

the GROUNDHOG

VOL. 4 - NO. 4 - JULY 1986

A Publication of the Mentone Area Preservation Association

Most Famous Citizen

*Keeps Secrets,
Shares Dreams*

Who is Mentone's most famous citizen?

What's your nomination?

There are those who would unqualifiedly suggest the one who is subject of a book — now in its second printing.

The one who employs more Mentone workers than any other business.

The one who has received visitors from more than eight foreign countries.

The one who has been subject of articles in USA TODAY, DIXIE LIVING, THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, BIRMINGHAM NEWS and numerous other publications.

The one who has been featured on numerous TV specials, Public Broadcasting and has been taken into the homes of such celebrities as Willard Scott, the NBC Weatherman, singer Willie Nelson, and Grand Ole Opry's Roy Acuff.

In their choice of subjects for cover stories, **THE GROUNDHOG** editors have developed certain disciplined judgments, from the necessity of the many, many suggestions and possibilities. These measurements include impact on the town, role in the community, and place in history.

Meeting all of these requirements is the Gourdie, which moves center stage for the month of July.

One hastens to inject that the Gourdie is less a doll and more a critter. There are inevitable comparisons with the Cabbage Patch Doll. Truth is, the Gourdie was born before the advent of the Cabbage Patch Doll.

Someone brought a batch of ordinary gourds (the kind people make bird houses of or drink well-water from) to Sharon Barron, who at that time was living on Sand Mountain. She determined that something unique and creative could be done with



Gourdie & Friends

these objects. So the Gourdie was born on Sand Mountain and shortly thereafter Sharon Barron moved from Fyffe to Mentone, setting up shop in

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Water Crisis Returns In Fury Page 1

New Groundhog Editors Introduced Page 1

Water Cutoff Provokes Solution

It was indeed to be an eventful July 4th Weekend, the Weekend of the 10th Crafts Festival, long days after the dismal drought began, with the camps going full blast — parents visiting their youngsters, tourists exploring the area's attractions.

Water usage was at its highest. Rumors began stirring that there would be a water cutoff. Some folks began filling their water jugs. Saturday evening, June 28, the water from Fort Payne was cut off — but flow continued in most parts of town until Tuesday, July 1st, at which time the real crisis began, two days with no water whatever.

On July 3rd, Thursday, a leak was found in the main near the rock bridge just above DeSoto State Park. When the leak was repaired and with much outside assistance, the water flow returned to adequacy on July 5th.

During that time many wheels were turning. Mayor Rob Hammond met with the Fort Payne Water Board and talked by phone to Montgomery. Mayor David Stout of Fort Payne had other business in Montgomery and sought state aid. The Mentone camp directors met with the Fort Payne Water Board.

Mayor Stout told **THE GROUNDHOG** that the basic problem was that the 6-inch line up the mountain was too small and that in emergency situations such as a leak in the main, or an overuse because of emergencies or a drought — it could not be handled — enough water cannot be pumped.

When Mayor Stout appeared at the July 7 meeting of the Town Council he said, "We are all one community. We need to work out these things together." He proposed a possible solution that is quietly being pursued: namely that a loop is instituted, in which a line is installed from Fort Payne to Valley Head, thence up to Mentone. It is a flexible plan which would assist all three communities. There could be times when each of the towns would have problems to be assisted by a common use of the flow of water.

The councilmen were cordial to Stout's outreach and proposal. Mayor Hammond was empowered to enter into conversations with Mayor William Crow of Valley Head.

The councilmen were generally favorable to the possibility of a Water Board which would handle the problems of water supply, leaving the council for more long-range planning and other details. Under the 1985-86 Mentone town budget the water department budget is \$52,000 and the remainder of the items total \$38,940. Mentone is one of the only communities in this area which does not have a water board.

Other suggestions were proposed during the council meeting. Councilman Max Cash proposed a dam at Taylor's Ford.

Even the Fort Payne-Valley Head-Mentone loop was

not considered a total solution. Mayor Stout stated that within 20 years the entire area may be faced with severe water shortages.

"We need to do something," it was said emphatically. "This will happen again."

The comments at the council continued. An emergency system at the Falls was one alternative. Ultimately we must have our own system.

Even without the leak, we probably would have been asked to cut our water off if the drought continued.

Three of the camps within the town limits are supplementing their supply with wells. In securing grants, the camps, the tourists, the summer residents, and Mentone's low income level are plus factors. The industries along the Valley Head-Fort Payne highway should be helpful in securing grants and other means of a more stable water supply.

Our own system may be the answer — but it will cost more.

Fort Payne cannot indefinitely provide supply under the present conditions.

Mentone is at the end of the line said Mayor Stout. It's the last of the areas being supplied by Fort Payne. It is also at the end of its own line; solutions must be sought and implemented.

On the afternoon of the fourth, Councilman Hobson Kirby saw a large tank truck at the bottom of the mountain being filled with water from the Valley Head system. He stopped to make the acquaintance of Caria and James McMillan of McMillan Milk Hauling System of Mt. Vernon. They had heard about the water crisis and called Mayor Hammond, volunteering their two trucks. Those Mentone citizens wanting to express thanks to these generous people should write Rt. 6, Box 253, Fort Payne, Alabama (35967).

The 151st engineers of the National Guard, along with units from Anniston, Piedmont, Valley Head, and Hammondville lent their assistance. Guardsmen hauled about 23,000 gallons; the McMillans, approximately 11,000.

These activities were well reported on the 10 o'clock news of Huntsville's Channel 31. Virgil Bouldin was shown dealing with an empty sink, saying he had not had water for two days. Channel 9, Chattanooga, interviewed Mayor Hammond on July 9.

On the day of the water hauling Rudolph Bell sat on top of the tank all day, directing the flow. Joe Baker, assistant superintendent of the Fort Payne Water Board, according to Mayor Hammond, was unusually cooperative — not only in finding the leak, but spending long hours in coordinating the crisis.

(See also The Mayor's Report and on page 2 "Time of Action" and "1978-86"). — CWM

New Groundhog Editors



When the new **GROUNDHOG** editors assume duties with the next edition, they bring appropriate talents to the task. Lew Keith, editor, is a career writer, a college English major, whose major desire in life is to write and to live in Mentone. His wife Darlene, a Mentone native, is a talented artist and potter who operates the Nightingale Artworks in the Hitching Post.

Charles and Jean McGehee, after three years, decided not to accept reappointment. In announcing their decision to the editorial board, they said it had frankly gotten to be too much for them, "too successful." They have some serious writing they want to do and to more fully enjoy their retirement. He is a former Unitarian Universalist minister; she taught high school English.

The McGehees made their decision about four months ago. In a talk at MAPA he said that he thought the only real future for **THE GROUNDHOG** was a professional approach. They negotiated with one prospect, who after a month's consideration declined. Having learned of the background of the Keiths, that they had come to live permanently in Mentone, and had built with their own hands a home on Darlene's family property, they invited the young couple to dinner.

Two subsequent meetings totaled almost ten hours of consideration. A meeting of **THE GROUNDHOG** editorial board was set up. This group is composed of MAPA officers and meets monthly prior to each publication. After a thorough interview, the board decided to recommend the Keiths to the membership at the July 1 meeting.

Introduced at the meeting, the Keiths were unanimously voted as new editors, beginning with the August issue. An agreement was signed by both parties. It specifies that the Keiths, in assuming full responsibilities for editing, producing and distributing the publication, will receive all advertising revenues beyond expenses. MAPA receives all membership payments. The organization currently receives approximately \$1,500 annually from about 150 out-of-town members.

The Keiths will maintain an office in the Hitching Post. Editorial meetings will be held there. This central location will make it more convenient for citizens to leave materials for stories, notices of meetings, etc. The McGehees declined to serve on the editorial board, feeling that it should be restricted to the officers and editors. "We will assist them in every way possible," they said. "It just so happens that we really like them."

Lew Keith was born and raised in Atlanta. After completion of high school he spent three years in the army. He then attended Georgia State and was graduated from Berry College where he was editor of the literary magazine. He was an English major and political science minor. Before moving to Mentone he was a branch manager for the circulation department of **The Atlanta Journal and Constitution**.

When asked about his plans for **THE GROUNDHOG**, he said: "I want to keep all those good things that people seem to like so much and have made it a success — and add to them. I have some interview styles I want to experiment with, and a cartoon series." Knowing that Lew Keith's basic career is writing, the new editor was asked what kind of writing he wanted to do. "I like to enjoy what I write," he said. "That's why I consider editing **THE GROUNDHOG** a real privilege. I hope to develop a living income from it that will make it possible for me to continue my creative writing. I'm currently working on three novels. I enjoy writing short stories. If my fiction has any basic theme, it is black humor."

He has had his fiction published in the **DeKalb County Literary Arts Journal** and the **Berry College Literary Magazine**.

Associate Editor Darlene Clifton Keith will be in charge of advertising, layout, and will do some writing. She is interested, among other things, in food and local lore. She was raised in Mentone, attended Moon Lake Elementary School and Valley Head High, where she edited the school

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The Mayor's Report

On Saturday, June 28, the water level of the Ft. Payne storage tank at Comer Scout Reservation fell to 4 feet. When full, the tank registers 30 feet and holds 500,000 gallons. Saturday afternoon Ft. Payne cut off our water pumps and asked us to give them time to build the reserve back in the tank. The level in Mentone's tank began falling then also. At that time we went on the radio asking all customers to conserve, and sent a letter out to all customers on Monday.

Since we have had the new tank, and have been asked to quit pumping, we have had a one or two day reserve that allowed Ft. Payne to pump and built up their reserve. However, this time the problem was a water main break in front of Rock Bridge Church near the entrance to DeSoto State Park. The leak was not found and fixed until July 3. Therefore the tank at Comer never rose above six feet and our water was cut off. Normal service resumed July 5.

I have met with Ft. Payne Mayor David Stout, Jim Russell of the health department, the Ft. Payne Water Board, and have talked with Mayor William Crowe of Valley Head about the problem. Mayor Stout attended the council meeting Monday night. He is very concerned about the ability of the Ft. Payne system to pump adequate water to this end of the mountain, and would like to work toward finding a solution. He hopes any bad feeling coming from the 1978 connection with Ft. Payne will not get in the way of solving the problem now. The town council will be working toward the short term goal of correcting the pumping capacity from Ft. Payne and the long term goal of finding additional sources of water.

In the crisis many people were supportive, and worked hard to help. I would like to thank all of those who helped: Arthur Porter of Civil Defense, the National Guard, members of the N. Lookout Mountain Fire Dept., the Water Department of Valley Head for the water, Rudolph Bell, the Fort Payne Fire Department, the Valley Head Fire Department, radio station WQRX, and especially Mr. and Mrs. James McMillan of Mt. Vernon. At no charge to the city they hauled 11,000 gallons in their milk tanker. I am sure I have not thanked everyone that is deserving, but if you were not listed above — the town thanks you for your help. During the water crisis most water customers were patient, supportive, and understanding. Any time there was any news about pumping schedules I contacted WQRX and they put it on the air. In any future water crisis or civil crisis of any kind, I will give information I have to the radio station to be broadcast. — Rob Hammond

Is There A Moon Lake?



In all the drought, the water crisis, when there was a need for pastoral reassurance . . . In all the Mentone history, with such frequent mentions of the families that settled around its banks — the Masons, the Berrys and the others . . . There came the Moon Lake School, the Moon Lake Baptist Church and all the other things given its name. In all these things, the real Moon Lake was lost in the shuffle. It was time, **THE GROUNDHOG** editors thought, to assign photographer Angelo Rosario to provide us with our very first photo of the genuine article. Yes, there is a Moon Lake and there it is. It's beautiful.

AUGUST MEETING

Mentone Area
Preservation Association

Subject:

CRITICISMS OF MAPA

A taking of stock, an evaluation of directions, a planning session. Non-members are invited to come, express their views, aid in the process.

REFRESHMENTS AND SOCIAL TIME
FOLLOW

The Parlor

St. Joseph's On-the-Mountain
Church

Tuesday, August 5, 1986 7:00 p.m.

MAPA Minutes

After a covered dish dinner the meeting was called to order by Director Amelia Brooks. Minutes were approved and the treasurer's report showed \$7,167. Jean McGehee gave **The GROUNDHOG** report, showing a balance of \$507.13 after presentation of a check to MAPA for \$1,200.

Charles McGehee outlined the reasons for their resignation as editors of **The GROUNDHOG**. A motion was made and carried unanimously to appoint Luther Keith and Darlene Keith as editor and associate editor. Director Brooks read and the membership approved an agreement which was signed by both parties.

Amelia reported that the wall rebuilding project is still stalled but she is trying to get it going. Final figures are not yet in on the June Jam corn and pie sales.

Following election of officers, the program was presented by Bob Elmore (See stories elsewhere).

— Adapted from the minutes of Bill Riedesel, secretary

Groundhog Finance Report

June Issue

Income:	
Balance on hand	\$1,486.86
Ad Sales	990.00
Donations, June Jam Tourists	5.80
	\$2,482.66
Debits:	
Greg Purvis	\$15.00
U. S. Post Office	76.78
Donna Bukley	178.50
McGehees	100.00
Summerville News Co.	405.25
	\$775.53
Donation to MAPA	\$1,200
Balance on hand	\$507.13

1978-'86

January 1978: State Health Department condemns Mentone's water treatment system on Little River. Fort Payne was asked by the state to aid Mentone in its water supply. An agreement was reached whereby Fort Payne supplies Mentone with 3-million gallons monthly. The contract certified that only in event of "emergency failures of the pressure or supply due to main supply breaks, power failure, flood, fire and use of water to fight fire, earthquake and other catastrophe shall the seller (Fort Payne Water Board) be excused from providing water for a reasonable period of time as is necessary to restore service." This was during the term of Mayor Ethel Manifold.

May 9, 1983: Under the administration of Mayor Sam Barrett, a federal community block grant was applied for under the Alabama Small Cities Program, requesting \$191,900 (supplemented by \$35,000 town matching funds) "to install an eight-inch main from the Fort Payne Water Company to the town's water storage tank to increase pressure." The project called for 20 new fire hydrants, lines enlarged, two rings added to the storage tank, an eight inch line run from the Falls to the tank, and several more two, four and eight inch lines.

January 1984: Following serious local conditions resulting from the Fort Payne Water Board cutting off the local supply over the holidays, Mayor Rob Hammond met with Fort Payne officials and suggested two alternatives: (1) Building our own surface water treatment plant; (2) discussing with Valley Head a connection with them. He also considered checking with state officials about amending the CBDG grant for use in securing additional water supply.

October 1, 1984: Following serious inconveniences because of water shortages over the summer, the town council voted to change the course of the grant plans, abandoning the enlarged main. Councilman Stanley Brown proposed "a special meeting with the council and the water people to discuss necessary changes in the lines, meters, hydrants, in order to upgrade the present system to utmost efficiency." Mayor Hammond voted against the resolution, insisting that the town should explore the possibility of a package water treatment plant before upgrading the present system.

October 30, 1984: At the special meeting with the project engineers it was announced that the new tank had been completed at a cost of \$40,000. Further monies were spent to sandblast, paint and fence in both tanks — at a cost of about \$10,000. Councilmen decided to install a 6-inch line from the Hitching Post to Camp DeSoto and across the river to Moon Lake School, with new fire hydrants along the way and in other points in town.

February 4, 1985: Council commends water employee Leroy Snider for working beyond requirements during the recent cold weather. With the thermometer registering below 20 he checked numerous meters, searching for leaks.

March 4, 1985: Citing the need for funds with which to apply for federal funds toward the goal of once again having the town's own water plant, the Town Council voted unanimously to increase water rates from \$8 for the first 3,000 gallons to \$10.

Oct. 21, 1985: Council adopts proposed 1985-86 town budget of \$38,940 with Water Department budget of \$52,000.

May 5, 1986: Council voted to restrict water service to the present level of 325 meters because of the serious drought.

June 2, 1986: Council members expressed relief that recent rains brought relief from the drought. Efforts would be made to check the meters more often.

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The Groundhog

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Charles White McGehee, Editor
Jean McGehee, Associate Editor
Donna Bukley, Advertising, 634-4678
Amelia Brooks, Director
Donna Bukley, Associate Director
Bill Riedesel, Secretary
Polly Cameron, Treasurer
Gregory Purvis, Student Reporter

Time For Action

Never were there more rumors and complaints, more suggestions and cross-information. I received calls from people insisting that **The GROUNDHOG** make some sense out of the situation. In preparation I studied reports of all Town Council meetings for approximately three years. I talked several times with Mayor Rob Hammond of Mentone, a troubled and busy man; with Mayor David Stout of Fort Payne, a dedicated leader concerned about Mentone; with Mayor William Crow of Valley Head, a quiet, competent official.

No one has a clear solution. But from many considerations and suggestions, I offer the following, hoping it will clarify and not further confuse the situation.

(1) The miserable cutoffs were not caused alone by the leak in the main, but by an unfortunate combination of the leak, the drought, the heavier load by the camps, by summer residents and tourists on a busy weekend.

(2) This will occur again — both in summer and mid-winter.

(3) The Town Council should adopt both a short-term and long-term plan and move full-speed ahead. Even a plan decided upon tomorrow could not be facilitated within a year.

(4) A Water Board system should be instituted. We are the only town in the area without one.

(5) Mentone water customers should demand, because they deserve, a notification system, in order to better prepare for cutoffs. Volunteers in various neighborhoods would agree to notify those on their list. Volunteers could be organized to answer the 4444 phone at Town Hall after Mrs. Catherine Bailey, town clerk, goes off duty at noon. Fort Payne should be legally compelled to notify Mentone of upcoming cutoffs. The largest complaints were for lack of notification.

Perhaps in a way we all are guilty: some water customers of over-use of water during the drought; the town council was probably wrong to change the direction of the grant funds away from its original intent; the Fort Payne Water Board has certainly been guilty of lack of notification. Perhaps even the original plan for supply from Fort Payne was in error. But these things are all past now. We can't persecute ourselves with "what if's." With members of the council, we should keep repeating, "It will happen again. Let's do something — now."

The Editor

The best analysis of THE MENTONE DROUGHT was in the **July 8 Fort Payne Times-Journal**, written by its publisher Gary Gengozian, a former resident of Mentone. We offer it for your consideration:

Some things never change. 10 years ago, when I lived on Lookout Mountain in Mentone, water shortages were a way of life. Apparently they still are.

The summer demand, coupled with drought conditions, forced the City of Fort Payne to suspend water delivery to the Mountain community in recent days. Service was restored over the weekend, and a major culprit was located in the form of a break in the line... so the crisis is over... for now.

But it will be back. Just as it will rise again in the dead of winter when lines freeze, pressure drops, and Fort Payne once again elects to cut Mentone off. After all, their contract with Mentone gives them that right, when emergencies arise.

We have no quarrel with that. Apparently, the city really didn't want to get into the water-selling business to start with, according to former city officials. They just did it to help out their neighbors.

But it does seem it would also be neighborly to let them know when situations become critical, so that Mentone residents can prepare for the worse. To cut off the town's water with no prior warning seems a bit much.

Now I'm sure an argument can be made for this policy of no prior warning, in that a "panic" might cause undue usage (if everybody fills up their bathtub all at once, for example). But it also seems an impending shortage should be easily enough recognized, and some system of on-

Mountain Watch

By Charles White McGehee

This is the last edition of the **GROUNDHOG** that Jean and I will edit. I have been asked to continue this column, which I shall do. All possible assistance will be given our successors, both in the transition and in any advisory capacity they may choose from time to time. We will continue active in the affairs of the Mentone Area Preservation Association, without which there would be no **GROUNDHOG**, and which in increasing measure is serving various needs in this town. Frankly this publication just got too successful, exacting too much of our energies. You have let us know your appreciation. Now we want to more fully enjoy our retirement. I have a book to finish; Jean has some writing of her own. We are confident of the talents of Lew and Darlene Keith to expand **The GROUNDHOG** to new dimensions. It could become a livelihood for them. It is a new form of journalism. With your continued cooperation it can truly make history, far into the future.

Back in the Birmingham days Abe Krawcheck was a good friend. He would say, "I can go without a new suit of clothes for years. But when I go to the tailor for measurement — I want that suit the very next day." Jean and I are like that about improvements to our cabin. For weeks we debated the pros and cons of knocking down the wall between our living room and study. We are winnowing down our books and thought the study was somewhat expendable. Finally we made up our minds. We called Mentone builders one after another. Certainly they could not stop in the midst of building a new house, or a major construction job, for such a minor task as this. Our impatience was at a breaking point when Paul Purvis made available two competent young carpenters. Now we have a large living area, which has added a sense of space and new comfort to our lives — all a product of impatience, which is in most instances an unfruitful and sometimes destructive attribute.

There's an old pocket knife in my desk drawer. It's been there for at least fifteen years. Its dingy yellow plastic handle and broken blade have a certain character that represents an old guilt. It was left at our brow house by either a plumber or an electrician. I never really tried to track down the owner. Most probably it was Mr. Prestwood. Every time I see him the guilt resurfaces. There's another side, however, to the guilt about tools. It seems to balance out. You gain as many as you lose. For instance, in my spring tool inventory, puttering around the shop, I found three — actually three — of those fine blue-steel snippers that cut heavy wire so efficiently. Should I get on the phone and try to track down the owners, having no idea which of the many worked at various things during the winter? No. Why not? Also during my inventory I found that two plier-wrenches were missing — whose tools we reach for when we don't know the proper one. Now, I'm not accusing anyone of taking those plier-wrenches. Most likely they just got mixed in with workers' other tools after a hard day's work. There are other examples — a hammer or saw missing, but others seem to show up. Emerson was right. It all balances out eventually. I'm always proud when workers ask if I have a certain tool they forgot or do not own — like a T-square or saber saw. It makes me feel important, even a little superior. If Mr. Prestwood wants to drop by and see if that's really his yellow-handled pocket knife, it's all right with me. But I sure will be glad when my plier-wrench shows up.

One day recently Jean interrupted my shaving. "Come quickly," she said, leading me to the window overlooking our woodpile and birdfeeder. There, pecking away among the rotting logs, was our own private pileated woodpecker. It was the closest view we had been gifted with. Soon the mate joined the feast. It was a time for reverence, knowing that these stately colorful creatures chose our private wilderness preserve for habitat. Also foraging around the logs was a tiny chipmunk. At the feeder wrens were fighting for the birdseed. Nearby on the lawn two robins who have nested in our yard were scrounging for worms. Somewhere in the underbrush just across the fence were the rabbits who will soon be threatening the garden; and the quail, a lonely pair who do not emerge often. Thoreau wonders what a country would be without rabbit and partridges. They are so simple and indigenous, of the very hue and substance of nature, nearest allied to the leaves, to the ground and to one another. They have their strange communication on our three acres to the pair of thrushes and to the cardinals who come back each year. The doves have their sad sound in our woodlot across the road where humans scarcely ever go.

again-off-again scheduling worked out... and made public.

Mentone residents were angry, when this last cutoff occurred. Some have vowed to organize a boycott of Fort Payne businesses and services, should it happen again. They "simply want to be warned," one resident told me.

Some of these same residents also know that the best solution is to find another source for their water... be it another supplier, or even their own system. Fort Payne may have been wrong in not notifying their Mountain customer in advance of the suspension of service, but Mentone also needs to explore ways of solving this continuous crisis once and for all.

The town knows of the demands placed on water supplies during the summer months, when all the camps are running. They also have been through enough of those long, cold winters, when the flow stops to a trickle. Maybe it's time to address the issue from a realistic standpoint, and work toward a permanent solution, too.

When I lived in Mentone 10 years ago, we were on the very end of the system, and our water was usually more like mud, anyway. I'm surprised the "muddy waters" haven't cleared up in all this time."

— Gary Gengozian, Editor and Publisher

New Editors (Continued From Page 1)

newspaper. After attending The University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, she went to Atlanta where she was graduated from Emory University with a degree in psychology. Her art studies were at Callanwolde Art Center and Georgia State.

Basically a potter, Darlene also engages in other art forms such as painting, black and white sketches, and basketry. Some of those who have purchased her pottery creations at the Nightingale Artworks are speaking of her as one of the outstanding potters in the Southeast. She is serious about her work, diligently scheduling the firing of her kilns, and constantly experimenting with new design.

GROUNDHOG readers will be interested in Darlene's family background and why she named her art shop Nightingale Artworks. Her great-grandmother, Emma J. Smith, was postmistress at the Nightingale Post Office. She was half Cherokee and was a feminist in the early 1900's. There are Indian names throughout Darlene's family, which has owned land in the area (where she and Lew now live) for a long time. Her mother's name was Oleta, and her sister is named Winona, both Indian derivatives.

New Cable TV Plans

"Negotiations are underway between Clear-Vu Cable-TV and the Mentone Town Council and something should be worked out soon," says Boyce Dooley of the Summer-ville, Georgia, firm.

Kidder Cable-TV which had been working out a system and had been awarded a contract announced at the June council meeting that he was unable to work out financial details.

Dooley felt that although some equipment was already ordered and measurements were about to get underway, he preferred to make no specific announcements until the contract and full details have been consummated.

Brow Briefs

Mentone resident Donny Guinn, son of Don and Becky Guinn, was a winner in the "How We Can Keep DeKalb County Beautiful" contest sponsored by Wal-Mart. Donny is in the ninth grade at Fort Payne High School. Other winners were John Chambers (See **THE GROUNDHOG**, May 1986) of Mentone and Joy Cochran of Geraldine.

The Living Stones, a group of Episcopal church people from Birmingham, will present a "Praise Concert" in the front yard of St. Joseph's-on-the-Mountain Church on Saturday, Aug. 2, at 6 p.m. This is appropriate entertainment for all ages. For more information, call Frank Purvis, 634-4884, or the church, 634-4476.

James Allen Tate and Patricia Ann Cash of Mentone were among the students on the Dean's List for the final quarter at Northeast Alabama State Junior College. Those on the Dean's List carried 15 or more quarter hours, with a grade range average from 3:00 to 3:99.

The Lookout Restaurant



Shown above is the newly completed wing of The Lookout Restaurant in Cloudland, owned by Sara and Joe Pless.

The Bells Of St. Joseph's

By David Bosworth

Between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. the St. Joseph's on the Mountain Episcopal Church chimes ring out over the mountainside. Mentone residents can hear every hour marked by the Westminster strike (originated from the Abbey in England). At noon and at five o'clock hymns such as "Blessed Assurance" and "The Old Rugged Cross" are played. During the Christmas season "Joy to the World" and other seasonal hymns are chimed. Each day is ended with "The Day Is Done." On Sunday two hymns and a string of bells are rung to call people to worship.

Upon making the decision not to buy real cast bells which are now only crafted in a few European countries, St. Joseph's bought the electric carillon that presently has three speakers in a cupola atop the church roof. This carillon runs on tapes and is the only one of its kind in this area.

Because of the excellent projections from the speakers, many people hear the chimes and songs mentioned above throughout the day. Visitors and residents alike are touched as the time of day and the old familiar hymns float across the mountain top.

One experience I had with the chimes was on a Wednesday night at five o'clock. I was routinely milking my goats. In the midst of all the noise of my goats, I thought I heard a hymn. I stopped what I was doing to listen. Sure enough, it was the chimes of St. Joseph's. I waited for both hymns to finish playing, then I returned to my work. It fills one with a good feeling to listen to familiar hymns while doing everyday activities.

Dishwasher To Manager



By Greg Purvis

DeSoto State Park cabins and motel rooms were booked-up for six months before the June Jam on June 14. With the surge of campers that weekend, Greg Rice, the new manager of the motels, cabins, chalets, and restaurant, had a busy schedule.

Rice has worked in the Alabama State Park Department for nearly nine years, most recently at Cheaha State Park. Rice started work as a dishwasher at Joe Weaver State Park and worked his way up to marina, then banquet manager. He left his job to attend school at the Memphis Academy of Arts and the Atlanta Arts Institute. He planned to enter the arts field but found that he liked the recreation business.

Rice was born in Savannah, Georgia, and grew up moving regularly with his father who was in the service. Rice has moved to many areas of Alabama and worked at several Alabama state parks. He is single and has no immediate family.

Rice says that the motel, cabins and restaurant have had a good season so far. He has been busy with the June Jam crowd and the regular summer tourists from all over America. When asked about entertainers staying at the motel during the June Jam, Rice said with a smile: "I don't know of any unless they stayed incognito." He also mentioned that a good number of out-of-country visitors have been in the park recently.

Rice said that cosmetic work on the motel and plans for landscaping next year are under way. He is expanding the gift shop and its stock of merchandise.

When asked his goals for his area of the park, Rice said: "My goals are to provide a service to guests and to maintain a quality facility. We welcome everyone, including the local populace."

Rice said that the best advertising is word-of-mouth and encourages local citizens to support DeSoto State Park so that it can continue to be a valuable part of the community.

Mentone Voters

In the Democratic runoff election on Tuesday, June 14, Mentone Box 1, Beat 21, went generally along with state and county results. Following are the official local results:

Governor: Graddick, 124; Baxley 77. Lieutenant Governor: Jim Folsom Jr., 136; John Teague, 61. State Treasurer: George Wallace Jr., 109; Jim Zeigler, 87. Public Service Commissioner Place 2: Terry Ellis, 107; Charles B. Martin, 72. President DeKalb County Commission: Sid Holcomb, 78; Ron Sparks, 118. DeKalb County Commission District 2: Richard L. Pridmore, 75; Howard Ridgeway, 109. DeKalb County Commission District 3: Auzie Anderson, 62; Cecil Shirey, 128. DeKalb County Commission District 4: Jim Bradshaw, 85; Kenneth Brandon, 104.

Races going contrary to winners in the state and county were that Baxley won in DeKalb County, but apparently Graddick in the state; Holcomb beat out Sparks for president of the county commission; Bradshaw won over Brandon, from Hammondville, for District 4 county commissioner.

The gubernatorial election has been challenged by the Baxley forces who insist that Graddick, a former Republican, was elected by the votes of Republican crossover voters who swung the balance. State law specifies that those voting for a specific party in the primary may not switch to the opposite party in the runoff.

Conversations by **THE GROUNDHOG** editor with Sammy Cash, Beat 1 County Commissioner and with Linda Brown, local election commissioner in both elections, revealed that 25 voted, voted locally as Republicans in the primary, and 7 of those voted for Graddick in the runoff.

Letters To The Editor

We enjoy **THE GROUNDHOG**, especially those articles about the Libbys and Dr. Quimby. We are graduates of Valley Head 37-38. We were "summer" folk for years, before the depression drove us to the home on Cove Road. Then I attended Moon Lake 5th grade. Martha was born in Valley Head.

Besides swimming, my earliest remembrance is attending Sunday school at the large Baptist Assembly Hall just west of the post office. We rode the train from Birmingham and Johnny Crow drove us up the old mountain road. I'm glad some folk don't want "too much tourism." — Donald G. Smith

I should like to let you know that I favor all endeavors of preservation in the Mentone area, especially the replacements of the damages to the stone wall. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance in these efforts.

Harman H. Hutcherson
DeSoto Parkway
Mentone, Alabama

Mentone Has It All

"Scenery, historical interest, and natural phenomena are the three ingredients necessary for tourism to be successful," said Bob Elmore of the Chattanooga Tourist Association, "and you have them all here in Mentone."

Elmore spoke following the Mentone Area Preservation Association potluck dinner at St. Joseph's-on-the-Mountain July first. "Tourism is a service-oriented industry, providing many local jobs. The money coming in is 'new money' and benefits everyone in the community." He went on to state that tourist bring tax monies, but their children do not use local schools.

Because of the prevalence of local famous musicians like Alabama, Willie Nelson, the Forrester Sisters, and the Louvin Brothers, publicity flows into our area. Whether we like it or not, tourism is coming our way. Last year the industry increased in Chattanooga by 8.1 percent. In addition, 500,000 visited Nockalula Falls in Gadsden last year and almost that many used the facilities at DeSoto State Park.

Elmore concluded his presentation by reminding those present that planning ahead for tourists would benefit the entire community; ignoring the phenomenon will only bring chaos.

Dear Friends

The opportunity to join the Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) is yours. We have been excited and encouraged about the activities of MAPA during the past year and are about to embark on even new challenges.

The reasons for joining MAPA are numerous. They include:

- Approximately 12 meetings per year, one each month.
- Opportunity for community involvement and getting to know your neighbors better.
- Participation in encouraging controlled growth in the area, with emphasis on a quality environment for everyone to enjoy.
- Preservation of historical landmarks throughout the region.
- 12 issues of **THE GROUNDHOG**, filled with information about regional activities and
- Low cost of \$10 per year, which is also tax deductible.

The main reason is that MAPA needs you. The organization exists to serve the community, a community of which you are an important part.

Send your check to Greg Frith, MAPA Membership Chairman, P. O. Box 50, Mentone, Alabama 35984.

Amelia Kirk Brooks

Re-Elected MAPA Head

Amelia Kirk Brooks was reelected director of the Mentone Area Preservation Association for the year 1986-87 at the July 1 meeting at St. Joseph's-on-the-Mountain. Other officers elected were Donna Bukley, Associate Director; Bill Riedesel, secretary; Polly Cameron, treasurer.

Director Brooks reappointed Maggie Cordell and Dorothy Crow as hostesses. Angelo Rosario will be director for the October Colorfest. Greg Frith is membership chairman.

Mountain Cookery

The best hot cakes in the world — that's the way Pearl Devine unabashedly described hers. The editors agree wholeheartedly and wish to share this method:

The night before, mix one cup of buttermilk and one cup of flour. Cover, but leave unrefrigerated. Next morning add an egg, teaspoon of soda, and three melted tablespoons of margarine (or olive oil). Beat until smooth and cook on a hot griddle that has been rubbed with a salt bag or sprayed lightly with Pam. Enjoy!

From Big Mama's **United Daughters of the Confederacy Cookbook** (Montgomery, 1922) comes the easiest, and quickest method for making cream pies:

Bake your own or a bought crust. Into a sauce pan mix thoroughly one cup of sugar (use brown if making butterscotch pie), 2 tablespoons of flour, and a pinch of salt. (Add 3 tablespoons of cocoa if making chocolate pie). To a measuring cup of milk (juice of two lemons and grated rind of one if making lemon pie — fill up with water) add 3 egg yolks well beaten. Add to dry mixture and cook over medium heat, stirring often.

Remove from heat and add one tablespoon of butter and one teaspoon of vanilla (except to lemon) and grated fresh or frozen coconut if coconut pie is desired. Pour into crust and top with beaten meringue made of the three egg whites beaten stiff with pinch of salt and 3 tablespoons of sugar slowly added. Cook meringue slowly in oven until lightly browned.

It's the same fast method, but it makes either a coconut pie, chocolate, lemon, or banana if you pour it over sliced bananas in the crust. — JDM

Did You Know?

That tourism brings \$10-million dollars daily into the state of Alabama and that Little River Canyon is the second most popular attraction?

MAPA At The June Jam



Here in their red roadster are Bill and Bobbie Riedesel, rolling along on Wednesday of June Jam Week for MAPA and the DeKalb County Tourist Association in the parade.

The shot on the right above is of the driver for Kelton Tours, Janet May of LaGrange, Georgia, and Donna Bukley, tour guide. To the left below the Riedesels are Bob Brooks,



Randy Still, and Harrell Jenkins in the corn-on-the-cob and apple pie MAPA tent at the Jam. To the right Maggie Cordell is extolling the virtues of both delicacies.



On Sunday, May 18th, few people were upset when the parade was rained out. It was a temporary halt to the long drought. It was a fitting climax and conclusion to the 1986 Rhododendron Festival. This photo and the

two above it were taken by Reba McKelvey, Maggie Cordell's daughter. The parade snapshot is by Donna Bukley. Other photos in this issue are by Angelo Rosario and Jean McGehee.

Mentone Troubador's Fame Increases

Tony Goggans, The Mentone Troubador, is gaining attention throughout the Southeast, highlighted particularly by his move to Mentone and establishing Jingle Masters, a firm for the writing, performing, and recording of commercial jingles.

A **Birmingham News** feature article by James H. Kennedy, who often writes about Mentone, quotes Tony as saying: "What I'm really doing is offering the small business man a way to get his message across." The new enterprise has already sold about 100 jingles, written mostly for politicians and small businesses.

Tony is a member of the Malibu Mountain Band and certain of its members are often used in the jingles. The article also calls attention to Tony's Musical Village, held Saturdays 10-2 and Sundays 12-2 on the deck of the Log Cabin Deli. The Musical Village promotes local businesses and events and at various times features Susan Bolding, Randy Still of Cragmere Manna Restaurant; Bernise Crow and Jean Elrod of Crow's Nest Antiques; Angela Jones and Judy Sims in nearby cabins, with Tony always the master emcee and central vocalist.

Where did James Kennedy learn about Tony Goggans? Why, in **The GROUNDHOG**, of course! **The Birmingham News**, like other important area newspapers, receives monthly copies of our esteemed publication.

Channel 13 TV of Birmingham recently visited Mentone and interviewed Tony Goggans for an upcoming evening news presentation. It was aired Saturday, July 12.

Crafts Festival X

By Linda Brown

Mentone's 10th crafts festival was a great success! Thanks to the many people who gave hours and hours of volunteer work, we did it again!

One of the most improved areas this year was our parking. In the fall of '85 the festival committee researched the records of the owners of the property directly across from the park. We contacted with them and asked for permission to use their property, buy it or lease it. We heard from most of them and while none were willing to sell, all gave permission to use. We cleared the undergrowth and used this for parking. Another lot that we cleared and used was the space behind the White Elephant. The fathers and mothers of the Little League ball players of Valley Head and Mentone directed and parked the traffic. Everything went very smoothly and they did a terrific job.

As always the Rhododendron Garden club did a fine job at the gates. They had an even harder task this year as the middle gate was very busy due to the new parking area. We certainly appreciate their help and hope that they continue to do this for us.

So many people helped that it is hard to mention them all. The DeSoto Rescue Squad helped with security, along with the police officers from Valley Head and Mentone. Several local people mowed and cleaned up the park in advance of the show and also afterwards. A very talented young man from Mentone constructed the rock pillars on the pavilion and repaired the outdoor grill for us.

Then there are the loyal persons who put up signs, sell

the visors, put in temporary electricity, assign and direct the exhibitors to their sites, take photos of the event, do all of the publicity and the many other tasks that must be attended to. We could not have the show without their help.

Thanks also to the local groups who furnish the food. Beginning with sausage and biscuits and coffee each day and providing plates, sandwiches, snacks and homemade ice cream throughout the festival.

A big drawing card to our festival is the fine entertainment. We had a terrific slate of cloggers and square dancers this year. Also a special treat was Mentone's own Thunder Mountain Expirations. A special touch this year was the devotional given on Sunday morning by a young man who is staying in Mentone for the summer. Special music was directed by the Mentone Troubadour, who is now a permanent resident.

Of course a big vote of thanks has to go to the officers and members who attend the meeting and do all the planning and other things that have to be done during the other 51 weeks of the year. We start on next year's festival as soon as the current one is over.

I have mentioned all of the work done by these people to let the public know how much effort the community of Mentone puts into this event. It is this team work and community effort and spirit that has made it possible to have this event each year for 10 years! But, we need more help and more workers, more ideas and more constructive criticism, we need you. If you are interested and would like to help, attend our meetings this year or get in touch with one of our officers listed at the conclusion of this article.

The exhibitors are the ones who really make our show. They are most important to its success and without them all of our efforts would be useless. We feel very fortunate to have the quality of art and crafts that we continue to have. We always have a wide variety of articles to buy or just to look at and admire. We encourage local participation and as always are very appreciative of the response we get from crafts people. They are a very special group!

The most important group I have saved until last. The many people who drive for miles or walk from just up the road, our spectators. Without them there would be no Mentone Crafts Festival. This year almost 1900 people paid to come through our gates. Add to this the ones who came to perform a service, accompany a young clogger and those under 12 who came in free, and you can see that quite a number of people attended the festival in Mentone.

Thanks again to all who helped in any way. I purposefully did not mention names for fear that I might leave someone out. But I would like to personally thank every one of you for all the help and support that I have received as chairperson. I have made the statement many times that we are one of the most congenial groups on the mountain. Thanks again everyone!

Linda Brown — 634-4755
Barbara Blalock — 634-4166
Sunny Mays — 634-4682
Richard Meadows — 634-4685
Next meeting — July 28 (Monday) 7:30 p.m. Mentone United Methodist Church.
Next Year's Festival — July 11, 12.



Robert Rakestraw doing a charcoal portrait. He is from Rome, Georgia. On the right is Stanley Sanders from Margaret,



Alabama, with his bird houses, feeders, and wind chimes.

Our Town

By Greg Purvis

(Rescue Squad)

The DeSoto Rescue Squad aided in volunteer service at June Jam V held on June 14 in Fort Payne. Squad members present were Captain Ples Cox, Desmond Disney, Leonard Shigley, David Mays, Paul Purvis, Greg Purvis, Jesse Crabtree, and Sam Whatley. These members parked cars and directed traffic during the June Jam from 4:30 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. the following morning.

Within twenty-four hours after returning home from the June Jam, the Rescue Squad was called out again. A young boy was reported lost at Comer Scout Reservation. DeSoto Rescue Squad, acting as leader to two other squads, arrived at 1:00 a.m. Monday morning. Bobby Brown, Desmond Disney, David Mays, Ovie Blalock, Paul Purvis, and Greg Purvis helped with the rescue. The boy had wandered through the woods and was picked up at DeSoto State Park Monday morning at 8:00 a.m.

(Fire Department)

The Mentone Fire Department helped the Alabama National Guard of Fort Thomas Jester and the Mentone Water Department by filling tanks and pumping water on July 3 and 4. The water brought up from Fort Payne by the National Guard allowed some water to reach homes where all water pressure was turned off. The Fire Department held a refreshment booth at the Mentone Crafts Festival on July 5 and 6 to raise money for fire-fighting equipment.

(DeSoto State Park)

According to Talmadge Butler, director of DeSoto State Park, June was a busy month for campers and staff alike. The park is in the process of renovating the camping areas. This will include road construction on the drive-ways to make it easier for campers to park and set up their equipment. Butler says this construction should be completed in one to two weeks. The park will be starting educational seminars on all aspects of camping and recreation. These seminars will be given to all interested schools, clubs and social groups. The park has also set up displays in the Interpretive Nature Center. The nature programs are doing very well, says Butler. They will be held each weekend until Labor Day.

The pool area opened June 21 after lengthy construction delays. It will be open daily until Labor Day. The park area was crowded on the June Jam weekend, and motel



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Mamie and Harry Springer on the occasion of their seventieth wedding anniversary July 15. They have lived in Ohio, Florida and for the past four years, in Mentone.

and camping spaces have been booked since December. Visitors for the June Jam staying in the park represented 30 states, Canada and England.

(Writer's Group)

American Entertainment of Mentone is currently looking for all types of poems for a large anthology. Already over two-hundred poems have been collected. Interested persons should call 634-4518.

The Petting Zoo

Randy Still, owner-operator of Cragsmere Manna Restaurant, heard Rainey Therrell of Saddle Rock, say with combined joy and exasperation, "I have three dogs and three cats. All I need now is a cow and a goat and I can start a petting zoo."

The wheels started turning with Randy and his fiancée Annie Ellis. He remembered hearing that Bob Blackwell, minister of St. Joseph's-on-the-Mountain, had recently bought a small goat for his children.

They arranged to borrow the goat, painted a sign entitled "PETTING ZOO" and drove to Rainey's house on DeSoto Parkway. After placing the goat in the yard in prominent view, they put the sign in clear view of the parkway by-passers.

They had hoped it would coincide with Rainey's return from her duties at Saddle Rock Camp. Behold, she was an hour late. It was the busy morning of Crafts Fair 10. Traffic began slowing to a halt in front of the house — all in wonder, in questioning wonder of the existence and definition of a "Petting Zoo."

The GROUNDHOG will not publish the dialogue between Rainey, Randy and Annie upon her return.

To MENTONE AREA PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION, BOX 50 in support of the objectives of MAPA, desiring to join with others in preserving and protecting the heritage, natural environment and other unique qualities of life in the Mentone area, I enclose \$10 for voting membership for one through June 1987.

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(Continued From Front Cover)

The Hitching Post in Old Hotel Square. The rest is more or less history. The Gourdie is subject of a cottage industry, averaging ten workers year-round. Its celebrity status is abundant.

What is so unusual about the Gourdie? Why does it seem more than a fad or a whimsey?

Each of its offerings has a special and distinct personality — like people, says Sharon Barron. Each is given distinct character by its artist, and signed.

The Gourdie is lovable — neither male nor female, never tells secrets because it has no mouth. Sharon gives the best definition in *The Gourdie Book*, which is also printed on a card that goes forth with each critter:

"A friend to tell a secret to;
To bear your soul when you are blue;
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Unique and original — just like you."

Setting for *The Gourdie Book* is unmistakably an adaptation of the Mentone Springs Hotel. Its chief character is Hattie, a woman who sees through the eyes of a child, yet understands as if she were very old. This faculty gives her a special magic, causing her to see things constantly as though they were new.

A major and symbolic theme is that of a seed, demonstrating that being in the dark can be the beginning of growth.

The philosopher Hattie insists that we each bloom in our own time and place. We each have the same feelings inside — we just need to find means of handling them, expressing them.

What is the most important thing in life? From the Gourdie's creator comes the summation: "A purpose in being."

Sometimes when asked a question we answer too quickly — without thinking. "When a person learns to voice his or her feelings, even if it is only to a Gourdie, life becomes richer."

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Leftovers

By Jean McGehee

If I ever picked blackberries when I was a child, I cannot remember it. The first I remember is about thirty-seven years ago here at Mentone. That was a very good summer for blackberries and small huckleberries. I made a pie and put hickory nuts in the crust.

Later that fall we went to Mississippi for my first visit to my husband's old home. I went blackberry picking with one of my favorite brother's-in-law, J. T. Dawson. Years later I picked with him at a small farm my folks had in Leeds, Alabama.

That morning in Mississippi I wore a pair of J. T.'s old pants gathered at the waist. The berries were so thick and luscious that we picked them in bunches, like grapes. I was picking blackberries in Massachusetts in the summer of '59 when word came that J. T. had just died after a long bout with cancer.

Our older son McGregor and I picked many times at Mentone. Until they were trimmed from the sides of the road around Brow Park, the blackberries grew so prolifically that I could pick enough for dozens of jars of jam and several pies without ever leaving the pavement.

McGregor and I have vivid memories of picking along Willie Nelson Drive behind our place when Delores Morgadanes, whose family then owned the house, tore down the driveway yelling in her fractured Spanish-English that those were her berries! We didn't realize until later that the family indeed owned the property across from their back fence, too. That's ours, too, now, but the berries are long gone.

One July Fourth several years ago I was picking in the then tangled area in front of the White Elephant when I heard a wonderful sound: dinner guests across at the Mentone Inn were lustily singing, "God Bless America," for their grace.

So long as we lived on the brow, there was a magnificent blackberry patch just below our deck. Such riches... now I'm doubly blessed because there is a good stand of wild berries in our lower back yard. They are small this year, but at least they're here. Last year there weren't any to speak of because the drought hit them at the wrong time. I bought some frozen ones from a lady at the Crafts Festival, but the jam they made was thin.

Jim Walbert, our Birmingham friend, is more addicted to blackberry jam than anyone I've ever known. He will even buy dreadful commercial varieties when he's desperate.

True blackberry pickers don't worry about ticks or chiggers — red bugs, we call them. It's just part of the picking. Mary Aymar Hobart, wife of our first minister, said the only way to pick is naked since the bugs go where clothing is tight.

When Caesar, our beloved shepherd dog first adopted us, he went berry picking with me. When he would pick a ripe berry and eat it, I'd laugh aloud. He remembers this

and will from time to time deliberately go to get a blackberry just to hear our praise and laughter.

The first blackberry cobbler is as native to summer as watermelon or homemade ice cream. Few tastes are more satisfying. Leftovers sneaked from the refrigerator late at night are even better.

Classified

HELP: Sometimes when we get to Taylor's Trade Center the Atlanta Sunday papers are all gone. Would other couples rotate on the pickups — leaving copies at a central place? 634-3737.

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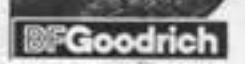
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