

SMOKE SIGNAL

VOLUME 55, ISSUE 7

Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968

October, 2022

www.smokesignalnews.com

HAPPY Halloween

from the staff of the SMOKE SIGNAL

Look inside for...

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Taste of Tucker 2022!

Take part in a foodie's paradise October 1 on Main St. in Tucker, GA starting at 1:00 p.m. In its 13th consecutive year, this event brings together some of the best restaurants, breweries, arts & crafts, live bands, and a free kids' zone.

As people come out to experience one of the best food festivals in Georgia, Main Street will be packed with festivities. The festival is free to attend. Tickets for purchasing food and beverages can be bought at the festival.

All proceeds from the Taste of Tucker go back to the community to benefit three local non-profits: Camp Kudzu, empowering and inspiring children and teens living with type 1 diabetes; NETWorks Cooperative Ministry, helping persons in need in the Northlake-Embry Hills-Tucker area; and Old Town Tucker Merchants Association, supporting a mix of shopping, dining and service options for local citizens and visitors.

For more information, including updates on participating restaurants, visit www.tasteoftucker.com, or check out www.facebook.com/tasteoftucker.



Sunday 9/11/22, 8:46 a.m.

The DeKalb County Fire and Police Departments, led by DeKalb CEO Mike Thurmond, held a commemorative ceremony on their campus in Tucker. Many citizens attended, including members of Smoke Rise and Tucker Garden Clubs. The wreath was provided by the DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs.

Photos Courtesy of DeKalb County Police Department



A Very Scary Time! Pick a Natural Gas Provider Now

Susan Gilbert, Staff Writer

Halloween's ghosts and goblins are not as scary as some of the natural gas prices we are seeing in our deregulated gas market. Find your last gas bill, look at what you were paying, and check when your contract expires - if you did lock in the rate last year. Our one-year contract with True Natural Gas is expiring and was at \$.39/therm. The current variable rate is \$2.30/therm or almost six times higher than our previous rate. Imagine getting a gas bill this winter six times higher than last year!



Normally, it makes sense to lock in a fixed rate for the winter season at this time of the year. The offer True sent me to continue ranged from \$1.25/therm for six-months or down to \$.99 for a 24-month contract. I was just about to go with the 24-month contract when, knowing I was writing this article, my friends at True Gas offered our Smoke Rise neighbors a special price. You can lock in for 24-months at \$0.73/therm. Don't celebrate quite yet. Even with that "good" rate, we can expect our heating bills to be double this year, compared to what they were last year with comparable weather. My weather-forecasting husband also believes we are headed for a colder-than-normal winter, because the sun is in a cooler than normal cycle now.

This is not just a regional issue for us here in Georgia. And, with the current administration's most recent canceling of new drilling for energy, all signs are for a very expensive seasonal market across the country. It's that old rule of supply and demand. Given the unknown future of wholesale pricing, it is usually best to lock in a rate with a gas provider as opposed to going with a month-by-month variable rate because that exposes you to market price fluctuations.

October is normally the best month to lock in a fixed rate for your home or business natural gas service. That's when gas companies make their commitments to buy the natural gas they will be providing over the coming months, and typically companies offer the lowest fixed rates at this time.

We have been with True Natural Gas since the industry deregulated about 20 years ago. They and Walton are known to usually have the lowest rates. True has a loyalty program that once eligibility is met, customers receive a monthly credit, and the longer you stay, the more you save. Stay long enough and your monthly customer service charge drops by \$2.50/month saving \$30 a year.

Contact Janay for this special offer at (678) 423-5423 or jmosley@truenaturalgas.com.



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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Views and/or opinions expressed in articles, stories or letters published in this newspaper are not necessarily those of the Smoke Signal or its staff. The information contained in it is believed to be accurate, but not warranted in any way. It is the policy of the Smoke Signal to publish signed letters to the Editor. We will not publish unsigned letters, but will withhold the writer's name upon request. All content may be edited.

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!

Digital copies of the *Smoke Signal* are posted to the archives at www.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

OCTOBER 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 OCTOBER 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:
 Archives (smokesignalnews.com)

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

BRING A BOOK TAKE A BOOK



Don't forget to check out the Little Libraries near the swim clubs.



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

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
 Danny Vancil, Minister of Music & Worship
 Hannah Vassar: Minister of Youth and Congregational Connection
 Rashette Walker: Director of Weekday School
 Denise Burcham, Director of Academy of Arts
 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/

WEDNESDAY

5:00 p.m. - Attend our Wednesday Dinner
 6:00 p.m. - Followed by activities and Bible Study for all ages
 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/Organist ~ Carole Mitchell
 Financial Coordinator ~ Jan Zabarac
 Director of Weekday Ministries ~ Celeste Sears
 Office Coordinator ~ Christina Wetzel-Sizemore
 Music Interns ~ Elizabeth Daly & Jose Azurdia
 5801 Hugh Howell Road ~ Stone Mountain, GA 30087
 770-469-4881 ~ www.eastminster.us

SUNDAYS

9:15 a.m. Adult and Children's Sunday school in person and via Zoom
 10:30 a.m. In-Person and Live streaming of Worship service
 Child care is available for young children during the Sunday school and worship times.

EPC Outreach Blood Drive is October 2nd, 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. in the LifeSouth Bloodmobile.

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:

10:00 a.m. Coffee and donuts
 10:30 a.m. Worship service (in person and online)

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

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 10:30 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

Looking for a way to give back to your community?

THE SMOKE SIGNAL is looking for a few more writers or people with a passion for storytelling.
 Contact: staff@smokesignalnews.com



DeKalb County
GEORGIA
Public Works Department - Sanitation Division

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HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE EVENT

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2022
8 A.M. - NOON

Sanitation Division's Central Transfer Station
3720 Leroy Scott Drive, Decatur, GA 30032

This event is FREE and open only to DeKalb County residents. Proof of DeKalb County residency is required. Residents are limited to 10 gallons of paint per vehicle. No commercial vehicles are allowed. Early arrival is highly recommended. For everyone's protection, event staff and residents are required to wear masks.

ACCEPTABLE ITEMS

- ✓ Mercury
- ✓ Adhesives (glue, etc.)
- ✓ Lawn care products
- ✓ Paint & paint-related products (strippers, solvents, etc.)
- ✓ Aerosols
- ✓ Flammable substances
- ✓ Fluorescent light bulbs
- ✓ Household cleaning supplies
- ✓ Propane gas cylinders (1-20 lbs.; limited to 3 per vehicle)
- ✓ Batteries
- ✓ Photo chemicals
- ✓ Hobby and artist supplies
- ✓ Swimming pool chemicals

RESTRICTED ITEMS

- ✗ Ammunition
- ✗ Business-generated waste
- ✗ Gasoline
- ✗ Automotive waste (fuel, oil, etc.)
- ✗ Pharmaceuticals
- ✗ Explosives
- ✗ Diesel
- ✗ Radioactive materials
- ✗ Biohazardous/Biomedical waste
- ✗ Kerosene

For more information, contact the Sanitation Division's Customer Care team at 404-294-2900.
Sanitation Division - Administrative Office - 3720 Leroy Scott Drive, Decatur, GA 30032 • 404-294-2900 • sanitation@dekalbcountyga.gov
www.dekalbcountyga.gov/sanitation Follow us on Twitter @DCA_Sanitation

Lunch & Learn at the DeKalb History Center: The Frank Hamilton School

This month's Lunch & Learn will feature Frank Hamilton and Mick Kinney, from the Frank Hamilton School, presenting and performing Georgia songs and tunes.

The Frank Hamilton School was founded in 2015 with the goal that people of all ages could gather together to celebrate, learn, and share music within a supportive musical community. The school is modeled after Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music, founded by Frank Hamilton and Win



Stracke in 1957. Believing the South, and Georgia, to be a place of strong musical tradition, Hamilton decided to take root in the Atlanta area and start another school with the help of local musician Bob Bakert. The school was small at first with classes being taught once a week, but throughout the years, the school has grown significantly. Today, the Frank Hamilton School is located in Decatur's Legacy Park. Class options are numerous and offered every day of the week.

This program is free. Interested parties are encouraged to bring their own lunch to enjoy during the presentation.

Tuesday, October 25 • 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Historic DeKalb Courthouse, 2nd floor
101 E Court Square, Decatur, GA



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Octoberfest
at Smoke Rise Baptist Church

You're invited to Smoke Rise Baptist Church's Octoberfest, Wednesday, October 26 from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. The church will have hayrides, bounce houses, face paint, games, and a Trunk or Treat! A BBQ dinner will be available for purchase at the door. Organizers say this will be a wonderful time for families to celebrate the season!



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Now Open!
200 Years of DeKalb County Exhibit

Join the DeKalb History Center in commemorating more than 200 years of DeKalb with an exhibit honoring some of the people, places, and events that have contributed to the wide-ranging history of the county.

This exhibit is FREE, but donations to the DeKalb History Center are welcome!

Located in the lobby of the Historic DeKalb Courthouse
Open Monday - Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

DeKalb History Center
101 E Court Square, Decatur, GA

NEWS YOU CAN USE by Aviva Hoffmann

The November General Election is Coming!

You can now request an Absentee Ballot for the November General Election.

If you're a registered voter in DeKalb County – and want to cast an absentee ballot for the November 8 General Election – you can begin the process now by visiting www.dekalbvotes.com. The application is the first step in obtaining an absentee ballot.



Although the deadline to submit an absentee ballot request is midnight October 28, you're encouraged to apply right away. Once the county receives your application for an absentee ballot, it takes an average of three-days to process and mail out an election ballot.

After you receive and fill out your official election ballot, you have several options for returning it — you can mail it, drop it in an approved, secure drop box, or hand deliver it (Weekdays 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., or until 7:00 p.m. election day) to the front desk at the DeKalb County Voter Registration and Elections Office at 4380 Memorial Drive, Suite 300, Decatur, GA, 30032. Tucker has an authorized drop box to collect completed absentee ballots. It's located inside the Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library at 5234 Lavista Road, Tucker, GA 30084.

Voters who request an absentee ballot but decide to vote in-person can bring their absentee ballot to their registered polling place and exchange the ballot for an opportunity to vote in-person on election day. You can vote in person on Election Day from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. at your assigned polling place. If you are in line by 7:00 p.m., you will still be allowed to vote.

You can find your assigned polling place at <https://www.mvp.sos.ga.gov/MVP/mvp.do>. You'll need a government-issued photo ID to verify your identity. Visit the Georgia Voter Identification Requirements page for more information regarding acceptable forms of identification.

To find out more about the November election, including important dates, deadlines, drop box locations, sample ballots, and hours of operation, call (404) 298-4020 or go online to www.dekalbvotes.com.

No matter how you vote, your election ballot must arrive at the Voter Registration office by November 8, 2022 at 7:00 p. m.

Key Dates

Friday, October 28

Last day to submit an absentee ballot application for November 8 Election

October 17- November 4

Advance Voting M-F 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

November 8- Election Day!

Get Familiar with Tucker's Public Works Referendum

During the November 8 General Election, City of Tucker residents will have an opportunity to vote on a public works referendum that will transition current public works services from DeKalb County to the City of Tucker. The City of Tucker has scheduled two more informational meetings this month to discuss this referendum.

The public works services are comprised of two distinctive functions: Roads & Maintenance and Stormwater services. By assuming public works services from DeKalb County, the City of Tucker aims to create an operational blueprint to provide high-value public works services with minimal financial impacts to Tucker's residents.

If the referendum passes, the prioritization of planned repairs, ongoing maintenance, and unexpected emergency needs related to public works services would be led and managed by the City of Tucker. However, the City of Tucker will also launch public works assessments to determine critical needs and identify opportunities to align capital projects with maintenance efforts.

YEAR ONE OBJECTIVES:

Within the first 365 days, the City of Tucker will prioritize any deferred public works maintenance and key repair needs.

YEAR TWO OBJECTIVES:

After prioritization of deferred public works maintenance and key repair needs, the City of Tucker will focus on reducing service delivery times by 50% or more.

If the public works referendum is approved by voters during the upcoming election, a homeowner with a property valued at \$328,000 would see a projected increase of \$94.00 annually for roads and maintenance services and stormwater services combined. Businesses located within the City of Tucker would see proportionate increases as well.

The informational meetings are scheduled October 18 at 10:00 a.m. and October 26 at 7:00 p.m. at 1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350B, Tucker, GA, 30084.

Meetings can be streamed at tuckerga.gov/pwmeeting.

OFFICIAL REFERENDUM QUESTION THAT WILL APPEAR ON NOV. BALLOTS

Transition of Public Works Services from DeKalb County to City of Tucker
 Shall the City of Tucker be authorized to directly provide road construction and maintenance including curbs, sidewalks, street lights, devices to control the flow of traffic, and stormwater management rather than rely upon DeKalb County to provide such services on its behalf and to levy and collect ad valorem property tax at a millage rate not to exceed 2 mills simultaneous with the ending of the collection of DeKalb County road and transportation special district ad valorem property tax?

[] YES [] NO

Advanced Voting

DeKalb County's Elections Board has set the advance voting schedule for November's mid-terms.

A total of 13 locations will be open for the three-week span that starts October 17 and ends November 4. That period includes two weekends of voting availability.

The Tucker Library, at 5234 LaVista Road is one of the 13 locations that will be open for all three weeks for advance voting, including from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays and noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays.

Two more locations will be available for the final week of voting ahead of the November 8 election.

For more information on the upcoming election, visit DeKalbVotes.com.

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Tucker High School News

By Genevieve O. Johnson, Tucker H.S.; AP and Gifted English/Collage Literary Magazine/ELA Department Chair

In our post-pandemic world, teachers are leaving the profession in droves. In spite of this mass exodus, Tucker's employees of the year remind us all why teaching is still one of the richest and most rewarding professions out there.

We celebrate Dr. Brittany Aarestad as our administrator of the year. Dr. A, as she is affectionately called, is our Administrator of Instruction. Personally, I have never met someone who worked as hard as Dr. A to ensure that our students and teachers not only have the right classes but that our academic world runs smoothly. Watching her in the hall, you would think that every kid walking through was her own child. She gives each student a warm smile, encouragement, and a hug when needed. I've watched her make time to tutor students and support those who need extra encouragement to pass a class. For our Tucker students, especially, she feels like part of an extended family.

Just as vital to our staff here at Tucker High School, is our staff member of the year IT wizard, Chuong Bui. Many teachers remark that teaching in 2022 could've been disastrous without the aid of Mr. Bui. I sometimes question whether it just might be possible for Mr. Bui to possess superpowers. He is brilliant, efficient, and always ready to support any teacher, staff, or student

with their IT issues. Mr. Bui is a miracle worker, and we are all very grateful to have him here at Tucker.

Ginger Graff is a brilliant reminder of why teaching is still a great profession and why great teachers make it so. Ginger started as a paraprofessional at Tucker High School more than 15 years ago. She later went on to join the TAPP program, which granted her a provisional teaching license while she finished her education courses. Principal, Dr. Eric Parker commented that Ginger has always been, "...a consummate teacher and professional. Ginger is an admirable member of our Tucker family as she always goes above and beyond in supporting her students." Ginger is indeed a heartening reminder of why teachers like her are so vital to our community. Her patience, kindness, and tireless efforts are recognized and will always be remembered. We are proud to have her as our Teacher of the Year.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to boast about some of the incredible people that I work with here at Tucker High School. This year will be my eighteenth-year teaching at Tucker High School. A large part of my longevity here is due to the wonderful faculty and staff that I get to work with, along with the great students.

Carolyn's Giving Closet

The Mountain Mums Garden Club and the GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club worked together to furnish school supplies for Carolyn Collins and her Giving Closet at Tucker High School. Members of the two clubs collected notebook binders, notebooks, notebook paper, pens, pencils and other miscellaneous items needed by the students at the school.



Last year, Carolyn's Giving Closet obtained 501c3 designation as a non-profit organization. If you would like to help the students and their families in the Tucker community, please contact Carolyn at Carolyn_Collins2014@yahoo.com. Your donation is tax-deductible.

The 501c3 number is 87-2073068.

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DeKalb County Establishes a Bicentennial Commission

DeKalb County CEO, Michael Thurmond recently announced plans to commemorate the county's 200-year history.

A DeKalb Bicentennial Commission will officially begin working on a year-long series of events December 9, on the 200th anniversary of the founding of DeKalb County.

CEO Thurmond's 2022 mid-year budget amendment recommendation to the Board of Commissioners includes several initiatives to preserve, celebrate, and honor our county's long history and heritage... such as revitalizing major gateways and arterial roadways, restoring the DeKalb historic courthouse, inventorying and expanding the county's historic landmarks – and more!

Be sure to look out for more information to follow on this exciting DeKalb County, year-long birthday celebration!



TUCKER
MANUFACTURING DAY
OCTOBER 13, 2022

Since 2019, the City of Tucker has hosted Manufacturing Day events to highlight and celebrate the manufacturers that call Tucker home. In response to an extremely successful and well-received May 2022 Manufacturing Day with Tucker High School students, the event is expanding!

On Thursday, October 13, the City of Tucker will be hosting a Manufacturing Day at Tucker High School! The event's goal is to celebrate and support our manufacturing sector by sharing with students, teachers, and parents examples of what manufacturing is like today, and the career opportunities that are available in the field. To make this event a success, your help is needed! The event will feature hourly panels of experts and booths filled with manufacturers, workforce development experts, and economic development partners to share information with attendees. Manufacturers are needed to speak as panelists on the following topics:

- Careers and a Future in Manufacturing
- Advanced Manufacturing and Technology
- "Inside a Manufacturing Plant" – a peak at all the departments and how manufacturing plants work
- Green Manufacturing – highlighting manufacturers and recyclers that are focused on re-use and green practices

There are no costs associated with this – for neither attendees nor the business participants.

For more information, please contact Angela Brooks, (470) 481-0214, abrooks@tuckerga.gov, or Jackie Moffo, (470) 366-1856, jmoffo@tuckerga.gov.

DeKalb News That's in Really Good Taste!

The DeKalb Drinking Water Quality Report is out. The county's Department of Watershed Management (DWM) has released this year's report showing our drinking water continues to surpass all federal and state standards for drinking water quality.



The DWM serves more than 700,000 customers and is responsible for treating and distributing drinking water and collecting and treating wastewater throughout DeKalb County.

DeKalb tests our tap water regularly to ensure it's safe for us to drink. In fact, the county collects and tests more than 250 samples a month from locations throughout the distribution system. Additionally, DeKalb County also conducts 45 daily production control tests 356-days-a-year.

Now, that's a good reason to raise a glass!

4633 Hugh Howell Road – Tucker, Georgia 30084

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What to do in the Garden *By Linda Karr*

Someone mentioned recently that her landscape company told her not to plant anything in the fall – it wasn't a good time to do it. Well, I have to disagree. There are advantages to fall planting!

Fall is the best time for planting trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, perennials, and cool-season annuals. Plants established in the fall require less water and are less likely to suffer from drought-related stress next summer. Perennials planted in the fall will have a healthier root system, making for larger plants and blossoms come next spring. It's a great time to plant! Don't miss the opportunity. Your new plantings will appreciate it next spring, and so will you!

You and the kids are ready to carve the pumpkin for Halloween, but how do you keep it fresh once you've carved it?

- Make sure you wash your hands with soap and water before handling the pumpkin.
- Make sure that all the tools you'll use for carving are clean.
- Before cutting, wipe the outside of the pumpkin with a 10% bleach solution.
- Save the pumpkin seeds for roasting. They are high in protein, minerals, vitamins B & E, potassium, and fiber.
- After carving, and daily, wipe or spray the inside and cut areas with a household bleach cleaning solution. Don't let the solution pool in the bottom of the pumpkin. Coat these areas with a thin coat of Vaseline. (This can help keep the carving fresh for about a week.)
- Keep them out of direct sunlight, freezing, or warm temperatures.
- If the pumpkin gets moldy, soak it in a bleach solution of 2 tsp bleach/gallon of water. A battery-operated candle used to light up the pumpkin, instead of a real candle, will also help prevent damage.

Opportunities in the garden for October:

- Bulb planting time! Plant spring flowering bulbs (daffodils, iris, hyacinths, tulips) now (before the ground freezes). Apply a fertilizer such as Espoma Bulb-tone. Plant bulbs in chicken wire "cages" to prevent squirrels and chipmunks from getting to them. Water well after planting. If you need to clean out your bed first, you can divide older bulbs and give some away or plant in another area. Continue to divide your hosta, coneflowers, daisies, and daylilies.
- Plant garlic and shallots now, too. The bulbs overwinter and then are harvested in the spring. Soft-necked garlic varieties are the best to grow in our climate. Use larger bulbs and leave the skin on them. Put the pointed end up and plant them about 2" deep. Fertilize and mulch.
- Add color to your fall gardens and containers with pansies, snapdragons, ornamental kale, cabbage, and mustard. Add a water-soluble fertilizer to get them off to a great start.
- When the flowers of your mums and asters have faded, cut the plant back to 6".
- To prevent diseases next year in your rose beds and underneath red tip photinia, rake out the old mulch and replace it with new.
- You can apply a pre-emergent to your zoysia, Bermuda and centipede lawns in early October to help keep down the winter weeds such as henbit, chickweed, and annual bluegrass.
- It's time to plant fall fescue.
- Do you have extra winter squash or pumpkins you're trying to keep? Make sure they are mature with a tough rind and no significant blemishes. Cure and harden their shells completely by placing in a warm spot (around 75-80 degrees) with good ventilation for 7-14 days. Then move to a cool, dark spot for storage. Check often for signs of decay.
- Plant amaryllis bulbs in dishes with colorful pebbles or pots for yourself and to give as gifts.
- Move your house plants that have summered outside into deep shade for a couple of weeks before bringing them inside. Move them inside before temperatures hit below 50 degrees.
- After the kids have jumped through the pile of leaves, mow them over and continue to add them to the compost pile. You can also use them as mulch.
- Be creative - build a scarecrow!
- Put netting over your water gardens until the leaves are down. Makes the cleanup much easier. Try putting a plastic pot filled with clay in the bottom of your pond, so that frogs can have a place to hibernate.
- As you prepare firewood for winter, make sure the stack is off the ground and, if covered, open on the sides, to provide circulation to help season the wood, which makes for a better fire.
- In anticipation of a cold winter, store hoses, and other irrigation equipment indoors if possible. Turn off the shut-off valves to exterior faucets, drain the faucets and leave them slightly open.
- Propagate a hydrangea or forsythia by bending a limb down to the ground, partially cover it with soil, and weigh it down with a stone or a brick.
- Decorate your fairy garden for Halloween.
- Turn the dirt in your vegetable garden to expose pests to cold weather.
- If you have fruit trees, make sure that you've cleaned up underneath them to keep down disease and rodent activity.
- As the flower stems of hosta, coneflower, daylily, and black-eyed Susan turn brown, cut them back to the ground. Remove faded flowers from hydrangeas; dry them -if you want- and spray them with festive colors for the holidays.
- Planting a tree? Make sure to check the mature size of the tree against the space you want to put it into make sure it won't overgrow its space. After planting, spread a 2-4" layer of mulch over the root zone to help keep down weeds and to conserve soil moisture. Don't stack the mulch up against the tree trunk which can lead to disease and insect problems. Keep the tree thoroughly watered for the first growing season. Make sure the water soaks down through the root system. A 1" caliper tree would require 10 gallons of water per week (including rainfall).
- Prepare new garden beds over unwanted sod by cutting the grass as short as possible, covering with a heavy layer of compost, and top with several layers of newspaper. Soak it down, and then top it off with more compost, shredded leaves, or mulch. By springtime, you should have some good organic soil ready for planting.
- Raise your mower height 1/2" and cut your zoysia, centipede, or Bermuda grass one last time.
- Keep leaves regularly raked and off of your lawn and use the leaves to mulch under your shrubs.

HEALTH NOTES:

by Patricia Baumann, MD

Update: COVID-19 Shots

Roughly a year and a half after their debut, the COVID-19 vaccines have received an update. Booster vaccines have been developed to deal with the ongoing mutations of the COVID-19 virus. Both the Moderna and Pfizer boosters have been cleared and are now available at many doctors' offices, pharmacies, and clinics. These new vaccines have been formulated to better target the omicron variants that are currently out there. The older vaccine and boosters were designed to fight a virus that has changed in the last two and a half years. The updated boosters are designed to provide protection against newer variants.

The first COVID-19 vaccines first developed in 2020 have saved millions of lives. The new vaccines help restore protection. The revised boosters could help reduce the infection, transmission, and hospitalization rates. The major goal of the booster continues to be prevention of hospitalization and prevention of serious disease. You can still catch COVID-19, but the symptoms will be much less severe for those with updated vaccinations. Receiving the vaccinations means you are less likely to end up in the ICU with a severe case of COVID-19.

The updated boosters are the so-called bivalent vaccines, which contain two sets of instructions that teach the body to produce antibodies to fight off COVID-19. One component of the vaccine is from the original strain of the coronavirus, to provide a broad protection against COVID-19. The other component is from omicron's BA.4 and BA.5 variants, which are the current threats. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), BA.5 is responsible for about 90% of new COVID-19 cases in the U.S. BA.4 makes up the rest. Both are expected to continue circulating this winter. Now that the new boosters are available, the older versions will no longer be available. However, the primary series of the COVID-19 Pfizer and Moderna will remain the same for now.

At this time, it doesn't matter how many boosters you have had, none, one, or two. If you have had your primary series, you can get a new Moderna booster - if you are 18 years old or older and it's been at least two months since your last shot. Pfizer's vaccine is cleared for fully vaccinated people 12 and older, along the same guidelines.

The side effects for the new bivalent vaccine remain essentially the same as the previous booster. As far as the frequency of boosters, if the virus stays reasonably stable, and doesn't mutate, then maybe we'll be okay getting this new booster on an annual basis. If it mutates rapidly, we may have to get a booster more frequently. It remains to be seen. The updated boosters are available at the locations where previous vaccines and boosters were given. You can check the nearest location at vaccines.gov. It's a good idea to call, before you go.

You can get the new booster at the same time as a flu shot. If you are someone who reacts strongly to either, it's probably best to wait and spread them out. Be sure to ask for a high dose flu shot, if you are 65 years old or older. Be sure to stay up to date on other vaccines as well. People 65 and older should receive a pneumococcal vaccine and also need to receive the higher dose of the shingles shot. You should probably get the new booster sooner than later. Government funding for the vaccine may be going away. The vaccine cost is free at the moment. This may not be the case in the near future!



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Out the Window

by Beth Henson

Glancing out the dining room window, I wistfully looked over my disappearing, colorful gardens. As fall approached, the nights were cooling, and the vibrant flowers of summer were becoming spindly and faded. Only the white pops of the impatiens would stay until the first frost. Looking across the patio of brick pavers, I couldn't help but laugh at the expansive "crack" garden that was still in full bloom. The previous summer's begonia pots, with their vibrant light green foliage and creamy white flowers, had decided to seed themselves between every brick. Somehow my observant yard man had known not to whisk them away with his capable weed eater, and they had fruitfully flourished.

Thank you for your impromptu show my little beauties. I'm looking forward to what might come next year!




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Cybersecurity Alert - Part 1 of 3



Last year, according to the FBI's Annual Internet Crime Complaint Center, there were more than 847,000 complaints representing \$6.9 billion in losses from scams like identify theft, online extortion, and data breaches. This kind of theft is predicted globally to reach \$10.5 trillion dollars by 2025, making it a business larger than the illegal drug trade.

You probably remember when in 2018, hackers targeted the City of Atlanta's computer networks demanding \$51,000 in bitcoins. The attack held the city hostage for nearly a week, but they refused to pay to avoid rewarding and encouraging more ransomware attacks. There was also no guarantee that systems would be restored even if it paid the ransom. In the end, the financial hit to the city was far higher than the ransom. The Atlanta Journal reported the costs associated with the attack could reach as high as \$17 million. Other major cities have had similar cybersecurity attacks and experienced similar consequences when they too have refused to pay.

Hackers who once focused on large corporations and government networks and servers are increasingly targeting small businesses and individuals. The COVID-19 pandemic caused nearly half of the U.S. labor force to work from home. As these employees access and share information online, the number of security blind spots balloons.

Experts say the most common mistake individuals make is underestimating the threat. Because this topic is too large to cover in one article, this is the first in a series and will focus on some of the warning signs of identity theft. Later articles will cover additional warning signs along with how to preview your US mail, using multifactor authentication, phishing, creating secure passwords, using password managers, and how to secure your home and smart car.

Detecting Identity Theft

One way of managing identity theft is watching for warning signs allowing you to act quickly to minimize the effects if you have been targeted. Here are some signs to watch for from industry leading online protection company, McAfee. There is more information on the website: mcafee.com.

- **You're alerted to a credit card charge you didn't make.** Financial identity theft is one of the most common types of identity theft, and credit cards are a popular target. Your online banking portal should allow you to set up alerts to email, call, or text you about suspected fraudulent credit card charges.
- **Your loan or credit card application was denied.** If you apply for a loan or line of credit and your application is denied, dig deeper. A rejection could indicate that your credit score is lower than you thought, possibly due to fraudulent activity. For example, someone may use your information to get new credit cards and not pay them off, leaving you responsible. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) allows U.S. consumers to get a free credit report every 12 months. Get a copy of yours at AnnualCreditReport.com. You can also pay for credit monitoring services to track your score.
- **There's a new account you didn't open under your name.** Once identity thieves obtain enough data, including your name and address, they may be able to open new accounts and credit cards. When you check your credit report, keep an eye out for new accounts that you didn't open. Another red flag is if you start getting bank statements or bills addressed to you for accounts you don't recognize.
- **Your information was part of a data breach.** Companies are required to notify customers of data breaches that could impact them. Keep an eye out for notifications.
- **Debt collectors call about accounts you never opened.** If debt collectors start calling, be cautious, especially if they're referring to accounts you aren't familiar with. Don't provide personal information to any collection agencies that call, as this can be a potential phishing scam.
- **You receive bills for medical services you never used.** Medical theft occurs when a fraudster imitates another person to get health care or supplies. If you get unfamiliar medical bills,

follow up because this could impact your insurance premiums or interfere with your ability to get care in the future.

• **Mail is addressed to your home but with another person's name.** This could be an indicator of identity theft that occurs when a fraudster creates a fake identity using various people's real information.

• **A tax return is filed under your name without your knowledge.** If you receive a confirmation of an annual tax filing before you've filed, take note. Criminals may try to file a tax return for another person to access their tax refund. Or you may find that you're unable to e-file your taxes because someone else has already filed using your name.

Stay tuned! There is a lot more information on this topic that will be covered next month.

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THE MYSTERIOUS CHEST

By Barbara Bruschi

Halloween is a haunted night of fantasies for children. The veil of darkness descends upon the earth. Ghost, witches, bats, and spiders perform the dance in a night of fright. The Druids believed the spirits were powerful and wild and celebrated with rituals.

As a child, born during the war years, there was only one reality at Halloween, the Russian occupation that tyrannized the citizens, which were living behind the Iron Curtain. All dreams were taken, and the communist rulers were absolute despots depriving us of all our freedoms. They assured nothing would stand in the way of enforcing the "Communist Manifesto" and maintaining absolute power.

Our town Stendal, a Hanseatic city was founded in the year 1160 and was full of ancient history. Under Russian occupation, it became an important garrison for the Russians and secret service, because the entire railroad system merged in Stendal. The distance to Berlin is only 118.8 km (64 miles), and it has proximity to the river Elbe. The Russians cordoned off an entire part of the town and built a jetport and nuclear plant (fashioned after Chernobyl).

Our home was built in 1913 and was an absolute heaven of secret hiding places and spooky secluded places. My focus was the heavy oak chest, dating from the year 1762, located in the foyer of the house. In my fantasy, I could create a whole world around the chest, with visions of fairies or evil ghosts, hiding and flying away on a magic carpet with my family, escaping a world of bombs and fright. This chest holds secrets of generations who passed through this enchanting house. It witnessed joy and absolute despair. It saw 30 Russian officers partying through the night, smashing china against the wall and trying to get my mother to join them, evoking great fear for her safety in me. In my mind the chest would save us.

While mother smuggled out some old family treasures before the Berlin

wall was built, the chest remained steadfast in its place. After the communists confiscated our home, they held an estate sale and most of the antiques went to the theater, as sets. The general public could purchase antiques for one to 10 Deutsche Marks, to emphasize how worthless the antiques of the old families were.

Luckily, the Winkelmann Museum purchased the chest for 1.00 DM and displayed it in the entrance hall. The Museum is a tribute to Winkelmann, born in 1717, heralding from a shoe-makers family. He was a German archeologist and art historian, particularly recognized for ancient Greek history - an expert of Western painting and sculpture.

After the fall of the Berlin wall, we visited our house which was now a children's home, deserted because of years of neglect and shortage of materials. On our first visit, the hotel reservations were not honored, and they recommended seeking out private residences for a short stay. We landed at a German citizen's home, a suspected Soviet agent's home. My daughter was sleeping in a separate room from us. I could not sleep all night, anxious, that they could harm or kidnap her. He invited us to dinner, as we passed a massive Russian post, he greeted the guard in Russian. He then took us to the restaurant connected with the construction of the Chernobyl-like nuclear plant. You had a choice from chicken to venison, all the best for the communist elite.

He also provided the key to visit our house. It was my first return since the age of 12 years. It was an emotional visit. Standing in the room I was born in, memories from long ago flooded my mind. The next day, we proceeded to the Museum. The chest was exhibited in the entrance hall of the Museum. What a glorious moment it was to discover a piece of my old and wonderful home.

We started the legal fight for repossession in 1990. After the laws were passed that inventory

should be returned to its lawful owners. It took nine years and many setbacks for the chest to be returned to me after my mother's death. We had witnesses that gave an oath that the chest was ours. This included a virtual painting, showing the chest in our home. Each time the city rejected our claim. We offered the Museum a loan agreement until 2000, and finally they consented. Two attorneys picked up the chest and suddenly it disappeared, one more chicane. They found the object d'art at the museum curator's house. Next, the key was missing, an important part of the chest, for without it, access would be denied.



Finally, the beloved object of my childhood would be sent to Hamburg, and from there it made the journey to Charleston S.C. and ultimately, Stone Mountain. It has been with us 23 years and will keep the history of our family safe until the end of time.

One lesson to be learned is to be free. That

means to live a life without fear - where civility, justice, respect, and trust in each other reign supremely. A life where each person gains his and her potential without interference of higher institutions. Celebrate this Halloween and fly to your happy never-never land of joy and peace. May all your dreams come true!

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Gardening Myths and Old Wives' Tales?

By Quill Duncan, Morning Glories

The Smoke Rise Morning Glories enjoyed a very humorous and educational talk at our September meeting. Ms. Sarah Brodd with UGA DeKalb Extension Office presented the power point program that shared and debunked many common myths about garden practices. For instance, Epsom Salts are not helpful to the garden, but they are ok for soaking your feet! Using salt to kill weeds will unfortunately kill everything else around it, instead, use a commercial weed killer for best results. Using copper pennies to keep slugs away does not work. For the various deer remedies, such as shredded Irish Spring soap, deer will ignore this preventative and truly, if they are hungry they will eat anything. "Liquid Fence" is the best way that I have found to deter deer. To remove moss from an asphalt drive, use the product "Wet and Forget."

And the funniest tale was the recommendation that you can tell when it is safe to plant in the spring if you sit on the ground on your bare bottom to gauge the temperature! Ms. Brodd suggested that if



l to r: Kim Fair, Mary Cochran and Quill Duncan

you want a proven scientific guide as to when to plant after the last frost, go to www.georgiaweather.net. Of course, that is not nearly as entertaining!

President Janet McGinnis was at the Garden Club of Georgia state board meeting with member

and Redbud Co-Director Bonnie Pennington, so the meeting was conducted by 1st Vice President Kim Fair. The club welcomed new member, Mary Cochran, from Georgia Regional Hospital where the club supports a garden therapy project. Many members will be participating in the Redbud District Standard Flower Show which will be held September 20-21 at the Callanwolde Fine Arts Center. The club also donated packaged underwear in the "Drop Your Drawers" project for patients at Georgia Regional Hospital. And, this was the month to bring Christmas Cards which will be sent to our service men and women through a contact at Fort Gordon in Augusta. The cards are signed with good wishes for the service members and sent to our troops in many locations around the world.

Our October meeting will be held on October 18 to accommodate the Redbud District annual meeting which will held on October 11 in LaGrange, GA. Many members will attend this fun event and enjoy the fellowship of seeing garden club friends from across the district. Our next club meeting will feature a lecture on the ecology of Stone Mountain and the granite outcrops. If you would like to attend one of our meetings at the Smoke Rise Country Club, please contact Janet McGinnis at (770) 939-8878.

Mountain Mums Garden Club

The Mountain Mums Garden Club met at the home of Carol Wales and enjoyed a brunch prepared by Carol and co-hosts Kathy Rhinehart and Barbara Luton.



Left to right--Carol Wales, Barbara Luton, Kathy Rhinehart

Co-Presidents Gaye Auman and Rita Maloof conducted the business meeting. Members were asked to continue to collect pop top tabs for the Ronald McDonald House and to collect socks, toiletries, and underclothes for the VA Hospital. Two projects sponsored by the DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs are the collection of pocket books and jewelry to be used as a fundraiser for the Federation.

Another fundraiser coming in November is the Leading Lights Luncheon/Fashion Show to be held at Callanwolde Fine Arts Center.

Beth Henson presented the program, PAINT ME A GARDEN. Using a power point presentation, Beth encouraged members to think of gardens as a painting. Art and gardens have three things in common—color, texture and emergence. She showed garden pictures by famous painters (Monet, Renoir, Sargent, Van Gogh, and Susan Abbott, a contemporary artist) and both water color and oil painting of her own work. Beth's work included her paintings of birds and flowers. Many of her pictures are of her own garden and birds that visit there. Like Beth, Monet planted his own garden on 2.5 acres of property in order to be able to paint his own creation. He famously wrote, "My garden is my most beautiful work of art." Beth encouraged members to not only continue to garden plantings as art but to try their hands at painting also.



Please contact Debbie Jones at debra-jones219@comcast.net for membership and information about the Mums.

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Amen, Let's Eat!

by Joyce Ray

Cast Iron Cookware – A Great Investment in Cooking

I have several cast iron skillets in various sizes that belonged to different grandmothers. They hold a classic position in my lineup of treasured, Southern, kitchen tools. They are almost indestructible and can be used to, fry, roast, sauté, grill, stew and simmer but there is one Cardinal rule for getting the best results – you MUST keep them well seasoned. That means it has built up a shiny black surface from cooking grease used over time that keeps food from sticking. New Cast Iron is not usually seasoned, so you should do it before use and frequently, until you get that shiny black surface. Here is the classic method:

Water is the greatest enemy of cast iron, causing it to rust over time. This could be water from washing (a no-no) or from cooking food with a lot of water or high in acid. After use, clean your skillet with paper towels and water with no detergent. If you have stuck on food, use salt as an abrasive to help scrub it out, rinse well, and oil it down before storing. If you use the skillet mostly for frying, it should maintain a nice layer of protection.

For seasoning, you can use solid or liquid fat with high smoke point like Canola oil or my favorite, solid Crisco. Set your oven temperature to 450° degrees. Liberally rub down every inch of the skillet inside and out. Lower both racks in your oven, so that you have only a short space between them and cover the bottom rack with aluminum foil. Place pan upside down on top rack and close oven door. Leave in the oven for at least one hour. You will likely have smoke from the burn off, so keep kitchen well ventilated. Allow pan to cool in oven.

A classic dessert for cast iron cooking is Pineapple Upside Down Cake. Canned pineapple slices and brown sugar are mixed with butter in the bottom of the skillet (or any nonstick pan) and the cake batter is poured on top. When flipped over after cooking, the pineapple and brown sugar make a delicious topping. Serve warm with ice cream!

Pineapple Upside Down Cake

On bottom of 10-12" iron skillet, melt 1 stick butter over low heat, add 1 cup brown sugar. Stir until well blended. Arrange pineapple (about 7) in a single layer over sugar and butter. Add a Maraschino cherry to center of each pineapple ring. Cook on low until sugar is dissolved, about 3 minutes.

Beat 3 eggs. Add the following:

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 5 Tablespoons pineapple juice, and a dash of salt

Pour over pineapple mixture in skillet. Bake at 350° degrees for 35-40 minutes. Allow to cool in pan for about 10 minutes before flipping over. Makes 6 servings.

Shepherd's Pie Steak Skillet Casserole

One-pan meals are the best! For this casserole, you will need a 12-inch skillet or Dutch oven.

- 1 T. Olive or Veg oil
- 2 pounds lean ground beef
- 1 cup chopped mushrooms (optional)
- 1 cup chopped yellow onion
- 3 minced garlic cloves
- 1 tsp salt, ½ tsp black pepper, ½ tsp dried thyme
- ¼ cup flour
- 1 (14 oz) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 (10.5 Ounce) can condensed French onion soup
- 1 cup beef broth
- 1 T chopped parsley
- 1 T red wine vinegar
- 3 lbs. Yukon Gold Potatoes
- 4 T butter
- 1 cup warm milk
- 1½ cups shredded sharp white cheddar cheese

Heat oil in skillet over medium high heat. Add ground beef and onion. Cook until onions are soft. Add garlic, thyme, salt and pepper. Cook 1 minute. Stir flour into mixture and cook 1 minute. Stir in tomatoes, condensed French onion soup, beef broth, parsley, and vinegar. Simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Peel and cut potatoes into small chunks. Cover with water. Add 1 tsp salt. Simmer until potatoes are soft. Drain potatoes. Add butter, milk and cheese. Mash with potato masher until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Spread potatoes on top of beef mixture. Transfer to oven and broil for about 3-5 minutes. Serve with green salad and crusty bread. Makes 6 servings.

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