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Volume 40, No. 4

"Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain"

April 2021

Communities Educating Children Through the Ages From Pioneer Schools to Moon Lake School by Kelly Leavitt

An old and stately red oak tree lives near the entrance of Moon Lake Elementary School in Mentone. Estimated to be approximately 220 years old, it has seen the history of this mountain unfold. It was already a mature tree when the Cherokee were removed from the area 183 years ago. It stood tall when tens of thousands of Union troops marched from Valley Head to Alpine, GA, and then back again a week later, 158 years ago. It continued to grow as the area's first pioneers made their claims on the wilderness.

Moon Lake School was built in 1911, when the tree was about 110 years old. It is still thriving in 2021 and has been accompanied by the laughter and sounds of children since the wooden playground was built around the tree 27 years ago, in 1994. Even the school's motto was inspired by the tree during Dr. Bill Berry's tenure as principal: "Firmly planted, moving forward."

According to the book, *History of DeKalb County Schools* (1998), since 1885 there have been 26 schools on Lookout Mountain. When Moon Lake School closes at the end of this school year and consolidates with Valley Head School, only one will remain—Ruhama School, near Dogtown. Consolidation is an often sad but very real result of the march of time.

In the latter part of the 19th century, simple frame and log structures began to spring up across our local landscape, often serving as schoolrooms during the week and as church on the weekends. In many schools, the students sat on wooden benches



against the walls which were also used by parishioners during church services. The schools were separated by many miles, and the students often walked to school. "The six-year-olds walked just the same as the 16-year-olds!" Jessie O'Rear Whitehead, the granddaughter of Mentone's founder, John Mason, wrote in *History of DeKalb County Schools*. [This book is the source of all quotes that follow.]

"Some schools are barely a faded memory, but at one time they played an important part in the life of the community," wrote Foye Jones, who was a beloved teacher at Moon Lake School for many years. "The schools were supported by pioneer settlers of each particular settlement. Today these

(continued on page 4)



Photo courtesy of Jessica Dietrich-Marsh

Riverfront Acreage Sold to State Conservation Department by Kelly Leavitt

A strong sense of joy and relief spread through Mentone on March 13, as the news spread that riverfront property in Mentone had been purchased by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources at an auction held in Gadsden. The land is adjacent to the state's DeSoto Falls property. It spans approximately 150 acres, with about 1,100 feet on Little River. The purchase price will be determined once the land survey is complete.

Commissioner Chris Blankenship said that the state recognized the opportunity to acquire the property so it could remain in a natural state and avoid development. "Interested people in the community contacted us, as well as staff at DeSoto State Park. They let us know it was coming up for auction. We're in the process of culminating the land purchase now. The important thing was securing the property."

It hasn't been decided yet whether the land will be administered by Alabama State Parks or the state's Forever Wild program. Both entities are part of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

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THE GROUNDHOG

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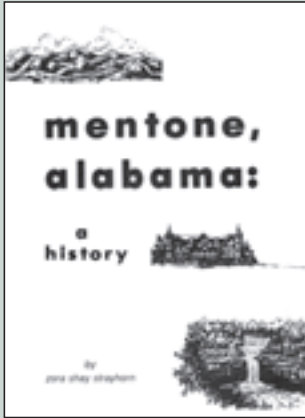
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Groundhog wood cut courtesy of Meg Justice

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



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

Mentone Matters • by Mayor Rob Hammond

The auction of the Sargent property on the West Fork of Little River, in my opinion, yielded the best possible result. The State of Alabama bought most of the 157-acre tract. I spoke with Commissioner of Conservation and Natural Resources Chris Blankenship at the auction. I think this land purchase is good for Little River, the Town of Mentone, DeKalb County, and the State of Alabama.

Due to wet conditions and threat of more rain, the litter pick up for March 27 was postponed until April 10. We did collect a van full of electronic recyclables at Town Hall. Thanks to Bobby Hamby from DeKalb Computers for helping area residents recycle their electronics for the past several years.

I grew up in LaGrange, Georgia, which is not too far from Warm Springs. Before he was president Franklin Roosevelt established a rehabilitation center there for victims of polio. My step-grandmother came to Warm Springs with her brother who was a victim of polio. Because of polio he had a withered arm and one of his legs was much shorter than the other. He was able to walk slowly with a limp. She became



friends with one of the Warm Springs managers who was also a victim of polio. She stayed on at Warm Springs and became the schoolteacher of the children there. Years later when the American people were offered the polio vaccine there was no hesitancy. We were all thankful to get it. Polio has been eradicated in the United States. Warm Springs is still a rehabilitation center—but not for victims of polio.

For those still unsure about getting the vaccine, talk with your family doctor or internist, about the safety and effectiveness of the three vaccines available. They will be your best source of information.



Letter from the Editor

I really enjoyed writing this month's cover article about the old pioneer schools in the Mentone area. Being somewhat of a map nerd, I was curious about where they were each located. Gail Crow Collins was kind enough to take me to the location of the New Union School, where her father was a student 100 years ago. Nothing remains of the school, which stood on what's now a grassy space interspersed with trees. It's a peaceful spot, situated on what was the old dirt road before CR 165 was built. I'm beginning to have an idea of how that old roadbed meandered across the land on its way to the once-bustling Alpine, GA, near the town of Menlo. Things sure do change.

If you're a local history buff and would like to

share your knowledge of the area or local families, please feel free to email me at groundhognews@yahoo.com or call anytime at 256-289-2002 and leave a voice mail. I'm ever-curious!

I'm so glad these days have returned when we can easily enjoy being outdoors without being too chilly. The spring flowers are abundant in their ephemeral beauty; the stars are brilliant; and the spring peepers enchanting.

Last month, a photo of a tulip magnolia accompanied my letter. In my haste, I typed 'tulip poplar.' My apologies to all you horticulturalists!

Be well, everyone. —Kelly





MAPA News by Mark Hoffman

I was looking forward to riding with Lyle Nicely last Saturday, dispensing water and snacks (and extra trash bags) to the clean-up volunteers, then collecting the full bags along Highway 117 and unloading them from Lyle's truck to the big dump truck parked in front of town hall. Mother Nature, however, put a big, wet dent in the plans, forcing a postponement to Saturday, April 10. Please come out and help—there is literally a ton of trash alongside the highway that needs to be picked up and disposed of properly. It's really sad and disheartening to know that so many people are so lazy, and care so little about our immediate environment, that they simply toss a soda can, fast food bag, beer bottle, or whatever (you need to see it to believe it—the crazy and unusual things we have found in the past are quite amazing) out of the window and onto the roadside. Please don't be one of "them." And tell your family and friends not to be one of "them."

Here's hoping you are enjoying the first legs of spring, are staying safe and well, and plan on coming out to help on April 10. It's a great opportunity to help beautify the area and spend some time with other like-minded souls from the community. And by the way, don't forget to bring some gloves! See you then.

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

Rhododendron Festival Cancelled Update by Beverly Haynes

The cancellation of this year's Rhododendron Festival was a very difficult decision on the part of the MAPA board of directors because both May's Rhododendron Festival and October's Colorfest are part of the very fabric of Mentone. However, planning for the spring festival starts at the very beginning of the year and at that time, we had no idea when the State of Alabama would lift restrictions.

Planning and delivering the Festivals involves so many behind-the-scenes activities that it is impossible to offer it without six months of hard work. In addition, because we care about the health and safety of everyone, we want to be diligent in our planning so that no one will become ill with Covid-19. We recognize that it is hard to see other venues holding events that bring many people together and would love to do the same. Once again, though, we have felt it best to follow the guidelines in place for the State.

We hope that it will be safe to host Colorfest once again in October and will announce that decision as soon as we possibly can. In the meantime, please stay well and stay tuned for updates.

Beverly Haynes serves as the secretary of the Mentone Area Preservation Association.

MAPA Festival Volunteer Opportunities

MAPA is hopeful that we'll be able to host Colorfest 2021 on the weekend of October 16 and 17. (We will make that decision by late June.) In November 2020, Festival Organizer Sharon Habin stepped down from that position and became our Event Organizer. She will continue to coordinate our charity golf tournaments, the Miss Rhododendron Pageant, and a possible charity run.

We are now looking for volunteers to fill two important positions: the Festival Organizer and Festival Vendor Coordinator. Although a financial stipend is provided, these are essentially volunteer positions with many duties, some of which include: working with Mailchimp, Google Docs and Sheets; communicating with many people by email, phone, and Facebook; and working

with volunteers and vendors. Preparation for Colorfest would start in June, so as soon as these positions are filled, training can begin. Sharon will help with this process, sharing her experience over the last several years. She and MAPA Treasurer Beverly Haynes have updated a comprehensive manual that covers all aspect of the festivals; this will be a very useful document for the new Organizer and Coordinator. Organizing festivals is a lot of work. It's also a highly rewarding experience to see the beauty of how all the people and groups interweave together to create the tapestry of the festivals!

If you'd like to know more about the Festival Organizer and Festival Vendor Coordinator positions, please email sharonhmapa@gmail.com as soon as possible.

Miss Rhododendron (Virtual) Pageant

MAPA's 2021 Rhododendron Festival will not be held, however the Miss Rhododendron Pageant High School Senior division will be held as it was last spring online so that everyone can be safe in their own home. Entrants will be interviewed by three judges via Zoom on Thursday, May 6.

"The interview process should be treated as if it were an interview for education and employment opportunities, which is often done online these days," said MAPA Event Organizer Sharon Habin. This will be a gown-free pageant, but entrants are expected to dress for the interview in a professional, appropriate manner. Each entrant will be also required to submit a paper, short video, or some type of creative expression, showing/telling how she is learning to adjust to the changes the coronavirus pandemic has made to her everyday life, of school, family and friends.

The winner will receive a crown and sash. Alternates will receive a medallion.

Miss Rhododendron will be awarded a one-year scholarship to Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC admission requirements apply.) To be crowned Miss Rhododendron, the contestant must be able to use the scholarship as described below:

The Miss Rhododendron scholarship to Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC) is a one-year scholarship covering full-time tuition and fees for the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters. The winner must have a minimum 2.5 GPA and must be a senior in high school to utilize the scholarship. The winner must enroll full-time (12 semester credit hours) in the Fall and Spring to receive the scholarship. In-state contestants are eligible, as are those who are residents of the Georgia counties of Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Floyd, Gordon, Hardison, Polk, Walker, and Whitfield, and Tennessee counties of Franklin, Hamilton, Lincoln and Marion. The scholarship can only be awarded to the winner.

MAPA is very grateful to NACC for offering this generous scholarship.

More details and applications are available online at mapamentone.com/2021-miss-rhododendron. The application deadline is Thursday, April 29, at 5 p.m. The creative submission is due on Monday, May 3.





New Union School, 1923–24, Garfield McCurdy's Class • Photo courtesy of Gail Crow Collins...*"I'm certain my daddy's in the front row, but I'm not sure which one he is!"*

Pioneer Schools *(continued from page 1)*

same respected family names will be found in each of the communities, but the schools have vanished. One by one, they have been absorbed into what is known as Moon Lake School."

"A small log house east of Mentone on what is now Highway 117 was used as a schoolhouse in the 1880s," Foye Jones continued. "A Miss Nettie Seymour and Miss Almedia Crow taught there. Another one room building northeast of Mentone located in the Blalock community off Cove Road served as a school building during the week and as a church on Sunday. It was known as 'New Lookout.' Some of the teachers were Lorena Johnson, Mary Sue Price, Arthur Hixson, and Lillian Petty. Several terms of three months each were taught in Little River Baptist Church in the late 80s and early 90s." Some of the teachers recalled by former students were George Lowry, Alma Davenport, Ellie Harris, Annie Wright, Nettie Seymour, George Phillips, Ruth Gardner, and Maude Brown.

Bankhead School

"During the latter years of the 19th century and for some 10 years into the 20th century, Bankhead School was the only school between Mentone, Alabama, and the Georgia state line," wrote Jessie O'Rear Whitehead. "It was located about 4-1/2 miles east of Mentone on the public road crossing the mountain and was a typical one-room frame building painted white.

"At the time I attended Bankhead School, the school term was five months. This was occasionally supplemented by a summer subscription school, the parents paying a small fee to some local woman to 'keep the school.' We enjoyed those sessions! The community was a quiet, rural one, and very few youthful activities were ever in progress. Summer school was like a picnic every day!

"The need for a larger school had become obvious, so Moon Lake was built.... It is essentially an outgrowth of Bankhead School.... By virtue of busing, it offers the advantage of education to the same general area and serves the great-grandchildren of many who once walked those long miles to Bankhead School."

Holly Springs School

The Holly Springs community was southeast of Mentone, in the area of the current-day Holly Springs Cemetery on CR 630. Foye Jones wrote, "The first teachers we could learn of were Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Smith in 1875. The original building was of logs and it was used as a church, as well as a school. The log building was later replaced by a frame building."

Lahusage School

When coal was discovered on Lookout Mountain in the 1900s, a town sprang up in the vicinity of current-day Lake Lahusage on the East Fork Little River. "A

two-story church was erected with the upper story serving as a Masonic Hall. Church services were held on the first floor on Sundays and school was held during the week. Some early teachers were a Mr. Barnes in 1905 and in 1908, Ella Wilks," wrote Foye Jones.

Liberty School

In the early 1870s, a group of people pioneered the community known as Forks of the River—the area between the East and West Forks of Little River, south of the old Alpine Road. "These pioneer families were the Morrors, Blalocks, Keiths, Cash, Bryaner, Wallace, White, Day, Reynold, Shigley, Waldon, Davenport, Howell and York," wrote Mabel Kirk. "This pioneering group of people organized and built a schoolhouse, which served the community as a school, church house, and for all community projects. It was known as the Liberty School House. It was built in the 1880 period and operated as a summer school basis for many years. Miss Mattie Farr was their first teacher. She boarded with the Frank Shigley family.... The house burned in 1901 or 1902. Liberty, the pioneer school, was no more." Liberty School was located in the general area of current-day Alpine Camp for Boys.

Master School for Southern Mountain Boys and Girls

This short-lived school was founded by Col. Milford Howard in 1923 to serve impoverished mountain children, some of whom lived too far to walk to a school. Boys' and girls' living quarters and a dining hall were on premises. The students helped construct a one-room stone schoolhouse which boasted two fireplaces. The ruins of the school are on private property near Camp Comer. [Learn more about this school in the Dec. '20/Jan. '21 issue of The Groundhog at mapamentone.com.]

New Union School

"As the Forks of the River became better known more families moved into the area. Attracted to the area were the Biddle, Grey, Boyd, Knox, Miles, and Crow families," Mabel Kirk wrote. "This new group of people with the earlier citizens [who built Liberty School] organized and built a new schoolhouse" which served as a school, church, and community center. New Union School operated only as a summer school and combined the Holly Springs and Liberty School communities. Miss Ella Dobbs was the first teacher; she boarded with the Frank Shigley family. Built in 1902, the school operated until 1910.

"In 1916 and 1917 Mr. Joe Biddle, Blevé Crow with other men of the community were able to organize and rebuild the schoolhouse," Mabel Kirk wrote. "They prepared a formal request to the DeKalb County Board of Education for the building to house a 7-month school. Superintendent J. M. Tucker "was

(continued on page 5)

Pioneer Schools *(continued from page 4)*

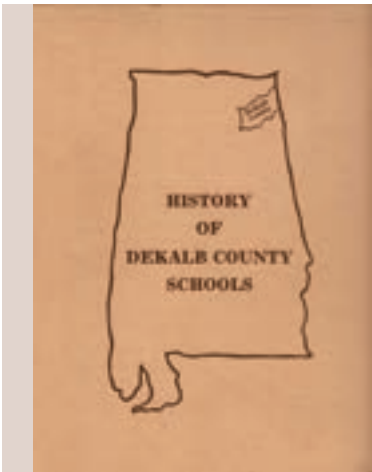
delighted to find the deep concern and genuine enthusiasm of these men for their community. Their request was granted. New Union School became the largest attended school in the Northeast area of DeKalb County. This school functioned from November 1917 through the fall of 1939.” It was located in the vicinity of Mentone’s Fire Station #2 on CR 165.

When President Roosevelt suggested the consolidation of country schools in the late 1930s, New Union School was consolidated with Moon Lake. “The small community school was no more,” wrote Mabel Kirk.

Rock Bridge School

Located near the current-day entrance to DeSoto State Park on CR 89, Rock Bridge School was a one-teacher school serving grades one through eight. “It was both a church and school. This was a wood building with two doors in front. One teacher remembers that she had no problem with the ventilation, but the heating problem was a different story. The school was consolidated with Fischer School about 1935.”

In next month’s issue, we’ll explore the rich and important history of Moon Lake School over the past 110 years. The future of the campus remains uncertain, but it will likely continue to serve the community in some capacity. The old oak tree will be there to welcome whatever new venture may come...“firmly planted, forward moving.”



**History of DeKalb County Schools:
A Pictorial and Script History of
Schools in DeKalb County, Alabama**
by DeKalb County Retired Teachers
Association
January 1, 1980
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SENIOR HEALTH

Medicare and the Covid-19 Vaccine

by Lynn Hixon

Medicare covers FDA-approved Covid-19 Vaccines. Be sure to bring your red, white, and blue Medicare Card so your health care provider or pharmacy can bill Medicare. You'll need your Medicare card even if you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan.

If you fill out a form to get the vaccine, you may be asked for your insurer's group number. If you have Part B, leave this field blank or write "N/A". If you have trouble with the form, talk with your vaccine provider. Medicare also covers Covid-19 tests, Covid-19 antibody tests, and Covid-19 vaccines in our area.

Pharmaceutical manufacturers are distributing the vaccine to federally and state-approved locations to start the vaccination of priority groups. Each state has its own plan for deciding who they'll vaccinate first and how residents can get vaccines. Contact your local health department for more information on

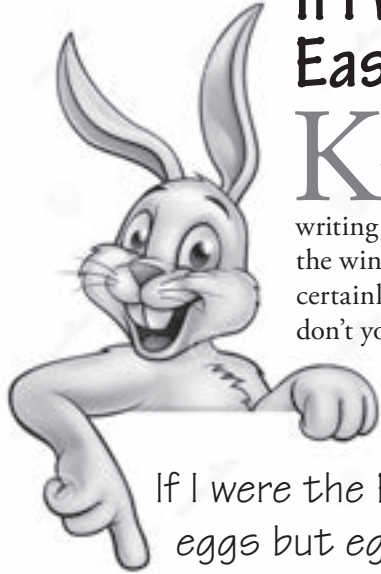
Covid-19 vaccines in your area.

Be alert for scammers trying to steal your Medicare Number. Medicare covers the vaccine at no cost to you, so if anyone asks you for your Medicare Number to get early access to the vaccine, you can bet it's a scam.

Here's what to know:

- You can't pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- You can't pay to get early access to a vaccine.
- Don't share your personal or financial information if someone calls, texts, or emails you promising access to the vaccine for a fee.

If you have any question please call the DeKalb County Council on Aging at 256-845-8590 and ask to speak to Lynn Hixon, the SHIP Coordinator for our county.



If I Were the Easter Bunny...

Kelbi Ballenger's 3rd grade class at Moon Lake Elementary School recently participated in an Easter writing contest. Congratulations to the winner, Solei Neuschaefer! She'd certainly make a fun Easter Bunny, don't you think?

If I were the Easter Bunny I'd hide eggs but eggs with pets in them! I'd bring penguins in people's yards. I'd fill the clouds with tacos. I would bring a giant Easter cat that can fly. Then I'd call Santa to make it rain cookies and presents. I'd make the chocolate bunnies come to life. Then I would go to bed after. This is what I would do if I were the Easter Bunny.

Join MAPA Today

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

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

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

JOIN AT mapamentone.com

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MAPA was organized in 1982. It is chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.



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Cub Scouts Conduct Community Service

by David Allgood

Mentone's Cub Scout Pack 106 conducted a community service project for Mentone's Town Hall Saturday on March 6. The boys pruned and planted flower beds at the entrance to Town Hall, beautifying the center of town for all residents and visitors. The boys also picked up trash in

the center of town, preserving the pristine beauty of our mountain home. The Scouts involved with the project included Eli Carreker, Liam Kling, Baxter Austin, Kamden Mahew, and Will Allgood. Lisa and LJ Smith and Greg and Stephanie Carreker provided adult leadership for the work effort.



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Aunt Bee's Homemade Pickle Contest



All entries must be turned in on May 1 before 9:30 a.m.
at Valley Head Town Hall. Judging will be at 10 a.m. For
more information, please call Deb at 256-635-6814.

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Memories of Mayberry Pie Baking Contest

*Categories:
Fruit, Nut & Other*

All entries must be turned in on May 1 before 10:30 a.m.
at Valley Head Town Hall. Judging will be at 11 a.m. For
more information, please call Deb at 256-635-6814.



Left to right: Toby Manifold, David Tucker, Joseph Lee, Wes Pullen, Mitch Gregory, Will Blackburn, Dan Green, Ken Trowbridge, Noah Durham, Gary Smith, Chuck McMunn

Mentone Fire Department Gets New Engine by Vicky Patrick and Ken Trowbridge

The North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District is proud to have a new shiny red engine. This new engine was necessary to replace the old 1967 Mack engine that the Fire Department has had for a very long time. The engine was delivered on March 4, 2021 by Deep South Trucks as the happy Fire Volunteers gathered for close inspection. The engine was a long time coming due to Covid-19, as it was expected in August 2020.

The truck was made possible with a grant from the federal government—a 95/5 grant, with 5% coming from us. This was our second attempt applying for this grant.

The engine, built on a Kenworth chassis, is equipped with a 2,500-gallon onboard water tank, ladders, a full set of tools, hoses and a collapsible water holding tank. The engine is capable of drawing water from ponds or streams in the event fire hydrants are unavailable. In the right situation, we will have the capability of arriving on a fire scene with up to almost 10,000 gallons of water.

A new feature is a front-mounted fire nozzle mounted on the front bumper. It can be remotely aimed and operated by a person in the cab of the truck using a joystick mounted on the center console.

The new truck will be kept at Station 2 on CR 165 at this time because as it will not fit in Station 1 in downtown Mentone.



Volunteer Fireman David Tucker



Assistant Fire Chief Kaleb McMunn with his son and daughter.



Volunteer Fireman Toby Manifold

Valley Head Happenings

by Karen Vest

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

If you have passed through Valley Head recently, you may have noticed several new houses being built. We are very excited to welcome growth and new residents. Valley Head has a wonderful school which houses kindergarten through high school. As you may know, with the closing of Moon Lake School at the end of this school semester, those children will have the option of going to Valley Head School.

We are working diligently to improve our town. Several projects in the works are paving numerous streets and replacing streetlights with energy-efficient LED bulbs. We are also adding an additional 30 new streetlights within the city limits to improve upon the safety of our town.

In 2010, then-Mayor Kenneth Hammond challenged Debra Rhodes, Valley Head Town Clerk, to apply for the designation of Tree City U.S.A. The town won the designation that year and we were recently honored with the award of the 2020 Tree City U.S.A. designation for the 11th year. To celebrate, Valley Head gave away hundreds of trees to over 50 families. A special thank you goes out to Dan Green, retired from the Alabama Forestry Commission, and to everyone who participated in this year's tree give-away.

Valley Head Park's pavilion will be re-opening on Monday, April 26. All restrooms will be open and available at that time and will remain open until winter. If you would like to reserve the pavilion for a meeting or party, please call Town Hall at 256-635-6814. Our Town Clerk, Debra, will be happy to take

your reservation. There is a variety of playground equipment, a basketball court, and of course, our walking trail to enjoy. The walking trail is a loop that will reward you with all the sights and sounds of the beautiful forest it winds through. You may spot the pair of red-tailed hawks that nest up on the ridge. Also, be on the lookout for a black bear and possible cubs, which were first sighted within the park in the spring of 2020. Ken Hammond donated the land for the walking trail to the Town of Valley Head many years ago. His generous gift has enabled hundreds of visitors to enjoy our nature trail. PLEASE remember to utilize the numerous trash cans located within the park including the basketball court. No one likes a litterbug.

In 2017, Mayor Lamar Bray realized the need to generate funds for Valley Head's all-volunteer fire department. With the help of Adele Phillips, Debra Rhodes, Jennifer Owen, Shannon and Raymond Beasley, and so many others, Memories of Mayberry Festival was born. Over \$13,000 was raised that year, which helped the fire department buy some much needed equipment and supplies.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 1, for the 4th Annual Memories of Mayberry Festival. The festival will take place around Valley Head's town square and will begin at 9 a.m. and run until approximately 2 p.m. The festival will feature live music, numerous food and craft vendors, a classic car cruise-in, pie baking contest, Aunt Bee's Homemade Dill Pickle contest, pony rides, children's train ride, blow-up slide and bouncy house, and so much more. All proceeds go to the Valley Head Volunteer Fire Department. This festival is our annual fundraiser for our ALL-VOLUNTEER fire department, and we appreciate the community's support. Bring your entire family for a day that's sure to be filled with fun. We will be following COVID prevention safety precautions by encouraging everyone to wear a mask, all vendors will have hand sanitizer available, and numerous hand sanitizer stations will be set up all throughout the festival area. For more information, please check out our Facebook page: Memories of Mayberry Festival.

Hopefully by the next issue of *The Groundhog*, the new website for the Town of Valley Head will be up and running. We are excited to be able to share current events and town news as it happens in our special little town. Valley Head's Town Council meets the first Monday of each month beginning at 6 p.m. The public is always welcome to attend. A mask is currently required to attend the meeting.

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



DeKalb County Forester Dan Green and Valley Head council member Karen Vest helped distribute hundreds of free trees.

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DOWNTOWN MENTONE, within walking distance to all the downtown attractions, including Brow Park. The original 1965 rock foundation gives much to the imagination of what this place could be with some tender love and care! Enjoy living at the end of a dead-end street with a wooded back yard or offer this as a weekend rental spot that will be convenient and peaceful. \$250,000. MLS #1770919



NEW

DON'T WASTE ANOTHER MINUTE...CALL NOW to see this gorgeous one-level home located minutes from DeSoto State Park and downtown Mentone. Vinyl and stacked stone exterior. Covered front porch that is perfect for your rocking chairs. Vaulted ceiling living room with stone, wood-burning fireplace and hardwood floors. Eat-in kitchen is custom with new flooring, new granite countertops, new tumbled stone backsplash, hickory cabinets, breakfast bar, pantry and stainless appliances. Laundry room with storage. Three bedrooms and 2 baths. Attached 2-car garage and storage building. Fenced back yard. Large back deck for grilling and entertaining. New HVAC. MUST SEE! \$239,000. MLS #1776275



MOUNTAIN LAUREL INN is nestled in the woods above Little River. Main residence with BR/BA, living, kitchen, utility & sunroom. Guest house with 4BR, each with private entrance & bath, & 2-room studio with kitchenette. Gathering house with LR and kitchenette. Approx. 7-acre property borders DeSoto State Park. \$379,000. MLS #1153859



6 FULLY FURNISHED CABINS LOCATED ON THE BROW IN MENTONE positioned on 7 tracts totaling approx. 22 acres. Each cabin boasts wood exteriors, wood interior walls and floors, vaulted ceilings, gas log fireplaces, full kitchen amenities including granite countertops, impeccable cabin decor AND hot tubs on the back decks with focus on the spectacular VIEWS! Each fully furnished cabin is currently in a rental program with a strong rental history, providing an income-producing opportunity for the new owner. \$1,499,000. MLS #1772318



ONE OF A KIND property with vaulted ceilings, open exposed solid wood beams. Wood walls, wood ceilings, master on main level w/ walk-in closet and small office space. Loft bedroom upstairs plus 768 sq. ft. of outdoor living on this 4-seasons porch! Situated on approx. 1.2 acres PLUS... It has a 100-year-old farmhouse and barn on property. \$210,000. MLS #1770545



NEW

WELCOME TO THE FRONT DOOR OF YOUR FUTURE! Don't miss your chance to enjoy peace, comfort and relaxation. This 2 story home on 4 acres of fenced pasture is located on Lookout Mountain in Mentone and is a welcome escape from the city bustle. Features are 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, fireplace, central heating and air, covered porch, 3 car carport, 4 stall barn with tack room and plenty of fresh country air! Opportunity only knocks once so call today! \$265,000. MLS #1775575



LOTS & LAND

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

#1076286— Beautiful Building Spot in Mentone! Perfectly located 1.75 acre building lot in West Fork Subdivision with over 400 feet of river frontage! \$39,900.

#1092235—Building lot in Laurel Creek Lakes. \$19,900

#1111628—AMAZING VIEWS! YES, VIEWS!!! REDUCED TO \$79,900.

#1113936—Looking for a brow lot inside the city limits of Mentone? \$68,500

#1150871—WHAT AN ADDRESS FOR YOUR NEXT HOME! Enjoy peace and quiet and the sound of rushing waters on this 3-acre lot on West Fork of Little River in Mentone. Bring your plans and move to Mentone today! \$48,500

#1150900—ATTENTION LAND LOVERS... For those of you seeking peace and quiet surroundings on West Fork Little River here's your chance to build the home of your dreams. This 2-acre tract is too wonderful to pass you by. \$48,500

#1150911—PANAROMIC VIEWS FOR MILES & MILES! Along with views of Battelle below in the valley. Bring your home plans and enjoy nature on this 8.9 tract of land. \$199,500

#1150912—WOW! What Amazing VIEWS you have for miles and miles! Beautiful views of Battelle below. Great place to build your forever home on this 8.8 acres of prime brow property. \$195,000

#1156528—9.93 acres with a spring! Great Building Spot! \$65,900

#1770010—3.10 acres on CR 89. \$30,000

#1774186—Beautiful North Brow in Mentone! 3-acre brow lot with view of

the valley below. Build that get-away cabin or the forever home of your dreams! \$125,000

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

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River Voice by Angie Shugart

"Indeed the river is a perpetual gala, and boasts each month a new ornament." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

To celebrate Earth month, I would like to highlight Alabama's amazing waterways. There are over 130,000 miles of rivers and streams flowing like veins through our state from the Mountains to the Gulf of Mexico. Little River is part of the Coosa River basin and contributes 63 total miles of the state's waterways.

Little River is fed by three major forks atop the plateau of Lookout Mountain. The recreational West, the hidden Middle and the wild East forks all begin amazingly by rain-fed springs and creeks in northwest Georgia. The West Fork, 22.5 miles long, begins close to where GA Hwy. 157 and Old State Line Road meet, flowing past Camps Ponderosa, Skyline, Laney, Riverview and Alpine before meeting the East Fork just south of DeSoto State Park. The East Fork, a total of 15 miles, flows from GA Hwy. 157 and Yankee Road through Camp Juliette Low and into Lake Lahusage, where it meets 5.5 miles of the Middle Fork and continues past Lookout Mountain Camp for Boys and on to meet the West Fork. Little River then flows another 20 miles from the West and East Fork confluence through the Little River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Little River Canyon until it finally meets Weiss Lake.

Each segment of Little River is dynamic, wild and scenic. Both East and West forks are the connection to historic summer camps that have attracted youth since the 1920s. Whitewater kayaking is world-class on the East Fork through

the WMA and Little River Canyon. The Middle Fork is mysterious and wild, making it possible for rare and endangered flora and fauna that are found throughout the river to call it home.

Clean water is essential for each segment to thrive. As new homes are built along the river, it is important to keep in mind how that action will affect the water quality. If a building site is not properly secured, sediment pollution (dirt) can wash into the river or nearby stream, degrading the water quality. Little River Waterkeeper would like to encourage smart growth that preserves the natural and scenic values of the landscape. Choosing low impact development is a smart choice in sensitive areas. Contractors will take measures to prevent runoff with silt fencing, straw, and rainwater retention systems. Keeping as much soil intact as possible is the key, especially the riverbanks. Having the benefits of pristine water quality is rare. Little River is a gem in the state and we think it is deserving of extra special care throughout the entire watershed.

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



**Little River Canyon National Preserve
Major Rivers, Forks, and Tributaries**

Created by Nathan Rinehart/Geography and Geology,
Western Kentucky University. Source: (USGS 2007a)



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Photo courtesy of Karen Graffeo



Howard Chapel Worshipers Congregate in the Open Air

The Sallie Howard Memorial Chapel ("The Church with a Rock in It") has long held an open-door tradition, welcoming people to visit any time of day or night. When the Covid-19 pandemic began, though, the doors were locked and congregants began holding services outside. Over the past 13 months, they have only missed two Sunday services. These devoted people have braved all kinds of weather in their dedication to continue to gather in worship. When the climate permits, they sit outside on the church's lovely grounds, and when necessary, they gather under the covered pavilion. Like many other area churches, they are looking forward to celebrating Easter Sunday together...outdoors. Soon, the chapel will open once more.



Mentone Area Clean-up Rescheduled

The clean-up scheduled for March 27 was postponed due to the possibility of rain. Let's hope for better weather on April 10! If you'd like to help clean the roadsides of Mentone, meet at the Town Square next to the Mentone Inn at 9 a.m. to pick up a safety vest, a litter grabber, and a bag.

Lyle Nicely will match individuals and groups with locations he's identified that need to be cleaned up.

Afterwards, a barbecue lunch will be served at Mentone Inn Pavilion. Please bring a covered dish to share, if possible. (The food can be dropped off at the Mentone Inn Pavilion in the morning.) Enjoy music

and camaraderie.

This is been an important (and fun!) tradition since 2002. If you have any questions, please contact Lyle Nicely at 256-996-0169.

Moon Lake Library thanks Chris Russell and Sharon Doviet for their significant donation to the library. Chris wrote, "Sharon and I appreciate everything libraries mean to each community...especially here in Mentone. We would like to make this donation in honor of: Judy Dowiat for her many years of service as a librarian for the local communities, including a decade of driving the Bookmobile all around DeKalb County; Kelly Leavitt for her incredible role in so many Mentone civic organizations and keeping this community connected with her tireless work in the essential service of *The Groundhog*; Stan Brown, who had served as an inspiring second grade teacher at Moon Lake Elementary; Annie Young, Sharon's grandmother and longtime DeKalb County librarian who influenced Sharon's love of reading; and in memory of Kathryn Jones, who had been the Principal and teacher to multiple generations of Sharon's family at Moon Lake School." Sharon wrote an article in the March 2019 *Groundhog* about Moon Lake School's library—when it was located on shelves in the janitor's mop closet. It's an enjoyable read.

Thank you, also, to everyone who has recently donated to the library. Your support has really showed how much you care about our library and its future.



Moon Lake Community Library News

by Dianne Kuehl

We'd also like to thank Jim and Marci Baggett for their generous donation of a subscription to the always-interesting *Smithsonian* magazine.

Thanks, too, to Kathryn and Mike Norris for their recent donation in memory of Garnett Whatley Smith, who passed away in January. We used these funds to purchase David Allen Sibley's latest book, *What It's Like to Be a Bird: From Flying to Nesting, Eating to Singing—What Birds Are Doing, and Why* (2020). A bookplate will be attached in honor of Garnett, whose daughter works at Mentone Market.

Our board of directors is grateful to Annette Stone Peteck and Angela Hadley for their dedicated service as board members over the past several years. We will certainly miss their input and guidance. We welcome Jacob Brown, Ph.D., to his newly-appointed position on the board. Jacob lives with his family in Valley Head and serves as the elementary principal at Collinsville School. His expertise is in technology. We think he's a great addition to our board as we navigate these uncertain times with the closing of Moon Lake School, with whom we share the library.

Dianne Kuehl is the treasurer of Moon Lake Community Library.



BOOK CLUB: *The Pecan Man*, by Cassie Dandridge Selleck Tuesday, April 27 at 6:30 pm via Zoom

The Pecan Man, by Cassie Dandridge Selleck (2012) is a work of Southern fiction whose first chapter was the First Place winner of the 2006 CNW/FFWA Florida State Writing Competition in the Unpublished Novel category.

In the summer of 1976, recently widowed and childless, Ora Lee Beckworth hires a homeless old black man to mow her lawn. The neighborhood

children call him the Pee-can Man; their mothers call them inside whenever he appears. When the police chief's son is found stabbed to death near his camp, the man Ora knows as Eddie is arrested and charged with murder.

Twenty-five years later, Ora sets out to tell the truth about the Pecan Man. In narrating her story, Ora discovers more truth about herself than she could

ever have imagined. This novel has been described as *To Kill a Mockingbird* meets *The Help*.

The Pecan Man is available to borrow from the library. To learn how to connect to this free Zoom event, go to moonlakelibrary.org. Everyone is welcome to join the discussion!

AUTHOR TALK: Marcus Thomas, Author of *Witch of the Mountain—The Real Story of Granny Dollar*

Monday, April 19 at 6:30 pm via Zoom

Marcus Thomas grew up on Sand Mountain listening to the legendary tales of Granny Dollar, who in 1923 arrived in the River Park community (near DeSoto State Park) and attained some level of fame.

A retired 25-year veteran FBI special agent and amateur genealogist, Marcus Thomas has applied his investigative skills with his genealogy experience to crack a 90-year-old mystery of the identity of midwife, folk healer, and fortune teller, Granny Dollar. The results appear in his

first book, *Witch of the Mountain: The Real Story of Granny Dollar*.

"For over ninety years, her actual identity has remained a mystery. The author...has spent years investigating this mystery. Now, for the first time, the real story of Granny Dollar has been told. The reader will learn that Granny Dollar's tale about her own life was a myth constructed over many years to help her achieve economic autonomy by laboring as a granny midwife, folk healer, fortune-teller, and conjurer. Her tale was also useful for

covering shameful details surrounding her family's history. Ultimately, her persona served to ensure her well-being and security when she could no longer work and in a place and time when a single woman had few alternatives."—from goodreads.com

Witch of the Mountain is available to borrow from the library. To learn how to connect to this free Zoom event, go to moonlakelibrary.org. Everyone is welcome to join the discussion! To read excerpts of the book, visit bit.ly/marcus-thomas.




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Calling All Book Lovers! Tuesday, April 13 @ 6:30 pm via Zoom

In February, we celebrated the month of love with a gathering of book lovers via Zoom. Aimed at being a relaxing time of social connection, those who attended chatted for 90 minutes about the books they love and their influence on their lives (among many other things!). The discussion was so enjoyable, we decided to make

it a semi-regular event, when we can relax in our homes and visit with others. During February's session, we were joined by two cats and a dog, comfortably settled in their owners' laps. Cozy, indeed! Everyone is welcome. Visit moonlakelibrary.org to learn how to connect on Zoom via your computer, tablet, or phone.

Mentone Arts & Cultural Center News

Improvements and Upgrades Begin at Arts Center by Randy Grider



The Mentone Arts & Cultural Center has begun a series of planned improvements and upgrades to its building and property in downtown Mentone.

We recently added signage to the front of the building designating it as the Chuck Sennett Center for

the Arts. Chuck Sennett, who specialized in aerial photography, is the late son of Barbara and Dr. Charles O. “Soc” Sennett of Rome and Mentone. Additional outside signage will include a sign above the gift shop/information area entrance in memory of the late Gladys Blalock Crane, who grew up in Mentone.

Other supporters will be honored inside the building in wall art and plaques in the coming weeks and months.

We also have started construction sculpture garden that will be named after Dr. Stephen Brewer. The garden is funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama (CFNA) as well as contributions from the Brewer family and the DeKalb County Development Commission. The CFNA grant is part of the Susie Parker Stringfellow’s 100 Year Legacy Program in which the foundation awarded funds to create “Open Spaces Sacred Places” gardens in nine northeast



Alabama counties. Other similar gardens are located at St. Joseph’s-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church in Mentone and at the Alabama Walking Park in Fort Payne. Turf Tamer in Fort Payne designed the sculpture garden and is doing the majority of the construction.

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



Community Calendar

Mentone Town Council meets the 2nd Tuesday every month at 5pm at 5607 AL Hwy 117, across from 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.

FREE FOOD for eligible persons and families. Wednesdays, 9–11am. New applicants are welcome during these hours. Joint effort between St. Joseph’s-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church (Community Outreach Ministry) and the Food Bank of North Alabama.

Ryleigh’s Closet is a clothing closet that provides men’s, women’s, and children’s clothing to those in need on 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 4–7pm. Mentone Community Church, 90 Summerville Rd. 256-634-4210.



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Birthdays

1

Michele Kincer
Angie Miller
Calvin Lanier
Kayla Cronnon
Cayson Hughes

2

Milton Chambers
Ellie Cox
Jayken Lawton
Nancy Lawton
Amanda Patrick
Dee Dee Hendricks
Marcus Ledford
Riley Shae Burt

3

Ray Padgett
Jessica Battles
Jalen Gregory

4

Jamie Vest
Mina Blalock
Sherry Barkley
Coty Powell
Cameron Thompson
Lindsay Thompson

5

Kaitlyn Tedder
Jana Sharp
Kenny Chamlee
Steve Rhodes
Chris Black
Andi Runnels
Donna Busby
Jamie Pannell
Gene Justice

6

Felicia Harrison
Jazz Hazelton
John Chambers
Jazz Chambers
Ethel Manifold
Sydney Ingram
Jennifer Cruse

7

Shannon Chappell
Kansas Lee
Kyle Miller
Dori Reed

8

Angie Wright
Jackson Eli Rosson
Sharon Coots
Madissen Chitwood
Hayden Knowles
Robert Williamson

9

Josh Goss
Justin Kahler
Mickey Smith
Cody West

10

Brittany McAdams
Newly Ingram
Paul Ethan Blackwell
Lindsey Webb
Lisa Moore
Emily McElhaney
Debra Rhodes
Stanford Carson
Conner Barkley
Robert Tillman

11

Jorden Beasley
Joey Garrett
Josie Crider Goss
Jerri Ann Tidmore
Austin Simpson
Ashton Simpson

12

Corey Davis
Kyle Coots
Tiffany Baker
Jeff Stephenson
Liam Cooper
Mary Shurett

13

Brian Blalock
Tessa Gravitt

14

Zoey Chambers
Carl Tubberville
Jason Baber
Tucker Wayne Smith
Austin Frost

15

Barbara Busby Rape
Craig Hendricks
Kailee Johnson

16

Preston Kirby
Danny Hopper
Al Blackburn
Sandy Johnson
Waker Moore

17

Ann Cash Harrell
Scott Guinn
Hannah Drain

18

Taylor Verdon
Shan Smith

19

Butch Manifold

20

Lane Ingram
Brenda Clinton

21

Charlene Smith

22

Thelma Coots
John Paul Verdon
Daxson Crow
Nolan Fowler

23

Lauren McGee
Philip Cash
John P. Smith Jr.
Coleton Phillips
KareyAnn Garner
Mindy Chadwick

24

Courtney Meadows
Taylee Keith
Adam Dupree
Mariah Shannon
Kinsley Brown

25

Cooper Kirby
Jennifer Hamilton

26

Molly Manifold
Eloise Lance
John Moore
Phyllis James
Cindy Carden
Zack Payne
Wesley Flarity
Karson London

27

Kaden Brody Johnson
Emily Miller
Kaylee Cartwright
Tommy Stephens
Ben Shurett

28

Stacey Bowman
Austin Reed
Vaelyn Heinrich
Maria Moreno

29

Linda Stephenson
Katie Hester
Dawson Kincer
John Kincer
Ezra Underwood

30

Mandi Goza
Anita Meadows
Shane McMahan
Jaimee McGee
Doug Powell

1

Raymond & Sharon Coots

3

Chris & Jennifer Collins
Steve & Sandy Tate

4

Tim & Allie Cowart

7

Milton & Gail Chambers

10

Nathan & Lacie Keith

14

Ronnie & Leslie Bowman

16

Nick & Shinice Stout

19

Corey & Abby Davis

20

Josh & Brandi Rosson

26

Ross & Jessica VanPelt

28

Todd & Angie Godwin

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Let's All Slow Down Through Town

It's been a year now since Mentone acquired two speed trailers which monitor vehicles traveling along AL Highway 117. When a vehicle is going more than two miles over the speed limit, the machine politely flashes blue and red lights to get the driver's attention. Mentone Police Chief Gene McKee says they have "absolutely" helped. "I've been satisfied with the results," he said. "We have thousands of cars coming through town. Half of them are from out of town or out of state. We all know it's unsafe and there's really no excuse to be speeding. We can all set the best example to out-of-towners and keep our roads safe by driving the speed limit. Chief McKee stressed that with camp season approaching and the tourist season picking up, we all need to be especially vigilant and mindful both of the speed limit and of pedestrians crossing the road.



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Vegetable Plant Sale

DeKalb County Master Gardeners will have two sales again this year. By doing this, the vegetable and herb plants that are ready will be in good shape to plant on time. Mid-April is our average last frost date, hopefully, so you will be able to get plants from us and be ready to plant

when it looks like the night time temperatures agree.

The sale is on Saturday, April 17, from 7 until 11 a.m. at the VFW in Fort Payne (151 18th Street NE).



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MERF News

[Mentone Educational Resources Foundation]

by Sarah Wilcox



Spring in Mentone is so enjoyable to watch as the earth awakes slowly. I'm loving the show that the daffodils, crocuses, and the forsythia are putting on right now as we see a bright, new beginning! Many have asked about what will MERF once Moon Lake School closes. MERF will continue "to enrich the learning and living in Mentone" with MERF moms, senior lunches, a spectacular Pathway to Community, and a good-looking community house! Just wait until you see the house painted with fresh colors and new gutters soon! MERF will also continue to support our school-age children with opportunities, tutoring, scholarships, and the arts but we do not know yet how that will look in the future. Ms. Paula is a part of those plans. We do know that MERF will be having another Afternoon with the Artists next month with Moon Lake Elementary School students, so we are excited.

The sun shone brightly at the MERF house on Monday, March 15, as the PTO, Rhododendron Garden Club, and MERF celebrated and served lunch to the spectacular Moon Lake Elementary School staff! Great hand-drawn posters adorned the walls of the MERF house, with each table beautifully decorated with floral arrangements by the Garden Club. Each attendee was able to take a vase home to enjoy. Several friends of Moon Lake and MERF added their gifts of beautiful and delicious food. Kat Griffith baked homemade bread and mouthwatering salad dressing. Mary Shurett made her delectable White Velvet dessert topped with fresh strawberries. Cat Findley from Tip Top Bake



Rhododendron Garden Club members
Alyce Kenney and Mellanie Tuttle



PTO, Rhododendron Garden Club,
and MERF show love and appreciation
for the Moon Lake staff



Shop made her yummy butternut squash soup and Jamaican curried chicken salad. And a special friend wrote encouraging notes to each of the staff, thanking them for what they give tirelessly to each student and encouraging them to have hope in this future change. Thank you to Mary MacMichael, Alyce Kenney, and Mellanie Tuttle for getting the MERF house

bright and inviting for our guests! What a great way to celebrate and show our appreciation for the main reason that Moon Lake Elementary School has been a great beginning for each child. We thank you and we love you, Moon Lake Elementary School staff!

MERF is so grateful for the many ways that the Mentone community supports us and each other. I loved a particular day in March as I bounded into the Little River Hardware store and accosted the owner, Cooper Lindsay. "I need you to be my model today! The sun is out, and you need to put on this MERF merch so I can take a pic to post!" So thankful that he didn't hesitate, and we got a great pic of him in a "Leave Me in Mentone" zip shirt and hat while holding up some of our other shirts. The hardware believes in community and is such a fun place to find great local art, hardware (of course), local news, and delicious homemade ice cream. Let's all make an effort to really support our local shops and restaurants this spring to give back to our fantastic Mentone community.



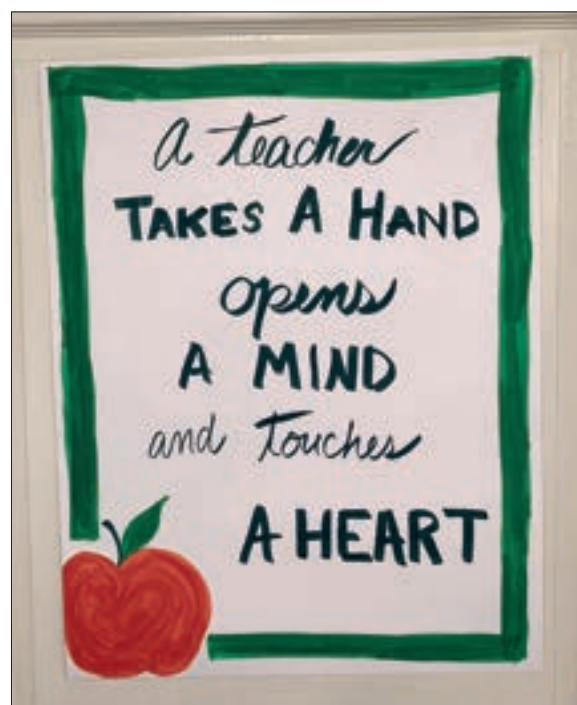
My boards may be a little creaky and my paint a little flaky but I am full of life. I continue to open my doors to the young and the wise so my walls are full of joy, laughter and learning.



Cooper Lindsay displays MERF merch.



MERF Moms creating art with Paula Easter



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

Every Picket Tells a Story!

Our February issue featured the beginning of a series by Jay Robbins which tell the stories of individual pickets on MERF's Pathway to Community. Below are some more selections our readers have expressed curiosity about.

The Pathway to Community is located on AL Highway 117, just to the east of Moon Lake Library. The project was funded by a generous grant from the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama. If you are curious about a specific picket's story,

or if you would like to share the story behind your own picket, please email Jay at jrobbins727@gmail.com and we will feature it in a future issue.

1, 2 Amanda & Nigel Gamsby

Hello, I'm Amanda Gamsby and my son is Nigel. Our pickets depict me with my purple hair and "goth" attire, against a light blue sky with some art supplies, and my son Nigel against a darker blue sky with some things he loves, including an ornate dragon shield, books, and a video game controller. I drew all the outlines and did much of the detail while Nigel made the creative decisions about his picket and filled in the bold colors.

We moved here to Mentone at Halloween time in 2019 after visiting my parents, Don Highfield and Anne McLeod, and deciding that we Really Should Just Stay. It was a very hard time in my life, and it became a major turning point when we moved here. Almost like a whole new life. That was part of the reason I depicted it as springtime in my picket, even though it was already late August. I included springtime flowers because I love flowers and gardening. I dressed myself in my usual sort of attire, with a shirt that just says LOVE because love is important to me. I'm holding a pen and a brush because I am an artist, and the ladybug is a copy of a drawing I've made, so it's like I'm using my pencil to

draw the things around me into life.

Here is the story of Nigel's picket in his own words:

"I made my picket to represent all of the things that I like. The books are D&D manuals because I love to play D&D, even though I haven't found anyone to play with. I love to play video games on multiple consoles, but I chose an Xbox controller because playing online on the Xbox is my main way to stay in touch with my friends. The Nerf sword and my wooden shield (which was hand-carved and painted by my granddad) are because I sometimes play Nerf with my friends and that is the only time that I ever actually see them. They may have meant something different to me at the time, but that is what they mean now."

3 Sandy Collins

My Dad helped me paint my picket. I like to play basketball. I was on the Dream Team at Rainsville First Baptist Church but I'm not playing basketball right now due to having a pacemaker a year ago. The Dream Team is a "Special Needs Upward Team" at the church.

4 Mickey Luck

The Pathway to Community project was an excellent way to bring many members of the community together. Painting pickets was an activity everyone seemed to enjoy. I ended up painting about 12 pickets and sketched several more for others to paint. My wife Cynthia spent many hours painting the backs of the pickets with solid colors. The flag triptych came about because we felt we really needed a flag represented; but I couldn't figure out how to get it on one picket. So—I fudged and sketched it out on three pickets, leaving it for the viewer to fill in the missing parts. The children at the bottom represent different races (as much as I could showing them from the back) to indicate that our flag is for all Americans. Long may it wave.

5, 6, 7, 8 Cathy Haven Howard

Working on the Pathways to Community project and specifically the pickets, was one of the most uplifting and inspirational things that I did during this past pandemic year. I painted four



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different pickets and the first one that I painted was right after George Floyd died. I wanted to do a picket that represented a person of color. Very few people had painted pickets at this point and I just let her come through without any image or thought of who I was painting. She was not willing to smile and act as if everything was okay, and at the same time she was strong in knowing who she was. My next picket was one of the tall ones and I had to ask myself what is something I can paint and get it to fit easily onto the picket? I saw a Facebook post about sunflowers that had a heart in the center of their seeds. I thought, that's my next picket. I decided to take photos of myself and my husband Ted Howard and use them as inspiration for my last pickets. I love the color purple and I have worn long dresses or skirts most of my adult life. I am a Minister of the Alliance of Divine Love and the name of our land/space where we live in Mentone is called Heartwood due to a large heart shaped burl in a tree outside of our home. Love is my thing and it felt that I wanted to hold a heart for the connection of community of which this project represents. My husband Ted is a fiddle player and loves to play old time music with others. He is ready and waiting to make some music.

9 Cathie Crow

Ian Wilkinson helped me sketch in the picket of a woman feeding her brood of chickens. The woman is me, and the chickens are my children. I raised two children of my own and now am taking care of three grandchildren, as well as another child we knew from our church who needed somewhere to stay. My husband was born here in Mentone, and I have been here 50 years. We love this community.

10 Carolyn Nail

I saw a picket that had already been sketched in. I knew right away that it was the one I wanted to paint. It shows a boy (or a girl) on the way to go fishing. He will get mud on his feet and will soon be putting a dirty worm on his hook and sitting on the bank of the river thinking about his life. It reminded me of my own younger days. I've always been an outside, nature-loving person. The boy on the picket has no cares. There are no electronics to distract him. To me it depicts pure, all-American youth.

11 Carol Hazell

Sarah Wilcox and I were on the porch of the MERF House cleaning up after a "picket-painting" session. We were discussing how thankful we were to have a picket honoring Sue Henry. Sarah said she wished someone would paint a picket showing the origin of the MERF House. That got me to thinking of what I would paint on such a commemorative picket. We were talking about how Mrs. Shigley gave the children who stopped by a chocolate-chip cookie and that she always had pansies growing everywhere because 'they were always smiling at you'. Immediately, the idea came to me of painting the House at the bottom of the picket with cookie-holding children venturing up a rocky sidewalk toward the sun with pansies growing all around. On that sun there would be the year that the house was built. The painted picket would show the love and happiness of the House many years ago.

Sarah deserves a great appreciation for all the work she has done with the Pathway to Community but she especially deserves praise for the time she spent organizing the process of painting the pickets.

When we FINALLY get our red door on the front of the MERF House, which I have requested for about 20 years, the Board has voted that my picket will be attached to the porch wall next to the door—what a flattering place for my picket showing the ancestry of the House.

As a member of the MERF board, I would like to say thank you to all those who showed participation and interest in making our House a better place.

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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 Tim Miller. Van Ministry for Children pick-up/take home, ages K-12, for all surrounding areas 8:15am (please call Donna Bunn 706-398-0720). 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. Heidi C. Bender. Sunday School is at 9:30am. 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" or Pastor Mike at "Mike Ellis".

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church offers Sunday School on Sunday mornings at 10am (EST) and Worship Service at 11am (EST). Pastor Jack Green. 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; however, indoor service and group meetings have been temporarily cancelled due to COVID-19. You may join us for weekly services by visiting our website at stjom.dioala.org. We are continuing to support our community with outreach, so please call our church office at 256-634-4476 for more information. 21145 Scenic Hwy, PO Box 161, Mentone, AL 35984.

Spirit Expression Ministry, a Chapel of the Alliance of Divine Love, invites you to sit with us in sacred circle on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at 11am Central at Heartwood Center, 7 miles from downtown Mentone. Reverend Cathy Haven Howard facilitates a spiritual wisdom topic. Email havenhoward1@gmail.com for directions and questions.

Summit Church of God in Mentone invites you to be in service Sunday morning 10:45am, Sunday night 5pm, Wednesday Bible Study 6:30pm. Pastor Lance Kincer.

Hammondville, Alabama

The **Church of God 7th Day** invites you to Sabbath School

*We suggest you
contact the churches
to inquire about how they are
currently holding services.*

classes at 9:30am and Worship Service at 11am. Visitors are always welcome. Located just off Hwy. 11 N. at corner of Hwy. 117 and Palmer Road. 256-717-5040.

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

Valley Head, Alabama

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

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

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

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

Fort Payne, Alabama

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

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

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

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

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

845-7446.

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

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

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

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

Cloudland, Georgia

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

Menlo, Georgia

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

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

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

Summerville, Georgia

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

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

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“I’m not an artist.” . . . I just don’t have any talent.” . . . “I’m not that creative.”

It’s time to question these statements, in particular the last one, and to think more expansively about what it means to be creative. The Little River Arts Council firmly believes the arts are for everyone, and that people often possess more creativity than they credit themselves with. Last summer as small groups worked on the picket fence for the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation’s walking track, we heard many say that it was the first time they’d ever painted. Yet, they had an idea or a willingness to put brush to picket to make someone else’s inspiration come to life, and it was their determination that made the project work beautifully.

There’s plenty of evidence that creativity is all around us, but because the end product is not a piece of fine art or a poem, or a dance, or a song, we overlook the role of imagination and vision in making possible what was not there before.

Consider:

Camp counselors, managers, and other staff, determined to craft memories for their campers so that decades from now, they’ll recall their weeks spent in Mentone, disconnected from their accustomed technology and connected instead to friends, the mountain, the river, and often a spirituality that will be linked forever to those summers.

The entrepreneurial spirits of those who believe so strongly in their concepts for new restaurants here in Mentone that they work to open during a pandemic year when too many had to close. And two of those are young people determined to offer our town its first food trucks, refurbished and eye-catching.

The home designer able to walk into a space and see the possibilities of it in all dimensions, so that he drafts a plan for expanded rooms with light-filled windows and good storage, where once there were only four walls enclosing a room dark and small.

The couple who decades ago built their own off-the-grid home and continue to tend their grounds and gardens, living as close to their beloved land as possible. They and other contemporary homesteaders seek and share knowledge with friends who want to venture into permaculture and solar energy.

The innkeeper whose hospitality provides her guests a seamless weekend getaway, thanks to their hostess having the discipline to maintain the inn’s routines as well as the flexibility to deal with the unexpected.



Expanding Ideas of Creativity

by Anne McLeod

People who can produce unforgettable experiences, whether they’re of light coming through new windows, a meal of fresh just-picked vegetables, or a Friday campfire, draw on reserves of creative thinking that often go unrecognized. These special strains of creativity are deeply rooted in our past, when it wasn’t a simple matter to make a quick run to the store from a rural community on Lookout Mountain.

Our knowledge of herbal remedies, quilts constructed of flour sacks and cotton from local fields, stone foundations underlying some of our homes even today are just some of the legacies of people who worked with materials on hand to learn, to innovate, and to create things that were useful and often more beautiful than they had to be.

In her book, *Big Magic, Creative Living Beyond Fear* (available for checkout from Moon Lake Community Library), Elizabeth Gilbert advises the reader to look at how their grandparents or great-grandparents lived:

“Look at your ancestors. Look at the ones who were immigrants, or slaves, or soldiers, or farmers, or sailors, or the original people who watched the ships arrive with the strangers aboard. Go back far enough and you will find people who were not consumers, people who were not sitting around passively waiting for stuff to happen to them. You will find people who spent their lives making things.

This is where you come from.

This is where we all come from.”

CALLING ALL ARTISTS!

The Little River Arts Council will once again sponsor its Saturday Artist Pop-Up Markets at the Linger Longer Pavilion in back of the Mentone Inn. If you’re an artist or crafter interested in setting up at the pavilion on Saturday this spring or summer, text Destin Padgett at (256) 926-8375 for more information.

This winter I visited the graves of my great-great grandparents in Henagar. Their grandson would grow up to be my paternal grandfather, a cotton mill worker, who kept honeybees in his backyard in Trion. When he and my grandmother were young, they constructed a goldfish pond in the front yard, an experiment that did not ultimately succeed, but would become a part of neighborhood lore for generations. Standing there in the Baptist cemetery gazing at their

headstone, I blessed William and Roxie for any part they played in endowing their son and his own son with a determination to see life’s possibilities and not just its limits, even when times were hard.

The axiom, “Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without,” was the mantra for those growing up during the Great Depression, but what about now? If people both young and old find it so easy to scroll endlessly on smartphones instead of making, building, and doing, are we in danger of losing the spark of creativity often born of frugality?

Far from it. Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in what has come to be known as simply “making,” so that the maker movement captures the widest range of creative endeavors, whether they be arts and crafts, gardening, cooking, technology, or mechanical. Some of those scrolling folks whose phones appear to be permanently attached to their palms are looking on YouTube or Pinterest for ideas, inspiration, and detailed how-tos for decorating their classrooms, casting on knitting stitches, resetting their computer’s settings, making their own cardboard amusement parks, flavoring kombucha, building robots, cutting their own hair, making or altering their own clothes.

This spring, the Little River Arts Council will offer a series of pop-up artist markets on weekends as well as the Music for the People summer concert series. Information about these and other events will be in future issues of *The Groundhog* as well as on social media. We hope you’ll join us. The arts are for all of us, as are curiosity and creative vision. The technology we possess today opens up fields of knowledge that were far less accessible in the past. Using these tools to learn to do things for ourselves and our friends and neighbors builds confidence as well as relationships. Let’s learn to appreciate the makers among us and let them know we recognize the value their creativity adds to our community.



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Moon Lake Elementary School recently gave grant money they had recieved to Valley Head School to help bridge the gap between the schools when they consolidate in the 2021–2022 school year. This grant money will be used for buying technology for students and staff. Pictured, left to right: Moon Lake School Principal Mary Lance, DeKalb County Superintendant Jason Barnett, and Valley Head School Principal Heath Kirby.



Calling All Golfers!

Enjoy a spring day on Lookout Mountain playing in MAPA's Spring Charity Golf Tournament at Lil Mole Run Golf Course.

Friday, April 23

mapamentone.com/golf

All proceeds go towards benefitting area non-profit organizations and emergency responders through financial grants.

Sponsorships are available for MAPA's Spring Charity Golf Tournament.

mapamentone.com/golf-sponsors

The Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit-organization.



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Wildflower Saturday at DeSoto State Park

by Brittney Hughes

DeSoto State Park presents its 29th annual Wildflower Saturday on May 1. Learn about the many species of blooming plants found on Lookout Mountain. All Wildflower Saturday events are free and open to everyone. No pre-registration is required, but groups of 10 or more are requested to RSVP to help us make everyone's wildflower experience better!

To learn more, visit alapark.com/dsp-wildflower-saturday or call 256-997-5025. Please note that these hikes are subject to change.

Wildflower Hikes

Over the course of the day, you will be able to choose from three separate hikes during the day, each hike with different leaders. Explore many of DeSoto's trails, which can vary from fairly flat terrain to slightly steep inclines and rocky ground. Each hike is marked for its difficulty level. Be sure to wear appropriate footwear and bring along water and snacks along on the hikes.

The Azalea Cascade Hike

9 a.m. / 1 p.m. / 3 p.m.

Easy to Moderate

Starts on DeSoto's Azalea Cascade Boardwalk and ends at the Country Store.

This hike has the easiest terrain, suitable for people with limited mobility or younger children. Starts out along the Talmadge Butler ADA-Accessible Boardwalk

Trail and continues along for both an elevated and ground-floor view of the hardwood forest. Ends at Azalea Cascade, with an option to venture off of the boardwalk on a trail that ends back at the country store.

Various plants to see: Pink Lady Slipper, Mountain Laurel, Wild Ginger, Catesby's Trillium, Galax, Trout Lilly, Sweet Shrub, Mountain Honeysuckle, Yellowroot, Dwarf Iris, New York Fern, Wild Geranium, Cucumber Magnolia, Wild Azalea, and much more.

The Rhododendron Trail Hike

9 a.m. / 1 p.m. / 3 p.m.

Moderate to mildly strenuous

Meet at DeSoto's Nature Center. Hike goes from Country Store towards DeSoto's pool area and down the yellow trail, ending at Indian Falls.

Classified as Moderate to mildly strenuous because of the length and slightly rocky terrain; this hike is great for walking under the forest canopy and among flowing creeks. Follows along the bluff line overlooking the West Fork of Little River, and ends at scenic Indian Falls.

Various plants to see: Catawba Rhododendron, Wild Camellia, Rosebay Rhododendron, Yellowstar Grass, Wild Huckleberry, Mountain Laurel, Trailing Arbutus, Bluets, Solomon's Seal, Catesby's Trillium, Galax, Sweet Shrub, Fringe Tree, Partridgeberry, and much more.

The Little River Hike

9 a.m. / 1 p.m. / 3 p.m.

Moderate to mildly strenuous

Meet on the grassy area outside DeSoto's Country Store

Meet outside DeSoto's Country Store on the grass. Hike starts at Indian Falls, follows the yellow trail, and circles back to Indian Falls.

Also classified as moderate to mildly strenuous, this hike starts at Indian Falls and goes down a slight incline to follow along the West Fork of Little River. Terrain is rocky with some minor rock-hopping next to the river. Trail curves around and starts a gradual curve up to the bluff above Little River and ends back at Indian Falls.

Various plants to see: Mountain Honeysuckle, Mountain Laurel, Catawba Rhododendron, Nuttall's Rayless Goldenrod, Yellowroot, Oakleaf Hydrangea, Indian Cucumber Root, Wood Sorrel, Tag Alder, Ashy Hydrangea, Oxeye Daisy, Coral Honeysuckle, Flatrock Onion, Neverwet, Royal Fern, Joe Pye Weed, Cinnamon Fern, Rattlesnake Plantain and much more.



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A Look Back at Menlo's Miss Edna Perry and the Perry House by Kelly Leavitt



Menlo, Georgia was founded by Captain Andrew Lawrence, who named it after Menlo Park, NJ, home of the laboratory of inventor Thomas Edison, who was greatly admired by Capt. Lawrence. The town was incorporated in 1903.

The "Perry House" was built around 1890 at the corner of Edison Street and 7th Avenue. It was recently demolished by its current owner, Menlo Baptist Church, to allow for future construction. The church, which was built in 1892, sits on the adjacent property. The home was an example of the Southern vernacular style of architecture. It boasted a wrap-around porch,

hand-carved mantles and doors, built-in bookshelves, and heart-of-pine flooring.

Mr. Jeremiah Perry, a widower, lived in the home with his children, who each married and moved away. The only exception was his daughter, Edna, who attained a certain infamy in the history of Menlo and its school system.

Miss Edna Perry graduated from Menlo High School in 1914 and went away to college to earn a teaching degree. She returned to Menlo to begin her career as a math and English teacher at her alma mater. Fifty years after graduating from Menlo High School, she had become illustrious enough in the community that the Town of Menlo named the day of her retirement 'Miss Edna Perry Day'.

"She held a special place in the hearts of each student, and many years later she would remark that she had enjoyed every student she had ever taught," said Patricia Settoon. "Miss Edna taught at Menlo all during the roaring 1920s, through the Great Depression of the 1930s, during the war-torn years of the 1940s, and through the infamous rocking years of the 1950s. She is said to have been a no-nonsense, serious teacher, but she still had a heart of gold, and she was so admired and respected by students. In the early 1960s, when the county schools consolidated and Menlo High School closed, Miss Edna taught in the elementary school until her retirement in 1964.

"She retired to her quiet home in the heart of Menlo, a place she dearly loved. She remained active in town life, and she faithfully attended Menlo Baptist Church, where she had played the piano for services for over 50 years. In later years, Miss Edna's sister, Mattie Perry Hammond, returned to the Menlo home, and the two sisters lived out their elderly years there. They would park their cars on the Edison Street side of the house, and they enjoyed relaxing on the spacious porch of the home in seasons. The home was frequently visited by the family and friends of both ladies, as well as by numerous former students of Miss Edna."

After Miss Perry passed away in 1975, the home had a series of owners. Prior to the church's possession, owners Richard and Patti Settoon had used the house as a rental. After Mr. Settoon's death, Menlo Baptist Church offered to buy the home from Mrs. Settoon in 2014.

On the morning of March 15, a bulldozer razed the house and Menlo gained another chapter in its memories. The home "will remain dear to the hearts of those who have loved the beautiful and charming old house and its 130 years of history," said Mrs. Settoon.



Miss Edna Perry

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www.facebook.com/MentoneFarmersMarket



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In 2019, Little River Escape Tiny Home Community was named one of the nation's top 6 tiny home communities by *U.S. News & World Report*. As a result, LRE is now fully occupied by folks who have come from 12 different states and even Venezuela. We have decided to embark on a new journey by creating River Ridge Escape Tiny Home Dealership, where tiny homes are available to tour. RRE is now delivering across the nation, as well as developing 4 new tiny home communities on or near Lookout Mountain.

New Tiny Home Communities, come see for yourself:

River Side Escape on the East Fork of the Little River
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I Love a Good Surprise...Don't You? by Paula Easter

Believe it or not there are many days, even weeks, where I never turn on my television. Instead, more often than not I will be on my smart phone or Kindle perhaps reading a good book, checking the weather forecast, local news, or the latest international news on CNN. (It is my favorite!)

This past December 17, a CNN article on former President George W. Bush caught my attention. Why would this article catch my attention, you ask? Let me explain why—Moon Lake sixth graders and I had talked about him in September, as we studied together about 9/11 (since none of these students were even born then) the history, pictures, and stories from that day. We saw many articles and pictures during the lesson of then President Bush. At the end of their lesson, I shared a book of artwork by young people of all ages who lived through that horrific day in American history, and then asked each sixth grader to share through a picture of their own their feelings about 9/11.

So, what about former President Bush and the CNN article I mentioned, you ask...? The article was about the 2020 Bush Christmas card. The card includes an image of Bush's painting of the Statue of Liberty titled "Beacon of Hope 2020" and is part of his new art collection celebrating immigrants. Did you know the former President has become quite an



"Beacon of Hope 2020" by George W. Bush

artist? I didn't either!

My "oh wow" moment was when I realized one of my sixth graders had painted a version of the Statue of Liberty that was very similar to the one painted by President Bush. The following day at school, I found the student's picture of Lady Liberty, and I knew I just had to find a way to get a copy of that Christmas card to share with my students. Where to begin, I wondered. I went to my computer and googled how to contact President Bush. Eureka! There was a web site listed if you wanted to send a message to his offices at the George W. Bush Presidential Library, at SMU. Me being me, I wrote twice as much information as I needed, but I wanted to make sure that I included all the pertinent information, including that I would gladly purchase a Christmas card to share with my students.

Would you believe I received a reply the very same day? Of course, I could tell it was a standardized reply, but I was excited just to receive a reply at all! "Thank you for contacting the Office of George W. Bush. We have received your message and will respond as soon

as we are able." This was the most important part of the message for me. Now I just had to wait till they answered my request.

To my amazement, the very next day as I was checking my email, I noticed another reply, I thought, from the Office of George W. Bush. Then...I opened the email... "Dear Paula, Thank you for your thoughtful note. I appreciate your taking the time to write to me. At your convenience, please send your mailing address so we may respond through the mail. Keep up the good work with your teaching. Best Wishes, Sincerely, George W. Bush." I know, WOW, right!? I immediately sat down and sent the requested information, plus, again, way more information than I needed to.

The week before Christmas I was opening my mail and several Christmas cards I had received and there was one without a return address...beautiful penmanship I might add. I opened it...and there it was, the Bush family 2020 Christmas card, "Beacon of Hope" signed by President and Mrs. Bush.

Don't you just love a good surprise?

Paula Easter is the Fine Arts teacher at Moon Lake Elementary School.



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Maundy Thursday & Good Friday services
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Easter Sunday worship at 11 am
No Sunday School

*Services will be inside. Please wear a mask and
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Rev. Heidi Bender, Pastor

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only
begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should
not perish, but have everlasting life. —John 3:16 KJV*