

# SMOKE SIGNAL



VOLUME 50, ISSUE 9

Serving the Smoke Rise Community Since 1968

December, 2017

www.smokesignalnews.com



*The Smoke Signal staff  
wishes your family  
a very Merry Christmas!*

## The Christmas Tree and The Hanukkah Bush

By Joel Gilbert

Christmas is an annual festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ observed in the United States on December 25th. Although the actual date of Jesus' birth is unknown, and despite scholars pointing out that "sheep in the field" would be more likely a September date, in the fourth century, the Western Christian Church placed Christmas on December 25, a date that was later adopted in the East.

Hanukkah (also spelled Chanukah) on the other hand has no repeating date in our calendar, because it is based on the phase of the moon. Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday commemorating their victory over a tyrant king and the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem more than 2,200 years ago. It is observed for eight nights and days, starting on the 25th day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar, which may occur at any time from late November to late December.



The decorations, use of a Christmas tree, and the giving of presents have murky beginnings. Scholars point to pagan rituals and ideas, which of course make serious Christians cringe. Being Jewish, I grew up envious of the pretty tree and decorations. Eventually, my parents, like most others we knew, bowed to the cultural pressures, and we put up a Hanukkah bush ... a Christmas tree that we decorated with the Star of David (the six pointed star Jews have always used to symbolize themselves) on top. As a child, I preferred Hanukkah to Christmas because you got a present every night of the holiday, not just on one morning. Plus, it was kind of fun lighting a candle each night with the family. This ritual celebrates that a one-night supply of oil, lighting the menorah needed to rededicate the Temple, miraculously lasted eight days.

Gift-giving and many other aspects of the Christmas holiday today have significant economic impacts. The big shopping day after Thanksgiving is called Black Friday because of so many people starting their Christmas shopping, and it is the first time in the calendar year that retailers finally make a profit ("are in the black vs. the red ink"). The challenge today is to remember the reasons for the season and to not get caught up in the commercialization, as much fun as it might be.

Then, we have the age-old questions about Santa Claus and whether we should even talk about this with our kids. For those who have become callous about it, I suggest you read the proof presented in the most read newspaper article of all time: "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus." Interesting, it is the most reprinted newspaper editorial in the English language.

## Smoke Rise Community Association News

By Michael J. Huerkamp, SRCA President

The entire Board of Directors of the SRCA wishes each of our neighbors the best of holiday times and good fortune in the New Year. Please make it your resolution at the beginning of 2018 to renew your \$35.00 membership or, if you have not been a member, to join in response to our mailing or at smokerise.org. Although we've been the source organization in Smoke Rise, SRCA commitments and projects to promote and enhance our community have reached the point of exceeding income. Have you used our Facebook page or Nextdoor site to find a service or engage in a forum? Have you attended our annual membership meeting, any number of Sears property development presentations, or even any of the town halls led by our council members? Would you like to play in the dirt or simply relax in our community garden as it is rejuvenated? Do you want to get involved in the vision for development and use of the three city park tracts located within Smoke Rise? Have you perused our Little Libraries or appreciated the sign toppers that distinguish our neighborhood? Have you ever wondered if we could do something with more panache at the Rosser Rd. stack and with a little more pop at other chimneys? If you have, please be inspired to lend crucial support to SRCA by paying your 2018 dues. Every dollar received by the SRCA is invested back into our community by our all-volunteer board and is thus returned to you. Send check to: SRCA, P.O. Box 870793, Stone Mountain, GA 30087 or go to the SRCA website at: <http://www.smokerise.org>.



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## A Whole Lot of Christmas

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas everywhere you go! That sentiment is definitely true at 1833 Smokerise Summit. The Christmas season is in full swing, and Santa Claus is preparing for his weekend visits to take photos in his sleigh. As in years past, donations are being collected for the Georgia Make-A-Wish Foundation. Please note that 100% of collected donations go directly to this worthy charity. Help us exceed last year's total, and reach our new goal of \$5,500. Also, be sure to take a picture in our newest addition.

If you have any unwanted outdoor Christmas decorations, especially plastic figurines, you may drop them off, and you can be sure they will be put to good use!

Merry Christmas!

## HOMES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Start your holiday season with a  
Tour of Homes  
Saturday, December 9

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club, a philanthropic organization, will sponsor a "Homes for the Holidays" Home Tour from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on December 9.

Tickets are \$25.00. The tour includes two homes in Smoke Rise, one Main Street business with antique cars and the Stone Mountain



Manor. Lunch is included and will be served at the Stone Mountain First United Methodist Church. Vendors will be at the church for you to do some Christmas shopping. Gather your neighbors and enjoy a fun day. Tickets are available from any club member, or call Kim Sekulow (770) 616-5362 or Elizabeth Wells (404) 630-9925.



## Smoke Signal

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

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

### December Calendar of Events

- 9 "Home for the Holidays" Home Tour  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- 9 Breakfast with Santa, 9:30 a.m.  
Marriott Evergreen Resort & Conference Center,  
Stone Mountain
- 12 Hanukkah Begins at sunset
- 12 Open Mic with Ricky and Bambi!  
Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- 13 Mountain Mums Meeting at 9:45 a.m.
- 16 Smoke Rise Academy of Arts Holiday Show  
Smoke Rise Baptist Church, 1:00 p.m.
- 25 Merry Christmas!
- 31 New Year's Eve

### January 2018

- 27 Mountain Mum's Walk to Remember, 9:30 a.m.

## Smoke Signal Deadlines

### DECEMBER 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 **DECEMBER 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 visit our website at [www.smokesignalnews.com](http://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!



### Candlelight Christmas Eve Service December 24, 6:00 p.m.

#### Mount Carmel Christian Church

6015 Old Stone Mountain Rd.  
 Stone Mountain

Service will include  
 special music, communion  
 and a short film.



Anthony Clark Blackburn, Jr. of Smoke Rise, graduated Basic Military Training for The Air Force on October 27, 2017. He graduated at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas with the 331st Training Squadron/FLT 733. Anthony will be studying Mandarin in Monterey, CA to become a Cryptologic Ground Linguist. His first duty station will be in Hawaii.

Life accomplishments include: Honor graduate from Stong Rock Christian School in Locust Grove, GA Eagle Scout, Airman.



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 to check out the  
 Little Libraries



that  
 have  
 popped  
 up  
 near the  
 swim  
 clubs.

### 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](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  
 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  
 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 Christian Education: Mardee Rightmyer  
 Pastor of Senior Adult Ministries: Rev. Jeanne Simpson  
 Telephone (770) 469-4881  
[www.eastminster.us](http://www.eastminster.us)

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

Sundays:  
 9:15 a.m. Sunday School for all ages  
 10:30 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary - nursery provided

Wednesdays:  
 5:45 p.m. Join us for dinner! - \$5 per adult  
 6:30 p.m. Program

### 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](http://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

Wednesdays beginning August 10:  
 5:30 p.m. Dinner  
 6:30 p.m. Bible Studies/Electives for All Ages

### 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 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.  
 Christmas Eve Service Times:  
 9:30 a.m. / 11:30 a.m. / 4:00 p.m. / 6:00 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).

# DANCE HALL DECATUR

NEW YEAR'S EVE TO BENEFIT



DEKALB  
HISTORY  
CENTER

Ring in the New Year with the best party in Decatur! The DeKalb History Center's holiday extravaganza features a professional DJ playing all your favorite dance hits. Admission includes delicious appetizers from Soiree Catering and Events, two drink tickets, sodas, a champagne toast at midnight, and holiday party favors. Guests can purchase additional drink tickets for beer, wine or cocktails. Festive holiday attire is encouraged!

Tickets are available at the DeKalb History Center offices or online at [www.dekalbhistory.org](http://www.dekalbhistory.org).

Sunday, December 31, 8:30 p.m. – 1:00 a.m.

Historic DeKalb Courthouse, 101 E. Court Square, Decatur GA 30030, Second Floor

Advance tickets are \$40/\$55 per adult and are available until December 29 at noon (all prices go up by \$10 after this deadline). Advance tickets are \$15 for guests under 21 only.

## Friends of Disabled Adults and Children Hosts Annual "Breakfast with Santa"

FODAC is holding its annual Breakfast with Santa at the Marriott Evergreen Resort and Conference Center in Stone Mountain on Saturday, December 9.

WSB Chief Meteorologist Glenn Burns and the big man himself will be present for this festive holiday breakfast! The event will include a gourmet breakfast buffet; free park admission with an all-attractions pass for each person (\$25 value); carol sing-along; a toy for each child; and an opportunity to meet and take pictures with Santa and his favorite elves.



Additional special guest host is FODAC spokesperson and board member Aimee Copeland.

Professional photographer on site at the event will take photos, which will be available via free online download.

Tickets are \$30 for adults and \$20 for children ages six -11; children five and younger are free when accompanied by an adult. All proceeds benefit FODAC's mission of providing refurbished durable medical equipment (DME) such as wheelchairs, walkers, shower benches and gait trainers to adults and children with disabilities at little to no cost.

For registration and info, visit [fodac.org/breakfast](http://fodac.org/breakfast).

**Feeling Crafty?**

Make your own holiday pop-up card to celebrate the winter season! Drop by the library Saturday, December 9, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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## WeLove2Read Inspires At-Risk Kids to "Read to Learn"

The Atlanta-based, non-profit WeLove2Read (WL2R) launches its first read-a-thon to provide books for at-risk Atlanta children. "A Very Merry Read" will commence at sundown on Friday, December 8 and end at sundown on Sunday, December 10. For those 48 hours, Atlanta readers will come together to enjoy holiday-themed books with friends, families and strangers, sharing the experience via social media. Sponsors can choose to support individual readers for as little as \$30.00, a family of five readers for \$90.00, or a team of 10 readers for \$240.00. Corporate sponsorships are also available.

All proceeds will be used to fund WL2R's mission of books for at-risk youth. Twenty-five percent of all dollars received go to local libraries for the exclusive use of adding to its children's collections. Many children visit libraries, and it's a way to supplement their reading materials without them or their families having to buy books. Sometimes library books are their only resource for reading. A well-read child becomes a reading adult and, moreover, a sense of curiosity is engendered. "What if, what about" become common questions and lead to the need to learn more.

The organization was founded by Sally Eggleston, who also serves on the DeKalb Library Foundation board, to encourage at-risk youth, including those in the foster system, homeless shelters, low-income families, transitional housing and in the juvenile justice system, by developing a love of reading through the gift of books. The program focuses on teaching kids not to "learn to read but to read to learn."

"These are the children most likely to fall behind in school, negatively altering the course of their lives and never realizing their full potential," stated Eggleston. "Their lost potential negatively impacts the communities in which they live and work. Students who don't read proficiently by the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school, and school dropouts cost our nation \$240 billion annually in social service expenditures and lost tax revenues."

More information is available at [welove2read.org](http://welove2read.org), or follow the organization on Facebook.

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**Emergency Pantry to Open Saturdays**

Residents of the Northlake, Embry Hills and Tucker area who are in need of food supplies will have a new resource on the weekends, as the NETWorks emergency pantry transitions to a schedule including regular Saturday hours.



A cooperative ministry of 17 local churches, NETWorks has opened its pantry on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for more than a decade. On those days, neighbors in need could obtain enough food to feed their families for one or two days, as well as obtain personal hygiene supplies.

“But we know that some of those in need work jobs that prevent them from accessing our pantry Monday through Friday,” explained NETWorks Program Director Stephanie Suggs. “The past few months we opened our pantry on some Saturdays as a pilot project. That went well, so we are moving to a new schedule in January.”

Under the new schedule, the pantry will be open Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The pantry depends on volunteers to sort donated food, welcome neighbors in need, and bag their goods. If you are interested in volunteering, please visit [www.networkscoop.org](http://www.networkscoop.org) or call (770) 939-6454.

**Donations Sought for Good Neighbor Christmas Store**

NETWorks will host its annual Good Neighbor Christmas Store the weekend of December 8-10 at the First Baptist gym on Main Street in Tucker. The store offers parents of limited means an opportunity to pick and purchase new toys for their children at greatly reduced prices.



This effort depends on donations of new, unwrapped toys from many generous people and organizations. NETWorks has developed a Good Neighbor Action Kit with instructions on how to donate toys or money, or volunteer time in the store. In particular, the action kit details how to conduct toy drives in conjunction with holiday parties, so a church or business Christmas party can celebrate

the season and spread joy to many families throughout the community.

The Good Neighbor Action Kit can be viewed or down-loaded at [www.networkscoop.org/christmas](http://www.networkscoop.org/christmas).

**Recurring Financial Contributions Now Accepted on NETWorks Website**

Many residents and organizations in the Northlake, Embry Hills and Tucker area have supported the fight against hunger and poverty by making donations on the NETWorks website. In the past, the website could accept only one-time gifts.

Now the website can accommodate those who wish to make on-going monthly donations. At [www.networkscoop.org/donate](http://www.networkscoop.org/donate), donors will learn, for example, that a \$50 monthly gift will fund pantry visits for 10 families. “Donors can make monthly contributions as small or large as they desire,” said Executive Director David Fisher. “The exciting prospect is that now they don’t have to visit the website every month to make donations, they can set a sustainable amount one time and thereby make automatic monthly gifts.”

**Open Mic with Ricky and Bambi!**

Do you sing, dance, play an instrument, or write poetry? Would you like to do a comedy routine, poetry reading, or read a passage from your favorite book? Then, come to open mic December 12 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Ricky and Bambi from Radio Cult and the Possum Kingdom Ramblers will be joining library staff to host. Come into the branch to pick up the list of songs they perform that YOU can sing! Or come play a song of your own! Call the library branch to register, or just show up!



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Tucker GA 30084



**Smoke Rise Academy of the Arts to Present First Annual Holiday Show**

The Smoke Rise Academy of Arts will present its First Annual Holiday Show at Smoke Rise Baptist Church on Saturday, December 16 at 1.00 p.m. The event will showcase the talented students of the academy, with ensembles and solos, instrumentals, singing, dancing and drama – all performed with holiday flair! The show is free to the public with no tickets required – come out and support these talented community artists!



*(photo: Marc Burcham) Students from Smoke Rise Academy of the Arts performed a holiday concert last year for residents of Atria Senior Living in Tucker.*

**Take a Veteran to School Day**

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman’s Club works with Smoke Rise Elementary School to hold a “Take a Veteran to School” Day each fall. Eight veterans spoke to classes at the school this year. The navy, army and air force were represented. Several veterans wore their uniforms, and several brought items for display. Members of the Beta Club served as guides to the classrooms. Mrs. Carolyn Thomas, parent liaison, furnished snacks and juices for the veterans.

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman’s Club is always looking for veterans to take part in this very important program to instill a sense of history in the students. Please contact Barbara Luton (770) 491-6711, if



you might be interested in joining the event next year.

*Participants pictured above, (L-R): Gerry Hutchinson, Warren Hoffman, Ray Ganga, Bill Rosenfeld, Jack Dress, Frank Luton. Not pictured: Willie Maffett, Jim Tucker*

**Smoke Rise Prep School Fun Run & Food Drive**

About 150 students, parents, and Smoke Rise Prep School teachers gathered for a Halloween Fun Run sponsored by the local businesses of the Smoke Rise/Tucker/Stone Mountain area in late October. This event incorporated art and physical fitness by having a school wide t-shirt design contest. Azalea Thomas, a 7th grade student, secured the winning design for the t-shirt prior to the event. Students wore their bright orange shirts and could be seen running the parking lot route in the Smoke Rise Baptist parking area as cars and trucks honked their approval, urged on by roadside cheerleaders. A drone, with a 360 panoramic camera, circled overhead during the event, allowing for the fun run to be carried live on social media. Students collected pledges prior to the race based on how many laps they projected they could run. The student bringing in the highest amount earns the chance to blast the principal with silly string. Other incentives were also introduced throughout the process.



On a separate note, a presentation honoring all local Veterans/Veterans Day was held this year at SRP on November 16 during a special Thanksgiving catered lunch. The school is also joining forces with Smoke Rise Baptist, with a goal of preparing at least 100 Thanksgiving baskets this season for those in need who are living in the Lilburn/Stone Mountain area. The following items are being collected and all donations are graciously accepted at the school or church offices: large cans of sweet potatoes, cans of vegetables, canned/jarred fruit, cranberry jelly, cans or packets of gravy, boxes of stuffing, packages of cookies, cans or packets of potatoes (no boxes), mac and cheese boxes, and holiday luncheon napkins. Gifts cards for \$10-\$15 for meat are graciously accepted and should be turned into the church office.

**Smoke Rise Elementary School’s CCRPI Significant Increase Season’s Greetings, Smoke Rise Elementary School Stakeholders!**

The results are in! State School Superintendent Richard Woods announced that the 2017 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) scores show improvements across the board, in Georgia’s elementary, middle, and high schools. The CCRPI is Georgia’s statewide accountability system, better known as a school’s report card. Smoke Rise Elementary School is pleased to announce that its CCRPI score, under the direction of Principal Pamela McCloud, has made significant gains.

Smoke Rise Elementary School’s CCRPI Scores

2017	69.1
2016	59.3
2015	61.8
2014	58.2

Although on average, Georgia’s elementary school’s CCRPI gains are between one and two points, Smoke Rise Elementary has a 9.8 gain. Principal McCloud proudly exclaimed, “Smoke Rise has the best staff in the state. We analyze student data, collaborate, and plan for instruction to not only meet academic goals, but to see the needs of the whole child. When the whole child’s needs are met, it is then, that academic success can occur.”

Is the school academically there yet? Not yet, but staff strive daily to provide every Smoke Rise Elementary School student with the highest quality standards based education, which will enable them to be on or above grade level.

**THE SMOKE SIGNAL  
NEEDS A FEW  
VOLUNTEERS  
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which will enable them to be on or above grade level.

The school extends a special thank you to its 45 active partners, School Council, and the Smoke Rise Community for your unwavering acts of support. Happy Holidays!

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**Of Note to the Community: Safety Alerts & Watches**

by Cedric Ross

Over the next few months I plan to review personal security and internet or cyber-safety. This month I will start with home safety. The approach I propose is a layered one. Beginning with the outer layer and moving closer to the home, I want a would-be criminal to know your home is not a place he wants to enter. Entering the well-secured home will not benefit him, and if he tries, he is more likely to be caught.

Having security signs that are highly visible in several locations provides the outer layer of protection that may deter would-be criminals. Motion sensor lights and cameras are in the next layer. Are there areas that you would need a flashlight to see when the sun goes down? These areas need to be lighted. Cameras are next. Many cameras record what is seen, some remotely. There are pros and cons to connecting cameras to remote devices, but I will talk about that at a later time.

Moving a layer closer to the home requires taking a look at what can be seen from outside of the house. To prevent someone from hiding close to the home, remove or cut back shrubs and bushes that would conceal him. Close your curtains to limit what can be seen from outside. A timer that will activate indoor lights or other devices at different times can help.

Next, and at the top of the list of things that you can do to improve safety, is getting a dog. A pet can alert you when a stranger is approaching. While having a pet has its challenges, a robber is less likely to approach or enter your home if you have a dog that barks. Next, do the locks on your doors and windows work and do you use them? If you only have a single lock, would a second lock add value? Have you looked into reinforcing the doorjamb? You can strengthen the frame with a single purchase. Only you can determine the value of a secondary locking system. In another column, I will cover many different types of locks, including locks that you can rekey anytime you need to. Glass film on the windows can make it harder to break the glass.

We have moved inside the house now. What value is there in an alarm system? Alarms should let you know when someone enters an area that is being monitored. Arming your alarm system brings value when you are at home and away. You can have someone install it or buy a do-it-yourself model. The choice is yours. Just a side note - there are alarms that even have the sound of a barking dog. Also, a panic button on your car alarm can be activated from inside the house to scare a thief way.

The final item - which is a personal choice - is a firearm. You need to weigh the pros and cons and decide what is best for you. Whatever your choice, it is important that you approach it as an informed consumer. There are websites, courses, and concealed weapon classes on safely using a firearm. You have the right to be informed and choose wisely.

If you have crime or safety-related news, please email details to cedric64@live, so we can keep our neighborhood informed.

**Curb Appeal**

Have a look at the curbs on your street. Some are clean and swept, and with others, you can hardly find the curb stones! So many of them are packed with leaves, pine needles, twigs and all kinds of trash, and with leaves falling so fast this year, it will get worse. It makes such a difference in the appearance of the whole street, if all the curbs are clean.



Let's give a good first impression to a potential home buyer in Smoke Rise, when they turn onto one of our streets, by getting out and cleaning our curbs. If you have a yardman, please tell him to make sure he collects the leaves from your curb - and not to blow them into the middle of the road, or worse yet, into the sewer. Thank you!

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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 as a potential starting point. We maintain a free listing of contractors and other service providers that your neighbors have used successfully. If you want a copy of this list, please email Jim Farmer at: jimfarmer@live.com or call him at (770) 939-8949. We also ask for your feedback. Tell us about a contractor or service provider that you have used with opinions about their work. This information will be useful for future revisions of the list.



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**Community Supports Chili Cook-off Fund Raiser**

Many residents of The Smoke Rise Community came out in support of this golf and cooking fund-raising event for the Community School of Decatur. Held on a beautiful November Sunday afternoon at the Smoke Rise Country Club, it provided a great way for the community to help this good cause. Nineteen chefs created fantastic chili for all to enjoy, and local celebrity chefs included Bruce Lucia (President of Kroger Atlanta Division), Chef John Szymanski (Kroger's official Chef), and Susan Mojcik (2016 Chili Cook-Off Champion). This year's winner was Lorrie McNeil.

Organizers included: Jocelyn Ralston, Brenda Alexander (parents, TCS Board Members and co-chairs of the Smoke Rise Chili Cook-Off), Anne-Pierre Goursaud (TCS Board Member), and teachers and staff volunteers.



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**A Tribute to Gwinnett-Tucker Toastmasters Club 833**

If you are not familiar with the organization, you might wonder from the name, what is Toastmasters? Formed in 1932, Toastmasters is a nonprofit educational organization that operates clubs worldwide for the purpose of helping members improve their communication, public speaking, and leadership skills. Through its thousands of member clubs, Toastmasters offers a program of communication and leadership projects designed to help people learn the arts of speaking, listening, and thinking.

Apparently, there is great need for help with public speaking. It's hard to believe that fear of public speaking tops most lists of peoples' greatest fears, beating out fear of death, torture, or starvation. Researchers attribute this to our evolution as a collaborative species that needed to be part of a group to survive against predators. When required to stand before an audience and speak, our primitive response surfaces, we break out into a sweat and our stomachs knot up, because we fear rejection. The fear is so great because we aren't just afraid of being judged or embarrassed, we fear being ostracized and cast out of the group. Isn't that interesting?

My introduction to Toastmasters was when the owner of the engineering firm I worked for required the company president, a member of the Georgia House of Representatives at the time and an accomplished speaker, to participate in our local Toastmasters Club to polish up his speaking skills. Thinking this must be humiliating to someone of his stature, I asked him why this request would be made. To my surprise, he explained that firm's owner only asked the most promising employees to participate in Toastmasters and made time available in their schedules to participate. I didn't have to wait to be asked. Figuring that if it was good enough for him, it was right for me, I attended my first meeting that week at Toastmasters Club 833 that meets in Matthew's Cafeteria. For the next five years, I was actively involved with the Club and consider my time spent there some of the most impactful of my career.

Club 833 was founded June 1, 1973, making it one of the oldest Toastmaster organizations in Georgia. For more than 44 years, it has been meeting Friday mornings in the restaurant's back room and welcoming all comers. Some participants arrive early for breakfast, others come right at 7:30 a.m. when a crack of the gavel calls the meeting to order. After some brief Club business, the meeting begins with the Toastmaster of the Day introducing the various participants in that morning's meeting. This includes the speakers, the grammarian, the evaluators, the "Um" Counter, the timer-light operator, and the most terrifying of all---the Table Topics Master. Table Topics is first on the meeting agenda. For about 10 minutes, the Table Topic Master fires questions at specific individual who must stand and deliver a coherent 60 second response. Following that knee-shaker, most meetings have three prepared speeches by members working on various lessons, as they progress through the Toastmaster Handbook. Lessons include using gestures, vocal variety, story-telling, to name just a few.

If you have never attended a Toastmaster event, you are welcome to drop by and join a meeting, no reservations required. It's a warm and welcoming group where everyone there is working to refine their skills while helping their fellow members do the same. And guests can opt out of Table Topics!



1st row (kneeling left to right) Lane Burnett, Kathleen Bingaman, Frank Causey. (2nd row, l to r) Guest, Bob Burnett, Guest, Andrew Carlton, Angie Racine, Donita Townsel, Jay Hickson, Lewis von Herrmann. (3rd row, l to r) Karen Dishongh, Dana Plazyk, Linnea Buckhalter (4th row, l to r) Forrest Tuff, Matt Fazio, Cindy Smallwood, Dean Juresic

**Salute to Advertiser Neighbor, Community Builder, and Tax Accountant Extraordinaire**

By Susan Gilbert, Staff Writer

You may not know the name or the face, but you are likely served by his work across so many of our local businesses and civic organizations. Over the past 10 years, as I have become more involved with the Smoke Rise community, it surprised me how many times I heard the name Harry Strack and Tiger Tax. From the Tucker Business Association to the Smoke Rise Country Club, to Rotary, to the Smoke Signal and beyond, it seemed his reputation was everywhere an accountant was needed. And, as I have learned from having the honor of working with him at several of these organizations, his expertise, capabilities, and integrity are revered and much appreciated here in Smoke Rise.



Harry Strack

A Smoke Resident since 1973, Harry began his distinguished career with a B.S. in Accounting from Auburn. He went on from there to complete three years at Georgia State with coursework in Accountancy, Taxation, and Business Administration. His 40+ years in accounting and taxes include stints at a major CPA firm, 13 years as a founder and partner in a local CPA practice, and 25 years as CFO for a large manufacturing/distribution company. On top of all that, Harry is a retired Navy Captain with 22 years of active and reserve service.

Since his retirement in 2010, Harry has maintained his accounting and tax practice, serving a wide range of businesses including several nonprofits, estates, and trusts. His two children and five grandchildren keep him and his former wife, Susan, busy with family interests. When not at work with one of his many clients, Harry can be found playing golf, tennis, or supporting his Auburn football team.

I don't know how he finds the time, but he volunteers his time and talents to so many of our local organizations, including in addition to the ones named previously, Tucker Civic Association, Smoke Rise Community Association, Stone Mountain Historic Association, Stone Mountain Village Business Association, the Tucker Northlake CID, and the Stone Mountain Woman's Club. Whew!

According to his friend and comrade in community volunteer work, Bill Rosenfeld, President of Rosenfeld Jewelry, "Harry is one of the unsung heroes of our Smoke Rise community and Tucker in general. For more than 40 years, his Rotary work has helped people around the world. He has volunteered his time and service to our community working on boards and as treasurer to many of our civic organizations. Harry has never asked for anything in return. He makes a difference in our community. The world needs more Harry's."

I think that says it all!

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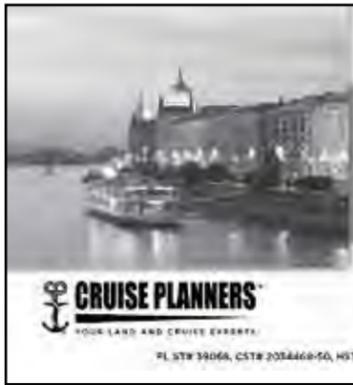
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**Stone Mountain and Tucker Rotary Clubs**

By L.A. Dison

**Rotary Clubs of Tucker and Stone Mountain Promote Community Service with Fall Events**

The Rotary Clubs of Tucker and Stone Mountain ushered in fall with two community events and a seasonal member social.

Stone Mountain sponsored a “trunk” during October’s “Trunk or Treat” in Stone Mountain Village, with members giving out candy and stickers to children and parents. The event was also World Polio Day, so there was plenty of “End Polio Now” literature to show Rotary’s commitment to eradicating the disease. Later that week, members donned festive and frightening garb to celebrate Halloween with a “Halloweenie” Roast at Stone Mountain Village’s Stillwell House - purported to be one of the most haunted residences in DeKalb County! There were plenty of “spirits” at the party - but not necessarily of the paranormal kind!



Tucker Rotarian Wayne Gresham helps Smoke Rise resident Chuck Schwartz unload some old electronics.



Smoke Rise columnist Jenny Hall greets young Treat-or-Treater at Stone Mountain’s Trunk or Treat.

The two clubs joined with Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC) to hold an Electronics Recycling Event one Saturday in November at Tucker’s Handy Ace Hardware. Residents from Tucker, Smoke Rise, Stone Mountain and surrounding communities came out to donate old televisions, satellite receivers, speakers and other electronics – many to make room for new purchases for the holidays. FODAC handled selling the old equipment to recyclers, and the funds went to benefit FODAC’s mission of providing durable medical equipment (such as wheelchairs, gait trainers and shower benches) to the disabled. FODAC has been instrumental in supporting recovery efforts in Houston, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, in the wake of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Both Tucker and Stone Mountain Rotary clubs have contributed manpower and funds to support



Rotary guest Emma Brantley and Smoke Rise resident Scott McEvoy dressed for RCSM’s Halloweenie Roast at Stone Mountain’s Stillwell House.

FODAC’s outreach to those who are still recovering from these horrible disasters.

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. Visitors, and those interested in learning more about Rotary, are welcome to attend as a guest of either club. To learn more about the clubs and their upcoming programs, go to [stonemountainrotary.org](http://stonemountainrotary.org) or [tuckerrotary.org](http://tuckerrotary.org), or follow the clubs on Facebook and Twitter.

**GFWC Stone Mountain Woman’s Club**

The members of the GFWC Stone Mountain Woman’s Club have been busy with activities and projects associated with the volunteer programs of the club. The Tallulah Falls School committee prepared and served a hot dog supper to students and chaperones from the school at Tallulah Falls, Georgia. The club furnishes tickets to the Tour of Southern Ghosts at Stone Mountain Park as a special Halloween treat for the students.



Candlelight Vigil: Standing: Barbara Luton, Andrea Redmond, Seated-Jackie Cornett, Marty Bryan

Prevention of Domestic Violence is a signature project of the GFWC General Federation of Women’s Clubs. Stone Mountain Woman’s club supports the Women’s Resource Center for the Prevention of Domestic Violence that is located in DeKalb county.



Tallulah Falls School Group (L-R): Elizabeth Wells, Shari Carter, Kim Cumbie, Barbara Luton, Pat Sartain, Sue Shoemaker, Sandra Hawkins

Members attended the candlelight vigil in Decatur that is a memorial service for the many victims of domestic violence in Georgia this year. Victims names are recited, and a short program is given in remembrance of them.

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

By Aviva Hoffmann

### DeKalb's Recycling Program Update

If you receive garbage pickup in DeKalb County, you are eligible to join the county's Residential Recycling Program (please!). This convenient, single-stream recycling program allows participants to put all approved, recyclable materials together into one recycling container at their curb, to be picked up by DeKalb County's Sanitation Division on collection day. There is no sorting of material required!

Effective since September, two recycling container options are offered. A new standard, 35-gallon recycling roll cart has replaced the 18-gallon recycling bin and the 40-gallon recycling bags. The existing 65-gallon recycling roll cart upgrade option continues. The 18-gallon bins will be repurposed for integration into the DeKalb County School District's recycling program.

If you are a new recycling subscriber, you will receive a complimentary 35-gallon roll cart after you enroll. The bigger, 65-gallon roll cart upgrade requires a one-time \$15.00 prepaid fee. If you are already an existing recycling subscriber, you need to trade in your 18-gallon bin by April 30, 2018. Use of the 40-gallon recycling bags are permitted until inventory is fully depleted. Also, sanitation will still service resident's 18-gallon bins in the meantime.

Also, you've likely heard about a recent change in the county's recycling procedures for glass. DeKalb residents can no longer place glass in curbside, single-stream recycling containers. Glass should be separated from other recyclable materials. For residents who don't want to sort their glass and drop it off at a recycling center, they should throw it away with the rest of the non-recyclable trash.

All glass items intended for recycling must be separated from other recyclable materials and taken to one of the locations where county-operated containers receive these items. Probably the most convenient location for Smoke Rise residents is at Fire Station 22 at 1859 Montreal Road, Tucker, GA 30084. The container there is located in the front area, to the right of the building. For a complete list of DeKalb County's glass drop-off locations, visit [www.dekalbsanitation.com](http://www.dekalbsanitation.com).

Before dropping off glass containers, you should rinse all food and liquids. Only food and beverage glass containers that are blue, green, clear or brown glass will be accepted. The drop-off locations will not accept pane glass, light bulbs, ceramic glass or non-beverage and non-food containers.

Requests for recycling roll carts can be submitted by mail, online, in person at the Sanitation Division's administrative office, or by email. A recycling subscription form must be completed for all roll cart requests, and is available online. Recycling bin trade-ins must be processed at the Sanitation Division's administrative office, 3720 Leroy Scott Drive, Decatur, GA 30032, Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

These recycling container changes provide subscribers with more durable and practical recycling container options, and support the Sanitation Division's move toward safer and more efficient recycling collection using fully automated collection vehicles to be introduced by fall 2018. The Sanitation Division services more than 178,000 households weekly, with more than 80,000 households participating in the curbside single-stream recycling program.

By recycling, we save energy and natural resources. If you think your pile of recyclables will not make much of a difference, think again. Smoke Risers, we need to line our streets with blue every week. For more information on recycling registration and how to get a roll cart, contact the Sanitation Division's customer service team at (404) 294-2900, or [sanitation@dekalbcountyga.gov](mailto:sanitation@dekalbcountyga.gov), or visit [www.dekalbsanitation.com](http://www.dekalbsanitation.com).

## HEALTH NOTES:

by Cheri Schneider, M.D.

### Treatment Options for Sleep Apnea

Last month, we explored what sleep apnea is and briefly how it is diagnosed. About 22 million Americans have sleep apnea - making them at higher risk for hypertension, heart attack, heart failure, heart beat irregularities, stroke and diabetes. As in most chronic conditions, there is a spectrum of severity of the disease. Treatment also is on the spectrum: simple and easy options first, then more complex solutions for more severe disease.

Mild cases of sleep apnea are often treated with lifestyle changes or mouth guard devices (sometimes called appliances). Lifestyle changes include:

- Losing weight, if you are overweight or obese. Even a few pounds can help.
- Sleeping on your side instead of your back. You may need to prop pillows along your back to keep from rolling over again.
- Smokers should quit smoking!
- Use of alcohol, sedatives, sleep aids or any medicines that make you drowsy (pain medicines, muscle relaxers, anti-seizure medicines, anti-depressants) should be re-evaluated by your physician, as these may worsen sleep apnea.

Mouth guards work by thrusting your jaw forward to open up the airway and keep your tongue from falling back. These appliances are usually custom-made by a dentist or orthodontist.

Sleep apnea and stomach acid reflux often go together. It is not known if reflux actually causes apnea, though. Elevating the head of the bed and avoiding meals three to four hours before sleep and use of anti-reflux medicines can help.

Patients with nasal allergies, nasal polyps or blockages on one side of the nose or the other may need steroid or allergy nose sprays, allergy medications or even a "nose job" to fix a deviated nasal septum.

Speaking of surgery... in the old days, surgery to remove excess tissue at the back of the throat was often done as a first line approach for patients with moderate to severe sleep apnea. Now it is rarely used first. Most patients have a trial of Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) first. Prior to surgery, careful patient selection is important as results can vary greatly! In children with sleep apnea, obstructing tonsils or adenoids may need to be removed. Adults rarely need this, as tonsils and adenoids tend to shrink with age.

Currently, using CPAP is first line therapy for moderate to severe sleep apnea. A CPAP machine is usually prescribed by the sleep specialist who does the diagnostic sleep study. Each prescription is written specifically for the patient and includes the equipment and the recommended settings on the machine. The settings recommended by the physician depend upon the severity of the apneas seen on the sleep test.

The CPAP machine works this way: The patient wears a mask that is connected by a hose to the machine at night when he goes to sleep. The machine puffs pressurized air through the mask into the airway to help keep the airway open while he or she sleeps. There are many types of machines and many types of masks. The main problems with CPAP machine therapy are patient discomfort from the mask, leaking around the mask, stuffy nose, rash on the skin where the mask fits, nosebleeds and dry mouth. Many patients have to try several masks to find the right one for them. Non-compliance is a common problem due to discomfort and awkward fit!

Finally, there is a new FDA approved implantable stimulator device now on the market called Inspire. The device is implanted under the skin and has a wire that goes up into the neck to stimulate the nerve that goes to the tongue. When there are pauses in breathing, the machine stimulates the tongue to move out of the airway. The patient synchs the device each night before going to sleep and turns it off in the morning. This device is now available to those who fail CPAP or are unable or "unwilling" to try CPAP.

If you think you have sleep apnea, do not be afraid to be tested. Eighty percent of people with moderate to severe sleep apnea do not even know they have it. Having a sleep study may help you avoid heart disease, diabetes and daytime tragedies. Treatments like CPAP are generally simple and have been "vetted" for a decade or more. If you are already trying CPAP and are having difficulties with it, you may be a candidate to try the new device called Inspire.

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**10-Year-Old Smoke Rise Resident in Christmas Play**

Smoke Rise resident, Lillarose Hardin has been cast as Juliette in this year's production of Madeline's Christmas at Horizon Theatre. Due to popular demand, Horizon has brought this fantastic production back for an impressive 10th year! Twenty-four girls have been cast in this magical holiday story from renowned author Ludwig Bemelmans. The musical is told through the eyes of twelve little girls who have fallen ill to the flu, all except for Madeline. On Christmas Eve, Madeline receives a gift from an unexpected visitor that leads to an enchanting adventure and life lessons of compassion and family values for all of the children.

Several of the girls who were cast live in surrounding areas from Decatur, Tucker, Stone Mountain, and Lilburn. Madeline's Christmas has two casts, the red and green casts. Both casts are brilliant! For performance dates, times, and ticket information, visit Horizon Theatre at <http://www.horizontheatre.com/plays/madelines-christmas/>. The red and green colors indicate which cast is performing. Lillarose is in the RED cast and performs as Juliette, along with Kushika, the first Indian Madeline, who is from Lilburn, Ga.

Performance Dates are December 2 – 31 at the Horizon Theatre in Little Five Points. 1083 Austin Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, (404) 584-7450



**Calling All Young Artists!**

DeKalb County Department of Watershed Management is looking for DeKalb elementary students to enter its 2018 Art Calendar Contest.

The contest honors 12 winners during a special ceremony at a 2018 Board of Commissioners' meeting. The 2018 calendar theme is "Protecting our Water Resources."

Artwork must be submitted by Friday, December 15. For complete rules, visit [www.dekalbwatershed.com](http://www.dekalbwatershed.com). For more information, contact Michael O'Shield, DWM public outreach specialist, at (770) 724-1456 or [msoshield@dekalbcountyga.gov](mailto:msoshield@dekalbcountyga.gov).

**Dolls, Dolls and More Dolls!**

by René Boven

The Scarborough Art Gallery in Tucker opened its 3rd Annual 101 Dolls exhibit on Saturday, November 11. A lovely reception was held to kick off the exhibit that runs through Sunday, December 31. The show features the work of four artists and includes 101 dolls.

If you've never attended, you will want to put this on your "to do" list now! Whether you go to just admire the art or decide to purchase something, this show is one for everyone – not just lovers of dolls. The exhibit features 101 dolls made from a variety of materials. They are all unique, creative and titled.

Featured artists include Angela C. Ferguson, Cookie Keeling Patterson, Martha Dudley and Elizabeth Small. All of these artists bring something special to the exhibit, and several are trained art professionals.

Angela Ferguson has crafted since the second grade and has been a Fine Art Doll artist for 12 years. She incorporates colors, textures, moods and a bit of whimsy in her soft sculpture dolls. A native of Columbus, Ohio, Angela now resides in the Atlanta area.

Another of the show's artists is Cookie Patterson. She is not only a creator of dolls but also a doll curator, and Cookie occasionally teaches beginning doll making classes in Atlanta. Her dolls feature dazzling dames.

Martha Dudley creates her dolls from a variety of fabrics, and brings with her more than 20 years of experience in fabric arts including quilting, doll making, beading, and fashion design. Her dolls travel throughout the U.S. with the Hoffman Fabric Challenge.

Elizabeth Small joins the exhibit for the first year. She is a self-taught doll maker. Each of Elizabeth's dolls has its own story and character. Costuming is her favorite part of her creations which feature embellishments of jewelry and trim.

Les Scarborough, owner of the gallery said, "the exhibit has so much to look at and to take in. This exhibit is such a work of love and fun." He encourages everyone to come see it soon.

You will find plenty to admire, marvel over, laugh about and/or want to take home! These are works of art with such whimsy, creativity and uniqueness. Take a fun break from the holiday craziness. The gallery is located at 4426 Hugh Howell Road on the right end side of the Publix shopping center. Admission is free.

Hours: Mondays – Thursdays, 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., and Fridays – Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.



Doll by Cookie Patterson



Doll by Elizabeth Small



**Mountain Creek Swim Club**  
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**Morning Glories and Spring Bulb Workshop in Fall**

November's bright blue skies and colorful turning oaks and hickories signal the perfect time to plant your spring bulbs. Club President, Bonnie Pennington, offered timely tips and conducted a bulb workshop for the club at the home of Joyce Ray.



*President Bonnie Pennington with her bulbs*

Bonnie is a Gwinnett Master Gardener and an avid gardener. Bonnie noted that she orders her bulbs from Brent and Becky's Bulbs or ColorBlends. She provided three types of daffodils, crocus and grape hyacinth and soil. She noted that coffee filters can be used at the bottom of containers to hold the soil but allow water to drain through the hole. Club members brought 6"- 8" pots and after her lecture, planted their containers for display in sunny patios or front porches.

Bulbs are deer resistant, drought tolerant and long-lasting with beautiful spring color. She advised members to mix in compost into the beds and plant the bulbs to the depth recommended on the packaging. Each type of bulb has different depth requirements and should be planted about 4" apart.

Fertilizer is not needed. Water after planting and lightly mulch. Bulbs perform best in a sunny location.

After bloom, leave the leaves to die back naturally. Do not braid or tie up the leaves. It is a good idea to plant your bulbs in daylily beds and let that foliage cover the dying daffodil leaves. You can also put a fine, thin layer of pine straw over the dying leaves but do not cover too much. The bulbs need the nutrients from the leaves to feed the bulb and renew it for next year's show.



*Janet McGinnis, Sherry Pacella, Joyce Ray and Gloria Cooke.*

The club brought diapers for donation to the Lilburn and Stone Mountain co-ops. The club will also bring unwrapped toys for the Battered Women's shelter's children. Lucky, Bonnie won the raffle of a lovely fall poinsettia and a hummingbird rain gauge. Hostesses for the luncheon were Joyce Ray, Judy Abrams, Janet McGinnis, Gloria Cooke and Peggy Youngblood.

**Smoke Rise Garden Club News**

Once again, Deb Christensen opened her nice home as a working studio. Smoke Rise Garden Club members were able to decorate and fill at least 60 boxes for the children who will be patients in the Children's Egleston Hospital at Christmas time. Apparently, the boxes are appreciated, and the children enjoy them.



The club received two awards from the Garden Club of Georgia for its contribution to the Land Trust Marshall Forest donation and an Award of appreciation for the contribution GCG Garden Therapy. Also, the club received awards of appreciation from State Botanical Garden for Children's Garden and Standard of Excellence from GCG.

If you are interested in joining or learning more about garden clubs, please contact Jane Culbertson at (770) 938-3060 or destovan@aol.com.

*Usha Ramakrishnan wrapping gift boxes*

**Mountain Mums Experience Whimsy in the Garden**

The Mountain Mums experienced a real "artsy" treat as they met at member Kelly Samaras house on November 8. Not only did they get to see her collection of family created art, they toured her outdoor living space and gardens... full of fun and whimsy. As one member said, "it was like attending the Mad Hatter's tea party in Alice in Wonderland!"

After brunch, Johnnie Hadley, President of the Greater Atlanta Begonia Society, and award-winning flower show recipient gave a very stimulating discussion of begonias. Each Mountain Mums club member was given a small rooted begonia (one with the interesting name of "Dottie's Eyelash"). Lucky members got two!

Attendees learned that begonias like very loose potting soil and a moist, but not soggy, environment. Most begonias thrive in indirect light. Any fertilizer will do. During the winter, begonias are indoor plants. The second week of May, they can be moved outside. Johnnie recommends putting begonias in pots in the garden in part shade. An example would be to put them under a tree or overhang that gets three to four hours of filtered morning sun. In mid-October, the plants should be moved back inside again.



*Shannon Betsill & her daughter, Bronwyn; Kelley Samaras; Johnnie Hadley, speaker; Sally Young; Debbie Jones*

The Mums were happy to hear that Begonias can be propagated using only one leaf. Jonnie showed how to make a cut near the spot where the stem enters the leaf, then roll the leaf up and "pot" it in potting soil. Place the small pot in a terrarium until a new stem and leaf "spout" out.... around three weeks. Begonias give an endless supply of new plants using this technique.

The Mountain Mums have a "date" with their lady friends at Brookstone Senior Living to make Thanksgiving turkey centerpieces out of pinecones. They do activities with these fun ladies about once a quarter.

Please come join, if this kind of garden club sounds likes fun to you. Call Debra Jones at (678) 260-7806 for more information. The club meets the second Wednesday of the month at 9:45 a.m.

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# HODGE PODGE



By Jenny Hall

*Christmas is coming and nothing says Christmas like sausage. That is where my mind is lately, which probably tells you right away that I'm not ready for the holidays. Not a bit. I'm sure eventually I'll be prepared, but at this point the odds are not in Santa's favor. There will come that one week when I frantically decide to bake every cookie I ever heard of and try to package them all cute and end up destroying my kitchen. Right now, I am in a non-committal, old lady mood and just can't be bothered too much. I want soup and savory things -- and sausage. I don't know why -- other than my arteries aren't clogged up enough and a few pairs of slacks actually still fit. To remedy that, I am making this luscious soup. A friend recommended it, and I tweaked it a bit so I could pretend I didn't actually steal it.*

### Sausage Pumpkin Soup

1 (12 ounce) tube of sausage  
1/2 - 1 cup of chopped onion plus 1 minced clove of garlic  
1/8 teaspoon EACH of thyme, marjoram, curry and nutmeg  
2 cups chopped fresh mushrooms (or more)  
1 (15 ounce) can plain pumpkin  
3-4 cups chicken broth  
1/2 cup cream and 1/2 cup water

Brown the sausage and drain. Add onion, garlic, seasonings and mushrooms, then sauté until done. Add pumpkin and mix well. Stir in broth and simmer about 20 minutes. Add cream and water and simmer on low about 10 minutes more. Salt and pepper to taste. This can be made vegetarian with veggie sausage and broth. It is low carb and very delicious! Very spicy made with hot sausage! If you like it thicker, add 2 cups of cooked rice. I used one of those pre-packaged, already cooked kind - jasmine I think. Just dump the whole carton in the broth and let rice separate as it heats.

*To go with this, what could be better than that old standby - Sausage Pinwheels? These are easy, wonderful for parties or brunch, and they reheat well. If you haven't made these in a while, go ahead and make them again. People gobble them up and they're perfect with all kinds of soups and stews.*

### Sausage Pinwheels

2 cans refrigerated crescent rolls. (Use the good kind. You can really tell the difference when you use store brands.)  
1 pound bulk sausage and 2 tablespoons chopped chives, if you want.

Roll one tube of crescent rolls out on lightly floured waxed paper and pinch the seams together. Roll until you have a 14x10 rectangle. Dollop and spread half of the raw sausage to within 1/2 inch of the sides. Sprinkle with chives if you want. I never bother. Starting with long side, use waxed paper to help roll it up. Cut into 12 slices and place on ungreased cookie sheet. I flatten them out with my perfectly clean hands cause I like them a bit crispy. Bake at a 375° for about 15 minutes. Repeat with second can of rolls and sausage. Cool on racks. You'll get 24 or more, depending on how you slice them... and whether or not you eat the ugly ones up first.

*To make sure my clothes don't fit at all, I think this is the ultimate cake:*

### Better than Sex Cake

Make plain yellow cake in 9x13 pan according to package directions, substituting buttermilk for regular milk or water. Bake as directed. Meanwhile, mix one 20 ounce can crushed pineapple, undrained, with 1 cup sugar. Bring to a boil, stirring, until sugar dissolves. As soon as cake is done, poke holes in top with skewer and spread with pineapple. Let cool a bit.

Mix one 5.1 ounces box instant vanilla pudding with 3 cups of whole milk until thick. Spread over pineapple and refrigerate cake 30 minutes.

Mix an 8-ounce container of thawed whipped topping with 1 cup toasted pecans and 1 1/2 cups coconut. I add zest of one orange as well. Spread over pineapple layer and refrigerate cake 1 hour before serving to your adoring fans.

This cake is best the next day and keeps well, covered, in the fridge for a week. If you eat the corners out and spread topping around a bit, no one will know you have been nibbling out of the pan. Toss a few cherries over the top for color and holiday pizzazz. The original recipe says it serves 20...hahahaha!!

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