APA is pleased to host a charity golf tournament at the newly renovated Lil’ Mole Run Golf Course on Saturday, October 10. (The rain date is October 17).

With the loss of revenue in 2020 from our two canceled festivals—the Rhododendron Festival and Colorfest—proceeds from this fundraising event will allow us to continue to be able to financially provide for some of the needs of our local non-profit organizations. Usually, the profits generated by the festivals allow MAPA to fund grant requests by organizations such as Mentone’s fire department, DeSoto Rescue Squad, Boy Scout Troop 106, Mentone Educational Resources Foundation, Moon Lake Library, Little River Waterkeeper, Ryleigh’s Closet, the Mentone Bicentennial Committee, and more.

MAPA Charity Golf Tournament
October 10 @ Lil’ Mole Run

Lil’ Mole Run is a lovely 18-hole, par 71 golf course located in Mentone at 741 County Road 647. The tournament will follow a four-man scramble format, which is a popular and friendly option for charity golf tournaments, as it allows players of all abilities to participate. After each player in a four-person team hits their driving shot, the team chooses the best drive and then all players hit their next shot from that position. Subsequent shots follow the same process until one of the players sinks a putt. The team then records its score for the hole and progresses to the next tee.

The registration fee, which includes the green fee, shared 2-person cart, and lunch, is $75/person or $300/foursome through September 23. The late registration fee is $85/person or $340/foursome. Space is limited, so it is advised to register early.

Teams will be organized to begin on different tees at 8 a.m. CDT. The top three flights will win prizes, and prizes will also be given for the longest drive and closest to the pin.

In addition, Tommy Ledbetter of Twin City Auto in Fort Payne will offer a free car for a hole-in-one on the driving range.
Mentone Matters • by Mayor Rob Hammond

Congratulations to David Allgood on his election to the Mentone Town Council. David and his opponent, J. D. Trammell are to be commended for running positive campaigns. In today's political climate, running for office, even in a small town, is challenging. It comes at a personal cost. We should appreciate their willingness to serve and their contributions to this community.

Town Clerk Kristen Emory did a great job in organizing her first municipal election. She put in many hours of preparation. Thanks to Donna Hedgepath, Jim Hedgepath, Marsha Tucker, David Tucker, Susan Van Apeldoorn, and Hank Van Apeldoorn for working the polls. Even without COVID-19 protocols, it is a long day.

Lastly I would like to recognize and thank Wesley Griffish for his long service (20 years) on the town council. During his tenure, Wesley also served as chairman of the Mentone Water Board. In short, he donated many hours of his time to Mentone. His thoughtfulness, judgment, and sense of humor will be greatly missed on the council. We are indeed fortunate to have Kat, Wesley, and the Griffith family in our midst.

Letter from the Editor

It will certainly be a different October this year with the cancellation of MAPA’s annual Colorfest arts and crafts festival, but also interesting with the advent of MAPA’s first charity golf tournament. If you golf, this event will be a fun and relaxing time amid the beauty of Lil’ Mole Run Golf Course, with its mountain breezes and picturesque views. MAPA certainly appreciates the helpfulness and support of Lil’ Mole Run, since this is our first time hosting a golf tournament!

This issue offers some fun stories, including a sunrise wedding at DeSoto Falls and the naming of a local island. I enjoyed getting to know Roger Lee, who is featured on the cover. Roger is the brother of Col. Robert Lee, who passed away in 2018, and the uncle of Robert’s son, Joseph, who serves as Mentone’s fire chief. It’s a shame there isn’t space to write more about Roger’s accomplishments, passions, and dreams—because there are many. I hope you enjoy this brief introduction to a very interesting and kind gentleman.

Mentone said farewell to Marjorie Jones Berry, a well-respected principal at Moon Lake School for many years. I happened to drive by the Berry Patch (the family compound) on East River Road during her funeral, and noticed the music carried on the wind on our beloved mountain top. Thanks to all who have helped make this happen.

Be well. And Happy Fall! —Kelly
Join MAPA Today
Help us preserve Mentone’s history and impact its future.

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

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

Individuals $20/year • Couples $30/year
Your membership includes a complimentary subscription to The Groundhog.

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

MAPA was organized in 1982. It is chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

MAPA News by Mark Hoffman

I hope everyone is doing well, and staying healthy! As you probably know by now, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to cancel Colorfest this year—it would be highly irresponsible to stage an event that brings so many people in close and direct contact with each other. Let’s hope we are well out of the woods on this by next Spring and that we will be able to move forward with the best Rhododendron Festival ever.

After throwing around several options for something that MAPA can sponsor this fall (and use as a fundraiser!) we decided to host the first annual (maybe!) MAPA Charity Golf Tournament. It will take place on Saturday, October 10, at Lil’ Mole Run Golf Course, and should be a lot of fun. I hope you will put a Team together, sign up, and come join us in the day’s activities. Detailed information about the event, how to sign up, etc. can be found on page 1 in this issue.

Now that September is upon us, I know we are all looking forward to that first burst of cool air coming down the east side of the Appalachian trail and the coloring of the leaves. Fall is my favorite season of the year. Let’s all get outside and enjoy it, and maybe even get a little exercise while we’re at it! I enjoyed painting a picter for MERF’s Pathway to Community project (see page 9).

I would love to hear from you, and can be reached via email anytime: mhoffmanatty@yahoo.com.

Mark Hoffman is the president of Mentone Area Preservation Association.

MAPA Charity Golf Tournament (continued from page 1)

(3-2-1) is available for $25, which includes three mulligans, two raffle tickets, and one free throw.

Lunch will be provided by DeSoto Rescue Squad in the pavilion overlooking the lake near the clubhouse.

Tickets for a 50/50 drawing will be sold; the winner and MAPA will split the proceeds of the tickets sold. Door prizes will be announced, and a golf gift basket donated by Lil’ Mole Run will be raffled.

Sponsorships are available. Hole sponsors ($100) will be acknowledged by a sign at the hole. Cart sponsors ($50) will be acknowledged by a sign in each cart. Corporate sponsors will be acknowledged on the team scoreboard, and in an individual banner ($750) or a group banner ($350) in the 6th hole. Mulligans, which allow an extra shot after a poor shot (which is not recorded), can be bought for $10 each (maximum of two for the front nine holes and two for the back nine). The MAPA Special About the event, how to sign up, etc. can be found on page 1 in this issue.

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November Groundhog. To become a sponsor, please go to mapamentone.com/golf or email mapamentone2@gmail.com.

Ways to register:
1. MAIL. Send a check payable to MAPA to P.O. Box 50, Mentone, AL 35984. Be sure to include a contact name, phone number and email.
2. ONLINE. Register at mapamentone.com/golf. A small surcharge will be added to cover the fees charged by PayPal. Be sure to include a contact name and phone number in the comments box.
3. IN PERSON. Register at Lil’ Mole Run Golf Course at 741 County Road 647 in Mentone any day of the week between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Because of COVID-19 precautions, no spectators will be allowed at this event. MAPA is grateful to Sharon Habin for coordinating this event; Marc Walsh, manager of Lil’ Mole Run, for helping organize this event and for managing the team scoreboard; and Darlene Shore and Tommy Roberts, co-owners of Lil’ Mole Run, for generously discounting green fees so MAPA can have a successful event.

To learn about Lil’ Mole Run Golf Course, visit lilmolerun.com. See the July Groundhog at readthegroundhog.com for an article exploring the history of the property.

Congratulations to the winners of August’s Municipal Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MENTONE TOWN COUNCIL</th>
<th>VALLEY HEAD TOWN COUNCIL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place 2: David Allgood</td>
<td>Place 1: Karen Vest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>Place 4: Dean Freeman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Key</td>
<td>Place 5: Chris Busby</td>
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</table>
Looking to Relax at a Lakeside Cabin? We believe this to be THE best little waterfront gem in Mentone. Certainly, it's the only one on the market. Located on a quiet, tree-lined street, this property is for sale. There's a site with a private dock and slips available. The house is situated on a corner lot, providing plenty of privacy. It's the perfect place for a quiet retreat or a place to call home. The home features a stone fireplace, hardwood floors, and a spacious layout. It's the only one on the market. This is a unique opportunity to own a piece of Mentone history. Contact us for more information. 256-996-5995

Want a place for company, but still want your privacy? There's a Lakeside Cabin? in Mentone. Certainly, this to be THE best little waterfront gem in Mentone. 1.38 acres. $264,500. It's the only one on the market. The property has a southern exposure, allowing for plenty of natural light. The home features a spacious layout, with a fireplace and hardwood floors. It's the perfect place for a quiet retreat or a place to call home. This is a unique opportunity to own a piece of Mentone history. Contact us for more information. 256-996-5995

Mentone Realty

Charlotte Gentry
Broker/Owner
256-996-5995

“The Natural Choice”

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

Melody Sellers
Assoc. REALTOR®
256-996-9297

Steve Manning
Assoc. REALTOR®
256-996-7624

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

Lively your DREAM! This unique home sits atop Lookout Mountain, built on the edge of the brow. Open style with windows throughout both sides & both floors of the entire home, the top floor is a full open loft w/sep bedrooms. The view is everything you could be looking for! The view you want. 2-car garage could be converted into guest quarters. Great rental potential! $325,000 (1138642)

The DeSoto Pkwy. Alll-wood interior features a huge, stone fireplace w/raised hearth. The brown view has been left uncut in order to provide shade in the summer. Select cut to create the view you want. 2-car garage could be converted into guest quarters. Great rental potential! $299,900 (1148480)

Spacious Cabin Home on 3.31 Acres. 3Br/2.5Ba, 2500 sq ft, one-owner home features a welcoming front porch & a deep, over-sized back porch for easy entertaining outdoors. Open living/dining/kitchen features an efficient, wood-burning heater; hardwood floors. Main-level master suite. First level also offers a laundry room & a half bath. Upstairs are two BRs w/their own baths. The land is just magnificent, light-filled space up to the wood-burning fireplace & a deep, oversized back porch for easy entertaining outdoors. 3BR/2.5BA, $264,500 (1128526)

It’s SO PEACEFUL & QUIET HERE, and the land is just gorgeous! 33.78 acres, with 2 ponds; fenced & cross-fenced; pole barn; verdant pastures; lush woodland areas. Simple 4BR/3BA ranch-style home, with finished, walkout basement. Land is approx ½ woods & ½ pasture; level to gently rolling. Spring-fed pond creates a small stream that dances down to the woods. Picturesque, gated, ranch entryway welcomes you with a gently-curved driveway leading past the pond & to the house. Satisfaction of views & pond & pasture from the front porch. House needs repairs, but this is one of those truly special places well worth considering. $299,000 (1145542)

New Listing! NEW LISTING! ENJOY YOUR MORNING COFFEE & GREET THE SUNRISE. From this vantage point, you can watch the changing seasons across the valley & beyond to Lookout Mountain. 0.8-acre lot in beautiful, woody, Pells Gap Subdivision, high atop Sand Mountain. Minutes away from I-59, Fort Payne, but worlds away from traffic & noise. Over 160’ East Brow frontage. Owner-financing avail. $75,000 (1150153)

New Listing! SWEET! Level, party-wooded, corner lot, approx 0.5 acres. Seller says this was the site of the original homeplace for this beautiful area once known as Pells Gap. The subdivision, named after this historic gap, is only a short drive to I-59, Fort Payne. Less than 10 minutes to Rainsville. This would be a great spot to build and has such easy access. Owner-financing avail. $15,000. (1151268)

10 Acres of Wooded Land, with Spring. Public water/ power avail nearby. A driveway was cut into the property several years ago, still viable. If you’ve been considering building your own cabin in the woods, this might just be the place to be. $65,000. (1109345)

New Listing! And Here It Is! Just the right amount of land for a home in the area most folks don’t even know exists. Build your own memories! 10 Acres of Wooded Land, with Spring. Public water/power avail nearby. A driveway was cut into the property several years ago, still viable. If you’ve been considering building your own cabin in the woods, this might just be the place to be.

It’s a Seller’s market! Call or text us today!
It was a gorgeous day on Saturday, August 1, when I happened to drop by the Mentone Inn late in the morning. In the living room, innkeeper Cynthia Stinson sat on a chair by the fireplace quietly speaking with a couple who sat close together on the couch. After some small talk, Cynthia introduced the couple as the "parents of the bride" and explained that she was hosting a bridal party and their guests at the Inn. The happy parents, Diana and Russell Lloyd, then told me the story of their daughter's unique sunrise wedding at DeSoto Falls early that morning. What made this wedding unique is that the wedding party and guests had actually hiked down to the pool below the Falls for their ceremony.

Katie Lloyd of Birmingham, AL and Joshua McGregor of Houston, TX, knew that that's where they wanted to marry, and they made it happen. The mother of the bride tells the story:

The wedding party and attendees met at the trail head on County Road 613 shortly after 6 a.m. for the 25-minute hike down to the pool. To protect her dress, Katie had designed a temporary overlay to wear over her gown during the hike. This was removed prior to the ceremony to reveal a beaming bride in her custom-designed, princess-style ivory lace wedding gown with matching veil.

The ceremony was officiated by the bride's uncle, James Lloyd, with guitar music by her father, Russell Lloyd. After the 'Man and Wife' pronouncement and the happy couple's kiss, cheers erupted from both the party at the foot of the falls and from observers on the overlook above. Following the ceremony, all hiked back out of the canyon and proceeded to the Mentone Inn. There, Cynthia Stinson hosted a fabulous breakfast for the guests and radiant couple.

The parents of the bride and groom are so grateful to the Lord for His provision in the couple's marriage. Attendees travelled from Texas, Oklahoma, Michigan, Tennessee and North Carolina to join those from Alabama in celebrating this happy event, and the clear morning skies were just one of the many answered prayers surrounding the wedding. Many thanks to Cynthia, her daughters, and others for their efforts in making this such a memorable and enjoyable gathering!

I thought how wonderful it was that as I lay asleep not far from the Falls, this wonderful story was unfolding. It was my good fortune that I learned about it in such a serendipitous way. Sometimes you learn the darndest things by simply striking up a conversation. Congratulations to the happy couple!
**Birthdays**

1. Connie Bell  
2. Grace Tucker  
3. Callie Ann Shoults  
4. Vince Carden  
5. Evelyn Jensen  
6. Craig Stanfill  
7. Heather Nicely  
8. Van Freeman  
9. Morgan Gregory  
10. Anna Collins  
11. Shane Burt  
12. Macy Hirst  
13. Jacob Rosson  
14. Pat Hunter

**September 5pm at 5607 AL Hwy 117, across from Town Hall. Everyone is welcome.**

**The Groundhog**

9am at the MERF house in Mentone. 
6pm at Valley Head Town Hall. 
Meets monthly on the 1st Tuesday at Valley Head Town Council.

**Mentone Rescue Squad**

Meets the 1st Saturday of the month at 7pm.

**Mentone Community Church**

Meets the 3rd Monday of every month at 7pm.

**Mentone Town Council**

Meets the 2nd Tuesday every month at 7pm.

**DeSoto Rescue Squad**

Meets the 1st Saturday of the month at 7pm. Mentone Community Church, 90 Summerville Rd. 256-634-4210.

**DeSoto Rescue Squad**

Against Northeast Alabama for 50 Years!  
877-272-1451

**Menlo Restaurant**

American Family Style

**Fall Equinox September 22**

**Anniversaries**

1. Shane & Ashley Ingram  
2. Josh & Mamie Miller  
3. Carl & Kathy Tuberville  
4. Benny & Kathy Graham  
5. Jeff & Melissa Couch  
6. Tom & Tonya Shanklin  
7. Zach & Ashley Jones  
8. Donald & Phyllis Stephens  
9. Gary & Cassie Parker  
10. Joseph & Crystal Lee  
11. Cameron & Paige Norsworthy  
12. Kevin & Kayla Worthey  
13. Amy & Dwayne Sullivan  
14. Amy & Dwayne Sullivan  
15. Joy & David Fields  
16. Jon & Kathy Chenoweth  
17. Joe & Kayla Worthey  
18. Aaron & Kim Fields  
19. Steve & Emily Wilson  
20. Paul & Anna Bryant

**Ryleigh’s Closet** is a clothing closet that provides men’s, women’s, and children’s clothing to those in need on 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 4–7pm. Mentone Community Church, 90 Summerville Rd. 256-634-4210.

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

**FREE FOOD for eligible persons and families.** Wednesdays, 9–11am. New applicants are welcome during these hours. Joint effort between St. Joseph’s-on-the-Mountain Episcopal Church (Community Outreach Ministry) and the Food Bank of North Alabama.

**Serving Northeast Alabama for 50 Years!**

877-272-1451

**Menlo Restaurant**

American Family Style

**Friday Night Special 7.99**

Hamburger Steak w/ 2 sides, Texas Toast & Drink

**Saturday Night Special 13.99**

Ribeye Steak w/ 2 Sides, Texas Toast & Drink

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

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

“Best Burgers Around”

Monday through Saturday
7807 Hwy. 48, Menlo, GA 30731
706/862-2281

**Dine-in & Carry-out**
Happy Birthday to MERF (Mentone Educational Resources Foundation)! Twenty-seven looks good on you! Thanks to Green Construction for fluffing up and enriching the look of the MERF house with new siding, doors, porch extensions, and roofing to keep us dry. And look at the work being done to bring the walking track to a bright, naturally attractive, and interactive Pathway to Community with native plants, artwork, and musical instruments. Thank you to the Rhododendron Garden club for working to eliminate unwanted plants and prepping the grounds for great new additions. Thank you to all who came out and painted the pickets for the fun, make-you-smile fence being erected soon. Thank you to the installment team for getting the musical instruments firmly in the ground. Thank you all for the excitement and encouragement for this community work. We live in a fantastic community! MERF is grateful to continue giving Moon Lake Elementary School support to make school enriching and encouraging. Paula Easter begins her 18th year as the Arts Education Teacher at Moon Lake, due to the tremendous financial support you all have offered MERF. I am working on how to bring in a field trip to the school with social distancing. Tutoring will be a bit different right now, but volunteers are needed for the Literacy Camp occurring Monday through Thursday from 3-4:40 p.m. now until October 1. Contact Sarah, if interested. Sadly, this September does not include the beginning of senior lunches at the MERF house, but we hope to interact with this group sometime soon. To keep up with all that MERF is doing, sign up for our newsletter on our website or send Sarah your email to add to the list. Thank you for your commitment to MERF and to our beloved Community for these 27 years!

The MERF community grieves with the families of Margie Berry and Carter Holland, both of whom we lost in August. Margie’s son, Dr. Bill Berry, is a founding member of MERF and of course we enjoyed Margie’s wit and smile at senior lunches and MERF events. Carter Holland and his mom, Lucie Stephens Holland, have enjoyed the mountain through many seasons of camp and their summer home in Mentone. Thanks to the graciousness of choosing MERF as a possible recipient of a memorial for their son, friends of the Hollands will impact opportunities for our Mentone area youth. Thank you for that honor for a son who is gone too soon.

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

Senior Rx and SHIP can help seniors cut costs and save money. These programs are a joint effort between the Alabama Department of Senior Services and Disability Resource Center and the State Health Insurance Assistance Program. The Senior Rx is state-funded, helping provide brand-name prescription drugs for citizens. The SHIP program is funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and is administered by the Alabama Department of Senior Services and the area agencies on aging.

Although the Council on Aging is closed to the public, they are working diligently to help people over the phone and then asking clients to come by the office and bring their necessary information. The Council on Aging has a special mailbox at the door that is being used as a drop-off location, and individuals can call, blow their horns, and someone will come to the door, retrieve the documents, copy them, and return them to the mailbox for pickup.

For more information, please call the DeKalb County Council on Aging at 256-845-8590 and ask to speak with DiAnne Callahan or Lynn Hixon. For regular updates, follow DeKalb County Public Transportation and Council on Aging on Facebook at facebook.com/DeKalbCoA.

The DeKalb County Public Transportation and Council on Aging is located at 600 Tyler Ave. SE in Fort Payne.

Menlo/Cloudland News by Pat Johnson

Menlo School

Menlo School began in-class instruction on August 3. Every class room is implementing social distancing, teachers sanitize their classroom between classes, and they have substituted water bottles with fill-stations instead of water fountains. Masks are highly recommended, but not required. The entire school is fogged every night to clean the air of any virus. Teachers always wear masks in the halls and everyone gets their temperature checked. So far, no one has tested positive on a COVID test. The students seems very glad to be back in school and seeing their school mates after a long summer of isolation. Menlo School is also offering virtual learning to students who wish to stay at home. Virtual learning started on August 20.

Menlo and Cloudland Cancel Events

Menlo’s Yard Sale and Bake Sale, originally scheduled to be held on September 11 and 12, have been cancelled. The Cloudland Volunteer Fire Department’s Annual Labor Day BarBQ and gospel sing has also been cancelled. They are still deciding if they want to sell BarBQ as a drive by. Watch for signs.

Menlo School

613 South Brow Drive
Cloundland

504 County Rd 1024
Mentone, Lake Lahunasge

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

HARDY REALTY & DEVELOPMENT CO.
September is the month when summer officially comes to a close and we welcome the cooler temperatures that autumn brings. This time of year, the lakes on Little River (Lahusage and DeSoto) are experiencing turnover, which means the surface water that was once warmed by the sunlight, begins to cool. The cool water then becomes dense and sinks, forcing the bottom layer of water to rise, in order for it to cool and the water become an equal temperature. You can see the signs when this happens, as the decaying matter on the lake bottom is warm and begins to bubble and release an odor. This seasonal, natural occurrence plays a critical role in the ecosystem. Fresh oxygen replenishes the bottom layer and allows fish to return and spend the winter months in the deep layer of water. The turnover happens again during the spring when the water begins to warm up.

I encourage you to get on the river this fall. Paddle a canoe or take a swim before the water is too cold. Hike along the river on the yellow trail in DeSoto State Park. Soon, the leaves will be changing, and the scenery is breathtaking. The water is like glass on the lakes, early in the morning and late in the afternoon. Watching the trees reflect on the water’s surface is a great way to experience serenity. River therapy is the perfect prescription!

Update on SwimGuide Season!

We conclude our summer SwimGuide season on September 3. For 16 weeks—Memorial Day to Labor Day—we monitored seven swimming holes on Little River in order to get a big picture of the overall health of Little River. The water quality in Little River is pristine and we had only a few high readings of E Coli bacteria. This doesn’t mean that there were no issues. We did observe high turbidity (muddy water) in the water table because of a wet summer and also because of impacts from land development along the riverbank. It is vital to the health of Little River that the riverbanks stay intact. Because Little River is shallow and rocky in most areas, aquatic and terrestrial species cannot survive when large loads of sediment wash in the river. We strongly encourage landowners on the river to leave a riparian (vegetation) zone between their property and the river in order to prevent erosion and degradation of the water quality in Little River.

Angie Shugart is the executive director of Little River Waterkeeper, a 501(c)(3) water advocacy program and a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance, a global clean water movement. Donations are tax deductible. 215 Grand Ave. SW Fort Payne, AL 35967.

Hemlock Informational Meeting Available to View

The Eastern hemlock species is on a path to extinction because of the hemlock wooly adelgid, a parasitic insect which is present in the Mentone area. Forestry professionals with the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service hosted a Zoom meeting in August for concerned landowners. They explained the problem with the pest and discussed ways to prevent and treat infestation. The meeting was recorded and can be viewed at aces.edu/go/HWA.
A plein air event will be hosted by the Little River Arts Council on September 11-13, when some of our area’s talented outdoor painters will bring their paint boxes and easels to Mountain Cove (Friday), Fort Payne (Saturday), and Mentone (Sunday). Fort Payne artist Eugenia Johnston will be the facilitator of this event, which is being held in conjunction with the 18th annual International Plein Air Paint Out. Artists across the globe will paint outdoors during the course of the weekend.

Plein air painting developed in France in the mid-19th century and is now enjoying a revived popularity. Plein air artists seek the quality of natural light and atmosphere outdoors. Using a variety of media, including oils, watercolors, and pastels, their artwork is in direct response to the beauty they find in nature.

The international organization, International Plein Air Painters, hosts the annual event, which was created for the sole purpose of advancing the execution and enjoyment of plein air painting without limitations of borders or regions. They encourage other artists to get outside, paint, and share ideas with other artists. You can learn more about the group at i-p-a-p.com.

If you are an artist and would like to participate, please register at littleriverartsCouncil.org and we will send you details about the weekend. For those who would like to see the artists’ works, we will post videos of the painters at work throughout the weekend on our Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube pages, so keep an eye out!

Our Artist Registry benefits both artists and art lovers. The registry bridges the gap between the idea of an artists’ community and the accessibility to the artists of the community. Visitors to the registry will see the rich array of visual artists living in the environs of Little River and neighboring communities.

Our registry offers artists more awareness through an expanded web presence via our website and social media platforms, in addition to a connection with LRAC members and art patrons. Members of the Artist Registry will receive exclusive notifications of opportunities such as grants, events, and competitions. Artists do not need to be members of Little River Arts Council to be included in the registry, which will launch in September.

Our annual home tour has been cancelled this year. The board has decided to postpone our annual silent auction until our membership meeting is held in 2021, hopefully in late winter.

Join our email list or Like our Facebook page to keep informed about some exciting upcoming events we’re planning. We remain cautious about hosting gatherings, so we will be focusing on free online events such as concerts, art classes, and tours of artists’ studios. Visit littleriverartsCouncil.org for more information or to become a member.
Announcing... Goose Island! by Kelly Leavitt

A small rocky island is situated in Lake Lahusage at the confluence of the Middle and East Forks of Little River. Locals refer to it simply as “the island.” Wyatt Thornton, 18, considered the land feature to be prominent enough to be deserving of a proper name. After seeing Canadian Geese hatch eggs on the rock over the last two years, he decided to call it “Goose Island.”

The name is now officially recognized by the U.S. Geological Survey. In January, Wyatt completed an online application and submitted his idea along with GPS coordinates, the elevation, a physical description, and his reasoning for the suggested name. In August, he received a letter in the mail stating that his proposal had been approved at the August 13th meeting of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

Wyatt is a senior at Rome High School. His family frequently visits friends and family who live on Lake Lahusage, where he enjoys “kayaking and hanging out. We usually paddle out to the island and tie the boats up, then go for a swim.”

An idea, a bit of research, and a simple action now means that Wyatt will be able to one day swim in the waters of Lake Lahusage with his children and grandchildren, and point out the island that he officially named. And maybe there will be a goose nest on it.

Moon Lake Community Library News by Kelly Leavitt

The Moon Lake Book Club met in late August via Zoom. We’re all starting to get the hang of meeting online! Participants each presented to the group a memoir they had read, and many great suggestions were offered. Patti Harless said she would never have chosen to read a memoir if it weren’t for the book club, and now she’s hooked. She mentioned a statement she’d heard: “Your comfort zone is where dreams go to die.” Deidre Hall wasn’t able to attend, but she sent a message with her suggestion, My Year with Eleanor, in which author Noelle Hancock writes about conquering her own fears by following Eleanor Roosevelt’s advice to “do one thing every day that scares you.” This seemed like a good topic to follow up on, so the group decided to read this entertaining and inspiring book for our meeting on September 22 at 6:30 p.m. Check our website or Facebook page for the link to the online Zoom meeting.

Curbside service continues at the library, as well as our virtual book sale. Thanks to Karole and Harry Ohme for a large donation of hardcover fiction books. We look forward to the day we can once again hold a public book sale, both to raise funds for the library and to make room on our sale shelves, which are overflowing. Visit moonlakelibrary.org to reserve books to check out or to place an order for books to purchase.
#1034997—Approx. 6 acres on Middle Fork of Little River. $48,900
#1039769—6.32+-/ water front building lot in Mountain River Estates! REDUCED TO $44,950
#1073864—Brow Lot! .78 acres. REDUCED TO $83,900
#1076239—Cleared & wooded 3.6 acres on Scenic Hwy. REDUCED TO $74,500.
#1078140—16.3 acres, unrestricted, partially wooded! $66,800
#1092235—Building lot in Laurel Creek Lakes. $19,900
#1099911—LAST CHANCE to buy open land before entering into Georgia!!! $165,000.
#1108339—Better Than a Bargain...this is a STEAL! $89,000.
#1111628—AMAZING VIEWS! YES, VIEWS!!! REDUCED TO $79,900.
#1112787—40 acres in Mentone, AL with stream and untouched family owned property since 1923! REDUCED TO $198,000
#1111936—Looking for a brow lot inside the city limits of Mentone? $78,500
#1118808—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. $25,000
#1118810—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. $25,000
#1118812—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. $25,000
#1118813—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. $25,000
#1118815—A GREAT PLACE TO BUILD YOUR GETAWAY NOW! Level wooded lots with underground utilities, inside gated community. Just minutes to Historic downtown Mentone. Call today for more information. $25,000
#1118829—A great little investment property or place for your weekend getaway-$49,900
#1118899—BEAUTIFUL LAKEFRONT PROPERTY ON TOP OF WORLD FAMOUS LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN! Sloping wooded lot inside gated community. Call Now for more information. $30,000
#1128694—40 acres with 3-acre lake stocked with fish. $189,900.
#1129833—15-acre brow lot in Mentone. $124,900
#1130311—The time to buy is now! Steal of a deal on 2 acres with a seasonal brow view! Build that cabin or home you have always wanted. Priced only at $29,999.
#1138874—AKE UP TO WATERFRONT LIVING on this 6.22 acres with a long and winding stream and frontage on Brush Creek. This property is located in a cul-de-sac and has lots of rock outcroppings and boulders scattered all about. The property has beautiful frontage along the creek and is mostly wooded. $49,900
#1139471—READY FOR THAT BROW VIEW IN MENTONE? 2.3 acres of untouched land! Make this your new home away from home and build the cabin of your dreams! $125,000
#1145115—BEAUTIFUL BUILDING LOTS across from Lake Luhagase near the dam! This wooded 2.5 acre parcel is divided from a larger tract and has all the making of a wonderful home site! $22,500
#1145590—GREAT POSSIBILITIES! This 22 acres +/- has lots of road frontage on Hwy. 117. $125,000
#1150950—BEAUTIFUL BROW PROPERTY ON County Road 105. You are within 5 minutes of Little River Canyon Falls! This is a great opportunity to purchase land and build that mountain cabin or dream home you desire! Seller will consider owner finance at full asking price with 20% down at 5.5% interest rate! $52,900.
#1148791—Beautiful 2.4 acre parcel in the mountains of Mentone on County Road 106! Wooded, gently sloping. Make that dream come true of building that cabin in the mountains of Alabama. Power and water at the road. $15,900
#1149803—GORGEOUS LOT IN MENTONE with .81+-/ acres in Hunter’s Ridge Subdivision. $15,000
#1150871—WHAT AN ADDRESS FOR YOUR NEXT HOME! Enjoy peace and quiet and the sound of rushing waters on this .3 acre lot on West Fork of Little River in Mentone. Bring your plans and move to Mentone today! $48,500
#1150900—ATTENTION LAND LOVERS... For those of you seeking peace and quiet surroundings on West Fork Little River here’s your chance to build the home of your dreams. This 2.25 acre tract is too wonderful to pass you by. $48,500
#1150901—PANARAMIC VIEWS FOR MILES & MILES! Along with views of Battelle below in the valley, Bring your home plans and enjoy nature on this 8.9 tract of land. $230,000
#1150911—WOW! What Amazing VIEWS you have for miles and miles! Beautiful views of Battelle below. Great place to build your forever home on this 8.8 acres of prime brow property. $225,000
Mentone Arts & Cultural Center Update by Ben Shurett

What a pleasure it is to have this space to give you an update on what’s going on with the Mentone Arts Center. Officers and committee members have been hard at work in July and August making plans for an October opening.

First, we have been busy recruiting artists and artisans to sell their wares in the Arts Center. We’ve invited a large number of artists who have some connection to Mentone. That connection might be because they live here full or part-time, or perhaps they’ve sold their wares in Mentone before. In any case, we are delighted that about 25 artists have already accepted our invitation and submitted photos via email for review.

You’ll recognize many of these names. Those who have already emailed us include such noted artists as Cynthia and Mickey Luck, Melinda and Neal Whitt, Linda Espy, Adelaide Drennen, Ginger Lowery, Lydia Randolph, Meg Justice, Sandra Hall, Tammy Beane, Eugenia Johnston, Thomas Spake, Karin Mack, Tisa Barton, Penny Dobson, Wayne Hostetter, Don David, Rita Winters, Linda Munoz, Chris Patterson and Karen Duke. I’m certain we have more to come.

Better still, we have a wide variety of expressions of artistic talents. We have paintings of a number of different genres, pottery, woven wear, baskets and much more. There will be a wide price range as well, so there will be value and bargains for everybody.

The Mentone Arts Center will also have antiques, large and small for sale. We already have a commitment from one well-known dealer and we are currently in negotiations with several others. We think it’s important to pair art and antiques so that buyers looking for either will stop in and find something they like and learn about all the merchants in Mentone.

We very much want more artists, and especially artists who live in Mentone fulltime. We invite everyone to come join in and to sell your creations in downtown Mentone. It will be a terrific place for many people to see your art. Please email Executive Director Randy Grider at mentoneartscenter@gmail.com for more information and details.

We have committees hard at work for us. Committees include those for art, antiques, volunteers, point of sale, public relations, styling and display, small goods and display. We also have a building committee to consider and direct the look and feel of the Mentone Arts Center both inside and out.

In addition to selling arts and antiques, we will also operate a Welcome Center for visitors and residents alike. The Welcome Center will have brochures for local and nearby attractions and an impressive section to honor the history of Mentone. We are so pleased that Doreen Crow Waters will lend us some significant historical items for the gift shop.

Finally, we want to be the place to help local artists sell their beautiful creations and provide education and entertainment for everyone living in or visiting Mentone. We hope you’ll want to be part of something that is fun and rewarding for everyone!

Ben Shurett is board president of the Mentone Arts & Cultural Center.

Hike DeSoto

DeSoto State Park (DSP) is offering several free guided hikes in September. If you’ve never hiked to the basin of DeSoto Falls, here’s your chance! On September 6, DSP staff will lead the way to the bottom of one of Alabama’s tallest waterfalls.

DSP staff and volunteers will lead a moderate hike on September 19 to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Quarry. Learn how the CCC constructed the original structures that you can still see in the park today.

A moderate hike will be led on September 26 by DSP staff to the Civilian Conservation Corps’s “unfinished” bridge. Learn the history of why the CCC left it standing and see several original structures.

To learn more about these hikes, visit the park’s Facebook page or alapark.com/parks/desoto-state-park/park-events.

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Thomas Bone, #1706
North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District Fundraiser by Vicky Patrick

Thanks go out to our friends and neighbors for the successful fund raiser on August 8. The smoked pork butts and sandwiches were again a hit with the community. The Fire Department raised $3,330. The monies from donations and fund raisers help the Department to purchase supplies such as bottled water and other expendables to make life easier for the volunteers. This would not be possible without the financial support of the community. Thank you for your support.

Vicky Patrick is the treasurer for the board of the North Lookout Mountain Fire Protection District (northlookoutmountainfire.org).

Alabama Folklife Association Launches Folk in Five
by Emily Blejwas

The Alabama Folklife Association (AFA) is asking Alabamians to share their folk traditions in 5-minute videos as part of the statewide “Folk in Five” initiative, designed to highlight Alabama’s diversity of culture, history, art form, and environment expressed through its folk traditions.

Folklife includes traditions passed down through families, communities, or work life. It could be a recipe, song, or story. Folklife is the way we learn to tie a fishing lure, lay out a garden, stitch a quilt, or celebrate a holiday.

Folk in Five is a great way to spend time while at home. We hope it will inspire Alabamians not only to share their traditions, but to engage with family members from multiple generations and to express creativity. It’s also a great activity for teachers to assign to students as a way to learn about local folklife.

Videos will be posted online, providing a wide range of folklife examples for access by educators and the public. Each month, the AFA will pick a winner to receive an AFA gift.

Videos will be received by email: alabamafolklife@gmail.com. Footage should include the participant’s name, county, tradition, and how s/he learned the tradition. Participants can also involve those who taught them and/or those they are teaching (when safe). Videos should be no more than 5 minutes in length.

Emily Blejwas is the executive director of the Alabama Folklife Association, based in Montgomery. The Alabama Folklife Association was founded in 1980 to document, preserve, present, and promote the multicultural folkways of Alabama through research, education, and programming.
Marjorie Nell Jones Berry
October 23, 1931 – August 18, 2020

Marjorie Nell Jones Berry died peacefully on August 18, 2020, at her home in Mentone at the age of 88.

Marjorie was born in Mentone on October 23, 1931, the daughter of Fred and Berrie Jones. A lifelong member of Moon Lake Baptist Church, in Mentone, she served for many years as director of Vacation Bible School and the Young Woman’s Auxiliary. Marjorie was the Valley Head High School homecoming queen in 1948 and a member of Northeast Alabama Community College’s first nursing class in 1972. She worked as a registered nurse on the surgical floor of DeKalb Regional Medical Center, in Fort Payne, for 24 years.

Marjorie was known for her radiant smile and her cheerful personality, both of which contributed to the entertaining stories she often told about her childhood, her work, and the colorful characters and events of Mentone’s past. Her house’s central location on the family compound known as Berry Patch followed an open-door policy, with visitors frequently dropping by for a dose of her trademark humor or a helping of her delicious cuisine. Always eager to hit the road, she visited all 50 American states, all 10 Canadian provinces, and 16 different countries. She touched the lives of many with her distinctive wit and wisdom.

The youngest of 11 children, Marjorie was preceded in death by her husband, Bill Berry, of Mentone; sister-in-law, Dallyne Jones, of Mentone; and numerous beloved nephews and nieces.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Moon Lake Baptist Church, in Mentone, she served for many years as director of Vacation Bible School and the Young Woman’s Auxiliary. Marjorie was the Valley Head High School homecoming queen in 1948 and a member of Northeast Alabama Community College’s first nursing class in 1972. She worked as a registered nurse on the surgical floor of DeKalb Regional Medical Center, in Fort Payne, for 24 years.

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The youngest of 11 children, Marjorie was preceded in death by her husband, Bill Berry, of Mentone; sister-in-law, Dallyne Jones, of Mentone; and numerous beloved nephews and nieces.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Moon Lake Baptist Church (at P. O. Box 423, Mentone, Alabama 35984) for the acquisition and installation of pulp sconces that will honor Marjorie and her late husband.

Susan Lynn Akes
August 14, 1962 – August 13, 2020

Susan Lynn Akes, age 58, of Valley Head, passed away on Thursday, August 13, 2020 at her residence.

She is survived by her husband, Andrew A. Akes; sons, Daniel O. Akes, Charles Akes (Caitlyn), Isaac Akes (Danny), and Henry Akes; three sisters, and one brother.

He then received advanced artillery training, but rejoined his battalion, where he was taught about a “top secret” new technology “Radio Detection and Ranging,” abbreviated and known today as RADAR. Mr. Ringer was deployed to the Pacific Theatre as a RADAR technician and was among some of the first Americans to arrive in Hiroshima after the dropping of the atomic bomb. He was a member of the Occupation Force until being shipped home to be honorably discharged at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. Following his military service, he went to Jacksonville State Teachers College, now Jacksonville State University. He graduated in 1949 and went on to teach at Ider, served as principal of Moon Lake Elementary School in Mentone, and then as principal of Valley Head Elementary School.

Mr. Ringer was very involved with his civic and church communities. He was an active member of the Valley Head United Methodist Church and was involved with the Alabama Retired Teacher’s Association, of which he was at one time President. He was a member of the Valley Head Volunteer Fire Department, the Veteran’s of Foreign Wars, The American Legion, The Military Amateur Radio Service, the DeKalb County Amateur Radio Association, President of the Valley Head Water Board since 1981, and was actively involved in the Alabama Rural Water Association. His call sign was W4DGH, and he regularly communicated with friends around the world. Mr. Ringer and his brother, Dr. Robert Ringer, helped to form the McClure Professorship to honor a professor who had greatly influenced them both at Jacksonville. Mr. Ringer remained active into his 90s, often traveling to visit family and friends and to attend events related to his interests in Amateur Radio and genealogy. He will be remembered as a gracious, generous, and honorable man and will be missed by his family and community.

He is survived by a niece, Sara Allen Schmidt (Norbert); nephew, Robert “David” Ringer (Susan); several great-nieces and nephews; a great-great nephew; many cousins; and his special caregivers, Brenda Jimenez and Amber Stokes.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Raymond J. Ringer & Mary Ruth Chisolm Ringer; brother, Dr. Robert Ringer; and sister, Joyce Ringer Allen.

Memorial donations may be made to the Raymond J. Ringer and Ruth Ringer Faculty Development Award or the McClure Professorship. Mail donations to: Financial Aid Office, Jacksonville State University, 700 Pelham Road N., Jacksonville, AL 36265.
HUBERT BLALOCK  
May 12, 1947 – August 13, 2020

Hubert Blalock, age 73, of Mentone, passed away on Thursday, August 13, 2020 at DeKalb Regional Medical Center.

He is survived by siblings, Dave Blalock (Yvonne), Irene Willingham, Hazel Hilliard, Bobby Blalock (Sandy), & Kathy Wheat (Ronald), and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Frank & Lucille Keith Blalock, and siblings, Joe Blalock, Mary Sue Hale, Katherine Blalock, Willie Blalock, and Jean Blalock.

GORDON EUGENE TUCKER  
October 3, 1929 – August 19, 2020

Gordon Eugene Tucker, age 90 of Mentone, passed away on Wednesday, August 19, 2020. Mr. Tucker was born on October 3, 1929 to the late Luther and Nora Kerby Tucker in Menlo, GA. He retired from Wheeling Foundry.

He is survived by his wife, Annie Marie Kerby Tucker; sons and daughters-in-law, David and Marcia Tucker, Michael and Patty Tucker, and James and Susan Tucker; daughter, Joyce Oliver; three grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren also survive.

KATHY WHEAT BLALOCK  
October 5, 1943 – August 21, 2020

Mrs. Kathy Wheat Blalock, age 76, of Cloudland, GA, passed away Friday, August 21, 2020, at her residence. Mrs. Holbrook was born October 5, 1943, to the late Lee and Ida Ballenger Cochran. In addition to her parents she was preceded in death by her husband, William Terrell “Bud” Holbrook; a brother, Joe Cochran; and three sisters, Mary Schevermeier, Peggy Cummings, and Gail Medina.

Survivors include her son, Curtis Lee (Melissa) Holbrook; daughters and sons-in-law, Becky and Dudley Easley, Melissa Ann and Clinton Carroll, and Birzi Jane (Marty Crow) Holbrook; brothers, Charles Cochran and Ray Cochran; sisters, Mildred Baker and Cordia Parleer. Eight grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren also survive.

THELMA LOU STOKER LOWERY  
March 13, 1926 – August 8, 2020

Thelma Lou Lowery, age 94, of Menlo, GA, passed away Saturday, August 8, 2020, at Redmond Regional Medical Center.

Mrs. Lowery was born March 13, 1926, in Cloudland, GA, daughter of the late George and Annie Moses Stoker. She was Baptist by faith and, prior to her retirement, was employed with Riegel Textiles. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, E.C. Lowery, and brothers, Claude Stoker and James Stoker. Mrs. Lowery is survived by several nieces and nephews.

In Memoriam

Loss is immeasurable, but so is the love that’s left behind.

“Mentone: Where Little River Runs”  
DVDs Still Available  By Holley Midgley

If you missed getting the 2019 history documentary “Mentone: Where Little River Runs,” copies are still available for free by contacting the Mentone Town Hall. Call Kristen Emory, town clerk, at 256-634-0704 to request a DVD. There is no charge for either the DVD or for mailing it to you. Is this a great town or what? Can’t wait to get your very own copy? Then go to YouTube, type in the name “Mentone: Where Little River Runs,” and I regret the omission. And the outstanding Wildflower Café probably should have been included as a place that has achieved regional fame. Mea Culpa, folks, and pass the humble pie.
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Big Mill & Vintage 1889
Blue Jug
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Bruce’s Foodland
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Fischer X-Roads Store
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Priceless IGA
Rim of the Canyon Café
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The Spot Coffee Shop
The Strand
Waffle House

GEORGIA
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Quality Inn
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Rim of the Canyon Café
Southern Properties
The Spot Coffee Shop
The Strand
Waffle House

GEORGIA
BJ’s State Line Store
Crossroads Market
Ingle’s
Judy’s Herb Shop
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Elevation
Fort Payne Water
Hair @ The Village
Helena’s Gas & Deli
Kawliga’s
Lil’ Mole Run
Little River Hardware
Log Cabin Village
Lookout Mountain Realty
Mentone Farmers Market
Mentone Inn
Mentone Market
Mentone Realty
Mentone Town Hall
Moon Lake Trading Company
Rocky Top Pottery
Southern Style
Tip Top Bake Shop
Tranquility Campground
Wildflower Café

VALLEY HEAD/ HAMMONDVILLE
1-59 Rest Area
Dave’s Antiques
Hammondville Town Hall
Merit Bank
Nena’s Produce
Valley Head Drugs
Valley Head Food Mart
Valley Head Town Hall
Valley Head Water Board

FORT PAYNE
Alabama Fan Club & Museum
Bargain Depot
Big Mill & Vintage 1889
Blue Jug
Boom Town Makers Market
Brown’s Cleaners
Bruce’s Foodland
Chamber of Commerce
Day’s Inn
DeKalb Library
DeSoto State Park Lodge
DSP Country Store
First Fidelity Bank
Fischer X-Roads Store
Hampton Inn
Holiday Inn
Huddle House
Kilgore Drugs North

Quality Inn
Priceless IGA
Rim of the Canyon Café
Southern Properties
The Spot Coffee Shop
The Strand
Waffle House

GEORGIA
BJ’s State Line Store
Crossroads Market
Ingle’s
Judy’s Herb Shop
River Ridge Escape
Menlo Design Cuts
Menlo Healthmart
Menlo Lucky’s
Menlo Restaurant
Menlo Town Hall
Mountain Top Country Store
Paradise Garden
Reece Tire

readthegroundhog.com
When I was growing up, my parents followed politics like many folks follow SEC football. (They followed SEC football too.) When election time rolled around, they always voted, usually for the same candidate, but there were some election cycles when they enjoyed good-natured arguments about cancelling out each other’s vote. Their example meant that when I turned 18, I registered to vote, and I’ve never missed a presidential or off-year election since. It’s turned into a habit for me.

But after almost missing the 2018 midterm election because of a family emergency, I wanted to take a close look at the different options for voting in Alabama, especially as the coronavirus pandemic causes even more voters to consider casting absentee ballots this fall.

Maybe you haven’t voted before. Maybe you stopped voting a while back but have decided that it’s time to get engaged again, realizing that citizenship comes with responsibilities along with rights.

It’s not too late to make sure you can cast a ballot in the general election on November 3. Here are some frequently asked questions to help you through the process.

I’m not registered. What do I do?
Register online at alabamavotes.gov or download a paper application at bit.ly/AL-voter-form to mail in or drop off at the DeKalb County Board of Registrars at 300 Grand Avenue South, Suite 200, Fort Payne, Alabama, 35967. You can also go by the Board of Registrars office and register in person.

If you’ve moved within the state and just need to change your address, you can do that using the same online or downloadable form.

Maybe I’m registered, but I’m not sure. How can I find out?
In DeKalb County, call the local Board of Registrars at 256-845-8598. Or check online at vote.org. If you’re still on the voter list, ask where your polling place is, because sometimes these change.

When is the last day to register?
October 19, so do it now.

Okay, I’m registered. What happens now?
If you are newly registered, the DeKalb County Board of Registrars will send you a postcard within about two weeks that tells you exactly where you’ll vote. If you haven’t received a card after two weeks, call them at 256-845-8598. Or if you registered a long time ago and haven’t voted lately, call to get an update on your polling place because sometimes these change.

Do I have to go to my polling place to vote or can I get an absentee ballot?
Because of the coronavirus pandemic, Alabama’s Secretary of State John Merrill recently issued an emergency order that allows any registered voter to apply for an absentee ballot.

These are your choices in terms of voting methods:
• Vote at your polling place in person on Election Day.
• Vote absentee in person - To vote absentee in person, go to the office of DeKalb County Circuit Clerk Todd Greeson on the 2nd floor of the DeKalb County Courthouse and bring an approved form of identification with you. There you’ll fill out a request for an absentee ballot, checking the box that says: “I have a physical illness or infirmity which prevents my attendance at the polls,” unless another reason applies to your situation. The staff will make a copy of your ID and notarize the form. They will process and approve your request and give you your absentee ballot to complete onsite. This option is available from September 9 through November 2. This is essentially Alabama’s version of early voting.
• Pick up a copy of the absentee ballot request form from the clerk’s office at the DeKalb County Courthouse or download it from bit.ly/DeKalb-absentee-ballot. You’ll check the box that says: I have a physical illness or infirmity which prevents my attendance at the polls unless another reason applies. Read the instructions carefully! Along with your absentee ballot request, you’ll send a photocopy of your identification, usually your driver’s license. See AlabamaVoterID.com for more information on approved forms of identification. In Mentone, go by Mentone Town Hall or Little River Hardware for a free photocopy of your ID. If you’re age 65 or older or disabled, you’re exempt from the photo ID requirement. All requests for absentee ballots must be signed by two witnesses or notarized and submitted by October 29. Your ballot will then arrive in the mail. Mail or hand deliver the completed ballot to the DeKalb County Courthouse Circuit Clerk’s office as soon as possible. Postage for the returned ballot is 3 first class stamps because of its weight. Also, if you are returning the ballot to the clerk’s office instead of mailing it, you cannot have someone else take it for you. You have to deliver it yourself.

I plan to vote at my local polling place on Election Day, but I’ve never done this before. What should I expect?
Show up between the hours of 7 AM and 7 PM with your driver’s license or other form of ID. Plan on the usual pandemic routines of social distancing, masks, and hand sanitizer. Poll workers will help you sign in, check your ID, and hand you your paper ballot, along with a privacy sleeve. You’ll mark your choices, put your ballot in the sleeve and place it in the ballot box. There will be poll workers around to answer questions you have about procedures.

As long as you’re in line at 7 p.m., you can vote. This isn’t an issue in Mentone, but large polling places may have lines on Election Day.

Aside from the presidential race, I have no idea who or what is on the ballot. Help! What do I do?
One Alabama Senate seat is on the ballot, plus the Congressional race. There are just a few local races this time, depending on what part of the county you’re in. Sample ballots will be available from the DeKalb County Probate Judge’s office after September 9. These samples often appear in newspapers or are posted around town.
Roger is in the process of developing a small pond below the water wheel. He is excavating huge rocks from his and the neighboring property and moving them to the pond to create a rock floor and walls because he intends to raise trout. “Trout need cold, clean water. The water feeding the wheel has run underground and is as cool as it can be,” said Roger.

He also raises quail, and uses the power of the water to run a series of shafts and pulleys he has set up to grind the corn and soybeans for quail feed. He recently connected batteries to the wheel, so the mill house is electrically powered by the water. His next goal is to use the wheel to power a wood splitter and he will eventually install a grist mill.

What set him on this course of action? “I just decided to do it,” he said. He taught himself what he needed to know in large part by watching videos on YouTube.

Roger has been developing and maintaining his neighbors’ 200+-acre property for the past dozen or so years. So far, three lakes have been built and nine ponds, some of which hold catfish and golden shiners. Fruit trees are thriving, as are several large garden areas which are irrigated by a system of underground valves and pipes that Roger installed to be able to draw water from the one of the lakes.

Bears are on this property, as evidenced by plentiful bear prints and scat. In the summer of 2019, Roger experienced the devastating effect a bear can have when his beehives were destroyed. “The first hit, the queen was killed,” said Roger. “I had to rebuild the hive. Then the hive got hit two more times. So I moved it to another location and started all over. But then it must have been a bigger bear that got that hive because it was totally destroyed. It licked it clean.”

What’s a man of the land to do? “I have a big garden, and I want bees for the plants, so I thought, “I’m going to have to build a hive that bears can’t get into.” The end result? A hive so heavy it needed to be set in place with a tractor. It’s constructed with solid wood and steel, sunk into concrete pilings with steel bolts. “A bear might scratch it up, but he ain’t getting in that one. So far, he hasn’t even tried,” Roger said with relief.

“I am not a smart person when it comes to books and computers,” Roger humbly explained, “but I can build you about anything with my hands. I can figure out to make it mechanically work, or fix it when it breaks. That’s my calling. But anything else, I’m an oddball. I don’t fit in the world today because the world has left me behind, with the computer age and all. But I’m not weeping over it. I like my lifestyle.”