

Little River: A Retrospective And Look To The Future

By Desmond Disney
President, Friends of Little River

Friends of Little River was born on Jan. 28, 1989 when an overflowing group of individuals from diverse backgrounds representing diverse interest filled the Mentone Town Hall. More than 100 persons, all united for the moment by a common cause: Save Little River, attended a panel discussion call by Mayor Rob Hammond on "Does the Little River need Protection." The immediate threat that brought this group of people out that night was the possibility that Chattooga County was about to turn an abandoned strip mine at the head waters of Little River into a landfill.

On the panel of experts were: Talmadge Butler, Superintendent of DeSoto State Park; Jim Russell, Administrator of the DeKalb and Cherokee County Departments of Health; and Dr. Doug Phillips, Director of the Center for Environmental Research and Service at Troy State University. The moderator was Rob Hammond. Although most of the discussion was about the proposed landfill it was the consensus of those present that many additional concerns should be addressed by those who want to protect Little River.

Dr. Phillips, a vocal defender of the environment and champion of planned growth, told the group how to go about protecting their beloved river. The threat of water pollution is only one of the things they must consider when planning what the river is to be 10, 20 or 40 years from now. Demands will be placed on the area by tourism, residential expansion, commercial attractions, the need for wildlife habitat, and other competing interests.

He told the group they could choose between three strategies. The first is "the way we usually do it in Alabama — get together and raise hell." The second strategy is to work through existing agencies to form a coalition of the diverse interest, including those who own land, those with economic interest and those with government control. The third strategy, and one that Dr. Phillips sees as inevitable in the long run, is to form a growth and development council, made up of all the diverse interests, to "paint the picture of what you want this place to be 50 years from now."

Speaking for the Department of Health, Jim Russell echoed the need for overall planning for growth. From his perspective as Superintendent of DeSoto State Park, Talmadge Butler said, "I'm not the kind that is against all

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Quiet calm stretches and rolling White Water mark the Little River as it runs the length of Lookout Mountain.

A Piece Of History

BITS AND PIECES
From Zora Strayhorn's History of Mentone
LITTLE RIVER

Little River with its spring-fed river beginning at Head River, Georgia, flows peacefully through Mentone, Alabama, and is the only known river in this hemisphere to flow along the top of a mountain. It meanders along the high plateau of the eighty-three mile-long narrow Lookout Mountain, plunging over a precipice one-hundred feet to form DeSoto Falls, in DeSoto State Park, about three miles from downtown Mentone. There are about fifteen falls in the Park, but DeSoto Falls is the most famous. DeSoto Falls was originally called Indian Falls as recorded by Federal troops in September, 1863, and later changed to DeSoto Falls by Sarah Force O'Rear. The river flows through a rock-cliffed gorge, Little River Canyon, and merges with the Coosa River, one of the three main river systems of the state.

Dates To Remember

March 23-24 — CANYON CLEAN-UP Contact DeSoto State Park for details.
March 25-29 — SPRING BREAK for area schools.
March 28 — FRIENDS OF LITTLE RIVER meeting, 7:00 p.m. Fischer Rescue Squad. Ralph Bullard speaker.
March 28 — LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN PARKWAY ASSOCIATION meeting, 11:30 a.m. (Central) at Cloudland Canyon State Park, Georgia.
April 1 — MENTONE TOWN COUNCIL meeting, 7 p.m. at city hall.
April 2 — MENTONE AREA PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION meeting, 7 p.m. at city hall.

Senior Events

Special Events for Seniors (55+).
GOSPEL SINGING March 13, 9-11 a.m. Senior Center.
EASTER EGG HUNT March 26, 10 a.m. Spring Grove Walking Park.
SEWING CLASSES March 5, 7, 12 and 14 9-11 a.m. Senior Center.
The DeKalb County Council on Aging Senior Center on Tyler Avenue in Fort Payne. A bus is available to pick up seniors at their home in Mentone on Tuesdays. For more information about the bus or any programs offered by the Council on Aging, call 845-1014.

MENTONE EMERGENCY NUMBERS

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Council Says "No" To RV-Camper Park

The Mentone Town Council approved two motions to restrict a possible tent camper park in the Signal Rock Park Subdivision in Mentone at their regular March monthly meeting.

Signal Rock Park Subdivision, consisting mostly of older summer and permanent residences includes Lookout Drive, Linchpenny, Alabama and Sunset Streets. The property involved is owned by Miles Allgood and abuts homes and lots which have been standing for many years.

Randle and Charlotte Rice presented the problem to the council along with several other residents of the subdivision and other concerned residents. Rice had sent the council a memorandum in February outlining his understanding of Allgood's plans including his installation of multiple water faucets on the property.

The Rice memorandum cited both state and federal laws Rice feels are applicable in the situation.

In the discussion it was learned that Allgood had approached the city for a commercial license to operate a tent camper park. Miss Catherine Bailey, town clerk, advised Allgood there was not a license of that type and did not issue him a license.

Sand Mountain Electric Co-op and the DeKalb County Health Department have approved applications for the lots that designated 'single family dwellings.' SMEC has provided electricity for at least one of the lots.

The Council passed two motions. One directs the city attorney Pat Tate to draw up an ordinance restricting lots in the city limits of Mentone to one trailer per lot. Later in the meeting a motion was passed to direct Pat Tate to look into the possibility of an injunction against Allgood starting operation of a trailer or tent camper park.

Councilmen Larry Hooks and James Johnson commented, "We don't want him to start it before we can get

it stopped."

The question of zoning was brought up by those attending the meeting as a possible solution to this situation and also to other future problems.

Angelo Rosario commented that there is already a large amount of commercial property along Highway 117 that is not being used at this time. He said the potential is already there for commercial development.

Former Mentone Mayor Bob Daniel related that there is a trailer — tent camper park being built in Georgia, near Mentone at this time.

"We want very, very slow growth," Mayor Max Cash said adding that he did not want to see Mentone become a Gatlinburg, Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge which is nearby both have grown very fast due to the Great Smokies National Park.

In other matters, the Council moved to not make any commitments for new water tap-in requests outside the city limits. The question of the amount of water Mentone has requested to buy from Fort Payne, four million gallons per month, has not been resolved.

The Council also moved to require the town policeman to turn in a log of his activity at each council meeting. Gasoline bills for the police cars are about \$500 each month. The Council estimates that about 3,500 miles are being put on the police cars.

They discussed that the policeman is not at Moon Lake School in the morning and afternoon each day control traffic.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 1, at 7 p.m. This is a time change from the winter months.

Johnsons Receive AARP Award

Betty and Jim Johnson were honored by the local chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons when they received the "Person of the Year Award" at a recent AARP meeting.

The Johnson's who are natives of Mentone were "surprised" by the award. They are both active members of Chapter 2150 of AARP where Jim serves as president and Betty as secretary.

"She has been secretary two years longer than I have been president," Mr. Johnson said.

The award given each year, is based on both community service and involvement in the club. Club members vote with secret ballots in January and the award is made at the February meeting. AARP meets the second Thursday of the month in Fort Payne. The meetings usually feature a program of interest to seniors. AARP works with the DeKalb County Council on Aging to provide for the needs of senior citizens in this area.

The Johnson's were both born in Mentone. Betty's mother, Grace Jones, who is 91, lives next door to her daughter. Jim is the son of a Methodist minister and moved from Mentone as a child but returned after he and Betty were married in 1946.

"We had a double wedding ceremony with Bernise and Homer Crow," remembers Mrs. Johnson. She and Bernise Crow were best friends growing up in Mentone.

The Johnson's comfortable home is on Lookout Drive with a view of the valley from their front window. A piano and organ are prominent features of their family room. Mrs. Johnson is the pianist at the Mentone Wesleyan Church.

Both of the Johnson's are active in their church. She is the president of the local church missionary society and has served as president of the Wesleyan World Women's group that includes the states of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Jim is the treasurer of the Delta District of the Wesleyan church.

Although they are members of the Association of Retired Persons, Betty says she and Jim "never retired." Jim was the General Manager of the Farmer's Telephone Coop and with that company for 30 years. He also has several accounting clients and had as many as 200 clients while he was general manager of the telephone company. Betty assists him with this business.

She has also been the president of the Rhododendron Garden Club twice and volunteers at the hospital in Fort Payne.

Another interest of the Johnson's is Central Wesleyan College in central South Carolina where Jim is a member of the Board of Trustees and Betty is part of the women's Auxiliary.

Jim serves on the Mentone City Council.

The Johnson's have two children, both grown. Their daughter is Betty Sue Rickman in Clemson, S. C. Their son-in-law teaches at Central Wesleyan College and their granddaughter Stephanie is a freshman at Asbury College. Their son Frederick lives in Rainsville. He is a C.P.A. and the Office Manager for Sand Mountain Electric. He and his wife have two children Philip, age 3, and Paige, 10 months.



Jim and Betty Johnson share honors from the American Association of Retired Persons, Chapter 2150.

Environmental Issues Concern DeKalb County

By Mike Lowery, Librarian
Friends of Little River

(Editor's Note: Friends of Little River has taken an active role in our area to protect the river and to bring attention to other related topics that affect the quality of life in Mentone. We asked them to bring us up to date on the issues they feel are important for our consideration).

Residents of DeKalb County are faced with numerous environmental issues today. We all need to become involved in order to chart the future of this county environmentally for our children. The following issues are just a few of the concerns we face at the present time.

First of all, the protection of Little River, one of DeKalb County's most precious resources is of utmost importance. Protection from what you may ask? The biggest threat to Little River at this point is development! Yes, development, not industry, not municipal waste disposal, but development.

At a recent meeting of the DeKalb County Commission with the National Park Services study team, some private landowners from the northern end of DeKalb County expressed concern about commercial development on the fringes of the proposed national park in the Little River area.

Ralph Bullard, head of the National Park study team said at this meeting, "The National Park Service determines what happens inside park boundaries, but the community must get involved to control development beyond that jurisdiction."

He told the County Commission and those at the meeting, "It's up to you people. If left alone, it will normally develop as the local people see best. Unfortunately, sometimes the vision just isn't there. If the decisions you make pollute your waters, that will be your decision."

Wink Hastings also with the National Park Service Study Team has agreed to help Friends of Little River with a greenway plan for the corridor of Little River. Greenways are usually linear parks most commonly located along streams and rivers. These parks emphasize the protection, preservation and enhancement of natural, cultural and recreational resource values through various conservation techniques. Most commonly, corridor studies along a river are used to justify the need for a greenway, but watershed studies that evaluate the entire watershed can be a more useful instrument.

Greenway planning brings together local, state, and federal government agencies, private organizations, and landowners to work cooperatively to develop strategies for conservation of the landscape of the greenway. Only a relatively small percentage of the land in a greenway will be in public ownership, so private landowners need to play a major stewardship role.

A greenway plan is a guide for achieving future protections and a map indicating community recommendations for land and water use and management within the area. The plan identifies the most important features of a landscape, describes the ways in which these features can be maintained, and assigns responsibility for their protection and use. The stronger the cooperative partnership is, the more likely that the special qualities of a landscape will be conserved, enhanced, and enjoyed by its residents and visitors.

How Will We Grow?

By Emily Smith

Just a few weeks ago I began to hear the alarming rumor that an RV — trailer park was in the works for a long established residential neighborhood in Mentone. Unfortunately, it proved to be true but, quick action by the Mentone Town Council at their March meeting will certainly slow down such plans if not stop them altogether.

At the same time I heard the alarming rumor, I was being reminded by many voices that a great deal of growth and development often accompanies national parks. From all the meetings The Groundhog has attended it certainly seems that a national park will be a reality for the Little River and the Little River Canyon, also known as May's Gulf, in the near future.

Mentone's mayor Max Cash echoes the feelings of many of us when he says "we want very, very slow growth" for Mentone. We don't want to see our community

On Feb. 20, Friends of Little River and DeSoto State Park jointly submitted a petition to the Environmental Management Commission of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management to classify Little River an Outstanding National Resource Water. The ONRW classification is provided for by the Environmental Protection Agency and provides protection for the quality of the river.

I was part of that petitioning group. The Environmental Management Commission adopted the ONRW classification for the state of Alabama, as mandated by the E.P.A. and voted in less than sixty seconds unanimously and without discussion or debate to send our petition for Little River to their rulemaking committee. This brings us another step closer to achieving the ONRW classification for our area.

It is unusual for the Environmental Management Commission to vote unanimously and without discussion. This shows us that the state is very interested in protecting Little River. They should be, it is an important resource for DeKalb County as well as the entire state of Alabama.

Recently Friends of Little River did a survey of the businesses in the Little River corridor and watershed. Of the 86 commercial ventures counted, about half were tourist or recreationally related campgrounds, camps, hotels restaurants, and convenience stores. It is estimated that \$6,267,000 was spent by tourists in DeKalb County in 1989. DeSoto State Park was one of the top five tourist attractions in the state in 1989.

There are 13 boys' and girls' camps located on the banks of Little River. It is estimated that combined they contribute over \$3,000,000 to the area's economy.

If Little River becomes a national park, these numbers are sure to increase, and with that so will the development.

The second issue that affects our area is summed up in the words of Billy McDow, DeKalb County's Solid Waste supervisor, "Let's talk trash." Specifically, discarded auto and truck tires.

Recently a Rainsville man was arrested and convicted of criminal littering. He dumped approximately 1,000 used tires down the mountainside at Wooten Gap on Lookout Mountain. He was paid \$200 by a Rainsville tire store to haul away the tires. Fortunately, the man agreed to clean up the dumped tires and transport them back to the tire store in lieu of fines and jail time.

We see a two-fold problem in this situation. First, the man said he "didn't know it was illegal to dump tires." If this is true what does it take to get the message across to people that littering and dumping is illegal in this county, period. Secondly, it is difficult to dispose of tires in DeKalb County. State law prohibits the burning of tires, regardless of the amount.

Billy McDow commented, "They (people who dispose of used tires) have to take them out of the county and pay someone to take them off their hands."

This is not just a problem for the county government, responsibility lies with tire stores in the county as well as each of us as individuals.

I recently talked with a tire store owner in Fort Payne. He said at this time the city of Fort Payne was still accepting tires at their landfill. But, he felt this probably wouldn't

become a strip of water slides, tourist traps, and fast food restaurants as we have seen happen around another nearby national park in Tennessee.

Now may be the time for Mentone to address the issue of what direction we want our community to take for the future. The action taken at the recent city council meeting was proper and expedient to take care of an immediate problem. It may, however, be the first of several such "brush fires."

Concerned Mentone residents need to give the mayor and the council the "fire fighting equipment" they need to keep Mentone on a "slow growth" schedule. If this is a matter of concern to you, contact the mayor and the council and let them know your feelings.



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last much longer considering the widespread problems of landfill space shortage.

"It might come down to requiring individuals who buy new tires to take their old ones with them," the tire store owner said.

Hence the problem for the individual — What should we do?

Perhaps the county government should initiate some public meetings with county officials, tire store owners and interested individuals to try to come up with some solutions to this problem. Solutions such as somehow recycling the used tires rather than burying or hauling them away.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone of the annual "Canyon Clean-up" scheduled for March 23 and 24. Talmadge Butler at DeSoto State Park needs our help with this project, and I for one intend to be there. Also DeKalb County's annual "Operation Clean Sweep" is scheduled for the weekend of April 20 in conjunction with Earth Day. I urge everyone in the county to get out and do their part to help clean our county up.

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The Groundhog Wants To Know:

Spring will officially arrive Wednesday, March 20. What is your favorite thing about spring in Mentone?



Hobson Kirby
"Everything coming alive is what I like best — the flowers and the birds singing all around."



Catherine Bailey
"My birds. I love to see the birds at the feeders around my house."



Bob Daniel
"My favorite thing is the flowers and the warm weather. I've lived in my house on the brow for 21 years and I love Mentone."

Country Journal

By Bernise Crow

The art of story-telling seems to be vanishing. This form of entertainment was most prevalent before the advent of television, which now seem to fill all homes with some sort of program. There is hardly any time for family conversation around the dining table or around the cozy fireplace where we used to gather to enjoy popcorn, roasted peanuts, and jam sessions. I always loved visiting my grandparents when my uncle Bill Taylor was there. His repertoire of hilarious tales seemed endless, and he never repeated himself. Many of the stories were of actual events, and others were completely contrived. Usually someone in the family was the subject, and the material was humorously related. As much as I enjoyed them, I cannot recall any one of them in its entirety. It would have been good to have written them down for future generations.

All of us have family stories and history that should be recorded. It becomes folklore and we all love it, especially after the teller of the story is gone.

The knack for telling a story well and holding the attention of listeners, is a talent. We have one son, Coy, who must have inherited some of Uncle Bill's gifts. He can take a simple activity and make a great story, by adding a little exaggeration. He is quite a performer, and one must watch him tell the story to enjoy it fully. He can imitate anything he ever heard or saw, and does so during the telling of the yarn. I have asked him to tell some of his stories to groups of our friends, and he declines. He is a little shy and will only do it for our family. I'll have to tape record his stories, when he is unaware of it.

Glenn Baty was one of the greatest story tellers — right here in Mentone. He could keep his audience spell-bound telling about coon hunting. Again I wish we had recorded these things.

We have some great American writers who have given us short stories for our reading pleasure. Mark Twain was the best, to my liking. Will Rogers made short humorous statements that were a story in themselves. He once said he liked his coffee "sauced and blowed."

But the greatest stories of them all are the ones handed down to us by our parents and grandparents. The old English and Irish ballads were passed down through families — long poetic stories, much like the country songs of today. They told complete stories, such as the one titled, "Barbara Allen." Aesop's Fables have been handed down to us for many generations, and most of us are familiar with them. Aesop's stories were usually of animals and were moralistic.

The stories of Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Bears, Chicken Little, and B'r'er Rabbit are read by all children — and remembered. I can remember most all the stories in my second and third grade readers, and have told them to my children and grandchildren. While looking through books at an estate sale, I found a copy of Elson Reader — Book 2, and was so excited about it I could hardly wait to get home and re-read those pages I had memorized. One of them was the story of "The man, the boy, and the donkey." It has a good moral about trying to please everyone. Perhaps you would like to read it.

Reading can be the greatest form of recreation — an escape from everyday nuisances. We can find stories of war, love, intrigue, mystery. Men usually like reading of wars, adventure and hunting. I love romance, beauty of scenery, and fantasy-land, all with a happy ending. We live in a world of war, poverty, stress, and at times — horror. So to escape reality for a short time and read some humorous short story refreshes the mind and makes one better able to cope with harsh realities and frailties of life.

Reading is good, but nothing surpasses the art of good live stories about people and places of which we are familiar. Perhaps at our Rhododendron Festival we could have a story-telling contest. Our ghost stories at the October Colorfest have been most enjoyable and our crowd gets bigger every year. This time we could just tell stories in general, of every type. My Dad and three of his brothers attended Berry school when Miss Martha Berry taught them in the log cabin. I loved his reminiscences about those days. He and his brothers Frank, Bill and John Wesley composed their own musical quartet, and performed in a minstrel at the school. He could quote most of the act to us, which was fascinating.

Please take time to write, or record, some facts told to you by your ancestors and they will make great stories for future generations. Just our life style a generation ago sounds like fairy tales (or horror stories) to our grandchildren. It's hard for them to imagine life without electricity, indoor toilet facilities, or refrigeration — no instant ice cubes. Civilization and culture moves so fast we lose sight of passing years before we realize it. Mentone is full of wonderful stories. If you have a good one to share, let our editor, Emily Smith, know about it. We could have a lot of fun with this.

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DeSoto Parkway — Mentone



4-H member at Moon Lake School enjoy club activities. From left, bottom row: Ashley Blalock, Shelley Ingram, Lori Tillman; middle row: Ginger Gray, Angela Russell, Mandi Browder, Tabitha Brisindine; top row: Amy Crane, Nikki Smith, Terri Campbell and Rene Brendle.

SSI Benefits Discussed At Town Meeting

Mentone Area residents learned about the Supplemental Security Income Program at a town meeting, Feb. 26 held at the Mentone Town Hall. Representatives from the Social Security Administration, the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) and the DeKalb County Council on Aging were on hand to answer questions about this program. The three agencies are involved in a special demonstration project to find more people who qualify for SSI.

Ken Brewer of the Social Security office in Gadsden explained that his agency administers SSI.

"This is what we call an 'entitlement' program. If you are eligible for SSI, you are entitled to receive it," he said.

"Occasionally we do run across folks who don't want a handout, they are very independent and don't want an agency to help them. This is something that they should check into. It can really make a difference for a lot of folks," Brewer commented.

SSI is concerned with five things: the aged, blind, or disabled, those with low income, and those with few resources. The federal program took over what had been known as "Old Age Pensions" in 1974.

The demonstration project is especially aimed at the aged because, according to Brewer this is the group that

they find do not know about SSI.

"Some people only get social security, that is their only income. We know that that alone does not give a person quite enough," he said.

Eligibility requirements for SSI which provides extra income and Medicaid include income for an individual of less than \$427 per month and resources of \$2,000. The house you live in, the land it is on and a car are excluded in this amount. Also, \$1,500 that is put aside for burial is excluded. The amounts for couples are different — \$630 per month income and \$3,000 in resources.

Brewer said that household goods, jewelry, and personal items are not counted in the resource category.

"This is important for older people who have heirlooms that mean a lot to them," he said.

Earned income is also counted differently.

Brewer urged those who thought they might be eligible for SSI or who knew someone who might be eligible to contact the DeKalb County Council on Aging (845-1404) or his office in Gadsden (800-648-8361 or 1-547-7883) for more information.

"At our office, we have a good staff and we try to be informative and helpful. I hope you will call if we can help you," he said.

Transport Of Hazardous Waste Brings Concern

The potential problem of transporting hazardous wastes through DeKalb County was brought up by Ricky Little, coordinator of the county's Emergency Management Agency at a recent Friends of Little River board meeting.

"My concern is for the active transportation of hazardous materials daily through DeKalb County," Little stated.

He commented that trucks from both Georgia and Tennessee often use Highway 117 (which passes through Mentone) to deliberately avoid the state operated truck scales on other roads.

"I am particularly concerned with Highway 117 and Highway 35," he said. There are several places along both highways that are narrow and curved, especially the bridges over both forks of the Little River. These bridges have been the scene of serious accidents from time to time.

An accident involving a truck carrying hazardous waste could potentially "contaminate the water source for much of DeKalb and Etowah County," said Little.

Little became coordinator for the Emergency Management Agency (also known as Civil Defense) in March of 1990. He began to upgrade the various contingency plans maintained by his office.

"I know that at this time we (the county) does not have the capability to handle a serious accident involving hazardous waste," he said.

In an effort to restrict the transportation of hazardous materials, Little sought a state Attorney General's opinion as to the effect of whether limiting this type of transportation would interfere with interstate commerce and fall under some type of federal rule or regulation.

A response was received written by James R. Solomon, Jr., chief of the Attorney General's Opinions Division. It said that because of possible changes in the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act of 1974, it would be "inappropriate for this office to issue an opinion at this time."

The Transportation Act covers the power of State and local governments to designate routes for hazardous materials. Little is hoping that by designating safer routes through the county truck traffic could be lessened on potential dangerous stretches of road.

"I'm not one to wait for an accident before doing something," he said. He suggested that if "we can't prohibit it (hazardous waste transportation) we should regulate it."

Little said, "I'm proud of what we have in DeKalb County and I want to protect it. Now is a good time to look at ways to do this."

Elizabeth Lowe Death

Elizabeth Lowe, former co-owner of Nippersink Lodge and teacher at Valley Head School, died this past month in Montgomery. Her partner and long time companion, Analee Tucker, died a few years ago.

Both Lowe and Tucker operated Nippersink Lodge in Mentone for many years and taught at Valley Head School. After their retirement they lived in Thomasville, Alabama.

Although in the last few years she was alone, Lowe lived alone, she was never lonely according to Linda Vice, columnist for the Mobile Press Register. She was often visited by members of her Sunday School class from the Thomasville United Methodist Church. She taught the junior high age group.

Her love for young people is reflected in Vice's words, "She had no children of her own but all her Sunday school children belonged to her."



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Happenings

By Emily Smith

A new restaurant is opening this month. It is called "Kountry Cooking" and located on Highway 117 across the road from city hall. Owner Dessie Newberry tells us she will be serving breakfast and lunch, Monday through Saturday. She also plans to have a Sunday brunch.

It will be a family operation with her son David and wife Cathy Cryer and her daughter Sharon and her husband Jerry Wooten helping her. Next month another son, Mike and his wife Teena Cryer will also join the business.

Another new business that has recently opened is the gift shop on Highway 117 next door to the Gourdie Shop operated by the Miracle's from Valley Head. Many of the businesses that were closed for the winter are doing their "spring cleaning" and will reopen soon.

Along the lines of food, the Full Measure Restaurant in Fort Payne on Valley Head Road is serving delicious lunches and dinners. It is operated by Bill and Irene MacDonald who live on Lookout Mountain near Adamsburg. We have seen lots of Mentone friends there and recommend it to you.

The Moon Lake PTA is selling ads for their annual. They are reasonable and a great way to show your support for the school. You can contact the school office at 634-4113 to buy an ad.

Lydia Speed has moved to Huntsville due to health problems and will be living next door to her daughter Pat. She had lived near Camp Alpine for many years and was active in Howard's Chapel and Rhododendron Garden Club. Lydia was well known for her beautiful wildflower garden and her love and support of many friends in Mentone. Her daughter, Gay Godbois, told us they will keep the house and we hope that means she will visit often.

Friends of Dennis Sibert were saddened to learn of his death this past month. His widow is Helen Sibert, secretary at Moon Lake School. He was buried in a military ceremony.

Many area families are looking forward to their loved ones returning home from service in the Middle East now that the war is over. Among the "soon to be returning" are: Wayne Alsobrook, son of Lamar and Katie Alsobrook, Cloudland; Randy Williams, son of Jeannette and Bill Cousins, Cloudland; Brian Long, Karen Herndon's brother; Andrew Ireland, Dorothy Reeder's grandson; Patrick McGinnis, Patricia Bryan's nephew; and, Allen Archer, Gene Taylor's son.

Barbara Nancarrow enjoys Tai Chi, a form of Chinese exercise, and hopes that anyone else interested in Tai Chi will call her at 634-4842. She hopes to have a workshop in the near future.

Some new babies arrived this winter in Mentone. Heather and Lyle Nicely have a little girl and Pam and Rodney Foster have a boy.

For those who have a bad case of spring fever, March 22 is "Goof-off Day." Goofing off is a great activity for which few folks need practice.

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Local Poetry Contest Winners Named

Students from Valley Head High School participated in a poetry contest sponsored by the Valley Head Women's Club. The students are in Ellen Wright's 10th and 12th grade English classes.

The winners are: first place, Brandi Wilbanks; second place, Renae Wagner; and, third, Keila Hammon.

Brandi Wilbanks, the first place winner, is a senior and the daughter of Debra and Daniel Wilbanks. Brandi submitted two poems that tied for first place. Second place winner, Renae Wagner, is a sophomore and the daughter of Marilyn and Donnie Wagner. Keila Hammon, third place winner, is a sophomore and the daughter of Ronnie and Lynn Hammon.

The poems were on the topics of historical landmarks, historical events, or national concerns.

NATURE'S BEAUTIFUL FLAW

By Brandi Wilbanks First Place — 1991

unknown to many
what abundant beauty
and secrets can be possessed
high on a mountain.

in its core
waters rush
past the creatures
who reside in Nature's crevice.

the hiding place of God
a crack meant to conceal
treasures a plenty.

in summer
the water invites
the pines entice.

in autumn
the colors glow
reminiscent of spice.

in winter
the trees are white
and hauntingly elegant.

in spring
from deep below
the mist hangs thick —

dissipating slowly
rising from the midst of the earth
melting like daydreams on a lazy afternoon.

Winners Never Quit Quitters Never Win

By Ron Johnson
Pastor, Mentone Church of God

This catchy little phrase, that I recall hearing sometime back, causes me to consider some real truth's about my own life and maybe it will cause you to do the same.

Sometimes I've been caught up and so thrilled by little sayings such as this one that I failed to realize that it might not be correct. I want to examine this phrase a little closer than we possibly did at first and see if it is truly applicable to our life.

I believe that all of us, regardless of race, religion or culture, share more than we see or understand. We all have normal feelings, desires and fears. One of those desires shared by all of us is the desire to be a winner. Now I'm sure many people share many different definitions of being a winner. Webster's dictionary states that a winner is one who wins. Well, that is simple enough but what does it mean to win? The same dictionary states that to win means to "gain the victory." Though this is a simple definition, I am a simple man and I like this definition. Personally, I want to gain the victory in every part of my life! Amen!

As you are reading this article today you are one of two different groups of people. You are either an individual who has given God control of your life through the Lordship of His Son Jesus Christ or you are an individual who has not, for whatever the reason might be.

This is where I find the question concerning this saying, "Winners never quit, and quitters never win." It is my opinion that if you fall into category number one, you have submitted your life to Jesus Christ, according to His word, then this statement is true.

In the life of a Christian we are constantly assured of God's love and forgiveness; nevertheless, there is no place for quitting — for example — quit going to church, quit praying, or quit trying to live a life that is holy and acceptable unto the Lord. I believe that if we quit we will not win the abundant life that God has promised for those who are obedient and if we win we must not quit! Amen!

However if you find yourself in the category number two and that is one who has not submitted your life to Jesus Christ, then it is not completely true. Without Jesus Christ being the Lord of your life, then it really does not matter how much you try, it will be impossible for you to gain the victory. Without Him there is no peace, no true joy and there is really no hope. How sad it is to me that people live their life without the hope that has been provided for them if only they would believe and obey.

I guess a greater saying would be that "Winners do quit, quit trying to win on their own and they learn to submit their life's to Jesus Christ, who has already won for us at Calvary. Then we as Christians never quit striving and pursuing all that God has for us, that we might truly be winners."

I make no apologies for the statements concerning Jesus Christ being the only source of life. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the father but by me."

TRAIN DEPOT IN VALLEY HEAD 1910
By Brandi Wilbanks First Place — 1991

the dusty musty blend
of tobacco, yellow pine floors, and leather
keep the air full of memories.

— the jingle of brass bells
above the screen door
the thump of boots —

unknown no-name bodies
occupying space —
traveling with the conductor's familiar face —
patiently waiting to leave this small place.

grand gentlemen
with hat and cane
graceful ladies
with parasols and violet scented squares of lace.

patiently waiting to leave this small place.

A SINGLE TEAR
By Renae Wagner Second Place — 1991

Today a single tear ran down my cheek,
It was a tear for every man and woman who are risk-
ing their lives to right for my freedom,
And for every man in Washington who is doing their
best to lead them.

A tear for the families of the men who will die,
And a tear for even this man they call Hussein, who
can kill and can lie.

A tear for all of the people who burn flags and protest,
And a tear for the many others who feel supporting our
troops is best.

I cried a tear for the future, for when this war will end,
and one for the military coming home,
And for the dead my country will send.

A tear for all of the hate that this world I live in holds,
even though I don't understand it,
That's the way life will always be I am told.

I cried a tear for all of the children who ask
How long will my daddy have to stay?
And a tear for all the people who cried a tear today.

DESOTO FALLS
By Keila Hammon Third Place — 1991

Through the lush beauty of the mountain,
That rises as if to touch the sky,
A river flows so smoothly and serenely.

As I gaze at the vistas surrounding this peaceful trail,
My ears catch a sound that is foreign to the peace I see.

The serenity of the waters turn into a tumult,
As it crashes and churns over rocks in a swirling mass,
Only to calm itself when it reaches a pool below,
Then goes on flowing smoothly and serenely out of my
view.

As I stand back and ponder the sights I see,
I can't help but wonder:
Is this God's way of having nature parallel itself?

To show man that in a beat of a heart
Life's serenity can turn to turmoil,
But given time to calm,
Life can flow serenely again?

Continued from Page 1
development and growth, but I want to be sure there's a good reason for it. I don't insist that everything stay untouched, but we have too much here that is unique for it to be abused. I am committed that care is taken of this park and this river."

It was the consensus of the group that Rob Hammond form a steering committee to establish an organization made up of the diverse interests to investigate the various threats to the Little River area, to communicate citizens concerns about these threats to government agencies, and to influence the way these threats are addressed.

The steering committee held its first meeting on April 28, 1989, at Nippersink Lodge. Although the group was formed in response to current potential threats to Little River, it took as its goal a broad-scale scheme for the rational use of the area's resources in the long term. After electing Rob Hammond as chairman of the steering committee, the group set about selecting a name. The ultimate choice of "Friends of Little River," suggested by Bill Adams, reflected the consensus that the group should be perceived as being "for" something rather than "against" something. Care was taken not to choose a name or statement of purpose that would imply antagonism between the group and governmental agencies. The name was chosen also to communicate that the effort to preserve the river should not be limited to a few who live or work near the river in DeKalb County.

The first general meeting was held on May 31, 1989, at Camp Desoto and a nominating committee was appointed for the election of officers in August. Today there are over 125 members of Friends of Little River. Our members come from a wide diversity of interests in the river, including fishing, hunting, canoeing, bird watching, protecting the water quality, preserving the scenic beauty of the river and more.

The support of our membership, concerned individuals, educators, environmental groups, civic organizations, businesses, government agencies and elected officials have been responsible for many significant gains for Little River.

Little River will probably be the first river in Alabama to be classified as an Outstanding National Resource Water and is currently under study by the National Park Service for inclusion in the National Park and Wild and Scenic Rivers system. We gained cooperation of Alabama Power to change from clear-cutting to selective cutting in areas along the river and canyon. We established a River Watch committee to test the water quality of the river and monitor the river corridor for activities that might have an adverse effect on the river. We sponsored a clean-up of the river at Highway 35 and have become an active participant in the Annual Canyon Clean-up. We helped increase the public's awareness of environmental concerns by having interesting and informative guests at our meetings and co-sponsoring a speaker's forum on environmental and community related issues with DeSoto State Park. We were instrumental in getting the Air Force to change the flight route of low level training flights over Little River Canyon and are investigating ways to establish an environmental research and education center in the area.

We want to see a greenway plan completed for the Little River, concentrating on the area outside the proposed National Park, continue monitoring the water quality of Little River with the help of the Health Department and local high school, increase our membership, especially with those who live in the area, increase the involvement of our present members, improve the public's awareness of Friends of Little River and see an environmental research and education center established in the area.

The Little River corridor is a very fragile ecosystem where even small changes can alter the river and its resources dramatically. Many factors exist that threaten the character and the quality of the corridor. Without a protection plan for the river, carelessly planned development, poor forestry and agricultural practices, and incompatible industries could irreparably damage the fundamental character of the river.

These threats must be addressed before they become a reality. That is why we must continue to build support within the community and those with diverse interest to come up with a plan on how we want this area to be 10, 20 or 40 years from now.

St. Joseph's Community Service

A series of community Praise and Healing Services is being held at St. Joseph On-the-Mountain Episcopal Church in Mentone on a monthly basis. The next service is March 17 at 6 p.m.

Everyone — regardless of denomination or religious background — is welcome to attend and receive prayer for God's healing touch in their lives.

The time together will generally include praise singing, Bible teaching on Christian healing and a time of prayer for healing through the power of the Holy Spirit.

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Ralph Bullard of the National Park Service (center, front row) discussed the proposed national park at the Lookout Mountain Parkway Association meeting. From left: Jack Jones LMPA president, Mentone; Ralph Bullard; Billy McDow, DeKalb County Solid Waste Supervisor. Back row: LPMA Board Members James Mackey, Rising Fawn, Georgia; Bob Elmore, Chattanooga; Joe Barnes, Gadsden.

Park Plans Presented To Parkway Association

Ralph Bullard, of the National Park Service, who has headed up the study for a proposed national park for the Little River area was the speaker at the Lookout Mountain Parkway Association meeting recently. He brought maps outlining the proposed area of the park.

A number of factors qualify the Little River area as a potential national park site Bullard explained. He said there was no one single significant landmark or event that make this area stand out but many factors including scenic, aesthetic, natural resources, and historical give Little River and the Little River Canyon importance.

The fact that Little River is located near large population areas was also a consideration for the proposed site. "It's a selling job," Bullard commented. "What we are selling is the park area."

He said that Lookout Mountain Parkway is the major artery through the proposed park area.

"The Parkway is what splits the area. It provides easy access to the River and the Canyon," Bullard said.

Although a very large area was included in the initial study, certain areas were excluded such as Manitou Cave. Bullard said the Park Service was very interested in the diversity of rare plants and animals including insects, fish, and birds that are native to the river and canyon.

The Park Service has already received inquiries from Jacksonville State University to set up scientific research stations and to provide educational opportunities in the proposed park.

Although the majority of the nearly 28,000 acres in the proposed park area is owned by the public as state park lands (about 5,000 acres) or by large corporations like Alabama Power with approximately 10,000 acres and in-

land Container (Georgia Kraft) with approximately 2,500 acres the National Park Service will have to acquire some privately owned tracts.

Bullard said there are a number of different ways that this could be done.

"There will be different designations for different areas," he said.

Bullard also warned private land owners that rumors of the National Park Service offering \$300 per acre for land was not true.

"No Park Service offers have been made. There is no authorization for any offers to be made," he said. Bullard suggests that private land owners if they are contacted with such offers demand identification from those making the offer.

"Call us in Atlanta at 404-231-5465 if you hear of this happening," he said.

Bullard went on to explain the different designations of parks in the park system. He said there are 22 classes of parks including recreation areas, monuments, military parks, the White House, and national parks. Hunting is allowed in recreation areas but never in close proximity to public areas, he explained.

Public hearings are scheduled April 16 at 7 p.m. at the DeKalb County Courthouse in Fort Payne and April 18 at 7 p.m. at the Cherokee County Courthouse in Centre. These meetings will give the public an opportunity to learn more about the proposed park and to ask questions about it.

The Lookout Mountain Parkway Association voted to formally support the proposed park area.

Investments Topic For MAPA Meet

Investments and taxes were the topic at the March Mentone Area Preservation Association meeting where David Brouwer and investment counselor spoke.

Brouwer quoted Benjamin Franklin saying that everyone should pay their taxes but pay no more than they absolutely were required to pay. He advised the MAPA group that government bonds are a wise investment and are tax-free.

Comparing the United States to the rest of the world, Brouwer said that one of the things that makes this country great is an American citizen's "ability to invest in the things that make the country strong."

He commented that other forms of government do not always allow this.

Tax-free bonds which are issued to cover the cost of public works projects such as roads, schools, airports, and sewers and issued by both the federal and local governments fall under the principle of mutual reciprocity.

"City, county and state governments can't tax the federal government and the federal government can't tax them," Brouwer explained. He said that is why government bonds are free from tax.

Looking ahead, Brouwer predicts that interest rates will fluctuate but most they are "going down." He feels that home mortgage rates may fall as low as 7 percent. Because of this trend, Brouwer does not recommend investing in certificates of deposit which are subject to interest rates and taxes as well.

MAPA will be supplying rhododendron to the Rhododendron Garden Club for planting along the sidewalk on Highway 117.

Ray Froehler reported that some booths for the Rhododendron Festival, May 17-19 have been reserved. He said Terry Hutcherson will head up the entertainment committee.

MAPA will pick up trash along their "adopt-a-mile" on March 18.

"Mentone, Alabama: A History"

By Zora Strayhorn

Plans are being made to reprint this book. If you have any additions or corrections please contact the author at: Route 1, Box 97, Mentone, Alabama 35984.

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Valley View

By Eloise Brown

Ann Lohr Erikson, our former pastor, accompanied by her husband, Jim, and little son, Thomas, visited Mentone and Valley Head Methodist churches, last Sunday. They were moving to Ladson, S. C. A group of friends, including Adelaide Biddle, Frances Longshore, Venna Livingston, Geraldine and Howard Hawkins, Fern Fitzgerald, Katherine Bailey, Connie Searcy from Scottsboro, Susan Belk from Ashland, Terre Thompson from Tuscaloosa and I, joined them for dinner at the North Bama Truck Stop.

The Sunshine Club met at the home of Sue Cooper for their February meeting. Those present were Evelyn Phillips, Gladys Cobble, Addie Hall, Bess Bauerle, Ruth Pickett, Evelyn Clark, Karen Freeman, Billie Harper and Vernitice Young.

Becky Stott and Jayne Hicks celebrated their birthdays with a trip to the Bahamas.

Gladys Stott, Ruth Pickett and Priscilla Gregory spent a little while with Mary Ann Smith, who has returned home from B.M.C.-DeKalb and is recovering from shingles.

Virginia and Bill Livezy had as recent guests, Pam and Rick Vise, and son, Chris, Lisa and Hooper McIntosh, and children, Ian and Darcy, from Birmingham.

The Valley Head U.M.W. met for their February meeting at the home of Venna Livingston, with Frances Longshore as co-hostess; others present were Brownie Tuttle, Laura Margaret Allison, Adelaide Biddle, Elizabeth Coleman, Mary Frances Tate, Velma Hammond, Gladola Holleman, Janie Longshore, Geraldine Hawkins, Helen White, Vesta Hawkins, Eloise Brown and Mary Louise Holleman, who presented the program, "We Are All Theologians."

Ruble Finster and daughter-in-law, Geri Finster of Menlo, visited Tillie Schlicher, recently.

Sue and Foyle Cooper went to visit Marguerite and Steve Wilson at Hixon, Tenn., on Feb. 23. They and other family members observed the first birthday of their great-granddaughter, McAll Alexander. She and her parents, Kelly and Eddie Davis, are visiting relatives here.

Family members helped my great-granddaughter, Amanda Brown, celebrate her fourth birthday at the home of her parents, Patti and A. J. Brown.

Christine and Walter Brooks visited Walter's brother, Marvin Brooks, and his wife, Jean, at Silver Springs, Fla. They also enjoyed the points of interest in Daytona and St. Augustine.

Brad Hawkins was only 42 years old, and 17 of those years he spent fighting leukemia. His battle ended Wednesday, Feb. 27, at B.M.C. Montclair. When he was well or in remission, he lived life to the fullest. He enjoyed square dancing, horseback riding and working with cattle. He was a devoted husband and father and a faithful church member.

Why? We always wonder why one so young, so useful, and so needed, is afflicted with so much suffering. Perhaps to exemplify patience, endurance, cheerfulness, faith, hope and acceptance, and to inspire us to strive to achieve these qualities which he exemplified. He fought an extraordinary battle; through it all, he had the support of a strong, loving wife and family, a host of friends and most of all his God.

He looked so young and handsome in his casket, with his cowboy hat on his pillow. It exactly matched the color of the Autumn leaf on the lining of the lid of the casket. Richard Ellis gave a good eulogy and the Owens Family gave their tribute in song. His saddle and rope, circled by a wreath of flowers, adorned the casket, which was taken to Beene Cemetery from Lea's Chapel Church on Saturday, March 2, on a horse drawn wagon. It was followed by a rider leading a riderless horse and some walking friends. This was a fitting tribute and crowning ceremony for a "good all-around cowboy" — as inscribed on the belt buckle he wore — and more than that — a Christian gentleman. It is a great loss for his wife, Jo Ann, his daughter, Tammy, his parents, Thelma and Clyde, his sister, Joyce, his brother, Hoyt, and all who loved him. Every one who knew him loved him because he was loving and lovable. The loss is great but we must rejoice that his travail is ended.

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