



THE GROUNDHOG

“Neighborly News from the Heart of Lookout Mountain”

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

ADECA Director and Staff Visit Mentone

Economic development team tours project sites to discuss potential grants

BY STEPHEN V. SMITH, EDITOR

Director Kenneth Boswell had heard so much about the good things happening in Mentone that he had to come see for himself.

The head of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Boswell, along with key members of his staff, visited Mentone in early October to tour the historic Moon Lake campus. This came on the heels of a meeting in Montgomery a few weeks prior, where Mayor Rob Hammond discussed the town’s need for support to continue renovations at the school.

“He was impressed with what he saw,” says Hammond. “It’s one thing to hear me talk about it sitting in his office, but walking around campus and seeing what we have already accomplished made a real impact.”

The town has applied for a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission



L to R: Leslie Wright, TARCOC economic development coordinator; Lee Terry, TARCOC director of economic development and planning; Ashley Toole, ADECA deputy director; Kenneth Boswell, ADECA director; Rob Hammond, Mentone mayor; Crystal Talley, ADECA division chief; and Kristen Emory, Mentone town clerk.

to upgrade electricity, plumbing, bathroom accessibility, and other important infrastructure across the campus. The county school board deeded the campus to the town when it ceased classes there at the close of the 2020-21 school year. The property has since been converted into spaces for artists, retailers, and gal-

leries. Northeast Alabama Community College holds classes there, and a new restaurant is opening soon in the former lunchroom.

ADECA coordinates ARC grants as part of its mission to “improve and strengthen communities and the quality of life in Alabama through a wide range

of diverse and comprehensive programs involving economic development, infrastructure, law enforcement, education, energy conservation and technology upgrades, and responsible management of water resources.”

The town is being assisted with the grant application by the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments. Two TARCOC representatives also participated in last month’s site visit.

While on campus, Boswell and his team toured the gym. Hammond shared discussions underway about the possibility of partnering with Northeast Alabama Community College to transform the building into a performing arts center.

Following lunch at Elevation Bistro, Hammond took the group to Brow Park, where they discussed potential improvement projects, such as an observation deck, a hiking trail, and restrooms. The town plans to apply for grant funding for these projects as well. 🍷

Groundhog Founder Bruce BonFleur Was a “Force That Could Make Things Happen”

BY KELLY LEAVITT

Bruce BonFleur was a man who loved adventures and purpose-filled projects. One of the projects he was most proud of starting was “The Groundhog” in 1982.

Bruce passed away on Sept. 17, 2024, at his home in Mentone after an almost 2-year-long bout with an aggressive form of cancer. He was surrounded by the love of his family.

Born in 1951, Bruce was a native of Daytona Beach, Florida. As a young man, after canoeing and hiking through the Grand Canyon with his father, he heard about Alabama’s Little River Canyon. Intrigued by the fact that it was carved into the top of Lookout Mountain, he decided to check it out.

Impressed with the people he met during a visit to Mentone, he found a house on the brow south of town, where he created Cragmere Manna Restaurant and Gardens. Cragmere became well known for its upscale food prepared by Mike Minden, a former executive chef for Walt Disney. Leah Gordon tended the Cragmere gardens, ensuring that the produce served to guests was freshly grown on the premises. Singing waiters and waitresses created an atmosphere that was both elegant and exciting.

“We became friends on the day I met him in 1981,” says Sandra Padgett. “Ray and I had dinner at Cragmere Manna, and I was impressed with Bruce’s creativity. I knew he was a force that could make things happen. Bruce had a dream of ‘putting Mentone on the map.’ In the 1980s, Mentone had The Log Cabin



The Groundhog founder, Bruce BonFleur (pictured with wife Marsha) passed away on Sept. 17.

Deli, Ruby’s Service Station, McGee’s Grocery, Mentone Inn, Blackburn’s Grocery, and the summer camps. That was the town.

“A few weeks after we met, Bruce called a meeting of local business owners,” Sandra says. “Ray and I had recently bought the Mentone Springs Hotel. Six of us met at a table in the hotel: the Rev. Charles McGee and his wife, Jean; Bernice Crow of The Hitching Post; Donna Buckley; Bruce; and myself. That was the beginning of the former Mentone Area Preservation Association (MAPA).

“This meeting spurred the creation of a typewritten, mimeographed newsletter designed to unite the community and create excitement,” says Sandra. “After

(See “Bruce BonFleur,” Page 16)

Mentone and Valley Head Respond Quickly to Help Hurricane Victims

Both Mentone and Valley Head sprang into action to help get aid as quickly as possible to North Carolina residents after Hurricane Helene left devastation in its wake in late September. The two towns put out the call for supplies, and the response was swift.

Coordinated by St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church, the Mentone request for aid was placed on several Facebook pages, and within hours, donations poured in by the carload — some from other towns around the Southeast. Church members packed donations and readied them for transport. A kind volunteer made three trips from Mentone to North Carolina with his truck and trailer to deliver the items to a local church for distribution. Donations included camp stoves, cleaning supplies, propane heaters and propane bottles, toiletries, diapers, jackets, blankets, and more. One storm victim called to say the camp stove she received allowed the family to enjoy their first hot meal in a week.

The Town of Valley Head partnered with Fritz Structural Steel and Harco Metal Products to collect supplies for storm victims, some of whom lost everything, including loved ones.



Pallets of water and propane heaters and tanks are loaded at St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church before heading to hurricane victims in North Carolina.

Valley Head’s volunteer firemen and employees of Fritz and Harco sorted and packed the supplies. A 30-foot trailer full of much-needed items was delivered on October 11 to the Boone, North Carolina, fire department by Fire Chief Dustin Burt and Assistant Chief Michael Chambers. Chief Burt said the North Carolina community was overwhelmed when they opened the trailer to reveal its contents.

The generosity of donors and volunteers in our communities is immeasurable. 🍷



Holly LaRock Owen, Christy Miller, Mary Jo Crabtree, Valley Head Assistant Fire Chief Michael Chambers, and Valley Head Fire Chief Dustin Burt working to get aid to hurricane victims. (Photo courtesy of Fritz Structural Steel)



The Groundhog

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The Groundhog has been in publication since 1982. MERF is honored to continue this community tradition.

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The Groundhog is a community newspaper, and as such we encourage submissions from readers. Send story ideas anytime. The deadline for articles is the 15th of each month prior to publication month. Thank you for reading The Groundhog!

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Groundhog woodcut courtesy of Meg Justice/Bee Spring Studio

FIND US ON 

Mentone Matters Developing Our Community

BY MAYOR ROB HAMMOND

Thousands of people visited our town for the Mentone Fall Festival last month. The weather was perfect, and everyone seemed to have a great time. From the varied selection of artists to the food and live music, there was something for everyone to enjoy.

Events like this don’t just happen. It takes untold hours from volunteers throughout the community to bring such a large festival to life. Months of planning and promoting are followed by addressing countless details concerning parking, marking tent sites, coordinating vendors, and putting up signage to direct our visitors.

In addition to thanking our many volunteers, we thank all of our festival sponsors who donated to help make the event a financial success. I would like to publicly thank our town employees, Town Clerk Kristen Emory, Public Works Director Paul Nail, Police Chief Gene McKee, and Assistant Police Chief Mike Langston, for putting in many extra hours in planning and preparing for the festival.

The work isn’t centered solely on the festival site. This is a community event, and businesses throughout Mentone welcomed visitors with specials, live music, and events to give folks a reason to enjoy all Mentone has to offer. Thank you to everyone involved — Mentone appreciates you!

You may not think of it this way, but festivals are part of our economic engine. The money generated by the festival will be reinvested in the historic Moon Lake campus. The school provides rental space to artists and galleries — plus Northeast Alabama Community College and a new restaurant soon to open. This, in turn, brings more visitors to our town and supports local business owners. The tax revenue generated is reinvested in services and projects that benefit all of Mentone.

Community development is an ongoing process. You’ll read elsewhere in this issue about a recent visit from Kenneth Boswell, director of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs



(ADECA). We’ve spent months working to secure grants to improve Moon Lake, and our enthusiasm led Boswell to visit Mentone to see the project for himself. While here, he asked about other projects we had in mind; when I mentioned Brow Park, he said, “Let’s go see it.”

Greeted by the amazing views at the park, Boswell saw the vision as I described improvements such as an observation deck, hiking trail, and restrooms. Brow Park is a tremendous asset to our community, and such upgrades would create an even more enjoyable experience for our citizens and visitors.

Make a point to visit Moon Lake soon and check out an Eagle Scout project. Longtime Laney camper and now counselor Matthew Hough from Atlanta expressed interest in doing his Eagle Scout project in Mentone. The structure around the white oak tree in front of the historic Moon Lake School was in need of staining, and Matthew took on the project. He had help from his parents, as well as Police Chief Gene McKee and Public Works Director Paul Nail. A few Laney counselors who had worked with Matthew took their lunch break at father/son weekend to help. Matthew gave a special shout-out to local scouts Jeremiah and Jonah Gilbert, saying, “They were a huge help and super committed to getting the whole structure finished.”

From the Editor Support Our Small Businesses

BY STEPHEN V. SMITH, EDITOR

Before you point your mouse to online shopping websites or hop in your car for a day of “big box store” browsing, consider supporting our local small businesses. You’ll find better service, competitive pricing, and a selection of goods that may surprise you.

Beyond those benefits, you’ll also help local business owners who depend on the holiday shopping season for a majority of their annual sales.

And have you heard of the multiplier effect? When you spend a dollar locally, it becomes income for someone else who also spends locally, creating a ripple effect that benefits many individuals and families. The tax revenue generated also pays for public services you and your fellow citizens depend on every day.

As you read through “The Groundhog,” spend a few minutes looking at all the businesses that advertise in these pages. They know you’re here,

and they have chosen to spend money to support the newspaper and entice its readers — you — to give them a try.

Not every advertiser is a business that provides goods, but even service providers such as banks, attorneys, and real estate agencies are locally owned and part of our greater community. And they want the opportunity to serve you as well.

November 30 is Small Business Saturday, where the SBA celebrates the 422,000-plus small Alabama businesses and the 1.2 million small Georgia businesses that make up more than 99 percent of the businesses in their respective states. But don’t wait until November 30; the next time you’re ready to make a purchase, ask yourself, “Can I buy this locally?”

Will you join us in supporting our local shops this holiday season? You’ll find friendly faces, unique gifts, and lots of appreciation for your patronage.

Thanks for shopping local!



American Legion To Host Sunset Socials on the Brow

You won’t find better views of the setting sun than on the brow in Mentone. Why not share it with friends? Our local American Legion Post 215 organizes a social for viewing the magnificent colors that put on a show just before dark.

The dates for the socials are set:

- October 17 at 6 p.m.
- December 19 at 5 p.m.
- January 16 at 5 p.m.
- February 20 at 5 p.m.
- March 20 at 5 p.m.

And always the third Thursday of the month, one hour before sunset.

See our Mentone Sunset Social on the Brow Facebook group or contact Barry Morton, commander, at 334-202-8936 (cell and text).





Veterans Day Picnic at the Post Saturday, November 9

BY BARRY MORTON

Veterans Day is a time for us to unite in respect for those who have served. Originally called Armistice Day, the federal holiday started as a day to reflect upon the heroism of those who died in our country’s service. It fell on November 11 to coincide with

the anniversary of the signing of the armistice that ended World War I — “on the 11th hour of the 11th month in 1918.” (military.com) However, in 1954, the day became Veterans Day to account for all veterans in all wars. Since this year’s Veterans Day falls on a Monday, the Picnic at the Post will be Saturday the 9th. Veterans eat free. For the general public, hot

dog plates will be \$5, and hamburger plates \$10. Join us for food and fellowship between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Find more information on Veterans Day at Military.com, and specifically on our local veterans at Mentone American Legion Post 215 on our Facebook page. 🍷



VETERANS DAY

MONDAY, NOV. 11

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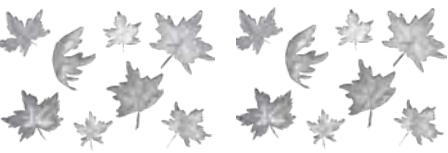
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Medicare Prescription Payment Plan

BY LYNN HIXON

The Medicare Prescription Payment Plan is a new program required under the Inflation Reduction Act. The purpose of the new payment option is to spread prescription drug costs throughout the year. Part D enrollees and enrollees in the Medicare Advantage plans that have drug coverage will have the option of spreading their out-of-pocket costs over the calendar year (January – December) rather than face high out-of-pocket costs in any given month. Enrollees who select this payment option will pay \$0 to the pharmacy for covered drug costs, and plan sponsors will then bill program participants monthly for any cost sharing they incur while in the program. Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage and Medicare Advantage participants will also have the added advantage of a \$2,000 out-of-pocket cap and the elimination of the infamous “donut hole” coverage gap. If you have any questions or would like to make an appointment, Lynn Hixon, the SHIP (state health insurance assistance program) coordinator, is ready to assist you at 256-845-8590 at the DeKalb County Council on Aging. 🍷





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We are pleased to present the poetry of Rand Hall and Amber Carroll, creative writing students at Northeast Alabama Community College’s Moon Lake Village campus.

Beckon the Approaching Autumn
By Amber Carroll

Summer floats away on kayaks and canoes
and honeysuckle blooms pirouette on a gentle wake left behind
in the West Fork of Little River, as a wherry approaches.
A chilling breeze sweeps them from underneath the campers’ rope swing
as the flat-bottomed ferry docks alone at the floating pier.
A floating ferryman steps out and suspends above water and dock.

Of all harbingers of the seasons — the petal perfumed, Lady Springtide,
the shining, sweet Summer Child, and the consuming, cobalt Count of Winter —
The Courier of Autumn is silent and somber as he escorts his cargo.
Tall and lean like a wraith, his cloak blankets the sun earlier in the evening,
to encourage the trees to lay down a red carpet of leaves,
and he extends a weathered hand and removes his black, wide-brimmed hat.

Appearing meek and muted to contrast, he alone has the grace to welcome
the colorful guests of Mentone. Without a glance toward the adumbral ark,
he bows deeply, stretching shadows and beckons the approaching autumn.
The first to disembark, Harvest, rushes out and raises the reaping of the work sowed.
At its heels is the Artist and the Quilter, fast to lay out their patchwork and paintings
on the mountainside and canopy, forgetfully leaving their cool tones behind.

Then comes the Tourist, metamorphosed and mesmerized, an apparition of who they are at home,
only here for a moment, like the flash of a camera, then gone.
Halloween’s haints, herds of antlered bucks, and hefty turkeys leap ashore.
Slowly, the last arrival is Time, dazed because he forgot this hamlet exists.
Performing his maintenance on the passage of time to set the length of fall,
he mistakenly removes the hands of progress from all the clocks in town.

Now night has swept over the village, mist stretching its fingers to curl around
the Mentonians who lie in wait, preparing for the parade of colors by
arranging the art, murmuring their music, fixin’ the food, and cleansing a space
for Autumn, feeling its arrival is imminent on the chilling breeze,
tickling turning leaves and whipping through the winding canyon.
With Autumn delivered, the ferryman returns to the barge and departs down the river.

Dawn on the Mountain
By Rand Hall

Tweeting, chirping, caw, caw, cawing
birds are always up
to greet the sun

Busy squirrels start their scurrying.
the morning breeze
blows through the leaves

Wait, The silent voice
Whispers wait, not yet,
Wait . . .

The wind stops dancing with the trees
The birds cease their song
The squirrels quit their chatter

And for just a few precious moments
each morning,
all in stillness

I can almost hear
the Earth
let out a sigh

Wait,
wait, not yet,
Wait . . .

Be still, be still,
Soon enough,
the busy day.



Gratitude and Resilience

BY DEJOLY LABRIER

It’s that time of year again, when the turkeys gobble around the barnyard trying to look inconspicuous! They talk among themselves and pull in their chests and bellies to be less tempting for those looking for a good meal! Some even try to bark like a dog, as if that would fool anyone! It’s a time when the fragrances coming from the kitchen are savory and sweet. Two kinds of dressing, baby peas and onions, homemade cranberry sauce, mouth-watering yeast rolls slathered with real butter, a large bowl of fresh greens, and a fresh veggie-and-pickle tray round out the meal. Pumpkin pie with made-from-scratch whipped cream and mincemeat pie with a healthy dollop of vanilla ice cream decorate the side table. But it’s not only the time of year for turkey dinners. It’s a time to be among family and friends and count our blessings. It’s a time set aside on the calendar for conscious remembrance of what we’re grateful for in our lives. Although I cherish the special day of gratitude with loved ones, my morning routine includes a nice, hot cup of strong coffee as I make a list of my intentions for the day, as well as a list of at least 10 things for which I’m grateful. Sometimes my list includes things like being grateful for my ability to be kind even when someone isn’t kind to me, being grateful for the beautiful and majestic trees that surround me, being grateful for special moments with friends, or just being grateful that I’m grateful. I think we’ve all had times when we’ve struggled with being grateful as challenges occur in our lives. And when we overcome the challenges, we often say a word of thanks for making it to the other side. That’s a time for a high five for resilience! Our world presents many opportunities to celebrate our resilience. In the wake of the storms in the Southeast and the huge fires in the Northwest, I’ve observed countless acts of kindness and strength in the face of huge losses. We are a resilient species. We get up each day, not really knowing how our lives will manifest. We don’t know what path we’ll be moved to take in light of outside circumstances. Yet we move forward, meeting the challenges and saying words of gratitude. This Thanksgiving, I will remember all of you, my community, and all of those who have lost so much. I will remember in prayer those who don’t have as much as I have, and I will celebrate our combined resilience. May God bless us all. 🍂



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Local Authors Featured at Moon Lake Library in November

BY ANNE MCLEOD

The Rev. Roy G. Pollina, Author of “Justified by Her Children: Deeds of Courage Confronting a Tradition of Racism”



On Sunday, Nov. 10, at 2 p.m., Father Roy Pollina will discuss his book “Justified by Her Children,” the story of the struggle to desegregate an Episcopal Church camp in Virginia in 1958. When the bishop declared that the camp would admit all races, there was resistance in some local congregations. However, the teenagers of Christ Church in Martinsville, backed by their young priest, pushed for all races to be admitted to camp, despite being dismissed as naive and told to leave such matters to the adults. The book was awarded the Illumination Christian Book Award in 2022.

Since the time Roy Pollina was chosen to lead the prayers at his kindergarten graduation, through the years as a choir boy and an acolyte, he dreamed of becoming a priest. After receiving his B.A. at Northern Illinois University in 1973 and his M.Div. (master of divinity) from the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest in 1985, Pollina was ordained a deacon in that same year and a priest in 1986 by the bishop of Louisiana. After 30 years of leading congregations, he retired from Christ Church in Martinsville, Virginia. His first book, “To Bless a Child,” was published by Morehouse Publishing, in 2009.

He and his wife, Susan, have two grown children, a daughter, Amity, a son Roy, and twin teenage grandsons, Matthew and Dominic. Roy and Susan enjoy their 6.5 heavily wooded acres in the mountains of northern Georgia.

He continues to do Sunday services for local parishes when needed, including St. Joseph’s on-the-Mountain.

Jerry Ellis, Author of “Quote the Raven on the Ferris Wheel”



On Tuesday, Nov. 12, at 6:30 p.m., Jerry Ellis will discuss his latest book, “Quote the Raven on the Ferris Wheel,” which debuted as a #1 New Release in Native American Religions and Spirituality. The story/book, a thriller, is being nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

A Fort Payne native of Native American heritage, Ellis was the first person in the modern world to walk, in reverse, the 900-mile route of the Trail of Tears from Oklahoma to Alabama. His resulting book, “Walking the Trail: One Man’s Journey Along the Cherokee Trail of Tears,” was nominated by Random House for a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award. Published in three languages, it has been read by almost 1 million people.

Ellis has lectured about his life-altering trek in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the United States. The book is required reading in some schools in the U.S. and Germany. Having written 10 books, the author has been published in “The New York Times” and has had five plays produced.

Ellis is also a Native American folk artist who makes masks, pipes, blowguns, and tomahawks. His creations have been displayed in galleries from Maine to Oregon, and some of them will be displayed for sale at the book signing.

Anne McLeod is the librarian at Moon Lake Library.

November 2024 at Moon Lake Library

Weekly Meet-Ups: KNITTING and CROCHET Tuesdays at 2 p.m.; SCRABBLE Wednesdays at noon

Nov. 1 at 6 p.m. - Family Game Night

Nov. 2 at 10:30 a.m. - Little Library Learners: Kids ages 3 through 6 are invited to celebrate Dinovember with Ms. Lynn. Do you have a favorite dinosaur? It can come with you!

Nov. 2 at 12 p.m. - Falconry with Matt Whitfield. All ages are invited to this informative program about the sport of falconry.

Nov. 3 at 3 p.m. - Holleyday: A celebration of the life of library board chair Holley Midgley. Join us at the DeSoto State Park Lodge restaurant as we remember our dear friend.

Nov. 9 at 10:30 a.m. - Book Club. Bring one or two of your favorite books to recommend.

Nov. 9 at 1 p.m. - Mentone Ukes offer free ukulele lessons for all experience levels.

Nov. 10 at 2 p.m. - The Rev. Roy G. Pollina will discuss his book, “Justified by Her Children: Deeds of Courage Confronting a Tradition of Racism.”

Nov. 12 at 3 p.m. - Municipal Library Board meeting, followed by Friends of the Library Board meeting at 4 p.m.

Nov. 12 at 6:30 p.m. - Featured speaker author Jerry Ellis will discuss his latest book, “Quote the Raven on the Ferris Wheel.”

Nov. 15 at 6 p.m. - Family Game Night

Nov. 16 at 10:30 a.m. - Dinovember continues with all the dino stories. Kids ages 3 through 6 can come and bring their favorite dinosaurs.

Nov. 19 at 6 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.

Nov. 23 at 1 p.m. - Mentone Ukes offer free ukulele lessons for all experience levels.

Nov. 26-27 - THE LIBRARY WILL BE CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING, reopening Friday.



Moon Lake Library

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Rhododendron Garden Club News

Members’ Creations Shine at “Fall Across America” Flower Show



BY MELLANIE TUTTLE

We did it, and we’re still talking to one another! The garden club had a very successful showing at the Federation Flower Show. Like raising children, putting on a flower show takes a village, and ours is special. Thank you to all participants.

Last month, this contributor was reminded that she was responsible for the program to make arrangements for the senior luncheon the next day. Unfortunately, she did not read her email until 9 a.m. the day of the meeting. Leftover pinecones from the December flower show and paint saved the day. A very simple way to decorate for fall, Halloween, Thanksgiving, or Christmas is to paint pinecones! Pinecones colored with oranges, yellows, or reds and placed in baskets make an easy and festive addition to the holidays. Cut some pine or boxwood, stuff it among the pinecones, add a bow, and voila! For Christmas, just change colors! Add some glitter, put in favorite Christmas ornaments, and you have instant loveliness.

My excuse for the forgetfulness was that I was gearing up for the flower show. Success! Club member results were terrific. First, the leftover pinecones from the luncheon were used in staging for the show. Since members had painted the pinecones, they could be counted in show participation as well as all the fabulous cooks who brought food for the judges, the clerks, and entry participants and photographer. An 80% participation is phenomenal.

Second, the Education exhibit won a blue ribbon and the Educational Top Award. The flower show’s theme, “Fall Across Alabama,” used titles based on fall festivals across the state. The Boll Weevil Festival in Enterprise was our inspiration. The boll



Entries in the recent Federation Flower Show, “Fall Across America.”

weevil arrived in Alabama in 1909, and by 1917 had devastated the cotton crop. Serendipity occurred — the county agent system began, George Washington Carver did research on the peanut, and a county agent and a local man from Enterprise traveled to Virginia to learn more about peanuts. The two men convinced a local farmer to replace his cotton crop with peanuts. He was so successful that other farmers in the area started planting peanuts. Peanuts were profitable. Farms were saved. In 1919, one thankful man in Enterprise commissioned a sculpture, and to date it is the only monument in the world dedicated to an insect — the boll weevil. It was 2009 before the complete eradication of the boll weevil in Alabama (Texas still has problems with the critters). Today cotton is back, and Alabama is still a top peanut. The exhibit was interactive, using recorded messages to expand on the event years shown on the display. So much fun.

Third, members racked up ribbons of all colors in Horticulture. Top award kudos to Mellanie Tuttle (Arboreal Award - *Ruscus aculeatus*) and Mary MacMichael (Award of Merit - *Swedish Ivy*, *Plectranthus verticillates*). A goal of the National Garden Club is public education, so complete botanical names are required and are often

accompanied by a cultivar name on the entry card. Several folks were taking pics of cards so plants could be added to their collections.

A fourth, newish division for flower shows is Botanical Arts, with sections in design and horticulture. These designs offer a different direction for creativity. The design section contained wreaths, collages, and pot-et-fleur (Barbara Umland, red ribbon; Donna Elrod, honorable mention). Fairy gardens, a single displayed dried hydrangea, or an unusual branch were classes in the horticulture section. The Botanical Arts Horticulture Award was given to a Fairy Garden (Mellanie Tuttle).

Creative, Illuminary, and Traditional (Dianne Kuehl, blue ribbon) designs showed innovation, creativity, and clever use of plant material. Keeping the staging panels on the wall and not toppling the designs presented challenges, but large glue dots fixed the problem.

The Youth Division stole the show. Numerous pieces of horticulture, whimsically painted gourds, collages, and fairy gardens were displayed. We’re no spring chickens, but two grandchildren are! One won a blue ribbon for her fairy garden, the other a third place for his fairy garden. They were adorable. Watching the



Botanical Arts Horticulture Award-winning fairy garden by Mellanie Tuttle

excitement of little ones bringing their entries was worth all the aggravation in putting on the show.

The November 12 meeting: same bat time (10 a.m.), same bat station (library). Program: Planting Bulbs
Presenter: Martha Wood
Bulbs available for purchase. The annual trek to a Van Zyverden warehouse in Meridian, Mississippi, is worth it. Some 450 to 500 bulbs to a “bag” at a much-reduced price. We’ll pass those savings on to you. Come for a daffy time. 🐼

Mellanie Tuttle is a member of the Rhododendron Garden Club.

Join us!

The RGC meets at 10 a.m. each month on the second Tuesday. For information, email rhododendron-gardenclub@gmail.com and find the group on Facebook.

RGC is a member of the National Garden Club; Deep South, Inc.; Garden Club of Alabama; District II and NE AL Federation of Garden Clubs.

VALLEY HEAD
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58. DeKalb Democratic Headquarters

60. DeKalb Republican Headquarters

76. Fort Payne Chamber of Commerce

93. Fort Payne MainStreet Office

101. Landmarks Historic Association

RESTAURANTS

7. Enthusiast Wine Bar

11. The Bakehouse Downtown

27A. The Spot Coffee Shop

29. Valley Nurriton

30. Mater's Pizza & Pasta Emporium

35. Meal & Market

40. Rib Shak

50. The Rusty Barrel

53. The Poppery on Main

132. Roadside 'Que

226. Vintage 1889

138. La Sabrosista Ice Cream

132. Little River Burpers & Brews

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10. Blissfully Serene Spa

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FINANCIAL SERVICES

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46A. PNC Bank

46B. PNC Bank: ATM

57. Citadel Finance

81. Tower Loan

108. Edward Jones (Gault Ave)

110. Credit Central

SHOPPING RETAIL

8. The Shops on Gault

9. Fever Dream

12. Alice Circle

19. Capital Sock Company

20. The Blossom Shop

28. Cotton State Boutique

37. Cornerstone Market

38. Katherine's Frame Shop & Gifts

39. Relics Antiques and Collectibles

42. Urban Serenity Clothing Co.

48. Bleu River Home Accents

49A. The Blue Charm Boutique

49B. Orbix Hot Glass Gallery

54. DeKalb Dispensary

55. Fort Payne Footworks & Outdoors

56A. Patterson's Music / Jewelry

56B. Tiger Lily Florist & Gifts

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25. Accel Graphics

47. Lucky Sound Studio

66. Southern Torch

105. Convenient Wash

114. Ancro Door Company

115. The Package Store

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

14. MDA Professional Group, CPA

33B. Allison Jenkins Photography

36. Scott Law Firm

62. Ole Heritage Realty

73. Southern Properties Agency

103. Alabama Living Real Estate

133. Surge Staffing

140. Allstate Insurance: Randy Posey

59. Downtown at Ruby Jeans

82. Boom Town Makers' Market

84. Hammer's

86. The Boxed Leaf Co.

88. The Salvation Army

94. Blue Jug & Butter Snob Bakery

106. Elizabeth's Closet

117. Carolina Hosiery

125A. The Big Mill Antiques

51. Pete's Alley

51. Pete the Cat's Star of Fame

75. Alabama Motorcars

77B. Alabama Band Star of Fame

77C. Sandra E. Lafferty Star of Fame

89. Alabama Band Statues

92. Fort Payne Depot Museum

93. Railroad Exhibit & Diorama

100. Fort Payne Opera House

101. Hunt Hall: Hosiery Museum Annex

102. The Hosiery Museum

119. The Dye Branch Kids

44. Kids Care Pediatrics

83. Therapy Junction

109. DeKalb MD

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EVENT SPACES

72. The Building

77. The DeKalb Theater

78. The Courtyard

98B. The Meeting Room

98C. Coal & Iron Building

121. Rotary Pavilion

125B. Back Forty Ballroom

127. The Garage on Gault

DOWNTOWN LIVING

18. The Quinn Apartments

21. The Cottage Suites on Grand

27B. The Lofts at Gault

56C. The Reed House

76. The Chamber Lofts

124. Davis House Lofts / Apartments

PUBLIC RESTROOMS / PARKING

32. Parking

40. City Parking - Behind Rib Shak

45. Pete's Alley Parking - In Back

74. City Parking - Southern Properties

90. City Park Restrooms

91. Parking / EV Chargers

MEDICAL SERVICES

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Giving Thanks

BY ALYCE KENNEY

In the few fast weeks that I have been in the role of executive director of MERF, I can surely say that I have learned a lot. No, make that A LOT..

From “Groundhog” distribution concerns (“Hi, did you know that Bruce’s Foodland is already out of October issues?”) to senior lunch crowds (“Hey, you forgot to call them and remind them!”) and from honoring the grant submission deadline at the end of this month to making sure we have enough t-shirts in the DeSoto Park Store, everything is important. It’s what makes MERF visible, successful, and able to impact you in our community and folks in our neighboring communities.

These issues are minor compared to others I am learning about. Did you know that the historic MERF house is to undergo renovations soon? These will make the building safe, strong, and accessible again. Over half of the funds needed to make this happen have been raised, and we are working diligently to raise the rest. We look forward to the time when club meetings, lunches, and other activities can return to the building like in the “good ole days.” We are hopeful this can happen by summer 2025.

How do we do all that we do? I see that it really comes down to the open hearts and hands of our own community. Volunteers, sponsors, and donors of all experience levels, ages, and

interests keep the many varied and vital moving pieces of MERF working. From delivering the paper to area businesses to serving tasty lunches to smiling seniors on Wednesdays at Moon Lake Baptist Church, we are thankful for these hearts and hands. From donors and supporters who send us funds in honor of loved ones to be placed in one of our scholarship funds, to local businesses who advertise in the paper, we are thankful for these hearts and hands. Local camps, church groups, businesses, and even individuals have said “yes” when asked if they could be, do, or share. We are thankful for these hearts and hands.

As this Thanksgiving holiday approaches, like most folks I will reflect on the blessings of my life. I am grateful that I can be a part of this nonprofit organization at this time.

For over 30 years, MERF has provided programs and opportunities that enrich the lives and learning of many — young and old — and we are proud to continue this mission for many years to come.

Because of you, the many hearts and hands who give of their time, money, energy, ideas, blessings, laughter, and tears, MERF is here to stay. We thank you. 🍂

Alyce Kenney is executive director of the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation. For more information or to volunteer, email MERF.mentone@gmail.com, call 256-634-2122, or visit MERFhouse.org.



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Applications are open annually from November 1 through the first weekend of December. Scholarships are awarded in December for the spring semester in varying amounts between \$300 and \$450.



Contact MERF at 256-634-2122 for more information.



thank you

MERF would like to express our gratitude to Moon Lake Baptist Church for providing space and volunteers for our Senior Lunches. Your partnership helps us deliver a valuable and appreciated service to the community.



MERF Senior Lunches
Last of the Season!!
Moon Lake Baptist Church
Wednesday, Nov. 13 & Wednesday, Dec. 4
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Inaugural Mentone Car Show Features

BY BARRY MORTON

The first annual Mentone Car Show, sponsored by American Legion Post 215 and Auxiliary Unit 215, was a well-tuned success. The October show at Moon Lake Village featured 18 classically beautiful cars; around 200 spectators; and great vendors, including creative vendors and The Rib Shack food truck. A group of Fort Payne Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps candidates (JROTC) assisted in spectator parking. The post

made a \$100 donation to the JROTC and fed them lunch ... and boy can they put it away!

Car show winners were:

- Best in Show: Tom and Mary MacMichael
- Peoples' Choice: Jon Mayhew
- Participants' Choice: Danny Raughton

If you want to see more, go to the Mentone American Legion or the Auxiliary Unit Facebook pages.

Looking forward to next year's show! 🐻



"Best in Show" was awarded to this classic 1961 Corvette.



Dr Lynna Meadows' 1974 Triumph TR6



Car show T-shirts are some of the coolest.



ON-FARM MARKET

Our final Friday Market dates for the 2024 season are listed below:

November 1, 8, 15, 22 - Open 2-5pm CT
November 29 - Closed for Thanksgiving
December 6, 13 - Open 2-5pm CT
December 20 - Final Market of 2024

You can call or email us if you have any questions or are interested in purchasing our products outside of our market hours.

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From the Archives

30 Years Ago, Recipes from the November 1994 Issue



Well, I had resolved to focus on low-fat recipes—but—it is November, and pecan and pumpkin time is here once more. Who can resist? The three-step pumpkin dessert is from my aunt, Sue Santelmann, whom we visited on our trip last month. The pecan pie recipe is from Norma Williams of Mentone, who says it is as good as it is easy.

PUMPKIN DESSERT

Sue Santelmann



[Step One]
1 cup flour
1/2 cup oatmeal
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup margarine
Combine these ingredients, press into bottom of ungreased 9x13x2 pan and bake at 300° for 15 minutes.

[Step Two]
1 can pumpkin
1 large can evaporated milk
2 eggs

1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp ginger
1/4 tsp cloves
Combine above ingredients and pour over baked crust, bake for 10 minutes more.

[Step Three]
1/2 cup pecans
1/2 cup brown sugar
2 Tbsp butter

Combine and sprinkle over other baked layers, and bake 15-20 minutes or until filling is set. Cool and serve with non-dairy topping or whipped cream. Serves 12.

PECAN PIE

Norma Williams

2 cups sugar
2 cups dark Karo syrup
6 eggs
pinch of salt
1-1/3 cups pecans
2 unbaked 9" pie shells

Mix first 5 ingredients and pour into 2 pie shells. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes.



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clairevassort@yahoo.com
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ARTISTS INCLUDE:

Claire Vassort
hand painted silk

Julie Clark
metal work/photography

Meredith Middleton
jewelry

Georgia Pollock
oil painting

Mark Issenberg
Lookout Mtn. pottery

Nikki Oliver
wood carved Santas

Bonnie Cayce
fiber art

Anna Cayce Smit
jewelry

Jayne James
decorative gourds

Beth Bradford
acrylic painting

Lizzie Caldwell
pottery/mixed media

Connie Ward
collage/mixed media

Kate Fisher
painted textile/leather

AUCTION

Saturday, November 16th at 10 a.m. (CST)
Clarence Shipman Service • Valley Head, Alabama

LIVE ON-SITE AUCTION with online bidding available! Clarence Shipman Service including Office, Shops, and Real Estate, HVAC Business, and Automotive Repair Business will be offered separately and then all together.

AUCTION SITE: On location at 36 Jeff Cook Drive, Valley Head, Alabama 35989

PREVIEW: Friday, November 15th, from 9 AM until 4 PM

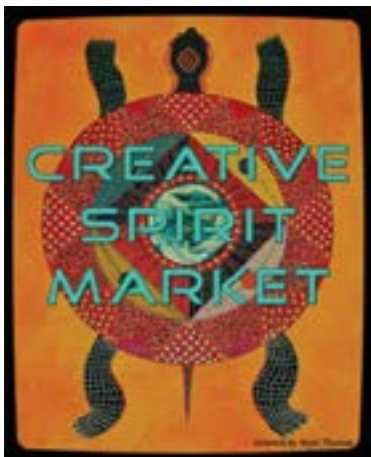
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Get into the Creative Spirit Nov. 9 & 10!

BY JULI JORDAN



The Creative Spirit Market returns Veterans Day Weekend, November 9 and 10, from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. inside DeSoto State Park near the picnic area across from the Country Store. This unique market celebrates not only finished works but also the artistic process. Visitors will have the rare opportunity to watch demonstrations, such as Native American twining, copper forging, pottery wheel, finger weaving, basketry, folded bark baskets, Native American tools and weapons, barn quilts, and more.

With approximately 60 local and regional fine and folk artists and makers, this is the perfect time to begin your holiday shopping. Enjoy live acoustic music and free interactive art stations, where market goers of all ages can experience leaf pounding, paper basket making, and painting clay creations.

Food vendors will include Papa’s Roasted Corn, The Cheese Station, Mentone’s Scout Troop 178 with candy and caramel apples, Ice Dream Frozen Treats, and Jersey & Company Freeze-Dried Treats.

If the weather is chilly, visitors can enjoy a blazing fire in the stone fire-

place in the CCC pavilion. Bring your own camp chair to hang out and listen to local musicians.

There is limited parking in the picnic area, the tennis court area, and in front of the Country Store. If parking anywhere in the picnic area, a \$2-per-vehicle fee applies. There is no fee to attend the market, and leashed dogs are allowed in the park.

Creative Spirit Market Live Music Schedule
Saturday, Nov. 9
10 a.m. Larry Jo Hall
11:15 a.m. Judy-Nicole Kirby
12:30 p.m. Lisa Crow & James Roberts
1:45 p.m. Jay Chadwick
Sunday, Nov. 10
10 a.m. Marc Womack
11:15 a.m. Parker Thomas
12:30–3 p.m. Elisha Tatum & Derek Whisenant

The Creative Spirit Market is hosted by DeSoto State Park and the Little River Arts Council, with funding from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Little River Art Gallery Artist of the Month
November’s artist is the talented and prolific Courtney Kinneman. She lives in Crossville, Alabama, and works in many different media and styles, with a special love for wildlife and nature. She often teaches watercolor classes at DeSoto State Park. Kinneman’s current piece in the Little River Art Gallery is a heron painted on a turkey feather.

ARTalk
November is the last month for ARTalk! If you’ve been meaning to join in the conversation, this is your chance! Tuesday, Nov. 19, 6 - 8 p.m. at Moon Lake Public Library. Bring your work and tell us about your process!

Holiday Home Tour
Saturday, Dec. 14, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Pre-sale tickets will be available on our website beginning November 22. Ticket and map pickup will be at Little River Art Gallery at Moon Lake Village on the day of the event, beginning at 9 a.m.
Homes and B&Bs are still being finalized, so stay tuned to our social media channels! A portion of proceeds from ticket sales will go toward artist stipends.

Pre-she-ate-cha! LRAC Appreciates our Volunteers!
The Little River Art Gallery would like to send out a special thank you to all the volunteers who have helped us as we have pulled the gallery together over the past three months. We have 15 members who have given their time and energy to taking care of our local artists and the work that is hanging in our space:
Chris Davenport, Denise Soares, Helen Allen, Brande Arno, Barbara Umland, David Cummings, Sandra Perry, and Bev Bates are in this wonderful group of people. Also included are Michele and Stephen Smith, Deedee Morrison, Rhea Pirch, Cyndi and Mikel Yeakle, and our intrepid leader, Juli Jordan. Thank you all so much for volunteering your time to support our community of local artists. We appreciate you!
A special shout-out to Mikel Yeakle, Juli Jordan, David Cummings, Chris Davenport, and Helen Allen, who clocked a total of 72 hours at the gallery over these three months! Thank you! And thank you to our members! Your support creates opportunities for artists.
If you like what we are up to, please consider becoming a member of Little River Arts Council at a level of your choosing. For more infor-

mation, visit our website: littleriver-arts council.org.
Little River Arts Council: We believe Art is for Everyone! 🐾
Juli Jordan is president of the Little River Arts Council.



November’s Little River Art Gallery Artist of the Month Courtney Kinneman.



Kinneman’s piece on display at the gallery: a heron painted on a turkey feather.

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May’s Gulf 7th Songwriter Series Welcomes Russell Gulley

BY JSU CANYON CENTER

Get ready for an afternoon of music and storytelling with Russell Gulley and Microwave Dave at Little River Canyon Center on Sunday, Nov. 17, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Concert goers are also invited after the show to celebrate Gulley’s 77th birthday.

Gulley, a Fort Payne native, grew up on Southern gospel and shape note music and set his sights on playing rock ’n’ roll. With strong ties to the Muscles Shoals musical heritage, he has written and played a rich variety of genres. He has toured with many successful artists; founded the group Jackson Highway (named for the location of Muscle Shoals Studio); and recently received the 2024 Alabama Arts Impact Award for the multitude of arts initiatives he’s either founded or taken part in:

the Big Wills Arts Council; Boom Days Heritage Celebration; the Rural Touring Artists Program; and Radiovision, to name a few.

Microwave Dave (Dave Gallaher), of Microwave Dave and the Nukes fame, has performed with several well-known groups, including the band Cameron, with whom he recorded and toured nationally. Later he formed the Nukes and began producing and performing on his radio show, “Talkin’ the Blues,” which recently marked its 35th year on Huntsville radio.

Tickets to the show are \$25 in advance and \$30 the day of the performance.

For more information, call Little River Canyon Center at 256-845-3548 or online at canyoncenter.org. For more information about the JSU Canyon Center, visit jsu.edu/epic/canyoncenter/ or contact Director Pete Conroy at 256-282-5784.



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Valley Head Happenings: Faith Festival to Bring Music, Speakers, and Kids’ Activities

BY MAYOR KAREN VEST

The final Hot Rods in the Valley event for 2024 was a great success, with even more vendors and classic cars and trucks. The town also held its annual Trunk or Treat around the square during the car show. More than 300 bags of candy were handed out to area children.

A Faith Festival is planned for Saturday, Nov. 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on the field across from Town Hall. Adamsburg Community Church and Valley Head Baptist Church are hosting this event. Multiple churches have been invited to set up booths and provide activities for children. Retail and food vendors will be present. The Valley Head Quarterback Club will sell barbeque lunches, and Christian music will be performed onstage under the tent. Among the many performers are the McBride Family, Carter Pridmore, the Adamsburg Choir, and the Valley Head Baptist Youth Choir. Speakers will include Lisa Powell, Nick Brown, and more.

The town, in partnership with Fritz Steel and Harco Metal Products, held a donation drive for victims of Hurricane Helene. A 30-foot trailer load of supplies was delivered on October 11 to the fire department at Boone, North Carolina, by Fire Chief Dustin Burt and Assistant Chief Michael Chambers.

Thank you to everyone in our community who purchased and donated items for the aid drive. A special thank you to the employees of Harco and Fritz and our volunteer firemen for donating their time to sort and pack the donated items.

During its October 7 meeting, the town council heard a presentation from Friends of the Moon Lake



Valley Head Town Park will soon have a Little Library like this one in Mentone. The mission of Little Libraries is, “Take a book, leave a book.”

Library, Anne McLeod and Betsy Sheldon, regarding the Little Library, a free-standing structure with shelves for multiple books. Its purpose is to bring a variety of books to children and adults alike who do not have easy access to a local library. This is a non-profit with a mission to build community, inspire readers, and expand access to books. “Take a book, leave a book” is the motto of these small libraries springing up all over the country. The council voted unanimously to allow a Little Library at Valley Head Town Park in the very near future. We hope our citizens will enjoy this special gift and respect it by keeping it full of books.

The Valley Head Volunteer Fire Department recently received an \$8,000 grant by the Alabama Mountains, Rivers & Valleys RC&D Council

to purchase two new sets of turnouts for our firemen. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends that all fire gear be replaced every 10 years. We would like to thank the RC&D Council and Lester Black for funding this grant.

We will winterize and close the restrooms in Valley Head Park on Nov. 1, 2024. Unfortunately, this is necessary during the winter months to keep vandalism to a minimum.

The Valley Head Town Council meets on the first Monday of each month at 6 p.m. A work session begins at 5:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend both. If you would like to address the council, please contact Town Hall no later than four business days prior to the meeting to complete the proper paperwork. ●

Going Nuts for Education

Valley Head Women’s Club Bake Sale Raises Funds for Scholarships



BY ANNA MAE HORN

The place to be on Saturday morning, Nov. 23, is White Hall Church. Pick up some home-made baked goods to enjoy over the weekend or to serve with your Thanksgiving meal. Choose your favorite cakes, pies, cookies, flavored baked pecans, and more from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Valley Head Area Women’s Club raises funds through an annual pecan and bake sale to benefit two \$500 scholarships given to Valley Head School graduating seniors who are pursuing higher education or technical training.

Fresh-crop pecans will be on sale for \$12 per 1-pound bag (no tax added) from early November through December until they are sold out. They will be available at the bake sale as well as Tigers Inn Restaurant. Or call 256-635-8775 to place an order.

The church is on Highway 11 between Fort Payne and Hammondville. ●

Anna Mae Horn is president of the Valley Head Women’s Club.

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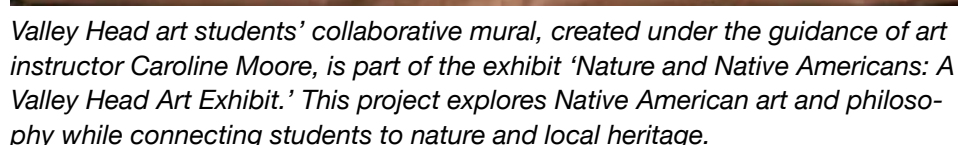
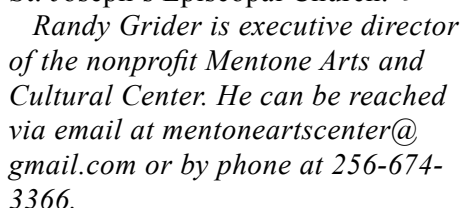
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BY RANDY GRIDER

Valley Head students have been learning about and creating art around the natural world and Native American philosophy and art. The project is a way to help kids connect with nature and understand some of the practices and beliefs of those who lived here before us. They have studied flora and fauna identification, medicine wheels, totem animals, native woven blankets, and much more. The exhibit will also include



Happy Thanksgiving!

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Watch the sunrise over Lookout Mountain from this wooded brow lot in Pell's Gap Development near Fort Payne. Public water, paved streets, restricted to site built homes and only \$45,000. MLS#1799116

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Under Construction in Fort Payne! Welcome Home to your new 3 BR/ 2 BA cottage in Downtown. This home boasts a living room with vaulted ceiling, and spacious kitchen. You will find this home has a private main suite with a view of Lookout Mountain. A porch on the front and rear of the home offer outdoor areas to relax. Call today before its gone. MLS# 21869153

4250 Citadel Rock Rd., Fort Payne, AL \$90,000



DeSoto Bluffs – west brow of Lookout Mountain. 4.3 acres with valley and mountains as far as you can see. Plenty of room. MLS#393614

1344 East Main Street, Centre, AL \$142,000



2 BR/1 BA home recently remodeled and ready to move in. Home is located close to schools and shopping. Make this your today before it's gone. MLS#21856198

3745 County Road 166, Fort Payne, AL \$265,000

Rustic Stone Cottage on the brow near DeSoto State Park and Mentone. Stone walls, exposed log beams and stone wood-burning fireplace with the "old Mentone look." Detached pavilion and detached carport/shop included. New roof and bath updated. Great view from this 2.3 acre lot. Great for weekend rentals! MLS#21844538




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November Community Events

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

November 1 Serious Skills Series: Leaf Pounding Class – Hosted by DeSoto State Park, the Serious Skills Series is a variety of classes and workshops that provide opportunities to discover a hidden talent or learn a new skill for personal enrichment. Classes are open to residents, overnight guests, and park visitors. Leaf pounding is a simple technique, historically used by Native American women to decorate fabric. Pounding with a rock or a hammer transfers the natural dyes of a leaf to fabric while retaining the design of the original leaf. Join DSP Naturalist Brittney Hughes on a quick walk to ID leaves that can be used, then make a beautiful and unique piece of fabric to take home. Participants can also bring their own fabric, such as t-shirts, handkerchiefs, pillowcases, etc., as long as it is 100% cotton. Ages 8 to adult; 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. DeSoto State Park. Meet at the Lodge, in the pollinator garden. \$10 fee covers all supplies. Class space is limited, pre-registration required: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-SSS-LeafPounding>. This class will be held outside under a covered pavilion, so be prepared for whatever weather conditions are present. For any questions, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

November 1 & 2 Downtown Fort Payne Ghost Walk Tour – Join Bill Potter, local historian and founder of Facebook's DeKalb County, Alabama, Historical Group, and Cassie Wigley, one of Landmarks Boom Town Players, as they lead two tours each night through the historic Main Street District. They will highlight stories and surprises about people and places from different times in the city's history. Starting and ending at the Fort Payne Opera House, the tour will last around 1 hour, 30 minutes. Refreshments will be available for a donation before & after each tour. Each group is limited to 15 people, and a pre-purchased ticket is required. Some stories on the tours may not be suitable for young children, so tours are not recommended for children under 10. This is a walking tour that will encompass several blocks and may not be suitable for everyone. We recommend you arrive 15 minutes ahead of your tour time. Tickets are \$12 and can be found at <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/landmarks-of-dekalb-county-49043174813>

November 2 Canyon Fest – Little River Canyon Field School and Interpretive Center wants you to come and enjoy live music, nature and arts activities, arts demonstrations and sales, great food, vendors, children's activities, and more. Free and open to everyone. Pets welcome on leashes. Donations appreciated.

November 2 Outdoor Observations Hike – Have you ever seen a plant, mushroom, or critter and wondered what it was? Even during winter there are some cool things to see, so join DeSoto State Park staff to discover what can be observed & recorded using iNaturalist, a free app that records observations of all sorts of things – plants, animals, and even fungi. Learn how to use the simple app to help contribute to park species lists and about species seen in the park. Moderate hike along mountainous terrain, some rocky terrain. Approximately 2 miles round-trip. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Meet at DeSoto's Country Store on County Road 89. Free & open to everyone, no pre-registration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256-845-5380 beforehand to check on status of walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking.

November 2 & 3 Fort Payne Main Street Holiday Open House – Get ready for the most magical time of year in Fort Payne! Join us for the Holiday Open House November 3-5. Local merchants are all set to make this the ultimate shopping weekend, with fantastic sales and delightful refreshments all around town. Mark your calendars, call your friends, and explore the festive charm of Fort Payne. While most merchants are participating, don't forget to check their hours and keep an eye out for extended hours and specials on Thursdays downtown. See you there!

November 3 Fly Tying 101 Workshop at Little River Canyon Center – Discover the art of fly tying and experience the thrill of catching fish with flies you've crafted yourself! Join Dr. Tim Lindblom for a hands-on Fly Tying 101 Workshop, where you'll learn to create effective flies for local bass and bream, and the techniques to use them. Tie your own flies to take home or trade. Beginner through advanced. Return in the spring for our Fly Fishing 101 course, where you'll get the chance to catch your first fish on the flies you've tied! From 1 p.m.-4 p.m. JSU's Little River Canyon Center. Cost: \$35 per participant; ages 14 and up. All materials are provided, though you're welcome to bring your own. Space is limited; registration is required. No refunds after October 25. For more information, call the Little River Canyon Center at 256-845-3548, or email rmtaylor@jsu.edu. Register Now! https://secure.touchnet.net/C20.../web/product_detail.jsp..

November 8-10, 15-17 The Mountain Song – Come to the Northeast Alabama Community College campus for our fall 2024 theater production! Four shows each weekend! New Saturday matinee performances! Learn and read more online at: <https://www.nacc.edu/programs-of-study/english-and-fine-arts-division/theatre/nacc-theatre-production-press-kit>. Tickets \$8. Appropriate for all audiences. The Mountain Song is the tale of a carpenter who climbs mountains and traverses rivers in order to attend his daughter's wedding – without a clue as to where it's taking place.

November 9 & 10, Creative Spirit Market – The 9th Annual Creative Spirit Market is hosted by DeSoto State Park & Little River Arts Council. Adding a new twist to a typical art fair, this event is designed as an open-air showcase, with artist demonstrations, locally and regionally created fine and folk art, premium hand-crafted goods, and live acoustic music. Shoppers can browse and watch artists in their creative process, listen to music, and purchase goods from fine and folk artists such as painters, potters, quilters, weavers and basketmakers, fabric spinners, culinary artists and craftsmen. Unique and one-of-a-kind gifts will be available for purchase. Stop by and get some early gift-shopping in!

November 9 & 23 Mentone Ukes Sessions – Ongoing FREE sessions of the Mentone Ukes are held at 1 p.m. at the Moon Lake Library. Newcomers and beginners of all ages are invited to attend these sessions. A beginners class is offered at the same time as our regular sessions, and loaner ukuleles are available. Find us on Facebook: Mentone Ukes, or on the web: www.mentoneukes.com.

November 10 Whisk Broom Workshop – Spend an afternoon learning the Appalachian craft of broom making! Join Frea Forager with Wild Earth Crafts to design and make a turkey wing-style whisk broom made with traditional broom corn straw and natural cordage. Whisk brooms are incredibly useful and attractive and make great handmade gifts. This class is open to beginners as well as professional crafters. Age limit: 13+ or with special permission of instructor. Email Frea at freawild@gmail.com for questions or potential scholarship opportunities specifically for BIPOC/PGM candidates, in the hope of fostering greater inclusivity and support for diverse perspectives. Little River Canyon Center. 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Fee: \$60 per person. No refunds after October 28. Register now. https://secure.touchnet.net/C20.../web/product_detail.jsp...

November 10 Sunday Suppers: Eat With Nancy Style – If it's Sunday, rest assured Nancy Wall Hopkins is hosting one of her famed low-key suppers. There are many secrets to Nancy's effortless laid-back entertaining style. At this Autumn Supper at Andiamo Lodge, you'll learn: How to set a stylish, inspiring, and comfy table; how to rely on collected boards instead of fussy serving pieces; and how to add sparkle with hints of silver and crystal. Nancy will share a favorite recipe for her house Pitcher Cocktail. Then, she'll share how she turns farmstand favorites into a completely fuss-free menu. Best of all, Nancy will show you how to sneak in a few of her go-to grocery-store finds for guest-please success. This is a cozy class that you don't want to miss. Grab a sweater and head on over. 4-7 p.m.

November 13 An introduction to The Relaxation Response, Your body is smarter than your brain – Join Joe Piscatelli at Moon Lake Village from 10-11:30 a.m. The body holds old emotional and mental subconscious patterns. As we learn and practice this technique we release these patterns and allow the body to do what it is made to do, repair, rebuild and rejuvenate. You will learn about and be conscious of the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. And, how to control your experience and quickly recover. You will learn and experience a process commonly known as the relaxation response/body connection and heart brain coherence. This simple focused surrendering exercise will assist your mind and body to deeply relax, experience peace and rejuvenate you to the core. This will be a seven part series workshop.

November 16 Collinsville Historic Turkey Trot – Food, fun, and games. An antique car and tractor show, turkey shoot, cake walk, and historic "turkey toss" from the roof of a building make this an event fun for all ages. Sponsored in part by the Collinsville Historic Association. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. 256-524-2788.

November 16 Serious Skills Series: Nature's Elements in Metal Art Workshop – Open to local residents, overnight guests, and park visitors. Unleash your creativity as you design and create your own unique metal art inspired by the beauty of nature. Join artist Kevin Watson from Tintations for a fun workshop that utilizes reclaimed tin and barn wood. This class is for ages 14 to adult. What to Bring: enthusiasm (all materials and tools needed to complete this project will be provided). Wear comfortable, casual clothing and bring drinks/snacks if you wish. This workshop emphasizes the use of hand tools. Students should have moderate hand strength. 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. DeSoto State Park. Specific location disclosed at time of registration; \$40.00 includes all supplies. Class space is limited, pre-registration required. Pre-register at <https://www.littlriverartscouncil.org/metalarts1.html>.

November 17 May's Gulf Songwriter Series – May's Gulf Songwriter Series featuring O'! Man Russell Gulley & Friends, Microwave Dave, and a birthday celebration to follow the concert honoring Russell Gulley. Tickets \$25 in advance. Seating is limited, make reservations early! 2-4 p.m. Little River Canyon Center. For

tickets: https://secure.touchnet.net/C20901_ustores/web/store_cat.jsp?STOREID=1&CATID=5&SINGLESTORE=true

November 19 ArtTalk – If you are an artist or an art appreciator, this is an evening for you. Mikel Yeakle leads an informal conversation about art, why we create it, and how it affects our lives. Having worked as a professional artist all his adult life, Mikel has useful tips for anyone new to selling their work. All are invited to bring their artwork and share their process and inspirations. The conversation is open to anyone who is drawn to art (pun intended), not just creators of art. Held at the Moon Lake Library in Mentone and free & open to all! 6-7 p.m.

November 21 Canyon Kids - Native Americans - Traditions & Innovations – The fall semester of Young Explorers meets the third Thursday of August, September, October, and November of 2024. Children ages 7 - 12 will want to attend ALL of these hands-on adventures to creatively learn about animals, plants, bugs, and more with JSU Field Schools. Little River Canyon Center. \$8 per class or \$25 when registering for the entire semester. Registration required. Limited availability. For more details, email rmtaylor@jsu.edu or call 256-845-3548.

November 22 Trail Trekker Hike: DeSoto Scout Trail – The trail follows the West Fork of Little River and traverses a varied terrain of ridges, valleys, fern glades, rock formations, waterfalls, deep pools, riffles, through rhododendron tunnels, creek crossings, swimming holes, and sandy stretches. Hike is approximately 3.5 miles round-trip; moderate to strenuous along rocky mountainous terrain with some steep slopes. We will go from Gilliam Loop Trailhead down Exit 1 and upstream to Indian Falls and back. Closed toed shoes are preferred. 12 p.m. - 4 p.m. DeSoto State Park. Meet at DeSoto's Gilliam Loop Trailhead (past the Lodge on cabin road). Free & open to everyone; no pre registration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256-845-5380 beforehand to check on status of hike. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for details.www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking. Bring plenty of water and/or sports drink, snacks/lunch, hiking poles/staff (optional), sturdy shoes. Dress appropriately according to seasonal temperatures/weather. GPS can be unreliable in this area; for directions to Desoto State Park, see www.alapark.com/DSP-Plan-Your-Trip.

November 23 Serious Skills Series Flintknapping Workshop – Delve into the ancient art of stone tool making. Long ago, the earliest humans transformed pieces of stone into tools that revolutionized their lives. Many people are familiar with stone artifacts such as arrowheads created by traditional cultures in North America and around the world. Uncover the secrets behind these ancient techniques and create your own stone projectile points. No prior knowledge of or experience with flintknapping is necessary. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. DeSoto State Park. Country Store & Information Center on Country Road 89. \$85 fee includes all supplies. Class space is limited to 4; pre-registration is required for attendance in this class. [CLASS IS FULL]

November 23 Discovery Hike: Unveiling the Geological Wonders – During fall, particularly along Laurel Creek, it's common for the waterfalls at DeSoto State Park to experience reduced flow or even dry up. Surprisingly, this dry spell enhances the hiking experience, providing a unique opportunity to observe the rocks beneath and the intricate markings etched on them over countless eons. Embark on this expedition with DSP staff to uncover the mysteries within the rocks. The trail will be moderate, rugged terrain over approximately 3 miles. We will utilize the orange and blue trails for this hike. Meet at DeSoto's Country Store on County Road 89. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Free & open to everyone; no pre-registration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256-845-5380 beforehand to check on status of walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking.

November 28 Fisher Rescue Squad's Annual Turkey Shoot – Come have some fun at Fisher Rescue Squad Turkey Shoot and Shotgun giveaway!! Buy raffle tickets from any Rescue Squad member. \$5 each or 5 for \$20. Drawing will be Thanksgiving Day! Starts at 6 a.m. at the Rescue Squad.

November 29 Black Friday Boutique Market – A shopping event providing an outstanding experience with 50+ boutiques/vendors, including women's/men's apparel, accessories, home decor, gift items, and food. VFW Fairgrounds. Doors open at 6 a.m.

November 29 Hike with a Naturalist – We will be hiking the 2-mile trail to Little Falls in the Little River Canyon National Preserve. This hike is a moderate to strenuous journey with varying steep terrain and approximately 140 stone steps into the canyon. Cell phones may have little to no reception. Please wear footwear suitable for hiking. Bring water, sun protection, and a snack! If it's raining/stormy or very poor trail conditions, we may have to cancel. If the weather is questionable, please check with the Canyon Center. Meet at the Little River Falls Parking lot at 10:30 a.m. Hike is 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Free and open to everyone! For details, call the Canyon Center at 256-845-3548.

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We do close four Wednesdays a year. (Holy Week, World's Longest Yard Sale Week, Thanksgiving Week and Christmas Week.) We also welcome pantry volunteers and donations. For questions, call 256-634-4476.



Bruce BonFleur *(continued from page 1)*

a few issues, we decided that a newspaper would help our cause, and ‘The Groundhog’ was born.”

Bruce and Sandra also published the ‘Mountain View’ quarterly magazine for a year. “We created the ads using geotype dry transfer lettering, which required rubbing the letters individually on the format,” says Sandra. “Ray built us a light table to help with our efforts.

“A few months later, Bruce had the idea of bringing tourism from Birmingham and Montgomery. He sponsored a luncheon at Cragmere, prepared by his world-class chef. We hired a limo to drive ‘Southern Living’ magazine’s travel editor, representatives from Alabama Tourism and PBS, and a Birmingham reporter to Mentone for a day. This resulted in two articles in ‘Southern Living,’ as well as several newspaper articles in Montgomery, Birmingham, and Chattanooga, and a great PBS program. Tourism was increasing!”

When financial difficulties caused Cragmere Manna to close, Bruce found employment with the YMCA in Chattanooga. His journey eventually took him back to Daytona Beach, where he became a high school social studies and American history teacher at Warner Christian Academy. The school was run by the White Chapel Church of God, where Bruce met and married Marsha Moore.

The couple began dreaming of moving to Mentone, and when Sandra and Ray offered to rent them a small apartment in the Mentone Springs Hotel, their decision was made. Bruce rented space in the old Hitching Post building and opened a kayak and bicycle rental shop for tourists.

“Just when life had settled into a pleasant pace, I unexpectedly found out that, at age 40, I was expecting a baby,” says Marsha. “Genevieve was born in 1992. Not wanting her to be an only child, Brent was born in 1994, after we’d moved back to Daytona Beach.

“When a missionary from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota came to speak at a Wednesday night prayer meeting, he described the dire conditions of the Oglala Sioux Indians. Pine Ridge Reservation is the second most impoverished place in the western hemisphere, where the life expectancy is 46 years for women and only 42 years



The premier issue of The Groundhog, founded by Bruce BonFleur, who passed away in September. We honor Bruce’s legacy and his dedication to sharing local stories and fostering community connections through his creation of this publication.

for men. Moved by those staggering statistics, Bruce took up a collection among the church members and sent the missionary home with a generous donation of the two things he said they needed most—Tylenol and socks.”

Bruce continued to correspond with the Pine Ridge missionary and learned of the need for teachers at a Christian school on the reservation. The BonFleurs and their children soon moved to the reservation, and Bruce became the principal of Pine Ridge Christian Academy, where Marsha taught high school students. When the director of the ministry that ran the school passed away three years later, the school closed.

“Most people would take that as God’s way of saying, ‘Good job. You’re free to go back to your normal lives,’” says Marsha. “Bruce, however, could never be accused of being ‘normal,’ and he chose to ‘jump from the frying pan into the fire.’ Just 2 miles from Pine Ridge was the state line in Nebraska and the infamous tiny town of Whiteclay, where four beer stores sold specially brewed beer that had a higher alcohol content than any other beer in the state. The four men who owned the stores had become wealthy at the expense of the Oglala Sioux people.”

Bruce dedicated the next four years of his life to meeting with Nebraska governors, attorneys general, liquor control boards, and senators. In the end, he was able to get the Nebraska Supreme Court to revoke the beer store licenses and close the liquor stores, ending more than a century of liquor sales in Whiteclay.

He opened a thrift store where people with no money could work in trade for the items they needed. He also created a praise and worship arbor where church groups from across the country came to worship with the Lakota people. “His efforts transformed the place that for decades had the nickname of ‘skid row on the prairie’ into a place of dignity and hope,” says Marsha.

Considering their mission accomplished, the couple returned to Mentone in 2018. It wasn’t long before Bruce had the urge to publish again and started ‘Mentone Trace Magazine,’ a monthly periodical focused on the local area.

“Recognizing that the income from advertisers was insufficient to cover the cost of the slick format he had chosen,” Marsha explains, “he switched to newsprint and changed the name to ‘The Trader’s Tab.’ The ‘Tab’ quickly evolved and covered parts of Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee.”

Bruce’s service to the Mentone community will remain a strong part of his legacy. Loyal readers will forever have him to thank for beginning the town’s beloved ‘Groundhog,’ which has kept area residents connected, informed, and inspired for over four decades.

A memorial service for Bruce was held at Mentone Community Church in September. His family requests that any memorial donations be directed to a YMCA of your choice. 🍷



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Successful Fall Festival Attracts Thousands and Marks a Season of Fun and Giving

An estimated 3,000 visitors made their way through the gates of this year’s fall festival, according to organizers. And they all seemed to leave full — of food, creative goods purchased from talented vendors, tunes from the amphitheater stage, and excitement about the charm our town has to offer.

So many gave their generous support to the festival, the proceeds of which support improvements to the Moon Lake campus. This year’s sponsorships totaled \$35,975. Parking fees contributed \$3,857, while festival T-shirt sales totaled \$1,477. The festival received 138 donations for supplies for kids activities, which, from the looks of those little faces, was put to excellent use. The soon-to-open Moon Lake Kitchen was kind enough to provide refreshments for the hospitality area.

The library book sale had folks swarming to browse hardbacks and paperbacks while being treated to the tunes of the Mentone Ukes. Area nonprofit groups were on-hand to greet people and provide information. The weather did its part to make the day perfect for wandering, chatting, and discovering the diversity of talent under the tents.

Not only did the festival itself bring people to Mentone, but many businesses in town held special events or opened special hours to round out the weekend of fun and make it memorable for all.

Congratulations to all involved on a well-run event that is surely already on the calendars of many for 2025. 🍂



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