

# SMOKE SIGNAL



VOLUME 53, ISSUE 10

*Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968*

January, 2021

www.smokesignalnews.com

The staff of the Smoke Signal wishes you all a  
**HAPPY AND HEALTHY**

**2021**

### *Look inside for...*

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## Looking Forward For Tucker in 2021

By Rosalyn Merrick

A few months ago, together, we celebrated a pride-boosting achievement for our neighborhood: City of Tucker was voted “Metro Atlanta’s Best Suburb 2020” in the AJC’s Best of Atlanta contest. As poignantly declared in the opening line of the announcement: loving where you live is important. No doubt, this is certainly true, this year especially!

There are myriad reasons to love Tucker- many of which are highlighted here in the *Smoke Signal* every month – the beautiful wooded landscapes and parks and observable wild-life, great businesses and schools, nice neighbors with diverse perspectives who are actively engaged with one another and their community, and a strong sense of community even in the midst of Tucker’s continued growth and development. In fact, preserving and enhancing these attributes that make our city special and unique is the driving force behind its development vision and plan.

In 2018, the City of Tucker launched “Tucker Tomorrow” a comprehensive master plan, shaped with community input and centered on five major community goals: Enhance Downtown; Improve Transportation Connections; Preserve and Improve Neighborhoods; Strengthen Recreational and Community Resources; and Bolster Economic Base, capitalizing on Tucker’s location within the metro Atlanta geographic region, attractive to both businesses and residents alike. Now, two and half years into the plan, the city has made great strides towards these goals, including movement to improve the connectivity and aesthetics of Hugh Howell Road.

“Tucker is undoubtedly one of the fastest-rising business destinations in the Metro Atlanta area,” says John McHenry, Assistant City Manager and Director



of Community and Economic Development. “Hugh Howell Marketplace is an example of this and an exciting addition of retail opportunities at a key intersection and gateway for Tucker.” The new Hugh Howell Marketplace shopping center, currently under development by Branch Properties and slated to open in late fall 2021, is the first of its kind in 15 years for the area. The \$25 million, 15-acre site will feature Publix and Chase Bank as its anchor tenants, 20+ other retail units, and green space.

Main street Tucker is undergoing its own new development. New businesses like Hot Betty’s, Ford’s BBQ, and Trio Nails, recently opened their doors bringing renewed energy and buzz to Main Street. The former E&B Jeweler storefront is being redeveloped (more details coming soon) and a new 10-foot-wide multi-use trail, planned to run along the backside of Local 7 up to Lavista Road, is also moving forward.

McHenry adds “The City of Tucker has a real gift with having this awesome little downtown already here. We don’t have to create one; we really just have to expand on what we already have and activate it. It’s very exciting!”

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## Live Deliberately and Forge Forward with Vigor

By Veronica Maldonado-Torres

The New Year offers a fresh slate to envision the infinite possibilities ahead and reset the course of our lives. Just as we savor the start of a new day, we meet 2021 with great expectations, say goodbye to the trials of yesterday, and hold firmly to the triumphs and lessons learned last year. With 2020 in the rearview mirror and the wide-open road of 2021 in front of us, our tanks are full of hope for the future. We have a fresh opportunity to serve with purpose and become the hero of our own life story, and the potential to live deliberately and with vigor.



Veronica Maldonado-Torres

For me, as a Chief Possibility Officer, this is the frame with which I approach the year when I work with clients. In this role, I serve as a strategist, coach, consultant and speaker for top executives and business owners in our community and around the world. I have a unique opportunity to witness the core attributes and mindsets of over 400 entrepreneurs and leaders in action; and, I have the honor of holding them accountable for achieving their highest vision, even on their toughest days. In working with them,

***“We have a fresh opportunity to serve with purpose and become the hero of our own life story...”***

I believe we are all capable of following these same foundational steps in order to achieve our own vision, goals and resolutions in the new year: 1) identify or clarify your personal purpose; 2) define your personal core values, principles, and priorities; 3) assess your strengths and areas needing development; 4) activate a mindset of continuous learning and growth; 5) commit to really thriving, not just surviving; and 6) build a network of supporters and mentors to hold you accountable to these steps.

In addition to these steps, also consider creating an annual mantra or motto for yourself to anchor your goals and inspire your progress toward them. This year, my mantras are “Live Deliberately” (personal) and “Forge Forward with Vigor” (professional). Maybe these particular mantras can spark an important reflection exercise for you as well... perhaps you ask yourself: how will I personally live deliberately with my health, self, family, friends, career, community, spirituality and faith? Or: how will I create a culture in my business, work or career that galvanizes employees to forge forward

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## Smoke Signal

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### Preferred Formats for Smoke Signal Submissions

When sending articles and photos to the *Smoke Signal*, it is helpful if articles could be sent in .doc or .docx format. Articles sent in .pdf format cannot be edited or changed in any way. Also photos sent in .jpg format can easily be opened and formatted to fit a particular space, so that is also a preferred method. Thanks for helping us make your neighborhood paper the best it can be!

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).

## Smoke Signal Deadlines

### JANUARY 13

Please e-mail articles to:

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(Word documents or text file attachments preferred)  
 PLEASE DO NOT SEND CLASSIFIED ADS TO THIS E-MAIL ADDRESS

Extra copies may be picked up at The Smoke Rise Community Garden on Hugh Howell Rd.

Deadline for classified ads is JANUARY 10

### SMOKE SIGNAL FLYER INSERT POLICY

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

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## Give Your Christmas Tree New Life!

Now that the holidays are behind us, it's time to start a fresh, new, year. That includes packing away and removing your holiday decorations! If you still have your Christmas tree lingering around, DeKalb County offers a very convenient way to get rid of it.

If you are currently serviced by the DeKalb County Sanitation Division, you can have your Christmas tree picked up on your curbside on collection day. Each year, the Sanitation Division provides county residents with free curbside Christmas tree collection from December 26 through the end of the second week in January. To participate, you must remove all decorations from the tree and place it curbside. Trees should be seven feet or shorter. Trees that cannot be cut to the required length can be taken to the County's Seminole Road Landfill or collected by the Sanitation Division's special collection unit (fees will apply). For more information, contact the Sanitation Division's customer service team at (404) 294-2900 or [sanitation@dekalbcountryga.gov](mailto:sanitation@dekalbcountryga.gov), visit [www.dekalbsanitation.com](http://www.dekalbsanitation.com), or follow @DKalBSanitation on Twitter.



## DID YOUR PAPER GET WET?

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

(They are no longer available on Smoke Rise Drive.)

## Smoke Rise Baptist Church

Connecting in New Ways During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dr. Chris George: Senior Pastor  
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 Becky Caswell-Speight: Minister of Families, Faith Formation and Connection  
 Jeremy Colliver: Minister of Youth, Mission and Communication  
 Jim Smith: Pastoral Care Associate  
 Amanda Coe Burton: Ministry Director for Children and Families  
 Harrison Litzell: Co-Director of Weekday School  
 Stacey McNeil: Co-Director of Weekday School  
 Telephone: (770) 469-5856 • [SmokeRiseBaptist.org](http://SmokeRiseBaptist.org)

SUNDAY  
 9:45 a.m. Attend Sunday School Online  
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 11:00 a.m. Attend Worship via Live Streaming  
 Live Stream Available at [SmokeRiseBaptist.org](http://SmokeRiseBaptist.org)  
 5:00 p.m. Outdoor Children and Youth Activities  
 (Activities are outside with social distancing and masks)

MONDAY  
 5:00 p.m. Weekly Devotional Video Link at [SmokeRiseBaptist.org](http://SmokeRiseBaptist.org)

WEDNESDAY  
 6:00 p.m. Journeys Spiritual Formation and Bible Study  
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 (In-person events are outside with social distancing and masks)

## Eastminster Presbyterian Church

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 Pastor of Senior Adult Ministries ~ Rev. Jeanne Simpson  
 Director of Mission & Youth ~ Mark Sauls  
 Office Coordinator ~ Christina Wetzel-Sizemore  
 Director of Weekday Ministries ~ Celeste Sears  
 Director of Respite Care Center ~ Helen Wilborn  
 Financial Coordinator ~ Jan Zabarac  
 Organist ~ Carole Mitchell  
 Choir Director ~ Joy Chittick  
 5801 Hugh Howell Road ~ Stone Mountain, GA 30087  
 770-469-4881 ~ [www.eastminster.us](http://www.eastminster.us)

Sundays:  
 9:30 a.m. Zoom Sunday School  
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## MC3 Church

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 Worship Minister: Leslie Riley  
 Student Minister: Will Tyler  
 Children's Minister: Rae Tyler Caggiula  
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[www.mc3.life](http://www.mc3.life)

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

Business Address and Hours:  
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 Stone Mountain, GA 30087

## First Moravian Church

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 Congregational Acolyte: Bill Hitz  
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[www.gamoravian.org](http://www.gamoravian.org)

Sundays:  
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 11:00 a.m. Worship  
 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Time

## Incarnate Word Lutheran Church

Please join us for worship on Sundays at 8:45 a.m. at the First Moravian Church sanctuary  
 4950 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain, GA 30087

## Mountain West Church

Pastor: Michael Shreve  
 Worship Arts Pastor: Gary Robinson  
 Telephone (770) 491-0228  
[www.mwchurch.com](http://www.mwchurch.com)  
 4818 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain  
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 Online Only: Sundays at 5:00pm & Mondays at 7:00pm

**Patrons of the Smoke Signal**

*In the interest of keeping our advertising rates low and continuing the 52-year legacy of our neighborhood paper, the all-volunteer staff who create the Smoke Signal each month would like to recognize those in our community who join us supporting the paper as Patrons making financial contributions.*

*These members of our community have donated to help us accomplish our mission. We hope you will consider supporting our good cause of keeping our local news flowing. Thank you!*

Gold: (\$1,000 and up)  
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**GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club**

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club has been busy even though the Covid virus has kept us from regular meetings and socializing. Many charities have been supported by donations of money, products and gift cards.

The members filled boxes for Samaritan's Purse, filled health kits for the homeless and made Christmas ornaments for Side-by-Side Club House for Brain Injured Adults. The VA hospital received plantings for their garden, and the club participated in Wreaths Across America for the military cemeteries in memory of members husbands who are deceased. A new project was money donated for the Fisher House which is a home for military families much like Ronald McDonald house.



Donations of food and toys were made to Networks Cooperative Ministry and the Women's Resource Center to stop domestic violence. Donations of gift cards and food were made to the Giving Closet at Tucker High School. A \$1000 scholarship was awarded to a woman for furthering her education.

Ongoing help for Operation Smile with hospital gowns, blankets and arm bands has continued as well as clothes for Little Dresses for Africa. Members continue to stock the Little Libraries with adult and children's books. Snacks and water were supplied to the policemen and firemen.

We are not all work and no play. A virtual Christmas party was held via Zoom. Christmas bingo was enjoyed by the members. Ten games were played and prizes were awarded to the lucky winners. We are hoping that before 2021 is out we will be able to meet in person and have fun together.

If you are interested in volunteering and serving your community as well as making friends and having good times, please consider joining the GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club.

For more information contact our website, stonemountainwomensclub.org., or email us at info@stonemountainwomensclub.org.



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Be the Change!

By Barbara Greenburg

We are living in interesting times to say the least. Many relationships are polarizing rather than harmonious, and stress is at an all-time high. For many, the ability to cope effectively is nonexistent.

When you acknowledge your inability to cope, it can be quite healing, revealing, and perhaps even freeing. Continuing to “sweep things under the rug” is the opposite of acknowledgement. What is mentally dismissed has a way of wreaking havoc on your mental, emotional, & physical well-being.

When was the last time you took some quality time for yourself; took some time for your well-being? You need a coping technique, a way to consciously re-set, relax and b-r-e-a-t-h-e. This pandemic has changed your WORLD, your family, your community, your life. It happened like a wave starting out slowly, gradually growing and swelling into something larger and bigger than any of us could have ever imagined. It has wiped us out mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, and perhaps even spiritually. Take a breath, let out a sigh, and feel your body relax and change.

By bringing a self-care routine into your life, you can change your attitude, be happy and even optimistic! Start by making the choice to ‘plug into’ YOU, rather than an electrical device. This may seem very unnatural to not turn on the TV, radio, computer, or check your cell phone first thing. But try plugging into you instead. Start with conscious breathing. Inhale 5 counts, exhale 5 counts... inhaling & exhaling equal counts with your eyes closed. Are you feeling better already? Sit comfortably. Place a pillow behind your back so you sit nice and tall. This way your lungs can expand fully. Uncross your arms, legs & ankles. This breathing rhythm is easy, effortless, calming and relaxing. It is much like being on a swing and swinging back and forth. Notice how this feels. By drawing your awareness to your breath, you close out the outside and connect to your inside... feeling and hearing your breathing.

You are now well on your way to a meaningful morning experience.

Now relax your face, your neck, your arms and shoulders, notice the calming of your mind, how your body is relaxing and feeling as a peacefulness is beginning to wash over your entire being. You are making a choice to begin your day in a new way, and if this is new to you, you are experiencing a change to a new you.

Begin this routine slowly, 5-7 minutes daily, gradually adding more time to your mornings, and making the choice to lessen the chaos, move into a more relaxing space, and feel the change you are wishing for your world.

The facebook posts, the morning news and the outside world will be there upon your return. I invite you to try this for a week. Add another and another until your first month is behind you. Perhaps you can add other elements to a consciousness breathing practice- even try a gratitude journal. What a wonderful way to focus on your blessings, your gifts, the ways you wish to change your world! Notice how you are feeling after some time spent with your gratitude journal. Take time to take care of you. It’s a choice you won’t regret.

Your meaningful morning practice may enhance other areas of your life through prayer, connecting to God, your creativity and your relationships both personally and professionally. You may be inspired to add some stretching, some other forms of exercise, a nice walk in the park, your neighborhood, weight training... whatever makes you happy. It’s true, you may have to wake up a bit earlier to experience your meaningful mornings but the results can be productive, positive, life changing and lasting. Starting your day like this will help create a happier, healthier you; mentally, emotionally, physically and quite possibly spiritually too!

I encourage you to go out and create some peace in the conflict, some love amidst the hate, some calm in the chaos and shine your beautiful light so the whole world can benefit from your presence in our world.

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.” (Ghandi)

Barbara Greenberg is a certified Kripalu Yoga instructor in our community and advertises in the *Smoke Signal*. She can be reached at [yogagram.40@gmail.com](mailto:yogagram.40@gmail.com).

Watch Out for the Future of Downtown Tucker

In partnership with the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Tucker-Northlake Community Improvement District has developed a plan to restore and expand the existing street and alley grid in downtown Tucker. Originally created by the Seaboard railroad in 1891, a plan for a grid of small blocks, streets, and alleys of a traditional city footprint has remained hidden in plain sight and obscured for over a century.

With the assistance of the architecture and design firm, Lord Aeck Sargent and Alta Planning and Design, the Tucker-Northlake CID is visioning what downtown Tucker can become.



“Planners see the potential of downtown Tucker almost instantly,”

says Tucker-Northlake CID Executive Director Matthew Lee. “The bones are here. It’s just a matter of fleshing them out so others can see that this is the real deal.”

Starting with early blueprints, the team of consultants worked with the CID to trace the history of land transactions back in time over a century to determine the location and ownership of the original streets and alleys. Lord Aeck Sargent developed dozens of maps showing how the downtown grid is used today and how it could be used in the future. Alta Planning and Design reviewed alley networks in other communities to assist in creating implementation options for Tucker’s alleys. The result is a plan that illustrates the viability and feasibility of expanding a vibrant, walkable, and welcoming environment in the heart of the city.

Using the 20-foot-wide alleys from the 1800s brings a renewed level of connection within downtown Tucker that few other communities enjoy. Pedestrian alleys passing through city blocks give businesses more opportunity for customer access including spaces for outdoor dining. For residential development, it gives everyone an opportunity for a front door and allows people to enjoy their time outside and away from the street.

“Sometimes success isn’t coming up with something new,” says Lee. “It’s pointing out what was right all along and making it stronger.”

Watch out for what’s happening in downtown Tucker!



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**Live Deliberately...**  
continued from page 1

with vigor and find new ways to create opportunities to win as a team or organization?

Essentially, if you want to achieve your goals and vision for 2021, be intentional in picking a resolution that is personal and serves a greater purpose for you. Write it down in black and white, keep it front and center, anchor yourself to a theme or mantra that inspires you to achieve it -especially on your toughest days. Above all else, persevere to make it a reality. Lastly, create a community close to you that will champion you. Sometimes old worlds have to come apart so you can create a new world.

*2021 has your name on it, friends. May you live it deliberately, and forge forward with vigor!*



**UPDATE ON TUCKER'S Trail Master Plan**  
by Matt Holmes

Tucker's Trail Master Plan process began in 2018. There were several public information sessions for residents to offer input. Consultants were hired by the City to look at how best to get people moving on foot or on bike throughout the City, as well as how to connect Tucker to surrounding cities and attractions. The result was an ambitious plan that, if funded and constructed all at once, would take decades to complete and come at a cost of more than \$50 million.

After much planning, Tucker will start seeing some progress in the new year. Staff is working with property owners in the downtown area on a segment of path that would transform the downtown Tucker experience. The project won't likely be complete this year, but the community should finally see dirt moved and have a more clear idea of what this project is going to look like as we move through 2021.

**Tucker Offers Economic Relief for Local Businesses**

by Matt Holmes

The City of Tucker is offering business owners some tax relief as they grapple with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Just before the last City Council meeting, Mayor Frank Auman signed a declaration of economic relief for local businesses.

"We want to do everything we can to help our local businesses," Auman said at the start of the meeting. "If your business suffered this year, we're going to defer the taxes you owe. We're not forgiving their taxes, we're just recognizing this may not be the best time to pay."

Occupational taxes in Tucker come due on April 15. That tax is calculated on a business' 2019 revenues. Under this "30-30 plan", if a business owner can show that their revenues dipped by at least 30 percent in 2020, they can defer 30 percent of the tax they owe until their 2022 occupational certificate renewal. An application for relief will be available on the City website.

This measure is just the latest effort to assist businesses during the pandemic. This week the City of Tucker will complete its CARES Act program for small businesses. That program saw around \$2.5 million in federal money distributed to more than 200 small businesses and nonprofits.

**City of Tucker...continued from page 1**

Tucker's flourishing economic ecosystem is formed by a patchwork of businesses of various industries and scales, from small, many family-owned businesses to regional and national companies- all supported by a base of active local patrons. Together, they share a common goal of sustaining and enhancing the quality of life that has come to define the community. Which is why, even in 2020, Tucker experienced vigorous commercial and residential economic activity.

"We always want to protect our jobs here in Tucker and help folks who are struggling with mortgage, utility, rent and food, especially during these tough times," explained McHenry. "The City has felt the struggle too - revenues from business licenses, permits and fees are down. But the City as a whole has had a great response to COVID, and we have a great team that has risen to the occasion."

The City's receipt of \$4.1 million in CARES Act funding last year, for food and housing relief and its small business grant program, also proved vital to stemming the pandemic's impact on the community.

McHenry says, "We are grateful for our businesses here in Tucker and all they've done to make things work in a positive way; we're looking forward to even better things in 2021." As the "Tucker Tomorrow" plan would have it, many more exciting things are on the horizon for 2021 and beyond in the City of Tucker.

The *Smoke Signal* looks forward to following and sharing these developments in the coming issues. More information about the City's comprehensive plan and progress updates are available at [tuckerga.gov/biz](http://tuckerga.gov/biz).

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**WALK TO REMEMBER (JANUARY 22)  
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We have some excellent Driving Scholarship applicants. You can see their stories in the next few *Smoke Signal* Editions. If we able to WALK to REMEMBER later in the year, we will let you know.

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**Meet the Neighbors**

by Susan Gilbert and Betsy Allen

Betsy Allen and her husband Lee have lived in the 2100 block of Gunstock for 48 years. They enjoy the Smoke Signal so much, she wrote a Letter to the Editor last month expressing her appreciation. She also suggested that her next-door neighbor had a story that might interest our readers. After speaking with him, I had to agree! His story is especially timely as we begin a new year and reflect on memories dear to us. Bill's story begins with his earliest memories of playing in his father's garden, walking the carefully planted rows, and occasionally picking a big, ripe tomato and eating it like a juicy apple. When he moved away from his parent's home, he no longer ate tomatoes because they just weren't the same as the ones freshly picked in their garden.



When he and his wife settled here in Smoke Rise about 50 years ago, his hilly property didn't have a good place for a garden. But his interest in growing tomatoes was rekindled when having lunch with a friend who offered him a tomato and mayonnaise sandwich on white bread. At that point, all he knew of tomatoes was from eating the tasteless, watery ones from the grocery store that he even went to the trouble of picking out of his salads, so he hesitated, but it was the only lunch offer, so he accepted it skeptically. With his first bite, he was hooked, saying he had never been more surprised that something so simple could taste so good! His friend shared that the secret was having good, homegrown, perfectly vine-ripe tomatoes.

The taste of that sandwich was what he needed to get focused on his gardening hobby and begin growing tomatoes. He cleared and leveled a hilltop beside his home and started looking for help to get the large garden started.

This is where Ozell Jones comes in. Ozell lives on Jonesboro Rd near East Point and drives several times a week to Smoke Rise to help Bill and other neighbors with their lawns. Ozell was delighted to add gardening to his already full workload because gardening takes him back to his roots. Growing up in rural Georgia with 10 brothers and sisters, Ozell's earliest memories of starting a new year were helping his parents harness up the mule to begin plowing their fields for spring planting. He says they harnessed up that mule and plowed or cleared or harvested every day of the year until winter came and they could take a break.

Growing up with that kind of disciplined work ethic stuck with Ozell, and neighbors say he is the hardest working lawn and garden helper you have ever seem. Strong as an ox and on the property at or before dawn, Ozell gets the job done, and he is much loved and appreciated by those who know him. After 35 years of working with Ozell, Bill says he can't even call Ozell a helper; he calls him his friend and leaves it at that.

Bill and his friend have been growing turnips, kale, asparagus, and cabbage, and harvesting an abundance of tomatoes from the 90+ plants on the hilltop. This is far more tomatoes than they can use, so they started taking them to neighbors. A long-time member of Mount Carmel Christian Church, Bill found that a welcome outlet for his harvests. Sadly, it closed its doors a few years ago, and he now shares his extra produce mostly with people he knows in the neighborhood. Bill especially likes sharing them with his older neighbors who can't get out and do their own gardening. If you would like to know more about Bill and Ozell's adventures in farming here in Smoke Rise, Bill says he is happy to take your call at 770-617-9017.

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**NEWS YOU CAN USE**

By Aviva Hoffmann

**Steering Clear of Bad Roads in Smoke Rise**

If you've ever driven over a pothole, or had to navigate around one, you know what a pain they can be. If you do encounter a pothole in Smoke Rise – there is something you can do about it.

As a fairly newly incorporated city the city of Tucker, (which includes Smoke Rise) shares the responsibility of providing governmental services with DeKalb County government. The county's Roads and Drainage department is responsible for maintenance to keep our roadways safe and operational. That responsibility includes potholes. State roads do not fall under the responsibility of the city or the county, except where intergovernmental agreements exist.

Maintenance issues can be reported to the county's Roads and Drainage Customer Service line at (404) 297-3840. When calling, be prepared to provide an accurate address and description of the pothole issue. You can also go online and fill out a "Request for Assistance" form with the county. You'll find that form at <https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/roads-drainage-request-assistance>.

The city of Tucker is responsible for road repaving. A Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (or SPLOST) initiative passed in DeKalb County in November 2017. This one cent sales tax is helping fund Tucker's road resurfacing projects. The SPLOST funds collected in Tucker during a six-year timeframe are estimated to be more than \$30 million. The city has evaluated every one of the 180 streets in Tucker and assigned a rating system, from worst to best. This will help the city to best schedule paving in a multi-year set of projects – considering the need and logistics. The first of the city of Tucker's road resurfacing projects, funded by SPLOST, began in August 2018. At least 65% of SPLOST funds will address roads and drainage issues. Other SPLOST funding is designated for sidewalks, pathways, bikeways, fire facilities, safety equipment, and capital outlay projects for parks and recreation as well as public facilities.

Ken Hildebrandt has been Tucker's City Engineer since 2016. He oversees our city's road projects and works with other engineers and developers to ensure projects are constructed to meet city and state guidelines. His email is [khildebrandt@tuckerGA.gov](mailto:khildebrandt@tuckerGA.gov).

If you want to know something about a city service or procedure, and you don't know where to start, Tucker's "Citizen Responder" is a great contact. Email: [info@tuckerGA.gov](mailto:info@tuckerGA.gov) or call (678) 597-9040.

Finally, residents can keep up with how SPLOST money is being spent in Tucker, and find a list of roads to be resurfaced, at [//tuckerGA.gov/SPLOST](http://tuckerGA.gov/SPLOST). To keep tabs on the city's finances, go online at: [//tuckerGA.gov/finance](http://tuckerGA.gov/finance).

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**So, there is a vaccine, but should I take it?**

by John S. Kennedy, MD

Although many people in our community have been affected by COVID, there still seems to be a divide between those who are truly fearful and those who are wondering what all the fuss is about. Although this virus is highly contagious, there are some who could have avoided the virus if they had heeded warnings about mask wearing and social distancing. A similar argument can be made for the wearing of seatbelts. A person may have never worn a seat belt their whole life, and if they were never in an accident, they might feel that wearing seatbelts didn't matter. But beware the day they have their first accident! I am one of the physicians who end up taking care of those who suffer the consequences of those decisions—either having more severe injuries from not wearing a seat belt, or those who end up dying from Covid or in the ICU on a ventilator fighting for their life because they did not heed warnings to protect themselves.

This virus is real, it is very contagious, and although some only have a minor illness, it has, and it will severely impact some of us, our family members and friends—particularly the elderly. Unfortunately, this is already happening in increasing numbers. Thankfully, there are several vaccines approved on an emergency basis, and more in the pipeline. Should you take one of the new vaccines, though?

For almost everyone, my answer is “absolutely yes!” You may question whether the vaccine was approved prematurely. The method of accelerating the vaccine development did not disregard any safety concerns. Our US government chose to pay for vaccine production ahead of time—while it was still being tested—before it was proven safe and effective. It was a gamble, in order to fast-track the development and distribution of the vaccine. If the vaccine had been ineffective or unsafe, all the money paid for production would have been for naught, wasted.

The two vaccines recently approved were administered to some 40,000 people of all ages (over age 16) and ethnicities during the testing phase. A similar number got a placebo. Researchers and participants were blinded, meaning that no one knew who got the vaccine. The patients in the study phase were followed, and cases of COVID were tabulated up to a predetermined number. Up to that point, no one knew who was vaccinated and who was not. After reaching that predetermined number, those who tested positive for COVID were separated into two groups to see who had been vaccinated and who had not been vaccinated. If the vaccine had not been effective, then there would have been about the same number in each group. However hardly any of those who got COVID were in the vaccination group. This is how the vaccine was calculated to be 95% effective.

Why am I planning on getting the vaccine? Because I, too, am vulnerable. I don't want to risk being the one who gets sick. I don't want to risk contracting COVID-19 and exposing those around me—family, friends, or patients. I don't want to be wondering every time I sniffle or sneeze whether I've “got COVID”.

It may be months before the general population has access to the vaccine(s), since the demand greatly outstrips the current supply. The state of Georgia has established a priority system, with nursing home residents at the very top, followed by health care providers, essential workers, people 65+, and those with chronic conditions. It seems that public health departments are going to be utilized heavily in distribution, but many details remain to be worked out. My advice for our community is, as soon as the vaccine is available to you, get in line!

For more information on the COVID-19 Vaccines, visit:

The CDC - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

The Georgia Department of Public Health - <https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-vaccine>

The FDA - <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/moderna-covid-19-vaccine>

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**HEALTH NOTES:**

by Cheri Schneider, M.D.

**A FEW Coronavirus Vaccine KNOWNs:**

Yes, there have been allergic reactions to the vaccine. This can happen with ANY vaccine, so, while greatly reported in the news, this is not out of the ordinary. After vaccination, you are required to stay 15 or 30 minutes for observation. Do not skip this step!

Two shots equal a full immunization. One shot is not enough to be fully protected from Covid. You must return in 21 or 28 days for the second shot—depending on which vaccine you receive.

A large percentage of people will experience aching, chills and fever from the vaccine... usually with the second dose. Symptoms do not usually last longer than a day (or two). This is an indication that your body is mounting an immune response. This reaction is a little less likely if you are older.

The most common side effects are injection site pain, generalized aching, fatigue, headache, joint pains.

No one knows how long the protection from the vaccine lasts. Why don't they know? The vaccine has only been studied for 6-9 months.

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**Out the Window** *By Beth Henson*

The mild winter day was quickly melting into another long, dark evening. As I looked out my front window at the fading rose and tangerine sunset, I was surprised to hear a faint choir of crickets chirping down near the gently trickling creek in my front yard. The busy crickets' lively, soft tune made me long for the days of summer when the sun would brighten the sky until nearly 9 p.m.



*Cricket by Beth Henson*

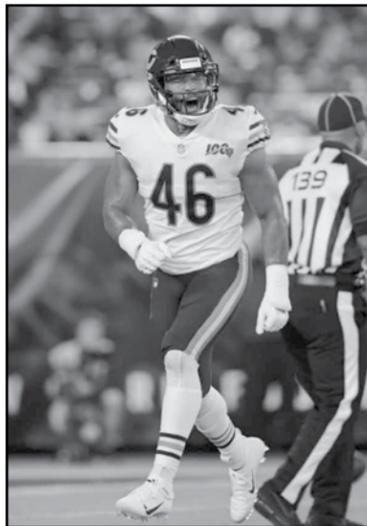
As the crickets' chant began a slow rallentando, I calculated that the outside temperature was most likely around 50 degrees. You can actually track how many chirps a cricket produces in 15 seconds, add 40 and that should be the present temperature! Their rate of chirp is directly dependent on their energy level which drops with the temperature change. I knew that I was hearing only a male ensemble, playing their repeating refrain by stridulation (rubbing their leathery wings and legs together). Their musical efforts are used to woo the females or drive away unwanted male cricket intruders. By this time of the winter, the ladies have already deposited their eggs in the cooling soil. The eggs will wait to hatch in spring when the soil is temperate and cozy.

I sadly thought about my delightful cricket choir being soon silenced by the much colder days to come, but happily looked forward to the cheery new melodies that would emerge from the soil this spring.

**From Smoke Rise to the NFL**

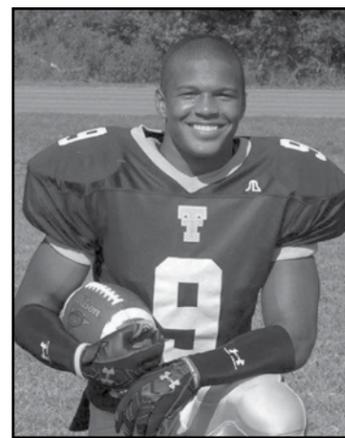
*by Frank Luton*

Recently when the Chicago Bears came to Atlanta to play the Atlanta Falcons, Smoke Rise native James Vaughters was "on the scene" playing linebacker for the Bears.



*James Vaughters, Chicago Bears  
(Pictures courtesy of the Vaughters Family)*

Vaughters played football for the Tucker Tigers and was a member of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution's Super 11 in 2010, his senior year. After Tucker, Vaughters played collegiately at Stanford University.



*James Vaughters, Tucker Tigers*

"I like the way he's grown for us the last couple of years," Bears Coach Matt Nagy said. "I just know that our defensive coaches really appreciate the knowledge that he has in this defense and the way he plays. To say that Vaughters is a "stick-to-it" type person would be an understatement."

Please give a "Go Bears" salute to one of our own, James Vaughters!

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## Dudes on Food

### Episode 2 - Pizza Night

On a random Thursday night, same question as last month ... where should we go? The debate was short, and Italian was on our minds, so pizza it was. We decided to hit this local, trusted pizza joint called Enzo's again. For those of you who don't know about Enzo's, it's located at 4437 Cowan Rd. behind the Zaxbys. There has always been a kind of comfort stepping inside. The feeling started back at its original location, when it opened in the early 2000's. We remember it as a very family friendly place with a cool outdoor fire pit, cornhole games and tons of families with kids milling around after soccer, football, swim team or baseball practice. Given the present state of our social distancing lifestyle, we are looking forward to getting back to those days.

Some might say Enzo's hit a bit of a slump before they ended up moving to the current location. But enough of the melodrama and onto

the food. We had not been to Enzo's in a while, so we opted for a few standbys. If you don't know Enzo's, don't wait to be seated, but step up to the counter, study the menu on the wall, and let them know what you want. We asked for the Garlic Knots, a Spinach Salad, the Meatball Parmesan sub, a slice of the "Nancy" pizza, Rigatoni with Alfredo sauce and chicken, a 420 and a Blue Moon. You see, we were kind of hungry. After the order is in, the nice cashier will give you a little frame with a clever picture, in lieu of a table number. Grab a seat, appropriately separated from others, of course.

First to arrive at the table were our garlic knots and spinach salad. The garlic knots were the bomb... hot, crispy on the outside, and sitting in a nice little warm bath of garlic butter. Perfect complement to these boys was the cold spinach salad. Everything was fresh and crisp with sliced mushrooms, bell

peppers and red onions. For us, the simple creamy Italian is the perfect dressing to go with it. The Marinara dipping sauce for the garlic knots was good also. Although, the savory characters out there may say it is a bit sweet. With the appetizers under our belt, we still had the rest of dinner to take on. A slice of the Nancy was just enough to get that pizza craving taken care of. Mushrooms, onions, green pepper, olives, tomatoes, spinach, fresh garlic... We had a small garden on there, and the solid, crispy pizza crust held its own. With

the pizza a goner, we were now onto our meatball sub. As you all know, meatball subs are tricky. It's kind of like a good band. When one of the members is not fitting in, it's a mess. This one rocked it! It was hot and had the right Marinara and cheese balance, and the meatballs were well flavored. We still had the pasta dish to conquer, though. The Rigatoni with Alfredo and chicken was good, but demanded quite a bit of extra Parma cheese to augment it. We would've been just as happy with about 10 more garlic knots instead.

Plenty full, we decided to round things out with a desert and opted for a Tiramisu. The staff let us know that Enzo's wasn't the mastermind behind this one, but instead purchased it elsewhere. Nothing wrong with that and kudos to whomever made it, because it was a great end to our visit.

While this may not be the right spot for a romantic date or to make an impression on high-end business clients, Enzo's is a great place to have a family dinner or a good spot to grab a bite, chill and hang for a while with friends.

**Indoor plants** are making quite a comeback. They are very popular with the younger generation. The trick with indoor plants is to scope out your indoor location first, before you buy plants. Many indoor plants, including succulents and cactus, need very little water. Most indoor plants need at least bright light. Some will need full sun. Don't cheat on this or you will have a poor performer. Bright light plants are ponytail palm, hibiscus, herbs, cactus. There are several very good low light plants. Snake Plant ranks high here. It needs very little water and grows quickly. It also makes baby plants easily. Do your research. Find a few interesting easy varieties and then go shopping!



Snake Plant



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**SRCC Tennis Pro Honored**

Congratulations are in order for Joyce Bitaraes, tennis professional at Smoke Rise Country Club. She was selected by the Georgia Professional Tennis Association as Assistant Pro of the Year.

Joyce is an upward moving professional. When her director was furloughed during COVID-19, she took on responsibility for the adult golf program. She created six summer teams and organized coaching sessions. She also worked with our tiny tot program, ages 3-4, and Munchkins, ages 5-6. These programs have grown from only a couple of kids to more than twelve kids participating several days a week. We are very fortunate to have her at Smoke Rise Country Club!



**Smoke Rise Civic Association: The Year in Review**  
by Michael Huerkamp

New Year's Tidings from the board of the Smoke Rise Civic Association (SRCA). After ending a peculiar and challenging year, we embark on 2021 with a collective optimism that vaccine-conferred immunity will allow a gradual return to normalcy. Perceptive readers will note the subtle change in the name of the association from SR "Community" Association to SR "Civic" Association. This change allowed us to dissolve the Smoke Rise Community Association and reincorporate retroactive to October 28, 2018 as the Smoke Rise Civic Association public charity. This amended our relationship with the IRS and allowed all member contributions to be tax deductible.

Although the pandemic forced cancellation of the annual membership meeting, the SRCA board met nine times this year to continue operations. We maintained plantings at key chimneys through a transition of landscaping services and look forward to a great 2021 with Ruppert Landscape. The community garden continued to thrive, and we helped sponsor the January 25 Walk to Remember, the THS Foundation Golf Tournament, and March 7 Casino Night benefiting Smoke Rise Prep. Board members served on the Tucker Civic Association Board, the elementary school construction committee, and as liaisons to Branch Properties regarding the development at Hugh Howell Rd. and Mountain Industrial Blvd. intersection. While our nation grappled with an unwanted virus, on a lesser scale we evicted hornets from the Summit Little Library on September 19, 2020.

The SRCA remains financially solvent thanks to the great support of our members and we hope that support will continue in 2021- especially with contributions tax deductible. We hope a poised SRCA can spring back as circumstances allow. Stay safe everyone!

**Tucker High School National Honor Society Members Offer a Helping Hand**

During the month of November, Tucker's NHS chapter participated in many virtual events to help their community prosper and give back. Some events were writing letters to veterans and officers Cadence Claar - Pressley and Ethan Furr hosted a drive at Tucker High School. Students could donate household items or grocery gift cards for the Giving Closet. Below are a few of our members that ventured beyond the events that were provided by NHS.

*Joy Martin (11th grade) - right*  
Every Wednesday, I go to volunteer at NETWorks Cooperative Ministry on the COVID-19 Response Team. We pack groceries for another team to distribute them to people in need. I have been able to volunteer 8 times in September, October, and November.



*Kenny Vu (11th grade) - left*  
He needed assistance with his AP Chemistry assignment (FRQ) that was assigned over Fall Break. It was specifically on Reduction-oxidation reactions and equations. I taught him how to formulate it and touched on stoichiometry. Also went over molarity and acid and base titration.

Members are not restrained to do activities only provided by NHS, they can also participate in activities by sports clubs, church groups, etc.

**Property Boundaries? Tucker vs. Clarkston**

by Matt Holmes: mholmes@tuckerga.gov

The City of Tucker filed an injunction in DeKalb County Superior Court against the City of Clarkston, Housing Authority of DeKalb County, DeKalb County, and Peachtree Creek on Ponce Apartments LLC In November over an annexation and rezoning issue along E. Ponce de Leon Avenue. According to legal filings, on November 8, 2018, the City of Clarkston annexed 4692 E. Ponce de Leon Avenue. State law allows a city to annex unincorporated properties only. The City of Tucker argues that 4692 E. Ponce de Leon Avenue is partially within the city boundaries of Tucker. Therefore, the annexation is invalid and void. In addition, Clarkston attempted to rezone a portion of Tucker. This poses a threat to Tucker's interests in real property, as well as infringes on Tucker's property rights to land within its city boundaries. For these reasons, the City of Tucker is asking for any development to be stopped immediately.



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**Arthur Wood Memorial Golf Event Sets Record!**

by Karen Wood

Arthur Wood believed that nothing was more important than his family and his faith, with golf and giving following closely behind. In 2005, he combined all of these and began a Salvation Army Golf tournament where he invited his friends and family to participate in a day of golf while donating toys and raising money for a good cause. Arthur Wood lost his battle with cancer in 2007 yet his legacy carries on with the tournament being hosted by his son, Art, and family.



Every year, Art Wood reaches out to friends and family solely by text and phone calls inviting them to participate in this much-loved tournament. Amidst the craziness of COVID-19 quarantines and concerns, the 16th Annual Arthur Wood Memorial Golf Tournament was held at Smoke Rise Country Club with a record number of participants. Smoke Rise Country Club and the Salvation Army went above and beyond to meet the protocols required by COVID-19 to make every aspect of the tournament safe and enjoyable for the participants. The Wood Family gathered that morning to greet everyone and give thanks for the tremendous support for the event. Major Bob Parker addressed the crowd and sent them off to enjoy a beautiful day of golf.

Special thanks to Chick Fil A and Enzo's pizza for providing food for the golfers throughout the day. Prizes are awarded to the teams with Low Gross and Low Net scores at the end of the day as well as to individuals who win closest to the pin long drive contests. Several local restaurants also support the tournament by providing gift cards to be used for prizes for the event. Thank you to Enzo's Pizza, Smith's Olde Bar, Fox Bros. BBQ, Local No. 7, Matthew's Cafeteria, 1910 Public House, Tucker Meat Market, Magnolia Room, Village Burger, Stratford Pub, Marlow's Tavern, Bell Street Burritos, Hot Betty's, My Parent's Basement, Savannah Distillery, The Beer Growler (Avondale), Hudson Grille and Three Blind Mice for your donations!

At the end of the day, thanks to the 148 golfers who participated, over \$20,000 was raised and more than 100 toys collected by the Salvation Army. But that is not where the story ends!

Several years ago, friends of the Wood family who knew that they are huge tennis fans asked why there wasn't a tennis tournament to support the Salvation Army. Ask and you shall receive. On December 13th the Wood Family hosted the Fifth Annual Salvation Army Tennis Tournament. More than 40 tennis fans participated, and the weather was perfect for the friendly round robin that raised close to \$2,500 and collected a generous number of toys.

The Salvation Army motto is "Doing the Most Good" and the Wood Family is proud to carry on the legacy of a great man who truly believed in doing the most good for others.

**Morning Glories Deck the WALLS!**

The historic 1870's Wells-Brown House in Stone Mountain Village was decorated this December by the Smoke Rise Morning Glories for the tenth year in a row. This tradition was amended a bit this year because the club was asked by the Stone Mountain Historic Society to decorate only the outside due to the COVID pandemic. No holiday events were scheduled for the house this year due to the restrictions on gathering and health concerns. However, the outside was beautifully adorned with the natural décor that complimented the historic home's charm. Club members used Acuba, Boxwood, Magnolia, Mahonia, Fir, Holly with abundant berries, Gala and Granny Smith apples and other greenery to fill the wreath and gate décor from their gardens. Cotton bolls that were harvested by our member Joyce Ray from her garden adorn the wreath.



The wreath and gate forms are made by filling the forms with oasis that is taped in place using florist tape. The forms are soaked in water tubs to hold the moisture in the oasis that will keep the greenery fresh longer. After the soaking, greenery and other material is cut to length and inserted into the oasis. A surprising amount of greenery is used to create the multiple layers of texture and color for the base. After that is completed, pine cones, apples and other decorative pieces can be attached using picks. The wreath is hung and the gate accent is wired into place on the original historic wrought iron gate.

Swags of cedar are purchased and hung on the Juliet balcony with beautiful bows to accent their greenery against the white house exterior. Lamp post and lamp and the statue also receive some attention with bows and greenery to compliment the seasonal décor. This year the crew of MaryAnne Anderson, Quill Duncan, Glendolyn Hallman, Bonnie Pennington and Joy Zaidan had the challenge and the fun of decorating this lovely historic home's exterior. Next year, we hope to be able to do the interior again and expand the work force to our usual twelve or more members to do their magic including preparing clove-studded fresh oranges and decorating the mantles and the stair bannister!

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**ATTENTION ADVERTISERS:** All inquiries regarding advertising should be directed to: Classified and display ads: Harry Strack, tigertaxstrack@att.net. Flyers: Barbara Luton at barluton@aol.com.

All classified ads are limited to 20 words, with the *Smoke Signal* reserving the right to edit any copy. Ads are \$15.00 per month, (\$75.00 per six months if prepaid). Please submit by email a copy of ad to tigertaxstrack@att.net. Deadline is the 10th of each month. ADS NEED TO BE PREPAID. Checks should be made out to *Smoke Signal* and mailed to P.O. Box 763, Tucker, GA 30085. When submitting classified ads, please include your full name, address, and phone number. This information is for our records only! For classified ads, contact Harry Strack tigertaxstrack@att.net.  
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## Amen, Let's Eat!



by Joyce Ray

### Consider Soup as The Main Course!

*In winter months our body clocks move us inside to linger just a little bit longer by the warm fire or under a warm comforter. A warm hearty soup is a great choice for the menu. Served with warm crusty bread, corn bread or grilled cheese sandwich, soup can make a hearty and delicious meal. This month I am featuring three international favorites! Classic French Onion Soup welcomes you home with that delicious "onions cooking" fragrance that makes you famished by the time it is served, and it is well worth the wait. Susan Gibson's Chicken Tortilla soup has lots of ingredients, but you will likely have it all on hand and can just throw it in the pot! To save time, start with a rotisserie chicken. For you instant pot fans, I have included the traditional Greek Chicken Lemon Rice Soup.*

#### Classic French Onion Soup

- 5 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 8 cups thinly sliced onions- about 3 lbs.
- 3 minced garlic cloves
- ½ cup port wine or Sherry
- 2 cartons (32 oz each) beef broth
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 24 slices French bread baguette -sliced ½" thick
- 2 large garlic cloves, peeled and halved
- ¾ cups shredded Gruyere or Swiss cheese

In a Dutch oven, heat 2 tablespoons oil and butter over medium heat. Add onions; cook and stir until softened, 10-13 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low, cook, stirring occasionally until deep golden brown, 30-40 minutes. Add minced garlic and cook 2 minutes longer. Stir in wine. Bring to boil, cook until liquid is reduced by half. Add broth, pepper, and salt, return to boil. Set oven to 300°. Cover pot, set in middle of oven and bake for 1 hour. Stir occasionally. Remove from oven. Just before serving, preheat oven to 400°. Place baguette slices on a baking sheet; brush both sides with remaining oil. Bake until toasted, 3-5 minutes on each side. Rub toast halves with halved garlic. To serve, place 8 oz broiler safe bowls on baking sheet. Place 2 toasts in each. Ladle with soup; top with cheese. Broil 4 inches from heat until cheese is melted. Remaining soup can be kept in refrigerator. Makes twelve 8 oz servings.

#### Chicken Tortilla Soup

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup yellow onion diced (about 1 medium onion)
- 1 large jalapeno pepper, diced, about 4-5 inches long. Remove seeds to reduce heat
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled and finely minced
- 32 oz (4 cups) chicken broth
- Two 14.5-ounce cans diced tomatoes with juice
- One 15 ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed 2
- cups shredded cooked chicken
- 1 ½ cups corn, frozen or canned
- 1 TBSP lime juice
- 1 Tbsp Chili pepper
- 2 TSP salt
- 1 TSP black pepper
- 2 tsp smoked or regular paprika
- 1/3 cup diced fresh cilantro leaves
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper (if preferred)
- Optional for serving: diced avocado and lime slices, shredded cheese, sour cream, tortilla strips.

To a large Dutch oven add 2 TBSP olive oil and heat to medium high. Add onion, Jalapeno, and sauté for about 5 mins. Add garlic and stir 1-2 minutes. Add all other ingredients except the cilantro. Allow mixture to boil gently for 5-7 minutes. Add ½ cilantro and boil one minute. Use remainder of cilantro as a garnish.

#### Instant Pot Greek Chicken Lemon Rice Soup

- 1 TBSP olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 6 cups chicken broth
- 2 large carrots, cut into 1/4" slices
- 1 rib of celery, chopped
- 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp black pepper,
- ¾ cup long grain white rice
- 1 chicken breasts (about 1 ½ pounds)
- 2 TBSP butter, melted
- 1 TBSP flour
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 eggs
- Feta cheese – optional for garnish

Turn Instant Pot to the Sauté setting and add olive oil. Allow to heat then add chopped onion and cook for 3-4 minutes. Add broth while preparing vegetables. Add carrots and celery with salt, pepper, and rice. Cut chicken breasts in half to reduce thickness. Add to pot. Cover pot and secure the lid. Set valve to sealing. Set the manual/pressure cook button to 5 minutes (high pressure). When timer rings, allow the pressure to release naturally for 10 minutes and then move the valve to venting. Open pot remove chicken. Set aside to cool. In a bowl, whisk together the butter and flour until smooth. Ladle a cup of the flour mixture into the bowl and mix well, then add to soup. Add lemon juice. In separate bowl, whisk the eggs until frothy. Spoon a tablespoon of hot soup into the eggs and whisk. Repeat this about 5 times. This will slowly temper the eggs to room temperature and not allow them to scramble in the pot. Add all egg mixture to pot and stir. Shred the chicken and add to pot. Cook on low 2-3 minutes. Ladle soup into bowl and serve with feta. Serves 8.

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