Wishes do come true

By Leewanna Parker
Independent Editor

A healthy child growing up in West Alabama might not be able to relate to a “fondest wish” centering on a simple fishing trip with their family. But for some children who have spent most of their lives battling lethal diseases or severe handicaps, who spend large portions of time confined to a hospital bed or wheelchair, that simple activity can seem as remote or as exotic to them as a space shuttle trip to examine Mars.

Bridgid O’Donohue, president and founder of United Special Sportsman Alliance, knows all about children who just want to be able to do something as normal as fishing from a boat under a blue sky. Like any good fairy godmother, she makes it her business to find ways to grant these children a few of their wishes. That happened last weekend at a luxurious resort specializing in hunting and fishing trips.

Children from ages five to 15 were welcomed with open arms and a lot of excitement at Leavellwood in West Greene, a busy commercial hunting and fishing enterprise, which suddenly became wide open and very available to them and their families once its owners found out about the wishes of these very sick children.

The year round business that has attracted some of the best sports men and women in the nation pulled out all the stops this past weekend to accommodate these really special VIPs — some of whom are terminally ill.

As it turned out, the effort to accommodate them wasn’t just on the shoulders of Leavellwood owners, Trey and Pam Montgomery. Word of mouth spread the news rapidly, and those who heard about the special fishing weekend for these children and their families began volunteering to assist however they could to make sure this was an unforgettable experience, indeed, for these kids.

Fishermen involved in BASS for ESPN and Bassmasters volunteered to serve as guides. So many volunteered that the Montogmerys were finally turning down help. They had racked up enough offers from pro-fishermen or very experienced anglers to supply every child with his or her very own guide for their entire stay.

Companies donated fishing tackle, foods, t-shirts, towels, mugs and even See “Wishes” page 2