

FREE

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THE GROUNDHOG

“Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain”

December 2022

Moon Lake Library Becomes an Official Public Library

by Anne McLeod

It's official: Moon Lake Library in Mentone is joining the DeKalb County Library System as a full-fledged public library. The executive board of the Alabama Public Library Service voted at its meeting on November 17 to approve the library's application for state aid.

This will allow Moon Lake to receive funds from state, county, and federal sources. With the Town of Mentone's commitment of financial support and the donations and funds raised by the Friends of the Library group, the library is in a more secure financial position going forward.

Library board chair Holley Midgley said, "The whole board and librarian Anne McLeod have prepared for this for many months. This was really a group effort. We very much appreciate the town's support. When the school closed last year, a lot of folks were worried that the library would close too. It's great to be able to report that our library is not just surviving but is thriving. The state board was very positive about Moon Lake. We look forward to working with Alabama Public Library Service and being a part of the DeKalb system."

Because this announcement came in the week of the deadline for Groundhog articles, we will feature a more detailed article in January's issue about what comes next for Moon Lake Library.

4th Annual Mentone Christmas Tree Lighting

by Cynthia Stinson

Plan to come out and enjoy our community's Christmas Spirit! The 4th Annual Community Christmas Tree Lighting will be held Saturday, December 10 at 5 p.m. on the grounds of the Mentone Inn, at the corner of AL-Hwy. 117 and CR 89. Santa will make an appearance for the young and young-at-heart for photo ops. We'll enjoy cookies, hot chocolate, and caroling. The Mentone Ukes will perform a medley of Christmas songs for us. This year, the tree is being donated by the Rhododendron Garden Club. It will be a live tree, planted in the ground for future generations to enjoy.

The tree lighting participation has become larger every year. That being said, I am asking for help this year with donated lights (preferably LED), decorating, cookies, and hot chocolate.

If you would like to help please contact Cynthia Stinson at 256-634-4836 or email mentonechristmastree@gmail.com. Follow "Mentone Alabama Christmas Events" on Facebook.

Christmas Cantata

by Sylvia Wolcott



L to R, front row: Sylvia Wolcott, Linda Miller, Gelane Pullen, Kathy McMunn, Carolyn Hendon, Karen Holcombe, Beverly Haynes, Dianne Kuehl, Lynn Castleberry, Robert Wolcott;
L to R, back row: Kathy Schuldt, Walt Pullen, Glen Miller, Mike Bare, David Tucker, Johnny Harris, Doug Schuldt, Kayla Knopps. Not Pictured: Sydney Allen, Amamda Ditmore, Melodee Allen, Devan Jackson, Colton Ditmore, Noel Allen

The Mentone Messengers will be presenting a Christmas Cantata entitled "The Glory of Christmas" by Jimmy and Carol Owens. This will take place on Sunday, December 18, at 6 p.m. at the Moon Lake Baptist Church in Mentone.

You are cordially invited to share this evening of

celebration with us and then join us for a reception in the fellowship hall following the program.

We have enjoyed preparing this beautifully written cantata which contains a variety of captivating songs to help prepare hearts for the true message of Christmas.

DeSoto Rescue Squad Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

Saturday, December 3 • 8–11 a.m.
Mentone Community Church
90 Summerville Road, Mentone



DeSoto Rescue Squad is once again serving up a breakfast of pancakes, sausage, and hash brown casserole for dine-in or carry-out. Coffee and juice are available with dine-in. Tickets cost \$10/plate and are available at Little River Hardware, from a Squad member, or at the door.

Get your photo taken with Santa from 9 to 11 a.m.! The cost is \$5 for a 4"x6" photo.

For more information, please contact Captain Michael Stone at 256-755-1023.



MAPA: It's Been a Very Good Year

In 2022, the Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) celebrated 40 years of fulfilling its mission to preserve and protect the heritage, natural environment, and other unique qualities of life in the Mentone area. We've had an active and productive year, and we're very excited about the possibilities coming with the new year.

Some highlights of 2022:

- In June, it was decided that it is no longer possible to hold Colorfest on the brow due to traffic, safety, and parking concerns. As an alternative, the Town of Mentone graciously offered the use of Moon Lake Village.
- In July, the board elected Kelly Leavitt to the newly-created position of executive director with the goal of nurturing MAPA's rich history of community involvement and support.
- A generous donor provided funds to secure an office at Moon Lake Village (the former Moon Lake School campus). Volunteers cleaned and painted, and donations of furniture have helped us create a comfortable space where small meetings and Groundhog interviews can now take place.
- A dedicated Colorfest team was able to use the office as its headquarters in the months leading up to the festival. Thanks to Chris Davenport, Beverly Haynes, Dana Lockhart, and Jody Rhodes for their invaluable support as we navigated the logistics of hosting the festival at its new location.
- Colorfest fell on a weekend with perfect temperatures and stunning fall colors and it's estimated that we hosted 8,000 to 10,000 people. We've had enthusiastic feedback about the new venue, which provided space for people to meander

(continued on page 13)



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.

MAPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Kelly Leavitt EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Lynn Hixon, Anna Mae Horn,
Alyce Kenney, Juli Jordan,
Anne McLeod, Holley Midgley,
Sandra Monk, Angie Shugart,
Cynthia Stinson, Sylvia Wolcott

*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

The Farmers’ Telecommunications equipment building was lowered into place by crane. Work should begin soon getting the fiber optic cable around Mentone.

Unfortunately, Mentone was not awarded a grant in this cycle to build a charging station for electric vehicles. This grant was highly competitive and we will review our application to strengthen it to apply in the next cycle.

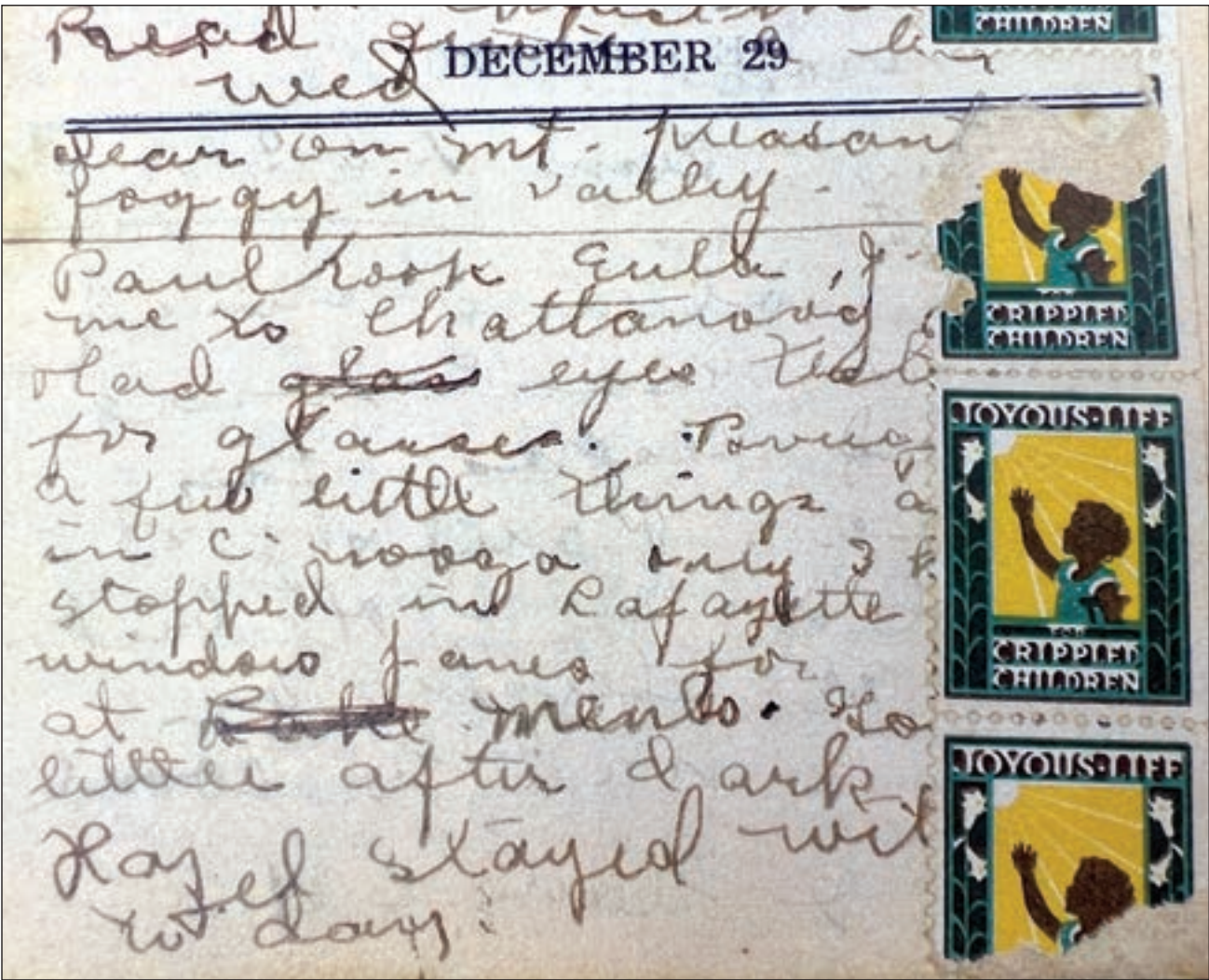
The town has begun the process to begin design work for Phase 2 of the Mentone sidewalk project. The town has chosen Ladd Environmental to do the design work. Ladd Environmental – Adam Lea, was our engineer for Phase 1.

As the 2022 draws to a close, I am thankful for the town employees who keep the Town of Mentone running—Town Clerk Kristen Emory, Chief Gene McGee and Officer Mike Langston, Zoning



Administrator Hershell Pruitt, Librarian Anne McLeod, and Moon Lake Village executive director Paul Nail. The town contracts with Steve Flanigan to maintain our town parks and the Moon Lake campus and with Alex Watters to maintain our town streets. Mentone is fortunate to have an outstanding volunteer fire department under the leadership of chief Joseph Lee and an outstanding rescue squad under the leadership of Mike Stone. Mentone would not be a great place to live without our volunteers.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and best wishes for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year!



From the Editor

by Kelly Leavitt

This month marks the end of Ruby O’Rear’s diary entries. Having transcribed so much of her writing over the past 17 months, I have begun to feel a bit of a kinship to her. Having spent time in her house with its newest owners, it’s become easy for me to picture her working in her garden, or singing to Mother in the living room, or canning fruit in her kitchen. I also enjoy reading about her sister, Jessie O’Rear Whitehead, a much beloved teacher from Mentone’s earlier days. I think we have all enjoyed Ruby’s reports on her cow’s escapades.

This month’s entries touched me. She was quite social. She seemed happy. She began reading *Gone with the Wind*, which had been published a year earlier, in 1936. She stitched a good bit, getting ready for Christmas giving. Unfortunately, two of the entries were illegible because some Easter Seals stamps became stuck to the pages. I’ve included the photo above so you can see her writing as well as the now-vintage stamps.

I have sometimes wondered if people have been reading her diary entries, and every now and then someone will tell me how much they enjoy them. They harken back to a simpler life, in the difficult years of the Great Depression. Ruby’s devotion to her mother, Alice Mason, who is credited with naming Mentone,

is extraordinary. Alice had suffered a stroke and required care, and Ruby offered it without complaint. According to Ernest Smith, “Alice’s daughters would... quote her as saying that she would much prefer to walk along the rocky bluffs of Lookout Mountain and be in awe of the grand vistas that lifts one’s soul than to gaze on the Taj Mahal or enter the palace of Versailles.”

Born in 1900, Ruby was in her late 30s when these diary entries were written. She lived to be 84 years old. Known for her love of flowers, it is said that she died after walking to Howard’s Chapel to deliver flowers for the Sunday service. Apparently, she sat down in one of the pews in the rear of the chapel and quietly passed away.

She was a true daughter of Mentone. I appreciate this month’s reprint from from the December, 1994 issue of *The Groundhog*, when folks reminisced about their Christmases in the early part of the 20th century.

This month, as we prepare for Christmas, perhaps their stories can help us to appreciate our abundance and let simplicity be our goal.

I hope you all have a wonderful month, filled with the love of family and friends, with charity and giving, and gratitude for the beauty of the season. —*Kelly*



“A Light in the Forest”

Artist Trés Taylor has generously designated 50% of the proceeds of the sale of this original painting to the Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) and 50% to Moon Lake Village.

Titled “A Light in the Forest,” the painting measures 36" x 48" and is on display in MAPA’s office at Moon Lake Village. It’s a great artistic addition to any mountain home!

Visit trestaylor.com/product-page/a-light-in-the-forest-36-x-48 for details. Thank you, Trés Taylor!

Do you like to write?

We welcome contributions!

Local stories, recipes, poetry, history, interviews . . .

Are you curious about a certain business in the Mentone area? Other than their opening hours, is there ever something you wonder, but don’t know the answer to? We haven’t covered businesses in quite a while, unless they have a historic significance, or are located in a historic building. Beginning in January, *The Groundhog* will begin featuring snapshots of area businesses, written by curious neighbors. Businesses from Hammondville, Valley Head, Mentone, Cloudland, and Menlo will be randomly chosen. Would you like to be a contributor? If you have a business in mind that you’re curious about and would like to know more, email groundhognews@yahoo.com

and we’ll discuss how to get you started—and make sure no one else has expressed interest in the same business. Submissions will be around 500 words—more of a personal narrative than a detailed report. A peek behind the curtain, so to speak. This idea is an outgrowth of the writers’ workshop *The Groundhog* started hosting in September. The group met again in November, and will meet once more in January. Some magical moments have occurred; writing is so often a cathartic activity. We’ll start another workshop series in February. If you’re interested in participating, email groundhognews@yahoo.com.



A Look Back...

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Remembering Christmases of Long Ago

by Dr. Pat Seymour

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 features voices who are sadly no longer with us. We're pleased that their childhood memories can live on...

When asked to think back through the years to their childhood and recall "Christmas the way it used to be," many Mentone citizens shared their memories with *The Groundhog*.

OLIVE JONES

The most exciting gift I ever received from Santa Claus was a 'By-Lo' baby doll with a china head and cloth body. I kept that doll for over 30 years, until Angela (Wood) was a baby. Mama was a good seamstress and made us clothes for Christmas. (Later, she even made my wedding dress.) My Grandmother Tannie, Daddy's mother in Jacksonville, Fla., would send strings of beads to me and my three sisters. We'd each pick one string that would be ours for Christmas. She also baked wonderful cookies for our holiday.



ALFRED CHAMBERS

We didn't have a tree, but when I was six, Santa brought me a red wagon. Up until then, there were no toys. Dad was a saw mill worker and a farmer. When I was eight years old, I was plowing with a mule. In 1930, Daddy got \$25 for 500 lbs. of cotton, so there wasn't money to buy toys. The first Christmas after Polly and I married, a relative gave us a dollar. I bought her a half-gallon sauce pan as a Christmas gift. There was no money, but a lady down the road had plenty of corn. She'd give me dinner and a bushel of corn when I worked all day for her. The corn brought \$1.00 or \$1.05 if you shopped in the local country store.

CLARA CASH

We lived on a farm when I was a little girl, and every Christmas, Daddy would cut down one of our pine trees. Mama would decorate it with popcorn strings and red and green crepe paper. There were no ornaments or lights. In my stocking, I would get clusters of raisins, an apple, an orange, and a candy cane. One Christmas, I received a little dining (tea) set, and when I was eight, I got a doll with a china head, only two teeth and blue eyes. Later, I got a 'Ma Ma Doll.' When you mashed a button on her stomach, she would say, 'Ma Ma.' I still have that doll, but she won't say, 'Ma Ma' any more. Guess she's worn out.



KATHRYN JONES

We lived on a farm, and the highlight of the holiday season was when Daddy cut down the tree and brought it home. Although the Christmas tree never had much on it, Mama would tie red crepe paper bows on the branches. At church, I would pick out what looked like the biggest, best present under the tree, but the gift always turned out to be a handkerchief! Mama was a teacher who saved chalk boxes. She'd put wheels on them, paint the boxes, and turn them into little cars for us to play with. There were three girls and two boys in my family, and each of us got walnuts, a peppermint stick, and an orange. Gifts were meager, but fun was ample. Mama made syrup candy, and we children would pull it into 'eating strings.'



MARGIE COOTS

We never had a tree. When I got older, I cut one for myself. We got apples, oranges, and a stick of candy at Christmas; no toys until I was about six or seven. We had a neighbor, Bamalene Brooks, who would let us wash her dolls' dresses. One Christmas, she gave my sisters and me a doll, and we took turns playing with it.

GERTRUDE COX

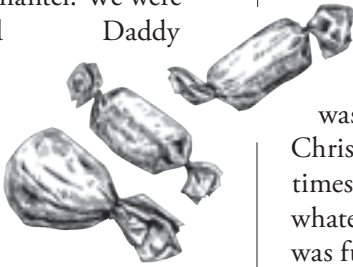
I was twelve before my brothers cut us down a Christmas tree. We had an apple, an orange, and a



couple of small toys in our stocking. Later, I got school clothes. One thing I remember about early Christmases was getting raisins on the vine to eat with English walnuts. That tasted delicious.

ALMA CRABTREE

I lived on a farm, and there were ten of us children. We hung our stockings on the mantel. We were nine miles from Valley Head, and Daddy drove a wagon pulled by steers when we went to town. It was dreadfully cold and seemed to snow every Christmas. There was one little store at Stamp, Ala., and I heard Mama and Daddy talking in the kitchen one Christmas Eve: 'We can't disappoint these children,' Daddy said. He tied tow sacks around his feet and walked to the store in the snow. Store keeper Gene Hall had only one box of stick candy, so each of us got a stick of candy for Christmas—no apple, no orange, no nuts. We didn't even have flour or sugar, but Daddy built a fire, and with some sugar grandmother had saved back, Mama made some gingerbread men and snakes. She also made popcorn balls and wrapped them in brown paper for our stockings. Mama and Daddy made tracks in the back to look like Santa had come!



LULA MCGEE BLALOCK

We lived on a farm, but we never had a tree. There were no toys, because we needed food more than we needed toys. I never had a doll until I married for the second time. I named her 'Yogunda,' a name I had heard on the radio. Mother and grandmother made all our clothes. We wore one dress to school and came home to put on a play dress.

POLLY CHAMBERS

Two of us girls slept in the same bed, and at Christmas, Mom would put whatever we got in our shoes at the foot of the bed. While Daddy worked at the Davis Mill, we got nuts, dolls, apples, oranges, hard candy, and different colored coconut

balls. When we moved to the mountain, we didn't have good Christmases any more. Daddy was now a farmer, and times were hard. Everybody was poor.



LELAND COX

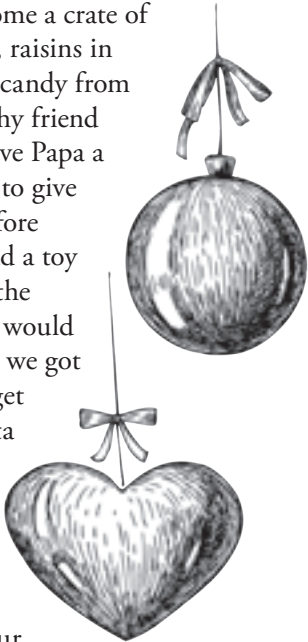
We always had a tree, whether there was anything to put under it or not. We'd hang our stockings up about a week early hoping somebody might slip in a piece of candy. One Christmas, my sister pulled a bad trick on me, and put a piece of coal in my stocking. When I felt it, I thought I'd gotten a big piece of candy. But—turned out to be a piece of coal. Talk about disappointed!

CATHERINE BAILEY

Christmas was always a happy, joyous time when I was a child. We didn't put up the tree until Christmas Eve, and that's when I hung up my stocking. Aunts and uncles always saw to it that I had an orange in the toe of my stocking, along with other fruits and nuts. I always got a doll, too. I guess I was lucky, because I never had a bad Christmas. My mind is filled with happy memories as I recall my early Christmases.

REV. EDMUND CROWE

We were a large family and didn't expect much in the way of gifts at Christmas. On Christmas eve, we would go to the woods, find a cedar tree, bring it in, put it up, and decorate it that day. Papa would bring home a crate of oranges, a crate of apples, raisins in the cluster, and nuts and candy from his store. We had a wealthy friend next door who usually gave Papa a check for enough money to give each child fifty cents. Before Christmas, we already had a toy or the like picked out in the Sears Catalogue. Mother would make out the order when we got our money. I'll never forget the Christmas when Santa brought me the 10¢ knife I had asked him to bring. Christmas morning, there it was in my stocking! Our Christmases were wonderful times at our house. Everyone was happy with whatever gifts they received. Most of all, our home was full of love and thanksgiving. Usually, Papa would go out on Christmas morning, point his 12-gauge shotgun upward, pull the trigger, and, boy, did we ever realize it was Christmas day!



SLIM EASIER

We lived on a farm when I was little, and there were ten of us children during the Hoover Days. Daddy worked for the W.P.A. for forty cents a day. Although we didn't have much, our home was filled with love and compassion. Since there wasn't money for toys, Mama would take ladies' long, black stockings to make the girls some dolls. She'd sew buttons on for eyes and a nose, and used strings of thread for the hair. Mama put up syrup, and when it turned to sugar, she'd make string candy we could pull. The best Christmas we had was one year when a neighbor gave us some fat bacon, strip bacon. My sister said, 'Goody, goody! I've got a whole piece of meat for Christmas.' Mama would dry apples and make us apple turnovers (with no sugar) for Christmas. After I reached age six, things got better, and wagon loads of friends would visit every Sunday.

Merry Christmas!

Ryleigh's Closet

December 19 will be the final open day at Ryleigh's Closet, a free clothes closet for children and adults. "After much prayer and consideration we think it is time to move on to other ministries and therefore we will be closing our doors permanently on December 19th," Gwen Stone posted on Facebook. "In the more than four years we have been open we have been blessed to be able to help

countless people in our community and beyond. Thank you to all those who have donated or helped in any other way. Love to all!" Ryleigh's Closet will continue to take donations in December, particularly coats. The Closet will be open on December 19 from 4 to 6 p.m. at Mentone Community Church. To learn more, call Gwen at 256-364-0150.

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Gayla Blalock Mark Hatfield Morgan Crane Marcia Tucker Christine Brooks Megan Kelley Donna Hearn		Keesha Burgess Reagan Owen Nathan Owen Olivia Burton Brandy Graham Waylon Durham		Isaac Crow Leon Crow Teah Landress		Melissa Claire Claire Wooten Carol Hensley Darlene Floyd	• • • • •	
2	Ladon Willingham Dwayne McKenzie Angel Baggett Brody Britton Jean Baker Hardman	8	Bailey Pryor Trish Clink Ross Hulgán	16	Lane Traffanstedt Jeff Pack Charlotte Goss Hailee Wells Eric Crane Raegan Flannigan	24	Caleb White Joe Kent Emma Lee Avion Gelfenstein Susie Southerland Sophia Sharp Anthony O'Shields	1	Cotton & Pam Baggett Hoyt & Helen Ashley Lamar & Cheryl King
3	Karen Saferite Austin Battles Angie Bell Young Dalton Bone Cherita Holman Beverly Haynes Mary Agricola	9	Brenda Kerby Kyle Freeman Mike Stone Dee Frost Genella Tolbert	17	Holly Williams Chris O. Smith Austin Black Jay Wagner	25	Mary Porter Irene Willingham Justin Easler Amanda Foote Logan Smith Adam Bethune Regina Totherow	2	Joe & Donna McClure
4	Lloyd McElhaney Nichole Williams Lydia Rastall Heath Blalock Raymond Beasley Easton Bailey Melissa Patton	10	Kevin Worthey Tammy Frost John Breithaupt Daniel Kilgore Jeremy Hart Darlene Swindall	18	Ashley Pounders Daniel Brown Scot Sharp	26	Jason Goss Melanie Hollis Avery Frazier Sheila LaRock Cat Findley	3	Walt & Shirley Zange
5	Jess Goggans Brian Howard Berkley Chambers Barbara Neel Avery Pepper Aero Potts Zack Peek Arrielle Turner Dylan Evans Micah Little Madison Broussard	11	Christine Ballenger Bryson Morgan Toni Freeman Hannah Blansit Christy Cordell Kaelan Shankles	19	Brynda Hopper Nick Hill Jake Nelson Jesse Bailey Tyler Gravitt	27	Melissa Shoults Houston Downer Jennifer Chambers Sally Wheat Cindy Lee Rachel Ford Madeline Taylor Sparrow Sizemore Carol Wilborn	8	Alvin & Sherry Durham
6	Austin Potts Judy Johnson Tonja Bell Sharon Crouch Mia Sweeney Chuck Williams Carson Wade Alex Easler Chris Carmichael	12	Valerie Logan Jeff Nelson Connie Nelson Waylon Collins Gwen Stone	20	Shelley Meadows Denise Carden Ann Dean Ilene Green Kopelyn Tedder Latina Battles Nancy Pendergrass	28	Avice Pearson Brooke Morris Elizabeth Russell Shawn Turner SaraDawn Langston Bamin	9	Jake & Melinda Easler Dennis & Amanda McDonald
7	Gavin Myers	13	Moria Potts Deborah Mason Crystal Poteat Jerrod Landers Hugh Don Henderson Kathy Nappier Tracey Davenport	21	Tyler Dean Jordan Hatfield Coby Harrison Lydia Roe Benny Graham Ronnie Brianna Williams Amanda Presson	30	Dawn Langston Ryley Chambers	12	Walter & Christine Brooks
		14	Ginny Zulker Jim Phillips Samuel Dobbins Patton Pridmore Nancy Bing	22	Remi Norsworthy Dale Howard William Beasley Briana Kilgore Ashlee Smith Weston Carter Bryan Roe Lorelai Chaney	31	Kiley Shankles Michael Kelley, Jr. Alicia Robertson	13	John & Jennifer Chambers
		15	Jessica Van Pelt Brody Baber Justin Shankles Ivy McCoy	23	Daniel Gray Aubrey Smith Steve Chandler			14	Benny & Brenda Goss Mike & Barbara Neel



Home for the Holidays

DeKalb Ambulance Service (DAS) is offering its “Home for the Holidays” program again this year. This program picks up a patient in a nursing facility and takes them home to be with their family on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. After the patient has spent time with their family, DAS will take them back to the nursing facility. This is free of charge to patients within the DAS service area of DeKalb County. There is limited space available and certain restrictions apply. If you think your family member would qualify for this program or for more information, contact DAS by phone at 256-845-4027, extention 101, or email at cheryl.turner@dasems.com.

You Give Me Strength

*Sometimes the road is long and weary.
Sometimes the load just can't be beared.
But that's when you are oh so near me.
My savior comes and meets me there.*

*You hold my hand through troubled waters.
You give me strength to carry on.
Dear Lord it's You. There is no other.
You are my strength. You are my song.*

*One day I'll be with You in Heaven;
No more to cry. No more to roam.
Yes you and I will be together.
Dear Lord in my Eternal Home.
Dear Lord in my Eternal Home.*

—submitted by Debbie Light of Summerville, GA ©2003



SOUTHERN PROPERTIES

Agency, Inc.

256-845-6000

www.southernpropertiesagency.com

311 Gault Ave. N., Fort Payne



THIS 3BR, 2.5BA HOME IS NESTLED IN MENTONE and sits on over an acre. Enjoy the covered front porch or enter the front door to be greeted by the two story stacked stone fireplace. Kitchen is equipped with custom cabinets and granite countertops. Master bedroom is located on main level and master bath includes a tub, separate shower and double vanities. Upstairs you will find a loft perfect for a game room, bunk room or a place where you can set up your own coffee bar and relax. Two additional bedrooms are located on the 2nd floor. Enjoy your screened back porch with family and friends. \$529,900. #1816166





WELCOME HOME IN MENTONE! Enjoy country living in this cute 2 bed-room home. Features include screened porch, office, living area with concrete floor, hardwood floors in kitchen and main level. Breakfast nook and plenty of storage. Call today and make it yours! \$299,000. #1820379



LOTS & LAND
MIDDLE FORK of Little River, Approx. 6 acres. \$48,900. #1034997
200 ACRES located near historic Mentone! Mature trees, creek, paved road frontage. \$1,000,000. #1781133
BEAUTIFUL BROW property located in Lake of the Brow. Enjoy



THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS! Located in Mentone town limits. Well-maintained home built in 2003 offers 3 BR, 2 BA, living/dining combo, kitchen overlooking backyard, laundry room & office/flex room. Master is complete with vaulted ceiling, arched window, walk in closet & ensuite w/ jetted tub! Covered front porch looks on to front yard w/ large shade trees. Covered back porch faces wooded back yard. Workshop, brand new roof & HVAC. .52 acres. \$285,000. #1816692

beautiful views of Shinbone Valley below. \$79,900. #1792283
BUILD YOUR NEW HOME with BREATHTAKING VIEWS year round! Brow property in Lake on the Brow on Lookout Mountain. \$55,000. #1798542, #1798643, #1798655, #1798657
MENTONE PROPERTY offers



A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE YOUR OWN WEDDING VENUE! Fernwood of Mentone is fully operational with a lovely wedding chapel that has been the setting of many intimate weddings. It also has a premier reception venue w/ large entertaining area with vaulted ceilings. Equipped with full commercial kitchen, dressing room, bathrooms & spectacular wrap around porch perfect for entertaining. \$699,000. #1816321

road frontage on Hwy 117 in the business/alcohol district. A rare opportunity as this is one of very few available vacant lots in this area! \$75,000. #1801221
AMAZING VIEWS! Live in PARADISE with your 2nd or retirement home on the brow of Lookout Mountain at Mentone Bluffs in Mentone. \$85,000.

#1807457
TAKE A LOOK at this 3 acre lot with gorgeous rock formations, view and a cave! \$59,900. #1810224
THREE ACRE lot in a natural setting. Enjoy listening to the sounds of the creek. Close to DeSoto State Park. \$59,900. #1810232
BROW LOT in Mentone! Watch the seasons change from your own paradise between DeSoto State Park and DeSoto Falls. \$149,000. #1815139
BROW VIEW in Mentone! You can see for miles from your 2.3 acres!! \$75,000. #1814577
ACREAGE IN MENTONE. 10-acre tract on one of the highest points in Mentone is wooded and secluded. Power & water available on the road. Property has had a perc test for septic tank and has a beautiful homesite. \$99,900. #1816638
GREAT POSSIBILITIES! This Mentone property offers road frontage on Cove Road in the business/alcohol district. A rare opportunity as this is one of very few available vacant lots in this area! Also adjoins a lot that fronts AL Hwy 117. #1801378



Sunday, September 11 at 2 p.m.

Moon Lake Library turned 20 this year, so we can't let 2022 get away without a very special holiday celebration and open house. Join us as on Sunday, December 11 at 2 p.m. as we acknowledge the extraordinary people who made Moon Lake Library a reality. It's a testament to the community spirit of Mentone that its citizens completed such an ambitious undertaking. Planning, fundraising, networking—that hard work paid off as they created a library the town can be proud of. There will be treats and music by the Mentone Ukes. The event is open to the public, and we hope you'll join us on this special day.

Jack Campbell Golf Classic Donates to Library

The Annual Jack Campbell Golf Classic is held in memory of Mike Campbell's father. Family and friends from all over the southeast come to Mentone each October for the two-day tournament played at Lil Mole Run Golf Course. The funds raised from this year's tournament were donated to Moon Lake Library.

L to R: Mike Campbell, owner Mentone Inn; Cynthia Stinson, business partner and Innkeeper; Holley Midgley, chair of Moon Lake Library Board



Covid Testing Available at Moon Lake Library

by Anne McLeod

Free COVID-19 self-swab testing is now available at Moon Lake Library in Mentone! We are excited to partner with Color Health and the CDC to offer free, easy to access COVID-19 testing for our community. Moon Lake Library will provide self-swab lab test kits onsite on Tuesdays through Thursdays from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. Patients can pick up a free test kit curbside, swab themselves, and drop off their kit at our site collection bin all in the same visit—and receive their results via text in around 48 hours.



Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible for this free testing program?
Anyone who is:
• Immunocompromised or high risk because of diabetes, hypertension, obesity, or other medical issues
• Pregnant
• Symptomatic—congestion, fever, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, etc.
• Exposed to someone who has tested positive
We cannot issue tests for travel or employment purposes.

How does the library minimize exposure risk for library patrons and staff?
If you know you've been exposed or are symptomatic, you can pick up the test curbside. We recommend that those wanting a test park in the parking lot during testing hours and call the library at 256-634-2127. We'll bring a test out to you at your car, answer any questions about registering your test kit for online notifications of results. After swabbing, just put the swab in the container and return it to the ziploc bag. Then place the bag in the dropbox beside the library door. We'll take it from there!

What kind of test is this?
We offer molecular COVID-19 tests (LAMP). Similar to PCR tests, LAMP tests are highly sensitive and accurate. LAMP tests can also be more accurate than antigen tests, especially for people without symptoms.

What do I need to bring with me when I test?
• A mobile phone number that can receive text for your results
• An email address for reporting test results
• If you have insurance, bring your insurance card. If you don't have insurance, it's not a problem. This is a free testing program.

If you have additional questions, call the library at (256) 634-2127 or email books@moonlakelibrary.org.

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December 2022
@ Moon Lake Library

December 2 • 6 p.m.
Family Game Night returns! Bring a snack to share and we'll enjoy board games at the library.

December 3 & 17 • 10:30 a.m.
Little Library Learners—stories and crafts for children ages 3–7.

December 3 & 17 • 1 p.m.
Mentone Ukes offer free ukulele lessons for all experience levels.

December 10 • 10:30 a.m.
Moon Lake Library book club monthly meeting where we'll share great books we've read lately.

December 11 • 2 p.m.
Holiday Open House and Moon Lake Library's 20th Birthday Celebration, with music from the Mentone Ukes.

December 24 and 31
Library closed for the holidays on Saturdays.
Regular hours Tuesday-Thursday.

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Mentone Educational Resources Foundation

by Anna Mae Horn



On December 7, Christmas lunch for our senior bunch promises to be a fun time! We'll start with a game of Bingo at 10:30 and have a Christmas carol or two, if time permits, before our 11:30 serving time. After lunch, Santa will be available for free pictures and maybe even a surprise for the guests. After all, you never know what the holidays will bring. Moon Lake Baptist Church continues to be a gracious host allowing us to use their fellowship hall for lunches.

The fall senior lunches were a great success. We had between 30 to 40 guests at each lunch meal! We shared laughter, songs, random facts, games, funny poems, musical cow bells, and delicious food. We've lost a few



Megan Halderman and Kaleb McMunn making melodies with a "little" help.

of our senior lunch regulars this season. They are sorely missed but live on through memories made around the lunch tables. The bonds made while sharing a meal and a conversation are a blessing.

During this season of gratitude, MERF would like to express its sincerest appreciation to all who make our programs possible. Donors, kitchen elves, camps, churches, restaurants, and individuals contribute in ways that make it possible for us to coordinate resources to enrich the living and learning of our community. We are grateful for each life we get to touch. Besides senior lunches and scholarships, MERF provides snacks and an indoor play area for MERF moms (a toddler group). We also enjoy touching the lives of students through theatrical productions, enrichment items, field trips and, of course, Ms. Paula's art and music class. The students and Ms. Paula are so very fond of each other. I enjoy seeing

the students' outstretched arms reach for her as a big smile comes across her face and lights up the room.

Blessings abound this season and throughout the year. Let us be thankful for one another and for the ability to bring such wonderful activities to our community. MERF is not simply a group of board members; MERF is a combination of effort between community members to enrich the lives of their neighbors. Thank you each and every one for making all of our achievements possible.

Mentone Educational Resources Foundation is a nonprofit organization whose mission is "to enrich the learning and living of the community by identifying needs and coordinating resources." If you would like to support MERF's programs, tax-deductible donations can be mailed to P.O. Box 107, Mentone, AL 35984 or contribute online at MERFhouse.org.

Anna Mae Horn is the executive director of the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation. She can be reached at 256-635-8775 or merf.mentone@gmail.com.



Sylvia Walcott playing the cow bells

Sue McLaurin Henry Memorial Scholarship

Applications are due by Monday, December 5, 2022.

If you are eligible, do not miss this opportunity!

Applicant requirements:

- Full-time student enrolled in college
- Academic, technical, or dual enrollment
- 2.8 GPA minimum
- Have a financial need
- Reside in Mentone or Valley Head

Applications are available at merfhouse.org or your college/school counselor.

A Visit with Former Groundhog Editor Emily Smith

by Kelly Leavitt

Emily Smith recently contacted MAPA to become a member and to gift her children with Groundhog subscriptions. Emily served as *The Groundhog's* editor from October 1990 through August 1992, when the paper was entering its second decade. We had a brief chat and I enjoyed becoming acquainted.

Emily was a newspaper reporter for several years at the *Clarion-Ledger* in Jackson, MS. "When we moved to Mentone," she said, "Bernise Crow asked if I'd take over *The Groundhog*. So we moved the whole operation into my basement. I would type the copy, then I'd have to ride down to the newspaper in Summerville. They would typeset the copy, then I'd drive back to Summerville and do the paste-up."

Her husband, Tim, was the rector of St. Joseph's on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church, and their daughter was a student at Moon Lake Elementary School. Their



L to R: Charlie Smith, Marion Smith, Lyle Smith, Jason Smith, Wesley Smith, Em Smith Headley, Sylvia Headley, Emily Smith, Tim Smith, Emily Smith

sons went to school in Fort Payne.

"When we talk about the places that we've lived that they considered to be 'home'," Emily said, "they always say, 'Mentone.' They really loved it."

"My daughter Em had Bill Berry for two years, in 3rd and 4th grades. She's now gone on to get her

(continued on page 16)

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Mentone Arts Center

by Randy Grider

Happy Holidays! We start off the month with a festive event on Thursday, December 1 with an Open House from 10 a.m.–4 p.m., followed by an After Hours Social from 4–6 p.m. The Open House will feature cookies and hot cider during business hours, as well as discounts on some specialty items in the gallery and gift shop. We also welcome everyone to join us for our After Hours Social to enjoy holiday snacks and live Christmas music.

Christmas will also be the theme of the monthly “Music on the Mountain” songwriters’ series. Due to scheduling conflicts, the date of the event has changed to Monday, December 5 from 6:30–8:30 p.m. “Please join us for a night of Christmas music—sing along to some old-time favorites and listen to some original music written by local and regional songwriters,” said event coordinator Dee Dee Cooper. “We will also be collecting toys for Toys for Tots and canned goods for our local food pantry. Any donations are welcome and appreciated. We look forward to seeing everyone at our year’s-end Christmas event.” The free event is hosted by Mentone resident and award-winning singer-songwriter Craig Hendricks. Other singer-songwriters scheduled to participate include Stuart Douglas, Stanley; Cliff Abbott, Jon Kinsey, and Kris Nelson.



We also will host a special “Paint Like Bob Ross” painting class on Friday, December 16 from 5–9 p.m. Certified Bob Ross Instructor Gary Grider will lead the class in painting a Northern Lights-themed 16"x20" painting. The cost of the class is \$100 and includes all supplies. The class is limited to 12 students and we have only a few spots remaining.

For more information on these events or the art gallery, gift shop/information, which is located inside the Chuck Sennett Center for the Arts in the heart of Mentone, please see contact information below.

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



Please remember our area’s first responders when considering your seasonal donations.

DeSoto Rescue Squad
P. O. Box 517, Mentone, AL 35984

North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District
P. O. Box 154, Mentone, AL 35984

Valley Head Volunteer Fire Department
P. O. Box 126, Valley Head, AL 35989

Hammondville Volunteer Fire Department
37684 US Hwy. 11, Hammondville, AL 35989

Cloudland Volunteer Fire Department
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Menlo Volunteer Fire Department
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Farm Market

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WIDE OPEN VIEWS & A CHARMING, ONE-LEVEL COTTAGE, invite you to savor sunsets any time of year. There's no better view available on the market in Mentone right now! Once a part of a quaint "traveler's motor court," this stone & wood cottage retains much of its original character, enhanced by upgrades like gorgeous new kitchen cabinetry w/ granite counters & an exquisite, custom-built, rustic b'fast bar. Home is completely accessible & includes a barrier-free Master Bath. 2BR/2.5BA; dining area w/ stone fireplace (gas logs); sun room/den w/ mtn stone floors & a wall of windows to bring the view inside. Full, brow-side back porch. Courtyard; garage & detached 2-car carport. Plus shared guest house! \$495,000 (1821376)



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 or a manufactured home. You can stay in the mountains of Northeast Alabama, 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)



LOTS and LAND
JUST LISTED! 1.45 ACRES, WOODED, LEVEL, with underground utilities in place. Nestled into the rustic quietude of the Hunters Ridge, this is a fall property in the heart of the mountains. Build your cabin here, where you can get away from the noise & light pollution of the city and escape to the mountains! \$15,000. (1821465)
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)
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)
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)
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. Con-venient 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)



PRIVATE RETIREMENT RETREAT: 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. \$450,000 (1806766)



SOUTH COOL STREET COTTAGE. Just the right size for a cozy home, personal getaway or rental. 2BR/1BA, 600 sq ft. Low-maintenance exterior with metal roof & cement block construction. Interior is a "moment in time," with original, mid-60s simple-mountain-retreat vibe still intact. Reminiscent of the old Florida homes that have all but disappeared. The location is perfect for those who want to be in the heart of Mentone, but away from traffic. Farmers Market & downtown shops/eateries are only a pleasant walk away. Sit on the porch in late afternoon & watch the sunsets. Nice storage building w/ electricity for handyman shop or craft room. It's a cute little package in a COOL location. \$229,900. (1818317)



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!) Hard plank exterior w/ front & back composite porches. Interior features nice details like antique chandelier, crown molding; stone fireplace (gas logs); built-in line appliances (even the cookware is built-in!) & 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)



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)



PENDING!



PENDING!



PENDING!



PENDING!



A Christmas Prayer
May this season of Christmas
bring happiness to our homes,
peace within our lives,
and the love of Jesus in our hearts.

Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year
to you and yours
from the Mentone Realty Family





River Voice

by Angie Shugart



As 2022 comes to a close, I would like to give you an update on our year at Little River Waterkeeper and give you some things to look forward to in 2023. The biggest and most important focus of the year was to progress our Wild and Scenic Campaign. Education on the Partnership Model is crucial in moving forward and gaining support from members of the community, local and state leaders. It seems like everyone would love the idea of creating a cohesive, river management plan that would protect and enhance the overall water quality within the watershed but that isn't the case. There are concerns that a federally-funded program might take away local control. I think the biggest challenge is helping people realize that a National Wild and Scenic designation would not be a federal overreach, rather a partnership approach with a local committee working together, overseeing, and managing the river as a whole and through a well-thought out annual plan. Encouraging

our Little River communities to support a three-year study is the first step, but studying the river wouldn't necessarily be a guaranteed designation into the National Rivers System. It would, at the least, create a Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) that could be implemented regardless of designation. We view this as a tremendous opportunity to bring together communities along the river, state and federal agencies, river conservation groups, and outdoor recreation partners to celebrate and plan for the future of one of Alabama's truly remarkable rivers in a way that nationally highlights the recreation and tourism benefits of the area.

The year started out with a meeting with the Commissioner of Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). Since part of the West Fork of Little River runs through state property, we thought the park would be a powerful partner and getting the support of DCNR is important to the overall success of the project. My interpretation of the meeting between myself, the Commissioner, and two staff members from Alabama Rivers Alliance was positive until we received an email stating that it would not be in the best interest of DCNR to support designation on Little River. The same reaction was made by a member of the Mentone town council. Jack West of Alabama River Alliance joined me for a presentation at the February 2021 meeting where the request for a letter of support was denied.

We continued our two-year conversation with members of Alabama's Congressional delegation, keeping them updated on our gains (and losses). Overall, the staff at Congressman Rogers' and Aderholt's offices have indicated that they are supportive of the idea of carrying out legislation for

a study but encourage us to keep working to gain support from all stakeholders. Throughout the year, we have continued to work with state officials, county tourism boards, economic development organizations, and federal and state agencies to build momentum for this designation. Our most recent letter of support comes from the University of Alabama Center for Economic Development, where a study and protection through Wild and Scenic designation complement their goals for better access to outdoor recreation opportunities in the state.

The road to a Wild and Scenic designation is not an easy one. It will take time and money to see it through. We are committed to the effort for as long as it takes. Not everyone will be in favor of us but many will. During this time we will also work on creating better policy around land development in the Little River corridor. In 2023, we plan to put out a streamside assessment guide for landowners and a streamside protection best management practices manual. The goals are to: 1) reduce sediment runoff in Little River; 2) reduce flooding; and 3) protect the integrity of Little River.

The new year will also bring new board members. We are seeking to recruit new officers and members. If interested, please contact angie@littleriverwaterkeeper.org. The board of directors meets quarterly to discuss matters of the organization, plan and implement events, and work as a team to promote Little River Waterkeeper. It is a great way to network with environmentalists, creative thinkers and do-gooders, while learning about conservation efforts on a local and state level.

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

Meet Your Neighbor

by Thomas Hayes

At the end of a long, secluded gravel road, perched on top of the mountain right outside of Mentone, is a little cabin surrounded by deciduous hardwood and pine forests, within the confines of a large plot of undeveloped land. With few neighbors, it is a private spot to call home. Some would argue, this is the end of the road, while others would contend this is the beginning. It is a less traveled road for those who desire a connection with nature. It is also a green place and envy of any master gardener. Meet your neighbor, Stan—whose pride and joy is living in harmony with nature, in the preservation of the land, as a manager of our natural resources.



With enough sun beaming through an opening in the forest, a vast display of garden variety vegetables and grapes meticulously tended to will quickly convince you that this is no ordinary garden. It is a masterpiece of intensive, high-yield farming, turning out the best and the juiciest garsh darn delicious produce yet to be found growing in a forest garden.

The proprietor shares his secret in his love of the land and taking care of it all, without the help of herbicides and pesticides. The benefits are reaped in what is sowed by lots of hard work, using quality seed stock, and watering as necessary. He confesses to being vigilant in weed control, implementing the old-fashioned method of hand picking. He foils the attempts of masked bandits (racoons) by putting a cage around his melons and other crops. The whole garden fence deters most after-hours marauders. As a last resort, critters are trapped humanely in a box trap and relocated.

High quality mulch and garden media play a vital role in providing a good home for root production. Another component to the success of Stan's thriving garden is the raised garden bed with his preference in using railroad ties for containment. Grooming the plants and removal of weak sucker growth contributes to allowing the plant to push more energy into the fruit.

It would be remiss not to mention Stan's appreciation for snakes in their role of rodent control and recognizing the predator/prey relationship in the balance of nature and the relationship to better gardening.

One of Stan's pet peeves is littering and litterbugs. Stan is a good steward of the land and takes pride in taking ownership of his backyard and giving back to nature. He is not only a preservationist but a protector of native wildlife and plant life.

"Alabama the Beautiful" is graced with blossoming flowers for all seasons. We're lucky that many of our neighbors are also dedicated to playing in the dirt and cultivating their own botanical wonders, in beholding to the theme of Alabama's beauty.

Everyone Is Welcome



Christmas Eve at St. Joseph's on-the-Mountain

- 4:00 Cookies & Cocoa with Santa
- 4:30 Live Nativity
All children are welcome to participate—wear a shepherd or angel costume!
- 5:00 Candlelight Christmas Service
with Lessons & Carols

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Little River Arts Council by Juli Jordan



Monica Moore, Living Historian with Alabama Folklife Association Board member & mosaic artist, Linda Munoz



Robert Ogle



Ellie & Jim Schuster

November’s Creative Spirit Market was cold enough to bring out the Christmas spirit in even the most determined curmudgeon! Artists, makers, and shoppers bundled up and kicked off the holiday season in DeSoto State Park. Musical artist Judy Nicole Kirby slipped in a few Christmas tunes as a gentle reminder that the gifting season is upon us. Inside the pavilion, fires blazed in each fireplace as children and adults created mosaic tiles at four creation stations. Warm cider, hot chocolate, and coffee from food vendor Ruth’s Goodies hit the spot and Mobile Munchies sold out.

One of the highlights this year was watching Monica Moore demonstrate twining and cordage making, and talking about natural dying of fibers. Monica is a living historian who portrays a Creek Indian from the 1770s across the state, including at the Moundville Native American Festival. Other demonstrations included Brittney Hughes’ basket weaving, Kelly Seahorn’s glass bead making, Barbara Umland’s fairy house building, and Caroline Nuckolls’ watercolor painting.

Creative Spirit Market is a wonderful opportunity for makers and artists who are just beginning to show their work. Celebrating their first art market this year were Robert Ogle (Idler) with hand-built log cabin bluebird houses; Erika Prater (Oxford) with her beautiful ceramics; Vicki Wallis (Gadsden) with vibrant floral paintings; Jana Jackson (Huntsville) showcasing her unique alcohol ink paintings; Mary Clemons (Decatur and Rising Fawn) displaying her natural eco-printing; and Susan Rutledge and her grandchildren, Ellie and Jim Schuster, with whimsical recycled Christmas decorations, hair clips, and wooden phone holders.

Supporting emerging artists is an important aspect of Little River Arts Council’s mission. At markets like Creative Spirit, Follow Your Art, and Pop Ups we offer an affordable opportunity for artists and makers to showcase their work to a wide variety of visitors and residents in Mentone. If you are an artist or maker who is new to showing your work, visit our website at littleriverartscouncil.org to learn more about opportunities in 2023.

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



Mosaic Art Station



Kelly Seahorn demonstrating glass bead making



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Rhododendron Garden Club

by Alyce Kenney

“Don’t think the garden loses its ecstasy in winter. It’s quiet, but the roots are down there riotous.” — Rumi



The November 8th meeting was held in the MERF house with a small but mighty group of members reviewing the recent activities and planning for the future events of our club. Our booth at the recent Colorfest at Moon Lake Village was visited by a lot of festival attendees. Some folks came to learn more about our garden club, and that resulted in us gaining some new members! Some folks came with questions about their specific plant concerns. Others came to purchase one of the many sweetly potted succulents we brought to sell. (A special thank you to Kathryn Norris for leading this venture). We thank everyone in our community for your interest and support of our club. We learn a lot from you!

The conservation and horticulture reports, along with our educational program, all touched on the subject of “eco-friendly” practices. Here are just a few ideas.

When you are planting, think about native plants that will thrive and survive rather than invasive species which can take over and crowd out the natural environment. Saving seeds and sharing with others promotes beauty and enjoyment and also provides a welcome place for pollinators to visit next year. Keep some leaf litter around your gardens. This organic material provides important protection for the soil and the many microorganisms that inhabit it. Gather some pine cones and a few snips of an evergreen and create a simple natural decoration for the holidays. Creativity and artistic expression are just outside your door.

Our December activities include:

12/2—The Garden Club of Alabama annual event of “Every Light A Prayer For Peace” which includes tea at the governor’s mansion and tree lighting on the capital steps. The garden club created two ornaments for the tree.

12/10—Lighting of Mentone Christmas tree. We’ll be busy as elves assisting with the decorations and refreshments for this annual event. All are welcome! Bring your holiday cheer and voices for caroling. [See page 1 for details.]

12/13—End-of-year luncheon/meeting for Rhododendron Garden Club. It’s a happy time to share with one another as the year ends. Pot luck will be held at

11 a.m. at the Mentone Inn. Get in touch with President Mellanie Tuttle to sign up with your favorite dish. Bring a friend who’s interested in learning more about joining our club.

December can be a month for looking back on the year that is nearly over. We take stock in what we have accomplished and look also at the things left undone. Gardeners are a funny breed. We often can be heard discussing our failures rather than our successes. See “Fall Garden Reflections” for some soulful messages on a recent post in Horticulture Magazine at hortmag.com. (Thanks to Sharon Harris for sharing this post.)

Rather than bemoan what we didn’t complete, every gardener (property owner) now has a “time-out” to sit and savor the memories of those summer days when everything was looking lush and full. Reviewing those memories of delight can sustain us all through the unpredictable winter ahead. Brew a cup of tea and sit!

December is a time for thinking about:

Birds—Stock feeders, suet holders, and water sources for your feathered friends who stick around for the winter.

Bugs—Keep some leaf litter around the base of hardy perennials – homes for beneficial bugs, their larvae and eggs over the winter.

Catalogs—Think about changes you want to make and investigate new plants that will work with your current designs and preferences. It’s fun to try new plants!

Soil—Once you’ve decided on a plan for the spring, make a note to check your soil for its “nutritional” needs before you plant. Soil samples are the surest way to know what is lacking and how to amend your soil. Your county Extension office can provide more information on this topic.

Sprinklers—Turn automatic systems off or to lower settings as plant demands decrease during the dormant time.

Some more information on the topic of eco-friendly gardening can be found at the following web sites:

- seewhatgrows.org
- ahsgardening.org/gardening-resources/sustainable-gardening
- “How Green is Your Garden?” Take a quiz to find out: ahsgardening.org/about-us/news-press/how-green-is-your-garden-take-our-quiz

The Rhododendron Garden Club is member of National Garden Clubs, Inc., Deep South Garden Club, Inc., the Garden Club of Alabama, Inc. – District II, and the Northeast Alabama Federation of Garden Clubs.

The Rhododendron Garden Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. CDT 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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A Very Good Year (cont. from page 1)

- and explore. Of particular benefit were the amphitheater, where folks relaxed and listened to music from the new stage, and the playground, where children played throughout each day and enjoyed free painting and art activities under the pavilion.
- The dedication of the Bill Berry Community Room at Moon Lake Village has provided a much-needed public meeting space. In September, MAPA hosted the first in a series of oral histories. Bill Berry was interviewed by Mayor Rob Hammond about his time as a student, teacher, and principal at Moon Lake School, and he also discussed the history of the school. In November, Mentone native and councilman Gerald Bailey was interviewed by Marsha Merrell. This series will continue through 2023 so we can capture important voices and memories.
 - In September, we began a series of talks focusing on traditional skills. Casi Brown spoke about and demonstrated her work with bent willow furniture, an art brought to the region by Appalachian gypsies. This series will also continue in the new year.
 - Civil War aficionado Judge David Rains spoke in October to a full house about the movement of Union troops across Lookout Mountain on their way to Chickamauga.
 - In an effort to bring the various segments of our local community together, in August we began hosting “Sunset Socials” at Brow Park. This has been a popular event which harkens back to the days when townsfolk gathered on the brow for social time.
 - *The Groundhog* began hosting a series of writers’ workshops in September for writers who would like to become more comfortable with their writing. Another series will begin in February. Look for some of these writers’ articles in upcoming *Groundhogs*!
 - *The Groundhog* celebrated 40 years of publication this year. With the September issue, the paper’s format shifted from the traditional “tabloid” size to a “broadsheet.” Thankfully, reviews have been

- favorable, all around.
- We hosted a Colorfest Volunteer Appreciation party in November at the beautiful “Secret Place” on Bear Creek. It was a very cold day, but everyone bundled up and enjoyed relaxing together. We recognize and truly appreciate the time, talents, and dedication of our volunteers.
 - We launched a YouTube channel, where you can watch recordings of Dr. Berry’s and Mr. Bailey’s oral histories, as well as Judge Rains’ talk. With the recent purchase of professional microphones, we look forward to contributing to this channel on a regular basis. You can find it at youtube.com/mapamentone.

What’s next?

- In 2023, MAPA will continue to host oral histories and other programming which supports our mission. As Mentone grows, it is essential we have ways to continue community bonding and to honor the past and document our area’s history. We’d appreciate hearing your ideas for programs!
- We will be applying for grants from the Alabama Humanities Alliance and other organizations that will help us offset costs and expand programming.
- We will host our fourth charity golf tournament this spring at Mentone’s Lil Mole Run Golf Course. This event originated during the pandemic in 2020 as a way for MAPA to continue to raise funds despite the loss of the festivals.
- The future of Colorfest depends on volunteers. This is an important event because it raises funds for MAPA, gives local non-profits the chance to share their respective missions and raise money, supports local artists and musicians, and brings visitors to Mentone to support local businesses. It is too large an event for a small group of people to produce, and in 2023 we will need a large, dedicated group of volunteers if the festival is to carry on. We will hold a preliminary Colorfest meeting in January, when we will explain essential volunteer tasks. Look for details in the January *Groundhog*. We certainly hope this 40-year tradition can carry on.

Thanks to outgoing board members Susan Seago

and Douglas Brewer for their service over many years. We will soon be appointing their successors and members will vote on officer positions at our 2023 membership meeting. If you are interested in serving on MAPA’s board of directors, please let us know.

Our office provides a space where people can sit comfortably while perusing the Groundhog archives (which are also available online at mapamentone.com). MAPA merchandise is available for purchase in the office, including Zora Strayhorn’s “A History of Mentone,” Colorfest posters from 2018–2022, Groundhog t-shirts and sweatshirts, and MAPA tote bags. Office hours are Monday–Friday, 10:30–12:30, and by appointment.

Financial support is key to healthy non-profit organizations. Please consider donating to MAPA so our free programming and events can continue to flourish. Your donations also help MAPA fund financial grants requested by area non-profits and service organizations. MAPA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Ways to stay in touch:

- Drop by our office.
- Call 256-289-2002.
- Email mapamentone@gmail.com or groundhognews@yahoo.com.
- Visit mapamentone.com.
- Like our Facebook pages: @MentoneAreaPreservationAssociationmapa, @mentonegroundhog, and @MentoneAlabamaFestivals.

As always, we owe deep and sincere thanks to our members, volunteers, sponsors, Groundhog advertisers, and subscribers. Your support is invaluable! We wish you all the very best.

MAPA’s Board of Directors
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Ruby O'Rear's Days Come to Life

DECEMBER 1937

December 1, Wednesday, 1937
Frost. To 55. Clear
Mother hasn't eaten so much to-day. James B. stayed home cause he wanted to. I started embroidering green checked cloth. Knitted a little. Paul, A.J., the children & Ethel all came over this p.m. after school. Mrs. Everett ironed. Changed cow's feed box. Put pine straw in for cow's bed.

December 2, Thursday, 1937
Temp 26. Fair. Windy.
Eula & Jodie came over to cut wood. Thelma came and stayed several hours. She crocheted after dinner. We sang for Mother.

December 3, Friday, 1937
Temp 22 to 50. Fair & pleasant.
Rinsed out some things for Mother. Mrs. E. washed out a few things & took a bath & I washed my hair. Jessie had Mynt call & tell me Geneva & Mr. C. got here at 2 a.m. last nite. Ernest Shigley moved to Brent to-day. Gov. man out to see about buying John's Mt. land. Offered \$30.00. Eula came over. Mrs. Butler came too. Embroidered and knitted some.

December 4, Saturday, 1937
Warmer. Cloudy & misty.
After Mother ate her breakfast I got ready & went to Ethel's to see Neva & Mr. C. Stayed over there until after 3:00. Frank & Milt came over & operated on hog. Ralph brot James B. home on mule. Talked to Mother & then we played & sang for her. Jessie said Willie Walker came over this morn.

December 5, Sunday, 1937
Cloudy. Turning cold. Temp 24 at 7:30 p.m.
Started to S.S. [Sunday School] but car had flat tire so I went on to Nettie's & Ethel's. Gave Neva crocheted collar. Back to Nettie's with Mr. C. & Neva & Eva. Ate dinner there. They started home with me & Grace came & said [?] & "Gip" were there. So I went by there on way home. Nettie & Ethel sent Mother cake & pie, etc. & she ate it. Put clean gown on her. Thot Neva might come on but she didn't. Evelyn Jones & James Selma married yesterday p.m.

December 6, Monday, 1937
Temp 12 to 17. Cloudy. Snowed a little last nite.
James B. stayed home from school. Paul at home. He took Jessie to school. Started embroidering luncheon cloth. Mr. Campbell & Frank came over. Built up fire in living room. Neva & Thelma came little later. We sang & sang for Mother. Mr. C. planning to go home to-morrow. Mother put on one of her new gowns.

December 7, Tuesday, 1937
Temp 20. Fair. Went to 31.
Stayed indoors most of day. Paul left this morn. James B. went to school to-day. I finished one corner of luncheon cloth. Eula came over & made Betty a coat.

December 8, Wednesday, 1937
Cloudy, warm. Not so cold last nite but p.m. it started snowing. Now things are quite white.
Fixed armholes of Jessie's brown dress. Jessie went by Ethel Green's & got skirt Neva had left for Mother. Mr. C. & Neva went back yesterday. Killed chicken that had got its feet frozen. Washed out a few things for Mother.



December 9, Thursday, 1937
Snow about 2 in. Cleared off in nite. Temp went to 6 for a little while 9 at daylight. Clear to-day.
Embroidered some & started pillow cases for Christmas present. J.B. didn't go to school. Bill Emerson also didn't go. Got left at Mentone & came back & spent day here. They nearly ran Mrs. E. and me crazy. Clyde brot me 2 bu corn. Paul came home.

December 10, Friday, 1937
Temp 13 to 28. Fair.
Mother didn't feel so well to-day. Jody came by. Wants me to call Fred Jones to see if he wanted to buy a cow. They want to sell theirs. Embroidered a little on luncheon cloth. Ran on short schedule to-day so Jessie & James B. got home early. Then I went to Dan's to get some wafers for Mother. Paul went to Ga. to-day. Jessie making out report. Has to take it to Mr. Turner tonite. Heard Lee Davenport fell yesterday & broke his arm.

December 11, Saturday, 1937
Temp 4 to 32. Clouding up.
Paul, Jessie & J.B. went to F.P. Jodie came by. Bill E. came over. I finished embroidering luncheon cloth corners. Sewed ric-rac on pillow slip. I've had the back ache to-day but feel better now. Jessie washed some clothes.

December 12, Sunday, 1937
Cloudy. Temp 18 to 37.
Stayed home all day except this p.m. James B. & I went & got a lot of holly. Cleaned Mother up. Took bath myself. Wrote locals tonite. Mrs. Everill saw grey fox. Heard Clara Green got V-8 Ford.

December 13, Monday, 1937
Sleeted this morn but warmed up this p.m. Temp 40 or above.
Paul took Jessie & J.B. to school but J.B. didn't go as bus couldn't come up mt. for sleet. He & Bill E. came back. Built fire in living room. I made 2 holly wreaths & packed 2 small boxes of holly. Sent wreaths to Rubye Hood & Cousin Battie & boxes to Joseph Garrett & Mrs. Grace's daughter Helen. After Jessie came home I went to store & mailed pkgs. Heard Ben Smith & wife had son. Mrs. Everett slid down steps. Got hard fall.

December 14, Tuesday, 1937
Temp 44 all nite & to 60 to-day.
Paul started to take folks to school & couldn't get up hill. I cleaned up living room & swept kitchen. Fixed up clothes for Paul to take to Mrs. Yarbrough's. He worked road. Eula came by. Fixed

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 December, 1937.

door in chicken house. Moved chest into living room. Worked little on edge of luncheon cloth. Mother feeling about as usual.

December 15, Wednesday, 1937
Cloudy. Mostly warm. Very little fire.
Mrs. E. went for mail to-day & while she was gone I helped Mother into living room. Worked some on luncheon set.

December 16, Thursday, 1937
52 to 62. Cloudy except sun shone some this morn. Very pleasant. Birds singing.
Mr. Yarbrough brot clothes home. Mrs. E. ironed. Eula came

over & sewed some. Mother went into living room & sat on rock in front of door for about 15 min. I finished luncheon set. Eula washed out skirt Geneva gave Mother. I ironed brown dress & J.B.'s pants. No fire last nite & not much to-day.

December 17, Friday, 1937
Rainy. Warm.
Didn't get room cleaned up til late. Mrs. E. ironed some more. I fixed box for Mamie. Bathed Mother off & changed gown. Mr. Ringer came by. Paul got stuck this morn as he backed out of garage. Dump Smith here, wanted me to call. Jodeie & Jack came by. Packed box of holly for Jessie. Mailed letter to Sears & 2 pkgs. Heard Fanny & Lee had girl. Only a little fire this morn.

December 18, Saturday, 1937
Cloudy. Turning colder.
Stayed with Mother all morn. Went for mail. Put up pig to fatten. Jessie washed out some things. Finished embroidering one pr. pillow cases & started another.

December 19, Sunday, 1937
Fair & pleasant. 35 to 48.
Went to S.S. Stopped at Hardie's to wait for Paul. Turned cow out & drove her to Dan's. She came back this p.m. Jessie sacked candy for children. Mrs. E. went to see Aunt Eve. Paul, Jack & J.B. went to Mentone & A.J.'s. I addressed Christmas cards.

December 20, Monday, 1937
Temp 25 to 50. Mainly clear but beginning to cloud up.
Tried to finish pillow cases but didn't. Was nervous to-day. Started Gone with the Wind. Ralph came to work. Started raking yard. Fixed telephone. Jessie walked home. I went to Dan's.

December 21, Tuesday, 1937
Cloudy in nite then cleared off. Temp 22 to above 40.
Ralph came back to work. Cut off ivy,

dug up stump, burned sedge grass out of trail. I finished pillow cases & worked some on apron for Margie. Stamped Christmas cards. Killed hen. Eula cut Mrs. E's & my hair. Told us she was expecting arrival in spring.

December 22, Wednesday, 1937
Warmer & rainy. Temp in 40s.
Took down curtains. Washed & ironed them. Mrs. Everett ironed. Fixed apron for Margie. Wanted to mop floors but never got to it. Mother up & down quite a bit. Paul came home.

December 23, Thursday, 1937
Temp about the same. Still raining a little.
Mopped our room. Eula & Jodie came by. Paul took Jack to school. Came back at mail time. Then went for her in p.m. Mrs. E. went to Sand Mt. with Hope. Box from Sears came, also Mrs. Whitehead's pkg. to Paul. Lane cake, etc.

December 24, Friday, 1937
Cloudy.
Jessie worked all morn cleaning up. James B. went to Emersons. After dinner about 2:00 Jessie, Paul & J.B. went to Fort Payne. Eula came over & stayed with me. Jessie got some things for Eula & the children. Paul took J.B. & me to program at church. Sat up quite late reading *Gone with the Wind*.

December 25, Saturday, 1937
Christmas
Light frost. Clear. Temp nearly 60. Very pleasant.
Got up early to get things off Christmas tree. Had breakfast. Jessie cleaned up & got dinner. Had pot pie, beans, lettuce, pickles, okra, cake & whipped cream. Late this p.m. I went to Ethel's. Came back by store. On way over went by where Eula & Jodie are going to live.

December 26, Sunday, 1937
Pleasant.
Went to church. Walked back with Thelma & Grace. Read some in *Gone with the Wind*. J.B. spent day with A.J. & in p.m. they all came over for a while.

December 27, Monday, 1937
Rainy. Temp 46.
Did nothing much except read some. Dried dishes for Jessie. Paul & J.B. started to V.H. but got car stuck on hill & had to come back & leave car.

December 28, Tuesday, 1937
Cleared off. Temp went to 68.
[Entry illegible]

December 29, Wednesday, 1937
Clear on mt. Pleasant. Foggy in valley.
[Entry illegible]

December 30, Thursday, 1937
A beautiful day. Clear. Pleasant.
Went to Mentone with Paul. Paid Mentone store & Lee in full. Came back to Alice James. Shelled 1/2 bu corn while there. Stayed until after dinner. A.J. took me as far as house at Lake. Walked on to store then by Ethel's & on home. Hazel still here.

December 31, Friday, 1937
Pleasant but clouding up.
Hazel ironed. Paul, Jessie & J.B. went to Fort Payne. Missionary Society met here. Cassia, Myrlice, Bertha, Margaret & Mrs. Emerson here. Mother's leg all swelled up. Kidney poison. She was nervous & cross & feverish. Hazel went home to attend watch party.



Happy Holidays!

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In Memoriam



ROBERT HOWARD HOFFMAN
Robert Howard Hoffman of Boynton Beach, FL, passed away peacefully at his home on October 14, 2022 at the age of 81 years. Bob, as we knew him in Mentone, was a firm believer in using his skills to benefit the community. He was a former president of the Mentone Business Association. Bob was particularly proud of providing an organized website for Mentone’s businesses with a daily opening schedule. His hobby was creating many websites for small businesses, for high school alumni associations, and to showcase his extensive travels throughout the USA in his RV. Several of these websites were

provided free of charge.
Robert was born in St. Cloud, Minnesota, to parents Howard and Esther Hoffman (dec.). He was a graduate of Leon High School (1959), Florida State University with a bachelor’s degree in math/statistics, and University of Alabama at Huntsville with a masters in computer science. He served his country at Homestead Air Force Base. He had a brilliant career as a computer programmer for the NASA space program through his employer of 30 years, Northrop Grumman. Robert is survived by his wife, Joyce Cooper, with whom he had 38 years of fun, travel and adventure; children, Ronald Hoffman of Guntersville, AL, Rhonda Anderson of Tullahoma, TN, and Steven Cooper of Ft. Lauderdale, FL; and sisters, Marylin Stallworth of Tallahassee, FL, Belinda Miller of Crawfordville, FL, and Lori Schwacke of Charleston, SC.



RONALD JERRY SLATON
June 4, 1949 – November 1, 2022
Ronald Jerry Slaton, age 73, of Valley Head, passed away on Tuesday, November 1, 2022 at his residence. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Marilyn Slaton; daughter, Brenda Key (Gary Beason); grandchildren, Kelly Key, Brady Key, and Savannah Slaton; great-grandchildren, Caiden Harville and Rorie Harville; sisters, Vickie Rothell and Sharon Burt (Ricky); and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his son, Jerry Dale; sister, Opal Slaton Smith; and parents, Corbet Slaton and Ruby Crane Slaton.

RANDALL WADE “RANDY” SOLOMON
1963 – 2022

Randall Wade “Randy” Solomon, age 59 of Mentone, passed away on Wednesday, November 2, 2022. Survivors include his daughter, Megan Solomon, cousins, Al (Kathy) Yoder and Laurie (Barry) Murray, their children, Hope, Jonathan, Caitlin, and Jessica, along with Blake and Dylan and a host of life-long friends.
Mr. Solomon will be remembered for his big personality. He was humble, generous with himself and giving to others. He shined the brightest when he was working with horses, even appearing downright giddy. He was a fantastic grillier. He will be missed.
In honoring his memory, do nice things for other people. Be kind to animals, help your neighbors, and every once in a while tell a joke at an inappropriate time.



MARY ALICE CLARK
October 22, 1948 – November 3, 2022
Mary Alice Clark, age 74, of Valley Head, passed away on Thursday, November 3, 2022 at DeKalb Regional Medical Center.
Mary had a heart for sharing the gospel with those around her; whether it was through her piano lessons with her students or her work at Save-A-Life or with telemarketers who called the house, the gospel of Jesus Christ was shared.
She enjoyed several years as a church pianist, a piano teacher, and a computer programmer, and served in the local church as well. She was a devoted wife and mother as well as an adored grandmother and great-grandmother.

She is survived by her husband: Dwight Clark; daughter, Ginger Hobbs; grandchildren, Ashley Evans (John) and Adam Tuxbury (Heather); great-grandchildren, Emma Evans, Faith Evans, and Abigail Tuxbury; brother, Richard Hartline (Sandra); and sister, Pat English.
She was preceded in death by her daughter, Carrie Clark; parents, Richard Hartline and Lela Patterson Clark; and son-in-law, Mark Hobbs.



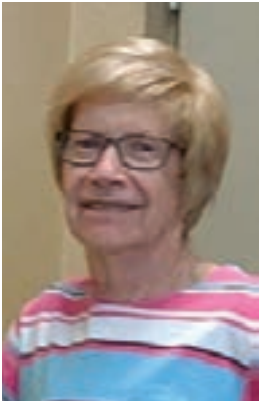
CYNTHIA ANN (SIMMONS) JOHNSON
April 25, 1939 – November 6, 2022
Cynthia Ann Johnson, age 83, of Mentone, died Sunday, November 6, 2022, at Advent Health Redmond.
Mrs. Johnson was born April 25, 1939, in Summerville, GA, daughter of the late James Thomas and Julia Ethel Stansell Simmons. She was a member of Mount Calvary Baptist Church and, prior to her retirement, was employed with Best Manufacturing.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, James Albert Johnson; sisters, Joyce Himes and Evelyn Sinsenbaugh; and a brother, James “Buddy” Simmons.
Survivors include her son, Jim “Muscles” Johnson; brothers, Carlton Simmons and Robert Simmons; grandchildren, Jennifer Reece, Emily Hampton, Maggie Johnson, and Sam Johnson; great-grandchildren, Sarah and Noah Hampton, Caleb Reece, Mason and Ethan Flood; daughter-in-law, Tammy Johnson; and life-long friends, Melba Walters and Alford and Annie Mae Owen.

LOYD MCSADDEN
November 24, 1950 – November 14, 2022

Lloyd McSpadden, age 71 of Mentone, passed away on November 14, 2022 at LUAB Hospital. He was born on November 24, 1950 to the late John Asberry and Goldie Boozer McSpadden.
He is survived by his sons, Dennis McDonald (Amanda) and Johnny Ferguson (Victoria); daughter, Sara Evans (Chad); grandchildren, Emma Kate McDonald, Abigail Ferguson, Isabelle Ferguson, Annabelle Ferguson, Easton Ferguson, Weston Ferguson, Emilyn Ferguson, Kaitlyn Johnson, Nickalas Evans, and Ryan Evans; sister, Gracie Hale.
He was preceded in death with his wife Kathy Steele McSpadden, brothers,

Donald McSpadden, Pete McSpadden, and David McSpadden, and sisters, Lois Enik and Mary Clark.



CAROLYN BLALOCK KILGORE
February 8, 1944 – November 15, 2022
Carolyn Blalock Kilgore, age 78, of Mentone, passed away at her residence on Tuesday, November 15, 2022.
Mrs. Kilgore is survived by her son, Matthew Kilgore; sisters, Sue Watson, Anita Meadows (Treamon), and Cheryl Crane (Leon); brother, Roy Blalock; brother-in-law, Carl B. Wilson Sr.; special niece, Marian Owen; and several nieces and nephews she loved dearly.
She was preceded in death by her parents, Mack and Geraldine Blalock; sister, Doris Wilson; brother, Huey Blalock; and brother-in-law, James Watson.

EMMETT WAYNE MILLER
April 4, 1944 – November 18, 2022

Emmett “Wayne” Miller, age 78, of Menlo, GA, passed away Friday, November 18, 2022, at Atrium Health Floyd.
Mr. Miller was born April 4, 1944, in Rome, GA, son of the late Bennett and Sue Miller. He was a veteran of the United States Marines serving in Vietnam. He was employed by the U.S. government.
Survivors include his wife, Marion Elaine Patterson Miller; sons, Emmett (Nora) Miller, Jr., Barry Miller; and five grandchildren.



CHARLES ROBERT “BOBBY” BROWN
May 22, 1935 – November 27, 2022
Charles Robert “Bobby” Brown, age 87, of Mentone, passed away on November 27, 2022.
Mr. Brown was born on May 22, 1935 in Mentone, to C. Raymond Brown and Mary K. Brown. He retired after 40 years from Sand Mountain Electric Cooperative and was a devoted member of Mentone United Methodist Church.
He is survived by his children, Gail Smalley, Charlie Brown (Sue), and Carol Hazell; grandchildren, Marc Smalley (Trish), Josh Smalley (Allison), Daniel Brown (Chrissie), Shelly Brown Shanklin, Alex Hazell (Becca), and Kayla Hazell Blansit (Dallas); great-grandchildren, Corrine Smalley, Sawyer Smalley, Hudson Smalley, Ford Smalley, Shepherd Smalley, Zoe Brown, Alyssa Brown, Mia Brown, Sam Shanklin,

Eli Shanklin, Mollie Frasier, Lilah Hazell, Olivia Blansit, and Caroline Blansit; and siblings, Sterlyn Brown (Renee), Stanley Brown (Christa), and Dee Kelley (Bill).
He was preceded in death by his wife of 60 years, Linda Brown.
The family is accepting flowers or donations to the Mentone United Methodist Church (P. O. Box 334, Mentone, AL 35984).



CARL MANNING MCCLESKY
Carl Manning McClesky, age 86, passed away on November 15, 2022, at his home in Cloudland, GA. He was a well-known sculptor in wildlife subjects. His work is enjoyed in private and public collections worldwide.
Traveling the creative path as a blacksmith, cartoonist, painter, and sculptor, Carl was an inspiration to many. He and his wife Betsy spent many rewarding years creating award-winning sculpture in their secluded studio or at, as Carl liked to say, “The house that lions built,” on Lookout Mountain, in Cloudland, GA. Their latest collaboration, “Sequoyah,” can be seen at the Mentone Arts Center in Mentone.
Carl was preceded in death by his parents, Henry Ford and Annabelle Harwell-McCleskey; his sister, Dianne Mayhew; and his son, Eric.
He is survived by his wife, Betsy Scott; his son, Brian McCleskey; Brian’s wife, Susan Soto; grandchildren Chelsey McCleskey, Travis McCleskey; Travis’s wife, Hayley; and one great grandchild, Finn McCleskey.
Father, grandfather, husband, and friend to many, Carl McCleskey will be greatly missed.
A Celebration of Life gathering will take place in the Spring of 2023.





Valley Head FFA News



The caption reads, "Splitsville: A pleasant April day is an opportunity to make spring divides. Alabama Ag teacher Cameron Mitchell prepares to trade empty frames for bees, brood, honey and pollen from one of Valley Head High School's FFA colonies. One of the caged queens atop the cinder block in the foreground will complete their new nuc."

Valley Head Future Farmers of America (FFA) Chapter is excited that its Valley Head Honeybee Apiary is the April 2023 feature in the *American Bee Journal's* calendar. The *American Bee Journal* is the oldest English language beekeeping publication in the world, in print since January 1861. Congratulations, beekeepers!

Emily Smith (cont. from page 6)

doctorate in education, and works at the county level in Athens, GA. She loved Dr. Berry and really benefitted from having him as a teacher. Em did a little newspaper for the school with Bill Berry's encouragement. She called it *The Tiger Pawprint*. Each class had reporters and they talked about what they were doing in school. They thought they were hot stuff, getting to do that."

Emily and Tim's middle son, Stephen, was a camper at Alpine Camp for Boys, and Em went to Camp DeSoto, where Emily had also been a camper. "Life in Mentone sure did revolve around the summer camps," she said. "I remember one day we were eating at Tiger's Inn and some camp girls came in. When they learned we lived here, they said, 'Oh, that must feel Christmas every single day!'"

"There were so many characters in Mentone," said Emily. "That Zora Strayhorn, she was a real character! She used to make pickles out of all kinds of things. We're still friends with Lynette McCary, who's living in Birmingham now."

"When I was editor, I took all the pictures and did all the ad sales. I'd bundle up the papers and take them to [former postmaster] Benny Goss, and he'd get one in everyone's mailbox. I'd drive the rest of them up and down the mountain and drop them off at various locations. It got to be a family activity. The children would help me with doing a lot of labeling. Once our oldest son, Jason, was old enough, I made him do a lot of the driving."

"When Jason was in college, he had a double major in English and print journalism. Then he decided he wanted to do broadcast work, so now he's a meteorologist on our TV station here."

"After we left Mentone, I wrote for a while but in 1997 I had a stroke and now writing doesn't come as easily to me. Tim's retired but he still travels a lot internationally for the church. He's going back to Africa in the spring."

"All our children still really love Mentone. Jason has taken his family to visit. Next summer, we're traveling from Mobile to have a family reunion at DeSoto State Park. Tim and I will be celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary."

I was pleased to hear that her children have such fond memories and were each influenced by their years living in Mentone. As *The Groundhog* enters its fifth decade of publication, it was also fun to hear that, really, not much has changed. (Except, of course, now we have the internet!)

Helping Hands at the Moon Lake Playground



The playground at Moon Lake Village has been seeing a lot of use lately. The wooden play structure was in need of repair, so a group of local boys and men volunteered their Saturday morning on November 5 to ensure children's safety. Thanks to Zachary Bergeron for organizing the repair work, Pamela and Roger Wald for donating the money for the wood, and to Paul and Maria Nail for providing lunch. Volunteers included Zackary Bergeron, Jesse Bergeron, BSA Troop 106, Bill Dunavant, Chuck Eaves, Ben Killian, David Killian, Chris Long, Patrick Long, Jon Mayhew, Kamden Mayhew, and Paul Nail. It's looking great!



Art of Woodburning—DeSoto Falls Ornaments

The Serious Skills series is a variety of classes and workshops hosted by DeSoto State Park that provide opportunities to discover a hidden talent or learn a new skill for personal enrichment. Classes are open to local residents, overnight guests, and park visitors.

Pyrography or woodburning is the art of decorating wood or other materials, the term meaning "writing with fire" dating back to the 17th century.

On December 3, artist April Blanks will teach the basic techniques of decorative wood burning and participants will work on their own souvenir DeSoto Falls magnet or ornament. Practice basic techniques using a pen-like burning tool and paint. Create a gift for someone this holiday season!

This class is for ages 14 to adult. Two class times are available: 9–11 a.m. or 12–2 p.m. The class will be held at DeSoto State Park (specific location disclosed at time of registration).

The \$25 fee includes all supplies. Space is limited, so pre-registration is required for attendance in this class. Email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov to sign up or for more info. Examples of April's work can be seen at [facebook.com/Aprils-Woodburnings](https://www.facebook.com/Aprils-Woodburnings).

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December Christmas Events



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

DECEMBER 3
Pancake Breakfast with Santa. Benefitting DeSoto Rescue Squad. Join us for our Annual Pancake Breakfast fundraiser. Santa will be there from 8am until 11am. Mentone Community Church.

Valley Head Christmas Parade. 10am.

Holiday Wreath Making Workshop. Blue Jug of Fort Payne. 2–4pm

Berry Singers Present Handel's Messiah. Handel's Messiah returns to Berry College! Come hear the Berry Singers present Part 1 for two performances at 5 and 7pm EST. Student soloists and professional orchestra directed by Dr Paul Neal. Come hear this holiday classic! Free and open to the public. Bell Recital Hall, Berry College, 2277 Martha Berry Hwy. NW, Mt. Berry, GA 30149.

Rainsville Christmas Parade. Downtown Rainsville. 11am.

Christmas at the Cabin and Parade in Henagar. Our Annual Christmas at the Cabin Celebration and Christmas Parade begins at 5pm with the Christmas at the Cabin activities immediately to follow in the Henagar City Park! Mark your calendars to begin your Christmas traditions with us this year!

Town of Summerville Christmas Parade. This year's theme is "Santa's Toyland Workshop." Santa Visits begin at 3pm EST. Parade begins at 5pm EST. Downtown Summerville, GA.

DECEMBER 3 & 4
Summerville's Victorian Christmas. Music and merriment for all the family! Main Street recalls the spirit of Christmases past with a live Victorian Christmas celebration. Journey into the past as our turn-of-the-century downtown ushers you into the spirit of Christmas long ago. Enjoy live street performers, caroling, a Live Nativity by Son Rise Church and a Christmas Market full of lots of food and shopping treasures, children's games and more! Sat. 11am–5pm EST. Sun 12:30–1:30pm EST. 706-859-0900.

DECEMBER 3 & 17
Starry Nights in the Garden. Paradise Garden celebrates this holiday season with twinkling Christmas lights and a hot cocoa bar! Bring the family and friends to stroll Paradise Garden the

evenings of December 3rd and 17th. Each guest will receive holiday 3-D glasses upon arrival. Enjoy complimentary hot chocolate and coffee to keep you warm during this relaxing evening. Shop the Holiday Artist Market and Museum Gift Shop for artistic holiday gifts. This is an all age, family and dog-friendly event. Come on over for a little outdoor fun this holiday season! 5–7pm EST. Free to Chattooga County residents & Paradise Garden members. Not-Yet-Members: Adults \$15; Seniors \$10; Students \$5.

DECEMBER 5
Christmas Songwriters Showcase. Come out for a collection of originals and Christmas favorites by various artists! 6pm. Mentone Arts Center, 5951 Al Hwy. 117, Mentone.

DECEMBER 9
Fort Payne's Christmas in the Park. The City of Fort Payne presents the 37th annual Christmas in the Park. Join us in City Park at 4:30pm for festivities before the annual Christmas Parade begins at 6pm.

Fort Payne Christmas Parade. Join us in beautiful downtown Fort Payne as we kick off the night with Christmas in the Park at 4:30pm followed by the Fort Payne Christmas Parade at 6pm. Larue Hardinger, Toys for Tots, will lead the parade as our Grand Marshal. Downtown Fort Payne is magical during the Christmas season. Please make plans to join us for this fun-filled night. If you are interested in more information, please call 256-845-2741.

Summerville's Christmas in the Park. Children of all ages will delight at Christmas in The Park! Visits with Santa, live music, free miniature train rides, Christmas Cookie Smackdown, Ugly Sweater contest, Best Dressed Elf contest, bonfire, vendors on site. 5–8pm EST. Dowdy Park, 170 Veterans Memorial Dr., Summerville, GA 30747.

DECEMBER 10
Mentone Community Christmas Tree Lighting. Santa will make an appearance for the young and young-at-heart for photo ops. We'll enjoy cookies, hot chocolate, and caroling. The Mentone Ukes will perform a medley of Christmas songs for us. 5 p.m. on the grounds of the Mentone Inn, at the corner of AL-Hwy. 117 and CR 89.

Canyon Christmas. Join us for Canyon Christmas at the Little River Canyon Center, 11am–2pm. The fun begins with storytime at 11:15. Get your free picture made with Santa starting at 11:30. Meet the Canyon Center's "Teacher Creatures" and see what each animal will be getting for Christmas at 12:30. Hike the Path to Learning as it is transformed into a self-guided story book trail. Create special holiday crafts, enjoy a sweet treat and more throughout the event. Little River Canyon Center, 4322 Little River Canyon Rim Pkwy., Fort Payne, AL 35967. 256-845-3548.

Bluegrass Christmas Party at Paradise Garden. You are invited to Paradise Garden's Bluegrass Christmas Party featuring

Russell McClanahan and Friends. Join us for live music from 5–7pm EST, and stroll the Starry Nights in Paradise until 8pm EST. Light food and beverages will be served in the Visitor Center. This is a free event for Paradise Garden members and Chattooga County residents. Not-yet-members \$15. Children 12 & under are free. Four-legged friends are also welcome! 200 N. Lewis St., Summerville, GA 30747.

Fyffe Christmas Parade. Line-up and judging starts at 11am on Paul Benefield Lane, Fyffe, AL. 35971. Prize money will be rewarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. For more information or if you would like to participate, please call the Town Hall at 256-623-7298. We hope you make plans to join us!

Crossville Christmas Parade. Please make plans to join us! We welcome floats, marching bands, clubs, decorated vehicles, antique vehicles, equestrian units, civic groups, churches, sports teams, etc. The Grand Marshals for this year are Bobby and Vickie Satterfield. Prize money will be awarded for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place floats. This year we will be having the first-ever Christmas in the Park! 6:30pm. Immediately following the parade, Santa will be at the Pavilion at the Walking Track for photos. Hot chocolate will be served. There will be a Christmas Tree Trail along the walking track. We look forward to seeing you all there! For more information, please contact Town Hall at 256-659-2122.

Geraldine Christmas Parade. Please make plans to join us! We welcome floats, marching bands, clubs, decorated vehicles, antique vehicles, equestrian units, civic groups, churches, sports teams, etc. Prize money will be awarded for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place floats. For more information, please contact Town Hall at 256-659-2122.

DECEMBER 17
Santa & Mrs. Claus at Log Cabin Village. Pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus.. Great shopping, too! Log Cabin Village, Downtown Mentone. 11am.

Hammondville's Dashing through the Park Christmas Celebration. Come enjoy Christmas tree lighting, food vendors, picture with Santa and more. Hammondville Town Park. 10am–3pm. 256-635-6374.

DECEMBER 18
Christmas Cantata. The Mentone Messengers will present a Christmas Cantata entitled "The Glory of Christmas" by Jimmy and Carol Owens. 6pm. at Moon Lake Baptist Church in Mentone.



Ongoing Community Calendar

Mentone Town Council meets the 2nd Tuesday every month at 5pm at Mentone Arts Center.

Mentone's Planning Commission meets the 1st Wednesday every month at 5pm at 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.

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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December Community Events

December 2—Family Game Night returns! Bring a snack to share and we'll enjoy board games at Moon Lake Library. 6pm.

December 3—Storytime and crafts for children. Ages 3–7. 10:30am. Moon Lake Library in Mentone.

December 3—Mentone Ukles. Free ukulele lessons at 1pm at Moon Lake Library in Mentone. Beginners welcome!

December 8—Sunset Social. Meet at Mentone's Brow Park at 4pm for a time of getting to know one another while enjoying a sunset. Bring a snack or beverage, if you like. Hosted by MAPA.

December 10—Gold City at the Pickin Post. The Pickin Post presents Golden Christmas with Gold City! Music starts at 6pm. For more info and tickets call 256-657-3817 or 256-845-4115.

December 10—Moon Lake Library Book Club monthly meeting where we'll share great books we've read lately. 10:30am.

December 11—Moon Lake Library Holiday Open House and 20th Birthday Celebration, with music from the Mentone Ukles. 2pm.

December 15—MAPA/Groundhog Open House. Join us for cookies and hot beverages in our office at Moon Lake Village. 4–6pm.

December 16—"Paint Like Bob" Workshop. With certified Bob Ross instructor Gary Grider. \$100 includes supplies. Limited class size. 5–9pm. Mentone Arts Center, 5951 AL Hwy. 117, Mentone. 256-674-3366.

December 16—Here We Are! 4th Annual Alabama Tribute. A portion of proceeds will benefit the Alabama June Jam Fund, and with ticket purchase you'll have the option to add a donation the The Alabama June Jam Fund, the Jeff and Lisa Cook Foundation for Neurological Disorders, and The SAM Foundation. Come jam with us to your favorite Alabama hits in the birthplace of the greatest country music group of all time,

ALABAMA! boysintheband.net/hereweare

December 17—Storytime and crafts for children. Ages 3–7. 10:30am. Moon Lake Library in Mentone.

December 17—Mentone Ukles. Free ukulele lessons at 1pm at Moon Lake Library in Mentone. Beginners welcome!

December 24 and 31—Moon Lake Library closed for the holidays on Saturdays. Regular hours Tuesday-Thursday.



**The Mentone Area Preservation Association
wishes you a very Merry Christmas!**

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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.

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.

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.

*Peace on Earth
will come to stay,
when we live
Christmas every day.
—Helen Steiner Rice*

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.

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.

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



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How Old Is That Tree?

by Kelly Leavitt

In recent *Groundhog* articles, readers have been invited to estimate the age of large trees and submit photographs. This month, we're featuring a magnificent white oak on Scenic Highway in Mentone, directly across from the driveway to the old Mentone Springs Hotel. Driving by, I have often wondered about its age. I recently decided to stop by and ask neighbor Lisa Schad if I could borrow a tape measure. According to our calculations, the tree's circumference is 146" and its radius is 46.5". Using the method below, this would make it approximately 232 years old, dating back to 1789...about 100 years older than the Town of Mentone.

We hope that by featuring these very old trees, readers might make notice of others. It's

easy to drive or walk past a tree and not think of how many seasons it has weathered. In this case, it's over 900 seasons!

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

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