

FREE

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THE GROUNDHOG

“Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain”

September 2022

Moon Lake School Transforms into Moon Lake Village by Kelly Leavitt

When the former Moon Lake School was closed by the DeKalb County Board of Education in May 2021, the Town of Mentone was given the deed to the property. The Town is committed to honoring the legacy and memory of the 111-year-old school and also make it possible for the campus to continue to thrive, with the community in mind. The council’s first order of business was determining how to bear the significant expense of maintaining the property and its facilities.

This summer, Paul Nail was hired to serve as executive director. Paul has been able to bring a lifetime of experience to the project. He served as executive director of Fort Payne Water Works for more than 25 years, and the organizational skills honed there are being well used. He has successfully found tenants for each of the classrooms, the gymnasium, and the lunchroom.

The property has been named “Moon Lake Village,” to honor both the school’s legacy and the community.

“I have a genuine love for this campus, I really do,” Paul said. “I want to see it do well. I want to see it stay vibrant for the community. That’s my goal, and I know that’s the Town’s goal.”

“I studied the survey the community



took last spring and took everyone’s ideas into consideration,” he continued. “Mentone is full of artists and crafts people who don’t have any space available to them, so we’re leasing the rooms out to craftsmen, which will generate funds monthly, and the Town will benefit from their sales through sales tax. The lunchroom will become a restaurant, and once it’s open, it will really draw folks here.”

The community room will become a living museum featuring the history of Moon Lake School and Mentone. “We don’t have anything like that

in Mentone, that honors Mentone’s history,” said Paul. “We can’t lose our history.”

The chain link fence on the sides of the playground in front of the school has been removed, opening up the space and making it more visually appealing. The playground is open to the public, but currently needs some repairs on the wooden part around the old oak tree. Older playground equipment near the gym has been removed because it had become unsafe.

“I don’t know anybody who’s working harder than Paul is right now,” said Mayor Rob Hammond.

“A lot of folks have been helping,” Paul said. “There’s no ‘I’ in ‘team.’ We’re all a team.” When asked how volunteers can help, Paul said that pressure washing, carpentry, painting, landscaping are currently the main priorities. Paul can be reached at 256-996-0351 if you’d like to volunteer.

Announcing the Bill Berry Community Room

Thanks to generous donations by two anonymous families, the newly formed community room at Moon Lake Village will forever be known as the “Bill Berry Community Room.” This room will be available to the public for a variety of purposes—classes, reunions, meetings, parties, and more.

When Moon Lake School was rebuilt in 1928 after a devastating fire, it was comprised of two rooms. As additional

classrooms were added, the wall between the rooms was removed to make a larger room where the student body could gather for school-wide gatherings and events such as the always-popular Harvest Festival. The room was eventually divided again to create an additional classroom. This summer, the wall came down once more, creating a space that will seat many people. The existing wood panelling has been removed, revealing the original wooden bead board installed almost 100 years ago. Across from a wall of tall windows, a Mentone history wall is being installed, with photographs and other documentation reflecting past days of Mentone. A new floor will be laid, and executive director Paul Nail has secured a donation of 50 padded chairs that were originally in Huntsville’s Von Braun Civic Center.

Classrooms are Being Transformed

The classrooms are being used as artist shops and studios, and two are being used as offices. Improvements such as fresh paint are bringing new life to spaces that still carry the memories of countless children over the years.

The following businesses are currently leasing space:

- Andiamo Gallery
- Bee Spring Studio
- Faith and a Mustard Seed
- The Heart Shack
- Mentone Area Preservation Association / The Groundhog
- Natural Light Photography
- Otherworld Gifts
- Terrence Hill Basketball
- TBT Design
- Trés Taylor Works on Tarpaper
- Zack of All Trades

Announcing the Shigley Amphitheater

Thanks to a generous donation by an anonymous descendant of Frank and Melissa Shigley, the grassy amphitheater adjacent to the MERF House and Moon Lake Village has been named “The Shigley Amphitheater.” For 48 years, from 1915 until 1963, the Shigleys owned the home that

(continued on page 7)

Colorfest Planning Underway

The Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) is excited to once again host Colorfest, Mentone’s oldest and largest event. The annual fall fundraising festival will be held on October 15 and 16 at Moon Lake Village.

Arts and crafts vendor booths will be set up in the field in front of the gym and in the parking lot on East River Road. Food trucks and booths will be in the front and rear of the property, and music will be performed on the new amphitheater stage.

Local residents and vacationers can enjoy family-friendly fun while browsing the vendors’ handmade arts and crafts. Children’s activities, including face painting and art, will be held in the pavilion by the playground (where they may play with parental supervision).

On Sunday afternoon, pets on a leash are invited to parade along the walkways and enjoy the socialization. They always bring smiles to people’s faces. Costumes are welcome!

The traditional scarecrow contest will be held, when community members create a unique scarecrows, with the top three winners earning cash prizes.

Businesses in Mentone are encouraged to take part in the “Beauti-



fall Bizzness” contest and decorate the exterior of their shops and restaurants in a festive fall manner. Winners will receive credit for advertising in The Groundhog.

Details on activities and contests can be found at mentonecolorfest.com and on our Facebook page (@mentonefestivals).

ALL FESTIVAL PARKING will be in the field on AL Highway 117 to the east of the MERF walking trail. Thanks to the Mentone Arts Center for the use of their property. This will be the first time that all cars will park in the field, and we have spent much time working out logistics to ensure safe and efficient parking. A \$5-per-car donation is suggested but not required. Look in the October *Groundhog* for full parking details.

(continued on page 7)



Mike and Michael Stone helped remove the wood panelling from the walls in the community room, revealing the school’s original bead board.



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 40 years.

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Randy Grider, Rob Hammond,
Alyce Kenney, Anne McLeod,
L.C. Moon, Barry Morton,
Angie Shugart, Susan Seago

*Birthday calendar maintained by
Kayla Worthey*

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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 woodcut courtesy of
Meg Justice/Bee Spring Studio*

Mentone Matters

by Mayor Rob Hammond

Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative CEO and Mentone native Fred Johnson called this week with exciting news. FTC received a grant to provide broadband to rural areas and Mentone is included. More details will be forthcoming.

Under the leadership of Moon Lake Village executive director Paul Nail, much progress has been made. Paul has raised money to build a stage at the Shigley Amphitheater and construction is well under way. Money has been donated to remodel two adjoining classrooms. The new room will be “The Bill Berry Community Room” and will be available for community events. Tenants have begun to move in and all have improved the spaces they are renting. Some are now open.

A few citizens have voiced concern over the removal of the playground equipment in front of the gym. Much of it was unsafe and could not be repaired.



We will concentrate on rehabbing the playground in front of the school. There is a lot of rotten wood on the structure around the big oak tree that has to be replaced.

In exchange for a donation, naming opportunities remain for the playground, gazebo, butterfly garden, and gym. Thanks to all who have donated time and money so far. If you wish to donate or volunteer, please contact Paul through the Moon Lake Village Facebook page. We hope to have a more complete listing of donors/volunteers in a future edition of *The Groundhog*.

From the Editor

by Kelly Leavitt



Wow, there’s a lot going on in Mentone! MAPA, Little River Arts Council, Mentone Educational Resources Foundation, Mentone Arts Center, Moon Lake Library, and Little River Waterkeeper have a variety of events lined up this month for your education and enjoyment.

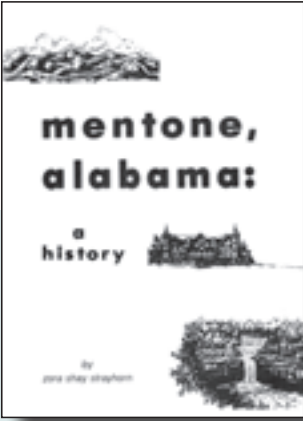
The Alabama Historical Association is holding its fall pilgrimage in Mentone this month. I’ve been invited to speak to the audience about Colonel Milford Howard. Hannah Leeper will talk about our area’s black bears, and Marcus Thomas will discuss the legend of Granny Dollar. You can read about the pilgrimage on page 8.

It’s been interesting laying out this issue, because I’ve never worked with a “broadsheet” before. I have tried to keep the flavor of the previous format and hope

you find it pleasing. Once I actually see it in print, I may see changes I’ll want to make! I think we’ll all miss the “tabloid” format, but since that’s no longer an option, I hope that, before too long, we’ll all feel accustomed to this larger format.

Change seems to be prevalent these days, in Mentone and beyond. When I read the headlines of the world, I am always grateful to be living in such a friendly community, surrounded by such beauty. Nature is a great balancer, and healer, and we are fortunate indeed.

MAPA hosted a Sunset Social in late August and it was lovely to meet long-time and new area residents. I would love to meet you at our next social on September 22. See page 7 to learn about this and other MAPA events. Be well, everyone. —Kelly



Learn about the History of Mentone

Zora Strayhorn’s book, *Mentone, Alabama: A History*, is for sale in the MAPA office, at Mentone Market and at DeSoto State Park. \$15; proceeds benefit MAPA. Shipping is available for \$3. Email mapamentone@gmail.com.



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Colorfest (cont. from page 1)

Of course, in order for the festival to be the most fun for everyone, we need volunteers who can help before, during, or after the weekend of October 15–16. A meeting will be held for anyone who might be interested in volunteering on Monday, September 12, at 5:30 p.m. in MAPA’s new office at Moon Lake Village. We’ll explain the various needs so you can see how you can help.

Many thanks to the volunteers who have already offered their time. We would love to have dozens more! This is a great way to meet new friends and have some fun helping ensure the festival’s success. If you can’t make the meeting, you can fill out an interest form at mapamentone.com/ colorfest2022-volunteers. An appreciation party for all volunteers is slated for October 22.

Thanks to Mentone artist Lydia Randolph for painting a stunning fall scene of DeSoto Falls for this year’s official festival poster. Color 11” x 17” posters will be available at the festival and in advance in the MAPA office. The cost is \$10.

For many years, a Colorfest tradition was a quilt raffle. This year, we’re adding a modern twist. Thanks to Nathan Winkler of Steel Quilts, the raffle prize is a 20” x 20” framed steel quilt built from recycled barn material on a weather-resistant board. Tickets are \$2 or 3/\$5.

Sponsors are essential to every festival, as they help offset expenses so MAPA can maximize the event’s proceeds, which are given back to the community with financial grants to local non-profit and service organizations. If you or your business would like to learn about the various levels of sponsorship and how they can benefit you, please visit mapamentone.com/sponsors.

On behalf of festival organizers Chris Davenport, Beverly Haynes, Dana Lockhart, the MAPA board, and myself, we’re all looking forward to another great festival! We hope you’ll join us.

Colorfest 2022



October 15 & 16, 2022 | Moon Lake Village, Mentone, AL
**Handmade Arts & Crafts Festival
Live Music | Food
mentonecolorfest.com**
Presented by the Mentone Area Preservation Association • Art courtesy of Lydia Anne Randolph | lydiarandolphart.com



A Look Back...
The Groundhog | September, 1993 | Page 1



Mentone’s Foxhunter Extraordinaire

by Evelyn Graves

This year, in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA), *The Groundhog* is reprinting a selection of articles from years past. (Archived issues are available to read at mapamentone.com/groundhog-past-issues.) This month’s selection is particularly poignant because John Baty

passed away on July 29. When Evelyn Graves wrote this article in 1993, she predicted that John’s book on fox hunting would be “just the beginning.” She was right. He went on to write and self-publish 11 more books which capture the old days on the mountain. They are all available at Moon Lake Library. We hope you enjoy this look back in time.

So many times I have remarked as I reminisced my childhood years that I wish “today’s children” could enjoy some of the things that I did as a child, but they are just not done any more. These are the simple things of life that have so much bearing on my life as an adult.

John Baty has experienced my same feelings as he looks back over the years at the meaningful things in his life, and he has done something about preserving and making available to future generations the sport of foxhunting. He has written a 108-page paperback book entitled, *Foxhunting in DeKalb County*.

John is no stranger to the Mentone area. He attended school at Moon Lake and Valley Head. His mathematics teacher in high school made the remark that there were many mathematical problems that he, as a teacher, was unable to solve, but there was no problem too complicated for John Baty. He stated that John had the most brilliant mathematical mind of any person he had ever encountered. After John finished college, he taught mathematics in the county schools in grades 7 through 12. He was forced to retire in 1974 because of a heart condition. John did not give up on life, but has enjoyed many things, including reading and expanding his mind, as is evidenced in his new book.

John attributes so much to his wife, Mary Sue, who has been his constant companion, participating in the things that John enjoys, including foxhunting. She helped in the research and correlation of the book, and the dedication page reads, “To my wife Susie: Mate, Best Friend, Hunting Companion.” John and



JOHN BATY

Mary Sue hunted together for 25 years before John became disabled. Now, that their favorite hunting dog, Knothead, has been replaced by a little Jack Russell terrier, the Batys want to preserve all they know about foxhunting in their home county. They say it is a dying sport, and that saddens them.

“Hunting with hounds is man’s oldest sport,” said Baty in an interview. “Since the dawn of civilization, the hound has entertained men of all social classes, and I am saddened by the plight of today’s hounds.

“A few people I know foxhunt now, but it’s different. With roads and buildings moving in, it makes it impossible to run outside of the enclosures that are stocked.”

Baty’s book covers everything from the historical aspect of hounds to local memories of “how it was in those days when foxhunting was more common than football, and the hound was king.”

Baty said a foxhunt could last all night long. “This is a race that includes fording creeks, smashing through brush, climbing fences. All the while, he must maintain control of the line of scent. No other mammal is as game as a foxhound.”

How does the foxhunt end? “A gray fox will climb a tree if hard pressed,” Baty said. “A red fox goes in a hole in the ground. Or the dogs may lose the line of scent and never recover it.”

Only 150 copies of Foxhunting are available, at \$5.00 each. The books are on sale at the Mentone Superette, Fort Payne Feed and Garden Supply, Killian’s Veterinary Office, and Morgan Drugs in Valley Head.

I asked John if he planned to write more books on different subjects that might be passed along to future generations, and he replied that he had no plans at this time, but that he “might get something else together.” After having read Foxhunting, I feel that this is just the beginning for John.

Message from MAPA by L.C. Moon

The magic of Mentone continues to unfold! I hope to share with you what the Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) is actively doing to be a part of and support the graceful growth happening within the community.

Historically, one of the greatest contributions from MAPA to the community is *The Groundhog* publication. It gives the community a voice, connects people, highlights what’s happening, helps document our present, and reminds us of our rich history. Kelly Leavitt (editor) has been the perfect person in recent years to navigate how to continue providing a charming hometown paper with all the aesthetic finesse of a big city publication.

Kelly has needed an office space for *The Groundhog* for some time. The board of MAPA voted to rent an office space at Moon Lake Village for this purpose. The office will serve as a multifunctional space for MAPA/Groundhog and is ideal for Kelly’s new role as executive director of MAPA.

As the *Groundhog* editor, Kelly hears the opinions and needs of the community and the other nonprofits and is invested in the Mentone area community. Kelly has helped educate the board and allowed them to be sensitive to things we would otherwise

not have been privy to. Kelly also has the skill and knowledge to help us in many diverse ways, from tech to community growth and education. Her cup runneth over with fresh new ideas to enhance and support the character of our community while preserving its history and heritage. Read on in this issue to get more details about the exciting things actively happening, i.e., sunset socials, oral history nights each month, and a writers’ workshop. I am so grateful for how Kelly is helping *The Groundhog* and MAPA grow in our role and mission.

The magic of Mentone is in the love people have for it. I am amazed by the ability of this town to recover and transform in the face of loss. The tragic loss of Moon Lake School has provided a chrysalis for a new dream and blessing to spread its wings! Like so many, I was devastated when I heard Moon Lake School was closing. The transformation of the school into a real true community center, Moon Lake Village, is exciting nonetheless. Our precious building is saved and the structure is being improved and restored daily! What the MAPA board supports is that Moon



Lake Village is allowing the legacy of the historic school house to continue contributing richness to the community and its character. It serves as a place for people to share their talents, skills, wisdom, events, and so much more.

Moon Lake Village will now be home to MAPA’s festivals. This was a hard decision for many of us on the board. I was vehemently opposed to move them from the brow. Disappointing as it may be, the town officials convinced the board that we could not continue to have the festivals at Brow Park because the traffic issues could be life-threateningly dangerous. Gene McKee, Mentone’s police chief, let us know the state department of transportation was very alarmed during the last few festivals. We tried all the tricks in the book but it was still not enough for our growing popularity as a tourist destination.

Kelly is coordinating with a team of people (Chris Davenport, Beverly Haynes, and Dana Lockhart) for the transition of the festival to move from Brow Park to Moon Lake Village. This is not an easy task and any help from the community is welcome. So far,

the Moon Lake Village property is turning out to be a grand location to hurdle the challenges of festival parking and popularity, with the help and cooperation of Mentone Arts Center, Moon Lake Baptist Church, Mentone Educational Resources Foundation, Mentone Community Church, and the Town of Mentone. The nostalgia of the brow festivals will be remembered in all our hearts. My prayer is that we embrace inevitable changes and gracefully manage how we grow.

I will leave y’all with this fun quip my dear friend John Williamson says to me about Mentone. “The world is full of interesting people... And Mentone has more than its fair share.” Blessings to all you interesting folks born and raised in Mentone, as well as to those of us called to Mentone as our home or chosen getaway.

My best to you all,
Moon
Parliamentarian/Past President

P.S. How can you contribute? MAPA still has openings for business sponsors for the festival as well as volunteers to help make it magical. The festivals are our biggest events and fundraisers to continue to support the community together. You can find information in this issue of the Groundhog or email us at groundhognews@yahoo.com.

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PRIVATE, WOODED SETTING, only a mile from downtown, 3BR/2BA cabin offers the perfect space & place for full-time, part-time or rental income. Interior features an open kitchen with granite counters; new gas range; b'fast bar. Stone, WB Fplce in LR. Plus a 14x28 detached, screened cabin, with fireplace & hot tub! Firepit area for evenings under the stars. One owner. \$389,900 (1814843)



OPPORTUNITY TO CLAIM YOUR OWN SPECIAL PLACE ON LOOKOUT MTN in this Charming little Bungalow in the heart of Historic Old Cloudland. 2BR/2BA; one-level; with warm, heart pine floors in much of the home; stone fireplace (gas logs); original bead board walls & ceilings in BRs; all wood interior; bright, efficient kitchen; front & back sunporches; back deck. 2-car carport w/10x20 storage room attached. Cute little red shed at the edge of the small woodland that is a part of the property. Furnishings & decor stay; just bring the groceries & start enjoying your mountain retreat. Easy access (10 min) to Mentone; less than 10 to Menlo. Co-brokered w/GA-licensed Lookout Mtn Preferred Realty. \$235,000 (1807522)



4.74 BEAUTIFUL, UNRESTRICTED ACRES w/septic tank; underground power; public water; 16x24 metal building! A place where you can choose to build a new home, bring in a manufactured home, or bring your camper when the urge strikes to visit the mountains of NE Alabama. Convenient to I-59, so getting here is easy from Chattanooga, Birmingham, or wherever! Perfect spot for a mini-farm; make a garden spot; raise some animals. \$54,900 (1812118)



TALL HARDWOODS & PEACEFUL BROW SUNSETS. Build your special mountain dream home on one of these beautiful lots along the DeSoto Parkway. Property lines extend over the brow so that trees may be removed for a clear view; good setback from the road for quiet privacy. Three lots available @ \$175,000 each. (1811069)

.....
LOTS and LAND

2 UNRESTRICTED ACRES IN MENTONE, on East River Road, where property seldom comes up for sale. Beautifully-wooded land is level, zoned Rural Farm, paved road frontage, power and water available at the road. High-speed internet available. \$55,000. (1795866)

GREAT PRICE, GORGEOUS VIEWS & 2.2 ACRES, on the brow with sunrise & sunset views possible. All the site prep has been done for you: cleared & leveled, for a personal getaway cabin or residence; site cleared for detached workshop, too! There is even a septic tank already in place! The best price for a brow-front property in the Mentone area. \$75,000 (1804042)

1.47 ACRES, ON LIBBY LANE. Inside Mentone Town Limits, off E River Road. Mostly hardwood, just enough clearing to get out the undergrowth & create a circle drive, as well as a proposed building area. Quiet dead-end paved road, with river-front homes across the road from this property. Public water, power and septic tank in place (installed July 2021). \$64,900 (1795866)

LAKEFRONT LOT offers 150' waterfront! There's 3+ acres of beautiful woods, w/approx 1.5 acres on one side of the paved road on which to build your river-front home, approx 1.5 acres on the other side of the road so that you can be sure it will stay natural & wooded! This area of the lake has deep water & would be perfect for a dock. Enjoy your time on the mountain fishing, swimming, paddling or motoring on Mentone's Little River gem, Lake Lahusage. \$200,000 (1810186)

BEAUTIFUL HOMESITE IN A PEACEFUL VALLEY! Situated in a valley farm setting that has a large portion of the farmland in a permanent conservancy. This tract is not under the conservancy and is a home site that has beautiful sunset views across the valley. \$72,000 (1809242)

THIS BEAUTIFUL BIT OF EARTH HAS IT ALL! Start with the great view, then look at the rest of the package - septic installed; underground power; public water; 16x24 metal building - all on 4.74 acres! Here's a place where you can choose to build a new home, bring in a manufactured home, or bring your camper to stay when the urge strikes to visit the mountains of Northeast Alabama. Convenient to I-59, so getting here is easy from Chattanooga, Birmingham, or wherever! Perfect spot for a mini-farm; make a garden spot; raise some animals. No restrictions. (There is a camper on the property right now that does not stay.) Priced very well at \$54,900 (1812118)

52 ACRES, WITH LAND ON BOTH SIDES OF PAVED COUNTY 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 other side of road. Level land. Current use is approx. 22 ac in orchard grass & fescue hay, 30 ac in 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)



NESTLED IN THE BOULDERS & TREES, just a block from Mentone's Brow Park, this spacious cedar-sided cabin home offers privacy & seasonal views of sunsets from the full front porch. There's even a separate apartment to accommodate guests who need their privacy (rental income!) Totaling 2800+ sq ft, add'l BR or studio. Enhanced by beautiful boulder outcroppings & more of land; paved circle drive. Wood-burning fireplace in vaulted living area; pine floors throughout; office/study; breakfast nook; dining room; partially-finished basement area for storage; att 2-car garage; back-deck & fenced back yard with intriguing boulder sentinels all around. \$425,000. (1812247)



CUTE LITTLE COTTAGE, TUCKED IN THE WOODS, offers big possibilities for full-time, part-time, or even as a rental. And, it comes fully appointed with exquisite furnishings (YES, the dishes, linens, EVERYTHING stays!) Hardy plank exterior w/front & back composite porches. Interior features nice details like antique bead-board walls; crown molding; stone fireplace (gas logs); great kitchen w/top-of-the-line appliances (even the cookware is fabulous!!) & granite countertop. King-sized master BR suite w/huge, walk-in closet & wall of windows to give you that "tree house" feeling. Located just off the DeSoto Pkwy, adjoining state park ROW. Try it on for size...it may be the perfect fit! \$319,900 (1812980)



RARE FIND IN MENTONE: 3BR/2BA, RANCH-STYLE HOME, 56X40 SHOP & 22 ACRES W/SMALL POND. Home was built for current owner, has been immaculately kept, & is only 5 years old. Land is beautifully wooded, with a gracefully-curving, nearly 1/4 mile driveway, lined w/dogwoods, leading up to the picturesque pond, shop & residence. Young fruit trees, including apple, pear, peach & fig. 3BR/2BA; one-level home w/rocking-chair front porch; hardwood floors; free-standing, wood-burning fireplace in LR; spacious kitchen with oak cabinetry & hardwood floor; large MABR suite; dining area leading out to covered back grilling porch & fenced back yard. Attached 2-car garage. 4-door workshop w/storage. \$475,000 (1806766)



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)



ONE-LEVEL, IMMACULATELY-KEPT, brick rancher; on 0.89 acre in historic district of Forest Ave NW; corner property; walking distance to downtown/city park. 3BR/2BA; den w/fireplace; HW floors; formal LR; DR; spacious country kitchen w/tons of cabinets; multiple pantry areas; 2-car, 24x24 attached garage; large, floored, attic storage; garden shed; concrete parking area & driveway. Park-like yard w/mature, bearing fig bush; room for a garden spot. \$280,000 (1802373)



WHIMSICAL, TINY, & TRULY SPECIAL GETAWAY. Cabin was built w/an artist's eye, great imagination, & surprising economy of space. Wood-burning fireplace; glass w/doors; loft BR; shower bath. Then there are the HUGE boulders; the flower beds; the fanciful garden art. It is quite magical, really. \$278,300 (1807189)



52 ACRES, WITH LAND ON BOTH SIDES OF PAVED COUNTY 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 other side of road. Level land. Current use is approx. 22 ac in orchard grass & fescue hay, 30 ac in 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. And with the land on both sides of the road, you have great privacy, no neighbors in sight. Agent owned. \$350,000



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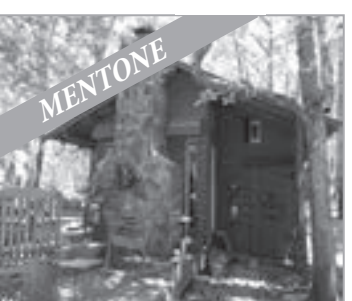
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"The best investment on Earth is earth."

-Louis Glickman



Let us help you find that special bit of earth.





Sacred Harp Singing Annual Event at Historic Council Bluff School

The public is invited to a Sacred Harp Singing at the historic Council Bluff School on Sunday, October 9, from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m.

Sacred Harp is a uniquely American tradition that brings communities together to sing four-part hymns and anthems. It is a proudly inclusive part of our shared cultural heritage. Sacred Harp events welcome beginners and newcomers, with no musical experience or religious affiliation required. The tradition was born from colonial “singing schools” whose purpose was to teach beginners to sing. Current methods continue to reflect this goal. Though Sacred Harp is not affiliated with any denomination, it is a deeply spiritual experience for all involved and functions as a religious observance for many singers.

Sacred Harp “singings” are not performances. There are no rehearsals and no separate seats for an audience. Every singing is a unique and self-sufficient event with a different group of assembled participants. The singers sit in a hollow square formation with one voice part on each side, all facing inwards so they can hear and see each other. However, visitors are always welcome to sit

anywhere in the room and participate as listeners.

This annual event takes place at Council Bluff School, the last one-room schoolhouse still standing in DeKalb County. The structure is listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. The property has been deeded to Landmarks of DeKalb County, Inc. for restoration.

Landmarks of DeKalb County welcomes the public to this event to celebrate the recent and on-going renovations at Council Bluff School, made possible in part by a grant from the Alabama Historical Commission. A dinner on the ground will be held after the singing.



Photo courtesy of Landmarks of DeKalb County

For more information about and directions to Council Bluff School: landmarksdekalb.al.org/preserving-dekalb-county-alabama-landmarks/the-council-bluff-school.

For more information about the event and to see the progress of the renovation please visit: facebook.com/LandmarksofDeKalb or instagram.com/landmarksofdekalb.

Mentone Ukes

by Hank Allen



Hank Allen

For years, I’ve heard that all good songs will work when played only on a piano or acoustic guitar. I have recently discovered that the humble ukulele works just as well for a foundational instrument. You can sing and play a uke on almost any song that works on a solo piano or guitar, and the ukulele is the musical instrument I needed to find. It’s small, light, and perfect for someone like me who has spinal problems. I can even play it on really bad days.

I found out about the Mentone Ukes last December, when member Tricia McNutt invited me to watch the group at a Christmas performance. I joined the group the next month. I can’t say how much of a blessing it has been to learn about this group. Playing with a group of people has helped me stay in rhythm (I’m closer anyway) and learn new musical tips that help on guitar and piano, as well. The best part about the group is we have fun learning with really great people.

I especially enjoyed the opportunity to play an instrument and sing in front of an audience for the first time in my life at the Mentone Farmer’s Market. I can’t wait to see what we get into next!

Newcomers and beginners of all ages are always welcome to attend our free on-going sessions. Loaner ukes are available. Dates for upcoming sessions are September 10 and 24 at 1 p.m. at Moon Lake Community Library. Find us on Facebook @ MentoneUkes. For more information, please contact Debra Fey (debrafey@gmail.com) or Jody Rhodes (jodyrhodesy@gmail.com).

Strum and
Be Happy!

DeSoto Rescue Squad’s New Home

by Captain Mike Stone

In partnership with the Town of Mentone and DeKalb Ambulance Service, DeSoto Rescue Squad now has a building to call home. We will be utilizing the old Head Start/Ms. Paula’s building on the Moon Lake Village Campus.

We have been working hard to renovate the building and make it home for the rescue squad. We have plans to have a meeting area, kitchen area, office, shower, handicap accessible bathroom, and a sitting area. We will also have portable cots on site for crews to be able to man the building during inclement weather.

DeKalb Ambulance will also have the ability to stage an ambulance as needed in the event of predicted poor travel conditions for the mountain. DeKalb Ambulance Service has provided a great deal of our needed supplies, and we have spent most of our available funds on this renovation.



The renovations include repairing the roof, replacing multiple sheets of drywall, adding a shower, replacing the sinks, replacing the toilet, new paint, replacing the stairs, replacing trim, updated LED lighting, a video security system, an electronic lock access control system, and adding a kitchen area.

DeKalb Ambulance will also be providing a refrigerator and seating for the sitting area. The

Town of Mentone has provided a replacement water heater. The DeKalb County Commission provided us funds to purchase a 30kW generator that we will utilize as either backup power for our building or backup power for the Moon Lake Village Campus overall. We are currently looking for a smaller standby generator to supply automatic backup power to our building.



We are excited about this location, as we will be able to hold our squad meetings and training sessions. We are also planning to hold regular CPR and Basic First Aid classes that will be open to the public.

If you would like to make a donation to the Rescue Squad to help offset some of the costs we have incurred, you can mail a check to DeSoto Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 517, Mentone, AL 35984. You can also visit our website at desotorecue.com and make an online donation via PayPal.

We are planning our Annual Pancake Breakfast for Saturday December 3, from

8 to 11 a.m. The Pancake Breakfast will be held at the Mentone Community Church to have enough space for dining. We are also contacting Santa Claus to see if he will be available. We are planning to have an Open House on Saturday December 10, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 256-755-1023 or via email at captain@desotorecue.com.

Mike Stone is the captain of DeSoto Rescue Squad.

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River Voice

by Angie Shugart

“Happily we bask in this warm September sun, which illuminates all creatures.”
—Henry David Thoreau



Partnerships are the key to most successful organizations. This month I want to mention the people that help LRWK grow, connect, and succeed.

One partnership is with Waterkeepers Alabama, a group that was formed in 2018 to further connect and support other Waterkeepers in Alabama and the southeast region. Little River Waterkeeper is just one of ten Alabama Waterkeepers that makes up the regional entity of Waterkeeper Alliance. The group meets monthly to discuss projects they are working on and collaborate on statewide water issues like fish consumption advisories, sewage overflows, municipal and industrial non-compliance, and so much more. Clean water advocacy doesn't end at the state lines, so Waterkeepers Alabama also has partnerships with our Georgia Waterkeepers, Coosa River Basin Initiative (CRBI) in Rome and the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

in order to mitigate issues coming into Alabama from other water basins.

This year, our friends at the Cahaba Riverkeeper submitted a grant proposal to the Mosaic Foundation. As a result, the Ten River Project was funded to allow all members of Waterkeepers Alabama to patrol other watersheds in the state. This gave us the opportunity to see first-hand the issues that other Waterkeepers in Alabama and Georgia are working on. Every watershed is unique and has its own set of issues. Field trips have allowed us to build connections with each other to make our partnerships stronger. Waterkeepers work tirelessly to make sure Alabama/Georgia waterways are clean and safe and it isn't easy! The job is an enormous task but the dedication from these amazing individuals is inspiring and quite impressive. I am grateful to have such great environmentalists in my corner and I want you all to know that they are looking out for your best interest!

These are the members of Waterkeepers Alabama. If you live in their watershed, reach out and thank them for the work they do! More information at waterkeepersalabama.org.

- Black Warrior Riverkeeper
- Cahaba Riverkeeper
- Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
- Choctawhatchee Riverkeeper
- Coosa Riverkeeper
- Coosa River Basin Initiative
- Friends of Hurricane Creek
- Little River Waterkeeper
- Mobile Baykeeper
- Tennessee Riverkeeper

Another partnership to mention is the Natural Treasures Committee at THRIVE regional partnership. This strong group of individuals focuses on creating sustainable growth in the Chattanooga region from now until 2055. LRWK is proud to sit in quarterly, regional roundtable meetings and get

updates from groups that are making great strides in conservation work in the tri-state, 16-county region of Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee. One project in particular that I am excited about is the Resilient Communities Initiative. I'll share more information about this soon. You can learn more about Thrive Regional Partnership at thriveregionalpartnership.org.

The final organization I want to give mention to is Alabama Rivers Alliance. This organization works to form partnerships with environmental groups throughout the state to strengthen bonds and build a strong network of groups and individuals who are creating positive change. We started attending ARA's annual Water Rally where all these organizations come together to network and learn from each other. Over the years we have created a strong bond with the employees at ARA and have partnered with them on our Wild & Scenic Campaign. It is a huge inspiration to know these amazing people who are passionate about Alabama's natural resources. More information about Alabama Rivers Alliance can be found at alabamarivers.org.

Little River Watershed Tours

Little River Waterkeeper invites you on a tour of parts of the Little River Watershed that you normally don't get to see! Meetup will be in Mentone and then we'll spend the day exploring the river from its headwater to the mouth. The dates are September 24, October 22, and October 29. Cost is \$100 per person and is limited to 10 people per trip. Contact angie@littleriverwaterkeeper.org to sign up!

Boom Days Festival

Visit the Little River Waterkeeper Booth at Fort Payne's Boom Days Festival on Saturday, September 17, in downtown Fort Payne.

Angie Shugart is a co-founder of Little River Waterkeeper.

Senior Health: Choosing Between Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage

by Lynn Hixon

People with Medicare can get their health coverage through either Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage Plan (also known as a Medicare private health plan or Medicare Part C).

Original Medicare is the traditional fee-for-services program offered directly through the federal government. It is sometimes called traditional Medicare or Fee-for-Service (FFA) Medicare. Under Original Medicare, the government pays directly for the health care services you receive. You can go to any doctor or hospital that takes Medicare, anywhere in the country.

If you want prescription drug coverage with Original Medicare, in most cases you will need to actively choose and join a stand-alone Medicare private drug plan, also called a Part D plan. Part D is offered through private insurance companies. You pay a separate premium for Part D.

Medicare Advantage Plans, also known as Medicare private health plans or Part C, are plans that contract

with the federal government and are paid a fixed amount per person to provide Medicare benefits. The most common types of Medicare Advantage plan are:

- Health Management Organizations (HMOs)
- Preferred Provider organizations (PPOs)
- Private Fee-For-Service (PFFS)

In the Medicare Advantage Plans, you still have Medicare. This means that you still must pay a monthly premium for Part B and potentially an additional premium for the MA Plan. If you are en-rolled in a MA Plan, you should receive the same benefits offered by Original Medicare, and many MA Plans include prescription drug coverage. An MA Plan may offer certain benefits that Medicare does not cover, such as dental and vision care. Just remember, you can join a MA Plan if you have Medicare Parts A and B and you live in the plan's service area.

If you have any questions about Original Medicare or Medicare Advantage plans, please call the DeKalb County Council on Aging at 256-845-8590 and talk to the SHIP Coordinator, Lynn Hixon.

Ryleigh's Closet

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Mentone Community Church 256-364-0150



Save the Dates!
October 15 & 16
Moon Lake Village
Mentone

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The Mentone Area Preservation Association Offers New Programs

by Kelly Leavitt

MAPA/Groundhog Office Opens

The Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) now has an office at Moon Lake Village so we can better serve our community. It is large enough to hold board meetings and host small group gatherings.

The public is invited to come in and look through the 40-year archive of *The Groundhog*. Zora Strayhorn’s book, *Mentone, Alabama: A History* will be available to purchase (\$15), as well as Colorfest raffle tickets and festival posters. You can also come in to subscribe or place an ad in *The Groundhog* or to sign up or renew a MAPA membership.

The former classroom we are occupying has had a fresh coat of paint thanks to Adelaide and Earle Drennan, who arranged for the generous donation of a 5-gallon bucket of paint from Tracy Shaw of Procoat Painting in Summerville, GA. The Drennans also helped clean the office and prepare the walls for painting, along with Karen Vest and Dana Lockhart. Thanks to Max Mitchell, who spent many days helping me paint. Many thanks to Doreen Crow Waters for the generous donation of an easy chair and a desk/ storage cabinet. We share one of the modular buildings with Kristen and Zack Bergeron of Zack of All Trades and appreciate their being such helpful and friendly neighbors.

Beginning September 15, the office will be open each day from 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. and by appointment (email mapamentone@gmail.com or call 256-289-2002). Please drop by to say, “Hi!”

Oral History Night: Dr. Bill Berry

Thursday, September 15, 6:30 p.m.



Dr. Bill Berry

In the spirit of adding to the historical record, the Mentone Area Preservation Association will begin hosting monthly Oral History Nights. These programs will feature oral interviews of individuals with long personal histories in our area. This method of interviewing is traditionally used to preserve important voices, memories, and perspectives. The interviews will be recorded on video and posted to MAPA’s YouTube channel for everyone to enjoy in the future.

We are very excited to announce that our first Oral History Night will feature Dr. Bill Berry, who will be interviewed by Mayor Rob Hammond. Born and raised in Mentone, Bill taught at Moon Lake Elementary School for many years before becoming a beloved principal of the school. He has served our community in countless ways over many decades.

We look forward to hearing some of Bill’s favorite boyhood memories, in addition to the history of the Berry Patch, the Berry family compound on East River Road. He will also share the early history of Moon Lake School.

A happy coincidence is that the interview will take place in the newly named Bill Berry Community Room at Moon Lake Village. As a teacher, he taught for 12 years in this space. As a Moon Lake fifth-grader, Bill was crowned Harvest Festival King on the stage at one end of the room.

Dr. Bill Berry will once again take the stage on Thursday, September 15, at 6:30 for our first Oral History Night. He will share humorous, interesting, and important details about his early life in Mentone.

These programs are open to all and free of charge. The interviews will be summarized in the Groundhog issue following each event. Everyone is welcome to come early to walk around the property and see what changes are in the works.

Traditional Skills: Casi Brown

Sunday, September 18, 4 p.m.



Rustic Furniture Artist Casi Brown

Appalachia is rich with cultural and artistic tradition. We invite you to explore a variety of traditional skills in a new series of programs, beginning on Sunday, September 18, at 4 p.m. in the Bill Berry Community Room.

Casi Brown will be our first guest and she will discuss and demonstrate the craft of making bent willow furniture. Everyone is invited.

“Most people know this type of furniture as ‘gypsy willow’ furniture. Gypsies travelled the south and willow is very plentiful here,” Casi said. “They used to trade furniture in exchange for a night’s stay in a barn, or even a meal.”

Casi learned her craft from Phil Faircloth, who is well known for his hickory and willow furniture.

“I’m interested in green infrastructure and renewable resources,” she said. “Willow is one of those things that the more of it you cut, the more you get. Most other woods aren’t like that.”

- Casi will discuss:
- The role gypsies played in the proliferation of willow furniture
 - Where willow grows and what it looks like

- How to bend it and what you can make with it
- The heritage of women as furniture builders
- How Native Americans used willow
- Medicinal uses by indigenous cultures
- The ecological benefits of willow

Future programs will highlight traditional skills such as spinning and weaving, pottery, woodcarving, architecture, quilting, dyeing, basketry, blacksmithing, and handmade musical instruments. If you are interested in presenting a program, please let us know by emailing groundhognews@yahoo.com.

Writers Workshop

Monday, September 19, 5:30 p.m.

Have you ever thought you’d like to submit something to *The Groundhog*, but fear your writing skills aren’t up to par? Readers love the paper for its personal feel, and the more writers who contribute, the better our community is represented. We will host a mini workshop on Monday, September 19, at 5:30 p.m. in the MAPA office at Moon Lake Village. We’ll be joined by seasoned writers Rebecca Henderson and Betsy Dillbeck, who will guide you through tips and exercises to help you feel confident about writing.

We welcome stories about your family or local history, amusing anecdotes from your childhood in Mentone, memorable events, reflections on your time in nature, poetry, and more. Email us at groundhognews@yahoo.com or call 256-289-2002 and let us know you’ll be attending. This will be comfortable, friendly gathering!

Sunset Social

Thursday, September 22, 6 p.m.

MAPA hosted a Sunset Social on Thursday, August 25, when area residents gathered to socialize while enjoying the sunset from Mentone’s Brow Park.

Another Sunset Social is scheduled for Thursday, September 22—the first day of fall—at 6 p.m. MAPA will provide plates, forks, cups, water, and name tags. Please feel free to share a dessert, snacks, or beverage.

With so many people moving into the area, especially in the last two years, this is a helpful way for new and long-time residents to get to know one another. Everyone is interesting; everyone has a story. We hope you’ll join us on September 22.



The foundation has been laid 8/4/22



A work in progress: The stage is getting ready for a roof 8/30/22

Moon Lake Village (cont. from page 1) now serves as MERF’s Community House. The family’s history is rich in its association with the former Moon Lake School. Frank and Melissa’s eldest son, Ernest, taught there, as did his son, Dr. Bob Shigley, before he became principal at Menlo School. An article in the September 2018 *Groundhog* (“Mentone Community House: A Home for the Ages”) details the family’s history and includes many interesting and amusing anecdotes from Shigley family members. It can be read online at bit.ly/Shigley-Family.

The amphitheater will feature a 25’ x 30’ stage with a roof. If enough money is raised, a stone fireplace will grace one end of the stage. The brush that has grown up along the sides of the amphitheater has begun to be cleared, revealing the trees growing in the wetland behind the stage area. Paul intends for the stage to have a rustic feel, and, with hope, 25 wooden benches will soon be installed in the seating area. A deck will be built at the top of the amphitheater for handicapped access. The stage will eventually be available to rent for parties, weddings, and reunions.

Everyone is encouraged to visit Moon Lake Village to see the changes that are underway, and those that are complete. Paul is on site every day between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Moon Lake Village is located at 5886 East River Road in Mentone.

For anyone who would like to donate to support the property, some naming opportunities are available to large donors. These include the amphitheater stage and benches, and the playground. Donations in any amount can be mailed to: Town of Mentone, Attention: Moon Lake Village, P. O. Box 295, Mentone, AL 35984.

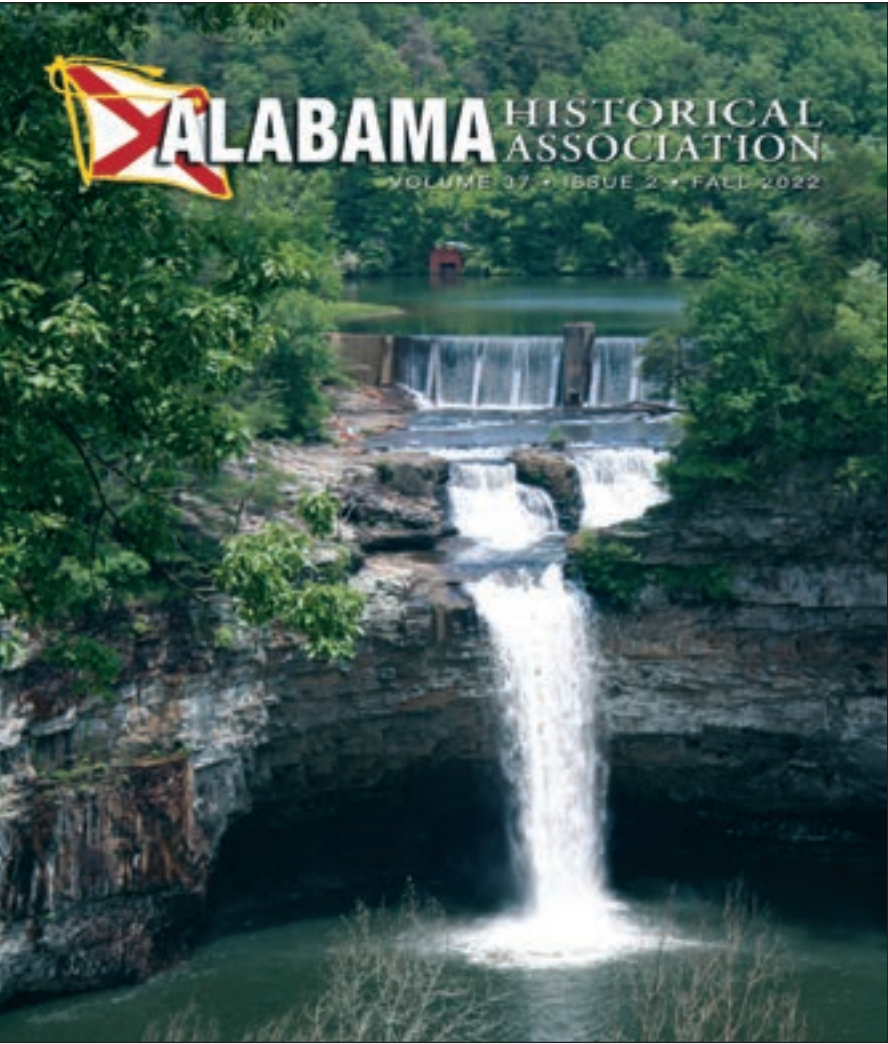


Moon Lake Village Executive Director Paul Nail



Alabama Historians Coming to Mentone

by Jim Baggett



For the first time in the organization’s history, the Alabama Historical Association will visit the Mentone area for its Fall Pilgrimage on September 23–24. Founded in 1947, AHA is the largest group of its kind in Alabama. With more than 600 members, AHA brings together people who make their livings as historians (academics, writers, public historians, historic preservationists, museum curators, archivists, and others) with people who simply enjoy exploring the history of our state. The Association publishes a quarterly journal, *The Alabama Review*, that features articles and book reviews on Alabama history; hosts an annual meeting in the spring where historians present papers and visit historic sites; administers a historic marker program; sponsors a podcast on Alabama history and a speakers’ bureau; and hosts an annual fall pilgrimage. The 2022 pilgrimage will begin in Fort Payne and include Friday afternoon tours of “Boom Era” Fort Payne, the Trail of Tears historic sites, and the Depot Museum. Then members will gather for a Friday night reception at the Old Hosiery Museum and Opera House. On Saturday, we will gather at St. Joseph’s-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church, where Groundhog editor Kelly Leavitt will share the story of Col. Milford Howard, author Marcus Thomas will discuss his book on local legend Granny Dollar, and Auburn University’s Hannah Leeper will share her on-going research on the area’s black bear population. The University of Alabama Press will be on

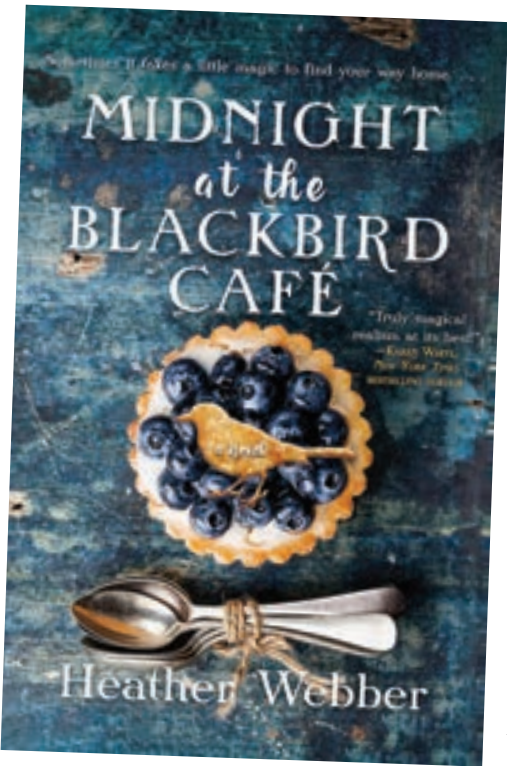
hand, offering their books at a 30% discount. Following a box lunch at the church, we will spend the afternoon visiting local historic sites and the shops in Mentone. The Martha Berry House, Sallie Howard Memorial Chapel, Mentone Arts Center, the DeSoto State Park CCC Museum, and DeSoto Falls will all be available for tours. We will end the day with a 5:00 p.m. reception and concert at Brow Park, featuring Alabama-made foods and Mentone area musicians Mickey Luck, Brenda Johnson, and Liz Baker. Everyone is welcome to join us for the event. You do not have to be a member of AHA to register for the pilgrimage (although we welcome and encourage new members). Your registration includes all of the events and tours, the Friday night reception, Saturday box lunch, and Saturday afternoon reception at Brow Park. For more information on the Alabama Historical Association, and to register for the fall pilgrimage, visit the AHA web site at alabamahistory.net. The deadline for registration is September 14. Our members are excited to visit the Mentone area, and we hope many local residents will join us for the event. *Jim Baggett is Archivist for the Birmingham Public Library, the current President of the Alabama Historical Association, and a part-time resident of Mentone. He can be reached at birminghambaggett@gmail.com.*

A Book Review: “Midnight at the Blackbird Café”

by Betsy Dillbeck

During the recent “pandemic” and “shut down” of our lives as we knew it, a group of avid book readers at my church began trading books we had read and loved. Many of my fellow readers were into what I call the “Southern Beach Novel” genre, one which I hadn’t fully embraced in my life. A bagful of books was given to me one day, containing the first five books of the “Mitford Tales” and several other novels set in the South. I quickly consumed the Mitford novels by Jan Karon, even seeking out the remaining six books of Mitford tales. I loved them! The next book I picked up was by Heather Webber, called “Midnight at the Blackbird Café.” The jacket cover blurb said, “Nestled in the mountain shadows of Alabama lies the little town of Wicklow,” and

continued with explaining the circumstances of a young woman returning to her mother’s and grandmother’s place of birth and finding family secrets revealed, a business to run, new friends, family she never knew, and a purpose for her life that her grandmother had set for her so many years ago.



mind said, “This is Mentone.” Then, not too far into the book, someone must go down the mountain to Fort Payne, for some reason or other. The book mentions Fort Payne at least four times as the destination “to town.” But, minus this geographical clue, it is the author’s description of the main street, of the layout of the town, of the small hidden cabin residences, the larger southern style homes just blocks from the main street, and all within walking distance, that defines Mentone, to me. And as the story progresses, it’s the characters and the ambiance of our fictional Wicklow that clinches it for me. The eclectic mix of people, their love and respect of old southern tales and traditions, the subtle but open admittance that in a small town, everyone knows everything about you, your family, and your history, good or bad.

This, of course, is what pulls all the characters together, this sense of community and the well-being of every resident. It is this outpouring of caring for Anna Kate that helps make her decision as to whether she will stay in Wicklow or head back to Boston. She and her newfound family come to grips with beliefs and feelings rooted in grief, blame, and pride, all creating a careening emotional roller coaster. But family is love, and new bonds are formed, and love and grace prevail, along with many revealing family secrets, the fate of the café, and the blackbird pies and their magical revelations. Heather Webber weaves a tale of true southern hospitality and small-town character that will delight the reader and, for those who know Mentone, will hopefully make them say, “Yes, this is Mentone, no doubt about it.”

Betsy Dillbeck is a retired journalist living in Fort Payne.



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Little River Arts Council by Juli Jordan



2nd Annual “Follow Your Art”: Sidewalk Chalk Art Contest & Art Market
Saturday, September 3, 10 am–3 pm • Chalk artists arrive at 9 am

Looking for family fun this Labor Day weekend? Join us the Little River Arts Council (LRAC) on MERF’s Pathway to Community walking trail next to Moon Lake Library for “Follow Your Art,” a free one-day art, music and storytelling event that includes a Sidewalk Chalk Art Contest.



This quaint art market features local artists, makers, and musicians set up along the walking trail where colorful painted pickets cheer on fervent sidewalk chalk artists of all ages. The Sidewalk Chalk Art Contest is open to all ages, choosing to work as individuals or groups. We’ll provide the chalk or you can bring your own. It’s a fun way to express imaginations, share hidden skills, and possibly win a prize at the end. The masterpieces will be judged in a variety of categories such as Most Colorful, Most Imaginative, and Best Use of Space, and visitors to the event will have a chance to vote on their favorite chalk art. The winners

will be announced after 2:30 p.m. Preregistration is not required, but is available on our website or by emailing info@littleriverartscouncil.org.

While a relatively small fair, the artists’ mediums are varied and include fabric art, jewelry making, rock and wood painting, photography, watercolor, folk art, macramé, wood carving, ceramics, and more.

Visitors will enjoy the sounds of local musicians Larry Joe Hall, the Vegetaters, and Judy Nicole Kirby.

The Rhododendron Garden Club will be selling baked goods, Moon Lake Library will have a wide variety of books for sale, and the DeSoto Rescue Squad will

be selling water and lemonade. All are fundraisers for those organizations.

New this year is storytelling! Join local author Debbie Happy Cohen as she reads her original fairy tales which were written for adults yet are equally enjoyable for kids of all ages! Some of the stories include “A Garden Snail named Grape,” “Jonah the Traveling Turkey,” and a “Bumblebee Named Cheesedoodle.” This will be interactive storytelling at its best! Storytelling begins at 10:30 a.m., with a new story every half hour until 2:30 pm.

This year, “Follow Your Art” is a judged show. Trés Taylor will judge the artwork and cash prizes will be awarded to the winners.

“Follow Your Art” is sponsored by the Little River Arts Council along with the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation, with additional funding by the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

PARKING: Please note that spaces around the MERF House are designated for handicapped parking only. Event parking is in the field just east of the MERF walking track.

Music for the People:
Lon Eldridge
Saturday, September 10
7–10 pm

For the final “Music for the People” concert, Chattanooga’s Lon Eldridge brings talent and style beyond his years for a toe-tapping good time. His warm and infectious musicality couples intricate fingerstyle guitar work with clever lyrics. Lon has toured the USA and Europe, taking his unique blend of traditional blues, ragtime, and jazz to whole new audiences.



Lon Eldridge

LRAC’s Summer Music Series is a community favorite. Meet your friends and family on the grounds behind Mentone Inn’s Linger Longer Pavilion, bring a picnic or grab some good eats from one of Mentone’s wonderful restaurants or food trucks. This is a free event for the community made possible, in part, by a grant from the Alabama State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and LRAC members.

ART TALK at Moon Lake Library
Wednesday, September 21, 6–8 pm

Every third Wednesday, local professional photographer Mikel Yeakle leads a lively and informal conversation about art, why we create it, and how it affects our lives. In addition, he offers very practical tips for artists who are new to sharing or selling their work.

All are invited to bring their artwork and share their processes and inspirations. The conversation is open to anyone who is drawn to art, not just creators of art.

Finster Fest
September 24 & 25
9 am–4 pm CT (10 am–5 pm ET)

Little River Arts Council invites you to visit our booth at Finster Fest at Paradise Garden in Summerville, GA, on September 24 and 25. To exhibit in this nationally recognized festival, an artist must have been invited by the Paradise Garden Foundation. As a result, the caliber of mostly self-taught artists is superb. The LRAC booth will feature a variety of works by member artists Kelly Farley, Mikel Yeakle, Lisa Sulkosky, Lacy Dobbs, Sam Fussell, and Susie Lawson. LRAC member artist Scott Thomas received his personal invitation from the Foundation this year! We are so happy to see Scott receive this well-deserved recognition.

LRAC Members Social & Meeting

Thank you to all who attended our Member’s Social at Mentone Inn last month. LRAC members and friends gathered together for the first time since our 2019 social, and the spirit of community was in the air!

In addition to a silent auction of donations from Mentone artists, local businesses, and organizations, we enjoyed music by Larry Joe Hall and delicious food prepared by the Mentone Inn.

LRAC membership elected a new board of directors and officers of the board: Lacy Dobbs, Kelly Farley, Brittney Hughes, Juli Jordan (president), Alyce Kenney (secretary), Deedee Morrison, Rhea Pirch (treasurer), Bill Rutledge, Cynthia Stinson, Steven Stiefel, Barbara Umland, and Mikel Yeakle (vice president).

We are grateful to Mentone Market, Mentone Inn, Wildflower Café, Elevation Bistro, The Hatter Café, Fantastic Foods, Groovy Goat, Mentone Arts Center, Moon Lake Community Library, and Tiger’s Inn for their generous donations. We are equally appreciative to artists Lisa Sulkosky, Lydia Randolph, Scott Thomas, Don Pirch, Lisa’s Creations, Lacy Dobbs, Caroline Nuckolls, Barbara Umland, Eugenia Johnston, Meg Justice, Rich Rybka, Mikel Yeakle, and Lookout Mountain Goat Ranch Originals, and to friends Sharon Habin, Holley Midgley, and Fontana Stinson for their donations to our silent auction.

Juli Jordan is the president of the Little River Arts Council.



L to R, LRAC board members Bill Rutledge, Juli Jordan, Lacy Dobbs, Kelly Farley, Alyce Kenney, Rhea Pirch, Cynthia Stinson, Barbara Umland, Mikel Yeakle (Not pictured: Deedee Morrison, Brittney Hughes, Steven Stiefel)

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How Old Is That Tree?

In recent *Groundhog* articles, we have invited readers to estimate the age of large trees and submit photographs. Richard and Paulette Manning, owners of Sweet Season Farm in Valley Head, submitted a photo of their granddaughter, Jules, standing by a tree on their property.

“According to our measurements and your formula, this red oak is 239 years old,” said Paulette. This makes the tree about 50 years old at the time of the Cherokee Removal, and almost 100 years old when Civil War troops marched through the area.

If you know of an especially old tree and would like to submit a photo, please follow the directions below and email groundhognews@yahoo.com.



An Easy (Unscientific) Way to Estimate the Age of a Tree

To estimate a tree’s estimated age, measure the circumference at a height of 45". To find the diameter, divide the circumference (in inches) by π (3.14) and then multiply that number by the species’ growth factor.

Growth Factors of Some Local Tree Species

- Tulip Tree 3 • Sycamore 4 • Red Oak 4 • Sweet Gum 4
- Black Walnut 4.5 • Red Maple 4.5 • White Oak 5 • Red Pine 5.5
- Redbud 7 • Dogwood 7 • Shagbark Hickory 7.5

Valley Head Cemetery “Running In Memory Of” Race

by Sherryl Lewis



The Valley Head Cemetery will hold the 7th Annual 5K and 10K “Running in Memory of” Race on Saturday, September 24. The races will start at 8 a.m. and will be held rain or shine. A zippered canvas race bag will be given out to the first 100 runners.

Pick your distance and join us on the town square for a beautiful run up the valley on Violet Hill Road. Registration and packet pickup will be set up at the Robert Johnson Roofing and Construction office the morning of the race from 7–7:45, with the races starting at 8 a.m. Pre-registration is available online at Run Sign Up. Call 256-657-1616 to register locally or register on the morning of the race. Register by September 10 to guarantee a race shirt; after that date race shirts will be available as supplies last.

We have some great door prizes to be given away and Gary’s Warehouse has generously donated a mini fridge as our grand door prize. All proceeds go the Valley Head Cemetery to help pay for mowing and other maintenance on the cemetery.

September 22 is the first day of fall!

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Mentone Educational Resources Foundation

by Sarah Wilcox



MERF “merch”

Follow Your Art right over to the MERF house porch on Saturday, September 3. MERF will again be participating in the Follow Your Art Festival organized by the Little River Arts Council on the Path-way to Community this Labor Day weekend. Stop by the porch for great “Leave Me in Mentone” items from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. All proceeds enable MERF to enrich the learning and the living in Mentone and the community.

The kitchen elves are busy preparing for another great fall of senior lunches, thanks to the many community friends who supply the wonderful meals. Senior lunches will begin on Wednesday, September 21, and continue each week until November 16. The Christmas lunch will be on Wednesday, December 7. Due to the crowd size, lunches will be served in the fellowship hall of Moon Lake Baptist Church. The meal is served at 11:30 a.m., so come early to socialize and to get a good seat. We are grateful for the many friends of MERF who help to make the lunches happen!

MERF is excited that Ms. Paula has started another year of teaching Art and Music to K-6th graders at

Valley Head School. MERF will bring two touring play performances from the Birmingham Children's Theatre again this school year. In October, the 3rd-6th graders will enjoy and learn about “Amelia Earhart.” In March, the K-2nd graders will see “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.” Valley Head teachers and students were impressed by the quality of last year's plays, and we're sure these will be just as delightful. Ms. Paula has signed up the 4th graders for February's Young People's Concert that is performed by the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra. She prepares the students well with theatre etiquette and recognition of each instrument, so they are impressive audience members.

On September 8, MERF celebrates 29 years of enriching the learning and living in the community, thanks to the many people who have provided sweat equity and financial support. Bill Berry has been a part of the magic of MERF since its inception! On February 11, 1993, MERF was established at a meeting and dinner at his home, guided by the inspiration of Sue Henry, Marsha Hurt, Phil Hurt, John Corey, and Jean Corey. He was the principal at Moon Lake Elementary School at that time and became MERF's first board president. Sue Henry became the next board president, followed by Sarah Wilcox, Kristen Emory, and then Bill Berry again. He has served on the board for almost 30 years. At the August board meeting, his resignation from the MERF board was accepted. MERF wishes him well as he enjoys new adventures. The MERF board is full of gratitude for all the ways



Bill Berry stands with a picket from the Pathway to Community that Jan Wilkinson painted in his honor when the fence was constructed in 2020..

he has helped MERF to serve the community. He will be greatly missed. Thank you, Bill Berry, for giving to the Mentone community in so many ways, especially regarding MERF!



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Mary Blair's “it's a small world” is the inspiration for Valley Head School 5th and 6th graders to paint a mural in Ms. Paula's classroom. They have sketched ideas and now are putting their creations on the wall.



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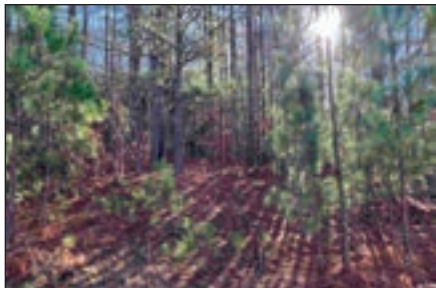
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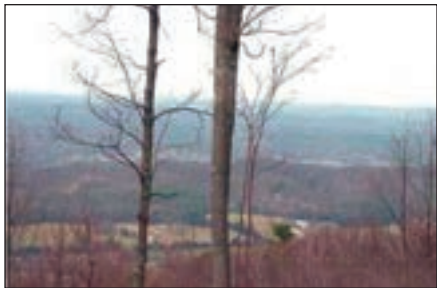


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Mentone Arts & Cultural Center

by Randy Grider

September includes fairy houses, Bob Ross painting, songwriters' workshop, and the return of Clare Donohue

September will be an active month with workshop/classes and a musical homecoming on the agenda. We are kicking off Labor Day (Monday, September 5) with a "Fairy House" workshop by artist/instructor Barbara Umland inside the Chuck Sennett Center for the Arts. This will be the third time she has led a class at the arts center and she always receives rave reviews from her students. The one-day workshop includes all supplies (though you are welcome to bring some items from your own yard). The fee is \$75 per student. The class is limited to the first 10 paid students. It runs from 9 a.m. until about 2 p.m. A light lunch will be provided.

On Tuesday, September 6, our "Music on the Mountain" songwriters' series will be a workshop format this month instead of the usual round. Bring a pen and paper and join the collaborative songwriting fun. It is free and open to all songwriters and those who have always wanted or thought they might write the next big hit. The workshop runs from 6:30–8:30 p.m.



Clare Donohue will perform on September 23. On Friday, September 23, we welcome Clare Donohue back to Mentone for a wonderful evening of music. The "Great Women of Song" show, which ranges from the Billie Holiday era to Patsy Cline and Karen Carpenter, will feature Donohue as the lead of four-piece ensemble. Admission to the 7–9 p.m. show is \$25. Donohue, who used to reside in the Mentone area, hails from Brooklyn NY, and has an extensive background in jazz. Her past shows have been noted for covering classics from the Great American Songbook and a tribute to Patsy Cline. Her musical career spans from New York City to Nashville and internationally from Canada to Germany. Online ticket information can be found on our Facebook page under Events or we can email you a payment link if you email mentoneartscenter@gmail.com.

We will host a "Paint Like Bob Ross" class on Saturday, September 24, from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Students in the class will paint Ross' beautiful yet lesser-known Emerald Lake scene on a black canvas. The tuition is \$100 and covers all supplies. Gary Grider, a certified Bob Ross Institute instructor, teaches the Bob Ross painting technique in a five-state region.

For more information or to make reservations to a workshop/class or event, please email mentoneartscenter@gmail.com or call 256-674-3366.

Randy Grider is the executive director of the Mentone Arts & Cultural Center, Inc.



A fairy house created by Barbara Umland



If You See Me Zipping Around Mentone...Say Hi

by Barry Morton

My autocycle is made by a Eugene, Oregon company called Arcimoto. Sounds Japanese doesn't it? Well, the vehicle is 100% American made (except, of course, the tires, which are Japanese).

- Some important facts:
- It's electric and goes about 100 miles per charge.
 - It uses household current and takes about 5 hours to charge.
 - It goes up to 83 miles per hour.
 - I've had it since March, 2021.
 - It has a 3-year warranty.



Barry Morton in his autocycle



Barry Morton & Joe Morgan

Arcimoto initially sold exclusively to California, Washington, and Oregon. About a year ago, they included Florida. As of last month, they are selling to Hawaii. They initially built a plant, the Arcimoto Manufacturing Plant (AMP), that was limited to 10 vehicles a week. About two years ago, they bought a 250,000 square foot building and are installing the machines and processes to build 50,000 autocycles a year. This should be achieved by the end of 2022. Compare it to Tesla about 5 years ago.

Why and how, you say, did I get one here in Mentone? I've been working with Arcimoto's employee number one, pictured here, for about six months after I first saw it advertised on Facebook.



Armando Hernandez

I immediately sent in my \$100 to hold my place in line. Arcimoto must have felt sorry for me because my aneurysm and stroke had affected my right foot...I can't flex it. I had to sell my car and required my wife to drive me around. But the Silver Bullet (that's what I've named her) has the throttle and brake on the motorcycle handlebars. When it came to be my turn, I implored them to make mine. I had it shipped from Eugene to Mentone.

As to maintenance, the Silver Bullet comes with a 3-year warranty—everything is covered. Since it is a new concept, it has already had five recalls.

Nothing is noteworthy...things like seat belts, brakes, and a display screen. I've had problems with my speakers. The company has two traveling maintainers, one from Orlando and one from Jacksonville, who take turns coming to visit me. Armando recently came from Orlando to take care of my broken fender bracket—we all know the roads here are tough on cars. While he was here, he satisfied the latest recall and replaced the brake sensor.

The farthest I've gone is into Fort Payne. I drive down the Parkway to Highway 35 and take that into town.

It is a two-seater. The back seat acts as a doggie enclosure. Phoebe likes to ride with me...especially to get ice cream.

It didn't come with doors, which didn't pass quality assurance until six months ago. The doors require an expert to install, but once they're on they can be easily removed and put on again. Arcimoto says I'm on the waiting list and the people who bought them on the west coast are first, because they can take their autocycles into the AMP.

Just recently, I've volunteered to beta test roll-down windows. But I need doors first. It was suggested to me that I should pay for the doors and swap out for two more years of maintenance...I think that's a great idea.

I love riding around Mentone and its surroundings. I've now included going weekly to the Moon Lake Village (MLV) to see the improvements happening so quickly. I've paid for a brass plaque to put on an amphitheater bench. Paul Nail is doing a great as the MLV executive director.

If you see me riding around town, be sure to say, "Hi!"

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Deer Visits: Help! My flowers and shrubs have been eaten!

by Susan Seago

Well, it happened. I have been walking in my gardens almost daily this summer, wondering if the deer were going to make a salad bar of it. They did not—until two weeks ago! They started with one of the hydrangeas. Most of the leaves at the top half of the shrub had been totally eaten. As the days went on, other perennials, especially the hostas and oxeeye daises, were eaten to the soil level. The worst was the day I spotted two new evergreen azaleas, still in their pots awaiting transplanting in my new neighbor's yard, chewed almost halfway back. Even the roses had been “pruned”!

I knew they would all grow back, but it is sad to see them like this in the middle of summer. Then I realized why the deer were doing this in such a massive manner. Rain had been sparse for several weeks, and the local pond and streams had pretty much dried up. The only water most of the deer had access to were those sources. There is a water trough in our horse pasture, and a few of the deer would drink from that. But, evidently they wanted more than that water.

Several friends asked me about the deer “problem.”

I could sympathize with them, as our gardens had also been sampled by them. There is a lot of water in plants, especially the leaves. And the branches and leaves are easily reached. Even my hosta bed that is next to a shed and has a somewhat protective fence around it had been almost totally eaten down to the soil level. The deer had even picked up and moved a few of the pots to get to others. What to do?

Actually, there is not one sure-fire way to keep deer away. They do not like ferns, so I try to place ferns near



those favorite plants, and it helps a lot. If the deer are so hungry or thirsty, they will eat just about anything except thorns. Yes, roses have thorns but the leaves must be awfully tasty as they will carefully pick them off and not touch the thorns. That's why the roses look so much worse than other shrubs.

Normally, deer do not like herbs, especially those in the mint family. Thick shiny leaves, such as my favorite perennial, the hellebore, are usually safe from deer. And this time, so far, the deer have left them alone. Bee balm is a member of the mint family, and they have been left alone, too.

You can search the internet for plants that are deer-resistant and would grow well here on the mountain, where so many deer roam. However, if you really enjoy seeing the deer, as we do, be kind to them and plant

many hostas along the edge of your property for them to enjoy. The hostas will regrow and even multiply so that the deer may not try any other delights in your landscape.

When the ponds and streams are once again full, the deer will not be as forthcoming into your beautiful,

landscaped gardens. That is, of course, unless you have one or two, as we do, that have become used to seeing us outside and just stand and stare at us when we are trying to get them to move along. I even named one “Doe.”

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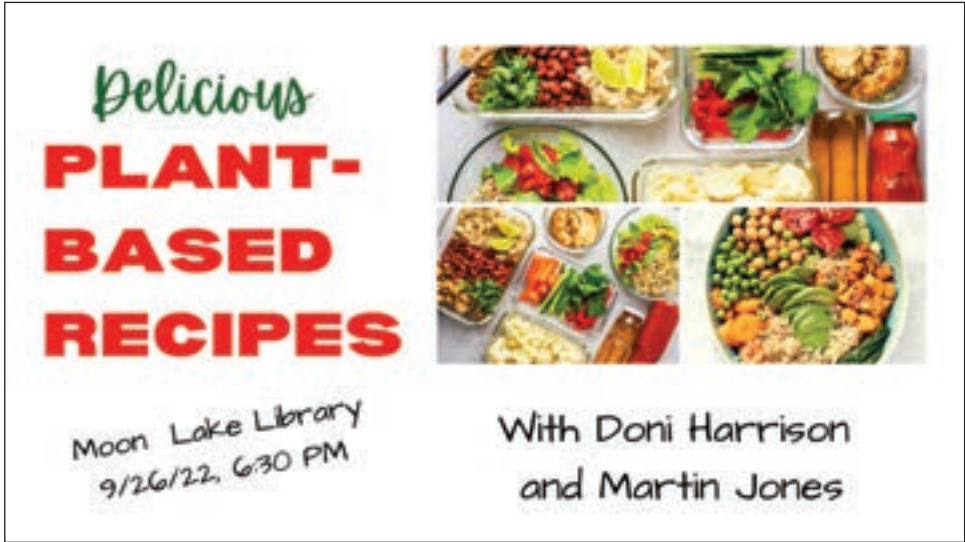
www.facebook.com/MentoneFarmersMarket



September @ Moon Lake Library

by Anne McLeod

September 26, 6:30 p.m.
Featured Speakers Doni Harrison and Martin Jones on
Delicious Plant-Based Recipes

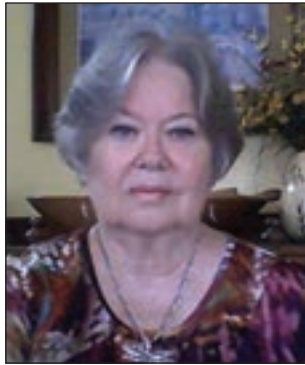


Whether you're looking for tasty new recipes to break up your usual repertoire or considering decreasing or eliminating meat and dairy from your diet, our September program has something for you.

In this presentation by Doni Harrison and Martin Jones, you will sample some tasty, easy-to-prepare plant-based foods, learn how to modify traditional recipes into healthier plant-based ones, and get ideas for how to improve your health while reducing your environmental footprint.

Bring your thoughts and questions as we plan to have a Q&A session to help you on your way to healthier eating and a greener planet.

October 3, 6:30 p.m.
Featured Speaker Sallie Brandon, Survivor of Tennessee Children's Home, the infamous orphanage that inspired Lisa Wingate's *Before We Were Yours*



"I was abandoned on the courthouse steps," Sallie Brandon told me. "My parents bought me for \$1,000.

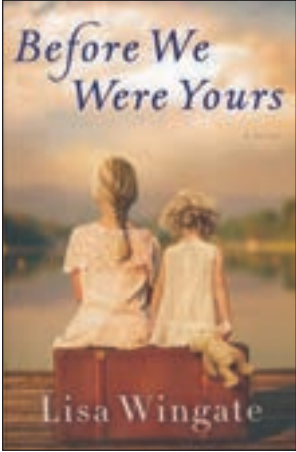
After being left at the courthouse, Sallie ended up in the Tennessee Children's Home, run by Georgia Tann. The ruthless administrator marketed babies and young children to wealthy families able to pay exorbitant fees, which Tann then pocketed. These criminal acts inspired Lisa Wingate's bestselling novel, *Before We Were Yours*, which is the September selection for the library's book club. (Actress Mary Tyler Moore played Georgia Tann in the 1993 film *Stolen Babies*.)

Sallie Brandon will share her extraordinary experiences at Moon Lake Library on October 3 at 6:30 p.m. She has been on the "Today" show and has spoken about the Tennessee Children's Home at numerous events.

In 2018 Lisa Wingate and one of the adoptees organized a reunion in Memphis, which Sallie and several others attended. There they compared personal histories and shared tips for searching for more information about their birth families. A second reunion organized by Wingate and Judy Christie followed in 2019. Christie and Wingate collaborated on a nonfiction book, *Before and After*, that told the true stories of those who had passed through the orphanage. Sallie Brandon's story is chapter 14 in *Before and After*.

We hope you'll join us for the book club discussion and for our unforgettable evening with Sallie Brandon.

September 10, 10:30 a.m.
Moon Lake Library Book Club Meeting:
Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate



Read *Before We Were Yours* and discuss it at the library Saturday, September 10, at 10:30 a.m. Moon Lake Library has one print copy as well as several Kindle e-readers on which the book has been loaded. If you have not tried a Kindle before, this is a great opportunity to test drive one. The Kindles also have *Before and After* on them.

If you haven't visited the library lately, please check us out. We're open 12-4:30 Tuesday-Thursday and Saturday 10-1. If you have more questions, call the library at 256-634-2127 or email books@moonlakelibrary.org.

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Rhododendron Garden Club

by Alyce Kenney

"Tell me, what is it you plan to do with
your one wild and precious life?"
—Mary Oliver, *The Summer Day*



As our summer winds down and we look ahead to the change of season, we may think about a time of rest. A time to reset. Perhaps a time to make a new plan for our life. Mary Oliver's poem was read as the meditation of our August 9th meeting and gave us all a moment to pause. We then continued our discussion and planning for the "Brush Strokes" flower show held at Minvale Baptist Church in Fort Payne August 18 and 19. The results of this show will be reported in next month's article. It's going to be exciting to share with you about all of our award winners! We have many talented and creative members in our club.

We are also making plans for our attendance at the "Follow Your Art" festival happening on Saturday, September 3, on the MERF Pathway, where we will be selling delicious baked goods and plants. This is our first appearance at this festival and we're looking forward to sharing our culinary expertise and the many lovely plants we wish to find good homes for from our gardens. You'll find different varieties of both shade and sun-loving perennials and houseplants. And a bonus is that we'll be able to help answer questions you have about your own gardens. Several of our members are Master Gardeners and have lots of knowledge and experience.

The program portion of our meeting was hosted by member and local artist Barbara Umland. Barbara found herself looking for a new creative outlet when the pandemic arrived. She discovered the joy of using natural plant materials found in her yard to make delightful little structures called fairy (faerie) houses. You might say that Barbara is a "faerie house architect." She taught us that faerie houses are made of natural materials, often found on your own property or nearby woods. Use twigs, pebbles, small cones, acorns, flowers, stones, feathers, moss, and bark for this construction job. Barbara's pandemic hobby has blossomed into the creation of multiple houses and displays of all kinds. She offers hands-on workshops in the community to help others learn how to create this unique and enchanting art form. The next workshop she's offering is on September 5 at the Chuck Sennett Arts Center in Mentone.

What is so special about attracting faeries?

Faeries blow away bad dreams, carry off your worries, and grant wishes. Who wouldn't want a few of them nearby? Faeries tend to be environmentalists. They live simply, recycle, and are thrifty. Typically, they're vegetarians. They're soft-spoken. They make great neighbors. Attract them to your land by building them their own special house. You don't need a contractor. Skip the plastic, the bottle cap, and the pickle jar. They don't need all the square footage that you have. They don't need a big screen TV, a Viking stove or a 3-car garage. A view from the brow is unnecessary. Locate the house in a safe, quiet, secluded place. Once built, you can attract faeries to this new house with treats and shiny stones. Faerie houses are the original tiny homes.

As the fall comes closer, and the business of life quiets down, consider creating a faerie home on your property. You never know how your "one wild and precious life" will be changed.

The Rhododendron Garden Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. in the MERF house. Come join us to learn, participate, and enjoy. Follow us on Facebook or send any questions to rhododendrongardenclub@gmail.com.

Alyce Kenney serves as secretary for the Rhododendron Garden Club.

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September Community Events

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

September 3–4, 10–11, 17–18, 24–25–Kayaking on Little River. Sit-on-top kayaks can be rented at Miller’s Bend Paddle Shack in the DeSoto Falls picnic area for a scenic flatwater paddle up the West Fork of Little River. Life vests & paddles provided. 10am–6pm. Details at alapark.com/kayak-little-river.

September 3–2nd Annual “Follow Your Art”: Sidewalk Chalk Art Contest & Art Market. Featuring 20–30 artists and makers, sidewalk chalk art contest, music, ice cream and community fun. Trés Taylor will judge the artists and cash prizes will be awarded. Hosted by Mentone Educational Resources Foundation & Little River Arts Council. 10am–3pm. Chalk artists arrive at 9am. Located on the MERF walking track next to Moon Lake Library on AL Hwy. 117. More info at littleriverartscouncil.org.

September 3–The Art of Woodburning: Make Your Own Souvenir. Hosted by DeSoto State Park. Pyrography or woodburning is the art of decorating wood or other materials, the term meaning “writing with fire” dating back to the 17th century. Participants in this class will learn the basic techniques of decorative wood burning from artist April Blanks and will work on their own souvenir magnet designs featuring several waterfalls and scenes in DeSoto State Park. Practice basic techniques us-ing a pen-like burning tool and paint. This class is for ages 14 to adult. Two class times available: 9–11am OR 12–2pm. \$25 fee includes all sup-plies. Class space is limited, so pre-registration is required. Email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov to sign up or for more info.

September 3–Sandstone Glade Plant Hike. A glade is an open area where the bedrock is at or near the surface, and where soils are so thin, trees and shrubs find it difficult to grow, yet you’ll find thriving, rare and unique plant communities that depend on the chemistry and condi-tions the environments provide. Learn about this unique environment and explore the glades in DeSoto State Park with Naturalist Michelle Reynolds. Scout out rare, beautiful plants and wondrous rock formations among the natural clearings dotting Lookout Mountain’s porous cap. This is a moderate hike along mountainous terrain, rocky terrain, approxi-mately 1.10 miles round-trip. 9am. Meet at the Nature Center, next to DeSoto State Park’s County Store & Information Center on County Road 89. Free. Pre-registration is required so we know how many to expect. Hike is open to ages 6 to adult. Email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for more info or to pre-register. As with all outdoor events, if it’s raining/stormy or very poor trail condi-tions, we may have to cancel. If the weather is questionable, please call the Park Lodge before leaving home at 256-845-5380.

September 5–“Fairy House” Workshop. With Barbara Umland. \$75 includes supplies. Limited class size. 9am–2pm. Mentone Arts Center.

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September 6–Songwriters Workshop. Bring a pen and paper and join the collaborative songwriting fun. Free. 6:30pm. Mentone Arts Center.

September 10–Moon Lake Library Book Club. Discussion of “Before We Were Yours” by Lisa Wingate. 10:30am. Moon Lake Library in Mentone.

September 10–Mentone Ukles. Free ukulele lessons at 1pm at Moon Lake Library in Mentone. Beginners welcome!

September 10–Free Concert: Lon Eldridge. Little River Arts Council’s Music for the People Summer Concert Series concludes with Lon Eldridge at the Mentone Inn’s Linger Longer Pavilion. Open to everyone! 7–10pm.

September 11–Fly Fishing 101 Workshop. Join Dr. Tim Lindblom to learn the basics to get started on your own fly-fishing adventures! We discuss gear selection, knots, fly selection, and casting instructions. Par-ticipants will get hands-on experience and the opportunity to make that first catch! Ages 14 and over are welcome. Spots are extremely limited. Please bring water, sun protection and a snack. All equipment will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own. Little River Canyon Center. 3–6pm. \$75 per participant. More information can be found at CanyonCenter.org.

September 12–Colorfest Volunteer Meeting. If you’re curious about volunteering for Colorfest, please join us. We’ll answer all your questions. MAPA Office, Moon Lake Village. 5:30 pm.

September 15–Oral History Night: Dr. Bill Berry. Mayor Rob Hammond will interview Bill Berry in the oral history tradition. Community Room at Moon Lake Village. Free. 6:30pm. Hosted by MAPA.

September 16–Campfire Talk: Poisonous & Venomous Organisms. Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors! DeSoto State Park Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground. (In case of inclement weather, talk will be located in the CCC Pavilion in the picnic area.) Free, no pre-registration required. For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

September 17–Serious Skills Series: Archery. Join DeSoto State Park Staff for an opportunity to learn archery safety & techniques. Archery is the art, practice, and skill of shooting arrows with the use of a bow. His-torically it has been used for hunting and combat and has been around for many years. Archery is also a sport that is becoming increasingly popular as an outdoor recreation activity. Ages 8 to adult. Activity is suitable for those who have never shot a bow, or for those with some previous experience. All equipment provided. Class times start at 10am, 11am, and 12pm in DeSoto State Park’s picnic area (across the road from DSP’s Country Store on County Road 89). Free & open to the public. Pre-registration is NOT required. Please note: this event may be postponed due to wet conditions. Email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details.

September 17–Boom Days Heritage Celebration. This annual art and musical event displays citizens of Fort Payne taking a second look at their past and the heritage passed down to them through the arts and crafts of our area. Musical performances and art displays in Fort Payne’s City Park. 256-845-1524.

September 18–Traditional Skills: Bent Willow Furniture with Casi Brown. Bill Berry Community Room at Moon Lake Village. Free. 4pm. Hosted by MAPA.

September 19–Writers Workshop. Interested in writing for The Groundhog? Come for tips from seasoned writers. 5:30pm. MAPA Office, Moon Lake Village. 5:30pm.

September 21–An Evening for Art Discussion and Critique. Hosted by Little River Arts Council. Artists are invited to bring a piece or two to share with the group for feedback. Everyone is welcome. Moon Lake Library, Mentone. 6pm.

September 22–Sunset Social. Meet at Mentone’s Brow Park at 6pm for a time of getting to know one another while enjoying a sunset. Bring a dessert, snack, or beverage if you like. Hosted by MAPA.

September 23–Clare Donohue Concert. “Great Women of Song.” \$25. Mentone Arts Center. 7–9pm.

September 24–Mentone Ukles. Free ukulele lessons at 1pm at Moon Lake Library in Mentone. Beginners welcome!

September 24–Valley Head Cemetery 7th Annual 5K and 10K “Running in Memory of” Race. Call 256-657-1616 to register.

September 24–Little River Watershed Tour. See parts of Little River that you normally don’t get to see! Meetup will be in Mentone and then we’ll spend the day exploring the river from its headwater to the mouth. Cost is \$100 per person and is limited to 10 people per trip. Email angie@littleriverwaterkeeper.org to sign up.

September 26–Plant-based Recipes. With Doni Harrison & Martin Jones. 6:30pm. Free. Moon Lake Library, Mentone.

September 30– Campfire Talk: All About Geocaching. Geocaching is a scavenger hunt where users with a GPS or

smartphone search for a cache hidden at a specified location using published coordinates. Caches are hidden worldwide and have even been placed on the International Space Station! Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location. Find out what geocaching is and how you do it yourself! Guest Speaker: Ashley Peters from the AL Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources. 7pm. DeSoto State Park’s Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground. Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program. (In case of inclement weather, talk will be in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area.) Free and open to everyone; no pre-registration required. For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

September 26–October 1–DeKalb County VFW Agricultural Fair. Rides on the midway, food, live entertainment, livestock exhibits, agricultural displays, awards, and more. Held at the VFW Fairgrounds, Fort Payne. Gates open at 5pm. 256-845-4752.

Ongoing Community Calendar

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 in Mentone. 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 the 2nd and 4th Mondays of September 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. Scrabble players meet and compete on Wednesdays at 12pm. Crochet Group for all experience levels on Thursdays at 3pm. 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.

Al-Anon meets at St. Joseph’s Church on Saturdays at 4pm. 21145 Scenic Drive, Mentone.



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September Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1

Connie Bell
Yvonne Brock
Dustin Burt
Lindsay Elkins
Nancy Garrett
Scott Blansit
Ralph Hammon
- 2

Grace Tucker
Lincoln Carden
- 3

Callie Ann Shoults
Stella Mae Akins
Katie Smith
Morgan Spencer
Jessica Bowns
- 4

Vance Carden
Markettia Crane
Karen Smith
Cloyce Allen
Millie Johnson
- 5

Evelyn Jensen

John Kirby
Payton Kirby
Sawyer Putman
Pam Cook
Marcus Stanfill
- 6

Terri Gilreath
Austin Farmer
Benjie Mason
Henry Shigley
- 7

Blakely Shoults
Amelia Saferite
Robbie Smith
Mary Bone
Sharon Cox
Marcella S. Campbell
Heather Nicely
Mary Bone
- 8

Van Freeman
Adele Phillips
Anastasia Pittman
Herman Johnson
Steve Watkins
- 9

Makenna Stalvey
Emma Harrison
Dillon Kirby
Ashley Harrison
- 10

Morgan Gregory
Angela Downer
Sam Langston
Anna Lee
Shatara Caraballo
Jake Easler
Paul Miller
Daniel Poe
- 11

Chasity Smith
Autumn Lewchuk
Joey Cox
Miley Cruz
- 12

Amanda Collins
Robert Johnson
Brittney Pepper
Chandler Johnson
Pam Wheeler
Harriet Pugh
Amanda Collins
- 13

Macy Gibson
Marcus Pardue
Karen Wright
- 14

Jacob Rosson
Pat Hunter
Benjie Crabtree
Griffin Winn
Baylece Walsh
Will Shanklin
Thomas McKinney II
- 15

Alex Tillman
Betty Blalock
Mikhaila Watkis
Tina Cooksey
Bryant Ware
Brandon Linn
Lisa Powell
- 16

Skippy Mathis
Haley Jacobs
Kathy Casler
Chase Byrum
Brooke Gaddis
- 17

Sam Easler
Angie Godwin
Brittany Villarreal
Dylan Pannell
Leon Crane
- 18

Connie McElhaney
Stacey Brown
Ann Kelley
Luke Williams
- 19

Taylor Chaparro
Dianne Smith
Erica Stevens
Marco Pulgarin
- 20

Tae Harmon
- 21

Peyton Williams
- 22

Addison Shoults
Cade Henderson
Cody Tedder
Scout Smith
Oliver Williams
Kelsey Divelbliss
Jaser Culbert
- 23

Bailey Grace Ware
- 24

Darrel Clark
Rusty Morrison
Bill Parker
Angie Hammon
- 25

Nicole Stott
Gavin Bain
Gaynell Worthey
Ian Blair
Katy Bell Moore
Scout Anderson
- 26

Amy Henderson
Kenny Busby
Carley Collins
Olivia Simmons
Anita Camp
- 27

Alfie Chambers
Libby Tubberville
Adam Hilliard
John Meadows
Jacob Meadows
Edris Gardner
Allen Wheat
Simon Gaspar
Jordan Cordell
- 28

Bailey Kirby
Susan Gilbert
Alley Hatfield
Brianna Wright
Tommy Langston
Miranda Chambers
- 29

Rusty Chambers
Amy Keith
Braden Henderson
McKenna Jackson
Louise Jackson
Larry Bone
Dillon Bone
Kayla Mitchell
Nelson Burger
- 30

Melissa Roe
Gracie Welden
Kaitee McGee
- 31

Hadley Wright
Magnolia Rose
Glenda Ingram

- 1

Shane & Ashley Ingram
Josh & Brittney Hughes
- 3

Josh & Mamie Miller
Lyle & Heather Nicely
- 4

Carl & Katy Tubberville
- 6

Jeff & Melissa Couch
- 9

Logan & Ryley Chambers
- 10

Dakota & Kaitlyn Robeck
- 11

Tom & Tonya Shanklin
- 12

Justin & Jayden Blansit
- 15

Donald & Phyllis Stephens
Terry & Missy Wooten
- 18

Gary & Cassie Parker
Paul & Anna Bryant
- 19

Joseph & Crystal Lee
- 23

Kevin & Kayla Worthey
Casey & Kayla Hellums
Michael & Pam Wheeler
- 24

Nick & Paige Hill
Russell & Karen Wright
Tom & Kristen Emory
- 25

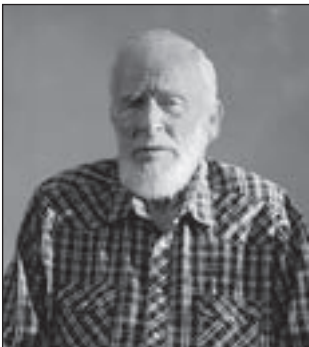
Jeff & Linda Stephenson
- 27

Jeff & Ann Nelson
Josh & Melissa Shoults
Jesse & Brittney Coleman
- 28

Ethan & Sydney Harrison
Joey & Beth Cox
- 29

David & Marsha Tucker

In Memoriam



JOSEPH DOYLE GREGORY
February 11, 1935 – June 30, 2022
Joseph Doyle Gregory, age 87, of Mentone, passed away on Thursday, June 30, 2022 at Redmond Regional Medical Center in Rome, Georgia. Mr. Gregory is survived by his wife, Ethel Bain Manifold-Gregory; daughters, Kathy Sonsel (Larry) and Sara Jo Poe; son: Tommy Gregory (Pat); seven grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; and five step-children. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Debbie Brubaker. Burial was at Little River Cemetery in Mentone.



ANNIE MARIE KERBY TUCKER
December 8, 1930 - July 8, 2022
Annie Marie Kerby Tucker, 91 of Mentone, passed away Friday, July 8, at DeKalb Regional Medical Center. She was born December 8, 1930 to Jeff and Melissa Hunt Kerby. Mrs. Tucker is survived by sons, David (Marcia) Tucker, Michael (Patty) Tucker, and James (Susan) Tucker; daughter, Joyce Oliver; four grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Gordon E. Tucker, and son-in-law, C.H. Oliver.



BOBBIE “YVONNE” BLALOCK
November 21, 1940–July 19, 2022
Bobbie Yvonne Blalock, age 81, of Mentone, went home to be with the Lord on July 19, 2022. Yvonne was the daughter of John R. & Lena Bishop. She is survived by Dave, the love of her life for 64 years; sister, Bernice Wheat; daughters, Susan Flynn (Ralph), Sherri Nichols (Neal), and Charlotte Dennis (Clay); son, Heath Blalock (Bridgett), and several nieces and nephews. She was called Mammie, Granny, & GG by her grandchildren Chrissie, Chase, Palmer, Morgan, Ryan, John David, Blaze Aryan, Zach, and Taylor and great-grands Arabella, Olivia, Molly, Norah Claire, Amber, Tayler and Ashelyn. Yvonne loved the word of God and her church families. She loved everyone she met and they loved her.



BILL ECHOLS DOVER, JR.
July 14, 1953–July 27, 2022
Bill Echols Dover, Jr., age 69, of Menlo, GA, died Wednesday, July 27, 2022, at Advent Health Redmond. Mr. Dover was born July 14, 1953, in LaFayette, GA, son of the late Bill Echols Dover and Gladys Harris Dover. He was of the Baptist faith and was a landscaper by trade.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his daughter, Christy Dover; sister, Sheila Brannon; and brothers, Robert Dover and Danny Dover. Survivors include his wife, Sybil Ballinger Dover; daughter, Brandy Storey; stepson, William “Billy” Ballinger; granddaughter, Byrina Womack; great-granddaughter, Alaya Hendrix; and step-grandchildren, Ryan Storey, Jonothon Storey, and Rachel Storey.

JOHN SHERWOOD BATY
April 20, 1936–July 29, 2022
John Sherwood Baty, age 86, of Mentone, passed away at his residence on Thursday, July 28, 2022. Mr. Baty is survived by his wife, Mary Sue Baty; brother, Larry Baty (Sandra); sisters-in-law, Martha Hulgán (David) and Robbie Nelson; and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Norace & Josie Baty; brothers, Glen Baty (Sis), Norace Baty Jr. (Sara), and Frank Baty (Sue), and sisters, Pauline Callan (Roy), Maxine Vinson (Herman), Mary Sue Underwood (Yewell) and Syble Tipton (Tom).

KEVIN LEE BATY
December 11, 1968–August 1, 2022
Kevin Lee Baty, age 54, of Mentone, passed away at his residence on Monday, August 1, 2022. He is survived by his uncles, aunts, & cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents, Jimmy Harrison Baty and Jonnie Faye Freeman Baty.



AMANDA MAE “WILLIE” PRESTWOOD
February 24, 1986–August 3, 2022
It is with immeasurable sorrow and heartbreak, that we announce Amanda Mae Prestwood “Willie”, age 36, of Summerville, Ga, finished her race of life at Redmond Regional Hospital on August 03, 2022. She leaves behind the love of her life and partner of 16 years, Nikita Forrester; mother, Angela Flegal; father, Eddie Ballenger; godfather, Johnny Prestwood; brothers, Adam Prestwood, Matthew Prestwood, and Levi Ballenger; sister, Cayli Ballenger; and niece and nephew, Stormy Prestwood and Addison Prestwood, all of whom she loved dearly and was loved by as well. Amanda was one of a kind. She was so full of life, love and beauty who lit this world for so many. She was an artist, so bright and smart, and had many trades throughout her short time here, all of which were difficult tasks for most. Leaving a mark upon so many is among the greatest of things we can leave behind. We miss her in ways words cannot explain.

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Mentone Area Church Directory

Mentone, Alabama
Cove Road Baptist Church invites everyone in the Mentone and Cloudland Communities to services—Sunday School 10am (GA time) Morning Worship 11am (GA time), Wednesday Prayer Meeting & Bible Study 5:30pm (GA time). Bro. Brian Keith is the pastor. 2415 County Road 631.

Howard’s Chapel (Church in the Rock) has regular services at 10am each Sunday. You are invited to attend these services or visit the church at other times. Casual dress is always acceptable. County Road 617.

Mentone Church of God of Prophecy has Sunday School at 10am, with Worship at 11am. Evening services begin at 5:30pm on Sunday and 6pm on Wednesday. Bro. Whitney Smith invites everyone to attend. AL Hwy 117 (across from Mentone Post Office).

Mentone Community Church invites you to Crosswalk Sunday School (K through Adult) 9:15am, Adult Worship Service 10:30am, JC Kids Worship Service 10:30am. Pastor Heath Croft, 334-315-3459. Van Ministry for Children pick-up/take home, ages K–12, for all surrounding areas 8:15am. Wednesday small group study 6:30pm. 90 Summerville Rd. 256-634-4210.

Mentone United Methodist Church invites you to come and worship with us. Each Sunday our worship service is held at 11am and is led by Rev. Robert (Bob) Reynolds. Sunday School is at 10am. The service of Holy Communion is held the first Sunday of each month and fifth Sundays are a service of music. 415 Cutler Avenue. 256-634-8006.

Moon Lake Baptist Church is a growing community of believers from various walks of life who endeavor to share the light, life, and love of Jesus with all we meet. We gather together for practical Bible study at 10am on Sunday. You can count on an encouraging and life-engaging message at 11am each Sunday. At 6pm, on Sunday, we enjoy a time of praying together. On Wednesdays at 6pm, we have groups for our children, students, and adults. 4671 Al Hwy. 117. 256-634-4568. Connect with us on Facebook at “Moon Lake”.

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church offers Worship Service at 10:30am (EDT). Interim Pastor Larry Elliott. 10090 County Road 103. 706-862-6221.

St. Joseph’s on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church and Sacred Garden is open daily for prayer and thanksgiving. Everyone is welcome to join us, in person or online, for Holy

Eucharist each Sunday at 10:30am, and for online only services each Tuesday at 12 noon for Noonday Prayers and each Thursday at 8pm for Compline. Please visit our website at stjom.church for more information. We continue to support our community with outreach, so please call our church office at 256-634-4476 if you need assistance. 21145 Scenic Hwy, PO Box 161, Mentone, AL 35984.

Summit Church of God in Mentone invites you to Sunday School 10am, Sunday Worship 11am. Pastor Brian Hughes. 1792 AL Hwy. 117. 256-706-5705.

Hammondville, Alabama
The **Church of God 7th Day** invites you to Sabbath School classes at 9:30am and Worship Service at 11am. Visitors are always welcome. Located just off Hwy. 11 N. at corner of Hwy. 117 and Palmer Road. 256-717-5040.

Greater Vision Ministries Church of God invites you to Sunday School 10 am, Sunday Worship *10:45 am, (*Nursery & Kid’s Church). MidWEEK re-charge Wednesday 6:30pm. Pastor Tim Coppock. 38623 US Hwy 11. 256-601-0679.

Valley Head, Alabama
Lea’s Chapel Baptist Church welcomes you to worship with us. 10am Sunday Bible Study, 11am Morning Worship, 6pm Evening Worship. Wednesday 6–8pm Awana (ages 4–18); 6:30pm Praise and Prayer time. 4212 County Road 751. 256-635-1001.

Valley Head Baptist Church invites you to come and worship with us. On Sunday, Bible Study is at 10am & Morning Worship is at 11am; Kidz Connection is at 5pm, Evening Worship at 6pm. Kidz Connection & Youth meet on Wednesday from 5–6pm & a snack supper is provided. On the second Wednesday of the month, there is a church-wide covered dish Fellowship Meal at 6pm. 265 Church Street. 256-465-1242.

Visitors are always welcome at **Valley Head United Methodist Church**. Please join us each Sunday morning for a traditional worship service at 9:30am. Tony Gunter is the Pastor. All are welcome. 146 Church St.

Wildwood Seventh Day Adventist Church, Mentone Chapter, holds services in Moon Lake Baptist Church’s dining hall. All are invited to attend. Sabbath School and Song Service 9:30–10:45am, Worship Service 11am–12:15pm. Pastor - Wilbur Atwood; Lay Pastors - James Hartley and Ryan Bunnel.

Fort Payne, Alabama
Since 1889, worshippers have gathered at the **Historic First Presbyterian Church PC (USA)** at 300 Grand Avenue North. We invite you to join us for worship this Sunday at 10:55am. 256-845-2915.

The **Fort Payne Christian Center** and Pastors Ken and Elaine Hollman invite everyone to join in Worship on Sunday at 10am, Wednesday evening at 6pm. 3610 Grand Ave. SW. 256-997-0047.

First United Methodist Church offers a Contemporary Worship service at 8:30am and a traditional service at 11am on Sundays. 206 Grand Avenue North. 256-845-1141. fpfumc.org

Grace Presbyterian Church (PCA) invites you to Sunday School at 9:45am; Sunday Worship at 10:55am. 256-845-4756. 5760 Gault Ave. NE.

Gravel Hill Baptist Church welcomes you to Sunday School at 10am & Worship Service at 11am each Sunday. All are welcome. Wednesdays at 6pm, we have supper and a brief devotional time together. Pastor George Moses. 14701 Hwy 11 South.

Highland Baptist Church welcomes you to join us for Sunday Morning Worship Service and Youth Sunday School from 10am-11am. We are located at 2004 Clark Ave. Follow us on Facebook @highlandbaptistfp for updates and events!

New Oregon United Methodist Church is located just off DeSoto Parkway, 1/4 mile south of Fischer Crossroads. We invite you to worship with us on Sundays. Our worship services are at 11am and also on Sunday evenings in the Chapel 6pm. You can also worship with us on-line @ facebook.com/neworegonumc. We have Wonderful Wednesdays during the school year with Bible studies for all ages meeting at 6pm in the Family Life Center. Pastor Ian Conerly. 1204 New Oregon Drive NE. 256-845-7446.

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church holds Sunday mass in English at 10am and 1pm in Spanish. Tuesday at 6pm in English, Wednesday at 5pm bilingual, Thursday at 6pm in English, Friday at 9am in English and Saturday at 6pm in bilingual. 2910 Gault Ave. N. 256-845-4774.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church holds regular Worship Services at 10am Sunday. Clifford Herd, Pastor. Everyone is welcome. 1519 Smith Gap Road (County Road 85). 256-845-4842.

St. Stephen Anglican Church invites you to attend service on Sunday mornings at 1pm. Sunday School is at Noon. 1519 Smith Gap Road NW. Father Rodney Jackson, 205-405-0055; Deacon Jack Gilbreath, 256-845-2605.

Walnut Grove Baptist Church, on Highway 11 north of Fort Payne, welcomes everyone at Sunday School 10am, Worship Service at 11am, Wednesday night youth meeting at 6pm, and Wednesday night Prayer Meeting at 6:30pm. 3606 Greenhill Blvd NW. 256-996-0929.

Cloudland, Georgia
Cloudland Presbyterian Church welcomes everyone to come join us for services, with Pastor Jan Warren-Taylor. Bible Study Sunday at 9am (EST) and Worship at 10am (EST). 150 Partain Road.

Menlo, Georgia
Alpine Community Church Pastor Jeremy Stroop welcomes each and everyone to worship service Sunday mornings at 11am GA time; Sunday School 10am (EST); and Wednesday night Bible Study at 7pm (EST). 1104 Hwy. 337, Menlo GA. 706-862-6641.

Menlo Church of Christ invites you to attend 10am (EST) and 11am (EST) Sunday services and evening services at 5pm (EST) on Sundays and Wednesdays. Visitors are always welcome.

Menlo Presbyterian Church (ECO) invites everyone to attend services with us. Sunday School at 10am (EST) and Worship Service at 11:15am (EST). Rev. Jan Taylor is our pastor. We are located at 70 North 6th Ave., next to the park in Menlo.

Summerville, Georgia
Redemption Worship Center invites you to “Find Love, Encouragement, & Purpose!” Wednesdays: Hour of Power Bible Study 6:30pm (EST); Chosen Generation Youth 6:30pm (EST). Sundays: Sunday School 9:30am (EST); Morning Celebration 10:30am (EST). Pastors Dr. David & Penny Reeves. 174 West First Avenue. 706-808-0909.

Summerville Seventh Day Adventist Church invites you to worship with us. Saturday morning Sabbath School classes at 9:30am (EST) and Worship Service at 11am (EST). Everyone is welcome. Services are held at the First Presbyterian Church, 116 College Street. The Pastor is Dr. Edward Skoretz. summervillesda.com.

Please send any changes to The Groundhog at groundhognews@yahoo.com or P.O. Box 387, Mentone, AL 35984.

In Memoriam



DAVE BURL BLALOCK
April 26, 1938–August 27, 2022
Dave Burl Blalock, age 84, of Mentone, joined his Lord and Savior and bride of 64 years Bobbie Yvonne on Saturday, August 27, 2022. Dave was a well-known carpenter for over 55 years. He loved working with wood, building handicap ramps along with anything he could do for the Lord. Being on the farm, Alabama football, and front porch sitting with family were some of his favorite things. Dave was proud of his salvation and knowing where he was going to spend eternity. He loved being a member of two wonderful churches, Minvale Baptist (Ft. Payne) and Lea’s Chapel (Hammondville) for over 25 years. Anyone who knew Dave would tell you he was the finest man they had ever known. “One of a kind.”
Dave was the son of the late Frank and Lucille Blalock. He was preceded in death by his brothers, Joe, Willie, and Hubert Blalock; and sisters, Mary Sue Hale, Kathryn, and Lois Jean Blalock.
He is survived by his daughters Susan Flynn (Ralph), Sherri Nichols (Neal), and Charlotte Dennis (Clay); son, Heath Blalock (Bridgett); sisters, Irene Willingham, Hazel Hilliard, and Kathy Wheat;
Brother, Bobby Blalock; grandchildren, Chrissie Watson (Heath), Chase Flynn (Jennifer), Palmer, Morgan McKenzie (Anthony), Ryan, John David, Blaze, Aryan, Zach, and Taylor; and great-grandchildren, Arabella, Olivia, Molly Grace, Norah Claire, Amber, Tayler, and Ashelyn.
Burial was at Bankhead Cemetery in Mentone.
In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to Mentone Community Church “Community Meals” (90 Summerville Road, Mentone, AL 35984) or Hospice of Alabama (266 Industrial Dr. Rainsville, AL 35986).



FELIX BEENE
November 23, 1949–August 23, 2022
Felix Beene, age 72, of Chattanooga, TN passed away Tuesday, August 23, 2022. He was born November 23, 1949, in Attalla, AL to the late Paul and Corrine Beene. Felix had a strong love for God, his family, and country. He was a United States Marine serving as a Helicopter Crew Chief in the Vietnam War where he received multiple medals and honors for his service. Felix went on to found and operate several businesses in the transportation and logistics industry for many years. He was a selfless, hardworking man who enjoyed the simple things in life. He will be missed tremendously by his family and friends.
He is survived by his children, Felicia Chesser (Brian), Jason Beene, and Scott Kyle (Tara); grandchildren, Britt Houston (Ashlyn), Ashley Guffey (Zac), Alexa Chesser, Anson Beene, Jade Buford (Brandon), and Kayleigh Kyle; and great-grandchildren: Briley Houston, Garrett Houston, and Wyatt Guffey.
He was preceded in death by his parents, Paul Beene and Corrine Beene, and daughter, Tracy Lynn Beene.
He was buried at Beene Cemetery in Hammondville with Military Honors.



IT IS NOT IN DOING WHAT YOU LIKE,
BUT IN LIKING WHAT YOU DO
THAT IS THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS.
—J.M. Barrie



Adventures with Carla & Malu by Cat Findley

In August, Valley Head resident Cat Findley began hosting two foreign exchange students—Malu from Brazil and Carla from Italy. The high school seniors will attend Valley Head High School for the 2022–2023 school year. Cat will be sharing her adventure with the girls with Groundhog readers in a monthly column.

What a whirlwind! Both girls have arrived and I think all three of our heads are spinning! Got them safely home from the airport and we’ve been going nonstop. The carefully prepared and decorated bedroom is now filled with excited and often exhausted teens and their possessions. My kitchen snack table and mini fridge are in full service to them and their friends. School schedules are set and, three days into it for Malu and six days for Carla, it’s starting to feel like we have a bit of a routine.

Mere days after just arriving, it was time for the high school football game. Football is a big deal here and it seems that our whole little community of Valley Head gets involved. After my kids graduated, I assumed I was done with high school football! After the game, the girls when to a local restaurant as is apparently the local custom. Then, they came to the house to hang out.

Besides the snack table, I’ve attempted to fill our house with fun things from streaming movie channels, disco lights, a karaoke machine and both indoor and outdoor games. From the day the girls arrived, our home has been full of friendly teens. I couldn’t be happier about it! Since I live alone (until now!) I don’t have to worry about anyone’s peace being disturbed by giggling teens up late at night. I absolutely love

having a house FULL and my sincere hope is that our local teens will feel welcome, comfortable and loved, hanging out at home.

Yesterday, when I got home from work, both girls were asleep. I think they’ve hit a wall. The exchange program told us we could expect it. Their brains have to process a foreign language from the time they wake up until the time they go to bed at night. They are mentally and emotionally exhausted. They love their new school and friends but I know it’s overwhelming. Honestly, I feel the same. I’ve prepared for them to be here for months and now I hope and pray they will find their way. It was also suggested that I be ready for homesickness. It hasn’t happened yet, but we’ve talked about it and I think we’re as prepared as we can be when it does hit.



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Ruby O'Rear's Days Come to Life

SEPTEMBER 1937

September 1, Wednesday, 1937
Sunshine & showers
Mother up most of day. Went into living room several times. Helen & Eula peeled potatoes for soup mixture. Gathered bushel & peck tomatoes & some beans & greens. Canned 9 qts. soup mixture. Mr. Shigley came over & measured for roof to see amount of trim needed.

September 2, Thursday, 1937
Warmer & didn't rain so much to-day.
Eula came over. Snapped beans & talked to Mother. They had a big time. Then Mother slept a long time. Canned 7 qts. tomatoes, 5 qts. beans & 2 qts. baked apples. Helen went for mail.

September 3, Friday, 1937
Fair most of the day. Only sprinkled a little.
Jessie washed. Mother up all morn. Walked into living room several times. Helen helped Jessie wash & they got thru about 2:00. I got dinner. Went to garden in p.m. Mr. Yarbrough left last nite for Ark. to pick cotton.

September 4, Saturday, 1937
Rainy in P.M.
Mother talked about Uncle Harry all day. She had dreamed that he was coming to Mentone. Fixed present (pot holder) for Gracie's shower but it was rainy and I didn't go. Made about a qt. of catfish. Helen ironed. Paul took her home in p.m.

September 5, Sunday, 1937
Fair & warm in morn, rainy in p.m.
Paul & J.B. went to Mentone. Brot back bu. tomatoes from garden. I walked to S.S. [Sunday school]. Saw Dewey Harrison & his wife at Clyde's. Rode back with Clara. Helen came back fairly early. Paul & J.B. went to Mentone. Oscar Scott & James Strickland had trouble.

September 6, Monday, 1937
Showers.
Went to garden & got bu. of tomatoes & some turnip greens. Ethel & A.J. came while I was there & got bu. & pk. of tomatoes. Paul brot things back in car. This p.m. canned 9 qts. soup mixture & 3 qts. turnip greens. Got some turnips for cow. Eula came by. Heard that Clara Crabtree had baby but it died.

September 7, Tuesday, 1937
Didn't rain any to-day. Rather warm.
Mother felt about as well as usual. Went into living room. I canned 5 qts. tomato juice & 3 pts. watermelon preserves. Helen killed chicken. Jessie went to Dan's to meet J.B. Cooked chicken, baked cake after she got back. Mr. Charlie Smith & Odie brot 2 cords wood. Edgar was with them.



September 8, Wednesday, 1937
Warm. Sprinkled a little in p.m.
Made catsup this morn & fixed some more tomatoes for more catsup. Canned 2 qts. green tomatoes, pepper. Helen went for mail. Jack & Helen washed their hair. I went to garden & picked dried beans. Mother ate her supper in living room.

September 9, Thursday, 1937
Cloudy in morn but cleared up in p.m. without raining.
Jessie washed. I got dinner. Canned some catsup & watermelon rind preserves. Mother walked into living room 3 times. Had us sing. Got letter from Cousin Ella with pictures of old brick house. Went to garden & picked 2 bu. of tomatoes to sell & bucket of ripe ones. Finished canning.

September 10, Friday, 1937
Cloudy and rainy all p.m.
Mother rested well last nite. I got up fairly early. Put on some tomatoes & beets to cook & went to garden for tomatoes & turnips. On way home met Miss Pearl Hudson. She had been to see Mother. Came home, canned 1 pt. hot pickles & 5 qts. tomato juice.

September 11, Saturday, 1937
Rained in nite. Cleared off. Warm to-day but cool (64) tonite.
Paul came home this morn. We fixed calf pasture. Paul & A.J. came over & she got some of her things. Said they had been married several weeks. She's keeping house now. Scrubbed kitchen. Washed my hair. Jessie & Paul went to Mentone.

September 12, Sunday, 1937
Fair & cooler.
Went to S.S. & church at Wesleyan. Came back with Clara Green. Heard that Clara Crabtree's mother was dead. Gordon & Georgia came to see Mother.

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 month of September, 1937.

Paul & J.B. got a few more melons. J.B. taught Helen to ride bicycle.

September 13, Monday, 1937
Fair. Warm during day but cooler tonite than usual.
Mother slept quite a bit today. Went to garden & picked rest of dried beans. Heard that Geneva Hulkan was sick again. Hoed potatoes. Ras Perkins came over & paid rent \$12.

September 14, Tuesday, 1937
Temp 43 this morn but went to 70 or above.
Finished hoeing potatoes. Went for mail & got turnips. On to Mrs.

Yarbrough's. Mr. Bain going to carry off load tomorrow. I went back to garden. Picked ½ bu. beans & picked some tomatoes for Ethel.

September 15, Wednesday, 1937
Temp 46—nearly 80
Jessie finished Mary Jo's dress & sent it off. Lee Rose & Jack came by. Lee was wanting us to build him a house. Eula came over. I mopped our room. Went to garden, gathered tomatoes, beans & greens.

September 16, Thursday, 1937
Fair in morning & warm. Dark cloud came up in p.m. & it rained some.
26 years ago Papa died.

Started painting floor in our room. Helen went for mail. Got her guitar. Eula came over. Brot Mother some peas and corn. J.B. rode bicycle from Mentone.

September 17, Friday, 1937
Fair & pleasant tho cool in p.m.
Mother walked out in yard. First time in over a year, tho we carried her out in chair in spring. Painted some more on floor. Went for mail, on to Mrs. Yarbrough's. She was not at home. Came home & went to Lilly Smith's for apples. A.J., Paul and Sammy came over.

September 18, Saturday, 1937
Temp 44 last nite but warm today.
Went to Mrs. Yarbrough's this morn. Back by garden. Cow got into field. Billy E. & Jack spent day with J.B. Eula & Jodie came over. Jodie went on to store & Eula stayed. Knitted some. Baked cake. Painted some more on floor. Helen went home. Paul came home tonite. Mother walked into yard again.

September 19, Sunday, 1937
Fair & warm.
Paul & J.B. went to Mentone then I went to S.S. Rode back with Clara. Paul & I went to Sand Mt. Ethel Green went with us to show us the way to Mrs. Adams & to see Mrs. Everett. Ethel came over & stayed with Jessie while we were gone then Hope & Sonny came for her. Merlin & Joseph came by.

September 20, Monday, 1937
Fair & warm. Temp 80 or above.
I went over to Eula's to get her to help.

Jessie was quiet (??) Helped her pick some green peas. Jessie & Eula washed 11 quilts & 3 comforts. Done by 3:00 so Jack & Paul went to Mentone & got J.B. then to Horace Jones & got bu. apples. Clyde Hazel's wife & children came down to see me.

September 21, Tuesday, 1937
Fair & warm. Temp above 80.
Quilts all got dry to-day. I finished painting floor except under stove. This p.m. I went to Ethel's & picked peas for about an hr. When I got home Mother had gone into kitchen & was lying on J.B.'s bed.

September 22, Wednesday, 1937
Fair & warm
Jessie washed. Helen & I got dinner. Painted floor under stove. I went to garden & helped Bain boy pick beans. He got 1 bu., some bunch & some pole. Then picked 1 pk. tomatoes for Ethel & some for us.

September 23, Thursday, 1937
Fair, warm but windy
After Mother was up & had breakfast & gone back to bed about 9:30, I went to creek to wash sacks. Washed 8 short sacks, 2 sugar & 7 guano. After 2:00 when I got done.

September 24, Friday, 1937
Fair, warm. Temp about 80.
Eula came over. Helen, Jack & I went to Lahusage for muscadines. We all got 3½ gal. Came back, ate dinner & went to missionary meeting at church. Ethel & I walked to Will's then rode on in Horace's car.

September 25, Saturday, 1937
Warm but clouding up.
Jessie washed some this morn. Mother up most of time till 11:00. Then rested well since then. Paul & J.B. went fishing. Caught 5.

September 26, Sunday, 1937
Cool and cloudy
Mother rested well today. I went to church and wore rain coat & dark shoes & hat. Mother up quite a bit last nite. Didn't get her settled in time to go to S.S. Frank preached a good sermon on holiness. Helen went to Dan's soon as I got home. In p.m. I went to garden to pick tomatoes. Hope, Faye & Ethel came by. I rode with them. Hope & Faye stayed a while – went on. Paul, A.J. & Mason came for Ethel.

September 27, Monday, 1937
Clouded up in nite after clearing off late yesterday then cleared off & cooler
Mother up quite a lot. Had us sing & play lots. Paul & Jessie didn't leave till 9:00. Took supper with Hope & Faye. Helen & I fixed muscadines & cooked them.

September 28, Tuesday, 1937
Fair & cool. Temp 39
Jessie made muscadine marmalade & canned hulls. James B. had to stay home from school ... had eaten too many muscadines. I went to garden. Got turnips for cow. Went on to Mrs. Yarbrough's. Separated pigs this p.m. J.B. went to Dan's on wheel.

September 29, Wednesday, 1937
Fair & warmer
Clyde Rose came down & stayed quite a while. Mother said she did not want any trees on King field cut & no house built on that land.

September 30, Thursday, 1937
Fair, pleasant
Killed hen & put her on to cook then went to garden & got vegetables. Eula came by in p.m. Jessie cooked. Had Paul, A.J. Mason & Ethel over for dinner. They didn't get here till nearly dark. Stayed till 9:00 or later.



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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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Moon Lake Gym Sees New Life:

Terrence Hill Basketball by Kelly Leavitt

The gymnasium at Mentone’s Moon Lake School sat unused for nine months after the school was closed in May 2021. One man’s vision has brought it back to life, and the sound of children once again fills the air.

Terrence Hill has opened a sports training facility with a focus on basketball, and since February has worked with about 80 youth from Mentone and beyond. “I have also started working exclusively with Valley Head’s girls’ basketball program to help improve their program and potentially push them in the direction of a state championship,” he said.

Terrence was born in Collinsville and moved with his family to Fort Payne as a young boy. In 2000, he graduated from Fort Payne High School, where he was a standout basketball player for the Fort Payne Wildcats. As a senior, his team won 33 of the season’s 35 games.

He attended Southern Union Community College on a basketball scholarship before transferring to Georgia’s Kennesaw State University, also on a basketball scholarship, to play with the Kennesaw State Owls. While earning a degree in sociology, he led the Owls to the 2004 NCAA Division II Men’s Basketball national championship.

“After college, I was blessed to try out for eight National Basketball Association (NBA) teams before being drafted into the NBA G League, formerly known as the NBA Developmental League,” Terrence said. “Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Budapest Hungry, Chile, and Mexico are a few places that basketball and sports granted me an opportunity to visit.”

In the early 2000s, Fort Payne rewarded him with a key to the city. In 2012, he was inducted into the DeKalb County Sports Hall of Fame and in 2016 he was inducted into the Kennesaw State Sports Hall of Fame.

After earning his master’s degree in Business Administration in 2021, he pursued his dream of having his own training facilities. This was the birth of Terrence Hill Basketball (THB).

“Sharing time between local gyms in Georgia and the Wills Valley Rec Center in Fort Payne, my dreams gradually started manifesting,” he said. “Little did I know that more blessings were in the foreseeable future. One of those blessings came in the form of Moon Lake Elementary Gym.”

Abbigail Davis was the connecting point between Terrence and Mentone. After her children attended a training camp with Terrence in Fort Payne in 2021, she asked him if he coached players individually. Through the course of conversation, she mentioned that she had heard that the gym was available to rent.

Terrence has secured a lease with the Town of Mentone for the gymnasium, now a part of Moon Lake Village. Use of the facility allows him to teach individual and group sessions in the evenings and on weekends during the school year.



Terrence Hill practices skills with a young player from the Better Self Academy, a group who came to THB from Atlanta this summer.



First day of Terrence Hill Basketball summer sports camp, July 2022

“I’ve been blown away by the response,” Terrence said. “We’ve had the opportunity to work with kids from kindergarten to college from Collinsville, Fort Payne, Sand Rock, Ider, Scottsboro, Rome, Calhoun, Gadsden, Valley Head, Mentone, and more.”

Abby has become integral to the program. She books sessions, communicates with parents, helps manage social media, and more.

“Abby’s really been there for me,” said Terrence. “She’s our day-to-day person with everything. Honestly, I couldn’t have done any of this without Abby.”

Terrence lives in Acworth, GA, with his wife, Tatiana, and their 8-year-old daughter, Willow. He gives his wife much of the credit for the success THB has enjoyed so far. Tatiana works as a school counselor at four different schools each day and the couple will soon become foster parents. “In the future, we want to put something together where the mental health piece ties into sports,” said Terrence. We hope we can tap into that because it’s needed now, definitely needed.”

“Most Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays I travel the back roads to Highway 117,” Terrence said. “Any given Sunday you can find grandparents, mothers, fathers, kids, and local residents inside and outside basking in what we promote at THB.”

Abby lives in Valley Head with her husband, Cory Davis, and their three boys, ages 8, 6, and 3. She attended Moon Lake Elementary School for three

years before moving with her family to Rome, where her father was a teacher and coach. She returned to this area nine years ago.

“When I first went in the gym with Terrence, I pointed to a spot and said, ‘I remember sitting right here with my little CD player, listening to Britney Spears,’” Abby recalled.

Terrence has hired another trainer who attended Moon Lake School—Fort Payne Wildcats basketball standout Gage Jones.

Terrence began playing basketball thanks to the influence of his mother, Elaine Hill. “My mom said, ‘You either play sports, or you play sports.’ She pushed my brother and me into sports so we’d stay out of trouble. I fell in love with it. We played basketball, soccer, baseball, football, track. I tried tennis one time, but, honestly, I was horrible.”

Terrence has many ambitions for the future. His older brother lives in Fort Payne and is an avid soccer player who attended Wallace State College on a soccer scholarship. “I want to bring him up here to offer soccer lessons for the kids in the area,” he said. “Once this program is more cemented, I want to bring in basketball players I know from Chile, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, and Budapest, and have their teams come here, and vice versa. We have big plans with this. Actually, huge plans with this. It’s about connecting the dots at the right time.”

The community will also benefit by being able to use the gym. A pickleball court has recently been added and the gym is available for walking laps. Yoga may be offered soon. “We also hope to offer something like Zumba or Pilates—something that doesn’t require a lot of equipment,” Terrence said. “I think people will really enjoy that.”

“It takes a lot to fund a gym, with operating expenses and equipment,” Terrence said. “Once we extend to different services that might require different equipment to serve the whole community, that’s where we might need some financial help. We’re also looking for sponsors to help fund children whose families can’t afford training. We want everyone to be able to chase their dreams. That’s important.”

“Although my competitive basketball days are behind me,” Terrence said, “the same passion runs in me to help develop the skills of players who have aspirations of becoming better basketball players. My classes are geared toward meeting kids where their skills are and then building to help surpass their goals.”

“I have loved being with these kids, working for Terrence,” said Abby. “It’s one big family. Once you’re a part of it, you don’t want to leave. It sucks you in and it’s absolutely fantastic. It’s something I want my kids to be a part of, and something I want this community to be a part of. It’s amazing.”

You can find Terrence Hill Basketball on Facebook and Instagram. Terrence can be reached directly at terrencehillbasketball@gmail.com or 256-418-0349.

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