



THE GROUNDHOG

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Volume 38, No. 2

"Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain"

February 2019

Flying High for a Good Cause by Kelly Leavitt

The first Sunday of the new year was an absolutely gorgeous day, with calm blue skies and a reading of 68 degrees on the thermometer. I enjoyed spending the afternoon with the DeSoto Rescue Squad Drone Team. We met in a field near Mentone Community Church which offered an expansive view looking towards the MERF Community House. The team had gathered, as they do every Sunday afternoon, to practice and to learn.

Shane Holman and Charlie Stone are each licensed commercial drone pilots. They train others on the team, who, when on a search and rescue mission, are only allowed to fly drones in the presence of a licensed drone pilot. On this day, team members were practicing both their flying and their search skills.

The day's mock mission was to search the field for a missing 11-month infant who was wearing a grey tank top and red shorts. Junior team members went into the field and "hid" a baby doll, while the drone pilots' eyes were averted. Then the drone pilots searched the field using a grid pattern, often with two drones at differing elevations, so one could get a large pan of the area while the other was focusing on specific



DeSoto Rescue Squad drone team member JD Trammell practices his drone piloting skills.

areas. Once the "infant" was located, the drone that found it would hover directly above it, so a team member could then safely rescue the baby. Everyone on the team took a turn and flew until they successfully located the baby.

Watching the drone pilot's iPad screen, I learned it's

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Interested in Flying a Drone?

Licensed commercial drone pilots Shane Holman and Charlie Stone will offer a series of free classes for those who are interested in flying drones, those who aim to get their pilot's license, and those who want to simply learn about drone safety and regulations. The class will alternate between informational classes and training sessions.

Classes will meet on Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m. at Mentone Community Church. The first meeting on Sunday, February 3, will be an introductory session where folks can meet each other, ask questions, and determine their interest in ongoing classes.

If you are interested in obtaining a commercial drone license, the classes will cover all the information pilots are required to learn in order to pass the FAA Rule 107 test, which Shane says is "a pretty overwhelming endeavor" to learn on your own.

Children are welcome to attend practice sessions to watch. "We're here to have fun, and to practice and sharpen our piloting skills. We just enjoy flying drones."

Email Shane Holman at sholman@desotorecue.org with any questions.

Congratulations Moon Lake School! by Anna Mae Horn

Report cards are in—state report cards, that is—and Moon Lake School received an "A". The school received an overall grade of 93 for the 2017–2018 school year. That is an improvement of 9 points from the previous year's grade of 84. It's also the highest score inside DeKalb County physical limits. The state as a whole received an overall average grade of 80. This marks three consecutive years that Moon Lake School has exceeded both state and district averages in academic categories. Of the more than 1,300 schools in the state of Alabama, only 88 scored a higher overall grade than Moon Lake.

The current Alabama Education Report Card grading system is

designed to meet the requirements of Alabama ACT No. 2012-402 as a transparent accountability dashboard intended to identify areas where schools are successful and where they need improvement (alsde.edu). Standardized tests are used to tangibly measure the math and reading skills of students, as well as to compare these subjects from year to year. Attendance is also a factor in the scoring.

Moon Lake students received a grade of 83 on Academic Achievement. This category reflects the average of both math and reading test scores. It shows that students are working hard and learning a vast majority of the items being taught in these subjects. This

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Moon Lake School teachers and staff.

First row, L to R: Mark Walsh, Principal Mary Lance, Karen Prestwood, Lea Long, Jennifer Gorham, Cindy Wilks, Leslie Bunch. Second row, L to R: Paula Easter, Michele Kincer, Mark Patterson, Vanessa Henderson, Kelbi Ballenger, Barbara Davis

THE GROUNDHOG



The Groundhog is published monthly by the Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA). First conceived on Groundhog Day, 1982, and then organized on April 5, 1982, *The Groundhog* has been in continuous publication for 36 years. MAPA is dedicated to preserving and protecting the heritage, natural environment and other unique qualities of life in the Mentone area. MAPA is chartered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

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FEBRUARY CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Joe Brewer, Rob Hammond, Rebecca Henderson,
Lynn Hixson, Mark Hoffman, Anna Mae Horn,
Pat Johnson, Anne McLeod, Diane Smith Mealer,
Holley Midgley, Rhea Pirch, Annette Stone,
Mellanie Tuttle, Sarah Wilcox

Contact *The Groundhog*

mapamentone.com/groundhog
groundhognews@yahoo.com
P.O. Box 387, Mentone, AL 35984
(256) 289-2002

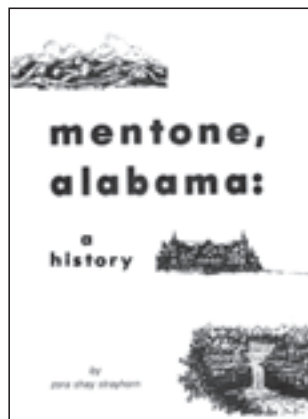
Contact MAPA

mapamentone.com
mapamentone@gmail.com
P.O. Box 50, Mentone, AL 35984

*Do you have a story idea?
Perhaps a poem or recipe?
We welcome contributions!*

Email groundhognews@yahoo.com

Learn about the History of Mentone



On sale at the Wildflower Café, Moon Lake Library, Green Leaf Grill, Little River Hardware, Mentone Market, DeSoto State Park, Earthly Elements & Bell Battelle. \$15; proceeds benefit MAPA.

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

Groundhog wood cut courtesy of Meg Justice.

Mentone Matters • by Mayor Rob Hammond



all posted speed limits and be aware of the blinking lights indicating slower speeds in the school zone in the morning and afternoon.

The zoning ordinance of Mentone can be found on our website mentonealabama.gov. The zoning map can also be viewed on the website. Before building, a certificate of zoning compliance is required. Application forms may be picked up at Town Hall. Completed forms will be reviewed by zoning administrator Hershell Pruitt. Building can commence once the application is approved.

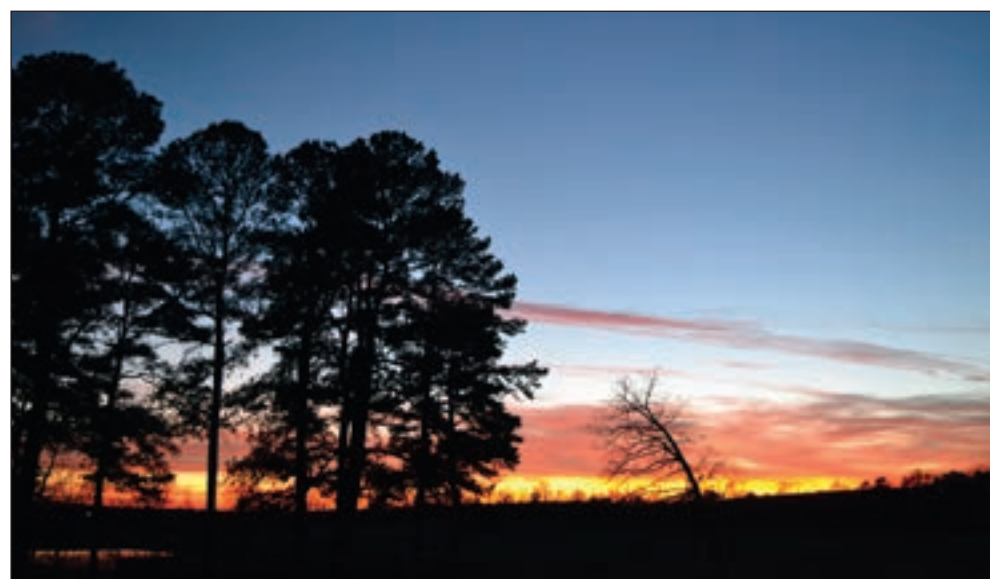
Recently, I had a call from ALDOT Maintenance Superintendent Doug Hicks. There are a few overhanging tree branches between Mentone and the state line on AL 117 that are scraping the tops of some higher profile trucks and motorhomes. His crews will be trimming these limbs in the near future. Mr. Hicks and ALDOT are aware that Mentone is a tourist destination and natural beauty is important.

Mentone police officers are beginning a concentrated effort to slow the traffic down on AL 117 and the side streets in Mentone. Please observe

Letter from the Editor

January graced our area with much beauty. We had rain which made for tremendous waterfalls, a full moon that was eclipsed in its entirety, two dustings of snow, dramatically foggy days, and a plethora of colorful sunrises and sunsets.

Like many in the area, I like to carry my camera with me so I can take the opportunity to capture photos of scenes that strike my eye. Folks around here like to post their photos on Facebook, their love for the beauty that surrounds us being so strong that they want to share it with others. We'd like to start including photos taken by community members in *The Groundhog* so the beauty can be



Sunset from County Road 165, January 21, 2019

shared with an even wider audience, both those in our area and our subscribers far away. Feel free to email any photos you'd like to share to groundhognews@yahoo.com. Have a beautiful February, everyone. It's the month of love. —Kelly

Could You Find Your House?

Our local fire, rescue, and police teams have a big favor to ask of you. A huge one, really. One that can make a difference between life and death.

In your mind's eye, picture it being 4 a.m. on a dark night...a stormy night...a foggy night. Would you be able to easily find your house from the road with a simple flashlight?

If not, the solution is simple—post 3" or 4" reflective house numbers at the entrance to your drive. These local teams say that this is the most important thing homeowners can do to support their task, which is, after all, to help others. It's frustrating—in moments when time can be critical—to head out on a call but not be able to find an address due to insufficient signage.

Little River Hardware is keeping a supply of numbers on hand, and the store's staff can help guide you to the easiest, most cost-effective way of displaying those numbers. For instance, one option is to attach the numbers to your mail box post. You could also put a short wood post in the ground with the numbers on it, or use a 2" PVC pipe with a cap on the top.

Let's all support our first responders. The more of us who respond to their request, the more they will feel our community's gratitude, respect, and support.



Mentone Area Preservation Association

by Mark Hoffman



At our January board meeting, we were able to start the new year on a very positive note, one that we think is extremely beneficial to the community. Mike Stone, on behalf of the DeSoto Rescue Squad, submitted a grant application requesting funds to enable the Squad to achieve a new and enhanced level of response licensing from the Alabama Department of Public Health. This new level of response will allow the squad's paramedics to carry medications not only for emergencies including chest pains, shortness of breath, and allergic reaction, but also to administer medications for cardiac arrest. Due to fluctuating and often lengthy ambulance response times, this no doubt will lead to lives saved. Additional benefits of the grant include proper storage facilities of the squad's property and medications, and a staging area

for members to come together during inclement weather conditions. The Board unanimously approved the grant request. Our thanks go out to Mike and his group of trained volunteers for their tireless efforts in helping to keep the residents of our community a simple phone call away from potentially life-threatening health- and weather-related events. We hope you never have to make that phone call, but it certainly is comforting and reassuring to know that Mike and his team are always there if you do!

Mark Hoffman is president of the Mentone Area Preservation Association.

Seeking Historic Photos and More

by Holley Midgley

The Mentone Town Council created a committee last year to consider ways to bring a local angle to the State of Alabama's 2019 Bicentennial Celebration. It was decided that a video presentation, entitled "Mentone: Where Little River Runs," would be created to highlight the history of the town. It is currently in production, and that's where you come in.

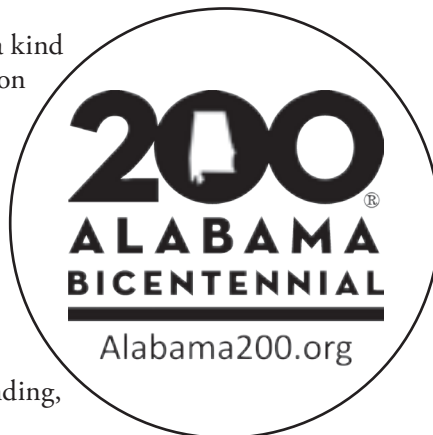
The committee is seeking old photographs of families, local scenes like swimming at the falls or fishing in the river, early business structures, etc. Additionally, we hope to find old movie film and videos that show Mentone folks at work and play. Diaries by ancestors who grew up or lived in Mentone would be highly prized.

If you have such things in your possession, or know of someone who does, please contact me at 334-313-1540 or via email at duckman1@centurytel.net and let me know about what you have.

On Sunday afternoon, February 24, we will be set up at the Mentone Inn, beginning at 2 p.m., to reproduce on video your pictures and film. We need to speak with you beforehand in order to schedule a time that afternoon when we can video your material. You will not need to leave them with us; we will copy them and send them home with you.

The Mentone Bicentennial Committee hopes this project will become a kind of video time capsule of the town's history. Following a premiere showing on the weekend after the 4th of July, copies of the video will be distributed to every household in Mentone and to Moon Lake Community Library. Additionally, a teaching unit will be created with the help of Moon Lake School faculty members.

This project is being supported by grants from the Mentone Area Preservation Association; the Alabama Bicentennial Commission; the Tillotson-Menlo Foundation; and the Alabama Humanities Foundation, a state partner with the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Alabama Humanities Foundation's mission is to foster learning, understanding, and appreciation of our people, communities, and cultures.



Fort Payne Water Serves Mentone

Fort Payne Water Works Board (FPWWB) has officially taken possession of Mentone Water Works. On January 3, their first day of business, FPWWB trucks were seen out and about in Mentone, getting straight to work to begin improvements.

"We've done a lot of work already," said FPWWB General Manager Paul Nail. "The elevated tank out in the Bankhead community hadn't worked in years, and we've got it back in service." Mr. Nail explained that if there's a problem within the system, they can isolate areas now while making repairs. "In the past, when there was a leak, they'd have to cut the whole town off and send all the kids home from school," said Mr. Nail. "We have three different ways we can feed the school now."

"Folks are going to see a huge difference in their bill," he continued. "In fact, one customer came to pay his bill yesterday and he'd figured that his new bill was almost half of what it was with the former rates."

A full-service FPWWB office is located next to Mentone Town Hall at 5972 AL Hwy. 117. It will be open Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The office phone number is 256-634-9106; the emergency/after-hours number is 256-845-7248. There is also a night drop box at the (unmanned) Fort Payne Water facility on Golf Course Road in Cloudland.

"I've lived beside Camp Comer for 14 years and I love Mentone," Mr. Nail said. "We're proud to be here as a company and I think we'll be good for the community."



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Mitch Gregory 2018 "Fireman of the Year"





DeSoto Rescue Squad's drone team practices on Sunday afternoons.

(Drones—continued from page 1)

harder than it might seem, finding a small person in tall grass. It takes a good eye and focused concentration. Still though, it's easier and more effective than searching on foot. DRS Captain Mike Stone explained that they can cover the entire field in about 20 minutes using a drone. "It beats fatigue," he said. "Drones don't get tired. It would take two people about 30 minutes to complete the same search on foot."

Since August 23, 2017, the squad has registered three drones with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). They were each donated and have a value of \$1,000. FAA rules state that, when flying a search and rescue mission, a drone pilot must be either at the controls or with the person at the controls, and another person must maintain visual contact with the drone, which can fly up to

4-1/2 miles. The squad is currently allowed to fly during daylight hours only. Their goal is to raise funds to purchase a new drone (\$5,600) with a thermal imager which would allow them to search at night and during inclement weather. Once they acquire this drone, the FAA will issue the squad a waiver that allows for night flight.

In 2017, a 19-foot camper was generously donated to the squad to use as a command center. Beginning this year, when they are called in for a search, they plan to immediately send the command center to a central location so all the teams involved will have access to a shower, toilet, sink, couch, stove, refrigerator, radios, and, perhaps most importantly, a big screen television.

Why a television, you might ask? Video from the drone controller can be sent via Apple TV directly to the big screen, so another set of eyes can be part of the search from with the command center. This could be a game changer during a search.

In addition, they can charge the drone batteries in the command center, instead of using their cars. Drone batteries only last for twenty minutes. Ideally, they would like to have three batteries

(\$100) per drone.

If you would like donate towards the squad's acquisition of a thermal imagery drone or batteries, you may contact Captain Mike Stone at captain@desotorecue.com. To learn about DeSoto Rescue Squad, visit desotorecue.com.



"Searching" for a lost baby in the tall grass



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MERF news: Two-scoop Days and Human Lighthouses

by Sarah Wilcox

On January 15, Paula Easter and I spoke at the Breakfast and Business meeting hosted at the Fort Payne Chamber office. We had fun sharing with the group about the many two-scoop days that the Mentone Area Educational Resources Foundation (MERF) has, such as mornings with MERF moms, train rides with the Grinch and Santa, senior lunches at the MERF house, and awarding five scholarships each spring. It was also gratifying to share the tremendous support MERF has from the community, both in volunteer time and financial support. I also shared that my MERF mantra this year is moving from two-scoop days to human lighthouses, though I still love my two-scoops image and story!

at him, or giving him a book. He is now a successful executive with a family and he is telling his story so kids like him will look for the house with the light on. The idea of "human lighthouses" struck a chord with me as I thought of Ms. Paula and the many volunteers who help with MERF programs. They offer so many rays of light by listening to a tutoring student spell a word, by serving a meal or giving a ride to lunch, and by exposing children to a professional orchestra, to name a few. We all need and have "human lighthouses" in our lives, whether life has been good or hard for us. My hope for MERF in 2019 is that we are more intentional in being a "human lighthouse" in the community and we develop a sense of being "lighthouses" for others.

Fabulous February means the resurgence of senior lunches! If it's sleeting or snowing don't come, but on Wednesday, February 13, weekly senior lunches will begin and continue until April 24. Thank you to all the businesses, organizations,

256-635-8193. The program needs to be compiled by March 20, so please don't delay. MERF is grateful for all the time, energy, organization, and support that make this such a fun community event.

Congratulations to Moon Lake Elementary School for making an "A" on your state report card and being TOPS! MERF loves working with the teachers, principal, and support staff that give their best to their students. What a great example of being a "human lighthouse" from both the adults and the students. Yesterday, as I tutored two students, one of them was intent on helping the other student with their spelling words! When we teach, we learn.

And for those with children below school age, the MERF moms are now meeting regularly at 10 a.m. on Thursday mornings in the MERF house. Please feel free to join them.

As always, #leavemeinmentone!

Sarah Wilcox is Executive Director of the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation (MERF), a local non-profit with the mission "to enrich the learning and living of the community by identifying needs and coordinating resources." To learn more, including how to support MERF's programs with a tax-deductible donation, visit merfhouse.org, email merf.mentone@gmail.com, or call 256-635-8193.



MERF tutors (aka "lighthouses") working with Moon Lake School students

In December, I was introduced to the idea of "human lighthouses" when I heard about the story of Steve Pemberton. He was being interviewed about his memoir and documentary, "A Chance in the World: Overcoming Childhood Abuse and Finding Hope." He grew up in an abusive foster home; see today.com for the interview. For Steve, books were his escape and gave him the power to overcome adversity. He talked about the "human lighthouses" in his life that gave him hope. They were everyday people showing him acts of kindness such as using his name, smiling

and individuals that allow MERF to offer such a fun Wednesday event. The meal will be served at 11:30 a.m., followed by fun entertainment and fellowship.

The 7th annual Taste of the Mountain and Art Auction committees have begun planning for another great evening on Saturday, April 6. Ticket sales will begin in March and tickets must be purchased in advance. Keep up with news on our Facebook page @merfhouse. If you are interested in volunteering, being a sponsor, or donating artwork, this is the time to contact MERF at merf.mentone@gmail.com or



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.



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New Police Chiefs in Valley Head & Mentone by Kelly Leavitt

On December 4, 2018, Jimmy Phillips was sworn in as Valley Head's new police chief. Jimmy brings 42 years' worth of experience in law enforcement to the job. He spent 27 years with the DeKalb County Sheriff's Department, where he served as an investigator for 22 years. After retiring in December 2006 from the sheriff's office, he worked as the police chief for Hammondville for three years, and then worked part-time on Mentone's police force for five or six years.

I asked what led to his interest in law enforcement. "I just like a challenge," Jimmy said. "And I like helping people."

After graduating from Valley Head School in 1967, Jimmy entered the U.S. Navy. He and his wife Adele will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in May. They have two daughters and a son, along with ten grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. In his free time, he enjoys golfing, going to ball games, and spending time with his grandchildren.

"I love my job here. I was raised here, went to school here, and I know just about everybody," said Jimmy. "We're small. We're going to do the best we can to do what we need to do. We answer calls out in the county if they ask us to. Mentone covers us sometimes, and we do the same. We both help cover Hammondville. It's nice we can work together to support a large area."

Jimmy replaced former chief Nick Welden after Nick was elected DeKalb County Sheriff in November. Gary Shavers was recently sworn in as Valley Head's Assistant Police Chief.

The new sheriff asked Mentone's former police chief, Brad Gregg, to serve as Chief Deputy Sheriff. (Valley Head's former Assistant Police Chief Ron Ogletree also moved to the sheriff's office.) Brad was replaced by Gene McKee, who was



Jimmy & Adele Phillips



Gene McKee & Mentone Town Clerk Wilma Fletcher

sworn in on January 14. Ross Greenwood is Mentone's new Assistant Police Chief.

Gene McKee was introduced in last month's *Groundhog*. We recently met at the library and talked about his first few weeks of being on the job. "It's going to be a lot of the same," he said. "We want to be seen and be available to people." I mentioned that I'd recently noticed an increased police presence as I've been driving around. "When I took over, I told Ross, 'Don't be concerned about putting miles on the car.' We want to be out there patrolling." The officers have also increased the number of hours spent checking traffic speeds with radar guns. Since AL Highway 117 is a popular corridor for people travelling between Huntsville or Nashville and Atlanta, many of the cars who speed are from out of the area. "If we each do our part and travel at the speed limit, we can slow the traffic down," Gene suggested.

Gene is also a volunteer fireman and echoed the concerns voiced by Fire Chief Joseph Lee and DeSoto Rescue Squad Mike Stone about house number identification (*see page 2*). He said that equally as important is that homeowners with security systems identify "keyholders" who can be available when an alarm goes off. Keyholders are people who are on record with the security company and are called when an alarm is triggered. Ideally, they are neighbors, so they can go check on the house to see if it's a false alarm. This would help avoid unnecessary responses from the police and firemen.

"Sometimes we'll turn into what we think is a driveway, and there'll be eight houses down there," said Gene. "And one of them has an alarm going off. There are no numbers posted and no keyholder available to let us in, so we're having to guess. If you're the last house on the road, you're the last house we'll get to. We're wasting so much time. Of course if it's on fire, we can find it. But if it's a small fire in an upstairs bedroom, we can't see the smoke."

He described another call they once responded to where the driveway to the house was a quarter of a mile long, and there was a locked heavy metal gate at the entrance. "No keyholder available. Now what?" said Gene. "We had to walk the quarter-mile, and call another truck to bring a torch to cut the lock so the truck could get to the house. We got down there and there was no fire, which is good—but the property owner had to buy themselves a new lock. If a designated keyholder had been available, it would have all been avoidable. As a fireman, I've seen it a lot. No keyholder available. Keyholders are very important."

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Original painting by Andrea Brandon

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Little River Arts Council News by Rhea Pirch

Picture it: A gathering of art enthusiasts, mingling with each other in the cozy dining room at DeSoto State Park Lodge, with the fireplace lit, artists demonstrating their skills, a table filled with hors d'œuvres to nibble on, a cash bar, and live music performed by local musician Larry Joe Hall. This will be the scene of the Little River Arts Council (LRAC) Annual Membership Social and Open House on Saturday, February 23, from 5 to 7:30 p.m.

The event is open to all. Along with socializing, it is our aim to present an opportunity to exchange ideas between current members, those interested in learning more about the Arts Council, and the board of directors. Suggestions will be welcome on how we can better serve artists and the community through our programs and activities. The board will introduce its new officers and current board members, and share our accomplishments of 2018, along with plans for 2019. We hope many of you will join us at this event.

In other Arts Council news: With help from a matching grant by the Alabama State Council on the Arts, on January 9, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival's traveling company once again visited Moon Lake Elementary School to present Shakespeare's romantic comedy "As You Like It" to the students. Fine Arts teacher Paula Easter prepared the students before the play by reviewing the characters, plot and Shakespearean language. During the performance, the children sat in the bleachers of the gymnasium, enthralled by the action of the play, made evident by their facial expressions and laughter throughout the performance.

After the play, the cast invited questions from the students, ranging from "How are the backdrops made?" to "What is your favorite Shakespeare play?" The cast of eight took time to answer each question, and followed up with a question of their own to the students: "How many of you have seen a Shakespeare play before?" Since this is the fourth time LRAC has hosted Shakespearean plays, this resulted in nearly the entire student body raising their hands with an enthusiastic "Me! Me! I did!" There really is nothing like the experience of a live Shakespeare play.

Ms. Easter followed up with the students, who wrote letters and drew pictures of their favorite characters, to keep alive the theater experience once



the performance was over. Seeing this enthusiasm, the Arts Council fully intends to bring each year's play to the school for as long as the Alabama Shakespeare Festival offers the opportunity.



The community art project, "A River Runs Through It," which will turn the risers of the steps at DeSoto Falls into a mosaic work of art, is nearing completion. LRAC board member and DeSoto State Park Naturalist Brittney

Hughes has been working on the project since day one, with the help of mosaic artists Linda Munoz and Jane Nuckols, along with a plethora of community contributors. Brittney will be working with a group of Girl Scouts and students, then will determine if any more community work days will be needed to complete the project. It is planned to be installed at the Falls in the spring, once the temperatures rise steadily above 50 degrees. The project's mosaic risers can be seen at the Nature Center of DeSoto State Park or on our website, littleriverartscouncil.org/desoto-falls-art-project, for all who are interested.

falls-art-project, for all who are interested.

We at the Little River Arts Council are looking forward to a fun and rewarding year, working with and for artists of all genres, and the entire community, to bring arts and art appreciation to Mentone and beyond!

Rhea Pirch is the treasurer for the Little River Arts Council.

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becky@hardyrealty.com



Moon Lake Community Library News by Kelly Leavitt

We held our first Community Seed Swap on January 26. Master Gardeners, organic gardeners, and gardening enthusiasts were on hand to answer questions and offer guidance. Many seeds were exchanged, and many were donated to the library, effectively creating our new Seed Bank! Come in and see what's available. We'll be making an inventory, so come by and see if anything interests you. If you have seeds that might go to waste, consider adding them to our seed collection so they can be used by others.

Thanks to everyone who supports Moon Lake Community Library, including our patrons, volunteers and donors. Our library is funded entirely by donations from the community and book sales; we have no government source of funding. It's our supporters who make it possible for the library to remain open, and we're grateful. Over the course of 12 "open" days in January, 85 books and 111 DVDs were checked out; 22 books were renewed. We issued library cards to eight new patrons. We have deleted 65 books from our stacks and added 40 that are more relevant to our community's interests. Fifty-six DVDs have been added to our movie collection.

The library is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3 until 5 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Check our Facebook page or web site (moonlakelibrary.org) for updates or to join our email list. The library is located at 4607 AL Hwy. 117 in Mentone. See you at the library!

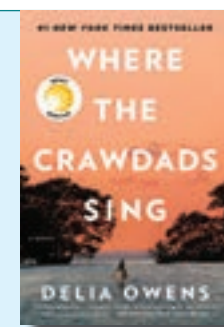
Kelly Leavitt is Mentone's community librarian.

The Poetry of Mary Oliver Saturday, February 16 @ 10:30am

Join us on Saturday, February 16, at 10:30 a.m., when we'll honor the life and language of poet Mary Oliver (1935-2019) with a casual poetry reading. Bring your favorite poem or essay to read. If you're not familiar with Mary Oliver or her poetry, come anyway for the reading. You'll likely become a new fan, especially if you appreciate nature, insight, beauty, and words...

Community Game Nights Friday, February 8 & 22 @ 6pm

Our first Community Game Night in January was attended by 35 people who played a variety of games—checkers, Uno, Clue, chess, backgammon, Telestrations, Sagrada, Mexican Train dominoes, Apples to Apples Junior, and Rummikub. We had so much fun that we've decided to have Game Nights every two weeks for the remainder of winter. Join us on Fridays, February 8 and 22 at 6:30 p.m. We'll share in a finger-food pot-luck. We have plenty of board games, but you're welcome to bring your own!



Moon Lake Book Club 2/23

Where the Crawdads Sing, by Delia Owens, has spent the past four months on the *New York Times* best sellers list. The author uses language beautifully, and tells an engaging story with a satisfying plot twist. Join fellow book lovers when the Moon Lake Book Club meets on Saturday, February 23, at 10:30 for a discussion. Everyone is welcome. Coffee and hot tea will be served.

I ♥ Reading @ Moon Lake Library

How much you ♥ reading throughout the month of February in this fun and friendly reading competition! Students and adults will be competing to see who can read the most books during February. Here's how to participate:

Students (Anyone under 18 years old)

- Read a book.
- Ask your teacher or the Moon Lake librarian for a BLUE paper heart.
- Write the title of the book you read, plus your name on the heart.
- Turn the heart in to your teacher, who will give them to the librarian each Tuesday during February.

Adults (Ages 18 and older)

- Read a book.
- Pick up a WHITE paper heart from the Moon Lake community librarian.
- Write the title of the book and your name on the heart and turn it in to the librarian.

Watch the hearts on the library windows to see who's in the lead!

FAQs

- *Do you have to be a Moon Lake student to participate as a student?* No, this competition is open to everyone—homeschoolers, middle and high school students. As long as you are 17 or younger, you can participate as a student.
- *Does any book count? Even picture books? Graphic novels?* Yes!
- *What if I read a book to my child? Does that count?* Yes. That would count as a book for your child and also for you. Be sure to pick up your heart at Moon Lake Library.



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Author Larry Smith to Discuss “New England Missions and Schools to the Cherokee 1820–1838”

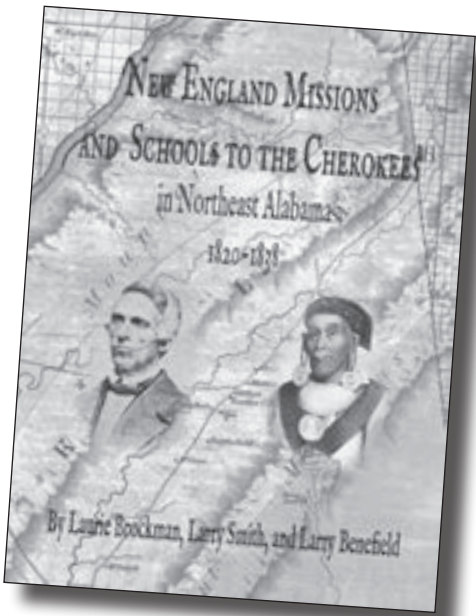
On Monday, February 25, at 6:30 p.m. at Moon Lake Community Library, historian Larry Smith of Guntersville will present information from *New England Missions and Schools to the Cherokee* in Northeast Alabama 1820-1838, a new book co-authored by Laurie Brockman of Tucson, Arizona, and Larry Benefield of Henagar. (Of interest locally is the fact that the idea for the book occurred at Mentone’s Wildflower Café.) Ten years of research led to the publication of this book, which tells the improbable story of how northern missionaries and teachers came to this area to educate and Christianize the Cherokees in the early 19th century.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), a worldwide missionary organization, established schools and missions between 1820 and 1838, in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. The focus of this presentation will be their three missions in Northeast Alabama; Chattooga (1820), Creek Path (1820-1837) and Willstown (1823-1838). Based on letters the missionaries sent back to their headquarters in Boston, Smith will set these three missions in national, cultural, and historical context. The juxtaposition of Christianity and the attitudes, and practices of the white New England missionaries and the cultural practices, beliefs, and way of life of the Cherokees will be discussed. Despite the many difficulties, misunderstandings, lack of a common spoken language, and different world-views, many deep relationships developed during the 38 years

that the ABCFM missionaries and the Cherokees lived together in the East, some of which continued during the Trail of Tears and for many years thereafter.

Dr. Vicky Rozema, a Native American historian/author from Chattanooga, had this to say about the book: “This thoroughly researched study...chronicles events at the missions and sheds light on the relationships between the New England Missionaries and the Cherokees. It fills a void in the story of early nineteenth-century Cherokee history and Northeast Alabama history. It will be of interest to scholars and readers of Southeast, Cherokee, or American religious history.”

The program is free of charge. Children are welcome. Moon Lake Library is located at 4607 Alabama Highway 117 in Mentone (moonlakelibrary.org).



Birthdays

1 John Lawton
Abby Bell
Tammy Kirby
Walter Brooks
Rindy Flannigan
Fontana Stinson
Thomas Blevins

2 Beverly Smith
Karen Nixon
Zeb Kincer
Elijah Rogers
Lamar King

3 Melanie Potts Garrett

4 Angela Phillips
Carson Dan Frost
Sophia Blair
Brittany Daniel
Aubree Lewchuk
Cameron Norsworthy

5 Yon Hopper
Savannah Wallace
Cameron Collins
Brylen Deal

6 Amanda Blalock
Allie McElhaney

7 Jordan Sutton
Tristan Rodriguez
Haven Stone
Haley Stinson Moore
Carley Verdon
Jase Kirby
Norah Underwood

8 Wyatt Blackburn
Crystal Smith
Helen Brown
Annette Johnson
Sandy Tate

9 Kara Goss
Jonnie Frost
Cayden Collins
Heath Jones

10 Joe McClure
Leonard Keith
Katie White
Luke Hulan

11 Cayla Wigley
Faith Nelson
Gentry Grisham
Amanda Ditmire
Elizabeth Rich
Rhett Davis

12 Tara Kirby
Nicholas Freeman
Sydnee Grider
Bubba Browder
Petie Garlin

13 Gretchen Winder
Carol Busby
Craig Hall
Isaac Pangle

14 Abbi Gifford
Eddie Manning

15 Ashley Coffman
Diane Smith
Axl Blake Jones

16 Katelyn Busby
Mary Jane Gray

17 John David Blalock
Trey Moore
Tyler Allen
Renee Peek
Tom Tate

18 Richard Harrison
Gail Crider
Braden Villarreal

19 Danielle Powell
Aaron Goss
John Fischer, Jr.
Tim Henderson
John Fisher, Jr.
Beverly Bates
Kelly Leavitt

20 Jon Baggett
Stella Pierce
Joan Byrum
Juanita McGuire
Adam Battles

21 Wendy Manifold
Lad Steinemann

22 Justin Langston
Johnny Mack
Ferguson, Jr.
Corey Blalock
Derek McMahan
Jordan Bethune

23 Jaden Turner

24 Michael Chambers
Tom Emory
Payton Day Lewis
Melinda Easler
Susan Collins

25 William Beasley
Emily Tate
Pam Bettis
Dorothy Cyr

26 Kylee Elkins
Johnny Battles
Kate Smith

27 Makayla Mullis
David Hilliard
Holden Smith
Marc Hale
Larissa Roe

28 Derek Davis
Ethan Bailey
Russell Odell

29 Ethen Battles

Anniversaries

1 Russell & Jan Odell

3 Ray & Sandra Padgett
Jeremy & Amy Henderson

4 Larry & Kathy Gray

5 David & Pam Dean

7 Calvin & Myra Lanier
Mack & Debbie Flannigan

8 Clark & Genella Tolbert

10 Danny & Sible Hopper

14 Joey & Melanie Garrett
Kevin & Connie McElhaney

15 Leonard & Amy Keith

17 Vance & Patti Carden

23 Jeff & LeAnn Bain

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Rhododendron Garden Club by Mellanie Tuttle



The Rhododendron Garden Club met on January 8 at St. Joseph's on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church. The meeting was called to order by President Marsha Merrell and the usual business followed. During roll call, houseplants and green plants in the garden were named. Green plants in the yard included; Hellebores, Nandina, Cinnamon fern, Daffodils, Gardenia, Arugula, Greenbriar and Mums. Houseplants were: Amaryllis, Ferns, Philodendron, Orchids, Peace Lily, Cacti. Dianne Kuehl supplied goodies and drinks. For the meditation, she read "The Gardener's Thanksgiving" by Max Koots, who shared his cornucopia of friends—feisty as tart apples; crotchety friends as sour as rhubarb and as indestructible; funny ones who are as silly as Brussel sprouts; old friends, nodding like sunflowers in the evening time; and the loving friends, who wind around us like tendrils and hold us, despite our blights, wilts and witherings.

Jan Wilkinson, Conservation Chair, talked about her visit to the US Botanic Garden in Washington DC and the amazing Holiday Show celebrating America's train stations that were created from plant material. The United States Botanic Garden website has amazing close-ups of the Union Station model and other DC landmarks. No plastic in sight! Martha Wood remains Horticulture Chair and her focus this year will be on wildflowers. She brought several of her collected wildflower books and recommended Jay Clark's "Wildflowers of Pigeon Mountain" as an excellent resource for information on local plants.

The Moon Lake project continues. During the one warmish and clearish day in weeks, students planted crocus, anemone, tulips, and hyacinth around the school yard and hung the pinecone feeders made in December. A wildflower lesson included planting of Beautyberry, Milkweed, Black-eyed Susan and

Sunflower seeds into newspapers pots to be taken home. That lesson's theme was "Look and See, but Leave Them Be!" A decision was made not to revive the butterfly garden behind the school due to poison ivy as the featured plant material. The club did vote to build butterfly houses that could be painted by the students and placed around the school, too, so all could enjoy the butterfly activity.

Great disappointment (by me) that the topiary DVD had left the building. No elephants, bunnies, or cones will grace the landscape of Mentone now. However, the group was treated to a partial viewing of the 2010 Philadelphia International Flower Show, "Passport to the World," a trip around the world in flowers—Poinsettias from Mexico, Birds of Paradise from South Africa, peonies from China, and a giant King fern, which is a descendent of a plant brought back from a collecting trip in the 1800s. Businesses, nurseries, garden clubs, and individuals created vignettes to transport viewers around the world. The Netherlands, of course, featured tulips in a Dutch canal scene. India's was a romantic wedding dominated by a life-sized elephant! Singapore used orchids to showcase a gazebo, cranes, and a bamboo archway which visitors could actually walk through. Island creatures peaked out of the native habitat in the New Zealand display. In the South Africa stop, a sixteen-foot-tall giraffe, a life-sized lion, and birds were stunning in the Zuni village. Of course, the South America display showcased a rain forest. A hot air balloon made of 50,000 pansies and 25,000 roses dominated the exhibit's space. Giant water lilies looked like huge plates floating in the water. Amazingly, they were started from seeds in November and grew to their four-foot diameters by February! Think of a static Rose Bowl Parade all under one roof! Overwhelmingly beautiful but the thought occurred that a vender selling allergy medication could have a really profitable day.

This year's event, called "Flower Power, the Power of Flowers" will be held March 2–10. From the website: "The PHS Philadelphia Flower Show is the nation's largest and longest-running horticultural event and features stunning displays by the world's premier floral and landscape designers. Started in 1829 by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the show introduces diverse and sustainable plant varieties and garden and design concepts. In addition to the major garden displays, the Flower Show hosts world-renowned competitions in horticulture and artistic floral arranging, gardening presentations

and demonstrations, special events, and the citywide Bloom Philly pre-Show celebration. The Philadelphia Flower Show has been honored as the best event in the world by the International Festivals & Events Association, competing with events such as the Kentucky Derby Festival, Tournament of Roses Parade, Indianapolis 500 Festival, and other international celebrations." Anyone for a trip to Philly?

The next meeting will be on February 12 at the MERF House. Start time is 10:00 and Dianne Kuehl will be speaking on the plant diversity in Alabama. Who knew that Alabama has several firsts in aquatic species as well? First in the US in crayfish, turtles, freshwater snails, fishes and mussels! Wow! Isn't diversity a wonderful thing?

P.S. Apologies to Mike Houghland for the misspelling of his last name in the January article. The auto check for spelling won that round.

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

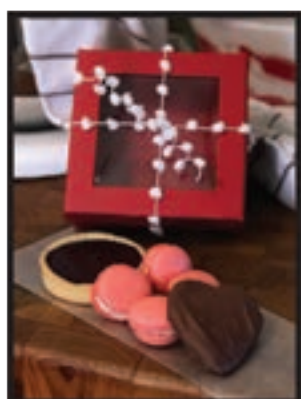


Longleaf Pine Needle Basketry Class

Learn the basics of pine needle basketry, an old craft with a long history. Join artist Brittney Hughes on Saturday, February 16, from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. at Little River Canyon Center to learn to make a coiled basket from longleaf pine needles. Each participant will learn the basic skills of pine needle basketry and take home their very own creation. Coiling is the technique of creating baskets and art from pine needles and was a part of pre-Columbian Native American crafts. Today, pine needle baskets and art are made primarily for decorative purposes. All materials (pine needles, thread, and small center for basket) will be furnished. \$25 includes supplies. Maximum 12 students ages 10 and older. Pre-registration is required; call 256-997-5025 or email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

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Researching Valley Head's Old Winston Cemetery

Joe Brewer of the DeKalb Genealogical Society is currently researching the Old Winston (African-American) Cemetery in Valley Head. "We believe it could be one of the oldest black cemeteries (100+ years) in the county," said Joe. "We have contacted some of the funeral homes in the area, but none has any information to share."

"We have done some research and have identified some names buried there," Joe continued. "We have some of the deeds showing how the land was passed down through the years. The current owners, the Millican family, have been nice to let us go up to the cemetery and survey it. We believe it dates back to the days of W. O. Winston, who owned most of the land around Valley Head. There are many unmarked graves there. We had a grave witcher come and help us in locating unmarked graves."

Joe has been working with a family member of the Davenports and Underwoods who lived in Valley Head years ago and are buried in the Old Winston Cemetery. They are working on cleaning up the grounds and placing a stone at the entrance with the name of the cemetery. Upon completion of a survey and placing of the stone marker, they will try to have the cemetery placed on the Alabama Historical Cemetery register.

If you have any historical information about the Old Winston Cemetery, please email Joe Brewer at jfbrewer25@yahoo.com. You may also email *The Groundhog* at groundhognews@yahoo.com.

What Is Grave Dowsing? by Joe Brewer

Dowsing is sometimes used in cemeteries to identify unmarked graves. A lot of older cemeteries have many unmarked graves. A couple of years ago, a man came to the DeKalb County Genealogy meeting and taught Doug Brandon, the DeKalb County Official Historian, how to dowse for graves. Doug later took the Society group (25 or 30 people) to the Glenwood Cemetery and he let everyone try it. Some of the group could do it really well, others could not...

Doug had two metal rods, one for each hand, of course. The rods were bent to have a 4- to 6-inch handle, with the longer part being 12- to 16-inches outward (large L shape). Here's how to dowse:

Hold your arms tightly at your side and hold the rods by their handles at a 45-degree angle from your body. Start at the foot of the grave and walk forward to the head. The rods CROSS. (Ya, they cross!) After you walk past the head, the rods uncross. (Ya, they uncross!)

You can determine if it is a man or woman buried there. At a man's grave, the rods will cross about middle way down the rods. At a woman's grave, the rods will cross closer to where the rods are being held. You can determine if the grave has a child or an adult by the length of the walk from foot to head. This also works if you walk crossways over the grave.

I am always the skeptic, but it works and made me a believer.

St. Joseph's Offers Celtic Worship Service

by Rebecca Henderson



St. Joseph's on-the-Mountain will again celebrate a special Celtic worship service on Sunday, February 3, at 5 p.m. The last service drew a large and varied group from many faiths and many communities in the area, and the church hopes to unite even more participants in worship and song. Celtic theology emphasizes the unity of all things on Earth and Christ's involvement in all things. The prayers and music speak to creation and the Holy Trinity. Many of the songs may be familiar, a blend of music from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales (words will be provided for everyone to sing). All are welcome to take communion if they wish. Refreshments will follow the service.

Relaxation & Stress Management Class Offered at Moon Lake Library

Learn how to recognize and reduce stress through mind and body awareness in a weekly experiential class with Joe Piscatelli, M.S. An introductory session will be offered on Thursday, February 21, at 6:30 p.m. at Moon Lake Community Library. Beginning February 28, participants will meet weekly on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. This workshop is being offered on a donation basis.

Joe Piscatelli, M.S., has been a consultant to for-profit and non-profit corporations in Training and Human Development and has done extensive research personally and academically on the mind-body experience. Joe has designed, self-published, and implemented various trainings and workshops, including "Dealing with Difficult People," "The Heart Mind Connection," and "Managing Stress and Burnout."

Archaeology Tour: Sacred Stone Structures

Learn about rock mounds, stone effigy structures and more on a hike with Jacksonville State University (JSU) archaeologist Dr. Harry Holstein in the Mountain Longleaf Refuge near White Plains, AL. The event on Saturday, March 2 will begin at 9 a.m. with a 45-minute "Sacred Stone" program in the Archaeology Lab at JSU. Hikes are moderate level with some steep, short trails to get to these structures. The fee is \$20 per person (ages 14 and older). Space is limited, so pre-registration is required by calling 256-845-3548.

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'NATURE'S SANITARIUM'

Mentone resident Cindy Beard recently sent me a message with the following letter which she thought *Groundhog* readers might find interesting. The letter had been published on August 26, 1897, in *Our Southern Neighbor*, the newspaper, at the time, in Livingston, Alabama.

I immediately realized what a “find” the letter was! Our “correspondent,” Miss E.C.G., all these 122 years later, describes in rather flowery language her love for Mentone (which she calls “Skyland”) and tells us something about daily activities during her summer visit to the mountain.

We climb the mountain in her hack, a buggy that ferried people on the precipitous dirt road up the mountain that wouldn't be paved for decades yet to come. (Many, if not most, of the young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC] who built the rock wall along current-day Alabama Highway 117 probably weren't even born yet.)

While visiting the pavilion at the spring that gave the Mentone Springs Hotel its name (near the current intersection of North Cool Street and AL-Hwy. 117), we hear the hammers constructing an addition to what was, at the time, called the Mentone Mineral Springs Hotel.

We also climb a pinnacle with Miss E.C.G.—the “100-foot tall” Eagle's Nest Rock “in the rear of the hotel” (fairly close to the current-day water tower on Scenic Highway, near the hairpin turn north of Brow Park).

She takes us to DeSoto Falls on Little River (which was called DeSoto River at the time). One can only wish she had also described her journey to the falls, a distance of two miles, as the crow flies, from the hotel.

She compares the “mountain men” of Mentone to those described in Charles Egbert Craddock's books. (Curious, I looked up this 19th century author and learned that [scandalously!] the author was actually a woman, Mary Noailles Murfree.)

I hope you enjoy learning about Miss E.C.G.'s visit to Mentone as much as I have. —*Kelly Leavitt*

Oh you dear Livingston people, groaning with groanings that cannot be uttered over the heat, the terrible heat. How sorry I do feel for you. Why doesn't some inventive genius make it possible for me to bottle up some Mentone weather and send it to you by express.

How strong you would feel, how vigorous, how able by one shove of your shoulder to turn the whole world over, if necessity demanded. How the orders for weather would pour in upon Skyland, otherwise known as Mentone, DeKalb County, Ala.

Just think, that on the morning of Sunday, August 8, at 8:30, the thermometer stood here at 64 deg. And a cheerful fire roared out the word Comfort as we sat beside it and saw the sparks going up the chimney like nuns going to chapel holding their lighted tapers.

To a plantation-bred woman like your correspondent, there is a spell in a wood-fire that can be exercised by no grate that ever held its black and glittering load of coal. To sit in indescribable comfort by a big wood fire in August is a luxury.

How many degrees the thermometer registered at day-dawn I cannot tell, it was really too cold for me to venture out on the verandah to examine the shining thread of mercury.

Perhaps the local habitation of Mentone is unknown to you and you may fancy that I am far away in France. Oh, no: my song is still “Alabama! Alabama! I will aye be true to thee;” I am in no foreign land, but in the mountains of my native state on grand old Lookout.

All Livingstonians know their own little town is the very lowest spot above sea level, on the A.G.S. Railroad, and that the point of greatest altitude on the same road is Valley Head. Two miles up the mountain, above Valley Head, may be found the delightful place that I call Skyland, that Uncle Sam designates as Mentone.

The western brow of Lookout here is piled high with great grey rocks, the ribs of the mountain; amid these, up there, and in the shade of the forest, the road winds up, up, up, until the traveler finds herself

on the brow of the cliff with beautiful Will's Valley outspread 1,000 feet below.

Now that we are at the top, we will leave our hack, for a little mountain path to the left of the “big road” stretches among the trees to a two-story pavilion that commands a view beautiful to behold, a view so full of nature's own exceeding peace that all our cares seem to drop away from us as the green chestnut burrs from the trees above our heads.

Beside the pavilion and over arched with stone and decorated with ferns and clinging vines, there is a spring of sparkling and delicious water. It is this crystal flood that gives its name to the great building rising on the elevation beyond and above the spring, Mineral Springs Hotel.

The sound of the saw and hammer comes to our ears as we quaff the life-giving water. Attracted by the bang, bang, bang, we look three hundred yards away and see a large building in process of erection. The little building that stood there last summer has put out great wings on each side and now has a front of one hundred and fifty feet.

What an ample expanse of verandah that hotel will have, for see, it curves and goes the length each end, so that at last it stretches out for two hundred and seventy feet; and fronting its pillars everywhere, standing face to face with them are trees, reaching out their wealth of beautiful foliage.

All surrounded by surrounding trees will be this most attractive hotel which is now growing day by day under the hands of the architect and carpenters. A few rooms of the old building are still intact, and within them, the family of the proprietor, Mr. Charles A. Loring, still have their home; it is with them that I am domiciled. We form a quartette: Mr. and Mrs. Loring, their daughter, and your correspondent.

It is to the grief of many that the Mineral Springs Hotel is not open this summer: but they must console themselves by looking forward to next summer on these heights of tranquil glory. Then the hotel will be able to accommodate one hundred and fifty guests and will have every appointment



Eagle's Nest

necessary to make it, in every respect, a first-class hotel.

But let the future take care of itself, let me tell you about the delights of the present.

One of these is the beauty, the wild, rugged loveliness of the country about Mentone. About a mile away is DeSoto River, a stream that loves Lookout Mtn. and goes dancing, singing, running and leaping along almost its entire length. Yes, leaping or falling, whichever expression you prefer: I like the former, for the river seems like a thing of life that exhibits its playful instincts in rippling over the ledge above the cascade and then, for the very joy of wild motion, throws itself over the perpendicular wall of rock to form the DeSoto Falls. You must stand beside it and watch the rush of its waters and the living etherealized snow of its spray in order to see its beauty.

From my window I see a merry picnic party: a big wagon with four mules, another with two mules, a string of buggies. How merry every one looks: these lads and lassies from Somerville, Ga. are as gay to-day as the birds that they startle from the boughs. In a little while, the wagons are empty and the merry people are straying about, some towards the pavilion, some to the hotel, from whose roof the hammers are suspended, for a moment, while the workmen watch the crowd: some to the verandah; and here almost before I know it, two voices are calling out to me: "So glad to see you! I knew you from the road! How did you ever find your way here!" The Shorter college girl seems ubiquitous. In her own enthusiastic fashion, she tells me she is on her way to DeSoto Falls, and is

having such a good time, "and isn't Mentone perfectly lovely?"

If I did not fear that somebody would call me giddy, I would tell of one of my feats, climbing to the tipmost topmost towering height of eagle's nest rock, a great solitary pillar in the forest in the rear of the hotel. The Bible talks about the time when the old are afraid of that which is high; I shall not say that I had no fear, but I climbed on until I reached the point from which the Cumberland Mountains, one hundred and seventy miles away, rose into view. Then I gazed and gazed, and while resting my eyes on faraway Kennesaw Mt., thought of the days when, so long ago, we watched with anxious heart for news from the men in grey. My eyes fill and peering over the edge of the rock, I wondered how I would ever climb down. How the feat was accomplished is not to be described, and much to my joy, not to be pictured, either. I believe I would have been more afraid just then of a Kodak than of a rifle.

Across from the hotel is the post-office, at the little country store. Here, all day long, the people may be seen at intervals; there seem to be two varieties, the Western Yankees, some of whom continue to wear the blue uniform, and the mountaineer who has, apparently just stepped

out of Charles Egbert Craddock's books. There are some mountaineers who are not to be seen, they are only to be heard of tales about them and afford daily excitement. No one can trace the origin of the rumors that the Revenue officers almost caught Mike last night, or that Jake has a mighty hard time riding out this rainy weather. In fact, the air is full of moonshine stories that are thrilling as any that were ever conceived. Think of seeing a woman dash by sitting astride, and hearing someone whisper, "The sister of the moonshiner that's hiding out." On she sweeps, leaving us to wonder whether life is worth living to a woman whose childhood, and womanhood, has been passed beneath the shadow of a wild-cat-still.

As I am not a sportsman, I cannot bag any of the "bushels of partridges" and "bushels of wild turkeys" in the mountains, nor can I catch the mountain trout and other fish in the lake and river below the falls. But I can gather armfuls of wild flowers and fill my basket with rosy apples, and all day long, in this light, bracing, exhilarating atmosphere I can feel that mere existence is a blessing.

As I do this, I rejoice that here, in my own state, on our line of railroad, there is a mountain resort so near and so full of attractions that when it is opened, as it will be next year, no one need to go to the mountains of Tennessee or Virginia to seek nature's sanitarium, but that here at Mentone, the Summer girl and the invalid may sit on the gallery and with happy hearts ring out again the familiar words, "Alabama! Alabama! I will aye be true to thee!"

—E. C. G.

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Nestled in the woods atop Lookout Mountain, near Mentone, Alabama, this quaint little chapel is surrounded by ferns, forest and flowers. The chapel is a scaled version of traditional Appalachian churches of days gone by. Stained glass windows filtering soft forest sunrays and soft organ music accent an ambience fitting the wedding ceremony. Inside, wooden pews will seat approximately 60 guests.

Linda Patterson, owner of the chapel, said the idea for it began with a bell, and now that bell rings as newlyweds exit the door of the chapel.

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(Moon Lake School—continued from page 1)

year's grade is an improvement from last year (79).
The second category of the grading system is Academic Growth. It measures students' improvement from year to year in math and reading. Moon Lake students scored 100. This means that each student has grown and improved in both math and reading since the previous year's test. This is a direct reflection of dedication and hard work on the part of students, teachers, and school staff. Last year's grade of 90 was good, but this year's grade is perfect!

Chronic Absenteeism is the third and final category. Moon Lake School had a low rate of 4% in 2017–2018, which was the lowest in the county system. Attendance is a very important part of a good education. This low percentage rate is a testament to the efforts of parents and guardians who ensure students are at school regularly. It is a tremendous improvement over the previous school year's 24% chronic absenteeism rate.

These three combined indicators—achievement, growth, and attendance—provide verifiable data to the public, parents, school staff, and leadership of the well-rounded education students receive. These various indicators also reflect a wide range of effort, cooperation, and dedication from many groups of people.

Moon Lake Principal Mary Lance stated there are three primary factors for the school's success: "1. Dedication of the whole staff to look at students' individual areas for growth; 2. Parent and community support; and 3. A schedule that provides enrichment and growth for both teacher and student."

Leadership, teachers, and support staff all work together at Moon Lake with the common goal of helping every child reach their greatest potential. Standardized

testing gives tangible measures to use as guidelines. Intervention and enrichment classes then allow students to meet their individual educational needs and goals.

Community partnerships with non-profits like the Moon Lake Parent-Teacher Organization, Mentone Educational Resources Foundation

(MERF), Little River Arts Council, Master Gardeners of North Alabama, and Moon Lake Community Library provide educational opportunities and cultural activities that students would not otherwise have available.

Volunteer and parental involvement, combined with dedicated teachers and a supportive school staff, equals a successful education for Moon Lake School students and an A on the Alabama Education Report Card. Let's all celebrate this great accomplishment!



Menlo News by Pat Johnson

Congratulations to Menlo students on the Principal's Honor Roll! They have qualified for this honor by having a 95 or above in each of their classes. They are: Brooklyn Hamby, Brylee Ward, Butler Crowe, Bluesy Harrell, Emma Elrod, Julia Hogan, Pippa Key, Joslyn Maddux, and Sarah Young.

The Menlo Tigers 10-and-under girls basketball team, coached by Wes Maddux, won the "Santa in Uniform Tournament" over the Christmas holiday break. They competed against teams from Summerville, Trion, and Lafayette.



Back Row: Coach Wes Maddux, Chloe Middleton, Raine Harrison, Elizabeth Laird, Haley Grace Maddux, Addie Mae Veatch, Anslee Evans, and Josie Gazaway.
Front Row: Raegan Key, Ashlyn Burrage, Ava Barksdale, Vanessa Tapp, Emily Hughes, and Makenzey Sauls.



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Menlo Quilters: "Sewing Threads of Kindness"

by Diane Smith Mealer

The Menlo quilters extend blessings for the new year to those in the hills, hollows, mountains, and valleys that surround our area. Today, Menlo remains a quiet town where people go to work, raise their children, care for their families, stand for the flag, respect God and the institution of the President, support our Veterans and love our town and country. The old churches still stand with their steeples pointing skyward overlooking and keeping watch over our place called home.

Our quilting ladies are proud of our heritage and the privilege of living, growing, and giving in such a beautiful community. We have been busy with meetings and projects that make a difference in the lives of others. I will catch up on the events as I have not been able to write any news for a while. We auctioned our quilt in the fall of 2017 that netted \$400

for the Menlo Fire and Rescue and in December of same year we donated 25 quilts to the residents of the Oakview Health and Rehab facility in Summerville, GA. In 2018, we completed a "Quilt of Valor" that was presented to Roger Keith, US Army, at the Menlo Veterans Day Program on November 9. On December 8, we braved the weather to present 33 quilts and 24 bibs to the Memory Unit of the Cherokee Health and Rehab facility in Centre, AL.



This new year is an opportunity for new adventures for our group and we look forward to the challenges ahead. Our planning meeting was held on January 12 and we have added several new members. During these cold days of winter, we are meeting at 11 a.m. (Eastern) at the Menlo Presbyterian Church on the second Saturday each month. We will resume meeting the second Thursday at 5 p.m. (Eastern) in April. We invite anyone who would like to learn, to take part and join us as we spend time "sewing threads of kindness" and fellowship. Call me for any information or questions at 256-266-1313.

SENIOR HEALTH

Special Enrollment Periods by Lynn Hixson

A Special Enrollment Period (SEP) allows you to change your Medicare Advantage Plan or your stand-alone Part D plan (PDP) outside of Medicare's regular enrollment periods. (You may also see these called Special "Election" Periods.)

If you qualify for an SEP, you can change your coverage outside of the Open Enrollment Period. You have the right to an SEP during specific and limited times.

Through March 31, if you are in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can make a one-time election to go to another Medicare Advantage plan or Original Medicare. If you want to go to Original Medicare during this period, you will have until March 31 to also join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan to add drug coverage or drop your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan completely. Your coverage will begin the first day of the month after the plan gets your enrollment form.

For help understanding SEPs and how an SEP might be applicable to you, contact your SHIP Counselor, Lynn Hixson, at the DeKalb County Council on Aging at 256-845-8590.

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February 2019 Community Calendar

Calendar entries are subject to change.

February 1— Little River Waterkeeper Pint Night Fundraiser at the Mentone Market. Evening of food, fun, and fundraising to support the ongoing work of the Little River Waterkeeper. The Mentone Market will donate \$1 on every pint sold. The money raised helps keep Little River clean for the community and future generations. Invite your friends and come to learn more about LRW's mission and to enjoy live music by Rob Bouchard. 5–9pm.

February 1, 2, 4, 7, 13, 15, 16, 20, 23, 25—Rappelling Adventure. Come experience the thrill of rappelling down the sheer sandstone gems of NE AL. Each trip includes all the gear plus basic instruction. True Adventure Sports. 10am–2pm. 256-997-9577.

February 1—Sculpt Your Own Flower. Have you ever wanted to actually sit at the gaffer bench and feel what it is like to shape hot glass? It's all about hands-on experience in a safe and fun atmosphere with a final product we know you will love. Orbix Hot Glass. Min. of 3 people and max. of 5 in each class. 1pm. Reservations are required. 256-523-3188.

February 1—Night Zip Line Adventure. All our zip lines are set up just before the adventure to ford a gorge or cross from one high point to another. Pre-registration required. True Adventure Sports. 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. 256-997-9577.

FEBRUARY 2 Happy Groundhog Day!

February 2, 16—Blow an Ornament. Come design and blow your own ornament with the help of one of our glass artists. No reservations are needed, it is on a first-come, first-served basis. 9am–2pm. Orbix Hot Glass. Cost is \$38 per ornament blown. 256-523-3188.

February 7-9, 11, 14-16—Children's Advocacy Center Annual Dinner Theater. The Children's Advocacy Center presents the 24th annual dinner theatre, "Happy Birthday Mama". The play will be held at the First United Methodist Church. Ticket prices vary and are by reservation only. For more information or tickets, 256-997-9700.

February 7, 18—Afternoon Rock Climb. Come experience first-hand what rock climbing is all about with guides who are fun, safe and energetic. This trip includes all the gear plus basic instruction. No prior climbing experience is needed. True Adventure Sports. 2–6pm. 256-997-9577.

February 8—Community Game Night. Bring your friends and family for an evening of playing a variety of board games at Moon Lake Community Library. Finger food potluck dishes are welcome. 6pm. 4607 AL Hwy. 117, Mentone. Free.

February 8, 16—Tumbler Glassblowing Class. This introductory glassblowing class teaches many fundamentals through the process of making a small tumbler (cup). Plenty of hands-on experience from choosing colors, gathering, paddling, blowing and shaping is gained in this four-hour experience. Class size is maximum of four students so everyone has adequate time at the bench working. Some safety material is provided before the class for you to review. Orbix Hot Glass. \$145. 2-4 students. Minimum age is 13 years old with parent. Reservations and full payment required. Call us at 256.523.3188 or email us at info@orbixhotglass.com for more information or to make a reservation.

February 9—Midnight Special: A Tribute to CCR. An iconic band that shaped the sound of the 60s and 70s, delivering hit song after hit song. Doors open at 6pm, show begins at 7pm. DeKalb Theatre, Fort Payne. Advance tickets \$10, day of show \$12, VIP tickets \$20 (includes select reserved seating, snacks, and drinks). 256-997-0396.

February 9—Paperweight Class. This class is designed for those who really just want see what molten glass is all about. Feel the heat, gather from the furnace, sculpt the glass into your own design. Orbix Hot Glass. Reservations required \$145 per person. 9am–1pm. 256-523-3188.

February 9, 19, 21, 28—Rock Climbing / Rappelling Adventure Combo. Come experience first-hand what rock climbing and rappelling is all about with guides who are fun, safe and energetic. This trip includes all the gear plus basic instruction. No prior climbing experience is needed. True Adventure Sports. 10am–2pm. 256-997-9577.

February 9—Alabama Ballet. "The Sleeping Beauty" presented by The Alabama Ballet! Tom Bevil Lyceum, Northeast Alabama Community College. 7pm. Tickets can be purchased online at nacc.edu. 256-638-4418 ext 2301.

February 12—Courtyard Concerts: "Silly Love Songs". Courtyard Concerts take place every 2nd and 4th Tuesday at The Courtyard (located beside the Historic DeKalb Theatre in Fort Payne). Featuring local and regional artists performing a variety of themes, styles, and genres. Admission is free. Gates open at 5:30pm, music begins just after 6pm. A cash bar is available, as well as food, drink, and merchandise. NOTE: In case of inclement weather, the concert will be held inside the theatre.

February 13, 20, 25—Rock Climbing Adventure. Come experience first-hand what rock climbing is all about with guides who are fun, safe and energetic. This trip includes all the gear plus basic instruction. No prior climbing experience is needed. 2–6pm. 256-997-9577.

FEBRUARY 14 Happy Valentine's Day!

February 14—Knot Class & Application. Introduction and instruction to essential knots and their application for camping, rappelling, rock climbing, outdoor survival, and other applications. True Adventure Sports. 1–5pm. 256-997-9577.

February 15—Valentine's Night Out Concert. Alabama Blues Hall of Famer Mr. Showman Bill Avery Band & Review. Classic Motown Blues from the 60s–90s. Advance tickets \$20/Door \$30. Bar will be open. Historic DeKalb Theatre, Fort Payne. 256-997-0396.

February 15—Paperweight Class. (See 2/9 for details.) Orbix Hot Glass. Reservations required \$145 per person. 12pm. 256-523-3188.

February 15—Sculpt Your Own Flower. (see 2/1 for details.) 10:30am. Reservations are required. 256-523-3188.

February 16—The Poems of Mary Oliver. Moon Lake Community Library will honor the life and language of celebrated poet Mary Oliver (1935-2019) with a casual poetry reading. Bring your favorite poem or essay to read, if you'd like. 10:30am. Moon Lake Library, 4607 AL Hwy. 117, Mentone.

February 18—Presidents' Day

February 23—Dutch Oven Cast-iron Cooking Demo. Dutch ovens have been in use for hundreds of years, especially when our country was expanding and families were on the move. Unable to bring their large cook stoves with them, women learned how to cook entire meals from stews & soups to bread & desserts, in their Dutch ovens. Learn the basics about Dutch ovens, how to clean & care for your cookware, AND cook (& eat!) dinner & dessert at the same time! Starts around 10am, located at JSU's Little River Canyon Center. This is a demonstration, so the best part is when food is just coming off the fire—drop in whenever you like & check out the food! 10am until the food runs out. JSU's Little River Canyon Center. Free. Call 256-845--3548 for details.

February 23—Moon Lake Library Book Club. Discussion of the book, "Where the Crawdads Sing" by Delia Owens. Please read the book in advance and come join in the discussion. 10:30am. Moon Lake Library, 4607 AL Hwy. 117, Mentone.

February 23—Little River Arts Council Membership Social & Open House. Open to all! Several artists will demonstrate their skills throughout the evening, and live music will be performed. Hors d'oeuvres will be served. 5–7:30pm. DeSoto State Park Lodge. littleriverartscouncil.org/events.

February 23—The Return: Tribute to the Beatles. Celebrate the 55th anniversary of the Fab Four's arrival to the U.S. Historic DeKalb Theatre, Fort Payne. Advance tickets \$20, day of show ticket price \$25. Doors open at 6pm, show starts at 7pm. 256-997-0396.

February 23—An Evening of Jazz. Dinner and a show, featuring Jacksonville State University's very own jazz ensemble. Little River Canyon Center. Doors at 6pm / show at 7pm. Cajun-style cuisine by Sweet T's Catering. Tickets \$45 in advance. Advance ticket price ends February 20. Tickets available at canyonconcerts.com. Table reservations & sponsorships contact 256-845-3548. Coolers welcome.

February 25—Author Talk: "New England Missions and Schools to the Cherokees 1820–1838." Co-author and historian Larry Smith will give a presentation on his newly released book. 6:30pm. Moon Lake Community Library, 4607 AL Hwy. 117, Mentone. Free.

February 26—Courtyard Concerts: "Mardi Gras". Courtyard Concerts take place every 2nd and 4th Tuesday at The Courtyard (located beside the Historic DeKalb Theatre in Fort Payne). Featuring local and regional artists performing all New Orleans music. Wear a costume if you'd like! Admission is free. Gates open at 5:30pm, music begins just after 6pm. A cash bar is available, as well as food, drink, and merchandise. NOTE: In case of inclement weather, the concert will be held inside the theatre.

February 28—Relaxation & Stress Management Introductory Session. Learn how to reduce stress and increase your ability to relax in a 4-week class that will be led by Joe Piscatelli in March. This evening is an introductory session. Classes will be held on a donation basis every Thursday in March. 6:30pm. Moon Lake Community Library, 4607 AL Hwy. 117, Mentone. Free.

February 28–29—Overnight Camping Skills Class. Most needed camping skills are brought to you as well as advanced skills such as how to find dry fuels, how to build a fire without smoke, how to start a fire without matches or flint, lean to construction, and safety barriers. True Adventure Sports. 5pm–9am. 256-997-9577.

Ongoing Calendar

Mentone Town Council meets the 2nd Tuesday every month at 5pm at Mentone Town Hall. Everyone is welcome.

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

Mentone Farmers Market is open year-round on Saturdays from 10am–1pm in the Town Square.

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

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.

Moon Lake Community Library is open on Saturdays from 9am–1pm, and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3–5pm. Enjoy complimentary coffee, wi-fi, and use of 2 computers. Visit moonlakelibrary.org for an online catalog.

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 4–8pm. Mentone Community Church, 90 Summerville Rd. 256-634-4210.

The Rhododendron Garden Club meets each month on the 2nd Tuesday at 10am. 'Green thumbs' and 'brown thumbs' welcome! 256-634-4403.

The Lookout Mountain Knitters meet each Tuesday at 3pm at Moon Lake Community Library. All are welcome.

Writing anyone? Point of the Pen is a small, supportive writing group that welcomes anyone to join us for a casual sharing time with other writers interested in life stories, poetry, and fiction. Come to Moon Lake Community Library on the 1st Thursday of each month at 3:15pm. Call 256-635-8775 for details.

Lookout Mountain Strummers mountain dulcimer group meets on alternate Thursdays at 1pm at St. Joseph's Episcopal Church. For a schedule and directions, send an email to normbaker194@gmail.com. Beginners are welcome.

Beginning yoga classes are taught by certified teacher Jamie Baugh on Wednesdays at 1pm. \$5. St. Joseph's Parish Hall, Mentone. 256-634-4476.

DeKalb Quilters meet every 4th Tuesday at 9:30am. Second Baptist Church in Fort Payne.

The DeKalb County Genealogical Society meets the 2nd Saturday of every month in the DeKalb County Public Library, 10am.

The Little River group of Alcoholics Anonymous meets every Saturday & every Tuesday night at 6pm at St. Joseph's on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church in Mentone. Both meetings are Open AA Discussion Meetings. Anyone who thinks they might have a problem with alcohol is welcome. Questions? Call 256-634-3060.

AL-ANON family and friends support group meets every Tuesday at 6pm at St. Joseph's on-the-Mountain Church in Mentone. Same time and location as the AA Meeting.

Hope AA/NA, a Christian-based support group, meets each Friday at 6pm at Church of God of Prophecy on Hwy. 117 in Mentone.

Exercise Room is open at the Fort Payne Senior Center each week, Monday through Friday (except for certain holidays), from 8am to noon. 600 Tyler Ave. SE, Fort Payne. 256-845-8590.

Free Low Impact Fitness Class is held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:30–10am at the Fort Payne Senior Center. 600 Tyler Ave. SE, Fort Payne. 256-845-8590.

Ballroom dancing lessons are offered at the Fort Payne Senior Center on Mondays from 6–8pm. Call 662-213-2401 to register.

Line dancing lessons are offered at the Fort Payne Senior Center on Tuesdays from 1:30–2:30pm (beginners) and 2:30–3:30pm (experienced). 256-845-8590.

Bowling League for Seniors at Mountain Lanes in Rainsville. Wednesdays at 1pm. 256-638-1710.

Ceramics/Pottery Club meets at the Fort Payne Senior Center on Tuesdays and Fridays 9am–12pm. New students meet Mondays & Wednesdays 9am–12pm. 600 Tyler Ave. SE,

Fort Payne. 256-845-8590.

Bridge Club meets at the Fort Payne Senior Center on Wednesdays and Thursdays 12:30–3:30pm. 600 Tyler Ave. SE, Fort Payne. 256-845-8590.

Round Dancing is held the Fort Payne Senior Center on Tuesdays 5–8:30pm. The cost is \$5/class. New students can start in February with FREE admission for the month. 600 Tyler Ave. SE, Fort Payne. Call 256-244-5320 to register.

Calendar entries are subject to change.

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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 9am and is led by Pastor Carol Gullatt. Sunday School is at 10am. The service of Holy Communion is held the first Sunday of each month and fifth Sundays are a service of music. 415 Cutler Avenue. 256-634-8006.

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

St. Joseph's on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church welcomes everyone to 10:30am Sunday service of Holy Eucharist. Open for daily prayer and thanksgiving. Supporting our community with outreach. 256-634-4476. 21145 Scenic Highway. stjosephmountain.dioala.org.

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 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.



Love bears all things,
believes all things,
hopes all things,
endures all things.

1st Corinthians 13:7

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 the Woodmen of the World 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 (Eastern) and Worship at 10am (Eastern). 150 Partain Road.

Menlo, Georgia

Alpine Community Church Pastor and Rev. Rodney Blaylock welcome each and every one to worship service Sunday morning at 11am GA time; Sunday School 10am GA time; Wednesday night Bible Study 7pm GA time. 115 Hwy. 337. 706-862-6641.

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

Menlo Presbyterian Church (ECO) invites everyone to attend services with us. Sunday School at 10am (Eastern) and Worship Service at 11:15am (Eastern). 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; Chosen Generation Youth 6:30pm. Sundays: Sunday School 9:30am; Morning Celebration 10:30am. Pastors Dr. David & Penny Reeves. 174 West First Avenue. 706-808-0909.

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



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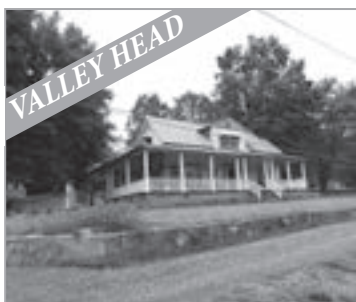


Holly Watson-Houston
Assoc. REALTOR®
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Office: (256) 634-4767



VALLEY HEAD
ANTEBELLUM FARMHOUSE with mountain views. Some of the rooms have been restored to original style & grace; other rooms redone in a more eclectic style. High ceilings, original pine floors, fireplaces (non-working), architectural details aplenty inside & out. 4BR/4BA. Picturesque outbuilding believed to have been the cook house. There's still work to be done, but the price is right at only \$89,000 (1101135)



MENTONE
IRIS MEADOWS FARM. Beautifully-updated, one-level cottage; 3BR/3BA; on 8 delightful acres of pasture & woodland, w/ small pond, seasonal waterfall, fruit trees & 22'x24' workshop w/ pavilion area. This place offers space indoors & out. Location perfect for road-side commercial endeavor for the farm or shop. Land is unrestricted & mostly fenced. Cottage features fab kitchen w/ lots of counter & cabinets; wide-plank pine floors throughout; inviting dining nook w/ built-in benches around hand-made plank table. Large dog kennel area attached to house. Not too much land, not too little. \$274,900 (1109864)



NEW LISTING
A TRUE ORIGINAL. Handcrafted details & locally-sourced woods; fireplaces on the porch & in living area; twin-tree kitchen island; poplar beams; wide plank pine floors; stone elements...this is a mountain cabin befitting of its name, "Knotty Pines"! Rugged good looks & all the creature comforts. 3BR/2BA; front & back porches. Most of the furnishings stay, too. 1.53 wooded acres. Why settle for less than extraordinary? \$225,000. (1110729)

LOTS and LAND

DESOTO FALLS AREA LAKEFRONT LOT with approx. 94' 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! So much natural beauty, so rarely available. \$155,000 (355152)

30 ACRES (+/-) IN MENTONE of mostly hardwood forest, some pastureland. Slight slope to offer a great elevation for future cabins, a farm, hunting cabin or whatever your Mentone dream dictates. \$105,000 (\$3,500 per acre)

OWNER FINANCING AVAILABLE! **2 WOODED ACRES** with a tiny little rustic one-room camping cabin (no plumbing, water or septic installed). Sort of a getaway or place to stay until you're ready to build your mountain home. Restricted. \$39,700 (1034503)

SOUTH COOL STREET brow-front property w/beautiful old stone chimney, part of the foundation, plus a small garage. New survey. An original Mentone summer home once stood here; owned by the same family since early 1920s. Approx 0.45 acre lot in an area where properties are seldom available. Build your own memories! \$125,000 (1070474)

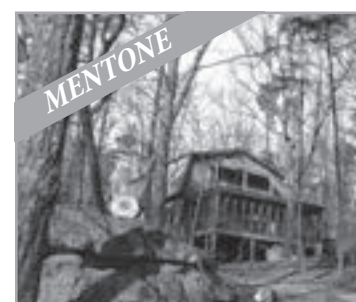
EASTERN LOOKOUT MTN'S EDGE, expansive views, gorgeous sunrises. 1-acre lot w/ approx 120' brow frontage; paved road; public water. Driveway tile already in place. Just right for your mountain home or getaway. Lake on the Brow Subdivision allows for use of lakes in common areas. Only a mile or so from famed Little River Canyon Nat'l Preserve, Jacksonville Center & favorite swimming holes of Little River. Less than 15 minutes to Ft Payne. \$59,900 (1088539)



MENTONE
"ALMOST HEAVEN." This one ticks all the boxes! Charm? Yup. Location? Yup. Price? Yup. So many possibilities, too! Residence? Getaway? Rental? Gallery or shop? Maybe a combination of all! This place is move-in ready! Built in 1940, with the heart-pine walls, floors & ceilings intact. Quaint "wavy board" exterior from local sawmill. 3BR/1BA. Furnished. 13x12 shop w/ A/C; 2-car detached carport; \$155,000 (1110622)



MENTONE
DEFINITELY NOT A TINY HOME! 3875 sq ft, bungalow-style home, w/ 1900+ sq ft basement gives you space seldom found in Mentone. Ideal for family gatherings, retreats, possible B&B, multi-family home... well, whatever your inspiration can come up with! Pine floors throughout; wood ceilings accented by solid beams in spacious, open dining/kitchen. 6BR/2BA. Upgrades underway: new windows & exterior trim color change. \$250,000 (1104553)



MENTONE
"THE BURREN." Snuggled into intriguing rock formations, huge boulders & woods on 1.9 acres, you'll find this 3BR/2.5BA mountain retreat, just off DeSoto Pkwy. Metal roof; screened porch; wood-burning mountain stone fireplace (great for these chilly winter days & nights); private back deck w/ new hot tub; 2nd floor balconies. Large screened porch offers expanded living area outdoors. Active vacation rental with great rental history! \$185,000 (1087665)



MENTONE
SOMETIMES IT'S THE SMALL THINGS that make life good! And if you're looking for a personal retreat that could also be used as a rental, this could be the cabin for you! Combination of rustic & civilized elements: HW floor & mtn stone, WB fireplace in LR; spacious BR; galley kitchen; shower bath; CH/A; lg laundry; new roof; updated ext paint; HUGE screen porch with hot tub; timber-frame pavilion that could be made into a studio or garage. \$129,000 (1104545)



MENTONE
HMM. WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE? A cute little board-n-batten cabin. 1BR/1BA with loft bonus room. Great location between downtown Mentone & DeSoto State Park. Yes, it could use a bit of fixing up here & there. But, this cabin has an extra lot to sweeten the deal! Approx 1.8 acres in all, with great frontage on DeSoto Parkway. (Cabin is built on Rd 934, which is a quiet little road off the parkway). Cabin & 1-acre bonus lot priced at \$149,000. (1107800).



MENTONE
THREE FEATHERS RANCH was the name given this beautiful, 34-acre (+/-) Mentone property featuring a 3BR/2BA house with 2 bonus rooms and a bath in finished basement! Land is approx 1/2 woods & 1/2 pasture, fenced & cross-fenced; 2 small ponds; tractor shed; picturesque ranch entry way with gently-curving driveway leading to house. Satisfying views of pond & pasture from house's full front porch. Located about halfway between Mentone and Alpine area near DeSoto State Park. This is definitely something to get excited about! Not many properties like this come on the market at Mentone. Priced at \$299,900. (1107782)



RELAX, IT'S "MOUNTAIN TIME." You've worked hard for it, you're ready to unwind. Here's that cabin filled with rustic flavor & mountain charm. All-wood interior, open living area, kitchen, dining room, w/ a fireplace, a porch & a back porch for just kicking back with no worries. Laurel Creek offers 3 lakes and well-kept walking trails to explore wildflowers & native plant life. A sweet package, a sweet price. \$173,900 (1089804)



SOUTHERN PROPERTIES

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311 Gault Ave. N., Fort Payne

NEW



QUAINT DOWNTOWN BUNGALOW
Looking for a new owner to enjoy the character and charm it offers. Built in 1910, the house has been fully restored, updated, and expanded. GREAT location on a quiet street. \$174,900. MLS# 1108601

NEW



NEW CONSTRUCTION! Don't miss your chance to customize the finishes in this new cabin now under construction in Mentone. Covered front porch, screened back porch, 2 bedrooms, 2-1/2 baths, laundry, open kitchen and living with corner gas log fireplace unit. If you're looking for just the right place...call now to make this home all your own! \$179,000. MLS#1109748.

REDUCED



MENTONE BROW HOME! 2BR/2BA brow home with tons of character! Enjoy all the extras like hardwood floors, rustic wood walls, gas log fireplace & more. Being sold furnished. Call today! \$295,000. MLS #1076700



VINTAGE BUNGALOW, completely remodeled, zoned Commercial/Residential w/250' on Hwy 117. Bright & sturdy 1940's-era, 3BR/1BA gem. Wood walls; period trim details. Updated with new electrical, plumbing, floors & cabinets. \$125,000. MLS#1046940.



JUST MINUTES FROM MENTONE & 1.5 mi. from DeSoto State Park. "Stone's Throw" offers 3BR/2BA with tons of extras! \$189,000. MLS#1089979.



Mentone Cottage! Fully remodeled spacious two bedroom with bath in each room and additional half bath. This home comes completely furnished and just in time for the beautiful Fall season. Property has been used as resort rental and can easily transition to your primary residence. Only \$179,900! MLS#1102065.



THE HISTORIC CRAGSMERE MANOR on 5+ acres serves as rental lodging and/or event hosting. Perfect setting for large or small groups, 6BR/4BA, Large kitchen, dining, and living area, covered pavilion. \$699,000. MLS#1066481



QUAINT DOWNTOWN bungalow looking for a new owner to enjoy the character and charm it offers. \$174,900. MLS# 1108601.



CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE in Mentone... Fifty breathtaking acres surround you in this one-of-a-kind property. Call today for your private tour! \$734,900. MLS#1070805



GREAT BEGINNINGS & OPTIONS are endless in Mentone with an unfinished home! Approximately 4,800 sq ft on 7.5 acres. Great investment opportunity to create a neighborhood of cabins leading to the Owner's Estate or Common Gathering Area. Great Investment Opportunity, especially with the growth of the Mentone Resort area! \$165,000. MLS#1099079.



WORKING POULTRY FARM with approx. 16 acres! Two 42x500 operating Pullet houses built in 2006. Houses operate on well water with city water back-up. Contract currently with Pilgrim's Pride. Property has pond and fencing. 25x50 3-bay shed. 3BR, 2BA house with carport built in 1970 also on the property. \$279,000. MLS#1096127.



GORGEOUS COUNTRY SETTING with a Modern 1-level, 4BR/3 Full BR home. Built in 2014! Open floor plan with a split bedroom design. Many upscale touches include a wood-burning fireplace that heats the home through the central unit duct work, full stainless steel appliance package, crown molding, tile flooring, security system. \$365,000. MLS#1099363.



BLUEBIRDS NEST Located in Laurel Creek Lakes, nestled on a wooded corner lot w/ a small lake in the back yard. Screened porch, open kitchen/dining/living area w/ custom features throughout. Gas log fireplace w/ stone surround, main floor master bedroom w/ vaulted ceiling & sitting area. Spacious laundry room w/ storage, main level bath w/ more storage. \$189,900. MLS#1099514.



3.3 ACRES of historic property in the heart of Mentone. Starting at \$325,000. Call for details. MLS#1045206.



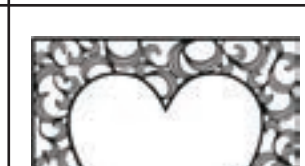
CUSTOM LOG CABIN in Mentone with breathtaking BROW views that will give you all the "feels"...Exposed beam ceilings, rock fireplace, office with view, sleeping loft, 2 bedrooms with 2 full baths, and a large back deck that will satisfy all your entertaining needs. This cabin is well maintained and MOVE-IN ready! Call TODAY for your private tour! \$344,000. MLS# 1103561.



BREATHTAKING BROW VIEWS! Entertain and watch the amazing sunset from your large private deck. This tri-level brow home has so much to offer including, three bedrooms, two bathrooms, wood floors throughout, vaulted ceilings, rock fireplace, and sun room. Call TODAY for your private tour! \$295,000. MLS#1104411.



A unique business opportunity in the heart of Mentone! Largest retail property in this tourist-oriented resort community w/ 4,931sq.ft. Fully furnished property with equipment, furniture and fixtures. The building currently accommodates a coffee bar, restaurant, office space, art gallery, live music and approved for an alcohol license. Only \$295,000! MLS#1102896.



**We would love to move you in 2019.
Call us today!**

LOTS & LAND

#1014183—1.5 acres. Brow Lot on CR 89. \$124,900.

#1021165—2-acre lot offering lake and brow footage. \$59,900.

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

#1039769—6.32+/- waterfront building lot in Mountain River Estates! \$49,950.

#1065542—90 acres on Co. Rd. 89 in Mentone. **REDUCED TO \$299,000.**

#1065504—One acre on Co. Rd. 89 in Mentone. **REDUCED TO \$125,000.**

#1070628—3.01 acres. 152' on west Fork of Little River. \$49,700.

#1070629—3.01 acres. 152' on West Fork of Little River. \$59,500.

#1073864—Brow Lot! .78 acres. **REDUCED TO \$94,900.**

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

#1076286—1.75 acre building lot in West Fork Subdivision. \$42,000.

#1078002—Brow view, 4.4 acres. **REDUCED TO \$89,500.**

#1078140—18.3 acres, unrestricted, partially wooded! \$66,800.

#1079713—Gorgeous lot in Mentone with .81+/- acres in Hunter's Ridge Subdivision. \$15,000.

#1080922—.54 acres, Mentone Bluffs. \$64,900.

#1083789—2.11 acres with 300' of waterfront in beautiful West Fork Subdivision. \$39,500.

#1092235—Building lot in Laurel Creek Lakes. \$24,500.

#1100905—A RARE FIND! Don't miss the opportunity to own 239 rolling wooded acres in Mentone with multiple pond sites, streams and abundant wildlife and "trophy deer"... \$669,200.

#1108339— Better Than a Bargain... this is a STEAL! Build your dream home here... on this 1.20 brow lot in Mentone with amazing views! Don't hesitate on this outstanding opportunity. Call TODAY for more details. \$99,000.

#1107397—Build here! \$99,900.

#1107398—Build here! \$99,900.

#1107408—Build here! \$99,900.

#1107412—Build here! \$99,900.

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February in Mentone's history...

Compiled by Annette Stone

1984

MAPA meeting was held at the Hitching Post. Resident Rand Still was thanked for his assisting Jean McGehee by taking her to the printers in Summerville during inclement weather. This made it possible to get *The Groundhog* to print in time for mailing.

1985

At the meeting of the Town Council, town employee Leroy Snider was commended for working far beyond the routine requirements during the recent cold weather. On the morning when temperatures hit -22 degrees below zero, Mr. Snider walked the water lines and checked meters, looking for any leaks in the water pipes.

Source: Groundhog archives

1990

"The bottom fell out" on February 15 as over 10" of rainfall in a few hours caused some residents to seek higher ground. DeKalb County schools were closed for the day, as the roads were impassable and school buses were unable to navigate the roads and bridges.

1992

MAPA and *The Groundhog* celebrate 10 years in Mentone.
Approximately 70 Athletes from the Special Olympics took to the slopes of Cloudmont for the 4th annual Ski Clinic and Competition.
Cellular phone service comes to Mentone. Company representative Morgan Weeks is quoted saying, "A car phone can do anything your house phone can do."

When I Am Among the Trees

by Mary Oliver (1935-2019)

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you too have come
into the world to do this,
to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine."

Menlo Restaurant

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Thursday, February 14

Enjoy a
dinner for 2

Ribeye Steaks
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The Groundhog
was conceived
by a group of
Mentone residents
on Groundhog
Day (February 2),
1982.

Celebrate our mascot with this
word search puzzle. Do your best
to find and circle the words listed
below. (Look forwards, backwards,
up, down, and diagonally!)

BURROW
DEN
FORECAST
GROUNDHOG
HIBERNATE
MARMOT
PREDICTION
SHADOW
SPRING
SUNSHINE
UNDERGROUND
WINTER
WOODCHUCK

Celebrate the Groundhog!

O	T	B	R	D	S	J	S	W	H	W	S	S	N	G
E	Z	S	J	P	B	H	F	D	I	J	F	W	I	R
E	W	G	A	C	R	V	A	D	K	Y	N	Y	X	O
N	D	C	V	C	M	E	U	D	L	B	C	D	S	U
I	Y	K	C	S	E	Y	D	H	O	K	C	T	P	N
H	T	D	R	Y	P	R	I	I	S	W	A	C	R	D
S	Y	K	U	L	F	B	O	Y	C	K	A	L	I	H
N	E	D	Z	O	E	E	L	F	V	T	T	Q	N	O
U	N	D	E	R	G	R	O	U	N	D	I	W	G	G
S	D	O	N	I	K	C	U	H	C	D	O	O	W	P
C	F	A	V	B	L	J	C	L	W	R	T	I	N	J
P	T	W	M	X	V	P	E	M	R	K	N	K	O	O
E	C	A	B	E	A	Y	B	U	W	T	A	A	A	V
M	A	R	M	O	T	U	B	B	E	A	J	Q	H	O
S	I	H	K	T	J	V	E	R	N	E	P	P	I	V

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- SUNDAY BRUNCH**—For an all-you-can-eat Sunday brunch that you'll be telling all your friends about, enjoy the new, improved Lookout Restaurant in Cloudland at the intersection of Hwy. 48 and 157. Serving from 11am until 3pm EST. Call 706-862-3060 for details.
- 23.5 ACRES FOR SALE** north of Mentone with stream, well, and septic. Great pasture. Call 256-276-8422.
- WALL BEDS** (Murphy Bed style)—We have all size Wall Beds. Great for spare room and small areas. Come see our showroom in Collinsville, AL on Hwy 68 at the Alabama Mattress Outlet. Store 9–5 Mon.–Sat. Call 256-523-3622 or Andy Crow 256-490-4025.
- HOUSE FOR SALE**—1-bedroom house on approximately 1 acre in Cloudland. Great workshop and storage area. Quiet neighborhood. Ideal for craftsman or artist. For details, or to see, call 706-862-2814.
- VALENTINE FEAST**—Executive Chef Chuck Lopopolo and Pastry Chef Cynthia Lopopolo will be serving a special Valentine feast at the new and improved Lookout Restaurant on Thursday, February 14. Call 706-862-3060 for details and reservations. You and your sweetheart will be glad you did.
- COX TILE**—Sunrooms, marble, baths, shower pan repair. James Pleas Cox, 706-766-2758, jpcxotile1@gmail.com.
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Mentone Mountain Getaways
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Mentone Town Hall
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Plowshares Bistro
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Chamber of Commerce
Days Inn
DeKalb County Library
DeKalb Tourism
DeSoto State Park Lodge
DSP Country Store
First Fidelity Bank
Fischer X-Roads Store
Hampton Inn
Holiday Inn
Huddle House
Priceless IGA
Quality Inn
"S"-House Antiques
Southern Gold & Silver
Southern Properties
The Spot Coffee Shop
The Strand
Waffle House
Waffle King | Dave's Antiques
Headquarters Beauty Salon
Tigers Inn
Valley Head Drugs
Valley Head Food Mart
Valley Head Town Hall
Water Board |
| FORT PAYNE
Alabama Fan Club
Big Mill & Vintage 1889 | VALLEY HEAD/
HAMMONDVILLE
Alabama Organics
Bell Battelle
Citizens Bank | GEORGIA
BJ's State Line Store
Ingles
Jim's Family Restaurant
Judy's Herb Shop
Little River Escape Tiny Homes
Menlo Handi Mart
Menlo Healthmart
Menlo Lucky's
Menlo Town Hall
Menlo Restaurant
Mountain Top Country Store
Reece Tire
The Lookout Restaurant
The Vineyard Cafe |
| | | OTHER
Alabama I-59 Welcome Center
Little River Canyon Center
Rim of the Canyon Café
& Grocery |

Rhododendron Festival

Apply online at
mapamentone.com

Saturday May 18 • 9am–5pm AND Sunday May 19 • 9am–4pm

Vendor Application **Deadline March 8, 2018** • 12x12 Spaces
Do Not Send Payment at this time. Notification by email on March 20 will also include payment due date and payment options. If you don't receive notification, please check your spam folder before contacting us.

Type of space: ☐ Art/Craft maker ☐ Food Vendor ☐ Organization

Name _____ Business Name _____

Email address _____ Cell Phone or other Phone _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Number of 12x12 Spaces needed _____ Facebook and/or Website Address _____

Art & Craft Makers \$100 *All Art Must Be Handmade By The Artist. NO Ready-Made Merchandise Is Allowed.*

Medium / Product _____

Please provide photos of your work to: MentoneColorfest@gmail.com or provide a current Website/Facebook address above. Digital photos emailed are preferred to mailing. Your application will be declined if there is no way to view your work. Please put Last Name of Contact on pictures sent.

Food Vendors \$105 List all food & drink _____

If using a trailer: Length, include tongue _____ Serving window side: ☐ Driver's side ☐ Passenger Side

☐ WATER add \$25 ☐ ELECTRICITY *To avoid outages, electricity is reserved for food vendors and those who require it to show and demonstrate their Art or Craft. (i.e., not for lighting or fans). No generators will be allowed.* 110V (\$25) Number of duplex outlets needed _____ 220V (\$50) Number of duplex outlets needed _____

Requests Our Festival Venue is somewhat primitive with uneven ground, porta potties, no parking at vendor spaces, and outdoor weather. *We will do our best to accommodate on a case-by-case basis.*

Requests/Special Needs & Handicap Accessibility _____

We reserve the right to limit the number of vendors within a category or to deny an application. Notification of acceptance by email on September 2 will also include payment due date and payment options. Please Do Not Send Payment at this time. All times are Central time. You may set up your space on Friday 11am–5pm, or Saturday 6:30–8:30am. You **must** be set up both days. You may break down beginning at 4pm on Sunday—no earlier. Spaces will be assigned about a week prior to the festival. Festivals are strictly arts and crafts; therefore, no political or religious organizations will be accepted.

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Performer Application **Deadline April 9, 2018**

Performers are selected through an application process. We pay a small stipend of \$50 per performer. Performances are 45 minutes long and will be spaced to allow time before performance and after performance for set up and take down. We will also provide a table close by where you can have someone to sell CDs, etc.

Contact Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Type or Genre _____ Group Name _____

Name/s of Performers _____

Website Address _____ Facebook Page _____

Address _____ City State Zip _____

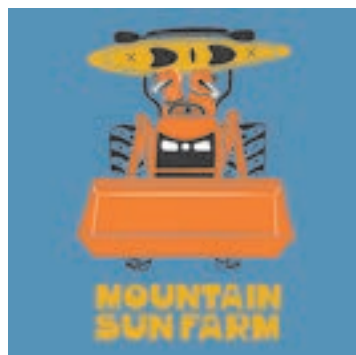
A short biography (100 words or less) that we can use for promotional purposes. _____

Notification of acceptance will be on April 12. Only the application is necessary if you performed in 2018 at a MAPA Festival, unless you would like to use a different bio or picture.

We appreciate the effort to submit the following:

1. This application
2. A picture to be used for media. Email to rhododendronfestival@gmail.com OR Mail to: MAPA, PO Box 50, Mentone, AL 35984
3. A performance sample. This could be a CD OR video OR a link to Facebook, or website, or YouTube. It will to be used for our selection process.

Vendors and Performer Applications should be mailed to MAPA, P. O. Box 50, Mentone, AL 35984.
Please email rhododendronfestival@gmail.com with any questions.



Mountain Sun Farm Is Thriving on an Unusual Piece of Land

by Kelly Leavitt

How does a private air strip become a commercial certified organic farm? With the vision and determination of two young farmers—Liz and Brian Simpson. After

operating Southern Foothills Farm on leased land in Oneonta for three years, they knew their ultimate goal was to farm on their own land.

“We looked for land all over Alabama. We were primarily looking for good soil, and we wanted to be near outdoor recreation. Before we moved to Mentone, we would wake up at 3 a.m. each Saturday, put in a half day selling produce in Birmingham, then drive to Mentone to go hiking. We didn’t think we’d buy land up here. We’d looked at a couple of other places here, but they didn’t work out, for various reasons. We hadn’t paid attention to this land because the real estate photo was of an airplane. We skipped past it every time we were looking at land.”

Why an airplane? Liz explained that the land, which had an air strip built on it long ago, was sold at auction 11 years ago to two brothers, one of whom was a real estate agent in Georgia. Apparently, he had hoped to subdivide the 34 acres and sell 10 parcels to people from Atlanta who would could fly their personal planes directly to their getaway homes, which would be built around the air strip. After 10 years, though, the land hadn’t sold, and the Simpsons were able to buy it at a

price that worked for them. “The soil type was the same soil on the land we’d been leasing in Oneonta,” said Liz. “It’s a sandy loam, so that’s good for us. Plus, it was the flattest piece of property we saw in all of Alabama.”

Their dream of owning a farm was realized in 2017 and they aptly named it Mountain Sun Farm. With their beloved dogs, Rosa and Hank, by their sides, they immediately went to work to prepare the land, build a greenhouse and pole barn, install electricity, and drill for water. They have been farming on about 4-1/2 acres since spring 2018, with the help of a few part-time helpers. According to mountainsunfarm.com, “Our farming methods prioritize ecological diversity and improving soil quality through intensive cover cropping, crop rotation, natural fertilizers, promoting beneficial insects, trap cropping, and only using natural pesticides that are not synthetic, not persistent, and do not have unpreventable high toxicity to non-target organisms.”

Liz and Brian are middle-school sweethearts. “I sat in front of him in math

class and he rode his electric scooter past my house and the rest is history!” said Liz. They both attended Auburn University, where she studied fruit and vegetable production, and he studied environmental chemistry and microbiology. After graduating, they worked on successful and established organic farms to gain some hands-on experience. It was during this time that Brian learned how to grow shitake and oyster mushrooms, and the couple eventually began selling their harvest at Birmingham’s popular Pepper Place Market and at Whole Foods.

Their experience as farmers and businesspeople helped them feel confident about starting their own certified organic farm. Liz explained it costs a bit more

to be certified, but that it’s important to them. Their web site thoroughly explains the farm’s organic practices. Liz and Brian are in the process of building a large barn which will hold walk-in coolers where they can store their produce. They’re also installing a public bathroom for future events on the farm. The young farmers hope to plant blueberries one day soon, so people can pick their own. Four thousand strawberry plants have been started this season and they’ll start seeding other plants in their greenhouse in mid-February. Because the cost of labor is so high, this year they are hoping to be able to do all of the work themselves. They currently wholesale to Whole Foods (4 locations), Earth Fare (3 locations), and Piggly Wiggly (2 locations) and in April will resume selling at Pepper Place Market on Saturday mornings.

Currently, Mountain Sun Farm is promoting a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) weekly pre-paid produce subscription for those who wish to get their produce directly from the farm.

CSAs are popular across the country as a way for communities to directly support their local farmers. “The CSA is a different way of supporting local food,” explained Liz. “It kind of forces you to get in touch with your food because each week you know more food is coming, and if you don’t eat it then it’s going to go to waste. That’s the top complaint of people who join CSAs, that they don’t use all the food. So we’re trying to do a smaller share size. CSAs are good for people who enjoy trying a variety of items and experiment with their cooking and learn to enjoy new vegetables.” The plan and lists of weekly shares are listed on their web site. “We don’t want to rule anyone out because of cost,” said Liz. “We want it to be accessible to everyone, so they can let us know what would fit in their budget. We can work with anyone on that.”

Liz’s final thought? “We love being able to take a long lunch and go for a hike with our dogs. It’s a perfect way of life for us.” Clearly, Mountain Sun Farm is thriving atop Lookout Mountain.

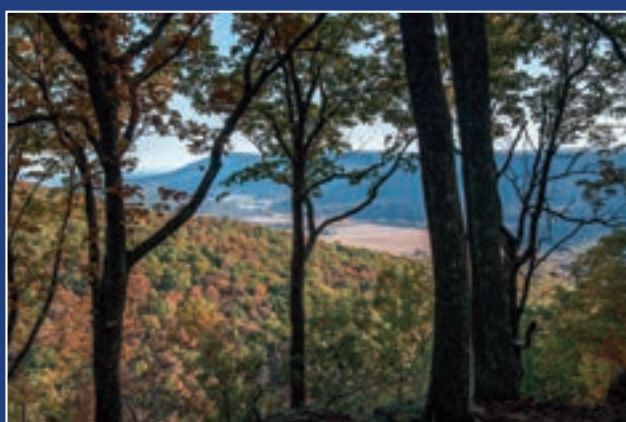


Liz direct seeds radishes onto a raised bed



Summer vegetable crops, with Sunn hemp cover crop in the background.

Two brow lots overlooking McLemore Cove



- 5-plus acres each
 - Adjacent to 20,000 acres of protected land
 - Level
 - 270 feet of brow frontage
- \$95,000 each**



Please call
John Martin
423-903-2450
Jeremy McDowell
706-506-0715



Fletcher Bright Realty
537 Market Street, Suite 400
Chattanooga, TN 37402
Office 423-752-0188
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