

SMOKE SIGNAL

VOLUME 54, ISSUE 12

Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968

March, 2022

www.smokesignalnews.com

Spring is in the air!

*Best wishes for this season
of renewal and bloom!*

– The Smoke Signal Staff

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City of Tucker Awarded Federal Trail Grant

The City of Tucker announced in January that the City has secured a grant from the federal government to fund part of a proposed three-mile multi-use trail to connect Tucker's downtown to the bustling Northlake retail district. The trail would ultimately require additional funding and approval from the City, with the Tucker-Northlake Community Improvement District (CID) contributing funds, as well.



"Anytime your city is awarded this kind of grant, it's a big deal," said Tucker Mayor Frank Auman. "This trail was first proposed back in 2005 by the Atlanta Regional Commission's

(ARC) Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) and has been included in subsequent LCI updates. It's a project that, when the time comes, our Council will look forward to gathering public input and making a decision on how to proceed."

The federal government is contributing nearly \$1.5 million in funding for the proposed

...Continued on page 4

Celebrating City of Tucker's Business of the Month!

Susan Gilbert, SRCC Board Member

Smoke Rise's own spectacular 175-acre Smoke Rise Country Club (SRCC) was recently honored by the City of Tucker as its Business of the Month. Since 1999, Tucker's Smoke Rise community has boasted one of the finest gathering places in all of DeKalb County. The club, which sits proudly in the Kanawha neighborhood, is what many call "Tucker's best kept secret" and a place to "rejuvenate, relax, enjoy."

The list of amenities reads like a wish list of anything that active families or individuals could want. They include a magnificent, semi private, par-72, 18-hole golf course, and eight lighted tennis courts, some with hard and some with clay surfaces. Members can take a dip in the junior Olympic-size salt-water swimming facility that features 5 pools. Inside the clubhouse there is a dining room, a ballroom, and even a boardroom members can use for important meetings or events. Increasing in popularity, with the addition of personal trainers and exercise classes, is the workout facility on the Club's lower level. In it, you will find all the essential workout equipment like treadmills, ellipticals, free weights, and TVs. Combine all that with a robust social events calendar and it is easy to see how SRCC is worthy of this recognition.



Paul Carey, the Club's general manager, says he understands why it is such a special place to so many in the community. "The Cofers, who were instrumental in starting this club, saw that it would give people in

Tucker and Stone Mountain a place to gather and connect with neighbors," Carey said. "We currently have about 400 members, some who have been here from day one, to new, younger families who are just moving in."

The newly constructed Smoke Rise Elementary School is bringing new families to Tucker, and the work-at-home trend makes it easier for people to move here where they can have larger houses and big yards. And some of our newest members are coming from

...Continued on page 4

– Poetic Moments –

Everybody's Irish on St. Patrick's Day by Victoria R. Crosby

Everybody's Irish on St. Patrick's Day
you don't have to come from Dublin, County Cork or
Galway Bay.

It is a special celebration in anticipation of the Spring,
with parades of happy people who love to dance and sing.

Everybody's Irish on St. Patrick's Day
from the coast of California to New York and Hudson Bay.
It's a time for eating cabbage, corned beef and soda bread,
where everyone wears shades of green, not yellow, blue or red.

Everybody's Irish on St. Patrick's Day.

You don't need to have kissed the Blarney stone
to be eloquent today.

At the end of an Irish rainbow there is a pot of gold,
and endless pints of Guinness,
at least that's what I've been told.

Everybody's Irish on St. Patrick's Day,
people from all backgrounds who love a party anyway.
Folks are sporting shamrocks, and I just want to say,
no matter where you come from,
God bless you, each and every day.

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poeticvic@aol.com

Smoke Rise Civic Association Report

by Michael Huerkamp

We were excited to scheduled a shredding event for later this spring after perceiving high, pent-up demand and finding a willing partner in Shred-It. We were not able to meet the new cost, liability, and security requirements of the school system to use school properties (not even the old, vacant elementary school) for the event, so we began anew to identify a location. Please watch the *Smoke Signal*, FaceBook, and NextDoor for developments on this.

Smoke Rise Civic Associatio (SRCA) will be a sponsor for the Tucker High School Foundation Golf Tournament on March 22. Please join us in the tournament and support our high school...but be sure to replace all divots!

Our official 2022 dues campaign mailing will be forthcoming. In the meantime, SRCA can receive membership payments in the following ways: by check mailed to Smoke Rise Civic Association at P.O. Box 870793, Stone Mountain, GA, 30087; or via PayPal or Zelle with payments sent to smokerisecivic@gmail.com. For the latter, in the "Memo" field please put your name and current address.

A detailed 2021 SRCA Financial Report is targeted for publication in the April edition of the *Smoke Signal*.



Smoke Signal

P.O. Box 763, Tucker, GA 30085
 A non-profit service organization devoted to furthering neighborhood cooperation with the aid of good neighborhood communication.

Editorial Committee... Cheri Schneider.....(770) 717-9914
 AvivA Hoffmann helloaviva@hotmail.com
 *Rosalyn Merrick ...rosalyn.merrick@gmail.com
 * This Issue's Editor-in-Chief

Recording SecretarySusan Gilbertsgilbert@apogee.net
 Corresponding Secretary ..Barbara Bruschi.....(770) 934-4644
 Treasurer.....Harry Strack(770) 365-9381
 Classified Ads.....Harry Strack(770) 365-9381
 Display Ads.....Harry Strack(770) 365-9381
 Church News.....Susan Gilbertsgilbert@apogee.net
 Health NewsCheri Schneider, M.D.(770) 717-9914
 Flyer InsertsBarbara Luton.....(770) 491-6711
 Recipes and Home.....Joyce Ray(770) 491-9015
 Social MediaPat Soltys(770) 573-9715
 News You Can Use.....AvivA Hoffmann helloaviva@hotmail.com
 Staff Writers.....Rene Boven.....(770) 905-5404
 Joel Gilbert
 Susan Gilbert.....(404) 312-8328
 Joyce Ray.....(770) 491-9015
 Pat Soltys.....(770) 573-9715
 Barbara Bruschi(770) 934-4644
 DistributionLaura Smith(770) 934-7595
 DeliveryMorgan Taylor and Charlie Smith

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Preferred Formats for Smoke Signal Submissions

When sending articles and photos to the *Smoke Signal*, it is helpful if articles could be sent in .doc or .docx format. Articles sent in .pdf format cannot be edited or changed in any way. Also photos sent in .jpg format can easily be opened and formatted to fit a particular space, so that is also a preferred method. Thanks for helping us make your neighborhood paper the best it can be!

In the future, digital copies of the *Smoke Signal* will be posted to the archives at www.smokesignalnews.com. For now, you can request a digital copy of the current issue, after the first of each month, by contacting staff@smokesignalnews.com. You can also visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SmokeSignalNews to view postings of newsletter pictures and stories throughout the month.

Smoke Signal Deadlines

MARCH 13

Please e-mail articles to:

staff@smokesignalnews.com

(Word documents or text file attachments preferred)
 PLEASE DO NOT SEND CLASSIFIED ADS TO THIS E-MAIL ADDRESS

Extra copies may be picked up at
 The Smoke Rise Community Garden on Hugh Howell Rd.

Deadline for classified ads is MARCH 10

SMOKE SIGNAL FLYER INSERT POLICY

Cost: \$150 by check to *Smoke Signal*
 Deadline to Receive: 6:00 p.m. on 19th of month
 Flyer inserts should be 8 1/2" x 11" (flat, not folded)
 Please provide 2,300 copies
 Reservation Required:
 Contact Barbara Luton, (770) 491-6711 by 15th of month.

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salutes its members for their dedication to community service:

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In support of organizations and individuals in Stone Mountain, Tucker, and the greater East Metro area.

<https://www.stone-mountainwomansclub.org>

ATTENTION GRADUATES, NEWLYWEDS, AND HONOREES

Please send in your picture and a brief article for publication in the *Smoke Signal*.
 Email submissions to staff@smokesignalnews.com



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The Smoke Signal has reached its ad-space limit and we are now keeping a waiting list for future advertisements.

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Smoke Rise Baptist Church

Connecting in New Ways During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dr. Chris George: Senior Pastor
 Bart McNeil: Associate Pastor of Administration, Ministry Support and Congregational Care
 Becky Caswell-Speight: Minister of Families, Faith Formation and Connection
 Jim Smith: Pastoral Care Associate
 Amanda Coe Burton: Ministry Director for Children and Families
 Harrison Litzell: Co-Director of Weekday School
 Stacey McNeil: Co-Director of Weekday School
 Telephone: (770) 469-5856
SmokeRiseBaptist.org

SUNDAY

9:45 a.m. Attend Sunday School through Zoom or In-Person
 Schedule Available at smokerisebaptist.org/streamingatsmokerise/
 11:00 a.m. Attend Worship via Live Stream or In-Person
 Live Stream Available at smokerisebaptist.org/streamingatsmokerise/
 5:00 p.m. Children and Youth Activities In-Person

MONDAY

7:00 p.m. Journeys Racial Justice Study Group
 Zoom or In-Person
 Schedule Available at smokerisebaptist.org/journeys/

WEDNESDAY

5:00 p.m. Dinner
 6:00 p.m. In-Person Programing for all ages, join the Adult Bible Study via Live Stream

Live Stream at smokerisebaptist.org/wednesday-evening-activities/

Eastminster Presbyterian Church

Pastor ~ Rev. J. Caleb Clarke III
 Director of Spiritual Formation ~ Jeanine Fulton
 Director of Family & Outreach ~ Mark Sauls
 Interim Director of Music ~ Ben Holcomb
 Organist ~ Carole Mitchell
 Financial Coordinator ~ Jan Zabarac
 Director of Weekday Ministries ~ Celeste Sears
 Office Coordinator ~ Christina Wetzel-Sizemore
 5801 Hugh Howell Road ~ Stone Mountain, GA 30087
 770-469-4881 ~ www.eastminster.us

Join us at Eastminster this Lenten season.

Ash Wednesday March 2nd

Dinner at 5:30 PM - Reserve a prepackaged meal
 Service at 6:30 PM - In-person and streamed live
 Wednesday Nights- March 9 - April 13 - (in-person only)
 Dinner at 5:30 PM - Reserve a prepackaged meal
 Program at 6:15 PM - "The Chosen" series and study
 Sunday School Lenten Study - March 6 -April 10 (in-person and via Zoom)
 Adult Sunday School at 9:15 AM - "Seven Words" Listening to Christ from the Cross

Children's Sunday School at 9:30 AM

Sunday School Zooms and streaming information can be found on our website at <https://www.eastminster.us/sundays>.

MC3 Church

Senior Minister: Art Stansberry
 Outreach and Family Life Minister: Gerardo Mancilla
 (770) 783-1035 ~ www.mc3.life
 4415 Stone Mountain Hwy., Lilburn, GA 30047

Sunday Schedule*:

8:30 a.m. Coffee and donuts
 9:00 am. Worship service (in person and online)

*Worship time will move to 10 a.m. beginning on Sundays in March.

Life groups throughout the week
 check out our website for times and addresses.

Business Address and Hours: 1316 Rockbridge Rd, Suite M
 Stone Mountain, GA 30087
 Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Mailing Address: 1227 Rockbridge Rd., SW, STE 208-251
 Stone Mountain, GA 30087

First Moravian Church

Pastor: Rev. Elroy Christopher
 Congregational Acolyte: Bill Hitz
 (770) 491-7250, (770) 755-8289
www.gamoravian.org

Sundays: 10:00 a.m. Sunday School-Adults & Children
 11:00 a.m. Worship
 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Time

Incarinate Word Lutheran Church

Please join us for worship on Sundays at 8:45 a.m.
 at the First Moravian Church sanctuary
 4950 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain, GA 30087

Mountain West Church

Pastor: Mo Huggins
 (770) 491-0228 ~ www.mwchurch.com
 4818 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain

Sunday Services: 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
 Thursday Neighborhood Bible Study with Pastor Mo: 10:00 a.m.
 All Welcome!

In-person and streaming online on Facebook and mwchurch.com

Letter from a Neighbor:

Thank you to the person who anonymously placed a beautiful brightly colored new flag at the intersection of Silver Hill and Hugh Howell Road. Seeing the flag lifted my spirits and reminded me to reflect on what the founding values it represents. The flag also gives additional meaning to Black History Month and the historic leaders whose birthdays we also celebrated in February - their leadership helped us through tumultuous times of conflict as well as glorious times of prosperity. I believe the flag stands and waves for unity as we declare that we are, "one nation, under God." May God continue to Bless the USA and all who read this. We love our wonderful Smoke Rise neighbors!

- Betsy Allen

Local Students Win National Award at 2022 Junior Theater Festival

Students from Smoke Rise Academy of Arts (a theater program of Smoke Rise Baptist Church in Stone Mountain) won a Freddie G Outstanding Production award at the 2022 Junior Theater Festival Atlanta. The monumental weekend dedicated to rewarding and celebrating student-driven musical theater programs happened online and in-person January 14-16, 2022, in Atlanta.

As a Freddie G Outstanding Production Recipient, Smoke Rise Academy of Arts performed for all festival attendees during the closing ceremonies.

At the festival, each group performed 15 minutes of a Broadway Junior® musical for a panel of judges including esteemed musicians, theatre educators, choreographers and Broadway actors. Judges were enamored by the students and gave glowing reviews of their performances and of the Smoke Rise Academy of the Arts program.



Students Sophia Kuechenmeister, Amanda Riedel, and Rayna White made it to the callback for future video shoots for "how-to" choreography videos. Students Logan Dokes and Harlie Sawtelle were distinguished as All-Stars, an outstanding group of young performers at the festival.

Congrats to these Smoke Rise all stars!

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Eleanor Patrick, Realtor

Donations to Charity


The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club is helping the Atlanta Area Rescue Friends (AARF) with donations of cat food, dog food, paper towels and plastic bags. Members donated \$134 as part of the request to celebrate the actress Betty White's 100th birthday by donating to a local animal rescue. Betty White was a longtime advocate for animal rescue. The club also collected and sent \$800 in gift cards to victims of the tornadoes in Kentucky.

If you would like to help AARF, please take donations of cat and dog food to their location at 951 Main Street in Stone Mountain. They are in need of both right now. Parking is conveniently located just in front of the store.



Photo Left to Right—Valerie Riecke, Linda Smith (Smoke Rise resident), Nelda Lunsford (Smoke Rise resident), AARF staff member, Becky Sanders (Club President)

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We'd Enjoy Connecting With Our Smoke Rise Neighbors.

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Federal Trail Grant... continued from page 1

project, almost \$1 million of that being dedicated to right-of-way acquisition. The City of Tucker would have to commit to just over \$350,000, while the Tucker-Northlake CID has agreed to put up \$50,000 toward engineering. The funding plans have been in the works since 2019, when the City and the CID submitted an application to the ARC for federal funds for this project.

“With Council approval, this project will help close the gaps between residential and commercial property in Tucker and provide an opportunity for regional connectivity,” said Tucker-Northlake CID Executive Director Matthew Lee. “From the pedestrian bridge over Fellowship Road to the shared use path across I-285 at Northlake Parkway, the proposed Tucker-Northlake Trail will bring people together in ways that haven’t been available.”

Plans call for the trail to originate at the future Tucker Town Green in downtown Tucker and stretch all the way to the reimagined Northlake Mall. It would be predominantly an off-road greenway with some side path segments. The trail wouldn’t just help people get around Tucker; plans call for a connection to the anticipated Top End I-285 Regional Trail, providing access to the Peachtree Creek Greenway, PATH 400, the Silver Comet Trail, and others. With final approval, preliminary engineering could begin later this year with right-of-way acquisition beginning in 2023. The City and CID would be eligible to apply for federal funding for future phases of the project.

The Tucker-Northlake Trail route is a part of the City’s 2018 Trail Master Plan, which lays out a network of more than 30 miles of multi-use trails throughout the City of Tucker. The Trail Master Plan can be viewed online at https://www.tuckerga.gov/plans_and_studies/trail_master_plan.php.

Tucker Business of the Month... continued from page 1

the Decatur corridor. “It’s our goal to make sure everyone, from newcomers to longtime Tucker residents, know about the Club and all that we have to offer this community,” Carey added.

For several years now, the Club has offered lower initiation fees and dues levels to build the membership. With membership being at an all-time high, it is likely initiation fees will increase, so now is a great time to join. Or, at a minimum, come see what the Club has to offer.

Learn more on the Club’s website, <https://www.smok-erisecc.com>, or by calling the Club at (770) 908-2582.



We Need YOU!
Smoke Rise - this is YOUR paper!
The Smoke Signal began more than 50 years ago and remains, to this day, a community newspaper created, written and produced by volunteer, Smoke Rise neighbors for the entire neighborhood.
PLEASE consider becoming a contributor, editor or joining our staff. It's a rewarding way to give back to your Smoke Rise community!
Contact us today. staff@smokesignalnews.com

Ladies Bunco at Smoke Rise Country Club

by Victoria R. Crosby

I recently attended my first Ladies Bunco at the Smoke Rise Country Club. I am not a gambler and do not usually enjoy this sort of thing, but was encouraged to attend in order to make new friends, as we moved to Smoke Rise in August from Long Island, New York.

The ladies meet once a month, on the third Tuesday, and the volunteer hosts choose the theme and the décor. The January theme was Great Gatsby. Having lived for almost forty years on the North Shore (known



as the Gold Coast), I have not only visited and written about many of the mansions, including the Woolworth and Pratt Mansions and Oheka Castle, I have also hosted fundraising events there for various charities. I also own several flapper-style outfits! At Bunco night the ladies wore long and short dresses, with lots of glitter, long strings of pearls, feathers and all the accoutrements of the era.

Bunco was a lot of fun, and it is open to members and non-members of the Club. Four ladies to a table take turns in rolling the dice and someone keeps score. Every time someone wins they get to wear the Bunco hat and everyone cheers, especially if the winner is a “Bunco Virgin.” Since you move from table to table, you get to meet a new group each time. You play in teams so you can come with a partner or be assigned one.

The bar is open and a buffet dinner is served before the game begins, but you can come for just the Bunco if you wish. There were prizes for various winners and all players received a goodie bag as a parting gift.

Please join us next time! The cost is \$15 to play and \$16.95 for dinner. For further information call SRCC at (770) 908-2582.



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Heed the Warning Light

by Joel Gilbert, P.E.

Perhaps your car reminds you when you should change the oil... This is certainly a helpful reminder. But, since it is a warning, most of us wait for a convenient time to do it. Oil cleanliness is of course not a sensitive measure. You could wait quite a while or even ignore the warning and extend the intervals between oil changes. We all know that. However, there is another way to think of warning lights like this. The one that I remember best was a sign on my dentist's spotlight light that read, "Only Floss the Teeth You Want to Keep!" Flossing teeth is not fun, unless you have been eating something like corn on the cob that gets stuck in your teeth.

As a lover of the sea and a part-time captain of a large vessel, I love this story: it is reportedly the transcript of a radio conversation of a US naval ship with Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland in October of 1995. This radio conversation transcript was released by the Chief of Naval Operations on October 10, 1995.

Americans: Please divert your course 15 degrees to the North to avoid a Collision.

Canadians: Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees to the South to avoid a collision.

Americans: This is the Captain of a US Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.

Canadians: No. I say again, you divert YOUR course.

Americans: This is the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln, the second largest ship in the United States' Atlantic fleet. We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers and numerous support vessels. I demand that YOU change your course 15 degrees north, that's one, five, degrees north, or countermeasures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship.

Canadians: This is a lighthouse. Your call.

Deference and humility were clearly missing in this story and perhaps the lack of these is required to heed warnings.

Hopefully, we will not be like one of my daughters. I was riding with her and noticed the Change Oil light was flashing red on the dash. I asked her how long that had been

on, and she said (as if noticing it for the first time), "Oh no! Thanks for pointing that out. These pesky lights keep coming on. I have been meaning to put tape over that one for years!"

So, as we face the rest of this new year, let's ask ourselves how many warning lights we have in our lives that need our attention.



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Chick-fil-A Petition to See Major Changes

On February 15, Tucker's Mayor and City Council cast a vote on the highly-anticipated special land use permit (SLUP) for Chick-fil-A. The restaurant chain, which is seeking to move its Tucker Station location to the site of the old The Greater Good BBQ on Hugh Howell Road, asked for a deferral of their petition so that they could make major changes to the plans. According to a representative of the company, those changes involve acquiring additional real estate to ease ingress and egress and to allay the complaints of neighbors in the area.

Council voted 6-0 to grant a deferral to their next meeting on February 28, when Council would be expected to consider a "full cycle deferral." That means the land use case would go back to the Planning Commission, likely at the April meeting, thus putting the petition back before the Mayor and Council at their May and June meetings.

Councilwoman Noelle Monferdini recused herself from the discussions and the vote because she has a family member who works at Chick-fil-A.

Chick-fil-A has said they need to relocate their Tucker Station restaurant, one of the chain's oldest that has not been renovated, to better accommodate drive-thru traffic.



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Out the Window

by Beth Henson

Drat! There they were again! Peering out the front window into my neighbor's yard, I couldn't help but notice the beautiful blooming bouquets of daffodils proudly standing out in a sea of winter gray and brown. The vibrant narcissus had been teasing me since early December when they had decided to pop forth their ruffled yellow bonnets, unseasonably early. The cold winds and several dustings of snow had not discouraged their sheer determination. How dare they!

I had gone as far as to wander the front lot hoping even one showy bloom was across the property line, but to no avail. The array of cheery flowers were all securely entrenched in the adjacent yard's soft rolling embankment, blanketed by a cover of sturdy oak leaves. On my side were only clusters of green spikes pointing to the sky with a few pale tight buds, obviously days away from their future glory.

As I turned away, I couldn't help but suppress a smile as I daydreamed of next month. My little beauties would be the envy of the neighborhood, and those cold weather showoffs - just a distant memory!

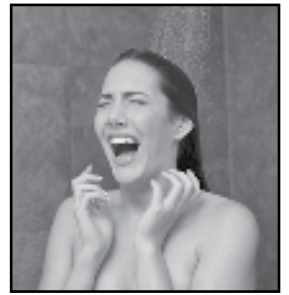


Daffodil by Beth Henson

techtalk

by Susan Gilbert

Water Heaters



Few people intentionally take a cold shower, but that might be your only option if your water heater suddenly quits working. While unpredictable, it is a situation that can be managed with some advance planning. First, consider the age of your water heater. If it is the one originally installed when the home was built, you can find its age by referring to the home's construction date from tax records. If it has been replaced, it can be harder to determine its age, but do not let that deter you. Check with previous owners or your home's records of major purchases to see what you can learn.

The reason this is important is that water heaters only last between 10 and 15 years in most cases. So, if yours is over 15 years old, now is probably a good time to replace it. This is not something you want to do under the time pressure of needing hot water, which you know will be at the worst possible time. This topic is near and dear to me because ours went out when we had a house full of guests staying overnight. They were polite and dealt with it, but it is not a situation that I would wish on anyone.

The most common replacement water heater is a tank storage type fueled by natural gas, propane, or electricity. They have the advantage of being the lowest initial cost. Quality matters because they hold hot water just like a thermos bottle and radiate heat through their shells to the surroundings. So, it is important to get one that is well insulated. Look for the Energy Guide label to understand its energy use rating and compare it to other models that use more or less energy. Ones that use the least energy will be better insulated and will cost less to operate. The best performers earn the Energy Star label and often are eligible for rebates on their purchase price. You can visit the Energystar.gov website and search for Rebate Finder to see what is available in your zip code.

Another alternative heating method in a storage unit is using a heat pump model. Just like an air conditioner moves heat from inside a home to the outside, heat pump water heaters move heat from their surroundings into the water they contain. Since moving heat is less expensive than creating it with electricity, they reduce electricity use by about 50% compared to a resistance electric storage unit. An additional advantage is they produce cool air, so they are great in hot areas like kitchens or attics.

Finally, the other option to consider is a tankless gas or propane unit which is also called an instantaneous water heater. These are more costly to purchase but they last about 20 years. They also eliminate those pesky standby losses by not having hot water sitting in a tank radiating heat 24/7. Instead, they heat the incoming water only when it is called into use. Tankless units may require an upgrade to your natural gas piping, but your contractor can probably advise you on that issue.

As you consider all the options and make your plans, keep in mind some of the numbers. Water heating is the second largest energy user in most homes, right behind space conditioning (heating and cooling). It accounts for about 15 percent of most homes' energy use and translates to about \$500 per year for an average household. It is well worth taking stock of your current water heating equipment, making plans for its inevitable failure, and avoiding that dreaded cold shower.

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And Then Came Pickleball!

by Barbara Conard, Contributor and Susan Gilbert, Staff Writer

Barbara and her husband, Jim, have become Pickleball proponents and offered to share their story with our readers. She begins the story, "When the kids were growing up and we parents were younger, we all loved the beautiful tennis court in our backyard. It was in regular use both for entertainment and staying in shape. But once the kids were grown and moved out and age took its toll, our tennis court became unused, cracked, and began sprouting weeds."

"Then along came a grandson who found it the perfect safe place to ride his big wheel. Once that aged out and his interests matured, it was a terrific place for testing his model radio-controlled airplanes. But even that was short-lived and we were back to having an unkept, unused tennis court."

Hearing that Pickleball was all the rage, Barbara had the idea of converting their tennis court into two Pickleball courts. Given its rapidly growing popularity, many of our readers may already be familiar with it, but

for those of you who have not heard of it, Pickleball is a paddleball sport that combines elements of badminton, table tennis, and tennis. Two to four players use solid paddles made of wood or composite to hit a plastic ball, resembling a wiffle ball, over a net.

Pickleball was invented in the mid-1960s as a children's backyard game. The spread of the sport is attributed to its popularity within community centers, physical education classes, public parks, private health clubs, and retirement communities. The Smoke Rise Country Club has had a similar experience with Pickleball interest picking up over the past several years. The Club now has several courts re-lined for Pickleball play and a growing number of committed players are regularly showing up for games. Several of our local churches have even set up for Pickleball on their basketball courts.

Barbara and Jim got started by ordering a portable Pickleball net and hanging it at the regulation height of 36 inches at the sides and 34 inches at the center. They got creative and used a large roll of masking tape to mark off a regulation size court 20 by 44 feet. And with those simple changes, they were in business! Now it was just a matter of getting a few friends to come play. That didn't take long and pretty soon, they had a regular weekly schedule with neighbors dropping by for some exercise and entertainment on the courts. The court saw so much action, the masking tape began to wear off. Realizing this wasn't a passing fancy, they decided it time to take the next big step of resurfacing the courts and having them professionally lined for Pickleball. Their once nice-sized single tennis court was now two pickleball courts with space left over for a sitting area.

When COVID struck, interest in the game grew even more. While nobody wanted to go out and be together in a group, it was great having Pickleball available as an option. It was outside and everyone was naturally socially distanced. It was a great relief for COVID-induced anxiety. The group now goes by the official title, the Millstone Pickleball Club, and we encourage all of our readers to give this great game a try.



Pictured L to R: Kate Graham, Libby Smith, Barbara Conard, Einat Toledano, Pat Ingles and Rebecca Liska



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The Annual Atlanta Science Festival Unveils 2022 Programming

Atlanta Science Festival (ASF), the city’s premier celebration of all things science, returns March 12-26. Science enthusiasts of all ages can experience more than 100 interactive and educational events featuring in-person, COVID-safe activities and exclusive online content. The Festival culminates in the Exploration Expo, a big science party in Piedmont Park.

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“Now in our ninth year, the Atlanta Science Festival has become synonymous with engaging and accessible science exploration for all ages, while celebrating diversity and our city as a science hub,” says Meisa Salaita, executive co-director of Science ATL – the engineers of the Atlanta Science Festival. “Today science is more relevant than ever,” Salaita says. “And just as science evolves, our Festival continues to grow and expand in ways we never thought possible.”

The 2022 edition of the Atlanta Science Festival gives kids and adults alike the opportunity to dive into a range of topics from environmental science, earth and space, and animals to science and the arts, science and society, and health and the human body. Nature walks, creature encounters, hands-on experiments, science-themed performances, and much more pack the two-week event calendar.

A few highlights taking place during the 2022 Atlanta Science Festival include:

- Drive-In Demos: Chemistry From Your Car - Emory chemists present a live-action chemistry demo show featuring fire, ice, bubbles, and a cloud. The audience watches from the comfort of their vehicles.
- 11 Alive StormTrackers: The Science Behind Tracking Thunderstorms - Explore the science behind storms and storm tracking, including thunderstorm life cycle and forecasting, and how radar allows us to see a slice of a thunderstorm.
- Conversations in Creativity - This thought-provoking discussion about the intersection of art and science features Atlanta-based artist and architect Amy Landesberg, Georgia Tech mathematician/physicist Elisabetta Matsumoto, and representatives of Science Gallery at Emory University, a new exhibition gallery where science and art collide.

Events take place at venues throughout Metro Atlanta, while technology allows science lovers from around the world to experience online events. Many Atlanta Science Festival events are free, and some require a nominal fee. Each in-person event will have specific COVID-19 safety precautions in place depending on the setting.

To learn more, visit AtlantaScienceFestival.org.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE by AvivA Hoffmann

Tax Services Made Easy

At some point, we all need to register a vehicle or pay a property tax. The DeKalb County Tax Office has many ways to reduce the hassle associated with these and other “facts of life.” Many tax-related items can be completed virtually at dekalbtax.org. You can view a tax bill, pay your taxes, get forms, receive email reminders and much more – all online.

Some tasks may require an in-person visit to the tax office. Now, you can join the virtual waitlist for walk-in service or make an appointment at any of the Tax Commissioner office locations in DeKalb County. The “Click2Skip” program is available for DeKalb County residents to help eliminate long wait times! You can schedule appointments in two easy steps. First, complete the quick online scheduling application and receive an appointment confirmation via text or email. Second, come to the Tax Commissioner’s office at your designated appointment time.

Be sure to bring a valid Georgia driver’s license or state ID with you. Proper identification is required for all transactions. It is also important to note that cash, personal checks, and money orders are accepted, as well as credit and debit cards with some fees.

When you arrive, you will be asked to provide the staff with your confirmation notice on your phone or a printout. Also, masks and temperature checks are required for entry. Be sure to be on-time for your appointment; there is only a 10-minute grace period for late arrivals.

There are three tax offices in DeKalb County. The newest one just opened at 3653 Clairmont Road in Chamblee. There is also a location at the Gallery at South DeKalb Mall at 2801 Candler Road in Decatur, and the main office at 4380 Memorial Drive in Decatur. Online, Kiosk, Drop Box and Mail-In services are also available daily.

Check out the website dekalbtax.org for more information. You can also follow @DeKalbTaxGA on Twitter and Facebook for updates.



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Dudes on Food

Episode 10: Cherokee Rose BBQ Bar & Kitchen

The dudes have been hearing the buzz about the new, sophisticated, modern BBQ spot in Stone Mountain. Cherokee Rose, named after the state flower of Georgia, has been open for less than a year, but we've bumped into a bunch of folks who are thoroughly impressed. So, we just had to check it out!

The restaurant is in the heart of downtown Stone Mountain. The whole area, with all its recent additions of culinary venues, has become a really cool spot and quite a destination. The place itself is located in a repurposed, old, one-story brick office building at the corner of Mainstreet and East Mountain. A lot of the old elements of the building are left in place in plain sight. The exposed interior brick walls make a great backdrop for peeling stucco, reclaimed wood, and old ceiling tiles. Right as we entered, we passed two heavy leather couches facing each other - what a cool spot to wait for your table! The décor is simple and the casual setting feels friendly and draws you in.

Once seated, we picked up the beverage menu and pondered the choices. How would we start the evening? We ordered "The 1800 Main St." a tequila-based margarita-inspired cocktail and a "New Fashioned" which is a different take on an old fashioned with sour cherry. Great decision! The menu is appealing and easy to grasp. Just like Leonardo Da Vinci said, "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication." Everything is represented but the menu is kept short. Love it! (Side note: the online menu does not seem up to date.)

We kicked off our culinary adventure with a special: "pork belly lardon soup." This broth-based hardy soup was a perfect starter for the evening. Herby undertones, fresh veggies, and, most essential, pieces of perfectly cooked juicy pork belly with every bite. Oh so good and followed by a round 2 of cocktails!

For our entrées, we picked one item from the smoker and one item from the grill (makes sense when you see the menu). A Hereford Smoked Ribeye, cooked to a perfect medium rare, with garlic Yukon mashed potato and Burgundy petite mushrooms set the stage for entrée one. If you now ask yourself, what is a smoked ribeye, you're not alone. This was new to us also, and we have been enlightened. It is cold smoked and thereby infuses with just the right amount of smoke, perfectly balanced when grilled later. At that point, we stopped asking questions; we just knew that whatever they did, it totally worked. A ramequin of homemade horseradish cream made this steak dinner top-tier. The mash and tangy mushroom sponges were the perfect playmates.

Entrée two was a wild striped Bass. As the fish is served, the herby scent of what we believe to be a Provençale crust immediately made our mouth water. The fish arrived atop a tomato olive caper coulis. Cooked to perfection, the Bass, with a squirt of the charred lemon, the herb crust, the tomato coulis, black olives and capers, was amazeballs. And then there were the sides... creamed greens and pimento cheese grits got along swimmingly with the fish. Each entrée was served with a small piece of warm crispy baguette, serving as a perfect interlude between bites.

Of course, we saved room for dessert. We scoped out that menu before we even got started. Also, next round of cocktails, please, and thank you! To accompany the sweets, we switched the beverage to a nice pour of "Smoke Wagon" Bourbon. A new one to us and now one to remember. As dessert goes, we went with the Kahlua Chocolate Pecan Pie and a Cranberry Rum Bread Pudding. Not that we are bread pudding aficionados, but three of those could have been our main course. Perfectly done with caramelized crust and almost burnt tips, soaked cranberries embedded, all on a fantastic mirror of creamy sauce with a hint of nutmeg. The Pecan pie must not feel left out either. A first-rate chocolate take on a southern classic.

Tyler, thank you for taking great care of us and being patient with all of our questions. We will certainly be back. I think sooner rather than later, based on that fantastic brunch menu we spotted.

We definitely recommend you experience Cherokee Rose BBQ & Kitchen at 975 Main Street in Stone Mountain, and let us know your thoughts. You can also check them out online at www.cherokeerosebbqbar.com.

Have an idea or a suggestion for the dudes? We would love to hear from you. Send comments to staff@smokesignalnews.com.

Before You Give, Take a Moment to Vet

by *Gia Anderson*

I love donating to charities. Charitable organizations exist to provide access to care, services and opportunities for the less fortunate. When I give, I feel deeply rewarded.

However, there are moments when I have wondered what happens to the funds afterwards. Of course, the children or the medically challenged benefit from it, I tell myself. But how would I know for sure? Like me, you may be wondering the same thing every time you donate to a charitable organization. Before you reach for your wallet next time, ask yourself these important questions to ensure that your financial support provides the intended maximum impact.

Does the charity's mission align with your personal values?

You want to support a charity that does work around missions that you believe in. For instance, access to education, food for all, shelter for young mothers, etc. Most charities have a website or social media pages where they give details about their vision, mission and goals. Chances are you may not find fulfillment from supporting missions you do not believe in.

Are they using funds wisely?

Most charities are registered with the IRS as 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations. This means that none of the organization's earnings may benefit a private shareholder or individual; all earnings must be used exclusively for the purposes of the organization's mission. A charity organization worth its salt will have a record of their financial activities available for public scrutiny. If most of their funds are used for administrative purposes and not to advance their mission, then your donation is probably not being managed properly.

Are they open about their progress?

A good charity organization is one that provides updates about the impact of donations and the progress around their mission. These reports can be found on their website or sent to you on request. If there is no such record, there may be cause for suspicion.

Do they practice financial data privacy?

Find out more about how a charity collects funds. If they ask you to give up your financial data over the phone, then that's a red flag. It is better to use a credit card on a secure website instead. For cash donations insist on a legitimate receipt. If you wish to remain anonymous, make that known upfront because some charities publish information about their donors in public forums and reports.

Who are the people leading the organization?

You can tell a lot about any organization by examining who sits at their leadership table. They need to be upstanding individuals whose lives exemplify the very mission they are championing. If they have a history of acting in ways contrary to the values of the organization they serve or contrary to your own beliefs, then chances are they are not the perfect match.

Lastly, if you or someone you know feels that a charity organization has mismanaged their donations or is involved in less than desirable activities, there are avenues to register complaints. In Georgia for instance, unless special exemption is granted, all charities soliciting for donations in Georgia are required to register officially with the State. The Office of Secretary of State manages registrations for charities, provides guidelines on solicitation of funds, and handles any related complaints from members of the public.

Giving to charity is a personal choice; with a little due diligence, you can ensure that it is also an impactful one.

Georgia Iris Society will meet on Saturday, March 12, 2022 at 2 p.m. at St. Bartholomew Episcopal Church, 1729 Lavista Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30329.

Lynn Fronk, National Garden Club Master Flower Show Judge, Flower Show Schools Design and Flower Show Procedures Instructor will be our guest speaker. Her presentation will be "Designing with Iris, A Lecture and Workshop". Participants will be creating floral designs in the workshop. Plan to bring a container and join in the fun.

Our meetings are free to the public and all are welcome.

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For more information, contact Quill Duncan (770) 414-4766.

Visit our new website: www.georgiairis.org.

Don't Try Turning on Ice (Part 2 of 4)

by Joel Gilbert

I shared my unpleasant experience learning to ski in the January paper. I suppose the end justified the means because Susan and I did announce our engagement on her family ski trip! I did make it down the mountain (and down the aisle), in one piece, despite my fear of heights, speed, and slippery surfaces.



This month I continue that story illustrating one of my biggest challenges: learning to ski when there are ice patches. Ice makes you speed up very quickly and my fear of speed makes me want to turn, but the turning technique I was taught in class simply does not work on ice. I was taught to "pat the downhill dog" to place more weight on the downhill ski and gain turning ability. But doing that on ice results in a fall.

My wife gave me the best answer to this challenge. She simply told me to stop doing that! Turning on ice as a beginner does not work. I had to learn to look ahead, see the icy patch coming, and either turn before or after it. Since turning was not something I did very well, I chose to turn after the icy patch, and that posed a speed problem. So, when I could anticipate the icy sections, I needed to turn before I got there. Once I did that, ice no longer terrified me.

As I think about life in general, this advice seems relevant. The idea of waiting for the right time to turn in difficult situations seems to take a back seat to acting now to change course. It seems all too often that simply turning because it seems to be the right time is less beneficial than early or late course adjustments. Therefore, it is okay to do nothing when you are on truly slippery terrain.

Turning before the ice is often wiser. If we are thinking, we can anticipate these slippery areas ahead of us in our lives. Yes, it takes more planning and judgment to turn before you hit the icy patch, but there are several advantages:

- You have changed course - and perhaps there is no ice on the new course heading - so what seemed inevitable is resolved.
- Recognizing the ice before you get to it prepares your mind and body. If you can see a fall coming, you can prepare to fall gently and not hurt yourself.

The net result is an improved life experience. Fewer falls and a lower risk of hurting yourself. Easier said than done but easier on your heart and body, if you can master it!

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Morning Glories and the Smoke Rise Community Garden Story

The February Morning Glories meeting was a fun trip down memory lane for our speaker Doug Reynics who many of you know as “Doug the Driver.” Some ten years ago, Doug agreed to spearhead the establishment of a community garden at the request of the Smoke Rise Community Association. The plot of land on Hugh Howell was the perfect spot to garden and, with lots of sweat equity and eager volunteers, the garden took off! At one point, over 700 pounds of food was donated to food pantries in one year. Over time, power, water, security lighting, a bee hive and a garden shed were added plus deer fencing to keep out those hungry roving animals. Many members of the community have participated in the garden, including Smoke Rise Prep school children who dug sweet potatoes that were donated to the local food pantry. There is parking on the grounds by the garden for easy access, and some plots are in use all year due to Georgia’s temperate climate and the wide variety of foods that can be successfully harvested throughout all four seasons.

One large central plot today is dedicated to growing food for distribution to the NetWorks food pantry in Tucker. There are now 20 beds for rental, and the current chair is Eileen Stone. For information on how to rent a plot, go to the Smoke Rise Community Association webpage.

Our member Gloria Cooke was recognized at the meeting for thirteen years of inspired leadership at the Smoke Rise Elementary School. Gloria is a retired teacher who taught at the school; after retiring, she joined the Morning Glories. It was a natural fit for her to volunteer there with the garden club’s blessing to improve the grounds and the two atriums that were used as outdoor classrooms for the children. Once the STEM program was implemented, many more activities were added to enhance the learning possibilities for the students. The club introduced a pollinator garden and added native plants in one atrium and in the other a vegetable garden was added. Now with the new school, the club will continue Gloria’s legacy with garden club volunteers working with the school’s STEM teacher to add raised beds for vegetable gardening. Members Quill Duncan, Kim Fair, Melodie Janin and Dolly Moy will be working this spring to set this new cycle of gardening in motion. Thank you, Gloria, for your many years of dedication and devotion to our community school.

The club’s next meeting at the Smoke Rise Country club at 10:00 a.m. on March 8. The focus will be the installation of our new officers for the new club year and a brief program. For information, please contact President Joyce Ray at joycemray126@gmail.com.



l to r: Kim Fair, Gloria Cooke, President Joyce Ray and Quill Duncan honoring Gloria



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Mountain Mums Learn How to “Bee” Sneaky



I almost missed the Mountain Mums meeting on February 8 at the home of Jean Weathers. The reason? I thought the topic of “Sneaky Bees Backyard Honey” would be boring. Another friend thought the same thing, but I picked her up and we both went. Guess, what? It was one of the most entertaining, informational meetings I’ve gone to in several years!

Ellen Ausley is a certified beekeeper who lives in Tucker. She ‘kept’ us in stitches. She talked about beekeeping and honey and why all honey does not taste alike. She and her family manage 12 (or it may now be 20) beehives. Her family hives produce sneaky bee backyard honey that tastes a bit to me like a jasmine flower smells.

We learned that wildflower honey is made from multiple sources of pollen. ‘Pure’ honey must have 40-50% of its pollen from the same source. Also, we learned that beekeepers often rent their bees for pollination of crops such as oranges. They will move their 200-pound beehives at night to the location needing the pollinators. In return, they get pollen needed to make pure honey from the source.

Ellen sells her honey from her home in Tucker and she let us know that local honey can be found at the Tucker Farmers Market. Also, she and a friend host group honey tastings and will schedule hive tours (you will be suited up for the occasion, of course). The honey tastings are paired with cheeses, and other niblets that pair well with each particular honey. The Mountain Mums tasted seven honey types, including the old standard ‘sue bee’ honey, which we found is likely just flavored corn syrup. All the honeys were very different in their character and taste. My favorite was sourwood honey!

The next Mountain Mums meeting will be held on March 9 and the topic of the presentation will be “Shades of Green Horticulture Design: How to Create a Self-Sustained Landscape.” If you would like to join us, call Mary Jacobsen at (770) 316-3225.

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Amen, Let's Eat!

by Joyce Ray

Fresh asparagus has long since been a herald of spring and valued for its early arrival. For this reason, many silver utensils and plates were designed just to serve this one vegetable. It can be difficult to get asparagus established in the garden but it will produce each year for many years once you get it started. Cooking requires very little time. It can be steamed, roasted or used in casseroles but, for me, simple is best! So I have included the simplest method for a delicious asparagus side dish.

Asparagus with Dijon Lemon Sauce

Wash and prepare asparagus spears. The stem end is left on the asparagus when it is harvested to keep it fresh. Remove the stems; gentle pressure will cause them to break right at the fresh part of the spear. Or you can cut them with a knife, if preferred.

You will need one bunch (about one pound) of fresh asparagus, 2 tablespoons olive oil, ½ cup freshly grated parmesan cheese, and ½ cup crisp bacon broken into pieces. Salt and pepper to taste. Heat olive oil in a skillet large enough to accommodate one layer of asparagus spears. Sauté until spears begin to change color, turning as they cook. Cook to a crisp/tender stage. Add cheese to top and reduce heat until cheese begins to melt. Garnish top with bacon.

Dijon Lemon Sauce: 4 Tablespoons olive oil, 1 tsp grated lemon peel, ½ tsp Dijon mustard, 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice. Mix together and pour over or serve alongside asparagus. Serve warm as a side dish.

Roasted Cornish Hens with Mediterranean Marinade

With recent price increases on meat, frozen Cornish game hens are still a great value per serving and offer versatile options for cooking or grilling. This marinade is heavy on garlic so adjust to your taste.

- 2 sticks celery, rough chopped
- 1 large, sweet onion, chopped
- Juice of 1 lime or lemon
- 4 similar size Cornish hens (about 1 ½ lbs. each)
- 2 cups chicken broth

Marinade/rub:

- 15-20 garlic cloves
- 1½ tsp each of paprika, allspice, dried thyme, ground black pepper, and salt
- juice of 1 lemon or lime
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil

Preheat oven to 425°. Combine all ingredients in a food processor and process until mixture is pasty. Apply marinade generously on the outside and into cavities and under the skin of dry hens. Heat oil in a cast iron grill or skillet. Turn heat to medium high and brown each of the hens on all sides. Place hens in a large cast iron skillet or roasting pan. Add vegetables and chicken stock. Bake for 1 hour or until hen juices run clear, basting every 15 minutes with broth. Remove from oven and cover loosely for 15 minutes before serving.

Southern Lemon Cake from The Tuscan Sun Cookbook

Frances Mayes and Edmund Mayes

- 2 sticks unsalted softened butter
 - 2 cups sugar
 - 3 eggs
 - 3 cups sifted all purpose flour
 - 1 tsp. baking powder
 - ¼ tsp. salt
 - 1 cup buttermilk
 - 1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice + zest of one lemon
- Glaze: 1½ cups sifted confectioners' sugar
 4 Tablespoons unsalted softened butter
 3 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 Tiny curls of lemon peel for garnish

Preheat oven to 325°. Butter a nonstick 10-inch Bundt pan, then lightly dust with flour. In a large bowl, cream together the butter and sugar. Add eggs one at a time. In medium bowl sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. Add flour mixture to batter alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour. Add lemon juice and zest. Pour into Bundt pan and bake for 50-55 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.

Make glaze by beating butter, lemon juice and zest until smooth, add confectioners' sugar and beat until spreadable. Spread over top of cake and decorate with lemon curls.

Note: Make butter cake by substituting vanilla for the lemon in cake and half/half for the lemon juice in the glaze.

Correction: Please note these changes to directions for New Orleans Double Chocolate Praline Fudge Cake from the February issue: First 3 ingredients are butter, cocoa and 1 cup water (cook these together separately). Flour, sugar and salt are combined as dry ingredients.

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