

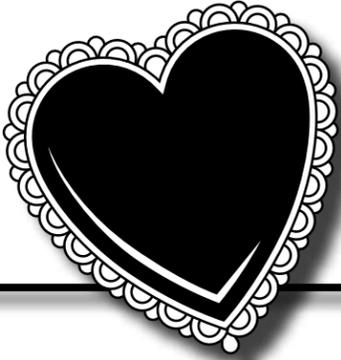
SMOKE SIGNAL

VOLUME 48, ISSUE 11

Serving the Smoke Rise Community Since 1968

February, 2016

www.smokesignalnews.com



Happy Valentine's Day from the staff of the Smoke Signal!

THE PANAMA CANAL: AN ENGINEERING MARVEL

by **Barbara Bruschi**

Sailing through the Panama Canal is an awe-inspiring experience. The six to eight hour journey through the canal etches itself into your memory forever. Truly an example of man's engineering genius, the canal was designed over 100 years ago and is the result of human innovation, courage, sacrifice and endless determination.

During the sixteenth century, when the Spaniards reached the Isthmus of Panama, the idea to create a route between the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean was born. In 1882, after the French successfully built the Suez Canal, they endeavored construction of the Panama Canal. The terrain, heavy rains, sweltering tropical climate, disease and financial scandals soon bankrupted the investors and the project was abandoned.

When Panama gained her independence in the year 1903, they negotiated an agreement with the USA to build the canal. Work began in 1906 and the construction of the canal was completed on August 15, 1914 with the passage



of the steamer ship Ancon officially opening the Canal. Sadly 5,609 people died during the canal's construction- mostly of yellow fever, malaria and accidents. The United States

handed the Panama Canal over to Panama's government on December 31, 1999 in what is known as the "Torrijos-Carter Treaty." The treaty states that the USA has the right to defend the Canal's neutrality.

Today, the waterway - which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year- connects 144 routes and reaches 1,700 ports in 160 countries. More than a million ships have passed through the canals six locks (three on the Pacific side, and three on the Atlantic Gulf side). The canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans saves the almost two week sea voyage needed to sail around South America. It is not commonly known, but sailing through the canal, from the Pacific side to the Gulf of Mexico you are initially sailing in a northwestern direction!

The inter-ocean waterway operates by using a system of locks with two lanes that operates as water elevators. It raises the ships from sea level to Gatun Lake, 26 meters above sea level, to allow the crossing through the Continental Divide, and then it lowers the ships to sea level on the other side of the Isthmus. The water used to raise and lower the vessels in each set of locks is obtained from Gatun Lake by gravity and poured into the locks through a main culvert and a system of gates that extends under the locks. Chambers from the sidewalls fill each canal gate.

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For The City of Tucker's New Mayor & City Council

Early Voting Begins February 8
Election Day---March 1

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

SRCA Candidates Forum

February 8, 7:00 pm

Smoke Rise Baptist Church

5901 Hugh Howell Road

Stone Mountain, Georgia 30087

Meet and ask questions of candidates seeking posts to represent Smoke Rise in the new City of Tucker government.

MAYORAL CANDIDATES:

Frank Auman
Lorne Cheek
Bruce Jackson

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES:

William (Bill) Rosenfeld
Jon Carr
Honey VanDeKreke

City of Tucker Special Election By Pat Soltys

The elections are a month away, with early voting beginning on February 8 and the general vote on March 1.

Candidates running for Council and Mayor in District 1 were asked to answer three questions.

1. *What is the most important thing that you have learned since filing your candidacy that will help you if elected?*

Frank Auman, candidate for mayor – I have learned just how deep people's love for Tucker is. And it has to do with the fact that Tucker is a place where a person, a family, can spend their whole lives. It's a place your children will want to return and raise their families. And that's so rare, and so precious, people are almost desperate to do what it takes to preserve it.

Lorne Cheek, candidate for mayor - I understand my responsibilities now. I have a focus.

Bruce Jackson, candidate for mayor - We feel that it is extremely important that we get out and listen to the people in the community within Tucker to really grasp the collective concerns and opportunities for our City. Also, we will need to take the time to meet with officials and leaders of communities (such as Brookhaven) that have recently transitioned into Cityhood as we can learn from what they have experienced.

Honey Van De Kreke, candidate for city council district 1, post 1 - Since qualifying for District 1, Post 1, I think voters are most concerned over the potential of rising taxes and the unknown. Realizing these concerns reaffirms my commitment to making the City of Tucker a model for how government should work.

Jon Carr, candidate for city council district 1, post 2 - I have learned that the formation of the City of Tucker will provide our community with an outstanding government. The residents of Tucker and Smokerise will have local representation to serve them on issues specific and important to them.

William "Bill" Rosenfeld, candidate for city council district 1, post 2 - We need to communicate with the voters on the set up the new city government of Tucker, its functions and the responsibilities of all elected officials. I have been asking voters what they want most in the new city. Most citizens want our city to be conservative in our formation and to make sure that we operate within our budget.

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Smoke Signal

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

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February Calendar of Events

- 1 ART Station "two by two" exhibit through March 1
- 1 SRGC meeting. 7:00 p.m. at Jane Culbertson's
- 8 EARLY VOTING BEGINS
- 8 SRCA Tucker Candidates Forum. 7:00 p.m. Smoke Rise Baptist Church
- 8 Silent Auction benefitting Henderson Park. Garden Enthusiast, Through the 20th
- 8 Mountain Shadow Garden Club. 7:30 p.m. Eastminster Presbyterian
- 9 Tucker Civic Association's Candidates Forum. 7:00-8:45 p.m. All Tucker Candidates will be present
- 13 Presidential Candidate Meeting. 10:00 a.m. DeKalb GOP Headquarters, Decatur
- 18 Tucker Arts Guild. 7:00 p.m., at Custom Frame Shop, Tucker
- 26-7 Cinderella kids. 7:00 p.m., Smoke Rise Baptist Church

Smoke Signal Deadlines

FEBRUARY 13

Please e-mail articles to:

smoke-signal@earthlink.net

(Word documents or text file attachments preferred)

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CLASSIFIED ADS TO THIS E-MAIL ADDRESS

Extra copies may be picked up at box at
5365 Smoke Rise Drive

Deadline for classified ads is FEBRUARY 10

SMOKE SIGNAL FLYER INSERT POLICY

Cost: \$150 by check to *Smoke Signal*

Deadline to Receive: 6:00 p.m. on 19th of month

Flyer inserts should be 8 1/2" x 11" (flat, not folded)

Please provide 2,300 copies

Reservation Required:

Contact Barbara Luton, (770) 491-6711 by 15th of month.

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United Methodist Men Announce The 220th "Music for Missions" Concert Talent

United Methodist Men at Lawrenceville Road United Methodist Church in Tucker are pleased to announce that Russian musical artists Olga McNeill and Elena Dorozhkina will play a concert of piano and flute compositions on February 21st at 7:00 p.m. The church is located at 3142 Lawrenceville Highway in Tucker just outside 285.

Olga McNeill, flute, graduated from the Ipolitov-Ivanov College of Music in Moscow graduating with an Honors Diploma. She also received her Masters Degree there. She also was invited to Master's class in Flute at Rossini Conservatory in Pesaro, Italy and at the University of Music in San Marino. Mrs. McNeill has performed with many ensembles in the USA and around the world.

Tucker Arts Guild Artist
Nancy Hester Exhibits
"Small Works in Various Media"
 at the Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library through February

Smoke Rise Baptist Church

Dr. Chris George, Senior 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
 Telephone: (770) 469-5856
 SmokeRiseBaptist.org

Sundays:
 9:00 a.m. Worship in the Chapel
 9:45 a.m. Sunday school
 11:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

Communion: Second Sunday of each month
 1st Tuesdays: 11:30 a.m. Prime Time
 Wednesdays:
 5:00-5:45 Fellowship Dinner
 6:00-7:00 Programs for children, youth and adults
 7:00-8:30 Sanctuary choir
 Nursery provided

Eastminster Presbyterian Church

Pastor: Rev. J. Caleb Clarke III
 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 to Senior Adult Ministries: Rev. Jeanne Simpson
 Telephone (770) 469-4881
 www.eastminster.us

Sundays:
 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
 11:00 a.m. Worship
 Wednesdays:
 5:45 p.m. Fellowship Dinner
 6:30 p.m. Adult and Children's Program
 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Mount Carmel Christian Church

Senior Minister: Art Stansberry
 Worship Leader: Leslie Riley
 Director of Students and Kids Ministries: Vicki Tyler
 Telephone (770) 279-8437
 www.mountcarmelcc.org

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

First Moravian Church

Interim Pastor: Stephen Weisz
 Congregational Acolyte: Bill Hitz
 Telephone (770) 491-7250
 www.gamoravian.org

Sundays:
 10:00 a.m. Sunday School-Adults & Children
 11:00 a.m. Worship
 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Time
 Thursdays:
 7:00 p.m. Adult Study Group

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
 Telephone (770) 491-0228
 www.mountainwestchurch.com
 4818 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain
 Service Times 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.



FREE NEIGHBORHOOD PET LOST AND FOUND

Please call Kay McKenzie at (770) 491-6784 if you have lost or found a pet.

The *Smoke Signal* is posted to www.smokesignalnews.com the first of each month. Go to the "Smoke Signal Digital" link. You'll also find the link posted to the *Smoke Signal* News Facebook page each month with posting of pictures and stories throughout the month. For questions, contact Pat Soltys at pat@smokeriseagents.com.

**SmokeRise Baptist Church
Journeys Session 6
Wednesdays at 6pm**

Ash Wednesday Service
February 10th in the Chapel

Entering Sacred Time and Space

In this session, we will explore the question, "Why do we need symbols, rituals, art, spiritual practices and seasons like Lent?" How do these things help us on our faith journey? This session will be led by Deedra Rich. Deedra was the former Associate Director of Spirituality and Lifelong Learning at Columbia Seminary and has served at Peachtree Baptist Church, John's Creek Baptist Church and Emory Presbyterian Church.

February 17th in the Fellowship Hall

**From Inspiration to Illumination,
an Introduction to The Saint John's Bible**

This contemporary Bible was created by a group of 23 scribes, artists and assistants in a Scriptorium in Wales. Through video, reproductions and rich visual images, participants are guided through the story of The Saint John's Bible. We will learn about the processes, tools, methods and materials behind the making of The Saint John's Bible, as well as explore several artworks through guided imagery discussions. We will handle vellum samples and a quill and see a large reproduction of an entire volume after the presentation. An exhibit of framed prints from The Saint John's Bible will be on display in the Parlor March 2nd thru 27th. Led by Tim Ternes, Director, The Saint John's Bible in Collegeville, Minnesota

February 24th in the Fellowship Hall

**Creating a Culture at Smoke Rise
Fellowship Hall**

The culture of a church determines what people experience, what they value and how they carry out those values. In this series, we will look at our intentions for creating a culture of hospitality, generosity, learning and evangelism:

Creating a Culture of Hospitality
March 2nd – Led by Rev. Becky Caswell-Speight

Creating a Culture of Generosity
March 9th – Led by Dr. Colin Harris

Creating a Culture of Learning
March 16th – Led by Rev. Kathy Dobbins

**Creating a Culture of Evangelism:
Being the Presence of Christ**
March 23rd – Led by Dr. David Hull.

Dr. David Hull served as a Baptist pastor from 1980 to 2014, with the last 28 years being spent at the First Baptist Churches in Laurens, SC, Knoxville, TN and Huntsville, AL. He works with the Center for Teaching Churches at McAfee School of Theology and teaches Leadership and Pastoral Preaching courses as Adjunct Professor. He is also the Southeast Coordinator for the Center for Healthy Churches.



Silent Auction to Benefit Park

The Garden Enthusiast - Backyard Nature Station in Tucker will hold our third annual silent auction from February 8th – 20th. Proceeds will benefit The Henderson Park Native Plant and Wildlife Walk at 2803 Henderson Road near the soccer complex. The park is used by school and student groups, dog walkers, and those who enjoy the outdoors. It's also a good site for bird watching.

This year's theme will be Mardi Gras in the Garden. Monies raised will go toward more native plants, signage, and additional area cleanup. The goal this year is \$3000. Some of the auction items include: bird house, bird feeder, bird bath, kitras ball, plants, fountain, photography, jewelry and much more.

In the last two years we have raised over \$2500 for the Tucker Butterfly Garden which provided for their new native plant expansion and signage.

Plan to come by for this auction, place a bid or two, and support another great local community resource. And, of course, we'll keep you informed during the two week period to let you know if you've been outbid!

Sharing the Christmas Spirit

The 2015 Christmas season was very exciting this year as we continued the tradition of decorating our home with thousands and thousands of Christmas lights. We decided to make a few adjustments to our display this year, and change things up. Our first change was the addition of an octopus to go with our Christmas Shark in the backyard, and the second was collecting donations for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Both changes seem to have been well received. We heard several positive comments about the octopus and, with the help of friends, neighbors and volunteers; we collected a record high of \$4,004.70 for the Make-A-Wish foundation. The donation was presented to organization representative Jaylie Welch on Wednesday, January 13th by my wife Theo and me.

Tucker High School's Habitat for Humanity continued its tradition of caroling for donations, and was able to collect \$500 in one night. We are so appreciative and thankful to everyone for the donations and generosity they have shown to these two wonderful organizations. Over the past four years, we have been able to collect and donate over \$10,000 to charity. We also want to thank all our neighbors who tolerate the constant traffic on our street.

Santa Claus was able to return and happily posed for pictures every Saturday and Sunday evening in his sleigh. We are happy he made time in his busy schedule to do this, and are hoping to have him return next year! We hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and we are already working on our new addition for next year!



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The North DeKalb Republican Women will host a Presidential Candidate Mass Meeting at the DeKalb GOP Headquarters on Saturday, February 13th at 10:00 a.m. Among speakers will be Rachel Little, immediate past Chairman of the Gwinnett County Republican Party, and Georgia Representative Buz Brockway, member of the Georgia House of Representatives since 2011. If you are interested in expanding your knowledge of the Republican presidential candidates, you are invited to attend. Coffee and refreshments will be served. The DeKalb GOP Headquarters is located at 2050 Lawrenceville Hwy, Suite 4054, Decatur, GA 30033, near the US Post Office.

The North DeKalb Republican Women meet on the 2nd Saturday of each Month at the DeKalb GOP Headquarters. For more information about the NDRW, visit our webpage at northdekalbrepblicanwomen.com, like us on Facebook "North DeKalb Republican Women", or contact our president Merrie Soltis at merriesoltis@gmail.com.

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club held a holiday brunch for the Side by Side Clubhouse for Brain Injured Adults in Stone Mountain village. Clubhouse members enjoyed music and entertainment by Jack Sartain, Patrick Hutchison, and Clemence DuBarre. Breakfast items served by Woman's Club members followed the music. Pictured left to right are Pat Sartain, Barb Curzon, Sheila Hortman, Martha Decker, Barbara Luton, Brenda Price, Barbara Clanton, Nelda Lunsford, Nancy Collins, Terry Ingwersen and Lorraine Dress.



STATION
A CONTEMPORARY
ARTS CENTER

ART Station Contemporary Arts Center is excited to announce a gallery exhibition, - "Two by Two," an exhibit of images from two incredible journeys by two artists, Erin Bailey and Del Martin showing in the Trolley Stop Gallery through April 6.

The artists' paintings were inspired by unique landscapes and animals they saw during excursions to South Africa and Alaska in 2015. Both trips were made possible by ART Station. An exhibit of members' artwork, juried by highly-renowned artist, Philip Carpenter, will also be exhibited through March 5.



www.smokerisebaptist.org/arts
artsacademy@smokerisebaptist.org
678-533-0562

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Based on the Screenplay by Ken Anderson and Homer Brightman

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FEBRUARY 26-27, 2016 7:00 PM
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5901 Hugh Howell Road
Stone Mountain, GA 30087



January 22- April 8

Tucker Arts Guild Photographer John Slep has an upcoming exhibit entitled "Flight Line" in the contemporary gallery at the Aviation Community Cultural Center. FLIGHT LINE features abstract photos of Flying Machines and runs through

April 8. The Center is located on the grounds of Fulton County "Charlie Brown" airport.

The Aviation Community Cultural Center
3900 Aviation Circle, NW,
Atlanta, Georgia 30336
For more information, call 404-612-8600.

Tucker Arts Guild meets January through November on the 3rd Thursday at 7p.m. at The Custom Frame Shop
4195 Fellowship Road
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SRCA BOARD NEWS

The first meeting of the SRCA board was held on January 11 at the new Enzo's location. The board concentrated efforts on addressing these four areas: details of the candidate forum to be held on February 8; tentatively setting the date for the annual membership meeting to March 22; setting the stage for the annual membership renewal drive; and working on unified seasonal planting themes for chimneys. The association also made a donation of mini-computers to the STEM program at the elementary school. The next meeting of the board is scheduled for February 15.

Tucker Civic Association

Tucker Civic Association hosts a candidate forum for ALL candidates qualified for the first Mayor and Council elections!



When: Tuesday, February 9, 2016
 Time: 7:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.
 Where: Tucker Middle School Cafeteria
 2160 Idlewood Rd, Tucker

Due to the large number of qualified persons, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. each candidate will have a table set up where they will be able to meet their neighbors in their district, answer questions, and provide any informational handouts. From 8:00 to 8:45 the three qualified Mayor candidates will field questions from the audience and via a moderator.

The Tucker Civic Association hopes the citizens of the new City of Tucker will attend, learn, and make educated votes. Thank you.

City of Tucker Special Election...continued from page 1

Communications will be important, and town hall meetings will be a vehicle to continue to educate and work closely with the citizens as we build the new City of Tucker together.

2. Fast forward to March 1, 2018 what will be the most important thing that you have accomplished in the two years in office?

Frank Auman, candidate for mayor - At the end of the 18 months of our first term, we will have established all the services for Tucker, including not only the ones we provide, but also the ones the county continues to provide. We will have a sound budget process, and a stable, professional staff. But the most important thing is that we will have set the course for the kind of city we will be, and how we treat each other in leading it.

Lorne Cheek, candidate for mayor - I have hired a city manager, set a budget, determined whether to contract out services or manage them with actual staff.

Bruce Jackson, candidate for mayor - One of the things that I think we will have focus on initially is being patient. (Much easier said than done) I am quite sure that we all would like to wake up on March 2, 2016 and have an instant City. I feel it will take a lot of time, effort from all of us within Tucker to make this work successfully. When we fast forward to 2 years from now, I believe we will have established the character, culture and a much clearer direction in accomplishing our goals that we have established.

Honey Van De Kreke, candidate for city council district 1, post 1 - My sincere desire is to have a solid foundation of policies and procedures for City Government that will be sustainable for years to come.

Jon Carr, candidate for city council district 1, post 2 - March 2018 we will celebrate the city's growth and independence. We will be able to show the formation of an outstanding City Administration who will develop programs that will grow our City and reduce community and business crime.

William "Bill" Rosenfeld, candidate for city council district 1, post 2 - My hope is that we have all the departments in place, functioning smoothly. We have done a good job in hiring and placing the best people possible in the right positions to help run our new City. The mayor and the City Council have done an outstanding job in negotiating with the county and that all the contractual agreements or sound and beneficial to all parties. This is not going an over-night process. It will take hard work and dedication and meeting unforeseen challenges.

3. All of the candidates are business people who cannot simply walk away from their businesses to devote time to the City of Tucker. What will be your strategy to manage the demands on your time?

Frank Auman, candidate for mayor - It's about commitment. All my business and public life, including my volunteer work for the Tucker cityhood initiative, have been a matter of following through on the commitments I've made and then just making it work. During the two sessions we spent working at the legislature for Tucker 2014 and Tucker 2015, not only did we spend hundreds of hours at the Capitol, but we never knew when or for how long we would need to be there. During that time, I also managed my business, my personal and family responsibilities, and the several boards I chair and/or serve on. Together, we'll make it work.

Lorne Cheek, candidate for mayor - I will establish my schedule. I will be free mornings on certain days, evenings on other days and leave weekends for personal appearances and mayoral duties. This way I can fulfil my duties and meet with my council. I will be flexible.

Bruce Jackson, candidate for mayor - As stated earlier, it will take a tremendous effort from all of us especially those in leadership positions. We will certainly have to make sacrifices to invest the time needed for Tucker continued success. Personally I have made some recent career changes that will afford me and my team to dedicate more time locally in our community. I would also say that we need to focus not only on the quantity of time that is spent but also on the quality of the time making each moment count for the greater good of Tucker.

Honey Van De Kreke, candidate for city council district 1, post 1 - I have been active working for the community the last 20 years and was able to manage a business. Working with Tucker Civic Association, MainStreet Tucker Alliance, Tucker Business Association, DeKalb Parks Bond Citizens Advisory Board, Tucker-Northlake Community Improvement District, Tucker Day and other miscellaneous planning and advisory position requests took time away from my business but I managed. My experience in business and public service has prepared me for the responsibility and time commitments that will be required.

Jon Carr, candidate for city council district 1, post 2 - I am a successful businessman with 25 employees and I have always had to manage my time. I can devote full time to City Council business as my business model has been built on years of experience and outstanding management by employees and my management team.

William "Bill" Rosenfeld, candidate for city council district 1, post 2 - My business supports my family and I cannot lose sight of that. However the business and my community activities have taught me to surround myself with dedicated, loyal and smart people. As a leader, I have to employ my strengths and engage others to complement and expand talent, all the time, listening and making sure that the best ideas and methods are used. This style of leadership has allowed me to manage time and create great results in business and the organizations and boards I serve on. Busy people get things done.

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NEWS FROM SMOKE RISE ELEMENTARY

Preparing for Georgia Milestones Assessment

Efforts to prepare Smoke Rise Elementary School students for the Georgia Milestones Assessment included a mock assessment taken during the weeks of January 11th and January 18th. The Mock Georgia Milestones assessment was purchased from Georgia Center for Assessment, who will also score the students' tests. The assessment was given in a secured testing environment in order to mimic an actual test setting, and was given over the course of five days. Each test is modeled after actual Milestones Assessment test questions, which include selected response as well as short answer and extended constructed response questions. Teachers have been working diligently with students to prepare them for the upcoming test in April.

Stone Mountain Women's Club Pen Pals Project

Smoke Rise Elementary third grade students are writing letters to Pen Pals from Stone Mountain Women's Club. Students write about various topics, including what's happening in the classroom or school. They love knowing that people in the community are interested in their lives, and they have so much fun sharing what they are learning at school! The project is in its early stages at Smoke Rise, but the school is excited to support the Stone Mountain Women's Club writing initiative.

Grecian Gyro Serves as Community Partner to SRES

SRES is elated to welcome Grecian Gyro of Tucker to our school family! The authentic Greek restaurant has consistently and graciously donated their time, appetizing food items and a great number of gifts during the holiday season for needy families and students. Grecian Gyro has also been instrumental in collaborating with SRES for their STEM program. Their admirable passion and dedication have made them SRE STEM Ambassadors!

Recently, the restaurant donated gardening supplies and labor to support the school's newly formed edible organic garden. They are the acting consultants for Green Engineering & Sustainability. Students are learning the process of planting native foods, which will be organic edible products. Chefs will demonstrate the "farm to table" concept to students. They will harvest the crops and send them to the farmers market for the community to enjoy! Culinary science training is another added learning opportunity being taught by Grecian Gyro's accomplished restaurateurs!

SRES would like thank Grecian Gyro for offering their time and talents to help students learn and grow.

Smoke Rise Community Association Supports STEM Program at SRES

SRES would like to extend a big thank you to the Smoke Rise Community Association for supporting our STEM initiative! The SRCA board committed to nearly \$5,000 to purchase Raspberry Pi computers and accessories that will provide students with cutting edge technology and academic enrichment training. The Raspberry Pi product is a miniature computer that plugs into a computer monitor or TV, and uses a standard keyboard and mouse. It enables people of all ages to explore computing and learn how to program in languages like Scratch and Python. It can do everything one would expect a desktop computer to do, such as browsing the internet, playing high-definition video, making spreadsheets, word-processing, and playing games. Raspberry Pi can also interact with the outside world. It has been used in a wide range of digital maker projects from music machines and tweeting birdhouses with infra-red cameras.

These new computers will surely enhance the technology component of the STEM curriculum and will help students achieve an array of real world training and experience in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math!

Smoke Rise Prep Safety Patrol

Smoke Rise Prep, a leading elementary and middle cooperative school in the Smoke Rise community, is proud of their 2015/2016 Safety Patrol; this group of students shows leadership abilities, dedication to schoolwork, responsibility, and dependability. The following students were all accepted onto patrol by the teachers and administration of SRP this year:

- Rachel Rose, 6th grade, Captain
- Nick Moreau, 7th grade, Captain
- Jayla Cochran, 7th grade, Secretary
- Justin Field, 7th grade
- Koby Fong, 7th grade
- Kalen Fraser, 7th grade
- George Graham, 7th grade
- Olivia Held, 7th grade
- Aaron Nash, 6th grade
- Chris Kindred, 7th grade



The students who serve take a pledge to set good examples and earn the respect of fellow students. They must represent the school's Owl Code, a set of 20 rules for success and good behavior. In addition, they help prevent accidents at school, run the carpool, plan fire drills, and participate in various school and community events.

The Director of Operations and Safety Patrol mentor, Kim Fong, commented, "It is an honor to work with the Safety Patrol each year. These students never cease to amaze me with their integrity, commitment, and caring nature. They love the safe, friendly environment we have created here at SRP and work hard to protect it."

Smoke Rise Prep is always looking for students who possess high academic standards and outstanding character traits. We are currently accepting applications for the 2016/17 school year.

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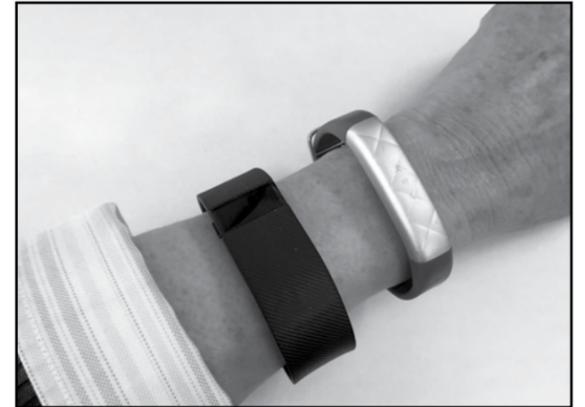


Update on Health & Fitness Monitors

So the New Year is here. Resolutions abound, and topping the list this year as usual is losing weight, getting in shape, and improving health. So, how about that health and fitness monitor we talked about last year? Have you gotten one? Are you using it and benefiting from what you learn from seeing how your body responds to how much exercise you get or what you eat?

I first became intrigued by the power of fitness monitors about this time last year when I purchased my first one. That inspired me to write the article about them for last year's June paper. My first device was the Jawbone UP24, which I selected because reviews of it had the most user-friendly interface available. Hearing the Fitbit was popular too, I got one and began wearing them both so I could do a comparison study of their relative strengths and weaknesses. Yes, people think I am a fitness zealot with my TWO fitness monitors, but I am not. I'm just trying to discern what functionality of a monitor really matters. Here are my findings from wearing the two monitors for about a year now.

Pictured are the black Fitbit with a time and message display and my new grey and silver Jawbone UP4 that improves on the UP24 by adding heart rate monitoring.



Advantages: Fitbit

1. It has a time display, so you can see what time it is without wearing a watch or having to check your phone to see the time.
2. When a call comes in to your cell phone, the band vibrates alerting you the call and the display shows the caller's name and phone number. When my cell phone is silenced, this is a handy feature that has more than once alerted me to a call I needed to take.
3. Step counts are not consistent between the two bands with Fitbit generally running about 10 percent higher than the Jawbone. I'll list that as an advantage because I like seeing the higher numbers.

Disadvantages: Fitbit

1. The summary information you view on your computer or cell phone, known as the Graphical User Interface (GUI), is unattractive and clunky compared to Jawbone's.
2. The band's clasp is a little hard to press into the locked position.

Advantages Jawbone UP4

1. The newer bands have latches that are far easier put on and less likely to let the device fall off your wrist when you remove a coat or brush by something.
2. The GUI is the best I have seen. It is extremely easy to understand the charts displaying your sleep, exercise, hydration, calorie intake and burn.
3. The heart rate monitor is a valuable upgrade I experienced going from the UP24 to the UP4. It is interesting to see what affects heart rate and to watch how it changes through the day based on your activity level and through the night as you go between deep and light sleep.
4. Tips provided from analysis of the monitor data can give you helpful pointers like reminders to drink more water related to your heart rate or suggestion to get up and walk around after a long sedentary period.

Disadvantages of the Jawbone UP4

1. Not having the time display is irritating. If it's on my wrist, why doesn't it tell what time it is?
2. The cell phone connection allowing you to see who is calling and being alerted to a call is something I wouldn't have missed on the Jawbone had I not had this feature on the Fitbit.

So now the big question I usually get upon having this conversation, "which one will you keep?" Hmmmm...I don't yet have a good answer for that. I've grown accustomed to them both on my wrist and will stay with that until one of the devices morphs into the complete and perfect one that would have all the advantages of both.

If you haven't yet picked up a health and fitness monitor, now is the time to do so. Prices continue to move lower and post-holiday sales abound.

Belinda Belvin, REALTOR®

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Smoke Rise Preferred Contractor's List

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: jimfarmer812@earthlink.net 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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Of Note to the Community...
(formerly Alerts & Watches)

by Cedric Ross

The cold has arrived and sunset seems to come a little earlier. It is also a time to include caution in your safety routines. Safety is an individual and community responsibility- meaning we all play a role in our safety. Take a safety look around your home daily for areas of concern.

Safety thoughts for the month:

- When you park your car are there items of value left in plain sight?
- When you shop, do you place items of value in the trunk and then go shopping, giving thieves a shopping list?
- Do you open your wallet or purse and display cash to on-lookers?
- Are your doors and windows locked and checked before bed, and is the alarm turned on?
- Do the outside lights turn on automatically at dusk or via switch or timer?
- Did your garage door close completely, or did it go back up when you accidentally bumped the garage door opener key fob?
- Do you have a locking storm door as an additional safety measure?
- Are your curtains closed when you don't want or need natural light?

Our goal is your safety and security. Each issue will share ways to move us all in the direction of living a little more safely. If you would like to share your thoughts and ideas about safety with the community, use the email below. We may not be able to share everyone's submissions, however we will share a few each month.

Email smoke-signal@earthlink.net

Crime Reports – We make an effort to list local crimes. If we miss something, let us know so that we can update our readers.

- 1/11/2016 BURGLARY – Forced Entry – Residence 4900 Block Chedworth Dr.
- 1/10/2016 DAMAGE TO PROPERTY – Private 1700 Block Kanawha Tr.
- 1/7/2016 THEFT OF AUTOMOBILE 5400 Block Leather Stocking Ln.
- 12/29/2016 DAMAGE TO PROPERTY – Business 4700 Block Hammermill Rd.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

By Aviva Hoffmann

Technology Helps Turn the Tide on Water Meter Errors

Something new is coming down the pipeline for our water meters. The DeKalb County Department of Watershed Management (DWM) has begun installation of new Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) System transmitters on water meters in various locations in DeKalb County.

The purpose of the AMI system is to improve the accuracy of water bills and improve customer service. The new technology will help eliminate manually misread meters and inaccurately estimated bills. The AMI system works like any other wireless device, using smart point units to regional collectors that transmit usage data. Under this system, water meters will call in their own meter readings. Receivers for regional collectors are being placed on existing water tanks and towers. The new AMI system will also allow for better leak detection within the water system, as abnormal spikes in water usage can be instantly identified using a software monitoring system.

DWM contractors began installing the new Advanced Metering Technology in January and expect to fit 40,000 meters throughout DeKalb by the end of this year. The work will continue countywide and is scheduled to be complete within three years.

For more information, visit the Department of Watershed Management's website at: www.dekalbwatershed.com.



The new AMI transmitter assembly will be applied to new water meters that are equipped to call in their own readings.

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Panama Canal...continued from page 1

The existing canal locks are only 110 foot wide. The giant cruise ship we took was 105 ft. wide. That means we only had a 2.5-foot clearance on each side! Amazing, since our ship carried 2,170 passengers, was 965 feet long and weighed 91,000 tons! In each canal lock, 4 towing engines on rails move the large vessels through each lock. The existing canal gate widths restrict the passage of large super tankers, large cargo container vessels, and some aircraft carriers. New 160-foot wide locks are currently under construction that will allow passage of these larger ocean vessels. Construction is scheduled for completion in 2017.

It is estimated that 10,000 workers are presently employed to operate the canal 24 hours a day. As we sailed through, among the hundreds of Panamanian flags, I saw no sign of any American symbols.

While there are several ways to see the Panama Canal, the 15-day cruise we took left from San Diego and traveled to Cabo San Lucas (Mexico), Puerto Vallarta (Mexico), Puerto Quetzals (Guatemala), Puntarenas (Costa Rica), Colon (Panama), Cartagena (Colombia) and finally landed in Fort Lauderdale (Florida).

Along the way we found the wildlife preserves with amazing species of birds and animals, as well as the sparkling fauna radiating with light and color hypnotizing. We were able to learn about many new cultures, fostering a connection with the world we live in. When a peaceful nation like Panama puts their most brilliant ideas together with its resources, great achievements for humanity can be accomplished. Building bridges across nations gives hope and a chance for a better life for mankind.



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HEALTH NOTES:

by Cheri Schneider, M.D.

The Skinny on Exercise and Weight Loss

There are so many articles written today about exercise, diet and weight loss that it is hard to keep up. Because it seems that writers and reporters can make almost anything sound true, I decided to highlight a few research-based facts about diet and exercise that work in the real world, not just the lab.

Find your *Body Mass Index (BMI)*. This number will help you know if you are in a normal weight category or overweight, obese or ‘morbidly’ obese. Go to www.bmi-calculator.net (or any other website with a BMI calculator) and plug your current weight and height into the BMI calculator. A BMI of 25 means you are overweight and a BMI of 30 means you are obese. A morbidly obese person would have a BMI of 40, be 100 pounds overweight or have a BMI of 35 and other health issues.

Regarding Diet: How do you know which diet is right for you? There are low cal, low carb, low fat, high protein, “clean eating”, “paleo” diets ... and the list goes on.

If you are healthy, but overweight, any diet will work to get the pounds off. It comes down to taking in fewer calories than you are burning. That means over the long term (two years) almost any diet will work. It comes down to what diet you will stick with. Many people find that low fat diets don’t satisfy their hunger. This is why low carb and high protein diets are now popular. Statistics show, though, that in the end, all diets work the same. Having a diet partner or accountability group will increase your likelihood of losing weight and keeping it off.

Several studies suggest that a high protein diet increases the amount of calories burned and helps to preserve muscle mass. The participants in these studies also limited their calories. The opposite is also true. If you are eating a very low protein diet, you may lose muscle mass. This will slow your metabolism, causing weight loss to be slower.

I recommend trying a diet that does not eliminate any food group (many of the popular diets eliminate food groups). Fresh, simple and non-processed foods are best. We need a little of everything... even healthy fats. Whole grain carbohydrates are best because they have fiber and vitamins that processed grains do not. Lean proteins include fish, beans, peas, nuts, seeds, eggs, lean cuts of meats and poultry. If you are going vegetarian you need to be very educated about protein. It is easy to become deficient in vitamin B12, iron and several other amino acids if you don’t eat meat.

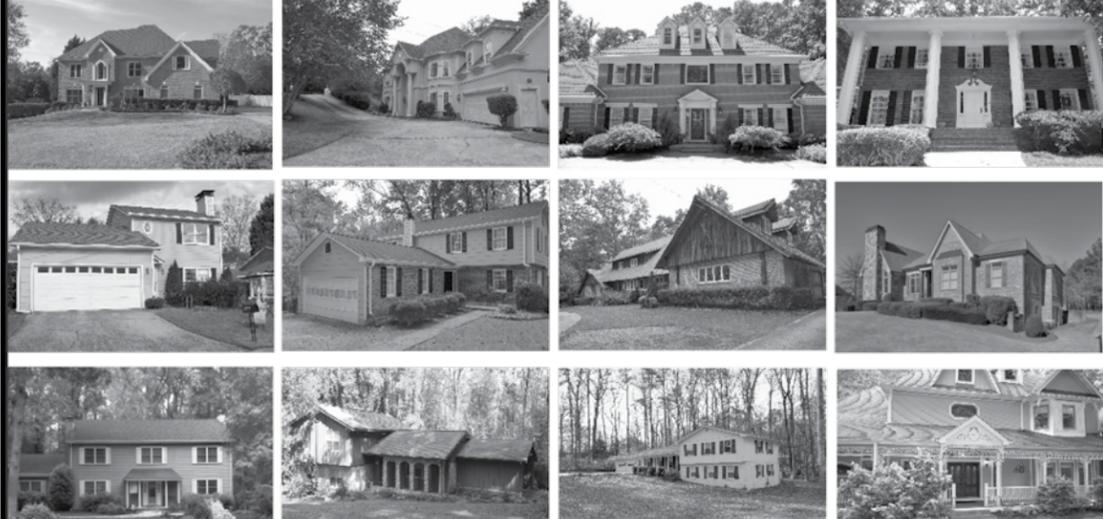
If you have any of these conditions: high blood pressure, glucose intolerance (either pre-diabetes or low blood sugars) or a cholesterol or lipid disorder you may have hyperinsulinemia or the ‘Metabolic Syndrome’. This means you have too much insulin circulating in your blood for the amount of blood sugar present. People with hyperinsulinemia do better on a diet that is low in carbohydrates and higher in lean protein and healthy fats. Examples of this kind of diet would be the Mediterranean diet, the South Beach Diet or a low Glycemic Index diet. These three diets will also work in everyone and are very healthy.

Now to Exercise:

Exercise is probably less important than you think in losing weight. It is probably more important than you think in keeping the weight off. Exercise alone will not help you lose weight. Exercise is for your heart health. It will also help you maintain bone density and muscle strength and mass. Several studies have shown that individuals who exercise after they lose weight are more likely to keep the weight off.

High intensity interval training (HIT) can help you lose body fat and build muscle. HIT consists of ‘spurts’ of high intensity exercise for several minutes at a time (as few as 4-10 minutes) followed by slower recovery exercises. Studies have shown that the body’s metabolism continues to be elevated well beyond the work out time with these type of exercises. People who add these spurts get aerobically fit and conditioned faster than others. The benefit to weight loss is not as clear.

There are many more things I could say. For now, I will just encourage you to eat well, watch how much you eat and get regular exercise at least three days per week.



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Get Yourself Ready for Tax Season, Part I

By Harry Strack



There's obviously not enough space in this column to provide a detailed examination of the tax preparation process, but a few basic items follow.

If you use a tax preparer, you should have plenty of direction on gathering the information and documents you will need to furnish for the preparation of your returns. Many preparers furnish an organizer with prior year numbers to assist you in gathering the information and assuring that you are not omitting pertinent data. There is usually a questionnaire with several pages of questions that need to be answered. It is important that you answer all the questions, although many of these will not apply to you. The answers will help your preparer assure that all information is considered.

Accumulate all the "Important Tax Documents" you receive. Be sure to provide complete brokers' statements to your preparer rather than just entering information on the organizer. The statements contain expanded information on classifications of dividends, interest, and other special items, such as broker's fees that you may not be aware you need to furnish. The schedules of gross proceeds of sales transactions provide the sales price and cost basis of each transaction. In many cases, the broker does not know the basis of the security sold. If your statement shows no cost basis for a particular transaction, you should do the necessary due diligence to obtain the basis to prevent delays in processing your returns.

If your preparer does not provide an organizer, or if you prepare your own returns (you're very brave), you need to be sure that you have all the required information and documentation. You should retain a copy of all your income tax returns indefinitely, and the documentation for the returns should be retained for five years. Reviewing the prior year return will remind you of all the documents needed for the current year. It's almost impossible for a layman to accurately prepare anything other than a very simple return, and there are very few of those anymore. There are tax preparation packages that claim you don't have to be an accountant to file your returns, but you do need to know the rules.

Obama Care has affected not only your medical health insurance but your income tax return. You must indicate whether all individuals are covered by health insurance. If, not there is a penalty (Health Care Individual Responsibility Penalty). If you received a Premium Tax Credit (PTC) against your health insurance premium last year, you are required to file Form 8962, which is a reconciliation of the premiums you actually paid versus the premium allowed based on your household income on your income tax return. If the PTC you received exceeds the allowed PTC, you will pay an additional premium penalty. You should receive a Form-1095A from your insurer detailing the information required to file this from. If you have not received the Form 1095-A, you should request the form from your insurer. The IRS will not process your return without the Form 8962, and refunds will be delayed.

Next month I will share a few thoughts that may clear up some questions you have and may even help you save money on taxes.

A Colorful Introduction to Garden Meadows

By Renée Hopf



Since we moved to the Smoke Rise area about 20 years ago, we have loved to experiment with our 2 acre terrain which has up-hill, down-hill, shady and sunny landscapes. We have tried from the beginning to let nature be our best guide. For example, when our builder's grass seed refused to germinate in shady areas, we allowed the beautiful dark moss that wanted to flourish on its own to grow there. Other shady areas filled in on their own, or with a little help from us with sprigs of liriopoe or commonly called monkey grass to give us lush shaded ground covers. Birds and insects soon dotted these areas and helped balance all of the critters. Meantime our 1/2 acre of sunny property on the front left side of our house had been ignored and was being overpopulated by the attractive, but aggressive, mimosa trees. This area was becoming our biggest challenge. One summer it did look really colorful when neighbors helped us grow and nurture giant sunflowers. Lovely, but totally labor intensive!! Next, we decided that planting red clover and lavender vetch was a much smarter idea. We chose to plant the entire lot with them because they would nurture the soil and give us time to decide on our next steps. The results were lovely. The red and lavender flowers of these two plants provided an immediate scenic area. We could have just continued to go with that red and lavender theme every year. However, we happened to be introduced to two inspiring books: Noah's Garden written by Sara Stein and Plants of the South by Sally Wasowski. They both set us on the path to creating a "meadow" lawn.

That was five years ago. Meadows evolve slowly on their own but they are worth your patience. You can view many of them if you are aware and traveling through the countrysides of Georgia. Our meadow has been full of surprises. Basically it is growing on its own with a few "nudges" and help from us. The first winter, we mowed it to about a 4 inch height and allowed it to rest during the Winter months. We were not surprised but kind of excited in the Spring to see the red and lavender shades of tiny clover and vetch peeking through since we had planted them a few years before. But, we also saw some traces of indigo. my favorite passion vine and violets pushing through.

Now, we do have to admit that through the first and second year of creation we would get occasional comments like "what do your neighbors think of all of those weeds?" But, as time has gone by they have realized that those "weeds" are really black-eyed Susans, milkweed, bluet, goldenrod and asters, to name a few.... and those comments have ceased. We also have found that we can transplant just a few wild flowers from the mountains and they will happily expand to decorate our Smoke Rise meadows. Queen Ann's Lace works its magic by adding its white beauty to all of the other rainbow of colors.

The meadow has certainly enlarged our palette of colors and native plants. Something equally important, however, is that it has increased our bird population, varieties of butterflies and other popular pollinators....all with only mowing it once a year! If these benefits appeal to you, you might find that you too may not be offended by those comments concerning "a few weeds" and begin starting a meadow of your own.

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Smoke Rise Garden Club

The Smoke Rise Garden Club's January meeting was held at the home of Denise Finley. Rick Barnes, formerly of Perimeter College -Pantherville-Botanical Gardens, and now President of Naturscapes, was the speaker. He visited the Western states this summer and toured gardens there that were designed with extreme water conservation in mind. The title of his program was *Hell's Gardens*, which he said was so appropriate for that part of the country. Some of the gardens in his photo collection were quite beautiful, considering the conditions. December's meeting was a brunch at the 1910 Public House in Lilburn with a Christmas shopping opportunity at Antiques in Old Town. This was a big treat enjoyed by all who attended.



Denise Finley

Chattahoochee River Watershed is Topic for MSGC February 8

The meeting of Mountain Shadow Garden Club (MSGC) on Monday evening, February 8, will feature a program titled "Tapped Out: The Drying Up of Atlanta". Despite our recent rains, anyone with experience in gardening around the Atlanta area for more than a few years can relate to the challenges of water use restrictions and conservation in the region.

The program will be presented by Laura Hartt, who has been the Water Policy Director for Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK) since 2008. Her talk examines the causes of the ongoing water crisis in the metro Atlanta region, focusing on the Chattahoochee watershed and offering practical solutions. Her work with CRK focuses on achieving sustainable water management at the local, state, and regional levels while maintaining healthy ecological flows.

Ms. Hartt has an undergraduate degree in biology from Cal Poly Pomona and a graduate degree in wildlife ecology from Utah State University. She also holds an environmental law degree from Lewis and Clark Law School in Portland. Ms. Hartt was previously with the National Wildlife Federation, working on Florida panther and Everglades issues. She also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya.



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

Morning Glories Greet the New Year!

A bright, sunny but cold day greeted the Morning Glories Garden Club for the first meeting of 2016. Our speaker, Doug Dorough, owner of Dorough Landscaping, presented a wonderful program on roses. He offered a clinic on pruning Knock Out roses. The best time to prune them is now until the first of March. Doug noted that the new growth of the rose will arise 6" below the pruning cut and will help the shrub leaf out more uniformly making it a more attractive shrub. Roses are heavy feeders since they bloom six months of the year, so fertilizer should be used quarterly during the growing and blooming season. Doug recommended using Osmocote 14-14-14 for shrubs. To the delight of the club, he donated two Knock Out roses as raffle items which were won by MaryAnne Andersen and Glendolyn Hallman.

Doug suggested members look at their homes from a street perspective remembering that landscaping enhances architecture and it not intended to hide it.

During the business meeting, the club donated \$1 per member to the state-wide initiative of "Dollars for Scholars" sponsored by the Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. Last year the garden clubs donated \$62K to 30 students statewide and the goal is to have 100% participation for this scholarship fund.

Marilyn Hug and her garden therapy group will be at Brookdale Stone Mountain Senior Living on February 17 for a Valentine themed floral workshop for the residents. February 17 is also Capital Conservation Day and several members will represent our club at the state capital, led by member Tally Sweat.

The club was distressed to learn that DeKalb Co. Sanitation is not recycling the glass that we are placing in our recycling containers for collection according to an article in the December *AJC*. Club President Quill Duncan will contact the county and request that a county representative attend our February meeting to explain this development. Recycling is a very important part of our club's environmental directive and this misrepresentation has really disturbed many folks in our club and in DeKalb County. Stay tuned as we hope to learn about other ways to recycle the collected glass.

Thanks to our hostesses Janet McGinnis, Julianne Goecke, Vivian Nickelsen, and Pat Jackson for a delightful luncheon.



Glendolyn Hallman and Doug Dorough with rose raffle donation.

Mountain Mums Garden Club

The Mountain Mums January meeting was held at the home of Lucy White. After a brief business meeting, Sara Henderson gave an interesting program on Hydrangeas. The Mums then enjoyed conversation over a wonderful soup and salad luncheon.

By the time you will have read this article, the Walk to Remember will be over. This year, walkers planted 180 red tulips again at the corner of Silver Hill and Hugh Howell Roads. Again, we thank the SRCA, Kroger, Pincentives, Smoke Rise Agents, Bill Rosenfeld, It's My Party Rentals, Taggart's Driving School of Tucker, and The Metropolitan-an In Town Business and Arts District for joining the Mountain Mums as sponsors of the walk.

Other activities planned for January include a winter 'make and take' craft for residents of Brookdale Stone Mountain Assisted Living. The field trip committee is in the process of planning at least two spring field trips. Club member Sally Young was honored by a vote from the club to be named a lifetime member of the DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs. The ceremony honoring all lifetime members will be held at Callenwolde during their luncheon meeting February 24th.

Sara Henderson, the director of Gardens at Oakland Cemetery, gave an excellent program on Hydrangeas. Her own garden has been featured on HGTV's *Garden Diary* and *Georgia Gardener* on GPTV. She covered the basics of care of the macrophylla Hydrangeas. These are the big mopheads and lace-cap flowers you see blooming in Atlanta around May and June. The following tips may help you have the 'best and biggest' blooms ever!

Color: Georgia's soil is usually acidic. This will give blue flowers. If you want pink, you will need to amend the soil with lime to make it alkaline (a ph of greater than 6).

Light: Most Hydrangeas do best with morning sun or dappled light. Some do well with 1-3 hours of direct sun, but afternoon sun can burn the leaves of some varieties.

Soil: No plant likes to grow in pure Georgia red clay. Water doesn't move through it well and roots don't push through it well. Amend the clay with lots of organic matter and composted manure. Afterwards top dress with about an inch of manure, followed by mulch once a year.

Water: Hydrangea bushes need deep watering to encourage deep roots. If leaves droop in the afternoon sun, see if they perk up when the sun begins to set. If not, water and consider moving the plant to a less sunny location.

Join us next month at Mary Still's house as we learn about *Garden Photography* with Lyle Collins. Email Gaye Auman for more information: gauman@mindspring.com.



Co-Hostesses Carol Wales, Debbie Jones, Becky Dennison, Sara Henderson (speaker) and Lucy White (Hostess)

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HODGE PODGE



By Jenny Hall-Busch

There is a new activity that is all the rage now that I actually have tried and enjoyed - coloring. Adult coloring books are intricate and amazing, and my astute daughter got me one that is supposed to promote calmness. I spent an entire day coloring lily pads, fish and rippling water. I think I did attain a sort of calm anxiousness, because I couldn't quit coloring until the entire page was finished. I also don't have a colored pencil sharpener, so that made me anxious, too. And I can't color in the lines. Actually, I'm not very calm now at all. This is probably causing you great concern in that I might present to you a recipe that is hideously complicated and stress producing. Fear not: I give you waffles for Valentine's Day.

Cake Waffles

Your kids will love you for this extra fun breakfast or dessert for Valentine's Day. Use strawberry cake mix for pink, but you can use just about any flavor cake mix you like.

1 box strawberry cake mix 1 cup water,
3 eggs 1/3 cup vegetable oil.

Mix as directed on box and bake on preheated waffle iron until done. They will not be crisp, but will be lovely--like warm cake. Serve with ridiculously extravagant

Nutella® Sauce

1/4 cup Nutella® thinned with 2-3 Tablespoons milk to make it drizzly. You could also serve with ice cream and sweetened sliced strawberries. Also, I wonder if you could sandwich two together with just a little cream cheese icing?

If you want something easy and delicious for dinner I'm offering up this recipe for baked chicken that is lovely with a salad and rice pilaf. First, I'll give you the recipe for the salad dressing because it's actually better if made a day ahead. I'm way out of order here, but since you're such a serene person, I know you can handle it. It needs refrigerating for at least an hour or so, but overnight is best. It's mild enough that most kids will like it too.

Pesto Buttermilk Salad Dressing

1 cup mayonnaise 1/8 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cups buttermilk 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 1/2 Tablespoons dried basil 1/4 cup shredded Parmesan
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

Whisk together, cover and refrigerate at least an hour or overnight and serve with your favorite greens, cukes, tomatoes, croutons and etc.

Chicken Breasts with Orange Glaze

4 large chicken breasts, boneless, (skin-on if you like)
Salt and pepper 1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup orange marmalade 1/4 cup dry white wine

Pat chicken dry. (This may calm you down as well.) Salt and pepper chicken and place in a lightly greased baking dish, single layer, skin side up. Bake in preheated 450° oven for 20 minutes. Yes, that is HOT. Meanwhile, melt butter and add marmalade. Heat to bubbling and add wine. Pour this sauce over the chicken breasts after their first 20 minutes in the oven. Lower temperature to 300° degrees. Yes, that's NOT HOT. Bake another 45 minutes, basting chicken twice.

Taste wine if there is any left. Make some rice if you remember. Serve the chicken, rice pilaf, and salad with the Pesto Buttermilk Dressing, and maybe some hot rolls. Finish the wine and have some dessert because February is cold and you need to store up energy and calmness.

Cherries Jubilee is just what you need!

2 (15 ounce) cans Bing cherries in juice - not pie filling
1 Tablespoon each of sugar and cornstarch
1/4 cup kirsch, cognac, rum or whatever you like

Drain cherries and reserve juice. Mix about 1/8 cup of the juice with sugar and cornstarch to make a slurry. Put rest of juice in saucepan. Add cornstarch mixture and heat until it gets thick. Add cherries, stir a bit to heat and add liquor of choice. If doing this on a gas range, be careful because it can flame unexpectedly. I usually just add kirsch off the heat, stir it and return it quickly to heat. But I like the flavor and don't want the alcohol to burn off. That is why I'm so calm I guess. Serve warm over vanilla ice cream for a wonderful dessert.



Stone Mountain Rotary Club

by L.A. Dison

Stone Mountain Club Partners with ART Station for Fundraiser

Stone Mountain's ART Station has earmarked its March 1 performance of "From My Grandmother's Grandmother unto Me" as a fundraising event for The Rotary Club of Stone Mountain. The event will also mark the 30th anniversary of ART Station; the one-woman show, co-written by Atlanta storyteller Charlotte Ross and her daughter, actress Clarinda Ross, and starring the younger Ross, was the premier play staged at ART Station in 1986. The anniversary production will once again feature Clarinda.

The play traces the joys and sorrows of five generations of the women in the authors' Appalachian family, from an 1890 homesteader to a contemporary actress. Proceeds from the March 1 performance will support the Stone Mountain club's 2016 community service projects, such as the distribution of dictionaries to DeKalb County elementary students in February and a Boy Scout Merit badge workshop in the summer. Stone Mountain, along with other District 6900 Rotary clubs, also supports Rotary International Projects, such as last year's shipment of medical supplies and equipment to aid earthquake survivors in Nepal.

The Stone Mountain club meets every Tuesday for noon lunch at Smoke Rise Country Club; visitors and those interested in learning more about Rotary are welcome to attend. To learn more about the club and its upcoming programs, go to www.stonemountainrotary.org.

