

The Mentonian



Winter 2015

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**The Homeowners
Association (HOA)
Board is made up of
community members
who volunteer their
time to make Mentone
a great place to live**

Irv Lampert,
President

Kim Stricklan,
Vice President

Paul Chandler,
Secretary

Michael Johnston,
Treasurer

Mary Opel,
Director

Upcoming Mentone Projects

The HOA board has scheduled several beautification/maintenance projects over the next couple of months.

Front wall restoration – Contractors will repair and clean the brick wall bordering Mentone property and Archer Road. Mentone common areas (those under HOA responsibility) include 4-5 feet in front of the wall toward Archer Road, and 3-4 feet inside the wall. After the wall is restored, landscape contractors will prune/replace the camellias and liriopse, and re-mulch the area on the Archer Road side. They will also trim the trees inside the wall, removing any branches leaning on the wall, and providing 6-8 feet of vertical clearance from the top of the wall. The goal is to leave as much barrier as possible, while protecting the wall from future damage. Homeowners living along the wall will be notified when workers are scheduled to gain access to the common area behind the wall.

Pool deck restoration – Contractors will replace the concrete pool deck with patio pavers. The existing deck is aging and cracking as part of normal wear and tear. Patio pavers will enhance the appearance of the deck, add value to Mentone, and provide for easier maintenance of the pool deck in the future.

Dog waste station bag dispensers – Three dog waste bag dispensers will be installed at the access points to the jogging trail. The stations have attached waste cans for easy disposal of used bags.

Mailbox cleaning – The USPS will clean all Mentone mailbox clusters sometime soon. PLEASE NOTE: Federal law prohibits posting anything on the mailbox clusters. It also damages the paint. There is a bulletin board at the pool pavilion to post flyers, and the Mentone Facebook page is a great place to post information.

Volleyball court update – There's been some fantastic input regarding the volleyball court. The HOA board is discussing a couple of options for the area. We appreciate everyone's ideas and if we decide to keep that specific area as a volleyball court, we could potentially add some outdoor exercise equipment near the jogging trail. More information will follow this spring.

Completed projects – This summer, the picket fence in Pecan Park was replaced with a PVC fence, much more durable than wood and easier to maintain. The soccer nets were also replaced in the common area near the pool, and the pool pavilion was painted and roof cleaned.

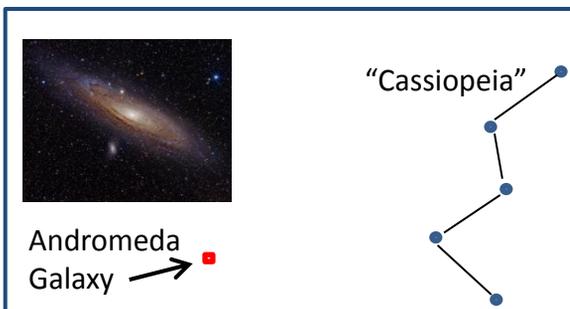
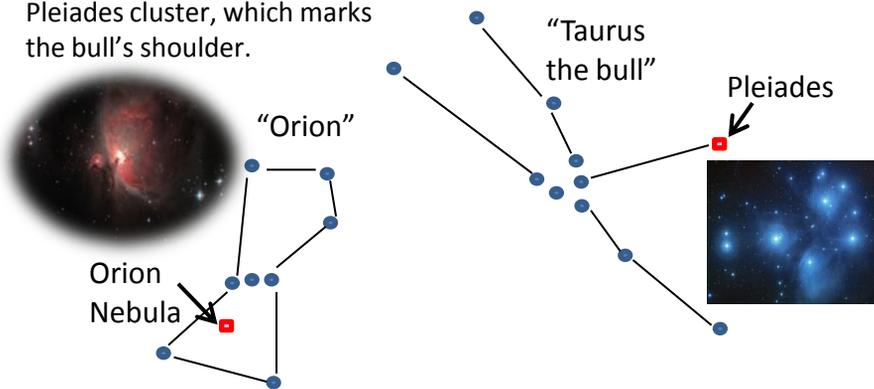
Winter – The Best Time for Stargazing

Winter is a great time to view the stars. The humid, hazy days of summer give way to crystal clear nights. Longer nights mean more uninterrupted viewing hours. You don't need an expensive telescope to see some amazing heavenly objects. Many can be seen with the naked eye, or by using a pair of binoculars. Around Gainesville, Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park is located away from city lights so it's a good place to view the night sky. The common area near the pool is also a decent stargazing location, right here in Mentone. A stargazing expert recommended these the heavenly bodies, which can be seen with the naked eye.

First up is the Orion Nebula, an interstellar cloud of dust and gases, which is found in the constellation, Orion. It's easy to spot, just look for Orion's belt. Look in the area of Orion's sword, and you'll see it.

Next is the constellation Pleiades, also called the seven sisters, which is an open star cluster of hot blue stars formed within the last 100 million years. The main stars in this constellation are named after the seven daughters of Atlas and Pleione, from Greek mythology.

To find the Pleiades, find Orion's Belt. Draw a line through the three stars of the belt to the right. You'll see a V-shaped pattern of stars, which is the face of Taurus the Bull. Keep going right and you'll see the Pleiades cluster, which marks the bull's shoulder.



The Andromeda galaxy is the closest large galaxy to the Milky Way and one of only ten galaxies that can be seen unaided from Earth. The Andromeda galaxy is a large hazy patch in the night sky.

To find it, look for the constellation, Cassiopeia, shaped like the letter M or W. One half of the W is more deeply notched than the other half. This deeper V is your "arrow" in the sky, pointing to the Andromeda galaxy.

There are some good phone apps to get you started. Night Sky Lite, Star Chart, and Sky Map are all free and good sky charts. To find the best viewing dates, go to Cleardarksky.com. This website lists stargazing conditions for a specific day/location. Just follow the links to your location. The site includes a link for the UF Campus Teaching Observatory. Finally, to stargaze from your armchair, Stellarium is a free downloadable program that will turn your computer monitor into a planetarium. Happy viewing!



What's Cooking?

Spicy Chocolate Truffles

- 1 1/3 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons of "pique" (Puerto Rican style hot sauce)
- 1 1/2 pounds semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 100% cocoa powder, powdered sugar, or Chili powder

In a medium sauce pan, bring heavy cream to a boil on medium-high heat. Steep for 4-5 minutes until very hot. Add Pique and stir to incorporate.

Place chocolate chips in a bowl. Pour cream mixture over the chocolate and stir until melted. Cover and place in refrigerator until firm, 1-2 hours.

When firm, make balls out of the chocolate mixture using a small ice cream scoop or melon baller and place on a cookie sheet covered with parchment or wax paper. Place back in refrigerator about 30 minutes.

Put cocoa powder, powdered sugar, and chili powder in separate bowls. Roll balls in 1, 2, or all 3 powders, then roll between palms to ensure each truffle is covered, and chill again.

You can also cover truffles with sparking cinnamon, crushed peppermint candy, espresso powder, or candy sprinkles. Use your imagination!