



THE GROUNDHOG

**Serving the Mentone, Valley Head,
Hammondville, Cloudland & Menlo
Communities since 1982**

P. O. Box 387, Mentone, AL 35984
mapamentone.com/groundhog

Volume 39, No. 5

"Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain"

May 2020

MIRACLE ON LITTLE RIVER

by Kelly Leavitt

It was a beautiful spring afternoon in Mentone on April 20. Little River was running high after recent rains. Sisters Makenzie, 21, and Virginia McDorman, 9, set off from their home in a kayak, intending to lazily float with the current down the west fork of Little River. Virginia sat between her sister's legs in the one-seat kayak. Their father, Slate, planned to pick them up at a family friend's home further downstream, near Camp Laney.

As young people are bound to do, once the sisters set off, they decided to alter this plan, and instead paddled upstream. Virginia wanted to see the waterfall which flows over the dam on the river near Camp Skyline, about 600 feet upstream from the McDorman home. Makenzie obliged her younger sister.

Larry and Sally Johnson, directors of Camp Skyline, were at their home on the west side of the dam, preparing for a family dinner. Their son, Luke, 22, had returned home from the University of Montana, where he plays on the lacrosse team, because classes had been cancelled due to the current pandemic. "We happened to be outside when we saw the sisters paddling up to the dam," said Larry. "Sally called out to warn them, but then they were pulled into the back flow about eight feet from the waterfall." The kayak flipped over, carrying the girls into the turbulent water. Sally and Luke ran to the river, while Larry ran to his truck to get a rope and Luke's girlfriend, Winslet Herron, called 911. "The minute Luke saw what was going on, he started stripping, down to his underwear. He never even looked back," recalled Sally's mother, Sylvia Cash.

"We had just moved our cornhole boards out by the side of the river," Larry said. "If it hadn't been such a pretty day, we would have been inside, and we wouldn't



The green kayak remained caught in the backflow for two days until Slate McDorman and John Fischer were able to retrieve it.

have seen or heard the girls."

"They were both caught in the hydraulic effect of the water's turbulence, and every time they came up, they'd catch a fast breath and then go back underwater," Sally said. "Virginia was wearing a life jacket. If she hadn't had it, I don't know if we would have found her, as small as she is. Makenzie, who is a young mother herself, told Luke to get Virginia. Her entire focus was on saving her sister. She held on to Virginia and was finally able to hand her off to Luke." Then Makenzie lost her footing and she began tumbling in the water, caught in the backflow.

Larry continued, "By the time I got back with the rope, Luke was chest high in the water, with his legs braced against the hydraulic, holding Virginia up above the surface. Last summer, Luke was a whitewater rafting guide in Montana, so he's been trained in swift water rescue."

Larry said Makenzie had started to drift, still caught in the hydraulic effect. "Every time she came up, she was looking at Virginia, so she couldn't see me on the shore with the rope."

"Makenzie had a bead on Virginia the entire time," said Sally.

Larry grew up in Florida and spent many years as a lifeguard, and he works with cave rescues for the Walker County Rescue Team in Georgia. He continues with the story: "I threw the rope to Makenzie a couple of times as she was coming up, going down, coming up, going down. Then the third or fourth time after I got there, she didn't come up. I'd see two feet come up and then, a few seconds later, an arm. At that point, I knew she was unconscious. (continued on page 4)

Mentone Springs Botanical Gardens & Wildflower Event Facility

Beautification has begun around the ruins of the Mentone Springs Hotel. Jim Rotch, owner of the historic hotel site, and L.C. Moon, owner of the Wildflower Café, are excited for the future of the property. Moon leased and managed the Mentone Springs Hotel from Jim and his partner, Sam Tortorici, during the fall of 2010. "I want to continue the vision of hope, so people's lives continue to be enriched on the grounds of the property," she said.

Moon's present mission is to preserve the ruins, sculpt the gardens that are underneath the overgrowth,

eventually add more botanicals and water features, and make it safe as an event venue. She has been documenting the botanicals on the property and the property she owns adjacent to the hotel. "I intend to utilize the premises as a joyful celebration place and a classroom without walls to teach about the botanicals while sharing their beauty," said Moon.

To learn more, visit MentoneWildflower.com for photos of the hotel and future visions for the Mentone Springs property.

Miss Rhododendron
(Virtual) *Pageant*



SEE PAGE 3.



THE GROUNDHOG

Published monthly by the
Mentone Area Preservation Association

MAPA was first conceived on Groundhog Day, 1982, and then organized on April 5, 1982. *The Groundhog* has been in publication for 37 years.

MAPA BOARD

Mark Hoffman PRESIDENT
Joe Piscatelli VICE PRESIDENT
Susan Seago TREASURER
Beverly Haynes SECRETARY
LC Moon PARLIAMENTARIAN
Domenic Fulginiti
Bill Shugart

GROUNDHOG STAFF

Kelly Leavitt EDITOR/DESIGN

MAY CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

DiAnne Callahan, Betsy Dillbeck, Rob Hammond,
Lynn Hixon, Slate McDorman, L.C. Moon,
Vicki Patrick, Jay Robbins, Angie Shugart, Sarah Wilcox
Kayla Worthey Birthdays & Anniversaries

Contact The Groundhog
groundhognews@yahoo.com
P.O. Box 387, Mentone, AL 35984
(256) 289-2002

Contact MAPA
mapamentone.com
mapamentone@gmail.com
P.O. Box 50, Mentone, AL 35984
readthegroundhog.com

The opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints expressed by the various authors in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints or policies of the Mentone Area Preservation Association.

Groundhog wood cut courtesy of Meg Justice

mentone, alabama:
a history

Learn about the History of Mentone

Zora Strayhorn's book, *Mentone, Alabama: A History*, is for sale at the Wildflower Café, Moon Lake Community Library, Little River Hardware, Mentone Market, DeSoto State Park, Earthly Elements, and Bell Battelle. \$15; proceeds benefit MAPA.

Mentone Matters • by Mayor Rob Hammond

Many thanks to the Mentone (NLMFPD) volunteer fire department, DeSoto Rescue Squad, Mentone police department, and ALDOT for their response to the unprecedented flooding over Easter weekend. After Hurricane Opal the river did rise higher but I have never seen it rise as fast as it did Easter weekend. AL-117 on the side of the mountain was closed from 11:30 p.m. to 3:30 a.m. There was some flooding in Town Hall and in the Community Room across the street. There was damage to several streets and culverts in town. ALDOT spent several days cleaning the ditches on the side of the mountain. However, compared to our neighbors in Valley Head and Ft. Payne we were fortunate. The economic fallout from the pandemic has affected most of us. Camp DeSoto has cancelled their summer sessions. The rest of the camps will make their decisions this month. Camps are still waiting on guidance from the Alabama Department of Public Health, the CDC, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.



As much as we all want this to be over the virus is still out there. Now is not the time to get complacent and quit doing the things that will keep us safe. We all understand the need to get out of the house. When we do go out, we need to use a little common sense. The weekend of May 2-3 saw a record number of people at DeSoto Falls. Too many people and vehicles occupied too small a space. There was no way social distancing could be practiced, making it challenging and dangerous for park personnel as well as the public.

Letter from the Editor

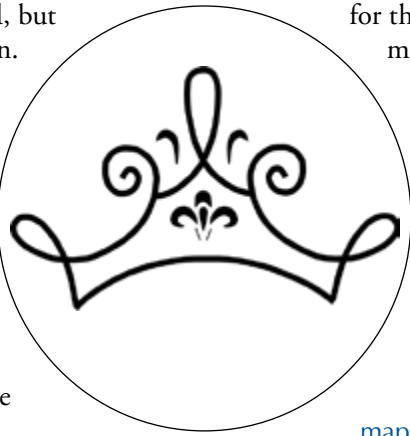


Like everyone else on the planet, this last month has forced many adjustments in life. In case you hadn't heard, the April *Groundhog* did not go to print and was available online only. You can still read it at readthegroundhog.com, where this issue will also be available. Another forced change was the cancellation of May's Rhododendron Festival, as well as most divisions of the Miss Rhododendron Pageant. High school seniors will still be eligible to compete for the Miss Rhododendron title and a one-year, full-time scholarship to Northeast Alabama Community College—a very generous award for which MAPA is enormously grateful. Details are on page 3. The cover story of this issue was, at times, rather overwhelming for me to write. The sequence of people and events that came

together to save two young ladies is astounding and, I believe, a true miracle. I hope the story serves as a cautionary tale for any who might be feeling a bit cavalier, as we are wont to be, from time to time. Makenzie's words on page 5 are heartfelt and borne from experience. Please share them with your family and friends. Sometimes we all need to put a situation into a personal context to really relate to it, and this story is personal. Accidents can happen to any of us. Being mindful helps us avoid them. Being grateful helps us to deal with them. I am thankful to the McDorman and Johnson families for trusting me to tell their stories. May we all enjoy the beauty of spring's native flowers, including our beloved rhododendrons, some of which have bloomed out and some of which are just starting. It's like the spring that keeps on giving. Be well, everyone. —Kelly

Miss Rhododendron (Virtual) Pageant

MAPA's annual Rhododendron Festival has been cancelled, but a part of the Miss Rhododendron Pageant will carry on. The "Miss Rhododendron" division (high school seniors) will be held online, so that everyone can be safe in their own home. Entrants will be interviewed by three judges via Zoom on May 21. "The interview process should be treated as if it were an interview for education and employment opportunities, which is often done online these days," said MAPA Festival Chair Sharon Habin. This will be a gown-free pageant, but entrants are expected to dress for the interview in a professional, appropriate manner. Entrants will be also required to submit a paper, short video, or some type of creative expression, showing/telling how the coronavirus pandemic has influenced them. The winner will receive a crown and sash. Alternates will receive a medallion. Some duties of Miss Rhododendron will be to make an appearance at Colorfest on the third weekend in October and to help with next year's Pageant. Miss Rhododendron will be awarded a one-year scholarship to Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC admission requirements apply.) To be crowned Miss Rhododendron, the contestant must be able to use the scholarship as described below: The Miss Rhododendron scholarship to Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC) is a one-year scholarship covering full-time tuition and fees



for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters. The winner must have a minimum 2.5 GPA and must be a senior in high school to utilize the scholarship. The winner must enroll full-time (12 semester credit hours) in the Fall and Spring to receive the scholarship. In-state contestants are eligible, as are those who are residents of the Georgia counties of Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Floyd, Gordon, Hardison, Polk, Walker, and Whitfield, and Tennessee counties of Franklin, Hamilton, Lincoln and Marion. The scholarship can only be awarded to the winner. MAPA is very grateful to NACC for offering this generous scholarship. More details and applications are available online at mapamentone.com/2020-miss-rhododendron. The application deadline is May 14 at 5 p.m. The creative submission is due on May 18.

Join MAPA Today

Help us preserve Mentone's history and impact its future.

The Mentone Area Preservation Association is dedicated to preserving and protecting the heritage, natural environment and other unique qualities of life in the Mentone area.

One of MAPA's key missions is supporting local organizations and projects which seek to improve the quality of life in Mentone. Financial grants are made possible through MAPA memberships, donations, and funds raised by the publication of *The Groundhog* and by hosting annual spring and fall festivals which feature handmade arts and crafts and live music.

Individuals \$20/year
Couples \$30/year

Your membership includes a complimentary subscription to *The Groundhog*.

JOIN AT

MapaMentone.com

or mail your check to MAPA,
P. O. Box 50, Mentone, AL 35984.
Be sure to include your name(s), address, phone, and email address.

MAPA is chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

Mentone's police cars were purchased and donated to the town by area camps.) Mayor Hammond says, "I would like to see Mentone continue to progress without changing the basic character of the town." In the near future, with the assistance of a grant already received from the Transportation Alternatives Program (which is part of ALDOT), a sidewalk is going to be built from the Mentone Market to Dempsey Avenue. If another grant can be secured, the sidewalk will be extended and will continue to the current bridge (which will become a foot bridge) and then on to Moon Lake School area. Municipal elections will be held throughout Alabama on August 25. To qualify, a candidate need only to own and live in a residence within the town limits for the 90 days preceding the election. Will the current mayor and board members run again? Gerald Bailey says he plans on it. We will know for sure who is and who isn't by July 21, which is the last day a candidate can throw his or her hat in the ring. (Qualifying begins two weeks before that, on July 7.) Elections are nonpartisan. If the current mayor and board members run unopposed, no election will be held and they will automatically sign on for another four years.

Miracle on Little River *(continued from page 1)*

“We were hollering at Luke, trying to get Virginia out. He threw Virginia towards the shore, but the current carried her back to him. So he reset his footing, pointed to Sally, yelled ‘Swim!’ and threw her as hard as he could. Then he dropped down into the bottom of the hydraulic and kind of popped out, so he could come up and grab her before she went back in. He was swimming her to the side, and that’s when Sally jumped into the river to take Virginia from him.

“While they were doing that, I was still on the bank, looking for Makenzie. At this point, she’d probably been unconscious for a couple of minutes. I caught a glimpse of her body starting to be spit out of the hydraulic and I pointed and hollered at Luke, ‘Body...four feet!’ The water was still flowing hard and you couldn’t really see anything, but he went to where I was pointing and put his hand down, reached around, and got her. It was by the grace of God that Makenzie was able to come out of the hydraulic when and where she did.

“As soon as Luke pulled her onto the shore, just barely out of the river, we started CPR. I was kneeling in the water, doing the breaths, and Luke was doing compressions. The worst thing with the breaths was we had to force the air through the water in her body, so for every breath, it was a gurgle going in, and a gurgle coming out.

“We got through two sets of compressions and then John Fischer pulled up in his kayak. He came onshore and started switching out doing the compressions with Luke, while I was still doing breaths.” John is a member of the DeSoto Rescue Squad. He and Makenzie have recently started dating and he happened to be at the McDorman house when the rescue call came in on the radio.

Slate also volunteers on Desoto Rescue Squad and was with John when the 911 call came. The first thing Slate said was, “Those can’t be the girls; they were going downstream.” As he said that, he realized they had doubled back, and he began running toward the river. He jumped in his kayak and was right behind John arriving at Skyline.

Mentone police officer Ross Greenwood arrived next and hopped into the rotation with the others who were doing compressions. Larry never stopped breathing into Makenzie. JD Trammell from DeSoto Rescue Squad quickly arrived and helped with compressions, then set up the defibrillator.

“They defibrillated her twice, but there was still a flatline,” said Larry. “After the first attempt, the machine had to recharge. Makenzie was still unconscious but had started to spit up a little bit. Her eyes had rolled backwards in opposite directions, her skin was blue and bloated. She was dead.

“But the second time they hit her with the defibrillator, it started to show a weak pulse. DeKalb Ambulance had arrived with a backboard, so they put her on it and DeSoto Rescue continued with compressions until they got her into the ambulance, where they applied the Lucas device, which acts as artificial CPR. They worked on her in the ambulance for about 10 minutes until they could get her stable enough to transport. John rode in the ambulance, holding Makenzie’s hand. They got her down to DeKalb Regional Hospital, and then she was life-flighted to Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga. The doctors at Erlanger didn’t think she was going to

make it. But she made it through her first night, and continued to get better and better. It was a miracle,” Larry concluded.

Slate later learned, when Makenzie returned home, that they had lost her again on the helicopter ride to Erlanger. The in-flight defibrillator was used successfully to resuscitate Makenzie for the second time that day.

“You don’t comprehend what kind of strength the water has, if you haven’t been around it,” said Edward Cash, Sally’s father. “And even local people, most of them haven’t ever been in the river when the water’s up like it was that day.”

“When you realize you’re too close, it’s already too late,” said Larry.

“All the links of the chain fell into place for Makenzie to survive,” Larry said. “It wasn’t just us; it was everybody. If you remove any link in the chain between here and Erlanger, it would have been a different outcome, no matter who you removed. We



L to R: Luke Johnson, Virginia, Makenzie, and Larry Johnson 5/1/20

did what we could do, handed off, DeSoto Rescue did what they could, handed off, DeKalb Ambulance did their part, DeKalb Regional did their part, and the airlift team did their part, until she finally arrived at Erlanger. Everybody did their step and handed off. Everybody made her stable for the next person down the line. It was everybody. Even having clear skies for the helicopter to fly in was a blessing, so they didn’t have to land using instrumentation.” Since Camp Skyline spans both sides of the river and has multiple driveways, Edward Cash also helped by directing the emergency vehicles to the site.

“The next two nights,” said Larry, “I woke up probably three times each night and when I woke up, I was still doing rescue breaths. I could still taste the river. We still didn’t know how she was doing at Erlanger. Luke and I would get up about 5, and we’d just stand there in silence, looking at the water, because you could still see the kayak. The kayak remained stuck in the hydraulic area below the dam until two days later, when the water was further down, and Slate and John were able to come get it. It took them a couple of hours.”

Sally said she believes Luke has been changed by the experience. “Absolutely. It’s not the first time he’s had to do this, but it’s the first time he’s pulled someone out who had flatlined.”

“She was underwater for at least a minute and a half, maybe two,” said Slate. “She was without a pulse or any life support for at least four minutes after, maybe five.”

Slate and John drove to Erlanger, where at first they were denied admission due to coronavirus policy. But the doctors at Erlanger didn’t think she would survive the night, so they made an exception for Makenzie’s parents to be allowed in the emergency room. As they walked toward her room, they saw a chaplain standing outside the door. A grief counselor also accompanied them throughout their time in the emergency room.

When Slate entered the room, he was told by the ER doctor that Makenzie’s lungs were so full of water, the sensors on the electronic defibrillator were tripping and the machine would not work on her. To keep oxygen flowing into Makenzie, a nurse stood next to her bed, squeezing a manual ventilator to pump air into her lungs. “For hours, the nurse stood there keeping her alive, literally by her own hands,” said Slate. The doctors had given Makenzie the maximum amount of blood pressure medicine they were legally allowed. However, her pressure and oxygen levels continued to drop. They couldn’t find any brain activity and Makenzie scored a complete zero on all the reflex and neurological tests. The doctors did not see any swelling or bleeding in her brain, but they were not optimistic that, if she were to survive, she would have any brain activity.

Makenzie’s parents next met with Dr. Jeffrey Poynter, who specializes in Cardiothoracic Surgery. Dr. Poynter said, “I believe there’s something that could help her, but there’s a 40% chance it will kill her the moment I flip the switch on the machine.”

He was referring to an ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation) machine, which is similar to the heart-lung by-pass machine used in open-heart surgery. “I signed the paperwork,” said Slate, “thinking she was about to die. Even if it didn’t kill her, it could have caused a stroke, or blown an artery, or her heart. There were pages of things that could have gone wrong.”

Slate said, “Forty-five minutes after signing the paperwork, Dr. Poynter returned and told us her body took to the ECMO and her vitals were improving. About an hour later, Makenzie was moved to an advanced ICU unit with two full-time nurses monitoring her vitals and the ECMO machine.”

When she settled into her ICU room, we were allowed inside the hospital to see her one more time. Slate noticed that Makenzie was crying when they began talking to her. Slate asked her to blink if she knew they were in the room. Makenzie blinked. Slate then asked her several yes/no questions, telling her to just blink for yes. Makenzie blinked the correct answer to every question. The nurses stated that those were simply reflexes and that Makenzie was not actually aware anyone was there. Slate then asked Makenzie if she wanted her tattoos removed while she was staying in the hospital. No blinking. He asked her to blink if she wanted to keep her tattoos. Rapid, rapid blinking. “I knew in that moment that Makenzie was still in there, as I had been trying to get her to remove those for years,” Slate said. After this visit, everyone had to leave due to the hospital virus protocols.

The nurses told her parents that it could be 48 hours to two weeks before seeing signs of improvement. Makenzie woke up, though, less than

(continued on page 5)

Miracle on Little River *(continued from page 4)*

12 hours after they put her on the ECMO machine. She had no memory of the accident and had no idea what was going on. She couldn’t speak because she was intubated, so they put her under sedation to help her relax. They took her off the ECMO machine the next day, and off the ventilator the day after that.

To provide Makenzie every comfort possible for her recovery, the hospital allowed her mother, April Glass, special permission to stay with her in the CVICU unit. April was the only visitor in the hospital. The third day after the accident, they had Makenzie up walking in the hallway.

The day before they removed the ventilator, her ICU nurse, Hannah Alexander, asked Makenzie if there was anything she could bring her. Makenzie scribbled “Starbucks” on a piece of paper. Slate said, “The nurses had never seen anyone ask for anything like that before.” Once the ventilator was removed, the hospital’s Starbucks café gave Makenzie and all the ICU nurses Starbucks drinks of their choice. Makenzie ordered a caramel macchiato.

“It looks like she’s going to make a full recovery,” said Slate. “She has all of her memories. She has complete motor function and no broken bones. Her lungs will take 6–8 weeks to get complete lung capacity back. Right now, she has the lung capacity of a toddler, but it’s slowly coming back.

“It took about a week for the memory of the accident to come back to Makenzie,” Slate said. “She remembers realizing they were going to flip, and throwing Virginia to Luke, and her foot slipping. She remembers inhaling the water, gasping, trying to get right side up, spinning around like a barrel, and choking until she passed out. What an awful memory to have. I wish I could it take from both my girls. But, I can’t. This has aged Makenzie and Virginia. I can see it in their eyes.”

“If the Johnsons hadn’t been there, I would have lost both my daughters,” Slate said. “If the girls hadn’t been where we were supposed to meet, I would have started looking for them on the river toward DeSoto Falls. It would have probably been an hour before I located them. Camp Skyline would have been the

(continued on page 6)

Mark Mitchell, Agent
17174 Broad Street
Henagar, AL 35978
Bus: 256-657-6252
mark.mitchell.b2g1@statefarm.com

Drive happier.

Join the millions who protect their cars with us. It's one more way I'm here to help life go right.
CALL ME TODAY FOR A QUOTE.

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company
State Farm Indemnity Company
Bloomington, IL

Texas County Mutual
Dallas, TX

1601561

In their own words...

I am grateful to the McDorman sisters for speaking with me and sharing their thoughts. Here is some of what they each had to say. –K.L.

Makenzie...I’m doing good. Overall I’m looking at the bright side of this and staying as positive as I can. I have my family. I have my sister. And I’m alive. I’m just very thankful I’m here....

The night before my accident, I found out that one of my best friends, Lindsay Lockhart, had been put into a coma because she had blood clots in her brain. I went kayaking the next day to try to pull myself out of the depression I felt myself going into. Kayaking is an “out” for me, and I just wanted to get on the river and pray and look at nature and the beautiful things that God has provided for us, so I could feel better. I had my little sister with me because she has the most beautiful and positive energy, and I couldn’t think of anyone more perfect to ride the river with me.

A week after my accident, when I’d been home for two days, I found out that Lindsay had passed away on the day of my accident. I believe that she is one of the angels that saved my life. She was an amazing best friend. I believe that she helped put the links together of everyone who helped save my life. I believe she said, “God, you can’t let her come up here with me. She has a baby boy and a family to be with, and I have to be able to watch her and be sure she is safe.”...

To get through this time, I’m looking at my situation through so many different positive ways. I support anyone else who goes through anything hard in their life to look at the positive side of their life—you’re alive, you have people who love you. Positivity has been keeping me going.

We don’t always take all the security measures that we should when our mind is somewhere else. Take a minute. Think, even if you are in a state of mind where you’re excited and ready to go. Take that minute and think of everything that you could be risking if something were to happen. Anything is possible, life and death. We’re not promised our next minute, our next breath.

My family has always told me I should go into nursing. Lately, I’ve been thinking about that more....

I got back on the water the week after I got home. Kayaking is a beautiful, fun sport to do. I definitely want to continue kayaking. The first time I ever went kayaking was on Little River, with my father. I cannot imagine not getting back on the water.

People need to know to respect the water. Water is like electricity, and like wind. It is an element and we have no control over it, other than when we build dams, and ponds. But even then, the water can overflow, and destroy. Wear a life jacket. Always know your weather conditions. Let someone know where you’re going. I myself was not in a mental state where I was thinking of these things, and I should have. Respect the earth and respect your life.

Virginia...I asked Makenzie to go upstream because I was feeling scared in my stomach about going downstream. We tried to turn around. I remember Makenzie saying we were going to flip. Once we flipped, my life jacket was pushing me up, but I was under the kayak. I kept popping up. I was in shock for a second, and then I swam. I’m a very strong swimmer, so I finally got out from under the kayak. The current kept pulling me backwards, but Makenzie gave me a smile and said it would be okay, and then she threw me to Luke. When they pulled her out, it was scary. I saw my sister when she had a dead stare, and her tummy was very big from swallowing water. Daddy kept saying, “Breathe, Makenzie! Come on! Breathe!” If I lost Makenzie, nothing would be the same.

I’m glad she’s home now. I think it’s going to be hard for a while. I think it really scared my best friend, Elizabeth Lessa, to find out that something really bad had happened to me. I don’t want it to ever happen again.

I’m thankful for Miss Sally for talking to me about my life and praying with me. And, I’m thankful for Mr. Luke and Mr. Larry, and all of the people who helped save our lives.

Bruce's
FOODLAND
Home Owned and Operated Since 1979
Fort Payne • Rainsville • Section • Iders • Fyffe • Scottsboro

202 Greenhill Blvd., Fort Payne, AL 35967

We're Open 7 Days A Week
7am-10pm

256-845-1970

WIC Vouchers
Quantity Rights Reserved

Snap Benefits
None Sold to Dealers

We Feature All This and More!

- Gift Cards
- Incoming & Outgoing Fax Service
- Postage Stamps
- Copies
- Deli/Bakery
- "Choice" Grade Beef
- Fresh Seafood
- Extended Lines of Gourmet, Specialty and Diet Food

We Accept

AMERICAN EXPRESS Card MasterCard VISA DISCOVER NOWUS

Dave's Antiques
in the old National Guard Armory

45+ Great Vendors in 15,000 sq. ft.

Mon–Sat 10am–4pm | Sun 12–4pm

256-418-4207
37669 US Hwy. 11
Hammondville
Just off I-59 @ Exit 231

Sales every Saturday
8am — 4pm

3615 Co. Rd. 322 • Henegar
256-418-2092

daves-antiques.com
davestone2012@yahoo.com

Birthdays				Anniversaries			
1	Junior Bell Kathleen Johnson Jennifer Owen Michael Stone Sue Anderson	Tracy Coots Jessie Baggett Carl Griffith Kelly Blansit Tony Garner	Christy Miller Evans Lonny Pendergrass	Ronald “Cotton” Baggett Jackson Mann Amelia Stott	1	Chris & LeAnn Underwood	
2	Morgan Blalock Ella Voils Cory Dobbins Isaac Vaughan Emerson Jean Bell	8 Connie Clark Ella Kate Wagner Sherry Durham Camdyn Goza	15 Shirley Zange	24 Joe Elrod Amber Parker Adam Miller Sadie Durham	3	Corey & Amanda Blalock Thomas & Ginger Kearney	
3	Abel James Baggett Paula Coots Steven Barkley Annabelle Gifford	9 Shaunathan Bell Megan Miller Ryker Shankles	16 Amy Kirby Riley Mae Owen Kaylynn Hulgán Harli Burton	25 Tristan Smith	4	Donnie & Carlotta Sharpton	
4	Mollie Sanderson Kathy Clure Cathy White Jody Nance	10 Gail Jones Angela Flanagan Jacob Hawkins	17 Shuan Flannigan Melinda Miller Owen Crouse	26 Paige Smith Rodney Mitchell	5	Charlie & Pam Harwell	
5	Alex Dupree Bobby Browder Emily Hilliard Jeffrey Bain Kathy Clure	11 Jessie Coots Ricky Barkley Merle Stokes Gerald Biddle Tanner Meadows	18 Chad Smith Nelson Kerby Traci Hulgán	27 Keila Daniell Amanda Smith Christy VanPelt Hunter Villarreal Crystal Scruggs Labron Poe	6	Craig & Katie Smith	
6	LA Smith Lee Worthey Phil Harris Carlie Kirby Cody Hodge Taylor Williams Dewayne Grisham Aval Leigh Hawkins	12 Hubert Blalock Allison Kirby Chris Davis Alyssa Cooper	19 Dillon Brown LeAnn Underwood Megan Smith Brown	28 James Cox Mikayla Owen	7	Wayne & Angie Miller	
7	John Johnson	13 Andrea Kirby Hayden Kirby Linda Hawthorne Angela Hadley	20 Alexis Manifold Jessica McKenzie Susan Elliott Elli Stone Joyce Tate Kenzlee Callahan	29 Mackenzie Willingham Justin Blansit James Bennett Smothers Glenda Kirby	8	Alan & Beth Hawkins	
		14 Ann Nelson Madi Gregory Logan McGee Raymond Evans	21 Lisa Crow Katie Villarreal Desiree Cash Jackson Mann	30 Patti Carden James Tubberville Ethan Webb Ava & Nolan Tate	9	Doug & Karen Powell Keith & Dawn Langston Shane & Valerie Burt	
			22 Sandy Blalock Caitlin Kirby	31 Richard Barkley Tracy Cartwright Joey Smith	10	Preston & Amy Kirby	
			23 Terry Pangle Adrienne Guice Nathan Baggett		15	Doug & Karen Powell Keith & Dawn Langston Shane & Valerie Burt	
					16	Casey & Jessica Battles	
					17	Chad & Amber Smith	
					18	Jeremy & Lindsay Webb Doug & Judy McMahan Kurt & Staci Winn	
					24	Wesley & Tammy Frost	
					26	Soni & Sheila Larock Ray & Bobbie Zachary	
					28	Adam & Wendy Haynes Easton & Anna Bailey	
					29	Alfred & Eddie Langston Johnny & JoAnn Bain	
					30	Tommy & Cindy Harrison	
					31	Jimmy & Adele Phillips	

Miracle on Little River *(continued from page 5)*

absolute last place I checked since I watched them head downriver. Not only did the Johnsons save Makenzie, they comforted Virginia through a very traumatic event. Everything they have done means the world to us.”

“As the incident happened, our 5-year-old son, Thomas, told my wife that God is taking care of all of us. I believe that. Now I am feeling very blessed, very scared, and more hyperalert to danger than I was. You can’t take anything for granted, especially what kids tell you they’re going to do. I’m just blessed to be having this conversation instead of another one. It’s a miracle. A lot of people had to be in the right place at the right time for this outcome.”

“Makenzie is proof of the reason you just keep going, fighting to save someone’s life,” said Larry.

“God’s hand is all in this,” Sally reflected. “It’s in all of this.”

The McDorman family extends thanks to...

Sally and Larry Johnson
Luke Johnson and Winslet Herron
Nearby citizens
DeSoto Rescue Squad
Mentone Police Department
DeKalb Ambulance Service
Valley Head Police Department
DeKalb County Sheriff’s Office
DeKalb Regional ER
Erlanger Helicopter Crew
Erlanger ER / ICU
Dr. Jeffrey Poynter
Nurse Hannah Alexander

A TRIBUTE TO MIKE STONE *by Slate McDorman*

I followed the ambulance transporting Makenzie from Camp Skyline to DeKalb Regional Hospital. We had a police escort to the bottom of the mountain. Upon arrival, a group of nurses stood guard in a Checkpoint Charlie station blocking anyone from entering in the ER. Nobody was allowed inside due to the virus. I sat down on the bench next to the emergency room entrance awaiting news on Makenzie.

A few moments later the doors parted, and Mike Stone stepped out looking for me and told me to come inside. Mike is Captain of DeSoto Rescue, a paramedic, and a friend. After the nurses took my temperature and asked me several questions regarding potential exposure to COVID-19, Mike ushered me inside and updated me on Makenzie. Her condition was not good, but he said I had one thing going for me—the water was cold. The low temperature reduces the brain’s need for oxygen and can help it survive longer without air.

Mike then proceeded to apologize for not being available to run the call to Camp Skyline. He was working that day on a different ambulance in another service area. He was however responding to the call anyway as it was paged “two girls drowning at Skyline Dam.” Mike’s apology caught me off guard and I was speechless. I do not recall what I replied but I knew at the time it was not the reply I wanted to say. After leaving DeKalb Regional and on our way to Erlanger, it hit me; Mike was there and he did help save my girl.

DeSoto Rescue is an all-volunteer organization that serves the Mentone area. I am one of three members who have been on the squad longer than Mike. Since joining, Mike’s dedication and attention to detail has taken DeSoto Rescue to the next level of what it can be. Mike has been strict in his reviews of member participation, with no tolerance for those who do not want to participate. Mike motivates us again and again to run every page whether it’s an emergency or a lift assist. DeSoto Rescue has reached a 98% response rate to calls; this might be the highest in the county.

Due to Mentone’s geography, radio signals are often poor and pages difficult to understand. Mike tested and setup a radio-to-text pager service, so every page is also delivered directly to our cell phone. Mike has pushed us to follow through on our training and taken the time to work with each member individually become more familiar with treatments and equipment. He has led our fund-raising efforts while stuffing and mailing our request for donation letters. He works with our local community organizations, including MAPA, to make sure the squad has the best equipment possible. He works on the squad vehicles himself to make sure they are well maintained and to save the squad money. The list of how he contributes his time to the squad could continue for pages. It is this dedication, training and meticulous attention to detail that led to John Fischer and JD Trammell to being at the right place at the right time with the know-how for how to save Makenzie. I have no doubts that without his contributions all these years, the outcome would have been different that afternoon.

Mike, what I should have replied to you in the hospital that afternoon is, “You were there and you helped save Makenzie’s life.”

Mountain Herbalist

The Simple Wisdom of Mountain Medicine

by L.C. Moon

Living “off the land” takes on new meaning when telling the story of A. L. “Tommie” Bass (1908–1996). Tommie was a mountain herb doctor who helped people discover the beauty in the simple things. He taught about the edible and medicinal plants, trees, mushrooms, and mosses growing on Lookout Mountain and in the surrounding valleys.

Tommie worked with nature for his livelihood and lived to bring ease to others. He is described as “a vanishing resource” by author, herbalist, and student of Tommie, Darryl Patton.

I certainly wish I could have learned from Tommie Bass. Although he passed away before I was able to meet him, I have gotten to know Darryl, who apprenticed with Tommie and has documented his wisdom.

I met Darryl for the first time when he led an edible and medicinal plant identification walk at Little River Canyon Mouth Park in 2005. It was the closest I would come to a dream come true of meeting and studying with Tommie Bass.

In 2004, Darryl published a book called *Mountain Medicine: The Herbal Remedies of Tommie Bass*, which I bought at his plant walk. I still learn from the book and am very excited about his new book coming out later this year, *Herbs, Roots, and Remedies*, which is an expanded version of *Mountain Medicine*. It has



Darryl Patton



Mature poke plant (Phytolacca Americana)

experiential knowledge of Darryl’s life thus far as an herbalist and naturalist, as well as wisdom gleaned from 13 years of studying with Tommie and over 100 hours of audio.

Darryl is carrying on the tradition of native wildcrafting and teaches the style of Mountain Medicine which he learned through direct experience. He operates the Deep South Center for Herbal Studies in Mentone, where he has always dreamed of having a school to teach about his passion. Darryl teaches a class on the second weekend of each month, with the first part of the day being spent in a classroom and the afternoon spent in fields and forests and along streams on Lookout Mountain.

Occasionally, he also takes students on field trips to places such as Bankhead National Forest.

I asked Darryl what he feels is one of the most important things that he learned from Tommie. He said the importance of having a relationship with plants is one of the greatest lessons. Darryl expressed to me that there is a different kind of wisdom imparted when you get to know the plants in their native habitat and

harvest them yourself, rather than simply learning from a book and buying the herbs.

Tommie taught Darryl that plants are not limited to the garden for food and medicine. “Hippocrates said, ‘Let food be thy medicine and



A. L. "Tommie" Bass

medicine be thy food,” said Darryl. “Tommie lived his life knowing that food was his medicine.”

Tommie Bass devoted his life to teaching that plants are both food and medicine. Folks like him who lived off the land learned to use “poisonous” plants like Poke

(Phytolacca Americana) as food, as well as to remedy arthritis, skin disorders, and more, depending on the parts used and method of preparation.

Darryl is doing what he loves, carrying on a tradition and helping others the way Tommie helped him. He learned from Tommie that when we love what we do, we are happiest. Darryl expressed that if you get away from doing things for the reasons you love them, and you only see what you’re doing as a way to make money, then it takes away from the love of what you do.

Darryl Patton has dedicated much of his life to living and learning as a naturalist and herbalist. For 35 years, he has been teaching classes and workshops from Florida to Michigan, sharing the folk traditions of Tommie Bass, herbalism,

(continued on page 16)



13 County Rd 950, Mentone
3 bed 2 bath close to Brow Park
300' brow frontage West Brow



434 Marigold Dr., Cloudland
2 bed 2 bath log home
200' frontage East Brow



24 County Rd 936, Mentone
4 bed 3.5 baths
89' Little River Frontage w/ deep water



12850 County Rd 103, Mentone
Lake Lahusage 4 bed 3.5 bath
2 Ac 190' frontage on lake



Becky Woodard REALTOR® | becky@hardyrealty.com
706-291-4321 office | **706-506-0777** mobile



Charlotte Gentry
Broker/Owner
256-996-5995



Holly Watson-Houston
Assoc. BROKER®
256-996-0552



Melody Sellers
Assoc. REALTOR®
256-996-5297



Steve Manning
Assoc. REALTOR®
256-996-7624



Elizabeth Way Thornell
Assoc. REALTOR®
205-792-3580

"The Natural Choice"

Office: (256) 634-4767



A CABIN FOR EVERY SEASON. 2BR/2BA on 1.75 wooded acres. All wood interior; wood-burning fireplace w/stone hearth in vaulted living; handy galley kitchen; 2 screened porches; welcoming front porch w/swing; large deck w/added supports (for future hot tub); mostly furnished. Property is wooded, borders a small creek, & has a great outdoor fire ring w/benches for chilly evenings around the fire. Located in Laurel Creek Lakes which offers lakes for canoeing & well-maintained walking paths. \$179,900 (1128107)



LIVE YOUR MENTONE DREAM! This unique home sits atop Lookout Mountain, built on the edge of the brow. Open style w/windows throughout both sides & both floors of the entire home, the top floor is a full open loft w/2 sep bedrooms each w/ balconies above the main deck for sipping coffee or a glass of wine while watching the sun set. Galley style kitchen + butlers pantry w/ top of the line stainless steel appliances+washer & dryer. Outside-screened porch with hot tub, fire pit w/cedar chairs/tables, circle drive & wooden fence. On top of all this, it's also being sold fully furnished!! Great rental history, too! \$325,000 (1138642)



OWN YOUR OWN LITTLE CANYON with Johnnie's Creek cascading through the forest below and 36 acres of beautiful, mostly-wooded land (on both sides of creek) & a fabulous, custom-built, cypress-sided home. Approx 3600 sq ft of deliciously-designed living inside, tremendous tree-top decks & porches outside! Two wood-burning fireplaces (one w/insert); Brazilian floors, windows galore, fab light fixtures throughout. Huge, open kitchen/living area. Tons of cabinetry, commercial-grade gas range, granite countertops; large pantry. A mountain escape, with simple luxury in a residence, hunting lodge or getaway. \$599,000 (1010510)



GREAT VISIBILITY & TRAFFIC COUNT ON HWY 117 IN MENTONE! Work is completed on the exterior painting, roofing & general upgrading of the exterior of Mentone's iconic gas station and eatery, Helena's Gas & Deli. This is a thriving restaurant, bar & grill, store, and gas station business. So, why would Helena want to sell? Well, she says she's ready to retire and be with her grandbabies. (And she's selling it "Lock, stock and barrel.") Locals and visitors to Mentone alike know this is the place to go for delicious food, reasonable gasoline prices & cold beverages. Lots of paved parking & add'l wooded land behind the existing building for future growth. \$345,000 (1119821)



SPACIOUS CABIN HOME ON 3.31 ACRES, with pleasant, winding, private drive. 3BR/2.5BA, 2500 sq ft, one-owner home features a welcoming front porch & a deep, oversized back porch for easy entertaining outdoors. Open living/dining/ kitchen features an efficient, wood-burning heater; hardwood floors. Main-level master suite. First level also offers a laundry room & 1/2 bath. Upstairs are two large bedrooms & guest bath. Two new CH/A units in Aug 2019. Outdoors, the property includes a well-equipped workshop/garage; a large pole barn for firewood with an attached chicken coop; and a combination of cleared/wooded land. Add'l land avail. \$264,500 (1128526)



KNOCK, KNOCK! Who's there? Well, it could be you! Cute & cozy cottage w/private upstairs guest quarters. Furnished. Front & back porches w/benches & swings. Main level w/hardwood floors; 1BR/1BA; light & breezy living area; handy kitchen. Upstairs is a tree-house-feel, efficiency apt w/claw-foot tub nook, privy closet, wood floors & multiple beds. Storage bldg. Near DeSoto Falls, State Park, Comer Scout Camp. Just off the parkway. \$119,000 (1124542)



IT'S SOUTH COOL STREET, and it's pretty special! Brow-front property with a beautiful old stone fireplace chimney, part of the foundation, plus a small garage. Newly surveyed. An original Mentone summer home once stood here, built and owned by the same family since early 1920s. Approximately 0.45 acre lot in an area where you're in town, but private & properties are seldom available. Build your own memories! \$118,000 (1070474)

Happy Mother's Day!



LOTS and LAND

10 ACRES OF WOODED LAND, WITH SPRING. Public water/power avail nearby. A driveway was cut into the property several years ago, still viable. If you've been considering building your own cabin in the woods, this might just be the place to start. \$65,000. (1137280)

NEED A BIT OF EARTH? Well, here it is! Less than 5 minutes from downtown Mentone. Public water & power avail. A single acre, unrestricted, has been very hard to find in this area until now. \$19,000. (1109345)

11.03 UNRESTRICTED ACRES IN MENTONE, cornering 2 county roads (one paved) with driveway, level-to-level life. Ideal for a few acres to have a place to park a camper, build, do a little hunting, too. \$60,000 (1132226)

UNIQUE, YEAR-ROUND NAVIGABLE RIVER LOT AT DESOTO FALLS Lake area. Approx 94' frontage on the prime part of W Fork Little River, the truly navigable part where you can canoe, kayak or pontoon all the way to Mentone! Survey & perc in file. \$155,000 (355152)

SOUTH COOL STREET BROW-FRONT property w/old stone fireplace chimney, part of foundation, plus small garage. Owned by the same family since early '20s. Approx 0.45-acre lot in an area where properties are seldom available. \$118,000 (1070474)

PENDING

MERF News by Sarah Wilcox



My boards may be a little creaky and my paint a little flaky but I am full of life. I continue to open my doors to the young and the wise so my walls are full of joy, laughter and learning.

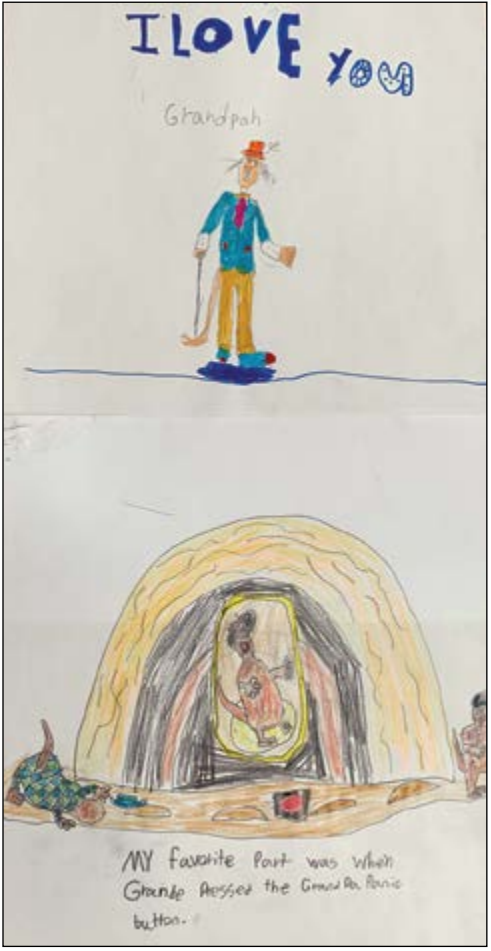
Hope you had as much fun at MERF's mini auction as we did! Thank you to those who participated and were able to take home a wonderful piece of artwork. Our main purpose was to have fun and offer a little diversion, which we did! Thanks to our bidders, MERF raised \$1,405 before taking out expenses, which we tried to keep low. Don't you love the artwork by our Moon Lake School artists? See pics of the ones not in last month's Groundhog. All went to great homes and will be well loved and appreciated.

This old dog has learned some new tricks in this time of social distancing. First, with using 32auctions.com for the mini auction. We will probably use it again, even though there is still hope for a live auction this year. We'll make a decision by the start of summer. MERF also finally set up a MailChimp account and will start using it more for communication with those who love and support MERF. If you didn't receive an email on March 30 or April 14 (look in your junk mail) from MERF, then send me an email or sign up for our newsletter on Facebook or the website.

Guess who had a Zoom playdate?! The MERF moms and kids did and we were able to catch up and visit for 30 minutes! George, my dog, even joined the virtual meeting! We look forward to meeting back up at the MERF house for playdates soon but, until that happens, we'll Zoom away. April brought big birthday wishes to our group: Selah (3), CG (3) and Coleman (1). Whoa, slow down and don't grow up too fast!

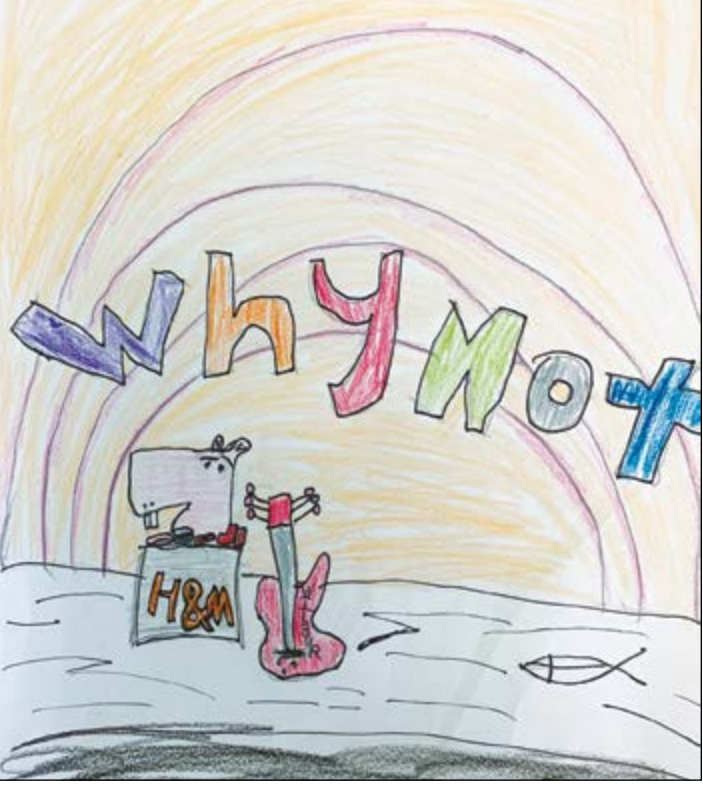
MERF's walking track has been in hot demand this month, as many are enjoying the beautiful weather and sunshine. How great it will be when we can add all the creative ideas for the Pathway to Community. New Adirondack chairs have been ordered from Little River Hardware #shoplocal. If you haven't used it before, one lap is ¼ mile. My dog, George, and I are walking daily, too, which gives me a great opportunity to phone and check in with the senior lunch bunch crew! Everyone seems to be doing rather well, just missing having fun with others.

So thankful for the many ways our community reaches out and brings light, joy, and necessities to many. The Mentone Community Church has graciously taken on the mission of buying and distributing food to our children for the rest of the



school year, as long as funds are available. St. Joseph's Episcopal Church continues meeting needs with the weekly food bank too. And DeSoto Rescue Squad and Rayne Zabava have formed the Lookout Community Meals to provide lunch to a group on the front lines each week. All these efforts depend on funding from us, so if you can help, mail them a check to help with their costs.

Mentone wouldn't be the same without our wonderful camps and this summer is going to be a bit different. I am so thankful for the many ways the camps support the community and I've really enjoyed their creativity and energy in reaching out to their campers and us through Instagram and Facebook. Check them out and enjoy daily devotions, scavenger hunts, line dancing, special camp recipes, and TBT pics. The mountain will be a bit quieter this summer, though the loss of community will not. Thankful also to for our local farmers and their hard work to provide us with plenty of opportunities for healthy, fresh food.



Let us all do what we can to shop local, keep in touch, and help each other to come out on the other side of this pandemic more caring, more resourceful, and saner.

P.S. I am still loving that MERF and Moon Lake Elementary School went to the "Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed" musical in early March. Here are some of the great thank you notes that the students wrote to the actors at the Alliance Theatre.

Sarah Wilcox is Executive Director of MERF, a local non-profit organization whose mission is "to enrich the learning and living of the community by identifying needs and coordinating resources." If you would like to support our programs, tax-deductible donations can be mailed to P.O. Box 107, Mentone, AL 35984, or you may contribute online at merfhouse.org. Contact Sarah at merf.mentone@gmail.com or 256-635-8193 for more information.

TINY HOMES & the People Who Love Them

by Betsy Dillbeck

Little River Escape is a riverfront gated community less than half a mile from the Georgia state line on Highway 48. This tiny home slice of Lookout Mountain, on the west fork of Little River, is owned and developed by Ed Waters, from Rome, Georgia. As a child Ed spent five summers at Camp Laney, returning as a counselor while in college. His degree is in architectural/urban planning and recreational planning and, although this property is not remotely “urban,” it is definitely recreational, as Waters has planned these tiny homesites to blend into the natural terrain of Lookout Mountain.

Each of the 50 home sites at Little River Escape sits on ¾ of an acre. Lots are leased, with landscaping upkeep is provided. Amenities include river access, walking trails, a swimming pool, clubhouse, gym, and common area, as well as a community garden and fenced dog park. A dock on the river allows for swimming and launching kayaks. It’s a short paddle to the body of Lake Lanahage.

Ed Watters is currently developing another tiny home community just outside of Mentone called Mentone Mountain Escape. He also owns River Ridge Escapes, whose focus is on building and selling tiny homes, with standard models or ones built to the owner’s specifications. “We use four different manufacturers and we provide the sitework,” said Watters. “The most important goal is to provide a home that blends into the beautiful natural environment of Lookout Mountain.”

Vicky Williams purchased a tiny home at Little River Escape in 2019, having relocated from Tennessee. She is a fan of tiny home ownership and living, “if you can get into the mindset.” The natural setting of the community sold her on the idea of tiny home living. “I love to hike in the woods, walk, kayak, and to feel that all of nature is at my doorstep. My living quarters’ ‘footprint’ is the smaller part of my lifestyle.” Her home is just 210 square feet, and not an inch of space has been wasted in its design. “There is a place for everything,” says Vicki, “and I was able to make design decisions that allow even more storage and usable space.”

The one very notable thing about this tiny home, and all the others I viewed, was the abundance of light. Windows are everywhere. “My windows are specially designed to keep out heat and cold, and they have custom-fitted screens,” she pointed out. “The entire heating and cooling system is state-of-the-art. My electric bill is never above \$50.”

The living area’s sofa opens into a full-size bed, with storage underneath. “I could have put a queen size bed in the loft, if I wanted,” explains Vicky, “but a full size is plenty. This allows extra storage cubes to be housed in the loft space.”

“It’s all the living space I need,” said Vicky. “I want to be outdoors most of the time, which was the main reason I chose this area. It’s absolutely beautiful here, with trails throughout the community and easy access to Little River. With the size of our lots, it’s like living in the woods.”

Vicky has a deck on the front end of her home and in the rear is a lovely patio area under the trees. “When the foliage is out in the summer, I cannot see my neighbors. I get all the benefits of living in a community, but still in a very private setting. I love it!” she commented.

Amanda Massa, an outgoing woman with an easy laugh, has opted for tiny home living in the Mentone area. Earlier in life, she worked in Columbia, Brazil, Peru, and Mexico where in most instances, her living quarters were small so she considers that time to be her first “tiny home experience.”

After returning to her home state of Florida, she visited the north Georgia area and rented a tiny home through Airbnb. “I decided I liked the area very much, and the tiny home itself,” said Amanda. “But for me, I really wanted to find a piece of land, a place a little more private, my own ‘woods.’” She found a beautiful spot, about 4-1/2 acres, at a price she could afford.

“It was such a great find,” said Amanda. “It already had septic and water and only one neighbor I couldn’t see. I loved it, and began planning my tiny home with Ed Watters’ company.”

Amanda’s home is just over 400 square feet. A winding driveway leads to her site, where her home is nestled into the side of a hill. The home seems perfectly fitted into the landscape, with a rock skirting around the foundation, and a beautiful deck/porch welcomes visitors.

“I’ve learned that it’s best to live based on what you need, and not what you



The swimming pool at Little River Escape overlooks Little River



Vicky Williams enjoys the outdoor space surrounding her tiny home

want, putting all into perspective.” said Amanda. “I found that life can sometimes be overwhelming and that it is hard to make decisions to let go of things, but there is a certain freedom in letting go. Here, my life is lived in such natural beauty and with all I really need.”

She ordered her home in April 2019 and it was delivered in July. A lovely living area offers a full-size sofa on one side and dining area on the other. The kitchen runs along one side and a small bedroom has a bunk bed for when her boys visit. She also has a full-size bedroom and a full bath at the rear of the home. Amanda works out of her home, where she has painted and decorated much of the interior. It’s easy to see that she has a creative side and a wonderful flair for color.

Amanda feels she has “found” her community in Mentone. “I have met so many people in the different shops and businesses, and at the library and through their activities. I really feel such a part of the Mentone community,” she explains. “Just because you prefer to live sort of ‘in the backcountry,’ it doesn’t mean you live without any friends or acquaintances. There is such a supportive and thriving community just up the road! My choices have given me the perfect lifestyle, and home, that fits me. I’m very happy here.”

Pamela Moniz is a talented artist who, after careful research, chose the Mentone area and bought a home at Little River Escape, having relocated from Virginia. “As age and adjustments would have it, I moved to Huntsville, to be near my daughter and her family,” she explained. “I really wanted a setting in the woods, but still felt

(continued on page 11)



Pam Moniz has plenty of space in her tiny home for her work and her art

Tiny Homes (continued from page 10)

that neighbors nearby would be good for me.”

Pamela has always loved the outdoors, and now she’s settled into an environment she wants to be surrounded by, while also considering how to be financially secure after retirement.

Her tiny home is 864 square feet—one of the larger homes in the community. The interior of her home is inviting and warm, with knotty pine that lends an amber glow throughout. The front door opens into a beautiful living space which features a fireplace. The back door opens onto a deck overlooking the woods. Her kitchen is spacious, and the main level features a large bedroom and bathroom. The loft area is above a second bedroom that Pamela uses as her office. Importantly, she also has room for her artwork.

“The Mentone community is very supportive of the arts, and that’s important to me,” she noted. Pamela also stresses that tiny home living is not for everyone. “You must keep in mind the excess that most of



Amanda Massa incorporated the bright colors of her native Florida

(continued on page 16)



Gary Smith, Vicky Patrick, and Ken Trowbridge

Fire Department News by Vicky Patrick

us live with and think of what you really want to do with the rest of your life, and what you can do as you age. Bring that along with what you love about your life, in general, and find that place. It’s kind of an idea that you evolve and fine tune. I have room for my grandchildren to visit, and my children, and that was important. But I also can manage what I have here, without taking time from what I enjoy doing.”

It turns out there is no stereotype for the tiny home buyer, according to Emmy Hobart Wilson, Little River Escape sales office administrator and community resident. Emmy is a recent college graduate with a degree in Business Administration. “Ed Watters asked me to help him one weekend with a show event in Florida. I found I enjoyed the sales and marketing aspect of the opportunity. Seven interviews later, Ed hired me to run the office here at the site. It’s been so much fun meeting all the people who telephone us and then come to see our community. Many just see the sign and drop by. We have sold all 50 lots and model homes at Little River Escape.”

“We have families who use their tiny homes as weekend getaways, and other families who live here full-time,” says Emmy. “Working-age men and women who commute to larger cities for their work find their tiny home is perfect for their lifestyle and work conditions. Much of the interest comes from retirees who want to live in a community with a beautiful natural setting, and from others, both singles and couples, who just want to downsize.”

Emmy and her husband, Seth, ordered their tiny home in November 2018 and moved in two months later. Their lot faces a creek, with a deck built along almost the entire length of the home. Emmy and Seth have their own flair for decorating—woodsy, comfortable, and casual—and a passion for using colored bottles to garnish the deck and gate, and even inside on shelves and nooks. A path leading toward the creek features a small area with a table, chairs and hammocks. “That’s our favorite spot in the good weather,” remarked Seth.

Their tiny home is 448 sq. ft. The living area features a plush sofa built around a coffee table. The electric fireplace is a “flush design,” so it does not take any space away from the area. “We wanted a very comfy, relaxed

The North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District Fire Station 2 has a new look inside. Located on County Road 165, Station 2 now has two bathrooms with tile showers, and a kitchen for fixing meals. Donations from the community have allowed the Department to outfit Station 2 as a place for people to seek refuge from power outages due to storms, impassable roads, or winter weather. It is not, however, a tornado shelter.

There is a generator to power the electricity and a gas stove for cooking. There is a gas heater in the meeting room and a hot water heater for showers and a dishwasher. Presently, the kitchen has FEMA provisions for food. A donation of a washer and dryer has been promised to complete the needs of displaced people.

This has been a dream of Chief Joseph Lee since the building was completed in 2010. “My vision for this station was to provide a place for people to locate to and have everything they needed if they had to stay overnight in a “shelter in place” type of situation. It’s a long time dream come true for me to say now we have a functioning place where the people of this community can come to get help if and when they need it. I’m beyond grateful at what Gary Smith, Ken Trowbridge, and Vicky Patrick have accomplished at Station 2.”

The Department would like to thank Lowe’s in Fort Payne who generously gave us a discount on the kitchen cabinetry. Thanks to all who have donated to the department. This work could not have been accomplished without our community!

Vicky Patrick serves as Treasurer of the North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District.

ST. JOSEPH’S GARDEN RECEIVES GRANT

by Kelly Leavitt

St. Joseph’s Memorial Prayer Garden was recently awarded a \$10,000 “Open Spaces, Sacred Places” from the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama in Anniston. Foundation administrator Fred Smith visited the garden in March and commented that the garden perfectly fits the vision the Foundation has had when offering these grants.

Mike Keracher, who originally had the vision for the community garden, and many volunteers have dedicated countless hours to create the space we all can enjoy, with a gazebo, labyrinth, walking trails, seating, and of course—plants.

Mike said, “Mr. Smith had the good luck to visit the garden when 1,500 daffodils were in bloom. He was impressed and said the garden meets all their checkboxes.”

The grant funds will be primarily used to purchase



additional plants. “With this money we’ll be planting a beautiful butterfly garden,” said Mike. “We plan to use as many perennial plants as we can, as well as

annual plants that will reseed. Pollinator plants attract butterflies, with their vivid yellow, red, orange, and blue blooms. We’ll also plant milkweed, which the Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on.”

A healing garden is also being planned, featuring native plants that are traditionally used for healing. The garden has about 100 ferns, and another 100 will be planted. Mike plans to put in another 1,000 daffodils later this year. “I’m very excited about this,” he said.

“Of course, a garden is never done, because it’s got to be maintained,” Mike said. “The church has been wonderful. They’ve added the garden to their budget so it can always be maintained.”

The one-acre garden is located on County Road 89 on the south side of St. Joseph’s-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church, which is located at 21145 Scenic Highway in downtown Mentone. It is open for the public’s enjoyment each day.

Moon Lake Community Library News

by Kelly Leavitt

“Reading can be therapeutic. In fact, it might be the best antidote for the psychological toll of a socially distanced life.” —Conner Goodwin

The library is now offering curbside service so patrons can have access to our book collection. The library building itself will remain closed until further notice.

The following protocols will be followed. Patrons may borrow three books for a period of

two weeks. You will choose a convenient time when you can come pick up your books. A plastic bag with your name on it will be waiting for you on a table on the library’s front porch. The library doors will remain locked.

Browse the library’s catalog at bit.ly/moonlake-catalog to select your books. DVDs and children’s books are NOT available at this time.

Visit moonlakelibrary.org/curbside to reserve your books and choose your preferred pick-up time.

Books should be returned to our blue drop box outside the front doors. They will be isolated for two weeks before they are returned to the shelves.

We are also offering a virtual book sale. Browse the photo gallery of our fiction books that are for sale at moonlakelibrary.org/virtualsale, then reserve your books and choose a convenient time when you can come pick up your books. A plastic bag with your name on it will be waiting for you on a table on the library’s front porch.

Nate’s Mobile Pizzeria
403 Gault Ave. N., Fort Payne
256-630-9924 • nmpizzeria1@gmail.com
facebook @ nate’s mobile pizzeria • instagram @ nmpizzeria

blue jug Follow us on social media for updates
[f](https://www.facebook.com/BlueJugofFortPayne) [i](https://www.instagram.com/BlueJugofFortPayne) [@BlueJugofFortPayne](https://www.tiktok.com/@BlueJugofFortPayne)

Alkaline Water by the Gallon
Filtered > RO Purified >
Natural Minerals >
Anti-microbial UV Light

Plus healthy snacks, local goods, & Butter Snob Baking
519 Gault N. Fort Payne 35967 256.648.5550

Experience Tiny Living on Lookout Mountain!

In 2019, Little River Escape Tiny Home Community was named one of the nation’s top 6 tiny home communities by U.S. News & World Report. As a result, our community is now almost fully occupied by folks who have come from 12 different states. Little River Escape has decided to embark on a new journey by creating River Ridge Escape Tiny Home Dealership, where 6-8 tiny homes are available to tour and purchase. RRE is now delivering across the nation, as well as developing other communities to bring more folks to Lookout Mountain.

A new development is coming to Mentone, only 3 miles from town. Mentone Mountain Escape will be a tiny home neighborhood with +/-20, ½-acre wooded lots per house and a common area with a dog park, patio, and firepit area.

RIVER RIDGE ESCAPE
Tour River Ridge Escape’s Tiny Homes • Thurs-Sat 11-5 EST or by appointment
12333 Hwy 48, Menlo, GA 30731
RiverRidgeEscape.com 706-936-0007

SOUTHERN PROPERTIES
Agency, Inc.
256-845-6000
www.southernpropertiesagency.com
311 Gault Ave. N., Fort Payne

NEW NEW CONSTRUCTION! 3 BED-ROOM 3 BATH CABIN IN MENTONE! We have just about finished this beautiful home in the mountains. Tongue & groove walls & ceilings. Two huge loft areas are connected by a beautiful wooden catwalk. Sitting on over 2 acres, lightly restricted. \$269,000. MLS #1125366	 ON THE BROW IN MENTONE 3BR, 2BA brick home. Spacious family room w/ wall of windows, vaulted ceiling, fireplace, dining area & wood floors. Open kitchen, pantry, laundry, separate den w/wood floors. 2.3 acres & large deck for entertaining. \$315,000. MLS# 1139408	 2 BR, 2 BA, also get a 1-room Cottage House. Indoor pool and its own attached screened porch. Large storage shed. Bathroom also serves as storm shelter. Furnished! \$182,000. MLS #1127846	 NEW HOME ON THE BROW! 2 Bedrooms, 2 Bathrooms with loft area. Nestled in the woods with seasonal views, covered back porch, wood burning fireplace, open floor plan, vaulted ceilings, and LAKE ACCESS! \$189,500. MLS #1125898	 KNOWN AS HIGHPOINT AND ONE OF THE MOST CELESTIAL AREAS FOR STAR GAZING... This 7 BR, 6 BA manor boast onyx porcelain & tile baths, walk-in showers, granite & marble counter tops/vanities. Attached private living quarters with full amenities PLUS detached guest cabin. \$729,000. MLS #1119192	 PEACE AND PRIVACY ARE YOURS! Three bed/1 bath home within walking distance to downtown Mentone. \$79,000. MLS #1123288
 UNIQUE MENTONE CABIN in walking distance of DeSoto Falls. Detailed rustic finishes. 2BR/2BA cabin with stainless steel appliance package, leathered granite countertops, stacked stone wood burning fireplace and amenities to numerous to mention! \$265,000. MLS#1132320	 SURROUNDED BY NATURE IN MENTONE. 2.3ac lot w/ 2 bedrooms, large kitchen w/ cooking bar, sun room, laundry room, covered side porch, screened side porch, detached garage & carport, lots of landscaping and room for more. \$109,000. MLS# 1132899	 CUSTOM LOG CABIN with breathtaking BROW views that will give you all the “feels.” Exposed beam ceilings, rock fireplace, office w/ view, sleeping loft, 2 BR w/ 2 full BA & a large back deck for all your entertaining needs. MOVE-IN ready! \$344,000. MLS #1103561	 FRIAR TUCK comes fully furnished w/ 2BR, 2BA, wood burning fireplace, hot tub, all the appliances and much more. This income producing cabin is ready for you take over and add your personal touches to keep it thriving. \$135,000. MLS #1137900	 MENTONE BROW HOME! 2 BR, 2 BA hardwood floors, rustic wood walls, gas log fireplace, CH/A, decks, detached storage building. \$288,000. MLS #1130058	

LOTS & LAND

#1034997—Approx. 6 acres on Middle Fork of Little River. \$48,900 #1039769—6.32+/- waterfront building lot in Mountain River Estates! REDUCED TO \$44,950 #1070628—3.01 acres. 152’ on West Fork of Little River. \$49,700 #1070629—3.01 acres. 152’ on West Fork of Little River. \$59,500 #1073864—Brow Lot! .78 acres. REDUCED TO \$83,900 #1076239—Cleared & wooded 3.6 acres on Scenic Hwy. REDUCED TO \$74,500. #1078140—18.3 acres, unrestricted, partially wooded! \$66,800 #1092235—Building lot in Laurel Creek Lakes. \$19,900 #1099911—LAST CHANCE to buy open land before entering into Georgia!!! \$165,000. #1108339—Better Than a Bargain...this is a STEAL! \$89,000. #1111628—AMAZING VIEWS! YES, VIEWS!!! REDUCED TO \$79,900. #1112787—40 acres in Mentone, AL with stream and untouched family owned property since 1923! REDUCED TO \$198,000. #1113936—Looking for a brow lot inside the	city limits of Mentone? \$78,500 #1118808—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. \$25,000 #1118810—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. \$25,000 #1118812—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. \$25,000 #1118813—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. \$25,000 #1118815—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. \$25,000	#1118229—A great little investment property or place for your weekend get-a-way. \$49,900 #1118898—BEAUTIFUL LAKEFRONT PROPERTY ON TOP OF WORLD FAMOUS LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN! Sloping wooded lot inside gated community. Call Now for more information. \$30,000 #1120910—Five-acre wooded property with stream, across from Lake Lahusage. \$39,900 #1127776—2.41-acre property just steps away from downtown Mentone. Build your wooded home-site, develop a tiny home community, or invest in the rental business. \$47,500 #1128694—40 acres with 3-acre lake stocked with bream and bass. \$229,000. #1129833—1.5-acre brow lot in Mentone. \$124,900 #1133689—3.58-acre property just steps away from downtown Mentone. Build your wooded home-site, develop a tiny home community, or invest in the rental business. \$69,500 #1133690—4.0-acre property just steps away from downtown Mentone. Build your wooded home-site, develop a tiny home community, or invest in the rental business. \$78,500	#1137464—It’s a Natural!!! Enjoy 40 acres of country backdrop! This parcel is country pure and simple. Enjoy privacy with lots of trees and a pond. Perfect spot for a rustic or farmhouse retreat. Better take this one seriously because a buy like this won’t last long! \$239,900 #1139102—Lot on County Road 89 located on the opposite of the brow. These lots don’t come available often. If you are looking to be nestled in the woods on DeSoto Parkway then this lot is for you! \$29,900 #1138874—WAKE UP TO WATERFRONT LIVING on this 6.22 acres with a long and winding stream and frontage on Brush Creek. This property is located in a cul-de-sac and has lots of rock outcroppings and boulders scattered all about. The property has beautiful frontage along the creek and is mostly wooded. \$49,900 #1139471—Ready for that brow view in Mentone? 2.3 acres of untouched land! Make this your new home away from home and build the cabin of your dreams! \$125,000
--	---	--	--

www.southernpropertiesagency.com

SENIOR HEALTH

Council on Aging: We Are Still Here

by Lynn Hixon

At a time when we all are having a “New Normal,” we are still here at the DeKalb County Council on Aging. Our SenioRx Program is still working on your medication applications, working with your doctors, and trying to keep your medicine flowing to you just as before. We are even seeing NEW clients, but in a non-face-to-face way. We can assist new clients over the phone, by email, by text, by regular mail, or whatever way that does not involve personal contact. We are still maintaining personal distancing for your safety and ours. We are trying new avenues to ensure that you get the best outcome, quick service, and uninterrupted deliveries.

- Here are some things that are happening that are of interest to seniors:
1. FARMERS MARKET VOUCHERS: People age 60 and older who meet the income requirements can call us if they want to be registered for the Farmers Market Vouchers. We will do it for you over the phone. Your MONTHLY household income cannot exceed the following guidelines: \$1,718 for 1 person, \$2,327 for 2 people, \$2,934 for 3 people, \$3,541 for 4 people, \$4,150 for 5 people, and \$4,756 for 6 people.
 2. MEALS: We are still providing meals to DeKalb residents ages 60 and older that need them. There are NO income guidelines. Call us to apply.
 3. TRANSPORTATION: We will not be able to provide public transportation until it is safe for people to be within 3 feet of each other. All of our previous clients are assisted with other programs if they want it.
 4. SHIP: We are checking the answering machine every day and returning those phone calls from home. We are working from home to help seniors in any way with their questions about Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Until we are back together again, please know we are thinking about you, missing your smiling faces, and keeping you in our prayers. If you need assistance with any of our programs, please call us at 256-845-8590 to leave a voicemail with your name, number, and what you need assistance with so that the correct staff member can call you from their home.

Important COVID-19 Information

by Lynn Hixon

Medicare is here to help during the COVID-19 emergency. Your health, safety, and welfare are our highest priority. Remember, if you don't need to go out, it's important to stay home to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Don't forget to wash your hands. To help you get the health care you need, while reducing your risk of exposure, Medicare has further temporarily expanded its coverage of Telehealth Services. This allows doctors and clinicians to perform dozens more additional services via telehealth.

As always, contact your provider first to see if your appointment can be conducted over the phone. If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19, get medical attention immediately. Here are additional key services Medicare has expanded due to the COVID-19 emergency:

Lab Tests for COVID-19. You pay no out-of-pocket costs.

All Medically necessary hospitalizations. This includes if you're diagnosed with COVID-19 and need to stay in the hospital under quarantine instead of being discharged from the hospital after an inpatient stay.

If you have any questions, please call the DeKalb County Council on Aging and ask for your SHIP Counselor, Lynn Hixon, at 256-845-8590.

Christmas Comes Early

by DiAnne Callahan

With all the bad news we hear constantly, there is some good news coming from the drug companies. There is some relief coming, not only for senior citizens, but also people who have been affected by unemployment.

NovoNordisk is waiving their \$1,000 out of pocket requirement for Medicare Part D seniors. If you use any product made by them and HAVE NOT spent this amount yourself, NovoNordisk will give you free medication.

Lilly Cares has ended their \$1,100 out of pocket requirement for Medicare Part D seniors. This is the same as for NovoNordisk on the free medications. Also, Lilly has a call center for anyone who has lost their job and was affected by COVID-19 crisis: Lilly Diabetes Solution Center 833-808-1234.

Sanofi has lowered their spend down requirement from 5% of the total gross household income to 2%.

Some companies have not changed their requirements, but may in the future. The SenioRx Program, through the DeKalb County Council on Aging, ADSS, and ADRC will keep you informed. If you qualify for any of the above savings programs, call DiAnne at 256-845-8590.



First Fidelity Bank

The finest traditions of community banking

Fort Payne
256-845-1077

Rainsville
256-638-6342

Ider
256-657-6255

www.bankffb.com
Telephone Banking 800-436-5103

Member FDIC

“We’re more than bankers, we’re your neighbors and friends.”



DIXIE SALVAGE

Discount Building Materials

3630 Gault Ave. N.
Fort Payne, AL 35967

Business (256) 845-5475
Fax (256) 845-5475

www.dixiesalvage.com

“Continuous service by the same family since 1933”

BROWN’S CLEANING & LAUNDRY

“An old company with new ideas”

Vault Storage for Furs & Woolens · Drapery Cleaning with Machine Decorator Fold · Suede, Leather & Fur Cleaning · Fire Restoration & Odor Removal · Wedding Gown Preservation · Alterations · Pillow Cleaning

817 Gault Ave. N. (256) 845-3241

Full Laundry Service



River Voice

by Angie Shugart

“Water is life and clean water means health.”
—Audrey Hepburn

Ahhh, May. Flowers are blooming, the birds are singing, and the water in Little River is crystal clear, making it very inviting. Oh, but I know better. That water is COLD!!

Memorial Day weekend will bring visitors from all around who want to experience the world in which we live. In 2014, Travel and Leisure magazine listed Little River #1 out of 20 swimming holes in the nation. Since then, eco-tourism has exploded and is the #1 industry in DeKalb County. With the swim season upon us, Little River Waterkeeper will keep you up-to-date with weekly water quality results. Beginning May 20, we will take water samples from your favorite swimming holes on Little River and post test results each Thursday on theswimguide.org, just in time for the weekend. Just go under Beach Finder and the app will zoom to your location.

2020 Test Sites

- West Fork Hwy. 117 at Mentone Bridge
- West Fork, DeSoto Falls
- Middle & East Forks at Lake Lahusage
- West Fork at Indian Falls
- Yellow Creek on CR 295
- Little River Blue Hole
- Little River at Martha’s Falls
- Little River Mouth Park

In the April River Voice, I touched on “what” we test for. To recap, our state certified lab conducts tests for: E. coli, a common bacteria found in warm blooded mammals that can enter Little River through runoff because of failing septic



“Matching people to the property of their dreams”

HEATHER NICELY
REALTOR®

Alabama • Georgia • Lookout Mountain

256.276.8422
BelloraRealtors.com
hnicely11@gmail.com



BARGAIN DEPOT

Online Returns and More

YOU WILL SAVE MONEY!!



Follow us on  

12 months same as cash available

256-273-6877 | 1/4-mile south of Fort Payne High School
thebargaindepot.net | thebargaindepot.fp@gmail.com

systems; PH, which determines the acidity and alkalinity in the water sample; Dissolved Oxygen, which helps us determine if our fish and other organisms are living in a healthy habitat; Turbidity, which measures the cloudiness in Little River and helps determine how much run-off is suspended in the water table; and Nitrogen which measures agricultural runoff from fields.

So, why is this preventative measure important for us to understand the overall health of Little River and our impact on the Little River Watershed? Little River is truly the lifeblood of the Mentone area. Thousands of youth attend local summer camps and visitors flock to Little River to enjoy its refreshing waters. Water testing for E. coli and other pollutants makes sure that our local swimming holes meet state water quality standards and prevent you from coming in contact with contaminated water. Recreational water illnesses caused by germs and bacteria can be spread by swallowing or simply coming into contact with contaminated water. These illnesses include stomach, ear, and skin infections, but diarrhea is the most frequently reported illness.

Because the ecosystem of Little River is unique and fragile, other water quality parameters are also taken into account when testing for physical, chemical or biological properties. When we find algae in the water or have a high nitrogen reading, this is often an indicator of agricultural runoff which can be detrimental to water quality and aquatic life. When we get a high reading for turbidity, this means the water is muddy from a disturbance upstream and the sedimentation can carry pollutants. Deposits from sedimentation pollution can choke out microscopic aquatic organisms that provide priceless environmental services such as filtration. When we have a pH reading that is too high or too low, aquatic organisms living within it will die. The majority of aquatic creatures prefer a pH range of 6.5-9.0. This useful data helps us determine how to best manage and restore parts of the river corridor over time.

Support the 2020 SwimGuide Season. Join SwimClub!

Your financial support helps us monitor Little River! By joining Swim Club, each \$10 donation funds one test site. You may choose to make a one-time or recurring donation. Your generous gift will be highlighted on our social media pages with a picture of the sponsored water sample.

Check out our website for more information about our water quality programs and to find out ways to support our work that protects Little River for future generations. Visit littleriverwaterkeeper.org for more information.

Angie Shugart is the executive director of Little River Waterkeeper.

Valley Care Direct Primary Care



DR. FRANCES H. KOE, M.D.

An affordable alternative to traditional health care

Learn how healthy food supports a healthy body

Quality Health Care that Improves Mind, Body & Spirit
Nursing home and house calls available

256.524.3090
valleycaredpc.com | agroshare.com
52 South Valley Avenue • Collinsville, AL 35961



Artists of all media are in special need of support during these times. The Little River Arts Council hopes to be of assistance by creating an Artist Registry for any artist who would like to be included. This directory will be on our web site at littliverartsCouncil.org, and will include information about the artist, as well as a sampling of their work. From time to time, we get requests from people hoping to buy a particular kind of artwork, and this will help buyers find a connection to local artists. Artists can learn more and apply to be included at littliverartsCouncil.org/registry. The board of directors has been being creative themselves, dreaming up ways that we can continue to fulfill our mission in spite of current restrictions. Please join our email list (on our website) or “Like” our Facebook page to stay informed about what

we’ll be offering in the near future. We encourage everyone (of all ages!) to be creative in their own way during this time. We’ll be offering suggestions, as well as promoting local artists in a variety of ways. Our Home Tour this year has been cancelled. Ordinarily, this is the time we would be selecting eight or more homes to be on the tour, and we feel it’s unreasonable to ask homeowners at this time if they’d like to have hundreds of people in their homes in October. Because the home tour is our main source of revenue that sustains us throughout the year, we will have an extra-big silent auction! We’ll keep you posted. The board would like to thank retiring board member Barbara Umland for her service in many ways, particularly with her love of painting “plein air.” Barbara will continue to help us with our plein air events. In the words of Edward de Bono, “Creativity involves breaking out of expected patterns in order to look at things in a different way.” This spring, we’ve all been experiencing broken patterns. Now let’s all get out there and be creative!



Serving Northeast Alabama for 50 Years!

877-272-1451

BUILDERS SUPPLY CO, INC.

Fort Payne
(256) 845-1451

www.bsupply.net

Sylvania
(256) 638-2244

Concrete Block
Roof and Floor Trusses
Clark + Kensington Paint
Lumber and Building Materials

Andersen

WINDOWS • DOORS

In-House Factory Certified Technician

Pallets & Crates
Plumbing & Electrical
Window and Screen Repair
Industrial Janitor Supplies

**SOUTHERN
GOLD • SILVER
& JEWELRY**

Full Service Jewelry Store
Specializing in Engagement Rings
& Custom Designs



We buy estates, diamond jewelry

256.997.7591
Layaway & Financing Available

1706 GLENN BLVD. FORT PAYNE
9-5 M-F (SAT BY APPT. ONLY)

Menlo Restaurant

American Family Style

Friday Night Special 7.99
Hamburger Steak w/ 2 sides, Texas Toast & Drink

Saturday Night Special 13.99
Ribeye Steak w/ 2 Sides, Texas Toast & Drink

Choose from these sides:
tossed salad • slaw • baked potato • baked sweet potato • okra
tater tots • french fries • onion rings • pintos • corn nuggets
onion strings with jalapeno buttons • fried or grilled squash

Featuring delicious homemade desserts including
pecan pie, chocolate chess pie, and the Menlo Brownie.

“Best Burgers Around”
Monday through Saturday
7807 Hwy. 48, Menlo, GA 30731
706/862-2281

Carry-out Available

Tiny Homes *(continued from page 10)*
living area,” said Emmy. Many windows give the home a spacious ambiance. Their tiny home’s main level features a kitchen/ eating area and a full bedroom and bath, and they have the use of a full loft as well. The couple says they plan to be here for a while. “I’m sure we could even raise a couple of kids here,” Emmy said. When you hear, “Less is More,” it’s hard not to agree with the tiny home way of life—less stuff and space to maintain, and more time for travel, the outdoors, and community life, with a comfortable home to live in. As people become aware of their environmental footprint on this planet, tiny homes and like-minded communities have proven to be a very attractive alternative lifestyle for many. While some might consider tiny homes to be trendy, it seems likely they will become less and less the alternative, and more and more the norm. *Betsy Drillbeck is a retired newspaper publisher and editor living in Fort Payne.*

Mountain Medicine *(continued from page 7)*
and living off the land. He is teaching more than knowledge about nature and wildcrafting for food and medicine. He is sharing a vanishing art—the wisdom to slow down and recognize nature as a resource to help people sustain their overall well-being. After interviewing Darryl, I began to reflect on the many forms of mountain medicine he inspires by connecting people to his interpretation of the wisdom available in nature. Wildcrafting has helped me to personally experience a new appreciation for nature and my connection with it. Both wildcrafting and teaching about native plants for food and medicine have fed me physically and soulfully, because they require me to be in and with nature. In nature, I find my mind gets calm and peace begins to grow. I often feel joyful following a morning or an afternoon spent in nature. If you would like to learn more about Darryl Patton or his classes, you can visit his web site at thesoutherherbalist.com. *Mountain Medicine* is available at Moon Lake Community Library.

**WINDOW
VISIONS**

JELD-WEN
WINDOWS & DOORS
RELIABILITY for real life®
WE SELL ENERGY STAR

New
Construction
& Replacement
Windows &
Doors

256-845-3893

162 45th Street NE, Fort Payne
www.windowvisions.us



May 2020

May 2020

In Memoriam

LARRY E. MANN
April 9, 1963 – January 28, 2020



Larry E. Mann, age 56, of Menlo, passed Tuesday morning, January 28, 2020, in a Rome hospital, after a sudden and unexpected illness. Born in Walker County on April 9, 1963, he was the son of Gene and Frances Hardy Mann, who survive. Larry’s working career began as a teenager at Favorite Market and other convenience stores in Summerville and LaFayette. He later joined the Long John Silvers team, working his way to the position as manager for the Summerville shop, and holding that position for about 15 years. He was also a Regional Training Manager, and this position allowed him to travel to distant cities and out of state. He later worked with Northwest Georgia Regional Hospital in Rome, as purchasing agent. For numerous summers he served as a cook and food service worker at Camp DeSoto. He was known for his delicious fried chicken. He was known for his cooking in general, and the home in Menlo was a favorite gathering spot for family and friends who were always anxious to sample some of his cakes, other desserts, and side dishes. He was a wonderful loving man, and he was a jack of many trades. In addition to being an excellent cook, he had skill in carpentry, interior décor and design, gardening, music, and art. In prior years he had been a member of several gospel groups and had an outstanding voice, and he played the piano by ear. His skill at the piano was amazing. Larry was in his forties when he decided to further his education. He enrolled at Shorter University in Rome, Georgia, and on December 10, 2015 he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, graduating cum laude. He was the first member of his family to receive a college degree. For the past five years Larry had served as a loan officer for Peachstate Federal Union in Trion. He was a devoted member of First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Rome, where he served as Second Reader. Surviving are his partner of many years, Tim Day, of Menlo; daughter, Keri (Josh) Epperson, of Rock Spring, GA; parents, Gene and Frances Mann, of LaFayette, sisters, Wanda Alexander and Lisa Turnipseed, and brother, Johnny Mann, all of LaFayette. Several nieces and nephews also survive.

MARSHALL T. “SKEETER” HILLARD
March 25, 1951 – April 4, 2020

Marshall T. “Skeeter” Hillard, age 69, of Mentone, passed away on Saturday, April 4, 2020 at the VA Medical Center in Birmingham, AL. Mr. Hillard was a veteran of the United States Army and worked as a saw miller. He is survived by his brothers, Ronald Hillard and Randy Hillard; sister, Gwen Ullery (Chuck); and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Haley O. Hillard and Juanita Cupp Hillard; siblings: Carolyn Smith, Janice Hadley, and John Hillard. Pallbearers were Jeremy Smith, Craig Smith, Brian Smith, John Meadows, Jacob Meadows, and Jason Snider.



Valley Head Drugs
Prescriptions and Gifts

Wayne and Cynthia Wootten
Owners

Call in your refills
for Curbside Pickup

256-635-6812 Phone
256-635-6832 Fax
valleyheaddrugs@farmerstel.com
114 Commerce Ave., Valley Head, AL 35989



The Groundhog 17

JIMMIE SUE BEASON
March 2, 1955 – April 30, 2020
Jimmie Sue Beason, age 65, of Mentone, passed away Thursday, April 30, 2020 at her residence. Mrs. Beason was born on March 2, 1955 to the late James “Jim” & Birdie Brickley Holland in Chattanooga, TN. She worked for Olan Mills as a Quality Control Manager before moving to Alabama. She was a huge Alabama football and NASCAR fan. Mrs. Beason is survived by her husband, Andy Beason; daughter and son-in-law, Sandy & Shaun Coker; daughter, Kelly Mayhew; sisters, Brenda Crowe, Gwen Lovett, Debbie Kessler, and Donna Hardiman; grandchildren, Aubrey (Brooke) Shields and Connor Coker; great-grandchild, Asher Lycans; unborn great-grandchild, Tegan Shields; several beloved nieces & nephews; and honorary son, Mike Nichols. She was preceded in death by her parents; and sisters, Jan Jumper and Gail Harris. The family asks that memorial contributions be made to the St. Jude’s Children Research Hospital.

TAYLOR DAVID BROWN
November 2, 1934 – April 11, 2020
Taylor David Brown, age 85, passed away on Saturday, April 11, 2020 at Riverview Regional Medical Center in Gadsden, AL. He is survived by his wife, Nancy Flarity Brown; daughters, Karen Saferite (Donald, Jr.) and Joann Fife; grandchildren, Haley Jacobs (Jonathon), Amelia Saferite, Hannah Filmore, and Taylor Filmore; brother, Michael Brown; sisters, Pauline Holleman and Virginia Coker (Ed), and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, James Lee Brown and Rose Blalock Brown, and siblings, Judy “Sis” Gorman, Johnny Brown, Joe Clifton “Dude” Brown, Don Brown, Sally McPherson, Troy Brown, and Harry Lee “Mitt” Brown.

BUFORD DANIEL "DANNY" WILCOX
November 8, 1953 – May 2, 2020
Buford Daniel “Danny” Wilcox, age 66, of Mentone, AL, died Saturday, May 2, 2020, at his residence. Mr. Wilcox was born November 8, 1953, in Centre, AL, son of the late Buford Daniel and Mamie Lucile Jenkins Wilcox. He was a member of Berryton Baptist Church, and prior to his retirement, was employed with Fruit of the Loom. In addition to his parents, Mr. Wilcox was preceded in death by a sister, Marie Duncan. Survivors include his wife, Esther Jones Wilcox; sons, Chris (Ashley) Wilcox, Bryan Wilcox, Josh (Alyse) Wilcox; a daughter, Ashley Wilcox; brothers, Rickey Wilcox and Tommy Giles; sister, Teresa (David) Crawford; 8 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren.

RUBY LOUISE DAVIS
February 27, 1949 – May 1, 2020
Ruby Louise Davis, age 71, passed away on Friday, May 1, 2020 at DeKalb Regional Medical Center. She was born on February 27, 1949 to Grady Clark & Mary Louise Keith Clark. Mrs. Davis Worked for Bailey Knit before retiring. She is survived by her husband, Charles Bukley; sons, Duncan Davis, Dennis Davis (Tina), Ricky Don Davis (Melissa), and Derek Davis; daughter, Treana Smith (Tom); brothers, Joseph Clark, Walter Clark, and Billy Clark; sisters, Naomi Chandler and Wanda Whipkey; twelve grandchildren and four great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and five siblings.



MERIT BANK
BETTER BUSINESS BANKING.
Member FDIC | Equal Housing Lender



Drive-thru Earth Day in Valley Head

Valley Head has long celebrated Earth Day, and this year was no different. Well, it was a little different. The Town of Valley Head traditionally holds a contest with t-shirts for prizes. This year, the town invited parents and children to drive by Town Hall to pick up a t-shirt commemorating the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. All 15 of the t-shirts were handed out. Congratulations to the lucky children!



FARM MARKET

OPEN (DRIVE-THRU ONLY)

We are continuing our careful and diligent work to get nutritious foods to you during this time. As spring is upon us, our harvest options should increase month to month. As we move forward in these uncertain times, we will make any adjustments needed at Market in order to give you the safest and best service possible. Please follow us on Facebook or Instagram (@thefarmatwindyhill) for the most up-to-date information. Need to talk to a farmer: email us at info@thefarmatwindyhill, or text/call at 256-674-3639. Meat and Pork are available Monday-Friday by appointment. We look forward to seeing you at our Market.

FRIDAYS
2-5PM CST
445 ROAD 942
MENTONE, AL

The Farm at
WINDY HILL
MENTONE, AL

LAW OFFICES OF THOMAS J. SKINNER, IV, LLC

- Estate Planning, Wills, Trusts, & Probate Matters
- Business Law
- Real Estate Law
- Real Estate Tax Sales and Redemptions
- General Civil Litigation



Open most
Wednesdays
from 9am to 4pm,
or by appointment.

No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers.

Valley Head 166 Commerce Avenue | 256-674-1111
lawtjs.com



Classified Ads

WINDOW CLEANING—Interior & exterior windows, sills, frames, screens, doors thoroughly cleaned with a non-toxic solution. References available. Free estimates. Reasonably priced. Home, office, rental properties. Call Steve Lockhart at 256-634-4030 or 256-347-7403 or email steve.lockhart5683@yahoo.com.

THINKING PARTNER—If you're looking for someone to bounce ideas off of who won't tell you what to do or make decisions for you, please contact me through TheMassaEffect.com.

HAND-CARVED cottage signs, walking sticks, figurines, and more. Woodcarvings by Don Highfield. Contact Don at 256-634-4222 or 706-340-3124. bit.ly/donhighfield

COTTAGE & CABIN RENTALS in Mentone, AL, high atop LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN near the attractions and downtown. Best Brow Views, River Front and more. See us at cottagesofmentone.com. Call or text anytime 504-481-8666.

FURNITURE REPAIR • Restoration • Refinishing • Repainting • Heirlooms • Almost antiques • Mid-century modern • Flea market finds. In-home work on cabinets, panelling, mantles, staircases, all trimwork. 35 years' experience. Pick up and delivery available. Call Allen Treadaway at 706-857-4977 or 706-528-3476.

COX TILE—Sunrooms, marble, baths, shower pan repair. James Pleas Cox, 706-766-2758, jpcxtile1@gmail.com.

RENT A HUSBAND—A complete handyman service. Decks, painting, pressure washing, sheet rock repairs, carpentry, bath & kitchen, remodeling, windows, doors, fences. Ask for monthly discounts. Free estimates. Home or office. Call Brian at 256-505-9841.

WALL BEDS (Murphy Bed style)—We have all size Wall Beds. Great for spare room and small areas. Come see our showroom in Collinsville, AL on Hwy 68 at the Alabama Mattress Outlet. Store 9–5 Mon.–Sat. Call 256-523-3622 or Andy Crow 256-490-4025.

Advertise in The Groundhog!

Current Rates & Sizes

All sizes are width x height and measured in inches.

- 1/8 page \$50 / \$65* (3.25 x 5 OR 5 x 3.25)
- 1/6 page \$75 / \$95* (3.25 x 6.75 OR 5 x 4.5)
- 1/5 page \$87 / \$110* (3.25 x 8 OR 5 x 5.25)
- 1/4 page \$100 / \$125* (5 x 6.5)
- 1/3 page \$150 / \$185* (5 x 8.75 OR 10 x 4.25)
- 1/2 page \$200 / \$250* (10 x 6.5)
- Full page \$300 / \$375* (10 x 13)

*up charge for color

Layout Charge 10% of ad cost

Classified Ads 45 words or less. \$10/advance

Design services available

mapamentone.com/groundhog-ads

GroundhogAds@yahoo.com

(256) 289-2002

• **SUBSCRIBE! Don't miss an issue** •
Have *The Groundhog* delivered to your mailbox.
Just \$20 a year.

Subscribe to *The Groundhog*
OR become a member of the
Mentone Area Preservation Association
and receive a free subscription!

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

☐ New Subscription \$20 ☐ Renewal \$20
Make check payable to *The Groundhog*, PO Box 387, Mentone, AL 35984.

OR

☐ I wish to become a member of MAPA and receive a free subscription.
Individuals: \$20 • Couples \$30
Make check payable to MAPA, PO Box 50, Mentone, AL 35984.

Is there someone special in your life who would appreciate a *Groundhog* subscription?
Just fill in their information above and fill in your name below.

From: _____

The Groundhog is available at these locations...

MENTONE

Helena's Gas & Deli
Little River Hardware
Mentone Farmers Market
Mentone Market
Mentone Town Hall
Moon Lake Trading Company

VALLEY HEAD/ HAMMONDVILLE

Alabama I-59 Welcome Center
Alabama Organics
Nena's Produce
Valley Head Drugs
Valley Head Food Mart
Valley Head Town Hall

FORT PAYNE

Blue Jug
Brown's Cleaners
Bruce's Foodland
Fischer X-Roads Store
Priceless IGA
Rim of the Canyon Café
& Grocery
The Spot Coffee Shop

GEORGIA

BJ's State Line Store
Ingles
River Ridge Escape
Menlo Handi Mart
Menlo Lucky's
Mountain Top Country Store



The Groundhog
is available online at
readthegroundhog.com

Angels at Work: Making Sure the Children Are Fed

by Kelly Leavitt

In mid-March, when Governor Ivey made the call to close schools for two weeks, Mentone Community Church (MCC) Pastor Tim Miller and Children's Pastor Laura McKenzie brainstormed how they could help the children in our area who relied on school meals. Laura called the county office and was told the county would continue to provide meals, but that a site and volunteers were needed to distribute the meals. The pastors immediately offered to help. On March 15, the county provided enough food for 14 children for the week. "I brought to their attention that we had a lot of kids from Valley Head School who actually lived in Mentone," said Laura. "The next week, they gave us food for another 14 students. Within an hour, we ran out of food."

Pastor Tim agreed that the church would fund a trip to buy more food. "I put a note on the door and said to call or text my phone and that we'd deliver food that evening," said Laura. "We headed to Rome to buy enough food to feed another 45 students. That night, Moon Lake Baptist Church youth minister John Kincer, Moon Lake teacher Karen Prestwood, and I went out and delivered those meals."

The next week, March 29, the county provided enough food for 30 students. The church provided meals to an additional 36 students. "At the end of that week, the county said they'd start a feeding program, delivering food on school buses directly to families," Laura said. "So, we thought we were done."

"Then I got notice that they were cancelling that program due to safety concerns. That's when I realized this was bigger than us. It wasn't just Mentone children who needed food, now it was those in Valley

Head, too. I put out a notice on MCC's Facebook page and asked for help."

On April 5, food was distributed to 143 children from Mentone and Valley Head; on April 12, 135 were fed. On April 19, 158 were fed.

During the third week, Jim and Joan Byrum contacted us to see how St. Joseph's Church and the food bank could help. They've been helping us quite a bit, both with food and financial donations. Carolyn Hall contacted us from Dollar General in Valley Head and offered to do a food drive, so we picked up food from them. The agreement was that any food we couldn't use, we would donate to the food bank.

Currently, about \$1,500 a week is being spent to feed about 150 children. Every Thursday or Friday, Laura heads to Costco in Fort Oglethorpe, GA, with her daughter, Jessica, and Megan and Jordan Sutton. "They're workhorses," said Laura. They purchase at least 700 of every item that they shop for. After loading the food into the church van, and then unloading it at the church, everything is unpackaged and set up for an assembly line of about 10 people who have been helping on Sundays. "We start packing at 3 o'clock," Laura said. "We pack 150 to 160 bags in just under 20 minutes. We've got this down pat."

Each child receives a bag that includes

breakfast, lunch and a snack. Breakfasts might include a small box of cereal, oatmeal, and a PopTart. Lunches typically include a couple of microwavable macaroni and cheese cups, some type of Chef Boyardee, a ramen noodle or soup package, a fruit cup, and chips. Snacks such as crackers, cookies, and fruit snacks are included, as well as five juice boxes. "We originally included fresh fruit," Laura said, "but it's getting harder to come by, and the cost just keeps going up."

To date, \$9,110 in donations have been received. Funds are sufficient to feed the children until May 10, which would coincide with May 15, which was supposed to be the final day of school. "We'd hoped to feed them through the end of May, which is still possible, since we're still receiving some donations," said Laura.

"This has just been something we felt led to do," she continued. "It's been a time-consuming ministry and an interesting adventure!"

"We really live in a great community. I'm proud of the people who step up and help those who are struggling. That's the way it should be."



Wildflower Café



Re-opening Soon!

See MentoneWildflower.com
256.634.0066

Donors from the Community have included...

Moon Lake Trading Company • Alpine Camp • Moon Lake PTO
MERF • St Joseph's Women's Group • Mentone Market
St. Joseph's Church • Mentone Community Church
Valley Head School • Riverview Camp • Camp Laney
Camp DeSoto • Camp Skyline
Numerous individuals in and out of our community

MENTONE MARKET

Your Mountain Grocery

Fresh Salads
& Sandwiches
to go

Local Goods * Eatery
Draft Beer * Wine

5872 AL HYW 117
Mentone, AL 35984