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THE GROUNDHOG

Mentone, Valley Head, Hammondville

Volume 29, No. 01

"Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain"

January 2010

Sue McLaurin Henry *A Woman of Wisdom and Grace*

by Bill Berry

Sue McLaurin Henry was a 17-year-old freshman at Mississippi State College for Women when she was hired as tennis instructor for Camp DeSoto's 1948 camping season. Although their policy required counselors to be at least 19 years of age, camp directors Norma Bradshaw and Bess Herron saw something special in the young Sue Henry. Little did they know that this exception to their rule signaled a pivotal moment in Sue's life ... and in the history of Camp DeSoto.

Sue had grown up in the Mississippi delta town of Rosedale, amid a flat agricultural landscape distinctly different from the more rugged terrain of Lookout Mountain. She recalled glimpsing Camp DeSoto for the first time, thinking to herself "this really is camp." As the summer of 1949 approached and Sue contemplated returning for a second season, she weighed the alternative option of participating in a Baptist Student Union missions program. Her mother pointed out that camp is also a mission, a simple statement that inspired and sustained the purpose and meaning behind Sue's then-developing mission in life.

Sue returned to Camp DeSoto during each subsequent summer, and in 1951 she became the camp's assistant program director, working alongside Bess and Brad during camping seasons and teaching in a series of academies across the South during off-seasons. She rose to the position of academic dean at one of these academies.

Her purchase of Camp DeSoto in 1978 sustained the philosophies and traditions established by her predecessors. Campers and counselors flourished under Sue's leadership, which was characterized by quiet wisdom and selfless grace. She dutifully practiced what she preached, exemplifying in her own life a spirit of simplicity and humility reflected by her frequent comment that "Too much of a good thing is not a good thing." Her economy of words imparted value to each remark, and for decades Sue's words illuminated the Camp DeSoto family in both their personal lives and their spiritual lives. As former camper and counselor Margaret Rose notes, Sue "was not interested in who we pretended to be but who we really were and what we might become as children of God. Hers was a deep listening which called forth and drew us to ourselves."



Sue's many familiar quotations defined her life and philosophy, and they will always remain part of the Camp DeSoto legacy. Her pithy sayings are perhaps best summed up by the eight words with which she concluded daily staff meetings: "Have a good day, give a good day." Although simple, these words serve both to recognize and to encourage the goodness that Sue saw in each person and in each day. Sue's distinctive perspectives on human relationships and life pur-

poses could be defined by four themes - justice, service, peace, love - that she consistently promoted through her words, actions, and instruction. She felt campers should depart Camp DeSoto with a functional understanding of those themes that could be gained only by their practical application, promoted through opportunities for active camper involvement with and service to individuals in the local community.

Sue assured a smooth transition when she sold Camp DeSoto to current codirectors Phil and Marsha Hurt in 1991. For the next three summers she pursued a new direction in her commitment to service by working as a volunteer in the Kentucky-based Christian Appalachian Project, assisting with a wide variety of training programs and practical activities.

Through the ensuing years she remained a vital part of camp in her role as director emerita, visiting frequently to lend a listening ear and sage advice. On opening days she held court on the gym lawn, greeting her many camping friends who were revitalized by an annual moment of reunion with their friend and mentor.

During the summer of 2009, her chair was vacant. After a brief illness Sue Henry passed away on June 4, just two days before camp opened. A definite sense of peace enveloped the camp staff as they prepared to greet campers, knowing that Sue's legacy would forever be a vital component of Camp DeSoto. And although her chair remained empty, the strength of her character continued to permeate and inspire the experiences and lessons of the camping season.

On a sunny Saturday in early August, almost 500 people gathered on the gym lawn, atop the crest from which the grounds of Camp DeSoto slope in all directions. Songs of worship and praise accompanied spoken tributes to Sue's life, faith, and wisdom. Current and former campers, many dressed in the camp's traditional Sunday whites, were among the diverse assembly of friends from far and near.

This diversity reflected Sue's range of influence, which extended well beyond the gates of Camp DeSoto. A longtime resident of Mentone, she participated in church, school, and civic events and contributed enormously of her time and talent to individuals and organizations. During the past decade much of her charitable work focused on the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation (MERF), of which she served as board president for many years. Sue's MERF-related outreach included tutoring students of Moon Lake Elementary School and making sure their teachers were able to attend workshops and conduct field trips, organizing and promoting senior lunches on spring and autumn Wednesdays, and actively seeking opportunities for other community-based programs and services.

MERF is establishing the Sue McLaurin Henry Scholarship, to be funded initially by memorial gifts and perpetually by future designated gifts. Since education was such



Continued on page 12

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RAMBLIN: WHO IS COLLEGE FOOTBALL'S NUMBER 1 TEAM?

By Bill Crane

Who is college football's number one team now? I know what you are going to say! And I agree with you. The way they, and their Heisman Trophy Winner, blasted Florida should convince everyone who is the bet. Since the last game has not been played there are some who claim that Texas, or TCU, or Boise State is number one. I would expect Alabama to blast Texas as much as they did Florida. That should settle any argument.

Who is responsible for Alabama's success? Not the coach, in my opinion. It looks to me like anyone could guide that bunch of superior athletes. My choice for the person, or group, that is responsible for the success of the team are the recruiters, especially the one that recruited the offensive line. Have you noticed the holes that Ingram has to run through most of the time? I have, and he should give him, or them, credit for a large part of his success. If they give recruiters Heisman Trophies he, or they, would receive it, in my opinion.

The bowl game will be interesting. When all are over there will still be two undefeated teams in Division I, Alabama, Texas, TCU, or Boise State. Which do you pick to stay undefeated?

There are other sport areas that are interesting, amazing and unusual. The Pro Football group has two unbeaten teams in Indianapolis and New Orleans, and it looks like they will stay unbeaten through the regular season. The Colts have one of the Manning boys as quarterback, while the Saints have a super quarterback in Brees. It will be most interesting to see which is better when they play in the Super Bowl. It is difficult now for me to pick one as the best.

College basketball has its surprises. It looks like the Kentucky Wildcats are back playing like they did years ago. North Carolina, the defending national champs, aren't as good as last year. So they will lot the crown to someone unknown at this point. The Pro Basketball group has its surprises too. The Lakers are like the North Carolina team, not as good this year as last. One team, the New Jersey Nets lost their first 18 games before winning one. The Atlanta Hawks, the usual doormats, have a good team this year and will make the playoffs.

One sport that is not unusual is Pro Soccer. The Atlantic Coast Conference dominates this sport like no other. Three of the Final Four in the playoff this year were from that conference, with one, Virginia, winning it.

Speaking of playoffs, I am still in favor of a playoff system for college football. But, it won't happen until the Athletic Directors figure out a way to have a playoff system and not decrease the money they now receive. I don't expect to see it in my lifetime. SHALOM.

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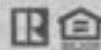
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3 ACRES IN NORTHBEND. Beautifully wooded corner lot (1997) frontage on main rd. (256) 630-1401. Just a n. **SOLD** shops, yet higher in elevation (approx 2000') Buy it for only \$37,000. (19378)

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2.5 ACRES with easy power, cable, and public water access. Mildly-restricted land with a great rural Mentone location, just minutes from DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne and Mentone. Great investment for future cabin site. 210' road frontage. Only \$25,000 (17127)

22 ACRES IN MENTONE, near Cloudland. Comb field & woods (timber cut approx 15 years ago), w/small wet-weather stream in back. Great wildlife area w/deer, turkey & even a bear sighting or two. Unrestricted. \$3,750 per acre at \$82,500. (19232)

62.32 ACRES WITH VIEWS of Lookout Mtn & Valley on the east, the communities of White Hall & "The Highlands" on the west. A private hunting preserve, secluded woodland retreat, estate or investment. Excellent paved road frontage along Hwy 137 w/access roads already cut in. Mostly hardwood, mainly mature growth trees & plenty of wildlife! \$249,900 (19492)

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for a Great
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Happy New Year!



MOUNTAIN TREE HOUSE with breathtaking views of the Tennessee River & Jones Cove below, "The Pinnacle" rock formation beside you. This 2BR/2BA custom home has an upscale rustic feel, w/wood floors, cathedral wood ceilings, tall cedar trees from floor to ceiling, beautiful stone gas fireplace. Premium hickory cabinets, stainless steel appliances, & open kitchen/dining/living area. Approximately 2500 sq ft living area, over 1500 sq ft porches/decks! Located in Indian Bluffs, just 6 miles from Scottsboro, but above it all! \$349,000. (19615)



CUDDLE UP & WATCH WINTER SUNSETS and then lie back to gaze at the amazing display of stars overhead. 2BR/1BA cabin w/open living area; all wood interior; stainless steel appliances; vaulted exposed beam ceiling; 3 acres level land right on the brow of Lookout Mountain. Away from the city lights, but you're just a short drive to town in case you've forgotten anything (a short drive to Little River Canyon, too). Weekend getaway, cabin rental, or cozy residence. Awesome views at an awesome price! An incredible deal at only \$127,000. (18954)



ALONG THE SCENIC PARKWAY between DeSoto St Park & Mentone, near Comer Scout Camp & Cloudmont Ski & Golf Resort. Nicely updated & remodeled 3BR/2BA cabin home in a picture-perfect setting in the trees. Great screened porch; stone Fpl; rustic beams; roomy kitchen; all new baths & CH/A. Priced at only \$159,000. (19531)



LET IT SNOW!!! Mentone on the mountain, a warm fire in the beautiful stone fireplace, enjoying the season in your new cabin with just the right combination of rustic charm & elegance. Cedar cabin with 3BR/2BA, possible 4th BR or office, stone Fpl; screened back porch; balcony off MABR. Sitting on 3 wooded acres w/small stream in back. \$209,500. (18887)



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PUBLIC NOTICE

The **2010** meeting dates for the **Valley Head Water Works Board**, 101 School Street, Valley Head, AL will be as follows:

JANUARY 11, 2010
FEBRUARY 8, 2010
MARCH 8, 2010
APRIL 12, 2010
MAY 10, 2010
JUNE 14, 2010
JULY 12, 2010
AUGUST 9, 2010
SEPTEMBER 13, 2010
OCTOBER 11, 2010
NOVEMBER 8, 2010
DECEMBER 13, 2010

All meetings will be held beginning at 4:00PM in the Valley Head Water Works office in the board room. Should there be any changes in the date, time, or place, a notice will be posted in the lobby of the Valley Head Water Works Building. A notice of any special or called meeting will also be posted in the lobby of the Valley Head Water Works Building prior to the meeting date and time. The location of the meeting will also be posted.

The **2010** quarterly meeting dates for the **Mentone Planning Commission**, 5972 AL Hwy 117, Mentone, AL will be on the 3rd Thursday of the following months:

JANUARY 21
APRIL 15
JULY 15
OCTOBER 15

All meetings will be held beginning at 5:00PM in the Mentone Town Hall meeting room. Should there be any changes in the date, time, or place, a notice will be posted on the bulletin board at the Mentone Town Hall. A notice of any special or called meeting will also be posted on the same bulletin board prior to the meeting date and time.

The **2010** meeting dates for the **Mentone Waterworks Board**, 5972 AL Hwy 117, Mentone, AL

will be at 4PM, on the 4th Thursday as follows:

JANUARY 28
FEBRUARY 25
MARCH 25
APRIL 22
MAY 27
JUNE 24
JULY 22
AUGUST 25
SEPTEMBER 22
OCTOBER 27
NOVEMBER 22
DECEMBER 22

All meetings will be held beginning at 4:00PM in the Mentone WaterWorks office in the board room. Should there be any changes in the date, time, or place, a notice will be posted on the bulletin board of the Mentone Town Hall, adjacent to the water office. A notice of any special or called meeting will also be posted on the same bulletin board prior to the meeting date and time.

The **2010** meeting dates for the **Mentone Town Council**, 5972 AL Hwy 117, Mentone, AL will be on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6PM, as follows:

JANUARY 11
FEBRUARY 8
MARCH 8
APRIL 12
MAY 10
JUNE 14
JULY 12
AUGUST 9
SEPTEMBER 13
OCTOBER 11
NOVEMBER 8
DECEMBER 13

All meetings will be held beginning at 6:00PM in the Mentone Town Hall meeting room. Should there be any changes in the date, time, or place, a notice will be posted on the bulletin board at the Mentone Town Hall. A notice of any special or called meeting will also be posted on the same bulletin board prior to the meeting date and time.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

BIRTHDAYS

1 - Jim Byrum
 2 - Kelly Wright, Amber Stokes, Jan Cherbonneau, David Baker, Beverly Henry, Elizabeth Romans
 3 - Joe Mayhew, Bennett Crow
 4 - Loretta McGee (in memory) Raymond E. Ringer, Lillian-Wigley-Speakman
 5 - Charles McGee (in memory)
 6 - Gage Baker, Donnie Voils
 7 - Kristen Emory, Amanda Holaway
 8 - Taylor Grace Davis
 10 - Walt Dillenbeck
 11 - Robert Green, Butch Jones
 12 - Marie S. Dillenbeck, Christina Wise, Scott Davis
 13 - Jimmy Graves (in memory) Alayna Wright
 14 - Lickety-Split (in memory)
 15 - Joey Blalock, Mickey Luck, Kat Griffith
 17 - Bill Cobble
 18 - Max Cherbonneau, Barbara Blalock
 19 - Floyd Bailey (in memory) Cindy Jones
 20 - Courtney Wigley

21 - Leland Cox (in memory)
 22 - Alicia Cherbonneau
 23 - Sierra Nicely
 25 - Sarah Wilcox
 26 - Martha Hicks
 27 - Jess Moore
 28 - Edna Morgan, Cynthia Wooten
 29 - Karen Stone
 31 - Michelle Broome

ANNIVERSARIES

12 - Scott and Katie Meadows
 16 - Mr. and Mrs. Sonny Gilbreath
 17 - Katie Bird and Bill Cobble
 24 - Marie and Walter Dillenbeck



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The Sunday morning services at **Winston Memorial Presbyterian Church** are held at 9AM each Sunday, except no services on 5th Sunday. Rev. Jerry Davis and Rev. L.A. Smith are alternate speakers for these services.

The **Valley Head Baptist Church** invites you to attend Sunday School at 10AM; Worship Service at 11AM; Sunday Evening Worship at 6PM; Midweek Service (Wednesday) at 6PM; Women on Mission meet at 1PM the second Tuesday of each month at different homes. Everyone is welcome to come.

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 to 18); 6:30PM Praise and Prayer time. Located at 4212 County Road 751, Valley Head. 635-1001.

Visitors are always welcome at the **Valley Head United Methodist Church**. Please join us each Sunday morning for a traditional worship service at 9AM.

Wildwood Seventh Day Adventist Church, Mentone Chapter, is currently holding services in the Woodmen of the World Hall in Valley Head. All are invited to attend! Sabbath School and Song service: 9:30-10:45 AM, Worship Service 11:00-12:15. Pastor: Wilbur Atwood; Lay Pastors - James Hartley and Ryan Bunnell.

The **Harmony Grove Baptist Church** located on County Road 239 invites you to attend Sunday School at 10AM and worship at 11AM. Sunday evening service is at 5PM. Thursday evening service is at 5:30PM.

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church on N. Gault Avenue in Fort Payne holds Mass Services at 11AM each Sunday; Scripture and Communion Services at 6PM on Tuesdays.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 1519 Smith Gap Road (County Road 85), Fort Payne. Regular Worship Services are at 10AM Sunday. Bible class or Lent/Advent services every Wednesday at 6:30PM. Steve Schrader, Pastor - 845-4314. Everyone welcome.

Walnut Grove Baptist Church, on Highway 11 North of Fort Payne, welcomes

everyone at Sunday School at 10AM, Worship Service at 11AM, Wednesday night youth meeting at 6PM, and Wednesday night prayer meeting at 8:30PM.

The **Fort Payne Christian Center** and Pastors Ken and Elaine Holliman invite everyone to join in Worship on Sunday at 10 AM, Wednesday evening at 6PM. God Bless you.

Grace Presbyterian Church (PCA), 5760 Gault Ave., NE, Fort Payne, AL Rev. Billy Dempsey, Pastor, Sunday School 9:45AM; Sunday Worship - 10:55AM.

Menlo Church of Christ invites you to attend the 10- and 11AM services and evening services are at 7-and-9PM. Visitors are always welcome.

Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Cloudland, GA, welcomes everyone to come and take part in our church services. Sunday School at 10AM; Worship Service at 11AM. Sunday evening at 6PM, and Wednesday evening at 7PM.

DeSoto Church of Christ invites you to attend Sunday Bible Study at 10AM, Worship at 11AM. Wednesday Bible study at 6PM.

The **Mentone Revival Center** and Pastor LeRoy Nichols and wife, Nell, invite everyone to join in worship on Sunday morning at 10AM and 11AM, and Sunday night and Thursday night at 6PM.

Howard's Chapel (Church in the Rock) has regular services 10AM each Sunday. You are invited to attend these services or visit the church at other times. Casual dress is always acceptable.

St. Joseph's on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church - a place of prayer, thanksgiving, and celebration.

Come by any time to pray and give thanks. Open 24 hours every day. Sunday service is at 10:30AM.

The **Mentone United Methodist Church** services are at 11AM each Sunday. Sunday School is at 10AM. Daniel Lee of Rainsville is the pastor.

Moon Lake Baptist Church invites you to worship with us. Sunday School begins at 9:45AM, with classes for all ages. Morning Worship is at 11AM. The Lords Supper is observed on the first Sunday of September, December, March, and June at the morning worship hour. Discipleship Training is at 5:00PM and Sunday Evening Worship at 6:00PM. On Wednesdays, Team Kids; Youth Bible Study and Adult Bible Study and Prayer Meeting are all at 6:30PM. Rev. Terry Turner is the regular pastor at Moon Lake.

Alpine Community Church, 115 Hwy 337, Menlo, GA. Pastor and Rev. Tommy Pledger welcome each and everyone to worship service, Sunday morning, 11AM, GA time; Sunday School 10AM GA time; Wed. Night Bible Study, 7PM GA time.

Cove Road Baptist Church, County Road 631, Mentone, Alabama. Brother Marlin Starnes, Interim Pastor, welcomes all to Sunday School - 9AM (10AM GA time); Church Services 10AM (11AM GA time); and Sunday night services 5PM (6PM GA time).

Summit Church of God invites you to attend their church. Sunday School-10AM; Morning Worship-11AM. Wednesday evening-6:30PM. Randall Beagles welcomes all.

Mentone Church of God of Prophecy regular service times are Sunday School at 10AM, with worship at 11AM. Evening services begin at 5:30 on Sunday and 6 on Wednesday. Rev. Dean Clair invites everyone to attend.

Mentone Community Church, 90 Summerville Rd., Mentone, AL 35984 Sunday Services: 9 am and 10:30 am

Adult Sunday School: Sundays @ 9:30 am
Teen and Adult Sunday School: Sundays @ 5:30
Tuesday Night Prayer Service: 6:30 pm
Wednesday Nights @ 6:30 pm: Children's Pioneer Clubs & Youth Group



DEVOTIONAL

By Evelyn Graves

As a new year dawns, it is as though we are standing before an open door looking through its arch seeing all things new. Behind us the old door is closing forever, sealed to everything except our memories. Before us lies new challenges, new opportunities, but no year is likely to be any better than we make it. We can take a new year and make it worse or better.

In Philippians, Paul says he forgets "the things which are behind" by "stretching forward to the things which are before." It is necessary that we remember some things; however, it is also necessary that we push other things out of our minds. We must not dwell too much upon successes, failures, sins, sorrows, and unpleasantness because this is thinking too much about ourselves. "Instead, if we give ourselves over to the Lord and to the Kingdom of God with complete indifference to what happens to us, we will find the pearl of great price," according to Ilion T. Jones, Presbyterian Tribune.

May God make your year a happy one!

Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

by John J. Whitaker

Albert Einstein was born March 14, 1879, in Ulm, Wurttemberg, Germany. Ulm was an old town on the Danube River. His parents were Hermann and Pauline Koch Einstein. Baby Albert's head was so big and angular that his mother thought he was deformed. A happy-go-lucky father, Hermann was a good worker, as were most other Jewish men. Pauline brought culture to the home and enhanced her son's life with music. A year after the coming of young Albert the family moved to Munich, Germany.

After a year in Munich, Maja, a sister, was born.

Young Albert was slow to develop speech, and even at the age of 9 years, he was not very fluent. People noticed that he was echolalic, and many people were puzzled to hear him repeat what they said to him.

At the age of 5 years, young Albert was enrolled in a Catholic school and attended it until the age of 10 years. Then he transferred to the Luitpold Gymnasium. These early years of school revealed only an average student. But he learned to play the violin, and this proved to be a good way to relieve the stresses of life.

The Hermann Einstein family moved from Munich to Milan, Italy, in 1894, but Albert was left behind in a boarding house with relatives to care for him. Six months later Albert joined them, leaving the Luitpold Gymnasium forever behind him.

For two years Albert lived in Milan, two years of which we know very little.

Family pressures on the 16-year-old lad dictated that he

attend the Swiss Federal polytechnic School in Zurich, Switzerland. The distance to the school was fairly close, no diploma from a gymnasium was required, and all he needed to do was pass the entrance exam. He failed on his first attempt. However, arrangements were made for him to attend a cantonal school at Aarau, a town twenty miles west of Milan. A year of study enabled him to pass the entrance exam in 1896.

Young Einstein decided that he would become a teacher.

He had made application to become a Swiss citizen, and this was granted on February 21, 1901. Now his native country of Germany was behind him.

In August, 1990, Albert was graduated with an overall average of 4.91 out of 6.00.

Entrance into the world of work was slow. He procured two part time teaching positions, but they were of short duration. However, in 1902, he accepted a job in the patent office at Bern, Switzerland. His duties were to put applications for patents in concise, clear form. He held this position until 1909.

Einstein married Mileva Maric in January, 1903. Mileva was a fellow student, with a slight limp (She had been born with a dislocated hip), and possessed a lovely voice and face. Before their marriage an illegitimate daughter had been born but was given away. (See *The Private Lives of Albert Einstein* by Roger Highfield and Paul Carter, 1993, chapter 5, page 88 ...) But two sons, Hans Albert and Eduard were born to them after the marriage. The marriage lasted until 1919, after years of turmoil. Eventually Mileva suffered a mental and

Continued on page 7:

MASSAGE THERAPY

Kerry Breithaupt LMT
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Continued from page 6

physical breakdown from which she never fully recovered; she felt that all her academic dreams were lost because of the poor relationship with Einstein, but did survive until 1948.

Einstein's second marriage was to a cousin named Elsa. He gained two step-daughters in this union. Elsa stayed with Einstein until her death at Princeton, New Jersey in 1936.

Einstein's parents, Hermann and Pauline, had died in 1902 and 1919, respectively.

In 1909 Einstein obtained a full time academic post at the University of Zurich (in Switzerland), where he became professor of theoretical physics. However, in 1911 and 1912 he received the same position in the German University at Prague, Czechoslovakia. In 1912 he returned to Zurich to become a professor in the Federal Polytechnic School. But in 1913 he moved to Berlin, Germany, and accepted a research post in the Kaiser Wilhelm Society that combined with a chair in the University of Berlin. Then in 1914, after accepting the professorship of physics at the University of Berlin, he renewed his former German citizenship. A year later he became director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Physical

Institute. Both positions were held until 1933.

While visiting England and the United States in 1933, the Nazi government in Germany took his property and citizenship.

He was invited to direct the school of mathematics in a new school, the Institute for Advanced Study, in Princeton, New Jersey. Here he taught for the remainder of his life (until 1955). He became an American citizen in 1940. In 1939 he wrote a letter to American president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, of the possibility of the Nazis inventing a uranium bomb. (This spurred American scientists to keep pursuing the development of the same type bomb.) Einstein received the Nobel prize for physics in 1921 for his quantum theory, which explained the photo-electric cell, (or the "electric eye"). The money arrived in 1923, and Einstein gave this to his ex-wife, Mileva, who had kept their two sons, Hans Albert and Eduard. For about a decade he had been a world traveler. He became the first superstar of science. Floods of letters daily came to his office.

In July, 1909, Einstein received an honorary doctorate from the University of Geneva. The University of Oxford gave him an honorary doctorate,

also.

Death claimed Einstein on April 18, 1955. He was 76. A doctor discovered an aneurysm in Einstein's abdominal aorta in 1948; however, he continued working until shortly before his death. In an autopsy, his brain was removed for research and was also preserved, but the remainder of his body was cremated.

For what is Einstein, the great scientist, remembered?

1. He had been a pacifist during WW I and several years afterwards. However, as an American citizen in WW II, he worked part time with the U.S. Navy in developing theoretical work on explosives.

2. He advocated a world government in letters he sent to the United Nations.

3. He was a strong supporter and friend of Israel.

4. He took out several patents when he worked in the Swiss Patent Office in Bern. One of them was a noiseless household refrigerator, and another was a new type of hearing aid.

5. However, the most prominent ideas of Einstein were those in the field of physics. His concept of relativity (sometimes called "special relativity") vastly changed scientific ideas of matter. Scientists began to think in concepts of four dimensions: length, width, height,

and space (or time). His famous formula, $E=mc^2$, i.e., the energy contained in matter is equal in ergs to its mass in grams multiplied by the square of the velocity of light in centimeters per second, basically states that a small amount of mass (anything that has weight and takes up space) is equivalent to a vast amount of energy. These concepts helped to develop the atomic bombs used in WW II on Japan. Much of his later work consisted of working on "unified field theory," which embraced both electromagnetic and gravitational forces. In applying his concepts of relativity to the universe, he and William de Sitter developed the concept of a gradually expanding universe, finite but unbounded. This concept is known as the "Einstein-de Sitter Universe."

Element number 99 was named einsteinium, obviously in his honor.

From Einstein and his theory of relativity many new ideas developed: 1. man began to understand some concepts that otherwise had been incomprehensible; 2. man could have more accurate accounts of the world; 3. human experiences do have limitation; and 4. we should appreciate our place in the world.

THANK YOU, PROFESSOR EINSTEIN.



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IN-TOWN CHARMER - Walk to downtown Mentone from this 2 bedroom, 1 1/2 bath cottage featuring wood floors, cathedral ceiling and gazebo all on 1 acre with more available. Call today! \$149,900 (16659)



A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY is found in this log cabin. Featuring 2BR/1BA on main floor, L-shaped living/dining/kitchen combo with wood flooring throughout. Upstairs has 2 sleeping areas and bath with unique footed maids tub. Cozy front and back porches. This cabin is sold turn key. Make your appointment today. \$239,000 (18871)



LOOKING FOR A MOUNTAIN GET-A-WAY? 3BR/1BA home just minutes from Mentone. Completely remodeled, this home is move-in ready! New kitchen appliances include range, refrigerator, microwave, and washer/dryer. Updated wiring, new CH&A, fresh interior paint, and rock fireplace. Sitting on two lots with a covered back deck, nice mature trees and outbuilding. \$99,500 (17931)



MENTONE - Over 200' of breathtaking brow view of mountains and valley located within walking distance to Historic Mentone. Put your special touch on this partially finished cabin with 2 rock fireplaces and a 2-car carport. \$325,000 (18270)



IN-TOWN PRIVACY! Sit on the screened porch of this 3 bedroom, 2 bath cottage and listen to the squirrels play. Completely remodeled kitchen and only a short distance from downtown Mentone. \$139,900 (19082)



THIS WARM & COZY 2 bedroom, 2 bath cabin nestled in the woods offers seclusion, privacy & tranquility in an artful setting. Some features include gorgeous pine wood floors, wood burning fireplace, vaulted ceilings with exposed beams & a covered front and back porch. \$174,900 (19524)



SPECTACULAR VIEWS!! You will call it home when you walk in! Classic Mentone Brow house, c.1955, situated on a beautiful wooded lot...Great room, gourmet kitchen, custom cabinetry, granite countertops, vaulted ceilings, wood floors, fireplace... Large deck... Guest House... basement workshop... all you've wanted in a Mountain home. \$445,000 (19460)



IT IS NOT OFTEN we find a house to sell nestled among the trees surrounded by "bigger than life" sized mountain rocks. This hand-hewn log cabin offers large great room and cozy sleeping loft. You will appreciate the attention to detail in the woodwork, upstairs deck, front porch and backyard gazebo. Sure to go quick at only \$92,500! (19508)



THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE MANY, BUT PROPERTIES LIKE THIS ARE FEW!! This beautiful traditional 5 bedroom, 4 bath brick home on over 40 rolling acres has ceramic kitchen with island and all the extras. Approximately 18 acres cleared, nice large barn and livestock pond. \$429,000 (14651)



This is THE OPPORTUNITY of a lifetime!! You can own the states oldest, still operating hotel. Currently featuring 10 bedrooms, 14 baths, 2 fully furnished commercial kitchens, upstairs ballroom and lots of room for expansion. Call for all the details. \$1,200,000 (18937)



LOOKOUT MTN WITH BEAUTIFUL VIEWS! Custom built log home with stacked rock fireplace, wide plank wood floors, large kitchen/dining area, spacious loft for extra living/ sleeping/storage, walkout basement/ game room, separate basement storage. FISH/CANOE in the 14 acre LAKE used only by property owners in this restricted, private subdivision located near Little River Canyon. \$339,500 (18235)



MOUNTAIN MAGIC! Enjoy the comforts of this magnificent Heritage log home currently under construction in Northbend. Property offers 2BR plus an open loft for possible 3rd bedroom, 2-1/2 baths, pine floors, covered front porch and side deck all situated on a 3.32 acre wooded lot. \$285,900 (16884)

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ENJOY THE GORGEOUS VIEW OF THE LAKE from this NEW construction in Mentone offering 2BR/2BA, large open living room with fireplace, spacious kitchen with dining area, master bath with garden tub and more. Call for your appointment today. \$159,900 (15985)



IF WALLS COULD TALK you could hear all the great stories this family and home has shared for over 50 years. Now this comfort and warmth is offered to you with 3 bedrooms, pine floors, den and storage basement in downtown Mentone. \$119,000 (16803)



HANDCRAFTED woodwork is found throughout this 2BR/2BA mountain home. Features include a great room with cathedral ceiling, full front and back porch, large utility room all situated on a wooded lot. Located in Laurel Creek Lakes with access to 3 lakes and walking trails. Call today for your viewing. \$184,500 (19135)



REDUCED! 120 Acres in Fairview Community near Geraldine and Skirum. Gently rolling to level land, timber recently cut. 3500 feet public road through property. NOW Only \$227,000. Less than \$1900 per acre. (17128)



LOOKING FOR COUNTRY LIVING? This 3 bedroom, 3 bath home offers hardwood and carpet, family room with fireplace, fully equipped kitchen, front and side porch and is surrounded by 8 acres in a restricted subdivision could be it. Call today. \$239,000 (14536)



IMMACULATE, newer 3BR home with metal roof situated on a level, shaded lot of over 2 acres. Covered front porch, open living/kitchen/dining area, gas log fireplace, complete appliance package, hardwoods, ceramic tile, jacuzzi tub, CH&A, 2 car garage, priced at \$119,000 just 4 miles from downtown Mentone! (19178)



COME SEE THIS BROW LOT in Mentone featuring a unique log structure that you can use to get-away from it all. The log structure has been moved to this site and offers an open living space with 1 bedroom and a bath. You'll have plenty of acreage to build something new or just enjoy the atmosphere of days gone by. \$279,900 (18256)



NATIVE MOUNTAIN FOLIAGE creates a level of privacy for this 3 BR/ 2BA brick house overlooking the West Fork of Little River from the back yard. Split BR design, large family room with cathedral ceiling and mountain stone wood-burning fireplace, screened porch, 2 storage sheds, (1 with electricity), an attached 2-car garage and CH&A. \$219,000 (16371)



MOVE UP TO RIVERFRONT! Get an open and airy feeling throughout this 3 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath home. Features include an oversized state-of-the-art kitchen with eating area, stone fireplace, wood and tile floors, oversized back porch and boat dock. Appealing landscaping with large native stones. Many windows to soak up the views. A must see for \$495,000. (17781)



MENTONE TREASURE! Over 300' of private and panoramic brow frontage. Restore this 3 bedroom, 2 bath home to its original splendor which features a living room w/ rock fireplace, Florida room, dining room and screened sleeping porch all overlooking a fabulous view. Also included is an in-ground pool and pavilion. Walking distance to Downtown Historic Mentone. \$650,000 (18271)



LIVE AND PLAY ON THE WATER! Enjoy 200' of frontage on the East Fork of Little River in this waterfront home featuring 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, rock floors as well as some carpet, all appliances, wood burning fireplace, and storage building. Call for more details. \$347,900 (18278)



LIVE ON THE WATERS EDGE in this custom built log cabin. Features include 2 bedrooms, 2 baths, spacious great room with cathedral ceilings, hickory floors and oversized windows, large utility room, 2-car garage and fishing dock situated on 2 lots. Set up your appointment today! \$238,000 (18898)

LAKE ON THE BROW - 1 acre lot on the lake. \$59,500 (17384)

PRISTINE RIVER LOT with 150' +/- frontage. \$195,000 (17782)

3 +/- ACRES on the E. Fork of Little River. \$150,000 (17568)

BROKEN DAM @ LAKE LAHUSAGE! Waterfront lots starting at \$66,000 (17333)

LAND and LAKE! 40 +/- ac with a 5 +/- ac lake with Brush Creek running through it. \$225,000 (18869)

2 LOTS on the middle fork of Little River near Lake Lahusage. \$69,900 Each (18627)

4 ACRES with 300' of brow frontage and gorgeous rock formations. \$250,000 (17175)

NEW DEVELOPMENT located off Co. Rd. 106 close to DeSoto State Park and DeSoto Falls. \$25,000 each. (17060/17061)

OAKWOOD SD - Great building lot offering 3.5 +/- ac. with possible owner-financing or trade to qualified buyer. Mild restrictions. \$29,900 (18770)

43 +/- ACRES IN MENTONE! 800' on Brush Creek. Possible Owner financing available to qualified buyer. \$259,000 (18729)

HIDDEN LAKE SUBDIVISION bordering UHP offers a gated community for people of like interests. \$89,000 (18406)

BEAUTIFUL BUILDING SITE - MENTONE! 3.22 ac. tract offers Lots of Hardwoods, Level Building Site, Per and water at CR 648! Priced at \$44,900. (18037)

MENTONE - Minutes from Downtown Mentone

and DeSoto State Park! Foundation already on property with paved road frontage and city water. 4.55 acres. \$59,900 (18989)

WATERFRONT LOT IN RESTRICTED LAKE ON THE BROW COMMUNITY! 104 feet of water frontage! Mild Restrictions in File. Great for a Vacation Home or Primary Residence. Only \$69,900! (18038)

5.62 ACRES Beautiful wooded building lot with stream located on CoRd 106 (Lahusage Drive) in desirable Mentone. Minimum square footage per dwelling is 1200 sqft heated. \$63,500 (18827)

WATERFRONT LOT AWAITS YOU! 3.06 acre lot in West Fork Subdivision in Mentone. Call for all the details. \$52,500 (19183)

8 +/- ACRES. No restrictions. Pond on property. \$59,900 (16393)

BUILD YOUR CABIN HERE on this beautiful, wooded level lot located in a restricted subdivision near downtown Mentone. \$39,900 (19426)

RHODODENDRON GARDEN CLUB NEWS

LINDA BROWN, SECRETARY

The Holiday Season had arrived!! The members of the Rhododendron Garden Club were sure of this when they met at the M.E.R.F. Community House on Tuesday December 8, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. The room was decorated with holly and poinsettias. The garden club always uses natural plant material to decorate. The president, Dianne Kuehl called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Gethryn Giles presented an article of inspiration and asked the blessing of the food.

A wonderful lunch consisting of the dishes brought by the members was enjoyed by all.

The officers of the club were acting hostesses and a bell was placed at every place setting. The fellowship of eating at a leisurely pace and catching up on all of the news was enjoyed and appreciated by everyone. Sometimes we forget to slow down and count our blessings.

After lunch, Dianne led many of the songs of the season. Harriett Lillich accompanied on the piano. This had become a tradition with the club and is enjoyed as much as anything we do.

The door prize was awarded to Lucette Dix. The meeting was adjourned by singing "Jingle Bells" as we rang our bells and "We Wish You Merry Christmas" as we departed.

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the M.E.R.F. Community House.

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

The Senior Christmas Lunch was such a wonderful event this year. We would like to thank the following businesses for contributing door prizes.

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SIMPLY A SPECTACULAR HOME and view. Reward yourself with the genteel elegance of this pristine 3BR/2+BA Contempo ideally sited on two acres. Two-story foyer, open staircase, high ceilings. Custom drapes. Metal-roofed. \$349,900 (18872)



YOU'VE GOT to SEE IT! Brow View, Near to Downtown Mentone, and Built Right! 2 bedrooms, 2 baths, Jenn-air pack-Contempo ideally sited on two acres. Two-story foyer, open staircase, high ceilings. Custom drapes. Metal-roofed. \$349,900 (18872)



DON'T PASS UP THIS DEAL ON LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN! 1550 sq ft home. Roll up your sleeves and flip this house! Enjoy the rock fireplace, 2 car carport, 1.5 acres, AND partial brick. Only \$44,900!! (19377)



AMAZING PANAROMIC BROW VIEW! Brick home with in-ground swimming pool, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, hardwood floors, living room with fireplace, island with grill, alarm system, 2 car garage and much more! \$239,900 (19364)



JUST REDUCED TO ONLY \$169,900! 40 ACRES OF BEAUTIFUL LAND! **SOLD** for a family wrap-around porch, fenced pasture, pond, & Barns. (18349)



PRIVATE SETTING WITH ACREAGE! Extra bonus for this listing is a mountain home and a rustic cabin on 5 acres in Mentone. Detached garage, garden spot, screened porches and covered porch. Reduced to \$185,000 (18331)



RUSTIC HOME You'll love this one of a kind retreat with pine walls, a fireplace, open floor plan, and two large porches! Minutes from the Little River Management Area, you can enjoy the fun and beauty that Lookout Mountain has to offer! Only \$110,000 (17020).



WOODSY SURROUNDINGS near Little River Canyon! Master bedroom and bathroom on main level with separate whirlpool tub and shower. Open living room and kitchen with high ceilings, all wood floors and wood walls. Oversized basement double car garage. \$129,500 (19607)



NEAR DOWNTOWN MENTONE Experience the beauty of seasonal bluff views, and glorious sunsets from any of three covered porches. Main living area offers an open floor plan, archways, hardwood floors, & fireplace. Third level cupola is surrounded by windows. \$525,000 (19190)



CONNOR'S COTTAGE! Currently weekend/nightly rental! 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, Living/Kitchen OR 3 offices/ 1 bath/ Rec Area/workroom! Many talents to choose! Zoned B-1 (commercial). Available. Furnished! \$132,500. Broker/Owner (18598)



SHOWY WOODLAND-VIEW RANCH! Savor peaceful privacy on two acres. Relax in the comfort of this renovated, bright & airy plan residence. 3BR/2 baths. Private drive, gas fireplace. Workshop. Newly-roofed. Take possession now. Only \$99,900 (18981)

997-0008

Lots & Land

SEE GLORIOUS SUNSETS from the Perfect place to build your new home. Views of massive towering rock cliffs on one side and a bluff view overlooking town on the other. Lots start at \$55,000 (15742)

GREAT INVESTMENT! Invest today with this **SOLD** frontage! Also has an u...! Mobile home allowed! \$2,500! (18876)

ENJOY THIS SECLUDED 14.4 ACRE TRACT ON LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN! Located on a private road, you will fall in love with your surroundings! Build or invest with this property. Great price! \$56,000 (19313)

ACREAGE INSIDE THE CITY LIMITS! Beautiful 43 acres of pasture land with a POND. Located in Fischer Community off of Desoto Parkway. Call for details! \$169,000 (19286)

3 ACRE TRACT located between DeSoto State Park and Mentone. Take a winding country road back into this secluded, scenic area where spectacular log homes and rustic cabins are tucked back into the woods. MORE ACREAGE AVAILABLE! \$39,900 (17412)

MOUNTAINSIDE VIEWS! Wills Creek runs through it! Almost 24 acres just minutes from downtown Fort Payne. Level, pasture and wooded, country Hwy 11 road frontage! Mild restrictions. Fenced. \$299,900. Agent/Owner (18071)

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN LAND! 41.65 wooded acres within Fort Payne city limits. Land borders Yellow Creek, REDUCED! Call TODAY! \$149,900 (19238)

BRING YOUR CABIN PLANS to this beautiful 3 acre tract. Property has been perked and partially cleared. Underground utilities, water & phone are available. Driveway is already in place! \$45,900 (17195)

GRIPES, FEARS or WHAT?

John Baty

With the price of gasoline, automobiles, medicine and fine drink on the rise, the only items which can be bought for the price of a soft drink is a used book and a soft drink.

The reader might surmise that I am not immune to the selfishness and abuse which plagues ethical journalism; that I am somehow plugging some interest in used books. In such case, the astute reader would be on track as I confess an interest in some future used bookstore. Just a thought!

I was taught and raised to think that a used book is far more valuable than an "unused" one and that their relative values are inversely proportional.

There is a good bookstore in almost every town large enough to support one and the prices are not low. It is very common (almost the rule) that any hard-back of promise will fetch around \$20; new.

America is a throwaway culture: When boom boxes, computers, can openers, television sets and automobiles go on the blink (or become familiar or dirty and boring) they are chunked and replaced with more complicated and sophisticated models. Something there is about preserving, repairing, using and savoring old reliable things that causes the average American to grow restless. Such a mentality is surely encouraged by our manufacturing companies and consequently America is on a complacent and euphoric binge of exploitation of natural resources.

I am old enough and poor enough to remember when there was not enough of anything; and I concur with the attitude "those

were the good ol' days and you can have them!" But somehow when I see the much-maligned automobile sitting on blocks in a yard, and when I enter an obscure, junky little shed, crawling over clutter to get to the tinkerer under the dim light in the back, or when I enter a hole-in-the-wall used bookstore and thumb the almost unused pages containing the thoughts and methods of the greatest minds ever to exist, I get nostalgic. Oh for the days when people were regarded as self-responsible entities! I cannot but wonder how a nation touted as the greatest civilization on earth could ever espouse the notion that responsibility can be legislated, that character and understanding can be built by denying the citizen access to the fire that burns the hand; the guns that kill; the substances that poison; the activities that teach.

Specialization with its narrow, confining boundaries has left interstitial gray areas where there is no expertise, no motivation, no help. Apathetic citizen voters look to the Government to remove all harm from our lives, to do what is best for us; notwithstanding our personal wishes and harmless desires.

Not long ago I was speaking with a friend about practicality and appropriateness of many of man's behaviors and the wisdom with which most of us make our choices. The word "insanity" somehow got into the conversation. Partly as a lame attempt at humor, but mostly in a very serious observation, I said: "For most of a lifetime I have observed and tried to emulate the sane. I have finally decided that I do not wish to be counted among their number."

Continued from page 1

a major part of Sue's life and work, it is appropriate that her dedicated interest in opening new pathways of opportunity for local students should be remembered in this manner. Details of the scholarship will be announced in 2010.

Each summer, campers and counselors can observe one of Sue's favorite quotes on the Camp DeSoto dining hall wall when they gather for meals - "Words are so powerful that they should only be used to heal, to bless, and to prosper." By putting personal action and practical meaning into those words, countless lives were healed, blessed, and prospered by the wisdom and grace of Sue McLaurin

Henry, and Mentone is enormously richer for having been her adopted home for the past 51 years.

Writer's note: Much of the background information regarding Sue Henry's life was gleaned from the book "Camp DeSoto - A History" by Norma Flora Cox and Norma Bradshaw Flora, granddaughter and daughter of former camp director Norma Bradshaw. Copies of this comprehensive review of Camp DeSoto's history, activities, and personalities - illustrated by a wealth of vintage documents and photographs - can be purchased at www.campdesotobook.com. Phil and Marsha Hurt provided additional insight into Sue's life and legacy, for which I am deeply grateful.

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A DIAMOND IN THE RUFF. This great residence and property has all the potential for a Mentone retreat. 4BR/3BA Stone Veneered Home, with living and Rock FP. Sunroom, Decks, Screened Gazebo. Detached Carport and Garage, much more. 2.3 acres and a sunset View on the Brow. \$375,000 (19170)



50 ACRES located in Cloudland, GA. Great farm with 20x40 Barn, large workshop, 3 outbuildings, garage, 3 wells, wet weather spring, 3 garden areas, approx. 5 acres cleared, beautiful hardwoods. 12x70 mobile home with rock foundation. Many more amenities. City water access. Also a 40x60 building. \$260,000 (10251)



NEW PRICE

40 ACRES LOCATED NEAR MENTONE. Stillhouse Branch runs through the middle of tract with 2 waterfalls. Large rock formations. Sanctuary for development or private estate. \$200,000 (18760)



NEW LISTING

NICELY WOODED 5 ACRES on DeSoto Parkway with Stream. Can be Residential or Commercial. Land has old homesite and green house. Large Rock formations. Possibilities are Endless! \$150,000 (19419)



UNIQUE SETTING on the West Fork Little River. The Hatteras Cabin has 3/4 wrap-around deck. 2BR/2BA and a large bunk area Loft. Mountain stone Fireplace. 160 ft on the river. All furnishings included. \$250,000 (18466)



THE PAWNEE LOG CABIN, consists of 2 bedrooms, 2.5 bath Great room with FP, Cherry Cabinets Cypress hardwood Floors and much more. \$160,000 (17778)



NEW PRICE

FLAT LANDING EAST FORK. 3 acres with over 250 ft on the River. High wooded bluffs to view the water below. Enjoy the coolness of a mountain swim. \$120,000 (18776)



MUCH SOUGHT AFTER West Fork deep water. 1 mile upstream from Desoto Falls. Build your dock and gazebo and bring your boat or canoe to cruise on the river. Great recreational lot. \$45,000 (19164)



HUNTERS RIDGE. Nicely wooded acreage tracts available. County water and underground power. Common area access to the little river. Lightly restricted, and POA \$100/yr. 8 tracts available. Priced from \$24,900 to 40,000. 1.6 to 2.9 acres. (17779)



MELBA DRIVE, TRION. Neat brick/vinyl home offers 3BR, 2 BA, kitchen/dining room, and living room. CH/A, utility room, and attached carport with storage room. Large fenced backyard. Concrete driveway. Great neighborhood! Shown by appointment only. \$112,500 (19296)



WIPPORWILL FARM. 49 acres on the east fork little river. 2800 ft on the water with deep pools and rapids. 2BR/2BA Rock and log home with all the comfort amenities. Horse barn w/ apt, detached double garage, turn of the century Rock barn, Screened sleeping cabin overlooking river. Much more! \$785,000 (19355)



NEW LISTING

BEAUTIFULLY FURNISHED 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath home located on 10 wooded acres. Outdoor amenities include wrap-around porch, hot tub, gazebo, and hiking trails. Detached garage. Inside a living room with fireplace, dining area, kitchen with eat-in bar, stainless appliance package and lots of cabinets. Much more \$395,000 (19559)



MOUNTAIN CHATEAU. 2 story home with floor to ceiling windows. 2BR/2BA with basement. Loft sleeping, full equipped kitchen. Spectacular views 4.77 acres. \$275,000 (18133)



MAKE OFFER!

GREAT INVESTMENT IN VALLEY HEAD. Triplex apt. in excellent condition. A: 2BR/1BA - B: 1BR/1BA - C: 2BR/1BA A Must See! \$85,000 (17189)



WALK TO MENTONE FROM THIS COZY COTTAGE! Enjoy the sunsets from the screened porch. 2BR, 1BA. Completely furnished. Great for weekend getaway or home. \$169,000 (18891)



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PO Box 387, Mentone, AL 35984

Published monthly by the Mentone Area Preservation Association, MAPA was first conceived on Groundhog Day, 1982, and organized April 5, 1982, for the purpose of preserving and protecting the heritage, natural environment, and other unique qualities of life in the Mentone area, and is chartered as a non-profit organization by the State of Alabama.

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Travels close to home

The Riverchase Galleria

By Sarah Jacoway Chastain

Ninth in a series on short trips that can be made in one day. Each article will include something special to see or do and a good place to eat while you're there.

The Riverchase Galleria in Hoover has been a destination for me since it opened in 1986. With its more than 200 stores, it satisfies my shopping needs both window shopping and actually making purchases. It's where my grandchildren always went to have their picture made with Santa and the Easter Bunny and where we all shopped for Christmas presents and Easter finery. (American Idol winner Taylor Hicks worked as the Easter Bunny there.) My children's school and church choirs performed there and I beamed proudly as they did. (I also joined many who took were a part of the Mall Walker's when the weather didn't permit me to walk outside.) The Galleria opens two hours early to accommodate the walkers and some of the tenants in food court open early so that walkers can replenish those calories that have just burned. One trip around the second level measures 1.14 miles so comfortable shoes are a necessity whether you go to shop or walk.

For any who are not familiar with the Galleria, as it is commonly known, it is Alabama's largest enclosed mall with four anchor stores including Sears, JCPenney, Macy's and Belk. Nordstrom will open its first Alabama location in the spring of 2012. It has a nine-story glass atrium featuring the world's largest skylight. It has 11 restaurants both inside the Galleria and in the outparcel area on the perimeter to please every dining taste from McDonald's to white-tablecloth elegance at The Winfrey. You can snack on a pretzel at Auntie Anne's, a cookie at Great American Cookies or ice cream at Haagen Dazs if you just need a little

snack to keep your energy up for more shopping.

There is a full-sized 19th Century Dentzel carousel with finely crafted animals that attracts children and their parents and grandparents who ride with the little ones while other family members try to capture a picture as it goes by.

The Galleria is always



tastefully decorated with lush greenery, streaming neon and sparkling lights but they really outdo themselves at Christmas with wreaths and lights suspended from the atrium. For those who enjoy people watching, there are abundant tables in the food court as well as benches throughout the mall.

You can sit and sip coffee or hot tea from Starbucks until you are refreshed enough to continue shopping. Committed shoppers even book a night at The Winfrey Hotel especially on the day

after Thanksgiving and Christmas when the stores open early for great shopping bargains.

There are more than 5,000 parking spaces with outside parking and two covered parking decks. More than 15 million shoppers visited The Galleria during 2008 which exceeded the prediction because of the downturn in the economy.

I have eaten at many of the restaurants in The Galleria and on the perimeter because when I lived less than 10 miles away I had ample opportunity to sample their fare. On recent shopping

trip, I chose to eat at Michael's Steakhouse which had played an important part in my Birmingham experiences. It was previously located in the Southside area near UAB. You went there when you wanted a really good steak. When it was torn down to make room for expansion in the area, it was much missed. Imagine my delight when I went down a couple of years ago to shop finding it on the perimeter road at The Galleria. It has since become a favorite place for family gatherings. At lunch time, it features a wide selection of meats and southern cooked vegetables at a very reasonable price. At night it still has those wonderful steaks. It is decorated in a sports motif. The Bobby Humphrey room accommodates groups of up to 50 and its walls are covered with Bobby Humphrey memorabilia including a recent addition of an older Bobby Humphrey with his son, an outstanding football player at Hoover High School.

Next month will include a "trip" that's really close to home. You'll have to wait and see where.