If you start building or just paying attention to the possibility of instrument construction from everyday items, you might be surprised to discover in yourself the newfound ability to see the world of junk in a different light, one that holds endless possibilities for discarded and transformed detritus. To the ingenious cigar box guitar builder, the landscape becomes a dumpster filled with treasure rather than trash. Tuners, the items that strings wind around at the top (the headstock) of the guitar, can be hand carved from scrap wood or you can purchase sophisticated, enclosed-gear, string-locking, metal devices. The frets of a handmade fretboard can be glued-to-the-surface toothpicks, large metal staples, cable ties or nickel-plated machined wires. Bridges and nuts, the items that the strings pass over at the headstock and near the tailpiece (at the bottom of the guitar), can be rusted bolts, recycled hinges, pieces of antler or modern, molded, metal marvels. You get the picture? Hey, don’t

throw that Mr. Peanut can away; the bottom is a sound resonator. Found an old rusty shoehorn? Drill holes in it and turn it into a tailpiece. Got an old leather belt that you’re about to donate to Goodwill? Wait...that can be a guitar strap. The sky is the limit, or the scrap pile is the “go-to” when it comes to building a cigar box guitar.

Cigar box guitars became especially popular during and after the Depression when money was tight but the desire for musical expression was not. Old-time blues players like Blind Willie Johnson (1897-1945) and Lightnin’ Hopkins (1912-1982), were just boys when they picked up their first guitar: a cigar box guitar. Blind Willie’s was a one-stringer built for him by his dad when the youngster was only five. Lightnin’ built his own from “a cigar box, a piece of plank, and some screen wire.” Both went on to establish their own unique style: for Johnson, gospel blues, and, for Hopkins, electric, talking blues. They are still revered today for their trailblazing techniques. Sleepy John Estes, Scrapper Blackwell, Hound Dog Taylor, Big Bill Broonzy: Don’t recognize those names? Your homework assignment is to find and listen to these ol’ timers who started their guitar odyssey on a cigar box guitar. Some other famous guitarists whose names you might know: Carl Perkins, Roy Clark, Jimi Hendrix, George Benson, Albert King, and Buddy Guy. Yep, them too. They picked up a cigar box guitar and the rest, as they say, is history. Extra credit if you add these dudes to your personal playlist.

So, how can you experience and enjoy the musical world of the cigar box guitar? Take a trip to Huntsville, AL and visit The Cigar Box Guitar Store, the ONLY store IN THE WORLD devoted entirely to cigar box guitars. It’s located in Lowe Mill Arts and Entertainment, 2211 Seminole Dr SW, Studio 106 (open Wed-Sat, call for hours, 256-886-8554). Want to learn to play a cigar box guitar? Stop in The Cigar Box Guitar Store on any Saturday from noon-2 p.m. (CT) for a free group lesson, and attend the 20th, and the world’s longest running, cigar box guitar festival at Lowe Mill, May 30-June 2, 2024. See The Cigar Box Serenaders from New Orleans, Debbie Bond and Radiator Rick, Microwave Dave, and Erin Coburn. The festival is free, fun, family friendly, and raises funds for music education in Madison County and northern Alabama. 🐿

Frank J. Kenney in a cigar box guitar craftsman at Billy Goat Guitars in Cloudland, GA.



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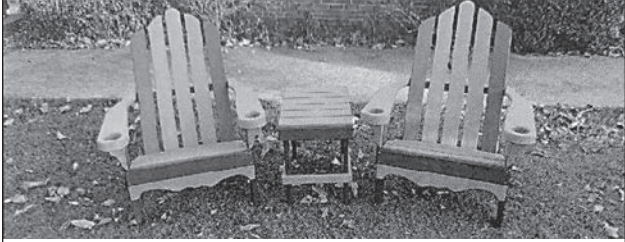
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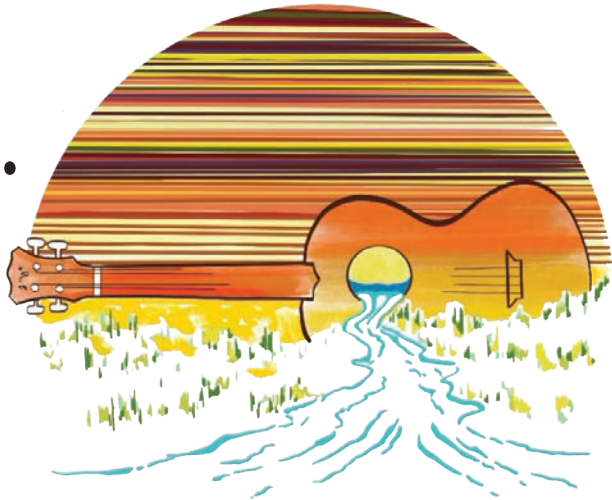
Mentone Ukes

If you provide a reason and a place...

by Jerry Megli

One of the things we’ve learned in our quest to continue nurturing this local ukulele group (besides all things pertaining to ukulele) is that if you provide people with a satisfying reason to get together and a welcoming place to get together, people will gather. In fact, people will come and do come from near and far to gather, and this begins to build its own reciprocal energy. The members of the Mentone Ukes share a common thread initially, that being the desire to learn and play the ukulele with others. Once that goal is realized, the members begin to see that they have more than just ukuleles in common, and the awareness of this shared interest comes through casual conversation or overhearing someone else’s conversation with another member. It’s like, “Did I hear you mention...?” “Could you show me that picking technique?” “What is the name of that song?” By being together, they find they have more in common than just the ukulele—a community is born. Along with their ukulele, people bring their past experiences to the community, and this includes career paths, family ties, connections within the Mentone community itself, diverse musical backgrounds, and so on, and it all begins to converge at our sessions.

In the early years of the Mentone Ukes, people tended to show up fifteen minutes ahead of time; when the session was finished, they would pack up and leave. We have observed over the years that people often arrive a half-hour to even an hour early so they can visit with each other prior to the session;



when the session is finished, they don’t leave right away. They visit with one another and share songs, musical techniques, and tips with each other. So, the reason to get together beyond the ukulele begins to expand, but the welcoming place to get together



Mentone Ukes on the porch of Little River Hardware.

continues to be generously provided by the Moon Lake Library. A few years ago, the Mentone Ukes was officially designated as the “House Band of the Moon Lake Library,” and it is a badge we wear proudly. The space provided by the Moon Lake Library is the springboard for other community activities that the Mentone Ukes participates in, such as the World’s Longest Yard Sale at the library, the annual Town of Mentone lighting of the Christmas tree on the grounds of the Mentone Inn, the Holiday Open House at the library, the spring and fall Farmers Market performances, Mentone Fall Festival performances, the MERF luncheon entertainment, and occasional porch picking at Little River Hardware—all of which are great reasons and welcoming places to gather. It is a simple formula but it works for us: provide a reason and a place and community will follow and grow.

May is New Revival at the Post

by Barry Morton

The Patriots Pole. After a quiet winter, May is a beehive of activity at the Mentone American Legion Post 215. I want to call your attention to the Patriots Pole being carved by Don Highfield. We’ve started a digital donation process for you to help share Don’s expenses. You can access this site from the Mentone American Legion FB group page. On Memorial Day, we will dedicate the carving to all the veterans in our post.

Memories of Mayberry Day in Valley Head. On Star Wars Day, May the 4th (be with you), we will have a booth at the Memories of Mayberry Day in Valley Head. Our booth will have flag pins, red poppy pins, and encouraging bracelets to hand out. It will also have \$5 and \$20 raffle tickets to buy. The \$5 winner will be announced at the end of the festival with the winner awarded the split of the pot (50%/50%). The \$20 is also a 50/50 split with the winner awarded \$1,000 on Memorial Day, May 27th.

Memorial Day. Besides the Patriots Pole dedication and the \$1,000 giveaway, we will have a Picnic at the Post providing all veterans with hamburgers and hotdogs free. The public may purchase meals also: \$10 for a hamburger plate and \$5 for hot dog plate.

Here’s a couple of photos of the Post with the Patriot Pole. You’ll notice our new windows provided by a generous \$2,000 donation from my wife, Lynna.

You can see our continued improvements at our Mentone American Legion FB Group page.

Barry Morton is Commander of the American Legion Post 215.



The Patriots Pole carved by Don Highfield. See the detail in the flag!

If you would like to see what this ukulele community might offer you, please join us at one of our free sessions on May 11th or 25th at 1:00 PM CT at the Moon Lake Library. Beginners and newcomers of all ages are always welcome to attend (that’s how most of our members got their start!). You can find us on Facebook (Mentone Ukes) or on our website, www.mentoneukes.com. For more information, please contact Debra Fey (debrajfe@gmail.com) or Hank Allen (hank.d.allen@gmail.com).



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MERF: Supported by Community

by Anna Mae Horn

April ‘showered’ MERF with many blessings. The annual Taste of the Mountain and Art Auction was a great success. The community came together through donations, tickets, art purchases, and volunteering to raise over \$18,000 for MERF programs and needs! We genuinely appreciate and value all who made this happen. It’s amazing to watch it all fall into place like a jigsaw puzzle. Then, look at the overall picture and see the impact of the funds on the community.

The week following the event, the MERF Board of Directors voted to approve funding for Valley Head Senior Beta Club registration fees at National Convention. Nine students who excelled at the state level will be allowed to compete nationally in Savannah, Georgia, in June. There will still be travel expenses for the teacher sponsors, and for the students who are able to go. They are conducting a service-oriented fundraising drive. Please donate gently used shoes at the MERF house, Moon Lake Library, Valley Head Town Hall or Mentone Market.

The Spring Senior Lunch program wrapped up at the end of April. This is another notable example of coordinated resources. Moon Lake Baptist Church graciously allows the use their fellowship hall for most lunches. Many thanks to Alpine Camp, Mentone Market, Camp Skyline, the Rhododendron Garden Club, Mentone Community Church, St Joseph’s On-The-Mountain, and Camp Laney for providing delicious meals. The Farm at Windy Hill (coordinating with Camp DeSoto) and The Hatter Café generously hosted two of our lunches at their locations. None of this would be possible without time generously contributed by the volunteers who serve the lunch. Thank you one and all.



VHS Senior Beta Club students with state awards.

Our next senior gathering will be an outdoor luncheon next to the sculpture garden at the Mentone Arts and Cultural Center on May 22. This luncheon is made possible by a grant to the arts center from the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama. We appreciate Randy Grider, executive director at Mentone Arts and Cultural Center, for applying for the grant and pulling everything together! 🍷

Anna Mae Horn is the executive director of the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation. For more information or to volunteer, email MERF. mentone@gmail.com, call/text 256-635-8775, or visit MERFhouse.org.



Community senior lunch.



Taste of the Mountain was a success



Carter Holland Memorial Scholarship Deadline is May 6!

Two \$750 scholarships will be awarded to 2024 graduates living in the Mentone/ Valley Head area.

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Daffodils are divided into thirteen divisions using the Royal Horticultural Society system of



classification. The American Daffodil Society has a great website with descriptions and pictures of each division. Daffodil petals are called perianths and the trumpet part is called the corona. The divisions are based on the characteristics of the two parts. For example, in Division 1 - Trumpet Daffodils, One flower to a stem; corona (“trumpet”) as long as, or longer than the perianth segments (“petals”). Other common divisions are Large-Cupped, Small-Cupped, Double, Triandrus, Cyclamineus, Jonquilla, Tazetta, Poeticus, and Split Cupped. Bulbocodium Hybrids have a dominant corona and little bitty perianth segment, so they look more like a poppy than a daffodil. There are many options in shape, color, and size (even miniatures), and by choosing early, mid

and later blooming varieties of daffodils can pop from January to May.

After daffodils have flowered, remove just the head, and let the stem and leaves remain. Bulbs continue to absorb nutrients for six weeks after the blooms have died. It may look messy, but it is imperative for strong, beautiful flowers the following year. Daffodils can be grown under deciduous trees since they do their thing before the tree leaves appear. They do not do well under evergreens. Plant bulbs in the fall and do not put fertilizer in the hole when planting. Fertilize and divide when blooms falter. Daffodils are the best. Just read Williams Wordsworth poem about the “*host of golden daffodils... fluttering and dancing in the breeze... tossing their heads in sprightly dance...*” 🌷

Mellanie Tuttle is a member of the Rhododendron Garden Club.

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

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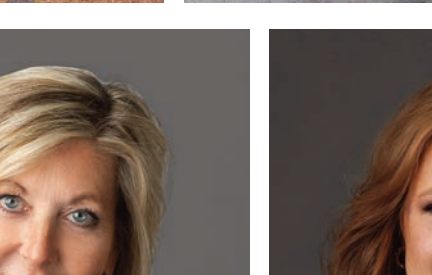
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A Film, Chalk Art, Concert, and an Art Show

by Juli Jordan

The merry month of May begins with the first chalk mural on the newly installed MAKE YOUR MARK ON MENTONE Chalkboard. That same week, Bollywood comes to Mentone. The third weekend of May features a concert by Will Dooley on Friday evening and the Big Art Pop on Saturday. The art-for-arts-sake season has begun!

Many of you may have noticed the construction of the chalkboard on the grounds of the Mentone Inn. Make Your Mark on Mentone is a public art project funded by Alabama State Council on the Arts, with generous donations from Mentone Inn, Dixie Salvage, Builders Supply Company, Lesa and David Cummings, Hoot Owl Hollow, and Pat Martin.

Beginning April 30 and continuing the morning of May 1, internationally known chalk artist Ivann Garc will “make his mark” on Mentone. Ivan is known for his 3D chalk art. We saw a glimpse of his mural concept in March. You will want to see it!

Chalk artists enjoy an interactive audience, so pull up a chair in front of the Make Your Mark on Mentone stage on the grounds of the Mentone Inn and ask him questions or cheer him on! We will be live streaming as well, so stay tuned to the LRAC Facebook page.

Why Chalk Art?
The concept for Make Your Mark on Mentone (MYMoM) originated in the

aftermath of the Hitching Post fire as a tribute to our lost historic structures, to honor the past and envision the future for Mentone. It is loosely based on a public art project that originated in New Orleans after Katrina and was adopted in cities across the world.

The chalkboard idea evolved from a temporary installation to a permanent structure. That is an interesting evolution con-

sidering the temporary nature of chalk art. Initially, we were intent on preserving the chalk murals as best we could, with thoughts of plexiglass or isinglass. And then, the professional chalk artists came to town, speaking poetically about how they loved the process of chalk art: design conception, creating the mural, interacting with onlookers, and even the degradation of the mural. They love how it evolves, how nature changes it, how humans change it.

Chalk artist Eduin Rosell says, “As a chalk artist, you have to understand that your art — no matter how much effort you put into it — is going to disappear... So, you have to be able to realize that things are going to disappear, they’re going to break down, they’re going to be gone.”

So, you could say that chalk art is about embracing the now. So, let’s give it a big hug. Now!

We hope to foster this conversation throughout the year. 🐿️

Juli Jordan is president of the Little River Arts Council.



BOLLYWOOD COMES TO MENTONE

May 2nd, Bollywood is coming to Mentone! Yash Gonsai, son of Rupesh Gonsai, owner of Mountain Top Grocery in Cloudland, GA, is the Executive Producer of Last Film Show which was nominated for a 2023 Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. LRAC and Mentone Arts Center are partnering to share this beautiful film with the community. The Gonsai family will graciously serve a tasting of traditional Indian food to complement the film. Seating is limited. RSVP to LRAC via Facebook messenger or email.

WILL DOOLEY CONCERT and BIG ART POP UP

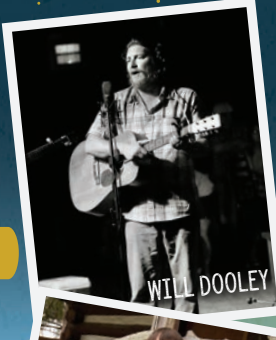
Returning the third week in May is a Music for the People concert with Will Dooley and Parker Thomas. Join us **Friday, May 17**, 6-9 p.m. at Linger Longer Pavilion behind the Mentone Inn. Bring your camp chairs and enjoy music under the stars with one of Mentone’s favorites. At the same location, **Saturday May 18**, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., it’s the Big Art Pop Up with area artists and makers ready to celebrate Spring! See what they created during those frigid winter months!



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Valley Head Happenings

by Mayor Karen Vest

It is an honor and privilege to serve as Mayor of Valley Head. I hope to use this column each month 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 NE Alabama.

May 4, 2024, is our 7th Annual Memories of Mayberry Festival which will take place around Valley Head's town square. The festival begins at 9:00 a.m. and will run until approximately 5:00 p.m.

Mayberry's favorite characters Floyd the Barber (Alan Newsome), Deputy Barney Fife (Anthony Wood), and Aunt Bea (Alisha McElhaney) will be strolling the streets of Mayberry again this year. Have your photo taken with them and in front of Barney's patrol car. We will also have our jail in front of town hall, so be thinking of who you would like to "lock up."

Our 2024 festival t-shirts feature the new slogan of "Reminiscing about Mayberry in Valley Head, AL." We have both dusty pink and bright blue to choose from, and they will be on sale for only \$15.00 for sizes Small through X-Large and \$20.00 for sizes 2X through 4X. All previous years' shirts will be on sale for only \$5.00.

Whitney Tinker will open the festival by singing the National Anthem. The main stage, located on the field in front of town hall, will also feature The Sharps, a Christian gospel group, and the band Stranded, a country rock band. Performing in front of the pavilion on Commerce Avenue will be a square dance club.

Numerous food trucks including Southern Comfort Food, Mi Pizza, Jus' Corn, D's Dogs, and A & R Concessions will be selling tasty meals. Also, numerous baked goods and candy vendors will be on hand. Valley Head's own Tiger's Inn will also be open for lunch that day.

There will be approximately 40 vendors selling numerous home-made items such as wood crafts, jewelry, hand crochet animals, kitchen potholders, farmhouse décor, Scentsy, hand crafted artisan soaps and resins, barn quilts and porch signs, and much more.

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. Be sure to walk around the corner to see all of the beautiful cars.

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 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place to the lucky winners. Don't forget to also enter 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 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. 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 Face Book page, Memories of Mayberry Festival. This year's proceeds will go into the Town of Valley Head Events and Festivals Fund.

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 us soon. 🐾



Memories of Mayberry

— VALLEY HEAD • ALABAMA —

Saturday, May 4, 2024

Starting at 9 a.m.

Proceeds benefit the Valley Head Events and Festivals fund.

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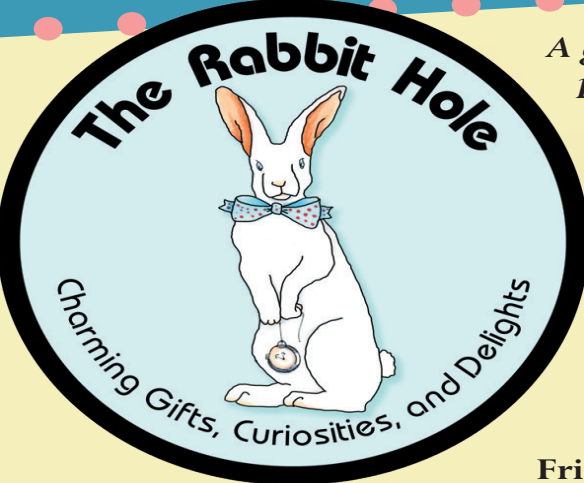
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Moon Lake Library

Guest Speaker Tim McIntosh

by Hayley Croft

The Moon Lake Library will host a special guest speaker, Tim McIntosh, on May 10, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. McIntosh is the host of a podcast called “The Play’s the Thing,” the ultimate resource for lovers of William Shakespeare’s plays, as well as a co-host of “Close Reads: A Podcast for the Incurable Reader.” Tim taught classics at Gutenberg College for 10 years. He is currently Creative Director at Westfall Gold in Atlanta, Georgia.

Tim is an actor and playwright whose scripts have been awarded and performed across the country. As a playwright, he has won multiple commissions and awards. Most recently, he was named a finalist for the 2018 Neil Simon New Play Contest. He is a produced screenwriter and has written for some of the most successful non- and for-profit businesses in the world. As a professional speechwriter, his scripts have center-pieced multi-million-dollar fundraising events across the nation.

Tim’s talk will be on “What Makes a Great Leader? Shakespeare on Power



Tim McIntosh

and Integrity.” Shakespeare obsessed over kings and queens and how they ruled. This talk will discuss what we can learn from good, bad, and crazy rulers in Shakespeare’s plays.

Hayley Croft is a member of the municipal library board.



May 2024 at Moon Lake Library

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

- May 3 • 6 p.m.** Family Game Night - Bring a snack to share and we’ll enjoy board games and cards at the library.
- May 4 • 10:30 a.m.** Little Library Learners, children ages 3-7. We’ll share information with parents and guardians about our summer reading program and signing up for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, sponsored by Friends of Moon Lake Library.
- May 9 • 3 p.m.** Monthly public meeting of the municipal board, followed by the Friends of Moon Lake Library board at 4 PM
- May 10 • 6:30 p.m.** Featured speaker Tim McIntosh of the Close Reads podcast, who will discuss “What Makes a Great Leader? Shakespeare on Power and Integrity.”
- May 11 • 10:30 a.m.** Moon Lake Library Book Club - Our theme this month is MYSTERIES. Bring a favorite to share with the group.
- May 11 • 1 p.m.** Mentone Ukes offer free ukulele lessons for all experience levels.
- May 18 • 10 a.m.-3 p.m.** The Big Book Sale - Shop our annual spring book sale, when we drag out ALL the used books. \$2 hardcover/\$1 paperback/ 25¢ DVDs.
- May 18 • 10:30 a.m.** Little Library Learners, children ages 3-7. We’ll share information with parents and guardians about our summer reading program and signing up for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, sponsored by Friends of Moon Lake Library.
- May 21 • 6 p.m.** Art Critique and Discussion Group with Mikel Yeakle, sponsored by Little River Arts Council. Let’s talk about art. Artists, please bring a piece or two to share.
- May 25 • 1 p.m.** Mentone Ukes offer free ukulele lessons for all experience levels.

Moon Lake Library

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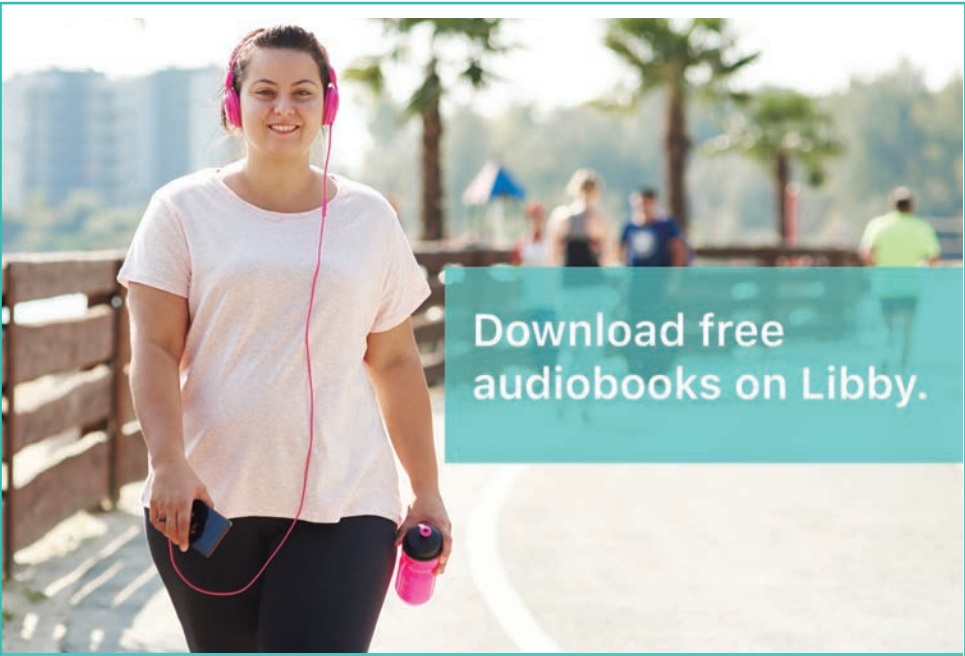
Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting books free of charge to children from birth to age five, through funding shared by Dolly Parton and local community partners in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Republic of Ireland.



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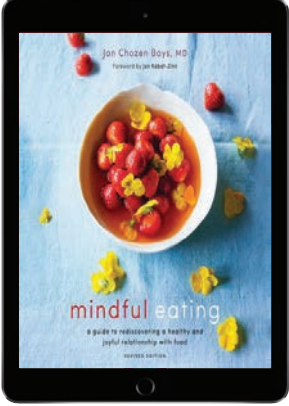
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After Little River Escape Tiny Home Community was named one of the top six communities to downsize in by *U.S. News & World Report*, this community has become fully occupied and folks have come from 12 different states to live within our community.

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.

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Bob Baty (continued from page 1)

voice recording of their informal conversation. She was accompanied by her long-time partner Rickey Baty, who is Bob’s cousin.

The Baty family has lived in the Mentone area since the turn of the 20th century. Robert “Bob” Glenn Baty, Jr. was born in 1941. His grandparents, Robert Norace Baty and Josie Smith Baty, came to the area from Georgia and raised nine children. Seven generations of Batys have now called Mentone home.

Bob Baty attended Moon Lake School through the eighth grade and graduated from Valley Head High School, where he played football. He earned a football scholarship to the University of Chattanooga and served in the U.S. Army for two years during the Vietnam War.

His father Robert “Glenn” Baty, Sr. (1917–1987) had worked for the Davenports’ Valley Head Lumber Company. When Glenn had the opportunity to buy their equipment, he started his own sawmill in Fort Payne. A few years later, he moved the stationary mill to the Bankhead community on County Road 642, on land his grandfather had purchased.

It was a family business from the start. Beginning at age 12, Bob spent summers working at the mill doing safe, simple tasks such as raking sawdust as wood was being milled. One story he told Max involved a jug of whiskey that he had found hidden in a pile of sawdust. He began moving it to different locations, much to the aggravation of its owner.

Rickey recalled a day in the 1970s after his brother, Edward, quit school at age 14 and began working at the mill. “When the truant officer came to the sawmill in search of Edward,” Rickey said, “Bob’s daddy asked him, ‘Would you rather he run the roads or work here, because he’s sure not interested in school.’ That was the last time they ever saw the truant officer.

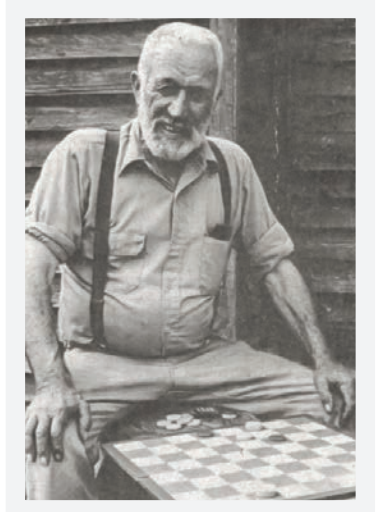
Many know Glenn’s brother, John Baty (1936-2022), as the author of a series of books about life on the mountain. John worked at the sawmill during the summers while he was attending the University of Alabama. “He and Sue were married while he was still in school,” Bob told Max. “One summer, on John’s first day of work, he brought some SlimFast for lunch because he said he needed to lose some weight. His job was to offbear, so everything that came through, he had to handle it. The next morning, he arrived with a paper sack full of food. He said, ‘Heck, you can’t offbear a sawmill with just a SlimFast for lunch!’”

Bob recalled that his uncle, Onzie Smith, and Onzie’s sons, Donny and Danny, took turns running the nailer. “One day Onzie nailed his toe to the pallet,” he said. “The two boys sat down and said, ‘We need a break, old man. Just hang out there.’ You ain’t never heard such cussing. They got him loose some way or another.”

“Another time,” Bob said, “Houston Marks shot a nail through his finger. I took him down to Doctor Quimby in Valley Head. Back then, Doc closed on Thursdays, and Coleman closed the drug store on Thursdays. Coleman had a lot with a camper on Lake Weiss, and they’d head down there Wednesday night and fish the next day. This was a Wednesday, and the office was full. The doctor gave Houston a shot and then got a pair of rusty old pilers from his tackle box he had ready for the lake and pulled out the nail. We



Painting of the sawmill by Jimmy Frazier



Glenn Baty

one step. I laid there, because the other option was to stay in the hospital. The doctor or his nurse, who lived down River Road, would come by once a week to give me a shot of penicillin. I learned how to embroider using punch boards while I laid there in bed. I was in 3rd grade and missed about half of the year. Miss Lyday was going to fail me, but the principal, I think it was Winfred Smith, told her to go ahead and pass me.

“There were always fiddles and banjos in the sawmill’s office,” said Bob. “Daddy played banjo and the kids would sing. Daddy had a fiddle he’d get out every once in a while, but he wasn’t very good at it and Mama would shut him down. My brother Jimmy played the guitar. We had a big old piano at the house, and folks would come by to play music. Old Hayward Hester the barber was one, and also Katherine Dempsey, who lived in Menlo. We’d go pick her up with her little girl Pam. Katherine played piano at the state line dances on the weekends.”

Bob’s father, Glenn, was known for his expertise in the game of checkers, sometimes playing for many

were nearly back up to Mentone when Houston said, ‘I ain’t never seen a doctor like that.’ I said, ‘No and you probably never will again.’

“Doctor Quimby took care of me when I was 10 years old and had rheumatic fever,” Bob recalled. “I had to stay in bed for 10 weeks. I couldn’t take

hours at a time and even playing in tournaments. “There was a fellow in Valley Head that built cabinets,” said Bob, “and my mama got him to build Daddy a checkerboard for Christmas. After Daddy died, she gave me the checkerboard and checkers. I had a table made from it. It’s walnut wood for the dark and ash for the light color. It’s a pretty complicated game. Daddy loved it and was pretty good. He liked to play people he couldn’t beat. That’s the only way he could learn anything.”

After Glenn’s death, Bob ran the mill and eventually his son, Scott, helped him. Many of the area’s houses, especially on the western brow, were constructed with rough-sawn lumber from Baty’s mill. When Bob and his wife, Maxine, built their house in 1972, all of the framing lumber, decking, and subfloor came from the mill. The company shut down in 2000, as business wasn’t supporting the expense of modernizing the equipment. Scott continues to work with timber.

Max Mitchell had planned to ask Bob to talk about what meals were like around the family dining table. She also planned to ask him to speak about “what he would tell the future.” Most of Bob’s stories will now rest solely with the family and friends who know them. ●

The interviews hosted by MAPA are posted on a YouTube channel called “Historic Mentone Alabama.” If you would like to conduct an oral history to post to the channel, please contact me at kelly.leavitt@yahoo.com. A cover story about Glenn Baty can be found in the August 1986 issue of The Groundhog at MERFhouse.org. John Baty’s books can be found at Moon Lake Library.

Editor’s Note: If you have another of Bob’s stories, or one of your own that you would like to share, please submit an article or a letter to the editor using the contact information on page 2.

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May Community Events

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

May 2 • Ponderosa Golf Tournament • Registration is OPEN for Ponderosa’s 21st Annual Legacy for Life Golf Tournament Fundraiser! Join us at Lil Mole Run Golf Course. Let’s tee off for a cause and raise funds for the Foster Kids Camp and beyond! Lunch and Door Prizes at 11 a.m. Shot Gun Start at 12 noon. Best Ball Scramble. Can’t swing a golf club? No worries! Make a donation today and support the legacy we are building for foster kids. Let’s make a positive impact together! Register, sponsor, or donate – every contribution counts. Visit our website for more details and to be part of this meaningful day. Together, we can make a difference! ponderosabilecamp.com/charity-golf-tournament.

May 3, 4 • 32nd Annual Wildflower Saturday • Wildflower Saturday is held in DeSoto State Park the first Saturday of May. Learn about the many species of blooming plants found on Lookout Mountain. Choose to stay the whole weekend, or just come for the day to enjoy the hikes and programs. Weekend starts off with a welcome social and guest speaker program on Friday night, a day full of hikes to choose from and a guest speaker on Saturday night. Free and open to everyone. No preregistration required. Groups over 10, please RSVP.

May 4 • Memories of Mayberry • Join the Town of Valley Head on the first Saturday of May for a great day for the whole family! There will be a cruise in, food, fun, entertainment, and more. Special guest Barney Fife. Activities around the square and in the field across from Town Hall. 9 a.m. 256-899-3776 or 256-635-6814.

May 4 • Gene Watson at the Pickin Post • Concert with country music legend Gene Watson, referred to by his peers as “the singer’s singer” at the Pickin’ Post. Special guest will be Cross Road. General Admission Seats; not assigned.

May 5 • Cinco de Mayo Day •

May 10 • 17th Annual Mayor’s Cup Terrapin Hills Country Club • Join the Fort Payne Chamber of Commerce at Terrapin Hills. \$600 a team – Hole \$150 – Mulligans \$5/each – 4 max per person. Lunch Included | Beer Cart | Cash Prizes | Door Prizes | Goody Bags. There will be an 8 a.m. or a 1 p.m. tee off time.

May 10 • Campfire Talk: Discover Alabama’s Frogs & Toads! • Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors! Embark on an adventure into the diverse world of Alabama’s amphibians! Join Guest Naturalist Jamie Rogers to learn more about Alabama’s frogs and toads, their similarities, and their differences. We will also learn how to identify some of these species. 8 p.m. DeSoto State Park. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (next to site 93. In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area). Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required. For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov

May 10 - 11 • The Spectacular Drive-in Laser Light Show - Double Feature! • Prepare for an evening of spellbinding laser lights and iconic music for just \$39 per vehicle at the VFW. Advance ticket purchase is highly recommended to ensure your participation in this unique event! <https://www.freshtix.com/events/ftpaynelasers>

May 11 • Spring Plant Sale • Clint Croxton’s Nursery and Wild Place Homestead will be hosting a Spring Plant Sale at Clint Croxton’s Nursery (Soil ‘N Green.) The sale will be from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. The location is 40993 US Hwy 11. There will be other vendors and vegetables, flowers, herbs, carnivorous plants, and natives for sale.

May 11 • May on the Mountain Bluegrass Festival in Henagar • Henagar City Park. Artists will perform on the back porch of the cabin from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Free admittance with vendors available for purchase of food, drinks, and crafts! Be sure to bring a lawn chair to enjoy a full day of fun and Bluegrass music!

May 11 • Cody Renfroe Rod Run • Join us for a day full of great times, sharp cars, and awesome food. Crossville Town Park 1 to 5 p.m.

May 11 • Sandstone Glade Hike • Sandstone Glade Hike. 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 environments provide. Learn about this unique environment and explore the glades in DeSoto State Park. Approximately 1.10 miles round trip: 1-3 p.m. Meet at DeSoto’s Country Store on County Road 89 Free and open to everyone, no preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of hike. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details.

May 11 • Park After Dark-Night Walk • DeSoto State Park. We will be using our senses to discover what can be seen, heard, or even smelled on this fun hike! About the walk: we will be on the cabin road and go to the frog pond, near DeSoto’s South entrance. All ages welcome, children must be supervised. Meet at DeSoto’s Lodge. Free and open to everyone, no preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256-845-5380 beforehand to check the status of the walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details.

May 12 • Happy Mother’s Day •

May 16 • Adventure Hike – DeSoto Falls Basin • Set out on an adventure hike with DeSoto State Park staff to the bottom of one of Alabama’s tallest waterfalls, DeSoto Falls! Meet at DeSoto Falls Trailhead on County Road 613. Free and open to everyone, no preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256-845-5380 beforehand to check on status of hike. Email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for more info.

May 16 – 19 • US 11 Antique Alley Yard Sale • Follow the scenic U.S. Highway 11 from Meridian, MS to Bristol, VA for more than 500-miles of yard sales! Explore charming historic communities and downtown districts like the 1889 boom town district of Fort Payne, Alabama. 888-805-4740 & 877-871-1386. www.visitlookoutmountain.com

May 17 • Henagar Volunteer Fire Department Auction Fundraiser • Henagar Community Center at 6 p.m. The Fire Department members have been going around and collecting donations from businesses around the county for the auction as well as two tickets from Alabama Adventure & Splash Adventure! Be sure to come out and enjoy a fun night and support your local fire department!

May 17 • Big Pop Up Concert: Summer Music Series: Will Dooley & Parker Thomas • Mentone, Alabama. Sponsored by Little River Arts Council, made possible in part by the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Bring your own chair or blanket to enjoy the show and enjoy some food from Fontastic Food Truck. Linger Longer Pavilion behind Mentone Inn. Free and open to everyone! 6–9 p.m.

May 18 • Mind Your Own Beeswax! • Botanical Paintings with Alcohol Ink at Andiamo Lodge with Vicki Lee. Come learn to create whimsical, botanical paintings on beeswax-coated panels, using alcohol inks and cans of compressed air. All supplies included. You will complete 3 finished paintings on 8-inch cradled panels, suitable for immediate display or gifting! No art experience is required, just your open mind will do! 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

May 18 • Hammondville Fire BBQ Fundraiser • Help support Hammondville Volunteer Fire Department. The dinner includes BBQ sandwich, chips, drink, and dessert. Whole butts sold in advance. 10 a.m. till they run out!

May 18 • Big Art Pop Up Market, on grounds of Mentone Inn • Hosted by Little River Arts Council, this event will showcase local artists set up around the Linger Longer Pavilion with art demonstrations and work for sale. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Address: 6139 AL-117. Free and open to everyone! For details, email: info@littleriverartscouncil.org

May 18 • Spring Fling • at Moon Lake Trading Co. Local vendors, music, and Seabolt’s Street Tacos.

May 18 • Berries & Blooms Festival at Town Creek Field & Farm Festival • There will be u-pick strawberries, flowers and bouquet making, local music, vendors, yard games, and more! 2116 CR 120, Valley Head. 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

May 18 • Fort Payne Lions Clun BBQ Chicken Dinner • It is once again time for the Annual Fort Payne Lions Club Bar-B-Que Chicken Cooking. Get your tickets from any Lions Club Member or at My Supply. You can pick up your dinners at the Fort Payne City Park starting at 11 a.m.

May 18 • Serious Skills Series: Mosaic Bee Watering Station • 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 and 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 Country Store. Fee is \$45 and includes all supplies. Class space is limited to 10, pre-registration is required for attendance in this class.

May 18 • Third Saturday Sunset Cruise-In • 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.

May 19 • Grand Times at Grand Oaks • Day includes a reading by the author under the oaks, a farm tour where it all began, a signed book for each family and time in the lavender fields to cut a fresh bundle to take home. Two times to choose from: 1 - 2:30 p.m. and 3 - 4:30 p.m. \$40 per family. Call or text Kate at: 804-677-4625 or call our farm office at 256-697-0465.

May 19 • May Gulf Songwriter Series IV • A “small stage” concert series featuring stellar artists from all different genres and music styles. The concert is set in an intimate atmosphere that provides a unique experience for the artist and listener alike. Seating is extremely limited so buy tickets in advance. The MGSS will give artists an uninterrupted opportunity to share their original music including stories and emotions behind some of their work. Performers will be Viv & Riley (duo) & Will Dooley.

May 21 • Art Talk • Little River Arts Council presents an evening of art critique and discussion – this will be free to the public and open discussion is encouraged! Art is meant to be seen, and discussed! If you are an artist or an art appreciator, this is an evening for you. Mikel Yeakle leads another informal conversation about art, why we create it, and how it affects our lives. He is an art history buff whose knowledge and enthusiasm for art is engaging and delightful. Having worked as a professional artist all his adult life, Mikel has useful tips for anyone new to selling their work.

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.

All are invited to bring their artwork and share their process and inspirations. The conversation is open to anyone who is drawn to art, (pun intended) not just creators of art. In 2024, we look forward to showcasing more local talent from the Mentone area. 6 - 8 p.m. Moon Lake Library, 4607 AL Hwy 117. littliverartscouncil.org

May 23 • Canyon Kids Young Explorers – Birding for Kids • Contact Little River Canyon Center for details.

May 23 • Meandering Moonlight Guided Paddle • DeSoto State Park staff offers this relaxing guided moonlight paddle trip on scenic Little River. This trip is approximately 4 miles round trip on flatwater, spans a 3 to 3 1/2-hour period and includes kayak, paddle, and personal flotation device. Must be able to paddle upstream and back (no current). Weight limits: 300 pounds for singles & 450 for tandems. Ages 8 to adult. DeSoto Falls Picnic Area - Miller’s Bend Paddle \$30.00 for single kayak rental; 2 person-tandem kayaks are available on a limited basis for \$50. Pre-registration closes May 19. Register at: <https://forms.office.com/g/RckcvRCJHD>

May 25 • CCC History Hike: ‘Unfinished Bridges’ • Join DSP staff on a moderate hike to several Civilian Conservation Corp’s ‘unfinished’ bridges built in the late 1930s. Learn the history of why the CCC left them standing and see several original structures. About the hike: moderate hike on Gilliam Loop Trail and old CCC roadbed-Approx. 4.5 miles round trip. Time: 1-4 p.m. Where: DeSoto State Park. Meet at DeSoto’s Gilliam Loop Trailhead (past the Lodge on cabin road). Free and open to everyone, no preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256-845-5380 beforehand to check on status of hike. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

May 29 • June Jam Parade • The Alabama Band will be bringing back the June Jam parade this year! The parade will run in downtown Fort Payne. Everyone come out and enjoy! 6 p.m.

May 30 • Teddy Gentry’s ‘Singing with the Stars’ • Located at Fort Payne City Auditorium @ 7 p.m. (Benefitting Children’s Advocacy Center).

May 30 • Jeff Cook’s Allstar Goodtime Band • DeKalb Theatre. Show starts at 7 p.m. All proceeds go to the Jeff and Lisa Cook Foundation. Get tickets at <https://thejeffandlisacookfoundation.org/events>.

May 30 – June 2 • Cigar Box Guitar Festival • Join us at the 20th annual, and the world’s longest running, cigar box guitar festival at Lowe Mill in Huntsville. See The Cigar Box Serenaders from New Orleans, Debbie Bond and Radiator Rick, Microwave Dave, Shane Speal, and Erin Coburn. For updates go to cigarboxguitarfestival.com. The festival is free, fun, family friendly and raises funds for music education in Madison County and northern Alabama.

May 31 • Buffalo Nickle June Jam Coin Show • 12 noon here at the Alabama Fan Club!

May 31 • ALABAMA June Jam Cornhole Tournament • ALABAMA Fan Club and Museum parking lot. \$50 entry fee per two-person team / cash prizes and trophies awarded / registration and entry fee day of tournament at the museum. 2:30 to 5 p.m.

May 31 • Brunch at Cook Castle for The Jeff & Lisa Cook Foundation • 10 a.m. Brunch poolside at Cook Castle / \$35 tickets available for purchase at jeffandlisa.org / event features prizes, special merchandise and auction items / proceeds benefit The Jeff & Lisa Cook Foundation.

May 31 • Alabama June Jam Songwriters Showcase • 7 p.m. in Fort Payne City Auditorium. .



DONATE TO BETA CLUB SHOE DRIVE

The Valley Head School Senior Beta Club is hosting its Shoe Drive through May 31. Please donate new or gently used shoes by dropping them off at the school, VH Town Hall, Moon Lake Library, MERF House (behind the library), or Mentone Market. VHS Beta Club will receive cash for the shoes from Funds2Orgs, who ships them to micro-entrepreneurs worldwide.

1	Riley Owen Kathleen Johnson Jennifer Owen Michael Stone Sue Anderson Beckie Crider Hughes Michelle Mancuso	15	Jessica Clardy Shirley Zange Emma Kate McDonald	Amber Parker Adam Miller Sadie Durham Misty Wilson	• 1	Chris & LeAnn Underwood	
2	Morgan McKenzie Ella Voils Cory Dobbins Isaac Vaughan Emerson Jean Bell LuLu Langston Carey Pike Destiny Hatfield	7	John Johnson Tracy Coots Jessie Baggett Carl Griffith Kelly Blansit Tony Garner Maddie Gilbert	25	Tristan Smith Faye Bone Gracelia Dickson	• 2	Sawyer & Charlotte Vice
3	Abel James Baggett Paula Coots Steven Barkley Annabelle Gifford Henlee Langston Bret Hulgan	8	Ella Kate Wagner Sherry Durham Camdyn Goza Pippa Daspit Harper Moses	26	Paige Smith Rodney Mitchell Jackson Jones Jack Dutton	• 3	Thomas & Ginger Kearney
4	Mollie Sanderson Kathy Clure Cathy White Jody Nance Russell Bone	9	Shaunathan Bell Megan Miller Ryker Shankles	27	Keila Daniell Amanda Smith Christy VanPelt Hunter Villarreal Crystal Bettis Labron Poe Matthew Wilson Cherylyn Whited Rhodes Dewey Smith	• 4	Donnie & Carlotta Sharpton
5	Alex Dupree Bobby Browder Emily Hilliard Jeffrey Bain Patrick Kyle Miller Allison Smith Charley Vest Karen Vest	10	Gail Jones Angela Flanagan Jacob Hawkins Barry Morton Scott Gilbert	28	Sophie Hulgan James Cox Mikayla Owen Nick Stout Hannah Highfield	• 5	Charlie & Pam Harwell John & Dowe Foreman
6	LA Smith Lee Worthey Phil Harris Carlie Heard Cody Hodge Taylor Johnson Bret Johnson Dewayne Grisham Avaleigh Hawkins Ray Zakary Mattie Durham Ashley VICE	11	Jessie Coots Ricky Barkley Merle Stokes Gerald Biddle Tanner Meadows Sierra Crider Imogene Thomas	18	Chad Smith Nelson Kerby Traci Hulgan Mary Jo Yarbrough	• 6	Craig & Katie Smith
		12	Allison Kirby Chris Davis Alyssa Cooper Tristan Miller	19	Dillon Brown LeAnn Underwood Megan Smith Brown Herbert Poe	• 7	Jonathan & Emily Miller
		13	Irelynn Walsh Andrea Kirby Hayden Kirby Linda Hawthorne Angela Hadley Maddox Jones	20	Alexis Manifold-Hunter Jessica McKenzie Susan Elliott Elli Stone Kenzlee Callahan	• 8	Wayne & Angie Miller
		14	Ann Nelson Madi Gregory Logan McGee Bennett Nowak Christy Miller Lonny Pendergrass	21	Lisa Crow Katie Villarreal Desiree Cash Jackson Mann	• Chris Carmichael & Pat Parmelee	
				22	Sandy Blalock Caitlin Kirby Ryan Pridmore Heather Cyrus Kathy Pritchett	• 10	Storm & Leanna Kurts
				23	Terry Pangle Adrienne Guice Nathan Baggett Ronald "Cotton" Baggett Amelia Stott Chrissie Baker Holder Bradley Stuttz	• 15	Doug & Karen Powell Shane & Valerie Burt
				24	Joe Elrod	• 16	Preston & Amy Kirby
						• 17	Casey & Jessica Battles
						• 18	Chad & Amber Smith
						• 20	Jeremy & Lindsay Webb
						• 23	Bradley & Rita Stuttz
						• 24	Wesley & Tammy Frost Stacy & Karen Smith
						• 26	Soni & Sheila Larock Ray & Bobbie Zakary
						• 27	Jason & Mandy New
						• 28	Adam & Wendy Haynes Easton & Anna Bailey
						• 29	Johnny & JoAnn Bain
						• 30	Tommy & Cindy Harrison
						• 31	Jimmy & Adele Phillips Kyle & Hannah Carden
						Richard Barkley Tracy Cartwright Joey Smith	



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PACHYDERM PACKRAT — Pachyderm Packrat here announcing 2 upcoming events at Dave's antiques, intersection of Highways 117 and 11 in Hammondville. U.S. Hwy. 11 Antique Alley Yard Sale is May 16-19. Vendors will be setting up outside offering overflow of sale items and inviting everyone inside to see what we've brought in recently. And on May 4, Dave's first spring auction at 11925 Hwy 117 (old I-59 flea market). Roger Burton ASL #1834 will be calling a huge auction beginning at noon CST. Preview items at ADL Auction, Inc. Be there! Phone 256-418-2092.

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In the Heat of the Night Chicken Salad

by Susan Van Apeldoorn

When movie crews work late but the producers choose not to hold a “second meal” (due when 6 hours have passed after lunch), they may call for a “walking meal.” A walking meal is something that can be consumed while continuing to work and usually happens when work is almost over and the crew is loading equipment and finishing for the day. Walking meals consist of things like pizza (also known as Circles of Death), hamburgers, or fried chicken.

Movie crews tend to like comfort food, as they do not take coffee breaks but work continuously. The caterers provide excellent choices with all the latest food innovations at breakfast and lunch. As Craft Service, I provided the food for the shooting crew while working. Sometimes, I had a good amount of fried chicken left over, which I refrigerated. The next day, I would skin the pieces and pull the meat off and make chicken salad. I could feel someone behind me while I was chopping and mixing. Turning around, I would find half a dozen crew members standing with a piece of bread in one hand and a spoon in the other impatiently waiting for me to finish.

I got to be known for my chicken salad and would have people call me about working a job with the question, “Are you going to make chicken salad?” The recipe is very simple and basic, but that is what the crew liked- familiar comfort food. When working on “The Legend of Bobby Jones,” the camera crew got mad at the caterers and came to my truck for lunch. They would take a 16 oz. Solo cup and fill it with chicken salad for each crew member. It got to the point that I was making 16 lbs. of chicken breasts into chicken salad. Every day. I also got to make picnic lunches for Robert Redford and his girlfriend when I worked on “The Promise.”

The recipe to the right is an estimation of proportions. I have made this so much that I just look at the ingredients as I add them and think, “Yeah, that’s about enough.” You can make this with leftover fried chicken by taking off the skin and cutting up the meat. If you do, throw in some of the little crunchy crumbles of breading for extra flavor. 🍴

Susan Van Apeldoorn spent 20 years in Craft Service.



INGREDIENTS:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 4 chicken breasts | 2 T. Dill pickle relish, drained |
| 1 carton chicken stock | Mayonnaise (I use Hellmann’s) |
| 1/3 cup chopped celery | Salt & Pepper |

Cook the chicken in the stock. Cool the breasts, then shred in a food processor. Do not over chop them. Add the celery, pickles, and mayonnaise. Use enough mayonnaise to moisten the mixture for spreading. Mix, then add salt and pepper to taste.

Told you it was simple.

Remembrance: Lest We Forget

by Barry Morton

As National Military Appreciation Month, May is a good time for honoring and remembering our military personnel. There are two great wars in which America was involved: World Wars I and II. I’ve written about Memorial Day and WWII. This article is about the “other” Great War, WWI.

World War I or the First World War, often abbreviated as WWI, was one of the deadliest global conflicts in history. It was fought between two coalitions, the Allies and the Central Powers. Fighting occurred throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Pacific, and parts of Asia. WWI began July 28,1914 and ended November 11, 1918. On April 4, 1917, America joined the war because Germany embarked on a deadly gamble - they sank many American merchant ships around the British Isles.

The main American sector in the “Great War” was the Meuse-Argonne region in the Northeast of France. Four American divisions, 40,000 troops, arrived in Europe in June and July 1918. During the last months of the war, they were in Flanders Field, Belgium. “The cemetery at Flanders Field rests 368 of our military dead, most of whom gave their lives in liberating the soil of Belgium in World War I. Their headstones are aligned in four symmetrical areas around the white stone chapel that stands in the center of the cemetery.” (American Battle Monuments Commission)

In the spring of 1915, shortly after losing a friend in the Battle of Ypres, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, a Canadian doctor, wrote his now famous poem, “In Flanders Fields”, inspired by the poppies growing in battle-scarred fields. Bombs from the war brought seeds to the surface and the nitrogen from them fertilized the soil, making poppies abundant.

“In Flanders Fields” was first published in England’s Punch magazine in December 1915. Within months, this poem came to symbolize the sacrifice of all WWI military personnel. The poppy came to symbolize lives lost in conflict. The red

poppy, specifically, is a symbol of both remembrance and hope for a peaceful future. Poppies are worn as a show of support for the Armed Forces community. National Poppy Day is the Friday before Memorial Day, May 24, 2024.

In the April 2023 Groundhog, I wrote about the American Legion’s start in 1919, shortly after WWI. In March 1920, fifteen prominent Legionnaires joined with Joseph W. Breen, an officer of Breen-McCracken American Legion Post 297 in Philadelphia, and began the idea of a new organization to provide camaraderie for the elite leaders of the American Legion.



40/8 theme was inspired by elements of the familiar train boxcar of the French railways.

This new organization would have an initiation ceremony based on common wartime experiences to encourage patriotic bonding in a fun way. To symbolize this new organization, the familiar train boxcar of the French railways that carried American doughboys and horses to the front was chosen. The theme also extended to officer titles and organizational functions. French terms were used for members, Voyageurs Militaire (military travelers), and candidates, Prisonniers de Guerre (Prisoners of War). The color of the new society became “French horizon blue”, and the society name was based on the cargo capacity sign “40 Hommes/8 Chevaux” which was emblazoned on each French boxcar. The organization was officially named “La Société des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux” (The Society of Forty Men and Eight Horses), commonly known as “The Forty and Eight”. When the war was over, France gave each US state a boxcar. The Alabama boxcar is located at the Huntsville US Veteran Memorial Museum.

My friend, and Mentone resident, Paul J. Vishaway, sponsored my membership in the 40/8 organization. We proudly go to monthly meetings in Huntsville and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow Legionnaire leaders. 🍴

Barry Morton is a member of La Société des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux and Commander Mentone American Legion.

In Flanders Fields

The poem by John McCrae

*In Flanders’ fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders’ fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders’ Fields*



The bombardments of war populated the countryside with poppies.



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