

SMOKE SIGNAL

VOLUME 54, ISSUE 10

Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968

January, 2022

www.smokesignalnews.com

Your Volunteer Staff at Smoke Signal Wishes You a HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Smoke Signal Staff pictured Left to Right:
Bottom Row: Aviva Hoffman, Linda Karr, Gaye Auman (Board), Victoria Crosby, Barbara Luton.
Second Row: Pat Soltys, Susan Gilbert, Barbara Bruschi, Pat Baumann, Cheri Schneider, Joyce Ray.
Top Row: Rachel Caines, Joel Gilbert, Bob Espy (board), Harry Strack, Gia Anderson.
Insets: Rosalyn Merrick and Beth Henson.
Not pictured: Lorie Leslie, Vickie Carpenter, Ralph Hughes (Board Members)

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Ten Year Anniversary: Walk to Remember by Elaine Taylor

On Saturday, January 22, the 10th annual Tucker “Walk to Remember” will be held starting at 9:30 a.m., at the Smoke Rise Baptist Church. After taking last year off due to covid, we are so happy to reconvene this year! The Mountain Mums Garden Club began this “WTR” tradition in 2012, on the 5th anniversary of planting trees in memory of seven young neighbors. The spring flowering Japanese magnolia trees are to remember seven beautiful, young lives lost in car accidents: Mandi Smith, Brandon Stovall, Matt Taylor, Charlie Wellman, Brandon Hubbard, Julian Carter and Ben Lokies. The area now known as the “Memorial Triangle of Trees”, is at Hugh Howell RD and Highway 78. Since those trees were planted by the Garden Club, families, friends, and the Mums have continued to beautify the area. A lot of construction has gone on in that area recently, but the Triangle of Trees remains! The seven trees are planted in a circle, and in the center of the ring is a tree that signifies HOPE.

Family, friends, neighbors, and members of the community (and DOGS) are invited to come join in the “WTR”. It will start in the upper parking lot of Smoke Rise Baptist Church, with a short time for fellowship in support of the families, and the Mountain Mums’ commitment to the Memorial Triangle. Then, all that wish, can take off on the approximate three-mile brisk walk through the neighborhood and the Smoke Rise green spaces. Any donations made this day, will go toward a scholarship to a student in our community for the Taggart’s Driving School Driver Education Program.

As the mother of Matt Taylor, one of the seven, I am extremely moved by the outpouring of compassion from the community. Last year, as you all know, we were put on hold from almost everything until vaccinations became available and proved effective. However, my family wanted to make the “WTR” in memory of Matt as we always have done. My husband and I were joined by our son and family, Jim, Candyce,



Trey, Mia, and their dog Cali! We did the 3 mile walk on a beautiful day January 23, 2021, thinking, laughing and talking about Matt. We even stopped at Smoke Rise Elementary School playground to reminisce. I am so happy we will be joined by many this year to walk again.

We hope for a great turn out for the 10-year anniversary of the “Walk to Remember”, to remember the seven neighbors that died too young. And remember to drive safely!

Fit Court and Greenspace Now Open in Tucker!

So excited to open the new Fit Court and greenspace in downtown Tucker today! This new park is surrounded by sidewalks on Church St. & LaVista. Throughout the downtown corridor you’ll see new street lighting, benches & landscaping. It borders Tucker First United Methodist Church and



Hearthside Senior Living. This space replaces the dilapidated & dangerous old library building, once an eyesore, now a beautiful park. A new 17-foot tree is planted at the corner of the park and a star is quietly shining on top. Planting trees shows hope for the future. I think Tucker’s future is bright! #tuckerparksandrecreation #cityoftucker #tuckerga #frankaumanmayorfortucker



Happy 10-Year Anniversary to Our CID

2021 marks our 10-year anniversary as a CID. When the district was created in 2011, Tucker was not yet a city and we were known as Stone Mountain CID. Now, the entire district falls within the City of Tucker and we successfully rebranded as Tucker Summit CID in 2018.

We have seen exponential growth and success thanks to our incredible members and business owners! Our partnerships with the City of Tucker, DeKalb County and Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) also contribute to the work we are able to accomplish on behalf of our CID and the property owners we represent.

Here’s to another successful 10 years and many more!



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.

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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

JANUARY 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 JANUARY 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.

"Like" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SmokeSignalNews
 or visit our website at www.smokesignalnews.com
 Link to the digital version of the *Smoke Signal* at <http://eepurl.com/pjn4v>
 or scan this QR Code with your smart phone!



GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club

salutes its members for their dedication to community service:

13,069 volunteer hours
 \$49,400 funds donated
 \$29,293 value of goods donated

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



DID YOUR PAPER GET WET?

EXTRA COPIES OF THE SMOKE SIGNAL ARE NOW AVAILBLE AT THE COMMUNITY GARDEN
 Look for the wooden box labeled *Smoke Signal*.



ATTENTION ADVERTISERS:

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

Please send your ad-size requests to Frank Luton, luton@mindspring.com, and your ads will be included as space becomes available, in the order requests are received.

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

Sundays:

9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School via Zoom and In-Person
 9:30 a.m. Children's Sunday School via Zoom and In-Person
 10:30 a.m. In-Person and Live streaming of Worship service

Events:

December 8 at 5:30 p.m. Game Night and Dinner
 Reservations required by December 3
 December 13 at 5:30 p.m. "Voces Amicis" Chamber Choir in Concert
 December 19 at 10:30 a.m. Lessons & Carols Worship service
 December 24 at 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service

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

MC3 Church

Senior Minister: Art Stansberry
 Worship Minister: Leslie Riley
 Student Minister: Will Tyler
 Children's Minister: Rae Tyler Caggiula
 (770) 783-1035 ~ www.mc3.life

Sunday Worship at Parkview High School Auditorium

9:30 a.m. Coffee and donuts; adult and student c-groups; nursery and Sunday school for infants to 5th graders.
 10:30 am. Worship service
 C-groups throughout the week at various homes -- check out our website for more 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

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



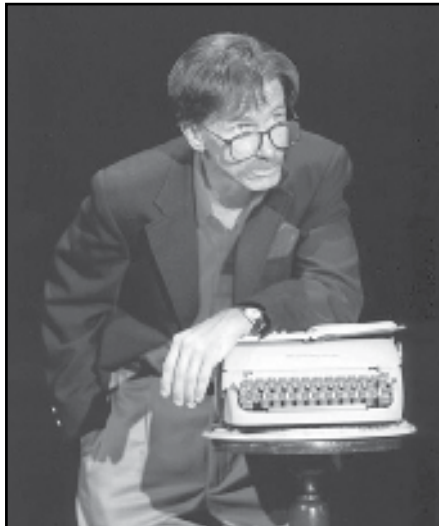
Renowned Actor Returns to ART Station

Actor Bill Oberst, Jr. returns from Los Angeles to the ART Station stage for the 17th year to perform the tour-de-force production of "Lewis Grizzard: In His Own Words."

Masks are required. ART Station requires that all patrons, ages 12 and above, provide proof upon entry of a completed COVID-19 vaccination (at least two weeks prior to the arrival at ART Station) or a negative COVID-19 PCR test that was completed no more than 72 hours prior.

Performances of "Lewis Grizzard" will be Friday, January 7 @ 8:00 pm, Saturday, January 8 @ 8:00 pm and Sunday, January 9 matinee @ 3:00 pm. All performances will be in the ART Station Theatre located at 5384 Manor Drive in Stone Mountain Village.

Back by popular demand after playing to sold-out crowds for 16 years, ART Station is pleased to present a loving tribute to Lewis Grizzard. Bill Oberst, Jr., pays respect to "one of the foremost humorists in the country," and honors Lewis with the best of his stand-up comedy and selections from his books and columns, spreading Lewis' unique writings and love of the South. www.artstation.org.



The Latest from Tucker Parks and Rec



The new adult Fit Court on Church Street between Tucker First Methodist and Hearthside Sr Living

With the holidays providing plenty of eating and fun, we at the Parks and Recreation Department would like to remind everyone about our workout opportunities. Tucker has miles of trails, as well as a gymnasium at the Tucker Recreation Center where you can play basketball, volleyball, or pickleball. You can check our website and calendar for days and times for open play or call the Center directly. We also have our new exercise gym available. It is open daily during operating hours Monday through Saturday.

Additionally, we have just opened our new outdoor Fit Court in the downtown area on Church Street. There are a lot of ways to help maintain your health in the City of Tucker. Give us a call, check out the newest edition of our Program Guide or visit our website at www.tuckerga.gov/parks for all the details.

Speaking of getting active, our youth basketball program has begun, and we are looking for volunteers for coaching, officiating or any number of opportunities to work with kids. Give Joe Stewart a call or email him at jstewart@tuckerga.gov. Play begins in January and runs through February.

Lastly, keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for information about our spring youth baseball and softball programs. Registration will begin early in 2022 with practices and the season to start in the early spring. We had an exciting season last year and we expect even more in 2022.

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**Georgia Iris Society Meeting:
How to Spot a Dangerous Tree**

Peter Jenkins, an ISA Certified Arborist and founder of Tree Climbers International School for recreational tree climbers will present "How To Spot A Dangerous Tree." He has been a tree care professional in Atlanta for 40+ years.

Join us in person at St. Bartholomew Episcopal Church, Saturday, January 8 at 2:00 P.M., 1790 Lavista Road, NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Our meetings are free to the public and all are welcome. Join us for education, beautification and recreation.

For more information, call Quill Duncan at 770-416-4766.

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SRCA NEWS

by Michael Huerkamp

Happy New Year to each and all of our neighbors in SmokeRise from your SRCA board of Directors: Lyle Collins (Antebellum), Jenna Greene (Ivey Oaks), Lori Jones (Greencastle), Lisa Khemani (Hugh Howell), Kim Nesbitt (Silver Shadow), Treasurer Anna Ogletree (Ivey Oaks), Beverly Ojo (Mountain Shadow), Kalpana Patel (Antebellum), Eileen Stone (Smoke Rise Dr.), Ryan Davidson (Stratmor), Sue Tolson (Kanawha), and President Mike Huerkamp (Silversmith).

Virginia Rece stepped down from the board so she could represent District One on the Tucker City Council. We look forward to working with both Virginia Rece and Roger Orlando to further Smoke Rise and Tucker District 1 interests.

Your SRCA concluded 2021 with a \$10,000 budget deficit for the calendar year and finished with approximately \$37,000 in assets. With that bracing news, it is our hope that you consider a minimum of a \$40 fully tax-deductible donation to the Smoke Rise Civic (not "Community") Association. Our 2022 annual membership renewal and recruitment campaign contributes to landscaping at the major chimneys, US 78 triangle, and Hugh Howell slope at the old school; charitable events that enhance and promote our neighborhood such as the Tucker High School Foundation Golf Tournament; and SRCA projects/regular support of the Smoke Rise Elementary School. If you value how SRCA supports YOUR COMMUNITY, please give to the SRCA.

As we proceed through the Greek alphabet of Covid variants, we are as dismayed as you are that we have been unable to continue our normal events. We intend to restart them as soon as possible and safe. These include an in person annual meeting, and our annual shredding event. We will communicate with our community when and if we can safely proceed. Please GIVE today to your Smoke Rise Civic Association. It is a fully tax-deductible donation. Check Smokerise.org for how to give.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Congratulations to Honey Van de Kreke for being recognized with Tucker Civic Association's first ever Lifetime Achievement Award for numerous contributions in her neighborhood, community and the City of Tucker.

Pictured left-right: Frank Auman, Mayor; Honey Van de Kreke, Laurie Wexel, Tucker Civic Association President



Smoke Rise Neighborhood Book Club

This neighborhood book club was started by Lizzie Terrone in June, 2018. Lizzie was new to Smoke Rise and was interested in meeting more of the neighbors. She posted on Smoke Rise Facebook page and on Next-door to see if any one else was interested in a neighborhood book club. Over 20 people responded to her request-that they also would be interested in meeting new people and reading books.

The club has met continuously even during the shut down caused by Covid. Lizzie was adept at setting up the Zoom meetings for discussion during this time. The girls started meeting on patios and porches this past summer. Refreshments are served—sometimes to reflect the book that is read. The group reflects the diversity in Smoke Rise, and the books also are very diverse and sometimes challenging. Book swaps are held a couple of times a year.

There are 14 active members, and 10 additional people have attended over the 3 years that the club has been in existence.

If you would like to meet your neighbors, consider starting a book group in your area. You can make new friends and become smarter through study and lively discussions.



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**Smoke Rise Prep:
What does school look like in 2022?**

Well, for one local school it looks like success! Local private school, Smoke Rise Prep has continued to move forward while keeping advanced academics a top priority. SRP has held school wide events such as Trunk or Treat, the Spooky Fun Run, the annual Thanksgiving Feast and even a few field trips, all while managing to boast 0% transmission rate. Smoke Rise Prep is off to a great start this semester following CDC guidelines including a building wide mask mandate, daily temperature checks and small class sizes.

Smoke Rise Prep has been able to adjust what learning looks like during the COVID pandemic. This year 5th grade teacher, Mrs. Gause had the students participate in an expeditionary learning project around the trees and indigenous plant life here in GA. Students began collecting leaf samples on school grounds, their neighborhood and during a culminating field trip to the Atlanta Botanical Gardens. The project was capped off by presenting a fully formatted pressed leaf research journal as well as an oral presentation of what they learned!

The middle school students began learning about coding, programming and running their own robots in class. This gave Mr. Wilson the idea to start Robots in Action! After realizing their desire to learn more about the importance of coding and how it relates to his students' future academic success. They have learned to code, program, build and operate their very own robot. The middle school is hoping to put all of their practice this year into play at competitions during the 2022-2023 school year.

Thanks to the CARES Act, for the first time since the pandemic began in 2020 Smoke Rise Prep held a family Thanksgiving Feast complete with free COVID testing. Families gathered a bit earlier than the luncheon for a free testing event hosted by EmergenTesting and all costs were covered by the CARES act. "This was such a wonderful slice of normalcy," said one parent. "It was great to be a part of a family event again, it was even better to be unmasked", said another.

Family fun comes back to SRP with rapid testing. Next will be a Chili Cook Off at the country club, Family Bingo Night at Smoke Rise Baptist Church and even a live Auction so stay tuned for those details! This local gem is always offering open enrollment so be sure to check them out at www.SmokeRisePrep.org



The "Ladies Who Lunch" group met at the Smoke Rise Country Club for lunch, fun and fellowship. Donations of gift cards for the Christian City Children's village were given in memory of Bob Crutchfield who was a long time Smoke Rise resident and very active volunteer for Christian City.

Financial Assistance Available

Residents of the City of Tucker who are behind on their bills have new hope today, as federal funds are now available for rent, mortgage and other assistance. Tucker is partnering with NETWorks Cooperative Ministry to distribute \$1 million in American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to those in need.

"As soon as President Biden announced the ARP funds, we began to prioritize how best to put this money to work in the community," said Assistant City Manager John McHenry, who is overseeing distribution of the money. "I think it is telling that the very first move we made was to direct these funds to residents in need. The City saw a crucial need and we responded in a prompt manner with a trusted partner."

"We hear from people everyday who are falling behind on their utility bills or, even worse, their rent or mortgage payments," explained David Fisher, the Executive Director of NETWorks. "Some families have rebounded financially and are doing just fine. But it's important for everyone to remember that there is a large number of people who lost their jobs or had their hours cut as a result of the pandemic. We need to continue to work to help those folks get through this very challenging time."

City residents must meet certain criteria to be considered for assistance. Single person households must earn less than \$49,440 (adjusted upward for more people in the household), have a demonstrated financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and have incurred housing or utility expenses between March 15, 2020 and February 28, 2022. Those matching the criteria may apply immediately at www.tuckerga.gov/arp.

The City of Tucker and NETWorks partnered last year on distribution of nearly \$1 million in federal CARES Act funds, which helped residents to meet rent or utility obligations in the direct aftermath of the COVID pandemic.

On the web: https://www.tuckerga.gov/news_detail_T14_R568.php

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Out the Window

by Beth Henson

The winter days had grown short with only a few hours of pale, silvery light before the sun would quickly sink into the ridge of tall, stately southern pines. Glancing out the back window I gazed at the much-neglected leaf-covered garden steps, flanked with a few spindly containers of last summer's impatiens. Somehow I had neglected clearing the terracotta of their earlier warmer weather glory. Their normally lush stems were now denuded of abundant green lacy-edged leaves, but surprisingly they were still crowned with a few blossoms of white, coral and hot pink. The brave annuals had barely hung on through the cooler days and frigid nights.

Suddenly I noticed a flicker of lemon yellow, dancing from pot to pot, flower to flower. A delicate Cloudless Sulphur butterfly was greedily drinking in the last of the summer spoils. I knew he was just passing through, and like the earlier monarchs, on his migration to Florida or the sunny Caribbean.

Hurry along on your journey before the cold winds come! I'm glad my oversight offered you a good meal and pleasant stop.



Cloudless Sulphur Butterfly by Beth Henson

HEALTH NOTES:

by Cheri Schneider, M.D.

SEVEN FITNESS MYTHS

Almost every newspaper and magazine will be filled with fitness and dieting tips as we begin the New Year. Keep in mind that mixed in with all the facts, you may be getting advertising ploys that are more a 'buy me' grab than science. Unfortunately, it can be so hard to tell. Everyone seems to be on a bandwagon of sorts. The worst ones in my book are 'de-tox' diets/cleanses and oh so many (expensive) supplements. These gimmicks are very emotionally charged topics to those who believe them as science. So far, I have avoided writing anything about them because I do not want to get death threats! Here are a few myths I collected to comment on that you might find interesting.

1. You can spot reduce fat: There is no scientific evidence that exercise can target a specific part of your body and reduce the fat there. The bottom line is that exercise burns calories and overall fat loss. It cannot target a specific area like the abdomen. Much of how and where a person gains or loses weight is genetically determined.

2. You should stretch before working out. Good studies show that warming up your muscles by walking, or exercising and then stretching gives greater flexibility and causes fewer injuries. So, exercise and then stretch before leaving the gym or getting into your car!

3. No pain, No gain: Pain can be a sign of injury. So be careful of this motto! A better and more factual motto is: If you don't use it, you lose it. 'Losing it' can happen very quickly to muscle fibers that are not used. There are dozens of studies showing that short stints of bed rest -as in after surgery or an injury- result in muscle weakness and atrophy. Have you ever seen anyone who just had a cast removed? The muscle atrophy you see is a perfect example of 'If you don't use it, you lose it'.

4. Working out three times a week is enough. One study showed that 'fit' athletes who ran 60 minutes a day and then sat seven hours or more a day--in their jobs, commuting and in front of the TV or computer--had higher death rates over an eight year period than those who ran 60 minutes a day and sat for only one hour a day. This seems to indicate that baseline activity level is just as important as a dedicated daily workout. This should encourage most of us, because this means that other forms of activity and movement are just as important as a traditional workout.

5. Weight lifting helps turn fat into muscle. Fat is the body's reserved energy that is stored for times of 'famine'. Fat and not muscle is burned and lost from the body through calorie restriction. Weight lifters aim to first lose fat through eating fewer calories than they burn. Then they work to build bigger muscles by fatiguing the muscle groups they want to build. This stimulates the muscle to hypertrophy or get bigger. Body builders do not get more muscles, just bigger muscles. An interesting fact is that sedentary people and weight lifters have a similar number of muscle fibers!

6. Sports drinks are necessary after exercise. This is not true! Water is just as good. And most people who exercise do not need any extra calories to 'replenish' their energy and electrolytes...unless you are an extreme exercise sportsperson. In this case 'extreme' means 90 minutes or more of continuous moderate to high intensity exercise.

7. To lose weight you need to exercise more. The fastest way to lose weight is to decrease the number of calories you take in. Exercise does burn more calories of course, but not as fast as you think. Most people (and their devices, on-line apps, pedometers, etc.) tend to over estimate the amount of calories burned during exercise. Some of the more popular apps can over-estimate how much you burn during exercise by up to 30%. There is good evidence that exercise helps maintain weight loss, however, so every person wanting to lose weight should begin a regular exercise regimen.

Do something healthy for yourself this New Year. The basics are still the same: Eat your vegetables, avoid sweets and bad fats and move, move, move!

Call for free consultation

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techtalk

by Susan Gilbert

A Real-Estate Market Hotter than Real Life!

You have all heard that real-estate in Smoke Rise and around the country is booming. But did you know there is a bigger, even hotter virtual real-estate market that is virtual? You might be surprised to learn that millions of dollars are being spent on houses and property that does not exist in this physical world. It is virtual digital world referred to as meta. How is that possible? Let's investigate.

In the first quarter of 2021, this Tech Talk column carried a three-part series of articles on virtual reality where I shared my experience with the Oculus Rift VR headset. Perhaps you or someone in your household got one for Christmas and you too are getting a sense for how engaging virtual worlds can be?

In just a year's time, these VR systems have exploded in popularity and are forecast to grow at a dizzying pace. The 2021 consumer VR market worldwide is expected to land in the \$3.7 billion dollar range, up by more than a billion dollars over 2020. But that is just for the hardware and software. The real-estate market within these virtual realities in the gaming systems is also growing at warp speed.

What might you buy in a virtual world? In some games, you select an avatar to represent yourself as you would like to be seen. You could also purchase nice shoes to wear, a winter coat, or artwork for your walls. You might also want to purchase a virtual home, an estate or a yacht. You might want to attend a concert, gamble in a casino, or visit another country. Millions of people are willing to pay real money to do these imaginary things in their digital world.

What was once primarily a gamer's experience of buying and selling virtual assets has attracted the interest of large investors. A growing number of investment firms are acquiring digital land in worlds (e.g., Sandbox and Decentraland) where players simulate real-life pursuits. These companies are betting that people will spend money to use virtual homes and occupy retail space, and they are betting the value of these properties will increase as more people join the worlds. This interest in virtual real estate got an enormous boost last month when Facebook renamed itself Meta Platforms Inc. saying they are now focusing on these online worlds.

Where gamers are gathering in the metaverse, real-estate sales are setting new records. This interest hit a new peak last month when Republic Realm, a firm that develops properties in the metaverse, reportedly paid \$4.3 million for land in the world Sandbox. The firm purchased the digital land from the gaming company Atari and the two firms are planning to partner on the development of some of the properties. The previous record sale was made by the investment firm Tokens.com Corp., who is thought to have paid around \$2.5 million for land in the world Decentraland's Fashion District.

Definition: *Meta is commonly used to describe something that transcends the usual or goes above and beyond. Metaverse would be outside what we know as the universe, bigger and better.*

Tokens.com chief executive officer explained the rationale as, "This is like buying land in Manhattan 250 years ago as the city is being built."

So now you know. Time will tell if these money-making schemes pan out for the companies mining for gold in the metaworld.



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Virtual Van Gogh Exhibit: A Must Go!

by Victoria Crosby

Before moving to Smoke Rise in September, I visited the Van Gogh exhibit—the immersive experience—at the Skylight, 300 Vesey Street, New York City. This exhibit is an amazing experience that I highly recommend, and now it is in Atlanta.

They have Covid protocols in place so visitors need to wear a mask and observe social distancing. Only a small number of people are in the exhibit at a time.

Visitors wander through a series of rooms with 3D artwork and visual video projections. It’s an in depth look into the artwork of Vincent Van Gogh. A huge room has the projections of constantly changing paintings on the walls and floor, so that visitors feel that they are part of the artwork itself.

With a VIP pass they also offer a virtual reality experience which allows you to travel to the places Van Gogh went to paint, while sitting in a chair wearing special goggles. You feel as though you are floating through his bedroom, then out into the streets and fields. If the January tickets are sold out, the Van Gogh experience will be showing in a new (secret) venue. Tickets are already on sale.

For further information visit vangoghexpo.com.



Real Men Do Cry

by Joel Gilbert

Maybe there is something women are more prone to do than men that we should consider in our resolutions for this new year. The title is my attempt at a new adage, akin to the phrase “real men don’t eat quiche.” Frankly, I like quiche!

That phrase made me wonder: Do we define manhood by some silly distinctives like this? What is wrong with quiche?

There is another saying: “Real men don’t cry.” What is wrong with crying? The whole idea that men are “sissies” or somehow less than real men if they cry is to be challenged in my opinion. I am not exactly sure where this all started. Maybe the idea of stoic behavior and Spartan warrior status combined to create a picture of “real manhood.”

But watch what happens when a truly sad moment is shared on TV and the man chokes back the tears. Is it now appropriate that a man can feel deep sorrow and show that by choking the emotions and tears back? Now, don’t get me wrong. I am not saying that it is manly to cry at just anything, but that it is manly to have a tender heart.

The shortest sentence in the New Testament is “Jesus wept.” I am sure most of you know, it was at the death of a friend. Not only does that show us the depth of His humanness, but also that real men do cry. By the way, many other male mammals are now known to cry.

We know laughter is good for the soul. But how about crying? Is crying good for the heart? We can cry out of joy, fear, and despair. Psychologists tell us we cry out of joy when something happens to us that is pleasant but out of our control. As you watch the Oscar or Emmy awards you see people cry. Clearly this emotion is good. It shows people’s humility. Just think about how ungrateful it would be for an award winner to imply they deserved an honor, or that it was overdue? How would we feel if we watched them accept the award and they scolded us for it taking so long to recognize their talent?

No, tears show vulnerability. They also tend to reflect a level of thankfulness. Yep, those are the characteristics of a humble person.

So, perhaps that is at the root of it all. Humility is a pre-cursor to that tender-hearted male. Hmm. Humility is not a trait I remember my father teaching me. I was to strive for excellence and then earn my crown of achievement. Real men strive and fight for their rights. Yes, they do, but should they?

I think from now on I am going with a new adage: Real Men Do Cry!

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Joel Gilbert Learning to Ski (Part 1 of 3)

by Joel Gilbert

Many of you know my wife Susan, who writes the paper's TechTalk column. You may not know that I asked her to marry me just five weeks after our first date, and she agreed. The decision came so early in our relationship that we both knew we should wait to let others know of our decision. So, it was our little secret for many months. The timing of Susan's annual family ski trip coincided with the timing we felt was right to make the announcement.

However, even the thought of skiing terrified me because I have three intense fears: height, speed, and slippery surfaces. And it doesn't help that I also have a terrible sense of balance. But I had a month to get ready, so my engineering background led me to buy a book titled: *We Learned to Ski*. I picked it because it had lots of pictures, diagrams, tips, and seemingly simple guidance. I read it cover to cover and even created a crib sheet in the back highlighting all the key thoughts including references to the pages in the book I could go back to if I wanted to review important tips.



I was rereading the book on our four-hour plane ride to Denver when the stranger sitting next to me asked if I was about to go skiing for the first time. I said yes and will never forget his reaction. He berated me with, "You can't learn to ski reading a book! You have to get out there and learn by falling down doing!" He was right of course, but that is the last thing I wanted to hear ... falling on steep, slippery, hills. Ugh. Now I was worried.

Quite naturally I signed up for ski school as soon as we got to the slope. I selected the class called: "Never skied before and afraid of learning." They started us out on a very mild downward slope so that we would not get going too fast. Before we began the instructor reminded us that we needed to keep our skis in what is called a snowplow and that we could slow down by increasing the angle of that plow and speed up if we narrowed the angle. But, in no case were we to simply point our skis down the hill. That made sense. I had read that repeatedly in the book. Check!

Then he said something that has a direct parallel to things we all have a tough time doing in our lives: "Keep your weight on the forward section of the skis." Or, in plain language, lean down the hill. He told us that our instinct would be to stand up straight or in the worst case, lean on the back sides (called the tails) of the skis. That inevitably results in falling. Got it! That is, I thought I had it in my intellectual mind but as soon as I started down the hill in my snowplow position, I became terrified and stood erect. Then, as I became more afraid, I of course leaned back and fell.

The good news is, by the end of the second day, I was skiing well enough to go down all the beginner slopes and the easiest of the intermediate ones if the conditions were perfect: groomed slope, no ice or bumpy areas, and ways around the steep parts.

Even better news is- we did announce our engagement to Susan's family. You will hear more about that story in the coming months.

As we begin a new year, I encourage you step out there and try new things this year. The results can be enormously rewarding. Just know that it is perfectly natural to experience fear and discomfort but be prepared to "lean into that fear" to succeed.

By the way, Susan and I are celebrating our 35th anniversary.





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Fulfilling the Dream of Martin Luther King

by Victoria Crosby

Over many years people have been trying to fulfill Martin Luther King's dreams, and to instill the hope of a better future for everyone. We cannot rest until this is done. We must realize the dreams of prophets who foresaw an end to prejudice and war.

Several students many years ago sat at a lunch counter, even though they knew it was futile to expect to be treated with dignity and respect, and to order each one a plate of food, they were ignored and their treatment was very rude.

They knew what they asked was a human right, but they were refused because they were not white. Their actions and those of others who realize we are all sisters and brothers, helped to bring about a change of law, but we must not forget how it was before.

The seeds of change started with a few,
Let them continue with me and you.
Let us all pledge today
to visualize a better way.
A future that will bring
the fulfilled dream of Martin Luther King.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE by Aviva Hoffmann

Convenient Holiday Tree Disposal, Curbside!

Happy new year! If you still have your holiday decorations on display, it might be time to take them down, pack them up, and move forward with 2022. That includes your Christmas tree. DeKalb County offers free Christmas tree curbside collection service for county residents.

If you are currently serviced by the DeKalb County Sanitation Division, you can have your Christmas tree picked up with your curbside collection service through mid-January. You should put your tree at the curb alongside your garbage and recycling roll carts during your regularly scheduled sanitation pickup days. Make sure your tree doesn't exceed seven feet in length (you can cut it if needed). Trees that cannot be trimmed to the required size may be taken to the county-owned Seminole Road Landfill



or collected by the Sanitation Division's Special Collection unit (fees may apply). And, of course, whether you place your tree at the curb or take it to the landfill, all decorations and lights must be removed prior to disposal.

This service provides an opportunity for residents to dispose of Christmas trees sustainably and free of charge. Collected trees will be recycled and

converted to mulch. Much of the recycled mulch benefits playgrounds, local government beautification projects, and individual yards.

For more information, contact the Sanitation Division's customer service team at (404) 294-2900 or sanitation@dekalbcountyga.gov, or visit www.dekalbsanitation.com.

Mountain Mums Celebrate the Season

The Mountain Mums had a great Christmas luncheon at the Smoke Rise Country Club. They dug deep and played Dirty Santa with lots of attention to a certain handmade wine cork wreath. This month the MUMS will be out in force for the Tucker Walk to Remember at 9:30 am January 22, 2022. PLEASE JOIN US for the Walk, and consider coming to a meeting. We are a fun club. We meet every second Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. Call Mary Jacobsen: 770-979-7848 for more information. Our next meeting is at the home of Patricia Baumann. The program title is 'Weed it and Reap! Invasive plant species' given by Barbara Dorfman.



Right: Jean Weathers and Mary Jacobson wrestle for the wreath!

Below: Club members enjoy their Christmas luncheon at the Smoke Rise Country Club.



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Stone Mountain Community Garden

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman’s Club supports, works and tends garden plots in the Stone Mountain Community Garden. Fourteen members have logged 78 hours in the last year in the garden.

The Community Garden was founded in 2009. It has 55 individual plots (4 feet X 12 Feet) and includes a wildflower patch, a honey bee colony, food pantry garden, mulch bins and covered pavilion. Pat Sabatelle, a Woman’s Club member, serves on the board. Food from the club plot goes to the food pantry in Stone Mountain.

Members plant, till and weed. In the fall the club planted flowers at the garden entrance. Members painted, printed labels and assembled plant stakes for the herb garden. The club plot has had blueberries, strawberries, and rhubarb. The food pantry plot has lettuce, kale, collards, cabbage and broccoli in its winter garden. Club members help maintain the food pantry plot.

Lowes Home Improvement is a new partner that is helping the garden. They donated cabbage, lettuces and herbs for the winter garden.

The garden is located on Gordon Street which is near the Post Office in Stone Mountain. Stop by and take a walk through the grounds. Bring your children—they may enjoy seeing all of the different plants that are there.



Morning Glories and Wellroot

December’s meeting was a special holiday celebration with friends gathering to share news and good cheer for the holiday season at the Smoke Rise Country Club.

Our speaker was Sharon Brewer who is the Community Cultivator for the Wellroot organization, formerly the United Methodist Children’s Home. This year is the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Children’s Home which was established to

house orphans of the Civil War in the Atlanta area. For many years it was located in the campus in Decatur. Over time their mission changed and expanded to address a wide variety of human needs. To better address the new direction, the campus was sold to the City of Decatur and, Wellroot was established in December 2018. Ms. Brewer described their current mission which



states that: “At Wellroot, we restore children and families from trauma through Jesus Christ”. Wellroot welcomes volunteers and hosts many community focused events. Their Tucker location is convenient to Smoke Rise and their website www.wellroot.org offers many ways to donate, volunteer and support this caring mission. The Morning Glories donated about 200 toys in the November meeting to be distributed to Wellroot families this Christmas. Our club will continue to support this organization and also Helping Mamas and

the Stone Mountain Cooperative Ecumenical Ministry.

Fourteen club members decorated the historic Wells Brown House in Stone Mountain this early December. Using period appropriate décor, the group enjoyed the creative spirit of the season by making a wreath, dressing the mantles, balcony, the staircase bannister and many other holiday touches were added. See the photo below of the beautiful old home in seasonal attire. And busy club members are continuing to create mats from plastic bags in a process using plarn to create the mats. Member Melodie Janin brought in a completed mat to show to the club. Many of the mats have been distributed to the homeless via social workers and local police.

The January meeting will be at the Smoke Rise Country Club on the 11th and will feature a talk by Jim Long with Trees Atlanta. If you would like to join us for the program and luncheon, please notify our President Joyce Ray at 770 491-9015. And if you would like to hear the “buggy humorist” Hal Coleman, he will give a talk entitled “What’s Bugging You” at Callanwolde on January 27th at 10:30AM. Contact Glendolyn Hallman if you would like more information or go to www.dekalbfederation.org.

Happy New Year, friends!



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Amen, Let's Eat!

by Joyce Ray

Happy New Year! I hope it won't take long for 2022 to become a comfortable date to write! By the time you read your Smoke Signal, you might have already sealed your good fortune for the year by enjoying a big meal of Black-Eyed peas, Collard Greens, or cabbage on New Year's Day. However, just in case you didn't get around to ensuring your prosperity, here is the recipe for Hopping John that will make any Southerner proud. Along with it is a Sweet Onion Sausage Bake to be served for a weekend brunch, and Corn and Cheese Chowder for those cold days coming our way in January.

Hopping John

- 2 cups dried black-eyed peas
- ¾ lb diced ham (or better yet, the saved ham bone from your Christmas dinner)
- 1 qt water
- 1 cup chopped Onion
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- ½ tsp hot sauce
- 2 cups hot cooked rice
- ½ cup chopped green onions

Put peas in large pot or Dutch oven. Cover with water, bring to boil. Cook 2 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and let stand for 1 hour. (Note: I prefer to use frozen peas and eliminate this hour of waiting). Drain. Add 1 qt water to pot with peas. Add ham and bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add onion, salt, pepper, and hot sauce. Continue to simmer until peas are tender. Stir in hot rice and green onions. I prefer to serve the peas over the rice and garnish with green onions on top. Serves 8.

Sweet Onion Sausage Bake

- 5 sliced Vidalia or other sweet onion (not chopped)
- 1 lb. bulk sausage, browned and drained
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 4 cup mayonnaise
- 12 crushed Ritz crackers
- ½ tsp seasoned salt
- ½ cup Shredded Sharp Cheddar cheese
- 1 small jar chopped pimentos

Mix soup and Mayonnaise. Layer onions, browned sausage, soup mixture, and crushed crackers in 10x12 baking pan – Make 2 layers. Cover with grated cheese. Bake at 400 degrees for 1 hour until cheese is melted and casserole is bubbly. Serves 8-10

Corn and Cheese Chowder

- 1 pkg frozen creamed corn
- 2 cans cheese soup (do not dilute)
- 1 liter beef broth
- 6-8 slices crisp cooked bacon
- 1 ½ cups half and half 1 cup milk
- 1 medium chopped onion
- 2 small cans diced green chili peppers
- 1 tsp salt (or to taste) 8 oz shredded cheddar cheese
- 3 medium potatoes, 2 large carrots

Boil chopped Potatoes and carrots together until tender. Drain and mash to lumpy consistency. Add cheese soup, beef broth and corn. Crumble bacon and add to soup. Sauté onion in bacon fat. Add milk and Half & Half to soup pot and bring to simmer. Add peppers. Thin with broth or milk if needed. Add cheese to soup and allow to melt at low temperatures. Note: Do not bring soups with cheese or milk to a rolling boil! This will cause the soup to separate or curdle.

These quick substitutions might help if you find you are out of an ingredient:

- For thickening sauces or soups:
 - 1 Tablespoon of cornstarch equals 2 Tablespoons of flour.
 - 1 cup homogenized milk plus 1 Tablespoon lemon juice or vinegar equals 1 cup buttermilk

How Much Salt?

- Unless recipe states otherwise, 1½ tsp salt to 1 pound of meat
- 1 tsp salt per each quart of water for cooking noodles or pasta.
- If using salted butter, cut stated salt amount in recipe by one half.

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Auto body shop local serving Tucker, Stone Mtn, Smoke Rise. Honest, reasonable, quality work. Providing home-to-shop transportation. Call Dave 770-609-8759.

COMPUTER AND NETWORK SALES AND SERVICES
 Trusted Company working with local community since 1995. References available. 770-979-1800, www.thepclink.com

FOR SALE - 1961 Chickering & Sons Baby Grand – Ebony, beautiful condition & tone. Call 678-832-8654

HANDYMAN INC. has over 225 clients in the SR community. Providing all your "homework" needs. Logan Carlisle, owner and Handyman@ 770-235-3684.

Floral Hills Memory Gardens
 2 Spaces located in Garden of Last Supper, \$5,950.00 for both. Roy @ 334-566-3482

DOG BOARDING: Loving dog care. Small, selective, safe, fun. Your dog will be glad you went on vacation!
 Call 770-510-8641 or visit
 www.theshepherdsden.com

Firefighter Pressure Washing
 We specialize in pressure washing and soft washing of your property. Call for an estimate 404-328-6595.

CHILD AND ADULT CAREGIVER
 RN 30 yrs. experience. Day or night. BCLS, homeschooling
 Babysitting to vents.
 Holly 770-455-1342

PETS, PAPERS, & POSIES. I'll take care of them while you're away. Smoke Rise resident 40+ years. Karen Bouchard. 404-472-7348. petpapersandposies@gmail.com

DOG GROOMING
 Smoke Rise Resident
 Call/Text Lisa 404-444-7763
 Loving Care for your Under 40lb Furbabies
 Professional Groomer since 2006

PIANO TUNING & REPAIRS – Over 40 years of professional experience. Contact Smoke Rise resident Steve Duncan at 770-414-4766 or lswd@att.net

FOR SALE – Many Children's Books & Toys, Baby Items – Bassinet, Etc., Amana Freezer \$125, Compound Mitre Saw w/ Wheels \$85. Call 770-469-5599.

LOCKSMITH SERVICES — Deadbolts installed, re-key, repair, reinforced strike plates & motion lights installed, door threshold & weatherstrip replacement. SR res/ SR ref, Rick 770-617-0466.

AFFORDABLE CLEANING SERVICES Providing excellent cleaning services at a reasonable price. Reliable references available upon request. Call Halida at 404-610-9056

UPHOLSTERY AND TRIM
 Recover replace and repair upholstery for auto, truck, motorcycle, boat, home, commercial and more. Call 770-465-0996 or visit www.freestyleupholstery.com.

HOUSEKEEPER -- Reliable, experienced housekeeper for several years in Smoke Rise area. Hours are flexible. References available. Contact Sabina @ 770-634-0463

ON POINT ESTATE SALES
 Let us take the burden of downsizing your home. Our professional and experienced staff will organize, stage and price your home items at a fair value resulting in a successful sale. Clean-out service is also available. Contact us at 770-881-5596 or email info@onpointestatesales.com

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 offering seasonal meals with your schedule, health, and happiness in mind.
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 Stucco, Stones, Blocks, Brick, Tile, Driveways, Roof, Room Additions, Decks, Walls/Fences, Painting.
 30 yrs. exp.
 Nick 678-791-9546 (cell)
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Need a professional pet sitter?
 Call Critter Sittin' Sisters at 404-409-3765. We make your pets smile!

Individual swim lessons taught in a private heated pool. I'm fully vaccinated and CPR/First Aid certified. Contact: 404-747-9545 or petersmadison@gmail.com

The purpose of the Smoke Signal classifieds is to advertise goods and services to the community.



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