

# SMOKE SIGNAL

VOLUME 51, ISSUE 11

Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968

February, 2019

www.smokesignalnews.com

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## Valentine's Day is Just Around the Corner!

By Joel Gilbert

We barely have Christmas decorations put away and here comes another reason to go shopping: Valentine's Day. Most of the world celebrates it on February 14. While not a public holiday where businesses close, it does seem to have become a significant cultural, religious, and commercial celebration of romance and love in many places around the world. I used to think the greeting card companies just made it up...but upon further study, I found that it goes back long before Hallmark cards.

February 14th first became associated with romantic love during the 14th century in England by the famous British author Geoffrey Chaucer. The concept of "courtly love" developed as part of the chivalry of the day especially among the kingdom's knights. A knight would profess his love for a woman but would not consummate it. Ironically, today, we might call this a stalker! Evidently, back then, women only had one suitor.

My favorite example from this period was the story of Don Quixote celebrated in the play and movie Man of La Mancha. In it, the knight professes his adoration for a street urchin. We all know a bit of the story from listening to the words of the song, To Dream the Impossible Dream.

In 18th-century England, Valentine's Day evolved into an occasion in which lovers expressed their love for each other by presenting flowers, offering confectionery, and sending greeting cards, known as "valentines." Since the 19th century, handwritten valentines have given way to mass-produced greeting cards.

My wife still has the letters I wrote her when we first dated. Yes, they were in cursive ... and yes, my penmanship was actually pretty good. Nowadays I guess people just text each other using emoticons ☺♥. Somehow that just doesn't cut it. The act of composing and writing letters seems lost. Now we search for a card that expresses appreciation, or in some way lifts the spirits of the recipient.

I do get concerned that our ability to communicate is on a dangerous decline. Now that we use our phones instead of our computer keyboards, we have a new style of shorthand. Texting has created a whole new vocabulary. POS can mean Parents Over Shoulder or a very derogatory description. Things have gotten cryptic and I fear expressions of undying love are no longer as meaningful as they once were. Poetry seems completely gone.

What does seem different today is the acceptance that a man can be kind, gentle, and romantic and still be a man. Today, men can cry and express emotions previously considered a sign of weakness.

Maybe the best thing we can all do this Valentine's Day is to face the person/people we love, hold their hand, look into their eyes, and let them know how much you value them. That is my wish for you.



## Caught in the Act!

### Clarkston on My Mind

By Karen Werner

Most metro residents have heard of Clarkston and may be aware that it is the most diverse square mile in the US, and is home to refugees from all over the world. But not many people have had the amazing privilege that I have had to volunteer in this wonderful community. I started volunteering when I retired six years ago from my psychotherapy practice and have loved every minute! I was lucky enough to meet an amazing man who worked in the community for many years



Karen and Paul Werner with their "adopted" grandchildren.

teaching ESL and GED preparation classes for refugees. He introduced me to several incredible refugee women from East Africa. I started a support group with these women and we met almost weekly for over two years. Today they are my dear friends.

In mid December, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the college graduation of one of them from Augusta University. She arrived in the United States seven years ago, after fleeing the genocide in Rwanda. She spoke no English yet went on to earn her GED and now her BS in Clinical Laboratory Science.

Today I meet with women in their homes and work with families who just need an American friend to help them sort out mail, school issues for their children, or need an occasional ride to an appointment. I have "adopted" so many of these amazing families! As our family continues to 'grow' so does my heart and my pride in these amazing friends! If you too would like to meet some wonderful people who could use a helping hand, there are many opportunities for volunteering in Clarkston. The organizations: Friends of Refugees, the



Graduate Sabine Mukesha with Karen and Paul Werner

Clarkston Community Center, the International Rescue Commission and New American Pathways all need volunteers who have space in their hearts for others.

If you know a Smoke Rise resident who volunteers or gives to others in need and would like to feature them in CAUGHT IN THE ACT, submit your ideas or article to [staff@smokesignalnews.com](mailto:staff@smokesignalnews.com).

## Gardens, Balloon Rides and More for Valentine's Day!

Does February have you feeling romantic? Or, maybe you're just bored with winter and need some new activities to do or new places to visit? Well, there are lots of things going on in the Atlanta area from concerts to hot air balloon rides for celebrating Valentine's Day with someone special or for just getting out and having some fun! Here are just a few of what's available this year:

### Valentines in the Garden

Thursday, February 14th | Atlanta Botanical Garden

The elegant evening will feature the exquisite Orchid Daze exhibit where you and your valentine can enjoy cocktails, desserts, and dancing. Enjoy live music as you stroll through the Gardens and tropical conservatories, sampling bites from Atlanta's top chefs alongside handcrafted Valentines Day cocktails!

7 p.m. - 10 p.m.; \$50.00 per person

### Atlanta Balloon Glow

Thursday - Sunday, February 14th - 17th | Piedmont Park

Atlanta's very first Balloon Glow features glowing hot air balloons each night, tethered balloon rides, activities for kids, and the city's best retailers, vendors, and food! Looking to celebrate with your special Valentine? Couples Balloon Rides offer your very own hot air balloon for a few minutes of alone time with your sweetheart while taking in the Atlanta Skyline. 5 p.m. - 9 p.m. - tethered rides booked in advance \$20. Per person. General admission is free.

...continued on page 9



## Smoke Signal

P.O. Box 763, Tucker, GA 30085  
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### February Calendar of Events

- 1-3 Lewis Grizzard: In His Own Words  
ART Station Theater
- 8,9 Willy Wonka Jr., Smoke Rise Baptist Church
- 14 DeKalb History Center's  
11th Annual Black History Month Celebration  
Historic DeKalb Courthouse, Decatur  
11:00 a.m to 1:15 p.m.
- 15-24 "Spit Like A Big Girl" ART Station Theater
- 21, 24, 28 MURDER at the Y2K Party  
Main Street Theatre

### ATTENTION GRADS AND BRIDES

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

## Smoke Signal Deadlines

### FEBRUARY 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 FEBRUARY 10**

### SMOKE SIGNAL FLYER INSERT POLICY

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

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 or scan this QR Code with your smart phone!



## WANTED...

Someone to volunteer for a fun job with the *Smoke Signal*.

Be part of a paper that's been in the community for half a century!

We need someone to scout out new businesses, restaurants and activities in Mountain Park for a new column, "What's New." This will not require writing an article, just listing the businesses.

We have people to do Stone Mountain and Tucker. Would you like to be the third reporter for this column?

Please contact the *Smoke Signal* at: [staff@smokesignalnews.com](mailto: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*. They are longer available on Smoke Rise Drive

### Preferred Formats for Smoke Signal Submissions

When sending articles and photos to the *Smoke Signal*, articles should be sent in .doc or .docx format. Articles sent in .pdf format cannot be edited or changed in any way. Ideally, photos and graphics should be submitted in .jpg or .pdf format. Thanks for helping us make your neighborhood paper the best it can be!

### BRING A BOOK TAKE A BOOK

Don't forget to check out the Little Libraries that have popped up near the swim clubs.



## Smoke Rise Baptist Church

Dr. Chris George, Senior Pastor  
 Bart McNiell, Associate Pastor  
 Kathy Dobbins, Minister of Spiritual Formation  
 Danny Vancil, Minister of Music & Worship  
 Becky Caswell-Speight, Minister to Families with Children  
 Jeremy Colliver, Minister to Families with Youth  
 Amanda Coe Burton, Director of Nursery Ministries  
 Valerie Coe Lowder, Director of the Weekday School  
 Telephone: (770) 469-5856  
[SmokeRiseBaptist.org](http://SmokeRiseBaptist.org)

Sundays:  
 9:00 a.m. Worship in the Chapel  
 9:45 a.m. Sunday school  
 11:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary  
 Communion: Second Sunday of each month  
 Wednesdays:  
 5:00-5:45 Fellowship Dinner  
 6:00-7:00 Programs for children, youth and adults  
 7:00-8:30 Sanctuary choir  
 Nursery provided

## Eastminster Presbyterian Church

Pastor: Rev. J. Caleb Clarke III  
 Pastor of Senior Adult Ministries: Rev. Jeanne Simpson  
 Director of Mission & Youth: Mark Sauls  
 Director of Music Ministries: Andrew Meade  
 Director of Preschool: Stacey Moura  
 Director of School Age Program: Celeste Sears  
 Director of Respite Care Program: Helen Wilborn  
 Director of Communications: Joy Summerville-Johnson

Telephone (770) 469-4881  
[www.eastminster.us](http://www.eastminster.us)

Respite Care Center Hours: 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Wednesday

Sundays:  
 9:15 a.m. Sunday School for all ages  
 10:30 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary - nursery provided  
 5:00 p.m. Youth Fellowship  
 Communion: First Sunday of each month  
 Wednesdays:  
 5:45 p.m. Join us for dinner! - \$5 per adult  
 6:30 p.m. Program  
 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

## MC3 Church

(formerly Mount Carmel Christian Church)

Senior Minister: Art Stansberry  
 Worship Minister: Leslie Riley  
 Student Minister: Will Tyler  
 Coordinator of Kids Ministry - Jim Barber  
 Telephone (770) 279-8437

6015 Old Stone Mountain Rd., Stone Mountain, GA 30087  
[www.mc3.life](http://www.mc3.life)

MC3 Church launched on Easter Sunday. Hours are:

Sundays: 8:30 a.m. Coffee/ Doughnuts/ Fellowship  
 9:30 a.m. Life Group Classes - Adults & Children  
 10:30 a.m. Worship

First Wednesday 5:30 p.m. Family meal and worship service  
 All other Wednesdays 6:30 p.m. -- Life Groups on campus

## First Moravian Church

Pastor: Dr. Stephen Weisz  
 Congregational Acolyte: Bill Hitz  
 Telephone (770) 491-7250, (770) 755-8289  
[www.gamoravian.org](http://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 Monrovia Church  
 4950 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain, GA 30087

## Mountain West Church

Pastor: Michael Shreve  
 Worship Arts Pastor: Gary Robinson  
 Telephone (770) 491-0228  
[www.mwchurch.com](http://www.mwchurch.com)  
 4818 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain  
 Service Times: 9:30 a.m. / 11:15 a.m. / 1:00 p.m.

The *Smoke Signal* is posted to [www.smokesignalnews.com](http://www.smokesignalnews.com) the first of each month.

Go to the "Smoke Signal Digital" link.

You'll also find the link posted to the

*Smoke Signal* News Facebook page each month

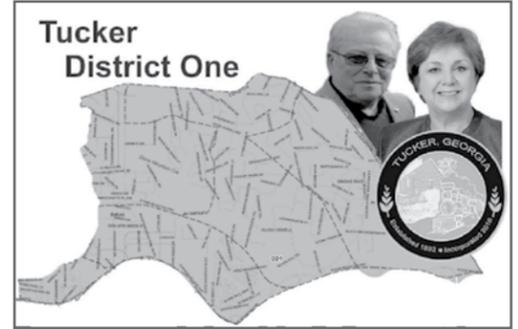
with posting of pictures and stories throughout the month.

For questions, contact Pat Soltys at [pat@smokeriseagents.com](mailto:pat@smokeriseagents.com).

*"Hymns in Harmony"*  
 – A Music for Missions Concert –  
**With the Briarlake Baptist Orchestra**  
 February 3 at 7:00 p.m.  
 At Lawrenceville Rd. United Methodist Church  
 3142 Lawrenceville Hwy, Tucker Ga  
 www.lrumc.com  
 Many of the hymns you love are presented  
 by the orchestra. Come and enjoy!

**District One Update**  
**Bill Rosenfeld & Pat Soltys**

While December felt a little slow, there was a lot going on with the studies that were initiated by the city of Tucker. We are now hearing reports of the studies, and evaluating the findings and their potential impact on the future of Tucker. Many of these are long term projects.



Paving of roads is basically complete for the year. One of the most significant improvements was the restriping of Fellowship at Lawrenceville Highway, adding a needed lane for turns.

In the business department, Tucker added 47 new businesses in the month of December, with only three being home based. That is a lot of growth! We also approved a new townhouse complex on Fuller Way near the Publix on Lawrenceville Highway. We are working to ensure that language and processes in the contracts relative to short term rentals help make these good neighbors.

Hopefully you have seen some of the new playground equipment installed and improvements in the Rec Center and other venues.

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**DeKalb History Center's 11th Annual Black History Month Celebration**

Please join us at this year's 11th Annual Black History Month Celebration of DeKalb County's vibrant and powerful African American political heritage! Dynamic presenters, elected politicians, and community leaders will educate us about the early days of voter intimidation and how the African American citizenry of DeKalb mobilized to register to vote, protest, and destroy Jim Crow laws, despite being fired from jobs, shamed, and even violently attacked. Some of the highlights of the program include the WWI soldier and the concept of the New Negro, the Primus King case, the elimination of the all-white Democratic primary, voter intimidation, the Obama legacy, and how to prepare for future political issues in diverse communities, followed by an original film and soul-stirring music.



Mrs. Deborah Strahorn - Program Moderator  
 Dr. Mary Etta Thomas - Panel Moderator  
 Representative Billy Mitchell, Georgia House District 88 - Opening Speaker

Presenters:  
 Dr. Robert Holmes - Former Georgia State Representative for the 53rd District  
 Mr. Peter Scott - Former civil rights journalist at the Atlanta Journal and Constitution

Panel Speakers:  
 Representative Vernon Jones - Georgia House District 91  
 Mr. Jamar Boyd II - Minister and President of Georgia NAACP Youth & College Division  
 Mrs. Smah Abdelhamid - Community Organizer in DeKalb County  
 Ms. Janelle Jones - Regional Field Director, Republican Party of Georgia  
 DeKalb School of the Performing Arts Chorus – Musical Talent

Thursday, February 14  
 11:00 am - 1:15 pm  
 Historic DeKalb Courthouse, Second Floor  
 101 E Court Square, Decatur, GA 30030

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**The Economys Light Up Christmas for Make-A-Wish Foundation AGAIN!**

The 2018 Christmas season was as merry and bright as ever! We continued the tradition of decorating our home with thousands of lights and welcomed the new Ferris wheel to our display. Santa Claus was able to stop by again this year and pose for pictures in his sleigh, despite all of the rain. We are happy he made time in his busy schedule to do this, and we are hoping to have him return again next year!

With the help of neighbors and Make-A-Wish volunteers, we collected \$6,874.85 for the Make-A-Wish foundation. All of which was presented to organization representative, Jaylie Welch, on Wednesday, January 9th by my wife Theo and me. This amount exceeds last year's total by over \$1,500 and brings the grand total to \$29,656.83 for the past seven years (100% of collected donations go directly to the charity). Each wish costs approximately \$10,000, so we are excited to have been able to raise the funds to grant approximately three wishes over the years! We are so grateful to everyone for the donations and generosity they have shown to this wonderful organization.

We also want to thank all our wonderful Summit neighbors who tolerate the constant traffic on our street. We hope everyone had a Merry Christmas, and we are already working on our new addition for this Christmas!



**WEDDINGS**

Francine Dyer and David Hull of Smoke Rise are proud to announce the marriage of their daughter Victoria Hull (Tori) to Preston Pangburn, son of Cheryl and Joe Pangburn, currently of Frisco, Texas. The couple was married October 5th at Trolley Barn in Atlanta; the ceremony was officiated by Landon Pangburn. Tori, a Tucker High School and University of Georgia graduate, is a Project Manager employed by Morrison Advertising Agency. Preston, an Alpharetta High School and University of Georgia graduate, is an Analyst employed by Parmenter Realty Partners. The couple honeymooned in Aruba and currently lives in the East Lake area where the plan is to live happily ever after!



**Santa's Sleigh Filled by Stone Mountain Co-op**

by Rene` Boven

Eastminster Presbyterian Church hosted a Breakfast with Santa sponsored by the Stone Mountain Cooperative on Saturday, December 1. A delicious full breakfast of pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, biscuits and gravy was enjoyed by over 150 in attendance. All the food was donated by local businesses such as Chick-Fil-A.



A Silent Auction was featured and included gift cards and gift baskets from local businesses as well as items from Friends of Stone Mountain Co-op including a beautiful large framed painting of Santa. Children and parents enjoyed visiting and taking pictures with Santa. Families were treated to wonderful Christmas Carols by A Capella South,

a women's singing group. And, there was a Santa Shop for children to 'shop' in for their loved ones.

Local Scout troops and student volunteers from Stone Mountain Middle and High School helped with the breakfast set up and take down. With ticket and auction item sales, the co-op cleared close to \$8,000. So, Christmas came early and this is a great help to this organization.



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**Celebrating 50 Years  
at Eastminster Presbyterian Preschool**

*By Rene` Boven*

Eastminster Presbyterian Preschool is celebrating its 50th year of serving the Tucker, Stone Mountain and Lilburn communities. In commemoration of their 50th year, they planted a dogwood tree near the entrance of the Preschool. Mr. Scott Uthlaut, a member of Eastminster Presbyterian Church, planted the tree for the school. The Preschool will continue the celebration with a special reception in the spring, inviting previous students and teachers to attend.

The Preschool has a wonderful team of passionate and highly-qualified teachers providing engaging learning and developmental opportunities to a diverse community of students. Some highlights of their curriculum are the Abeka Reading and Phonics program, Handwriting Without Tears program, and music class. There is also weekly chapel, outdoor and indoor playtime on the playgrounds and in the gym, field trips and special guest visits and readers who come throughout the year. A weekly Spanish class will start in the 2019 – 2020 school year. The Preschool offers classes for ages 12 months old – preK 4 year olds, and has two, three, four and five day options at affordable tuition fees.

My children attended this school, and both of them have wonderful memories of those days. And, they are still friends with several of their former classmates. Many Smoke Rise families have attended this school and, many former students have sent their own children to Eastminster. Some students have even become teachers for this school!

Contact the school for more information or to arrange a tour by calling (470) 709-5419. Mrs. Stacey Moura is the Director and holds a Master's degree in Education, ESOL certification and a Reading Teacher Endorsement. The school's website is [www.eastminster.us/preschool](http://www.eastminster.us/preschool), and the Facebook page is [www.facebook.com/EastminsterPresbyterianPreschool](http://www.facebook.com/EastminsterPresbyterianPreschool).

Congratulations, EPC Preschool for reaching such a great milestone and for serving our community in such a special way! We wish you many more years of continued success.

**Smoke Rise Prep's Unique Learning Environment Gives Students a Leg Up**

*By Sherrie Waddell, Principal of Smoke Rise Prep*

In 2011, a group of teachers and parents reimagined what preparatory education could be. We created a vibrant learning environment around an established curriculum and focused on smaller class sizes. We gave teachers freedom to teach creatively and bring education to life, hoping to instill a love of learning in every child.

We thought if we could refresh education -increase transparency, add flexibility, and focus on creating a positive learning environment - both teachers and students would thrive. And boy, were we right! With 1:1 technology, certified teachers, an emphasis on character, a nurturing environment, and parental involvement, our goal to create well rounded 21st Century learners is a reality.

And the best part is, after a short time at SRP, we consistently hear from parents that they have seen a transformation in students who were less confident and less engaged in other learning environments. We hear every day how students have really connected with education again and have rediscovered their love of learning here.

In seven short years, we are so proud of what Smoke Rise Prep has become. In this upcoming year, 2019-2020, we will be adding a kindergarten to become a fully functioning K-8 private school. We invite you to attend one of our Open Houses or Info Sessions to learn more. For more information, please visit our website at [smokeriseprep.org](http://smokeriseprep.org).

<u>Open Houses</u>	<u>Info Sessions</u>
2/8- 9:15am	2/24- 3:00pm
3/14- 9:15am	3/25- 3:00pm
4/26- 9:15am	

Now that's refreshing education.



You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose.  
- Dr. Suess

**Boy Scout Troop 876 News**

*by Jack Yang, troop historian*

There are many opportunities to advance in rank in the BSA program. The scouts in this program work very hard to achieve these goals. When a scout achieves these goals they are recognized for their work. Their progress is shown in a ceremony called a "Court of Honor". This is when Scouts and their parents come together and celebrate what the scouts have achieved in the last few months. The entire troop gets together to eat food and celebrate each other's work. This occasion is always a happy one because many scouts get to share food and talk to each other. During the December 2018 Court of Honor, the scouts also exchanged gifts. This event could not have been possible without the Eastminster Presbyterian Church. They graciously lent us their space to use. The parents of the scouts also deserve thanks. Over all, the event was very successful.

If you would like to join us for fun trips, service projects and other activities, stop by one of our troop meetings at Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 5801 Hugh Howell Rd. on Mondays at 7:30 p.m., or check out our website [www.bsatroop876.com](http://www.bsatroop876.com).



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Actor Bill Oberst, Jr. returns from Los Angeles to the ART Station stage for the 15th year to perform the tour-de-force production of **"Lewis Grizzard: In His Own Words."**

Friday, February 1 at 8:00 p.m.  
 Saturday, February 2 at 8:00 p.m.  
 Sunday, February 3 at 3:00 p.m.



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," as he 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.

All performances will be in the ART Station Theatre located at 5384 Manor Drive in Stone Mountain Village. Go to [artstation.org](http://artstation.org) for tickets.

**ART Station Presents New Play Called "Spit Like A Big Girl"**

February 15 -24  
 Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 p.m.  
 Sunday matinees at 3:00 p.m.  
 Additional Wednesday Matinee:  
 February 20 at 10:30 a.m.

Clarinda Ross, one of the original founders of ART Station in Stone Mountain, and a Los Angeles actor for many years, will return to Stone Mountain to perform in her new play entitled Spit Like A Big Girl.

The play is a comic look at what a Southern daughter learned from her college professor parents. Inspired by the discovery of her father's journals after his death, Clarinda Ross takes us on a humorous and poignant journey as she leaves her home to venture out into the big world. Compassion, etiquette, men and child-rearing are just a few of the subjects she examines through her wacky and uniquely Southern viewfinder. Most importantly, the play expresses how well he father's lessons have served her in her struggles as a mother of a disabled child. The play features Clarinda Ross and Angelica Spence and is director by ART Station Artistic Director David Thomas.

For reservations call 770-469-1105 or visit the ART Station online box office at [www.artstation.org](http://www.artstation.org).



Clarinda Ross with her daughter Clara Ross.

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 SHORTY'S NEIGHBORHOOD EATERY

Times are good, but will an oversight in computer programming from decades earlier cause a breakdown in society? Tension is high on the television set of MSTV's New Year's Eve broadcast as long-time VJ, Carter Blackwood, tries to remain calm with his production team and a group of the biggest stars in television, film and music. Will they all survive and make it to the year 2000?



The Public is invited to attend free performances of this 'sweet' family musical



BY THE SMOKE RISE ACADEMY OF THE ARTS  
 Elementary DRAMA Class

FRIDAY, February 8, 7:00 P.M.  
 SATURDAY, February 9  
 10:00 a.m., 3:00 and 7:00 P.M.

In the Fellowship Hall of  
 SmokeRise Baptist Church  
 5901 HUGH HOWELL ROAD  
 STONE MOUNTAIN

Based on Roald Dahl's fantastical tale, WILLY WONKA JR. tells the story of the world-famous candy man, a Golden Ticket and his quest to find an heir to his sweets-making company. The score includes arrangements of the enchanting songs from the 1971 film in addition to a host of fun new songs. It's a scumdidilyumptious musical guaranteed to delight everyone's sweet tooth!

The SRAA teen drama class will present DISNEY'S BEAUTY AND THE BEAST JR. March 22 - 24 2019.

Smoke Rise Academy of Arts provides group arts instruction for children and adults, and individual music lessons for all ages on piano, violin, flute, guitar, drums and voice. Visit [smokerisebaptist.org/arts](http://smokerisebaptist.org/arts) or call them at 678-533-0562 for details.

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**Tucker Reid-Cofer Library**

**February Children's Events**

Building Blocks  
 Story time for babies  
 0 to 24 months  
 February 5, 12, 19 and 26  
 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Tales for 2s  
 Story time for 2-year olds:  
 February 6, 13, 20 and 27  
 9:30-10:00 a.m.

Book Ends Book Club  
 9-12 year-olds  
 February 11 (must register)

Read to a Pet Partner  
 5-12 year-olds  
 February 14 (must register)  
 3:00-4:00 p.m.

*Children can practice their read-aloud skills by reading to two excellent canine listeners.*

Homeschool Family Get-Togethers  
 6 and older  
 February 13  
 3:00-5:00 p.m.

The Tucker Reid-Cofer Library is located at 5234 LaVista Road, Tucker, GA. Register for all events by calling (770) 270-8234, ext. 2312.

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**HEALTH NOTES:**

by Cheri Schneider, M.D.

**EXERCISE for All Our “Buts”**

I am letting you know right off the bat, that I am writing this article for ME! Last summer, I broke my ankle at Stone Mountain Park. This happened one day after I had made a decision to start attending a second Zumba toning class each week. This would have been a great addition to the 3-5 days a week I was already walking, because I needed the strength training for my upper body. Well, I am here to tell you, that since the break, I have exercised only a few times — except of course for physical therapy for the broken bone. This is very frustrating, and often is how the ‘buts’ begin. This article may help you eliminate exercise ‘buts’. I have written up a list of alternatives to the complaint that you would exercise, but...

If it is too cold to exercise outdoors, or the weather is bad ... have you seen Northlake Mall recently? It is fairly empty compared to years past. Put on your walking shoes and circle around the remaining stores for 30 minutes. Just don't end up at the food court. Sam's Club, Costco, Walmart and Ikea are similar big box stores you can walk in. Many malls open early to allow people to come walk. Also, try indoor exercises or classes at your local gym or workout studio. I recently heard that the gym behind Mountain Park Baptist Church is open and is free. Go check it out. You can walk and work out there!

Do you have bad knees, bad hips or painful feet? Walking may still work, as long as it is on level ground and you get your shoes right. A recumbent bicycle (stationary or outdoor), elliptical or rowing machines are other alternatives. If you are using a recumbent outdoor bike, just remember, you are lower than many cars and are harder to see. Pool exercises: either running or walking in the pool (mid chest deep), swimming, or water aerobics are great year round regardless of the weather. Mountain Park has an outdoor lazy river that I used to jog in. In the winter, I went to the one at Bethesda Park Aquatic Center. It is indoors. You can also do this chest deep in any of the pools around. Just walk the pool, side to side so you stay at the same depth, against the water pressure and swing your arms underwater. It is great exercise!

Back problems? A stationary bicycle or elliptical machine will help. If you ride outdoors, you will get a better workout if you don't use all the gears. I have friends who are in love with their spin class! If you have a serious back problem, work out your upper body. Or, water aerobics may be for you. You do not need to know how to swim, as during most of the exercises you will use floatation belts and work against water resistance.

If you have balance problems and weak legs: Silver Sneakers or a personal trainer may help you. There are great balance exercises and many that will help strengthen your legs.

No time? Fifteen minutes twice a day is just as good as a 30-minute work out. Or—several studies have even suggested three 10-minute workouts work. Just do something!

No motivation to go? Ask around in your neighborhood, job or extra curricular activities. Someone just like you may be longing for an exercise partner. My best buddy-regular exercise partner moved away last year. I recently connected with someone else I knew and can walk at least once a week with her. Joining an exercise class may even open the doors to new friendships. The group thing really does help!

That Zumba toning class? I am ready to start back at the beginning again! No ‘buts’ about it!



**Instapot: What the Heck is It?**

It seems that every store I visited this last Christmas season was selling something that sounded like or was in fact called an Instant Pot. There are brand names and knockoffs and it is almost bewildering to try to sort all this out.

If you are like me, I shop on Amazon and use the customer ratings as a guide to what seems the most reliable and reasonable. But, the first question you probably have is: why do I need another kitchen appliance? Fair enough, and perhaps you don't if your slow cooker keeps you blissfully happy.

However, if you do not have a pressure cooker, this may be the life-changer since pressure cooking can do what no other appliance in the kitchen can. If you didn't get one for Christmas, here are some tips that may help you decide which is right for you.

An Instapot is a pressure-cooker. Pressure cooking is much faster, seals in moisture and flavor, and foods can be cooked directly from frozen.

Unlike pressure cookers of old, which could be dangerous, this new pressure cooker has 10 proven safety mechanisms. I've never worried about burning myself while using my new Instapot.

Additional uses include:

- rice cooker
- yogurt maker
- steamer (veggies and more)
- saute pan
- hard-boiled egg maker
- slow cooker/crock pot

There are 3 sizes of Instant Pots.

- Two to Three (2-3) quart is considered the “mini” for dorms, RVs, and other smaller needs. These also work perfectly if you are only cooking for yourself.

- Six (6) quart is the standard size that easily feeds 4-6 people and can cook a meat-loaf, cheesecake, or a small chicken or roast.

- Eight (8) quart is for if you are cooking for a larger family. It takes a bit longer to come to pressure but the extra size is handy.

There is a LOT you can do with one Instapot, so much so, that it's a little overwhelming at first. Doug Reynics recipe for making yogurt, below, is just one example to help you get started. Happy Cooking!



**Instant Pot Yogurt**

By Doug Reynics

Did you know you can easily create your own yogurt in your instant pot? It only uses a few ingredients and is ready overnight.

It's best not to alter this recipe. It's also a better set if you don't try to create a “fruit on the bottom” type yogurt. Follow this recipe for a good set.



½ gallon Fair Life milk (or milk that must be ultra pasteurized)

4 Tablespoons of Skyr, or Oui or Phage unflavored yogurt

1 can sweetened condensed milk

1 large bowl

Pour about a cup of milk and the starter, whip until well mixed.

Pour in more milk and add sweetened condensed milk and a heaping Tbsp of vanilla extract Mix well.

Pour in rest of milk and mix.

Take 7 jelly (8 ounce) and 7 half jelly (4 ounce) jars. Fill and screw on tops loosely.

Pour about 1-2” water in inner pot (NO trivet). Place the 7 jars around/ in the center of the pot.

Stack the half jars on top.

Close pot (does not matter if it's on seal or not).

Press Yogurt button (it should read 12).

Store in fridge. Will keep for 2 weeks.

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If you are looking for reliable people to build decks, paint, do electrical, plumbing, interior design and many other services, then request a copy of this list. We maintain a free listing of contractors and other service providers that your neighbors have used successfully. For a copy of this list, go to: <http://www.smokesignalnews.com/vendor-list.html>

You may also submit a new recommendation, comment on a service you used or brag on a contractor.





**GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club**

Twelve members of the GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club led by conservation co-chairs, Valerie Riecke and Linda Smith (Smoke Rise resident), visited Fernbank History Center to attend the Winter Wonderland exhibit seeing holiday celebrations, traditions and events from around the world. They viewed the 3D film, "Flight of the Butterflies," which tracks research and the journey made by Monarch butterflies over hundreds of miles as they migrate from Mexico.



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**Rotary Club of Stone Mountain Focuses on Vocational Service**

*By L.A. Dison*

Stone Mountain Rotarians celebrated the New Year with a move to a new location for its weekly member lunch. Starting in January, members now meet at Village Corner German Restaurant on James B. Rivers Drive in Stone Mountain Village. The restaurant serves a wide variety of traditional German cuisine, and is owned and operated by RSCM member Claus Friese and his family.

"Vocational Service" was the theme for January's programming, and speakers were scheduled to discuss various aspects of the topic. Dr. Tavarez Holston, the newly appointed president of Georgia Piedmont Technical College, spoke on the importance of vocational training, and how GPTC's technical education programs prepare students to enter the workforce and make a positive impact in their communities, companies, and an ever-changing global economy.

The Stone Mountain Club meets every Tuesday for noon lunch at the Village Corner Restaurant. Visitors are always welcome to attend as a guest of the club.

To learn more about the club and upcoming programs, go to [stonemountainrotary.org](http://stonemountainrotary.org) or follow the club on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

**GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club  
Club Woman of the Year**

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club chose Betty Pompey as the 2018 "Club Woman of the Year". The 75 members of the club selected Betty for her work in the club and as a volunteer for club activities. Betty publishes the GFWC monthly newsletter, "The Yellow Daisy Pages", and distributes it electronically to the club members. She posts information on the club Facebook page, handles the Club website and all communications with publications in the area. Betty serves on the membership committee working with new members, and is on the Home Tour committee and the strategic planning committee.



*Brenda Price (President), Betty Pompey, Kathy Gallo (First Vice President, Smoke Rise Resident)*

At home in Stone Mountain village Betty has worked with the Farmers Market and the committee for the renovation of the old train depot. She has also been selected as a past "Volunteer of the Year" for the city. She is active in a Prayer Shawl ministry. Betty retired from the postal service after 30 years-- having started as a letter carrier and progressing to retire as a Facilities Specialist awarding and working with facility projects. Betty has three adult children, 5 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. She is a busy lady who is an asset to the club, the city and the community and we are proud of our new Club Woman of the Year!

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**Community in the Smoke Rise Community Garden**

Community...this is the 2019 focus word for the Smoke Rise Community Garden. Not only do we want to be a place for like-minded gardeners to gather, but we want to welcome anyone interested in learning about where your food comes from. In partnership with the Smoke Rise Community Association, we hosted a Winter Solstice s'mores roast on Saturday December 22. There was a great turn out for hot cider and s'mores fixings. On Monday, January 21, we offered an opportunity to Smoke Rise neighbors to volunteer on the National Day of Service to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. The mix of garden and community members accomplished a lot for our garden. We constructed a compost bin, set up a rain barrel and pulled vines off of the fencing, pruned rose bushes and sorted tomato cages. Our smallest volunteers-- ages 3 and 4 years -- weeded the herb bed and learned about composting. Stay tuned for information on joining this growing collective community of gardeners ...lol...did you see what I did there? "Growing" collective of...🌱



**Valentine's Day... continued from page 1**

**Love Stories of Oakland**  
 Sunday, February 10th | Oakland Cemetery  
*Recount the loves, lives, and losses of Atlantans of days past while enjoying tour stops through Oakland Cemetery's Victorian Garden. The hour-long tour also examines the symbolism of love and devotion found on monuments, headstones, and mausoleums throughout the grounds. 2:30 p.m.-6 p.m. (recurring event); tickets adults \$16; seniors \$12; children under 5 are free.*

**An Evening of Love Poems on Valentine's Day**  
 Feb. 14th; 7:30 p.m. at Callanwolde Fine Arts Center; free admission  
*Selected local poets will read well-known and lesser-known love poems. Held in the Library of the Historic Candler Mansion.*

Whether you're a romantic or not, check out some of these special events. It's a great way to celebrate a day set aside for L-O-V-E! Happy Valentine's Day!!!

**Skeptic About Your Septic?**

by Rene` Boven

Living in the area that we do, septic tanks are a given. And, unfortunately, when they're malfunctioning the tanks can be a real pain in the rump for homeowners. During the holidays and the period where we were getting so much rain, we had one of those pains. One night we noticed water coming up through two drain holes in our basement. In speaking with a plumber, we were told "not to worry about it as long as it was just water" and that they were receiving a lot of calls about this due to the water table\* being so full-- i.e., the table was so full that the water had to go somewhere. I wasn't comfortable with this advice; however, knowing that we had just had our tank pumped out a year ago and our lines flushed out too, I went along with it. My gut was telling me otherwise.

Well, through years of experience, I have found that the gut usually trumps logic so I regret not acting more promptly. Two days later, we had more than just water in the basement, and quite a mess to clean up. In the meantime, we had a septic tank company come out and inspect the tank. It needed pumping. Note: In general, a tank needs to be pumped every five to seven years. And, some plumbers/industry pro's on this subject, will tell you that tanks never need pumping. Well, some version of these two opinions is probably more true if your tank is functioning properly; i.e., there are no clogs, blockages, broken pipes, roots in the pipes, or disruptions in your drain field. Our tank had a clog so it was not draining properly.

\* Did the water table impact our tank? "Rainfall has a direct relationship to the groundwater level, and time seems to not be a major factor, though the longer the time between rain events and their magnitude does seem to change things," said Ryan Tidwell-Davidson, our local (Smoke Rise) meteorologist. "This December we had 12.02 inches of rain at Dekalb-Peachtree Airport; we usually average 4.16 inches." Ryan did some research and looked at the groundwater tables. "As we had rain after rain every weekend or so, the ground water went from an average of near 7.5 feet below the surface to almost 6.5 feet below the surface. Not incredibly high but still higher than the median value recorded over the last 34 years. The water table would have to be pushing five feet or less from the surface to have a significant impact," Ryan explained.

So, indeed, we did have a lot of rain and the water table was higher than norm but, our woes were of another nature and not from the crowded table. Logic is good but in the future, I'll be a skeptic and listen to my gut on matters of the butt (pain in the rumps....LOL!)

**GEORGIA IRIS SOCIETY MEETING**  
**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9**  
 2:00 - 4:00 P.M.  
 ST. BARTHOLOMEW EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
 1790 LAVISTA ROAD

"MONARCHS AND MILKWEED ACROSS GEORGIA" will be the program presented by Susan Meyers. Susan will speak on her passions, "planting seeds" of awareness, understanding and commitment to Monarch butterfly education, conservation and research.

Our meetings are free and all are welcome. Join us for education, beautification and recreation. Lite refreshments and door prizes will be available. For more information contact Kathy Blackwell, 678-471-2604.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

By Aviva Hoffmann

City of Tucker at Your Fingertips

It seems we can never finish all our daily tasks. How do we manage to get everything done? Even if you consider the potential for its abuse, online technology is arguably a tremendous aid to many of us. I know my family can't live without some of the conveniences of computers. That definitely includes online services (and computer games, smart phones and our "smart" TV too).

The World Wide Web provides a communication platform, and generally can help make our lives easier. For example, we can access information and entertainment, fill out forms, make purchases, and even pay bills – online! However, I do recommend a healthy dose of caution when exchanging sensitive information online (either personal or business). But, you may be pleasantly surprised what you can accomplish online - once you get past the paranoia phase.

Both DeKalb County and our City of Tucker have been increasing online service offerings. For example, you can apply for a homestead exemption, report a code violation, search for current job openings, or apply for water and sanitation services. You can also find out about upcoming public hearings, submit an open records request, report a code violation, or get caught up on other local news happening in your community.

The City of Tucker has always offered new business license applications online, and now, it has a brand-new service in place – online business license renewals! City officials hope this new online feature eases the burden on staff and business owners. The city's new software allows users to input and process all information through the site. A business owner would never even have to come in at all to get their "business done." License applications and renewals can be found at: [www.tuckerga.gov/licenses](http://www.tuckerga.gov/licenses).

There is an abundance of useful information available "at your fingertips." To access all of Tucker's online services, go to the city's homepage on the web at: [www.tuckerga.gov/](http://www.tuckerga.gov/). You will find a lot of information conveniently assembled on the "How Do I?" page. That section will take you to a comprehensive listing of many of the city's available services and other useful information.

To view the staff directory for the City of Tucker, visit [http://www.tuckerga.gov/staff\\_directory/index.php](http://www.tuckerga.gov/staff_directory/index.php).

You can also call city hall at: (678) 597-9040.

Are Home Repairs Keeping Your Home From Selling?

By Joyce Ray

If you have made the decision to sell your home this spring, you will want to take inventory of its condition and make sure it is ready to bring the highest possible price and quickest sale. One of the main causes of buyers canceling their contracts before closing is due to the repair conditions that are discovered when the buyer has a professional inspection on the house. Even if defects are discovered and negotiated for repair, the sellers can still end up paying much more for those repairs than they could have beforehand. When the buyers discover undisclosed defects, they are likely to want to dictate the choice of contractor or materials used. If you are not sure of the condition of your home or have not kept records of the age of systems and updates it would be wise for you to hire a professional home inspector prior to putting the house on the market and go ahead and make any discovered repairs before you list it for sale. The list below summarizes some of the most common repairs that are discovered by professional inspectors.

1. Electrical: Electrical codes change over the years. You are not required to update an electrical system but if you do any modification it must be done to current code. Lack of Ground Fault Circuit Interruption (GFCI) outlets in wet areas is one of the most common problems, along with loose electrical wiring that is not in a junction box and double taps into the electrical panel.
2. Siding issues are common. Even some of the more recent concrete sidings can have missing caulk at the joints.
3. Chimneys are susceptible to many issues. Flashing to prevent standing water, missing boards and cracked chimney caps are common problems on older homes. Roof issues can include flashing defects around gables and porches, missing or cracked shingles and damaged vent stacks. Soffits and gutters are carefully looked at for loose connections, wood rot, moisture intrusion and holes in gutters.
4. Decks should be inspected for any issues that could make them unsafe, including rotting boards and loose rails.
5. Wood rot and missing caulk around windows and doors, and front steps that have settled are often noted. Any uneven steps or broken concrete can be considered "trip hazards" and will be in the report.
6. Most reports have several small items such as doors that don't latch or lock, loose faucets, ceiling fans that are not level. One of the most often noted is rocking toilets that are not securely fastened to the floor.
7. Plumbing and water: Inspectors are careful to check for any water leaks and note the obvious causes, such as leaking sinks or condensation drips from air conditioning. Current or previous water penetration in crawlspaces or basements will be noted.

Many of the needed repairs can be taken care of by your local handyman and will go a long way toward forming the buyer's impression of the condition of your home which, of course, affects the price he is willing to pay.



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## Mountain Shadow Garden Club February Program: Slopes and Paths

The meeting of Mountain Shadow Garden Club (MSGC) on Monday evening February 11 will feature a program by Lyle Collins on "Slopes and Paths". Through photographs and commentary, he will discuss how challenging conditions in home landscapes can be turned into attractive and functional features.

Lyle is a founding member and now President of Southern Trillium, an award winning design/build company committed to providing clients with the highest quality in landscape design, installation, and construction. Founded in 2004, the group is one of the most professionally licensed companies of its kind in metro Atlanta. Lyle is involved in all aspects of the company, as well as participating in the on-site installation of projects.

Living in the Atlanta area puts us in the Piedmont region of Georgia, characterized by rolling hills.



Combining the existing sloped topography with typical house site placement means that many of us have slopes and hills in our landscapes. Where these slopes are often seen as challenges for access and drainage, they can also be utilized for interesting landscape and garden installation. Understanding the best and easiest ways to work with slopes in our gardens allows

them to become an asset for interesting visual spaces while also considering how we navigate through them using steps, stairs, landings, and pathways.

A graduate of the University of Georgia, Lyle received his landscape design training from the Department of Horticulture. Among other credentials, he is an ISA Certified Arborist and a Georgia Certified Landscape Professional.

Lyle and his wife and two young daughters live on a property of about two acres in the Smoke Rise community. They continue to expand their garden rooms and landscape with spaces serving as a private retreat for the family as well as a place to experiment with new plants and ideas. Photography is one of his major hobbies and Lyle has presented programs to MSGC and other groups highlighting techniques for best results, especially in outdoor settings.

MSGC is open to men and women of all ages who enjoy learning about a diverse range of topics related to home landscapes, plants, and gardens. The meeting and program begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. in Founders Hall, Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 5801 Hugh Howell Road, Stone Mountain. Free. Refreshments and socializing follow. For more information and directions, contact club president Jeff Raines at 404-641-8633. [www.facebook.com/MtShadowGardenClub](http://www.facebook.com/MtShadowGardenClub)

## Mountain Mums Welcome Woodlands Gardens Director

What do camels and the Mountain Mums garden club have in common? Not much with the exception of a shared interest in oasis. And, no, we're not talking about the floral kind. We're referencing the kind found in deserts which provide shade and shelter, i.e., a pleasant or peaceful area, a refuge or haven such as Woodlands Garden – an urban oasis!

The Mums kicked off the new year by hosting Kate McAlpin, Executive Director of Woodlands Garden for their January meeting's program. Mrs. McAlpin holds a BA in Biology and Secondary Education from Clemson University, and a MS in Public Horticulture from the Longwood Graduate Program with the University of Delaware.

Prior to becoming the Director, she was inspired by the history of the greenspace and intrigued by the growth potential of this newly (2002) formed public garden. Former property owners, Dr. and Mrs. Morris, understood the importance of tempering Decatur's rapid urbanization, and arranged to have their property permanently preserved from development. Their original home is the Visitor Center and offices.

The Garden is located at the intersection of Scott Boulevard and Clairmont Avenue in Decatur on eight acres of greenspace which is surrounded by residential development in the midst of our bustling metropolitan area. Mrs. McAlpin said "the Garden's mission is to educate and engage the community in the natural world" and to allow visitors to "feel the green around them". The Gardens are divided into two major horticultural focus areas: the Georgia Piedmont Native Garden and the Morse Family Heritage Garden offer guests a variety of native plants as well as ornamental plants.



Mountain Mums Members Lisa Armistead, Angie Ballard, Lynn Malone, Kelley Samaras and Woodlands Garden Director Kate McAlpin.

The Gardens are usually open seven days a week during daylight hours. Over the next five to seven months the Woodlands Gardens will undergo a major renovation, so this will effect the hours they are open. The changes will include better parking and public restrooms, and will be school bus accessible with better access in and out of the grounds.

The Mums worked up quite the appetite after 'exploring' the Gardens. Lunch was provided by hostesses Angie Ballard, Lynn Malone and Kelley Samaras. The next meeting will be held February 13. If you are interested in membership, please contact Lynn Malone at 678-471-2049.

## Morning Glories Learn to Garden Inside in January!

Many of you have heard and enjoyed Mickey Gazaway every Saturday morning on Walter Reeves' The Lawn and Garden Show on WSB. Mickey is an employee of Pike's Nursery for over 25 years and is a Georgia Master Gardener and a Certified Arborist. She is a plants-woman extraordinaire and a delightful, interactive speaker. Her topic for our January meeting was house plants and she brought a broad array of plants for us to admire and study.

She offered a wonderful tip on selecting the proper house plant for your home based upon available light levels. House plants are categorized by light level: high, medium or low. You can gauge your home light level by raising your hand 6" over a flat surface with normal light in the room. If your hand shadow is distinct, you have high light. If it is blurred, your light is medium and if you cannot see the shadow, you have low light. Very few plants will survive in that low light level. A great example is the Sansaveria or Mother in Law's Tongue.

Mickey noted that fertilizing and watering are the other keys to successful house plants.



In fact, she noted that every plant has very specific water requirements and most want very little water especially during the winter months. Many houseplants can be moved outdoors from April-October into shady areas with morning sun only. The last day of frost in the Atlanta area is typically April 10th, so don't move them too soon. Fertilizing is dependent on the type of plant. If it is a plant grown for foliage like Pothos or Dracaena or Corn Plant, you need a fertilizer with 10-2-4 mix. If it is grown for flowers like the African Violet, it should be 8-14-8.

One last tip that will help anyone who received an orchid this holiday season. She noted that once the bloom stalk has completed blooming, you can cut it off to the first node on the stalk and it will bloom again. Try it!

President Bonnie Pennington welcomed two new members to the Morning Glories, Jaelyn Cox and Allison Reeves. Three members will be honored on February 28th at Callanwolde as Life Members of the Dekalb Federation of Garden Clubs. The honorees are MaryAnne Anderson, Vivian Nickelsen and Bonnie Pennington. The club plans a busy winter schedule with various meetings and interesting topics. If you would like to attend a meeting, please contact Bonnie at 770 469-2304.



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## Amen, Let's Eat!



February signals that Spring is just around the corner. Lawns are greening, trees are budding, daffodils are popping up and, indeed, we are turning our hearts toward love and..... American Presidents! When I was in school, we honored both Lincoln's birthday on the 12th and Washington's on the 22nd. Then, in 1971, as part of the Uniform Holiday Act, which created a 3-day weekend for the nation's workers, the third Monday In February was chosen as President's Day, honoring all US presidents and providing an excuse for President's Day sales.

I began to wonder what the favorite foods of some of our presidents might be. With a little research and delving into my favorite "First Ladies' Cookbook", I was expecting to find that President George Washington's favorite food would naturally be Cherry Pie. While I did find that many presidents had a fondness for pie, I learned that George's favorite food was mashed sweet potatoes (easy on the wooden teeth) and President Lincoln's was his mother's gingerbread. Washington had a fondness for all types of fruit, which adds even more intrigue as to why he cut down that cherry tree! Virginia Ham was one of the top favorites of presidents, as was seafood, cakes, mutton chops and ice cream. Squirrel soup also made the list. Georgia's own President Jimmy Carter, I presumed, would have a fondness for peanut butter pie but, alas, his southern roots prevailed with the simple and humble favorite of grits and cheese. On the other hand, President Donald Trump is said to always have peanuts available as a frequent favorite snack, proving once again that food is the common experience that brings us together!

By now you have guessed that this article is heading toward recipes for pie, beginning with a cherry pie in honor of the Father of Our Country. "Easy as Pie" didn't quite fit the definition of cooking a pie for me until I discovered Pillsbury Pie Crust. It is in the dairy section near the canned pastries and the box has two pre-cut rounds. With many products I don't mind trying the store brands, but this is one product that I insist on. It has the flaky texture that tastes homemade and is quick and easy to use. Take it out of the fridge about 20 minutes before you use it. My favorite frozen pie crust can be found at the Dekalb Farmer's market.

### Quick and Easy Deep-Dish Cherry Pie

- 1 box Pillsbury Pie Crust (or you can make it from scratch)
- 1 can cherry pie filing
- 1 can dark sweet cherries (undrained)
- ½ cup sugar
- 4 tablespoons butter cut in small pieces.

Mix undrained cherries and cherry pie filling, add sugar. Place one round of dough on board and roll slightly with a rolling pin. Place in lightly greased deep-dish pie pan or dish. Add mixture of cherries. Dot top with butter. Add second pie crust (also rolled) on top of pie and crimp edges all around pie dish. Cut slits in top crust around center of pie for steam to escape. An impressive lattice top is easy to learn, and I am sure there is a you tube video with directions. Lightly sprinkle top of pie with 1 tablespoon of sugar for a crispy crust. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes or until crust is golden brown. Cool pie in pan. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

*You know that recipe card that you can barely read because of all the spills and grease on it? Well my Coconut Buttermilk Pie is on just such a card. This one goes back many years and never fails to be a favorite. It really is "easy as pie" because can be mixed in one bowl and you can multiply the recipe if you want to make a bunch of them to freeze.*

### Coconut Buttermilk Pie

- 1 stick melted butter
- 1 ¼ cup sugar
- 3 eggs – lightly beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ cup buttermilk
- 6 oz sweetened flaked coconut

Melt butter and add sugar. Mix well but don't beat with electric mixer. Add vanilla and buttermilk. Add eggs last. Fold in coconut. Pour into unbaked pie shell and bake at 350° for 30-35 minutes until pie is set.

Double recipe will make 2 deep dish or 3 standard pies. NOTE: when doubling recipe cut sugar by ¼ cup.

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