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# THE GROUNDHOG

“Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain”

SEPTEMBER 2023

## The End of an Era

by Kelly Leavitt

Change and consistency are two factors underlying the evolution of life. The community of Mentone has benefitted from both since its founding in the late 18th century. Following the removal of the Cherokee, pioneer homesteaders moved into the area, and many of their descendants remain. In 1872, John Mason arrived in Mentone with his daughter, Alice, and son, Ed. John is considered the founder of the town of Mentone. Alice is credited for giving the town its name at the urging of Dr. Frank Caldwell, who built the Mineral Springs Hotel in 1884 (renamed the Mentone Springs Hotel in 1915.)

The hotel was constructed in mountaintop wilderness and soon became a resort destination for people who came from distances far and wide. In its heyday, the hotel boasted such amenities as a tennis court and bowling alley, and for years was host to thousands of attendees of the annual Southern Baptist conventions. It was named after a nearby spring which Dr. Caldwell believed had healing properties. When the



“new” road up the mountain was constructed in 1928, the spring dried up after blasts shifted the underground topography. The hotel’s location became the central core of

Mentone, with various other buildings constructed nearby. A tragic blow was dealt to the town when the hotel burned on March 1, 1914. The Mentone Inn still stands across the street from the hotel ruins, and the Hitching Post, which dated to the turn of the 20th century, stood at the diagonal corner until its demise to fire on February 2, 2023.

Little River has flowed for millennia atop Lookout Mountain, from its headwaters in northwest Georgia to its confluence with the Coosa River—a total of about 75 miles. It is said to be one of the world’s only rivers that primarily flows along the top of a mountain. The river has seen its own changes. Dams have been erected, most notably the dam at DeSoto Falls, which was constructed in 1925 by A.A. Miller, whose efforts at producing hydroelectricity brought power to residents in Fort Payne, Mentone, Valley Head, Collinsville, and Menlo. The dam created about two miles of deep water upstream that allows for swimming, canoeing,

(continued on page 3)

## First Responders Need Volunteers

by Kelly Leavitt

Rural living has countless benefits, and it can also present some challenges. Our local volunteer first responders make a world of difference. They can be invisible to us—until we need them. But dozens of our neighbors work hard to be sure that if a life or property can be saved through their prompt response, it will be.

When anyone in DeKalb County calls 911, they dispatch the appropriate responders. Often, calls will go out to all of the nearby responders, including DeSoto Rescue Squad, the North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District (Mentone’s firefighters), Valley Head Fire Department, and Hammondville Fire Department, as well as the municipal police departments.

To illustrate the need for additional volunteers, some “dual enrollment” firefighters are on the rosters of more than one department.

DeSoto Rescue Squad Captain JD Trammell plans to have a volunteer drive soon. “We do our very best to respond to every single call from Mentone, Valley Head, or Hammondville with one or multiple squad members,” he said. “But because of the small number of people who are on the squad, every now and then the

squad is unable to respond before DeKalb Ambulance can arrive.

“We brought on two more people at our last meeting,” he said. “We train them to know what to do when they run a call. We have a couple of trainers on our squad, Scott Pepper and Isaac Bottomly, who can train people to respond to calls or get them trained as EMRs (Emergency Medical Responders).”

The squad gets calls for “lift assists” quite often when someone has fallen and needs help.

“You have to be willing to get up at 3 a.m. and use your own gas to go help someone that you don’t even know, just out of the goodness of your heart because you want to serve mankind,” said JD.

Volunteers are helpful even with just a basic knowledge of first aid. “If you can help stop someone



Valley Head Fire Department's new (used) 750-gallon tanker truck

from bleeding, know how to apply bandages, and have a caring heart and presence, we can use you,” JD said. The squad has several medics on staff, but if they’re unavailable, other volunteers can help stabilize the person until the ambulance gets there—potentially saving a life.

Squad volunteers meet once a month at their headquarters at Moon Lake Village.

If you are interested in CPR training, contact JD;

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## Mentone’s Boy Scout Troop 106 Moves to Fort Payne

by Kelly Leavitt

After 30 years with a home in Mentone, Boy Scout Troop 106 will be relocating to Fort Payne, with the First Baptist Church becoming its sponsor organization.

Troop 106 currently has 15 Scouts on its roster. Scoutmaster David Killian said, “When I became involved with the troop in late 2000 or early 2001, virtually every boy in the troop was from Mentone or Valley Head. Now, we have one boy who lives in Mentone. Since I became Scoutmaster in 2018, the majority of our troop has come from Fort Payne, our side of Sand Mountain, Hammondville, and Valley Head. We’ve had kids from Rainsville, Higdon, Pisgah. I noticed a difference in local enrollment when Dr. Berry left Moon Lake School in 2002, and again when the school closed in 2021.”

There is not currently a troop in Fort Payne. “Mentone and Fischer have served as the de facto troops in our county for quite a while,” said David.

“Since most of the boys and all of the active adult leadership lives in Fort Payne or attends First Baptist, now’s the time to make a change. The move is a sad thing, but it will probably benefit the troop in the long run. Parents won’t have to drive their boys so far to attend meetings. I think it will make the troop more stable and sustainable.

David grew up in Fort Payne, where he was a member of Troop 63 (the same troop that David Gilbreath, the founder of Troop 106, was a part of.) When David returned to Fort Payne after law school in 2000, David Gilbreath asked him to serve as Assistant Scoutmaster. When Mr. Gilbreath retired in 2015, David took over.

“The Scouting program is virtually identical to when I and David Gilbreath went through it,” David said. “The kids are different, though. They have so many competing interests.

“Scouting is more than tying knots and camping. The program is designed to attract and hold kids through an outdoor program, whatever that might be, and in the process expose them to the beneficial side of Scouting—leadership, citizenship, vocational skills, and life skills.

“We plan our activities half a year at a time. We have a weekend activity once a month and we meet on Monday nights, though we might not meet after a weekend activity.”

September’s weekend activity will be bittersweet. On September 15, the troop is spending the night at Jim Berry Hall, which has served as the troop’s meeting place since 2000. They’ll be packing up, cleaning up, and moving out on the 16th.

On the 11th, the boys will be given an orientation to their new meeting place at First Baptist Church and will meet there on the 18th for a uniform check, opening ceremony, advancement, and Court of Honor planning.

(continued on page 3)

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



# 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 41 years.

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Barry Morton, Pat Parmelee,  
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*Birthday calendar maintained by  
Kayla Worthey*

### Contact The Groundhog

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

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**Groundhog woodcut courtesy of  
Meg Justice/Bee Spring Studio**

# Mentone Matters

by Mayor Rob Hammond

At the Alabama Association of Chiefs of Police August conference, Mentone Police Chief Gene McKee received Advanced Certification in Law Enforcement. Gene completed 240 hours through the University Partnership of Alabama Continuing Education Program. Congratulations!

Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter and Senator Steve Livingston, along with representatives from the RC&D (Resource Conservation and Development) Council for our region were in Mentone on August 22. They presented a check for \$20,000 to the Mentone Police Department in the first phase of helping the department become P25 compliant. Computers and printers for two patrol cars, dash cameras, and body cameras were purchased



with these funds. Chief McKee and Assistant Chief Mike Langston put together the application and purchased the equipment. The town thanks them for their hard work and professionalism. Thanks to Speaker Ledbetter and Senator Livingston for their assistance on this project.



L to R: Senator Steve Livingston, Mayor Rob Hammond, Police Chief Gene McKee, Assistant Chief Michael Langston, Henlee Langston, Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter, Renona Seibert

# From MAPA’s President

by Beverly Haynes

The Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) was created in 1982 by local visionaries to serve Mentone and the organization has heartily proved its worth serving our community well for many years. Specific community needs were identified and contributions supporting various local organizations were provided to meet goals and causes important to the Mentone area. Though this is a time to honor and celebrate the many successes of MAPA, we must also take time saying our goodbyes to the old friend this organization has become to all of us in Mentone and the surrounding communities. We now formally announce that MAPA is actively in the process of bringing the organization to an end and is busily engaged with transitioning the vibrant path forward for Mentone’s beloved community newspaper, *The Groundhog*.

I would not change the wonderful opportunity I have had to preside over MAPA in its concluding year. I liken it to a final farewell given to the most revered and honored of friends. It is a privilege to recognize the high value this organization has played for our community and to lay this

noble organization to rest with the graciousness and dignity it has earned.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this organization: the founders, board members, officers, festival organizers, volunteers (lots and lots of volunteers), and so many others who supported MAPA’s fundraisers. Reading through the archives of *The Groundhog*, I learned of all kinds of events, programs, and projects MAPA sponsored or supported with a financial contribution. One, many years ago, even sent members on the hunt for an elusive working still! I never learned if one was actually found.

And to our many faithful members, how can we begin to thank you? You are why we existed for so many years. We will miss seeing you at MAPA-related activities but, like me, I know you will find a new home in another well-deserved organization supporting our wonderful community.

Thank you to everyone who had a hand in creating and keeping our beloved newspaper in print. To all former editors and of course current editor, Kelly Leavitt, you have our deepest gratitude and appreciation. Advertising is necessary for any

publication and without our advertisers there would not have been a *Groundhog*. To all who have run ads in the paper—we couldn’t have done it without you. Thank you also to the many fine folks (far too many to count) who contributed articles to the paper over the years, making this a genuine community paper.

MAPA is pleased to announce you will continue enjoying *The Groundhog* as it transitions to being published by Mentone Educational Resources Foundation (MERF). MERF has been a part of the Mentone community for 30 years and one could not find a better fit for *The Groundhog* than this organization. With their primary focus being education, we know this transition will be seamless. Along with *The Groundhog*, MERF will also enfold the Mentone Area Heritage Scholarship into their organization, providing an academic scholarship to Northeast Alabama Community College for a high school senior in our area. The match with MERF has brought peace of mind to MAPA’s board members and we know our community joins us in expressing gratitude to them.

Finally, I would like to thank our

current MAPA Board of Directors—Joel Leonard, Vice President; Chris Davenport, Treasurer; and LC Moon, Parliamentarian. You have worked tirelessly while exercising thoughtfulness during difficult decision-making meetings and for that I cannot express my gratitude enough. A huge thanks, also, to Kelly Leavitt, Executive Director. I appreciate your serving this organization with the utmost integrity and trustworthiness plus taking on the difficult task of working many long hours in forensic pursuit of documents and information.

In closing, I am reminded of a quote I learned during my high school years regarding moving on: “The moving finger writes and having writ moves on: nor all thy piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all thy tears wash out a word of it” (from *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*).

The moving finger has written the story of MAPA and now moves on. We will let it take its place in Mentone’s history. It is a part of the story of our town and our lives.

Blessings to all,  
Beverly

# From the Editor

by Kelly Leavitt

This issue marks my last issue as editor of MAPA’s *Groundhog*. It has been my profound honor and pleasure to serve our community in this role for the past six years. I have met and interviewed a wide variety of interesting people, learned much about local history, and honed my own writing skills, to boot.

This publication is precious to so many. When delivering papers, I have often been approached by people in parking lots from Summerville to Fort Payne who ask for a copy of the paper, “hot off the press.”

As we’ve all witnessed the gradual demise of the printed newspaper in our nation, *The Groundhog* stands out for its 41 years of continuous publication. The paper has even stayed in print through a pandemic, with only the April 2020 issue being exclusively digital. That spring, we worked with our advertisers, providing discounts on their ads to help their financial challenges. Advertisers are, in a way, the unsung heroes of the paper, as they have allowed the publication to be offered free of charge each month to thousands of people. I encourage you to support them whenever possible.

When researching a feature story, I often rely on *The Groundhog*’s hundreds of digitally archived issues. I am acutely aware of the impact so many people have had on the paper, especially the succession of editors and writers. Their voices are a large part of what has made this paper special for so many decades.

When I was studying to become a teacher, one of my professors explained that the best way to learn something is to teach it. He challenged my fellow students and me to teach a certain topic to our peers, which made us dig down and really know the subject. I’ve often thought of this as I’ve researched topics I’ve written about. I have learned so much. I strongly encourage any of you who have thought about writing an article to go ahead and do it! *The Groundhog* will always need your voice. The impact that writing may have on you, even if you consider yourself “not a writer,” might surprise you.

I will be forever grateful that the paper will be held in the capable hands of the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation so it can continue to flourish. We can all be grateful for that.

Many hands make the paper a success, from writers to readers, from the billing of advertisers to the mailing of subscriptions, from layout to distribution. Everyone who’s been a part of this paper has a right to be proud of their efforts.

I look forward to occasionally submitting articles in the future, as there are many more stories I want to “dig into” and share. If you are new to the area and want to learn about the past (highly recommended), the archives are a great way to spend your time. *The Groundhog* serves as a rich documentation of the evolution of our community.

We have an active fall ahead of us, and it’s always a good idea to get your calendar out and make note of the various activities as you read the paper. My personal thanks go out to each of the organizations and their volunteers who help make Mentone such a unique place to live. These pages are filled with opportunities for all.

Have a lovely month, everyone. —Kelly

**The End of an Era** *(continued from page 1)*

and kayaking—activities that form a foundation for the summer camps along the river.

A number of pioneer schools were started in the area—Bankhead, Holly Springs, Lahusage, Liberty, New Union, and Rock Bridge Schools. Many of these were consolidated into Moon Lake School, which was formed in 1911 and consolidated into Valley Head School in 2021. Moon Lake’s closure was a tremendous loss to the community and has perhaps forever changed the face of Mentone. Many young families are choosing to live in communities where housing is more affordable and closer to their children’s schools.

When the Covid-19 pandemic began in March 2020, Mentone was a unique place to be. While city dwellers’ lives were greatly impacted by restrictions, it seemed that life in Mentone did not change all that much, with the abundance of fresh air and open spaces. Since that summer, hundreds of people have moved to our area, a trend that has been felt nationwide as thousands have made their exodus from cities and opted for the slower, perhaps healthier, pace of country living.

The Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA) was formed by a small group of citizens in 1982. It has been said that a primary purpose for the organization was “to put Mentone on the map.” Throughout its history, the town has been through undulating periods of prosperity and popularity. Without MAPA’s efforts, the town might not have thrived to the degree that it has over the past 41 years. Certainly, there are varying opinions about whether this is a “good” thing or a “bad” thing, but the fact is that with the town’s development over the years have come such benefits as employment opportunities and infrastructure in the form of a water system and paved roads.

MAPA’s dedication to documenting Mentone’s history has been invaluable. In the words of Marcus Garvey, “A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots.” If that history is lost, or ignored, a community’s flavor is forever changed.

This documentation has been possible mainly through MAPA’s monthly publication, *The Groundhog*, which humbly began as a few typed, mimeographed pages mailed to all 35984 addresses, and which has evolved to its current form, with distribution from Summerville to Fort Payne and subscribers in 17 states.

A digital archive is online at [mapomentone.com](http://mapomentone.com); these hundreds of issues make a fascinating read for anyone interested in a solid understanding of years

past. MAPA also published Zora Shay Strayhorn’s book, “Mentone Alabama: A History,” which can be considered the community’s de facto source of deep history.

MAPA is in the thick of change right now and will soon be dissolved as an organization. Since its inception, many other non-profits have formed and are successfully serving various corners of our community and beyond. These organizations have all been supported by MAPA, either through financial grants or by having a voice in *The Groundhog*.

MAPA has also contributed in ways that many are unaware of. It was through the efforts of volunteers working with state leaders that the sidewalk was constructed along Highway 117 between the Hitching Post and the post office, where MAPA erected the bulletin board for the community’s use. The gazebo at Mason Park next to Mentone’s town hall was erected in memory of Bernice Crow, one of MAPA’s earliest supporters. Also at Mason Park is a plaque placed by MAPA which honors our local veterans. The rhododendrons that line the park’s edge at the highway were planted in memory of Bernice’s husband, Homer, also an early and active supporter, and dozens of rhododendrons were planted along Highway 117 to beautify the thoroughfare.

MAPA hosted the popular Miss Rhododendron Pageant, which for years was held in the upstairs of the Hitching Post. About 10 years ago, Ray Padgett, former MAPA president, arranged for the winner of the Miss Rhododendron title to be awarded a full year’s tuition to Northeast Alabama Community College. When the pageant became less popular in recent years, the scholarship took the form of the Mentone Area Heritage Scholarship, an essay-based competition for high school seniors living in Mentone, Valley Head, and Hammondville. This scholarship will be managed in the future by the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation (MERF).

MAPA was the host of the long-running Rhododendron Festival each spring and the Colorfest festival in the fall. The spring festival has not been held since the pandemic and the newly named Mentone Fall Festival is now hosted by the town of Mentone, thanks to the efforts of a large group of community volunteers. For years, Mentone’s Boy Scout Troop 106 was responsible for vehicle parking at the festivals, allowing the boys to raise funds from parking lot donations while proudly wearing their Scout uniforms and interacting with the public.

With funds raised by the festivals, MAPA was able to meet the financial requests of non-profit and service organizations, as well as Moon Lake School. A few examples of recent grants tendered include donations to MERF for foundational repairs to the MERF House, to Little River Waterkeeper to monitor the health of Little River, to DeSoto Rescue Squad to provide a temperature-controlled office for potentially life-saving medicines, to the town of Hammondville for the scoreboard at the new ball field that’s used by Valley Head School’s baseball team, and partial funding for the video “Where Little River Runs,” which was spearheaded by Holley Midgley and supported by numerous volunteers to celebrate the state’s bicentennial anniversary in 2019. These and additional donations to Little River Arts Council, Moon Lake Library, St. Joseph’s food bank, the North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District, and others, have made a difference in our area’s quality of life.

MAPA was the brainchild of Bruce BonFleur, who invited a small group of people to meet in his restaurant, Cragmere Manna, on Groundhog Day in 1982 to discuss the formation of an organization. His efforts, combined with the ideas and commitment of many others, including Sandra Padgett, led to a strong community-backed organization whose accomplishments are too many to list here. So often, we take things for granted when we don’t realize the efforts that brought them to reality, and we can all be grateful for the role MAPA has played in the Mentone area.

We are now approaching the second quarter of the 21st century, and it’s easy to see the potency of changes since 1982, the most obvious of which are technological. With the advent of the World Wide Web, email, mobile phones, and social media, we are more connected than ever. People are connected on Facebook through the Mentone Neighbor to Neighbor group, created by Sharon Habin, past MAPA festival chair, and other similar groups. Videos of oral histories of generational natives and other historic programs are posted on MAPA’s YouTube channel.

MAPA is particularly grateful to MERF, whose board of directors has voted to acquire *The Groundhog* and continue its publication in a way that maintains its charm, character, and historic content. This transition will be aided by the fact that MERF’s executive director, Anna Mae Horn, once served as editor of the paper.

Change and consistency are hallmarks of life on Earth, and certainly for the town of Mentone.

**Boy Scout Troop 106** *(continued from page 1)*

Weekend activities slated for this fall include: golfing at Lil Mole Run; camping on the river property at Alpine which is owned by the local Boy Scouts; a trip to Gulf Shores (which may include a visit to the Dauphin Island Marine Biology Center and perhaps an aerial performance of the Blue Angels); and Cloudland Canyon.

“We don’t have any immediate plans for overseas travel,” David said. “Dr. Berry drove the overseas travel and we don’t currently have anybody with the skills he had to put those trips together.

“We plan to get a trip together to Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, where we’ve travelled eight times in the past. The Scouts also have a big camp in the north, bordering Canada, called Northern Tier. It’s basically Philmont in canoes. We’ve talked for several years about trying that out. We’d floated the idea of a trip to Washington D.C., but Covid curtailed those talks.

“You can get stuck in a pattern. It’s easy to do. We try to avoid that by doing different things. Earlier this year, we spent the night in a cave. This summer, we canoed Big Wills Creek, starting at the livestock sale barn on Airport Road and



floating down past the county jail.

“I believe the BSA program and what it offers is healthy. Membership numbers have been declining for years, though, since there’s so much more for kids to do, including social media. The goal of becoming an Eagle Scout means something. It’s something for boys to strive towards. We’d love for more families to take advantage of the program.

“Mentone’s always been really good to us and we certainly appreciate all the support from the community over the years.”

Jim Berry Hall has been owned by the Mentone Green Foundation, a non-profit organization which was formed to support Troop 106. Proceeds from the sale of the property will continue to support the troop.

One of October’s activities will be working on the Scouting Heritage merit badge. David Gilbreath will teach the boys about the history of Scouting, and of how Troop 106 and Mentone’s Scout house came to be. The boys are fortunate to be mentored in this activity by the father of Mentone Scouting: “Before David Gilbreath, there was no Scouting heritage in Mentone,” said David.

*Editor’s note: You can read about the origin of Troop 106 in our August 2023 issue.*



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.....  
**LOTS and LAND**  
**LEVEL 1.4-ACRE LOT** with frontage on 2 roads (County Rd 106 & E River Rd) so you can choose your access point. Wooded land that is very nice except for the residential power line running through the back side of it (near E River Rd). New driveway, a new well, a new septic, a new shed, a new cabin, a new house, a new everything! You get to choose your cabin or whatever you choose to put on the lot! And, that's a portion you don't have to clear for a driveway either. :) If you are of a mind to get some exercise, you can hike less than a half mile & be at DeSoto Falls. Sweet! All in all, this is a pretty nice lot at a pretty nice price. \$25,000 (1838352)

**TALL HARDWOODS AND PEACEFUL BROW SUNSETS.** Build your special mountain dream home on this beautiful 1.2-acre lot in a choice area along the parkway between DeSoto Falls & Desoto State Park. Property lines extend over the brow so that trees may be removed for a clear view. The lots have a good setback from the road for quiet privacy. Two lots available. Lot 21, \$175,000. (1825125)

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**BROW-FRONT LOT ALONG THE PARKWAY,** the perfect location to build your dream residence or getaway between DeSoto State Park and DeSoto Falls. Beautiful sunsets and the views of the valley & mountains beyond can be created because you own your view and can decide how much, or little, clearing you want. Good setback from the road offers privacy on this 1.2-acre, hardwood-covered lot, with approx. 107' of brow frontage. Two lots available. Lot 22, \$175,000. (1825126)



**CUTE, CUTE, CUTE! A COTTAGE IN THE WOODS**, small in size, big on charm, perfect for full-time, part-time, or even as a rental. The interior features nice details like antique bead-board walls; crown molding; stone fireplace w/gas logs; great kitchen w/top-of-the-line appliances & granite countertop. King-sized master suite w/huge, walk-in closet & wall of windows to give you that "tree house" feeling. (Filled with very nice furnishings, too!) With its hardy-plank exterior & front & back composite porches, maintenance is easy. New shed w/power for workshop/storage. Located just off the DeSoto Pkwy, so it's easy to get to & enjoy all the mountain has to offer. High-speed internet. Very attractively priced! \$324,500 (1832743)



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



"September days have the warmth of summer in their briefer hours, but in their lengthening evenings a prophetic breath of autumn."

—Rowland E. Robinson



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5866 East River Road, Mentone, AL 35984  
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- DeSoto Rescue Squad
- Faith & Mustard Seed
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- LeonardDesign
- Otherworld Gifts
- The Sacred Earth Mama
- Shigley Amphitheatre
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A new shop & art space in Mentone!  
Handmade Art & Gifts by local artists

Coming Up Violets!

Art events • classes for kids • coworking space  
Located in Moon Lake Village - 5866 E. River Road  
Open Thurs - Sun 10-4 (& whenever else we're there)  
For info email comingupvioletsgmail.com or just stop by!

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First Responders (continued from page 1)

a minimum of 5 to 10 people is needed before a training can be scheduled.

To learn more or to become a volunteer squad member, call or text JD at 256-635-8906, or contact Gwen Stone, Michael Chambers, or John Fischer. “We’ll get them a membership application,” JD said. “We’d love to build our membership up.”

Mentone’s fire chief Joseph Lee said the only requirement for volunteers is that they show up as often as possible to meetings and calls. “No one’s expected to show up 100% because they’ve got a life and a job and kids and sports,” he said.

Meetings are held every Monday night at 6 p.m., usually at the main fire station downtown. “We test equipment and undergo training,” he said. “We visit various places for fire pre-planning, where if something would happen, we know where to set the trucks up. When the Hitching Post burned, we pretty much attacked it as planned, and that’s why nothing else in town burned that night.

“Anybody can help, even if it’s just with paperwork or grant writing...there’s a place for everybody.

“We run more tree calls than anything else. I was up at 1:30 this morning on a tree call. When there’s a bad storm coming, we get prepared for it, and make sure our saws are ready and our vehicles have gas.” He mentioned that in the event of disaster, whether it’s a downed tree in the road or a structural fire, citizens should call 911, who will dispatch to the rescue squad or fire department.

“Our current ISO fire rating is a 6,” Joseph said. “It was a 9, so everyone needs to let their homeowner’s insurance company know so their rates will be adjusted and they can save money.” ISO ratings are determined by audits from the Independent Safety Organization. Last year’s audit of Mentone’s fire department included variables such as determining how much water can be hauled in tanker trucks, and looking at training logs and the health of the roster and board.

Joseph pleaded for homeowners to use 4" high reflective numbers to mark the house number of their property. “In the middle of the night when the power is out or it’s storming, sometimes it takes us minutes to find an address—minutes that could be critical.”

Another helpful precaution that homeowners can take is to make sure the gauge on each fire extinguisher is in the green. “If not, throw it away and buy a new one,” he said. “Commercial properties should be reevaluated every year by a professional fire extinguisher company.”

Looking to the future, the board is looking at building a new Station One in Mentone, hopefully in 2024. “As of right now, we don’t have enough room to build on our property,” said Joseph, “so we’re looking for another lot. We need to be as

close to the center of town as possible. Ideally, we want property on 117. If anyone has property, please let us know. We need a minimum of one acre, if its lays right. We’ve got some money set aside and we don’t have any debt. We can also apply for state funding to help with the purchase.” To learn more about volunteering in Mentone, call or text Joseph Lee at 256-899-4027.

Dustin Burt serves as fire chief for the town of Valley Head and is also on the roster of Mentone’s fire department. “When I was in school, some of my friends’ parents were firefighters, and I thought they were interesting men. It always stuck with me, so I became a ‘junior firefighter.’”

Valley Head is also in need of volunteers. Dustin said 60% of their calls pertain for traffic accidents.

“We will offer any training needed,” he said. “Members start with basic training, and as you work your way up, more training is available.” Two of Valley Head’s firefighters are currently training to be “Certified Volunteers” by participating in a 160-hour course that takes place in Fort Payne every Tuesday and Thursday evening from 6–10 p.m. The department also does pre-fire planning “when we have time and people available.”

“We need help with everything, from traffic control to helping with paperwork, establishing fundraisers, and looking for grants,” he said. “We’re hoping to create an auxiliary so members of the community can help in a variety of ways.”

Valley Head’s fire department’s current ISO rating is 5X.

One tip Dustin offered homeowners is to “Be mindful of both your surroundings and the weather when you’re outside burning brush piles.”

Call or text Dustin Burt at 256-418-2204 for more information about volunteering.

Craig Hall has been Hammondville’s fire chief since November 2006. “We currently have 11 people on our roster,” he said, “but with everyone’s work schedule, only four or five are usually able to show up on a call during the day. Everyone in the county needs volunteers.”

As in Mentone and Valley Head, Hammondville’s fire department can use volunteers interesting in firefighting, directing traffic, managing paperwork, etc. “The majority of our calls are responding to traffic accidents on the interstate,” Craig said.

The DeKalb County Association of Volunteer Fire Departments offers training on the first Saturday of each month at the Fort Payne training field for anyone interested in learning to be a firefighter.

Call or text Craig Hall at 256-630-3092 if you’d like to discuss the possibility of serving Hammondville’s volunteer fire department.

River Voice

by Angie Shugart

*“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” —Mother Teresa*

Well folks, this is tough, but it is time for me to hang up my role as Director and Waterkeeper at Little River Waterkeeper. For me it is the right decision and the right time. I will be continuing to work for river protection into the future, but my days in an adversarial role is over.

For the last ten years, being the director of Little River Waterkeeper has been the high point and the privilege of my life—supporting the River that I love has been a journey filled with blood, sweat and tears—and a lot of joy and laughs. Working with, and for the Waterkeeper Alliance has been a dream come true and I have never had the privilege of working with a more passionate and committed group of people. The Waterkeeper Alliance helped me give voice to Little River, and work on behalf of its life.

I will continue on through the summer and fall of 2023, but by 2024, the Little River Waterkeeper will be dissolved. Our Wild

& Scenic Campaign will be picked up by our partners at Alabama Rivers Alliance. I have confidence that Little River will become the next Wild & Scenic River and the pristine water legacy will remain for Little River. I strongly encourage all of you to follow and support their efforts, along with the work of Waterkeepers Alabama. The Upper Coosa Riverkeeper and the Coosa Riverkeeper will share jurisdiction over the watershed in the future.

At Little River Waterkeeper, I have been fortunate to work with great partners and have been supported by a passionate Board of Directors. I have appreciated the dedicated interns, volunteers, and many friends, all of whom have looked after the river, supported the organization, and cared for their communities. It is my hope that another river conservation group will be formed to watchdog our precious Little River.

Over the years, I have spent a lot of time and energy educating the community on how to keep our river clean so future generations can enjoy it like we do now. It is now your role to caretake and implement stewardship practices throughout the entire watershed, to take care of your downstream neighbors, and to remember, we all live downstream!

Cheers to Clean Water! Thank you for all of the support over the years.

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



**Learn about the History of Mentone**

Zora Strayhorn’s book, *Mentone, Alabama: A History*, is for sale (\$15) at the Mentone Market and the Wildflower Café in Mentone.

**Delivering Custom Tiny Homes Nationwide or to Our Communities**

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

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

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

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8021 Highway 48, Menlo, GA 30731 [RiverRidgeEscape.com](http://RiverRidgeEscape.com) (706) 936-0007

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# The Beautiful Luna Moth (Actias luna)

by Kelly Leavitt

We have often been fortunate to see many luna moths on our front porch, particularly over the past several years. I recently saw one whose hind wing's streaming tails were missing. Curious, I turned to the internet to learn more. I discovered that the cause was most likely one of the luna moth's main predators—the bat. Science has proven that moths in the giant silkworm family grow their fancy tails to avoid bats. In flight, the streamers create an acoustic signal which dominates a bat's echolocation sonar. Confused, the bat will bite off some of the tail, leaving the body of the moth free to escape and extend their chance of mating.

These moths are not rare but are not often seen by humans. They are



The luna moth is the only moth to have appeared on a U.S. postage stamp (1987, 22 cents)

night flyers; during the day they tend to sit still, benefitting from their seafoam green camouflage, which is a result of reflecting light rather than pigmentation. They tend to be found in deciduous wooded areas.

Female luna moths lay between 200 and 600 eggs over a period of days, increasing their survival by being spread around rather than laid in one location. The moths are found only in North America, mainly in the eastern half of the United States. In the northeast, they have one brood per year, whereas in the southeast, they can have up to three broods.

Luna moth caterpillars constantly eat, and their host plants include white birch, American persimmon, American sweet gum, walnut, sumac, and several species of hickory. When threatened by predators, they click their mandibles (mouth parts) and regurgitate a malodorous liquid. After feeding for

about a month, the caterpillar builds a cocoon protected by leaves and emerges as a moth approximately three weeks later.

These elegant insects have impressive wingspans of 3 to 4.5 inches, and in rare instances can be as large as 7 inches. Their fore and hind wings feature eye spots as a defense mechanism to intimidate predators.



Adults do not have mouth parts or a digestive system, so they do not feed. Their only purpose is to reproduce, and since they only live about a week, surviving each day is vital. Predators mainly include bats, owls, and birds.

Luna moths are considered by some cultures to symbolize rebirth, change, transformation, and resurrection.

They can be seen in the south as early as March and throughout the summer months. If you happen to spot a luna moth, take a photo and enjoy the sighting! They are uniquely beautiful creatures.



This moth landed on our window, creating a truly unique view!



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(256)-674-3639 or [info@thefarmatwindyhill.com](mailto:info@thefarmatwindyhill.com)

Follow us on Instagram and Facebook for our most up-to-date information.

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Rocky Top Pottery on Facebook



# October Festival to Benefit Historic Mentone Site

by Pat Parmelee

Mark your calendar! The new Mentone Fall Festival will take place Saturday, October 21, and you will not want to miss it. The festival will host more than 40 artists and craftsmen, a variety of food vendors to keep festival goers refreshed, and musical entertainment on two separate stages. There will also be children’s events and games, truly offering something for everyone at the festival. Local businesses, including the Mentone Inn and the Log Cabin Village, will host additional events on Friday night and throughout the day on Saturday, promising a festive atmosphere throughout the community.

All festival proceeds will support renovation of Moon Lake Elementary School, a community landmark built in 1928 and closed in 2021. This historic building is enjoying a renaissance as Moon Lake Village, a repurposed campus supporting local artists and businesses, as well as a community gathering spot for special events. Honoring the school’s motto, “Firmly Planted, Forward Moving,” the Town of Mentone has forged ahead with improvements to preserve this cultural asset, including renovation of classroom space as studios and offices, creation of the Bill Berry Community Room, and construction of an outdoor venue, the Shigley Amphitheater. Unfortunately, in March 2023, the Mentone Town Council learned

that the original structure needs major repairs and was forced to close the Bill Berry Community Room. Costs will be significant. The Mentone Fall Festival will help move renovations forward, ensuring that this very special part of Mentone’s history is preserved as a resource for all.

Sponsored by the Town of Mentone, the Mentone Fall Festival is a community-driven effort, planned and executed by a dedicated team of local residents who are donating their time and energy. It continues the tradition of a local fall festival and has been developed to become a self-sustaining event to benefit the Town of Mentone, its landmarks, and infrastructure. The festival is completely self-supported, relying on donations from area businesses, community organizations, and individuals to cover the costs of planning and staging the event. All proceeds will go to benefit Moon Lake Village and historic downtown Mentone.

“Excitement is building for the Mentone Fall Festival,” states Mentone Mayor Rob Hammond. “Thanks to the many volunteers on the various committees for their hard work and enthusiasm! Putting on a festival also requires teamwork. It is gratifying to watch the community come together to make the Mentone Fall Festival a success.”

The new festival follows the tradition of Moon Lake School’s Harvest Festival, which began in the 1950s, and Colorfest, which was introduced in 1982 by the Mentone Area Preservation Association to replace the annual fall Crafts Fair. Past festivals have been vital as an economic driver for all area businesses, a platform for local artists and musicians, and helpful fundraising events for area nonprofits. The Mentone Fall Festival will continue the tradition while drawing attention and much-needed funds to preserving and developing a cherished local landmark.

For more details regarding the Mentone Fall Festival, including information on how you can become a sponsor or volunteer, please visit the website at [mentonefallfestival.godaddysites.com](http://mentonefallfestival.godaddysites.com) or follow Mentone Fall Festival on Facebook.



# Rhododendron Garden Club News

by Alyce Kenney

*“The greatest fine art of the future will be the making of a comfortable living from a small piece of land.”*

—Abraham Lincoln

The August meeting of our club brought us back together for a business meeting after some enjoyable summer field trips. The agenda was full and lively discussions ensued. The program offered by Martha Wood was about how to create a winning horticultural exhibit for the upcoming DeKalb County Agricultural Fair. Anyone who gardens knows that certain plants call our attention to them with their bright colorful blooms and showy leaves. There is a true sense of pride in what has been created. Why not share your successes with others? Every one is eligible to exhibit, whether you are a member of a garden club or not. All the information you need to know is in the Fair catalog. There are specific rules, of course, but that just makes the competitive spirit shine a bit brighter. You can find the catalog on line at [dekalbcountyvfwfair.com](http://dekalbcountyvfwfair.com). This year’s fair runs September 25 through the 30th at the VFW Fairgrounds in Fort Payne.

Most of us have gone to a county fair at some point in our lifetime. The very first county fair in America was held in Pittsfield, MA in 1807. Fairs have been held since the 1850s in Alabama. The fair is an event to showcase and highlight the many talented and dedicated individuals who contribute to enhancing each of our lives through agriculture, arts and crafts, animal husbandry, home-crafted food, horticulture, music, and more. Going to the fair brings one closer to the local community and its people. It is a place for inspiration, education, and just plain pleasure. Fairs are for kids and adults alike. You can brave the gravity-defying rides of the midway or sit still and listen to the

talented musical artists in the bandstands. You can admire single stems of dahlias and be inspired by the handiwork of a patchwork quilt. There is something to see, learn about, enjoy, and taste for everyone. The DeKalb County Fair holds the record in the state of Alabama for the number of times to have been named the Number 1 County Fair. This is because of the loyal support from all of us. So join the Rhododendron Garden Club girls and enter a bloom, stem, or even a favorite houseplant. Earn a ribbon and treat yourself to some cotton candy and funnel cakes while you are at it. You will become a part of a very special time-honored tradition.

Some more information can be found at these following websites:

- [gardenclub.org/ngc-flower-shows](http://gardenclub.org/ngc-flower-shows)
- [yesterdaysamerica.com/american-traditions-a-short-history-of-agricultural-fairs/showcase](http://yesterdaysamerica.com/american-traditions-a-short-history-of-agricultural-fairs/showcase)

Come visit us at the Follow Your Art festival on September 2. We’ll be selling plants of all kinds and will answer your gardening questions.

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

The September 12th meeting is scheduled at 10 a.m. CDT at the Scout House on Dempsey Street.

*Alyce Kenney serves as secretary for the Rhododendron Garden Club.*



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# Coming This Fall at Moon Lake Library: Ebooks and Expanded Hours

by Anne McLeod

The Moon Lake Library municipal board is happy to announce some new initiatives that will expand access to library resources. Ever since we became Alabama’s newest public library in November of last year, we’ve looked forward to being able to offer our patrons ebooks and digital audiobooks. That day is getting closer. We’re also planning to increase the hours of operation by opening on Friday afternoon and hiring a library assistant.

### Access to Ebooks and Digital Audiobooks

Several weeks ago, in response to a survey posted by the library on the Facebook group “Mentone Neighbor to Neighbor,” many patrons said that this is a service they would use. This was important to determine because the cost of ebooks is a substantial part of our annual book budget. If people use it, it is well worth the expense.

Through the Alabama Public Library Service, we have access to Camellia Net, if we choose to subscribe. At their August meeting, the municipal library board voted to move ahead, once additional funds become available this fall.

The bottom line: look for ebooks and digital audiobooks to become available in late November or early December. Most people use the Libby app to read or listen to digital titles, but they can also be downloaded to Kindles.

### Expanded Hours Coming Soon and We’re Hiring!

Another exciting project this fall is expanding the library’s hours and hiring a library assistant, both of which were approved by the Mentone Town Council at its August meeting.

Moon Lake Library is currently open 16.5 hours weekly, from 12–4:30 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday and 10 a.m.–1 p.m. on Saturday. With the development of Moon Lake Village and the presence of shops that are open on Fridays, the library’s board of trustees approached Town Council to see if the library funding might be increased to cover one more day per week. Opening on Fridays will bring our total hours per week to 21.

Although small libraries like ours are open part-time, having a second paid staff person will allow those hours to be shared so that each person can have whole days off per week to be better able to handle appointments, family responsibilities, and travel.

The municipal board is accepting resumes through September 15. Although a Masters of Library Science (MLS) would be a plus, it is not required for this position. Instead we are looking for someone who can work a flexible schedule of between 7.5 and 9 hours most weeks and also be available to occasionally cover the entire 21 hours if I am not available. Experience as a library volunteer is very helpful, and training will be provided.

The timeline is as follows:

- Applications will be accepted until September 15, 2023. Email a resume and cover letter to [books@moonlakelibrary.org](mailto:books@moonlakelibrary.org) to apply.
- Interviews will be conducted over the following week, with a hiring decision made by September 25.
- The new assistant will begin work the first week of October.

We are grateful to Mayor Hammond and the Town Council for their support. We look forward to starting our next chapter at Moon Lake Library!

For more information on these and other library events, email [books@moonlakelibrary.org](mailto:books@moonlakelibrary.org) or call 256-634-2127.

Anne McLeod is the librarian at Moon Lake Library.

A ZOOM VISIT

IT'S A MYSTERY

Featured Speaker: Mystery Writer Nora McFarland

Nora McFarland is the author of the Lilly Hawkins series and is active in the Mystery Writers of America. Join us on Zoom, either from the library or from home, as we find out what goes into planning and plotting a mystery story.

ON MONDAY, 18 SEPT 2023 | 6:30 PM

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MORE INFORMATION | [WWW.MOONLAKELIBRARY.ORG](http://WWW.MOONLAKELIBRARY.ORG)



IN CELEBRATION OF



CONSTITUTION DAY

FEATURED SPEAKERS

- Judge Randall Cole - *The Constitution and How We Got It*
- Anne McLeod - *Selecting Books for Libraries: The First Amendment in Practice*

September 25, 6:30 PM

Moon Lake Library

Hiring: Library Assistant for Moon Lake Library

Duties

Provide customer service; handle circulation and cataloging; assist with public relations, including social media; collaborate with library director on collection development; place orders; assist with technology management; help with inventory; handle sales of used books and DVDs.

Requirements and skills

- Library experience (volunteer or professional) required
- Dependability and commitment to the job
- Experience using computers and working with electronic databases; familiarity with library information management systems
- Strong organizational skills
- Effective communication
- A patient and friendly personality
- A degree in Library Science; a Master’s in Library Science or Information Management is a plus

Hours

Part-time work average of 9-13 hours per week, with occasional opportunities to work 21 hours per week.

Pay

\$10/hour

To apply, please email resume and cover letter to [books@moonlakelibrary.org](mailto:books@moonlakelibrary.org).

September 6 is

National Read a Book Day!

“I find television very educating.

Every time somebody turns on the set,

I go into the other room and read a book.”

—GROUCHO MARX

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# Little River Arts Council News

by Juli Jordan

The 3rd Annual Follow Your Art is Saturday, September 2, at MERF’s Community Walking Trail. Over 30 artists will exhibit, along with delightful storytelling with Debbie Happy Cohen, the Sidewalk Chalk Art Contest, face painting by Brandi Still, local musicians, Mobile Munchies food truck, and Freudian Sip coffees and smoothies. Check out the Sidewalk Chalk Art and vote for the People’s Choice Award.

Follow Your Art artists are part of a judged exhibit with \$900 in awards. We are honored that Hank Willet is our judge this year.

A new addition to Follow Your Art is the Emerging Artists Exhibit represented by students of Fort Payne High School and Northeast Alabama Community College. The Rhododendron Garden Club will offer baked goods and plants for sale and DeSoto Rescue Squad will sell drinks.

Sidewalk Chalk Artists can check in as early as 7 a.m. so that your masterpiece is completed in time for judging at 1 p.m. LRAC provides the chalk or you may bring your own. All ages are welcome. Awards will be given for Best of Show–Youth; Best of Show–Team; Best of Show–Adult; and People’s Choice Award.

The event is free and open to the public.

This month’s ARTalk features artist Steve Soares of Magick Farm. Steve will talk about his unique creations and the inspirations behind them on Wednesday, September 20, 6–8 p.m. at Moon Lake Library.

LRAC will have a tent at Finster Fest at Paradise Garden in Summerville, GA on September 23 and 24, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. EDT. Participating LRAC artists include Susie Lawson, Kelly Farley, Lacy Hope Dobbs, and Mikel Yeakle. If you’ve never been to Finster Fest, we highly recommend it!

Believe it or not, Creative Spirit Market is just around the

corner—November 11 and 12. A favorite annual event, Creative Spirit Market is held at DeSoto State Park’s picnic area. The open-air showcase features artist demonstrations, local and regional fine and folk art, hand-crafted goods, live acoustic music, and an interactive art area.

Our home hour returns Saturday, December 9, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., as the “Holiday Home Tour.” Beautiful homes, inns and lodges will be featured, as well as local artists.

THANK YOU to the artists, friends, and businesses who contributed to our annual silent auction and membership social: Tres Taylor, Tre Lilli, Mentone Market, Holley Midgley, Doug Perkins, Carol Reynolds, Don Pirch, Meg Justice, Kevin Chitwood, Scott Thomas, Stephen and Michele Smith, Fantastic Foods, Mentone Inn, Barbara Umland, Vicki Wallis, Kelly Farley, and Hoot Owl Hollow. Thank you to Clare Donohue and Stephen Powers for the wonderful entertainment and to Cynthia Stinson for the delicious food.

LRAC’s events are made possible by our members, contributions by artists and businesses for our annual silent auction, and by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. If you enjoy our events and would like to become a part of our support team, visit our website and become a member at [littleriverartscouncil.com](http://littleriverartscouncil.com). Annual memberships begin at \$25.

*Juli Jordan is the president of Little River Arts Council.*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday, September 2 • 10am–3pm**  
**FOLLOW YOUR ART & Sidewalk Chalk Art Contest**  
MERF Community Walking Trail  
4561 AL HWY 117, Mentone

**Wednesday, September 20 • 6–8pm**  
**Art Talk featuring Steve Soares of Magick Farm @ Moon Lake Library, Mentone**

**September 23 & 24 • 10am–5pm EDT**  
**Finster Fest: LRAC Artists Booth**  
Paradise Garden, Summerville, GA

**November 11 & 12 • 10am–3pm**  
**Creative Spirit Market @ DeSoto State Park**

**Saturday, December 9 • 9am–4pm**  
**Holiday Home Tour, Mentone**

# A River Watch Water, Water Everywhere and Ain’t That Grand

by William W. Schwarz

*Editors note: Bill Schwarz was part of a group of concerned citizens who formed Friends of Little River in 1998. The organization was instrumental in the formation of the Little River National Preserve. He wrote regular columns in The Groundhog and we’re pleased to reprint this article from the December 1992 issue. Bill passed away in 2019.*

Sitting here on the porch and watching the river is my very favorite early morning thing to do. Little River is truly an event in life if you really look, listen, and feel it. All of your senses can participate in the wonders of water. Listen to the awe-inspiring roar of DeSoto Falls a few hours after a really big rain storm; feel the ground shake from the impact of water hitting rocks or more water. Another day, listen and it’s a soft background murmur, a white noise that is soothing and relaxing, wiping clean the slate of worry, stress, and care. On a warm summer evening the hum of the falls can put you right to sleep.

All life on earth depends upon water. There is nothing in the animal or vegetable kingdoms that does not need water, from the smallest bacteria to the largest whale and tallest tree. Some use more than others, but ultimately all need it, all absolutely must have it. Even viruses, which are not “alive” in the sense that animals and plants are alive, need water; for they reproduce and carry on their function in the water-laden cells of humans and animals.

Water is the most plentiful compound on earth (covering 70% of earth’s surface) and is made up of two elements which are gases—hydrogen and oxygen. Hydrogen is the lightest of all elements and oxygen is the other material upon which life depends. These two elements are joined together in the ratio of two hydrogens to one oxygen and the chemist represents this compound as H<sub>2</sub>O (H for hydrogen and O for oxygen).

As a chemical compound, water really is an oddity. It has no business being a

liquid over the temperature range 32° to 212°F. Other molecules of the same size are gases over that temperature range. Take ammonia, for example. It is a gas all the way down to –36°F and doesn’t become a solid until –61°F. Methane (marsh gas) doesn’t become a liquid until –107°F and changes to solid at –199°F.

Ice—now there is a great form of water. What a wonderful sound, the clink of ice cubes in a glass of tea. Watch the ice cubes float at the surface, cooling the tea and you on a hot summer afternoon. Ice is another odd characteristic of water. Its solid form floats in its liquid form. Water is the only compound which expands when it freezes. Ever notice that ice cubes are peaked on their upper surface? That’s because when the water was cooling down from room temperature, it first started to shrink but when it reached 39°F it stopped shrinking and started to expand as it was cooled further. When it finally froze at 32°F it had expanded so that it occupied 10% more space than it did at room temperature (it had gone from a density of 0.997 at room temperature to 1.000 at 39°F to 0.90 at freezing). So, this is why ice floats; it is not as “heavy” as water. This behavior of water is absolutely unique and boy are the fish glad. As a matter of fact, there wouldn’t be any fish in the cold regions of the world if the water behaved other than the way it does. If water continued to shrink as it cooled then ice would sink from the bottom up and kill all aquatic life as we know it.

Water covers 70% of the earth’s surface and nourishes all life. Of all this wonderful stuff only about 1% is available as fresh water; 97% is saltwater ocean and about 2% is tied up in ice, snow, and glaciers. That 1% is all we billions of humans have for all our needs. We better take care of what we have and there is no better place to start than with our Little River. It is unique in the state of Alabama and is necessary to our life on top of Lookout Mountain.

These are not nearly all of water’s wonderful, but odd, properties. Thanks for your time and be sure to look out for our water.

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# Mentone Ukes

by Romey Atchley

Two years ago, my family and I made an abrupt decision to leave the Alaska wilderness and the cabin we had called home for almost 25 years. (Momma called, as the Bear would say.) My family needed us, and with all the support they had been in our life over the years, we wanted to be able to give them the help they needed. After having been absent from their lives over the years, oftentimes with no form of communication, we were ready to leave our remote location to be closer to the people we cared about knowing my grandfather had limited time left.

When we moved to Mentone, people who knew me would inevitably ask how we were making out in our transition. It was hard to say. We were doing the best

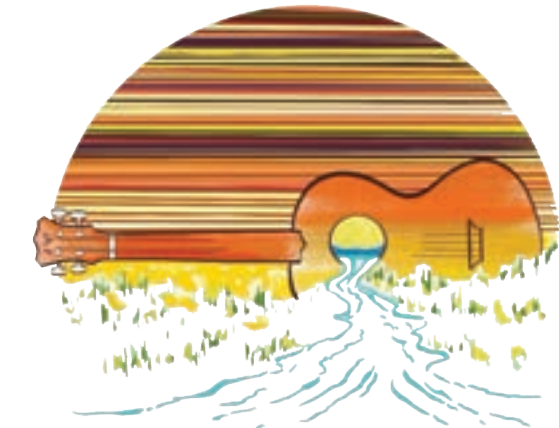


Romey Atchley

we could to try and build a new life for ourselves but still had a sense of homelessness and loss after leaving everything behind. Our close-knit family of three was pulled in different directions. We had lived in our one solitary corner of Earth for so long, the busyness of living with a community and things such as traffic were hard to get used to. Everything was moving so fast, and we jumped right into the flow. Busy focusing on all the tasks at hand, we had little time for reflection.

We were tethered to our daily routine of helping my parents care for my grandfather until he finally passed away in February. With him gone, I felt a loss of purpose. I had suddenly found this open space in my new Mentone life, but trying to decide what to do next left my mind feeling like a swirl of dandelion seeds floating on the wind. I was overwhelmed with possibilities, not knowing what ideas might land and grow roots. Looking for my grandfather’s obituary, I grabbed a copy of the March *Groundhog*. While flipping through the pages, I noticed an article by Debra Fey recounting her personal struggles of loss and the healing force the ukulele has been in her life. Her story made a huge impression on me, enough that I decided to show up for a beginners lesson at the next meeting of the Mentone Ukes.

For me, music was alluring but allusive. Though I struggled with learning an instrument, I always kept



trying to play on and off throughout my life. I had dabbled a bit with the guitar and mandolin but had not played for years. Still, learning to play music well enough to play with others had been a lifelong dream of mine. I have many friends who are musicians, and I had often wondered what it might be like to join in the fun of playing around a campfire or to partake in a musical conversation. When it came to music, I had always felt like I was on the outside looking in, like I was missing out on some great secret. The invitation from the Mentone Ukes fanned that spark of desire in me to join in and play music with people. I went to my first lesson, and from the moment I held the small instrument in my hands and formed my first chords, I was hooked. The tone of the uke was bright and cheery, and I found it easy to play. I immediately procured an uke of my own and practiced a little every day, and in a months time, I was able to move up to playing and singing with the group. My joy of playing has even inspired my son and husband to get their own uke, giving us moments to share that remind us of the times we were hanging out as the only three people on the planet.

This summer, I was fortunate to be able to visit my Alaskan wilderness cabin. For us, it was a great gift to step outside of humanity once again and have a moment to reflect on the new direction our lives are taking. As I packed all my familiar Alaskan gear to head out to my cabin, there was one thing from my Mentone life that I brought with me, and that was my new ukulele. It traveled well through airports, Bush flights, boat rides, and hikes. Playing music gave me something to do at each way station of our long journey as well as provided nightly entertainment as we played together at our cabin. And while it was hard for us to leave Alaska once again, one of the things that kept tugging at me was the excitement for my next group practice, to catch up with the friends I have made and learn some new songs together. I could feel the new roots of music and community that had begun to grow drawing me back to the mountain. I feel blessed to have stumbled upon this great network of music lovers who share favorite songs and play together in a supportive atmosphere. The Mentone Ukes have given me an opportunity that I never thought I would have and a safe space to explore my newfound joy of playing an instrument with a group of musicians.

**“Strum and Be Happy!”**

After four years, the Mentone Ukes is still growing and going strong! To find out why, consider joining us at an upcoming session on September 2, 16, or 30 at 1 p.m. CDT at Moon Lake Library. We offer a beginner’s introduction to the ukulele at the same time as our regular session, and you can use one of our loaner ukes. Connect with us on Facebook @ MentoneUkes or on the web at mentoneukes.com. Questions? Contact Debra Fey (debrajfey@gmail.com) or Jody Rhodes (jodyrhodesy@gmail.com).

—Debra Fey

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# Let’s Take a Walk!

by Anna Mae Horn



Have you enjoyed a good walk lately? The Pathway to Community at the MERF community house is always available. On September 2, it will be filled with vendors and fun artsy activities as Little River Arts Council hosts ›Follow Your Art. You don’t want to miss the sidewalk chalk art competition! Most of the time it isn’t that crowded, though. Sometimes, it is even empty. That is great for those who enjoy the sounds of nature as they walk. Others prefer company. Have you ever wanted to walk, but needed a walking buddy? If you’d like to start a buddy program for walking, reach out to me. If we have enough interest, I will start a program.

Did you know there are three “different types of walking: one way will boost your creativity, another will make you more productive, and a third way will make you a rockstar problem solver.” MelRobbins.com has all the details on podcast episode 88. The website also says walking can reduce inflammation, help you conquer your fears, and make your brain younger. Walking is a great exercise and can be a good way to connect with others.

Senior lunches are always a fun way to connect as well! Those will be starting back soon. We are looking forward to the activities, education, food, and companionship. The Mentone Educational Resources Foundation (MERF) is grateful that Moon Lake Baptist is once again allowing use of their fellowship hall.

As MERF continues to “walk down memory lane” and highlight our 30th year, we would like to especially celebrate September 1993, the momentous occasion when Probate Judge Paul Thomas officially signed MERF’s Certificate of Incorporation.

What started it all? If you were born in this rural area, or a similar region, you know how limited school funds are. MERF’s founders, and many board members since then, truly appreciated the value of local education but saw a need for enrichment activities for students, workshop monies for teachers, and educational support and continuation after school.

Minutes from the original meeting in February 1993 record a purpose of enrichment and “to help meet educational needs in whatever ways we could see fit.” Mentone’s Moon Lake Elementary School would be the beginning, but the minutes reflect, “...with the added desire for branching out toward Valley Head School if we progressed and developed to the point that expansion of interest was possible.”

The founding group met several times and fine-tuned the organization’s structure and purpose. Notes I have found in the file cabinet are in various forms—handwritten, typed on a typewriter, and a few pages that were obviously printed from an early word processor (talk about a throwback!). Something in particular stood out to me. Several copies of drafts were printed, distributed to board members, and returned with handwritten notes on the side. That variety of feedback formed a solid foundation that merged into an organization that is standing the test of time in an ever-changing world.

By September 8 of that same year, the wording of the bylaws was arranged to intentionally focus on education and to ensure growth of the organization. Since then, MERF has served all age groups and the service area continues to expand as much as is fiscally responsible. (Last month’s article detailed MERF’s many programs; read it online at mapamentone.com if you missed it.)

Enriching the learning of a community has many benefits. As people come together to create learning opportunities or to raise funds for those opportunities, they learn about each other, and they learn from one another. These are the bonds that tie a community. Mentone Educational Resources Foundation is honored to have enriched the community and strengthened these bonds for 30 years.

*Anna Mae Horn is the executive director of the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation.*



MERF's Pathway to Community is located on AL Highway 117 next to Moon Lake Library.



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# Mentone Arts Center

## Lampwork and cabaret music; saluting Artist of the Month Ginger Lowry

by Randy Grider

We begin the month by exploring the ancient art of lampwork. Glass beadmaking artist/instructor Terry Hale of Hale Fire Glass leads the two-day workshop, September 2–3. Students will work with rods of beautiful colored glass that they’ll melt over an open flame torch. They then work on basic shaping followed by adding dots, lines, sprinkles of color, and much more. Tuition is \$195 plus a \$35 supply fee paid directly to the instructor. Only two spots remain at press time.



Clare Donohue

On Friday, September 15, we are excited to host Clare’s (Donohue) Quintet featuring Ken Watters as they perform Cabaret on the Mountain from 7–9 p.m. on the stage inside the Chuck Sennett Center for the Arts. Admission is \$25 per person.

The show will pay homage to the late Nancy Lamott, who died in 1995 at age 44 from cancer.

“Lamott was a New York cabaret singer in the 1980s at the time I was a young singer in my 20s, just starting out,” Donohue said. “I actually never got to see Nancy. She played some of the most expensive rooms in New York by the time I was old enough to travel to Manhattan on my own. I mean The Oak Room, The Algonquin, and Don’t Tell Mama and she broke all house attendance records. She wasn’t a Bette Midler. She couldn’t scream and belt like Aretha Franklin. She was

appropriately attractive like the girl next door and sang beautiful songs from the deepest recesses of her heart and soul and you knew it and you felt it—everyone felt it. She performed at The White House twice and Carnegie Hall, so I guess a lot of people felt it.”

The quintet will also pay tribute to a couple of other musical giants.

“I’ll be doing a Sinatra number that will feature Ken Watters and two Antonio Carlos Jobim numbers Stephen and I have been working on, but the Nancy Lamott songs will be the Crown Jewels of the show...particularly her remake of Sinatra’s ‘The Best Is Yet to Come.’”

On Saturday, September 16, we will host another Paint Like Bob Ross painting class from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. The class will feature a mountain/lake scene and is being taught by visiting Certified Bob Ross Instructor (CRI) Gary Grider. The class is limited to 10 people (ages 13 and up) and costs \$100. All supplies are included to create your own 16" x 20" Bob Ross technique painting. We will also provide light snacks and drinks.



Our September Artist of the Month is Ginger Lowry. “Not your ordinary equine art” is Lowry’s quote that sums up her art in one tidy statement. She specializes in doing her favorite subject, racehorses, but also does rodeo horses, and birds. Lowry’s work is collected and has won numerous awards, both nationally and internationally, including in the United Kingdom, Dubai, Japan, France, and Australia. It has also been featured in several national and international publications and television media.

Lowry’s oil paintings are done with only a painting knife and she incorporates gold leaf in many of them. They are a marvel of layers and textures, done in somewhat of an expressionist style, always challenging the viewer to find something new each time they look into the heart of a painting.

The pastels are more traditional, but still in her own unique style. They incorporate her use of pure, intense color and graphic design elements to achieve her goal of enticing the viewer into the world of action and motion that racing or bucking horses present.

Lowry grew up showing both English and Western events with thoroughbreds and quarter horses on the family farm in Summerville, GA. When she was 16, she started galloping race horses at Old Mill Farm in Cartersville, GA, under the tutelage of Horatio Luro, the trainer of Kentucky Derby winners Decidedly and Northern Dancer.

After attending Ringling College of Art and Design, she worked with some of the best flat and steeplechase stables in the nation, from Tennessee to Pennsylvania to New York, working with numerous champions. In 1989, she retired as a thoroughbred trainer and amateur jockey after serious injuries in a starting gate accident.

She always dabbled with her art after college, but didn’t pursue a career professionally until after her accident, which she looks back on as a blessing in disguise, requiring her to focus on her artistic abilities. She currently resides in Cloudland, GA, with her husband Timothy Brown and various animals.

For more about any of the workshops or events—or to register or make a reservation—see contact information below.

Randy Grider is the executive director of the Mentone Arts & Cultural Center. He can be reached by email at [mentoneartscenter@gmail.com](mailto:mentoneartscenter@gmail.com) or via phone at 256-674-3366.



Ginger Lowry



This is the earliest-known photograph of DeSoto Falls, probably dating to the 1920s. DeSoto State Park Naturalist Brittney Hughes believes it was taken either before the original 10-foot dam was constructed or during its construction. “It is definitely before A.A. Miller put in the large pipe running into the basin,” she said.



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# September Community Events

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

**September 2–3rd Annual Follow Your Art.** Music, storytelling, children’s art projects, face painting, Mobile Munchies food truck, A Little Something Extra ice cream truck. Art vendors will line the winding walking trail behind the MERF House, on Highway 117, just east of Mentone. Hosted by Mentone Educational Resources Foundation & Little River Arts Council. 10am–3pm.

**September 2–3, 9–10, 16–17, 23–24, 30–Little River Kayak Rentals.** Miller’s Bend Paddle Shack in DeSoto Falls Picnic Area will help you begin your scenic kayak trip up the West Fork of Little River. Rent sit-on-top kayaks to enjoy a peaceful flatwater paddle on Little River overlooking beautiful DeSoto Falls. Your adventure can be up to 4 miles round trip, or as long as you want to make it! Paddle trips are perfect for individuals or groups. Life vests & paddles are provided. Call DeSoto State Park’s Lodge for info: 256-845-5380 or [alapark.com/kayak-little-river](http://alapark.com/kayak-little-river). Boat Shack hours: Saturday & Sunday 10am–6pm.

## September 4 Happy Labor Day

**September 9–Creative Spirit Nature Art Workshop.** Explore your wild creativity and discover the ancient art of crafting with nature as your muse! For thousands of years, humans have been creating art through nature. Participants will create works of art using a variety of natural materials, using materials like clay, leaves, acorns, pine cones, etc. Nature Journaling supplies will also be available to create your own unique memory of your day in DeSoto State Park. (bring your favorite journal if you wish). Ages 12 to adult. Instructor Ila Hatter is an interpretive naturalist, artist, storyteller, wildcrafter and gourmet cook with more than 35 years of experience teaching the cultural heritage of native plants ([www.wildcrafting.com](http://www.wildcrafting.com)). 3:30–5:30pm. DeSoto State Park. Pre-registration required by September 7. Sign up @ [forms.office.com/g/rsE7GX088G](https://forms.office.com/g/rsE7GX088G).

**September 9–Sensory Hike for Kids.** Join us for a guided 1-mile hike for kids. We will be using our senses to make observations as we learn on the trail. Meet at the Little River Canyon Center. 10:30am. Free event. No registration required. Please wear footwear suitable for hiking, bring water, sun protection. This hike is designed for children 10 and under, but all ages are welcome!

**September 10–Courtyard Concerts: Muscle Shoals.** Featuring local and regional artists performing a variety of themes, styles, and genres. Admission is free. Gate opens at 5:30pm, music begins just after 6pm. A cash bar is available, as well as food, drink, and merchandise. Located at the Coal & Iron Building in Fort Payne.

**September 15–Campfire Talk: Birds of Alabama.** Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone! 8pm.

**September 16–Birding 101 Hike.** Have you always wanted to learn more of the basics of bird identification? Birding is an excellent way to explore and connect to nature in a new and different way. Join Ashley Peters from AL Dcnr (State Lands Division) for an early morning hike on the boardwalk and along some of the trails around the Azalea Cascade at DeSoto State Park. There are approximately 430 species of birds that call Alabama home, so we hope to see some of our feathered friends and learn how to identify them based on sight and sound. Discover how to use current technology to become a better birder. Prior birding experience is not necessary, just have your eyes and ears ready for bird

activity! Feel free to bring binoculars. 7am. Meet at the Talmadge Butler Boardwalk Trail on County Road 89. Free, no pre-registration required. Great for all ages! For any details about the hike, email [Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov](mailto:Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov).

**September 16–Boom Days Heritage Celebration.** Musical performances and art displays in City Park, Fort Payne. 256-845-1524.

**September 16–Boom Town Opry.** Landmarks of DeKalb County, Inc. presents the Boom Town Opry, its 2023 Summer Series. Think of it as Fort Payne’s version of HeeHaw, with a featured cast of Players performing skits alongside musical guests & friends. It’s sure to be a show that tickles your funnybone and leaves you with a tune in your ear. Each performance will take place during the Third Saturday Cruise-in, so come in and cool off after you check out the sights and sounds downtown. For a suggested donation of \$10, you can come and go throughout the performance. All proceeds benefit the restoration of the historic 1889 Opera House, so please give more if you can! Our September show is a special matinee performance at Boom Days. 2–4pm. Located at the Fort Payne Opera House, 510 Gault Ave. N., Fort Payne.

**September 16–Landmark of DeKalb Annual Book Sale.** Need to replace a Landmarks publication, or just add to your collection? Come by and see us during Boom Days at the Richard C. Hunt Reception Hall for our Annual Book Sale. Everything will be 1/2 off! 10am–3pm.

**September 22–Hike With A Naturalist.** Join JSU Field School staff on a 2-mile adventure hike at Canyon Mouth Park in the Little River Canyon National Preserve. Bring plenty of water &/or sports drink, snacks, hiking poles/staff (optional), sturdy shoes (open toe shoes are not recommended). Be sure to dress appropriately according to weather. If the weather is questionable, please check with the park before leaving home. Please make every effort to arrive early or on time. Meet at Canyon Mouth Park at 10:30am. Free and open to everyone! For details, contact 256-845-3548.

## September 23 Happy Fall Equinox

**September 25–30–DeKalb County VFW Agricultural Fair.** Rides on the midway, great food, live entertainment, livestock exhibits, agricultural displays, awards, and so much more. Held at the VFW Fairgrounds, Fort Payne. Gates open at 5pm. 256-845-4752.

**September 28–Courtyard Concerts: Ladies Night.** Featuring local and regional artists performing a variety of themes, styles, and genres. Admission is free. Gate opens at 5:30pm, music begins just after 6pm. A cash bar is available, as well as food, drink, and merchandise. Located at the Coal & Iron Building in Fort Payne.

**September 30–Meandering Moonlight Paddle Trip.** DeSoto State Park staff offer a relaxing guided moonlight trip on scenic Little River. Enjoy this flatwater paddle as the sun goes down and the full moon comes up. Experience the peace and quiet of the gloaming time! This trip is approximately 4 miles round-trip and includes kayak, paddle, and personal floatation device. Weight limit is 300 pounds for singles, 450 lbs for tandems. Ages 8 to adult. Wear appropriate clothing for weather (you may get wet) and bring headlamp or flashlight, bug spray, snacks and drinking water. 7–10pm. Meet at Miller’s Bend Paddle Shack at DeSoto Falls. \$30/single kayak. 2-person tandem kayaks available on limited basis (\$50). Pre-registration closes September 26 at 5pm. Email [Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov](mailto:Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov).

# September 2023 @ Moon Lake Library

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

**September 2 @ 10 a.m.–4 p.m.**—Tie-dye with Ms. Lynn during the Follow Your Art event at the MERF walking track. The cost is \$20 for a white library T-shirt. This is an easy art project for all ages. While you’re at the library, shop our big book sale.

**September 2, 16 & 30 @ 1 p.m.**—Mentone Ukes offer free ukulele lessons for all experience levels.

**September 8 @ 6 p.m.**—Family Game Night! Bring a snack to share and we’ll enjoy board games at the library.

**September 9 @ 10:30 a.m.**—Book Club: Poetry, novels, or essays by Kentucky author Wendell Berry.

**September 14 @ 4 p.m.**—Public meeting of municipal library board of trustees, followed by Friends of Moon Lake Library at 5.

**September 16 @ 10:30 a.m.**—Little Library Learners returns after our end-of-summer break! Children ages 3–7 are invited to join Ms. Lynn for stories, games, and crafts.

**September 20 @ 6–8 p.m.**—Art Critique and Discussion Group with Mikel Yeakle, sponsored by Little River Arts Council. Let’s talk about art. Artists, please bring a piece or two to share.

**September 18 @ 6:30 p.m.**—Zoom with mystery writer Nora McFarland, author of the Lily Hawkins mystery series. Come to the library for the Zoom or join us from home with the link that will be posted on Facebook and the library’s website.

**September 25 @ 6:30 p.m.**—Constitution Day featured speakers: Judge Randall Cole “The Constitution and How We Got It,” Anne McLeod “Selecting Books for Libraries: The First Amendment in Practice.”



The Valley Head Cemetery will hold the 8th Annual 5K and 10K “Running in Memory of” Race on Saturday, September 30. The races will start at 8 a.m. and will be held rain or shine. A zippered 6-pack cooler bag will be given out to the first 100 runners.

Pick your distance and join us on the town square for a beautiful run up the valley on Violet Hill Road. Registration and packet pickup will be set up at the Robert Johnson Roofing and Construction office the morning of the race from 7–7:45, with the races starting at 8 a.m. Pre-registration is available online at Run Sign Up. Call 256-657-1616 to register locally or register on the morning of the race. Register by September 10 to guarantee a race shirt; after that date race shirts will be available as supplies last.

We have some great door prizes to be given away and Gary’s Warehouse will donate our grand door prize. All proceeds go the Valley Head Cemetery to help pay for mowing and other maintenance in the cemetery.

**Gift & Wine Shop**  
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[@thegroovygoatmentone](https://www.facebook.com/thegroovygoatmentone)

## Community Calendar

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**Mentone Town Council**  
meets the 2nd Tuesday every month  
at 5pm at Mentone Town Hall.

**Mentone’s Planning Commission**  
meets the 1st Wed. every month at 5pm at Town Hall.

**Valley Head Town Council**  
meets monthly on the 1st Monday at 6pm at Town Hall.

**Hammondville Town Council work sessions**  
are held monthly on the 1st Tues.. at 5pm at Town Hall.  
Council meetings are held on the 1st Thurs.  
every month at 6pm in the Fire Hall.

**The North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District Board** meets the 3rd Monday of every month at 7pm.

**FREE FOOD for eligible persons and families.**  
Wednesdays, 9–11am. New applicants are welcome.  
St. Joseph’s-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church, Mentone.

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# In Memoriam



**RUSSELL H. STALVEY**  
**October 10, 1937 – July 27, 2023**  
Russell H. Stalvey, age 85, of Mentone, passed away on Thursday, July 27, 2023 at DeKalb Regional Medical Center.  
He is survived by his wife, Ruby Joy Stalvey; step-children, Steve Blalock and Phyllis Roberts; siblings, Laura Jean Tilley, Evelyn McKenzie, Betty Crane, Leroy Stalvey (Willodean), Robert Stalvey (Jane), and Junior Stalvey (Denise); 10 step-grandchildren; 15 step-great-grandchildren; 3 step-great-dreat-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.  
He was preceded in death by his parents, Amon Horton Stalvey and Jessie Mae Stalvey; brothers, William Doyle “Sonny” Stalvey and Donald Ray Stalvey; step-son, James “Bud” Blalock; step-granddaughter, Connie Purvis; great-niece, Makenna Stalvey; step-grandson, Britton Purvis; and step-great-grandson, Britton Purvis.  
Mr. Stalvey was interred at Bankhead Cemetery.



**DEAN DUANE FREEMAN**  
**March 19, 1966 – July 28, 2023**  
Dean Duane Freeman, age 57, of Valley Head, passed away on Friday, July 28, 2023 at DeKalb Regional Medical Center.  
He is survived by his mother, Dorthey Freeman; brothers, Rhett Freeman (Toni) and Kyle Freeman; and niece, Vandila Freeman.  
He was preceded in death by his father, Jerry Freeman, and sister, Vandila Freeman.  
Mr. Freeman was buried at Violet Hill Cemetery.



**NORMA JEANNE BARE**  
**May 14, 1959 - July 31, 2023**  
Norma Jeanne Bare, 64, of Mentone, went to be with Christ on July 31, 2023.  
She is survived by her husband, Mike Bare; their daughter Tiffany Hilyer (Jordan) of Fort Payne; their son Jared Bare (Lauren) of Charleston, WV; and four grandchildren, Bryson, Ada, Geneva, and Lydia. She is also survived by her siblings, Teresa Glisson (Phil) of Memphis, TN and David Baker (Cheryl) of Mentone, and several nieces and nephews.  
She was preceded in death by her parents, Robert “Spokey” and Norma Baker, and brothers, Bobby and Ricky Baker.  
Mrs. Bare was buried at Fischer Cemetery.

**CRAIG ANTHONY LEBOUF**  
**March 2, 1959 - August 1, 2023**  
Craig Anthony LeBouef, age 64 of Mentone, formerly of Louisiana, passed away on Tuesday, August 1, 2023. He was born on March 2, 1959 in Thibodaux, LA to Weldon and Mary Ann Robichaux LeBouef. He was a retired as a car salesman at Golden Motors. Craig loved to cook, fish, and entertain his friends. He was an avid LSU and Saints football fan.  
He is survived by his wife, Debra Champagne; son, Jeffery LeBouef (Krystal); step-daughter, Crystal LeBlanc; sisters, Mona Breaux (Keith), Iris Weimann and Tina Voisin; grand-dog, Sophia; and several nieces, nephews and cousins.  
He was preceded in death by his father, Weldon LeBouef; brother, Neil LeBouef; and infant sister, Beverly LeBouef.



**ANITA BLALOCK MEADOWS**  
**April 30, 1951 – August 6, 2023**  
Anita Blalock Meadows, age 72, of Mentone, passed away on Sunday, August 6, 2023.  
She is survived by her husband, Willis Treamon Meadows; children, Grant Meadows (Shelley) and Colby Meadows (Kelly); sisters, Sue Watson and Cheryl Crane; brother, Roy Blalock; grandchildren, Elizabeth, Courtney, Isaac, and Olivia Meadows; and several nieces and nephews that she loved dearly.  
She was preceded in death by her parents, Mack and Geraldine Blalock, and siblings, Doris Wilson, Carolyn Blalock Kilgore, and Carl Blalock.  
The family requests donations to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital (stjude.org).  
Mrs. Meadows was buried at Little River Cemetery.

**TONY CROW**  
**October 15, 1959 – August 4, 2023**  
Thomas Anthony Crow, age 63, of Mentone, passed away on Friday, August 4, 2023 at Erlanger Medical Center. Tony was born in Wildwood, GA on October 15, 1959 and worked as a rock mason for many years.  
He is survived by his daughter, Sheena Crow; grandchildren, Hannah Estermyer and Daniel Estermyer; brother, Marty Crow; and sister, Andrea Brandon.  
He was preceded in death by his parents, Dewey Thomas Crow and Leona Langston Crow.  
Mr. Crow was buried at Little River Cemetery.

**THERESA VIVIAN HARDEMAN**  
**1965 – 2023**  
Theresa Vivian Hardeman, age 57 of Valley Head, passed away on Sunday, August 13, 2023.  
She is survived by her daughter, Rebecca Hardeman; son, Michael (Crystal) Hardeman; sisters, Mary E. Johnson and Jackie (Nydell) Chaney; brother, Tommie (Laura) Johnson; grandchildren, Drayton Higdon, McKenley Higdon, Aria Higdon, Jackson Higdon, Rinoa Hardeman, Ayden Hardeman, Tidus Hardeman; special friend, Tony Hardeman; nieces and nephews, Marty Floyd, Margaret Helms, and Richard Floyd; and a host of great-nieces and great-nephews.  
Ms. Hardeman was preceded in death by her parents, Elbert and Margaret Johnson; sister, Lorna Johnson; and brothers, Calvin Johnson and Kavin Johnson.

**DAVID WAYNE GARRETT**  
**1974 – 2023**  
David Wayne Garrett, age 48 of Valley Head, passed away on Thursday, August 17, 2023.  
He is survived by his wife, Dorothy Annette Carber; daughter, Patricia Marie Garrett (Dustin) Spradlin; stepsons, Ian Carber and Aaron Carber; sisters, Ronda Whited, Elisa Garrett, Patricia Williams, Vernell Faye Garrett, and Denita Chatham; brothers, James Michael “Butch” Garrett, Joey Garrett, and Gregory Garrett; and grandchildren, River Spradlin and Raelynn Spradlin.  
Mr. Garrett was preceded in death by his parents, Henry and Marie Garrett, and brothers, Billy Garrett, Skipper Garrett, and Stanley Garrett.



# Mentone American Legion Report

by Barry Morton, Commander Post 215

At the District Meeting, 27 August, Richard Pope, the DeKalb County Commander, reported the status of Post 215, the Mentone American Legion. Post 215 is one of eight in the District 13.

- 1st in Membership Renewal at 65.12%, which exceeds October goal.
- Membership Attendance is up. We had 10 members at our August monthly meeting.
- Currently have 43 members, which is 10.9% of the population in Mentone, based on the 2023 Official Travel Guide of Lookout Mountain Alabama—DeKalb County.
- Recently added a large screen TV, connecting it to an Apple iPad to present information to members.
- Legionnaire, Executive Committee Member, and Mentonian Sandra Plummer and Commander Barry Morton will be attending a grant writing eorkshop in Rainsville on September 5 at 5:30 pm. A grant will be drafted for the repairing the building.
- Post Commander Barry Morton is scheduled to attend Leadership Conference September 22 and 23 in Montgomery.

The County Commander will be swearing in the Post 215 Post Officers. Swearing in and Installation will be done at the Post Monthly Meeting, September 19.



We have a new lamp that was purchased during the longest yard sale. It fits in perfectly at the Post. (It's not a lamp post...it's a Post lamp!)



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October 20–21, 2023

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## Fall Festival



**Friday, October 20**  
**Festival Kickoff Concert**  
**@ Mentone Inn**

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

**Saturday, October 21**  
**Mentone Fall Festival**  
**@ Moon Lake Village**

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

Arts & Crafts Vendors  
Face Painting  
Children’s Activities  
Food, Fun & Live Music  
Artisanal Events  
& Much More!

*Festival Proceeds Benefit the Historic Moon Lake Village Campus Restoration!*

**Become a Valued Sponsor or Vendor! Information & Applications Online Today!**

Visit us @ [mentonefallfestival.godaddysites.com](http://mentonefallfestival.godaddysites.com) or on Facebook for more information!  
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