



Photograph by Steve McComb

There is still time to catch **Free Friday Night Flicks at Homewood Central Park**. Movies begin at sundown and the suggested arrival time is 7:30 to find parking. This is a free, fun-for-the-family event provided by the Parks and Recreation Board.

- August 4: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
- August 11: Curious George
- August 18: Ice Age II



The **Mustang Club of America** will celebrate 30 years of dedication to the Mustang Hobby at their 30th Anniversary Stampede over the Labor Day weekend at Barber Motorsports Park. As part of their celebration, they will host a cruise-in on Thursday, August 31 on 18th Street South in Downtown Homewood. Beginning at 6:00 p.m., over 200 vintage and limited edition Mustangs will fill the streets. Enjoy live music from the Flashbacks who will entertain the crowd with selections from the 60s and 70s. For more information, contact Randy Cunningham at (205) 491-0563 or randycunningham@airflowproducts.com.

Homewood Police Department Annual



The **Homewood Police Department** will hold its annual Halloween Trick-or-Treat on Tuesday, October 31st, from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. in the parking lot located at 1833 29th Avenue South. For more information call 332-6204.

RED MOUNTAIN PARK:

A REGIONAL PARK IN A LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD

By Paul DeMarco and Libba Vaughan

A local park initiative will make our state home to one of the largest urban parks in the nation, and create a regional attraction that is only minutes away from the City of Homewood.

The proposed Red Mountain Park stretches four-and-a-half miles along the ridge of Red Mountain between Lakeshore Parkway to the south and Ishkooda-Wenonah Road to the north. The 1,108 acre-property is larger than New York's Central Park and Atlanta's Piedmont Park, and it's even larger than the Golden Gate Bridge Park in San Francisco. The Red Mountain Park property also includes a two-and-a-half mile rail line called the High Line Railroad that once ferried iron ore from Red Mountain to Fairfield Works.

"Red Mountain Park was once home to ore mines that put Birmingham on the map, and now it can put us at the top of a national list of cities with the most open space per capita, even more than Minneapolis and Seattle," says Wendy Jackson, Executive Director of the Freshwater Land Trust.

Last year, the Freshwater Land Trust negotiated with the current owner of the property, U.S. Steel, to purchase the historic land in southwestern Jefferson County for \$7 million. This price is a \$9.5 million discount from the appraised value and resulted in U.S. Steel's *largest* philanthropic donation in the company's 100-year history. In addition, U.S. Steel has pledged an additional \$1 million in cash towards the development of park amenities which could include athletic fields, hiking and biking trails, a 20-acre lake, and historic preservation sites.

"Homewood is so fortunate to be located so close to Red Mountain Park," says Holli Watts, Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Homewood. "This can be a Central Park-type park, and the opportunities for biking and hiking and just general recreation are tremendous."

Thanks to the old railroad beds that once ferried ore trains, over 18 miles of trails exist today within the Park boundaries, waiting to be used. "It is also possible to link all of the local park and greenway initiatives together, including Homewood's Shades Creek Greenway and Mountain Brook's Jemison Trail to Red Mountain Park," says Jackson. "Red Mountain Park gives us the opportunity to connect 64 miles of hiking and biking trails within Greater Birmingham."

The Land Trust has hired Wallace, Roberts and Todd, a landscape architecture firm from Philadelphia, to produce the parks' master plan. Public input is vital to the park planning process, and the landscape architects plan public meetings during each of their upcoming visits. Tom Martin of ConsultEcon, has also been hired to help produce a feasibility and economic impact study as well as a business plan for the Park. "The architects and Tom Martin will work closely together to produce a plan for this park that will result in a sustainable regional amenity," says Jackson.

The Land Trust has also had a lot of help from the community. After the proposal was announced last year, the Land Trust organized the Red Mountain Park Steering Committee. This group of private, public, civic, and government leaders has worked hard to help the Land Trust meet the two-year option deadline. They are working to raise the money necessary to purchase the property.

The Steering Committee also helped draft a bill that was passed in the state legislature in April that lays out the park's future ownership and management.

In March, State Representative Paul DeMarco, (R-Homewood) and Merika Coleman, (D-Bessemer) introduced House Bill 707 in the House of Representatives, while Senator Rodger Smitherman (D-Birmingham) and Senator Jabo Waggoner (R-Vestavia) sponsored a similar bill in the Senate. This bill, which Governor Riley signed into law in April, created a 15-member state commission called the Red Mountain Greenway and Recreational Area Commission that will eventually own and manage the property known as Red Mountain Park.

"We are thrilled that so much progress has been made in making this park a reality," says Wendy Jackson. "We have a lot more work to do, but creating a park of this scale is a monumental task."

"Never in my 40 years have I been so excited about a project of this scale," says Watts.

For more information, visit the Freshwater Land Trust's web site at www.freshwaterlandtrust.org or the Friends of Red Mountain Park's web site at www.redmountainpark.org.