

the GROUNDHOG

Vol. 4, No. 6 - SEPTEMBER, 1986

A Publication of the Mentone Area Preservation Association

George Sauer

A Man with Horse Sense

If you want to see the face of George Sauer light up, all you have to do is mention the word "horse." Mr. Sauer has worked a number of jobs during his 70 years—born September 16, 1916—but most important to him has been his time spent with horses. George was raised on a farm in Centerpoint, Iowa. Horses played a prominent role in his life; they provided transportation and recreation as well as a means of farming. "I've been around horses all my life," he told us proudly. "The only way to farm back then was with plow horses. On Sunday morning we went to church and then we rode horses for fun on Sunday afternoon. Horses were the only way we had to go then—you rode a horse or you walked. You saw a car every now and then...but not many."

Mr. Sauer had a hard time remembering his first car—he thinks it was probably a 1937 Model B Ford. However, he had no trouble remembering his first horse. "She was a quarter horse named Trixie. I was 13 years old when I got Trixie...I kept her until she died at the age of 34." He didn't hesitate to say that Trixie was his favorite of all the horses he has owned. He smiled, his eyes took on a faraway look, and he spoke excitedly about Trixie, "She wasn't big, but she was quicker than greased lightning. She was so quick that sometimes I couldn't stay with her." Photographs of Trixie and many other horses hang in the Sauer's living room. He pointed out a stout pair of Belgian draft horses he had bought when he was 19; they also had a story behind them: "Those were the two horses I bought when I started farming for myself in Iowa." And farm he did until the outbreak of World War II.

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The quarter horse that Mr. Sauer owns now is named Pistol—his "second favorite horse."

MAPA APPROVES New Goals

At the August MAPA Meeting a committee was appointed for the purpose of reevaluating the goals MAPA set in 1983, and, if necessary, to provide suggestions and guidelines for establishing new goals. Members appointed to the Goals Committee were Jack Jones, Harrell Jenkins, Heather Nicely, Grace Howard, and Sammy Cash. During August the group met to discuss past and future goals; in addition, the committee ascertained what actions had been taken in order to accomplish the goals set in 1983. The following is a report made by Grace Howard detailing the discussions of the Goals Committee:

On September 5, 1983, Bruce Bon Fleur, Harrell Jenkins, and Grace Howard met to consider goals for MAPA for 1983-4. The following were recommended and no further goals have been set forth since. The goals committee for 1986 wishes to review these goals and comment on each.

1. Continuation of the trainagle beautification project.

Graham Glover, Sandra Padgett, and Bernice Crow were appointed heads of this project. Billy Lee, Ann Climer, Marie Shadgett, Lynette McCary, and many others helped. However, people moved away and others curtailed their involvement due to family illness. As a result the triangle has fallen into a disheveled state.

2. Active investigation of procedures to have the Old Hotel Square placed on the State and National Historic Site list.

The Padgetts accomplished this goal for the Mentone Springs Hotel. No similar efforts have been made for other buildings in Mentone.

3. Continued support of THE GROUNDHOG.

THE GROUNDHOG has grown to be a self-supporting publication, contributing to projects sponsored by MAPA.

4. Organization of efforts to reconstruct the historic rock wall at the crest of Hwy. 117 as it approaches Mentone.

Progress has been made on this project. The wall reconstruction project, however, is a very expensive project, and though funds have been secured, more money is needed before reconstruction efforts can get underway.

5. Cooperation with the Mentone Crafts Festival Committee, the city of Mentone, and other concerned groups to rebuild the public picnic shelter at Brow Park.

This project was spearheaded and accomplished by the Mentone Crafts Festival at the cost of \$3,690. MAPA contributed \$600 and the City of Mentone contributed \$500 toward rebuilding efforts.

6. Continued participation and promotion of quality, seasonal events in the Mentone area.

MAPA sponsors the Rhododendron Festival, the October Colorfest and Groundhog Run, and Musical Mountain Christmas.

7. Appointment of a special "study committee" to explore the possibility of re-constructing the old covered bridge over Little River.

This goal was abandoned because local residents expressed strong opposition to this project. This area is one of the quietest parts of Mentone, and rebuilding the covered bridge would have destroyed the tranquility.

8. Continue efforts to acquire new highway recognition signs for Mentone.

This goal has been realized by the efforts of MAPA and local merchants. Merchants placed a large wooden sign on I-59 describing the attractions of Mentone. Furthermore, Mentone has been added to the exit signs off I-59 from both Birmingham and Chattanooga. A limited number of Mentone signs have been added to State Hwy. signs. (However, some people still have trouble finding us.)

9. Study the feasibility of locating, constructing, and funding a community center.

This effort is being pursued by the City Council. The old City Dump is a possible site. Federal and State funds are being sought.

10. Active encouragement of County and State road departments to paint divider stripes on our roads.

This goal was accomplished. MAPA invited the County Engineer and the State Highway Commissioner as our speakers and guests; during their visit they were shown our needs. The County does not own a striping machine; we are dependent upon the State.

11. Clean and enhance the Mentone Springs site.

The former mayor, Sam Barrett, brought in workmen with a bulldozer to open an area to the Mentone Springs; talk was "the local rock-men were going to rebuild it." However, ice storms soon dropped trees across the access, and no further work was done. Recently, the paths to the Springs was cleared by two citizens of Mentone.

12. Organize an active drive to increase MAPA membership.

This is a continuing goal and certainly has been accomplished beyond our early dreams. As Mentone grows, we must encourage new residents, as well as Mentone natives, to join us in our efforts to preserve Mentone in the best interest of all people.

13. Appointment of a committee to investigate, organize, and implement an active, "endowed" program to fund the historical and community projects of MAPA.

This goal was tabled in 1983. Since that time a fund has been established to restore the rock wall on Hwy. 117.

Other accomplishments not included in the 1983 goals:

1. Placing an attractive bulletin board at the Post Office to be used by all Mentone citizens.

2. Helping the City to secure a caution light on our major intersection. We wish this could be a stop-light; however, the State Hwy. Department has control over this light.

3. We are pursuing the building of a walkway from the Hitching Post to the Post Office. The basic engineering is complete, and contact has been made with the State Highway Department as to their requirements. Many problems will have to be worked out before this can be accomplished.

(The following "new" goals were established by the Goals Committee and approved by MAPA at the September meeting.)

1. A continuing effort to restore the rock wall along Hwy. 117. It is also recommended that a special effort be made to raise more funds by letters and personal contact with people who love Mentone.

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DeSoto State Park Ready For Fall

DeSoto State Park Manager Talmadge Butler and his staff have spent the summer giving the park a face-lift, just in time to welcome the coming of fall. Now is a perfect time to visit the park in northeast Alabama, where the crisp mountain air and the blazing autumn colors make a beautiful setting for hiking along the Little River and DeSoto's waterfalls. All 78 park campsites have been newly leveled and bordered. Twenty of the sites have full hookup facilities; all have water and electric hookups, a picnic table, grill and fire ring. DeSoto's camping area has two complete bathhouses, two playground areas, a group pavilion, RV storage area, volleyball court and horseshoe pits. The park has accommodations to suit varying degrees of "roughing it," from primitive camp sites to rustic cabins and chalets to a 25 unit motel with all the modern conveniences. For information and reservations, dial (205) 845-5075 or 1-800-ALA-PARK.

Join the Fun: Run the Groundhog Classic



One of the highlights of the October Colorfest is the fourth annual Groundhog Classic run on the morning of October 18. The Mentone Area Preservation Association run chairman, Jean McGehee, has secured fifteen local sponsors for the run.

Sponsors will have their logos printed on the back of the T-shirts presented to each winner. They are Stateline Country Store (owner-manager Terry Day is also giving GATORADE to entrants), Citizens Bank, Morgan Drugs, Mentone Inn, Ruby's Variety, Log Cabin Deli, White Elephant Galleries, Crow's Nest Antiques, Mentone Superette, WQRX, Cragsmere Manna, Cloudmont Ski & Golf Resort, Mentone Springs Hotel, Gourdis, and the Lookout Mountain Camping Association.

MAPA is hoping for 150 runners this year. George Bedwell, coach at Berry College, is lettering the T-shirts and lending his electrical timing device. Brent Craig, owner-manager of DeSoto Athletic, is giving jackets to the over-all male and female winners. Winners in each age category will receive medals.

John McCartney of Fort Payne won the first Groundhog Classic with a time of 21:17. Second year's winner was Robert Florio of Huntsville, with 22:28. Last year's winner was Randall Harris of Huntsville, with 22:29. Women's division winners have been Caroline Melson of Trussville, with 27:53 in 1983 and 26:47 in 1984. Last year's winner was Rosemary Hurayt with a time of 29:12.

Rainey Therrell will be in charge of events the day of the run. She will be assisted by Polly Cameron and other personnel from Saddle Rock Camp for Girls (see Groundhog Classic entry form on page 4).

Cooper's Changes Hands

"Cooper's Appliance" now has new owners and a new location. Sharon Lee, who worked at "Cooper's" as the bookkeeper, and her husband, Jackie, purchased the business from the Coopers. It is now located across the street from Citizen's Bank. Sharon said, "We plan to continue in the Cooper tradition. Jackie is doing service work and we will do any type of repair; if we can't do it, we'll find someone who can. We're honest and hard-working, if people support us, we'll stay in business."

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

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

MAPA Minutes

After the September MAPA meeting was called to order by Director Amelia Brooks, the minutes from the last meeting were read and approved. The Treasurer's report was not given. **THE GROUNDHOG** report was given, reporting a balance of \$507.13.

Homer Crow gave a report on the wall rebuilding project; he said that progress is being made on the project, though there are still obstacles to overcome. Amelia Brooks reported on the possibility of receiving help from the state of Alabama to finish the paving of the Lookout Mountain Parkway to the Georgia state line. Grace Howard reported that the Mentone Springs and Beauty Springs are now more accessible because the trails leading to the springs have been cleared (see **Mentone Springs and Beauty Springs Trails Cleared**). Mrs. Howard also gave a report detailing the new goals that were arrived at by the Goals Committee (see story page 1). The new goals were voted on and approved.

Angelo Rosario described plans for the upcoming October Colorfest. It was decided that MAPA would underwrite the expenses involved in sending Amelia Brooks to the Mountain Lakes Tourist Association on September 23.

The speaker for the evening was David Marion, President of the DeKalb County Tourist Association and publisher of the Sand Mountain News. Mr. Marion spoke on the subject of journalism, describing the rapid disappearance of the family-owned newspaper. He cited economic reasons for the decline, pointing out that newsprint prices and other expenses have increased to the point that it has become extremely difficult to operate a privately owned newspaper.—Adapted from the minutes of Bill Riedesel, secretary.

Submit to "The Groundhog"



Recently I built a box on the porch of The Hitching Post. I hope to find it stuffed full of photo's, information on upcoming events or recent past events; artwork, poetry, anything concerning the natural environment (animals, plants, hiking trails, etc.), and "letters to the editor" voicing your concern over anything that might be on your mind. Please include your name, address, and phone number. I do reserve the right to edit all submissions for reasons of space and clarity. If you would prefer to mail submissions rather than put them in the "Groundhog Box," address them to "The Groundhog," Box 50, Mentone, AL 35984. Thanks.

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The Groundhog

Published monthly by the Mentone Area Preservation Association. First conceived on Groundhog Day, 1982, and organized April 6, 1982, for the purpose of preserving and protecting the heritage, natural environment, and other unique qualities of life in the Mentone Area. Chartered as a non-profit organization by the State of Alabama.

Luther Y. Keith, Editor
Darlene C. Keith, Associate Editor
Contributing Editor:

Desmond Disney
Gregory Purvis, Reporter

Amelia Brooks, Director
Donna Bukley, Associate Director
Bill Riedesel, Secretary
Polly Cameron, Treasurer

Town Council Meeting

Cable T. V. moves one step closer. Ordinance 86-5 was accepted by the Town Council granting a franchise to Boyce Dooley's Clear-Vu Cable. If all goes as planned, it looks like Mentone will have cable T.V. by the first of the year.

The water supply in Fort Payne is up to approximately sixty days; though this represents an improvement over recent supply levels—a twenty day supply on August 22—the water shortage is by no means over. Water restrictions still apply in Fort Payne and Mentone—Mayor Hammond commented that, "It is important that we continue to conserve water."

The Town Council also discussed the possibility of acquiring funds to improve Mentone's water system. One of the options considered was a Community Block Development Grant. Proposals from an engineer involving a plan for the municipality would be the first step in the grant process.

Lyle Nicely and Bill Rutledge attended the Town Council Meeting. Mr. Nicely voiced his concern over the traffic congestion at the recent craft festivals. Also, Mr. Nicely brought up the issue of Mentone's legal liability in the event of an accident at one of the festivals. Mayor Hammond responded that Mentone did carry liability insurance, and said he would check with the city attorney as to the legal question of liability.

Bill Rutledge complained about the closing of DeSoto Parkway (City Road 89) during last year's Groundhog Classic Run. He said it made it all but impossible for the affected residents to enter or leave their driveways while the run was in progress.

Sorry, We Forgot

In last month's edition of "The Groundhog" we neglected to mention the source of our Mentone, France, photograph. The photo was contributed by the Virgil Nolans; they got it from friends who had visited France.

THE MENTONE AREA PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION invites you to join us for our October COLORFEST, October 19 and 20, 1986. Arts and Crafts will be featured in the center of town, along with a 4-mile run and many other activities. Fees for Arts and Crafts exhibitors will be \$20 for the two days.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Art or Craft _____

Inclosed Fee _____

Return to:

M.A.P.A.

P. O. Box 50

Mentone, Alabama 35984

Our Town by Greg Purvis

The Mentone chapter of the American Legion met recently to elect new officers for the year. As they take office, many new goals and plans are being discussed. The new officers are: Howard Carson, Commander; Richard Meadows, First Vice Commander; Edward Ringer, Adjutant; Jesse Crabtree, Service Officer; Ralph Lowe, Sergeant at Arms; and Leland Cox, Chaplain.

Commander Carson attended the American Legion District Meeting in Arab August 21.

Both the county and Fort Payne City school systems began classes for the 1986-87 school year on August 25. Valley Head High and Fort Payne High have had good starts in their football seasons. Valley Head won their first game against Gaylesville August 29 at Valley Head. Fort Payne won their game on that same night.

Fort Payne High School is hosting three foreign exchange students this year. They are: Minnie Wallin of Sweden, Antonio Solana of Spain, and Bastion Wetzel of Germany.

The Fort Payne High School journalism class of 1986-87 handed out the copies of the *Aurora* sold last school year. Work will soon begin on the next yearbook. Gregory Purvis and David Lusk are staff members from Mentone.

The DeKalb County Sheriff's Department is offering a \$500 reward for information leading to the conviction of the persons responsible for the recent Mentone burglaries. There have been eight burglaries in the past six weeks, most of which have taken place on the brow of the mountain and on the secluded DeSoto Parkway. Thousands of dollars in merchandise have been stolen from these homes.

We can all be thankful for the rain we've received over the last couple of weeks. It has rained nearly every day; the increase in rainfall means that our water crisis is growing less severe. When it seemed that Fort Payne water would be turned off due to the shortage, it began to rain and eased—for a time—some of our problems.

October is traditionally a month for ghosts and phantoms to come out from hiding, and ghost stories are an ever-popular pastime in Mentone at that time. *American Entertainment* is looking for the best ghost story that we can find, original or an old favorite. Send us a copy of your tale (not more than 3 pages long) so that we can share your spooks with everyone! Send by October 3 to: *American Entertainment* P. O. Box 245 Mentone, AL

OCTOBER MEETING Mentone Area Preservation Association Amelia Brooks, Director

Topic:
A Discussion on the
Upcoming October Colorfest
REFRESHMENTS & SOCIAL
TIME FOLLOW
The Parlor
St. Joseph's On-the-Mountain
Church
Tuesday, Oct. 7, 1986 7:00 p.m.

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DRESSING
LASAGNA
TUNA CASSEROLE
MASHED POTATOES
BROCCOLI w/CHEESE SAUCE
CREAM STYLE CORN
YAMS
PEACH COBBLER
BANANA SPLIT CAKE

SUNDAY, SEPT. 28

BEEF TIPS w/RICE
CHICKEN CURRY
SWEET & SOUR PORK
LASAGNA
BAKED FLOUNDER
GREEN BEAN ALMONDINE
POTATOES IN SOUR CREAM SAUCE
SQUASH CASSEROLE
CORN O'BRIEN
BLUEBERRY TARTS
FRESH APPLE CAKE

SUNDAY, OCT. 5

BEEF STRAGONOFF
HONEYGLAZED BAKED CHICKEN
POLISH SAUSAGE w/GREEN PEPPERS
ONIONS & SAUERKRAUT
COUNTRY FRIED STEAK
BBQ PORK
CHICKEN CASSEROLE
AU GRATIN POTATOES
LIMA BEANS
FRESH SQUASH w/ONIONS
FRIED OKRA
STRAWBERRY COBBLER
CHOCOLATE OR COCONUT PIE

SUNDAY, OCT. 12

SWEDISH MEATBALLS
EGG NOODLES
CHICKEN CASSEROLE
BBQ RIBS
YANKEE POT ROAST
FRIED CHICKEN
BROCCOLI CASSEROLE
SCALLOPED POTATOES
CORN ON THE COB
ENGLISH PEAS
FRESH APPLE CAKE
PINEAPPLE PUDDING

BUFFET HOURS 12:00 - 3:00

MOUNTAIN WATCH

by Jean McGehee

The press is so much maligned these days, we forget Jefferson's statement about preferring it to one of the branches of government if he had to make a choice. However, there's no denying the power of the press. Within hours after the July **GROUNDHOG** was placed in local mailboxes, two phone calls came in response to two items:

Homer Crow called to say that if I wanted to pick more blackberries, he had plenty at his home. Charles and I drove over one morning after the dew had dried, and Homer wasn't exaggerating. It was blackberry heaven. The bushes formed a couple of islands and a peninsula. Setting my bucket on the ground, I picked with both hands. Someone could have come along after me and not been able to tell I'd picked, there were so many.

Charles enjoyed watching Jesse Crow, Homer's brother, laying rock on the side of the house and on a terrace. Like all true artists, Jesse makes it look easy. When we returned to pick another day, Homer was laying his own rock. Jesse was adding more rock work to Bobby Lee Cook's house.

The other phone call was from Eula Hammond. We had run a classified ad for a dripolator coffee pot. In many ways, the old methods are better. I don't like the plastic, the glass pots, and the inability to re-heat coffee in the automatic makers. Mrs. Hammond and her husband Leonard had a stainless steel dripolator that was just like new.

When I went to their house, there was a feeling of coming home. The Hammond's dining room furniture was identical to my parents'. We discovered both sets had been purchased in the Birmingham area within a couple of years of each other. Also, Mr. and Mrs. Hammond have one daughter and two grandsons, just as my parents had.

If there's a better place to live, I haven't found it. We've enjoyed **Luzianne** coffee every morning since—perfect coffee. Fortune has also been kind to us in other ways lately.

One of my favorite legacies from Mother is a garden cart. One day I was struggling to put it into the van to take it to Furgerson's to have air put in the tires. My husband phoned Charles Furgerson and within minutes he was here with a portable air compressor to inflate the tires on the cart. When I tried to pay him, he absolutely refused, saying he was coming this way anyway.

A few days later, when Charles was having trouble with his vision when he was working at his desk, Dr. Michael Parker made a house call! Within minutes he, too, had a solution: a crookneck lamp and a stand to hold papers made all the difference. When I reached for the checkbook to pay him, Dr. Parker said, "I wouldn't know what to charge you."

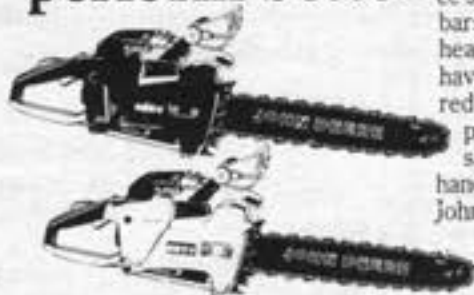
We found a piece of roofing tin under the house and thought it would be a good idea to place it under the wood pile to cut down on bugs and trash getting on the wood. But we needed another piece of tin. One day on the way home from Fort Payne, I stopped by Metal Deck near Valley Head.

The receptionist sent me to an office where a nice young man told me to drive around to the back of the loading dock. He met me there and loaded two pieces of the roofing into the van. When I asked the cost, he said, "It would be more trouble to write it up than to just give it to you." So I thanked him and quickly left before he could change his mind.

The next good luck came when the garden faucet leaked. Larry Smalley arrived to replace it and when I started to pay him, he said, "No way. I replaced that faucet last year, so it must be its fault, not yours."

Like I said, there may be better places to live, but I sure don't know about them.

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(continued from page 1)

2. Pursue the completion of the sidewalk along Hwy. 117. Consider a route through Jack Jones' corner, thru City Park, and along the alley behind Sammy Cash's property. This will allow the sidewalk project to avoid State Hwy. requirements.
3. Better organization of the Festival Activities in Mentone.
4. Continuing care and improvement of the Mentone triangle. A new committee is needed.
5. Work in conjunction with the City Council to secure a Community Center.
6. Encourage the City Council to reconsider zoning laws for Mentone.
7. Encourage the City Council to mow road right-of-ways more often in order to make the right-of-way safer for pedestrians, especially along DeSoto Parkway from the square to the city limits.
8. Pursue improvement and restoration of the Mentone Springs.
9. Beautification of Mentone with more clean-up campaigns and the planting of native plants.
10. Pursue new revenue generating ideas, such as a Mentone calendar or Mentone T-shirts. Also, each festival should be publicized as a fund-raiser for the major upcoming project. (For example, if there is time, the Colorfest would have more strength if we said "all proceeds go toward the restoration of the rock wall on Hwy. 117.")
11. Assist the Moon Lake School gym with money for lights, and the Moon Lake Library with money for books.
12. Find ways to improve communication between the many and diverse groups that live in Mentone. Also, encourage the different merchants and organizations of Mentone to work together in promoting the planned activities in our town.
13. MAPA should underwrite the publication of Zora Strayhorn's: *Mentone, Alabama: A History*. This history was a project of THE GROUNDHOG; publication would be fully in keeping with MAPA's preservation of heritage objectives. Slowly, cost of publication would be recovered by profit from sales.

MENTONE GROUNDHOG CLASSIC RUN



Sponsored by the Mentone Area Preservation Association
Saturday, October 18
9:30 a.m.
4 miles, flat to gently rolling hills on DeSoto Parkway

ONE MILE FUN RUN at 9 a.m. Pre-registered entrants are guaranteed a T-shirt (to be mailed to late registrants). Times called but no records will be kept.

Awards: Specially designed T-shirts to all pre-registered runners with late registrants having theirs mailed. Medallions to top three finishers in each division.

Splits: Called at half way mark. Water available on course.

Especially scenic course, beginning at historic Old Hotel Square and continuing down DeSoto Parkway at height of autumnal foliage splendor. Circles back at turn-off to DeSoto Falls. The Groundhog Classic caps off the Fall Colorfest.

Mentone is located on Lookout Mountain, halfway between Chattanooga and Gadsden on Highway 117. There are exits on I-59 north and south. Follow 117 through Hammondville, Valley Head, and up the mountain. From the east, Mentone can be reached through LaFayette, Summerville, Georgia; through Menlo to Cloudland to Mentone.

The race is in its fourth year, and all proceeds go to the goals of the Mentone Area Preservation Association, which is dedicated to preserving and protecting the natural heritage, environment, and other unique qualities of Mentone.

Detach and mail or bring to:

The Mentone Groundhog Classic
Box 439
Mentone, AL 35984

Entry fee of \$6 per run must accompany each application. \$7.50 after October 15. Make checks payable to MAPA (Mentone Area Preservation Association).

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ TELEPHONE _____

Age as of Oct. 30, 1986 _____

SIGNATURE _____

(If under 18, signature of parent or guardian is required).

Shirt Size S M L XL

Division:

☐ Men	☐ Women
☐ 14 & under	☐ 14 and under
☐ 15-19	☐ 15-19
☐ 20-29	☐ 20-29
☐ 30-39	☐ 30-39
☐ 40 & over	☐ 40 & over

☐ Fun Run
☐ Groundhog Classic

NO ONE MAY ENTER THIS EVENT WITHOUT SIGNING THIS OFFICIAL WAIVER: In consideration of accepting this entry, I the above-signed, intending to be legally bound, hereby, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators waive and release any and all claims for losses and damages I may have against MAPA and all other parties and their representatives, successors, and assigns for any and all injuries suffered by me in said event. I attest and verify that I am physically fit. Further, I hereby grant full permission to any and all foregoing to use photos, videotapes, motion pictures, recordings or any other record of this event for any purpose whatsoever.

(continued from cover)

In 1942 George Sauer was drafted into the Army. After basic training in Fort Warren, Wyoming, which he described as "cold," he was stationed at Camp Sibert in Gadsden, Alabama. In Gadsden he met Ruby, a native of Valley Head and his wife of forty-one years.

After the war ran its course the Sauers went back to Iowa to live until 1959. They might have stayed in Iowa except that their 5 year old daughter, Sue, became ill. The doctor could find no cure for her condition, so he proposed a change of climate. Ruby was from the Valley Head area; they decided that might be just the place for Sue to recover. They brought their furniture with them from Iowa, but were forced to sell their horses. Once they moved, Sue did get well, lending credence to what some people say are the "healing powers of 'the Mountain.'" Mr. Sauer said he has "always loved it here." He does miss Iowa sometimes but "it's a lot nicer in the winter here."

After moving to Valley Head in 1959, George Sauer became an integral part of the community. He had worked at International Harvester in Iowa and transferred to the same company in Fort Payne. From there he went to work at Valley Head Saddlery, where he cut leather parts for saddles, bridles, and breast collars. George added, "That was when they still did the cutting by hand, not machine." After he quit the Saddlery he still went back and helped them if they were in a pinch. Later, he served for three years as Chief-of-Police in Valley Head. He said "I never had any real trouble; the kids were pretty good. A lot of them were bigger than me so I tried to keep them on my side—I was friends with them. If I ever needed any help, they were there." For the next 14 years he worked as the Security Guard at the Citizens Bank in Valley Head—he retired last January.

Like the years spent in Iowa, his years in Valley Head have been characterized by an ongoing involvement—or call it a relationship—with horses; George said, "I just couldn't stay away from them." After moving here, George said that, "I bought a little mare named 'Dixie' from Dewey Smith; she was for Sue... Sue rode horses before she could walk. Before she was big enough to sit in the saddle I rode carrying her in my arms." He taught horseback riding at Camp Laney for 8 years under Coach Laney. He stayed on for two years after Rob Hammond purchased the camp, then recently returned to head the riding program there for the past two summers.

Mr. Sauer describes himself as "a quarter horse man." "I know a lot about horses," he told us, "but every time I get a new one I learn more. All horses are not alike...just like people." For many years, while working at the bank, he judged quarter horses at weekend shows. He got off from work at the bank at 11:00 on Saturday, went home and ate lunch, then loaded up the truck for him and Sue to go to shows in Gadsden, Boaz, and towns further south. They usually got home the next morning around 3:00. "There used to be horse shows in Valley Head, too, but I didn't judge those because I knew all of the horses and the people; I would have been accused of favoritism." He did, however, serve as ringmaster at the shows in Valley Head. "The horse shows were a big event. At first they were held on the Valley Head High School football field, then later moved to Clyde Hawkins' farm. They drew large crowds," he told us, warming to the subject at hand, "But they had to close down the shows because

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horses and equipment got so expensive. People couldn't afford them. The price of a horse, the tack, and the vet bills got to be too high for a lot of folks.

"Once, several years ago, Sue and I decided to go to a horse show in Gadsden...just for fun, not to judge. Well, when we arrived, the quarter horse judge still hadn't shown up. The ringmaster told me not to leave, that I might be needed to judge. I had already told everybody I wasn't going to judge, so I said no. Then the man yelled up to the gate for them not to let me out. When I still refused, they asked Sue to judge the quarter horses; she said she would. That was the first and last time Sue ever served as a judge. I gave her a little help in one category, but otherwise she knew her horses and did a fine job." Mr. Sauer quit judging horse shows three years ago because he was "Just tired of going so far from home every weekend."

As we drove back up the Mountain, we talked about Mr. Sauer's reminiscings about the "old days." He had told us that working with horses on a farm was a lot more fun than using machinery. He had also informed us that the way they rope cattle on television is not really the way it's done. I left Mr. Sauer's house thinking that he knew something I didn't, and maybe it had something to do with horses, but I'm still not sure.

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Mountain Cookery

by Luther Keith

I'm sure, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that my wife is a scientific cook. She measures so much of this and so much of that before throwing it in the pot. I'm no scientist. I cook by intuition and faith. I go by what looks, feels, and smells right; and my wife has to admit that more often than not what I come up with is pretty darn good, even though it may be something altogether different than what I set out to make. There was the time that I thought I'd try my hand at anchovy paste but instead ended up with a rich-flavored herring ice-cream which bore an uncanny resemblance to Rainbow Compote—and it was the best fish ice-cream either one of us had ever tried; curious thing that she's never requested a repeat performance.

What I'm getting at is this: The spirit of adventure has gone right out of the kitchen with the dinosaur eggs. Science has no place in the bathroom, bedroom, or kitchen. So for those of you who might be feeling your oats and are ready to have a go at cooking the old-fashioned way—by exploration—loss out the cookbooks (I'm living proof you don't really "have" to have a cookbook), strap on an apron, and I'll give you a secret recipe I stumbled across just the other day while trying to formulate a Gazpacho Dip for Cottage Cheese-Cucumber Salad; the Gazpacho Dip was a failure, but what resulted is probably the best barbecue sauce known to man.

Real cooks cook in a cast-iron skillet, and you want one that has good weight and size to it—if you go knocking about in the kitchen and accidentally bump up against your pan, you want it to stay put. (I decided to buy my skillet the day after I spent an entire afternoon cleaning Braised Chinese Cabbage and Stewed Eggplant off the kitchen floor.)

Once you've got your skillet you need something to get you in the cooking mood. I accomplish this by playing a little mood music: I would suggest something slow but at intervals fast so you can fit it into the times when you might be stirring at a leisurely pace or caught up in a chopping and dicing frenzy. The music that works best for me is *Madam Wang's Waltz*, a little known tune just gaining popularity in this part of the country.

Now that you're in the mood to cook and you've got the pan to do it in, all you lack are the ingredients. This is what you'll need, but deciding just how much of each and when to add them will be your first step on the road to "adventure cooking": green peppers, fresh garlic (true cooks use only "fresh" ingredients), brown mustard, honey, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, onions, tomato sauce, dill, diced pineapple, bay leaves, parsley, tarragon, oregano, chervil, basil, beer, lemon juice, hot peppers, chives, white wine vinegar, ground cumin, cayenne pepper (rookies in the kitchen should be careful with this one), star anise (available in oriental grocery stores), cinnamon, and anything else that might strike your fancy at the time of consummation. Once I've rounded up these ingredients, I turn *Madam Wang* loose on the stereo, get the skillet hot, and I'm off. Though there's no real order in constructing the sauce, I usually put the onions in first and the beer in last. The onions need sauteed or they will be crunchy in the final product; use only half a beer if you want to keep your sauce thick—I put it in last because I usually drink the first half while I'm doing the cooking. Once I have everything in the skillet I usually simmer everything until its done. You can tell when its done by following *Madam Wang's* famous formula: "When it tastes done, it is." Remember, if you want to be a big hit in the kitchen, you've got to use your nose, eyes, and most importantly your sense of taste: feel free to sample as you go. That's the main difference between a scientific cook and the man or woman who cooks with adventure on their side: one goes by the book, and if it comes out lousy, they blame the book; I, on the other hand, go by intuition and blame only myself or my wife when I fail. One last piece of advice to my male counterparts: If you do the cooking, make sure it's understood that the girl friend, wife, or children do the dishes, because adventurous cooking leaves the kitchen a wreck. (But it's worth it.)

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ANY TIME

by L. Keith

Too Little Too Late

The drought of '86 may be over, but the rain that has been falling as of late has been too little and it has arrived too late for many Alabama farmers. The affected areas are not confined within the borders of Alabama; much of the South has felt the effects of heat and drought: crops withered; pastures parched, unable to support livestock; water supplies threatened; and the list goes on and on.

Corn, cotton, hay, peanuts, wheat, soybeans, and various other crop yields have been reduced by 50% and more due to the lack of rain. But it's not just the crops that have suffered: Alabama produces over 12% of the country's broiler chickens; experts say that the drought has already caused a 20% yield loss, which translates into a \$137 million loss for those raising broilers. Many areas of Alabama have reported pasture loss as high as 90%. Cattle ranchers are forced to sell their cattle because they can't afford to feed them. Alabama hatcheries have seen a 25% drop in egg production—another malady for which the drought has been responsible. All in all, it has been another tough year for the farmer.

On August 1st our representatives in Washington, in response to the farmer's plight, finally acted—a \$1 billion aid package went into effect to help drought-stricken farmers in a ten state area: Alabama was one of those ten states. The late-arriving aid is like the recent rains: too little too late.

The farm aid package consists of \$530 million appropriated by the Congress plus a Reagan Administration farm assistance program that pushes the total of the relief package to over \$1 billion dollars. Feed for animals, cash payments, and a variety of other forms of relief are included in the program. Without a doubt the relief is desperately needed—it is unfortunate that it did not come at an earlier point. A billion dollars, though it may sound like a great deal of money, will not go very far when spread over ten states—Alabama farmers alone will lose almost half a billion dollars to the drought. Regrettably, government relief does not come in time for farmers to replant, nor does it come in time for farmers to feed hungry cattle they were forced to sell off weeks ago.

You can't blame the government for acting/reacting at a snail's pace—that is its estranged nature. But neither can you blame the farmer—as far as I know the farmers had nothing to do with the lack of rain. It's hard to assign culpability in a circumstance where there is no culprit. The plight of the farmer is one that I'm not jealous of. He/she is at the mercy of elements over which there is no control: in this case the weather. Undoubtedly, every year there will be areas of this country that will experience drought, flood, fire, ad infinitum; as a result, there will be farmers suffering every year in some part or other of the country. This year the place is the South, and those of us who live here have been affected. But the farmer has had to bear the brunt of the drought, for it is the farmer that has been hurt the most.

Maybe next year will be kinder.

Mentone Springs & Beauty Springs Trails Cleared



MENTONE SPRINGS

In recent years access to the Mentone and Beauty Springs has been extremely difficult: the pathways leading to the springs had over time become obstructed with fallen trees and overgrown with vines and weeds. Thanks to the efforts of Lyle Nicely and Bill Rutledge, the trails have been cleared and access to the springs restored. Bill and Lyle put in several hours of hard work on a sweltering day so the people of Mentone might once again enjoy two of Mentone's most beautiful sites. (The paths to the trails begin across the street from the White Elephant Gallery. The trails are not clearly marked; if you have difficulty finding them, drop by the Hitching Post for directions.)

ALABAMA

	Production as percent of U.S. total, 1985	Percent of yield loss, 1986	Amount of loss (millions of dollars)
Broiler chickens	12.5	20	\$137
Corn	0.3	50	100
Cotton	n.a.	30	60
Eggs	4.1	25	50
Hay	1.0	67	5
Pasture	0.5	25-90	n.a.
Peanuts	14.5	50	84
Soybeans	1.3	50	95
Wheat	0.5	85	43

Sources: Alabama Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.



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Mountain Greenery

by Desmond Disney

Tall Fescues: Installation, Renovation, & Maintenance

One of the most common turfgrasses for home (and commercial) use in our area is fescue. Commonly called tall fescue or Kentucky fescue, this cool season grass is shade tolerant and generally more tolerant to drought, heat stress, and disease problems. It is also more cold tolerant than the warm season grasses.

Tall fescue is a relatively coarse-textured bunch type grass that is adapted to a wide range of soil and climate conditions; it grows best at average temperatures of 60 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Tall fescues grow rapidly in the spring and fall but little during periods of extreme heat or cold.

Kentucky 31 has been the most popular variety, however many new Tall fescue cultivars are now available. Often referred to as "turf types," they are more shade tolerant, have better disease resistance, tolerate a lower cutting height, and their leaves are finer in texture (width). Falcone, Rebel, and Clem-fine are some of these new "turf type" tall fescues.

INSTALLATION

Fescues are relatively easy and inexpensive to establish from seed. Since they are cool season grasses, spring and fall are the best times to establish and renovate fescue lawns. This gives the grasses enough time to develop a strong, healthy root system that can better withstand the heat and dry conditions of summer.

Fall is generally the best time of year to plant tall fescues. Earlier plantings may undergo excessive heat stress and later plantings may not become fully established prior to winter. However, when planting under trees it is important to keep the leaves off the newly established grass. This can be difficult because raking the leaves might pull the tender, new grass up. On the other hand, once it has been established (4 to 6 weeks), regular mowing will remove most of the leaves.

Soil preparation is important to insure good root growth. New areas to be planted should be roto-tilled to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. All debris, such as rocks, sticks, or clumps of soil, should be removed; add organic matter, lime, and fertilizer as needed. It is best to have your soil analyzed to determine the proper amounts of lime and fertilizer your soil requires. Finally, level the surface and slope away from buildings. A good way to level off bumps and hollows is to use a drag made by attaching a rope to a ladder (pull it sideways over the surface).

Buy only high quality, certified seed. A common seeding rate is 10 pounds of seed per 1000 sq. feet. Planting is best accomplished using a mechanical spreader and broadcast on a calm day if possible. To obtain even coverage sow half the seed in one direction and the other half at right angles. This helps insure uniform distribution. (Fertilizer should also be applied in this manner.) Drag a flexible leaf rake lightly

(Continued on Page 10)

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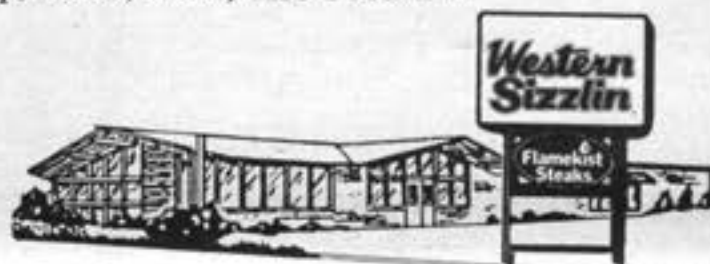
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Lookout Mountain/JFK Trail



Photos above and below are of scenes viewed from the Lookout Mountain/J.F.K. Trail.



Lookout Mountain J.F.K. Trail

by Danny Crownover

Lookout Mountain, the "Last of the Cumberlands," is a rugged picturesque terrain known for its wilderness beauties, abrupt palisades, and panoramic views. This mountain is of great interest to geologists and botanists alike for the strange formations and rare plant species that are found.

Already much of the choice land is being gobbled up and the sites visited by our ancestors are no longer accessible to us or future generations. The Lookout Mt./JFK Trail will seek to educate people of these limitations and preserve natural wildlife.

Scenery along this trail is unbelievable. There are many attractions including several waterfalls. Because the trail runs along isolated areas, it will create an awareness of the beauties that remain along Lookout Mountain.

Undoubtedly, this is one of Alabama's most ambitious trail building enterprises. The idea began in the mid 1970's with Doyal Benefield, park manager of DeSoto State Park. Originally, the trail was to run from the Little River Canyon mouth to Mentone, Alabama. Conferences with other trail organizations found this to be a short trail so the idea of routing the trail throughout the entire mountain was born.

As envisioned, this pathway will be over 100 miles long and be known as the Lookout Mountain/J.F.K. Trail. It will stretch from the entire southern to northern ends of Lookout Mountain.

By winding south through Noccalula Falls and the Black Creek Gorge, the trail will cut across and follow the east ridge of Lookout Mountain to Cherokee Rock Village, a geologic wonder overlooking Leesburg, Alabama, then up an abandoned railroad line to Yellow Creek Falls and Little River Canyon. From this point the Little River Canyon Trail and the DeSoto Scout Trail are utilized to reach DeSoto State Park.

I hope that one day southeastern backpackers will have a winding, mountainous footpath leading from Noccalula Falls to Mentone, across Georgia and into Tennessee.

I have been encouraged with the full support of conservationists, property owners, wildlife biologists, scout groups and backpacking clubs. The trail from my hometown of Gadsden to DeSoto State Park is nearing completion.

Maps and brochures are available from the Alabama Appalachian Association for one dollar. This includes printing cost and postage. Write to Danny K. Crownover, 609 So. 4th St., Gadsden, AL 35901.

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over the surface to work the seed into the top 1/8 inch of the soil. Firming the soil with a roller provides better seed to soil contact, thus increasing germination. Mulch with a light covering of straw and water with a fine spray to keep the soil moist (but not wet) until the seed germinates.

Be sure to keep the seedbed moist for 7 to 14 days or until the seedlings have emerged. Then you can reduce your watering to every other day and finally to once a week when the new grass is one to two inches tall. Less frequent, but deeper watering, will help encourage a stronger, deeper root system and a heartier turf.

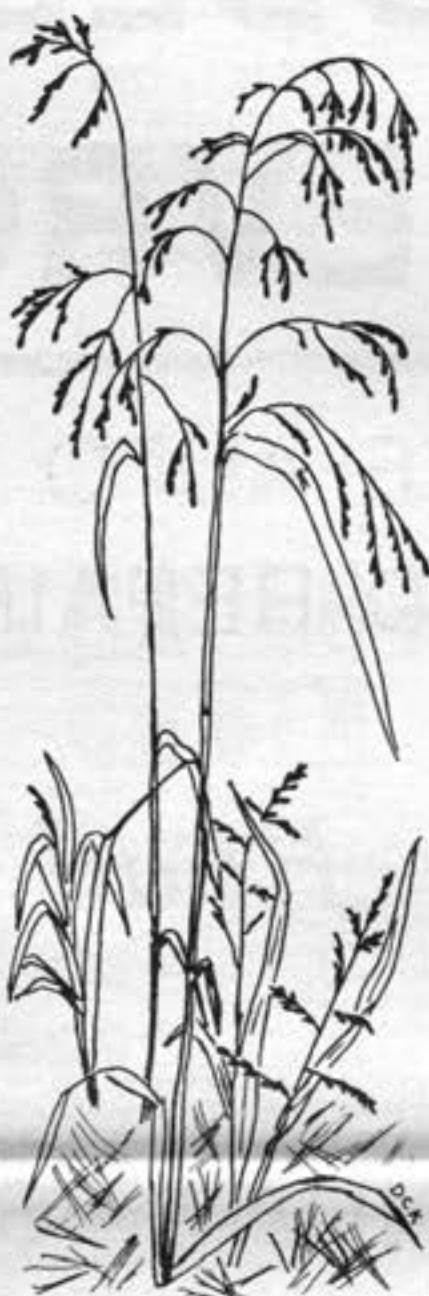
Begin mowing at a height of 2-2½ inches when the seedlings reach a height of 2½-3 inches. Do not mow when the grass is wet, especially young seedlings, and mow often enough so that you never remove more than ⅓ of the plant material. Be sure to keep your mower blades sharp. Dull blades tend to pull and tear the grass. You should sharpen your blades each time you cut or buy several blades and rotate them.

RENOVATION

Sometimes a lawn will become spotty and thin to the point that normal maintenance practices will not revive it. If 50% or more of the area is desirable turf, renovation should succeed.

The first step in renovation is to determine and correct the problem: it could be improper maintenance, peat problems, environmental conditions, or some other problem.

Like establishing new lawns, fall is the best time to renovate a fescue lawn. The following steps are usually involved in the renovation process: (1) Soil test: Base fertilizer and lime recommendations on the soil test. (2) Mow: Mow lower than normal and remove clippings and other debris (leaves, etc.) by raking. (3) Cultivation: cultivate the soil by coring (called aerifying). This reduces soil compaction, a major problem of turf areas, and allows more air and water to reach the roots of the grass. Also, by disturbing the soil, seed to soil contact is enhanced. (4) Fertilizer: Add fertilizer and lime according to the soil test recommendations. Generally 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1000 sq. feet is needed at planting. (5) Planting: Same as for new



lawns at the rate of 2 - 5 lbs. per 1000 sq. feet. The seed should be worked into the soil by lightly raking; rolling will ensure better seed to soil contact. A light mulching of straw is helpful where there is little existing grass, or where soil erosion may be a problem. (6) Watering: Apply water after planting and keep the soil moist until seedlings become established. This usually requires light daily watering for 2 - 3 weeks. (7) Mow: Same as for new lawns.

MAINTENANCE

Once a lawn has been established, its health and appearance depends on a sound maintenance program, one involving fertilization, mowing, and watering. These procedures are interrelated and necessary to obtain an attractive, healthy turf.

Generally 2 - 5 lbs. of nitrogen per 1000 sq. feet (yearly) is recommended for tall fescues and should be applied in early spring and fall. Additional nitrogen can be applied if more color and growth is desired, but avoid fertilization of fescues during the summer months because it adds to heat and drought stress.

Tall fescues will not tolerate low mowing heights, especially during the hot dry summer months. Mow at 1½ to 2 inches during the fall and spring and 2½ to 3 inches during the summer. Taller mowing heights help reduce weeds and hold soil moisture. And again, use sharp blades and mow often enough to remove no more than ⅓ of the plant material.

Proper watering is important to maintaining a quality fescue lawn. Water when the grass shows signs of stress, such as wilting or rolling leaves. Enough water should be applied to wet the soil to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. Water in the early morning; evening watering can increase disease development.

Installing and maintaining a lawn requires the development of an awareness and sensitivity to the various plant materials and their special needs. Become aware of what is happening in your yard during the different seasons so you can correct any problems before they get too serious. Staying on top of potential problems helps insure an attractive and healthy landscape year round.

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There are basic reasons why you should advertise regularly in this publication:

(1) Business volume is dependent on conveying your message to potential customers. Each month 3,500 copies of **THE GROUNDHOG** are printed. One is placed in the mailbox of every resident of the Mentone area. It is distributed at numerous outlets in the DeKalb area—often picked up by

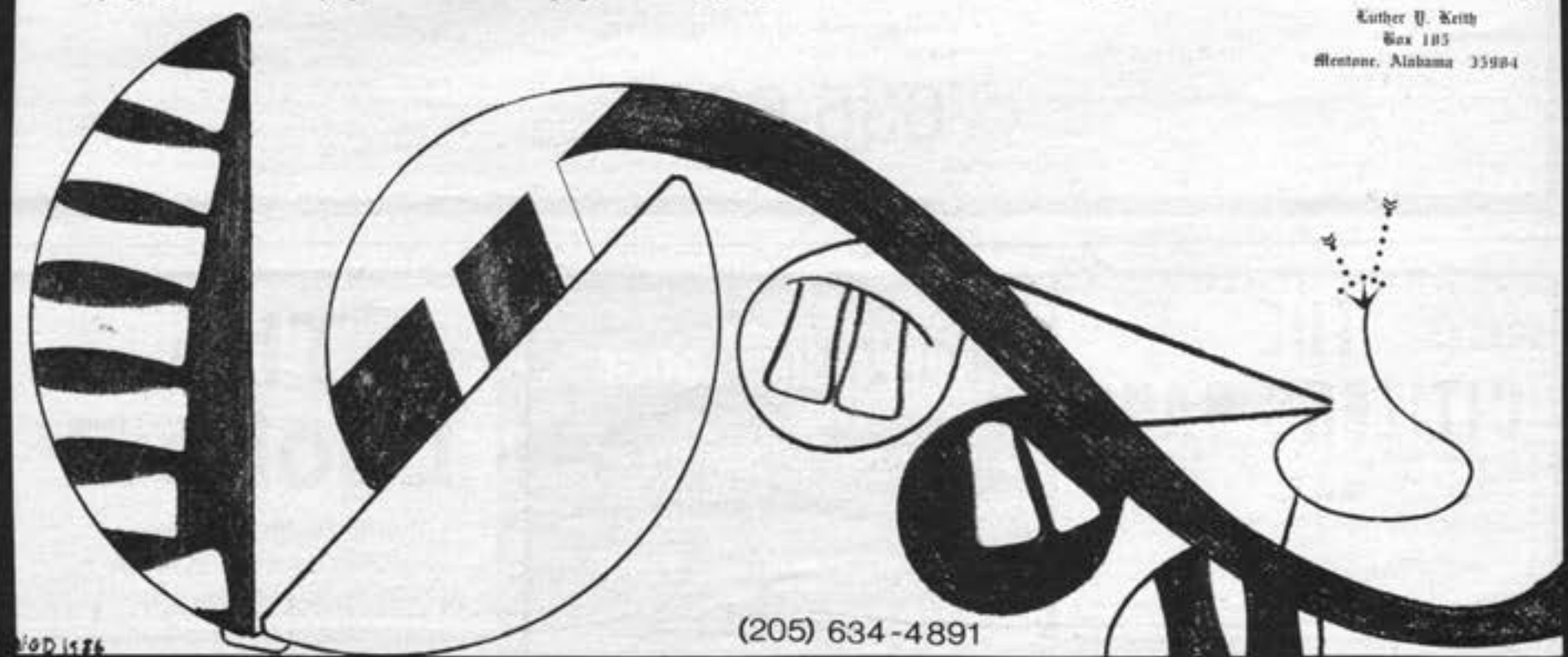
tourists. It is mailed to over 200 persons outside the Mentone area.

(2) **THE GROUNDHOG** is not a profit-making operation. Any proceeds above expenses go to the activities of the Mentone Area Preservation Association, of which it is an arm. MAPA is dedicated to "preserving and protecting the heritage, natural environment, and other unique qualities of life in the Mentone area."



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Bloodless Turnips

by L. Keith

Why read fiction? I'm not sure that I know the answer. I think it's something all people should do and do on a regular basis. Reading exercises something between the ears that can't get exercise any other way.

My brother graduates from high school next year. He loathes reading. I know as much because he told me so. When I would think about his attitude toward reading, I would begin to wonder what went wrong. I knew he attended a good school. I knew he was instructed by well-meaning teachers. I knew his dislike of the written word was shared by his friends. What I didn't understand was why he had become so disenchanting by something that fascinates me: the simple act of reading fiction. So I asked him. He grunted, made a face indicating to me that he thought he was about to get another big brother lecture, but said nothing. My brother is a loutish and his words can at times can be like blood. Nevertheless, I squeezed and at last was rewarded with an answer: "It's no fun."

I almost made a big mistake and said that reading wasn't supposed to be fun. There was food for thought in his answer. After chawing for a while I've decided he's right. At the age of seventeen—or seventy, for that matter—reading should be fun, or else why do it. In my brother's school a variety of books are used in his literature courses: Tolstoy, Dickens, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Faulkner, Odoevski, etc. My brother always concludes his list with "and there're all dead." It's hard to argue with a teenager. But to a degree, I think that he's right. I know that when he goes to college he'll encounter a lot of the same books while he abhors through the two or three required English courses. I also know that authors like Faulkner can be a tough pill for young people to swallow—they've yet to build up the required patience/brance or whatever else is required to have fun with Poe and Coleridge. As any oldie, and regardless of which point one chooses to argue, my brother and his friends will probably enter adulthood without the desire to read literature. My brother, like the vast majority of the population, will probably never read a book, or a book, or a book, and that's a shame and a shame.

Reading can be fun. It all is knowing where to look.

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L'Humour Noir

by Luther Keith

The term "black humor," usually applied to the work of a large and diversified group of American novelists who gained prominence in the 1950's and 1960's, is by no means an American invention. L'humour noir (black humor), an expressive sobriquet of French surrealism, was coined by Andre Breton—the leader and theorist of French surrealism. In 1940 Breton compiled his *Anthologie de l'humour*, realizing that black humor was not confined to the borders of France. Breton included the work of English authors such as Johnathan Swift, Thomas De Quincey, and Lewis Carroll, with French exemplars such as the Marquis de Sade, Arthur Rimbaud, Alfred Jarry, and Jacques Vaché.

Black humor, as modern literary critics is a product of American writers. During the 1950's, a group of writers were laying the groundwork for the institution of black humor. Many critics, led by Edmund Wilson, were quick to condemn the writings of early black humorists. Wilson, after reviewing the work of George Washington Harris, condemned him for the use of crude and brutal humor, further stating that Harris's humorous writings were undiluted poison. Harris's sardonic tradition exploded in the 1960's. Joseph Heller, Ken Kesey, Thomas Pynchon, Walker Percy, John Barth, John

Hawkes, Bruce Jay Friedman, and Kurt Vonnegut began to question in a mordantly humorous fashion the accepted values of contemporary America. From Weber writing in *The Comic Imagination in American Literature*, theorized that "Black humor distorts because it is not necessarily nor always light-hearted, funny, amusing, laughter-arousing. Furthermore, black humor seems to have little respect for the values and patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior that have kept Anglo-American culture stable and effective. It has provided a basis of equilibrium for society and the individual. Black humor violates sacred and secular taboos alike without restraint or compunction. It discovers cause for laughter in what has generally been regarded as too serious for levity: the death of men, the disintegration of social institutions, mental and physical disease, deformity, suffering, anguish, privation, and terror."

Black humor as a literary movement lacks only, which might be one of its major appeals. Black humorists are an anarchistic bunch finding cohesion only in their purpose. To expose to laughter society's shortcomings.

Kurt Vonnegut is exemplary of contemporary black humorists: he probes the most sensitive areas of human existence with a cutting wit that leaves his target a bit shaken. Vonnegut, in *Happy Birthday, Wanda June*, uses the character of Harold Ryan to satirize Ernest Hemingway. Vonnegut refers to Ryan as "the slayer of nearly extinct animals which meant him no harm."

Vonnegut's attack on the machineman, and his willingness to use Hemingway as the archetype, indicates that the black humorist of today holds nothing sacred when it comes to exposing what the black humorist feels is "outdated and irrelevant."

Vonnegut, who was a survivor of the fire bombing of Dresden (he was a POW confined to a subterranean meat locker), was deeply affected by the sight of tens of thousands of scorched bodies which filled the streets of Dresden. The incident a perfect example of the cruelty that man is capable of, is extremely poignant when trying to analyze why a black humorist chooses to work in his particular field. The Dresden incident, moreover, may explain Vonnegut's motives in *Cat's Cradle* when he has narrator descend into a jail cell fitted as a bomb shelter after waiting out a storm that freezes the world. He emerges to discover that the world is dead and thousands of bodies dot the landscape. He considers them to be symbols of man's stupidity. The reader can only laugh at the ridiculousness of the situation while at the same time feeling a bit uncomfortable with the course the novel is following—in this discomfort is a sign to the black humorist that he has been successful in his attempt to promote awareness on the part of the reader.

The issue of death is quite often at the heart of Vonnegut's black jokes. In *Cat's Cradle*, Philip Galt recalls the mountains of dead bodies that surround his father's jungle hospital. When Philip's father could no longer find any live patients to treat, he broke into a night giggle and walked out into the night armed with a flashlight. Philip's father flashed the beam over the thousands of rotting bodies, placed his hand on his son's head, and said, "Son, someday this will all be yours." The giggle in the jungle signals mankind's acceptance of his heritage—death. Vonnegut would be hard pressed to reproduce another scene to equal the profound sense of futility and vulnerability found in the exchange between Philip and his father. It is a foregone conclusion, made starkly apparent by the "blackness" of the situation that father must die followed by son followed by his son, the only defense from death is suggested by Vonnegut—to laugh in the face of it.

Black humor's largest contribution to literature may be that it teaches us not to take life so seriously. Black humor points out to us, in rather stark terms, the absurdity that has always existed and will continue to exist long after the black humorist is dead and gone. The current outlook for the black humorist, in view of the disheveled state of the world, appears bright.

Thar's Pottery in Them Thar Hills

Pottery From the Mountain of Alabama, an exhibit of Alabama pottery dating from the Civ. War to the early part of this century, will be shown at the Bessemer Hall of History during October. The exhibit originated from the extensive research on decorative arts that was done by the Birmingham Museum of Art. Approximately 60 pieces are included in the exhibit which was curated by folk artist Joey Brackner of the Alabama State Council on the Arts and Humanities and by Ron Countryman, who conducted the survey. On Sunday, Oct. 5 from 1 to 5 p.m., Mr. Brackner and Mr. Countryman will give a gallery tour and will answer questions. For more information, contact the Bessemer Hall of History at (205) 426-1632.

Remember Charlotte's Web?

Remember reading E. B. White's classic novel of the warm relationship between a pig and a spider? "Charlotte's Web," the children's tale of enduring appeal, has been transformed into a stage production. The University of Montevallo Theatre will perform the stage adaptation from Sept. 30 through Oct. 4. For ticket information, contact the theatre at (205) 665-6413.

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DILL: Not Just For Pickles

by Darlene Clifton Keith

Dill is a familiar herb—strong and fragrant—which most likely makes you think of dill pickles. Often grown in the home garden, it is a hardy annual that easily self-sows; dill has a tendency to pop up all over the garden. If planted early in the spring, dill will produce seed the same season, and, where the growing season is long (as it is here), may even produce a second crop. But don't save it just for the cucumbers—dill is a versatile herb to use in all sorts of dishes and as a home remedy.

Dill has quite an interesting history, being used over the course of time for a variety of things. The name "dill" originates from the Old Norwegian word *Dilla*, meaning to lull, soothe, or dull. The plant has been used for hundreds of years to do just that: to lull babies to sleep. Dill tea also was commonly used to treat swellings, digestive gas, and to increase milk in nursing mothers as well as to treat flatulence in infants. The Romans knew dill as *anethum*, from the Latin word *anif*. They wove it into their head wreaths. In the Middle Ages people believed dill could protect them from the evils of witchcraft. You may not be interested in head wreaths or warding off evil but you might want to give dill tea a try the next time you have an upset stomach: Steep 2 tsp. dill seeds in 1 cup water for 10-15 minutes, take ½ cup at a time, 1-2 cups a day.

In the kitchen, dill has been used to flavor just about everything. Freshly snipped leaves are delicious mixed in butter or sour cream to be used on sandwiches, fish, meats, and vegetables. Try fresh or dried leaves sprinkled in potato salad, cole slaw, and salad dressings. I use dill leaves and dill vinegar in chila, spaghetti sauce, soups, and stews. Unusual as it might seem, many European cooks bake cakes and pastries flavored with dill. As with any herb, experiment

by using just a little to start with—the flavor may be stronger than you think.

Dill grows rapidly in full sun and good garden soil. The 2-3 foot mature plant is covered in feathery bluish-green foliage and topped by clusters of small yellow flowers that develop into seeds. A better seed crop results when plants are not too crowded. Because of the pungent aroma of herbs, few insects bother them. The only pest I have found on my dill is an occasional parsley worm (dill is a member of the parsley family), which is easily hand-picked.

To dry dill leaves, simply cut the stems and tie them together into bunches. Hang upside-down in a warm, dark, airy place out of the sun. Protect from dust by covering with a paper bag. In humid weather you can finish drying your herbs in the oven: place in an electric oven, the temperature set at its lowest setting, for 15-20 minutes, or a gas oven using only the pilot light (if they are still not completely dry, repeat the oven process). After drying, snip off the leaves and store them in dark, airtight containers. Check containers in two weeks; if moisture has formed on the inside, remove the herbs and dry again in the oven. Herbs that are only partially dried will mold and be unusable. Seed heads may be harvested on a dry day when they have changed color but have not yet shattered. Hold the seedhead over a paper while rubbing it between your palms—the seeds will fall out.

Plant dill in the early spring in a spot that will remain undisturbed from year to year. And, make sure you plant enough, some to use fresh and some to dry for leaves and seeds, some for cucumbers, some to go to seed to self-sow, and then a few extras—dill makes a lovely addition to wildflower bouquets.

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