



THE GROUNDHOG

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Volume 41, No. 1

“Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain”

February 2022

MAPA Celebrates 40 Years of Community Service

The Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) was conceived and formally organized in 1982. In the April 1983 edition of *The Groundhog*, in an article recognizing MAPA's first anniversary, we learn that on Groundhog Day, February 2, 1982, “thirty-seven residents and business people of this area met at Cragmere Manna to discuss the future of Mentone. They were in general agreement that ‘preserving the uniqueness’ of Mentone should be the primary goal.

“Another meeting was held on February 16 at St. Joseph’s Church. A statement of purpose was adopted and views were expressed that more community input was needed. Subsequently a letter was addressed



to Mentone area residents by Sandra Padgett, announcing another meeting on March 2 at St. Joseph’s for the purpose of choosing a chairman, forming committees, and naming the association.

“On April 6, the group was activated. Constitution and by-laws were approved, a nominating committee named, and future plans outlined. In coming months, non-profit corporate status was achieved, a community newsletter was begun, and a committee on goals was established.”

We will be celebrating the life of MAPA over the coming year. Thank you to all who have supported the organization since its inception! You have made a difference in the life of our community.

A New Sidewalk Is Coming to Town

by Kelly Leavitt



Work has begun on an exciting new project in Mentone—a sidewalk that will run from Dempsey Street to Dogwood Street. The concrete sidewalk will allow pedestrians to safely travel from the Mentone Market eastward to Little River Hardware Store. A crosswalk will be installed at the Mentone Market, connecting to the existing sidewalk on the south side of the highway that extends westward to the traffic light at County Road 89.

Will Blackburn of Mentone is one of two project superintendents overseeing the job. Will was born and raised in Mentone; his grandparents and parents owned the Mentone Superette for 39 years and his grandmother was part of the Cash family. Will is a project superintendent for Lambert Contracting, a Scottsboro firm that won the \$400,000 construction bid. “I was fortunate we bid the job,” Will said, “and fortunate we won it. I’m thankful to be able to do the project in my hometown.”

As of January 24, 250 feet had been completed. The 5-foot-wide sidewalk will eventually span 7/10s of a mile (about 3,700 feet). It must be at least 16–20 feet away from the paved road. “ALDOT has the right-of-way, and they made agreements with some property owners to extend the right-of-way,” said Will. The path will both run in a straight line and curve around trees.

Six to eight workers are on the crew. The project is slated to take 80 days to complete, but weather conditions could cause delays. “It has to be 40 degrees and rising before we can pour concrete,” said Will. “If the temperature drops at night, we put concrete blankets on the sidewalk to keep the fresh concrete from freezing.”

“I think this project’s great for the community and for the landowners,” said Will, who serves as a volunteer fireman for the North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District. “It shows that Mentone’s growing.”

MAPA Festivals Update

Over the years, the Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) has become known for hosting spring and fall arts and crafts festivals at Brow Park. The festivals provide great fun for the community and our visitors. Even more importantly, they raise funds which MAPA distributes to non-profit and service agencies in the Mentone area. Over the past five years, almost \$50,000 has been granted.

MAPA is fortunate to be able to have such an impact. Our funds are generated by the festivals, memberships, donations, Groundhog advertising revenue, and, most recently, the charity golf tournament.

The biggest challenge with any festival is having enough committed volunteers to make it all happen. As the saying goes, “Many hands make light work.” One of the impacts of these changing times is that people aren’t often freely available to volunteer their time. This puts the task onto a small group who expend a tremendous amount of effort.

The board of directors has voted to hold only one festival this year—Colorfest, on October 15 and 16 (always the third weekend of October). The decision to cancel

May’s Rhododendron Festival was made with the acknowledgment that its proceeds are often lower than Colorfest’s and that not enough volunteers have been stepping forward.

In 2020, MAPA held its first charity golf tournament. Through sponsorships and fees, a substantial amount of money was raised in one morning with a handful of dedicated volunteers. In contrast, a weekend festival requires many volunteer hours, beginning months in advance.

MAPA very much appreciates the generous time volunteers have given in years past, and we will optimistically count on an increased level of volunteer activity when we begin planning this year’s Colorfest. We also deeply appreciate our festival sponsors; your financial help makes a big, big difference.

If you’d like to help with MAPA’s golf tournament in April, the Miss Rhododendron pageant in May, or Colorfest in October, please visit mapamentone.com and complete the volunteer form to signify your interest. Keep an eye on future *Groundhogs*, our Facebook page, and website for news from MAPA, including our needs and our community impact.



THE GROUNDHOG

Published monthly by the
Mentone Area Preservation Association

MAPA was first conceived on Groundhog Day, 1982, and then organized on April 5, 1982. *The Groundhog* has been in publication for 39 years.

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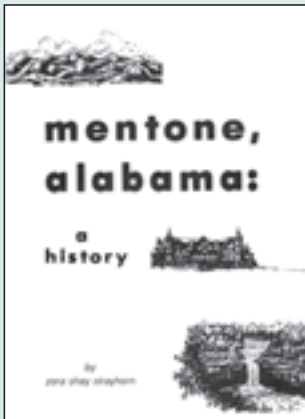
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The opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints expressed by the various authors in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints or policies of the Mentone Area Preservation Association.

Groundhog wood cut courtesy of Meg Justice

Do you have a story idea?
We welcome contributions!
Email groundhognews@yahoo.com



Learn about the
History of Mentone
Zora Strayhorn's book,
*Mentone, Alabama:
A History*, is for sale
at Mentone Market
and DeSoto State Park.
\$15; proceeds
benefit MAPA.

Mentone Matters • by Mayor Rob Hammond

The work on the sidewalk has begun. Progress has been good despite the cold weather. (See Kelly's article in this edition.) Hopefully we will be walking on it by late spring!

The council hopes to come up with a master plan for use of the Moon Lake Campus. Bill Berry is gathering ideas and information from the community and welcomes your input. The goal is for the campus to continue to be a center of education for all ages and serve the community while generating enough revenue to be self-sustaining.

Community cleanup day is set for Saturday,



April 2. Lyle Nicely is again coordinating this event. He will be posting more information on social media at a later date.

Letter from the Editor

I recently learned a new word: Sonder. It is defined in the *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* as such:

n. the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own—populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries and inherited craziness—an epic story that continues invisibly around you like an anthill sprawling deep underground, with elaborate passageways to thousands of other lives that you'll never know existed, in which you might appear only once, as an extra sipping coffee in the background, as a blur of traffic passing on the highway, as a lighted window at dusk.

I thought of the wide variety of people who live in the Mentone area and I posted a query

in a local Facebook group asking folks to share their main jobs or careers in life. As the replies flowed in, I was not surprised to see a vast variety of responses! Our neighbors have been employed in many arenas in life, including (but in no way limited to) naval aviation, foster parenting, research analysis, athletic coaching, entrepreneurship, housekeeping, psychotherapy, accounting, making art, teaching, nursing, welding, firefighting, rocket science, truck driving, film and television work, and even our own resident bear researcher.

Reach out and get to know your neighbors. Their life stories just may fascinate you. Everyone is important. And everyone has a story. You may find yourself being inspired—or you, yourself, may be a source of inspiration.

Be well, everyone. —Kelly

MAPA's Spring Charity
Golf Tournament

Friday, April 29 RAIN DATE MAY 6
Lil' Mole Run • Mentone, Alabama

Tee Off 8 a.m. Central Time

\$300 Foursome • \$75 Person UNTIL 4/14
\$340 Foursome • \$85 Person AFTER 4/14
Includes 18 holes of golf | Cart | Lunch

Four-person Scramble
Cash Prize Top 3
Best Scores
Door Prizes + Raffle

Space is limited, so register early!



Register at mapamentone.com/golf
256.289.2002
Sponsorships available at mapamentone.com/golf-sponsors



MAPA President's Message by Mark Hoffman

At 67 years of age, I will become a grandfather for the first time on or about April 7. Wow! My expectant daughter Erin (who is now known as Mrs. Dylan Hoffman-Hillestad) lives in Gerton, NC, a very small town outside of Asheville. Gerton, and its neighboring town, Bat Cave, remind me a lot of Mentone. Similarities include extreme natural beauty and being situated along the Appalachian chain (foothills for Mentone), slow-paced, and imbued with a vibrant artistic sensibility.

A big difference I have noted, however, is that Mentone, to a much more visible degree, has a tremendous number of non-profit, community-focused organizations firmly in place to serve the town and its citizens on a year-round basis. MAPA is one such organization. We work very hard to be able to fulfill our mission statement—"to protect the heritage, natural environment and other

unique qualities of life in the Mentone area." In order to do that, we need to continually assess and find ways to acquire funding, and to be fiscally responsible. The members of the MAPA board give their time and efforts on your behalf on an entirely volunteer basis. Please keep that in mind if you or someone you care about will somehow be negatively affected by the board's decision to not sponsor and coordinate the Rhododendron Festival this Spring. It was not an easy decision to make. Rest assured, however, that barring dramatic unforeseen circumstances, we will host Colorfest this fall. And with your help (we need volunteers—it is truly a very challenging task to put all the pieces together in a relatively seamless fashion), it will be loved and enjoyed by all participants and guests.

Thank you for your understanding and support. Be safe and stay healthy, and please let us know if you have ideas, time and/or financial resources to contribute to MAPA. As always, I can be reached via email at mhoffmanatty@yahoo.com.

Mark Hoffman is the president of the Mentone Area Preservation Association.

What's In a Name?



The *Groundhog* is not a typical moniker for a community newspaper, is it? Have you ever wondered about the origin of the name?

Throughout this year, in celebration of MAPA's 40th anniversary, we will be reprinting articles from archived issues of this paper to highlight some of the organization's history.

In his "Viewpoint" column of April, 1983, longtime *Groundhog* editor Charles White McGehee explained his perspective on the origin of the name "The Groundhog."

"When it was suggested that this publication be named *The Groundhog*, I had reservations. It seemed a bit facetious for the objectives that were to be pursued. As time went on the logic of it unfolded. Someone pointed out that like the fabled groundhog, Mentone is waking from a long slumber. These are the words by Tom Mason in his *Anniston Star* article, one of the best things I have read about Mentone.

It's a familiar story. On February 2, the groundhog emerges from winter slumber, looks languorously about for his shadow, and if it appears he returns for six more weeks of winter slumber. So it was on that memorable day when a group of Mentone citizens met to discuss some of those things unfolding in this area—it just happened to be Groundhog Day.

More is involved in the resurrection of a town than economics. There are deeper and more personal reasons. People visit Mentone and inhale an air of something wonderful. They want to be a part of it. Many of them return to establish a permanent residence. Others build summer homes, in preparation for the Long Vacation of retirement. Some lucky people carry the names of families who came to this section of Appalachia generations ago.

I know of people in Mentone who drive regularly to work in Chattanooga, Gadsden, the Bellefonte atomic power plant, Rome, Georgia, Atlanta and other faraway places. It would be much more convenient for them to live nearer their work. Imbued with the spirit of Mentone, they are determined to live here. Some have said that something in their lives is being resurrected by partaking of life here. They have emerged from a hibernation.

So if the groundhog is to be a symbol of this recycling of lives and history, we should know more about this creature. Several persons have sighted groundhogs in this area. In doing research on this symbolic animal, bear in

mind that the names groundhog and woodchuck are a reference to the same animal.

Found in many areas of the United States, it is some 18 to 24 inches long, with a chestnut and grizzled body, blackish feet and tail. Because of Mentone's rocks and slopes, our area is a natural habitat. A favorite place for digging burrows is under rocks and in wooded areas. The holes are deep in a slanted direction to keep out the water. These are interesting designs, with several compartments and more than one entrance.

This is a cleverness also pursued by the pesky little chipmunks, which are difficult to track down. When you have attacked one entrance hole, that is only part of the problem. The burrows run in many directions.

Deep down in one of these compartments is where the groundhog enters into a dormant state for the winter, like a bear or a snake, avoiding the bitter cold and the high fuel bills. The groundhog does his digging with powerful forefeet and strong teeth, throwing the dirt underneath the belly, kicking it out with its hindfeet.

Natural enemies of groundhogs are foxes and skunks. They generally are mild-mannered, but when cornered can defend themselves with vigor.

What's in a name? Sometimes a great deal. Sometimes a few facts from Encyclopedia Americana. Do you have any groundhog stories?"

The Groundhog has changed in many ways since its inception, but one thing has certainly remained constant: it is a paper which serves to preserve the heritage and reflect the quality of life in the Mentone area.

**Help us preserve Mentone's history
and impact its future.**

Join MAPA Today

***The Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA)
is dedicated to preserving and protecting the heritage,
natural environment and other unique qualities of life
in the Mentone area.***

**Individuals
\$20/year**

**Couples
\$30/year**

Your membership includes a complimentary subscription to *The Groundhog*.

JOIN AT mapamentone.com

Or mail your check to MAPA, P. O. Box 50, Mentone, AL 35984.

**Be sure to include your name(s),
address, phone, and email address.**

**Read *The Groundhog!*
1982–2021 mapamentone.com/groundhog-past-issues**



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MEMORIES OF LAZY DAYS FULL OF FUN ON THE LAKE permeate this one-owner property located on the private side of Mentone's Lake Lahusage. Filled with one family's nostalgia, waiting for the next family to bring it back to life & fill it with their own memories of good times on the lake. One of those rare places with easy walk down to the water; swim & fish from your dock; put in a boat at the public ramp just a short distance away. 4BR/2BA; wood floors; wood beams; mtn stone fireplace; vaulted LR/KI/DR. Screened porch on back leading to huge deck overlooking the lake. Yes, it needs A LOT of work, but it is a rare gem awaiting the right person to make it shine! \$375,000 (1786628)



..... LOTS and LAND

GORGEOUS VIEWS & 2.2 ACRES. This Mentone East-brow-front property already has the major prep work done for you to begin building your dream getaway cabin or residence. Septic tank in place, driveway in place, building sites for a cabin & for a shop cleared & leveled. Now incredibly priced at only \$85,000. (1775068)

COME BUILD YOUR DREAM HOME IN A PEACEFUL VALLEY! Here are 19+ acres of beautiful vistas that would be perfect for horses, or whatever strikes your fancy. The property is part of a large family farm which has a major portion in a permanent farmland conservancy. The interstate is 5 minutes away, convenient to Chattanooga, Fort Payne and Mentone. \$164,050 (1790823)

RIVERFRONT LOT ON W FORK LITTLE RIVER; 3.01 acres; approx 270' frontage on the river. Beautifully wooded w/building site on the river side of the road. Imagine a cabin, a peaceful, a soul, the south, a very private, even a "away-from-it-all" feeling; less than 2 miles from downtown Mentone. Adjacent to historic Little River Baptist Church, just down the road from Lil Mole Run Golf Course. \$75,000 (1788717)

1.47 PARK-LIKE ACRES ON LIBBY LANE; inside Mentone Town Limits; on a quiet, dead-end paved road; with water, power, septic tank and circle drive already in place. Ready to build. Zoned R-1. \$64,900 (1795866)

52 ACRES, WITH LAND ON BOTH SIDES OF PAVED COUNTRY ROAD. This old home place offers so many options & some of the best Sand Mtn sandy loam soil there is; Shankles Branch running through the property on one side of road, serving as property line on the other. Let's see, approx. 22 acres of blue hay woods. Old home site w/remains of the farm house that is falling in. Well house is still intact & the ancient pear tree still bears fruit. Public water meter in place; 3 wells are known to exist on property. Beautiful land with deer & turkey often seen enjoying fields & woodland. Agent owned. \$350,000 (1790110)

If you've been considering selling your property in the Mentone area, or even if you'd just like to know what it might bring on today's market, please give one of our agents at Mentone Realty a call and see how we may be able to help.

There are buyers calling almost daily looking for something in Mentone and, amazingly, there is just nothing to sell them! As of the end of January, there were only 4 properties for sale with a house of any sort on them.

Plenty of Buyers + Scarcity of Properties = A Seller's Market!

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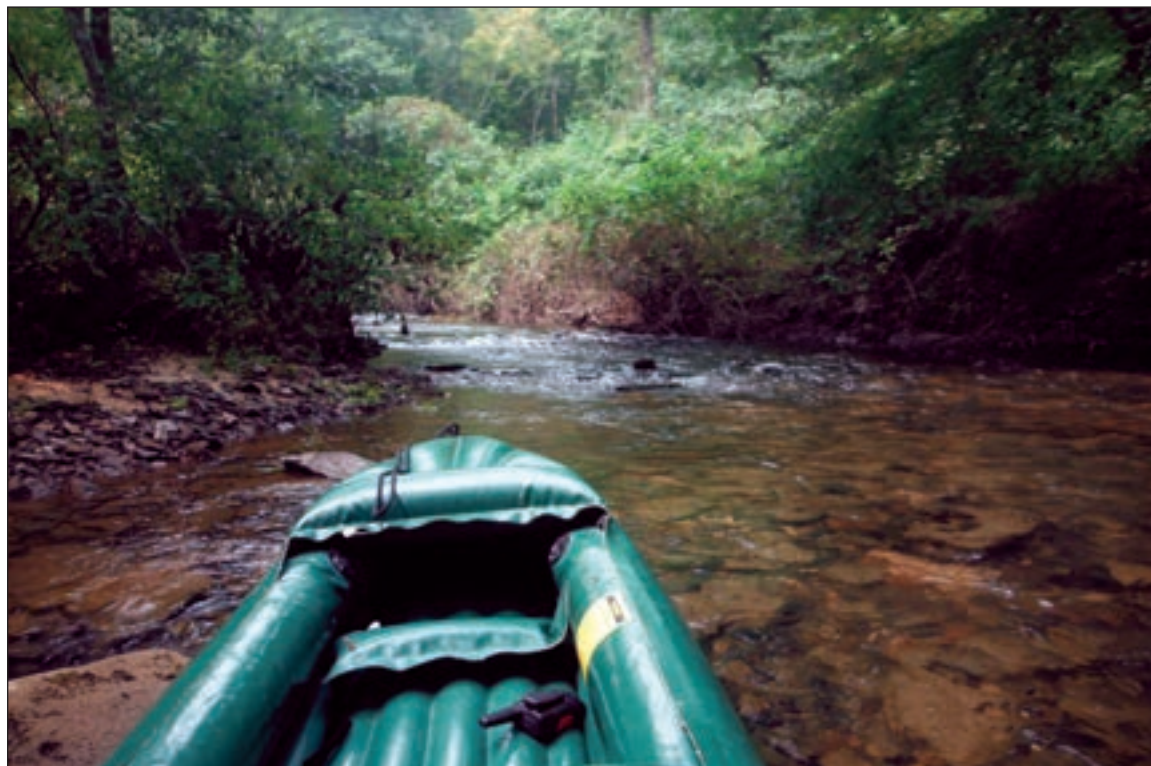
Home Sweet Alabama

by Thomas Hayes

Greetings all, and thank you for your old-fashioned southern hospitality. As a newcomer to the area, many have asked why we chose to retire in Mentone. The simple reply to that is, we didn't. Mentone chose us. As my wife would say, "My roots don't grow in concrete."

As a country boy, I always yearned to return to my roots. Yep, we have no family down here and know absolutely nobody down here. This is, after all, the destination point for many who seek to escape the fast pace of the city and all those variables associated with it—the noise, the pollution, the crime, the traffic and the so-called peaceful demonstrations, and alas, the snow and ice of the north. It is indeed quite a cultural shock, but for us, it is a no-brainer.

We are happy to leave all the mayhem in our rearview mirror and see the clear blue skies of Mentone, one of the few places in the world where a river runs on top of a mountain. A place where the



stars and the moon light up the sky and the sounds of burping frogs and chirping birds fill the air with music to the ears, where forest bathing is a term of endearment in landscape immersion.

Most remarkable is the relaxed lifestyle of a less hurried society. I find the people down here to be more respectful, personable, and laid back than the hurried society of the big cities, where politeness and

consideration for others is lost and anger is brewed. A reasonable assumption as the new kid on the block is one of suspicion. Perhaps that is so, but no such evidence on that notion has been observed down here. We are home. This is our forever home.

One day while lazily kayaking down the Little River, I came to a riffle zone and at that junction, I had to duck to miss an overhead pile of washed up branches and trees from a high-water event. In passing under the mass, I tagged a large tree trunk with my hand. Within that moment came sudden darkness and deafness. Next thing I knew, I was gasping for air with this humungous log on my head. Seeing a fuzzy image of my paddle floating downstream, I realized my glasses

must have been thrown clear. Talk about up a creek without a paddle. When I got home, still giddy and laughing, my wife asked what happened and I said I lost my glasses. Maybe it was the bump on the head, maybe it was all those endorphins still cruising the bloodstream, or maybe it was realization that this is a piece of heaven. Mentone is the destination place.



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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*, our community has become fully occupied and folks have come from 12 different states to live within our community.

With a successful year, Little River Escape has 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 five tiny home communities and one down County Road 641 in Mentone, AL. There are several Airbnb Tiny Homes in our various locations to come experience a tiny home, downsizing, the community, and explore the surrounding areas.

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Mentone Arts & Cultural Center Update

Scrappy Quilt and Fairy House workshops on tap in February by Randy Grider

We have two exciting workshops scheduled for this month.

First up is our Make Your Own Scrappy Quilt workshop on Saturday, February 19, starting at 9 a.m., at the Charles Sennett Center for the Arts

Students will make their own 36"x36" scrappy quilt during the 6-hour workshop, which is being taught by Tracey Rybka of Tracey's Stitches and Designs.

This is a "beginner-friendly" class. Tracey will provide fabric scraps (you are welcome to bring some of your own if you wish), cutting utensil and cutting table, batting and backing. Participants need to bring a portable sewing machine with thread and bobbins. If you don't have a sewing machine, you can rent one from Tracey for an additional \$30. The tuition for the workshop is \$125 per person. A light lunch will be provided. The class is limited to the first eight paying students.



Tracey Rybka will teach a Make Your Own Scrappy Quilt workshop on February 19.

On Monday, February 21, we invited you to join artist/instructor Barbara Umland for a fun and creative workshop as you create your own magical fairy house. The one-day workshop includes all



the supplies (though you are welcome to bring some items from your own yard) and a light lunch. The tuition is \$75. The class is limited to the first 10 paid students.

We have scheduled additional Paint Like Bob Ross workshops on April 23, which is currently near capacity, and June 4. Certified Bob Ross instructor Gary Grider has taught two of the popular classes in Mentone in

recent months. We are working to add another class in May, but that has not been finalized.

Our monthly Songwriters Round will resume in March. Scheduled songwriters and featured guest will be announced.

For reservations or more information about any of the workshops or events, see contact information below.

Randy Grider is executive director of the Mentone Arts & Cultural Center, Inc. He can be reached at mentoneartscenter@gmail.com or 256-674-3366.



Barbara Umland will be teaching her second Fairy House workshop on February 21.

Mentone Ukes by Jerry Megli

I most enjoy the quiet, soft sounds that can come from the ukulele creating a time in space where your thoughts like to pause...and linger.

The ukulele is an instrument that is small in size, easily portable, and has a voice longing to be heard. It has four strings. Pluck one or strum four at a time and just listen to it sing. I get some personal satisfaction in being able to set its voice free. I am a solitary guy, but getting together with other people with ukuleles is very enjoyable. I don't consider myself to be a musician or a performer but I do enjoy introducing the ukulele to those with absolutely no prior experience. At our sessions I teach a basic introduction to the ukulele—how to hold it, how to strum it and how to play simple chords—and then watch the expressions on their faces transition from being initially unsure and then I can see the light come on and they say, "I can do this!" If you're curious about how simple and satisfying playing the ukulele can be, join us at an upcoming session on February 5th and 19th at 1 p.m. at the Moon Lake Community Library.

Mentone Mah Jongg by Lynn Vanderhoff

Mah Jongg players in the area are invited to join the Mentone players on Sundays at 1 p.m. at the MERF House. This traditional Chinese tile game is played using rules from the National Mah Jongg League. Similar to the card game Gin Rummy, but with exponentially more winning combinations, this game is great for improving concentration and lots of fun. (Warning: it can be addictive!)

If you are interested in learning, come for our introductory classes starting on February 6. Anyone new to Mah Jongg or who would like a refresher is welcome. We will go over all the basics and play openhanded so that you can see how to build your winning hand. Our experienced players will assist you with advice and strategies.

It is time to order your 2022 card! The National Mah Jongg League publishes an annual card outlining the official standard hands and rules each year, changing out about one third of the hands,



so that experienced players are challenged with new combinations. Orders are taken through March, and then sent out first come, first served beginning in April. As soon as all our players have their 2022 card, we will begin to play with that version. You can order your

card online at nationalmahjonggleague.org. There are many other organizations that produce a card. But for our group uses this card only, so don't order unless they have this particular card (red card, 2022, National Mah Jongg League).

Please note: In consideration of players who have underlying health issues, we ask that you wear a mask to help keep everyone safe and healthy. Also, we are collecting \$5 per month per player to help cover the expenses of using the MERF House. Please bring cash or check (made out to MERF). It's a small price to pay to help keep the heat and lights on and have this much fun! For more information, contact Lynn Vanderhoff at lynn.vanderhoff@gmail.com.

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DeSoto State Park's Talmadge Butler Boardwalk Trail makes a leisurely walk in the woods accessible to all. The 360-yard boardwalk offers a unique perspective through wooded slopes and moist forest floor, ending at a 20' octagon deck near the Azalea Cascades. It is located in the park on CR Road 89.

The End of an Era



Photo by Robert Norris, January 16, 2022

Over the past 100 years or so, a drug store has stood in downtown Valley Head at the corner of Winston Street and Commerce Avenue. In late January, owner Cynthia Wooten announced the closure of Valley Head Drugs. In our next issue, we will explore the history of Valley Head's drug store through the ages, including the memories of many who frequented the establishment. If you have memories to share, please email groundhognews@yahoo.com.



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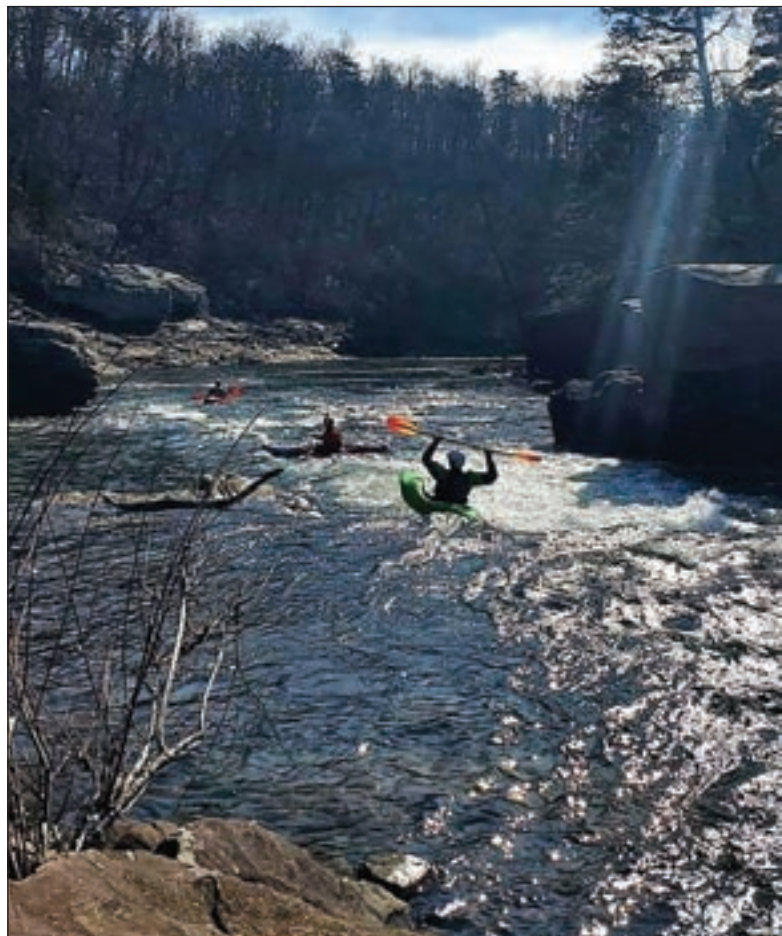
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River Voice by Angie Shugart

**"The river called. The call is the thundering rumble of distant rapids, the intimate roar of white water."
—John Craighead, Naturalist Magazine, 1965**



A flooded Little River is a sight to behold and gives whitewater paddlers a slice of heaven, especially on winter days. Whitewater on Little River is a seasonal phenomenon that attracts professional kayakers from all over the world. While most of us enjoy Little River on hot summer days, winter is the time adventure seekers don their drysuits, strap their kayaks to their vehicles, and head to the nearest put-in.

Today's technology provides an "app" to alert eager boaters when the flow has reached a safe level after a heavy rain event. It is not long before Little River Canyon is dotted with brightly colored kayakers against a green and gray landscape. To watch kayakers fearlessly descend the 30' waterfall at the beginning of Little River Canyon is not for the faint of heart. Be assured, these guys and gals are trained in whitewater safety and know how to "read" the river—scouting out and understanding the dangers.

Having experienced kayaking skills makes the Canyon no less dangerous, though. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Little River literally gets wild along the East Fork within the Little River Wildlife Management Area, and, of course, Little River Canyon and its major creeks. It is this wildness that has made the river so famous for the sport. Kayakers have named sections of the river "Pinball" and "Suicide" for a reason. They take on these challenges all the way to where the mouth of Little River flows into Lake Weiss.

So what makes Little River roar? People ask me, "Where is the dam release?" Although there are dams on Little River, none generate electricity or release water to maintain a certain level of flow. Other waterways, such as the Ocoee and Nantahala Rivers, are dam-controlled, with popular areas for whitewater rafting and kayaking.

The reason for the seasonal rise in cubic feet of water on Little River is unlike anywhere else in the world. A thin layer of shale perches water on top of Lookout Mountain, making the river completely dependent on rainwater for its flow. During heavy rains, ephemeral (wet weather) streams and tributaries flow into Little River, creating a swell which can wash away items that are not secure along the river. Furniture, boats, floats, and even docks get swept away and are not only a loss for homeowners but a danger for boaters downstream.

River flow is measured in real time by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) by gauges all over the nation. The data is collected and used on a national level for the creation of river management plans, to forecast flooding, and to manage reservoirs, but the maps are available to be read by anyone who is interested in water levels and streamflow. At any given time, you can visit usgs.gov to look up real time data on Little River. This is how boaters know when the river is ready to run. The USGS gauge on Little River is located above the Highway 35 bridge at Blue Hole. If Little River is flowing over 1,000 CFS (cubic feet per second), make sure to secure your items that are close to the water. The river can get up above 10,000 CFS during any given rain event. To give you another perspective of how big Little River can get, during the Easter flood of 2020 the Blue Hole gauge read close to 40,000 CFS. Now that is some BIG WATER!

Angie Shugart is the executive director of Little River Waterkeeper, a 501(c)(3) water advocacy program and a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance, a global clean water movement. Learn more at littleriverwaterkeeper.org. Donations are tax-deductible. 215 Grand Ave. SW Fort Payne, AL 35967.

Volunteer for Erase the Waste 2022

Going on now through April is our annual litter campaign Erase the Waste! This program organizes cleanups in the Little River Watershed before it gets into our local waterways. We provide volunteers with garbage bags, litter grabbers and safety vests. You can work at your own pace and as long as you wish. Dress in light layers that can be removed and according to the weather. Wear hiking boots or sturdy tennis shoes. Gloves and a toboggan may be needed. Bring your own water bottle and any snacks if needed.

February Cleanups

Saturday, February 5

DeSoto Falls Basin Cleanup

Meet at 1 p.m. at the basin trailhead on County Road 613.

Saturday, February 19

Lake Lahusage County Road 106 & 635

Meet for supplies at 1 p.m. at the entrance to Lookout Mountain Camp for Boys entrance on CR 106. Volunteers will clean that area and around Brushy Creek and others will drive to the other side on CR 635 to clean that area of the lake.

If you are not able to attend a LRWK cleanup event, we encourage you to take action by picking up litter in a nearby stream or roadway. Remember to upload a picture to Facebook or Instagram, tag Little River Waterkeeper and use the hashtag #EraseTheWaste.



Photos by Brad Huie

SENIOR SERVICES

by Lynn Hixon

Special Enrollment Period

Most people on Medicare know about the Open Enrollment from October to December, when Medicare recipients can make changes to their Part D plans or change to Medicare Advantage plans. What most people are not aware of is that there is another Special Enrollment period that runs from January 1 to March 31. This enrollment period will enable you to change your Medicare Advantage to another Medicare Advantage plan or change back to Traditional Medicare, enabling you to get a Medicare Part D and a Medicare Supplement.

If you feel you are stuck in a Medicare Advantage Plan—by mistake or perhaps because your physician will not take your new plan—you may be able to make changes in that plan or get back into Original Medicare and get a Medicare drug card. Please call the DeKalb County Council on Aging for more information or free assistance at 256-845-8590 and ask for Lynn. I am ready to assist you during this Special Enrollment Period.

Lynn Hixon is the SHIP coordinator for the DeKalb County Council on Aging.

Free Tax Preparation

by Emily McCamy

IRS Certified Volunteers will prepare simple tax forms at no charge to anyone who needs assistance on Thursdays, February 17, February 24, and March 31. Appointments and walk-ins will be welcome from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. If you would like to book an appointment, call us at 256-845-8590. Walk-ins will be first come, first served. The location is the DeKalb County Council on Aging at 600 Tyler Ave. SE, Fort Payne, AL 35967.

This opportunity is brought to you by RSVP of Etowah County, the DeKalb County Council on Aging, and sponsored by the IRS.

Due to the high numbers of COVID cases in our area, please do not bring additional people with you. The only people that need to come are the participants who sign the tax return and their driver, if they need one. We encourage everyone to wear a mask. Masks will be available, if needed.

Please bring the following with you:

- Photo ID for you and your spouse
- Social Security cards for everyone being claimed
- Last year's tax return
- All W-2s, 1099s, and any other tax documents

Memories of Mayberry

Downtown Valley Head

Saturday, May 7

Miss Rhododendron Pageant

The Miss Rhododendron Pageant will be held in May. The high school senior crowned Miss Rhododendron will be awarded a one-year scholarship to Northeast Alabama Community College.

This annual event is presented by MAPA. More information and details about which age groups will be involved will be available in March in *The Groundhog* and at mapamentone.com.



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Little River Arts Council is gearing up for our Linger Longer Pop-Ups and newly added art workshops this spring. Keep an eye on our social media (Facebook, Instagram, and our website) for workshop information and pop-up dates. In the meantime, join Little River Arts Council to support our local artists, keep up with the Summer Music Series, Follow Your Art, and Creative Spirit Market, and to receive member perks at our workshops! An outline for Spring Classes will be printed in the March issue of *The Groundhog*.

Destin Padgett serves as the president of the Little River Arts Council.



Pastor Mike Ellis October 22, 1960 - December 18, 2021



Moon Lake Baptist Church experienced a great loss on December 18, 2021, with the death of its pastor, Michael Anthony "Mike" Ellis.

Pastor Mike was born on October 22, 1960, in Dania, FL. After graduating from Baptist University of America in 1982 with a B.A. in Youth Ministry, he engaged in decades of fruitful ministry. Prior to Moon Lake Baptist, Mike pastored Salem Baptist Church in Calhoun, GA and Everett Springs Baptist Church in Armuchee, GA. In earlier years, Mike had a 19-year-long ministry as a missionary with Word of Life. Through Word of

Life, Mike served as an area missionary for Georgia and Tennessee. Highlights of this ministry included working with many church youth groups, speaking at youth camps, and writing Bible education curriculum for Word of Life. Recent ministry included a chaplaincy at Renaissance Marquis.

Mike was a tenderhearted man who loved reading, learning, and public speaking. He and his wife, Marilyn, were inseparable. They enjoyed many activities together, such as hiking, traveling to new places, camping, and their latest hobby of motorcycle touring. They shared their love of the outdoors with others by often taking

friends to fun places in the mountains.

Mike was an accomplished magician who joyfully shared his talent with Mentone's seniors at one of MERF's senior luncheons and with local children during a program at Moon Lake Library.

He is lovingly remembered by his wife of 35 years, Marilyn Ellis, along with his children Amanda (Zach) Smith, and Stephen Ellis; grandchildren, Lillian and Evelyn Smith; mother, Judy Ellis; sister, Shannon (Dwight) Wehr; and many nieces, nephews and in-laws. Mike is preceded in death by his father, Samuel Ellis.

Wildflower Café & Country Store



Original painting by Andrea Brandon

See our website for extended Valentine's Day hours

mentonewildflower.com
256.634.0066
6007 AL Hwy. 117, Mentone



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on the square at the Mentone Inn

www.facebook.com/MentoneFarmersMarket

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LOTS & LAND



Approx. 6 acres on Middle Fork of Little River. \$48,900. MLS #1034997



Enjoy the natural beauty of Brush Creek from your building site on this wooded property. Located on a private road just minutes from downtown Mentone. \$19,900. MLS #1779301



HERE IS A RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TODAY! 200 ACRES LOCATED NEAR HISTORIC MENTONE ALABAMA! Mature trees, creek, paved road frontage, minutes from Interstate 59. Land like this doesn't become available very often. \$1,000,000. MLS #1781133



40 ACRES OF PRIME MENTONE AL LAND. BEAUTIFUL TRACT WITH ABOUT A 5 ACRE LAKE. Flat open land with an old well on the property. Mostly fenced all the way around. good road through it. Over a half of a mile of county road frontage with power and water available. \$400,000. MLS #1788540



13 acres on East Fork Little River in Mentone. Privacy awaits you on this heavily wooded lot. Get your plans ready and build the home you've dreamed of! Call today and make it yours! \$175,000. MLS #1791030



BEAUTIFUL BROW PROPERTY located in Lake of the Brow. Just minutes from Little River Canyon and the falls. Enjoy beautiful views of Shonbone Valley below. \$79,900. MLS #1792283



Lot 59 in Crestline Park Subdivision in Mentone. This location is just off of the scenic County Road 89. This subdivision offers light restrictions including no mobile homes, no commercial buildings or temporary structures. Insuring permanent or vacation living only for you and your neighboring properties. Property is owned by a licensed home builder offering "will build to suit". Call us today and start picking out a house plan! \$39,900. MLS #1776065



Beautiful building site on Libby Lane, Mentone, Alabama. Seller has all the groundwork ready, septic installed, water and power on the property! Bring your house plans to this level lot and let the dreams begin!! This 1.47 acre parcel is located near the end of a dead-end street inside Mentone city limits!! No mobile homes, no campers, and no tiny homes allowed. \$79,900. MLS #1796363



Build your new home with BREATHTAKING VIEWS year round! Brow property located in Lake on the Brow on Lookout Mountain near Little River Canyon. Gorgeous views just minutes from Little River Canyon and the falls. \$55,000. Call for an appointment today! MLS #1798542



Build your new home with BREATHTAKING VIEWS year round! Brow property located in Lake on the Brow on Lookout Mountain near Little River Canyon. Gorgeous views just minutes from Little River Canyon and the falls. \$55,000. Call for an appointment today! MLS #1798643



Build your new home with BREATHTAKING VIEWS year round! Brow property located in Lake on the Brow on Lookout Mountain near Little River Canyon. Gorgeous views just minutes from Little River Canyon and the falls. \$55,000. Call for an appointment today! \$55,000. MLS #1798655



Build your new home with BREATHTAKING VIEWS year round! Brow property located in Lake on the Brow on Lookout Mountain near Little River Canyon. Gorgeous views just minutes from Little River Canyon and the falls. \$55,000. Call for an appointment today! MLS #1798657



Opportunity is knocking! Now's the time to purchase this 10+ acre parcel of mostly wooded acreage! Great location just minutes from downtown, but with a country vibe. Owner has surveyed into 3 lots, but is selling as a whole. You can build and subdivide if you desire or simply hold onto this beautiful property as an investment. City water and electricity available on CR 106. Call for more details. \$91,500. MLS #1798938



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www.southernpropertiesagency.com

Assistance Is Available for Those in Need

St. Joseph's Food Pantry

Free food is distributed every Wednesday at St. Joseph's Food Pantry in Mentone. Call Melinda Baugh at 256-634-4476 for more information.

Meals on Wheels Program

The Meals on Wheels program is coordinated by the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) and the DeKalb County Council on Aging. It provides a weekly box of frozen meals and fresh milk to area seniors who are unable to prepare meals due to health, mobility, and financial restrictions. Volunteer Domenic Fulginiti coordinates pickup and delivery to the seniors in our area who are unable to prepare meals for themselves or make the trip to the senior center in Ft. Payne.

Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)

EFSP is a federally funded program that provides assistance with emergency needs for food and shelter. This includes utilities, such as metered electric, water, and propane gas. Residents of Mentone, Valley Head, and Hammondville who need assistance with utilities and also meet the eligibility requirements for the Food Pantry may contact Melinda Baugh at 256-634-4476 for more information. This program is administered in DeKalb County by the Community Action Agency of Northeast Alabama.

Welcome, Baby Black Bears



Black bear tracks. Near the bottom left corner, you can see a quarter to show the scale of size.

Black bear cubs are usually born in February. Mama's thick coat will keep the helpless ones warm on even the coldest of nights. Some bears are tagged and collared, but even more are not. The Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division would always like to know if you see a bear or one's tracks or other sign. You can file an observation report at this link: game.dcnr.alabama.gov/BlackBear.



Black bear cubs stay snug in their mama's den. Do not disturb!

Ryleigh's Closet

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DeSoto Falls Picnic Area and Overlook Temporarily Closes for Dredging and Other Improvements



The DeSoto Falls Picnic Area and Overlook was closed to all vehicle and pedestrian traffic in late January, allowing workers to begin dredging the West Fork of Little River above the A.A. Miller Dam. The area will be closed until early spring.

According to a press release issued by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, silt and debris have washed up along the shore of DeSoto Falls for years, especially during flooding or other high-water events, and the dredging work will safeguard and fortify the area. “DeSoto Falls is one of Alabama’s true treasures, and we take our responsibility to protect it seriously,” Alabama State Parks Director Greg Lein said. “We apologize for any inconvenience this work will cause for our visitors, but it is critical to making sure the Falls is here for generations to come.”

The work will allow the park to re-establish a beach and designated swimming area. The park also has plans to re-pave the entire parking area after the dredging project concludes. That work will also cause temporary closures.

DeSoto Falls is one of the tallest and most visited waterfalls in Alabama. “Thousands of visitors enjoy DeSoto Falls every year, and it’s no secret that we cherish it as a truly special place,” said DeSoto State Park Superintendent Josh Hughes. “This temporary closure should make it better than ever for our visitors. That’s the goal.”

The DeSoto Falls Picnic Area is the only location closed in the park at this time, and all other entrances and areas are accessible to the public. For more information, visit alapark.com/AL-desoto-falls.



Gain a new perspective! The hiking trail to the basin below the falls will remain open daily until dusk. The trail is considered moderate to strenuous. A trail map is located at the trailhead on CR 613. You can also learn more about this hike at DeSoto State Park's Country Store & Information Center on CR 89 and at the park lodge.



Debra Fey below DeSoto Falls



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In order to protect the quality of Little River’s pristine ecosystem, a floating silt fence will catch debris that may surface from the dredging. Mentone resident Casey Harp was hired to operate his boat so workers could install the silt fence in an arc shape across the river so anything that comes to the surface during the dredging will be caught and eventually vacuumed up. Unfortunately, this initial phase of the project didn’t go as planned.

The floating silt fence was tied to the boat, and when the water’s strong current pulled the fence over the dam, the boat almost went over with it. “It all

happened at a very quick pace. It was a very scary moment. Luckily, I was able to find my knife in time and cut the boat free of the floats,” Casey said. The fence is made of a tarp-like material that’s about three feet tall, with a chain sewed into its bottom to help keep it vertical.

The workers tried to retrieve the floats, but the strength of the water going over the dam overwhelmed the initial effort. As of press time, they had not yet been retrieved, but we’re confident they will be just as soon as the power of the water permits.



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Hands down, THE PEOPLE! Most interesting, eclectic, artistic, musical, kindest people we have ever met. Beautiful people, beautiful spirits in a beautiful place!

Jan Jan

The solace of being in nature...seeing the deer and fox in my yard.... the calm, slow pace to which I can enjoy all my surroundings...and of course, the people are so nice and friendly up here!!

Alysia Swanson

East Fork Little River and the peace and quiet and my back deck!

Marc Walsh

Slow pace.

Bob Garfrerick

It's like that old show "Northern Exposure." Except in this case it's southern. So many characters, so much eclectic culture. Truly one-of-a-kind place. Love that.

Jacquelyn Jackson

I feel like I can reach up and touch God when I'm on Lookout Mountain.

Beth Garfrerick

Cocktails in the clouds. Train whistles in the valley. Sunsets along the brow. Moss-covered rocks amid colorful flora and fauna.

Whitney Chapman

The police, volunteer fire dept., the rescue squad and other volunteers who assist in a crisis.

Holly Parker

Available hiking and variety of hiking. Culture and shops. Food and cuisine in the area. Nature's glory.

Alan Lawson

Absolutely everything, the small town environment and charm of the area. The view from almost every vantage point and especially the wonderful, loving, and kind people. This is where I plan to live out my days. We just moved here in April and cannot imagine living anywhere else in this world. It's a pretty strong statement but the welcome feeling that we have here amongst the locals and as well our church family and not to mention all the beauty here, well it's just one of God's many miracles.

Sharon Fox

My neighbors.

Lisa Sulkosky

Feeling close to nature. Having four seasons.

Dena Phillips McKee

The people!

Karen Vest

Everyone is so friendly.

Dudley Easler

Old school.

Angela Rogers

Peace

Lori Manifold Blackburn

Family.

Virgil Battles

Everything

Cynthia Stinson

A strong sense of community...Knowing I can depend on the people here if I ever need help and being there for those who need it. It's HOME.

Dee Dee

Peaceful, no box stores, good folk, great neighbors.

Charla Hermann

That we have maintained it without a Starbucks for the last 40 years of love, peace, home-cooked art and NATURE.

Mary Beth Escher

Moved from Pittsburgh, PA. We both love the area! We are getting to know a few people, no family or friends live here, we just followed our hearts! The house and town found us.

Charles Runnels

Moon Lake Baptist Church

Jen Thompson

Getting food from Fontana's and eating lunch at Brow Park!

Tim Gardner

Slow paced. The beauty and the people. Old school

Linda Harris

The peace it brings to my soul...And the kindest people anywhere!

Claudia Springer

The people.

Susan Gilbert

The people are amazing and always polite

The Groundhog asked a sim
"What Do
About Life is
and the community respo
they consider the Mer

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Indian Falls

TRAIL TREKKER HIKE SERIES:

Waterfall Hike

Sat., February 12 • 10 am—3 pm

Join DeSoto State Park staff and volunteers for a fun day of hiking throughout the park to see some of DeSoto's waterfalls, big and small. See Lost Falls, Laurel Falls, Indian Falls, and more water features like Laurel Creek and the West Fork of Little River. Come on out and burn those calories while enjoying the Great Outdoors! This free hike series is designed for those who prefer some company out on the trails with experienced park staff or volunteers.

The trail will be moderate, rugged terrain over approximately 5 to 6 miles. This hike will travel on the white, silver, and orange trails and a section of the DST.

Meet at DeSoto's Country Store and Information Center on County Road 89. Pre-registration is required. The Waterfall Hike is open to ages 8 and older. Email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for more information or to pre-register.

multiple question on Facebook:

Do You Love Mentone?"

bonded with many reasons
Mentone area so special...

Kevin-Harriet Pugh

Everything! No matter what the weather, it's beautiful! The people for the most part are genuine and kind.

Chad Haywood

I love the scenery and most of the locals. Got stuck in the ditch the other day in my semi truck, Mr. John O'Rears helped get a crew to get me out, free of charge. Thank you to my community.

Sheila Larock

Slower life style.

Pam Hudson

I love the privilege of experiencing God's absolute beauty of His creation just by looking out of my window or walking outside. His presence is felt in everything, the wildlife, the trees, flowers, the change in seasons, snow, rain, wind, sunshine and the simplicity of mountain life. We feel truly blessed to call this magical place HOME.

Josh Johnson

Everything!! It's my favorite place in the world! It feels like a million miles away, even though I live just in Guntersville.

Don Pirch

I honestly came home to spend my last days here & love that I can... Happily.

Anna Chapman

Mentone has the best locally-owned businesses run by people who care.

Willow Flowers

Love being surrounded by wild flowers, trees and animals, etc. Love that it's slow. Not as much sound or air pollution. Kept clean yet part wild. Such things that give it its charm. Nice to have a community that not only supports each other but stands up for natural habitats and our Little River. Anyone who knows anything about the geology of this place knows it's extra special. Nothing to take for granted and over-develop. I like being surrounded by others who are living in example of being a light of love in the world. Feel blessed to be here. Always in gratitude.

Mike Howell

Life in Mentone.

Carol Ennis

Good people.

Angela Eads

Brow Park.

Rickey Baty

Everything.

Jane Faile

I love the spiritual energy of this beautiful mountain.

John Dowe Foreman

I love that my family has history here and I can go along a path or a curve in the road and remember it from when I was a child. I love the trees, the woods, and the fog that rolls up from the brow and is so thick at times that I can't see 10 feet in front of me. I love the ones who have been here far before me and the newcomers that are so excited to be here. This mountain is home in the truest sense of the word.

Sherry Schoenheit

We just recently purchased our 2nd home there and I can say without a doubt that it already feels like HOME! We try to go once a month. So far we've been there a week at a time since our purchase in September. Most recently we drove in the night of the snow. It was exciting, scary and amazing... being Floridians. It was absolutely BEAUTIFUL the next morning. We love how peaceful, laid back and secluded we are. The land and the wildlife is absolutely amazing. The scenic roads are awesome to ride our motorcycles on. People are friendly and it's like we are in our own little world. Seriously... it is hard to come back to Florida, when the time comes to go back. I would love to live there full time. One day soon.

Pat Harless

I don't live there but close..have made some great friends there! Nicest folks!

Rita Gail Chapman

I have many great memories of growing up here. Nothing else really felt like home until we moved back on family land. My grown children love it as well.

Nelson Burger

Mentone is our peaceful place. The Hand of God can be seen all around us.

Linda Griffin Stephenson

It suits me...Quaint, country, beautiful...

Jackie Baxter

I was born and raised here.

Lanier Isom

St. Joseph's!

Pamela Wald

The people most of all.

Mary Ann Robbins

That I have a produce and meat stand within steps of my door, my neighbor has Camp Laney horses at her back fence every morning, there is an alpaca farm just round the bend, that I can walk to the post office and shops, that I can see the stars at night and hear the "bells" of St. Joe's, and though I do not attend church, there is a lovely church on my street. That several neighbors have family connections to our home, that DeSoto State Park is practically my backyard...



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Ruby O'Rear's Days Come to Life

JANUARY & FEBRUARY, 1937

January 1, Friday, 1937

Cloudy in morn. Rainy in PM

Ralph came over & raked 3 hrs 10 min. Paul helped him a little. I mopped our room & raked up east end of our rooms. Hazel ironed. W. Paul came about 1:30. Knitted some on Hazel's sweater. Started rubbing of bottom. [?] We sang for mother.

January 2, Saturday, 1937

Thundered & lightened. Water in creek high. Rained all day.

Hazel ironed. I knitted some on her sweater & finished my crocheted silk rug made from silk hose, etc. W. Paul came over & stayed a little while. We sang some for Mother.

January 3, Sunday, 1937

Colder. Clearing up.

Dan brot card from Edna Perry saying Myrtle died at S'ville [Summerville] hospital yesterday. Hope, Faye, & Mrs. Anderson came by & so Hope took all the pigs. Going to keep his & sell mine. Paul's car is broken & Dan's is too. I bathed. Called Menlo & found out myself funeral would be tomorrow at 10:00. W. Paul came about 2:00 & he & A.J. took me to Mr. Wyatt's. I stayed about 2 hours. Mr. Dady came while I was there. Jane & Robert also came. Stopped by Mr. Laster's about 5 minutes. Miss Eva Nell gave me pumpkins. Pigs 6 weeks old to-day.

January 4, Monday, 1937

Temp 22. Clouding up.

Didn't do anything much to-day. Wrote some locals four cards & took them to store to mail. Came back thru field & got some corn.

January 5, Tuesday, 1937

Rained most all day. Temp 36 to 40.

Jack & J.B. & Paul went to V.H. [Valley Head] with Dan & didn't get back till after dark. Car in garage. Clyde Rose & Willie Perkins came over. Willie interested in Johns Mt. land. When W. Paul came over he brot article on John's Mt. by Robert Sparks Walker. I crocheted some on cotton hose rug.

January 6, Wednesday, 1937

Temp 46. Still raining.

Didn't do anything much. Clara had letter from Jessie Jones in Rome. Said she could get job keeping house over there so she plans on leaving here soon.

January 7, Thursday, 1937

Temp 50 or above. Sun shone little in valley. Foggy here.

Mother walked out in living room twice. Crocheted on cotton rug. Wrote some to Neva. Paul brot some Pathfinders [?] Worked some on cut work piece.



January 8, Friday, 1937

Temp 50 or above.

Foggy. Sun shone a little in valley & here a little in P.M.

Sewed a little. Went to field for corn. Put some chicken fertilizer on flowers. Washed Mother off & put clean clothes on her. Mr. Lyons came to see A.J. about renting house. Clara gone to Grace's. Heard Charles & Margaret had a girl, Delois Evangeline.

January 9, Saturday, 1937

Temp went above 70.

Sun shone most of the day.

Hazel came over & washed. My

Christmas cactus is at its prettiest. Clara heard from Jessie to-day. She's planning to go to Rome tomorrow. She went to Jones to see about way to go to Rome. Lucile came back with her. Hazel going to stay to-nite & to-morrow. Clara & Lucile went to Cashes. Jack & some boys came by & said Jessie Jones was at home. After we had gone to bed Oscar came hunting Grace.

January 10, Sunday, 1937

Foggy & rainy again. Temp 64 to 60. Slept with door open.

Clara came home early. Forrest came about 9:15. Grover came for Clara & her trunk & took them all to bus at S'ville. Jessie went back. I walked to S.S. [Sunday school]. Stayed for church & walked back. Aileen said guessed she could come to-morrow. Crows were in wreck this morn at V.H. Had started to hospital in Birmingham to see John.

January 11, Monday, 1937

Foggy & rainy. Temp 57.

Hazel stayed last nite. Aileen came this morn. Paul gone to V.H. We just ate lunch so we could have hot supper. Floored chicken house. Fixed bird feeder. Took up some daffodils.

Editor's Note:

In our July 2021 issue, we introduced the diary entries of Miss Ruby O'Rear, granddaughter of John Mason, (the founder of Mentone) and daughter of Alice Mason (who named the town). You can read more about Ruby O'Rear at mapamentone.com/groundhog-archives (July 2021).

In 2015, the University of Alabama acquired her diaries from the years 1936 and 1937 from a bookseller in Brooklyn, NY. They are part of the University Libraries Special Collections (MSS4133). Many thanks to Chris Carmichael for sharing his copy of the diaries with *The Groundhog*.

We hope you will enjoy reading these entries of her daily diary for the months of January and February, 1937.

January 12, Tuesday, 1937

Warm & rainy

I killed guinea this morn. Hope came & took sow to some place below Menlo. I didn't do anything much to-day.

January 13, Wednesday, 1937

Still warm. Cloudy.

Then sun shone a little.

Washed my hair.

Sewed some on my wool quilt top. Emb'd a little. Paul got car fixed. A. J. went to V.H. with him.

January 14, Thursday, 1937

Warm. Temp 68.

Cloudy most of day.

Heard that Frances & Clyde Crow's baby was born dead

yesterday P.M. I went to store to see when funeral would be. Found out it was to be at 11:00. Mr. Ringer burial insurance man came for Mother's yearly premium. Paul at home sick with cold. Aileen also has cold.

January 15, Friday, 1937

Cooler. Rainy in morn. Cleared up later.

Paul at home again with cold. Got out Mother's scrap book. Copied off some letters for Jessie. Eloise sent me some of her fruit cake. A.J. started to school to take Jack to V.H. Car stopped on her this side of mill. She had to come back & Paul went & started it. Mrs. Adams called wanting Aileen to come out there. Mrs. Yarbrough sent me a note saying Edith Smith wanted to come & stay awhile with us.

January 16, Saturday, 1937

Frosted last nite. Clear to-day.

Finished sewing wool quilt top together.

Hazel came to wash. Evans came for Aileen. Billy E & Jack came over. Cut shoulder of hog for breakfast.

January 17, Sunday, 1937

Rainy. Temp 44 to 60.

I went to S.S. Walked there & back. Frank Warren at S.S. Came back by store. Had dinner. Paul came for A.J.

Started letter to Maurice. Hope, Faye & Vera Mae came out. Cow out. Went to cornfield then to Dan's. I rode back with Hope to store & brot her home. Hope brought sow back.

January 18, Monday, 1937

Rained all morn. Temp dropped from 60 to 53.

Telephone out of order. Car would not start so Hazel, Jack & J.B. walked in rain & just did meet the bus. After rain was over car started. Paul went for mail then back in P.M. for folks at school. Katherine & Floyd Barley have a girl, Barbara Alice.

January 19, Tuesday, 1937

Still warm & foggy & rainy

J.B. had indigestion last nite & stayed home to-day. A.J. cleaned up kitchen & got dinner. Paul went to Trion. Back in time to bring Jack home. Cow got out & it was too rainy to go get her.

January 20, Wednesday, 1937

Foggy all day. Temp 56 [?] or above

Paul took Jack & J.B. to school then brot cow home then left for Gadsden. I washed dishes. Made up one bed & ironed. When Jack came home I fixed fence. When cow saw me fixing fence she went to another place & jumped out & went to corn field. Had just been over there for corn & had to go back for her.

January 21, Thursday, 1937

Temp 62. Foggy all morn but fog lifted about 12:00 & sun almost shone out.

Cow jumped out again & went to Dan's. J.B. & Jack brot her home. A.J. washed dishes & swept floor. I cooked some beans. Peeled potatoes & we had had creamed potatoes, gravy & meat. I worked some on quilt.

January 22, Friday, 1937

Windy, Clear most of day. Temp above 70.

I washed out 2 dresses & some small things. All dried. Mopped up floor. Bathed Mother off & put clean clothes on her, then took bath myself. Hazel came from school to stay all the time. Cow out. Went to Yates hunting her. On to Emersons & found Geneva Irvine has girl.

January 23, Saturday, 1937

Rainy, warm.

Jack, Paul & J.B. went to Fort P. [Fort Payne] Hazel washed some things. I put line above stove to dry them. I tried to fix little lot fence. Cow got out twice & I got her back & put her in little lot & she pushed out. Finished sewing large woolen pieces together for quilt top.

January 24, Sunday, 1937

Rainy & warm.

Went to S.S. & church. A.J. & J.B. went to V.H. Papers full of news about flood

(continued on page 18)

February Birthdays

1 John Lawton Abby Bell Tammy Kirby Walter Brooks Rindy Flannigan Fontana Stinson Thomas Blevins AJ Hairston	6 Amanda Blalock Allie McElhaney Ruthie Jane Brown Jonathan Wilbanks Kendall Thompson	11 Cayla Wigley Faith Nelson Gentry Grisham Amanda Ditmore Elizabeth Rich Rhett Davis	17 John David Blalock Trey Moore Tyler Allen Renee Peek Tom Tate Fay Langston Charles Allen	22 Justin Langston Johnny Mack Ferguson, Jr. Corey Blalock Derek McMahan Jordan Bethune Hubby Foret
2 Beverly Smith Karen Nixon Zeb Kincer Elijah Rogers Lamar King	7 Jordan Sutton Tristan Rodriguez Haven Stone Haley Stinson Moore Carley Verdon Jase Kirby Norah Underwood Kevin Burt	12 Elliott Floyd Harry Ohme Tara Kirby Nicholas Freeman Sydnee Grider Bubba Browder Cooper Jones Leanna Kurts Petie Gatlin	18 Richard Harrison Gail Crider Simeon Bickerstaf Braden Villarreal Nigel Gamsby	23 Dally Hairston Jaden Turner
3 Melanie Potts Garrett	8 Wyatt Blackburn Crystal Smith Helen Brown Annette Johnson Sandy Tate Leon Drown Jay Cullen Thompson	13 Belle Easley Gretchen Winder Carol Busby Craig Hall Isaac Pangle	19 Danielle Powell Aaron Goss John Fischer, Jr. Tim Henderson Beverly Bates Nick White Kylie Justice Shannon Gray Baker	24 Michael Chambers Tom Emory Payton Day Lewis Melinda Easler Susan Collins
4 Angela Phillips Carson Dan Frost Sophia Blair Brittany Daniel Aubree Lewchuk Cameron Norsworthy Katie Beth Woods Andrew Hairston William Tyler Lee Mandy Morton Mark Clark Makenzie McDorman	9 Kara Goss Jonnie Frost Cayden Collins Leon Drown Heath Jones	14 Abbi Gifford Lillie Moses Eddie Manning Baxter Austin	20 Jon Baggett Stella Pierce Joan Byrum Juanita McGuire Adam Battles Will Barksdale James Ledbetter Elizabeth White	25 William Beasley Emily Tate Pam Bettis Dorothy Cyr
5 Yon Hopper Savannah Wallace Cameron Collins Mike Burt Skye Kurts Brylen Deal	10 Joe McClure Leonard Keith Katie White Luke Hulgan Tim Jackson	15 Ashley Coffman Diane Smith Axl Blake Jones Brandon Davis	21 Wendy Manifold Lad Steinemann Bonita Gaston	26 Kylee Elkins Johnny Battles Kate Smith Amina Bearden
		16 Katelyn Busby Mary Jane Gray		27 Makayla Mullis David Hilliard Holden Smith Marc Hale Larissa Roe
				28 Derek Davis Ethan Bailey Russell Odell
				29 Ethen Battles

Anniversaries

1 Russell & Jan Odell Craig & Ashley Hulgan	5 Don & Glenda Ingram	10 Danny & Sible Hopper	15 Leonard & Amy Keith
3 Ray & Sandra Padgett	7 Calvin & Myra Lanier Mack & Debbie Flannigan	14 Joey & Melanie Garrett Kevin & Connie McElhaney Lauren & Jackie Brettner	17 Vance & Patti Carden
4 Larry & Kathy Gray James Rhodes & Angela Eads	8 Clark & Genella Tolbert		

Ongoing Community Calendar

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

Mentone Town Council meets the 2nd Tuesday every month at 5pm at Mentone Town Hall. Valley Head Town Council meets monthly on the 1st Monday at 6pm at Valley Head Town Hall. Hammondville Town Council meets monthly on the 1st Tuesday at 6pm at Hammondville Town Hall. DeSoto Rescue Squad meets the 1st Saturday of the month at 9am at the MERF house in Mentone. The North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District Board meets the 3rd Monday of every month at 7pm. Mentone Farmers Market is open year-round on Saturdays from 10am–1pm in the Town Square. FREE FOOD for eligible persons and families. Wednesdays, 9–11am. New applicants are welcome. Joint effort between St. Joseph’s-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church (Community Outreach Ministry) and the Food Bank of North AL. The Lookout Mountain Knitters meet each Tuesday at 3pm at the MERF House. All are welcome.	Ryleigh’s Closet is a clothing closet that provides men’s, women’s, and children’s clothing to those in need on 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 4–6pm. Mentone Community Church, 90 Summerville Rd. 256-364-0150. Moon Lake Community Library is open on Saturdays from 10am–1pm, and Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12–4:30pm. Visit moonlakelibrary.org. The Rhododendron Garden Club meets each month on the 2nd Tuesday at 10am. ‘Green thumbs’ and ‘brown thumbs’ are welcome! 256-634-4403. Ukulele Sessions Continue. Bring your uke to the Moon Lake Community Library at 1 pm on February 5 and 19. Follow us on Facebook (Mentone Ukes) or contact Debra Fey (debrajfe@gmail.com) for more info. Beginners of all ages are invited to join in. Strum and be happy! The Mentone Mah Jongg Group meets at the MERF House in Mentone on Sundays 1–4pm. Please note: We ask that you wear a mask and gloves. We have several players with underlying health concerns and just want to keep everyone safe. Also, please bring \$5/month contribution to the MERF House, so they can keep the lights on.
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Ruby O'Rear (cont'd from page 16)

in Ky, Ohio & other states. 300,000 homeless. Extra cold in Cal. ½ of citrus crop killed. W. Paul came over for A.J. before we ate dinner. Bill came home with J.B. Cow went to Emersons again. Paul & J.B. went for her.

January 25, Monday, 1937

Rained hard last nite but clearing off a little. Temp 50

Paul took folks to school then he was going on to Atlanta. Mother walked out on to back porch, to bath room & in cellar & little room. Didn't seem to tire her especially. I worked on cow lot. Every cow got out & went to Dan's. Folks came home early. Hazel & I took up meat, scalded & hanging it up to smoke. I went for cow. Lopo went with me but didn't come back. Put cow in barn. Hazel scrubbed.

January 26, Tuesday, 1937

Temp 42 but cloudy

Paul didn't come home last nite. Neither did Lopo. Cow stayed in barn last nite & in lot to-day. Lopo over at Cash's. J.B. brot him home. Paul came home to-night. Came by Gadsden. Read a lot. John L cut his foot.

Wednesday, January 27

Clear most of the day & hard East wind blowing

I had headache. Hazel stayed at home & washed. Clothes all got dry. I got dinner & washed dishes. Hazel went to Wallace's to see how John Lawrence's foot was. Stayed only ½ hour. Came back. Brot in clothes. Cow stayed in lot all day but turned her in pasture for nite. Paul brot sack of beet pulp. Mr. Walker called & wanted us to get word to Mrs. Earnest & Mrs. Galloway.

January 28, Thursday, 1937

Raining again

Jessie about sick. Paul went to Scottsboro. I didn't do anything much. Folks came in from school early. Hazel ironed. I got supper. Hazel made our order for John Lawrence some things.

January 29, Friday, 1937

Clear most of day. Temp in 40 went above 60

Heard that Miss Emma J. Smith died

this morn. Had stroke last nite while shucking corn. Had come home from Mrs. Lilly's yesterday morn. Eula came by & visited a while. My head hurt some from reading.

January 30, Saturday, 1937

Cloudy in morn but sun shone some later. Cold & windy.

I didn't feel at all well. Had some cold & head hurt. Hazel ironed. Jack cleaned up. I went to Mrs. Emma's funeral. Mrs. Lily so sick they have not told her of Mrs. Emma's death. I came back by field to get cow. She went by Cash's. Eula & children got her. Jack & Kenneth both sick.

January 31, Sunday, 1937

Rainy

I'm taking a bad cold. Stayed home all day until late P.M. Hope called & wanted me to come to Dan's so Hazel & I went up there. Took him bucket of lard & he gave me \$5.00 of pig maw.

February 1, Monday, 1937

Cloudy—colder.

My cold is worse. Took B.D.R to-day. Hazel's brother came. Brot her and a cousin of hers. Hazel & Leola came from school with him to Wallace's. She called & wanted to spend nite there.

February 2, Tuesday, 1937

Groundhog Day. He saw his shadow.

Temp 24. Clear. Warmed up.

Mr. Holland came home with Hazel & stayed a few min. He's taking all the children back except John Lawrence & Hazel. Said he'd come for her when school was out. Paul took me to Summerville. Our lot no 6 block P was sold for Faye to get a good deed. Mr. Crawford Bailey bought it for \$265.00. Hazel & A.J. stayed with Mother. Hope tool me up to see Humphreys. Still have cold. Hazel washed some. Clothes got dry. Took meat down. Took Hope his middling.

February 3, Wednesday, 1937

Clouding up. Went below freezing.

Jodie gathered Albert's corn & brot me mine which was only a few. Mother's ear bothered her. Thot bug was in it but I think it was just cold made it buzz. I was up quite a bit & slept late. Cow

got out but I got her in. Hardie came by to see Mother. Hung meat in cellar. Miss Spence & Miss Andrews (teachers) came with Hazel to see places she's staying at now.

February 4, Thursday, 1937

Cleared off last nite. Temp 40.

I crocheted some. Cow got out & went to field. I turned out pig. Paul went to V.H. Brot folks in from school. Paul went for cow. She was in field with Emerson's cows.

February 5, Friday, 1937

Temp 24. Clear most of day

Paul didn't go anywhere but folks missed bus & he had to take Hazel on

to school. I finished collar for Miss Spence. Started on jabot. My cold better but Mother has one. Jessie didn't go to meeting at V.H. Turned cow out. Then Paul went for her. A.J. knit most of day. I wrote letters.

February 6, Saturday, 1937

Cloudy, warm.

I caught 4 hens to sell. After dinner Paul took me to Mentone. Sold chicks & got sack of scratch feed. I got out at Dan's. Went to Cash's to see Clara but they said she had come down here. Back to Dan's & Clara, Gracie & Lucile were there. Talked with them a little. Cow at Dan's. J.P. & Bill & Jack brot her home.

February 7, Sunday, 1937

Warm. Sun shone some then a hard shower would come.

Thot to-day was 2nd Sunday so went to church at Wesleyan but it wasn't preaching day. Have furnace in but not in operation. Heard that Kenneth Morgan died this morn. Rode to Dan's with Clara. Stayed there awhile. On home. After

dinner Hazel & J.B. went to Wallace's. Cow out. Went to Emersons. They brot her home. Jack & Paul walked over to Yarbroughs where Kenneth's body was.

February 8, Monday, 1937

Warm. Stormy. Thunder & lightning.

Temp above 70.

Knitted a little on Hazel's skirt but as she had made some mistakes just raveled it out. Crocheted some. Jessie, Mrs. York & Miss Spence brot all the children who wanted to come to the funeral. Luther Kirby came to telephone for wrecker truck broke. I was in shower going for cow.

(continued on page 20)

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January's Snowfall

by Kelly Leavitt

January brought two snowfalls to Mentone and the surrounding area. On Monday, January 3, three to four inches fell, creating a magical wonderland. Many area residents and visitors spent the day outdoors enjoying the beauty and taking photographs.



Photo: Pat Parmelee



Photo: Christy Plunkett



Photo: Sarah Wilcox



Photo: Lisa Schad



Photo: Ashley Sanderson

Two weeks later, on Sunday, January 16, another snow fell. It was a wet snow that caused problems for our volunteer first responders.

"A lot of trees were blocking roads," said Joseph Lee, chief of the North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District. "When 911 gets a call about a tree blocking the road, we get the call. About 1:30 Sunday morning, we had multiple tree calls to go out on, and then after daylight, we had some traffic problems. We were working half the night Saturday night and most of the day Sunday."

Alabama Highway 117, the main artery through Mentone, was shut down for three hours. "An 18-wheeler was starting down the mountain and

started sliding, then jackknifed and blocked the whole road," said Joseph. "He was so close to the edge he was afraid he'd turn over, so he didn't want to try to move anymore. Safety first."

Later in the day, further east on Highway 117, a car travelling east slid, missing the turn to the bridge over Little River's west fork. The vehicle slid down the rocky embankment, coming to a rest just before the water's edge. Its two occupants were able to escape the car before it resumed sliding and became submerged in the frigid water. "That was the worst we've seen in a while," said Joseph. "The main thing was, they walked away. They were very fortunate."

Agencies responding to these incidents included the Mentone Fire Department (NLMFD), DeKalb County Emergency Management Agency (EMA), DeSoto Rescue Squad, DeKalb County Road Department, ALDOT, the DeKalb County Interdiction Unit, and multiple wreckers.



Photo: Jennifer Blalock Chambers



Photo: Spencer Morano

Ruby O'Rear (cont'd from page 18)**February 9, Tuesday, 1937***Rainy. Getting cooler.*

Started knitted skirt again only to find I had it twisted & had to take it off & start all over again. Think I have it straight this time. Cow got out & went to Gus Cole place. I brot her back in little while. Hazel's skirt started.

February 10, Wednesday, 1937*Temp 23. Clear all day. Went a little above freezing.*

Knitted some on Hazel's skirt. Third time I've started it. Cow got out. Went to Gus Cole place but when I went for her at 12:00 she was gone. Crocheted some on Miss Spence's collar. Called Hazel & told her to look for cow at Dan's. She was there & they brot her home.

February 11, Thursday, 1937*Temp 16. Fair. Went to 43.*

Finished crocheted collar for Miss Spence. Read some to Mother. Knitted a little. Made cake for supper. Tried new recipe for icing. Kept cow up all day except about an hour this P.M. Paul went to S'ville.

February 12, Friday, 1937*Temp 20. Fair, East wind.*

Didn't feel so well to-day. Hazel washed. Paul stayed at home. W. Paul & A.J. hiked all P.M. I cooked some peas for dinner. Stayed with Mother most of day. Turned cow out & she took Emerson's cows to Dan's. Paul had to chase her down. Hazel scrubbed kitchen. Paul went for Jack & J.B. & on to Mentone for shorts. Heard Rose Smith had baby (a girl).

February 13, Saturday, 1937*Temp above 40 cloudy.*

Paul, Jack & J.B. went to F.P. Hazel swept the house then ironed. My back hurt & I did nothing much but crochet.

Knit on Hazel's skirt. Sent corn to mill by Jodie. Started Mother's gown P.M.

February 14, Sunday, 1937*Valentine Day**Rained last nite but clear & colder this morn. Temp 34. Windy.*

Heard this morn that Mrs. Lilly Hardwick was to be buried to-day. Funeral at Cloudland Church at 1:30. I went to church at Wesleyan. Had new furnace installed. Heats church fine. Saw Margaret's & Charles' baby. Went home with Ernest Shigley. On to funeral with them but rode back with Gordon & Georgina. When I got home I found that Mother had had another catch in back. J.B. fell in creek.

February 15, Monday, 1937*Cloudy. Temp about 40 to 60.*

Mother didn't rest well last nite. Coughed a lot. But slept well this morn. Paul stayed at home. J.B. also stayed as his boots were not dry from falling in creek yesterday. Mother got up 3 times. A.J. & I got her up twice by ourselves. I slept a little to-day.

February 16, Thursday, 1937*Cloudy. Cold N.W. winds. Temp 32.**Hard wind blew last nite.*

Mother rested fine last nite. Didn't turn over a time. Paul stayed at home to help with Mother. I knitted a little. I basted some on Faye's brown dress. Thot Ethel was coming out to-nite but she wasn't well & couldn't come. Got pkg from Sears. Mother stayed up for 45 mins at a time twice to-day. Got Observer to-day. First since flood.

February 17, Wednesday, 1937*Temp 29 to 43. Pleasant*

Mother got up 3 times. I knitted some on Hazel's skirt. Eula came over for a while. I dug up mustard in garden & Paul put cow in there. Then after folks came home I cleaned off flower garden part of garden.

February 18, Thursday, 1937*Temp 38 to 46 or above. Weather changeable but cleared off.*

Hazel stayed home to wash. J.B. had something matter with his ear & stayed home. Mother stayed up over an hr. twice. I got dinner. Mr. Emerson came over to see Mother. I knit some on skirt. We have it about 6 in long now. Paul went for Jessie & went on to Mentone & got some things.

February 19, Friday, 1937*31 before day to 46*

Finished Mother's pink gown to-day. Killed & cooked a guinea. W. Paul came over. Pearl Jacoway brot some thing up to V.H. for Hazel. Mr. Emerson came by hunting his cows. Eula came by & enquired about Mother. Mother got up 3 times.

February 20, Saturday, 1937*Warm. Cloudy. Rained last nite.*

Mothger got up at 1:00 AM & took enema. Then up 3 or 4 times today. Put clean clothes on her. Ralph came over to see her. I baked 2 cakes. Crocheted a little. Hazel ironed.

February 21, Sunday, 1937*S.W. wind. Cleared off in PM.*

Was so stormy looking didn't go to S.S. Later when it cleared off some, Paul & J.B. went to Mentone. I fixed the icing for the cakes. John Lawrence came over to see Hazel & spent PM. We sang some for Mother & read some poems. Ethel called. She was at V.H. Paul & A.J. going to bring her out to-nite.

February 22, Monday, 1937*Washington's Birthday**Temp below freezing. Clear. Then went above 40.*

Mother got up 4 times. Her back doesn't seem to be any better. Ethel didn't come out last nite as she was going to F.P. to-day. Paul went for mail. I read a lot to Mother. Knit & crocheted a little & hemmed Hazel's blouse. Ethel Brown called & wanted Ethel & A.J. to take supper with them to-nite. Paul came for her about 6 & they were going to V.H. to get Ethel.

February 23, Tuesday, 1937*My birthday**Temp 36 last nite but above 50 to-day.**N.W. wind & clouding up.*

Ethel spent nite with Ethel & going to see Catherine's baby to-day. Ethel called this morning & said they had Dr. with Mason & she was going to

stay. Mother's back no better. Worse if anything. Only got up twice to-day. Paul went for Jessie. They went to Mentone & to Thelma O'Rear's.

February 24, Wednesday, 1937*Temp 38 to 46. Clear. Windy.*

Hazel stayed home to wash & go see her uncle Wallace who is sick. Paul not feeling well. Think Mother's back is better. Hazel went to Wallace's after washing but only stayed a short time. John Lawrence sent me a rabbit by her. Mother didn't get up as many times as she did at first.

February 25, Thursday, 1937*Temp 28 & only went to about 35. Clear & windy.*

I knitted some. Mother got up twice. W. Paul brot Ethel over & then they took her to S'ville. Billy E. & J.B. & I went as far as Menlo to a musical program at Presbyterian Church. As we went down early I went on to Mr. Bob Wyatt's on to church with them. Stopped at Mrs. Pless's a few min. after program. Went to Edna Perry's a few min. W. Paul & A.J. came up.

February 26, Friday, 1937*Temp 18 went to 38. Clear.*

Mother got up 4 times to-day. I didn't feel so well. Hazel missed the bus so went on to Wallaces. She's going to stay there a day or two. Paul went for mail. Jessie got supper. Had rabbit. Sure was good.

February 27, Saturday, 1937*Sleeted. Temp just above freezing.*

Another February sleet. This was grainy sleet. Snowed a little in P.M. Big flakes. Then rained some & froze. Jessie about sick. Mother about the same. Hazel still at Wallace's. Intended to come home to-day but he wasn't feeling so well so she didn't come. Started to unravel white wool purse. Think I'll knit a blouse out of it & hat.

February 28, Sunday, 1937*Temp 28. Cloudy. Ground white with sleet. Went a little above 32.*

Jessie better & think Mother is too. Wallace lots better. Hazel came home this morn. While starting dinner, Hazel started to well & being unable to cross foot log she turned up the creek to evidently cross Spring Branch Creek & got lost. When she didn't come back Paul started to look for her thinking she had fallen. Then A.J. started to look for them both. Mother got up twice.



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**Lookout
Mountain
Knitters**



The Lookout Mountain Knitters group meets on Tuesday afternoons at 3 p.m. at the MERF House in Mentone. You don't need to be a knitter to join, but if you enjoy any kind of needlecraft, feel free to bring your yarn and needles and enjoy time socializing while doing handwork.

February 2022 @ Moon Lake Library by Anne McLeod



OPEN HOURS
Tues., Wed., Thur. 12–4:30
Saturday 10–1
moonlakelibrary.org



Check It Out! by Lynn Vanderhoff

The Moon Lake Community Library has Little Library Learners programs for children ages 3–6 on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month. Please note our new time of 10:30 a.m. CST. Program topics range from science and nature, to history and fantasy, and more. We'll have stories and activities geared towards your child's age and skill level so they can comfortably participate. We look forward to learning with you!



Abe Loved Books—Do You? Saturday, February 12

Do you love books as much as Abraham Lincoln? Come find out what made our 16th president love books and help us celebrate his 213th birthday.

National Fairy Tale Day Thursday, February 26

Dress as your favorite character and tell us why you love them. Bring your favorite fantasy or fairy tale book to the program and we'll read them and others as we celebrate National Fairy Tale Day!



Come check it out at Little Library Learners!

Moon Lake Book Club

Ten years ago this month, *Wonder*, a children's novel about a boy born with a rare craniofacial syndrome was published and soon became a sensation in the world of children's literature. In celebration of the 10th birthday of *Wonder*, published on February 14, 2012, Moon Lake Library Book Club has chosen to read a children's book for the first time and to invite students who have read *Wonder* to join the discussion.



The book is written for children in grades 4–6, and many schools have used the book to encourage conversations about the importance of kindness and the need to end bullying behavior. The story opens as 10-year-old August Pullman, nicknamed Auggie, begins school for the first time. In previous years, he had been home-schooled due to many surgeries and hospitalizations. As he gets ready to go to school with other kids his age, Auggie is nervous about the reactions of his future classmates. Will they be able to get past his appearance and see him for who he really is?

Author R.J. Palacio has explained that the book grew out of an encounter she and her children had with a child with a condition similar to Auggie's. Her children were fearful and upset by the child's face, and Palacio quickly led them away. Reflecting on the incident later that day, she recognized how her own discomfort and fear had made a painful situation worse for the little girl in the store. That night she began writing *Wonder*.

Moon Lake Library has multiple copies of *Wonder*, so if you would like to read this award-winning novel, come by and borrow a copy. The book club meeting this month is February 19 at 10:30 a.m. and is open to both adults and children for a discussion of *Wonder*.

February 2 / 2–3 p.m.

Celebrate World Read Aloud Day with a Zoom chat from 2–3 p.m. Share your favorite read aloud or talk about your experiences reading books or poems aloud. We'll post the Zoom link that morning on our website and Facebook page.

February 5 / 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Our annual community seed exchange is here again. Bring seeds to the library and we'll swap! If the weather is good, the seed exchange will be held outdoors.

February 5 / 1–2 p.m.

The ukulele class, the Mentone Ukes, will meet for an hour. No uke, no problem. They have a couple of extras, if you're just getting started and want to try it before you buy an instrument.

February 10 / 1–2:30 p.m.

Chess club meets every other Thursday afternoon. All ages and ability levels are welcome.

February 12 / 10:30 a.m.

Little Library Learners with Ms. Lynn Vanderhoff. Children ages 3–7 are invited to join us Saturday morning for stories and activities about Abraham Lincoln and the importance of books in the life of one of our greatest presidents.

February 19 / 10:30 a.m.

Book Club meets for discussion of R.J. Palacio's *Wonder*, a middle grade novel about the importance of kindness. Book club usually reads adult titles, but this month we picked a children's book. We invite kids who have read *Wonder* to join us for the discussion and some birthday party favors to take home!

February 19 / 1–2 p.m.

The ukulele class, the Mentone Ukes, welcomes players of all ages and ability levels. See description above.

February 24 / 1 p.m.

Chess club meets at 1 p.m. every other Thursday. All ages and ability levels are welcome.

February 26 / 10:30 a.m.

Little Library Learners will celebrate National Fairy Tale Day! Children ages 3–7 are invited to join Ms. Lynn for stories and activities about favorite fairy tales.

Moon Lake Library is located at 5701 AL Hwy. 117, Mentone AL 35984.

Seed Swap - Feb 5



Moon Lake Community Library

Bloom where you're planted!
Bring some seeds to share at the
library's annual seed swap.

Saturday, February 5, 2022 10:30-12:30



MERF News

[Mentone Educational Resources Foundation]

by Sarah Wilcox



It's 2022, what's new with you?!

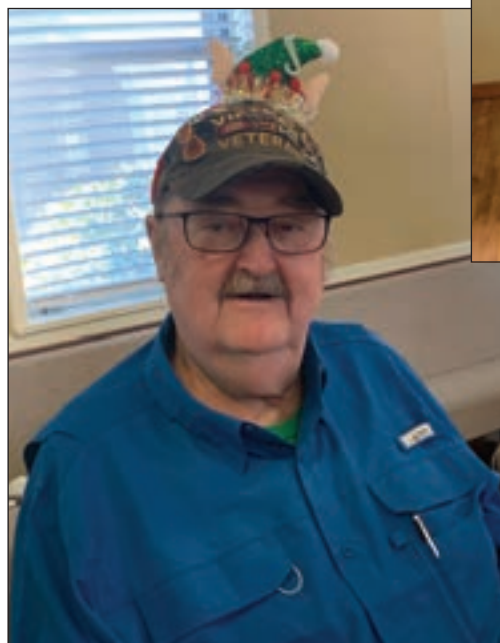
Before we leave last year, if you did not make it to BINGO and the Christmas party on December 8th, you missed joy and fun! As always, bingo was rowdy with Gertrude demanding the right number to be called and Sharon and Dean calling Bingo at least three times. I want them to buy me a lottery ticket. Talented local artist Craig Hendricks provided festive music (craighendricksmusic.com) and Skyline Camp for Girls provided a delicious meal and fab cake—yum. The kitchen elves worked hard, stuffing stockings with candy and treats while

welcoming all who joined in the fun! MERF is so grateful for all who have helped to provide a delicious, fun, and safe senior lunch season. As I am writing this in mid-January, I am not sure



Bingo Beauties

Santa Sally Johnson always brings delicious cakes.



Gene Watkins, looking cute at the Christmas party



We miss you, Pat Peterson.

when we will start lunches back, but I'll let you know by Facebook and phone calls. Thanks to The Hatter Café for allowing MERF to sell Christmas cards by our local artists at Valley Head Schools.

December was also sad for many of us who have enjoyed senior lunches for several years. One of our dedicated kitchen elves, Pat Peterson, passed away after a fall. Thank you, Pat, for setting many a table and serving plates with a smile, especially during the time that I was coming back and forth from Atlanta while taking care of my mom. The MERF family will miss your welcoming smile and eager helpfulness. I'm so glad that Pat was able to enjoy several senior lunches with us this fall.

The New Year has brought crazy weather, but it has also allowed MERF to award \$1,000 Sue McLaurin Henry Memorial Scholarships to Julie Smith at UAB and Charles Fletcher at JSU. Both are full-time students, have a GPA above the 2.8 requirement, and have demonstrated a focused effort on achieving their

academic goals. MERF has been awarding this scholarship since 2010, when the fund was established in memory of Sue Henry, a founding member of MERF with a keen interest in supporting local students with their academics and personal growth. MERF is grateful for all the memorial gifts that support this scholarship. MERF also has the Carter Holland memorial scholarship that will be awarded this spring to local students for the fall semester at a college or technical school. Information about this opportunity will be available in March.

January gave me the opportunity to attend the Valley Head faculty meeting and the Valley Head PTO meeting. Both meetings allowed me to talk about ways for MERF to partner with and dream with Valley Head on experiences that educate, inspire, and intrigue students. There are some volunteer opportunities for anyone interested. Ms. White, the 4th-grade teacher, is looking for volunteers to come speak to her class about Alabama history. Do you have the gift of making Alabama history exciting and engaging? Ms. Cooper, the 5th grade teacher, is looking for Earth Day volunteers for their program on Thursday, April 21. If interested in either of these opportunities, email me at merf.mentone@gmail.com and I will put you in touch with the teachers. Let's support our school and our children.

Sarah Wilcox is the executive director of MERF, the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation, a non-profit organization whose mission is "To enrich the learning and living of the community by identifying needs and coordinating resources." If you would like to support MERF's programs, tax-deductible donations can be mailed to P.O. Box 107, Mentone, AL 35984 or contribute online at merfhouse.org. Contact Sarah at merf.mentone@gmail.com or 256-635-8193.



The MERF House looks good in any season.



Lisa Schad, always playing music wherever she is!

HAPPY
Valentine's
DAY

Rhododendron Garden Club by Alyce Kenney



William Blake once said, "In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy." And enjoy we did. Eighteen members of the Rhododendron Garden Club met for a very celebratory meeting on December 14, 2021, just a few days before winter officially began. Long-time member Sharon Harris graciously hosted the gathering in her beautiful home, which sits amid idyllic views of nature in every direction.



Officers of Rhododendron Garden Club 2020–2022. L to R: Rhea Pirch, secretary; Mellanie Tuttle, vice president; Marsha Merrell, president; Martha Wood, Horticulture Queen, Dianne Kuehl, treasurer

Outgoing president Marsha Merrell shared some heartfelt words of appreciation for the many hours of effort and commitment the Garden Club members have offered during her two-year term. She thanked her officers and presented them with a Christmas ornament specifically selected to each lady's unique personality, which brought much laughter to the room.

Looking back over the past two years of events and success, it was proudly noted that, despite the pandemic, the Garden Club was able to complete projects and continue with events that boosted the community and people of Mentone. Garden spaces around the MERF House property were created and the Secret Garden was perfected. The Senior Luncheons at the MERF House served by the Garden Club were always a highlight and brought many smiles to participants and members alike. Last fall, the vision, enthusiasm, and spirit of Mellanie Tuttle and her band of ready helpers created a quirky gourd-headed Cinderella in a blue chiffon dress and sparkly shoes that earned a first-place ribbon in Colorfest's Scarecrow Holler contest.

The new officers for the 2022–2024 term were sworn in by Carol Argo. They are: Mellanie Tuttle, president; Rhea Pirch, vice president; Alyce Kenney,



Members of 2022 Rhododendron Garden Club—Christmas luncheon and installation of new officers, December 14, 2021

secretary; Dianne Kuehl, treasurer; Mary Ann Robbins, assistant treasurer.

After all the business was conducted, a delicious potluck lunch was shared by all. There was laughter and chatting amongst members as Sharon led everyone on a tour around her property, where plants from succulents to shrubs were identified.

The January 2022 meeting was cancelled due to the pandemic and the hope is that February's meeting will carry on as scheduled. Plans are in the making for a flower show at the Chuck Sennett Center for the Arts in Mentone. The Rhododendron Garden Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. in the MERF House. You can follow us on Facebook and send any questions to our email address: rhododendrongardenclub@gmail.com.

Alyce Kenney is the secretary for the Rhododendron Garden Club.



Newly installed Rhododendron Garden Club officers for 2022–24. L to R: Alyce Kenney, secretary; Rhea Pirch, vice president; Mellanie Tuttle, president; Mary Ann Robbins, assistant treasurer; Dianne Kuehl, treasurer

Love is like wildflowers.
It's often found in the most unlikely places.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



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2022: Returning the Mentone American Legion to Greatness Again by Barry Morton



Covid has had an effect on the Mentone American Legion (MAL) Post 215... for all intents and purposes, we closed down. We had only two meetings in 2021, with the last one being in August.

How did we start? In 1948, a group of WWII veterans in Mentone organized an American Legion post for their community. Pictured at right (L to R), the founders are Leonard Shigley, Max Cash, Luther King, Jr., Sammy Cash, and Leland Cox. Their first Commander was Sammy Cash.



Since November 12, 1984, we have also had an Auxiliary. The Auxiliary are the spouses of members and they support the Post. The group was started by Cathrine Bailey, Eunice Baxter, Cordelia Baff, Marjorie Berry, Clara Cash, Annie Climer, Gertrude Cox, Kathryn Jones, Alta King, Nancy Lusk, Bennie Pearce, and Reitha Sheffield. How many of them did you know?

Today, American Legion Post 215 continues to be an active community service organization in Mentone. The MAL honored its founders this past Veterans Day by dedicating a new sign to them.

In attendance, pictured below (L to R) are Alan Lawson, Building Improvement project manager; Jerry Wise; Leland Cox, new member and son of one of our

At our sign dedication ceremony we find, pictured below (from L to R), Marcella Shigley Campbell, Leland Cox, and Marsha Merrell. All three are related to each other and are relatives of the Post founders. Marsha found the hat of her father and gave it to her brother Leland to wear. What a neat community we have here in Mentone!



The first and only fundraiser for the year we had was a cash raffle. On Veterans Day, we awarded a winner \$1,000. We had sold 100 tickets...thanks to all of you who bought tickets.

By the Numbers

MAL has 44 members of the 17,282 in the state of Alabama. There are 167 posts organized in 17 districts. In Alabama, the MAL's district is the highest-rated out of 17 districts. The MAL is third out of eight posts in the district. I guess you could say we've done pretty well in meeting our goal, in spite of Covid.

Take a tour of the inside...



I can imagine a great fire here... can you?



Here is where the members meet; the commander sits at the head.



Looking from the fireplace to the fully functional kitchen



founders; Ron Merrell, new member; Barry Morton, adjutant; John O'Rear, former commander; Tammy Kirby, chairperson of the Building Improvement committee; Carter Morris, new member; Jessie Crabtree, former commander; Terry Hutcheson, commander; and Larry Brewer, vice commander.

Members are military veterans who have served at least one day active duty. Alabama National Guard and Air Guard veterans are eligible for membership.

In January, we kicked off our 2022 rebuilding campaign which includes having a membership drive, additional fund raising, and restarting our Auxiliary. We meet the third Tuesday every month from 6:15-7:30 p.m., with a 15-minute fellowship pre-meeting.

The Future

We want to return to the greatness that our founders had envisioned. Doing so includes:

- Our building and grounds improvements including a complete facelift of the building.
- Restarting an Auxiliary
- Hosting more charitable events so we can not only maintain but provide funding opportunities for our Mentone community.

Our address is 195 Cove Road in Mentone. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 114, Mentone, AL 35984. Email, call, or text our adjutant Barry Morton at barrymorton74@gmail.com or 334-202-8936. For more information, please visit our Mentone American Legion Facebook group.

Barry Morton serves as the adjutant for the Mentone American Legion (MAL) Post 215.

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Fischer X-Roads Store
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Paradise Garden

In Memoriam



ARNOLD D. CLINTON

March 30, 1936 – November 27, 2021

Arnold D. Clinton, age 85, of Valley Head, passed away on Saturday, November 27, 2021 at his residence.

Mr. Clinton is survived by his daughters, Rita Stutts (Bradley) and Cindy Scagnegatti (Jorge); son, Allen Thompson (Jennifer); grandchildren, Jessica Hartline, Kayla Stutts, Alex Stutts, Mackenzie Nichols, Mya Nichols, Zanna Eaton, and Olivia Thompson; and great-grandchildren, Trinity Hartline, Tristan Hartline, and Emma Eaton. He was

preceded in death by his wife, Brenda Joyce Clinton.



MR. KENNETH LEE BUSBY SR.

October 18, 1955 – December 3, 2021

Kenneth Lee Busby Sr., age 66, of Mentone, passed away on December 3, 2021.

He is survived by his wife, Carol Newsome Busby; children, Kenny Busby (Ginger) and their children Kenneth Aiden, Autumn, Renee, Clara, Sara, & Anna; Alisha Lawton (John) and their children Kandis, John Tyler, & Jayken; Chris Busby (Alisha) and their children Hunter & Braden; sister, Barbara Rape (David); brother, James Busby (Pam); beloved pet and companion, Rosie; and a host of beloved nieces, nephews, aunts and uncles.

Mr. Busby was preceded in death by his parents, James Melmith "Jim" Busby and Estelle Helms Busby; sister, Patricia Ann Busby; and daughter, Kela Nesha Busby.



LINDA SUE DANIELL BLYTHE

May 22, 1951 – December 4, 2021

Linda Sue Daniell Blythe, age 70, of Mentone, passed away Saturday, December 4, 2021 at her home. She was born May 22, 1951 to the late Perry R. Daniell and Elizabeth Collins Daniell. She is survived by her husband, Bob Blythe; children, Brandon Adams (Kathy) and Tia Howard (Justin); stepchildren, Charlene Matthews (Kim) and Cheron Blythe; brother, James

Pendleton; sister, Mary Armstrong (Allen); grandchildren, Tyler Lacey (Autumn), Blake Lacey, Briley Adams, Collin Lacey, Spencer Adams, Haylee Matthews, Makayla Howard, Natalie Adams, Trey Adams, Kimberlee Matthews, and Braelyn Howard; and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and sister, Sally.

HELEN JONES (PAYNE) MOSHER

July 12, 1944 – December 8, 2021

Helen Payne Jones Mosher, age 77, of Mentone, passed away Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at a Chattanooga hospital.

Mrs. Mosher was born July 12, 1944 in Chanute, KS to the late Estel and Bessie Jane Payne. She was a retired Bus Driver for the Dade County Board of Education and was a member of Cove Road Baptist Church.

Along with her parents, she is preceded in death by two infant sons, and a brother, Lyle Payne.

Survivors include her husband, Michael Mosher; children, William Jones, Chay Mosher (Edson), Astrid Hemphill (Harrison), Micky Mosher (Triny), AJ Mosher (Heather), and Billy Mosher (Tammy); 12 grandchildren, one expected grandchild, and six great-grandchildren.

MR. WILLIAM DAVID JONES

May 28, 1968 – December 13, 2021

William David Jones, age 53 of Menlo, GA, passed away Monday, December 13, 2021 at Advent Health Redmond.

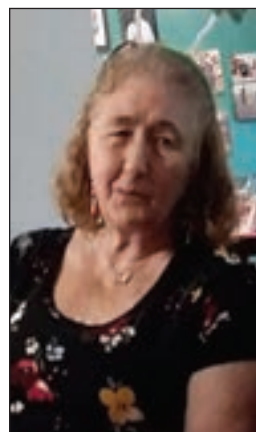
Mr. Jones was born May 28, 1968 in Pampa, TX to the late Jim and Helen Payne Jones. He enjoyed building and racing cars.

Along with his parents, he is preceded in death by his brothers, Jimmy Jones and James Jones.

Survivors include daughters, Leona Jones and Samantha Jones; wife, Charmin Jones; step-son, Cody Burke; step-father Michael Mosher; step-siblings, Micky Mosher, AJ Mosher, William Mosher, Chay Mosher, and Abby Hemphill; and two

grandchildren.

A memorial service to celebrate the life of Mr. Jones will be held at 2:00 PM December 29, 2021 at Cove Road Baptist Church.



PATRICIA DIANE PETERSON

July 15, 1940 – December 13, 2021

Patricia Diane Peterson, age 81, of Mentone, passed away on Monday, December 13, 2021 at Highlands Medical Center in Scottsboro, Alabama.

Pat was a loving mom and grandma. She always had a smile and was willing to help others any way she could. She worked as a volunteer at the Moon Lake Library for many years. She also was a kitchen helper at the M.E.R.F. house in Mentone. Pat belonged to the knitters club that met at the library.

She lived in Alabama for many years. She was formerly from Englewood, FL, and Rose City, MI.

She is survived by her daughters, Julie Mayhew (Joe), Mentone, and Robin Carroll (Chris), Powell, AL; grandchildren, Dan Carroll (Katey), New Jersey; Baley Carroll (Talya), New Jersey; Jonathan Mayhew (Windy), Sulphur Springs; Jessica Clardy (Randy), Fort Payne, AL, and Jamie Mayhew, Mentone; great-grandchildren, Dan Carroll, Hannah Carroll, Violet Carroll, Destiny Clardy, Breanna Clardy, Connor Clardy, Ava Clardy, and Kamden Mayhew; and cousins, Alyn and Garvine.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Raymond and Blanche Grandjean; and son, Robert Hadley.



NORMA JEAN PANGLE

May 10, 1938 – December 14, 2021

Norma Jean Pangle, age 83, of Valley Head, passed away on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at DeKalb Regional Medical Center.

She is survived by her sons, Terry Pangle (Dana) and Steve Newport; daughters, Teresa Smith (Con), Kathy Stewart (Jack), & Cara Devries; 15 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, and one great great-grandchild; brothers, Monkford Gass and Gary Gass (Kim) and sisters, Donna Jenkins and Ann Hester (Larry). She was preceded in death by her husband, Roy Pangle; parents:

James L. Gass and Pauline Clark Gass; and brothers, Bobby Gass, Tonny Gass, and Ronald Gass.



CLYDIA ANN DOSS

November 16, 1942 – December 24, 2021

Clydia Ann Doss, age 79, of Valley Head, passed away on Friday, December 24, 2021 at DeKalb Regional Medical Center.

She is survived by her husband: Randall Doss, Sr.; children: Michael Doss Sr., Randie Tucker, and Randall Doss Jr.; grandchildren, Michael Doss, Jr., Brandy Ann Doss, Shelby Johnson, Shane Tucker, Tonie Leverett, Glenn Leverett, and Cory Tucker; several great-grandchildren; sisters, Marvveta Owens, Virginia Jackson, Juanita Prince, and Barbara Gamble; and several nieces and nephews.

Mrs. Doss was preceded in death by her parents and several brothers and sisters.

TYRONE ARTHUR BROWN

June 8, 1948 – December 29, 2021

Tyrone Arthur Brown, age 73, of Mentone, passed away Wednesday, December 29, 2021 at his home. He was born in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee on June 8, 1948 to the late Arthur and Willadee Cox Brown. Mr. Brown was a veteran of the United States Air Force and the United States Army serving in the Vietnam War. He was an avid Alabama fan.....Roll Tide!

He is survived by his wife Patsy Jones Brown; step-son Stan Jones (Kim); granddaughters Olivia Jones and Shelby Jones; brother Doug Brown; sisters Phyllis Cox (Jim) and Judy Walton (Charles); and extended family Beverly Watts, Scott Shankles, Jay Shankles, and Seth Shankles.



JIMMIE LEE WORTHY
October 10, 1948 –
January 1, 2022

Jimmie Lee Worthey, age 73, of Mentone, passed away on Saturday, January 1, 2022 at his residence. He was born in DeKalb Co., Alabama on October 10, 1948 to Robert Worthey and Lillian McCorkle Worthey. Jimmie served in the United States

Army and worked as a plumber and electrician.

He is survived by his wife, Gaynell Smith Worthey; son, Jimmie Lee Worthey, Jr.; daughters, Stacie Worthey Painter (Wink) and Melissa Worthey Simpson (Phillip); grandchildren, Colton Miller, Annabelle Grider, and Hudson Lee Grider; sister, Joyce Worthey Tate (Tom). He was preceded in death by his daughter, Stephanie Worthey.

MARY JANE GRAY

February 16, 1930 – January 9, 2022

Mary Jane Gray, 91, of Mentone, passed away January 9, 2022 at Redmond Regional Medical Center in Rome. Mrs. Gray was born February 16, 1930 to the late Samuel Henry and Maggie Ella Clark Hale. She was a homemaker and raised three sons. A member of Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, she loved attending worship services and listening to gospel music.

Mrs. Gray is survived by her sons; Larry Gray (Kathy), Gary Gray (Pat), and Steve Gray (Pam); brother, Gene Hale; sisters, Linda Hale and Wanda Buttram; five grandchildren; and 16 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Junior Gray; grandson, Larry Paul Gray; four brothers; and two sisters.

JEFFREY WAYNE EDMONDSON

May 26, 1967 – January 21, 2022

Jeffrey Wayne Edmondson, 54, of Valley Head, passed away Friday, January 21, 2022. He was a 1985 graduate of Plainview High School and owned Edmondson Construction for over 18 years.

He is survived by his son Connor Edmondson; sisters Sandy Goodwin (Jamey) and Becky Fugatt (Vann); step-father Johnny Conkle; and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his father Terry Edmondson; mother Gloria Conkle; stepmother Jimmy Edmondson; and sister Christal Edmondson Hill.



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