

THE ALABAMIAN

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION • SPRING 2020



The Show Off Edition

ARPA Launches New Website



Alabama Recreation and Parks Association

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ALABAMA RECREATION & PARKS ASSOCIATION

People
We represent more than 900 dedicated Alabama Recreation and Parks Association professionals.

Places
We have member agencies in over 92 cities and towns in the state of Alabama representing a majority of the state's population.

Programs



Bradlee Colburn
2020 Publications/Marketing Chair

Natalie Norman
Executive Director
Alabama Recreation and
Parks Association

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- Billy Powell – President
- Summer Ammons – Past President
- Gary Minor – President Elect
- Bradlee Colburn – Secretary
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- Alabama Five-O – Sandi Wilson
- Awards – Mandy Johnson
- Conference Site – Natalie Norman
- COPP – Summer Ammons
- Finance – Sandi Wilson
- Long Range Planning – Gary Minor
- Marketing/Publications – Laura Leigh Chesser
- Membership – Drew Peterson
- Nominating – Summer Ammons
- Professional Development – Robin Brothers
- Recreational Sports – Kenny Thompson
- Therapeutic Recreation – Staci McCormick

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The Alabamian is the official publication of the Alabama Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA), an affiliate of the National Recreation and Park Association. The magazine is published by the Alabama Recreation and Parks Association, Inc. as a service to its membership. Submissions of parks and recreation-related articles are welcomed. Opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the authors and not necessarily those of ARPA. Comments/responses should be sent to:

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Cover Feature:
Pelham's New Recreation Center



From the
President
Gary Minor

Kah Kaw and Hello ARPA!
I hope this letter finds you well amongst one of the more challenging and unprecedented seasons in our history. I am happy to report that ARPA remains hard at work to provide our professionals and affiliates with the tools and support they need to be successful in these trying times.

Please join me in thanking the City of Mobile, Mobile Parks and Recreation Department, volunteers, exhibitors, sponsors, speakers and attendees for an amazing conference this past January! This year's conference was yet another testament to the high-quality work of our members, affiliates and supporters. Thank you again! We look forward to 2020 Fall Workshop and the 2021 Annual Conference in Orange Beach.

I encourage all members to tune into ARPA's debut webinar series announced recently by Natalie Norman. ARPA staff, along with affiliate professionals, are developing relevant and useful content to help you better navigate this crisis. The ability to collaborate and share best practices with experts state-wide is a very valuable and tangible benefit of ARPA. Please join us and share your ideas as we work together to emerge stronger than before.

As our country works to address this crisis, I am reminded of the extremely important role parks and recreation will play in recovery. Parks and recreation professionals represent one of the most resourceful and hard-working sectors of our communities. The benefits of recreation are crucial in fostering the well-being of the communities we serve. We should strive to remind our communities and elected officials of these benefits and the healthy solutions our agencies provide.

I wish you the best during these times and hope to see you soon. I am confident in the extraordinary ability of our profession to mend our communities and emerge to an even brighter tomorrow.

Best,

Gary Minor
2020 ARPA President



From the
Executive Director
Natalie Norman

ARPA Members,
Even as we find ourselves in narrow and uncertain times, we continue to have an attitude of gratitude. We would like to extend a special thank you to the City of Mobile, the Mobile Parks and Recreation Department and all of the wonderful volunteers for being an exceptional host for our 2020 conference. Thank you to the Conference Education Committee for a tremendous slate of sessions. Thank you to the attendees, speakers, exhibitors and sponsors for making conference a great success!

It has certainly been a time unlike any other since its conclusion. We are a profession that thrives on community, activity, health, wellness, inclusion and communicating in close proximity to those that we serve and with each other. In the current environment we still thrive on all of those things, but at a distance, and we plan for the future. ARPA applauds the strength and cohesiveness in which

you and your departments have shown while dealing with the fluid landscape that COVID-19 has brought.

What will it look like when COVID-19 is behind us? When we get back to a sense of normalcy as we open up for business? It may not look the same, and there will perhaps be a new normal.

We are in an unprecedented time, yet together we embrace the opportunity of being a part of a parks and recreation rush and having the privilege of creating new paths. Thank you meeting the needs of your communities each and every day, exemplifying the difference parks and recreation has made, is making and will make.

Please continue to safe and healthy!

Together,
Natalie Norman, CPRP
Executive Director

January 24-26, 2021
Orange Beach Event Center
ARPAonline.org

Alabama Recreation & Parks Association
Annual Conference

SAVE THE DATE



Show Off Edition

Photo courtesy of Boaz Parks and Recreation Department

Boaz - Boaz Field Crew Team

Team is a very important word in our line of work, and we are extremely proud of ours! The Boaz Parks and Recreation Field Crew has worked tirelessly to restore our SportsPlex to its original glory.

Visitors will notice the dugouts sporting a fresh coat of paint along with the press boxes, concessions stands, and bathrooms. At both the Baseball and Softball Complex new mulch has been laid out, trees removed, and landscape timber installed. All bleachers throughout our facilities have been brought up to safety standards and fields have been renovated to level the playing surfaces. Currently, the crew is hard at work restoring the flowerbeds to add color and life to the area. For all these reasons and many more, we want to give a shout out to Joe Tarvin, Lance Morgan, Chad Thomas, and Salem Negrete for helping to bring a “wow-factor” back to the Boaz SportsPlex.



Fort Payne - City Park Fountain

The fountain in Fort Payne City Park has an interesting history.

It was cast in France in 1890 for the DeKalb Hotel. Made of iron, the fountain is 8ft in diameter, 10ft high with the bowls 15in deep. At the base are designs of frogs, snails, shells, lizards and calla lilies with leaves molded in iron. The fountain has a twin that is located at a private residence in Fort Payne.

The DeKalb Hotel was built by the Fort Payne Coal and Iron Company in 1889, contained 125 rooms and was 3 stories high. The park across from the hotel was named Union Park to make the influx of northerners feel at home. The hotel burned February 5, 1918, however, the park continued to provide a

gathering place for residents and was eventually renamed City Park.

The fountain sits by an entrance, welcoming people to the park.



Guntersville



Guntersville Parks and Rec Director Matt Bryant and family enjoying a stroll along one of the city's many miles of walking/biking trails.



Missing the summer crowds at the City of Guntersville Parks and Rec!



Checking out the new LED pool lights at one of the City of Guntersville Parks and Recreation Department's pools.

Guntersville



Fantastic shoreline venue for pickleball, basketball, and skate park located at the City of Guntersville Parks and Recreation Department Civitan Park.



Light dusting of snow behind the City of Guntersville Senior Center.



Call for Articles!

If you would like to be published in a future issue of The Alabamian Magazine, please send your article and any graphics to the State Office at nnorman@arpaonline.org.

The theme for the next issue is “The Show Off Edition.”

An issue full of pictures. What’s the coolest thing your agency has done in the past year? Do you have any beautiful landmarks, parks or facilities? Show them off. Feel good or success stories, people, parks, sports teams, events and programs!

The deadline for consideration in the Spring 2020 issue is March 30th. Please call 334-279-9160 with any questions.

Huntsville

Adaptive Basketball

The City of Huntsville has a full house on Saturdays from January until April with our Adaptive Basketball groups. We offer competitive and recreation basketball sessions for ages 6 and up.

The competitive ballers in the photo are at their best when they play full court 5 on 5. The intensity is amazing and after each game they come together and show great sportsmanship.



Huntsville



Diving Board

The Special Populations program participants love spending time at our parks, pools and recreation centers. Khalil (diving board) is a part of our summer camp and basketball program. He's a kid with so much character and loves recreation in every way. He is flexing his muscles on the high diving board during the City of Huntsville's adaptive summer camp at the Huntsville Aquatics Center!

Swim Lessons

Swimming anyone? The City of Huntsville adaptive swim lessons are a big deal to our parents and participants. Teaching water safety and proper swim techniques are the goals for our talented swim instructors to pass on to the students. We offer 10-week classes with four swimmers and two instructors in each class. The class in this picture takes place at the Dr. Richard Showers, Sr. Recreation Center Pool on Tuesdays and Thursdays. (Shelby, Everett and Maggi are pictured)

Madison County



Helicopter
Waiting for the helicopter to drop eggs at the Sharon Johnston Park Easter Egg Drop

Christmas
Sitting with Mrs. Claus at Sharon Johnston Park's Pioneer Village Christmas Event



Seniors
Seniors having fun at the Hawaiian Theme Senior Fun Fest at Sharon Johnston Park

Sand Mountain - Park & Amphitheater

Despite everything that is going on in the world, construction at Sand Mountain Park & Amphitheater in Albertville is still in full swing. We are very excited to open the brand-new park this summer, and our baseball/softball/t-ball season will begin on June 1, 2020.

Sand Mountain Park & Amphitheater is a sports, leisure, wellness and entertainment venue with 16 tennis courts, 14 outdoor turf fields, a

7,500 person capacity amphitheater, an 8-lane indoor competition pool, an outdoor water park, playgrounds, a miracle field, an RV park, and a 103,000-square-foot community recreation center that will include hardwood courts, a 2-story fitness center, concessions, locker rooms and conference/party rooms.



Pelham - Recreation Center



Tuscaloosa - Safe Room & Activity Center

McDonald Hughes Community Safe Room

Tuscaloosa County PARA held a grand opening ceremony for the McDonald Hughes Community Safe Room on December 16. This state-of-the-art storm shelter is a monolithic style dome facility designed to protect the community from tornadoes and other severe weather events throughout their duration. The 12,868 sq.ft. structure meets all FEMA requirements and will protect up to 1,700 people from an EF-5 tornado with winds of up to 250 mph. It is also a dual use safe room that functions as a basketball gym complete with restrooms, bleachers, and covered sidewalk. The total project cost was over \$3.6 million, funded primarily through a FEMA grant of \$2.7 million with the City of Tuscaloosa and Tuscaloosa County providing an additional \$800,000 in funding.



Jerry Tingle Activity Center

The Tingle Center just completed its first full year of service to the Tuscaloosa County community. The 18,500 square foot building was spearheaded by the Tuscaloosa County Commission. Amenities include an indoor pool with two, 190 foot long outdoor/indoor slides, fitness room, large and small multipurpose rooms, a catering room, a sheriff's office and other amenities. The Tingle Center is PARA's 7th activity center and fills the need for the growing population in East Tuscaloosa County. It currently enjoys a large membership, a full slate of rentals, birthday parties, and more!



Auburn - Dixie Youth World Series Champs and 50 Years of Parks and Recreation

Auburn Orange won the Dixie Youth "O" Zone World Series in 2019!



Auburn Parks and Recreation Celebrates 50 years! Throughout 2020, we'll be celebrating #50YearsofPlay in honor of the Auburn Parks and Recreation Department's 50th anniversary! We'll be incorporating the celebration into many of our annual events, hosting some new anniversary-themed events and posting blasts from the past and fun ways to celebrate #50YearsofPlay on our Facebook and Instagram! We're so excited to celebrate with you!



Opelika



The Potters of Rocky Brook



Opelika's Floral Dog Park



Rocky Brook Creek

Opelika



The Penn Yonge House at Spring Villa Park



The Train Depot at Monkey Park



Swinging at Spring Villa Park

Eufaula - EPR Sports 'Shows' Off Its Best: Good Coaches Make Greatness

A major topic of conversation in youth league athletic departments is finding and keeping quality coaches who know the sport, teach the game, and most importantly bond with athletes in a special and unique way.

Eufaula Parks and Recreation is fortunate to have two men involved in separate athletic programs who have each transformed the sports they coach using different techniques. The results, however, have been the same – wins and championships.

Billy McClendon, a former youth pastor at First Assembly of God Church in Eufaula, began coaching soccer for EPR in 2013. His love for helping and teaching young people, especially teenagers, the game of life, made him the perfect coaching fit for a group of soccer All-Stars who have transformed the game at EPR.

Although some players he initially coached aged out of the soccer program at EPR, most kept playing for “Coach Billy” as he is affectionately known. McClendon’s success on the soccer field is built on relationships, love, and trust. His ability to communicate to players on and off the field and bridge diversity and talent among teens is a gift; a task most coaches find difficult. However, one McClendon has mastered. As a result, EPR soccer is now known around the state for its competitiveness and sportsmanship.

EPR soccer has competed in four consecutive Alabama Parks and Recreation Tournament State Championship games with McClendon at the helm. The program won the 2017 ARPA 16U State Championship, and with most of the same players captured the 19U title in 2019.



The Eufaula Parks and Recreation Department 19U All-Star team won the 2019 Alabama Parks and Recreation State Championship. For the majority of the team members, it was their second ARPA State Championship in three years. The team was coached by Billy McClendon, who led EPR to the 2017 ARPA State Championship in the 16U division.



Eufaula Parks and Recreation Department 19U All-Star Soccer Coach Billy McClendon won his second Alabama Parks and Recreation State Championship in four years in November of 2019. EPR soccer player and Eufaula High School junior MacKenzie Glover played in all four ARPA State Tournaments for EPR, and was the only female on the team in 2019.



Eufaula Parks and Recreation 19U All-Star players Garrett Hines and MacKenzie Glover show off the 2019 ARPA 19U State Championship trophy prior to participating in the downtown Eufaula Christmas Parade in December of 2019. The entire EPR 19U All-Stars were in the annual parade, and also recognized for their accomplishments in December of 2019 at a Eufaula City Council Meeting.

Eufaula - EPR Sports 'Shows' Off Its Best: Good Coaches Make Greatness

In contrast to McClendon's coaching style of embracing the individuality of each team member, James Harris brings a hands-on "old school" approach to the basketball court at EPR.

Harris prefers teaching the game, therefore, coaching younger children has always been his preference. He started coaching basketball at EPR in 1989 before stepping away from the game in 2010. Harris coached many of Eufaula's greatest athletes during his first 21 years on the hardwood, and won two 10U Boys ARPA State Championships.

EPR staff, parents, and other basketball coaches were glad to see Harris return to coaching at Jack Powell Gym in 2019-2020. The historic basketball venue in Eufaula is where Harris compiled numerous regular season league titles over the years.

Though the way the game of basketball is played and even the children are different, Harris remains the same. And, his way of teaching the fundamentals of basketball won over the parents of his players and caught the attention of three other first-year head coaches in the EPR 10U league. Harris became a mentor to other coaches, and an immediate father-figure to his players.

Harris' return season didn't see him win the league, but he earned the right to coach the 10U Boys All-Star team and gained the respect of a new generation of parents, players, and fellow coaches.



Coach James Harris, second from left on the top row, led Eufaula Parks and Recreation's 10U All-Star Boys team to qualifying for the Alabama Parks and Recreation State Tournament in Trussville in March of 2020. Harris returned to recreation league coaching in 2020 after a 10-year absence. His success of teaching the game of basketball on the court and life lessons off the court are well known throughout Eufaula and Barbour County.



The Eufaula Parks and Recreation 12U All-Star Girls Basketball team became the first EPR girls' team in nearly 10 years to win a district basketball title and qualify for the ARPA State Tournament in Trussville, Alabama.



One of the biggest success stories in Eufaula Parks and Recreation All-Star Basketball in 2020 was the play of the EPR 12U Boys. The team coached by Willie Walker and Reggie Screws not only won three straight games at the District 6 Tournament to qualify for the ARPA State Tournament, but also received the prestigious Sportsmanship Award.

Eufaula

Second Grade Swim Lesson collaboration with Eufaula City Schools:

The Eufaula Community Center is thrilled to work with Eufaula City School's second grade students offering a water safety program. The community center's knowledgeable and caring instructors teach the second graders swim lessons



while the Corp of Engineers instruct lake safety. We are hoping this will help our children stay safe in and around beautiful Lake Eufaula. This is the 4th year collaborating with ECS & working together in hopes of saving lives.



Eufaula Community Center FITmas Challenge:
This past Christmas the Eufaula Community Center offered its first annual FITmas Challenge. It was a huge success! Members & non-members competed, doing the things they were already doing such as utilizing the fitness center, participating in group fitness classes & personal training sessions; while being encouraged to try new things like completing a trainer's Challenge of the Day and posting to social media; all while racking up points! We had lots of participation and plan to offer it annually at the Eufaula Community Center.

1st place winner with 320 points, Tamika Woodson won a one-year free membership to the ECC, 3 personal training sessions, \$25 Chick-Fil-A gift card, water bottle, towel, ECC pullover & workout gloves.

2nd place winner with 295 points, Lynne Ward won 3 months free membership to the ECC, 30-minute massage, \$30 CSC punch card, ECC pullover, water bottle & towel.



Thanks to Marvin's of Eufaula and Great Southern Wood, Barbour Creek Boat Landing was remodeled with all new TimberTech composite material. This much-needed facelift is not only appreciated by the Eufaula Parks & Recreation department but also by the many who utilize Barbour Creek Boat Landing on a daily basis.



The Eufaula Community Center hosted a heart transplant HIIT workout fundraiser for retired fireman, Scott Woodruff. The event was a huge success & raised \$2,275.00, leaving Scott within \$2,000 of his \$25K heart transplant goal!

Ozark



Kidzone Pavilion and Splash pad at Steagall Park

Kidzone Pavilion and Splash Pad at Steagall Park is located on Peacock Parkway. Stegall Park has picnic areas, pavilions, a playground, splash pad, eight lighted tennis courts, a lighted basketball court, and four lighted athletic fields for baseball/softball and special events. Kidzone, a lighted state-of-the-art community built playground, is located on the Faust Avenue side of Steagall Park. The large wooden pavilion is available for birthday parties, family reunions, or any other special event. The pavilion is available for rent in three hour blocks.

Ozark Community Pool

Ozark Community Pool offers a relaxing oasis. The pool is heated so it can be used throughout the seasons. It offers swimming lessons to all ages, aquacise, recreational swim, and lap swim. While taking a break from swimming you can visit the concession stand and lounge by the pool or sit at a shaded picnic table.



Aquacise is a low impact water exercise class that works to improve strength and cardiovascular fitness without stressing joints. This class is taught in shallow water so knowing how to swim is not a requirement. The pool can also be used for aqua therapy sessions. We offer a chair lift to assist swimmers getting into and out of the pool. The pool has certified lifeguards on staff during all hours of operation.

Lunch Program

Ayanna Williams, the manager of the Autrey Center, has been heading up a lunch program to help feed the kids of Ozark during the time of the COVID closures. With school not being in session, Ozark Leisure Services has partnered up with Ozark City Schools to help provide 500 lunches



Monday – Friday March 23, 2020-April 10, 2020. We are serving 18 years and younger. They are receiving a fully packed lunch each day!

Ozark

Ed Linsenby Lake

Ed Lisenby Lake is a 92- acre, award-winning state fishing lake located in a beautiful 390-acre park. The lake also has a fully stocked bait shop offering boat rentals, fishing permits, fishing and hunting licenses, snacks, drinks, live bait, a large assortment of lures and fishing supplies, and a handicap accessible pier. The lake has a 3.1-mile pedestrian and bird watching trail. One mile of the trail is primitive, while the remaining 2.1 miles are paved. Approximate walking time is one hour. The trail is available year-round for walking and jogging. Pets are welcome to walk the trail, but they must be on a leash. Our newest addition to the lake is our mountain bike and hiking trail. This unique recreational resource provides a rich experience for trail lovers, mountain bikers, and hikers alike. All users appreciate the naturally wooded trails with opportunities to hike or ride 1-2 mile loops or tackle the whole trail system. Everyone enjoys the section of trails through the beautiful wetlands and the scenic views of Ed Lisenby Lake. Sam Dale Park, part of the lake complex, has a pavilion, picnic area, and a memorial to pioneer Sam Dale. The lake is also home to the Ozark Community Archery Range. The range is open to the public six days a week from sunrise to sundown and is closed on Wednesdays.

We have great employees that work at the lake and keep the bait house stocked and operating. We also have a great grounds crews that is able to keep the grounds accessible and beautiful year round.



Troy

Pike County Lake, managed by Troy Parks and Recreation, Troy, Alabama.

Photos by Jonah Enfinger

Mobile

Once a month, Heidi Hanchey facilitates TR class for people with disabilities and their family members. Families work together creating art.



ARPA Announces Virtual Town Hall Series

ARPA will host a four-part series of virtual town hall meetings to provide an opportunity to share and discuss ideas, strategies and plans related to COVID-19. All meetings will be held 1:30-2:30p. Scheduled dates for the series are 4/23, 4/30, 5/7 and 5/20.

ARPA is fortunate for the ability to leverage the combined strengths of its members and affiliates to better address this crisis through this technology. Subject matter experts within ARPA will be invited to share their knowledge and expertise as well as facilitate discussion and respond to questions. ARPA members will receive emailed invitations to join each meeting via Zoom.

Should you have a specific question that you would like to be addressed, please feel free to submit to Natalie Norman (nnorman@arpaonline.org) prior to each meeting. We hope that you can join in, and we look forward to connecting!

ARPA Launches New Website

We are excited to announce the launch of the new and improved ARPA website at www.arpaonline.org. We encourage you to visit, browse and try out some of the new features. The website's redesign provides additional functionality, organization, and a stronger visual appeal. Among other capabilities is the capacity to streamline Coach Safety Act related inquiries. This is a vital component in the successful implementation of the legislation and should help members and affiliates achieve compliance. The website is always under improvement as we continue to update its features and content to make it a true one stop shop of all things ARPA. Please check it out soon!



2020

Calendar of Events

May

16 ARPA State Track Meet
Trussville, AL

July

10-12 ARPA Softball State Tournament
Trussville, AL

23-25 ARPA State Swimming and
Diving Championship
Birmingham, AL

August

11 ARPA State Archery Tournament
Dothan, AL

November

4-6 LEAD
Camp Skyline, Mentone, AL

6-7 ARPA Youth Flag Football
State Tournament
Trussville, AL

21-22 ARPA Soccer State Tournament
Dothan, AL