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THE GROUNDHOG

“Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain”

AUGUST 2023

The Origin of Boy Scout Troop 106

A Chat with David Gilbreath and Bill Berry

by Kelly Leavitt

I enjoyed a conversation with David Gilbreath and Bill Berry at Mentone’s “Scout House” to learn about how Mentone’s Boy Scout Troop 106 came to be. As a young Junior Girl Scout, I earned merit badges and spent a summer’s week at a Scout camp, but while learning about the breadth and impact of Troop 106, I found myself silently wishing I’d been able to benefit from being a boy in this remarkable troop.

David and his wife Dianne grew up on the same street in Fort Payne, where David was a Boy Scout in Troop 63. After graduating from Auburn University, they married and moved to Lakeland, FL, where David took an executive position with Sears, Roebuck & Co. Their two sons became Boy Scouts in their church’s Scout troop.

“Bill Hollis, a philanthropist and early executive with Publix Super Markets, was on the committee of Troop 106,” said David. “He asked me to be Scoutmaster, but I wasn’t interested.

I was involved in another troop, but I didn’t do anything. I showed up for meetings, I went camping. Then I went to Wood Badge in the early 80s and my life was changed.”

Wood Badge is a national leadership training program for Boy Scouts of America (BSA) volunteers and officers.

“I realized if I’m going to be part of the program, I better do this thing right,” David said. “It was a turning point for me.”

After leading Lakeland’s Troop 106 for four years, David moved to Mentone with Dianne. Their sons had already earned the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest BSA award given to those who have earned at least 21 merit badges, held leadership positions in their unit, and planned and led a service project. David saw a need for Scouting in Mentone. “As far as I’m aware,” said David, “there had never been a troop here.”

The Gilbreaths began attending Moon Lake Baptist Church, where they met Dr. Bill Berry a year after he had become principal of Moon Lake School. “One evening,” Bill said, “David invited me to be the Assistant Scoutmaster of the troop he wanted to start.



David Gilbreath and Bill Berry display a banner with the signatures of Troop 106’s Eagle Scouts.

The church had agreed to be the charter organization. I was a blank slate. I knew nothing about Scouting, but I agreed to become involved. In March 1993, we started off with six boys, and a couple of weeks later another boy joined. I learned how to tie knots and put up a tent alongside the boys. David taught us everything. He’s a great leader and a great teacher. The boys really looked up to him and listened to what he had to say and the things he had to teach.”

“Bill caught on real quick,” said David.

The troop, which was named after Troop 106 in Florida, originally met at the church’s former parsonage. “Different patrols met in different rooms,” said Bill. “Then we moved to the fellowship hall at

the church. We moved our stuff in for Monday night meetings and then moved it out. One night after a meeting, David and I agreed that we needed our own space.”

That night, the two leaders drew the floor plan that would eventually become Jim Berry Hall on Dempsey Street. The hall was officially dedicated in 2000.

“My father passed away in 1998,” said Bill, “and my last memory of him before his accident was of him marking off the corners of this building. He was the troop committee chairman and was going to lead the construction effort. That’s why David named the building for him.”

“Two generous donors, Rick and Christie Hardin, gave us a warehouse they owned in Dadeville, AL,” said David. “We sold the warehouse and those proceeds paid for our new building. The Hardins were very involved with this troop and big supporters. Two other donors made a big impact. Arlene Fowler gave us enough money to make this a nice building with the wood finish so it could be more than just a concrete block building. Gordon Berry, Bill’s uncle, gave us enough money for the parking lot. The troop matched the money from Gordon. At the time, we were selling peanuts and recycling aluminum cans.”

Bill’s aunt, Almeda Blevins, owned the land on Dempsey Street which Moon Lake Baptist Church leased for 50 years. An anonymous donor bought and donated the land to a non-profit organization, the Mentone Green Foundation, which had been formed to support the troop.

“The lot was a pine thicket,” said David. “We all worked hard to clear it. To create the building’s stone foundation, we lined up five 16’ x 8’ trailers and loaded them with rocks from a field in the Fischer area. That was hard work. Within a week, I realized we hadn’t made a dent in what we needed for the foundation. In the end it took 28 trailer loads.”

The building is stunning, with spacious dimensions

(continued on page 5)

SUNSET SOCIAL

HOSTED BY THE MENTONE AREA PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION (MAPA)

Sunset Social August 24

Thursday, August 24 @ 6:45 p.m. • Brow Park

Make new friends while enjoying the sunset from Mentone’s Brow Park on Thursday, August 24. Plates, forks, cups, water, and name tags will be provided. Please feel free to share a dessert, snack, or beverage.



PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE BEARS

Learn why on page 15.



The Groundhog

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MAPA was first conceived on Groundhog Day, 1982, and then organized on April 5, 1982. *The Groundhog* has been in publication for 41 years.

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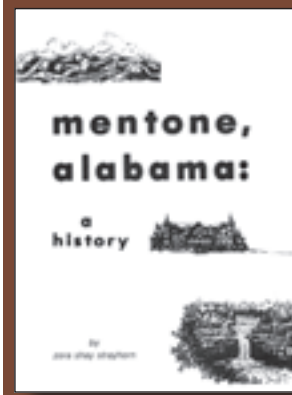
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*Groundhog woodcut courtesy of
Meg Justice/Bee Spring Studio*

Find us on 



Learn about the History of Mentone

Zora Strayhorn's book,
*Mentone, Alabama: A
History*, is for sale (\$15)
at the Mentone Market
and the Wildflower Café
in Mentone.

Outdoor Alabama Photo Contest

The 2024 Outdoor Alabama Photo Contest is accepting entries through October 31. The contest focuses on traditional photography techniques and the use of handheld cameras. No cellphone, smartphone, game camera, or drone photography will be chosen as winning photos for nine of the 10 categories. Smartphone and tablet photos will be accepted in the Young Photographers (17 and under) category.

Qualifying photos must have been taken in Alabama in the past two years. Winning images will be featured online and in a traveling exhibit at various venues across the state during 2024. The contest is a joint project between the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) and the Alabama Tourism Department. For complete 2024 category descriptions and contest rules, visit outdooralabama.com/photocontest.

Mentone Matters

by Mayor Rob Hammond

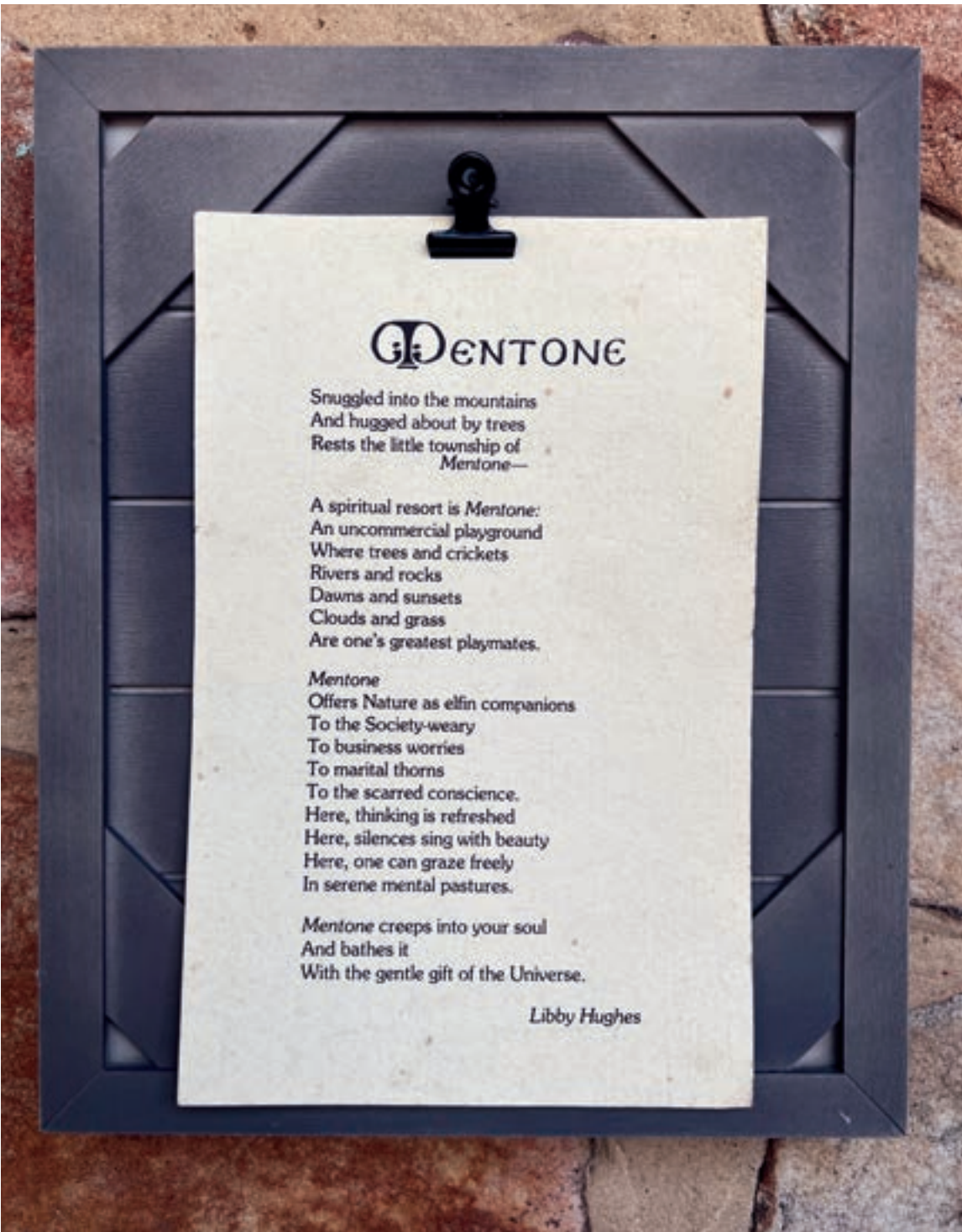
We are experiencing the dog days of summer—a time of high temperatures and high humidity. The camps are closing and soon children will be back in school.

There is nothing new to report this month on our sidewalk extension project. Our grant application to the Appalachian Regional Commission for repair to the Moon Lake School Building has been submitted and hopefully we will hear back in late fall.

Our public works director Paul Nail has begun mowing the right of way on AL 117 as well as the right of ways on town streets. He is also maintaining the pull off area at the Mentone



sign down the mountain on 117. As always Steve Flannigan is doing a great job maintaining Brow and Mason Parks. The public areas of town have never looked better. Thanks!



From the Editor

by Kelly Leavitt

A year ago, I was in the Gourdie Shop in the now-lost Hitching Post. I noticed this poem by Libby Hughes and took the liberty of placing it on a nail I found on the stone wall outside to take a photo. I'm so glad I did, as it was lost in the fire. It's a beautiful testament to the place so many of us call home.

This month, the free concert hosted by the Little River Arts Council features The Lazybirds, a North Carolina band that is one of my favorites. We used to host house concerts in our home, and The Lazybirds performed for us twice. Their music will make you smile—I promise. Details about the August 12 concert are on page 8.

Earlier that day, a book signing will be held at The Gallery by Andiamo at Moon Lake Village with Heather Webber, who wrote *Midnight at the Blackbird Café*, a book which is set in a fictional town loosely based on Mentone. The book is available at Moon Lake Library. It's a fun read and I'm looking forward to meeting the author. Details are in the library's calendar section on page 13.

MAPA's final Sunset Social will be held on August 24. It's always great sharing the sunset with friends old and new. Details are on page 1.

Have a lovely month, everyone. —*Kelly*

From MAPA's President

by Beverly Haynes

While rocking on my back porch watching fireflies rise from the grass as the sun gently sets on this balmy July evening, I think of how the changing seasons of Mentone are a constant in our lives. Mentone's mountain visitors and summer campers are in full swing making life memories. The sounds of laughter and the sight of families enjoying walks along the shops of town or at Brow Park make up our days as fireworks, campfires, and s'mores make up our nights. While these represent some of the best parts of summer, we are rapidly approaching the time when the season will be coming to a close as campers say goodbye to each other until next year, children head back to school, and we all begin to look forward to cooler fall temperatures. The bustle of our little town will slow down and these long summer days will grow into shorter fall days. Every changing season provides

us with opportunities to spend time together and grow closer to our families and friends. This way of life on the mountain binds us all together. Seasons bring about change. Life is about changes.

The Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) is an organization that has confronted change over the years. I am honored to be a part of MAPA and very proud of this organization's long history of supporting Mentone and the surrounding communities. MAPA operates with a focus on the people and places that make our community so very special. *The Groundhog* serves as our greatest means of documenting these stories and photos which highlight the very best of our community. Over the past several months, MAPA has encountered some challenges impacting the ability to recognize our Mission and Vision for the organization. MAPA's board was

realigned with a dedicated group of people serving as an Interventional Board of Directors. This group has been engaged with reviewing several operational issues and is now faced with making difficult decisions regarding change and next steps for MAPA. We recognize change is necessary for the organization and we appreciate your support and patience while these matters are addressed. We want our community to be assured MAPA feels strongly about the significant value *The Groundhog* represents to our community. We are concentrating on a clear path for this publication to carry forward maintaining its quality, integrity, and character that has served our Mentone community so well for over 40 years. We will be sharing with all of you as decisions are finalized about changes with MAPA and *The Groundhog*.

Be blessed. —*Beverly*

Book Review: *Killers of the Flower Moon*

by Betsy Dillbeck

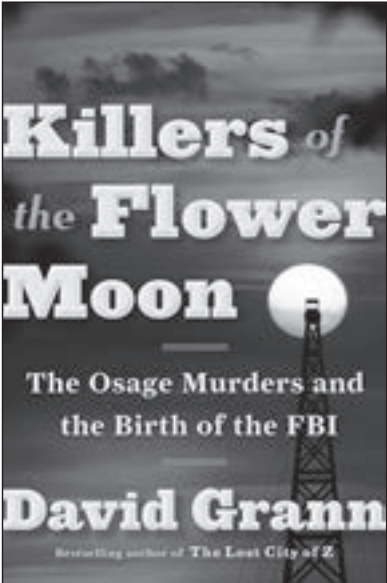
One of my favorite book genres is historical fiction. I find that tales are enhanced when based on factual premise and recorded history. I read David Grann’s *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* in 2018, soon after it was first published [Doubleday, 2017], and I was awed by the tale. I reread it last month, as publicity swirled around the book’s release as a movie when it was shown at the Cannes Film Festival. It is the kind of book when, after reading, I thought, “Wow, this would make a great movie.”

The book begins by explaining the Flower Moon: “In April, millions of tiny flowers spread over the blackjack hills and the vast prairies in the Osage territory of Oklahoma. There are Johnny-jump-ups and spring beauties and little bluets. The Osage writer John Jacob Mathews observed that the galaxy of petals makes it look as if the ‘gods had left confetti.’ In May, when coyotes howl beneath the unnervingly large moon, taller plants, such as spiderworts and black-eyed Susans, begin to creep over the tinier blooms, stealing their light and water. The necks of the smaller flowers break and their petals flutter away, and before long they are buried underground. This is why the Osage Indians refer to May as the time of the flower-killing moon.”

This book is the historical account of the ruthless killings of Osage Indians which began in the 1920s, when Oklahoma was the last remnant of the “wild, wild west.” As the facts are presented, the reader begins to understand why the Osage were targeted.

In the 1870s, the Osage became the only American Indian nation to buy its own reservation. A quarter-century later, oil was discovered under the land the tribe collectively owned.

Leading up to Oklahoma statehood in 1907, the U.S. Congress passed the 1906 Osage Allotment Act, legislating that property and mineral income be distributed equally among the more than 2,200 tribal members. One equal share became known as a headright, and a headright was hereditary, passing to the immediate legal heir of the deceased—even if that heir wasn’t Osage.



In the 1920s, when oil production in the Osage Nation reached a zenith, the tribal members had famously become rich, and the area became a magnet for schemers who plotted to relieve the Osage people of their headrights and wealth by any means necessary.

In 1921, when the Osage were reportedly the richest people per capita in the world, the federal government

mandated that the Osage people were incapable of managing their own wealth. Adults were assigned court-appointed white guardians who often swindled tribal members out of their fortunes.

Between 1920 and 1925, more than 60 mysterious or unsolved murders in Osage County related to Osage headright holders. Some were shot, some were poisoned, and a few were even bombed in what became known as the “Reign of Terror.”

Enter the F.B.I., as local and regional law enforcement proved to be ineffective and prone to taking bribes and believing false information, mostly fed to officers by the Osage guardians.

In 1923, the tribe sent a delegation to Washington, D.C., to request that the federal government investigate. Agents were dispatched to Pawhuska, OK.

“We paid at that time, in the ‘20s, \$20,000 to hire the F.B.I. to find the killers of our people that were being murdered,” Daniels said. “And a big part of the scandals are these guardianships. So, white business owners, the well-todos of the town, had these guardianships of the Osage people. A lot of the Osage people were given a \$20 allowance, and then they [the white guardians] took off with the rest of the money.”

In 1925, the U.S. Congress passed a law prohibiting non-Osages from inheriting headrights of tribal members possessing more than one-half Osage blood to prevent another Reign of Terror.

“Even though I don’t have relatives that I know of that were murdered, I had relatives who were alive in Osage County at that time. And it really brings to the fore for me the experience that they had to live....They were not really viewed as fully human. Their lives didn’t have value to their neighbors here in the state of Oklahoma,” said Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt, who is Osage.

A parallel story explains the birth of the F.B.I. The rise of J. Edgar Hoover as its Director is intertwined with the murder investigations and the unbelievable court trials of the perpetrators. The F.B.I. investigators, many former Texas Rangers, dealt with threats of death at every turn as they uncovered the maniacal scheme of murdering the Osage for the valuable “headrights” to the mineral assets of the land they owned.

It is a fascinating read with unexpected twists and turns. As the story unfolds, Grann talks with many descendants of those killed, and some who simply disappeared, and helps them research F.B.I. archives and tribal records and try to reach some closure on the killing of their relatives. Grann estimates that over 600 deaths were connected, in one way or another, to this reign of terror that besieged the Osage Indians.

Although the Osage murders happened a century ago, Grann considers it to be “living history.” Many tribal members who died in those dark days have family who still live in the area. “I tracked down descendants of both the victims and the murderers,” said Grann. “And many of them still live in the same neighborhoods, side by side.”

I read a recent interview with Martin

Scorsese, the film’s illustrious director. (The film will be released in the USA in October.) Scorsese was also involved in the writing of the screenplay. He stated that his primary focus was the story of the beginnings of the F.B.I., but as he got deeper into the Osage history and talked to the family’s victims, his focus shifted. He felt the real story was what happened to the Osage and how the people of the tribe were terrorized during the years of the killings and the court trials, and how they were affected by the outcome of those trials.

The film’s cast features many Native American actors and actresses in the roles of the Osage. I believe it promises to be an award-winning film. It is an eye-opening story of historical events that most of us have probably never heard of—a story that might have gone untold were it not for Grann’s incredible research and talented writing.

I encourage you to read the book before the movie comes out. You’ll enjoy the movie much more with all the background knowledge that Grann presents.

Betsy Dillbeck is a retired community newspaper editor and publisher living in Fort Payne.

Senior Health: Medicare & Transportation Services

by Lynn Hixon

Medicare Part B covers emergency ambulance services. Medicare considers an emergency to be any situation when your health is in serious danger and you cannot be transported safely in another way. Certain requirements must be met for Medicare to cover an emergency ambulance ride:

- The ambulance must be medically necessary. This means it is the only safe way to transport you.
- The reason for your trip must be to receive or to return from receiving Medicare-covered care.
- You must be transported to and from certain locations. For example, from your home to the nearest hospital, or from a skilled nursing facility to your home. Medicare will only cover your ride to a medical facility when it’s the nearest appropriate facility that’s able to give you the care you need.
- The transportation supplier must meet Medicare’s ambulance requirements by being staffed by at least two people.

Medicare Part B covers non-emergency transportation. You must meet one of two requirements to have your non-emergency ride covered:

- You are confined to your bed. This means you are unable to get up from bed without help, unable to walk, and unable to sit in a chair or wheelchair.
- You need vital medical services during your trip that are only available in an ambulance. This means you may need medications administered during the trip or need your vital functions monitored.

Medicare may also cover scheduled and regular non-emergency ambulance transportation. To get this kind of transportation covered, your doctor must send the ambulance supplier a written order saying it is medically necessary. For example, if you need help getting to your dialysis treatment facility every week, Medicare may cover your scheduled ambulance rides.

If you have any questions about these services, call your SHIP coordinator, Lynn Hixon, at 256-845-8590 at the DeKalb County Council on Aging.



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178 FEET OF RIVER FRONTAGE on the emerald green waters of the West Fork Little River. \$179,900. #1826674



MIDDLE FORK of Little River. Approx. 6 acres. \$48,900. #1034997

LOTS & LAND

MIDDLE FORK of Little River. Approx. 6 acres. \$48,900. #1034997

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GREAT POSSIBILITIES! This Mentone property offers road frontage on Cove Road in the business/alcohol district. A rare opportunity as this is one of very few available vacant lots in this area! Also adjoins

a lot that fronts AL Hwy 117. \$75,000. #1801378

BROW LOT in Mentone! Watch the seasons change from your own paradise between DeSoto State Park and DeSoto Falls. \$135,000. #1815139

BEAUTIFUL WOODED LOT in Crestline Park Sub in Mentone, 1.19 +/- acre building lot with lots of trees. \$54,900. 1836087

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QUIRKY & QUAIN, TINY, SITE-BUILT COTTAGE WITH BIG CHARM & plenty of outdoor spaces. Open plan efficiency is key: both in the space & in the low utility costs! Fun & funky use of recycled materials inside & out, giving a uniquely Mentone flair to this cottage. Owners live here full time, but it would also be a great little getaway, or a rental. Nice outbuilding that is insulated & could easily become add'l sleeping quarters. Level yard for setting up outdoor activities, or for a garden spot. (Maybe just sow it in wild-flowers if you don't want to mow!) Plus, with the additional 1.8-acre parcel, there's room to build a larger cabin & use this one for guests. 3.2 ac (+/-) total. \$295,000 (1838812)



CUTE, CUTE, CUTE! A COTTAGE IN THE WOODS, small in size, big on charm, perfect for full-time, part-time, or even as a rental. The interior features nice details like antique bead-board walls; crown molding; stone fireplace w/gas logs; great kitchen w/top-of-the-line appliances & granite countertop. King-sized master suite w/huge, walk-in closet & wall of windows to give you that "tree house" feeling. (Filled with very nice furnishings, too!) With its hardy-plank exterior & front & back composite porches, maintenance is easy. New shed w/power for workshop/storage. Located just off the DeSoto Pkwy, so it's easy to get to & enjoy all the mountain has to offer. High-speed internet. Very attractively priced! \$324,500 (1832743)



.....
LOTS and LAND

NEW PRICE! JUST ENOUGH IS JUST RIGHT. And this 0.65-acre lot could be just right for your retirement home in the country! Nice & level w/chert driveway, septic tank, power & public water already on site. Very pleasant copse of trees & picturesque neighboring pasture along back of property. Plenty of areas with good sun exposure for that garden spot. Less than 5 miles from Hwy 11/I-59 in North Ft Payne; easy commute to Chattanooga, B'ham. Or just take the backroads! Priced at only \$39,900 (1834307)

TALL HARDWOODS AND PEACEFUL BROW SUNSETS. Build your special mountain dream home on this beautiful 1.2-acre lot in a choice area along the parkway between DeSoto Falls & Desoto State Park. Property lines extend over the brow so that trees may be removed for a clear view. The lots have a good setback from the road for quiet privacy. Two lots available. Lot 21, \$175,000. (1825125)

NEW LISTING! LEVEL 1.4-ACRE LOT with frontage on 2 roads (County Rd 106 & E River Rd) so you can choose your access point. Wooded land that is very nice except for the residential power line running through the back side of it (nearer E River Rd). Now we have a power line to remove, but you get your cabin or whatever you choose to put on the lot! And, that's a portion you don't have to clear for a driveway either. :) If you are of a mind to get some exercise, you can hike less than a half mile & be at DeSoto Falls. Sweet! All in all, this is a pretty nice lot at a pretty nice price. \$25,000 (1838352)

BROW-FRONT LOT ALONG THE PARKWAY, the perfect location to build your dream residence or getaway between DeSoto State Park and DeSoto Falls. Beautiful sunsets and the views of the valley & mountains beyond can be created because you own your view and can decide how much, or little, clearing you want. Good setback from the road offers privacy on this 1.2-acre, hardwood-covered lot, with approx. 107' of brow frontage. Two lots available. Lot 22, \$175,000. (1825126)



A CABIN WITH A CREEK is something a lot of folks have asked for, and we've just listed this 3BR/2BA cabin w/approx 340' of frontage on Brush Creek. It comes with 2 lots, both with creek frontage, so you could build a guest cabin, garage/workshop, party pavilion, or whatever suits your needs on the 2nd lot. Cabin has 2 sunrooms, one off the kitchen & leading to the screened deck area w/hottub pavilion on the back of cabin; the other is off the upstairs MA BR. Huge 3rd BR upstairs (there's also a BR & BA on the main level) can sleep several folks and has a balcony. Cabin has been an active rental as well as a place for owners to get away. Sold mostly furnished, too. \$395,00 (1837396)



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



PENDING

August

A POOR ODE TO AUGUST

August comes in on the heels of July, a month filled with celebration.
But, alas, poor August is just hot and dry, with the hope to fit in a vacation.

Then it's back to school, the endless lists of supplies and clothes to be bought.
Getting back on a schedule, early to bed, and other battles that have to be fought.

Even the poetry of August one finds to be dry (A search yielded nothing on the shelf).
In the languorous beauty of late summer heat, I had to write this poem myself.
Happy August, anyway!

MOON LAKE VILLAGE

5866 East River Road, Mentone, AL 35984
Located on the grounds of an historic 95-year-old schoolhouse

- Bee Spring Studio—Meg T. Justice
- Cloudland Framing
- Delightful Retreats
- DeSoto Rescue Squad
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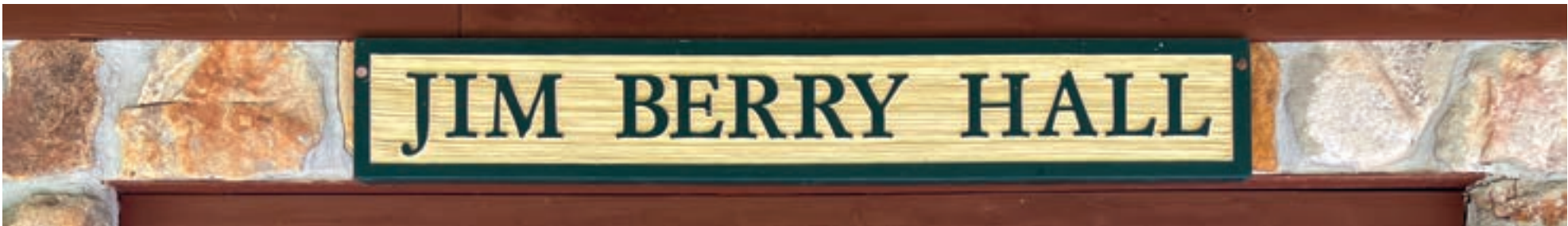
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The Origin of Troop 106 *(cont. from page 1)*

and an impressive stone fireplace. A plaque on the wall honors 60 donors who helped turn the building from a dream into reality.

“The day of dedication was also Andrew Habel’s Eagle ceremony. To make the building ready, we worked at night planting shrubbery.”

“Much of why this troop is so successful,” said Bill, “is that David got it off on a good foot through planning, following through on the plan, evaluating the plan, and moving forward.”

David retired as Scoutmaster in 2015. During his 22 years of service, many Mentone-area boys learned the power of fellowship, among innumerable other lessons. They also experienced journeys that were invaluable to their development as men.

In 1994, the troop traveled to the legendary Philmont Scout Ranch in the Rocky Mountain range of northeastern New Mexico. Over the course of 19 years, the troop traveled to Philmont a total of eight times. The ranch incorporates 140,000 acres and 315 miles of trails. It is mountainous and rugged terrain where the Santa Fe Trail can still be seen crossing in front of Tooth of Time Mountain. Troops choose between a variety of 10-day treks which require substantive physical training. Troop 106 flew to Colorado Springs and rented a bus to drive to the ranch. The boys carried 50-pound backpacks and every four days they picked up a new food supply along the trail.

Other adventures included beach camping in St. Augustine, FL, where they also visited historic sites. They travelled to the Smoky Mountains numerous times and enjoyed canoeing in South Dakota and Kentucky. “We were fortunate to borrow canoes from Camp Comer,” said David. They once took a train from Atlanta to Washington, D.C., where they spent three days exploring the city on foot.



*The original seven Scouts of Troop 106.
Clockwise from top: Adam Blalock, Jack Corey, Curt Miller,
Ryan Drake, Jake Pinholster, Ken Miller, Bryan Young*

“The train ride itself was quite an experience for the boys,” said David.

“We try to involve trips that support earning badges,” said David. The trip to Washington preceded trips to other countries, which all heavily involved

the three Citizenship merit badges: Community, Nation, and World.

Between 1996 and 2016, the troop travelled abroad on four occasions. “We always made sure two things happened,” said Bill, who teaches World Geography at Northeast Alabama Community College and has visited 123 countries. “We spent one day with a local troop, which allowed the boys to see how other troops do things, and we visited the respective countries’ American Embassy and learned about the work they do.” Troop 106 visited El Salvador and Poland (where they visited Auschwitz and learned from a Polish scout troop how to shoot a traditional bow). They also travelled to the British Isles; one trip took them to England and Scotland and a subsequent trip took them to Ireland, North Ireland, Scotland, and England.

“Part of the experience was staying in inexpensive youth hostels. We all have some stories to tell,” David said with a chuckle. “What I enjoyed about these trips were the things that happened along the way that we didn’t expect. They always add to the enjoyment of travelling.”

The troop paid their own way for all their ventures. Their camping trailer was paid for by the sale of aluminum cans. For decades, the boys and leaders earned money parking cars at local festivals and weddings. “This gave them a chance to wear their uniform and interact with the public, representing their troop. We all worked really hard—both the boys and the adults,” said David.

The pinnacle of the scouting experience is the rank of Eagle Scout. To date, Troop 106 has awarded this rank to 57 boys between the ages of 14 and 17. David says that, nationally, only 7% of those who attempt to earn the rank succeed. After earning 15 required and six elective merit badges, a board

(continued on page 6)



The 2009 Journey to the United Kingdom
Mentone’s Troop 106 explores the Scottish town of St. Andrews.

Greg Carreker, John Stanley, Nathan Jones, Edwin Stanley, Kaleb McMunn, John Gilbreath, Matt Stanley, Will Stout, Luke Blalock, Ben Spears, Connor Pope, Henry Akes, Jimmy Blalock, Wesley Spears, Kenneth Long, Scoutmaster David Gilbreath, Paul Whittle, Marlin Blalock



The 2013 Trip to Philmont Scout Ranch
Mentone’s Troop 106 atop Baldy Mountain — 12,441’ elevation

John Quaid Westmoreland, George Westmoreland, Bleu Stone, Tommy Evans, Austin Evans, Jimmy Blalock, Noah Blalock, John Westmoreland, Daniel Smith, George Westmoreland, Kenny Blackwell, Max Blackwell



The 2016 Journey to the British Isles
Mentone’s Troop 106 meeting with 13th Galway Scouts in Renmore, Ireland

Scoutmaster David Gilbreath, Marlin Blalock, Bill Berry, Nathan Hurley, Jimmy Blalock, Andrew Gentry, Noah Blalock, Max Blackwell, William Chitwood, Austin Evans, Kenny Blackwell, Hollis Gentry, Tommy Evans. Jody Hurley not pictured.



The 2004 Trip to Philmont Scout Ranch
Mentone’s Troop 106 atop Baldy Mountain

Keith Miller, Greg Carraker, Kyle Hooks, Alex Hazell, David Killian, Glenn Miller, Mike Bare, Isaac Akes, Jared Bare, Jon Mayhew, Max Cheronneau, Charlie Akes, Ben Stewart, Paul Whittle



(Photo at left)

The 2001 Journey to Poland
Mentone’s Troop 106 at Morskie Oko in the Tatra Mountains

Clockwise from far right: Scoutmaster David Gilbreath, Robert McReynolds, Joshua Hughes, Andrew Habel, Marek Malowidzki, Bill Berry, Greg Carraker, Tripp Griffith, Dee Gilbreath, Martin Cox, Kyle Hooks



The Origin of Troop 106 (cont. from page 5)

of review convenes and asks the Scout a variety of questions about his scouting experiences, his service project, and how he plans to implement scouting into his future life. If the board is satisfied with his responses, the award is garnered at the close of the meeting.

Eagles Scouts are then honored amongst their troop, family, and friends at a Court of Honor, a ceremony that acts as a celebration.

“I wrote the scripts and directed the Eagle Courts of Honor,” said Bill. “We always tell the families it’s one of the major events of a boy’s life and try to make it an impressive ceremony. We want it to be something the boys can look back on as a proud memory. These are times of fellowship.

“At the regular Courts of Honor, held in January and September, all the Scout families come together for a meal. We present all the merit badges and ranks boys have earned since the previous regular Court of Honor.

“Each of the mothers has a sash that is specially made for Troop 106. Whenever a boy achieves the next rank, his mother comes forward in the Court of Honor wearing her sash and the boy pins a miniature badge representing his rank onto

her sash as a gesture of appreciation for what she’s done to help him achieve that rank. We keep the parents involved because they really are part of it. At the Eagle ceremony, the mother receives her final pin and the father receives a tie tack.”

“Mothers don’t usually attend the meetings,” said David, “nor go on camping trips. But they’re working behind the scenes to assure their son’s success. This is a way of honoring them for all they do.”

Troop 106 is part of the Sequoyah district in the Greater Alabama Council.

“David Gilbreath is the heart and soul of this troop, and he always will be,” said Bill. “He is very revered by all of us. Around the time he retired, we had our 50th Eagle Scout celebration. We’d always said that when we had 50 Eagle Scouts, we’d invite them all back for a big celebration. We honored David that day, as well. He richly deserved it.”

President John F. Kennedy said, “One person can make a difference, and everyone should try.” David Gilbreath is certainly one person who has made a difference in the lives of many boys by introducing Scouting to the Mentone area. We can all be thankful for his efforts.



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The 2004 Trip to Philmont Scout Ranch
Mentone's Troop 106 atop Baldy Mountain

Clockwise from top left: John Westmoreland, John Q. Westmoreland, Daniel Smith, Paul Whittle, John Stanley, Andrew Wright, Gordon Walters, Edwin Stanley, Bleu Stone, Benjamin Spears



The 2010 Trip to Philmont Scout Ranch
Mentone's Troop 106 atop Baldy Mountain

Clockwise from top left: Jared Hurley, Mason Baldwin, Luke Blalock, Brayden West, Jimmy Blalock, Conner Pope, John Stanley, Trevor Clecklor, Ben Spears, Edwin Stanley



The 2007 Trip to Philmont Scout Ranch
Troops 106 and 75 atop Mount Phillips — 11,711' elevation

Clockwise from top left: Frank Graham, Mike Bare, Kaleb McMunn, David Killian, Alex Hazell, Josh Haworth, Paul Whittle, Glenn Houston, Fowler Cunningham, Nathan Jones

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Rhododendron Garden Club News

by Alyce Kenney

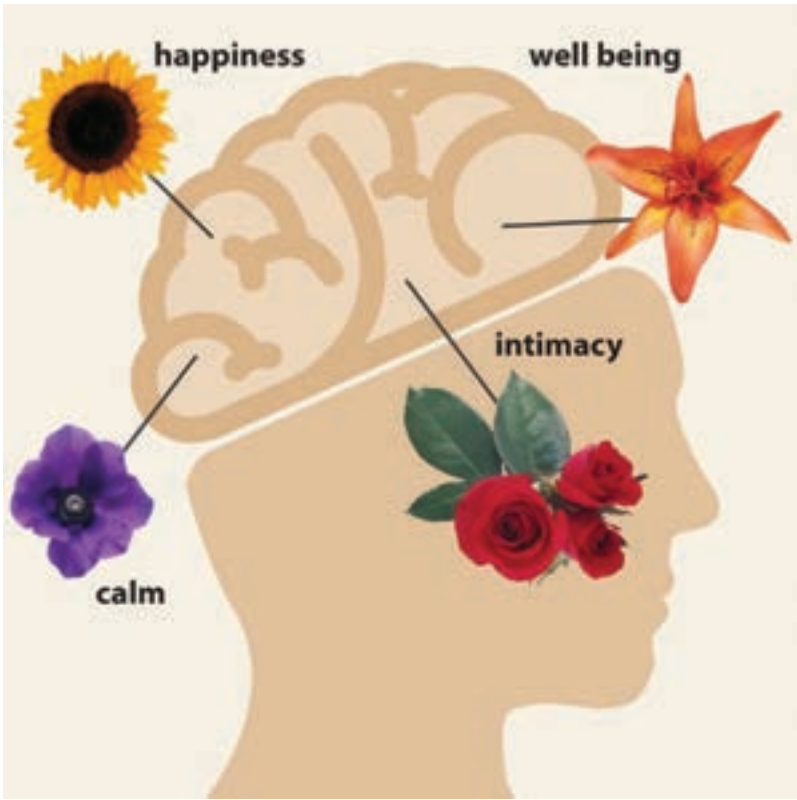
“Where flowers bloom, so does hope.” – Lady Bird Johnson

The July meeting of the Rhododendron Garden Club was a tour of Moonflower Farms in Fort Payne. This is a wonderful place to walk amongst the bright colorful blooming flowers, complete with butterflies and other eager pollinators, and cut your own stems to take home and enjoy. Smiles could be seen on everyone’s faces. As Ralph Waldo Emerson so aptly put it, “The earth laughs in flowers.”

What is it about flowers that makes people want to look at them, be around them, hold them?

During the period of “hunter-gatherers,” flowers represented a huge reward signal in the brain because they marked the coming of abundance after a hungry winter. Today we have enough to eat all year round, so we don’t consciously link flowers with food. But the blossoming of a flower triggers the sense that something special is coming because it triggers the release of dopamine into our bloodstream. [Psychology Today, June 2017] Dopamine is one of the “feel good” neurotransmitters at work in our bodies. It plays a role in important body functions, including movement, memory, pleasurable reward, and motivation.

A study on the emotional impact of flowers was conducted by Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Project Director of the Human Development Lab at Rutgers University. She discovered that nature provides us with a simple way to improve emotional health—flowers. The presence of flowers triggers happy emotions, heightens feelings of life satisfaction, and affects social behavior in a positive manner far beyond what is normally believed. In a 10-month study, a team



of researchers explored the link between flowers and life satisfaction. They recorded participants’ behavioral and emotional responses to receiving flowers. The results show that flowers are a natural and healthful moderator of moods. Here’s a link to the study and several more articles on the mental health benefits of being with flowers: safnow.org/aboutflowers/quick-links/health-benefits-research/emotional-impact-of-flowers-study. Be sure to watch the video!

Important garden tasks in August include: keeping up with watering during the “doggiest” days of summer; split over-abundant perennials and relocate so their root systems can reestablish before the cooler temps return; plant “cool” weather crops such as greens, carrots, beets, and herbs such as basil and cilantro. We live in a climate that allows a second harvest of deliciousness!

The August 8th meeting of the Rhododendron Garden Club will be held at the Scout building on Dempsey Street. We’ll discuss plans for fall events and projects. All are welcome, whether you have a green thumb or not.

Here are some more links to information about flowers:

- moonfloweralabama.com
- completewellbeing.com/blogpost/5-lessons-from-flowers
- sciencing.com/importance-of-flowers-in-nature-12000163.html

Alyce Kenney serves as secretary for the Rhododendron Garden Club.



Sunflowers at Moonflower Farms on Sand Mountain. Photo courtesy of Kathryn Norris.



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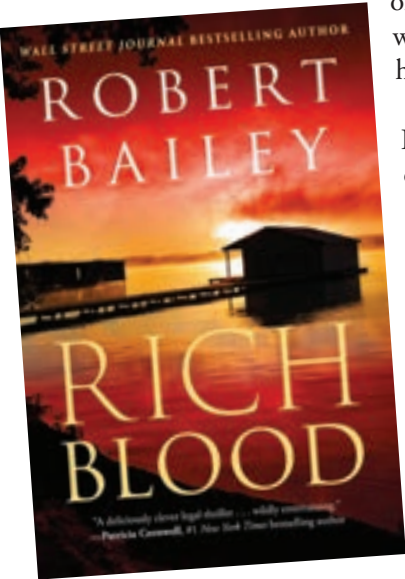
Book Signing & Author Talk by Robert Bailey
by Anne McLeod

Robert Bailey, the Huntsville attorney, who has parlayed his legal experience into a mystery-writing career, will speak at the library on August 21 at 6:30 PM and will sign copies of his books. His latest, Rich Waters, is the second in his new series set in Guntersville. The protagonist is Jason Rich, whose billboards with his pitch to personal injury clients, “Get Rich!” line interstate highways. Blackmailed by a drug kingpin into defending a former local high school football star accused



Robert Bailey

of killing a police officer, Jason is plunged into a world of secrets and intrigue while he tries to put his own past behind him. Robert Bailey’s previous visit to Moon Lake Library was our first in-person event after months of online only events during the pandemic, and fans came from miles around to hear him talk about his books and writing career. He promised then that the next Jason Rich mystery would include some scenes set in Mentone, and in Rich Waters he delivers on that promise. Come to the library to hear this fascinating writer and pick up his latest legal thriller. For more information on these and other library events, email books@moonlakelibrary.org or call 256-634-2127.



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—JOHN MUIR



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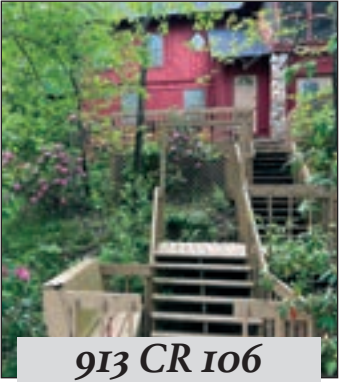
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Chalk Art: A Storied History

In 2020, LRAC & MERF hosted the first Sidewalk Chalk Art contest as a way to get outside and create art together. In preparation for our fourth Sidewalk Chalk Contest, now a part of Follow Your Art, I was researching similar events across the country and ran across interesting articles on the history of chalk art (also referred to as street painting and pavement art).

Before American artist Kurt Wenner popularized 3-D chalk art in the 80s, sidewalk chalk was typically associated with hopscotch and children’s art. Yet there is a rich history of chalk art.

In 16th-century Italy, beggars who were looking to catch the attention (and coins) of pilgrims visiting cathedrals began to use charcoal to sketch religious images, especially images of the Madonna. These beggars-turned-artists became known as the Madonnari and their tradition continued for centuries and spread throughout Europe.

Victorian England chalk artists were known as “screevers,” a term likely from the Italian word, “scrivere” meaning “to write,” as their art included moral or political poems or proverbs. After WWI, many disabled servicemen became screevers to support themselves.

In her 1934 book, *Mary Poppins*, P. L. Travers’ character, Bert, sold matches on rainy days but “If it was fine, he was on his knees all day making pictures with coloured chalks on the pavement.” And, in the first film version, Dick Van Dyke’s Bert sang: “Today I’m a screever, and as you can see / A screever’s an artist of ‘ighest degree / And it’s me own work from me own memory.”

Fast forward to 1972 when the International Pavement Art Festival in the Italian village of Grazie di Curtatone began, with hundreds of European artists participating in the street-painting competition. This festival not only recognized the modern-day Madonnari but the art form saw a worldwide resurgence and reinterpretation. It was the first of many similar festivals around the world.

A decade later, NASA illustrator Kurt Wenner left his job to study classical art in Italy, only to discover there were no classical art teachers. He learned classical techniques by visiting Vatican museums and copying the masterpieces. On his daily walks he passed chalk artists who invited him to make art with them. Inspired by the techniques used on church ceilings, Wenner invented the geometry of 3-D chalk art. He was the first American Madonnari and won first place at the Grazie di Cortatone competition three years in a row. Check out his art at kurtwenner.com.

National Geographic documented his work and introduced Wenner to the world in an award-winning film entitled *Masterpieces in Chalk*. In 1986 he started the first chalk art festival in the U.S. at the plaza of the Old Mission Santa Barbara in California. Today there are chalk art festivals throughout the world, from Dubai to Singapore to Mentone.

Fawne Derosia, a member of the Georgia Chalk Art Guild, participates in many of these chalk art festivals. She will bring her expertise to Mentone on Saturday, August 19, 10–12:30, for the Chalk Art Workshop at MERF’s Community Trail. It’s open to all ages and skill levels. There is no fee for 18 and under, \$10 for over 18.

Show off your newly acquired chalking skills on September 2nd and become a Mentone Madonnari at Follow Your Art’s Sidewalk Chalk Art Contest!

Wrapping up this year’s Music for the People summer concert is The Lazybirds, a classic American roots band from North Carolina. The Lazybirds cover a lot of musical ground, from early American string band music to Dylan classics, as well as classic sounding originals. Bring your own chair or blanket to enjoy music under the stars on Saturday, August 12 at 7 p.m in the grassy area behind the Mentone Inn.

The next day, our annual **Members Social** will be held on Sunday, August 13, from 5 until 7:30 p.m. at the Mentone Inn. It will include a silent auction, delicious food by Cynthia Stinson, door prizes, and live jazz by Clare Donohue accompanied by Stephen Powers on guitar. The social is open to the public.

Our third annual **Follow Your Art** event will be the best yet! On Saturday, September 2, shop from 30 of our area’s favorite artists and listen to delightful fairy tales by local author Debbie Happy Cohen and a variety of live musicians. Brandi Still will offer face painting; nonprofits will have fundraisers, including

the Rhododendron Garden Club’s plant sale; and DeSoto Rescue Squad will host a hydration station. Mobile Munchies and Freudian Slip will serve up food, coffee, and smoothies. Check out the Sidewalk Chalk Art and vote for the People’s Choice Award. Follow Your Art artists are part of a judged exhibit with \$900 in awards. Co-hosted with the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation (MERF), the event will be held from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at MERF’s walking trail next to Moon Lake Library in Mentone.

Follow Your Art and Music for the People are made possible by a grant from Alabama State Council on the Arts, National Endowment of the Arts, and LRAC members. To learn more about these events and how to support your Arts Council, visit our website at littleriverartsCouncil.com.

Juli Jordan is the president of Little River Arts Council.



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In Memoriam



PAMELA KENNEDY HEGWOOD
March 5, 1957–June 27, 2023

The family of Pamela Kennedy Hegwood is devastated to announce her passing after a brief illness. She passed away peacefully on Tuesday, June 27, 2023, surrounded by her loved ones.

Wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and friend, Pam was loved by so many and will be missed by all who knew her.

The daughter of John Knox and Dorothy Weems Kennedy, she was born March 5, 1957, in Jacksonville, FL, and grew up in Bucks County, PA. As a teenager, Pam moved to Chattooga County. There she found love and built a life alongside her adoring husband, Tim.

Pam was an incredible cook and there are many who can attest to her specialties. Her chicken and dressing was legendary and her bread pudding rivaled any other dessert known to man. Ever.

She was a part of many lives through her work with the Menlo Housing Authority, Recreation Department, Farm Bureau, and being an active mother and grandmother in the Chattooga County and Trion Communities.

One of her proudest accomplishments was “The Field of Dreams,” the Tillotson Sports Complex in Menlo. Pam worked with the Menlo Recreation Department to obtain the property, secure funding, and design the fields and press box. And, though Tim was the president of the Recreation Department, she was the one who made things happen.

She truly enjoyed her work supporting the community, but loved nothing more than spending time with family and loved ones—especially if that time involved the beach. She was incredibly proud of her children: Jonathan, Jacqueline, and Amanda, and will be missed by all who knew her.

Pam is preceded in death by her parents, John and Dorothy Kennedy.

She is survived by her loving husband of 44 years, Tim Hegwood; children, Jonathan (Jessica) Hegwood, Jacqueline Hegwood, Amanda Hegwood; siblings, James Kennedy, Tom Kennedy, and Elizabeth Lavell; grandchildren, Addison Anderson, Elizabeth Cook, Jack Hegwood, and Legend Smith; and several nieces, nephews, and special friends.

She was interred in Alpine Cemetery



VINCE STEVENSON POLK II
November 2, 1946–June 30, 2023

Vince Stevenson Polk II, age 76, of Valley Head, passed away on Friday, June 30, 2023.

He is survived by sons, Vince Stevenson Polk III (Brenda),

Joseph Polk, and Thomas Polk (Erica); daughters, Angie Fenley (Bryan), Amanda Polk (Martin), and KaSondra Polk; 18 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.



TAMMY KAYE LLOYD
December 26, 1961–July 10, 2023

Tammy Kaye Lloyd, age 61, of Valley Head, passed away on Monday, July 10, 2023 at her residence.

Tammy was born in Taylor County, FL on December 26, 1961 to William and Irene Quiette. She was a wife, mother, and Granna. She enjoyed her family, gardening, and being in God’s creation. She was also a member of Mentone Community Church.

She is survived by her husband of 19-1/2 years, Steve Lloyd; daughters: Brandy Hixon (Jake), Brittany Rigstad (Brandon), and Erica Arnold (Daniel); son, Justin “Pug” Lloyd (Jacqualine); and grandchildren, Korbin Arnold, Karter J. Arnold, Karlee M. Arnold, Marleigh R. Lloyd, Anna C. Garner, and Taylor N. Lloyd.

She was preceded in death by her parents, William and Irene Quiette, and her sister, Mary Hope Quiette.

She was buried at Head Springs Cemetery.



JOHNA LYNETTE BURRAGE
January 19, 1960–July 23, 2023

Johna Lynette Burrage, age 63, of Cloudland, GA, passed away Sunday, July 23, 2023 at a Rome, GA hospital.

Mrs. Burrage was born January 19, 1960 in Lafayette, GA

to the late John Hogue and Frances Wofford Gilreath. She was retired from Circle K and enjoyed playing guitar, painting, and crafts.

Survivors include her husband, Michael Burrage;

daughters, Quisha Leonard and Stephanie Webb; step-daughter, Felisha Freeman; Siblings, Sean Hogue, Shane (Ava) Hogue, Bradley Hogue, Carol Maloney, Celenia Kirby, Brandy Selfors, and Malinda (Joe) Brown; grandchildren, Emma Weathers, Natalie Leonard, Nathaniel Leonard, Chase Freeman, and Alyssa Freeman; and great-grandchild, Daniel Weathers.

Mrs. Burrage was interred at AMI Cemetery.



STEVE LEON WATKINS
September 8, 1948–July 23, 2023

Steve Leon Watkins, age 74, of Valley Head, passed away on Sunday morning, July 23, 2023.

Steve was an Army Veteran who served in the Vietnam War. His favorite pastimes were metal

detecting and spending as much time as possible with his granddaughters. He was a very hardworking and loving man who always had a story to share. He loved talking to people and was always there to help anyone who needed him.

He is preceded in death by his mother and father, Doris Louise and Elvis Watkins of Henagar.

Steve is survived by his wife, Patti Blalock Watkins; daughter, Stephani Chaney (David); granddaughters, Isabella Chaney and Lorelai Chaney; sister-in-law, Lynn Blalock; nephews, Rocky Blalock, Jesse Blalock, Dylan Blalock (Linsay), and Jason Watkins; and great-nieces, Addison Watkins and Olivia Blalock.

The family is accepting donations to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital (stjude.org).

He was buried at Bankhead Cemetery with Military Honors.



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What Is MERF?

by Anna Mae Horn



MERF, Mentone Educational Resources Foundation, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that supports life-long learning in the local community through various programs. Because MERF’s programs are diverse, some people only know one aspect of what we do. Here’s a chance to get to know more about MERF.

Organized in 1993, MERF’s official mission has always been “to enrich the living and learning of the community by identifying needs and coordinating resources.” The original founders, a group of six local residents, saw needs at Moon Lake School beyond the basic education of children. They also identified needs in the community for adult literacy and parenting classes. Senior citizens wanted to stay engaged, but activities in this rural area were sparse. The common thread was education.

Tutoring is a vital part of a successful education program. For years, the MERF house was filled in the evenings with Moon Lake students and local volunteers. Currently, Valley Head has temporary funds for their tutoring program. When the need is there again, MERF will answer the call. (I know several volunteers are looking forward to helping out again.)

Recognizing the many benefits of a fine arts education, MERF has provided a fine arts teacher and supplies free to all elementary students for many years, first at Moon Lake School and now at Valley Head School. MERF also provides theatre experiences on and off campus and financially supports other school theatre trips.

Field trips to Space Camp and Sea Lab have also been partially funded by MERF. Last year, MERF started partnering with high school teachers for on-campus enrichment activities to prepare teens for life after graduation. We have hosted mock interviews and life skill talks.

Spring scholarships to honor the memory of founding member Sue Henry have been given for over 10 years to full-time students in post-secondary programs. In 2021, a new fund was established in memory of Carter Holland for current high school seniors.

Lunches and socials for senior citizens bring them together to socialize, learn about age-specific topics, and be active when possible. MERF coordinates meals from locals eager to give: camps, churches, restaurants, and groups.

Pathway to Community is a physical education project. The quarter-mile MERF walking track is separated from the state highway by a colorful picket fence painted by community members. Colorful seats and large outdoor musical instruments are interspersed along the track for adventure and relaxation.

Over the last three decades, a host of other educational needs have been met: adult literacy, parenting classes, toddler play groups, craft classes, etc. Many ideas are in MERF’s future plans, and we are open to suggestions. MERF is governed by a volunteer board of directors who make the difficult choice of what the budget funds are spent on. MERF has one employee, the executive director, who is in charge of day-to-day business and overseeing programs.

The needs are great and varied; it takes a team to ensure lives are enriched by education. Resources coordinated by MERF include a terrific base of volunteers. Some enjoy helping the school children, others are sparked by the senior activities, and many just like working on a project in the background. Financial resources come from several sources: individual donations; grants; matching grants from employers; legacy gifts; and the sale of “Leave Me in Mentone” merchandise; and our annual art auction. Each and every gift of time and funds is greatly appreciated and efficiently used to support life-long learning.

Some events we coordinate only require MERF to make the invite and have others show up. Last month, Camp DeSoto’s July campers participating in Project Phoebe hosted local seniors again at The Farm at Windy Hill for a 1950s-style sock hop. Good music and dancing with root beer floats, Shirley Temples, and popcorn for refreshments had everyone smiling and singing.

To learn more and see more photos about all the enriching educational activities going on, check out MERFhouse.org or follow us on social media. Call 256-635-8775 to share your ideas or ask Anna Mae for more details.

Anna Mae Horn is the executive director of the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation.



Student painting from Fine Arts Class.



MERF volunteer tutoring a Moon Lake student.



Senior lunch from 2015 in the MERF house.



Camp DeSoto seniors entertaining MERF seniors in July.





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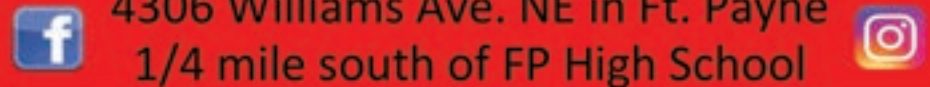
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Mentone Arts Center

Upcoming classes and events; spotlighting Artist of the Month Mary Margaret Binkley

by Randy Grider

We are heading into a very busy few weeks of classes events—some of which stretch into the fall.



First up on August 1 is the Music on the Mountain Songwriters Series that takes place the first Tuesday of each month from 6:30–8 p.m. The Nashville-style songwriters round spotlights area songwriters performing their original music followed by a feature. The event is hosted by award-winning singer-songwriter and Mentone resident Craig Hendricks. The round is free to the public. Come check it out.

On Saturday, August 5, artist/instructor Lisa Opielinski will lead an acrylic workshop from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. “Aunt Louise’s Corner” will be the subject. The painting is inspired by lively colors, patterns, textures, and Opielinski’s love of collected eclectic design. Students will collage and add texture with gel medium. They will learn dragging techniques and apply vibrant colors with acrylic paint to create work on a museum-quality Ampersand panel. The tuition for the workshop is \$100 plus a \$30 supply fee paid directly to the instructor. The workshop is limited to 10 students.

Other upcoming classes and events:

- September 2–3—Glass Beadmaking Workshop. Glass beadmaking, also known as lampwork, is an ancient art that is still an honored craft. In this introductory workshop, students will learn the amazing process of making glass beads. Students will work with rods of beautiful colored glass that they’ll melt over an open flame torch. Students will then work on basic shaping followed by adding dots, lines, sprinkles of color, and much more. Detailed safety instructions will be covered throughout the day. At the end of class, there will be a discussion about how to wear and display the beads and offer some interesting ideas for using them in non-wearable ways. This class will be a perfect first step for those interested in pursuing the art of lampwork. Instructor is Terry Hale of Hale Fire Glass. Tuition is \$195 and class is limited to 10 students. There is also a \$35 supply fee paid directly to the instructor on the first day of class.
- September 15—Tribute to Cabaret Greats. Clare Donohue accompanied by Ken Watters will perform numbers by some of the great New York cabaret singers. The 7–9 p.m. performance is \$25 per person.



Mary Margaret Binkley



Painting by Mary Margaret Binkley

- September 16—Paint Like Bob Ross Class. Featuring certified Bob Ross instructor Gary Grider, students will learn the wet-on-wet oil technique while creating their own 16x20 painting scene in the style of the iconic Bob Ross. The tuition for the 9 a.m.–1 p.m. class is \$100 and limited to 12 students.
- September 21—Fall Social honoring our third quarter Artists of the Month. All artists and art enthusiasts are welcome to attend. 5:30–7 p.m.
- October 27—Watters/Felts Trio. Featuring Ken Watters and Ingrid Felts for a great night of music. 7–9 p.m. \$25 per person.
- October 28—Watercolor workshop lead by Lisa Opielinski (postponed from August 6). Tuition is \$100 plus \$30 supply fee paid to the instructor. 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

We salute Mary Margaret Binkley as our August Artist of the Month.

Mary Margaret is a self-taught artist. She created her own style using acrylic and gel medium after being inspired by her late father, Robert Thomas McClendon, who taught her to value others’ creativity as well as her own. In memory of him, she has incorporated his name into her signature—M/THOM.

Mary Margaret specializes in trees and angels. Her work has been shown in public and private collections throughout the South. She is one of the most popular artists in the gallery at the Arts Center.

For more about any of the workshops or events—or to register or make a reservation—see contact information below.

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







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August Community Events

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

August 1—Music on the Mountain Songwriters Series. 6:30pm. Mentone Arts Center.

August 3—Canyon Kids. Join us for a hands-on adventure the 1st Thursday each month in 2023! Children (age 3 years–3rd graders) will want to attend ALL of these hands-on outdoor adventures! Bring your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and neighbors to creatively learn about animals, plants, bugs, and more with JSU Field Schools. Please wear footwear suitable for hiking, and bring water and sun protection. Free event. Registration strongly suggested. Limit 15 students. 10:30–11:30am. Little River Canyon Center, Fort Payne. For more details and for pre-registration, email rmtaylor@jsu.edu or call 256-845-3548.

August 4— Back to School Hike Creek Stomp. Celebrate the last day of summer vacation and Fee Free Day with the JSU Field School and biologist from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management at Canyon Mouth Park! Entry into the park is FREE on August 4. We will learn about watersheds and the macroinvertebrates that call Little River home. Be sure to bring some shoes you don't mind getting wet and a change of clothes as search for bugs in Little River. Don't forget to bring bring water, sun protection and a snack! We will meet AT Canyon Mouth Park at 10:30am. This 90-minute program is FREE and open to the public. Registration is appreciated by emailing Rebekah at rmtaylor@jsu.edu.

August 5—5th Annual Pete the Cat Day. The Big Blue Cat will be back along with face painting, art activities, the Pete boogie dance, popcorn, Pete items, and James Dean, the creator of Pete the Cat will sign one item per person who has a ticket. 9am–Noon. 100 tickets are free and available at Katherine Custom Framing & Gifts through August 4 or until all tickets are given out. Please stop by and pick up your ticket. Tickets will not be held but given out on a first-come basis.

August 5—Acrylic Workshop by Lisa Opielinski. The tuition is \$100 plus a \$30 supply fee paid directly to the instructor. Limited to 10 students. To register, please email mentoneartscenter@gmail.com or call 256-674-3366.

August 5–6, 12–13, 19–20, 26–27—Little River Kayak Rentals. Miller's Bend Paddle Shack in DeSoto Falls Picnic Area will help you begin your scenic kayak trip up the West Fork of Little River. Rent sit-on-top kayaks to enjoy a peaceful flatwater paddle on Little River overlooking beautiful DeSoto Falls. Your adventure can be up to 4 miles round trip, or as long as you want to make it! Paddle trips are perfect for individuals or groups. Life vests & paddles are provided. Call DeSoto State Park's Lodge for info: 256-845-5380 or alapark.com/kayak-little-river. Boat Shack hours: Saturday & Sunday 10am–6pm.

August 6—History of Insect Pinning. Join the JSU Field School and Instructor Christian Braswell as we learn all about insect collecting and pinning. Pinning insects, an important education tool and hobby that is still enjoyed today but has a long history from the Victorian age. Come and go anytime from 10:30am to 12pm. This program is FREE and open to the public.

August 10—Courtyard Concerts: 70s Night. Featuring local and regional artists performing a variety of themes, styles, and genres. Admission is free. Gate opens at 5:30pm, music begins just after 6pm. A cash bar is available, as well as food, drink, and merchandise. Located at the Coal & Iron Building in Fort Payne.

August 11—Mayors Cup Golf Tournament. Hosted by the Fort Payne Chamber of Commerce to be held at the Terrapin Hills Country Club. Start is at 9am. Lunch, prizes, beer carts and more will be available. 256-845-2741.

August 11—Outdoor Music Night at Moonflower Farms. Live music from the Alley Cats, Mobile Munchies food truck, local vendors and craftsmen, and lots and lots of flowers. Bring your lawn chairs and coolers. 5–8pm. 948 County Road 112, Fort Payne. Moonfloweralabama.com.

August 12—Moon Lake Library Book Club. Let's talk about books! Sometimes we read and discuss the same book. Other months, we share book recommendations. This is a great way to meet new friends and also get some good ideas about what to read next. 10:30am.

August 12—Summer Music Series: The Lazybirds. Sponsored by Little River Arts Council, made possible in part by the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Bring your own chair or blanket to enjoy the show & enjoy some food from Fontastic Food Truck. 7–10pm. Linger Longer Pavilion, behind Mentone Inn at 6139 AL-117. Free & open to everyone. littleriverartscouncil.org.

August 16—Art Talk. When artists gather to talk about what moves them to create art, what is really created in that moment is community. A community of like-minded people who speak the same language. A community of people who are genuinely interested in learning and supporting each other. If this sounds like your kind of gathering, please join us. Bring your art and share your process. Moon Lake Library, Mentone. 6–8pm.

August 19—Sidewalk Chalk Art Workshop. Learn tricks to make the most of your sidewalk chalk art with professional artist & member of Georgia Chalk Art Guild, Fawne Derosia. This workshop will set you up for success for the Sidewalk Chalk Art Contest (Sat., Sept. 2) and any other chalk art opportunities that may pop up in the future! For all ages and all levels. 10am–12:30pm. MERF Community Walking Trail, 4561 AL Hwy 117. Adults \$10, Youth under 18 free. Sign up at littleriverartscouncil.org/events.

August 19—Year of Alabama Birding Photography Workshop: Wild Places, Wildflowers, and Wild Birds! Sponsored by Alabama Tourism Department. Join Beth Cowan Drake from Alabama the Beautiful for a photography workshop designed to teach the field techniques of bird photography. From numerous approaches to photographing different species of bird, she will explain how to control the variables to capture the image of a bird, discuss her personal settings for various images she has captured, and review her Lightroom editing technique. Beth's many years of photography experience helps in understanding composition, balance, and form as she teaches all levels of photographers how to create artistic and

DeSoto State Park's Olympic-size swimming pool is open through Labor Day weekend. Pool hours are daily, 11am–6pm. An ADA lift is available, and lifeguards are on duty. The pool is located across CR 89 from the Country Store.

The cost is \$5 per swimmer. Individual season passes are available for \$88, and a family pool pass costs \$198 for up to six family members. Call 256-845-0051 for more information. The pool is available for after-hours parties.

beautifully pleasing images. The time in the workshop belongs to you: Beth's guidance will make your experience exceed your expectations: 1–5pm. DeSoto State Park. \$35 per participant. Pre-registration required by August 11. To pre-register call Brittney Hughes at 256-997-5025 (leave message).

August 19—Third Saturday Cruise In. An afternoon of family fun activities in the Main Street District of Fort Payne. This public event includes food, live music, motorcycles, antique car show, and much more. 5–9pm.

August 19—Boom Town Opry. Landmarks of DeKalb County, Inc. presents the Boom Town Opry, its 2023 Summer Series. Think of it as Fort Payne's version of HeeHaw, with a featured cast of Players performing skits alongside musical guests & friends. It's sure to be a show that tickles your funnybone and leaves you with a tune in your ear. Each performance will take place during the Third Saturday Cruise-in, so come in and cool off after you check out the sights and sounds downtown. For a suggested donation of \$10, you can come and go throughout the performance. All proceeds benefit the restoration of the historic 1889 Opera House, so please give more if you can! 6–8pm. Located at the Fort Payne Opera House, 510 Gault Ave. N., Fort Payne.

August 24—Courtyard Concerts: Dealers Choice. Featuring local and regional artists performing a variety of themes, styles, and genres. Admission is free. Gate opens at 5:30pm, music begins just after 6pm. A cash bar is available, as well as food, drink, and merchandise. Located at the Coal & Iron Building in Fort Payne.

August 25–26—Vintage Pickin'® Fall Market. The BEST one-stop shopping event in Alabama featuring... Antiques • Vintage • Fall/Holiday Themed Home Decor • Handcrafted Jewelry • Artwork • Gift items • Candles • Women & Children's Boutique & Vintage Clothing • Live Music • Tasty Treats, Drinks & Food Trucks! VFW Fairgrounds, 151 18th Street NE, Fort Payne. vintagepickin.com/fallmarket

August 26—Fyffe UFO Day. Hot air balloon rides showcase this unique family outing! Arts and crafts, children's games, food vendors, antique tractors, live entertainment, street dance and much more make this event fun for the whole family. Gates open at 9am and music starts at 10am. 256-623-2222.

August 27—May's Gulf Songwriter Series. Featuring original music by Pierce Pettis & Stuart Douglas Stanley. 2–5pm. Little River Canyon Center. Tickets \$20 in advance, \$25 the day of the show. Coolers welcome.

Community Calendar

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

Mentone's Planning Commission meets the 1st Wed. every month at 5pm at Town Hall.

Valley Head Town Council meets monthly on the 1st Monday at 6pm at Town Hall.

Hammondville Town Council work sessions are held monthly on the 1st Tues.. at 5pm at Town Hall. Council meetings are held on the 1st Thurs. every month at 6pm in the Fire Hall.

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. St. Joseph's-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church, Mentone.

August 2023 @ Moon Lake Library

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

August 1 @ 6 p.m.—Youth Advisory Board meeting. Students ages 12–19 welcome. Join us as we plan activities and suggest resources for the library.

August 4 & 5 @ 10 a.m.–4 p.m.—Used book sale with musical accompaniment by the Mentone Ukes on Saturday.

August 4 @ 6 p.m.—Family Game Night! Bring a snack to share and we'll enjoy board games at the library.

August 10 @ 5 p.m.—Joint meeting of Friends of Moon Lake Library and the municipal library boards

August 12 @ 9–11 a.m.—Book signing with Heather Webber, author of *The Coffee Shop of Curiosities* and *Midnight at the Blackbird Café*. NOTE: This event is at Andiamo Gallery in Moon Lake Village. The library's regular book club meetings will resume in September. September's selection: Poetry, novels, or essays by Kentucky author Wendell Berry.

August 16 @ 6–8 p.m.—Art Critique and Discussion Group with Mikel Yeakle, sponsored by Little River Arts Council. Let's talk about art. Artists, please bring a piece or two to share.

August 19 @ 1 p.m.—Mentone Ukes offer free ukulele lessons for all experience levels.

August 21 @ 6:30 p.m.—Author talk with Robert Bailey whose latest book, *Rich Waters*, is set in Guntersville. Robert will have copies of his books for sale and for autographing.



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August Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1

Chelsey Owen
- 2

Logan Goza
Ginger Busby
Heather Dutton
Ashley Simpson
Ella Kay Bell
Courtney Durham
- 3

Halle Hilyer
Adriana Grace Hall
Wendy Haynes
Chance Pearson
Mary Frances Battles
Daniel Vest
Chet Perky
- 4

Henry Phillips
Phyllis Stephens
Savanna Goza
Chris Russell
Johnathan Floyd
Joe Bain
Tim Bain
Jane Patton
- 5

Hope Martin
Amanda Pilotte
Elizabeth Meadows
Amy Jones
Laura Stout
Matt Hilliard
Creed Smith
Carley Cash
Leah Kay Ozment
- 6

Casey Stott
Dallas Bowman
Chris Collins
Josey Noles
Dalton Stout
Laura Windom
- 7

Samantha Reed
Destiny Watters
Collin Bowman
Charles Mitchell
Breana Clardy
- 8

Alex Gifford
Benjamin Nelson
April Bates
- 9

Martha Browder
Carolyn Martin
Brayden Hughes
Cynthia Connor
Decker Jones
Leslie Bunch
Jordan Brown
- 10

Alex Whatley
Sharon Doviet
Ade Kate Stephens
Eddie Sue Winter
- 11

Dianna Carden
Lila Jane McElhaney
Harlee Wooten
Tim Cowart
- 12

Kinsley Worthey
Amber Smith
Brant Smith
Lawrence Harrison
Frances McNutt
Sharon Doviet
- 13

Stephanie Potts
Brittney Barkley
Cindy Tipton
Tomas Gravitt
Carol Argo
Sandra Perry
- 14

Jennifer Ferguson
Alan Black
Hannah Meadows
Ryan Hicks
Matthew Sword
Emilia Shores
Chris Boggs
- 15

Mike Langston
Dallas Gregory
- 16

Brandy Dupree
Ashton Jones
Audreanna Durham
- 17

Sandra Pruitt
Mattie Belle McGee
Jacob Bain
Theresa Case
Bo Chadwick
- 18

Hudson Bearden
- 18

Kinsley Mitchell
Tucker Watkins
Dawn Holloway
- 19

Ray Beeson
Michael Flannigan
Lee Pierce
Blake Villarreal
Luella Mae Gregory
- 20

Carla Warren
Shane Ingram
Joseph Goza
Jesse Jones
Brian Carden
Heath Watson
Grayson Kinsley
Linda Crane
Angel Mann
- 21

Chloe Bell
Eddie Langston
Emma Crawford
Chrissie Watson
Michele Black
Hannah Neel Boni
Bryson Richey
Chrissie Watson
- 22

Casey Gregory
Haven Downer
Keith Langston
Anthony McKenzie
Hazel Hilliard
Sinjhin Smith
Candice Wilbanks
Mae Hairston
Heather Williamson
Mandy New
Whitney Dodson
- 23

Slade Carden
Lukas Boehringer
Phillip Pannell
Bandy Johnson
- 24

Dana Pangle
Tammy Larock
Nicole Callahan
Stephen Robeck
- Tiffany Graben
Margaret Clingan
- 25

Brenda Hall
Carolyn Coots
Jason Gregory
Aubrey Baker
Georgia Mae Baker
Kelly Johnson
Crystal Durham
Olivia Craig
- 26

Brantley Hughes
Tom Shanklin, Jr.
Amelia Bowman
Jane Kerby
- 27

Sadie Carden
Howard Hilyer
Crystal Lee
Tamara Hawkins
Luke Durham
Jack Chambers
Charlotte McGee
Jaymie Ballard
Todd Godwin
Donna Johnson
TP Pilotte
Sharon Jones
Sidney Erker
- 28

Larry Gray
Hunter Izell
Courtney Gregory
Jase Gregory
- 29

Kayla Worthey
Donna Willingham
Susan Cherones
Isaac Browder
Armen Case
Tony Wilborn
Annlyle Johnson
- 30

Wink Painter
- 31

Wesley Rhodes
L.C. Bone
Mark Battles
Ian Norman
Gary New
Riley Stout
- 1

Harold & Diana Carden
Kirk & Mikhaila Warkis
- 3

Matt & Jeannie Woods
- 6

John & Amy Kirby
- 7

Eric & Miranda Chambers
Chris & Tiffany Graben
- 8

Park & Anna Nelson
- 9

Corey & Tiffany Baker
- 10

Andrew & Jessi Hairston
- 11

Rayford & Cindy Bethune
- 12

Terri & Tony Wilborn
- 13

Rodney & Kayla Mitchell
Wes & Helen Pullen
- 15

Desmon & Carrie Turner
David & Dorothy Horton
- 17

Bobby & Sandy Blalock
- 18

Butch & Denita Manifold
- 21

Randy & Jessica Clardy
- 22

Bennett & Cyndle Browder
Michael & Jazz Chambers
- 24

Dwayne & Laura McKenzie
Matthew & Taylor Smothers
- 25

Mike & Stephanie Potts
- 26

Will & Lori Blackburn
Coleton & Sammie Reed
- 27

Lonnie & Kim Novak
- 28

Joseph & Mandi Goza
- 29

John & Kim Johnson
Jason & Stacey Akin
- 30

Richard & Christy Harrison
Kenneth & Ginger Busby

Happy Day!

Classified Ads

DAVE’S ANTIQUES—Voted Best of DeKalb 2022 and 2023, has an upcoming special “GET IT WHILE IT’S HOT” Auction, starting at 12 noon CST, on Labor Day weekend, Sat., Sept. 4. The auction house and booths sit up on the hill at the I-59 exit for Mentone, marked Dave’s I-59 Finds.

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Mentone Ukes

by Debra Mays

My ukulele story started a long time ago when I brought a friend to an oncologist office for her cancer treatment. As we waited in the waiting room a man came in, sat down, and played his ukulele. I was so impressed and happy to hear the music. He made the wait a lot more enjoyable.

Fast forward a lot of years and I found myself widowed, with land and a house that was too big for one person. I decided to sell everything, buy a truck and travel trailer, and travel around the U.S. I happened to be in Gadsden Outfitters one day and they had cute little ukuleles and I thought that it would be nice to sit outside my travel trailer and play the ukulele, maybe help meet people. So I bought one. When I finally decided to try and learn to play it using the booklet that came with it, I quickly got frustrated and of course my finger tips were a little sore. I put it aside and planned to try again after I settled. Being exceptionally good at putting off doing things that are foreign to me and having tried and failed to learn to play the guitar 40 some odd years ago, I skillfully kept putting it off.

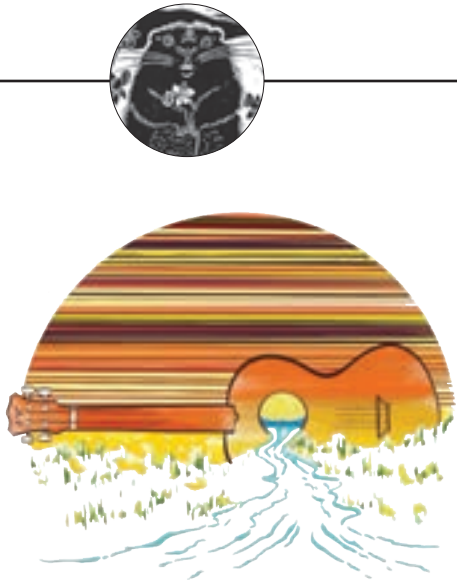


Debra Mays

just jump in with the regular group and see if I could at least change chords and get an idea of how the songs sounded when people who had been playing for a while played them. That worked well, and even though I have a long way to go I sit and play with the group each session and have even played at a few of their concerts. The best thing is that everyone in the group is accepting of beginners—pointing out that everyone was a beginner at one time.

“Strum and Be Happy!”

We do love beginners and newcomers! Consider becoming a part of this incredible journey that is the Mentone Ukes. If you’re curious about how easy and satisfying playing the ukulele can be, join us at an upcoming session on August 5 and 19 at 1 p.m. CST at the Moon Lake Library. On August 19, we will celebrate our 4th anniversary! After the session we will host a social for our members. Please join us! You can take a beginner’s lesson using one of our loaner ukes or you can just sit and listen to the group play. Connect with us on Facebook @MentoneUkes or on the web at mentoneukes.com. Questions? Contact Debra Fey (debrajfey@gmail.com) or Jody Rhodes (jodyrhodesy@gmail.com). —Debra Fey



I bought some land in Leesburg, AL that was travel trailer-ready. Not giving up on my plan to travel, I took the travel trailer to RV parks a few times, but since I was traveling alone that didn’t end up making sense. I went into We Ship It in Centre, AL one day and saw a sign offering free ballroom dancing lessons—something I always wanted to do. I went to the lesson and met a lady who was also fairly new to the area. We had arrived early so we had time to talk and I mentioned that I was trying to find ways to meet people. She told me about the Mentone Ukes. She told me they gave free lessons and even had loaner ukuleles for those who needed them. She told me the group meets every two weeks on Saturday at Moon Lake Library in Mentone. I made it a point to go to their next session. I didn’t know what to expect but was pleasantly surprised when I got there and was welcomed by Debra Fey and Jerry Megli. They were so friendly and treated me like a friend. I went to the beginners’ class, where Jerry showed me the different sizes of ukuleles and how to tune my ukulele. I was given a beginner’s package with chord charts and songs. Jerry did a great job teaching three chords that allow one to play several songs. I was encouraged. Two weeks later I went back. I decided to take the beginners class again and learned a lot. Two weeks later I decided the best thing to do would be to

Please Don’t Feed the Bears

by Kelly Leavitt

Residents in the Mentone area have been learning how to live with black bears for four years now. It was the summer of 2019 when bears began to more commonly be seen in our area. Now it’s becoming so frequent that people routinely post on social media photos or videos of bears they have seen.

We were fortunate to have bear researcher Hannah Leeper living in Mentone for three years, as she helped educate the public about how to best live with bears. Last year, she moved to Minnseota to continue her work as a field researcher. Now we must all help others become educated.

A friend called me recently and said she’d heard that visitors were asking to purchase bear food at Little River Hardware, presumably with the hopes that they’d be able to see a bear.

A primary piece of advice Hannah gave us, repeatedly, is to never provide food for bears. The sad adage, “A fed bear is a dead bear,” may one day become true. Bears that become accustomed to “free” food sources tend to become lazy and stop foraging in the wild. Nature provides what bears need to be healthy, and we must encourage them to stay wild.

Owners of rental cabins might consider posting refrigerator notes advising their guests about best practices, including not intentionally providing them with food. We’ve all seen the trash problem that has arisen when trash cans are left unsecured. Even when secured, bears can often find their way into them. I haven’t yet heard any stories about bears opening car doors, or patio doors, looking for food. But, bears can be quite ambidextrous when motivated. A good practice is to keep car, house, and screen doors locked at all times.

Other practices include taking bird feeders and pet food bowls inside each night, cleaning and then securing barbecue grills and smokers inside a garage or shed, and storing trash and recycables in a secure building or bear-proof container until trash day. Electric fencing is advised for vegetable garden,



A bear this size could wreak havoc inside a car!

chicken coops, and beehives. Bird feeders should be safe if hung at least 10 feet in the air and four feet from a building. Some folks enjoy setting out food for deer or foxes so they can enjoy watching them, but that practice should be limited to the months when bears are hibernating or less active—early December to early March.

The point is to eliminate any potential food source. The more people who actively participate, the better the chances for the survival of bears. If a bear becomes a “nuisance,” they might have to be euthanized. It’s currently a felony to shoot a bear in the state of Alabama, but the sooner bears become accustomed to living near homes rather than in the wild, the sooner the State might allow hunting to take place.

To learn more, web sites with valuable information are bearwise.org and bebearaware.org.

County Road 89 Slated to Be Repaved

A portion of County Road 89 will be repaved thanks to the Rebuild Alabama Act’s annual grant program. Governor Kay Ivey has announced that more than \$5.1 million in state funding is being awarded to cities and counties for various road and bridge projects.

It is anticipated that a number of projects will be under contract by the end of this year. All projects are required to move forward within one year of the awarding of funds.

The Rebuild Alabama Act, overwhelmingly passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Ivey in 2019, requires the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) to establish an annual program setting aside \$10 million off the top of the state’s share of new gas tax revenue for local projects.

“Just recently, we marked the fourth anniversary of Rebuild Alabama, and it has continued to show it produces nothing less than real, tangible results. With this grant, 21 new projects will be underway and under development, ready to benefits folks in all corners of the state,” said Governor Ivey.

The portion of Mentone’s well-travelled County Road 89 that will be repaved spans 5.7 miles from Alabama Highway 117 to Tutweiler Gap.

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October 20–21, 2023

Introducing the 1st Annual...

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Fall Festival



Friday, October 20
Festival Kickoff Concert
@ Mentone Inn

- **Will Dooley & Company**
7–10 p.m.
@ Linger Longer Pavilion
(Fontastic Foods, 6 p.m.–’til?)
- **Plus!** Mentone restaurants, shops
(including Moon Lake Village & Log
Cabin Village) & businesses open to
festivalgoers—ALL WEEKEND!

Saturday, October 21
Mentone Fall Festival
@ Moon Lake Village

- **Festival Info & Hours**
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
\$5 parking fee
More info coming soon!
- **Plus!** An expanded Farmer’s Market
will be happening @Mentone Inn,
10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Arts & Crafts Vendors
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Artisanal Events
& Much More!

Festival Proceeds Benefit the Historic Moon Lake Village Campus Restoration!

Become a Valued Sponsor or Vendor! Information & Applications Online Today!

Visit us @ mentonefallfestival.godaddysites.com or on Facebook for more information!
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