



THE GROUNDHOG

“Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain”

JULY 2023

The Legacy of Little River Farm

by Kelly Leavitt

Mentone resident Frank Mason experienced the harsh effects of the Great Depression during his years growing up in north Birmingham, Alabama. “I was born in 1924, not long before the Depression began. From the time I was 6 to 16,” he recalled, “a fellow would push a cart by our house, selling frozen popsicles for a nickel. But we never had a nickel to spare. I’ve known it both ways through my life—having plenty, and not having anything. I never went hungry, but I also never had that popsicle.”

Frank Mason, who celebrated his 99th birthday in May, now owns around 3,000 contiguous acres just north of Mentone, spanning from the edge of the seventh hole at Lil Mole Run Golf Course all the way to the Georgia state line. Most of it is in the name of Little River Farm, LLC, a company he runs with family members.

It all began in 1970 with a much smaller purchase. “A friend of mine came into my office one day and asked if I’d ever thought of buying property,” Frank recalled. “He told me about 80 acres that was for sale and invited me to bring my fly rod and go take a look at it with him. We put in just below the dam at Camp Ponderosa and waded in Little River all day, fly fishing. We brought lunch and made it down to the next dam at Camp Laurel Dell. We caught red eye bass and brim and cooked fish for supper. I thought, ‘This is pretty nice.’ One thing that really impressed me was how clear the river water was. The other thing that impressed me were the native rhododendrons and mountain laurels. This was late May, and the riverbanks were a mass of blooms. The river cut through the property, so I decided to purchase it. My friend was selling his A-frame house on North Cool Street, so I bought that as well.”

At the time, Frank was CEO of the Mason Corporation in Birmingham. He



L to R: David Mason, Frank Mason, and Ann Mason Chambliss at Lake Bess

had risen to the top from humble beginnings. In 1947, while studying mechanical engineering at the University of Alabama, he left school to work at his father’s tool and die shop in north Birmingham. “His health was not great at the time,” said Frank. “I thought since he took care of me when I couldn’t take care of myself, I needed to go help him. I wasn’t paid, but I had a bed to sleep in and I ate three meals a day. When I started working there, my father had four employees. By the time I left the company, we had 180. What began as Southeastern Tool & Die Co. became Mason Corporation. It was a good ride.

“Some of my happiest days were spent working with dad building equipment to manufacture product. We wound up in the business of roll forming aluminum window screen frames, the corner inserts, and the hardware. Every town in the U.S. had a screen shop, but screens back then were made of wood. Soon after, aluminum screens were sold across the country. After our success

with that venture, we added products like aluminum patio covers, carports, and walkway covers. Eventually, we got into service station canopies.”

Frank’s son, David, said, “Dad started a profit-sharing program for his employees. He made the maximum contribution that he could, which helped a lot of folks who ordinarily would not have had much to retire on.”

“Fifty percent of the company’s profits went into an account for the employees,” said Frank. “I know of one fellow who ended up with over a million dollars in his retirement fund. To be able to help people who help you—when both parties benefit, that’s a good deal. We came out real well, and they did, too.”

His daughter Ann’s husband, Russ Chambliss, ran the company after Frank’s retirement about 25 years ago. The

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A Valued Connection

by Col. Jay Skinner

Many readers of The Groundhog are familiar with Jay Skinner, our local lawyer in Valley Head, but what many don’t know is that Jay has a second career—he is a Colonel in the Alabama Army National Guard. We are proud to count him as a member of American Legion Post 215 in Mentone, where he is on the Executive Committee. In the Alabama National Guard, he is the Staff Judge Advocate for Alabama’s 167th Theater Sustainment Command at Fort McClellan in Anniston, where he serves as the senior legal advisor to the two-star command.

DeKalb County is blessed to have citizens with a strong military commitment. Mentone’s American Legion Post 215 has over 40 members alone, and there are numerous other American Legion, VFW, and Marine Corps League posts throughout DeKalb County.

If you are interested or know someone who is interested in serving our country in the military, please reach out to Jay at his Valley Head office. If you served in the military or are a veteran and would like more information about American Legion Post 215 in Mentone, please call or text Post Commander Barry Morton at 334-202-8936 or email barrymorton74@gmail.com. —Barry Morton, Mentone American Legion Commander

My military career took an interesting turn during the Covid pandemic. At the time, I was with the 31st CBRN Brigade in Northport, AL. The Brigade specializes in Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) reconnaissance and decontamination missions. In 2020, I was tasked as the CBRN liaison officer for a CBRN team visiting Alabama from the Romanian Land Forces.

The Alabama National Guard and Romania share a 30-year military partnership in the State Partnership Program. Alabama National Guard soldiers and airmen regularly train with their Romanian counterparts both in the U. S. and in Romania.



Col. Jay Skinner and Lt. Col. John Hubbard of the Alabama Army National Guard visit DeSoto Falls with Col. Teodor Spanu and Lt. Col. Claudiu Margin of the Romanian Land Forces.



L to R: Col. Jay Skinner (US), Maj. Dragos Schuller (RO), Col. Teodor Spanu (RO), Lt. Col. John Hubbard (US), and Lt. Col. Claudiu Margin (RO) holding the Romanian flag on the brow at the Skinners' cabin in Mentone.

Over the last three years, I have visited Romania multiple times, starting with planning missions that lead to joint CBRN training missions both in the U. S. and Romania. The first such event was held in Sighisoara, a lovely old town nestled in the Transylvania region of Romania. I noticed many similarities between Romania and north Alabama—lots of small family farms, beautiful mountains, and friendly, welcoming people. Other training missions followed at Camp Shelby, MS, again in Sighisoara, and this year at Fort McClellan.

The soldiers learn a great deal from each other by learning to use each country’s equipment and techniques. The training the U. S. and Romanian soldiers provide

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various authors in this publication do not necessarily
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*Groundhog woodcut courtesy of
Meg Justice/Bee Spring Studio*

Mentone Matters

by Mayor Rob Hammond

The town is applying for a grant to repair electrical and structural issues at the Moon Lake School building as well as other improvements to the campus that would improve handicapped accessibility. This grant program is through the Appalachian Regional Commission. If awarded, ARC will fund 70% with a matching 30% from the town.

At the last council meeting, the Mentone Fall Festival committee presented its plan for a one-day festival to be held October 21. The Mentone Fall Festival will be held at Moon Lake Village. An impressive amount of planning has been done already.

The town will work with the committee in making the Mentone Fall Festival a success. After expenses, proceeds will go to the repair of the Moon Lake

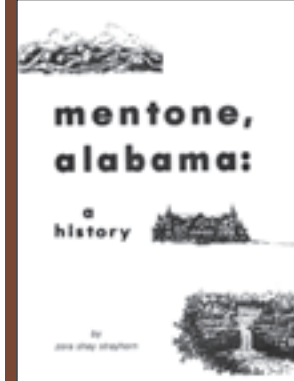


School building. All money raised will be deposited into a Town of Mentone account.

Farmers Telecommunications will announce soon when its high-speed internet service will be available—hopefully before the end of summer in some places.



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Learn about the History of Mentone
Zora Strayhorn's book, *Mentone, Alabama: A History*, is for sale (\$15) at the Mentone Market and MAPA office at Moon Lake Village.

From the Editor

by Kelly Leavitt

Sunset Socials are always a pleasant surprise. Each time we gather, I've met someone I didn't know. Some are new to the area, and the monthly socials have been a great opportunity for them to introduce themselves and meet new friends. I love hearing folks' stories about how they came to live in Mentone. The socials have also been well attended by people who have lived here for years, and they're always so welcoming. It's a special time when people gather to simply share the beauty of our area while getting to know one another.

I truly enjoyed writing about the Mason and Chambliss families and exploring their Little River Farm. They are exceptionally friendly and down-to-earth, and I am grateful that they are caring for such an enormous swath of land, protecting it for future generations. While I was sitting on the Chambliss's back porch overlooking a pond, a crane at the water's edge flew up and away, and I was awed by the sheer span of its wings. It was a unique and beautiful sight.

I have yet to see a bear, but, as many others have experienced, bears have finally found our trash can. Local residents have been sharing on Facebook a variety of innovative methods they have devised to secure their trash cans. Bear-proof cans are quite pricey, so these are welcome solutions. As their population expands, bears have increasingly revealed their presence over the last few years, both through sightings and through spilled trash. The more of us who can teach them that our trash is not, indeed, their treasure, the better. Let us know if you have found a solution that works for you.

This issue is filled with fun summer events offered by local non-profits, and the community calendar lists events at DeSoto State Park and in Fort Payne. There is rarely an excuse to feel "bored" in Mentone! From music to art, to board games and a book club, there really is something for everyone to enjoy and be enriched by.

Have a lovely month, everyone. —Kelly

Ideas for "Bear-proof" Trash Cans



Photo courtesy of Thomas Hayes



*From Mike O'Melia:
Use a dremel blade to cut slot. Set eyebolt low enough that carabiner makes a snug fit (top won't raise). Trash folks can quickly undo. Attach picture frame wire using a nut on the eyebolt.*

SUNSET SOCIAL

HOSTED BY THE MENTONE AREA PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION (MAPA)



Sunset Social July 6

Thursday, July 6 @ 7:30 p.m. • Brow Park

Make new friends while enjoying the sunset from Mentone's Brow Park on Thursday, July 6. Plates, forks, cups, water, and name tags will be provided. Please feel free to share a dessert, snack, or beverage.



Stream Health

by Angie Shugart

In May, I began a series of articles on Streamside Protection to highlight the connection between good water quality and vegetative buffers on the banks of Little River and its tributaries. Understanding the nature of Little River, erosion, and the role of vegetation now, we move into how to diagnose stream health. There are some issues that you can simply look

at and tell that the water quality is compromised, but some issues are not so obvious and need deeper investigation. Physical indicators like color and odor can provide clues to possible sources of pollution. Chemical and biological testing gives a more specific reading of water quality and biological inventory. Let’s break it down into the different types of indicators.

Color

- Green water is caused by excessive algae growth and could indicate nutrients from sewage, fertilizers, or livestock waste runoff.
- Orange-red water can be from old acid mine drainage, however some occurs naturally with iron-rich water.
- Light brown water indicates sediment deposits caused by erosion.
- Foaming white suds that do not break apart easily could indicate detergent pollution from residential or agricultural waste. Small amounts are found naturally in the river.

Smell

- An odor of rotten eggs could be a sign of sewage.
- Musky odor from decaying algae could be a sign of untreated graywater, sewage, or livestock waste.
- Acidic smells could be pesticides from drifting.
- Chlorine may indicate the discharge of swimming pool water.

Stream Inhabitants

River and streambanks that are lined with a canopy of trees, shrubs, and other dense vegetation are extremely important for good water quality and a healthy river! Natural buffers filter pollutants, stabilize banks, and slow erosion. When this important buffer is removed, the water temperature rises. Fish and aquatic insects can’t tolerate extreme or sudden changes in temperature. Since warmer water holds less oxygen, fish diversity begins to decline.

In addition to filtering pollutants and preventing erosion, shaded riverbanks improve wildlife habitats. When decaying leaves fall into the water, food is provided for small aquatic organisms called macroinvertebrates, which are a food source for fish. These macros are sensitive to pollution and their presence or absence serves as an indicator of water quality.

In a healthy stream, we find several different types of aquatic organisms like stoneflies, caddisflies, riffle beetles, mayflies, and hellgrammites. These little guys are intolerant to pollution and can be found attached to underwater rocks or in clumps of leaves and debris. This is why it is vital to leave these areas natural.

Crayfish, dragonflies, and damselflies are in the next range of macros and can tolerate some pollution but are still found in clean water.

Pollution-tolerant organisms include aquatic worms, midgefly larvae, blackfly larvae, leeches, and pouch snails. Although these organisms can be found in good or poor water quality, if found in large numbers with midrange sensitive macros, they indicate poor water quality.

Fish can also be sensitive to pollution and the number of fish depends on the type of macroinvertebrates found in the river. Sunfish and small mouth bass can be found throughout the forks of Little River and are considered pollution-sensitive fish that require good water quality and a habitat conducive to their survival.

Land Use Impacts

The largest contributor to poor water quality from non-point source sources is related directly to the way land is used. When vegetation on the banks of Little River is removed, there is increased erosion, pollution from land runoff, and loss of habitat for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. In the Little River watershed, we deal with issues from failing septic systems, logging, construction, and culverts from county roads. When landowners make an effort to keep a vegetative buffer on the river or streambank, the less pollution gets washed into the waterway.

Everyone who lives in the Little River watershed can take an active role in protecting water quality. Every stream plays an important role in the life of Little River and if you are fortunate enough to have a stream or to live on one of the main forks, your role is the same. Protect that resource.

Angie Shugart is a co-founder of Little River Waterkeeper.



L to R: Lt. Col. Claudiu Margin (RO), Col. Jay Skinner (US), and Col. Teodor Spanu (RO) visiting Bran Castle in Romania

A Valued Connection (cont. from page 1)
each other is invaluable. It ensures that both of our forces are fully capable of working together and using whoever’s equipment is available to complete the mission. The soldiers also spend time with each other learning about the culture of our respective countries. Side trips to castles in Romania and the World War II Museum in New Orleans have enhanced the cultural exchange between the soldiers. These missions built close friendships between the U.S. and Romania soldiers. I also enjoy a deep friendship with my Romanian CBRN leader counterparts. This year, my Romanian friends came to Alabama for training. While the soldiers were learning about US equipment and operations at Fort McClellan, I hosted the Romanian senior CBRN leaders in Mentone. We visited DeSoto Falls, the shops in Mentone, and my office in Valley Head. That evening over grilled steaks, some famous Alabama Conecuh Sausage, and a beautiful Lookout Mountain sunset at my family’s Mentone cabin, we discussed future joint operations and expanding the Alabama-Romanian CBRN relationship. Spending quality time together like this strengthens our two countries’ mutual relationships, deepens our personal friendships, and enhances our military capabilities. We are fortunate that Mentone is now a part of that special connection.





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LOTS and LAND

JUST ENOUGH IS JUST RIGHT. And this 0.65-acre lot could be just right for your retirement home in the country! Nice & level with a chert driveway, septic tank, power & public water already on site. Very pleasant copse of trees & picturesque neighboring pasture along back of property. Plenty of areas with good sun exposure for that garden spot. Restricted to new construction or new mobile home only. (Owner would allow camper to be in place while construction is being done.) Less than 5 miles from Hwy 11/I-59 in North Ft Payne; easy commute to Chattanooga, Birmingham. Or just take the backroads! \$45,000 (1834307)

MEMORIES OF LAZY DAYS FULL OF FUN ON THE LAKE

permeate this one-owner property located on the private side of Mentone's Lake Lahusage. Filled with one family's nostalgia, waiting for the next family to bring it back to life & fill it with their own memories of good times on the lake. One of those rare places with easy walk down to the water; swim & fish from your dock; put in a boat at the public ramp just a short distance away. 4BR/2BA; wood floors; wood beams; mtn stone fireplace; vaulted LR/KI/DR. Screened porch on back leading to huge deck overlooking the lake. Yes, it needs A LOT of work, but it is a rare gem awaiting the right person to make it shine! \$375,000 (1786628)

A CABIN WITH A CREEK

is something a lot of folks have asked for, and we've just listed this 3BR/2BA cabin w/approx 340' of frontage on Brush Creek. It comes with 2 lots, both with creek frontage, so you could build a guest cabin, garage/workshop, party pavilion, or whatever suits your needs on the 2nd lot. Cabin has 2 sunrooms, one off the kitchen & leading to the screened deck area w/hottub pavilion on the back of cabin; the other is off the upstairs MA BR. Huge 3rd BR upstairs (there's also a BR & BA on the main level) can sleep several folks and has a balcony. Cabin has been an active rental as well as a place for owners to get away. Sold mostly furnished, too. \$395,00 (1837396)

God bless America, land that I love

Stand beside her and guide her

Through the night with the light

from above

From the mountains,

To the prairies,

To the ocean white with foam

God bless America,

My home sweet home.

—Irving Berlin



Little River Farm is a cow-calf operation raising black angus cows.
Photo courtesy of Ann Chambliss



L to R: Peter Hurt, Frank Mason, and Cody Garrison
Photo courtesy of Ann Chambliss



Ripening berries at Little River Farm
Photo courtesy of Ann Chambliss

Little River Farm (cont. from page 1)

company was sold in 2015. “After it was sold,” Frank said, “we had the opportunity to visit the factory and saw that some of the machinery that Dad and I had made so long ago is still being used to make product.”

Through the years, Frank had been purchasing land that bordered his Mentone property. By the time he had 300 or 400 acres, Edmund and Edward Cash told him about more than 2,500 acres being sold by Georgia Paper. “They worked a deal and Frank became part of that deal,” said Russ. “That’s when he got the bulk of the land.”

“We used to take customers pheasant hunting in South Dakota,” Russ said. “In fact, we went out there one time with the Cashes. Once, we hunted with John Forester, a wildlife biologist. Frank asked him to come to Mentone and do an assessment of the land. This was in the early 80s, before the big purchase. John came to Mentone and said, ‘Frank, what you’ve got here is a biological desert. There’s nothing living here. No deer, turkeys, rabbits, squirrels—nothing.’”

“Frank hired him to come back and make a plan. John laid out our first food plots and fields. We were only planting for the wildlife. Deer came back immediately. We started seeing squirrels and then rabbits and the others. We had quail but we didn’t have any wild turkeys.

“Frank learned about a program with the State. They trapped 14 turkeys—five toms and nine hens—at the Simpson

farm for about 30 years, and then Peter Hurt helped with the cattle before moving to Colorado to manage a large cattle ranch. Peter is the son of Phil and Marsha Hurt, owners of Camp DeSoto and The Farm at Windy Hill. The current farm manager is Cody Garrison, who is assisted by Jeff Grace.

As I drove with the family along some of the property's 50-plus miles of dirt road, we passed intersections with "street signs" like Dogwood and Bald Eagle. The network is comprised of roads that Frank created and old logging trails. We passed Goose Pond, another spring-fed pond Frank had built that is named for the geese who have raised their young there, year after year, until recently. He recalled that one weekend, David's parents-in-law caught 47 bass while fishing in the pond.

After Frank bought the timbered land, he added more food plots to attract turkey and deer for hunting, more pastures, and hay fields for the cattle. “This used to be wooded, here on the right,” David said as we passed an enormous field. “Peter Hurt told us, ‘If you’re going to run cattle, you’ll need hay fields to feed them.’”

The property is associated with the Alabama Treasure Forest Program, established by the Alabama Forestry Committee in 1974. The program is “dedicated to improving the forest land of Alabama and helping landowners in their commitment to sustainable forestry” (treasureforest.org).

After we had driven for about five minutes, I began to feel as I were on safari, having encountered no fences and nothing but beautiful landscape. We eventually arrived at a special spot on Little River called "Lake Bess," named after Frank's wife, Bess, who passed away in 2007. On the bank sits a rustic stone pavilion with screen windows and a fireplace which the family enjoys when they gather to swim, kayak, and grill.

When Frank and Bess bought the original 80-acre tract, they stayed in an old farmhouse that is on the property. Bess enjoyed drawing, and she drew up the plans for a home they built in the late 1970s. “In 2006, she began having difficulty with stairs, so I designed and built a new house for her,” said Frank. “Unfortunately, soon after she was diagnosed with cancer. We were only able to spend three weekends here before she couldn’t make the trip to Mentone anymore.

“That’s two times in my life when I did something to help someone else that, in the end, benefitted me. I got out of college to help Dad. As it turned out, it helped me 1,000 times more. And instead of helping Bess, like I’d planned, building this house has tremendously helped me. I’ve benefitted from it much

(continued on page 6)

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Little River Farm (cont. from page 5)

more than she did. These have been two of my great life lessons.”

Frank was once an avid pilot. While he was studying at the university in 1942, a friend suggested that rather than be drafted, they join Naval aviation. “I’d never been on the ocean, and I’d never flown in a plane,” said Frank. “I spent two and a half years learning how to fly. We finished up with carrier landings on Lake Michigan. In 1945, we left the naval air station in Chicago to travel to San Diego and be sent out to the Pacific. By the time we got to San Diego, the war was over. When I finished with the Navy, I had 500 hours of flight time. When I quit flying, I had over 5,000 hours of flight time.”

Frank owned many aircraft over the years, always Beechcraft. He often flew for business, and each year he flew his family to Crested Butte, Colorado, for ski vacations. Once, Frank flew Bess and another couple to Europe via Iceland.

“He was an impeccable pilot,” said Ann. “I always felt safe. As a child, I loved to sit up front with Dad. I loved it so much I got my pilot’s license when I was in high school.” As a teenager, Ann attended Skyline Camp, and then taught horseback riding to the campers when she served as a counselor during her college years.

In 1996, Ann and Russ purchased more than 80 acres of land adjacent to Little River Farm. In 2003, they added on to the property’s existing structure, creating a spacious and comfortable home. “My granddaughter told me she wants to live in this house for her entire life,” Ann said with a chuckle. The close-knit Mason/Chambliss family now numbers 30, 12 of whom are Frank’s



The Chamblisses built this barn for their Tennessee Walking horses, which they enjoy riding on trails on Little River Farm.



The Chambliss's property includes a spot on the brow where the family enjoys the solitude, the view, and an occasional s'more prepared on a fire pit. Photo courtesy of Ann Chambliss.

great-grandchildren. They often gather together at the farm. “It’s a wonderful time to have several generations together, with all their pups,” said Ann.

The house that Frank built for Bess boasts an impressive stone fireplace which was constructed with the chimney stones from a nearby cabin dating back to the 1800s. The structure had burned and only the chimney remained.

“One of the other houses on the property was in really bad shape,” said Ann, “so the fire department asked if they could burn it for training purposes. That was really interesting to watch.”

The family’s land was challenged during the wildfire in the fall of 2016, which consumed countless acres of land

along the mountainside and brow north of Mentone. “Our volunteer firemen are amazing,” said Russ. “It looked like a warzone. There were firemen everywhere. One day, we saw a fire crew sitting in the middle of the road, exhausted. It turns out it was a state crew. One of the firemen said, ‘Let me tell you something. These firemen you got up here, they’re something. Most of the time, when we show up, they go home. But when we showed up here, they told us to get out of the way.’ That’s a pretty good compliment!”

In 2011, the family donated three acres of land to Mentone’s fire department, the North Lookout Fire Protection District. This is now the site of the department’s Station #3, where trucks and equipment are located for quick response to properties north of town, on the west side of the river. In the late 1970s, Frank donated the metal building which houses the fire engines at Station #1 on Highway 117.

“Dad always says he’s the luckiest man alive because he’s had three great wives,” said David. “He and Mom were married for 59 years.” After Bess passed away, Frank married Bet, who had been married to one of Frank’s Boy Scout friends. In fact, Bet and Frank had dated for four-and-a-half years while he was in college and the Navy. Bet was an artist and gardener, and the greenhouse Frank built for her still stands near the home. The couple was married for five years before she passed away. For the past 10 years, he has been married to Betty, who attended Camp DeSoto for five years in the 1930s. Betty loved to ice skate and traveled the country judging figure skating competitions. She once brought Olympic bronze medalist Janet Lynn to Mentone for a visit.

“I think part of why Dad has lived to this age is that he’s curious,” said David. “I am awed by the energy and drive he’s had to be able to put together all he’s done.”

“I never dreamed I’d be able to do this,” said Frank. “But I’ve never regretted it. The whole family loves it up here, and that makes it really worthwhile.”



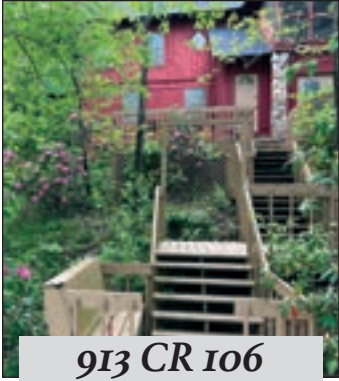
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July 19 at 4 o'clock
The Farm at Windy Hill
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Photos courtesy of Susanna Wiggins, 2023 Camp DeSoto Photographer



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Summer of Fun Continues

by Rhea Pirch



“Music for the People” Series

July 9
Natti Love Joys
Reggae
nattilovejoys.com

August 12
The Lazybirds
Blues, Jazz, Country, Ragtime
lazybirds.com

The Linger Longer Pavilion grounds were packed to capacity for the June 10th performance of the Black Sedan Band, the second concert in our Music for the People summer concert series. This high energy band had the audience on their feet and dancing to a wide range of popular songs from “Boogie Shoes” to “Boot Scootin’ Boogie.” And they will be back! Mark your calendars for their return performance next year on Saturday, June 8.

Don your tie-dye and join us for another Mentone favorite, the Nattie Lovejoys, returning for their third year to perform their traditional reggae roots music on Sunday, July 9, from 6 to 9 p.m. It will be another opportunity to sit under the stars or to get up and dance to the beat of popular reggae covers and Nattie Lovejoy originals. Led by husband-and-wife duo Anthony “Jatti” Allen and Sonia “Marla” Allen, the band hails from Turtletown, TN, and has a wide following throughout the Southeast. They are best known as the founders of Camp Reggae, a bi-annual music festival held deep in the Tennessee mountains which offers a unique opportunity for families to retreat from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

The change in the usual Saturday night concert led to an opportunity for St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church to present “Summer Sunday Supper,” a fundraiser to benefit Episcopal Relief and Development, an arm of the Episcopal church that provides disaster relief locally and worldwide and has aided with tornado and flood emergencies in Alabama.

Starting at 5 p.m., to-go plates, prepared by church volunteers, will be available from the back of the church beside the pavilion area. For \$12, the plates will include a choice of BBQ pork or chicken salad, pasta salad, sliced tomatoes, cantaloupe, a choice of desserts and iced tea. The plates will also be available for take-out, for those who don’t attend the concert, and will be served until 8 p.m. or until the food runs out.

The Music for the People Summer Music Series is made possible by a grant from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and our members.

T-shirts

Our new T-shirts are now available at the Mentone Arts Center! Short-sleeve tees with our slogan “We Believe the Arts Are for Everyone” and our long-sleeve “Music for the People” tees can be purchased for \$25 and \$30 for yourself or as gifts. The T-shirts were designed by Michelle Smith and printed at Mentone’s local Snappy Graphics.

Upcoming Events

Don’t forget our August and September events!

On Saturday, August 12, the Lazy Birds of Boone, NC will perform their mix of blues, jazz, country and ragtime for the last concert of our summer music series. On August 13, join us for our annual meeting/social and silent auction to be held at the Mentone Inn.

At 10 a.m. on August 19, we’ll be holding a sidewalk chalk workshop led by professional artist Fawne DeRosia of the Georgia Sidewalk Chalk Art Guild. For \$10, you can join this workshop, held at the MERF Community Walking Trail. It’s a great way to prepare for our Sidewalk Chalk contest at our annual Follow Your Art event on September 2. Registration information for the workshop and Follow Your Art can be found on the events link on our website, littleriverartscouncil.org. You can also follow our Facebook and Instagram pages for updates on all our events.

Founded in 2006, our mission is to enrich the quality of life for people in Mentone and neighboring communities by raising funds for the arts; sponsoring events; providing educational opportunities and strengthening cultural resources for the benefit of all businesses and citizens in the Mentone area.

We rely on memberships, program revenues, and fundraising to support our programs throughout the year. We are grateful to our supporters and volunteers who make our work possible. If you would like to support our mission, consider becoming a member and/or volunteering at one of our events by clicking on the membership link at our website.

Rhea Pirch serves as the treasurer of Little River Arts Council.

Summer Supper, Live Music and a Great Cause!

On **SUNDAY, JULY 9**, from **5–8 p.m.**, St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church will offer a Summer Supper in conjunction with the Music of the People event at the Mentone Inn Pavilion.

Purchase your meal for \$12* and enjoy while you listen to some great tunes, or take a plate home with you.

Menu

BBQ or Chicken Salad • Pasta Salad
Cantaloupe • Sliced Tomatoes
Dessert • Tea

St. Joseph’s-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church
21145 Scenic Highway | Mentone | (256) 634-4476

*All proceeds from dinner sales will benefit Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD), which is used to help those suffering from hunger, poverty, natural disasters and disease. ERD has aided people all over the United States and in other countries.

Senior Health: Pharmacy and Prescription Drug Fraud

by Lynn Hixon

Just as it is important to get assistance with your drug costs, it is important to protect yourself against potential pharmacy or prescription fraud, errors, and abuse. There are many types of prescription drug schemes. Here are some examples of potential pharmacy or prescription drug fraud:

- A pharmacy bills Medicare for a medication that you did not receive or were not prescribed.
- A pharmacy gives you a medication that is different than what your doctor prescribed. For example, the pharmacy may give you too few pills. A pharmacy could also give you an expensive compounded medication when your doctor ordered a less expensive prescription.
- A pharmacy offers you a “free” or “discount” prescription drugs without your doctor’s order, and then bills Medicare.
- A pharmacy offers you gift cards or money in exchange for you using their pharmacy.
- A pharmacy gives you expired drugs.
- A pharmacy automatically refills a prescription that you no longer need and bills Medicare, even if you do not pick up the prescription.
- A pharmacy routinely waives copays for all clients.

If you notice anything suspicious with your Medicare statements or medications, contact your local Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) or call the DeKalb County Council on Aging and ask for Lynn Hixon at 256-845-8590.

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Become a Friend of Moon Lake Library

by Anne McLeod

It’s a typical Tuesday, and the library is hopping. Visitors on vacation are here as soon as the door opens to hit the used book sale. I ask our volunteer worker, Jane Arnett, to help with the Teen Table, detaching intricately designed pages from the coloring book they’re in, to place on the table alongside jewelry making supplies for teens and tweens to enjoy. Chess players set up in the corner, and a couple of ukulele players practice new songs ahead of the next Saturday session for the Mentone Ukes.

A shipment of recent bestsellers from a new vendor has been partially processed. In between other tasks, I’ll be getting them ready for the shelf. Jane finishes the coloring pages and moves on to updating our outdoor sign promoting our author visit with Scot Duncan later in the month.

The Lookout Mountain Knitters arrive at two, setting up in the computer lab because they don’t want to disturb my stacks of books or the library board member working at their usual table. It’s shift change for volunteers, with Jane heading out and Karen Kwiatkowski coming in to tackle shelving books. A staff member from Camp DeSoto comes in to pick up the Playaway audiobooks purchased in collaboration with the library for campers to enjoy. Some longtime cardholders come in to check out a few books. Newcomers to Mentone, as well as a couple of folks who live on the Georgia side, sign up for library cards too, a total of four new cards for the day.

Overcoming Challenges

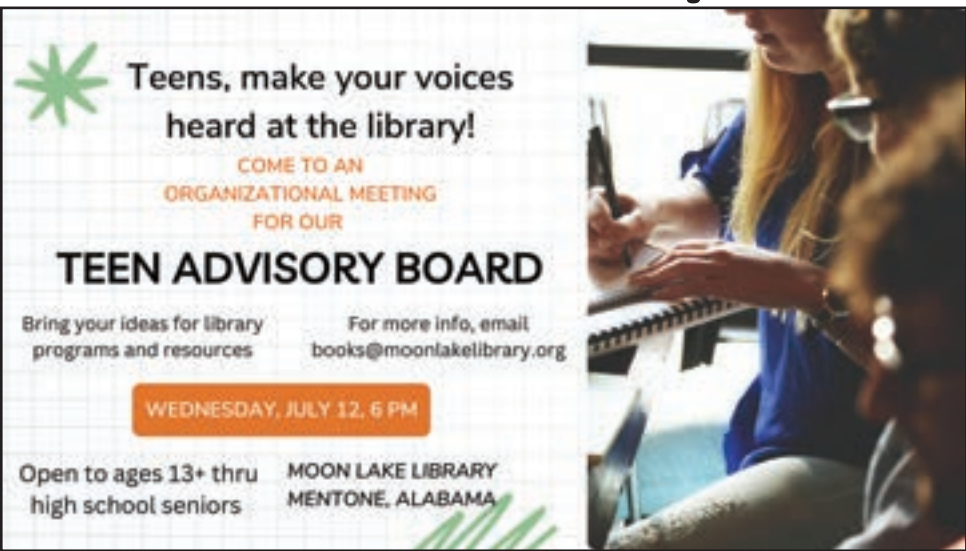
When my husband and I first moved to Mentone five years ago, I heard many people describe the library as “the heart of the community.” It had long served students and townspeople alike, and, under librarian Kelly Leavitt, had developed a reputation for providing great programs for the public—art workshops, local history sessions, author talks. The library was the place to be.

Then Covid-19 hit. We all know the toll the pandemic took on businesses and public institutions like libraries. Programs continued at Moon Lake Library, via Zoom. Checkouts were largely curbside, with patrons requesting books after browsing the online catalog.

When the school closed in spring of 2021, the future of the library was uncertain, but thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the library board, Moon Lake Library survived. The board served as volunteers for months while also fundraising to make sure Moon Lake had enough in its coffers to cover operating costs.

Their efforts paid off. It’s been a joy to see the library come alive once more. We’ve been approved as a public library, which has implications for funding. We’re eligible for more grants, plus the Town of Mentone is paying the librarian’s salary as well as insurance on the building and its contents. The former library board has transitioned into a strictly fundraising entity, while a new municipal board appointed by the town council has charge over administrative matters.

In early June it became clear that the air conditioning unit we’d been nursing along for several years would have to be replaced. The Friends of the Library came through, arranging for a new, more energy-efficient unit to be installed. We want to give a shout-out to Clarence Shipman, who not only gave the board a good price



on the new unit, but also had it in place and operating within 48 hours of being given the go-ahead.

Moving Forward

It’s a load off our minds, knowing we’ll all stay cool and be able to keep the books in a lower humidity atmosphere as the summer heats up. At the same time, we know the library will confront other expenses in the months and years to come. It’s possible that we’ll find we need a second AC/heating unit. We already know that at some point in the next five years, the 20-year-old carpet will need replacing, a major project indeed. Some projects are more fun to contemplate, like the possible addition of ebooks to our catalog via Camellianet or updating our technology, and they take money too.

Dianne Kuehl, who served as board treasurer for most of the library’s existence, always counseled, “Keep a reserve fund. The day will come when we need it for an emergency.” Thanks to this wise advice, Moon Lake Library has not just survived challenging times but continues to thrive. It is time to begin replenishing that reserve with an eye to

the future.

Donations to Moon Lake Library

Private donations to the library make a real difference. Whether it’s cash stuffed in the donation jar or a check sent annually or a Paypal donation made through a link on moonlakelibrary.org, we appreciate it. Donations may be one-time or recurring.

Because the Friends of Moon Lake Library is a 501(c)(3), donations are tax-deductible. This means the organization is also eligible to receive nontaxable distributions made directly by the trustee of your IRA. We currently have one IRA distribution we receive annually, and it’s a huge help. Please consult your estate planner for specifics on these distributions.

If you haven’t been to Moon Lake Library lately, we hope you’ll stop by and see what’s going on. Attend a program, play chess or Scrabble, bring kids by to check out books or enjoy some activities. There’s something for everybody at the library, and as Lennon and McCartney put it, we “get by with a little help from our friends.”

Moon Lake Library Book Club

2nd Saturday
10:30 AM

July 8: A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson

August 12: Surprise event! Details TBA

September 9: An author study - Book, essays, or poetry of your choice by Wendell Berry

in early June it became clear that the air conditioning unit we’d been nursing along for several years would have to be replaced. The Friends of the Library came through, arranging for a new, more energy-efficient unit to be installed. We want to give a shout-out to Clarence Shipman, who not only gave the board a good price

HOLIDAY HOURS @ MOON LAKE LIBRARY

JULY 1 - OPEN
NO CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

JULY 4 - CLOSED
ENJOY THE 4TH!

July 2023 @ Moon Lake Library

Weekly Meet-Ups: CHESS on Tuesdays at 1; KNITTING and CROCHET Tuesdays at 2; SCRABBLE on Wednesdays at noon

July 7 @ 6 p.m.—Family Game Night! Bring a snack to share and we’ll enjoy board games at the library.

July 8, 15 & 22 @ 10:30 a.m.—Little Library Learners. Bring your reading log. Visitors are welcome!

July 8 & 22 @ 1 p.m.—Mentone Ukes offer free ukulele lessons for all experience levels.

July 8 @ 10:30 a.m.—Moon Lake Library book club will discuss Bill Bryson’s “A Walk in the Woods.”

June 10 @ 10:30 a.m.—T-shirt tie-dye session for kids ages 3–7. Bring your reading log too. Visitors are welcome!

July 12 @ 6 p.m.—Organizational meeting of Teen Advisory Board with Angela Hadley and Anne McLeod. Ages 13+ through high school seniors, young adults with disabilities welcome!

July 13 @ 5 p.m.—Joint meeting of Friends of Moon Lake Library board and the municipal library Board of Trustees

July 19 @ 6–8 p.m.—Art Critique and Discussion Group with Mikel Yeakle, sponsored by Little River Arts Council. Let’s talk about art. Artists, please bring a piece or two to share.

July 29 @ 10:30 a.m.—Summer Reading Celebration! Join us for songs, crafts, and a celebration of books and reading. We’re having a Picket Painting Party! Dress down.

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Mentone Arts Center

Art classes, music and saluting Fran Myers as Artist of the Month

by Randy Grider

Midsummer dreams include art and music inside the Chuck Sennett Center for the Arts.

We start off the month with a “Paint Like Bob Ross” class on Saturday, July 8. The Smoky Mountain-themed class is taught by visiting Certified Bob Ross Instructor (CRI) Gary Grider and takes about four hours. It is limited to 10 people (ages 13 and up) and costs \$100. All supplies are included to create your own 16 x20 Bob Ross Technique painting. We will also provide light snacks and drinks.

The late Bob Ross was the creator and host of The Joy of Painting, a PBS instructional television program that aired from 1983 to 1994. Thanks to the internet, there has been a renewed interest in Ross and his painting technique among younger generations. Artist/instructor Gary Grider completed his CRI in 2019 and begin his Happy Little Paint Brushes classes at his studio in Chattanooga. He currently teaches at 12 venues across Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

On Friday, July 14, at 7 p.m., we welcome back Gwen (Hughes) and the Kats for what promises to be a great show. Hughes is a popular American jazz singer, songwriter and actress based in Atlanta.

Reservations are \$25/person in advance and \$30 on the day of the show. Reserve your seats at square.link/u/gSdTCh7H.

Hughes has released six albums on Fairfield Records, starting with “Torch Life” in the 1990s up until her newest album, “Dancing in the Moonlight,” recorded with her European band, Mono, featuring the greatest hits of their 10 years of touring Eastern Europe. Gwen recently signed with Zoho Music for the album, “Native Land,” a recording celebrated by JazzWeekly: “Gwen does it again!”

Always a musical explorer, her latest singles fuse jazz with EDM and hip-hop: “I’d Know Your Voice Anywhere (Mark Alston Deep House Remix)” and “You Make Me Feel Like Candy” (BELOW Remix).”

Along the way, she has crooned from Paris to Istanbul, collaborated on a film about Elvis impersonators (“We Three Kings”), and appeared as a character in a detective novel (Phillip DePoy’s, Dancing Made Easy, published by Dell.) In 2016, Gwen performed in Prague at the invitation of Emil Viklicky, the Czech Republic’s national jazz legend. The former Ambassador to Slovenia, Joseph Mussomeli, proclaims: “As a performer and a person, Gwen is a delight, and the music that pours—actually, gushes—from her band is stirring and refreshing.” The U.S. State



Bob Ross Technique painting by Gary Grider



Gwen and the Kats



Fran Myers



“Trois Fleur-de-lis”



Lisa Opielinski

Department sponsored two tours of the band through Eastern Europe.

Hughes also has appeared on television, most recently on Donald Glover’s “Atlanta,” as well as appearances on “Stan Against Evil” (IFC) and “Murder Comes to Town” and “Dead Silent” (both on Investigation ID).

Offstage, Hughes worked as a Board Governor with The Recording Academy, as well as Atlanta’s Grammy Museum Ambassador (which preserves the American music heritage). She was also the Johnny Mercer “Artist in Residence” with the Georgia Music Hall of Fame and instructor for the Otis Redding Foundation Songwriter Camp. She is also an advocate for music education all over the world, working with students of all ages in the U.S., Morocco, Kenya, Slovenia, and France.

In 2012, Gwen was cast in the world premiere of Stephen King and John Mellencamp’s “Ghost Brothers of Darkland County,” with music production by T-Bone Burnette.

July’s Artist of the Month is Fran Myers, a ceramic artist in Summerville, GA. Her pottery adventure began in 1999. When she could not find a potter who would make the container she wanted, she decided to make it herself. She had a few lessons, bought a wheel, and has been making pottery ever since. After much practice and many workshops, Myers made the container she wanted.

Myers enjoys creating wheel-thrown, functional stoneware, in addition to floral design containers glazed with glazes mixed in her studio. She incorporates natural items such as driftwood and shed antlers in her work, especially her raku pieces. In 2017, Myers enrolled in a painting class. She enjoys painting still life and landscape in oils. She paints using the alla prima technique. She also enjoys floral design, gourd art, and crochet. She likes the challenge of mastering a new skill. She and her daughter, Olivia Myers, both display and sell pottery in our art gallery.

We have two exciting workshops (one acrylic and the other watercolor) being taught by renowned instructor Lisa Opielinski on Saturday, August 5 and Sunday, August 6.

The tuition for each workshop is \$100 plus a \$30 supply fee paid directly to the instructor. Each workshop is limited to 10 students.

In Saturday’s workshop, “Aunt Louise’s Corner” will be our subject. “The painting is inspired by lively colors, patterns, textures, and my love of collected eclectic design,” Opielinski said. That design characteristic runs deep in both of Opielinski’s parents’ families. “Aunt Louise was the most ‘out there’ and flamboyant of her mother’s sisters. Her Chicago flat was most definitely “collected eclectic” and I enjoyed visiting her every chance I got.”

In this workshop, students will collage and add texture with gel medium. Students will learn dragging techniques and apply vibrant colors with acrylic paints. Impressionism meets abstract composition in this class.

You’ll create your work on a museum-quality Ampersand panel.

In Sunday’s workshop, students will learn a quick and simple image transfer technique as well as learn color harmony while working in watercolors on a museum-quality Ampersand panel. “You’ll learn just how forgiving the surface is as we add, subtract, multiply and blend colors to create ‘Trois Fleur-de-lis,’” Opielinski said. The subject is inspired by the lively colors and classic architecture found in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

For more about these events and classes/workshops, email mentoneartscenter@gmail.com or call 245-674-3366.

Randy Grider is executive director of the Mentone Arts & Cultural Center.

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After Little River Escape Tiny Home Community was named one of the top six communities to downsize in by *U.S. News & World Report*, our community has become fully occupied and folks have come from 12 different states to live within our community.

With a successful year, Little River Escape has decided to embark on a new journey by creating River Ridge Escape Tiny Home Dealership. At the dealership, tiny homes are available to tour and purchase. RRE is now delivering across the nation and also developing other communities to bring more folks to Lookout Mountain.

River Ridge Escapes now has five tiny home communities and one down County Road 641 in Mentone, AL. There are several Airbnb Tiny Homes in our various locations to come experience a tiny home, downsizing, the community, and explore the surrounding areas.

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In Memoriam

KAMBREIGH ALAINA DITMORE
May 28, 2023 - May 28, 2023

Infant Kambreigh Alaina Ditmore, of Valley Head, passed away on Sunday, May 28, 2023. She was born on May 28, 2023 to Colton & Amanda Ditmore in Fort Payne. She is survived by her parents; sisters, Kensleigh and Kayleigh Ditmore; grandparents, Kathy Carson and Tim Ditmore; great-grandparents, Patsy (Lloyd) McElhaney and Kenneth Millican; and a host of aunts, uncles and cousins. She was preceded in death by her grandparents, Karen Ditmore and Stan Carson; and great-grandmother, Judy Millican.



LEE LEMAR TOLES
January 29, 1932–June 5, 2023

Lee Lamar Toles, age 91, of Menlo, GA, died Monday, June 5, 2023, at his residence.

Mr. Toles was born January 29, 1932, in the Alpine Community, son of the late Guy Harold Toles, Sr. and Eunice Autrey Cavin Toles. He was a member of Midway Baptist Church and was retired from the United States Postal Service. Mr. Toles had also taught electro-mechanical and construction at Chattooga High School for 10 years. He was a veteran of the United

States Air Force, having served in the Korean War.

In addition to his parents, Mr. Toles was preceded in death by his wife, Hilda Esttlee Thrash Toles; brothers, Fletcher Toles, Guy Harold Toles, Jr.; sister, Daphne Toles; and a daughter-in-law, JoAnn Toles.

Survivors include his sons, Stewart (Elaine) Toles, Mark Hiram Toles; sister, Iris Toles; 5 grandchildren; and 5 great-grandchildren.

Mr. Toles was laid to rest in Alpine Cemetery.



RICHARD FRANCE DOUTHAT
June 16, 1937–June 9, 2023

Richard France Douthat, 85, of Fort Payne passed away on Friday, June 9, 2023. He was born on June 16, 1937 in Huntington, WV to the late George and Florence Estelle Douthat. Before his illness, he was an active member of Northside Baptist Church, serving the church for many years in different capacities. He owned

and operated R & S Hydraulic and Welding in Fort Payne until his retirement in 1999. He was a U.S. Navy Veteran, an Honorary Lifetime Member of DeSoto Rescue Squad, and a former member of the Alabama Association of Rescue Squads Honor Guard. He loved to serve wherever he was needed. He had a servant’s heart and was ready to help and do for anybody at any time he could. He was a wonderful and loving husband, father, and friend. He loved the Lord and it showed in everything he did. His family is comforted by the fact that he is with Jesus and is no longer suffering. The family requests no flowers but memorial contributions may be made to Northside Baptist Church in Fort Payne.

He is survived by his loving wife, Jo Dean Douthat; son, Shawn Douthat; son and daughter-in-law Derrick and Lori Douthat; daughter, Gwen Stone; son-in-law, Mike Stone; grandchildren, Jessica Douthat, Shawn Michael Douthat, Justin (Becca) Douthat, Christina Stone, Ashley Stone (Shawn Millard), Emily Stone, and Michael Stone. He was preceded in death by his parents and his first wife, Terry Douthat.



GLENDA CAROL KIRBY
May 29, 1947 – June 11, 2023

Glenda Carol Kirby, age 76, of Valley Head, passed away on Sunday, June 11, 2023 at her residence.

She is survived by her daughter, Tracy R. Wright; grandchildren, Kimberly Knott and Sierra Spangler; great-grandchildren, Logan Wright, Adrianna Knott, Maverick Knott, Myla Henderson, and Mac Spangler; and brother, Curtis Wayne Roden

She was preceded in death by her parents, Curtis & Elsie Roden; siblings, Howard Waits and Rita Clardy;

granddaughter, Terra Wright; and sister-in-law, Sharon Roden.

Ms. Kirby was buried at Walker’s Chapel Cemetery.



MR. HENRY LEE COVINGTON
January 25, 1946 ~ June 12, 2023

Henry Lee Covington, age 77, of Menlo, GA, died Monday, June 12, 2023, at U.A.B. Hospital in Birmingham, AL.

Mr. Covington was born January 25, 1946, in Menlo, son of the late Will Henry and Delia Hudgins Covington. He was employed with Menlo School for 37 years, where he currently served as the head custodian. He was the smiling face that greeted each and every child that came through the doors at Menlo.

In addition to his parents, Mr. Covington was preceded in death by his brothers, Will Covington, Jr., Lee Mosteller, John Calvin Hudgins, Jeff Franklin Covington; sisters, Annie B. Coleman, Pauleen Evans, and Mary Perry; and special family members, Neil Bowman, Sr. and Alice Bowman.

Survivors include his brother, George W. Covington; special family members, Shanne (Yogi) Hegwood, Donna (Greg) Koonce; grandchildren, Nicole (Dustin) Rosser, Corey Dyer, Gabby Dyer, Nathan (Halle) Hegwood, Natalie (David) Fletcher, Billy (Grace) Hegwood, Matthew (Selena) Martin, Tripp Marks, and Tori Wyatt; special great-grandchildren, Lily Grace Green, Jeremiah Dyer, Zion Morrison, Jordan Morrison, Freya Rosser, Isaiah Dyer, Callie Fletcher, Evan Fletcher, Scarlett Hegwood, Charlie Hegwood, Tripp Parra; as well as all of the special kids who ever attended or currently attend Menlo School, and all of the Menlo School employees.

In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests donations be made in his memory to the Mr. Henry Scholarship Fund set up at United Community Bank in Summerville, GA.



SUZZANNA V. SMITH
January 9, 1945 - June 20, 2023

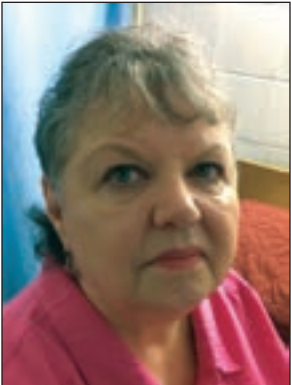
Suzzanna V. Smith “Sue”, 78, was born on January 9, 1945 in Manchester, TN and passed away at her residence in Valley Head, AL on June 20, 2023. She is survived by daughter, Pamela Hall, her son Donald Smith (Tammy) and daughter, Mary BethAnne Cooper (John). Grandchildren, Brooke Herrera, Haley Johnson

(Daniel), Alex Hall (Breanne), Brendon Hall, Nevan Hall, Sydnee Rowell, Heidi Smith, Kyle Cooper (Alexus), Jessica Bailey (Cole); great-grandchildren, Hayden Herrera, Harper Hall, Izabelle Hall, Leland Cooper, Dexter Cooper, Alicyn Bailey, Sophia Bailey, and Elaina Bailey; Numerous nieces & nephews; adopted granddaughter, Talitha Hughes; and sister, Trudy Stevens (David).

She was preceded in death by her loving husband, Kenneth Smith; parents, Roy and Mary Frances Davis; and infant daughter, Gina Breneman.

She loved God, her church, family and friends, and special friend, Mrs. Martha Carden.

Mrs. Smith was buried in the New Home Cemetery.



PATRICIA ROSE HUNTER
September 14, 1950 – June 24, 2023

Patricia Rose Hunter, age 72, of Mentone, Alabama, passed away on Saturday, June 24, 2023.

She is survived by her aunts, Virginia Coker and Nancy Brown, and numerous cousins. She was preceded in death by her husband, Doug Hunter; mother, Judy Brown Gorman; and brother, Richard Gifford.

Mrs. Hunter was buried at Bankhead Cemetery.



HEWLETT CHERVIS ISOM JR.
1939 - 2023

Chervis Isom of Mountain Brook, AL, passed away on May 18, 2023. Chervis and his wife, Martha, enjoyed their second home in Mentone. He was a prolific writer. Many area residents know Chervis from his memoir, *The Newspaper Boy*. The following piece, which he wrote in 2008, was read at his funeral. His obituary can be read at ol.com.

The Birmingham Public Library by Chervis Isom

As a young boy, there was no place I loved like the Birmingham Public Library. The first room I entered from the park side was the Juvenile Reading Room. Always, the first thing I would do as a young boy would be to look around the upper portion of the walls to the murals of fairy tales and to the ceiling and support beams, all painted in intricate detail.

In that room, I would find all the boy’s adventure books I could possibly read. My favorite author, as I recall, was Stephen Meader, who wrote a flock of stories for teen-age boys, the age I was hoping to become in a few years. Of course, there were the Hardy Boys as well, and a room full of great books for boys and girls.

Before my stay was done, I would always wander into the main reading room for adults. There, the vaulted space would overwhelm me, at least thirty feet high, with a stairwell to a mezzanine. On the mezzanine was located a bronze statue of the female wolf nursing Romulus and Remus of Roman myth. I must have climbed those steps to the mezzanine a hundred times to look at that mystical work of art and wonder about the story on which it was based. And in fact, I’ve looked at it periodically through the years, as I so often stop in the library on my way to the Court House just to see the murals, to feel the lift I get from the beauty of the main reading room, to reflect on the value of myth and story in our lives.

There is something special for me about this room, even today, sixty years later—the vaulted space, the murals on the upper walls depicting literature from around the world, the decorative ceiling, all warmed by thousands of books in the wooden shelves tucked into the lower walls, the chandelier which no one would notice but for the light they cast—that puts me in a pensive mood.

Maybe it’s the painting of Confucius that casts such a spell over me. He sits alone in deep contemplation, resplendent in robes, beneath a white flowering tree, a silver areola, like a nimbus, hovering behind his head, a symbol of purity in the same manner as medieval paintings of the Christ.

Sometimes I wonder if I were not born for a life of quiet contemplation instead of that of the lawyer I’ve been for fifty years. Sometimes I think I would have been a perfect mystic, a man in a small Spartan room with a cot and a desk, and a few books. The contemplative life. It seems to me that’s the life I should have lived, and I get a little jealous these days as I turn from one chore to another, an endless series of distractions from the life I’d like to lead. Repetition—to do the same thing each day, to keep the same schedule, to pray the same prayer, to live without stress, just might place one in a transcendent state. I’ve heard about the transcendent state that some achieve but I cannot imagine what it might be.

I look up from my writing pad and study the image of Don Quixote at the east end of the room—the Don in armor aboard his horse, Rocinante, holding his vertical lance, his servant Sancho astride a donkey, as if they are about to ride out of town on his famous futile quest.

That’s the way life is, I sometimes think, we frail children of the dust with big dreams that we dare to pursue. We build sometimes to see it crumble. But we build, even into the far future, knowing full well we’ll never see the final product. I think of the towns in the past, far into the past, when Gothic churches were being built up into the heavens. Sometimes the work would cover the span of hundreds of years, ten or twenty generations of people, bent to the task of building what they would never hope to see completed. Yet they built on and on to completion.

What can be said about the human spirit that we march on toward our own oblivion with full knowledge and insight into our own condition — our own memento mori, remembering that we will die—and in that regard, it is all so futile, so meaningless, yet somehow, meaning abounds. We are a special species, we homo sapiens, imbued with:

- Truth in the face of mendacity,
- Integrity in the face of corruption,
- Humility in the face of arrogance,
- Love in the face of hate,
- Courage in the face of fear,
- Faith in the face of doubt,
- Hope in the face of death;

And onward we trudge, toward our own oblivion, and yet we trudge forward without hesitation, just as Don Quixote did in years gone by, to do our duty in our own time, whatever that duty should happen to be.





Rhododendron Garden Club News

by Mellanie Tuttle

The Rhododendron Garden Club wishes to thank the Boy Scouts for allowing us to share their awesome cabin while the MERF House gets sorted out. Back in the day, meetings were held in the homes of members, with visiting gardens and socializing a priority. Last month's member and friends garden tour was a reminder of those days. Thanks to members Sharon Harris, Dee Kelley, Mary MacMichael, and Deedee Morrison and to our friends, Victoria and Jim Gaston,

Connie Baer, Paul Howell, and Kat Griffith (St. Joseph's Sacred Garden and the Steven Brewer Sculpture Garden). Gardens really do reflect the personalities of their creators.

The MERF House has been a great home but if all 31 of our members show up for a meeting it would get cozy—and not in a good way. The 15 members who attended the June meeting at the Scout Cabin had plenty of elbow room. Whoo hoo! President Mellanie Tuttle demonstrated lashing and binding techniques. I know where your minds went, but these are methods of connecting sticks together which can then be made into armatures to support plants or used in designs.



The cross uses the binding technique. Other pieces can be added for a three dimensional armature.

In the left one, covered floral wire was used to lash the pieces. Wire is divided in half, wrapped around the first stick and then twisted. Additional sticks are added and lashed together.

The other one was lashed with bind wire. It shows the straight version but fans nicely as well.

When I first began writing the club news for the paper, many years ago, the format included: who hosted the most recent meeting; what food was served; a description of the table arrangements; the number of members present; a brief synopsis of business discussed; and who presented the program. Often the poem or inspiration from the meeting's Meditation was included. Sometimes the article would share the program presenter's insights. No meetings were held in the summer months. We had seven



members, so officer duties rotated between us. We ran the show.

Gradually, our roll increased with new members blending in. We adapted. We started meeting in the summer to accommodate the seasonal members. Programs were more hands-on and fun. Articles became less about format and more newsy, informative. Rhea Pirch and then Alyce Kenney took over writing the Groundhog articles and added their own flair to the mix. Members were urged to participate in flower shows. Things were bopping along.

Then came Covid—time to pause and ponder everything. Moon Lake School was gone. And then Mentone was booming again! New restaurants, new people, new library designation. Fire took out the Hitching Post. Suddenly five "old RGC members" and 24 "new" ones. So many changes.

The only constant is change.

- In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety. (Maslow)
- Growth and comfort do not exist. (Rometty)
- Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great. (Rockefeller)
- If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we aren't really living. (Sheehy)

Without change, RGC could still have seven members, stuck in the past and irrelevant. We can be uncomfortable with growth and change but also be kind and tolerant. We even have a Facebook page! Growth...change...as members and as a club.

The public has the opportunity to participate in the Horticulture Specialty Show at the VFW Fairgrounds in September. Now is the time to put together those container-grown plants—single plants in a pot, multiples of the same plant, and hanging containers. They have to be done 90 days ahead of the show. Terrariums, dish gardens, and planters (mixes of flowering and foliage) must be done six weeks prior. No fairy gardens. Arboreals, herbs, bulbs, vines, foliage, flowering perennials, and annuals are other entry possibilities. Ribbons. Prize money! GROW and enter!

Next month, July 11, we're on the road to visit Moonflower Farm and perhaps cut a bouquet to take home. Carpool from the MERF parking lot promptly at 9 a.m. That's an hour earlier than usual so the heat won't overwhelm.

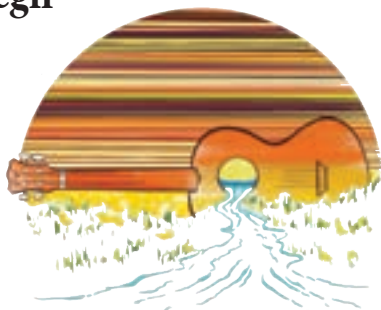
The Rhododendron Garden Club is a member of National Garden Clubs, Inc., Deep South Garden Club, Inc., the Garden Club of Alabama, Inc.—District II, and the Northeast Alabama Federation of Garden Clubs.

Mellanie Tuttle serves as president for the Rhododendron Garden Club.



Mentone Ukes

by Jerry Megli



Music flows from the Soundhole
Like Little River
Cascading through the Canyon.
—Jerry Megli

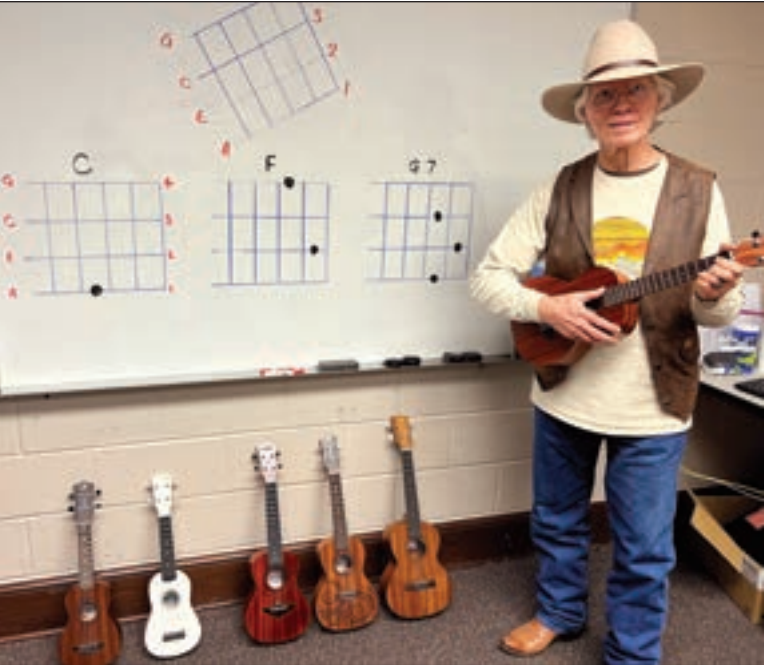
I most enjoy the quiet, soft sounds that can come from the ukulele, creating a time in space where your thoughts like to pause...and linger. My mind was in this quiet space when I began to imagine what our logo could be.

The ukulele has a voice that is longing to be heard. It has four strings. Pluck one or strum four at a time and just listen to it sing. I get some personal satisfaction in being able to set its voice free.

I am a solitary guy and the ukulele lends itself to that very nicely, but getting together with other people with ukuleles is very enjoyable. I don't consider myself to be a musician or a performer but I do enjoy introducing the ukulele to those with absolutely no prior experience.

At our sessions I provide an opportunity for newcomers to learn how to play the ukulele. The learning is a part of your journey. At first, unsure. And then, a realization that "I can do this!" Your journey begins with the C chord... and it never ends. Your skills continue to grow, and before you know it you are playing with our group or teaching a friend how to play.

Consider becoming a part of this incredible journey that is the Mentone Ukes. If you're curious about how simple and satisfying playing the ukulele can be, join us at an upcoming session on July 8 or 22 at 1 p.m. CST at Moon Lake Library. You can take a beginner's lesson using one of our loaner ukes or you can just sit and listen to the group play. Connect with us on Facebook @ MentoneUkes or on the web at mentoneukes.com. Questions? Contact Debra Fey (debrajfe@gmail.com) or Jody Rhodes (jodyrhodesy@gmail.com).



Jerry Megli in "teaching mode" preparing for the beginners class.

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July Community Events

All times are Central unless otherwise noted.
Calendar entries are subject to change.

July 1-2, 8-9, 15-16, 22-23, 29-30—Little River Kayak Rentals. Miller’s Bend Paddle Shack in DeSoto Falls Picnic Area will help you begin your scenic kayak trip up the West Fork of Little River. Rent sit-on-top kayaks to enjoy a peaceful flatwater paddle on Little River overlooking beautiful DeSoto Falls. Your adventure can be up to 4 miles round trip, or as long as you want to make it! Paddle trips are perfect for individuals or groups. Life vests & paddles are provided. Call DeSoto State Park’s Lodge for info: 256-845-5380 or alapark.com/kayak-little-river. Boat Shack hours: Saturday & Sunday 10am–6pm.

July 4
Happy Independence Day!

July 6—Canyon Kids. Join us for a hands-on adventure the 1st Thursday each month in 2023! Children (age 3 years–3rd graders) will want to attend ALL of these hands-on outdoor adventures! Bring your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and neighbors to creatively learn about animals, plants, bugs, and more with JSU Field Schools. Please wear footwear suitable for hiking, and bring water and sun protection. Free event. Registration strongly suggested. Limit 15 students. 10:30–11:30am. Little River Canyon Center, Fort Payne. For more details and for pre-registration, email rmtaylor@jsu.edu or call 256-845-3548.

July 8—The Boys in the Band at the Pickin Post. 6pm. Limited tickets. \$25. 256-657-3817 or 256-845-4115.

July 9—Natti Love Joys Free Concert. Little River Arts Council Summer Music Series. Located on the lawn of the Mentone Inn’s Linger Longer Pavilion. 6pm.

July 10-26—“Christmas in July” Ice Skating. Fort Payne-Main Street is bringing some Christmas magic in July to town with a synthetic ice skating rink at the Rotary Pavilion (next to the Alabama Walking Park). Admission is \$10 (cash) per person for an hour of skating with the skates furnished by Fort Payne-Main Street. Children must be accompanied by an adult and a signed Accident Wavier and Release of Liability Form will be required. Mon-Thur 11am–6pm, Fri & Sat 11am–7pm, Sun 1pm–5pm. Christmas in July will be decorated like Christmas at the beach where Santa is vacationing.

July 13—Courtyard Concerts: Country/Western. Featuring local and regional artists performing a variety of themes, styles, and genres. Admission is free. Gate opens at 5:30pm, music begins just after 6pm. A cash bar is available, as well as food, drink, and merchandise. Located at the Coal & Iron Building in Fort Payne.

July 14—Plant Discovery Walk: July Blooms in the H. Stanley Sims Native Plant Area. Join DeSoto State Park Staff for a meandering walk in the park, taking in every opportunity to learn more about the natural world. On this walk we will identify many native blooming plants of the southern Appalachians and will be teaching you how to recognize the species found in the park. Bring a notebook/camera if you wish and discover what can be seen along the way. All ages welcome. We will be walking from the Lodge to the H. Stanley Sims Native Plant Area, which is a short 1,000-yard loop. Easy terrain, approx. 1 mile total. 4–6pm. Meet outside DeSoto State Park Lodge. Free & open to everyone. Pre-registration is appreciated so we know how many to expect. Sign up here: forms.office.com/g/BXbvSxPbh0

July 15—Third Saturday Cruise In. An afternoon of family fun activities in the Main Street District of Fort Payne. This public event includes food, live music, motorcycles, antique car show, and much more. 5–9pm.

July 15—Boom Town Opry. Landmarks of DeKalb County, Inc. presents the Boom Town Opry, its 2023 Summer Series. Think

of it as Fort Payne’s version of HeeHaw, with a featured cast of Players performing skits alongside musical guests & friends. It’s sure to be a show that tickles your funnybone and leaves you with a tune in your ear. Each performance will take place during the Third Saturday Cruise-in, so come in and cool off after you check out the sights and sounds downtown. For a suggested donation of \$10, you can come and go throughout the performance. All proceeds benefit the restoration of the historic 1889 Opera House, so please give more if you can! 6–8pm. Located at the Fort Payne Opera House, 510 Gault Ave. N., Fort Payne.

July 15—Daybreak Flatwater Paddle Trip. DeSoto State Park staff offers this relaxing guided morning paddle trip on scenic Little River. Enjoy the peace and quiet of nature as we paddle upstream on the ‘coke bottle clear’ waters of the West Fork of Little River. Learn about this outstanding water source with its clear water, plant & animal life, and about the history of the area around DeSoto Falls. This trip is approximately 4 miles round trip on flatwater, under your own power & spans a 3- to 3-1/2-hour period. Includes kayak, paddle, & personal flotation device. Bring appropriate clothing, bug spray, snacks, and drinking water. 7–10am. Meet at DeSoto Falls Picnic Area—Miller’s Bend Paddle Shack. \$30 for single kayak rental (tandem kayaks are available on a limited basis for \$50) Pre-registration closes July 12 at 5pm. Pre-registration form: forms.office.com/g/9XR04tTLnd

July 15—Yoga on the Mountain: Peace of Mind. Join us for a fun yoga class in DeSoto State Park! Instructor Destin Padgett will guide participants with relaxing, alignment-based poses. Perfect for those beginning their yoga practice or for those wanting to try something new! Classes are open to local residents and park visitors alike. No pre-registration required! Benefield Interpretive Center (Nature Center) next to the Country Store on Co. Rd. 89. \$5 per participant per class (cash or check). Bring a mat or towel.

July 16—Historic Fort Payne Opera House Presents Throw an Appalachia! The Appalachian Mountains have always inspired adventure and creativity. From the clouded peaks to the darkest hollers, people for generations have been creating music inspired by the sights, sounds, and lifestyle of the hills, but it’s not just banjos anymore. Presented by Landmarks of DeKalb County, Inc. This showcase will feature artists from throughout the Appalachian region, from Pennsylvania to right here in Fort Payne, presenting their songs and stories. All artists will also have merchandise for sale in Hunt Hall following the show. This event is a fundraiser for a new fire sprinkler system for Fort Payne Opera House, the second oldest building in the Fort Payne Historic District. We must all chip in to ensure its place as an independent venue for the visual and performing arts. All proceeds will go to a new, remotely monitored fire response system that will help prevent a disaster at one of our county’s greatest showplaces. While tickets are just \$10, we encourage you to give as you can to help continue Landmarks’ mission of “Saving our Past for Future Generations.” If you require reserved handicapped-accessible seating, please call 256-845-6888 to order your tickets. 2–4pm.

July 21—Park After Dark-Night Walk. Join DeSoto State Park Naturalists Jamie & Brittney to get to know the park after dark! You never know what you can discover during the night; we will be using our senses to discover what can be seen, heard, or even smelled on this fun walk! On this walk we will be on the cabin road & go to the frog pond, near DeSoto’s South entrance. All ages welcome, children must be supervised. We will walk from the DeSoto State Park Lodge—short distance, terrain will be a mix of asphalt and dirt road, closed toed shoes are preferred. Bring a small flashlight or

Fun in the sun!

DeSoto State Park’s Olympic-size swimming pool is open through Labor Day weekend. Pool hours are daily, 11am–6pm. An ADA lift is available, and lifeguards are on duty. The pool is located across CR 89 from the Country Store.

The cost is \$5 per swimmer. Individual season passes are available for \$88, and a family pool pass costs \$198 for up to six family members. Call 256-845-0051 for more information. The pool is available for after-hours parties.

headlamp if you wish (red light preferred) or there will be some flashlights available first come-first served. Please no dogs, as our nighttime friends can be shy. 9pm. Meet outside DeSoto State Park Lodge. Free and open to everyone. No pre-registration required. This hike may be cancelled in case of rain. For any details about the walk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

July 22 —Creek Kids’ Watershed Workshop. Learning about our water....not just for kids! Hosted by DeSoto State Park. Experience a view of Little River’s watershed and how it connects to the rest of Alabama and our oceans. Many species of fish and aquatic invertebrates, including some types of crayfish, mussels, and snails, live only in Alabama. Participants of all ages will have a good chance of observing some species only found in certain Alabama streams & rivers; they will learn about the impacts of dams on water-ways & learn how pollution moves through aquatic environments. We will take a short walk to Laurel Creek & the West Fork of Little River for a dip to a view native fish & inver-tebrates such as crayfish, mussels, and snails up close. A VERY fun way to explore and cool down at the same time! This fun workshop is based on the ‘Creek Kids’ program, a partnership between the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division (WFF) and Tannehill Ironworks His-torical State Park. 10am–3pm. Meet at the DeSoto State Park Nature Center on County Road 89. Participants should bring a lunch/snacks/water, clothes & footwear suitable for the river. Free & open to everyone, kids to adults (we welcome all ages, with or without kids!). Pre-registration is required no later than June 21st. Email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov to pre-register.

July 22—Campfire Talk: Owl Prowl. Join us for a fun camp-fire talk in the Great Outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located at DeSoto State Park’s large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone! Ever wonder whooo’s going “hoot” in the night? Bring the whole flock and join naturalists Jamie Rogers & Brittney Hughes as we search for our resident owls. Your prowl will begin with learning how these amazing nocturnal predators are adapted to be stealthy at night or during the day, their habitats, and behaviors. After the program, you may choose to go on a night hike through the woods to listen for fascinating night sounds. (Be sure to bring a flashlight/headlamp!) 8pm. In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area. Seating is limited, so bring your own comfortable camp chair if you wish. Campground gate will open before the talk begins. Free, no pre-registration required. For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

July 27—Courtyard Concerts: Pop Music. Featuring local and regional artists performing a variety of themes, styles, and genres. Admission is free. Gate opens at 5:30pm, music begins just after 6pm. A cash bar is available, as well as food, drink, and merchandise. Located at the Coal & Iron Building in Fort Payne.

Community Calendar

- Mentone Town Council** meets the 2nd Tuesday every month at 5pm at Mentone Arts Center.
- Mentone’s Planning Commission** meets the 1st Wed. every month at 5pm at Town Hall.
- Valley Head Town Council** meets monthly on the 1st Monday at 6pm at Town Hall.
- Hammondville Town Council work sessions** are held monthly on the 1st Tues.. at 5pm at Town Hall. Council meetings are held on the 1st Thurs. every month at 6pm in the Fire Hall.
- The North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District Board** meets the 3rd Monday of every month at 7pm.
- FREE FOOD for eligible persons and families.** Wednesdays, 9–11am. New applicants are welcome. Joint effort between St. Joseph’s-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church (Community Outreach Ministry) and the Food Bank of North AL.

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July Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	John Tyler Lawton Marilyn Slaton Patrick Coots August Shanklin Patrick Long Nicholas King Allie Cowart Terry Hutcheson Jessica Hartline	6	Dawson Crow Dustin Burt Corey Powell Nikki Wheat Jim Hedgspeth Warren Baxter	Juliegh McKenzie John Walters Abby Boatwright	Paxton Harper Brianna Powell Peggy Johnston Tony Hammonds Gwen White Randy Mitchell Kevin Cash Blake Woods	• 1	Casey & Tracy Cartwright
2	Karen Potts Byrum Emory Virgil Battles Corey Wilbanks Janny Gak	7	Jim Blalock Marcus Crider LaShae Jones Zoe Moon Cassie Battles Corey Powell	13	Jordan Goza Sissy Crider Brody Battles Myles Battles Tracie Thotherow Ronneta Bullington	• 2	Ladon & Donna Willingham
3	Nick Black Jared Webb Allison Powell Josh Rosson Craig Hughes Mason Tubberville Reba Coleman Johnnie Lewchuk Randy Fowler Luke Milford Kobe Hill Jerry Lewis Sarah Koering Bill Horne	8	Daniel Phillips Kathy Gray Eian Bain Doug Kiker Donna Bailey Sheila Smith Stacey Clark Nina Sizemore	14	Will Blackburn Dave Vest Jeffrey Hopper Park Nelson Paul Crawford Teena Bain Michele Walsh Ava Harrison Bella Harrison Dylan Flannigan Sheila Meadows Courtney Stone Johnny Yarbrough Owlan Headrick Jessi Hairston	• 3	Brooks & Haley Moore
4	Jack Carden Bennett (BJ) Browder Deb Smith Ashley Hulgán Lana Miller Corey Dupree	9	KayLee Kilgore Skylor Dutton Mia Woods Braylie Callahan Eli Goggans Mike Goggans Herbie Thorpe	15	Jason Dean Tatum Lanier Paul Zulker Will Battles Chelsea Stephenson Lexi West Chasity Williams Lana Harris Rayven Berry	• 7	Justin & Jamie Shankles Charles Robert & Angie Hammon
5	Steven McElhaneý Chris Underwood Seth Williams Donna Smith Harper Brownfield Thomas Wright Buddy Ridge	10	Steve Lanier Addison McClure Ryan Tramel Caroline Batý	16	Nathan Hargrove Margie Daniel Tricia Shankles Kendall Shankles Johnny Lewchuk Katie Cobble	• 9	Al & Vickie Blackburn Tim & Kay Bryan
		11	Kanissa Young Brooklyn Carroll Lacie Keith Kori Willingham Dylan Carter Garrett Collins Moses Sharp Randy Clardy	17	Christopher Black Valerie Burt Justin Battles Waylon Burton Nolan Stinson Kristen Wilborn Hannah Carden Donna Spears Elijah Collins Ruby Stalvey Annabelle Shankles Harper Ashley	• 10	Corey & Brandy Dupree
		12	Charles Gray Cindy Harrison	18	Loy Langston Lily Cash Kaye Kiker Stone Cross Laura Catherine Moon Nicki Barksdale	• 13	John Paul & Teresa Verdon
				19	Danny Cross Anna Bush Avery May Kilgore	• 14	Ryan & Kristy Pridmore
				20	Becky Langston Lindsay Black Bailee Carter Jeff Clure Craig Hulgán Paul Whittle Jason Cyrus James Rhodes Judy Dowiat	• 15	Nick & Kelly Floyd
				21	Tonya Hilyer	• 18	Zach & Tamara Bain Tommy and Traci Massaro
						• 20	Charles & Amanda Gray
						• 21	Cleve & Ann Chisenhall
						• 22	Eddy & Karan Bolton Larry & Sally Johnson
						• 23	John & Alisha Lawton Craig & Greta Hall
						• 24	Jamie & Gequetta Darwin Don & Yvonne Brock Jerry & Darlene Floyd
						• 25	Donald & Karen Saferite
						• 27	Trey & Allison Kincer
						• 29	Heath & Amy Jones

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38 ACRES, stocked pond, 3 bedroom 2 bath home, and 2 chicken houses not in operation. \$499,000. #1828301

THE PERFECT MENTONE GET-AWAY. Address is actually 123 Road 1967, Mentone. \$349,900. #1824129

4BR 4.5BA CRAFTSMAN HOME near Little River Canyon! Beautiful views. \$709,900. #1826936

A PIECE OF HEAVEN! 3BR2BA home. Unfinished basement with unfinished BA. \$349,900. #1836259

Happy 4th of July

RARE FIND IN MENTONE. Brick basement ranch home positioned on 36.8 acres. \$425,000. #1825214

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LOTS & LAND

MIDDLE FORK of Little River. Approx. 6 acres. \$48,900. #1034997

200 ACRES located near historic Mentone! Mature trees, creek, paved road frontage. \$1,000,000. #1781133

BEAUTIFUL BROW PROPERTY located in Lake of the Brow. Enjoy beautiful views of Shin-

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MENTONE PROPERTY OFFERS ROAD FRONTAGE on Hwy 117 in the business/alcohol district. A rare opportunity as this is one of very few available vacant lots in this area!

\$75,000. #1801221

GREAT POSSIBILITIES! This Mentone property offers road frontage on Cove Road in the business/alcohol district. A rare opportunity as this is one of very few available vacant lots in this area! Also adjoins a lot that fronts AL Hwy 117. \$75,000. #1801378

BROW LOT in Mentone! Watch the seasons change from your own paradise between

DeSoto State Park and DeSoto Falls. \$135,000. #1815139

BEAUTIFUL WOODED LOT in Crestline Park Sub in Mentone, 1.19 +/- acre building lot with lots of trees. \$54,900. 1836087

ONE ACRE LOT +/- in Mentone. Nice lot wooded and flat. \$29,900. #1836305



Miniature Forest Gardening

by Thomas Hayes



Forest Gardening is a term that conjures up imagination when visiting the plant nursery at Misty Watter’s Moon Lake Trading Company in Mentone.

Most notable to be discovered in her collection of plants are a variety of high-quality miniature trees with such names as Dwarf Pagoda (Japanese Holly) Ilex crenada, Jersey Jewel (Japanese Holly) Ilex crenada, Compressa Common Juniper as well as others. As the names suggest, these evergreen trees maintain a stature that resembles a full-grown tree but remains in miniature form. It is a treat to be able to find and hand pick these little gems right here in our little town of Mentone.

In planting your forest garden, the true value is in appreciating the design of your creation and watching it grow into something beautiful.

A designated plot can be intensively planted in a small space while maximizing on the theme of the mountains of Mentone, providing that mature forest in the background as part of the ambiance of living in Mentone.

While the dwarf cultivars may very well lend themselves to bonsai enthusiasts, they also fit in well in a small space surrounded by a rock garden with native plants such as rhododendron, with other large forest plants as the backdrop. Many gardeners create fairy gardens to scale to look like a real forest, only a smaller replica of the real deal.

Unlike bonsai, there is no set of rules in establishing a miniature forest. The goal is similar though: to grow

a tree in miniature form with all the characteristics of an adult tree. Even regular trees can be kept from growing large with a reduction of branches and roots within the confinement of a small pot or a slab for group forest plantings.

The trick is to end up with a small tree with an interesting, thick trunk and curvy branching with lots of smaller secondary branching (called ramifications) that proportionally give the appearance of looking like an ancient tree that has survived a lifetime of natural events.

The challenge is in keeping the leaves small in proportion to the size of the trees. As a friend once said, why do you want to torture a tree by wiring it all up and constantly cutting it down to size and forcing it to grow in a small pot with little soil? While this may be true, some very nice examples of miniature trees thrive in outdoor landscapes or even a large tub or wheel barrow just to be whimsical, all the while, without the worry of making sure the roots are not starved of water or the stress of deep freezes in the winter associated with the potted plant. Many species were specially developed to maintain a small size and small leaves. The miniature trees offered by Misty at Moon Lake Trading Company are zone-hardy to Mentone, if protected from extreme drops in winter temps and extreme heat and drought conditions. The direct Alabama summer sun and severe wind conditions will adversely affect these cultivars, though. Some shade and protection from severe wind is welcomed by many forest plants.

Angelica Blue has a naturally aspired curvy body with beautiful sweeping arms, a wide base, and fat trunk, making it a candidate species for a focal point or main tree in representing a forest planting. Add a large rock to represent a typical Mentone boulder or take it one step further and create a little rock shelter or a little water feature and you are well on your way to creating your own memory of Mentone in your outdoor landscape scene. May the forest be with you...



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Friday, October 20

Festival Kickoff Concert @ Mentone Inn

- Will Dooley & Company
7–10 p.m.
@ Linger Longer Pavilion
(Fontastic Foods, 6 p.m.–’til?)
- Plus! Mentone restaurants, shops
(including Moon Lake Village & Log
Cabin Village) & businesses open to
festivalgoers—ALL WEEKEND!

Saturday, October 21

Mentone Fall Festival @ Moon Lake Village

- Festival Info & Hours
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
\$5 parking fee
More info coming soon!
- Plus! An expanded Farmer’s Market
will be happening @Mentone Inn,
10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Arts & Crafts Vendors
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& Much More!

Festival Proceeds Benefit the Historic Moon Lake Village Campus Restoration!
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Visit us @ mentonefallfestival.godaddysites.com or on Facebook for more information!
Contact us via email: mentonefallfestival@gmail.com

3rd Anniversary Golf Tournament!



Saturday, July 29, 2023

Tournament Entry Fee \$75 per Person | \$300 4-person Team
Shotgun Start 8 am Central & 1:30 pm Central
Best Ball, A, B & C Flights: Payout based on participation
Lunch provided to golfers by Vamos Taco Truck. They will also have food for purchase.
Call or stop by to register.
If you or your business is interested in sponsoring a hole for \$100 (includes sign on hole), please call Darlene (706) 506-0551.
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