



the **ECHO**

MARCH 2026
COVER: JACOB SLONE

A BENT TREE
PUBLICATION



When you can't tell
who has dentures, implants
or natural teeth,
we've done our job!



Dr. Michelle F. Ireland
310 Gilmer Ferry Road, Suite 200
Ball Ground, GA 30107
(678) 845-0366
www.IrelandDentistry.com

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Extractions • Emergencies



OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Thursday
7:30am - 4:30pm
Lunch: 12pm to 1pm

About

DR. MICHELLE F. IRELAND



For over 20 years, Dr. Michelle F. Ireland has perfected the smiles of thousands of patients. Dr. Ireland graduated with her Doctorate of Medicine in Dentistry (D.M.D.) from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) in 1994 and became licensed to practice as a general dentist. Upon graduation, she completed additional educational requirements and specialized training at the UAB School of Dentistry to become a prosthodontist.

Dr. Ireland has served as a professor at UAB School of Dentistry in the Department of Prosthodontics, where she enjoyed teaching crown and bridge prosthodontics and

removable prosthodontics with an emphasis on esthetics, occlusion, and implant restoration.

Over the years, Dr. Ireland has counseled former students, general dentists and their patients, and continues to receive extensive training in the field of dentistry and prosthodontics. Dr. Ireland has built a reputation as a caring, compassionate, and competent dental practitioner. Her additional expertise is a blessing and is evident in the way patients are accepting of her recommendations.



SWEET!...Bent Tree Stables Back in Action

By Jim Pryor, General Manager

Over the past 18 months, community members, board members and staff have dedicated a lot of time reviewing the Stables facilities and determining the future viability of this venture for the Bent Tree community. The Board of Directors was recently faced with the decision to contract with a new operator or simply just close the facility. At the January 27th Board meeting, the Board chose to enter into a lease agreement with an operator that we found through a nationwide Request for Proposal.

In spring of 2026, Sweet Stables LLC will be the new operator of the Bent Tree Stables facility. Shana Sweet and her husband Clint are the owners of Sweet Stables LLC. Sweet Stables LLC has been in business for 20 years and is located in Suwanee, GA (Southern Forsyth County). Their existing operation consists of 51 acres of property where they board and care for 28 horses. Their business started with boarding and expanded into the addition of riding lessons for groups and individuals, classes for the care of horses, summer camps, and special events. Sweet Stables is a family-operated business lead by Shana who has an intense passion for horses.

Over the past few years, the land for their operation has fallen into a large land conglomerate purchased by Fischer Homes to build a new housing development. This forced the Sweet's to either close or relocate their business. They have chosen to relocate their business and Pickens County became the focal point. While their business operation is much larger than the Bent Tree Stables facility can accommodate, their business plan was to seek a larger parcel of property to locate their home, barn and pastureland. At one point, we investigated the option of them purchasing the 28-acre campground property on Bent Tree Drive, but property restrictions/land value became an issue to why this was not a viable option. The Sweets will be purchasing a 29-acre property on Steve Tate Highway to locate their ranch.

Through the discussions with Bent Tree, Shana developed a great vision for operating the Bent Tree Stables. This opportunity encapsulates her vision for boarding horses as well as the interactive programming aspects of a community amenity such as trail rides, riding lessons, camps, social activities, and special events. With this, Sweet Stables brings their own equine capital for program horses and the Sweet's will be able to accommodate interested boarders. They will potentially be able to rotate horses between the 2 business properties to create the best interest for the horse/owner.



This new lease agreement between BTCI and Sweet Stables LLC allows for them to operate Equestrian Activities using the Stables facility. This agreement is intended to be a Landlord-Tenant relationship. On the Bent Tree side of things, the agreement will be managed by the Stables Committee composed of Board Liaison Buddy Creef and community members appointed by the Board of Directors. The agreement is for a term of 3 years, with termination options available to both sides. Being the Landlord, Bent Tree will continue to own, maintain, and insure the building structures on the property. Being the Tenant, Sweet Stables will operate the business, maintain the premises, and be responsible for the costs of operating their business, including insurance, utilities and personnel. The agreement specifically details responsibilities and expectations of the Tenant as they exist and operate within the Bent Tree Community. Discounted prices will be provided to Bent Tree residents for both boarding and programming functions.

Over the next couple months, our wonderful community volunteers will finish the improvement plans to the Stables while the Sweets start to move their horses to their new home. I expect they will have operations and programs ready to launch this spring. Be on the lookout in Friday News and/or email blasts for details.

It's a NEW YEAR!

By Muzette Randall. BTAC Chair

Bent Tree Activities Committee certainly had a busy 2025. We accomplished much by bringing in new events and activities for our community, holding our most successful Fall Festival ever and of course the much-loved Bent Tree's Got Talent and the return of Holiday Tour of Homes. We worked hard as a team to update our Operating Procedures and form partnerships with BTAC organizations to pursue success.

What's 2026 got in store for BTAC? Newly elected officials took office, and we streamlined leadership roles with our appointed Liaisons. Two new ones! We took that opportunity to look at our offerings and consolidate our subcommittees with the intent of allowing future expansion for community-desired activities, events and programs. Fortune shined on us and we added new Volunteer Resources to contribute to our efforts. We are committed to spending time this year focusing on better communication with the community via the Bent-Tree website.

Our plan is to build on past years' successes. Starting with the return of our Volunteer Reception which will be held at our April Full Committee Meeting. We will sponsor community favorite events like the opening of our pool celebration, beach and deck music, dance parties, artistic adventures, Youth Week and of course, the ever-popular cook-off. Stay tuned for some new events guaranteed to please!

Please take a moment to look through this Echo edition. You will find BTAC well represented! Know that each one of our BTAC Volunteers contributed to the information provided. What they do is amazing. You may find that we organized things a bit differently than previous years, but our hope is that it will make things easier for you to decide what events you can't miss, what activities you simply must try and what programs interest you most. Our reward will be your smile!

This New Year from BTAC you can expect the tried and true and maybe some surprises too!



Public Safety Stats

1/1/26 – 1/31/26

By Michael Koorey - Director,
Donnie Arp - Fire Chief,
John Hawkins - Assistant Director

Call Responses

Fire	12
Medical	22
Resident Complaints	3
Resident Assists	7
Property/Resident Checks	5
Animal Calls	1
Public Safety Calls	21
Total	71
2026 Total	71

Patrol Mileage

Total Patrol Mileage (1/1 – 1/31)	1,878
2026 Total	1,878

Violations

Written Citations	2
Warnings	19
Total (1/1 – 1/31)	21
2026 Total Written Citations	2

40 Little Pine Mountain Road
Jasper, GA 30143 • 770-893-2628
publicsafety@bent-tree.com



GPS Directions to Bent Tree

Please give your visitors the following address (1 Little Pine Mountain Rd, Jasper, GA) to gain access into the front gate on Bent Tree Drive, which will alleviate GPS systems from sending them to the back gate off Grandview Rd.



We Want You...

- ... to email us short stories, interviews, poetry, and articles of general interest to our residents.
- ... to tell us what articles you would like to see.
- ... to share with us some of your amazing Bent Tree related images.

Thanks.

echo Editorial Committee

2026 Board of Directors

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davidjohnson@bent-tree.com
225-205-2630

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aallen@bent-tree.com
770-630-9566

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charlesrice@bent-tree.com
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Contact the Editor of the *echo* at
btecho@etcmail.com

Why would I ever learn to play tennis?

By Coach Bob

Playing tennis offers a comprehensive range of physical, mental, and social benefits, making it one of the most effective sports for long-term health.

Physical Health Benefits

- **Increased Longevity:** Regular players can add nearly **10 years** to their lives compared to sedentary individuals, a higher gain than seen in sports like soccer or jogging.
- **Cardiovascular Health:** Playing for just 3 hours per week can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease by up to **56%**. It strengthens the heart, lowers resting heart rate, and improves blood pressure.
- **Full-Body Workout:** The sport engages all major muscle groups—including legs, core, shoulders, and arms—while alternating between aerobic and anaerobic activity.
- **Bone Density:** As a weight-bearing sport, tennis stimulates bone formation, helping to prevent osteoporosis and maintain skeletal strength as you age.
- **Weight Management:** An hour of singles can burn between **400 and 600 calories**, making it highly effective for lowering body fat.

Mental and Cognitive Benefits

- **Brain Power:** The need for strategic thinking and split-second decision-making enhances **cognitive function**, alertness, and tactical thinking.
- **Stress Relief:** Physical exertion releases endorphins, helping to reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and tension.
- **Mental Toughness:** Players learn to manage pressure, recover from setbacks, and build **resilience**, which are valuable life skills off the court.

Social and Developmental Benefits

- **Community Connection:** Whether playing singles or doubles, tennis provides significant **social interaction**, reducing feelings of isolation and building lasting relationships.
- **Youth Development:** Young players often show higher self-esteem, better grades, and improved social skills like sportsmanship and teamwork.

BTAC Artistic Activities

Mary Davis - Subcommittee Chair
404-213-2196
mcmdavis@live.com

Andy Kidd - Liaison
386-290-6002
AndrewKidd58@gmail.com

Artistic activities span a wide range of creative pursuits, from visual arts like painting, to functional crafts such as knitting and quilting as well learning expression through music.

[Cricut Crafts & More](#)

This crafty group meets on the **4th Wednesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. in the Club Tamarack Rec Room**. The group works on a different craft technique every month. You can also learn how to use a Cricut machine if you have one, however, a Cricut machine is not required to participate in this fun group. Crafts, Cricut & More also sponsors a private FB page with craft ideas and helpful tips. Email Mary for more info on this or to join.

Mary Davis - Leader
404-213-2196
mcmdavis@live.com

[Quilting SEWcial](#)

Quilting SEWcial is a place for quilters of all levels, experience, and interest to gather to work on projects and connect. We meet on the 2nd Friday of each month at the Club Tamarack Rec Room from 1 to 4 PM. We are happy to help new quilters learn how to get started and to help them with any problems they may face. We also share tips and encouragement for everyone! Bring your projects to show and tell, along with either your machines or hand work and come join us!

Beth Leonard - Leader
(770) 815-0878
bethleonard1@att.net

[Knit Wits Group](#)

If you like to knit, quilt, crochet, or do any other types of needle crafts, Knit Wits is for you. We meet **Tuesdays from 10:00am to 12:00 noon in the Cottage**. If you are just learning or having difficulty with a project, come to Knit Wits where there will probably be someone to help!

Carol Kopetski - Leader
941-830-1225
kopetskicarol@gmail.com

[Guitar Lessons](#)

Our beginning guitar lessons are the perfect opportunity to discover the joy of playing this beautiful instrument. Lessons are taught by Bent Tree resident, Randy White, on **Wednesday evenings** in the Cottage. **5:30 PM for beginners and 6:30 PM for advanced**. Each 1-hour lesson is \$6.00. Advance arrangements must be made by contacting Randy.

Randy White - Leader
(770) 608-0843
bluestrat2701@gmail.com

[Visual Art Lessons](#)

Looking to start a new hobby or wish to continue to enhance your painting skills? Bent Tree offers painting lessons for all skill levels. The classes are held weekly on Wednesdays from 11AM to 1PM at the Club Tamarack Rec Room (lower level) throughout the year. Our professional artist and educator will focus on composition, values, color mixing and brush work during a two-hour long session each week. The class is a 'work-at-your-own-pace' and is offered to adult residents. Art Supplies must be provided on your own.

Sulaine Sims, Instructor
(770) 605-1467
sulaine1234@gmail.com

BTAC Bookworms

Men, women, guests, kindle readers, and traditional book lovers! All are invited. People share their love, likes and dislikes of the books they have read throughout the month. **3rd Monday of the month in the Cottage at 10:30 a.m.**

Gary Baker - Subcommittee Chair
678-925-6355
gbaker@etcmail.com

Norma Garza - Liaison
706-949-0501
normagv@yahoo.com

BTAC Tap Dance

Video instruction featuring beginners to advanced beginner routines. We dance to a variety of musical styles. Our focus is fitness, fellowship, and fun! Join us on Tuesdays at 2:00 in the Club Tamarack Rec Room.

Cathy Rumble - Leader
770-617-8426
rumble@bent-tree.com

Norma Garza - Liaison
706-949-0501
normagv@yahoo.com

BTAC Chair Tap Dancing

Video instruction featuring beginner routines. Chair dancing is safe and low impact. Learning dance routines provides cognitive stimulation and improves posture while strengthening your core. We dance to a variety of musical styles. Our focus is fitness, fellowship, and fun! Join us on Tuesdays at 1:00 in the Club Tamarack Rec Room.

Cathy Rumble - Leader
770-617-8426
rumble@bent-tree.com

Norma Garza - Liaison
706-949-0501
normagv@yahoo.com



BTAC Parlor Games

Bent Tree Parlor Games consists of group games played indoors for social entertainment.

Kim Stewart – Subcommittee Chair
229-205-7651
KStewartx4@me.com

Norma Garza – Liaison
706-949-0501
normagv@yahoo.com

Bridge

If you are interested in bridge as a social event or if you are a master player, you can find a game here at Bent Tree. All skill levels are welcome. Ladies, mixed, and duplicate groups are available. Come and make new friends and have a great time.

Ladies Bridge Advanced

Mondays 12:30 – 4:00 Club Tamarack Fireside
Cathy Pierce - Leader
770-893-2047
cpierce20@tds.net

Duplicate Bridge Mixed Group

Tuesdays 3:00 – 6:30 Club Tamarack Fireside
Nancy Proffitt & Sandi Lowe
Co-Leaders
404-405-3187 678-906-8553
nancypr@etcm.com Sandilowe1@gmail.com

Ladies Bridge Beginner/Intermediate–Wednesdays

12:30–3:30 Club Tamarack Fireside
Lyn Fickes - Leader
770-402-9027
lynfickes@gmail.com

Bridge Mixed Group

Thursdays 6:30 – 10:00 at the Cottage
Gary Baker
678=925-6355
gbaker@etcm.com

Canasta

Canasta is a classic card game, typically four players using two decks including jokers. It is focused on melding cards (like Rummy) to form Canastas of seven cards. It uses strategies involving memory, partner cooperation, and managing the discard pile to build high scoring combinations. The group meets on Tuesdays from 1-4 pm. Join us for a fun time. Everyone in Bent Tree is welcome, new players as well as experienced players

Bonnie Pitchette – Leader
813-505-5155
bonniepitchette@msn.com

Mah Jongg

Wright- Patt Mah Jongg is a variation of the traditional Mah Jongg game. Originally developed and played within the military community, this style of MJ has elements of both the National MJ League and the Cantonese style of play. We play every Thursday from 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM at the Tavern Club Room. Contact Kim for more information

Kim Stewart – Leader
229-205-7651
Kstewartx4@me.com

Bunco

Bunco is being held on the **1st Wednesday at 12:30 pm in Club Tamarack Dining Room**. Bunco encourages friendship and laughter and has an added benefit of minimum Math Skills! Bunco Nights are hosted by members of the group, who rotate each month. Bunco is played at Tables of 4 with a max crowd of 24. E-mail to attend, join the Facebook group, and for more information.

Lesli Creel: Co-Leader
404-438-6000
lesli.jean.creel@gmail.com

Beverly Fenello: Co-Leader
404-915-7869
Bev@fenellogroup.com

BTAC Well-being/Physical Activities

We offer a variety of activities to encourage and support an active lifestyle, including Pilates, Basketball, Water Aerobics, and Tai Chi Basics. We look forward to seeing you participate in these activities.

Karmai Marshall – Subcommittee Chair/Liaison

706-505-7203

karmaialexander@gmail.com

Basketball

Come on out for a basketball shoot-around and casual play at the court by the beach. Enjoy some basketball and meet your neighbors. Adults and teens are welcome. Basketballs provided, but you're welcome to BYO. Fall/ Winter schedule: second Saturday of the month, 1:00-2:30 pm.
Spring/ Summer schedule: weekly on Thursday night
TBD

Brad Poel – Leader

615-495-8995

poelbrad@gmail.com

Tai-Chi

Tai-Chi is an ancient practice to promote and maintain optimal health. It consists of slow and easy movements, breathing techniques and mental focus. It can be practiced seated or standing up. Classes are held in **Club Tamarack Rec Room every Thursday from 4:30-5:30**. Cost is \$5 per class. The instructor is Bent Tree resident Liisa Pasila.

Liisa Pasila - Leader

561-236-2633

liisapasila@yahoo.com

Pilates

Mondays 11:30 a.m. and Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Club Tamarack Rec Room

Cost: \$5 per class

Pilates is a controlled method of working your entire body. Pilates gives you strength, flexibility, and balance with a focus on core. Most of the exercises are performed on the floor with a mat and can be modified to fit your individual needs. In Pilates, your muscles never worked to exhaustion, so there is no sweating or straining, just intense concentration. The workout consists of a variety of exercise sequences that are performed in low repetitions, usually five to ten times, over a session of 45 to 60 minutes. Each exercise has a prescribed placement, rhythm and breathing pattern. Mat work and specialized equipment for resistance are used.

Karen Rooker is a certified Personal Trainer and a certified Pilates Instructor with 30 years of experience

Karen Rooker - Instructor

214-475-9722

krooker2749@sbcglobal.net

Water Aerobics

Water exercise is known to be the easiest and most beneficial form of exercise for your joints. Join us at the upper pool for a good workout from the first Monday in June through Labor Day. Bring a noodle and wear pool shoes. Start time is at **9 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday**. There is a small fee for each session, watch for more information.

Bay Cagle is the current instructor and is both CPR certified and holds a certification in teaching water aerobics.

Sandy Bloyd – Leader

770-547-1555

sandy@etcmail.com

BTAC Art Events

Bent Tree Art Event encompasses a variety of events showcasing many of the arts.

Andy Kidd – Subcommittee Chair/Liaison

386-290-6002

andrewkidd58@gmail.com

Theater Events

Dinner Theatre events are held at Club Tamarack, featuring Bent Tree actors in themed shows. For updates, check BTAC *News & Happenings* on Thursdays, the *Friday News*, or Mail Center Info Boards.

Reid Conrad, Leader

386-366-1902

RRConrad55@gmail.com

Art Show

The Bent Tree Art Show is an annual event held in Club Tamarack Rec Room. The date is usually the first Sunday afternoon in June. The display is 1:00pm - 3:30pm. The Bent Tree Art Show will feature all art media including, but not limited to quilting, woodworking, multimedia, photography, watercolor and oils. This is a fun event that offers a platform to show and describe your own artwork. Of course, it is open to the public and we hope that everyone will come out and enjoy and appreciate our own Bent Tree Artists. There is no fee to participate and no fee to enter the art exhibition. Beautiful acoustic guitar and piano background music will be provided by Bent Tree Musicians.

Sulaine Sims, Co-Leader

(770) 605-1467

sulaine1234@gmail.com

Charlie Lyle Co-Leader

603-933-0525

pappielyle@gmail.com

Meet the Authors

Join us to celebrate local literary talent! We will have **four to five published authors** from our community to share their work, connect with readers, and showcase their books.

Event Highlights

- **Author Setup:** Each author will have their own table in the Fireside Lounge or foyer for displaying books, signing, and sales.
- **Promotion:** The event will be widely advertised to reach our community and beyond.
- **Schedule**
- **5–8 minutes:** Casual mix-and-mingle to welcome attendees and allow networking.
- **10 minutes per author**
- **After all presentations:** A **5–10-minute Q&A** session, moderated by our MC
- **Optional book signing & sales:** Immediately following the presentations

Andy Kidd – Leader

386-290-6002

andrewkidd58@gmail.com

Dance Events

Bent Tree hosts social dances several times each year, held in either the Dining Room or the Recreation Room at Club Tamarack. These events are open to everyone, and no dance experience is required. Guests are invited to bring a dish to share along with their preferred beverages. Bottled water and tableware are provided. The cost typically ranges from \$5 to \$10 per person, depending on event expenses.

Mary Ada Kidd, Leader

386-212-2777

Mamekidd1@gmail.com

BTAC Events

Beach & Deck Music

The summer evenings of music take place two times during this season. Music is performed by various musicians from 6:30–9:30 p.m. Concerts are free and are held on the beach. Singles, couples, and families are welcome. Participants are asked to bring their own chairs, food, drinks, and dancing shoes. No reservations are needed. In case of rain, events will attempt to be rescheduled.

Sunset deck music events are held on Friday or Saturday evenings in April and September on the deck at the lower pool. Solo and duet performers are featured performing as the sun goes down.

Tim Miller – Subcommittee Chair
404-517-7657
Tim.Miller9021@gmail.com

Karmai Marshall – Liaison
406-405-7203
karmaialexander@gmail.com

Social Events

Special social events and parties are planned throughout the year. These events are a tradition in our community and change in theme and experience every year. Each event is self-sustaining with ticket price dependent upon cost according to the event. Check the website, *BTAC News & Happenings* on Thursdays, or the *Friday News* for details of upcoming events.

- Spring Fling
- Last Blast of Summer

Norma Garza – Subcommittee Chair/Liaison
706-949-0501
normagv@yahoo.com

Children's Events

Children and Family activities seek to promote community connections for families within Bent Tree. Special events are planned throughout the year and include:

- Easter Egg Hunt at the Beach & Pavillion
- Family Pool Event – Upper Pool
- Halloween Spooktacular – Club Tamarack

Laura Chambers – Subcommittee Chair
404-788-3085
chambers221@gmail.com

Karmai Marshall – Liaison
406-405-7203
karmaialexander@gmail.com

Youth Week

This event is held around the **week of July 4**. It is open to all children and grandchildren of Bent Tree residents. The many activities planned for young children, aged three through 17, will introduce participants to individual sports available at Bent Tree. In addition, crafts, games, and special projects are offered, based on the interests and hobbies of the residents. Children have an opportunity to participate in golf, cooking, tennis, hiking, swimming, crafts, and to socialize with other participants. Nominal fees charged for some events to cover expenses. Pre-registration forms are available in May on our website.

Volunteers are always needed to help plan, organize, supervise, and conduct activities.

Other BTAC community events planned:

- 4th of July Road Race
- Golf Cart Parade

Kim Stahlman – Subcommittee Chair
678-858-507
kimberlynicolestahlman@gmail.com

Andy Kidd – Liaison
3386-290-6002
AndrewKidd58@gmail.com

BTAC Programs

Community Directory

For the use and enjoyment of the Bent Tree Community the community directory is organized, composed and published in the 4th quarter of every year. Property owners are contacted to add, delete or change their information. Participation is strictly voluntary. The directory is provided free to all participating residents.

Meghan Wandrie – Subcommittee Chair
248-765-6279
mewandrie@hotmail.com

Karmai Marshall – Liaison
406-405-7203
karmaialexander@gmail.com

Bent Tree Library

The Bent Tree Library is open **every day from 9:00am – 8:00pm**. The Library is housed in the Cottage located behind the Recycling Center, near the front gate. Borrow books and return them at your leisure. We accept book donations. Please do not donate books with a copyright date earlier than 2016. Please check your copyright date prior to donating your books.

Mary Lou Weng – Subcommittee Co-Chair
770-894-9086
wengml@etcmail.com

Peggy Bennett – Subcommittee Co-Chair
760-855-3939
palau1971@hotmail.com

Andy Kidd – Liaison
386-290-6002
AndrewKidd58@gmail.com

Monday Night Picnics

Our annual tradition of gathering at the beach pavilion for a picnic with neighbors begins on **Monday, April 6th** and will continue **Mondays through October 26th**. Bring a dish to share, your tableware and beverages. Social Hour starts at 5:00. The picnic buffet begins at 6:00. This is a great way to meet your neighbors and make new friends.

From November until March we have monthly Monday Night Picnics in Club Tamarack Rec Room, on the 3rd Monday of the month.

Denis Foerst
404-713-4857
dfoerst@gmail.com

Andy Kidd – Liaison
386-290-6002
AndrewKidd58@gmail.com

Newcomers

An enthusiastic group of volunteers contact new residents to Bent Tree to help make their transition to our community a pleasant and easy one. Special welcoming events are held throughout the year to introduce newcomers to the various groups and different activities in which they can get involved.

Stephanie Holland – Subcommittee Chair
404-510-4001
shhollandwin@bellsouth.net

Norma Garza – Liaison
706-949-0501
normagv@yahoo.com

Suppers Around The Tree

Suppers Around the Tree is Bent Tree's own version of a supper club, made up of groups of eight people (couples and/or singles) who meet monthly at each other's homes for a meal. We have two seasons: **February to May**, and **August to November**. Each couple takes a turn hosting the group at a mutually convenient date and time. The host decides and prepares the main dish and contacts the other members of the group to arrange appropriate side dishes. Each group decides the format of their meals, from complex to simple, ethnic to good ole home cooking, dinner or brunch, weekday, or weeknight, eating in or going out. Anything goes!

Suzie Harper – Subcommittee Chair
404-560-3526
btacsuppers@gmail.com

Karmai Marshall – Liaison
406-405-7203
karmaialexander@gmail.com

Learning Programs

Learning Programs consists of different groups that provide structured environments fostering community, and understanding scripture through discussion, personal study, and fellowship.

Pattie Jones – Subcommittee Chair
803-795-9566
dpjones_2000@yahoo.com

Karmai Marshall – Liaison
406-405-7203
karmaialexander@gmail.com

Men's Bible Study

This men's group focuses on a non-denominational study of God's word. Studies exist of both book-to-book study and topical study. Time is spent sharing the Word and discussing where one can apply it to their lives. All men are welcome! Meets **Thursday Mornings, 9:00 at Club Tamarack Fireside.**

Bryan George - Leader
931-982-0978
beegee111@gmail.com

Women's Bible Study

This women's Bible Study group provides opportunities for believers to grow and mature in Christ by knowing and obeying GOD's living word through Scripture based studies. Our time together is comprised of learning GOD's word, sharing, discussion and prayer. **Meetings are held Friday mornings from 10:00 am to 11:00 a.m. in Club Tamarack Rec Room.**

Laura Trousdale - Leader
(770) 313-2335
a2tbunch@gmail.com

Monday Night Bible Study

This is a group that builds community through Bible learning, application, and fellowship. It is open to men, women, singles, couples, and the curious. We meet in the **Club Tamarack Fireside on Monday evenings at 6:30.** We will start an expositional Bible study in January that will include a time for sharing and prayer. We also have outside activities throughout the year to encourage fellowship. Contact Pattie for more information.

Pattie Jones - Leaders
803-795-9566
dpjones_2000@yahoo.com

Senior Programs

Senior Programs endeavors to connect senior residents, or those residents living alone, with activities that better reflect their interests and lifestyle. While all residents are welcome to attend, the programs are geared toward senior adults. Examples of the events presently scheduled are BINGO, Valentine Tea, Game Day, Theater Outing, and Home & Garden tours.

Patrick McMorrow – Subcommittee Chair
770-710-1133
Pmcmorrow26@gmail.com

Karmai Marshall – Liaison
406-405-7203
karmaialexander@gmail.com

ACTIVITIES

<i>Artistic Activities</i>	<i>Mary Davis</i>	<i>Chair</i>
Cricut Crafts & More	Mary Davis	Leader
Knit Wits	Carol Kopetski	Leader
Guitar Lessons	Randy White	Leader
Quilting Sew-cial	Beth Leonard	Leader
Visual Art Lessons	Sulaine Sims	Leader
<i>Bookworms</i>	<i>Gary Baker</i>	<i>Chair</i>
<i>Tap Dance/Chair Tap</i>	<i>Cathy Rumble</i>	<i>Chair</i>
<i>Parlor Games</i>	<i>Kim Stewart</i>	<i>Chair</i>
Ladies Bridge Advanced	Cathy Pierce	Leader
Duplicate Bridge - Mixed Group	Nancy Profitt	Co-Leaders
	Sandi Lowe	
Ladies Bridge Beginner/Intermed.	Lyn Fickes	Leader
Bridge Mixed Group	Gary Baker	Leader
Bunco	Lesli Creel	Co-Leaders
	Beverly Fenello	
Canasta	Bonnie Pichett	Leader
Mah Jongg	Kim Stewart	Leader
<i>Well Being/Physical Activities</i>	<i>Karmai Marshall</i>	<i>Chair</i>
Basketball	Brad Poel	Leader
Pilates	Karen Rooker	Leader
Tai-Chi	Liisa Pasila	Leader
Water Aerobics	Sandy Bloyd	Leader

EVENTS		
Art Events	Andy Kidd	Chair
Theater Events	Reid Conrad	Leader
Art Show	Sulaine Sims	Co-leaders
	Charlie Lyle	
Meet the Authors	Andy Kidd	Leader
Dance Events	MaryAda Kidd	Leader
Beach & Deck Music	Tim Miller	Chair
	Interim: Diane Kueffner	
Children's Events	Laura Chambers	Chair
Easter Egg Hunt		
Family Pool Party		
Halloween Spooktacular		
Social Events	Norma Garza	Chair
Spring Fling		
Last Blast of Summer		
Youth Week	Kim Stahlman	Chair

PROGRAMS		
Community Directory	Meghan Wandrie	Chair
Library	Peggy Bennett	Co-Chairs
	Mary Lou Weng	
Monday Night Picnics	Denis Foerst	Chair
Newcomers	Stephanie Holland	Chair
Learning Programs	Pattie Jones	Chair
Men's Bible Study	Bryan George	Leader
Monday Night Bible Study	Pattie Jones	Leader
Women's Bible Study	Laura Trousdale	Leader
Senior Programs	Patrick McMorrow	Chair

Published Bent Tree Photographer, Poet and Author Featured in March

By Andrew Kidd

“Survivors of the Shelter Speak” is an exhibition created by resident Lynn Kaiser Conrad. It will be on display at Club Tamarack from Saturday, March 21 through April 3, 2026 in the downstairs Rec Room at Club Tamarack.

One in three and seven times are relevant statistics for this art project. This collection of works deals with an historic women’s issue, yet everyone is impacted. The collection, both the written word in the form of poetry and in visual photographic images, are in white, grey and black. The color palette creates a subtle and somber feel, but the images have beauty and warmth. The voices in the poems are authentic, and the material is real since Lynn interviewed every individual. Of course, the names, ages and some identifiable details, including gender, have been changed to maintain the integrity of privacy and confidentiality. Domestic Violence impacts everyone, and these poignant poems are easily understandable by a typical reader. While the subject matter is heavy, the overall theme is one of hope. The poems and photographs are organized in chronological age from the youngest survivor to the oldest, thus allowing attendees to have a lifelong perspective on the impact and cycle of DV. No one is immune. The poems are named. The photographs are assigned to each poem and do not have their own titles. The poems and photographs accompany each other for an impactful and memorable message and paired to add depth

Survivors of the Shelter Speak



Poetry and Photography
by
Lynn Kaiser Conrad

and dimension. Domestic Violence is a topic we can only stop discussing when it is eradicated from human life and extinct long enough that it cannot be recollected in any memory. One in three women has or will experience some form of DV and survivors will return to their abusers on average seven times. This project is intended to start conversations. We need to talk about this. We need to raise awareness about this topic. We need to develop compassion surrounding this malady. Thank you for taking your time to view the exhibition.

Save the Date: This exhibit will be powerful addition to the annual “Meet the Bent Tree Artists” on Sunday March 22nd at 1:00pm in the Fireside Room in Club Tamarack. This is a BTAC Cultural Arts Event. Questions: Andrew Kidd 382-290-6002 text or call.

Friends of the Forest – Black Bear

By Lynn Kaiser Conrad

Brush piles, rock crevices, and hollow trees are popular black bear den locations, making Bent Tree a virtual welcoming wonderland. The north Georgia mountains are one of three primary black bear populations in the state, which has an estimated total population of 5,000.

The good news is that black bears are naturally afraid of humans. The bad news is that humans can do some dumb things to jeopardize their safety. Bears will associate humans with food if a bear is taught that. Bears are omnivores. Their diet is mostly berries, fruits, acorns and grasses, but they are opportunists and will eat garbage and small animals. Bird feeders are an attraction for bears and should be removed in the spring and summer. Bears that eat human garbage have, on average, a 23% shorter lifespan. In the wild, bears live 8-15 years.

When bears associate humans with food, this becomes a dangerous situation. The saying goes “a fed bear is a dead bear.” Why? Because a fed bear loses its natural fear of humans and thus becomes unpredictable and hence dangerous. Sadly, an unpredictable bear will be euthanized.

While black bears have poor eyesight, they have a superb sense of smell and can run up to 30 mph. Black bears are three feet high at the shoulders and six feet long. Adult males weigh 500 pounds and females weigh 300 pounds (a Smart car is five feet tall and eight feet long and goes 30 mph).

So, if you see a bear, you should not approach it, and remain aware. If the bear changes its activity, looks in your direction (because it smells you), stops feeding, moves in a new direction, then you are too close. If you are too close, the bear may feel threatened. Do not run (unless you run 40 mph). Do not turn your back on the bear. Increase your distance.

Bear cubs are so cute, though. If you see a cub, you know 300-pound mama is near. Use extreme caution. Do not ever get between a mama bear and her cubs. Cubs are born in January and only weigh eight ounces. Cubs stay with mama for the first year of life, until the following spring. Males reach reproductive maturity at 1.5 years, while females aren’t ready to reproduce until 4 years old.



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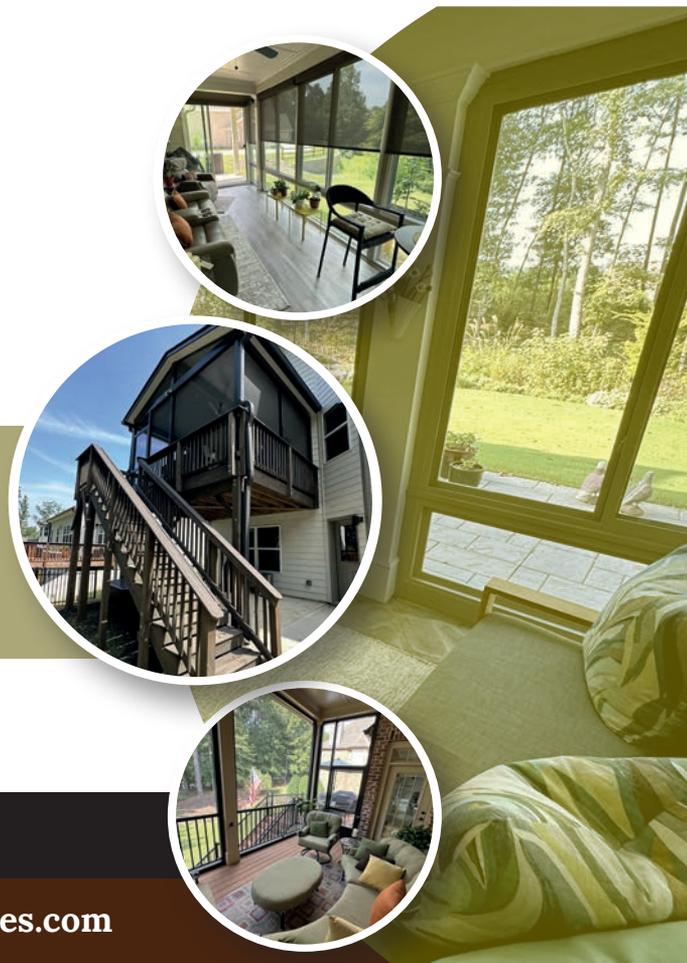
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Day Tripping – Still comes from Distillery

By Lynn Kaiser Conrad

Distilling is the practice of making hard alcohol. The process of separating the alcohol from water through evaporation and condensation, through boiling. The piece of equipment used to create alcohol is called a still. Curiously, it is legal in Georgia to own a still, but it cannot be used to concoct alcohol or spirits or moonshine! You can use your still to distill water, essential oils, or vinegar. While making beer and wine at home is permitted by law, it is expressly illegal to manufacture hard alcohol. For those who enjoy spirits, there are local distilleries convenient to Bent Tree.

Sharptop Distilling Company claims to be Jasper, Georgia's first legal distillery. That marketing tagline is enough to entice the curious to stop by for a tasting. They use fresh spring water from Burnt Mountain and the corn and grains are sourced by local farmers. If you like moonshine, Sharptop offers a variety of fruit flavors and of course traditional corn whiskey. There are other whiskeys and brandies, too. For more fun, you can join their club; they don't meet regularly like Rotary or Kiwanis, but you get discounts and swag.

104 North Main Street Suite A2, Jasper, GA
sharptopdistilling.com

Just up the road a piece in Ellijay is another distillery called White Path Creek Distillery. Their beverage menu is seasonal and made here in the north Georgia mountains, so you either need to check with them before visiting to ensure your palette will be pleased or go with a sense of adventure and enjoy whatever is ripe and flowing from the still. White Path Creek is affiliated with Blue Ridge Distillery.

1211 Old Northcutt Rd., Ellijay and
116 W. Main St. Blue Ridge, GA
www.whitepath-distillery.com

Big Creek Distillery is a bit further than Ellijay, situated in the quaint town of Dahlonega. This is a family-owned business led a father and son team. If you're interested in a distillery tour and learning about the making of drinking spirits, this location may be worth the drive, but check the website or contact them directly, because they are not open daily. They offer private one-on-one tours and tastings straight from the barrel. Now that sounds like a barrel of fun!

The Day the Mountain Stopped Asking Anything of Me

by William Klenk

I went up the trail the way I always have, without thinking much about it. Boots by the door, jacket out of habit rather than need. For years, going up there meant something specific: exercise, resolve, proof. Even after retirement, the pattern stayed. The mountain had been a place where effort translated cleanly into worth. You showed up, you climbed, you earned the view.

That morning, though, something felt slightly misaligned. Not wrong—just quieter. I noticed I wasn't counting steps or monitoring my breathing. I wasn't planning how far I'd go or how long I'd stay. The absence of a goal felt almost irresponsible, as if I'd forgotten an appointment.

The trail looked the same. Stones worn smooth by decades of boots. Trees holding their familiar line against the sky. Nothing in the landscape suggested a change. And yet, somewhere between the first bend and the rise where the ground steepens, it occurred to me that the mountain wasn't asking anything of me anymore.

That thought surprised me. For most of my adult life, the mountain had been a kind of conversation, sometimes encouraging, sometimes stern. It rewarded effort. It noticed discipline. When I was younger, I took pride in meeting it on its terms. Faster. Higher. One more switchback. Even later, when my pace slowed, I still felt the obligation to try.

But that morning, there was no sense of negotiation. No silent challenge. I could stop if I wanted. I could turn back. I could sit on a rock and call that enough. And the mountain, I realized, would not register the difference.

At first, that recognition carried a flicker of loss. If I was no longer being tested, what was I here for? So much of my life-work, responsibility, identity, had been shaped by expectations, spoken and unspoken. Meeting them had given my days their structure. Even now, in a community built around shared endurance and self-reliance, it's easy to believe that value comes from effort alone.

I slowed and listened. Wind moving through branches. A bird I couldn't name. My own breath, steady and unremarkable. The mountain hadn't changed its standards; it had simply outlasted my need to measure myself against them.

I sat for a while. Not to rest exactly, more to notice the unfamiliar comfort of not pushing on. When I eventually turned back, earlier than I once would have, there was no sense of quitting. Only a quiet understanding that this, too, was a way of belonging.

The mountain still stands. It always will. What has changed is my relationship to it. I no longer come to be proven. I come to be present. And in that shift, subtle as it is, I've found something unexpectedly generous: the permission to simply be here.

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From the Golf Pro

By Rob Spiars

Good day Bent Tree! Spring is just around the corner. 😊
We have many events on the horizon. Please keep an eye out for communication from the golf shop for dates and sign-up!!

The March schedule has our first MGA event of the year with the Opening Day tournament on the 7th. A core aerification will be implemented on the golf course March 9th and 10th. 9 holes will be open each day during the process.

The golf shop has received a major upgrade with new floors and paint!! Stop by to take a look and browse our new merchandise! Those of you who are interested, our seasonal cart plan begins in March!! Take advantage of great savings and sign up at administration.



2026 Golf Tournament Schedule

March

7	9am Shotgun	MGA Opening Day
9-10		Aerification
21	10am-2pm	Callaway Demo Day

April

4	12pm Tee Times	GSGA Tournament
13	9am Shotgun	Bent Tree Animal Shelter
18	8:30 Shotgun	MGA Player in the Box
24	4pm Shotgun	Couples Scramble
30	9:30 Shotgun	CARES Tournament

May

6	1pm Shotgun	Jasper Optimist
14	1pm Shotgun	Lowback Open
16-17	8:30 Shotgun	MGA Member/Member
18	8:30 Shotgun	Northeast Georgia Seniors
29	4pm Shotgun	Couples Scramble
30-31	12:30 Tee Times	Girls Golf Tour

June

3	TBD	Hospice
9	9am Shotgun	Ladies Invitational
11-13	TBD	MGA Member/ Guest
15	TBD	Bent Tree Foundation Tournament
26	4pm Shotgun	Couples Scramble
27	9am Shotgun	Bear Necessities Tournament
29	8-10 Tee Times	GSGA

July

11	1pm Shotgun	Matthew Campbell
13	AM Tee Times	Georgia Mid AM Qualifier
18	8:30 Shotgun	MGA Red, White, & Blue
31	4pm Shotgun	Couples Scramble

August

3	8:30 Shotgun	GSGA
15-16	8:30 Shotgun	MGA King of the Mountain
21	4pm Shotgun	Couples Scramble
29-30	AM Tee Times	Bent Tree Club Championship

September

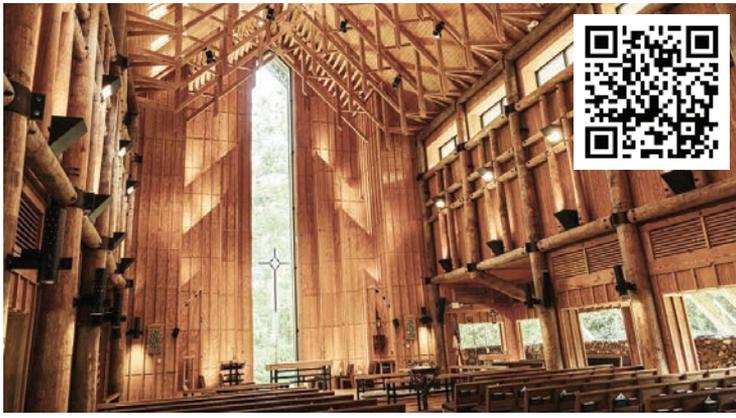
10-12	TBD	Salazar Group
14-15		Aerification

October

5	TBD	Habitat for Humanity
10-11	8:30 Shotgun	MGA Lee Wilson Colligate
12	8:30 Shotgun	Northeast Georgia Seniors
20	TBD	Joyhouse Tournament
26	9:30 Shotgun	NWGASR
30	4pm Shotgun	Couples Scramble

November

7	8:30 Shotgun	MGA Foley Cup
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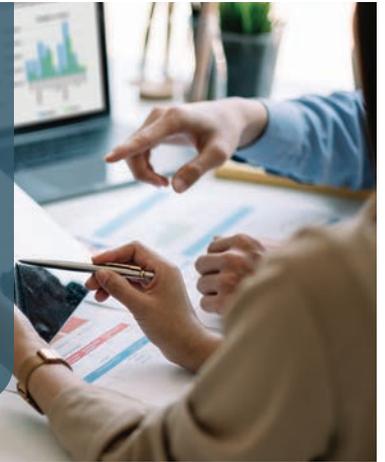
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Ladies Golf Association News

By Lyn Orletsky

Spring is almost here, which means a new season for the Bent Tree Ladies Golf Association, LGA, will start on the first Tuesday in April and continue each week through October. Our officers, Lynn Manni, Gayla Smith, Carole Falgren, and Susan Carmichael, are working with our golf pro, Rob Spiars, to plan a plethora of games this year. Opening day is always a 9:00 shotgun scramble followed by lunch and laughter at the Tavern.

I've heard so many amusing stories about the course and its members, that I am convinced the best memories anyone has about Bent Tree will come from golf and the LGA.

All women with a GHIN handicap of 40 or less are welcome to join. Annual dues are \$45 which covers prize money for our weekly games from April through October. It's the best way to improve your golf game while having fun.





Bent Tree Events

BENT TREE BASKETBALL

Off-season Schedule
2nd Sat. of the Month
Next Up: Sat. Mar. 14
1:00-2:30p

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*The Goldphire Blueprint.
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Craft Real Estate closed 2025 as the top selling brokerage in Bent Tree again. With 55 homes sold in Bent Tree in 2025 for a volume of \$25,587,000. Craft sold 18 of those. So far in 2026, there have been seven closings for a volume of \$3,706,000 and Craft has three of those. There are currently 38 active homes on the market and Craft has eight of the active listings. There are three pending sales and Craft has one of those. We need more houses to sell! There are still plenty of buyers looking in Bent Tree but there is very little inventory to sell them. If you are considering selling your home, please contact us. Craft outsold every other brokerage in 2025 with 18 of the 55 sales. We have the knowledge, the experience, and the contacts to sell your home for top dollar. Looking forward to working with you.



93 Thunder Ridge
\$725,000 | 3BD/3.5BA



175 Fairview Court
\$669,000 | 3BR/3.5BA



450 Little Hendricks Mountain Road
\$650,000 | 3BD/3.5BA



572 Cutthroat Ridge
\$615,000 | 3BR/3.5BA



213 South View Trail
\$585,000 | 3BR/3BA



354 Starcross Lane
\$469,000 | 3BR/3.5BA



1379 Little Hendricks Mountain Road
\$375,000 | 3BR/2BA



214 South View Trail
\$365,000 | 3BR/2BA



858 Crippled Oak Trail
\$359,900 | 3BD/2BA



304 Sunset Court
\$329,900 | 3BR/2BA



784 Fairway Drive
\$298,000 | 3BR/2BA



193 Valley View Trail
\$284,900 | 2BR/2BA

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