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Volume 39, No. 8

"Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain"

August 2020

For the Love of Horses... and Children

A Look at the Camp Horses of Mentone
by Kelly Leavitt

The summer of 2020 has been unique in many ways. In the Mentone area, perhaps the most evident change has been due to the closing of most of the popular summer camps which typically draw children and their families from near and far. Camps creatively relied on technology this summer as a way to stay connected with their campers, offering evening campfires, skits, classes, prayers, and more that have been filmed and posted to the internet.

One element of camp that can't be experienced with technology is horseback riding, and the connections that campers develop with the horses they ride.

Being a camp horse is a bit of a high calling. They must each have calm and confident demeanors, since camp leaders must, as much as possible, trust the life of each child to the horse he or she is riding. These horses work hard each summer—typically about six hours a day. They spend long, hot days working, when other animals tend to stand in the shade.

This summer, however, we can assume they're

enjoying the freedom of being at pasture—while likely also missing the stimulation and interaction they experience when camp is in session.

Just as Mentone has a long history with the presence of its summer camps, the history of camp horses is rich, as well.

Since the advent of horse programs at Mentone's camps, camp horses have been leased to various camps by a small number of local families who care for the horses during the fall, winter, and spring, and then transport them to camps where they live (and work) during the summer.

Hardy Jones and Dewey Smith were likely the first to lease horses to camps in Mentone. Their passion has now been shared by several generations of family members.

Hardy Jones furnished horses to Camp DeSoto. When he passed on, his son, Ed Jones, took up the reins, so to speak, and leased to Camp DeSoto, Lookout Mountain Camp for Boys, and Camp Laney.



Campers enjoy being on horseback at Camp Skyline.

Dewey Smith leased to Camp Skyline, where he met his wife, Nancy, when she was a counselor there. After their marriage, the couple leased to Camp Skyline and Alpine Camp for Boys. After his death, Nancy partnered with Ed's daughter, Trish Jones Martin, to lease to Camp Skyline until Nancy's death in 2017. Nancy and Dewey's son, Larry, had helped Nancy train their horses and get them ready for camp until his passing, and now his children carry on the tradition, with Josh Smith and his wife, Emmy, leasing to Lookout Mountain Camp and Camp Hidden Hollow in Chickamauga, GA, and Justin Smith and his wife, Lashaye, leasing to Barnsley Resort in Adairsville, GA. Lashaye and Trish Martin partnered together last year in leasing horses to

(continued on page 13)

Free Food Boxes Offered to Area Residents

by Kelly Leavitt

Monday, August 17
Valley Head Town Hall
8–10 a.m.

St. Joseph's Episcopal Church
10 a.m.–12 p.m.

In April, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) launched the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) which, in part, ensures that every American has access to healthy food. The USDA has partnered with regional and local distributors to purchase produce, dairy, and meat and to provide free boxes of food to Americans in need. The Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) has been administering this program in our area, and communities across north Alabama have benefitted.

For the past two months, J.D. Trammell, of Mentone, has spearheaded the effort to deliver these boxes to residents of Mentone, Valley Head, Hammondville, and Sulphur Springs.

On Monday, August 17, 568 boxes will be distributed to these areas. Any resident is eligible to pick up a box of food at no cost. The boxes contain meat, milk, butter, cheese, fresh produce, and assorted other food items. The food boxes will be freely distributed on a first-come,

first-served basis. Pick-up times are subject to change.

- Residents of Valley Head, Hammondville and Sulphur Springs: Food boxes will be distributed at the Valley Head Town Hall between 8 and 10 a.m. Contact Valley Head Town Clerk Debra Rhodes with any questions at 256-635-6814.

- Residents of Mentone: Food boxes will be distributed at St. Joseph's Episcopal Church between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. Contact Mentone Town Clerk Kristen Emory with any questions at 256-634-4444.

TARCOG has been channelling the boxes through the DeKalb County Council on Aging, who asked J.D. if he could help distribute

the boxes. "I said they'd need to waive any required criteria," said J.D. "They agreed to do that, so I said, 'Give me as many as you can. I'll get it done.'" Anyone in our local communities can receive a box when they're available, no questions asked."





THE GROUNDHOG

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Mentone Area Preservation Association

MAPA was first conceived on Groundhog Day, 1982, and then organized on April 5, 1982. *The Groundhog* has been in publication for 38 years.

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

Groundhog wood cut courtesy of Meg Justice

Do you have a story idea?

We welcome contributions!

Email groundhognews@yahoo.com

Mentone Matters • by Mayor Rob Hammond



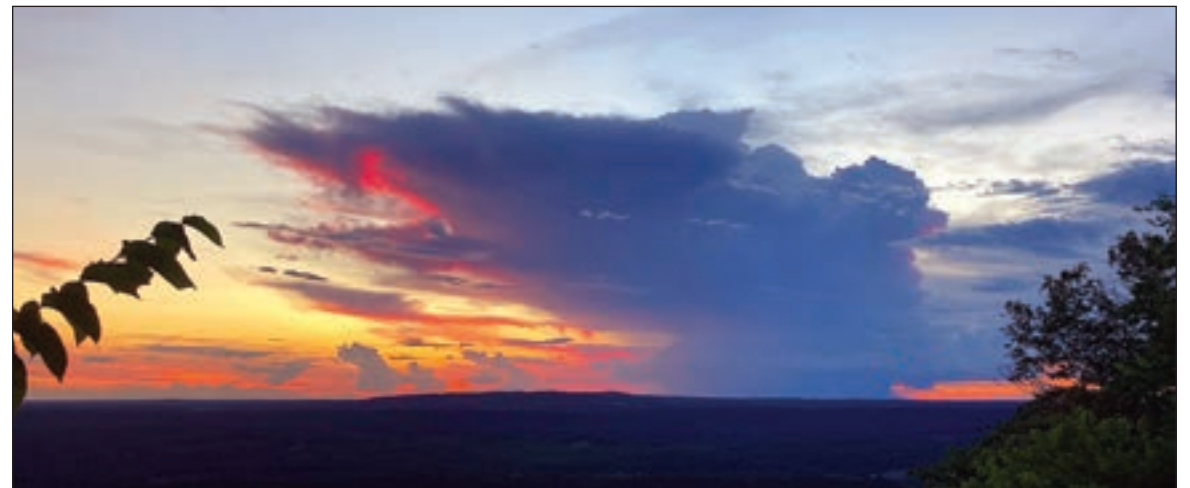
Recently, I was able to paint a plank at the MERF House for the Pathway to Community project. I am not very artistic. However, Jan Wilkinson had outlined several planks. I chose one of hers with Snoopy on it to paint. It was a really fun experience! For those of you who are creative and artistic, you can create your own plank. If you are like me, Jan has planks outlined and ready to paint! Contact Sarah Wilcox at 256-635-8193 to set up a time.

Sales tax revenues are off nearly 50% for April, May, and June 2020, when compared to the same months in 2019.

Mentone recently received \$38,000 from the state's Coronavirus Relief Fund Reimbursement, which will help offset loss of revenue.

To protect lives and livelihoods, please wear a facemask when in public places. Continue to wash hands and physically distance. Right now, these are the best tools we have in slowing the spread of the virus.

Letter from the Editor



I was recently chatting with a *Groundhog* reader and she said, "Opening a *Groundhog* is like walking into a candy store." What a fun analogy! The paper has now been in publication for 38 years. Through these years, countless tales have been told of both our area's history and current news. I would liken it to a tapestry, with interwoven threads that, together, show a picture of a vibrant community and its many fascinating people.

I really enjoyed learning about and writing a brief history of Mentone's camp horses for this issue's cover story. I was a horse rider when I was a girl and can certainly attest to the power horses have in helping develop confidence and connection. Isn't it wonderful that, over the years, thousands of campers' lives have been touched by these magnificent, sensitive creatures, while surrounded by the beauty of Mentone? I feel deep gratitude for the many people who have made this possible over these many decades.

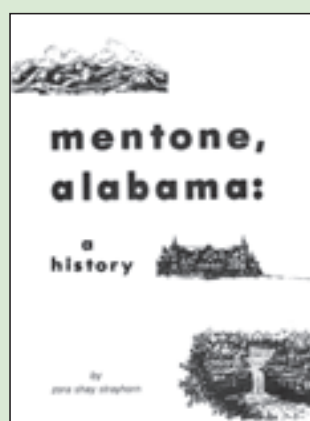
This current issue reflects the voices of many contributors who are each carrying on the tradition of providing a snapshot of life in Mentone and its surrounding areas, offering somewhat of a respite from the trials of today's

world. As I write this, I sit at the window looking onto our front porch and yard. I hear a woodpecker in the trees overhead. I see another bird on the porch, hopping from flower basket to wind chimes to hanging candle holder, searching for breakfast. A deer and fawn quietly hold their heads to the grass further out in the field, in their peaceful, attentive way. As the world struggles with "worldly" challenges, I enjoy the simplicity of these fleeting moments, witnessing the beings of nature as they go about their own business of survival.

Honestly, I get that "candy store" feeling every time I make the effort to drive to the brow to watch a sunset, which I try to do often during these long days of summer light. It's always unpredictable...always a surprise. Sometimes the lingering light will simply fade away, and sometimes it will evolve into an explosion of color and texture, even after the sun has already dipped below the horizon of Sand Mountain.

Community and nature are like powerful portals into the remembrance of what is right and good in this world. We are so fortunate to have both in such great abundance.

Be well. —Kelly



Learn about the History of Mentone

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

I'm not sure if you have already heard, but I am sorry to have to break the news: there will be no Colorfest this year due to the ongoing pandemic and recent spike in infection rates. The MAPA Board, without the need for much discussion or debate, strongly believes that it would be highly irresponsible to try and go forward with the festival this October under current circumstances (planning and coordination with vendors, suppliers, transportation facilities, the town, local merchants, etc. takes several months advance planning and work, primarily by our fabulous festival coordinator, Sharon Habin). I, personally, will really miss spending that weekend as Sharon's "gopher," helping host the MAPA booth, and having the opportunity to meet and talk with all of the vendors and patrons, both local and those from out-of-town. Let's make sure we double up on the fun next spring at the Rhododendrun Festival!

We are tentatively planning on holding the annual meeting of MAPA members sometime in either December or January, and will continue doing that in the future. We will provide plenty of up front notice of



the actual date, time and place to the membership. Please make sure we have current email addresses for everyone. You may contact our Secretary, Beverly Haynes, at beverly.haynes@yahoo.com to confirm or update your info.

Lastly, especially in light of the loss of revenue from not being able to host the two festivals this year, MAPA is dependent upon the largesse of our membership, individual donors, and *The Groundhog's* advertisers in order to continue to do what we do for the Mentone community and its other charitable organizations. I urge you to become a member if you are not one already, and to support the local businesses whose ads you see in this and future issues of our beloved *Groundhog*! They need your support.

Thanks, stay safe and help keep those around you safe and well. I can be reached anytime at mhoffmanatty@yahoo.com.

Mark Hoffman is the president of Mentone Area Preservation Association.

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.

One of MAPA's key missions is supporting local organizations and projects which seek to improve the quality of life in Mentone. Financial grants are made possible through MAPA

memberships, donations, sponsorships, *Groundhog* advertising and subscriptions, and by hosting annual spring and fall festivals which feature handmade arts and crafts and live music.

Individuals \$20/year • Couples \$30/year
Your membership includes a complimentary subscription to *The Groundhog*.

JOIN AT mapamentone.com

or mail your check to MAPA, P. O. Box 50, Mentone, AL 35984. Be sure to include your name(s), address, phone, and email address.

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

Municipal Elections

August 25 by Jay Robbins

Voters across Alabama go to the polls on August 25 to cast their ballots for the various officials in the city or town where they live. Polling places will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

In situations where only one person is running for a specific position, no election is held; rather, the lone qualifier automatically assumes that office when the new municipal quadrennium officially begins (on the first Monday in November). In Hammondville, for example, there will be no election because there is only one qualifier for the position of mayor and for each of the five places on the town's council. It's a different story in Valley Head. An election is necessary because two people are vying to be mayor, and there are two qualifiers each for Places One and Five on the town council. In Mentone, the candidates for mayor and for four of the five places on the town council (all incumbents) are running unopposed, but Mentonians will get to decide between J.D. Trammell and David Allgood for Place Two on election day.

COVID-19 is still with us, of course, and all poll workers will wear gloves and masks (or face shields). Residents may vote by absentee ballot in August's municipal election, if there is a concern of voting in person due to COVID-19. If you are resident within the town limits of Mentone or Valley Head, contact your town clerk to learn how to get your absentee ballot:

- Kristen Emory, Mentone Town Hall, 256-634-4444
- Debra Rhodes, Valley Head Town Hall, 256-635-6814

The virus is also responsible for declining sales tax revenues in communities all over Alabama. Monies from the CARES Act passed recently by Congress have trickled down and are helping out our communities, but each of us can help the town we live in by purchasing supplies and gas locally.

HAMMONDVILLE

* Mayor John W. Moore

Council Members:

- * Place 1 Trey Moore
- * Place 2 Jennifer Barker
- * Place 3 Johnny Ferguson, Jr.
- * Place 4 Felicia Harrison
- * Place 5 Tammy Brown

MENTONE

* Mayor Rob Hammond

Council Members:

- * Place 1 John Paul Verdon
- Place 2 David Allgood
J.D. Trammell
- * Place 3 Hobson Kirby
- * Place 4 Ray Padgett
- * Place 5 Gerald Bailey

VALLEY HEAD

Mayor Michael Key
Jacob Brown

Council Members:

- Place 1 Karen Vest
Jacob Brown
- * Place 2 Adele Philips
- * Place 3 Jack Martin
- * Place 4 Marie Behling
- Place 5 Chris Busby
Anna Mae Horn

* designates uncontested positions

Moon Lake School Makes Plans to Reopen

by Kelly Leavitt

When students return to their classrooms at Moon Lake School in Mentone, it will be after an unprecedented break of almost five months.

Students have been given the option of returning to in-class instruction or enrolling in DeKalb County's Virtual Academy. Certain precautions are being taken at school to help keep the students and teachers healthy.

As students enter their school bus in the mornings, their temperature will be taken. If they have a fever, they will not be allowed at school. "We are relying heavily on parents to not send their children to school if they are sick," said principal Mary Lance. "Students who become ill at school will need to be isolated in a special area until their parents come to pick them up."

Students in grades 3 through 6 will each receive a Chromebook which they will take home with home at the end of each school day. Mrs. Lance explained that "if school does not for some reason resume the next day, by mandate of the state or

(continued on page 4)

SENIOR HEALTH

Updates About In-person Healthcare Visits

by Lynn Hixon

As our communities continue to re-open, you may have questions about when to resume in-person visits with your healthcare providers, and what to expect during a visit. Always check with your physician to see what is best for your healthcare needs. These are some helpful considerations for your IN-PERSON visits:

- Don't put off necessary care or check-ups, especially if it's urgent or may lead to complications, such as heart attack or stroke.
- Continue preventive care such as immunizations and cancer screenings.
- Providers and facilities will minimize exposure, so you may experience some changes during your visit:
 - Wait in your vehicle until the start of the visit.
 - Use a limited entrance, if possible.
 - Be screened for COVID-19, including having your temperature checked.
 - Avoid waiting rooms and common areas.
 - Maintaining social distancing.
 - Wear a face covering. One will be provided to you if you don't have your own.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Lynn Hixon at the DeKalb County Council on Aging at 256-845-8590.

Menlo/Cloudland News

by Pat Johnson

Menlo School

Menlo School began on July 30. The students and parents have chosen one of two options for learning: in-class instruction or digital learning. The school welcomes our new personnel: Amy Hall, Pre-K paraprofessional; Courtney Scoggins, 3rd grade teacher; Angela Shankles, art teacher; and Lindsey Green, secretary.

Menlo Housing Authority

A yard sale and bake sale is planned for September 11 and 12 from 8 a.m.–1 p.m. EDT at the Lawrence Center in Menlo. The sale proceeds will fund the Reading Buddies Program and the Veterans Marker Project. The sale may be effected depending on rules for the COVID-19 pandemic. There will be signs out in Menlo, so watch for them. We will update you in the September *Groundhog*.

Cloudland Volunteer Fire Department

The Fire Department is planning on having its annual barbecue on Labor Day this year. The COVID-19 pandemic might change these plans. We will update you in the September *Groundhog*.

Moon Lake School Reopens *(continued from page 3)*

county, the students will have their devices at home with them. This will help make a seamless and organized system as they transition into remote learning with their classroom teachers."

The library will be closed to the students, but the school's new librarian, Megan Lee, will regularly visit each classroom. The students will be reading e-books on their devices. Ms. Paula Easter, the fine arts and music teacher, will also teach in the classrooms, rather than in her art trailer. Students will eat lunch in the lunch room, keeping their distancing, but no parents or visitors will be allowed to join them.

Teachers must wear a face mask when

within six feet of another person. Pursuant to Governor Ivey's latest mandate, students in grades 2 through 6 will be required to wear masks. Social distancing will be enforced.

Last year's 6th graders will finally have the opportunity to graduate in the school gymnasium on Thursday, August 6. Congratulations, graduates!

School will resume incrementally, with small groups meeting on August 10 through 13. All students will be at school on August 14.

Of course, all of these carefully laid plans may change, but the school's principal and teachers will do their best to keep everyone safe and healthy.



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River Voice

by Angie Shugart

"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself." —Joseph Campbell

As an environmental advocate, there is nothing else on this earth I would rather do than to educate others about how they can become good stewards of the environment. You don't have to take extreme measures and chain yourself to a tree

in order to be an environmental advocate. It is simply caring enough about the land and making good decisions based on the natural world. Education is vital to ensuring positive change and is our greatest tool as an organization. I can talk to landowners for hours, literally, about how to protect Little River by simply keeping their creekbanks and riverbanks intact. I love to visit properties of members from the river community and point out native plants on their property and give tips on plants that are tolerant and thrive in this area.

I feel very fortunate to do this work and I enjoy connecting with others in the community for a common goal. Our small organization has a hand in several projects and depends on grants and donations from individuals that align with our mission in order to protect Little River from degradation. In March (pre-COVID-19), the organization was gearing up for a great season full of guided trips on Little River, fundraising events, and implementation of programs through our grant agreements. By May, most grantors halted or postponed funding and we were forced to cancel events until further notice, making the future of LRWK shaky and uncertain. One thing IS certain. Little River Waterkeeper has not ceased to work protecting Little River! Here is what has been going on.

In March and April, the staff of Little River Waterkeeper worked together in order to complete scheduled litter cleanups on Little River and the Fort Payne

Drinking Water Reservoir. We built and installed monofilament line recycling tubes and placed bilingual "Please Do Not Litter" signs within the two watersheds.

In May, we kicked off our fifth year of SwimGuide. We test seven areas of Little River each week, Memorial Day through Labor Day. This important work informs users about the water quality in Little River and allows our organization to monitor the overall health of the watershed. Check out weekly data at littleriverwaterkeeper.org and click the Swim Guide 2020 tab.

We continue working on the *Keep Little River Wild* campaign, a positive campaign to protect Little River in its entirety. You can read more about our efforts at KeepLittleRiverWild.org. It is probably one of the most important projects we can accomplish as an organization. Please sign the petition while you are on the site!

Daily tasks of the Little River Waterkeeper include responding to citizen concerns, educating land owners about how to prevent degradation, and patrolling the watershed for issues. The organization is also expanding work into mapping industrial farming impacts in the watershed.

I invite you to check out our website at littleriverwaterkeeper.org and consider becoming a member or making a monetary donation to support our work. All donations are tax deductible. If you would like to show us your river property or have an area of concern, please call and schedule a site visit. Call 256-634-8370 or email angie@littleriverwaterkeeper.org.

Angie Shugart is the executive director of Little River Waterkeeper, a 501(c)(3) water advocacy program and a member of the international Waterkeepers Alliance.

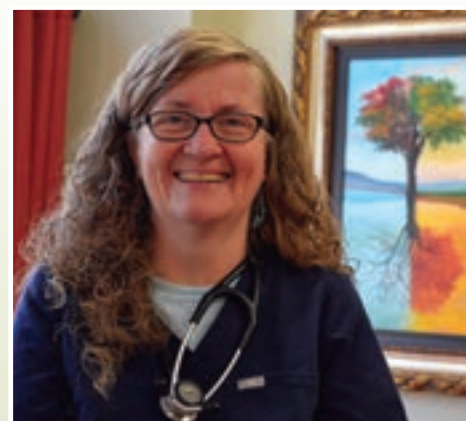


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NEW



LAKE LAHUSAGE Two Bedroom, One Bath cabin on Lake Lahusage priced at \$139,900. MLS #1147590



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NEW CONSTRUCTION! 3 BEDROOM 3 BATH CABIN IN MENTONE! We have just about finished this beautiful home in the mountains. Tongue & groove walls & ceilings. Two huge loft areas are connected by a beautiful wooden catwalk. Sitting on over 2 acres, lightly restricted. \$269,000. MLS #1125366



ON THE BROW IN MENTONE 3BR, 2BA brick home. Spacious family room w/ wall of windows, vaulted ceiling, fireplace, dining area & wood floors. Open kitchen, pantry, laundry, separate den w/ wood floors. 2.3 acres & large deck for entertaining. \$315,000. MLS # 1139408



FURNISHED CRAFTSMAN HOME within walking distance to downtown Mentone! Family room & Master BR include Rock Fireplaces! Screened back porch and All Seasons room for family time, sleeping porch, dining or enjoying the outdoors year round. Property is RESIDENTIAL or COMMERCIAL and in the downtown business district. \$169,900. MLS #1134273



KNOWN AS HIGHPOINT AND ONE OF THE MOST CELESTIAL AREAS FOR STAR GAZING... This 7 BR, 6 BA manor boast onyx porcelain & tile baths, walk-in showers, granite & marble counter tops/vanities. Attached private living quarters with full amenities PLUS detached guest cabin. \$729,000. MLS #1119192



UNIQUE MENTONE CABIN in walking distance of DeSoto Falls. Detailed rustic finishes. 2BR/2BA cabin with stainless steel appliance package, leathered granite countertops, stacked stone wood burning fireplace and amenities to numerous to mention! \$265,000. MLS #1132320



MENTONE BROW HOME! 2 BR, 2 BA hardwood floors, rustic wood walls, gas log fireplace, CH/A, decks, detached storage building. \$288,000. MLS #1130058



PICTURE PERFECT HOME sitting on 6.49 ac. 3 BR 2.5 BA. 3400 sq. ft. Farmhouse feel w/ spacious rooms, large closets, huge rocking chair front porch, all-seasons room w/ view The property has a pond, 60x30 barn w/ add'l storage. \$320,000. MLS #1145347



LOTS & LAND

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

#1039769—6.32+/- waterfront building lot in Mountain River Estates! REDUCED TO \$44,950

#1073864—Brow Lot! .78 acres. REDUCED TO \$83,900

#1076239—Cleared & wooded 3.6 acres on Scenic Hwy. REDUCED TO \$74,500.

#1078140—16.3 acres, unrestricted, partially wooded! \$66,800

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

#1099911—LAST CHANCE to buy open land before entering into Georgia!!! \$165,000.

#1108339—Better Than a Bargain...this is a STEAL! \$89,000.

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

#1112787—40 acres in Mentone, AL with stream and untouched family owned property since 1923! REDUCED TO \$198,000.

#1113936—Looking for a brow lot inside the city limits of Mentone? \$78,500

#1118808—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. \$25,000

#1118810—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown

Mentone. Call today for more information. \$25,000

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#1118815—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. \$25,000

#1118229—A great little investment property or place for your weekend get-a-way. \$49,900

#1118898—BEAUTIFUL LAKEFRONT PROPERTY ON TOP OF WORLD FAMOUS LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN! Sloping wooded lot inside gated community. Call Now for more information. \$30,000

#1127776—2.41-acre property just steps away from downtown Mentone. Build your wooded home-site, develop a tiny home community, or invest in the rental business. \$47,500

#1128694—40 acres with 3-acre lake stocked with bream and bass. \$189,900.

#1129833—1.5-acre brow lot in Mentone. \$124,900

#1130311—The time to buy is now! Steal of a deal on 2 acres with a seasonal brow view! Build that cabin or home

you have always wanted. Priced only at \$29,999.

#1133689—3.58-acre property just steps away from downtown Mentone. Build your wooded home-site, develop a tiny home community, or invest in the rental business. \$69,500

#1133690—4.0-acre property just steps away from downtown Mentone. Build your wooded home-site, develop a tiny home community, or invest in the rental business. \$78,500

#1137464—It's a Natural!!! Enjoy 40 acres of country backdrop! This parcel is country pure and simple. Enjoy privacy with lots of trees and a pond. Perfect spot for a rustic or farmhouse retreat. Better take this one seriously because a buy like this won't last long! \$239,900

#1138874—WAKE UP TO WATERFRONT LIVING on this 6.22 acres with a long and winding stream and frontage on Brush Creek. This property is located in a cul-de-sac and has lots of rock outcroppings and boulders scattered all about. The property has beautiful frontage along the creek and is mostly wooded. \$49,900

#1139471—Ready for that brow view in Mentone? 2.3 acres of untouched land! Make this your new home away from home and build the cabin of your dreams! \$125,000

#1145115—Beautiful building lots across from Lake Lahusage near the dam! This wooded 2.5 acre parcel is divided from a larger tract and has all the making of a wonderful home site! \$22,500

#1145590—GREAT POSSIBILITIES! This 22 acres +/- has lots of road frontage on Hwy. 117. \$125,000

www.southernpropertiesagency.com

Mentone Arts & Cultural Center News

MACC Plans to Open Center to Visitors, Artists, and Limited Programming

by Randy Grider

The Mentone Arts & Cultural Center (MACC) is working hard to open as soon possible at its new home in downtown Mentone. MACC purchased the former Kamama building from the Town of Mentone. The organization closed on the property at 5951 Alabama Highway 117 on June 29.

MACC leaders hope to open a visitors information area for tourists to pick up brochures within the next few weeks. Due to the coronavirus, visitors must wear masks and access will be limited to the front area until the surge in cases decreases significantly.

The organization plans to have artist booths ready to sell artwork and antiques this fall. The focus will be showcasing local and regional artists. It has put together an advisory team to assist with artists' requests for displaying/selling their artwork and the gallery setup.

MACC also is scheduling limited programming for the immediate future. Scheduled classes include a photography workshop taught by master photographer John Dersham, Sept. 18-19 (limit of 10 persons, \$135) and a rescheduled watercolor in drybrush class by instructor Alan R. Young Oct. 2-4 (one spot available, \$135). Other classes/workshops were being finalized at presstime.

For more information on displaying and selling artwork or reservations for a class/workshop, please see contact information below.

All programs and events are scheduled with health department social distancing requirements or person limits set by instructors for classes and workshops. All are subject to change as circumstances develop with the current health situation. Please follow us on our Facebook page for updates.

In its agreement with the Town of Mentone, elections for the next 50 years and council meetings for the foreseeable future are being held at MACC facility. MACC also has leased the restaurant to Kevin Dunlap, owner of Elevation Bistro and Catering Company, LLC.

"This is great news for people who live here and visitors alike," said MACC president Ben Shurett. "People who love art and entertainment will have many more options and we will be very supportive of local artists. The Town of Mentone will have a place to vote and meet that is much larger than previously in Town Hall and we're so pleased to have another terrific dining option. Perhaps most importantly, the building will be alive again with activities and programming and everyone should be able to feed off that energy."

In addition to its many donors, MACC's support network includes partnerships with various organizations across the state including Northeast Alabama

Community College, Alabama State Council on the Arts, Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama, Daniel Foundation of Birmingham, Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association, DeKalb Tourism, DeKalb County Community Development Commission, DeKalb County Economic Development Authority, and others.

MACC has already started networking with instructors from the renowned John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, N.C., to create a visiting artist/instructor program. MACC continues to talk to other local and visiting artists/

instructors who are interested in teaching here. MACC welcomes any local artist who is interested in teaching classes and workshops to get in touch with us.

When fully operational, classes and workshops at the building will include arts-related programs in the following disciplines utilizing local and visiting artists: painting/drawing, culinary arts, pottery, photography, ceramics, woodworking, quilting, music, poetry, storytelling, music, songwriting, acting/community theater. Some programming

will be held at off-site locations when applicable.

The building will be dedicated in memory of a late family member of MACC's two earliest supporters, Dr. Charles O. "Soc" and Barbara Sennett, of Rome, GA. The Sennetts are well respected throughout the area and have long maintained a second home in Mentone. "We are so pleased that the building will be named in memory of the Sennett's beloved son, Charles O. "Chuck" Sennett," Shurett said. The date and time of the dedication is yet to be determined. Please look for updates on our Facebook page.

MACC will honor other donors and supporters during the following months in various locations throughout the center. More details on those honorees will be announced as those areas bearing their names become operational.

The original plan was to construct a building just beyond Moon Lake Library on Alabama Highway 117, but with the pandemic and economic slowdown, MACC leadership saw the need to quickly adapt its plan in the face of the uncertainty both conditions presented.

"When this existing building became available, it was perfect for our needs and allows us to open and begin programming almost immediately," Shurett said. "We are confident MACC programming will bring many people to our area and be a real boost to the local economy."

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





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Save the Eastern Hemlock

The hemlock wooly adelgid is threatening the Eastern hemlock species to the point of possible extinction. The presence of these insects has recently been documented in Mentone. If you have hemlock on your land, you can learn more about this pest and how to save your trees by joining a webinar hosted by the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service on Monday, August 10 at 10 a.m.

- To join by computer, go to auburn.zoom.us/j/92633717191.
- To join by telephone call either 646-876-9923 or 301-715-8592. Once connected, enter the meeting ID: 926 3371 7191

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Chris Collins
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Destiny Watters
- 8 Alex Gifford
- 9 Martha Browder
Carolyn Martin
Brayden Hughes
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Decker Allen Jones
- 10 Alex Whatley
- 11 Dianna Carden
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Harlee Wooten
- 12 Kinsley Worthey
Amber Smith
Frances McNutt
- 13 Stephanie Potts
Brittney Barkley
Cindy Tipton
- 14 Jennifer Ferguson
Alan Black
Hannah Meadows
Ryan Hicks
Matthew Sword
Emilia Shores
- 15 Michael Langston
Dallas Gregory
- 16 Ashton Lee Indiana Jones
- 17 Sandra Pruitt
Mattie Belle McGee
Jacob Bain
- 18 Kinsley Mitchell
- 19 Ray Beeson
Michael Flannigan
Lee Pierce
Blake Villarreal
- 20 Carla Warren
Shane Ingram
Joseph Goza
Jesse Jones

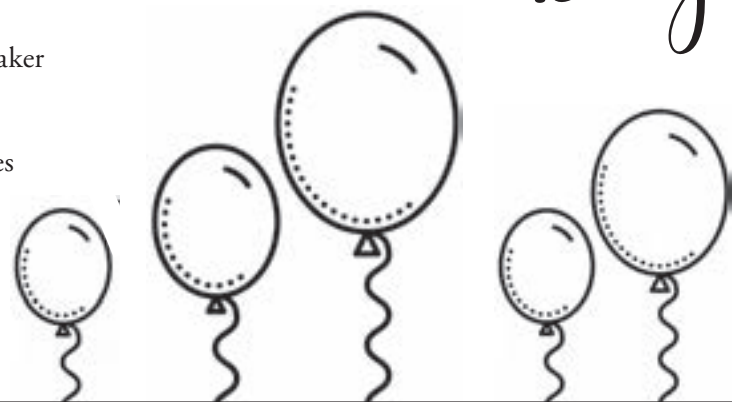
- 21 Chloe Bell
Eddie Langston
Emma Crawford
Christina Stokes
Michele Black
Hannah Neel
- 22 Casey Gregory
Haven Downer
Keith Langston
Anthony McKenzie
Hazel Hilliard
Sinjhin Smith
Candice Wilbanks
Heather Williamson
- 23 Slade Carden
Lukas Boehringer
Phillip Pannell
Bandy Johnson
- 24 Dana Pangle
Tammy Larock
Nicole Callahan
- 25 Brenda Hall
Carolyn Coots
Jason Gregory
Aubrey Baker
Georgia Mae Baker
Kelly Johnson
Crystal Haynes
- 26 Brantley Hughes
Tom Shanklin

- 27 Sadie Carden
Howard Hilyer
Crystal Lee
Tamara Hawkins
Luke Durham
Jack Chambers
Charlotte McGee
Jaymie Ballard
Todd Godwin
Donna Johnson
- 28 Larry Gray
Hunter Izell
Courtney Gregory
Jase Gregory
- 29 Kayla Worthey
Donna Willingham
Susan Cheronos
Isaac Browder
- 30 Wesley Rhodes
L.C. Bone
- 31 Mark Battles
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Kirk & Mikhaila Watkis
- 6 John & Amy Kirby
- 11 Rayford & Cindy Bethune
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Community Calendar

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

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

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

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MERF News

by Sarah Wilcox



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.

Wow! The MERF house has not slowed down this summer! Many have scheduled time to make their mark and to paint pickets with solid colors and designs. There is still time to get involved and paint a picket for our Pathway to Community project. If interested, head to littliverartscouncil.org/pickets to submit a request for a painting time. An email will be sent with availability and your timely response would be appreciated. Your painting time will be a two-hour slot with a limited number of attendees. There are some pickets with a sketched design to follow for artists needing a bit of support. Masks will be used, and social distancing will be respected. Follow MERF's Pathway to



Cory and Lawson Ozley



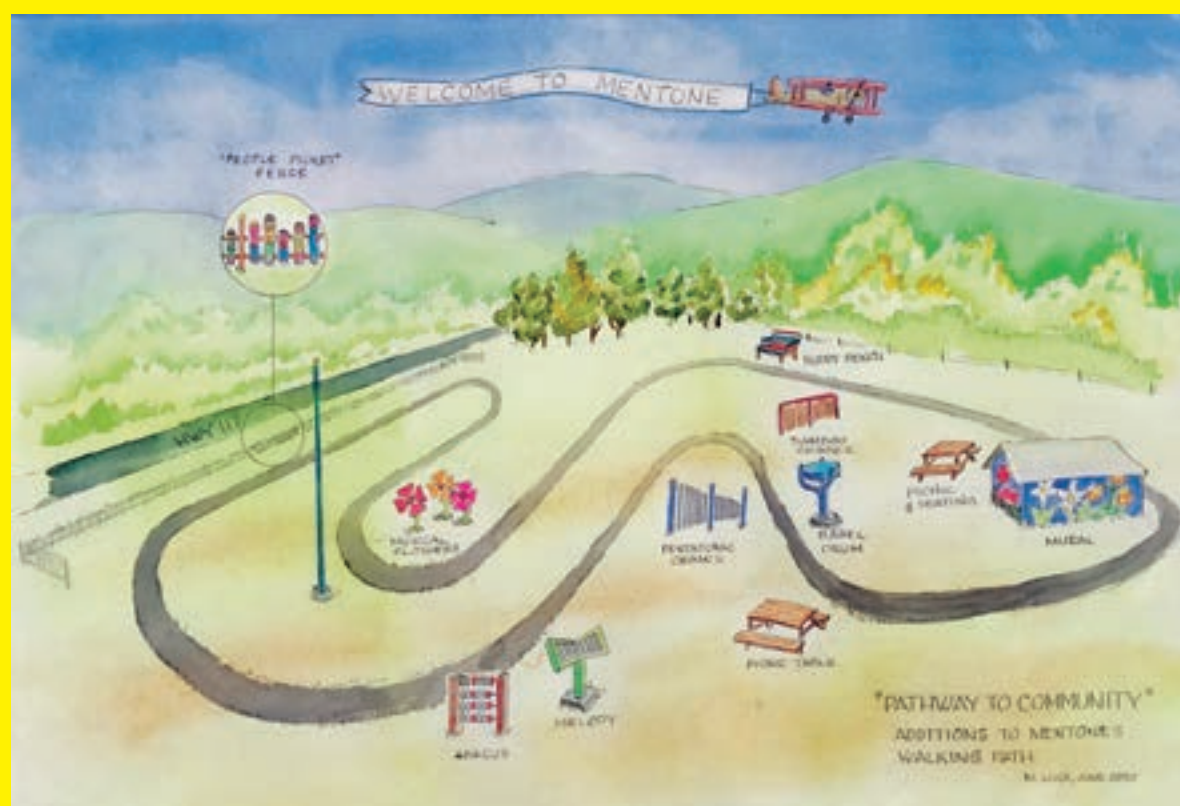
Donna and Jordan Sutton



Camp Skyline



The Wilkinson Family



Thanks to local artist Mickey Luck for designing this beautiful rendition of the Pathway after the design team worked on placement of the musical instruments, picnic tables, and benches.

Community page on Facebook to see all the fun designs being created by our community!

Be on the lookout for the outdoor musical instruments gracing the walkway soon!

Creativity has not only been happening at the MERF house but also next door in Ms. Paula's art room. MERF provided the funding for Ms. Paula to attend a virtual professional development workshop by the Alabama Arts Alliance. SAIL (Sustaining Artful Instruction and Learning) 2020 was a multi-disciplinary art

making virtual event. The teachers explored Alabama geology, geography, rivers, flora, and fauna through music, dance, poetry, bookmaking, printing paper, painting, and more. Ms. Paula loved dreaming about what she could bring to her Moon Lake Elementary School students as she drew dirt, studied the Cahaba river, and learned about the endangered, red bellied turtle. I cannot wait to see what our creative students will experience and create!

In case that is not enough action, the MERF house is finally getting a face lift with some needed renovation work! Looking forward to having a beautiful exterior with a covered ramp and new side entrance along with the new Pathway to Community. #leavemeinmentone



Sue Schwarz and Sampson

Sarah Wilcox is Executive Director of MERF, a local 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 our programs, tax-deductible donations can be mailed to P.O. Box 107, Mentone, AL 35984, or you may contribute online at merfhouse.org. Contact Sarah at merf.mentone@gmail.com or 256-635-8193 for more information.

FORGOTTEN Southern GESTURES

by Larry Smalley

I am proud to live in the South. Proud to be from Alabama and very proud to live in Mentone. Southern people have an attitude worth catching. We are very responsible to others and love our mothers dearly. If you want to feel the wrath of the South, just say something about our mommas.

We have always had or made certain gestures that you only see in the South. I remember not too many years ago, when you were driving and met a car you would raise your index finger from the wheel just to say hi. We have all but stopped that and it is such a pity. Instead of looking at folks, now we are too immersed in texting or calling and never notice who we are meeting. Even when we are walking, we keep our heads down or on the phone.

I have also noticed the impatience of people stopped for a funeral procession. Really? Have we gotten so busy that we can't give a few minutes to honor the ones that go before us?

The first time I pulled over with my Northern daughter-in-law, who I love dearly, she asked why you would stop for someone you don't even know. My answer was quick and to the point. I told her we still have respect in the South for our people.

Please don't let this culture die. When you are driving, look around you at what was created with you in mind. He (God) knew us long before we knew him and the least we can do is enjoy what he has given, and enjoy the people we come in contact with. One day when our light is closing in, let's not ask ourselves what all we missed in our life because we were too busy worrying about things that never really mattered any way.

So if I see you on the road, I will always raise a finger and I hope I never meet a hearse carrying you or a loved one, but if I do, you can bet I will gladly pull over to pay my respects as it passes by.

North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District Fundraiser by Vicky Patrick

The Fire Department will be holding a fundraiser on Saturday, August 8, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Yes, friends and neighbors, we will be selling those delicious smoked pork butts for \$35 at the fire house at 5907 AL Hwy. 117 in Mentone. A few half butts will be available for \$20. In addition, hot dogs and sandwich combos will be available for take out. The sandwiches will be made from the pork butt meat.

You need to pre-order the smoked pork butts by calling or texting Crystal Lee at 256-717-3055. She needs your name and the number of butts. We will collect your money upon pick up.

Vicky Patrick is the secretary for the board of the North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District (northlookoutmountainfire.org).



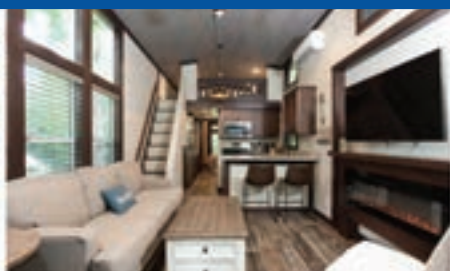
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Social distancing guidelines are in place and we ask that you use provided hand sanitizer when you arrive. Donations are welcome.



Experience Tiny Living on Lookout Mountain!

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, our community is now almost fully occupied by folks who have come from 12 different states. Little River Escape has decided to embark on a new journey by creating River Ridge Escape Tiny Home Dealership, where 6-8 tiny homes are available to tour and purchase. RRE is now delivering across the nation, as well as developing other communities to bring more folks to Lookout Mountain.

A new development is coming to Mentone, only 3 miles from town. Mentone Mountain Escape will be a tiny home neighborhood with +/-20, 1/2-acre wooded lots per house and a common area with a dog park, patio, and firepit area.



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Camp Horses (continued from page 1)

Ed Jones and L.M. Flannigan, 1991

Winshapes Camps in Mt. Berry, GA. Trish currently leases her horses to Camp Skyline. Her brother, Ronnie Jones, and his wife, Gail, lease horses to Riverview Camp for Girls. Camp DeSoto, Camp Laney, and Alpine Camp for Boys now own and maintain their own horses.

Jack Jones (no relation to Hardy Jones and his descendants), owned

Cloudmont Camp for Boys, which became Saddlerock Camp, and is now Riverview Camp for Girls, for which Ed Jones's son, Ronnie Jones, and his wife, Gail, now furnish horses and where Gail serves as head of the equestrian program. Jack also began Valley View Ranch in Cloudland, GA, which was originally a camp for boys but soon became Valley View Ranch Equestrian Camp for Girls, which Jack's daughters attended and where, through the years, they continued to develop the riding programs. The camp is currently owned and directed by Jack's daughter, Nancy Jones. Her sister Janis Jones Carrier's daughter, Chelsea Manning, is assistant director, and her sister Marsha Jones Hair's son, Doug, Jr., serves as the farm manager.

"A camp horse is special," said Trish Martin. "They must have a big heart, they must have a lot of tolerance, and they must have drive. A lot of horses can start out being good horses, but they get burned out, just like people do. At that point you have to find them a different choice. If they get tired of the ring, they might need to go on to the trail. Like people, their feelings have to be considered. If you want a safe horse, you have to have a happy horse."

"A camp horse is not about a breed," said Trish, whose horses have included Appaloosas, quarter horses, walking horses, Rocky Mountain gaited horses, and paint horses. "A camp horse might be a registered, high-dollar horse no longer wanted by its owner. Or it can be your typical plow horse, what we call grade horses, that are not registered. It's all about their ability to give a child the confidence they need to become a horseperson, and their ability for us to put trust in them and feel a confidence in them to be able to turn a child loose on them."



Dewey Smith with 'Ruff N Reddy', 1971

"That comes with a lot of experience," Trish continued, "a lot of horse knowledge—what we call horse sense, being able to know what a horse is typically going to do. You never know. They're 1,000-pound animals. You're always surprised. That's why we have stringent safety protocols in place. There is no room to not be cautious and safe with these animals. But camp horses are the type of animals that you can take from the pasture, ride for a few weeks, and then send them to camp, where they'll take care of the children. My philosophy is, 'Those kids are my kids.' If I wouldn't put my own child on a horse, I won't put somebody else's child on that horse."



Nancy and Dewey Smith, 1987

(continued on page 13)

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BOOK REVIEW

by Anne McLeod

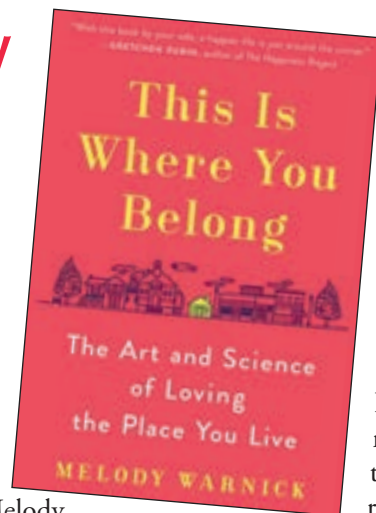
This Is Where You Belong: The Art and Science of Loving the Place You Live

by Melody Warnick (Viking, 2016)

Americans move an average of 11.7 times in their lifetimes, according to Melody Warnick, author of *This Is Where You Belong*. We are footloose people, some of us more so than others. As her family moved from Austin, TX, to Blacksburg, VA (post-college move #6 for Warnick), she recognized a need for her young family to develop roots and a sense of place attachment, a loyalty to home that would let them settle down at last.

Warnick discusses research about what makes people develop that kind of loyalty and developed specific steps she could take to help her feel better about her latest hometown, a place she found, at least initially, a bit nondescript. She identified ten things people who love their towns tend to do: Walk more; buy local; get to know their neighbors; do fun stuff; explore nature; volunteer; eat local; become more political; create something new; and stay loyal.

For each of the ten things on the list, Warnick developed specific activities and did her best to implement some herself. These "Love Where You Live Experiments" sometimes created awkward moments, such as their forced attempts to become "regulars" at



a local cafe. But others, such as taking a batch of banana muffins to their neighbor on Good Neighbor Day, did help break the ice and establish a connection.

Reading *This Is Where You Belong* reminded me of just how many of Warnick's action items are normal everyday activities for people in our community. I've been on walks recently in my neighborhood and never reached the end of my block because I run into neighbors and stop for

extended, socially distanced chats. Two hours later I head home, up to speed on local politics, real estate, and everything else Mentone. Our takeout treats are from the local restaurants we love. We're also blessed with opportunities for volunteer work, such as the Pathway to Community project taking shape on the east side of Mentone at the MERF walking track. And our fun stuff and nature exploration includes canoe trips on Little River every chance we get.

In the penultimate chapter of the book, "Stay Loyal," Warnick discusses the poignant legacy of the 2007 mass shooting at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA, reminding us that no community is immune to Bad Things happening. She offers as examples Hurricane Katrina, Chernobyl, tsunamis, tornados, but also long-term stressors such as racial and class tensions, public health issues, and economic downturns. This chapter resonated with me, as I read it with the coronavirus pandemic upending life around the world, not just in our small town. Warnick's research was an important reminder that

the shared experience of going through hard times together instills empathy and inspires actions that build a stronger community.

This Is Where You Belong, with its practical steps to help readers develop positive connections to their hometowns, is a good read for anyone thinking about home and creative placemaking. It is available for check out from the Moon Lake Community Library.

Moon Lake Community Library News

by Kelly Leavitt

The library building will remain closed for the foreseeable future, but books and DVDs may continue to be checked out using our curbside service. Go to moonlakelibrary.org/curbside to learn more.

We are also continuing to sell books through our virtual book sale. Learn more at moonlakelibrary.org/virtualsale. We've had LOTS of donations, especially fiction, so there are plenty of books to choose from. Book sales are a main way our community library is funded, and we appreciate your support.

On Monday, August 3, at 6:30 p.m., we will host Heather Webber, author of *Midnight at the Blackbird Café*, for an Author Talk on Facebook. Go to facebook.com/moonlakecommunitylibrary. The book's setting was loosely based on Mentone. Moon Lake Book Club participants enjoyed a lively discussion of the book during a Zoom meeting on July 30.

INTERESTED IN BEARS?

Ask the expert...whatever you'd like to know!

Hannah Leeper will join us for a Zoom Q&A on Tuesday, August 11, at 6:30 pm CDT. Hannah is an Auburn University graduate student who is currently studying the bears in our area. This free presentation will be interesting for both children and adults. You may connect via computer or telephone. Go to our Facebook page, or moonlakelibrary.org, or email moonlakecommunitylibrary@yahoo.com to learn how to connect.

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Camp Horses (continued from page 11)

Last year, Trish had to euthanize three of her horses, ranging in age from their mid-30s to early 40s. “My husband made the comment that it would be amazing to know how many children have ridden these horses over the years.”

“They’re special animals,” said Trish. “But they have to be groomed that way, and they have to be cared for.” Ed and Trish have always bought young horses and groomed them into camp horses. Trish likes her horses to be older than five years before becoming camp horses.

Caring for camp horses is a process. In early spring, those who lease horses transition their feed from grass to grain, get them shod, and start riding them. Throughout the year, they make sure the horses’ veterinary needs are met, and they make sure they have grass and hay. “And of course,” said Trish, “when you put up hay, you need hay equipment. It’s a business. People should not do this for the income. It’s more for the love—the love for both the animals and for the kids.”

Trish plans to lease 50 horses to camps next year. “With me, it’s a way of life because of the fact that my grandfather and my father and brother and myself have all been involved through the generations. My sister, Amanda Shirey, used to teach riding lessons on her farm. Ronnie and Gail’s daughter, Jessica Jones [who many know as a small animal veterinarian in Fort Payne], has the same history that every other Jones has. All of us are rooted in horses.”

At Camp Skyline, Trish is the head of horsemanship and the equestrian program. More than 10 years ago, the camp developed a specialized equestrian program for “the girls who loved riding so much that they wanted to ride more than one activity period each day,” said owner and director



Ed Jones and daughter Trish Jones Martin lead a wagon train

Sally Johnson. “The program allows them to ride three activity periods a day. The girls learn riding and jumping skills, or hone their current skills, and also learn how to care for the horses, with each girl sharing a horse. They learn the body parts of a horse, and how to feed them and clean out stalls. The program is geared to girls who really, really, really love horses and want to be around them all the time,” said Sally. “It’s a small program that stays full.”

Trish has taught high school science at Sylvania High School for the past 15 years, and she carries those skills to the ring, where she trains staff members who work with the campers and horses during the summer. “We work with them for weeks before the kids arrive,” she said.

Any discussion of Mentone’s camp horses would be incomplete without mention of L.M. Flannigan, a special man who had a deep love for horses. He passed away at age 75 in 2008, but is still considered by many, as Trish said, to have been “one of the most well-loved men on this mountain. He always had a table to sit

at.” L.M. worked at the stables at various local camps, working with the horses, brushing them, and cleaning stalls. “You couldn’t have asked for animals to be loved any more or barns to be cleaner,” said Trish.

“The horses L.M. cared for were a real source of pride for him,” said Rob Hammond, owner and director of Camp Laney. “He’d look at me sometimes and say, ‘Now Rob, you know I take really good



Amanda Jones Shirey and L.M. Flannigan



A young camper at Riverview Camp for Girls bonds with her horse

care of my horses.’ I’d laugh and say, ‘I know you do, L.M.’”

L.M. was a seasoned rider, as well, and enjoyed off-season trail rides. He accompanied Ronnie and Ed Jones on several annual eight-day “Alabama Wagon Trains” from Boaz to Montgomery—about 165 miles. “He was a big part of the horses’ lives, and the campers,” Trish recalled.

As you drive around the Mentone area and enjoy the view of green pastures with horses freely roaming, they may just be camp horses. And the story behind each of these horses is that they have played an important role in influencing children through building confidence, new skills, and connection with large creatures, while having a comfortable and happy experience. Often, campers who may be frightened by the horses at the start of camp eventually become enamored by them.

The work of the families responsible for caring for these horses clearly pays off in droves. The history of this calling is part of this mountain’s history. As Trish said, “It’s not just one of us, it’s all of us.”

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SPACIOUS CABIN HOME ON 3.31 ACRES, w/ private drive. 3BR/2.5BA, 2500 sq ft, one-owner home features a welcoming front porch & deep, oversized back porch for easy entertaining outdoors. Open living/dining/kitchen w/ efficient, wood-burning heater; hardwood floors. Outdoors, the property includes a well-equipped workshop/garage; large pole barn for firewood with attached chicken coop; combination cleared/wooded land. Add'l land avail. \$264,500 (1128526)



A PLACE TO THINK & GET AWAY. It's not fancy, it's not big in size. But, it has been a big part of the life of one of the area's most interesting personalities & his family. The huge, stone fireplace, wood floors, walls & ceilings harken back to the cabins enjoyed on his many travels. One can imagine the cool evenings spent around the fire, conversing with friends; or the quiet times relaxing on the back deck enjoying the sunsets through the trees. Nice 2-car shop, too. \$299,900 (1148480)



LOOKING TO RELAX AT A LAKESIDE CABIN? We believe this to be THE best little waterfront gem in Mentone. Certainly, it's the only one on the market right now. Rustic, open-floor-plan cabin comes fully furnished. Want a place for company, but still want your privacy? There's a tiny, rustic guest cabin included! Each has a perfect porch with lake views. The property has a park-like feel with easy access to the lake. It's not a huge lake, to be sure. But it's perfect for kayaking, canoeing, swimming, fishing or just sitting on the dock. Owner says he's caught some very large bass in the lake, too. Great storage for your toys in the rustic outbuilding. 1.38 acres. \$264,500 (1148466)



..... LOTS and LAND

A REAL WATERFRONT LOT ON LITTLE RIVER, in the DeSoto Falls Lake area. Approx 95' frontage on the prime part of W Fork Little River, the truly navigable part where you can canoe, kayak or pontoon all the way to Mentone! Just upstream from the classic red boat house. Survey & septic permit/perc test in file. Private road away from traffic. \$149,500 (1149018)

20 ACRES IN MENTONE CITY LIMITS, with a meandering, seasonal, wet-weather stream. Completely fenced w/large gate, this beautiful woodland is almost park-like because of the lush, mossy undergrowth. Most of the land is in some "lost" state on those days you just need to get away from it all. Property is zoned Rural Farm, giving you the freedom to have a few animals, build a farm, a cabin or a private compound. It's really up to you. \$100,000 (1128108)

10 ACRES OF WOODED LAND, WITH SPRING. Public water/power avail nearby. A driveway was cut into the property several years ago, still viable. If you've been considering building your own cabin in the woods, this might just be the place to start. \$65,000. (1137280)

REDUCED! NEED A BIT OF EARTH? Well, here it is! Less than 5 minutes from downtown Mentone. Public water & power avail. A single acre, unrestricted, has been very hard to find in this area until now. Nicely wooded. Survey markers in place. Now \$17,500. (1109345)

SOUTH COOL STREET BROW-FRONT property w/old stone fireplace chimney, foundation by the 1920s. Appx 1/2 acre in an area where properties are seldom available. \$118,000 (1070474)



LIVE YOUR MENTONE DREAM! This unique home sits atop Look-out Mountain, built on the edge of the brow. Top floor is a full, open loft w/2 sep bedrooms, each w/ balconies above the main deck. Galley-style kitchen + butlers pantry w/ top-of-the-line SS appliances; washer & dryer. Screened porch w/hot tub; fire pit w/cedar chairs/tables, circle drive & wooden fence. Fully furnished!! This place has a great rental history, as well. A personal getaway with income potential \$325,000 (1138642)



NOW THIS IS A MOUNTAIN CABIN! 3BR/2BA, 1900 sq ft cabin built w/locally-sourced woods; cedar cabinetry; cedar-lined closets; peeled pine railings; built-in on staircase; bank flr w/wood burning FP. 2nd level has huge loft area for gameroom & 3rd BR. Metal roof; 3/4 wraparound, covered & uncovered porch; extended back deck; 1.56-acres. \$239,900 (1143954)



IT'S SO PEACEFUL & QUIET HERE, and the land is just gorgeous! 33.78 acres, with small pond; fenced & cross-fenced; pole barn; verdant pastures; lush woodland areas. Simple 4BR/3BA ranch-style home, w/finished, walkout basement. Satisfying views of pond & pasture from the front porch. Some repairs are needed on the house, but this is one of those truly special places well worth considering. And the only one available with this acreage. Perfect horse property. \$299,000 (1145542)



PRIVATE CABIN IN THE WOODS WITH CREEK, walking paths, peace & quiet. Gated entry, lined with trees, leading to a cedar-sided, 3BR/2BA cabin on 3.17 wooded acres. The serene, covered porch overlooks the creek. Inside is a vaulted greatroom with knotty cypress floors; pine walls & ceilings; stone fireplace. 2BR/1BA on main level; Master suite upstairs. Fully furnished. Workshop/garage. \$269,000. (1144579)



LESS THAN A YEAR OLD, this adorable cabin is tucked into the woods, less than 4 minutes from the heart of Mentone. 2BR/2.5BA; stone, gas-log fireplace; rustic decor. Full kitchen, full bathroom. Easy-care exterior with fiber-cement siding, stone foundation & metal roof. All packed into a sweet little package on 1.5 unrestricted acres. Rental potential! \$178,000. (1146781)



THE YELLOW DELI, LOG CABIN DELI, MOONLIGHT BISTRO, GREEN LEAF GRILL... There have been some great memories made in this cool, old storybook log cabin. The time has come for the next chapter to be written in this iconic property's story. Tucked into the heart of Mentone's Log Cabin Village, this place could be most any kind of business. Come & sit on the front porch, nestle up to the wood-burning fireplace inside, take in the hand-hewn beams & other rustic elements of this unique property. Dare to dream. \$159,500 (1145258)



7.5 ACRES WITH 600' TOTAL BROW FRONTAGE! Less than 3 miles from downtown Mentone. This property offers 2 different levels, each with 300' brow frontage, on which to build. Up to you to decide if you want to build on the upper or lower level? Property extends all the way to the valley, where huge boulders stand sentry. Gated drive already in place. \$225,000 (1145750)



TRULY THE HEART OF MENTONE: the Hitching Post, rich with history & even a bit of mystery! Steeped with charm & interesting nooks, this building has potential to be most anything! Currently housing active businesses The Gourdie Shop & Tip Top Bakery, there is also office space & a huge retail space w/ covered, stone-floored entryway. This is THE corner on the market...literally! But, there is also that magnificent, light-filled space upstairs (approx 2800 sq ft) for a studio or booths. Generous parking. \$350,000 (1143518)

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LITTLE RIVER

ARTS COUNCIL

N•E•W•S

by Kelly Leavitt

It's unfortunate that spectators weren't allowed at our sidewalk chalk art contest on June 27 on MERF's walking trail. It was one of the small sacrifices we've all had to make during the pandemic. Artists of all ages were invited to make chalk art in open air—and some remarkable art arose from the asphalt! We had ten entries, with a total of 27 artists participating. The public was invited to engage by voting online for various categories and prizes were given to all the participants. It was such a fun day that we're planning on this being an annual (or bi-annual) event. Visit littleriverartscouncil.org to see all the entries and a video (with drone footage) showing the progression of the artwork. Thanks to all who participated (including those who voted!).



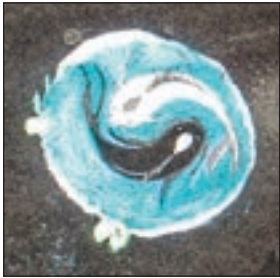
Most Realistic
Most Amazing



Most Moving



Most Imaginative



Wisest



Most Whimsical



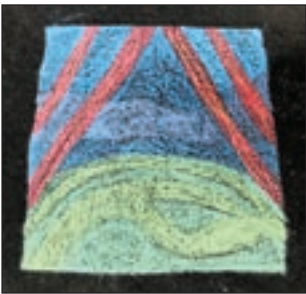
Best Use of Space
Most Unique



Most Colorful



Best Landscape
Most Cheerful



Most Abstract



Most Simply Sweet

Participating Artists
Top row, L to R: Don David, Jr., Kim David, and Tim Dingle; the Roden/Robbins family; the Morgan family; Grace Leavitt.
Middle row, L to R: the Jones/Godbois family; Christopher, Carrie, and Cyrus Denenny; Baxter Austin and Jessica Brown
Bottom row, L to R: the Caminity family; Don David, III; Unknown (we didn't have a registration form for this entry, so if you know the artists, please us know!)

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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 10am. The service of Holy Communion is held the first Sunday of each month and fifth Sundays are a service of music with a pot luck lunch afterwards. 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. Sunday School for all ages 9:45am, Traditional Worship 11am, and Sunday Evening

Service 6pm. Sunday Evening youth meet at 5:30pm. We have Wonderful Wednesdays during the school year with Bible studies for all ages, meal at 5:30pm and classes at 6:15pm. We also have Wednesday morning Bible study at 8:45am, and knitting every Tuesday at 9am. 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 8am. 411 SW Grand Ave. (in the basement of Killian & Killian Attorneys). 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

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THE ONLY SCOUT CAMP IN NORTH ALABAMA

by John H. Glenn

A small group of scouts sit in a semi-circle beneath a sweltering mid-afternoon sun, listening to a lecture on Search and Rescue in the Outdoor Skills area of the Boy Scout of America's (BSA) Hugh M. Comer Scout Reservation in Mentone. The scouts sit six feet apart and wear facemasks. Still the scene is a precious respite during a period of crisis that has touched even the most remote of woodland camps like Comer.

"I'm really enjoying camp," says Star Scout Billy Dainty of Tampa, FL, with an unmistakable smile hidden beneath his mask. "It's not really as different as I expected before I got here." This is his first time at Comer and second time spent at a summer camp. He is one of many new faces from all over the Southeast at Camp Comer, the only BSA camp open in north Alabama.

This summer, when moving around camp, there is a noticeable pressure to business here.

On the winding road leading into camp, a grey truck sits idling in the rain as a caravan of cars comes to a stop near the check-in station. "Pretty simple for our check-in process," says Asher Kervin, Comer's camp medic. He is the first to see the troops as they arrive at camp. "Every scout must have a waiver which says they haven't travelled to certain places, haven't been around with people with symptoms, or had a positive COVID-19 test. If they don't have a waiver, they can't come to camp. We also do temperature checks, and if one of the scouts shows a high temperature, the entire troop is turned around and sent home."

The medic's aide, John Ford, a long beard poking out beneath a green mask, goes from window to window with a small infrared thermometer, checking each temple and forehead. "A lot of people are just really glad to be outside to be out of their



L to R: Michael Bailey (Eagle Bound Staff); Tyler Wright (Camp Clerk); Emma Wright (Health Science)

houses," he says.

Each of the troops passing underneath the iconic arrowhead arch benefits from months of preparation, checking, and planning—more than any other year in living memory. The staff prepared with an obvious heightened focus on health and safety during training week. The camp was open for only three weeks this year, and 300 Scouts (half the normal population) were allowed per week. No assemblies were held on the parade field, nor meals with other troops in the dining hall; masks were required indoors and in key areas, and social distancing was maintained for the whole of camp. Shared resources like bathrooms and showers were extensively cleaned and sanitized, as well as things like climbing gear, shooting sports gear, computers, and the teaching spaces themselves. "Through discussions with health officials, review of CDC and state guidelines, and recommendations, we came to the decision to open camp with our executive board," said Seth Hill, director of Camp Comer and director of camping for the Greater Alabama

Council. "We felt we could offer a long-term camping experience for our youth that was safe and followed the recommended practices." This decision to open camp made it one of only two BSA camps in Alabama to offer programming this summer.

The experience of running a camp in the age of COVID-19 came with challenges and difficulties, such as longer staff hours, and more intensive work. "It has been challenging to say the least," Seth continued. "There is always the worry of a case arising and the fear of the current affairs surrounding us. However, I have been pleased by how the staff and campers have adapted to help ensure the quality delivery of an outstanding program here at Comer Scout Reservation."

Was it worth opening up camp at all in the end? "We felt that youth needed a return to normalcy and that the camping experience could help foster that return; however, there was also great apprehension," Seth said. "Many camps chose not to open this summer, and none should be faulted for their precaution. In the case of operating and planning for operations, you always consider the worst-case scenarios, and that was certainly in our mind. However, with the plans put in place, we felt confident in mitigating those scenarios."

So, atop Lookout Mountain, Comer finished her 55th summer as one of a handful of camps to be open in 2020. Workers and participants alike collaborated to return a small amount of routine and tradition to a year of profound change. "I personally am grateful that we as a camp were able to offer a summer camp experience this summer," said Seth. "To hear the laughter of Scouts, to see them discover new things, and gain knowledge and leadership is always an incredible thing. I am so happy that again this summer, that was possible."



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In Memoriam

ROY CARL SMITH, SR. October 17, 1928 – July 19, 2020



LTC (R) Roy Carl Smith, Sr., Ph.D. of Valley Head passed away the morning of July 19, 2020 surrounded by his family. Roy was born on October

17, 1928 to Gertrude Virginia (Hartline) and Carl Burnett Smith in Sulphur Springs, AL. He attended Valley Head Schools and graduated in 1946. He earned his Bachelor's degree in teaching from Jacksonville State, where he met his wife, Gwen Cornelius Smith. They were married in 1951 and have two children. Roy was drafted into the Army and served in Japan during the Korean War. His military career spanned from Korea to a commission in the National Guard. He rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and commanded the 151st Engineer Battalion headquartered in Fort Payne, AL. Upon leaving active service, he started teaching in Rising Fawn, GA. He later taught math and coached football at Valley Head High School. He moved to Northeast State Junior College as Dean of Students. From

there, he attended the University of Alabama to complete his Ph.D. There, he worked at several positions, rising to become the registrar and supervising multiple departments. He was an NCAA certifying official and was part of the ACT Board. He retired from The University in 1995 to his farm in Valley Head where he raised cattle, participated in Masonic activities, and served on the Valley Head Water Board until his death.

He is preceded in death by his parents and his sister Betty Willis. He is survived by his wife Gwen Smith, Ph.D. (Cornelius); his children, Roy C. Smith, Jr. (Glenda Jones) and Patricia Leath (Glenn Leath); his grandchildren Dr. Roy C. Smith, III, DVM and Dr. Andrea Smith, Pharm.D. (Dr. Andrew Crowe, Pharm.D.); his great-grandchildren (Eleanor, Colette, and Annika Crowe); and two surviving sisters (Alice Smith Wheeler and Virginia Smith Mashburn).

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial contributions be made to the Dr. Roy C. Smith, Sr. UA DeKalb Bama Club Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o National Alumni Association Endowed Scholarship Program, P. O. Box 861928, Tuscaloosa, AL 35486, attn: Deborah Parr (make checks payable to Alumni Fund and denote Dr. Roy C. Smith, Sr. on check).



ALEXANDER SOMMERS GLOVER, SR. October 23, 1927 – July 18, 2020

Alexander Sommers Glover, Sr. age 92 of Menlo, GA passed away Saturday, July 18, 2020 at his residence. Mr. Glover was born October 23, 1927 in Rome, GA to the late William Alexander Glover, Sr. and Eleanor Graham Glover. He was an elder member of Cloudland Presbyterian Church. He was a graduate of Darlington School and Auburn University. After graduation he served as a first Lieutenant in the United States Air Force based at Dobbins Air Force Base in Marietta, GA. In his early years, he called square dances at the Mentone, AL Hitching Post that his family owned and operated in the 1940s. He worked for General Electric Company in Rome, GA for 32 years as its purchasing agent. He enjoyed going to the Guntersville Yacht Club, attending art shows with his talented wife, Honey, who had won several awards for her painting and photography. Alex was an avid Auburn Tigers fan. He was Scoutmaster of Troup 55 in Rome for 23 years and he lived life to the fullest enjoying the company of many friends and family. He liked to fish, hunt, going to Trade Day, and buying and selling land. He served for several years on the Chattooga County Board of Tax Equalization, and served as its Chairman. He was a member of the Berry family and his grandmother was Lila Berry, the younger sister of Martha Berry, founder of Berry College. Alex's great-grandfather was Captain Thomas Berry (CSA) of Oak Hill in Mt. Berry, GA. He grew up on the property that is now the entrance of Berry College.

Alex was known by many names including Elec, Dad, Pawpaw, and Onion.

Along with his parents he is preceded in death by his brothers William Alexander Glover, Jr. and Samuel Graham Glover, and a daughter, Laura Glover Whitten.

Survivors include his wife of 66 years, Honey Turley Glover; sons, Alexander S. Glover, Jr. (Debbie) and Samuel Glover (Liz); daughter, Lynn Glover Holloway (Mark); and grandchildren, Blake Glover, Evan Holloway, Allison Holloway, Lainey Glover, and Kain Glover.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Cloudland Presbyterian Church, C/O Nancy Moorehead, 13030 Co. Rd 103 Mentone, AL 35984.

ONEIDA CROSS BROWN December 7, 1929 – July 16, 2020

Oneida Cross Brown, age 90, of Menlo, GA, died Thursday, July 16, 2020, at her residence. Mrs. Brown was born December 7, 1929, in LaFayette, GA, daughter of the late Louie Bass Cross and Mammie Carroll Cross. Prior to her retirement, she, along with her late husband, owned and operated the family business, Brown and Brown Wrecker Service, which they founded in Chamblee, GA and continued to operate with her family for 47 years. She was also a member of the Order of the Eastern Star. "Oneida," or "Nanny," to her friends and family, she was also fondly called "Mamma Brown" by many of her loyal employees over the years, and she had a life-long love of the beach and traveling.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, William Rossie Brown; her son, Dennis Brown; her brother, Jack Cross; and her beloved friend, companion, and sister at heart, Elizabeth Cooke, with whom she shared her love of Nascar and Alabama Crimson Tide Football.

Survivors include her sons and daughters-in-law, Bill (Mary) Brown, Arthur (Lisa) Brown; daughter-in-law, Teresa Brown; 8 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; and 1 great-great-grandchild.



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Did you know that that art and other creative activities have been proven to reduce stress? Our innate ability to be creative can really help us cope during “This Time.” Girija Kaimal, assistant professor of creative arts therapies at Drexel University, led a study examining the effects of making art on stress-related hormones in the body. The results, published in *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, found that just 45 minutes of creative activity lessens stress in the body significantly, *regardless of artistic experience or talent*.

As an Artist-in-Residence at UAB’s Institute for Arts in Medicine, I am a huge proponent of the healing power of art. I’ve seen the calming effect firsthand and have experienced it personally, as well.

Some ways that help us cope with the isolation and other stress factors caused by COVID-19 include regular sleep patterns, eating well, exercising, being outside, reaching out to someone daily, and, I would add, doing something creative each day.

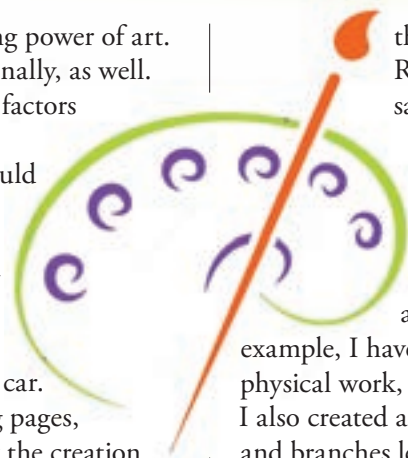
While this idea may seem overwhelming if you doubt your talent, the studies show, IT DOESN’T MATTER! Have fun! Any creative activity counts—singing in the kitchen, trying a new recipe, painting rocks around your garden, coloring, reading, writing poetry, woodworking, gardening, and even dancing in the car.

I love crafts (I am addicted to Pinterest) and I also love coloring pages, which I often hand out at the hospital. I’m particularly inspired by the creation of something out of nothing, such as creating an abstract sculpture with the Amazon boxes piling up in your garage. I suggest simple, fun, creative, projects where the process is more important than the product. I’d also encourage you to use materials you already have. Now is the time to cut up those old *National Geographic* and make art.

I recently led a virtual workshop for UAB’s Mental Health Ambassadors about the power of doodling. We drew simple lines, creating flower designs. Once we

The Healing POWER of Creativity

by Helene Taylor



filled a whole page with doodles, we selected three, drew them on a folded piece of paper, and wrote a letter to a friend or loved one. Sometimes writing a letter can feel daunting, so I suggest you begin by describing where you are sitting, what you are doing; approach it like a friend just stopped by. I feel this simple intimate conversation on a hand-drawn card is an easy creative activity—and you are reaching out to someone at the same time. You have done two things to enhance your mental health...creative expression and reaching out to someone. You just might get a letter in return.

I’ve noticed over the last few months that I sometimes have less energy and my mind can get a bit foggy. Researchers at the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine say we are experiencing a collective trauma, with life’s usual stresses becoming prolonged; they are taking their toll on many. These researchers suggest that what we really need is “response art.” According to art therapist Barbara J. Fish, “This is the art that is created to contain difficult material and to express and examine their experiences.” I interpret this concept for myself as an artist as working out my own struggles in a creative way. For example, I have repaired a garden that was cut down by the power company. This physical work, and creating beauty out of devastation, has been incredibly healing. I also created a sculpture (a garden goddess named Grace) out of the broken vines and branches left behind from the clearing. These creative endeavors were my own personal response to the fear and isolation stresses of the pandemic.

I hope during the “This Time”—the pandemic, the racial unrest, the economic insecurity, the isolation and separation from loved ones, and the loss of lives—you will find the healing power of art.

Helene Taylor is an artist and part-time Mentone resident. For more suggestions on creative activities, you may contact her at hbtaylor@uab.edu and she will send you some creative prompts at no charge.

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