

the GROUNDHOG

Vol. 5 Number 12

A Publication of the Mentone Area Preservation Association

MARCH 1988

Humane Society

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How Much Do We Really Care?

Many years ago, a member of my family brought home a box of puppies someone had abandoned by the roadside. They could not escape from the box, and had soiled it until the stench was unbearable. The little things were almost starved and tried to chew the box but were too young to even tear it.

I immediately began to try to save the abused orphans, but it was a losing battle from the start. As I gently bathed them, clumps of skin and hair came off in my hands. Their tiny gaunt skeletons seemed to have a piece of shriveled hide stretched over them. They were so hungry, but could not eat. After a few days of watching them suffer, I had them put to sleep. That was what I wanted, in my outrage, to do to whoever had left them on a backroad to starve slowly and painfully.

I know people who love puppies and kittens, but when the animal starts to become an adult, have no more use for it and feel it is perfectly all right to take the animal and abandon it. I have seen this happen, with the poor creature trying frantically to keep up with the car as it leaves it behind. It cannot understand why it has been cast out with no one to care for it. Often, it will wait for the owner to come back until it starves or is run down. Patiently and forlornly it waits, never passing judgment, never questioning the omnipotence of the master of its fate.

I know of hunters who will starve their dogs so they will track better, and the result of this is often the voracious dog is unable to resist a domesticated animal; the instinct to kill takes over when starvation is threatened.

I don't believe that a person who puts so little value on the creatures we must share the earth with, can place too much value on the sanctity of human life.

There are also kind and loving and caring people who treasure all of God's creatures, and who are willing to give of their time and resources to try and make life a little better for the abandoned and abused ones. Such are Irene MacDonald and Sally Cleveland and all those who are try-



ing to establish a Humane Society in DeKalb County. These individuals put their efforts where their hearts are, and it is through people like these that great changes come to be.

The State of Alabama has a law which states that each county must provide a pound for animals, and DeKalb County does not comply with this law. Ft. Payne has a

(Continued On Page 7)

Super Tuesday Results Page 1

Rhododendron Festival May 21,22

Our Town With Linda Brown

Spring must be just around the corner. My pussy-willow tree has kittens or whatever those little fuzzy balls are. Don't you enjoy this time of the year, especially in Mentone?

Super Tuesday came to Mentone, too. About 250 persons came out to vote. This was above the average turnout ntaion wide. There are 830 registered voters in Box 21-1. I commend those who took the time to vote.

Something else happened on Election Day. A fire burned out of control in the vicinity of the Wesleyan church. No one was available to drive the fire truck, until school was out that afternoon. Two young men, Preston Kirby and Brian Crow, came home from Valley Head School and drove the truck to the scene and fought the fire, along with the Valley Head and Hammondville fire departments and other Mentone citizens until it was extinguished. No damage occurred to any buildings. I'm proud of these two guys and just wanted them to know.

Recently H. P. Goss and I were talking about gourds. The subject of gourd dippers came up. Both of us remembered when they were used. For those of you who aren't as old as H. P. and I, a gourd dipper was placed in the water bucket (my grandmother's was of cedar wood but many were metal) and everyone drank pure well or spring water from the gourd dipper. Today it doesn't seem very sanitary but those were different times and places and the water tasted so good!

DeKalb County is in the process of cleaning up the entire county. I hate to say so, but Mentone needs attention as badly as any other area. Let's do some organizing and clean up our town. Then let's educate adults and young people to "stash their trash." An impossibility? Maybe not.

Rev. Don Brock, pastor of The Church of God of Prophecy on Highway 117 in Mentone, asked me to include these announcements about his church in this column. Special Easter service, April 3, with an egg hunt to follow. April 17 will be Senior Adult Sunday, a day set aside to honor all senior citizens, the public is invited. Revival services April 18-23 beginning at 6:30 p.m. nightly.

Regular services: Sunday School — 10 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship — 11 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship — 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday Evening Worship — 6:30 p.m.
Don is the son of the late Raymond Brock and Ruby Brock. Welcome to Mentone!
Linda Brown,
P. O. Box 207
205/634-4755

Fire Department

The North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District will have a guest speaker from the Alabama Forestry Commission on Thursday night, April 21. The speaker will discuss The Prevention of Forest Fires and The Precautions To Take Should A Fire Occur.

Meeting will be held at the Mentone Town Hall Meeting Room.

The Fire Department has answered seven calls during the past month. There were five forest fires, one house fire, and one car accident.

The Fire Department has monthly meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Anyone wishing to attend is invited to become a member.

Herschell A. Pruitt
634-4274

Thank You!



Thanks to everyone who participate in the Campbell's Soup Label Drive. This year Valley Head School collected a total of 7,926. It is our best year ever and we are grateful to teachers, parents and students who helped. The school will receive an Electric Pencil Sharpener, a quartz clock, a projection screen and a Microwave Cookware Set.

Start saving now for next year's drive.
Thanks,
Kathy

MAPA MEETING

APRIL 5TH

7:00 p.m.

Town Hall

Alabama — The State Of Surprises

Mike Mitchell, assistant director of the state Bureau of Tourism and Travel, spoke to the March first meeting of MAPA in the Town Hall Meeting Room. The previous slogan for his organization was "Alabama, the Beautiful." The new slogan is "Alabama — the State of Surprises."

Tourism in Alabama grew 11 percent last year. Of the four percent lodging tax, 1/4 goes for teachers' salaries in the state. Tourism is the state's largest single industry. Tourists leave 20 percent of our retail tax collections.

In Alabama tourists spend \$4 billion annually, and it is money that is largely kept in the communities. As part of the "surprises" in the state, Mitchell stated that Alabama has more miles of navigable waterways than any other state. Another surprise is that Boaz is the fourth largest tourist attraction in the Southeast.

Hunting and fishing are popular tourist attractions here. "People want pristine beauty; they are tired of the urban areas," Mitchell stated. Some of the attractions in Alabama listed by him as top tourist sites were Gulf Shores; the Alabama Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville; the 23 state parks; Birmingham's zoo, botanical gardens, and malls; the Alabama Shakespearean Theater in Montgomery; Bellinger Gardens and the USS Alabama in Mobile; the Alabama Fan Club and Depot Museum in Fort Payne.

We must learn to "avoid hardening of the attitude. Eliminate mental b.o. — stinking thinking — in regards to tourists," he said. Tourists do not litter or trash our roadsides.

High in his praise for Governor Hunt's attitude toward tourism, Mitchell gave the components for the "Alabama Reunion 1989," patterned on Tennessee's 1987 "Homecoming" promotion. This year is the year of preparation for heritage, pride, progress and celebration — to help residents and tourists realize their roots, the natural beauty here, economic development, and a year of parties and festivities celebrating these things. The toll-free number for the Bureau of Tourism and Travel in Montgomery is 800-392-8096.

Volunteers Are Still Needed

Do you have a few hours a week to invest in helping someone learn to read or to prepare for the GED Test? You may take your ability to read and write for granted and forget that there are many of your fellow citizens who can't pick up the newspaper and read the headlines or even read their children's report cards. Classes are available for these people, and you can play a vital part in helping someone over the hurdle of learning to read.

If you have at least a high school education and would be interested in serving as a volunteer with the adult education program, you may call one of the following numbers for further information or call the Adult Education Office in Fort Payne at 845-0465.

Between 25 and 30 percent of the students enrolled in Alabama's post secondary institutions are GED graduates according to Bobby Dees, Alabama GED Administrator. If you have ever dreamed of going to college and yet have not finished high school, now is the time to take the first step and to work toward passing the GED Test. Classes are available in your area to help you to prepare to pass the test. Even if you have no plans to go to college or advanced training, you can benefit by attending adult education classes to improve your skills in math, English, social studies, science and reading.

Anyone 18 years of age or older may enroll in the adult education classes offered FREE by the Northeast Alabama Area Adult Education Program. High school graduates may attend for brush-up; special assistance is also available for the non-reader. There is no charge for the classes, and the books and material are provided FREE.

You may enroll at any time by attending the class most convenient to you. For further information, you may call one of the numbers listed below, or you may contact your local board of education or the Adult Education Coordinator in Fort Payne at 845-0465.

Super Tuesday In Mentone

Democratic Senator Albert Gore and Republican Vice-President George Bush led their tickets at Mentone's Super Tuesday election on March 8. According to District Beat Chairman Sammy Cash, the following are the local voting results:

Democrats: Gore, 96; Dukakis, 15; Jackson, 9; Gephardt, 7; undecided, 4. No votes were cast for Hart, Babbitt, Larousche and Simon.
Republicans: Bush, 65; Dole, 18; Robertson, 13; Kemp, 7. Haig and Dupont received no votes.

Democratic officials at the election were Max Cash, Leland Cox, Linda Brown, Evelyn Graves and Iva Lee Stansell. Republicans were Brenda Goss, Nancy Brown, Nancy Kirby, Pat Russell and Betty Jo Johnson.

Voting was at the Fire Hall. The Town Council has voted that upcoming elections will be in the new Town Hall Meeting Room.

In statewide voting for the Democrats Jackson received 176,764 to Gore's 151,739. Republican leader Bush received 137,807 to Dole's 34,733.

In Memoriam

Sam Barrett

Former Mentone Mayor Sam Barrett had been a resident of Mountain Manor Nursing Home in Fort Payne for some time and had been in declining health for several years. Mrs. Barrett, the former Edris Low, a Mentone native, died in 1977. The Barretts are survived by three sons: Sam Jr., James and David. Sam was an active member of the Mentone United Methodist Church for years.

Sam was a very popular mayor who believed in considering all sides of an issue. "The purpose of a leader is not to take sides too much," he once said.

Sam Barrett spoke of Mentone: "That fellow who said you can't go home again was wrong. We found home here and never regretted the move."

Those of us who were lucky enough to know him are glad he chose to call Mentone home.

DEKALB COUNTY CLASS LOCATIONS

Geraldine High School Tuesday 6-9 p.m. Phone: 659-2142	Crossville High School Monday 6-9 p.m. Phone: 528-7859
Henagar Jr. High School Tuesday 6-9 p.m. Phone: 657-4483	DeKalb Co. Public Library (Fort Payne) Wednesday 9-12 Noon Phone: 845-0465
Williams Avenue School (Fort Payne) Tuesday 6-9 p.m. Phone: 845-0465	Rainsville City Hall Annex Monday 9-12 Noon Thursday 6-9 p.m. Phone: 638-6331
Moon Lake Elementary (Mentone) Thursday 6-9 p.m. Phone: 634-4113	Ruhama Jr. High School Tuesday 6-9 p.m. Phone: 845-3377

ADULT READING CLASSES

Williams Avenue School (Fort Payne) Monday 6-9 p.m. Phone: 845-0465	Geraldine High School Tuesday 6-9 p.m. Phone: 659-2142
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Lacy Hair Center

Audrey Lacy moved to this area from Trenton, Georgia where she ran a beauty shop for 13 years. "I try to keep up with all the latest techniques and styles," Audrey told *The Groundhog*, "and I offer a wide-range of services to my customers."

Audrey and husband Bobby live on Lowery Road in Valley Head, just past the housing project if you turn off of 117. She has a charming shop near her home. The area is rural enough to seem like country, but close enough to Valley Head and Fort Payne to be easily accessible.

Audrey Lacy prides herself on old-fashioned values and up-to-date expertise; all this in a comfortable setting. *The Groundhog* welcomes Audrey to her new home.

From The Editor

By Mickey Strickland

What is the measure of a man? That question has been asked for ages and there are as many conflicting answers as there are diverse groups of people on the earth. Our Constitution states that all men are created equal and that is supposed to give us a guideline to follow in our treatment of others, but the truth is, men are not created equal. Some are born into teeth-grinding poverty, or with mental or physical difficulties to overcome or with the bigotry of small minds already a part of their lives at birth. To equate a child born into a comfortable loving home to a baby reared in abuse and ignorance is a cruel joke. Surely those individuals who do not have a caring, supportive start in life or who must overcome handicaps, are deserving of more attention and assistance and forgiveness than those whose opportunities are guaranteed.

The burdens of the individual should be taken into consideration, and others more fortunate or who have been there themselves should be willing to allow the extra support needed and should be ready to take some of the load, even if only on a personal level — a word of encouragement, understanding for mistakes, forgiveness for bitterness and anger associated with social injustice, patience when communication is difficult and most of all, unconditional acceptance regardless of educational or financial status.

Too often a person who has had the advantages of higher education will have the tendency to be condescending to those who have not had such opportunities. There is an intellectual elitism that sets itself apart from those it considers unworthy because Ph.D. is not part of a name, or because the elitist links worth to financial success.

Perhaps, in spite of his wonderful opportunity to be enlightened through higher education, the elitist harbors dark feeling of inadequacy and must bolster his own self-esteem at the expense of the feelings and integrity of another. Perhaps it is a way of separating oneself from a situation one fears. Whatever the reasoning, such an attitude prevents understanding and circumvents communication, for if men cannot meet as equals in spirit, there is no common ground upon which to solve the problems that strangle humanity. An unforgiving, elitist attitude extinguishes the flame of reason, and that means darkness for us all.

MAPA Minutes

Director Bill Riedesel called the MAPA meeting to order promptly at 7 p.m. March first in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Twenty-seven persons were present.

Harrell Jenkins showed films prepared by Bill Bosworth, director of the DeSoto State Park Interpretive Center showing activities available there throughout the Rhododendron Festival May 21 and 22. Plans also call for the park video already seen by MAPA members to be shown in the Town Hall during the festival.

A motion made by Charles McGehee and seconded by Grace Howard was passed unanimously by the group:

The members of the Mentone Area Preservation Association wholeheartedly support the consensus of the Jan. 28 meeting at which some 150 persons deplored the possible pollution of Little River from the landfill at the strip mining site north of Cloudland. At the meeting, the chairperson, Mayor Rob Hammond, was instructed to appoint a watchdog committee. The letter with the resolution is to be delivered personally to the mayor by Director Riedesel and Treasurer Jenkins.

Director Riedesel introduced Mike Mitchell of the state Bureau of Tourism and Travel, who gave a delightful presentation of statistics, places, and events in the state (See elsewhere).

After his talk, members voted unanimously to request permission from Gaynelle Pitts, of the Alabama Fan Club, to sell lemonade, sausage biscuits, coffee, and corn at the June Jam.

Motion for adjournment was made at 8:25, after which refreshments prepared by Shurleen Froehler were enjoyed.

Condensed from the minutes of Jean McGehee, secretary

PRE REGISTRATION—Moon Lake Elementary will have pre-registration Tuesday, April 26, 1988, from 8:00-10:00 A.M. Child must be 5 years of age before October 2nd to enter Kindergarten. Please bring blue certificate of immunization from Health Department and birth certificate. Vision and hearing screening will also be done by the school nurse. Educational services are available to handicapped children regardless of severity of handicapping condition. All children who did not attend Kindergarten or first grade will need to register.

The Groundhog

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205-634-4198 or 4185

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Associate Director Ray Froehler

Secretary Jean McGehee

Treasurer Harrel Jenkins

Steam Power

By John Baty

In the 1920's two residents of the Head River Community needed an engine to power their sawmill. Steam engines were generally used for that purpose, so they ordered one from Chattanooga. It came to Valley Head by train one Saturday morning and the owners met the train to get their new engine. Such engines were usually referred to simply as "power units" and required loading on a wagon to be hauled to the mill site. This particular power unit, however, was equipped with its own wheels and had some manner of "gearbox" and a crude steering mechanism.

They filled the boiler with water, kindled a fire in its firebox and soon were able to "drive" it off the train.

It chugged along the street to the south of the Depot and approached the railroad crossing in front of the Hammond house. Then, as now, it was a considerable climb up and over the railroad. The engine stalled on the grade and refused to pull itself. More wood was ordered up to increase the steam but this failed to do the trick. Stangers joined in to boost the engine by pushing. Still no go. A team of horses was summoned from somewhere nearby and finally, with some men pushing, some stoking the fire and horses pulling, the engine crossed the railroad and headed for Lookout Mountain.

The climb up Lookout was slow and long, as wood had to be gathered along the roadside to keep the steam pressure up. After what must have seemed an eternity, the engine and its crew topped the mountain, worked their way through Mentone and proceeded up the Brow Road past Eagle Rock and continued north.

Sometime during the early hours of Sunday morning the dirty and tired crew steered its new steam engine onto the mill site near the present Head River Church and shut off the steam. It might be imagined that this was one time when working men looked forward to Monday morning with keen anticipation.

I was told it happened this way at Mentone.

The Lookout

"Atop Lookout Mountain"
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MOUNTAIN WATCH

By Jean McGehee

Since 1980, two years before we moved into the Morgadanes cabin, I've kept a garden journal. In it I've listed the annual rainfall in DeKalb County since 1966, with the exception of the five years when we were both working in Chattanooga.

Carl Parker, observer for the Fort Payne Station of the U. S. Department of Commerce Weather Bureau, provided me with the missing years' records. The average annual rainfall over these 22 years, from 1966 to 1988, is 56.74 inches.

There is a definite pattern to the annual rainfall records. In 1968 and 1970, the annual rainfall was below 50 inches. This occurred again in 1978, and in 1986 and 1987. There is a seven year gap between 1970-1978 and from 1978 to 1986. This is reminiscent of the seven year plagues in the Old Testament.

While we were in Florida, I asked a consummate gardener friend whether she believed in such cycles. "Why not?" she answered. Gardeners live on optimism, always hoping for a better year. At least it gives a glimmer of hope that maybe the present drought is over.

While we visited the church where Charles served as minister for 16 years, we once again were privileged to stay on the seventh floor of a condominium belonging to the firm of a businessman in church. Right on the ocean, the apartment was a luxurious treat. It rained lightly the first week of our stay, and our principal viewing was concerned with surfers and shrimp boats. However, during the second week, I got in some walking on the beach in the 68-70 degree weather and we saw two memorable scenes.

One afternoon we were watching people on the beach at low tide. Our attention was drawn to a young man on a bicycle, stopped in a flock of sea gulls. Among the gulls were a brightly colored blue parrot-type bird and one pinkish-red one. They were both walking around, seemingly visiting with the friendly inquisitive gulls. Suddenly the young man leaned over and offered his wrist to the blue parrot. It hopped onto his arm, and he transferred it to a handlebar. He repeated this with the large pink bird. Then they rode off into the sunset.

The other scene also had to do with the gulls. Late one afternoon I was watching a flock just over the edge of the water. One bird appeared to have red cellophane attached to its underwings. I got the field glasses and immediately saw that it was a kite. It had escaped from its owner, but then I saw a young family — mother, father and small son — anxiously watching the kite.

It rose and fell on the wind currents exactly like the gulls, who flew all around it. All at once the father ran out into the cold surf and retrieved the kite string. Then happily flew the kite for quite some time until the gulls flew away; then they pulled their paper bird in for the walk home.

Coming home, we hit Atlanta right at the morning rush hour, but we decided to drive straight through since there had been a big wreck and traffic tie-up on the by-pass. Although it was slow driving through downtown, we never stopped altogether until we hit Mentone. On the edge of town, a large mobile home was being manipulated onto a side street, and we had to come to an absolute stop for a few minutes.

One of the happiest events to take place on the local scene is the establishment of a Humane Society with a pound in Fort Payne. Several of our Mentone citizens are on the board. It is grossly unfair to animals to allow them to run free, to say nothing of annoyance to people. We see far too many unwanted animals abandoned in Mentone. The Humane Society will help to make people responsible for their pets.

If only we could do something about the litter. It is so obvious that the problem in our county is about the worst ever encountered. I've never understood how people can trash this beautiful place, defiling it with their hideous refuse. It isn't enough to be responsible for our own property — we must pick up when we can and teach our children to have respect for the earth. I've been driving behind adults who are friends and seen them toss out large bags of trash on the parkway and on I-17. It is a sin to me, and I wish they'd stop. Everybody talks about littering — like the weather. But while we can't yet control the weather, it is within our power to do something about the littering. There's a lesson from history here — the Cherokees who first inhabited this area considered the land to be sacred — a gift or loan from God.

RHODODENDRON FESTIVAL

RHODODENDRON BEAUTY PAGEANT
ATTN: BUSINESS OWNERS

If You Would Like to Sponsor a High School Beauty for the Rhododendron Queen Festival Contest . . . Contact Bernice Crow — 634-4664.

Young Ladies 14-18 Can Enter Beauty Pageant for Rhododendron Festival "Queen for a Day" Contest — Prizes, Fun and New Friendships — Contact Bernice Crow — 634-4664 for Application.

Log Cabin Craft Village

The Village Boutique



There are new shops in Jack Jones' Log Cabin Craft Village, and one of them is The Village Boutique which offers hand-woven garments of natural fibers that are uniquely the designs of the Mother-Daughters team of Jeanette McCord, Donna Barnes and Allison McCord from Sand Mountain.

Each of these gifted ladies offers something special. The shop features the handwoven artistry of Donna who spins her own thread and weaves the cloth on a hand loom, and who plans to bring a spinning wheel and a loom to the shop to demonstrate the art of weaving and spinning. She makes beautiful capes, scarves, sashes, jackets, bags, and sweaters. Donna also dyes her own fabrics, achieving a softly-subdued rainbow of colors.

Jeanette offers hand-painted silk patchwork jackets and jackets made from old quilts. She also makes bags and pillows from the quilts. "We like to think of our work as 'art to wear' and want people to enjoy it as one would any functional artwork," Jeanette uses tapestry in some of her creations, and old lace doilies are also a part of some of her designs.

Allison, who is a college student, will have tie-dyed T-shirts in the shop, as well as articles that have been hand-painted. The Village Boutique will mostly feature clothing and accessories, but will have table runners and mats and other small items for the home.

For artists such as these to choose Mentone is wonderful, for not only will they bring the fruits of their talent, but will bring the process of the craft itself for everyone to share.

The Twig Shop

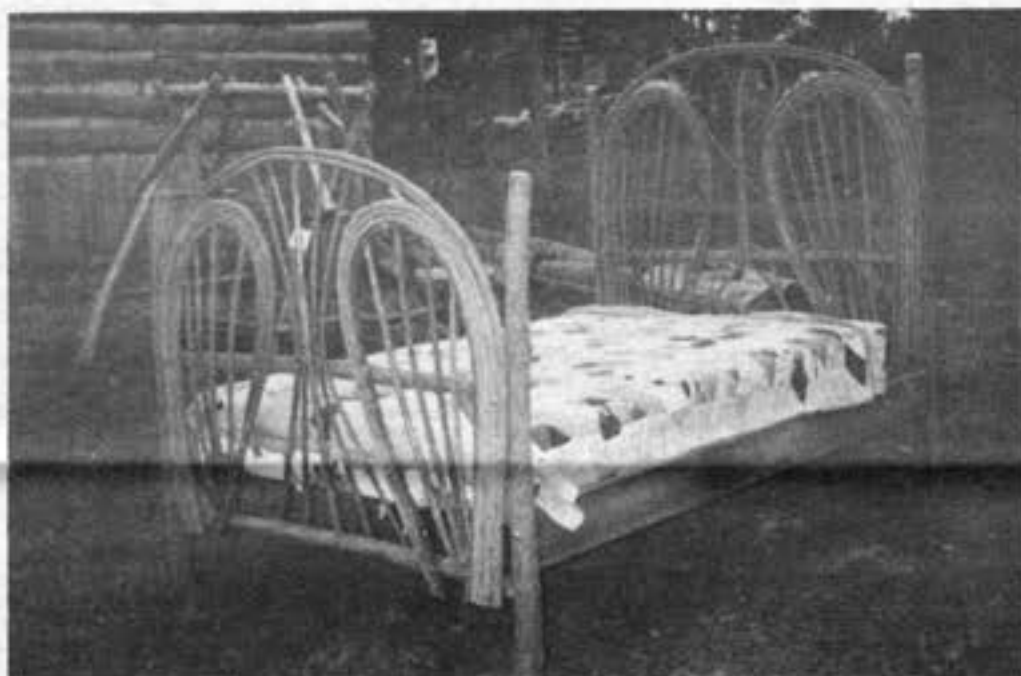
Phil Faircloth is the kind of man one would associate with craftsmanship that reflects quiet strength and honest integrity. He is calm and unassuming and lets his work speak for itself. The beauty of the pieces he creates says a lot for Phil.

This craftsman takes one of nature's most beautiful and enduring objects and makes it into functional and artfully designed objects to be used and admired for generations. In a world gone crazy with chrome and plastic and styrofoam, Phil's work stands among those treasured things taken from the spirit of the natural earth, and his work will shade the ground where it stands long after the superficial and artificial have gone to a landfill somewhere.

Phil lived in Southern Florida before escaping to Wildwood, Ga., which is near Rising Fawn — a town where many of Phil's family members live. He was active in scuba diving for years and taught the sport to others. "I dived every day for a whole year," Phil recounted. "That was something I really enjoyed." In fact, it seems as if anything to do with nature is important in Phil's life and working with wood in its primitive state is perfect.

Phil is married and has four children. He recently opened The Twig Shop in Jack Jones' Log Cabin Village in Mentone and has some unique and lovely items on display there. He will build furniture from any design or create one for the customer. Custom designing is one of his specialties. Phil's rustic furniture is well worth the modest prices he asks, for in these days a handmade item is a treasure indeed.

Phil also has pottery by Sue Cannon and handmade baskets.



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A Meeting With Mother Nature *By Talmadge Butler, Park Manager, DeSoto State Park*

A rainy February morning at DeSoto State Park — Valentine's Day, 1987. A few campers and cabin guests and at least one hardy group of hikers were at the park. We'd been hoping for sunshine. After all, the three previous days had been beautiful and warm, the kind that make you want to start a garden or work among the flowers.

I expected the day to be uneventful unless some driver lost control on the wet roads and ended up in a ditch. Yet on this day I was offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity — a meeting with Mother Nature.

I'm a park manager, not a journalist, so I feel somewhat limited in describing the meeting. Its importance to me was the understanding I gained. But I think Mother Nature intended me to share the experience.

It was not a typical meeting. We didn't sit down with a cup of coffee or walk the hiking trail together. I was parked near the Wilderness Area watching the rain fall on the pines and hardwoods. I could see a faint red haze on some of the maples; the recent warmth had caused them to bud. I wondered why the trees had started budding — didn't they realize there would be more harsh, freezing weather before spring finally arrived?

An answer to my question came: "It's really no great mystery. The trees are as anxious for spring as you are. To them each false start could be the real thing. They don't want to delay — some other plant might flower first and steal the show."

At first I didn't realize the source of the answer. I thought I was just getting wiser. I find it hard to believe I didn't realize right away that she was there. After all, I'm the one who tells people DeSoto State Park is the home of Mother Nature. This park is supposed to be the place she gives special attention, makes especially beautiful, and guards so carefully. How could I, of all people, fail to realize I was not alone that rainy morning, but sharing the solitude?

As I sat there thinking about spring and asking myself more questions about nature, I felt I was getting too many answers. I realized I wasn't that smart. It dawned on me that Mother Nature must be there with me.

"Of course I'm here," she said. "By the way, don't you know this is the kind of day you should stay home?"

"Well, yes," I responded. "But the weather man only predicted a 30 percent chance of rain."

"Weather men, weather women! When they get it right a few times they think they have it all figured out. I can sure make them look foolish just by twitching a jet stream or speeding up a cold front. Besides, I was ready for a little rest."

"Well," I said, "I'm glad you're here. We've been doing quite a bit of work getting the park ready for spring. The campground will be in good shape after our improvements — the sites are level and neater now. We've spruced up the cabin area and we're doing some work at DeSoto Falls."

"It's about time you started doing something at the falls! I hope you get the erosion under control and clean up that beach area!"

Boy was she touchy! She did need a rest. I assured her we planned to take care of both problems. Then she brought up the hiking and nature trails.

"You really need to put special emphasis on those trails," she told me. "Some of my best hiking trails are right here in DeSoto State Park — the Rhododendron Trail, for instance. The sparkling little stream down near the swimming pool helps muffle sounds from the roadway and the day area. The site near the big overhanging rock is especially peaceful. I arched the rhododendron over the trail so it's almost like walking through a tunnel. And down by the river I have rhododendron, mountain laurel, a variety of my wildflowers, and the wild and scenic Little River. The park's Interpretive Trail, dropping down along Laurel Creek among the waterfalls, is so enjoyable in summer. By the way, I'm sorry about drying everything up last summer, but if I don't do that once in a while no one appreciates the water."

"Oh, I understand," I said. "I saw how upset folks got last year when the streams and waterfalls dried up and the river almost stopped running. I hope you don't plan on doing that again this summer."

"I haven't really decided. Even when I do decide I may change my mind. I do that quite often you know, change my mind."

"Now that you mention it," I said, "I can think of several times you did." Before she could change her mind again and leave me, I hurriedly said, "Mother Nature, would you mind if I asked you some questions? The answers might help me be a better park manager."

"If you hurry," she said, "The rain's beginning to let up and I have a lot of work to do. But don't expect any indepth scientific answers. What do you want to know?"

"Well, what's the most important thing I can do so people can appreciate your handiwork?"

"Educate them," was her quick and emphatic response. "Never miss a chance to help someone understand the delicate balance of nature and how people interact with their environment. Teaching the names of animals, fish, plants, flowers and trees isn't enough. People must understand their significance. Concentrate on the children. If you give them a basic understanding and a desire to learn more about nature, maybe someday you'll have a generation that cares enough to protect and preserve their precious natural heritage. What's next?"

"If there were a higher power than you," I asked, "one that could grant the proverbial three wishes, what would yours be?"

"Rest assured, young man, there is a higher power," she corrected me. "But wishes, like prayers, are often best answered through hard work. But I can tell you three things that would be high on my list."

"For one thing, I wish people understood more about the effects of pollution and toxic waste. I get so tired of harmful substances pumped into the air, the ground and the water. And just look at the litter thrown everywhere! You deal with a lot of it here in the park when your staff works so hard to keep litter picked up. I really appreciate the fine people who don't litter."

"My second wish would be for environment protection. Someday people will learn they can't keep draining the swamps, clear-cutting the timber and building houses and shopping malls. Some day there must be a stopping point, or there won't be anything for me to work with or them to enjoy."

"Now for the third wish, let's see... Look! The sun is shining! I must go. I have lots of work to do and so do you. We'll finish this another day. Get to work on that education. Bye now."

She was gone. I was disappointed she left so abruptly. As I headed down the road to the Nature Center I thought about what she had said and realized I had my work cut out for me. Maybe she'll return some rainy day and we can continue our discussion. But for now, I have work to do — and so do you.

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Old Times Letters

April 1, 1896—From Valley Head

The cooing of the dove, the peach blooms, the barefooted boys, the digging of bait, hook and line, the rattle of the red heads on the old dead limb, is enough to convince one that spring is on us, and from the report (or orders, rather) I hear I guess I will have more evidence by tomorrow night that spring is here. I hear something like this, "I must have your Pa plow the garden, plant the onions, potatoes, mustard and lettuce, sow some early turnips and plant a few rows of corn, prepare the sweet potato bed, clean out the ash hopper and put them on the garden; all must be done tomorrow." And of course, it will be done, I like to garden very much and take pride in it. Wish I could make a living at it (especially on a quarter of an acre). But what knocks all ambition out of me is the credit I feel like I'm entitled to. It's my garden to keep the fence up and to plant and to hoe in and keep in good condition, but I notice our neighbors speak of it as Mrs. CYC's garden when everything looks fine. Well, I suppose it's right for I notice it works that way on the railroad. Brant Wright has the credit of having the best section on the road, but I

notice Brant don't work much; and Mrs. C. will step out and give orders what must be done here and what there and maybe she will let me stop rolling the wheelbarrows long enough to get the orders. I suppose this comes under the head of superintendence. Well, I will have to surrender the right to the ownership, but I have one advantage, I retain the right to work it. My two boys will take lessons this summer in the garden. One of them says he wants to be a farmer and the other one says he wants to be the same thing his Pa is, a justice of the peace. I think I will put a blind bridle on him.

Some kind friend is sending me the Montgomery Advertiser, and whoever he may be, I wish to tender my thanks for the same. It has the name of being a clean-cut Dempsey, but if I can see right a few breaks like it has made in reference to the Decatur primary election is calculated to make a fine opening for some other party in Alabama, and that soon.

C.Y.C.

Indigo Snakes

By Seth Banks



Indigo snakes are Alabama's largest snakes, reaching from three to eight feet in length. They are found in remote, unsettled areas. Their habitat includes sandy areas, pine forests, and damp fields. Many of these snakes have been wiped out because they winter in other animals' shelters and people have tried to get rid of these animals. They have also been killed when people have poured gasoline in holes trying to get rid of rattlesnakes.

The indigo snakes are on the endangered list in Alabama. They used to be found from South Carolina down into Florida and South Alabama. They can also be found in southern Texas and Mexico. It has been years since these snakes have been sighted in this area.

Indigo snakes are docile when captured. They used to be used by "snake charmers" in circuses, carnivals, and reptile exhibits. They feed on mice, rats, birds, frogs and lizards. They have been known to include poisonous snakes, such as rattlesnakes and water moccasins, in their diet.

If you see one and recognize it, do not kill it. Its size will not harm you. This snake has been almost completely driven out of Alabama. Let's try to preserve its existence.

"Snakes of Alabama" was used as an information source. This is a very informative book by Donald W. Linzey.

News From The Valley

The Valley Head United Methodist Women met Feb. 23 at the home of Vesta Hawkins, with Venna Livingston as co-hostess. The devotional was given by Cindy Barrett. The program, "The World Is At Our Doorstep," was led by Frances Longshore, assisted by Eloise Brown. Others present were Mary Louise Holleman, Patsy Hammond, Laura Margaret Allison, Velma Hammond, Brownie Tuttle, Mary Frances Tate, Elizabeth Coleman, Adelaide Biddle and little Mary Frances Barrett.

Adelaide Biddle has returned from Dallas, Texas, where she visited her son, Allen Biddle.

Mr. and Mrs. Rick Norton and baby son have been visiting her mother, Mrs. Mary Taylor.

Sympathy is extended to the family of Mary Ruth Holleman, who was returned here for burial. Among those who attended were her nephew, E. L. Foster of Ocala, Fla., and Ruth Claire Foster Berlinsky of Charleston, S. C. They will be fondly remembered as growing up here and attending Valley Head High School.

The Sunshine Club met for their February meeting at the home of Sue Cooper. Billie Harper was co-hostess. Others present were Ruth Pickett, Vernice Young, Betty Brown, Tillie Schlicher, Pat Baurle, Geraldine Hawkins, Addie Hall, Evelyn Clark, Eula Chadwick, Bess Baurle, Heather Harper and Eloise Brown.

We welcome Barbara and Harvey Morrow from Cullman who have a vacation home here.

Geraldine and Howard Hawkins visited their sister-in-law, Mrs. Russell Hawkins, at Cartersville.

Roy Cobble is a patient at B.E.C., DeKalb, suffering from pneumonia. We wish for him a quick recovery.

Our hopes and prayers must be with Brad Hawkins, who is at the National Institute of Health, in Bethesda, Md., for bone marrow transplant.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Livezy attended the wedding of Lisa Freeman to Charles Gordon, Jr., at the First Methodist Church in Florence, Ala. Lisa is the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Buddy Freeman. Rev. Freeman is a former pastor of Valley Head Methodist Church and is now pastor of First Methodist Church in Montevalle, Ala.

Little Amanda Brown celebrated her first birthday with a family party at the home of her aunt and uncle, Cindy and David Meadows. She was showered with gifts and love. She is the daughter of Patti and A. J. Brown.

Doris and Jim Carmichael were invited to the Alfa Insurance Awards dinner at the Civic Center in Montgomery. Doris recently retired after 12 years service with Alfa (formerly Farm Bureau) Insurance. They renewed acquaintances and enjoyed the honor and fellowship.

I received a call from Berthell Adams of Ider. She asked, "When are you coming to see me?" I replied, "I'm coming one of these days." She asked, "What is wrong with today?" Although I had many things I needed to do, I decided I needed to do that more. She is a lovely and talented lady. She belonged to our Poetry Group. We met each month to read our poems. Now she is mostly a shut-in, but far from inactive. She is now Historian for the Ider Garden Club. She showed me the history she had compiled with pictures illustrating all their activities and achievements which convinced me that they have a live-wire organization, winning awards for their achievements and accomplishing many good things for their community. Berthell's son, Lewis, teaches and in his spare time carves and makes beautiful objects from wood. A visit with Berthell is always a joy with interesting things to see and hear.

I also visited my mother-in-law, Thelma J. Brown, in Chattanooga recently. She is 92 years old and has a very cheerful, optimistic attitude.

William Thomas, his father, Bob Thomas, with members of Scout Troop 75 of Fischer, have gone to Charleston, S. C., on a camping trip aboard the Yorktown Aircraft Carrier, making a great memory for the future. William is a grandson of Doris and Jim Carmichael.

Joann Waldrop who had suffered a broken arm, has returned from Brookwood Eye Center in Birmingham, where she received tests and treatment for her eyes with good results. She is Melba Fuller's sister.

Congratulations to the Jones "boys" on the beautiful bank. It adds much "class" to the Valley Head scene.

Geraldine Hawkins suffered bruises from a fall at her home.

Nell and Dixie Brown and granddaughter, Rebecca Smith, have returned from Jekyll Island, Ga.

Happy "St. Patrick's Month." May the scene be green, warm and serene!

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COUNTRY JOURNAL

By Bernice Crow

We left Birmingham on Brouilff Airlines to get to Miami and board Pan-Am for Rio. They had a short stop at Orlando. When we left Miami at 1:00 a.m. Sunday morning, we were enroute to Buenos Aires, Argentina instead of Rio. The flight we were to take was oversold and we either had to spend a night in Miami or go via Buenos Aires. We chose flying, since our luggage was already checked to Rio. We did have our carry-on bag with tooth brushes and bare necessities. We met some nice people from S. C., who just happened to be from Bishopville, S. C., the hometown of our son-in-law, Gregg Cooper — small world. They also went to Rio via Buenos Aires. And we met Courtney a nice young lady who was going to Brazil to represent the United States in the singles sailing competition — international contest. All very interesting. From Buenos Aires on to Rio. We called our hotel to be sure our room was reserved, since we were about nine hours late getting there.

Homer arranged this trip through Travel Impressions, which is an agency based in New York, but has a branch here at the travel agency in Fort Payne.

When we arrived at the Rio Airport, it was raining. The travel agency had a young lady there with a sign "Crow" on it. She was waiting for us with a cab to transport us to Gloria Hotel. Our luggage was then at the airport — no problem. Our guide told us a lot about the city enroute to the hotel. She spoke English well, and was a native of Rio.

The hotel was beautiful — completely furnished in antiques — some art however, but mostly with Portuguese pieces over 100 years old. Our room had a French motif — and what a fantastic view from our window. There was Sugar Loaf Mountain, with its cable cars, a beautiful bay and other small mountains. A lovely park, full of luxuriant tropical blooming trees and coconut palms was between our hotel and the beach.

We turned on TV and saw the devastation wrought by the floods there. It was bad. But right where we were, there were no signs of it. It seems disaster nearly always strikes the very poor people first. The small poorly constructed houses are built on the steep slopes of the mountains, and they cut all trees when they build. So there is nothing to hold the soil when heavy rains fall — hence mud slides, houses and all. One guide told us they have been warned repeatedly not to cut all the trees, but they continue to do it. Our daughter, Doreen, was staying here at our house in Mentone, and she called us worried about the situation because of seeing the flood made headlines in a Chattanooga paper.

Monday was a bit dreary, and tours were cancelled all over the city, but by Tuesday everything was bright, clear, sunny, with a warm gentle breeze. How nice it was.

The city of Rio is sea level and there is nowhere for extra water to go, hence flooding comes easily, but is quickly gone. This is a most unusual, beautiful city — with long, curving sandy beaches, just in front of high mountain peaks. And mountains seem to almost surround the beaches. Probably the most famous beach is Copacabana — or at least the longest one. Then there is Ipanema, Liblon, Arpoador, Leme and Flamingo. It's warm here and the beaches are loaded most all year.

We took a helicopter tour of the city one day, and there is no way to describe the beauty of it. Mountains, beaches, tall buildings. Even the poor section looks pretty when viewed from the air. We flew around the granite statue of Christ the Redeemer on Corcovado mountain — very high. (My stomach did a flip-flop here). The statue is 115 feet high and weighs 1,400 tons. The statue may be seen from any area all over the city. It is over 100 years old, and one wonders how it could ever have been placed on this high peak where it is very narrow and steep.

On our second night in the city, we went with a group to a wonderful French restaurant for dinner. Again we met a nice couple from Long Island, N. Y. The food was wonderful, served on a beautifully set table, complete with silver candelabra and fresh flowers.

From the restaurant we rode the cable car to the first level of Sugar Loaf Mountain for a Sombia show. The show was spectacular because of the most colorful expensive costumes I ever saw. I could not help remembering Carmen Miranda. She made her home in Brazil, the guide said, but was originally from Portugal. The dancers practice year round here in preparation for Carnival. Much like Mardi Gras in New Orleans. It was held a week before.

The next day we took a free cab to Copacabana beach to a jewelry store, to see their gems. We learned that Brazil furnishes about 80 percent of all the world's gems. They are beautiful and plentiful. We got small 18-K gold charms for our granddaughters, Lisa and Jennifer.

Then we walked on the beach a long time. We shopped some in the area. Leather goods are a good price in Brazil, but even these are expensive to me.

The next evening we ate dinner at Platform 1, and had the best fillet mignon steak we ever ate. They served us large portions you wouldn't believe. One steak would have been enough for both of us. And it was very reasonably priced. We saw the show there but it was almost a repeat of the previous one. The music was loud and not exactly to my taste. Then the cab ride back to the hotel was wild. The drivers there go like the wind, as if being chased by a demon. There are no rules, it seems. Double yellow lines mean nothing to them. They run from one lane to the other, slamming on brakes and always blowing the horn. When I finally decided they knew what they were doing and not

entirely mad, I laughed till my sides hurt. It doesn't take long to get anywhere one wants to go in the city. The city buses are crowded and we were warned not to ride them. An American tourist is very obvious there, and an open target for gangs of thieves. There is much poverty, and young children learn early to steal for a livelihood. There doesn't seem to be many in our middle class category.

Every day, we enjoyed something different. I especially enjoyed the flowering trees and plants, and wished for a botanist to give me the names of them. One large tree was covered with big yellow flowers, resembling a hibiscus. The blooms opened at night and by noon all of them were on the ground — just like a shower of soft complete blooms, altogether intact. Some trees had large pink blooms, similar to a camellia, only it had a center resembling the fly-catcher or pitcher plant.

The people of Rio are beautiful. There is a racial mixture that seems to know no boundry — German, Dutch, Portuguese, Polish, Indian, African. All of them are friendly, very polite and interesting. Many of them speak English. The waiters in our hotel gave extra good service — all male. The tables were formally set — the food extra tasty. We loved the good breads and fruits. There was always fresh pineapple, watermelon, papayua, coconut.

It is fascinating to find people everywhere are unique in some ways; but most of us are alike in that we like good food, good music, a good bed to lie on. All of us love comfort, and can certainly relate to these matters, even if we speak a different language.

Right now is a good time to visit Brazil, while the U. S. dollar is worth more there. This is a time of high inflation there. And there is quality merchandise to be found. January is their warmest month — a good time to escape winter here. Their seasons are exactly opposite to ours. Brazil is rich in natural resources, some as yet untapped — in time it will prosper. It grows the world's largest crops of coffee and oranges, the second largest crops of soybeans, sugar and cocoa. It has one of the world's largest livestock populations, and it's waters hold some of the world's richest fishing beds. Of course the precious minerals — diamonds, gold and other gems are plentiful.

If you can manage it — see Brazil. We hope to return and see more of the inland countryside.



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Humane Society—Continued from cover

small pound, but it does not meet the needs of the city, much less the needs of the whole county. There is little chance that many of the animals taken there will ever see the light of day again because of the serious animal problem.

The proposed Humane Society would provide clean runs, an exercise yard, a cat facility, spaying and neutering, vaccinations, medical care for the abandoned animals and much more. One facet of the Society would be public education in the care of animals and the necessity of having them spayed and neutered.

There would have to be animals put to sleep, and this would be done with a painless injection. Sometimes death is preferable to a life of abuse; it is sad but true that sometimes the quality of life is not such that it is preferable over death, and it has been said that the animals who are allowed a quick painless death are the lucky ones.

Fern Fitzgerald hosted a special meeting of the

founders of the Humane Society and some citizens of the Mentone area who share a love and concern for animals. The gathering was a great success, with everyone present offering input into the problems faced by the county in the area of animal care and control.

The society has been able to acquire a lease on a kennel owned by Teddy Gentry, and at a very reasonable price. Now it is up to the DeKalb County Commission to follow the guidelines of the laws of the State of Alabama and find a way to fund this much needed facility and organization.

The society will seek members, both active and associate, and accepts any donation, whether it be money, time or food. We are supposed to be a civilized society, but we often behave as barbarians where the weak and helpless are concerned. Now is the time for those who believe in the sanctity of all life to step forward and make a difference.

MISSING PURSE

Anyone who has any knowledge of the purse missing from a car in the Log Cabin Deli parking lot on Wednesday, March 16, please contact Donna Buckley — 634-4678. Reward.

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Benefit Dance For Brad Hawkins

There will be a benefit dance for Brad Hawkins of Valley Head. The money raised will be used to help defray medical expenses for his on-going cancer treatment. The event will be held Saturday night, April 9, at 7 p.m. at the Valley Head Promenade Hall. Area square dance callers will be featured. Donations of \$10.00 per couple will be accepted.

Those unable to attend the dance may send a donation to The Brad Hawkins Fund, First Federal Bank, 1401 Gault Ave. N., Fort Payne, Ala. 35967.

Sponsors of the event are The Valley Head Promenaders and the Scottsboro Grand Squares.



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"For Kids Sake"

Vote for Joe Lemaster



THE LEMASTER FAMILY
Gabe, Mickie, Hannah and Joe Lemaster

Joe Lemaster has announced his candidacy as a Democratic candidate for the position of DeKalb County Superintendent of Education in the June 7 Democratic Primary.

Lemaster is married to Mentone native, Mickie Blalock. They lived in Mentone from 1973 to 1975. Mickie taught at Valley Head School for 11 years. Now they reside in Rainsville. He and Mickie teach at Plainview High School. Their children, Hannah, 9, and Gabe, 7, attend Plainview School.

Lemaster has a Bachelor's Degree from Jacksonville State University, a Master's Degree from the University of Alabama, and a AA Certificate in Administration and Supervision of Schools from the University of Alabama.

He has been a classroom teacher for the past 14 years in the DeKalb County school system and has been very active in organizing the countywide S.A.D.D. (Students Against Driving Drunk) programs.

As Superintendent, Lemaster says that he will be a full-time Superintendent, devoting all his time and energy to one special interest group — the children of DeKalb County.

Lemaster asks "For Kids Sake" please vote and support him for DeKalb County Superintendent of Education in the June 7 Democratic Primary.

JOE

LEMASTER

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Greg Rice—Talent Unlimited

"I feel art is one of the purest forms of self-expression," Greg Rice said as he spoke of the ways in which art had influenced his life. "It means a sort of giving of oneself, and although I do not paint to make a political or social statement, I would like for my work to bring something meaningful to life, kind of like a small light around a dark corner." Greg is manager of DeSoto Lodge and Restaurant.

Greg's attitude and personality are the illuminating factors in the beautiful and often haunting paintings that he does. His portfolio ranges from rustic rural scenes to enigmatic images of fantasy that have the quality of technicolor dreams. "I enjoy taking realistic images and putting them into unrealistic situations," he mused, "and I paint what I feel." And those feelings are as much a part of each work as the canvas and paint. It is as if human emotions were mixed into the colors and strokes as pigment is mixed into the oil and acrylic that Greg layers to create a hint of three-dimensional texture.

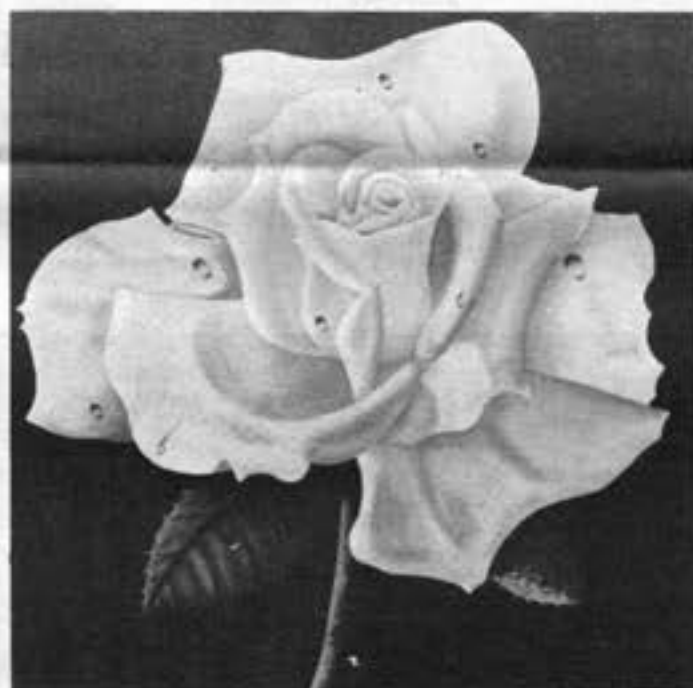
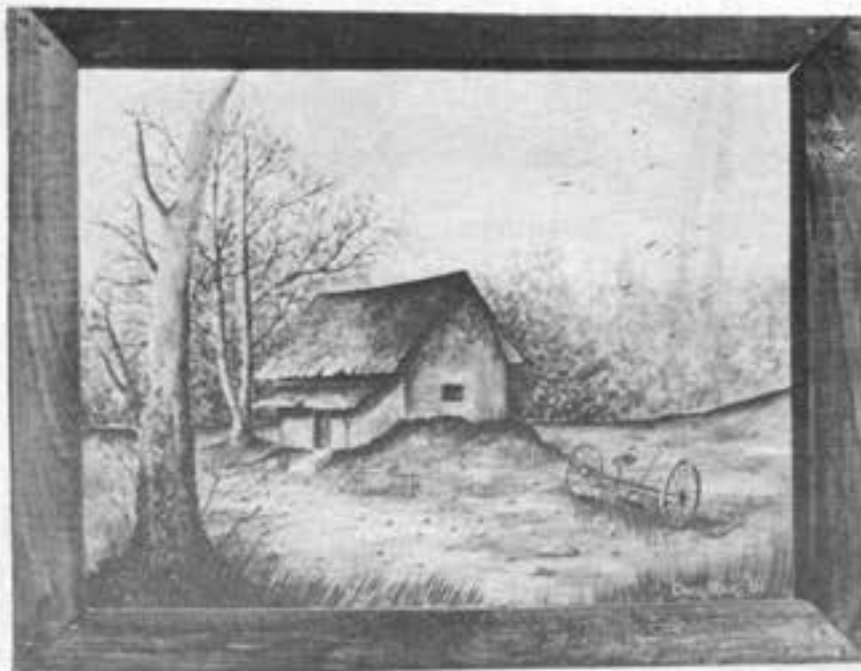
Greg is also adept in the creation of make-up sculpture, which involves a complicated procedure from making the original form to transforming the clay and latex into something lifelike, yet often grotesque. He won first place, \$250.00, for a creation last year.

Greg was born in Savannah, Georgia, but moved a lot during his early life as his father was in the Air Force for 23 years. Greg attended schools in Canada, Guam, Texas and Illinois, among others before graduating from a high school in Lineville, Ala. Upon graduation, he attended the University of North Alabama, The Memphis Academy of Art, and the Atlanta Institute of Art. He began with the Alabama State Parks 10 years ago and has been Manager of the Lodge, Motel and Restaurant at DeSoto Park for two years. When asked about his career in the restaurant and motel business, Greg answered: "I like people very much, and the best part of this kind of job is knowing you

have done your best to provide people with the best service possible and the nicest facilities." Greg likes for others to be happy, "and if I meet someone I really like, I am a very loyal friend."

Greg was a member of a rock and roll group known as "Blue Rock" for several years and is accomplished on the bass guitar and keyboards. He loves music, and the lyrical quality of his painting seems to reflect this love.

Greg Rice is a multi-talented individual who is one of those unique people who can capture bits of time and fantasy on canvas. He brings to his art a lifetime of experiences in diverse places, real and imagined, and those places he visualizes and brings forth are like places that are a part of us, even though we have never been there. And that is one of the truest quests of any artist.





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Foodland's Shan And Connie Bruce

..... Home Grown Operators

Shan and Connie have spent most of their lives in Fort Payne, but do not forget their Sand Mountain roots. Shan hails from Crossville, Ala., and started in the grocery business when he was just 11 years old, at Dover's Store there. He feels a special kinship for the place that gave him his first job and still speaks of Dover's with nostalgia and warm regard.

Connie was no stranger to the retail grocery business: her family owned and operated the Easy Curb in Fort Payne after they moved from Fayette, Ala. Connie grew up on the working side of the counter, and Shan chose the perfect help-mate for she knew the particular demands a retail business requires of a family.

Shan worked for Piggly Wiggly for 17 years before purchasing Hurley's Store and renaming it Bruce's Foodland in 1979. The Bruces have two sons: Mike, a junior at Fort Payne High School who plays varsity football, is a member of the Student Council and is involved in various clubs and organizations; and Eric, who attends Williams Avenue and is in the seventh grade there. Eric loves all sports and plays football, basketball and baseball. Because Shan believes in sports as a tool for growth and development of young people, he has coached for 14 years and it is one of the things he enjoys most about his life. It also gives him more time with his sons. Shan and Connie support the Rec. Center in Fort Payne and support the Little League program.

Bruce's Foodland is the only home-owned and operated major grocery store in Ft. Payne, and it is easy to see that Shan and Connie have a stake in the community. They give of their time and resources to make things better, especially for young people, and their work with and support of such groups as the Jaycees and Jaycettes, UGF, Chamber of Commerce, Scouting and sports programs help them to make a difference in the quality of life in their home town.



Mike Bruce



Eric Bruce

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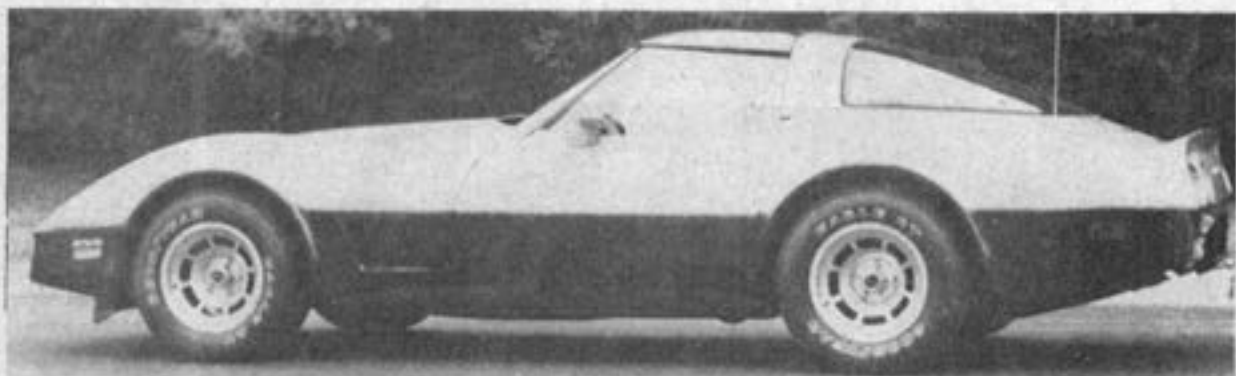
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