

SMOKE SIGNAL

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Serving the Smoke Rise Community Since 1968

February, 2018

www.smokesignalnews.com



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LOVE IS IN THE AIR

By Barbara Bruschi

"One word frees us of all the weight and pain of life. That word is Love." Sophocles 496 BC.

February the fourteenth is designated as a day to commemorate Saint Valentine and love. Saint Valentine was executed for marrying couples in secret. The day before his death he send a note to his jailer's daughter, "signed from your Valentine".

What does love mean? Oh sweet mystery of love, let your magic weave a tapestry of inspiring love of many kinds throughout the world!

Eros (also the Greek god of love) is synonymous with romance and passion. Cupid, the Roman counterpart of Eros, was god of erotic love. Eros was a form of madness brought about by one of Cupid's arrows. Romantic love shines bright as the stars and creates a longing for those we desire. Great poets, composers, singers, musicians and philosophers have portrayed the many ways in which we are able to love. It is a theme that has reoccurred through centuries. Depictions of love—from ideal love to smoldering lust; from the height of splendor, to the deepest despair—have never lost its attraction to readers all over the globe.

Philia- is the hallmark of friendship. It is the goodness, trust and companionship that attracts us to one another. A good friend is like a pearl that shimmers forever. Friendship means accepting a person with all their strength and weaknesses. It brings us to a higher level of understanding both of ourselves and of the friendships we cherish.

Storge- or "familiar love" signifies the bonds between parents and children. While conflict situations may arrive throughout a lifetime, unconditional and pure love mainly exists in this relationship.

Agape- is the "universal" love. It is our yearning to extend love to nature, strangers, to Christendom and other religions. Love of God is wonderful unless it takes the form of fanaticism that can be extremely destructive. It is associated with altruism. Recently I witnessed a terrible car accident in Mexico, which killed 12 people. Not knowing any of the victims, my loving thoughts were with those families. In these times of division, a little agape could go a long way.

Ludus- shares some elements of philia. It requires a more mature relationship. It is uncomplicated and more casual. If one party confuses ludus with eros, trouble and unhappiness can follow.

Pragma- is a kind of love founded on reason or duty and one's longer-term interest. Pragma is based on personal compatibilities. One can imagine that this would apply to an arranged marriage.

Philatia - is self-love. It is acceptable and even healthy to like or love oneself. It is when one puts self above all else, that it becomes problematic. The Greeks believed that a person "could be accused of hubris if he placed himself above the gods", and this would ultimately lead to self-destruction. In an ideal world, one should place the greater good of all mankind above one self's personal ambition.

We have an opportunity on Valentine's Day to rededicate ourselves to make the world a better place by giving love where it is needed and wanted. May the spirit and romance of the many types of love be the guiding light for those that seek a life full of adventure and fulfillment as you share a tender moment and care for those that are truly in need of love.

When Seniors Move or Downsize

By Joyce Ray

Seniors often have a difficult time making decisions about relocating because they fear that family members will not approve or will be disadvantaged by the move. One key to making a successful change in living arrangements late in life is to begin to make plans, explore options, and enlist family members or professionals to help with different aspects of the move early.

Moving parents is never an easy job, nor will it happen quickly. However, the most successful moves involve a partnership between parents and children—where decisions are jointly made and accepted. Adult children who "take over" for Mom or Dad and leave them out of the decision-making are likely to experience a more difficult adjustment time for the parent. Even if memory loss or health issues prevent the parent from making difficult decisions, they should be consulted and made to feel part of the process. In families with multiple adult children, each one should take some responsibility for decisions made and not allow petty differences or past conflicts to take over the process. Strong family ties can be forged or rebuilt when each member accepts part of the responsibility and values the contribution of other siblings.

Records, receipts and legal documents should be one of the first jobs tackled. Even if you are not moving and have chosen instead to "age in place," you should make sure that family members are aware of where wills, deeds, and other legal documents are kept. An estate lawyer friend advises that the most responsible child who lives the closest should be the one requested to take on that challenge, regardless of birth order!

As the process unfolds there will be information that only a parent can impart to children. Disclosing family history, identifying records and old photographs will be a valuable and memorable learning exercise for all generations, including grandchildren. Don't forget to have your camera handy to document these times and share items that everyone wants to remember.

One of the biggest challenges of downsizing or moving is dealing with accumulated possessions- including collections, family heirlooms, and personal possessions in general.

...continued on page 10

Wildlife in the Neighborhood

These turkeys were seen at a corner of Silver Hill Road.



Also spotted in Smoke Rise: multiple sightings of a 'sick fox' (possibly mange) and a very large coyote. Nextdoor Smoke Rise is a great place to go for up-to-the-minute info from neighbors who are out and about. Check it out at Nextdoor.com and look for the Smoke Rise area.



The Smoke Signal is looking for a Volunteer to take over the handling of Advertisements and Classified Ads

Computer skills and spread sheet or bookkeeping experience necessary.

Inquire at staff@smokesignalnews.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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February Calendar of Events

- 2-4 PETER PAN, JR. Smoke Rise Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, various times
- 5-17 Garden Enthusiast Silent Auction for Kelly Cofer Park
- 6, 11 Auditions for The Curious Savage 7:00-9:00 p.m.: 10:00 am to 1:00 p.m.
- 8, 11 Murder at the Wake Dinner Theater
- 7-11 Clark Gable Slept Here, ART station, 8:00 p.m.; Sunday at 3:00 p.m.
- 9 Smoke Rise Baptist Weekday School Open House, 9:45 A.M.-12:45 P.M.
- 11 Kirking Of The Tartans Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 10:30 A.M.
- 11 Everyone Loves Love Stories, Mountain West Church, 8:00, 9:30, 11:30 A.M.

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 box at
5365 Smoke Rise Drive

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.

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



Tucker Library Events

Building Blocks Storytimes: (ages 0 to 2) every Tuesday in February @ 9:00 a.m.

Tales for 2s Storytimes: (2-year-olds) every Wednesday @ 9:30 a.m.

Read to a Pet Partner: Children can practice their read-aloud skills by reading to two excellent canine listeners. Call to register. Wednesday Feb. 14.

Homeschool Family Get-together (1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.) Feb. 21

After School Movies for Teens (ages 13 to 17) 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mondays Feb. 5, 12, 19.

Hamilton Party: Raise a Glass to Freedom! (Family-all ages): Saturday, Feb 17 from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Join us as we celebrate Alexander Hamilton—the man and the musical. Desiree Wallen, certified Archivist and Archives Technician from the National Archives in Atlanta, and Martha Brockenbrough via Skype, author of the YA biography *Alexander Hamilton, Revolutionary*, will join us. There will be Hamilton karaoke and Hamilton crafts for the kids. Open to first 150 participants. Funding provided by the Friends of the Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library.

Open Mic with Ricky and Bambi: (Family, all ages): Wednesday February 7 from 5:40-7:30 p.m.

Do you sing, dance, rap, play an instrument, or slam poetry? Would you like to do a comedy routine, or read a passage from your favorite book? Come to our open mic! Ricky and Bambi from Radio Cult and the Possum Kingdom Ramblers will host. Visit the library to pick up the list of songs they perform that YOU can sing or perform a song of your own! Open to first 30 participants. Funding provided by the Friends of the Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library.

For more information and to register, please call 770.270.8234, ext. 2312

Smoke Rise Baptist Church

Dr. Chris George, Senior Pastor
 Bart McNeil, Associate Pastor
 Tim Adcox, Minister of Missions
 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

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
 1st Tuesdays: 11:30 a.m. Prime Time
 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

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

Mount Carmel Christian Church

Senior Minister: Art Stansberry
 Worship Leader: Leslie Riley
 Coordinator of Kids Ministry - Jim Barber
 Director of Student Ministries: Will Tyler
 Telephone (770) 279-8437
www.mountcarmelcc.org

Sundays:
 8:30 a.m. Coffee/ Doughnuts/ Fellowship
 9:30 a.m. Bible School Classes – Adults & Children
 10:30 a.m. Worship

First Moravian Church

Pastor: Dr. Stephen Weisz
 Congregational Acolyte: Bill Hitz
 Telephone (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 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
 4818 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain
 Service Times 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.

The *Smoke Signal* is posted to 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.

KIRKING OF THE TARTANS

Sunday, February 11, 10:30 am
Eastminster Presbyterian Church
5801 Hugh Howell Road, Stone Mountain, GA

Join us as we celebrate our Scottish heritage with a procession of tartans, Celtic music, bagpipes, and a shortbread reception.



Raising the Bar: Smoke Rise Elementary School – No Longer on the Underperforming Focus School’s List

On December 5, 2017 the Georgia Department of Education announced that Smoke Rise Elementary School and the following Dekalb County School District (DCSD) schools are no longer on the Focus or Priority list for underperforming Title I schools:

- Smoke Rise Elementary School – Focus
- Barack H. Obama Elementary Magnet School of Technology – Focus
- Canby Lane Elementary School – Focus
- Clarkston High School – Priority
- Columbia High School – Priority
- Cross Keys High School – Priority
- Freedom Middle School – Focus
- Mary McLeod Bethune – Focus

The Focus and Priority School’s list identifies underperforming schools based on specific criteria. Focus Schools are campuses that rank in the lowest 10 percent of schools statewide based on a three-year average of Achievement Gap scores. To advance above that level, a school must demonstrate a 2.5-point increase in that three-year average.

Priority Schools are campuses that rank in the lowest five percent of schools statewide based on a three-year average of Content Mastery scores, along with a graduation rate of less than 60 percent for two consecutive years. To advance above that level, a school must demonstrate a 5-point increase in that three-year average and obtain a graduation rate above 60 percent.

Smoke Rise Elementary exited the Focus list after making a 9.8 gain in student achievement on the state’s spring 2017 GA Milestones End of Grade Assessment. Its gains are attributed to collaboration, analyzing student data, visiting, then revisiting the needs of every student.

Congratulations to all eight schools for exiting the Focus or Priority School’s list. And way to go Smoke Rise Elementary!



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Smoke Rise Baptist Weekday School Open House

Friday, February 9
9:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
5901 Hugh Howell Road, Stone Mountain, GA

Parents are invited to Smoke Rise Baptist Weekday School to tour the school, meet the Director Rev. Valerie Coe Lowder and teachers, ask questions, and register for next school year. Call 678-533-0558 with questions or to schedule a tour.

For the 2018-2019 School year, Smoke Rise Baptist Weekday School will offer half-day classes for:

- Kindergarten – Monday-Friday
- Pre-K/Fours class – Monday-Friday
- Threes – 3, 4 or 5 days
- Older Twos – 3, 4 or 5 days
- Toddlers and Young Twos – 2, 3, 4, or 5 days
- Parents’ Morning Out- ages 6-15 months – on Thursdays



At Smoke Rise Baptist Weekday School, young children worship, learn, care, serve and give. For nearly 50 years, Smoke Rise Baptist Weekday School has met the needs of children and families through loving teachers, excellent facilities, and curricula that stimulate young minds to play and discover. In a safe, loving and creative environment, children learn through play about their own capabilities, about Christian faith, and the skills necessary for success in elementary school and beyond.



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Smoke Rise Academy of the Arts Drama Department Offers Two Disney Stage Productions to the Community

PETER PAN Jr.

Friday February 2, 7:00 p.m.
 Saturday February 3, 3:00 and 7:00 p.m.
 Sunday February 4, 3:00 p.m.



MARY POPPINS. Jr.

Friday March 23, 7:00 p.m.
 Saturday March 24, 3:00 and 7:00 p.m.
 Sunday March 25, 3:00 p.m.

Smoke Rise Baptist Church Fellowship Hall

Each show will have live pre-show entertainment, and concessions are available for purchase during intermissions. Attendance is free with no tickets required.

Based on the Disney film and J.M. Barrie's enchanting play, DISNEY'S PETER PAN JR. is a modern version of the timeless tale about a boy who wouldn't grow up. The score includes new arrangements of classic Disney songs and a story featuring one rousing adventure after another.



Everyone's favorite practically perfect nanny takes the stage in DISNEY AND CAMERON MACKINTOSH'S MARY POPPINS, billed as a "supercalifragilistic-expialidocious musical adventure." Based on the books by P.L. Travers and the classic Walt Disney film, the show delighted Broadway audiences for over 2,500 performances and received nominations for nine Olivier and seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical.



Starring: Bryan Brendle, Jessica McGuire, Wendy Melkonian, Spencer Kolbe Miller, and Ben Thorpe
 Directed by Paul Conroy

\$28 Adults, \$24 Seniors (60+), \$19 Students/Military
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 Please be advised that this show contains strong adult language and nudity.

Purchase your tickets online or call our box office!
770 469 1105
www.artstation.org
 A \$1.00 facility fee is added for each ticket.

Murder at the Wake
 Main Street Theatre Tucker
 Dinner Theater Experience
 at Shorty's Neighborhood Eatery
 February 8 and 11

limited tickets available: www.tuckertheatre.com

Our dear friend, William Patrick Farnsworth III, recently passed away and we're gathering for a celebration of his life. But the celebration may be short-lived . . . Did William Farnsworth die of natural causes . . . or was there a bit of foul play involved? Perhaps one of our characters knows the truth!

main street theatre
 tucker

The
CURIUS SAVAGE
 by John Patrick

OPEN AUDITIONS
FEBRUARY 6th & 11th

Mark your calendars. Auditions for our upcoming production of John Patrick's The Curious Savage will be held on February 6th, 7:00-9:00 p.m. and February 11th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Our auditions are always open to actors of all ages, colors, sizes, identities, cultures, and abilities. Be prepared to read from the script. Please bring a recent photo. Show runs weekends May 11 - 20.

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WEDDINGS

DEAN ~ SHARP

Melissa Dean, daughter of Howard and Amy Dean of The Forest, exchanged wedding vows with Andrew Sharp, son of Barry and Laurel Sharp of Peachtree Corners on Saturday, November 18, 2017.



The formal ceremony took place in the Julia Thompson Smith Chapel at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, with celebration, dinner, and dancing in the Alumnae Gardens and Letitia Pate Evans Hall following. The couple was surrounded by their family and closest friends.

In February 2017, Andrew surprised Melissa by proposing at the Sapporo Snow Festival in Japan. Honoring this special occasion, Melissa amazed Andrew with a groom's cake in the shape of a ramen bowl, complete with midair chopsticks.

Melissa, who grew up in Smoke Rise, swam and coached for the Sharks. Following the wedding the couple honeymooned in Bermuda. Melissa and Andrew both graduated from Georgia Tech and now live in Atlanta. They are avid Braves fans and attend as many music festivals as their schedules will allow.

NETWorks Receives Major Donation from Taste of Tucker



NETWorks Cooperative Ministry has received a donation of more than \$16,000 from the 2017 Taste of Tucker street festival. In its eighth consecutive year, Taste of Tucker featured samples from nearly 30 restaurants and drew a crowd estimated at more than 5,000. Co-founders Art and Karen Wood explained that the festival is a fundraiser for local non-profits. "Taste of Tucker is a great community party," Karen said. "But it also generates significant support for worthy causes." The leading recipient of funds has been NETWorks, a partnership of churches, organizations and individuals that fights hunger and poverty in the Northlake, Embury Hills and Tucker area. Executive Director David Fisher said the funds help sustain an emergency food pantry, a grocery co-op, financial assistance for



rent and utilities, as well as educational programs.

Other non-profits receiving donations from the 2017 Taste of Tucker included EIRO, a consulting service for churches; Camp Kudzu, which supports children and teens who have Type 1 diabetes; and the Old Town Tucker Merchants Association.

Christmas Display Donations Make Christmas Merry and Bright

The 2017 Christmas season was as merry and bright as ever! We continued the tradition of decorating our home with thousands of lights, and welcomed the addition of dolphins to our display. They fit in quite nicely with the flamingos, octopus and Christmas Shark! Another fun addition was the Christmas Elf photo cutout board added to the side yard.

Santa Claus was able to stop by again this year and pose for pictures in his sleigh. We are happy he made time in his busy schedule to do this, and are hoping to have him return again next year!



With the help of neighbors and Make-A-Wish volunteers, we collected \$5171.28 for the Make-A-Wish foundation. The donation was presented to organization representative Jaylie Welch on Wednesday, January 10th by my wife Theo and me. This amount exceeds last year's total and brings the grand total to \$22,781.98 for the past six years (100% of collected donations go directly to the charity). 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!

Tucker Arts Guild Meeting

February 15, 7:00 p.m.

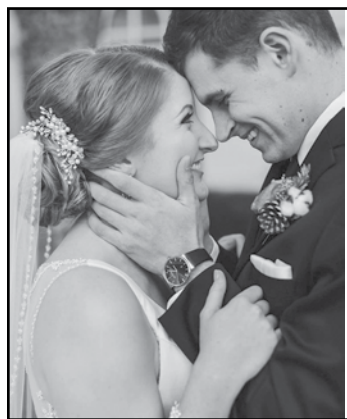
First Baptist Church of Tucker, Building B

Church Street Entrance Tucker

TAG member Nancy Hester has a show at the Tucker Library through the end of February. She is an accomplished artist in a variety of media. These works are from her hand-made paper period. Check them out next time you are at the library!

Also, John Slep will be participating in an exhibition through February 20 at the South x Southeast Gallery in Molena, GA. Call the Gallery for information.

For more information about the Tucker Arts Guild go to www.tuckerartsguild.com.



BRANAM ~ BRIESKE

John and Beth Brieske of Smoke Rise are pleased to announce the marriage of their son, Paul, to Kelly Branam, daughter of Mike and Melinda Branam of Lawrenceville. Paul and Kelly were married on Dec. 16 in a beautiful evening ceremony at The Brickyard in Marietta.

Paul, a 2013 graduate of the University of Georgia, is a third-year law student at Georgia State University and a sergeant in the Georgia National Guard. Kelly, a 2015 graduate of the University of Georgia, is a teacher with the Gwinnett County School System. Paul and Kelly live in Brookhaven with Milo, their precious pup. The couple honeymooned at Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic.

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Of Note to the Community: Safety Alerts & Watches

by Cedric Ross

Personal safety is the responsibility of each person-- and of the community. Yes, I did say the community! There are many who would say that you are the only person responsible for your safety. I would challenge that point of view. If there are members of our community that are taken advantage of, don't you somehow feel less safe? While working to maintain your personal safety, shouldn't you also keep a vigilant eye open for your neighbors? If you see something, say something. Say something to someone nearby or even the authorities. Sometimes the simple approach gets the job done best.

Here are some simple thoughts about your personal safety:

- Walk with confidence
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Don't become distracted
- Notice who is approaching
- If it looks wrong-- leave and report it. Better safe than sorry
- Keep visual cash to a minimum. Use a card when possible

There are those who would ask why I didn't mention defense classes, pepper spray, walk with a friend or two, conceal-carry or even a body cam. All of these are options. My first concern is the very basics. You can always add other safety items as you see fit.

Crime Reports

- 1/5/2018 Unknown Black Camry in a Smoke Rise Neighborhood – beware of unknown car(s) sitting for an extended period of time
- 1/4/2018 Possible Mail Fraud, an unknown person has tried to send credit cards to someone's home and then tried to retrieve them from the homeowners mail box. The home owner is installing a lock on their mail box.

We make an effort to list local crimes. If we miss something, please let us know. If you are aware of some action we need to highlight please email details and your contact number. Email address for submission(s) to this column – cedric64@live.com.



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Woman's Club Hosts Brunch for Side by Side Clubhouse

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club hosted a Christmas Brunch for the members and staff of the Side by Side Brain Injured Clubhouse in Stone Mountain village. Members of the Woman's Club prepared and served the Christmas Brunch for the 11th consecutive year. Entertainment was provided again this year by Jack Sartain, husband of club member, Pat Sartain. Jack sang, played his trumpet and led the Side by Side group in singing favorite Christmas tunes.



A check for \$500 was presented by the GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club to Side by Side for their annual fundraiser, Jawbones vs. Sawbones Charity Basketball Game.

Barbara Curzon, chairman of the Home Life Community Service Program, organized the event for Side by Side Clubhouse.



Heat for Your Feet!

Growing up in Kentucky, I hated getting out of bed on cold winter mornings and putting my feet down on the freezing floor. While Atlanta is a little further south, it's not much better here when it's as cold outside as it has been this year.

Hearing about radiant, electrically heated floors always intrigued me, but it never seemed worth tearing up our existing flooring to put it in until we did a renovation. Because we were putting down new bathroom tile anyway, it made sense to give heated floors a try. After removing the old tile, our contractor made sure the floor was totally level and smooth. This important step lessens the likelihood the electric mat under the surface tiles will get damaged, fail, and have to be replaced. On that prepared floor, he rolled out mats of thin electric wire that are available at most hardware stores. Tile was laid on top of the mat. The final step was having an electrician connect the wiring to the control panel. Shown in the picture, the small controller mounts on the wall at the same height as your light switches, making it easy to program and adjust.



Over the winter months, we operate the floor for a couple of hours in the morning and a couple of hours in the evening. The floor heater uses about ten watts per square foot. This means it is costing about seven dollars per month for our floor area of 50 square feet. You wouldn't want to heat your whole home this way because it could cost more than \$1,000 a month for a 2,000 square foot home. We figure our initial cost was about \$300 more than just putting down tile. For a small space and a few hours a day, this seems a reasonable luxury.

The idea of using heated floors isn't new. It originated in Roman times when rooms were heated by running flues from slave-tended wood-burning fires under elevated marble floors. Centuries later in this country, renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright created a modern version by placing copper pipes carrying hot water in concrete floors. These were a feature in several postwar subdivisions, including Levittown. Unfortunately, this luxury didn't last because the pipes eventually corroded, leaving the owners with the option of abandoning them or jackhammering their floors to do the repair.

When our floors were completed and we first stepped on that wonderfully warm floor, we agreed it was the best decision we made in our whole project. The heat seems to massage your cold feet on chilly mornings, and the warmth can be felt all through the space. That's one decision we don't regret, and anyone who has taken the plunge into radiant floor tiles will probably agree. If you are thinking about redoing flooring in your bathroom, or even a mudroom or foyer, adding in-floor heating is a luxury worth considering.

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Stone Mountain and Tucker Rotary Clubs

Rotary Clubs of Tucker and Stone Mountain Focus on Education and Community Service

The new year started out with a focus on education and community service for The Rotary Clubs of Tucker and Stone Mountain.

The Stone Mountain club continued its support of local schools with hands-on member involvement. Member Anresa Davis helped coordinate the donation of a new refrigerator from Park Springs Retirement Community to Stone Mountain Elementary School; members Chris Brand and Scott McEvoy helped deliver and set it up in the teachers' lounge. Irvine Weekes was invited by fellow member and Redan High School math teacher Rodney Finkley to visit the school's Interact Club and speak to student members about life skills and career planning.



The Tucker club enjoyed a visit from Scottish exchange student Lily Bownes, who is currently enrolled at Georgia State University under the Georgia Rotary Student Program (GRSP). Bownes is being sponsored in GRSP by the Tucker and Buckhead Rotary Clubs.

Both clubs kicked off the year with engaging and informative speakers, many offering club members opportunities for additional community service. The Stone Mountain club hosted Brian Bollinger, executive director, Friends of Refugees, and Julie Zeff, community engagement manager, The Breman Museum. Tucker club members enjoyed presentations from Cory Babb, environmental analyst of Georgia Power, and Blake Watts, COO, Rockdale Medical Center.

In late December, Stone Mountain members and Smoke Rise residents Al and Carol Lipphardt joined members of VFW Post 12002 for Operation Santa in Savannah. The annual event provided a worry-free day for the children of parents deployed in the U.S. armed services. Beneficiaries of this year's effort were members of the 75th Ranger Battalion, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) "Night Stalkers", and the 165th Airlift Wing. The Stone Mountain club has contributed about \$20,000 to Operation Santa since the program began in 2005.

Two members of the Stone Mountain club were honored with significant appointments within the Rotary organization. Chris Brand was appointed president-elect of the DeKalb Rotary Council for the 2018-2019 Rotary year. Current President Gillian Leggett has accepted the role of Assistant Governor for District 6900 Governor Elect Court Dowis for his term beginning 1 July 2018.

The Stone Mountain club meets every Tuesday for noon lunch in the fellowship hall of Stone Mountain First United Methodist Church; the Tucker Club meets every Thursday at noon in the fellowship hall of First Christian Church of Atlanta in Tucker. To learn more about the clubs and their upcoming programs, go to stonemountainrotary.org or tuckerrotary.org or follow the clubs on Facebook and Twitter.

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HEALTH NOTES:

by Cheri Schneider, M.D.



Get to the Heart of it: Know your Risk of Heart Disease

This winter season has been a sad one for me in many ways. Three friends I know lost their spouses. All of them thought they were healthy. In fact, one was an avid runner and took care of himself-- exercising regularly and eating better than most of us do. What I want to point out this month is, that each of you should have some idea of what your risk of having a major cardiovascular event is. By that, I mean: how likely are you to have a stroke, heart attack or to die suddenly of cardiovascular disease? February is 'Heart Health Month'. Use this month to calculate your risk of heart disease.

First, you need to know that not all risks for heart disease can be modified or changed. These unmodifiable risks are risks you were born with. Men have a greater risk of heart disease than women do. A man's risk of heart disease begins to rise at age 45. A woman's risk begins to increase after menopause or about age 55. Family history of early heart disease or sudden death, and race are unmodifiable risk factors. Blacks and South Asians have greater rates of cardiovascular disease (CVD) than whites. East Asians (especially recent immigrants) have lower rates of CVD. All of these risk factors are significant.

Significant risk factors that you *can* change include: smoking, having high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and obesity. Stopping smoking is the most important modification you can make! Treating high blood pressure and high cholesterol lowers CVD events too.

Other risk factors that are important, but not currently considered major risks are: physical inactivity, overweight or obesity, borderline diabetes or borderline hypertension, having mental stress or depression or having metabolic syndrome (pre-diabetes, pre-hypertension, obesity and abnormal lipids together). There are other minor risk factors that do not have conclusive hard evidence behind them. Ask your doctor about these.

What next? I would suggest you go to your regular doctor and have your blood cholesterol, lipids and blood sugar drawn. Write down your blood pressure, weight and height. Find out if you are overweight (BMI>25), or obese (BMI>30 or waist circumference >35 inches female and >40 male). The internet has an easy to use BMI calculator or your doctor can tell you.

With these numbers (they are written down, right?) go to one of two CVD risk calculators online and plug in the numbers: 1) Framingham Hard Coronary risk (10 year risk) or if you have already had an event like a heart attack or stroke, the Framingham Recurrent Coronary Risk; 2) ACSVD Risk Calculator (google this... there are several websites).

Talk to your doctor if your calculated risk of CVD is higher than average. You may be a candidate for low dose aspirin prevention or another intervention. If you have any symptoms of chest pain, discomfort, shortness of breath or irregular heartbeat, you may need an EKG or further work-up. Sometimes, even without symptoms you should have a thorough work-up. Your cholesterol should be checked about every 5 years. Your blood Sugar should be checked every 3-5 years—sooner if you have a family history of diabetes or had diabetes during pregnancy.

My last word of advice comes from something I heard from the pulpit: "More men (women too, I wonder??) have died from Stubbornness, than from any other disease." There is truth to this statement! DON'T be stubborn and ignore symptoms of heart disease: chest pain, pressure, aching or burning --with exercise, especially; Pain down your left arm or into your back and jaw, shortness of breath; extreme fatigue, weakness and faintness, nausea, sweating, irregular or fast heart beat or all of the above. Call an ambulance! Do not try to 'wait until morning' or drive yourself to the hospital. You could die waiting or die on the way. Don't be a statistic like one of my friends was! Get to the heart of it. Know your risk! And be honest with yourself if you have symptoms. If my friend had been honest with himself and gone to the doctor instead of staying at home and complaining, he might still be alive today!

NEWS YOU CAN USE

By Aviva Hoffmann

A Review of Sanitation Services

Most everyone in Smoke Rise knows by now that our areas services have gone through a few changes. We became part of the City of Tucker in a November 2015 referendum and Tucker now provides our planning and zoning, code enforcement and parks and recreation services. However, DeKalb County still provides many other government services – including sanitation.

In 2014, our area was part of a new sanitation pilot program that included 28,000 households throughout the county. The final phase of the new program became effective countywide in April 2016 – changing the pickup schedule to once per week and requiring the use of green, county-issued garbage roll carts for all household garbage. Non-approved garbage containers are not serviced anymore, but excess garbage can be placed in secure, durable plastic bags alongside roll carts on collection day.

With the new collection program, there are a few details to keep in mind. All household garbage must be secured in plastic bags prior to placement in the roll cart. This reduces odor and insects, minimizes litter falling onto the street, and helps keep the inside of the carts clean. Place your cart curbside by 7:00 a.m. on your designated collection day - away from other objects, including mailboxes, utilities, driveways, sidewalks, drainage systems or roadways.

There has been much conversation and a little confusion on how to position the roll carts. Their placement is not essential right now, because crews are currently using semi-automated trucks. When we get the fully-automated trucks later this year, you will need to place your roll carts curbside in the correct way – with the arrow pointing to the street –so that they are properly serviced. Also, do not place anything on top of the roll cart. Carts must be removed by 7:00 p.m. on your scheduled collection day.

The current semi-automated system helps reduce injuries to sanitation workers from repeated hand loading or manual lifting of heavy carts and containers. By using the new carts with the semi-automatic trucks, workers can also avoid exposure to potentially harmful contents of garbage such as sharp objects and harmful chemicals. Decreasing worker injuries also helps reduce costs to the county for providing collection services. The fully automated trucks and procedures are expected to help with these matters even more.

The streamlined sanitation service means we only have to bring items to the curb once a week. That includes garbage, recycling, and yard trimmings. All acceptable, recyclable materials should be placed curbside in county-approved, blue recycling roll carts. Customer-provided recycling containers from a third party are not approved for recycling collection service. To subscribe to the Sanitation Division's FREE residential single-stream recycling program, contact (404) 294-2900 or visit the website: keepdekalbbeautiful.org.

Yard trimmings must be placed in approved 20 to 40 gallon receptacles, or bundled and tied, and placed at the curb before 7:00 a.m. on collection day, also away from other objects. You may use biodegradable paper bags (no plastic bags) and durable metal cans with durable handles (20-40 gallons).

Some of you have driveways that lead directly to heavily trafficked roads and need to ensure your roll cart is not left in the road, or the middle of the entrance to your driveway, after being serviced. Sanitation workers are aware of this and are usually pretty good about it. However, if you need to reach the Sanitation Customer Service Division, you may call (404) 294-2900. This is also the number to use if you have any sanitation-related questions or need to arrange pickup of bulky items.

It's a dirty job – and DeKalb's Sanitation Division is happy to do it!

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You can find DeKalb's Sanitation Collection Procedures online as well at:

<http://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/sites/default/files/2017%20Collection%20Procedures%20Brochure.pdf>City of Tucker: (678) 597-9040, <http://tuckerga.gov>.

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Safety Tips for Driving on Icy Roads

by Rene' Boven

Winter is here! And, we've already had some wintry weather conditions with likely more to come. The combination of near freezing temperatures and precipitation causes hazardous road conditions that can prove costly to motorists. Staying off the roads during bad weather is the best way to avoid an accident but it isn't always possible. If you must get behind the wheel when icy roads are predicted, there are some smart driving tips that can help you reach your destination safely.

1. Before you leave, take a few minutes to clear your vehicle of accumulated ice or snow. Make sure that your windshield and other windows are fully defrosted.
2. Start off slowly so you can get a feel for the condition of the road and properly judge your steering and braking capabilities.
3. As you travel, adjust your speed to changes in the road conditions to ensure you have enough time to slow down or stop safely.
4. When turning or attempting to stop, start slowing down three times sooner than you would when roads are clear and dry.
5. To maintain control of your vehicle, steer smoothly and avoid changing lanes abruptly.
6. Stay aware of the road ahead at all times so that you won't have to accelerate or apply your brakes too sharply. Ice can make your car slide and especially when you brake hard/quickly.
7. Watch further ahead than you would when driving on a bare road so you can react to danger quickly.
8. If you need to apply your brakes, do it gently so they don't lock up. If you feel your wheels starting to lock, ease off the brake pedal gradually.
9. Know what type of brakes you have and how best to use them under icy conditions. With an ABS braking system, you should apply steady pressure. If you don't have ABS brakes, you should pump the brake pedal gently.
10. If you feel you're starting to skid, slowly ease your foot off the gas pedal but don't attempt to apply the brakes. As your tires start to gain traction, slowly turn the steering wheel in the direction that you want the front wheels to go.
11. Allow an eight to ten-second gap between you and the vehicle ahead to help prevent a rear-end collision. Maintain three times the distance that you normally would when driving on clear, dry roads.
12. Turn your lights on to ensure your vehicle is easily seen by other drivers.
13. To improve your own visibility, use your wipers and defrosters to keep your windows clear.
14. Clean your lights periodically to remove any build-up of ice and salt spray.
15. Make sure that your tire pressure is correct so they can grip the road properly.
16. To improve your traction, use a lower gear on hills and turns.
17. Turn off your cruise control so that you're in complete control of your vehicle.
18. Drop your speed when you approach bridges, overpasses, tunnels and any areas of the roadway that are shaded. Even if the air temperature is above 32 degrees, these areas may still be slick.
19. When you encounter a plow or sanding truck, don't attempt to pass. The driver's reduced visibility makes it risky, and the road ahead is probably in worse condition.
20. Don't be lulled into a false sense of security just because you're driving a four-wheel or all-wheel drive vehicle. They don't offer any additional stopping or steering benefits on icy roads.

Icy roads pose a danger to even the most experienced drivers. Reducing your speed and exercising caution can lower your risk of becoming an accident statistic and may even save your life. So, keep these tips handy and review when having to drive in not so prime conditions.



The Garden Enthusiast – Backyard Nature Station on Main Street in Tucker will hold its sixth silent auction February 5th through the 17th. This auction will benefit Kelly Cofer Park on North Park Drive. The park contains a pollinator garden, the Peach Pit Pavilion, the Fruit Stand Stage, and Tucker's only public swimming pool.

The Friends of Kelly Cofer Park plan to

- recreate the Memorial Garden and native plant walk started by the Tucker Women's Club in the early 1960s
- create a trail between the Pollinator Garden and the Peach Pit
- clear overgrown invasive plant species such as kudzu

Auction items include gift certificates for a private concert, photography portrait packages, restaurants, Main Street School of Art and horseback riding as well as jewelry, art work by local artists Louise Georges and Sally Eppstein, a Cricket Forge Table/birdbath, fruit tree seedlings, birdhouse, garden art, and much, much more. We will continue to take auction items through February 1st. If you would like to donate an item, please call Linda at 404-474-7072.

The Garden Enthusiast has raised over \$13,250 during the last four years for the Tucker Butterfly Garden, Henderson Park Native Plant and Wildlife Walk, and John's Homestead. Plan to stop by The Garden Enthusiast, place a bid or two, and support another great community resource. Volunteers from Kelly Cofer Park will be available on both Saturdays and will provide some light refreshments. There will also be musical entertainment for you to bid by. And, of course, we'll keep you informed during the two week period to let you know if you've been outbid!

2316 D Main Street, Tucker, GA 30084
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Downsizing...continued from page 1

Using the 'three area system' of tackling a closet, room or storage area can be a big help. Area one is for the things you want to keep and will definitely use. Area two is for items that still have useful life left that you would like to donate. Area three is for discards. These are things that you no longer need and have no value to anyone (other than to possibly be recycled). This kind of sorting is not a one-day task! It is one of the best places to spend money to hire outside helpers or professional organizers who have no emotional connections to your possessions as they can move the process forward.

Local realtors, estate planners and churches will be able to help put you in touch with professionals who can assist you. College students are a great resource for hauling stuff to the donation center or moving boxes from the attic or home. Care should be taken to get references from anyone you allow to have access into your home. Be sure to have someone at home with you when they come.

Last, but not least, is the process of "gifting" books or small items to your best friends, family members or others that you would like to remember with a little memento from your life. My favorite aunt gave each niece a teacup and saucer from her china set.

The current trend among younger homeowners is for homes to incorporate smaller spaces with fewer possessions. If your baggage, no matter what your age, is requiring too much of your time and effort to maintain, it could be time to let go and enjoy life without it. One of my friends who moved into a smaller home told me that it is amazing how quickly she forgot about possessions that she once collected and valued. It is never too early to begin "decluttering" and planning for the future. Even if you do plan to age in the house you currently own, the freedom of releasing "stuff" and knowing what is in each box will be a relief as years go by.

In upcoming articles we will explore some of the places where you can recycle, donate or sell household items, clothing or collectibles.

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Morning Glories Learn Landscape Design Do's and Don'ts

January's meeting of the Morning Glories was a primer on landscape design from Doug Dorough, plantsman and landscape professional for over fifty years. Doug's firm, Dorough Landscape Co. is located on the Lawrenceville Highway in Lilburn and was once again voted as the "Best Landscape Company in Gwinnett County".

Doug shared numerous before and after pictures of the transformation of ordinary, blank or overgrown landscapes into breath-taking vistas of lively color, shading, texture and detail.

He and his team have tackled many complex issues all over Atlanta, from water retention ponds to challenging terrain with red clay. He reminded us that landscapes should complement the architecture of the home, not overpower it. Noting that layers of landscape build an overall design with the use of dwarf groundcover, lower growing perennials and shrubs and medium shrubs to complement the tree canopy, he showed many examples of successful plantings.

Varieties of materials can define the space between the lawn and flowerbeds or planting areas including plants, bricks and stones as edging. Benches, paths and sculpture add to the garden's function and enjoyment. He demonstrated that narrowing a passage from one area to another can create an illusion of larger overall space within the garden. Doug's talk was inspirational. Now we need to get busy once it warms up a little bit!

In other news, the Morning Glories donated 313 bars of soap to the Lilburn and Stone Mountain cooperatives. Elaine Marchbanks and Joy Zaidan won the raffle prizes of gift certificates to Hall's Florist. The Club will be participating in several events in the next month including attending the Atlanta Botanical Garden's Flower Show February 23-25 and the Life Member Luncheon at Callanwolde on February 22, 2018 where we will honor Nancy Hudgins, Brenda Jones and Peggy Youngblood. Hostesses for the meeting were Quill Duncan, Kim Fair, Susan Morrison, Carolyn Woodson and Joy Zaidan who are pictured with Doug Dorough.



Carolyn Woodson, Kim Fair, Doug Dorough, Quill Duncan, Joy Zaidan, Susan Morrison

Mountain Shadow Garden Club to Feature "Keukenhof—Heaven on Earth -Tulips of Holland"

The meeting of Mountain Shadow Garden Club (MSGC) on Monday evening, February 12, will feature a program on the spring flowering bulbs of Keukenhof in the Netherlands, presented by Jennifer Stenjem. Also known as the Garden of Europe, Keukenhof is located in Lisse, about 20 miles from Amsterdam in South Holland. The gardens cover almost 80 acres and are planted with more than 800 varieties of tulips and other spring flowering bulbs.

Jennifer and her husband travel each year and visited Keukenhof in 2017 for the second time. "I acquired my love of gardening from my dad, who loved sharing his tulips with his neighbors," she explains. Her gardening interests also include herbs, antique roses, kitchen gardens, hummingbirds, the smell of spring and the colors of spring in a Georgia garden. She is a member of Mountain Shadow Garden Club.

A native of Wisconsin, Jennifer and her husband moved to Tucker about three years ago. She works for Emory University and is also attending law school.

The presentation will include photos of the millions of spring blooming bulbs at Keukenhof, where winding walking paths and vistas offer visitors a close-up perspective. Jennifer will also discuss the fascinating history of tulips.

The Keukenhof grounds include a castle built in the 1600s. In most years, up to one million or more visitors from around the world visit Keukenhof during the peak bloom season from mid-March to mid-May.

Mountain Shadow Garden Club 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. Refreshment and socializing follow.

For more information, contact MSGC President Jeff Raines at 404-641-8633. www.facebook.com/MtShadowGardenClub.



Georgia Iris Society

2:00 p.m., Saturday, February 10

St. Bartholomew Episcopal Church, 1790 Lavista Road, Atlanta, GA.

Our speaker will be Bob Wells who formed his media production company, Wells Communications, Inc in 1976. Bob has filmed all over the US and Europe. He also teaches tai chi. He will present "Mystery of the Trees", his documentary regarding the curious bent trees found all across the United States.

Join us for education, beautification and recreation. Our meetings are free to the public and all are welcome. For more information, contact Kathy Blackwell (678) 471-2604.

Mountain Mums Garden Club

The Mountain Mums Garden Club's January 10 meeting was held in the home of Cheri Schneider. Debra Adams, Helen Homrich and Rene Boven co-hosted. Dawn Hines, Dekalb County Master Gardener, gave us a very informative and entertaining talk about using native wildflowers in the garden. Her slide show catalogued over eighty plants. Many of her photographs were taken from her own garden or were photographed from the roadside as 'drive-by shootings.'

Dawn mentioned that it takes about seven hundred and twenty plants to survive and be completely sustained in the wild. Native plants usually originate- without human introduction- in a region or area and tend to have a natural resistance to pests. All native plants are not 'good', however. Poison ivy and Virginia creeper are examples of 'bad' native plants.

Dawn Hines suggested that many non-native plants work well when mixed into the landscape with native wildflowers. Heritage plants work especially well as they are usually non-invasive and have adapted well to our land. A heritage plant is one that has survived for over one hundred years. Many were introduced from Asia. Examples are Mophead hydrangeas, camellia sasanqua, Pieris japonica and Camellia japonica. Problem heritage plants include English ivy, Chinese Privet, Golden Bamboo, Tree-of Heaven, Leatherleaf Mahonia, Monkeygrass, Princesstree, Mimosa, Chocolate Vine and Scarlet Firethorn. These should NOT be planted, as they are invasive. A complete list of plant to avoid is found at www.invasive.org.

Several websites have good information about native plants to use in the garden: www.gnps.org, www.findnativeplants.org and www.wildflower.org, or you can call 1-800-ASKUGA1 to speak to a Master Gardener.

The Mountain Mums next meeting will be on February 14 at the home of Lucy White. The Mums also will have hosted the Walk to Remember January 20 and will be visiting Brookstone Senior Living for a winter project with the residents on February 9. If you would like to join us, call membership chair Debra Jones 678-260-7806.



Debra Adams, Cheri Schneider, and Rene Boven

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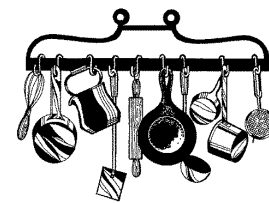
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HODGE PODGE

By Jenny Hall

Sometimes when I can't sleep I look for recipes on-line and end up finding all kinds of weird stuff...bizarre things - especially if I google: "trendy food" or "new age cooking". Can you believe that preserved egg yolks can be grated over your food like cheese? Who dreamed up the process of putting egg yolks into salt and sugar and letting time create a perfect yellow orb of egg mystery food? I tried the candy corn/peanut butter mixture that is supposed to taste just like a Butterfinger® candy bar. How could I resist that? Melt candy corn and stir in peanut butter and Voila! Butterfinger colored fudge! Notice I did not say anything about flavor. It absolutely does not taste like anything. Well, it closely resembles those awful peach-colored circus peanut candy things that sit around filling stations for months. You could actually spread peanut butter on a styrofoam peanut and get the same taste and sensation. The experiment was a dismal failure. Yes, I ate it anyway.

What I did discover is that fried grits are a wonderful thing. Wow! They are delicious, easy and fabulous for any meal. Have some sautéed shrimp to serve on top or mix up a batch of tomato chutney to go alongside. I love this recipe.

Andouille Sausage Cheese Fried Grits

1 cup quick grits (not instant)
3 cups water and 1 cup milk
1 teaspoon salt
1 Andouille sausage link, diced (or use about 1/2 cup diced ham)
1/2 cup each diced green pepper and onion
1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
1 beaten egg and about 1 cup flour (gluten free works fine)

Stir grits into cold water and milk; bring to a boil, stirring. Add in the sausage, salt, diced pepper and onion and continue to cook about 20 minutes, stirring and watching carefully so they don't either stick or splatter all over your cooktop. Remove from heat and add cheese, stirring to melt. Taste and add salt and pepper. Line a rimmed cookie sheet with non-stick parchment/foil and spread the grits in the pan. Put in fridge at least 2 hours. When cold, just cut into rounds with biscuit cutter, dip into egg and lightly dredge in flour. Fry in a little vegetable oil until golden. Lots of people skip that part entirely and just pan fry as is. Of course you can cut these into heart shapes too if you're trying to impress everyone. Keep warm in oven until you want to serve. Wonderful with any meat and I love this chutney with it.

Tomato Chutney

1 (28 ounce) can of chopped or whole tomatoes (un-drained and broken up)
1 cup brown sugar
1 green pepper, chopped
5-10 drops hot sauce
1 medium onion, chopped
2 Tablespoons catsup
1/2 teaspoon pepper

There isn't any vinegar in this, so it's not really a chutney, but close enough. Delicious with hash browns too. And a dollop of sour cream on top is amazing.

Cook the green pepper and onion in a little water first to soften them, then just dump in everything else. Bring to a boil, stirring, and then lower heat. Keep cooking, stirring once in a while, until most of the liquid starts to evaporate or until you just like the consistency. Use a fork to keep breaking up big tomato pieces. Add salt, pepper or more hot sauce once it's cooked down the way you like it. Serve with fried grits or hash browns or use to liven up black eyed peas, lentils, etc.

I also discovered that pancakes for dinner are a national treasure and they can be baked. Boy, I jumped on this technique like a mouse on a cheeto. Here's all you do:

Baked Blueberry Pancakes

1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries (or raspberries, etc.)
1 box of pancake mix (I used King Arthur Gluten free. You want enough to make 16-20 pancakes. That's usually about 2 cups of dry mix.)

Follow directions to make pancakes on the box, using the amount needed to make about 16-20 pancakes. Preheat oven to 350° and lightly spray a 9x13 pan with nonstick fake-o stuff. Scatter blueberries over the bottom of the pan and then just pour all the batter over. Pop into the oven for 20-25 minutes until puffed and done. They will be thick and fluffy, so if you like thin pancakes, you can use a 15x10 jelly roll pan and reduce cooking time. These cut into squares easily and everyone can eat at the same time. These were a big hit around here over the holidays, and it would be pretty easy for kids to make these pancakes for mom on Valentines Day with supervision. And of course these can be cut into rounds and hearts and all kinds of nonsense if you are feeling creative and just want to eat all those scraps. If kids want to make chocolate chip pancakes, scatter the chips over the batter instead of on the pan so the chocolate doesn't overcook or stick.

Boy Scout Troop 876 News by Nate Young, Troop 876 Historian

In December BSA Troop 876 scheduled a cold weather backpacking trip to Blood Mountain. Parts of the trail were very icy and there was lots of snow. Luckily we didn't slip and fall! The Scouts had a lot fun and enjoyed the hike. We camped at a shelter approximately 5 miles from the trail head with a beautiful view of Blood Mountain. In the morning we hiked 2 miles back to Lake Winfield Scott. The entire trip was around 7.5 miles. The Scouts got good exercise and became stronger hikers. Overall we had a great time and hope to go backpacking again soon. If you would like to go on fun trips like this, then come for a visit to 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



(L to R) Lucas Mathews-Smith, Micah Pullen, Jackson Lee, Nate Young



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