

Monte Sano Civic Association Newsletter



Vol. 57 No. 4. Improving Huntsville's Unique Mountain Community Since 1954. December 2011
For the latest news, visit us on the web at <http://www.montesano.org/msca/>

MSCA News

2012 MSCA Board Election Results

Congratulations to the Newly Elected Board Members:

- Emily Elam
- George Heeschen
- Katie Pinnix
- T Poe
- Greg Wright

A Heartfelt Thank You to the Retiring Board Members:

- Nancy Robertson
- Jan Miller
- Bob Crook
- Kyle Siegrist

Holiday Party

You are invited to the Monte Sano Civic Association Holiday Party on Sunday, December 18, 2011 from 5:30 to 8:30 PM at the Monte Sano State Park Lodge.

- 5:30 - 6:00 Social Time (complimentary beverages)
- 6:00 Potluck Line Starts (Please bring a side dish or dessert to share)
- 6:30-8:30 Socializing and live music by the **Looking Back Band** (lookingbackband.com/)

Come and celebrate the season with your friends and neighbors!

Membership

Your Monte Sano Civic Association goes through a feast or famine budget cycle over the course of a two year period. Membership levels go down during non-directory years and the expenses associated with the directory largely occur in the low membership year. Membership then swells when the directory is released. A simple change to the membership policy will make budgeting and cash-flow more balanced. Starting with your next renewal of a membership, the cost will be \$20 for **Two Years**. No action is required; the label on the front shows your membership paid through year xxxx. For more information contact Greg Wright by phone at 256.536.5914 or by email at greg.wright@nasa.gov.



Monte Sano United Methodist Church

Amahl and the Night Visitors

The Monte Sano United Methodist Church and Calhoun Community College present *Amahl and the Night Visitors* by Gian-Carlo Menotti, directed by Vivienne Atkins. The performances will be at the Church (601 Monte Sano Boulevard) on December 16 and 17 at 7:30 PM, and on December 18 at 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM. For more information, call 256.533.6083.

Candlelight Service

The Monte Sano UMC Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service will be held on December 24. The service begins at 6:00 PM, and the Come and Go Communion starts at 7:00 PM.

Financial Peace

Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University Class will begin in January. A Preview will be held on January 8 and 15 at 10:15 AM and 12:15 PM. Classes start on Wednesday, January 18 at 6:30 PM. For more information contact Liz Thomson at Beth010409@yahoo.com.

Dale Clem

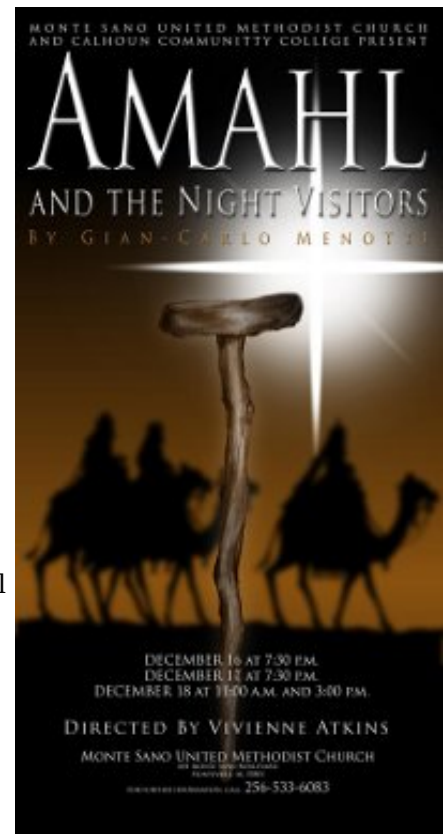
Flint River Conservation Association

FRCA Annual Holiday Event

The Flint River Conservation Association (FRCA) invites residents of Monte Sano to join FRCA at their Annual Holiday Meeting at 6:30 PM, December 13 at the Monte Sano State Park Lodge. We will share accomplishments and great food. Our guest speaker will be Paul Freeman, aquatic ecologist with *The Nature Conservancy* who will tell us about their report, *Priority Areas for Freshwater Conservation Action: A Biodiversity Assessment of the Southeastern United States*. Please bring a side dish (with utensil) to share with others. FRCA will supply the turkey and ham. For more information, call Soos Weber at 256.539.3747.

Update on Gatehouse Restoration

As we reported earlier, the Flint River Conservation Association received a *Legacy-Partners in Environmental Education* grant to restore the little CCC Gatehouse in Monte Sano State Park and turn it into a small nature center. Thanks to Kent Wilbom, the State Park employees, and about a dozen volunteers, the building is nearing completion. The lighting will be in before the MSCA Holiday Party, and all that will be left to do will be to install the front porch posts, floor tile and the exhibit cases. If you want to take a peek, you may do so on Christmas Eve, from 10:00 AM to Noon. Assembling the collection of historic and natural artifacts is the next step. If you have any interesting mountain memorabilia, photos, artifacts that you would like to display, please contact me. The items will be in secure display cabinets and the building will have an attendant when it is open. Work will continue on December 11 at 1:00 PM. If you would like to help, call Soos Weber at 256.509.1219 or 256.539.3747.



Thanks to the following folks and businesses for their generous donations the last few months:

- **Belgard Hardscapes** for donating the pervious pavers for the handicap parking area.
- **Across the Pond** for pick up and delivery of the pavers.
- **Ed Rogers**, a retired architect who has donated dozens of hours to the project.
- **Dave Nagy**, a park ranger who has spent many hours coordinating work on the building.
- **Vulcan Materials** for donating the limestone gravel for the "No Runoff" parking lot.
- **Lewter's Hardware** for donating the window glass for the Gatehouse.
- **Southerlands Photo** for donating 10 × 12 glossy photos of the "before" Gatehouse.
- **John Osborn** of Osborn Electric for donating time and materials to bring the Gatehouse up to code.

Wildlife Habitat Certification

Please remember our goal of making Monte Sano the first Certified Wildlife Community in Alabama, under the National Wildlife Federation Certification Program. As part of the continuing effort to gain points towards this goal, we will be holding *Invasive Plant Control Field Days* this winter. The first demonstration will be at Donovan and Doris Fandre's property on Feam Drive at 1:00 PM on December 31, barring inclement weather. All mountain neighbors are invited to attend and see various methods for the control of invasive species (in this case, Chinese Privet). Once the privet is under control, the Fandre's property will be certified under the Backyard Wildlife Habitat program.

As I travel on Monte Sano roads this winter, the privet stands out like the proverbial sore thumb. Residents are getting infestations on unattended property lines, and these in turn are invading other neighbor's yards. This is a very serious problem on Monte Sano, because species like privet and bush honeysuckle are spreading into the wild areas of the State Park and Land Trust properties. Please check your property for species that need to be removed. For more information, call Soos Weber at 256.539.3747.

If you are intimidated by choosing new plants to fill the holes where the invasive plants are removed, I am here to help. I am organizing a Native Plant Sale for next March. In addition, several speakers who are experts on landscaping--Harvey Cotten of the Huntsville Botanical Gardens, Lee McBride of Foodscapes, and others--will speak in February to give residents a chance to think about their landscape plan, before pre-ordering for the spring.

While you are stuck inside this winter, please look at the website of [American Beauties Native Plants](http://www.abnativeplants.com) (www.abnativeplants.com) and send me a wish list of plants that you like and that will grow in Region 7 (our growing region). The goal is to order the plants in February so that they will be delivered in time for our plant sale in March. The dates and venue are still to be determined, so check the [MSCA website](http://www.montesano.org/msca) (www.montesano.org/msca) for updates. American Beauties proudly supports the National Wildlife Federation, our coach and sponsor for the certification program.

And remember, by providing food, water, cover and a place for wildlife to raise their young, you not only help wildlife, but you also qualify to become an official Certified Wildlife Habitat and join the nearly 140,000 sites across the country. You can register your yard online at www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Outdoor-Activities/Garden-for-Wildlife/Certify-Your-Wildlife-Garden.aspx?campaignid=WH10DGWP. Monte Sano gains a point for each backyard that is certified. For more information, contact Soos Weber by email at Weber-caudill@att.net or by phone at 256.539.3747.

Soos Weber, Master Gardener and Wildlife Ecologist

Monte Sano Elementary School

Holiday Music Program

The Monte Sano Elementary Holiday Music Program will be at 6:00 PM on December 15, at the Monte Sano Methodist Church. All classes from Kindergarten through 5th grade will perform, and we look forward to having our program on the mountain this year! Thank you to Dale Clem and Monte Sano Methodist Church for allowing us to use the church for our musical performance.

Outdoor Classroom Program

April Waltz with *Alabama Forever Wild* and Susan (Soos) Weber representing the *National Wildlife Federation* (NWF) are lending their expertise and the organizations' resources to organize an effort to create an outdoor classroom and curricula that would meet the Alabama course of study. The *Alabama Outdoor Classroom Program* provides technical assistance and

support to educators, administrators, students, and community volunteers who wish to create sustainable wildlife habitats and outdoor classroom sites on their school grounds. These projects provide hands-on learning opportunities and allow students of all ages to utilize multi-disciplinary skills in a fun and exciting environment. The outdoor classroom at the school would count 10 points towards certification of Monte Sano as a NWF Wildlife Community (see our article on Wildlife Habitat Certification above).



The organizational meeting for the Outdoor Classroom took place on November 30 at the school. The committee is conducting a survey to find out how teachers would use an outdoor classroom, and what kinds of lessons would need to be prepared. The cost will be estimated after a plan is in place and items are priced. If you are interested in being a part of this wonderful project or want to share your input please contact Don Masterson by phone at 256.428-7300 or by e-mail at dmasterson@hsv.k12.al.us.

Tutoring

Adults from the Monte Sano community continue to tutor at Monte Sano three days a week. If you are interested in helping tutor students in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade, please email Don Masterson at dmasterson@hsv.k12.al.us. The tutoring is done during each student's lunch time and takes place in the school library under the supervision of the school librarian. We have lots of deserving lower-grade students asking to be tutored.

Don Masterson, Monte Sano Elementary 4th grade teacher

Von Braun Astronomical Society

The **Von Braun Astronomical Society** Annual Christmas Planaterium Show will be held on December 10 and December 17, at 7:30 PM. For more information about VBAS events, please visit our website at www.vbas.org.

Gena Crook