

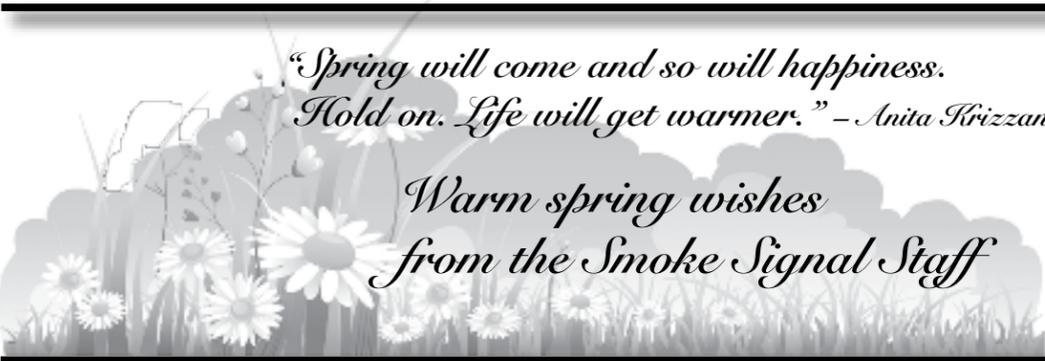
# SMOKE SIGNAL

VOLUME 53, ISSUE 12

*Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968*

March, 2021

www.smokesignalnews.com



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## Smoke Signal Tribute to Community Leader and Friend Bill Rosenfeld

Smoke Rise is saddened by the sudden and heartbreaking loss of one of our most well-known and beloved residents. Some knew Bill from him being our District 1 representative to the Tucker City Council. Others from his ownership of Rosenfeld Jewelry, The Diamond Store on LaVista Road in Tucker. Many more knew him from his extensive community service involvement.



How fitting that our City Council voted in February to rename the Smoke Rise Bath & Racquet Club in his memory. In this tribute to the life and work of Bill Rosenfeld, we share Mayor Frank Auman's words expressing our respect and appreciation for his contributions to our community.

Bill was a true public servant, as evidenced by the fact that his public service arose naturally from his lifetime of personal and private service to his friends, neighbors, and everyone with whom he came in contact. He never sought the spotlight for its own sake but was always first to volunteer to help or to give to any need that came to his attention, always in his own quiet, but very effective way.

As a founding member of our Tucker City Council, Bill was a reliable, stabilizing force for us all. He could be counted on as a steady hand, lending careful thought to all our plans and decisions. Like all of us, he occasionally took a particular interest in an issue, and when he did, his determination to see it through was influential on all of us.

Bill was instrumental in the City's acquisition of the Smoke Rise Bath and Racquet Club, and in turning it into a facility that benefits all of Tucker. Though it is already open to all our citizens, the work there has only just begun, and it is another facility that will pay dividends to all of us far beyond most of our lifetimes. The City Council unanimously voted in a recent meeting to rename the Smoke Rise Bath and Racquet Club for Bill.

Bill was many things to many people, and his involvement in the community is legendary. The Rotary Club, FODAC, the Tucker Business Association, the Tucker Northlake Community Improvement District, our Police and Fire Departments, Smoke Rise Country Club, and untold others benefitted from his involvement, his leadership, and his generosity.

Bill cannot be replaced on the City Council. There will soon be an election to fill his position, one of two City Council members representing District 1, the Smoke Rise community.



## Tucker Major Intersection Improvements Underway

Construction improvements and upgrades continue at the intersections of Mountain Industrial Boulevard (MIB) at Hugh Howell Road with additional turn lanes; Highway 78 at MIB with the relocation of the exit ramps; operational improvements on MIB from Greer Circle to Elmdale Drive; SPLOST road resurfacing on North Royal Atlanta Drive from MIB to Lawrenceville Highway and Litton Drive from Lewis Road to East Ponce de Leon Avenue; and a new raised landscaped median on MIB up to the Gwinnett County Line.

Additionally, the City of Tucker approved a contract with E.R. Snell to add turn lanes and a traffic signal at the Flintstone Drive at Hugh Howell Road intersection. The driveway will provide access to the Crespac property, the Smoke Rise Elementary School and interparcel access to the future Publix at the new Hugh Howell Marketplace development.

DeKalb County, the City of Tucker and TSCID contributed to this \$1 million intersection improvement. Construction is scheduled to be complete before school begins this fall.





## 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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### 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

### MARCH 13

Please e-mail articles to:

[staff@smokesignalnews.com](mailto:staff@smokesignalnews.com)

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

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

Deadline for classified ads is MARCH 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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## COVID-19 Vaccine:

For those who are eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations during this initial phase, keep checking the DeKalb County Board of Health website ([www.dekalbhealth.net](http://www.dekalbhealth.net)) as more appointments become available. For more information about the vaccine, please visit the Georgia Department of Public Health website or call 888-357-0169.



### Social media is no place for COVID-19 vaccination cards

Sharing with your social media network that you have received your COVID-19 vaccination, in hopes of inspiring others to do the same, is a great idea. Posting a picture of your vaccination card to prove it - not so much! You could be inviting identity theft.

Your vaccination card has information on it including your full name, date of birth, where you got your vaccine, and the dates you got it. Just by knowing your date and place of birth, scammers sometimes can guess most of the digits of your Social Security number. With this key piece of information, identity thieves can open new accounts in your name, claim your tax refund for themselves, and worse.

Feel like sharing the news about your vaccination? Consider a selfie with a closeup of the cool band aid over the injection wound on your shoulder instead.



### 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  
 Bart McNeil: Associate Pastor of Administration, Ministry Support and Congregational Care  
 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  
 Schedule Available at [SmokeRiseBaptist.org](http://SmokeRiseBaptist.org)  
 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  
 Opportunities Online and In-Person  
 Schedule Available at [SmokeRiseBaptist.org](http://SmokeRiseBaptist.org)  
 (In-person events are outside with social distancing and masks)

## Eastminster Presbyterian Church

Pastor ~ Rev. J. Caleb Clarke III  
 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  
 10:30 a.m. Live streaming of Worship service  
 Our Sunday service information can be found on our website at <https://www.eastminster.us/remotesundays>

## MC3 Church

Senior Minister: Art Stansberry  
 Worship Minister: Leslie Riley  
 Student Minister: Will Tyler  
 Children's Minister: Rae Tyler Caggiula  
 Telephone (770) 783-1035  
[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:  
 1316 Rockbridge Rd, Suite M  
 Stone Mountain, GA 30087  
 Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
 Mailing Address: 1227 Rockbridge Rd., SW, STE 208-251  
 Stone Mountain, GA 30087

## First Moravian Church

Pastor: Rev. Elroy Christopher  
 Congregational Acolyte: Bill Hitz  
 Telephone (770) 491-7250, (770) 755-8289  
[www.gamoravian.org](http://www.gamoravian.org)

Sundays:  
 10:00 a.m. Sunday School-Adults & Children  
 11:00 a.m. Worship  
 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Time

## Incarnate Word Lutheran Church

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

## Mountain West Church

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 Worship Arts Pastor: Gary Robinson  
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 In-Person & Online: Sundays 9:00am | 11:00am  
 Online Only: Sundays at 5:00pm & Mondays at 7:00pm

**Tucker Restaurant Week Proclamation**

Last month, City of Tucker Mayor Frank Auman joined restaurateurs from across Tucker in proclaiming February 24-28 to be Tucker Restaurant Week. During a special ceremony on Main Street, the proclamation was presented to James Tsismanakis, Executive Director and CEO of Discover DeKalb.



For decades, Tucker has been known as a destination for diverse and unique restaurants. Several new restaurants have opened in Tucker in the recent past, adding to the regional interest of the city as a hub for good food. As such, the food service industry has solidified itself as the backbone of the Tucker business community, creating jobs for hundreds of people and driving local tourism to the area.

In celebration of these businesses and their positive impact, Discover DeKalb, the city's Convention and Visitors Bureau, organized the inaugural Tucker Restaurant Week.

During the announcement and proclamation of the week, Mayor Auman recognized Discover DeKalb for its role in creating this important, community-uniting event and thanked local restaurant owners for continuing to conduct business during the past challenging year, including those who opened their restaurants during the pandemic.

"We really appreciate the people here who work every day to create community around Tucker," said Auman. "Thank you for giving everybody places to go to hang out, get to know each other, share social time, and eat good food."

More than a dozen restaurants from across Tucker, representing a variety of food genres, were featured in Tucker's first Restaurant Week. From community veterans to newer stops on the block, the week showcased specials and specialties that drew foodies from across the region. Participating patrons "joined the movement" on social media, posting pictures of their visits and meals with the hashtag #TKRRestaurantWeek.

"This is great news for Tucker and puts us in a good place as we get ready to go forward," remarked Mayor Auman. "Our role as a city is to make a great marketplace for our restaurants and to encourage people to avail themselves of the food and services they offer."

As was the vision, it was a fantastic week and a great display of what makes Tucker a beloved food destination. View highlights and menus from the week at [www.TuckerRestaurantWeek.com](http://www.TuckerRestaurantWeek.com)... and continue the celebration!



The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club presented a new barbeque grill to Fire Station #11 in Stone Mountain village. The grill was donated by the Home Depot #110 at 4121 Highway 78 in Lilburn. Fire Station #11 is the busiest station for calls in the area.

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Please send in your picture and a brief article for publication in the *Smoke Signal*. Email submissions to [staff@smokesignalnews.com](mailto:staff@smokesignalnews.com)

**Smoke Rise Community Association Board Update**

The SRCA board, led by Virginia Rece and Kalpana Patel, has been working with neighbors in the greater Deer Ridge area to gauge the effects of noise from the South Royal Atlanta Drive section of the industrial park. The board is inviting Smoke Rise residents to respond with their feedback to a 6-question survey on NextDoor and Facebook. To access the survey, scan the QR code pictured here with your mobile device or visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6RL9B7T>.



Ruppert's, the Association's landscaping partner, has been busy burnishing the beds at our stacks for the spring and mowing at the US Highway 78 triangle. Also, the 2021 SRCA Membership Campaign is underway, and the traditional annual mailing will go out soon. Payments can also be made to [smokerisecivic@gmail.com](mailto:smokerisecivic@gmail.com) via Zelle (a digital pay option available in most banking apps). The requested donation of \$40 is now fully tax-deductible and provides for landscaping, including the possibility of expanding the number of stacks covered and maintaining the oasis that is the community garden, and operating expenses of the 100% volunteer organization.

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**Run The Reagan** returns this year as a week-long virtual race, March 20-March 31. Participating runners will compete in 5K and 10K “Virtual Race Courses” using MayMyRun.com.

Run the Reagan is a 501-(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose purpose is to raise funds for other charities and organizations serving those in greatest need in Gwinnett County. This year’s benefiting charities include Southeast Gwinnett Co-Op, Lilburn Co-Ops, and Brookwood Schools Foundation.

More details available at [www.runthereagan.net](http://www.runthereagan.net) and (404) 447-3707.

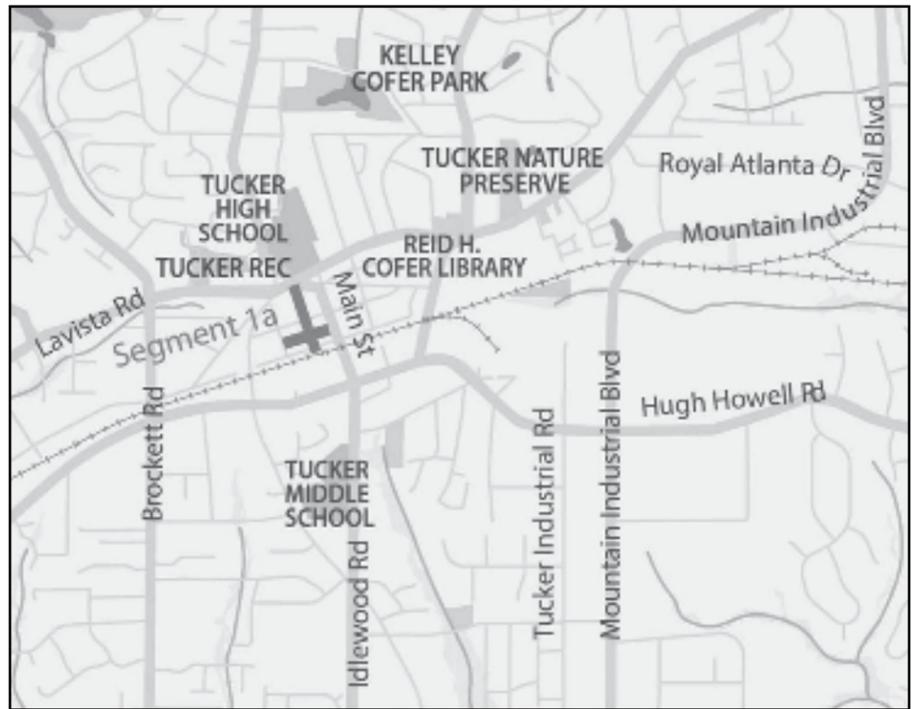
**City of Tucker Model Trail Project Underway**

The City of Tucker has announced that “Segment 1A” from the Tucker PATH Master Trail Plan has been selected for implementation as the system’s “model trail project”.

Located in the heart of Downtown Tucker, this 0.3 mile segment utilizes a portion of the historic network of alleys to connect Main Street, Lavista Road and Railroad Avenue. Downtown Tucker’s historic 20 -wide alleys are large enough to accommodate a 12 -wide trail as well as space for outdoor dining.



The project aims to not only transform the Downtown Tucker experience, contributing significantly to the amount of public space there, but also serve as a model for future trails. It includes construction of the multi-use trail, which ranges from 10 to 12 feet in width, as well as installation of lighting, benches, trash cans, signage, landscaping and decorative brick banding. Kaizen Collaborative Design, Inc. has completed the design and engineering phase and right-of-way acquisition is underway. Construction is scheduled to begin this year.





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**Smoke Rise Elementary School Construction Update**

*By Caroline Croom*

The brand new, state of the art, 950-seat Smoke Rise Elementary School facility is right on schedule. The long-awaited school building will open in August of 2021.

Members of the Construction Advisory Council, along with proud Principal Pamela McCloud, had the opportunity to visit the facility recently. Their excitement became apparent upon witnessing the lengthy project become a reality and the countless planning and collaboration meetings finally pay off.

In retrospect, during the October 2019 groundbreaking ceremony, 5th grade student Xavier Ragland mentioned the dream of a construction zone being transformed into a learning zone for students of all backgrounds. This statement certainly holds true today. The new Smoke Rise Elementary School has gone from blueprint to manifestation.



In summing up the words of our esteemed leader, we are excited about our new journey. We are excited to move learning from an old home into a new design complex with state-of-the-art classrooms and 21st century technology. And we are excited to continue making academic gains as we hold onto our 89.2% College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) score. This is a significant jump from a past score of 59.3% in 2016. For both the final destination to a score of 100% and the new Smoke Rise Elementary School facility, here we come!

The Smoke Rise Elementary School family graciously extends a very special thank you to the Construction Advisory Council (CAC) and all those who made the dream of a new school a reality.

**Smoke Rise Prep: Happy Spring!**

*By Grier Kellett*

Smoke Rise Prep (K-8), Stone Mountain's best kept secret, focuses on the core values of character, culture, and curriculum. In order to shape well-rounded students, our teachers and parents create an atmosphere that aligns with those core values. One way that we accomplish this is to create a healthy balance between academic rigor and enriching activities. Our teachers have been busy incorporating engaging, project-based lessons that challenge our students both in person and virtually. Our small class sizes create the optimal learning environment for our students.



Our number #1 priority is providing a quality education as safely as possible while providing flexible options according to our families' comfort levels.

This month we have our annual Casino Night Auction beginning March 13. For the past 9 years, this has been our most popular annual event. This year, to keep our families safe, we are making the fun virtual and opening the auction to the public. The funds raised at this event will enable SRP to maintain and update our academic and enrichment activities, ensure students have access to the latest technology, and supplement our operating expenditures. Our online auction will run from March 13 -27. We hope that you will visit our event at <https://www.32auctions.com/SRP2021SilentAuction>.

Our Admissions Season is open, and we are excited about next year. We have some great things in store, and we invite the community to attend one of our virtual open houses to experience what makes Smoke Rise Prep unique. In lieu of personal tours, we are offering Teacher Talks where visitors can speak with our teachers directly about their class activities, expectations, and more.

Visit our website for more information: <https://www.smokeriseprep.org/open-housetours>. To hear more about specific grade levels and to learn about additional offerings, contact [info@smokeriseprep.org](mailto:info@smokeriseprep.org).



**Smoke Rise Eagle Scout**

Troop 876 announces their newest Eagle Scout, Charlie Smith. Charlie has been a member of the Troop for six years and has enjoyed countless outings and activities including two trips to Florida's National High Adventure Sea Base. He led friends and fellow scouts in building a work table and 24-foot trellis at the Lilburn Community Garden for his Eagle Scout Project. Charlie is the son of Laura and Jay Smith and the grandson of Penny and Graham Stovall and Laverne Smith. He is a junior at Providence Christian Academy where he plays football and tennis. Troop 876 meets at 7:30 at East Minster Presbyterian Church on Monday nights. Come join us and start your adventure!

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**Out the Window**

By Beth Henson

Glancing out the front window, I gazed at the dismal brown and gray landscape. The skeletal hardwoods were a constant reminder that the dead of winter was definitely upon us. Squeaky (my resident squirrel) and his cohorts were busily foraging through the thick carpet of decaying dead leaves, searching for their buried treasure of the fall. The colder weather had been no match for these energetic little pirates.



*Wren in Wreath by Beth Henson*

As I glanced towards the double front doors, I noticed a glimmer of sparkling gold, winking in the bright winter sun. I suddenly remembered that this year's Christmas wreaths were still joyfully adorning my doorstep. Although the holidays had long passed, I had been more than reluctant to take them down in hopes they would help chase away the cold weather blues. On second thought, I had probably left them up a little longer than necessary, most likely causing the neighbors to be slightly perturbed at my unseasonal display.

Creaking open the seldom used front door, a burst of rust colored feathers quickly exploded into the air. Mrs. Wren had taken up winter residence in my cozy Christmas decor. She quickly lighted on the adjacent garden wall and let out a barrage of birdie complaints (and who knows what else)!

Sorry, Mrs. Wren, for disturbing your warm, comfy winter abode! I will leave everything, as is, until warmer weather, even if the neighbors do complain.

**NEWS YOU CAN USE**

By Aviva Hoffmann

**Can We Bank on These Savings?**

Daylight Saving Time (DST) has been used in the United States and in many European countries since World War I. We change our clocks during the summer months to move an hour of daylight from the morning to the evening. Then, we turn back our clocks in the fall (and gain an extra hour of sleep). This process has been the subject of much debate and investigation. Some studies have found negative results from switching every six months between daylight and standard time such as disruptions in sleep patterns and increases in the number of heart attacks, car crashes, and workplace injuries.

The twice-a-year time switch was originally adopted to make better use of daylight and thereby reduce energy consumption. This is theoretically accomplished by limiting the



number of waking hours where there is no sunlight – to reduce the amount of time we use artificial light. While this might give us more time with the sun, some studies have found it does not necessarily reduce heating or air conditioning costs. Also, the argument can be made that more evening hours of light encourage people to run errands and visit friends (during non-pandemic times), which creates more energy usage. Farmers complain they have a hard time making their animals aware of the twice-a-year time change! Additionally, many parents express concern that the time change during the school calendar results in early morning dangers, as children can be less visible while waiting for school buses in the darkness.

You will find numerous arguments on both sides of this issue. Personally, I like more daylight in the early evening hours and am not fond of a pitch-black landscape before I even get off work. Plus, I find it hard to make the adjustment to a new sleep pattern – at least in the initial days following every time change.

The Uniform Time Act of 1966 standardized time zones and daylight saving practices around the United States, but it allowed individual states to pass laws to “opt out.” Hawaii and much of Arizona do not observe daylight saving time, nor do a few of the U.S. territories. Georgia lawmakers are considering a bill that would put an end to the back and forth of resetting our clocks twice a year. If it became law, our state would observe daylight saving time all year long. Imagine that!

For now, daylight saving time in Georgia begins again at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 14. Remember to “spring” ahead one hour on all of your timepieces. And, be good to yourself, as you adjust to the new “time zone.”

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## A Movie with a Message

By Susan Gilbert

Several weeks ago, at 12:26 p.m. on February 20, a spacecraft named after NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson launched from a Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia on a cargo resupply mission to the International Space Station. Intrigued by the stories we had heard about Katherine Johnson, we decided to find and watch the 2016 movie, *Hidden Figures*, documenting her early career with NASA.

As we investigated, we learned that the movie received critical acclaim, with praise for the performances, writing, direction, cinematography, emotional tone and historical accuracy. It was chosen by National Board of Review as one of the top ten films of 2016



Katherine Johnson

and received three nominations, including Best Picture, at the 89th Academy Awards. According to Wikipedia, *Hidden Figures* is a biographical film loosely based on the book of the same name by Margot Lee Shetterly. It is about African American females working at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) during the Space Race and the challenges they persevered. The film stars Taraji P. Henson as Katherine Johnson, a mathematician who calculated flight trajectories for Project Mercury and other missions, Octavia Spencer as NASA supervisor and mathematician Dorothy Vaughan, and Janelle Monáe as Mary Jackson, another NASA engineer.

The movie is a powerful illustration of how bias and stereotypes limited the potential of everyone involved. It speaks volumes about problems at the time that, looking back, seem so hard to believe existed. In addition to the powerful lessons it conveys, it is a really good movie I would recommend to anyone. It is available for free on Disney Plus and can be purchased on Amazon Prime. You can also watch some of the best scenes from the movie on YouTube, simply by Googling “Hidden Figures video.”

Katherine Johnson was the oldest-living of the three *Hidden Figures*; she died in February of 2020 at the age of 101. In the final years of her life, she received long-deserved recognition for her NASA achievements: in 2015, Katherine was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and NASA dedicated the Langley Research Center’s Computational Building in her honor in 2016.

## techtalk

by Susan Gilbert

### Selecting the Right Virtual Reality System Part 2 of 3

If the February TechTalk article piqued your interest in Virtual Reality, you may be waiting for this follow-up detailing the costs, pros, and cons of the most popular systems on the market. Thanks goes to my son, Stephen, who researched the options and wrote this column sharing his vast (maybe too vast?) experience with gaming, devices, and the technology that supports both. According to Stephen...

Before you decide on a VR Headset, there are three major factors to consider: 1) what price you are willing to pay, 2) what hardware requirements you will need, and 3) the space where you intend to use your device.

While the price is rather self-explanatory, the other factors are less intuitive, so I will outline them here. VR devices are less like a game console and more like a computer peripheral, with the notable exception that they require a powerful computer—and graphics card—to render the virtual world. I will go over the hardware requirements associated with each system because they vary from headset to headset. When it comes to your ‘play-space’ there are external factors that need to be considered. While you do not need a huge amount of space to use a VR device, you need at least enough space to stand still and swing your arms around without hitting anything, and some systems will require more space than others.



VR Headsets are divided into two forms of ‘tracking’ or how the device keeps up with the location of your head and hands during use: Inside-Out and Outside-In. With Inside-Out tracking, the headset uses internal sensors to locate your controllers, allowing for the device to be used with far less setup and far greater mobility but at a cost of blind spots with certain movements, like reaching behind yourself. Outside-In tracking relies on stationary “lighthouse” sensors that must be set up in the space. They detect the location and position of both the headset and controllers. This requires additional setup but provides a superior experience... provided you can keep a clean line of sight between yourself and the lighthouse. With that all out of the way, on to my recommendations.

# 1 - Oculus Quest 2: Entry level and running at about \$300, the Oculus Quest is the perfect stand-alone solution for those interested in getting started with VR because it does not require an external computer. The entire system is within the headset and the outside-in tracking, requiring no remote sensors, allows it to be incredibly mobile. Because the system is in the headset, you carry the weight of that additional hardware on your head, though there are few complaints about this in reviews.

...Continued on page 10



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## HEALTH NOTES:

by Cheri Schneider, M.D.

### Coronavirus and Medical Jargon: A Jab in the Dark?

When I was in college, one of my first jobs was working in a hospital lab as a phlebotomist, someone who draws blood for the lab. I still remember the very first time I was allowed to draw blood from a patient all by myself. "It will be one quick jab," I assured the patient. When we left the patient's room, my supervisor turned to me and said, "Never, ever, tell them it will be a 'jab', tell them it will be a 'small prick', or a little 'bee sting'."

Imagine my relief all these years later to find out that I was right after all! In the British world a 'jab' is an injection or some type of vaccination. In December of 2020, the United Kingdom received the first COVID-19 vaccine 'jabs'. United States news outlets went wild using the term, telling us the daily 'jab rate' in the UK. In January of 2021, the US had its first release of vaccines, and we heard the same daily reports in terms of numbers of 'vaccinations'. Our connection to the world through news, internet and social media has made the world a smarter place, especially in 2020 as we learned new medical concepts and vocabulary that described what was happening to us. For example:

--We all know the COVID-19 outbreak is a *pandemic* (not an epidemic). A *pandemic* is an epidemic gone viral-- oops, I mean global.

--We know that COVID-19 is a *novel* virus, meaning it is a new, never before seen or identified strain of virus.

--We know that when exposed to COVID, we should *quarantine*, or rather, find a place to isolate for a period of time so that others do not catch the illness we have (or might have). We know you can quarantine with another person who has also been exposed or is sick.

--We know that to *isolate* is slightly different than to *quarantine*. When isolating you strictly keep yourself away from other members of the family or society. This may include being sent to your own room or part of the house, or using your own bathroom. Isolation usually continues for a certain period of time, too.

Terms like *flattening the curve*, *false positives*, *false negatives*, and *rate of positivity* are thrown about loosely in the daily news and in daily conversation. I never knew my college Statistics Course would become so important!

The term *cytokine storm* is now used in general news articles. This term was not even used in medical journals until about 10 years ago— and now our neighbors are using the term to describe what happened to their friends. By the way, a *cytokine storm* refers to a sudden outpouring of inflammatory chemicals and cells that damage the lungs and other organs.

*Droplet spread*, *N-95 masks*, and *filtration rates* are discussed like the daily weather. We use the words *ventilator*, *BiPAP*, *CPAP*, and *proning* (sleeping on your stomach) as if they are everyday terms. *Messenger RNA* is commonly, (and often inaccurately) described in newspaper articles. And I thought you needed a cell biology, genetics or biochemistry course to understand accurately how the mRNA works.

We now know what our average daily temperature is. Is yours really 98.6? Or is it 97-ish like mine is?

If you got COVID-19, did you buy a pulse oximeter? If so, you probably know that a normal pulse oximetry reading should be above 94 at rest. You probably know that a reading under 90 is worrisome and should send you to the doctor or the ER.

Yes, the year 2020 changed our vocabulary. It changed us. It made us smarter, more interested in how our bodies work, and more concerned about the impact a disease could have on a community and a world.

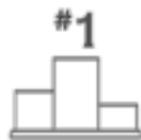
Oh, and who in 2021 hasn't heard of *herd immunity*?



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**Virtual Reality...continued from page 7**

A concern some have is that Oculus is owned by Facebook and use requires a Facebook log-in, which is a turn-off for many tech-savvy potential users.

Without a computer, you are limited to games available on Facebook, but adding a computer remedies that. The other issue for more serious users is that while you can use the Oculus to run anything from their own proprietary store, other VR applications either need to be loaded externally or powered directly from a PC, somewhat diminishing the value of its mobility should you have your heart set on a non-Oculus application.

#2 - Playstation VR: For \$50 more, at \$350, the Playstation VR does include a game (which is usually a separate cost of \$50) so the systems are pretty much matched in terms of cost. An advantage of this system is its superior graphical performance compared to the competition in its price range. Another advantage of this system is the highly rated performance of its time-tested hardware: Playstation Move controllers and camera for body tracking.

This however comes with a rather significant caveat: it is rather firmly married to the device supporting it, namely, the Playstation 4. If you are the proud owner of a Playstation 4 that already holds a place of honor in your home, in a space that already allows for adequate movement for VR, this is hardly an issue. However, much like the Quest, you may find it somewhat arduous to set up VR programs that are not available through the PS4's native environment, even if you try to power the device with a PC instead; this somewhat defeats the purpose of using a proprietary headset.

One suggestion is to hold off for the moment and watch for developments in this space, as the Playstation 5 has just been released, which might prompt a new VR release to accommodate. That said, for the time being, the Playstation 5 will be backwards-compatible with the Playstation VR.

#3 - HTC Vive: Starting at twice the price of the Quest, for \$600 the Vive aims to be the top-of-the line for VR, which unfortunately also means that it has top of the line expectations. While its screen resolution is highly praised, all that screen space needs to be powered graphically, and unlike the Playstation VR, the Vive must be driven by a powerful computer that can support its screen resolution, something that not everyone has. That said, if you are dedicated to experiencing only the greatest visual phenomenon or are especially interested in fast-paced VR gaming, and have the computer graphic power to support it, the Vive delivers in ways the Playstation cannot. Like the PSVR, the Vive uses outside-in tracking, using different controllers but the same lighthouses as the VALVE Index discussed below.

#4 - VALVE Index: Costing around \$1,000, the Index is the most powerful consumer option currently on the market, boasting the best-in-class for headset field of view, structural integrity, and controller quality. However, it also requires the most from the computer powering it. While possibly not the best fit for someone just dipping their toes into Virtual Reality, it delivers top performance for those who know they want to take the deep dive and make a real commitment.

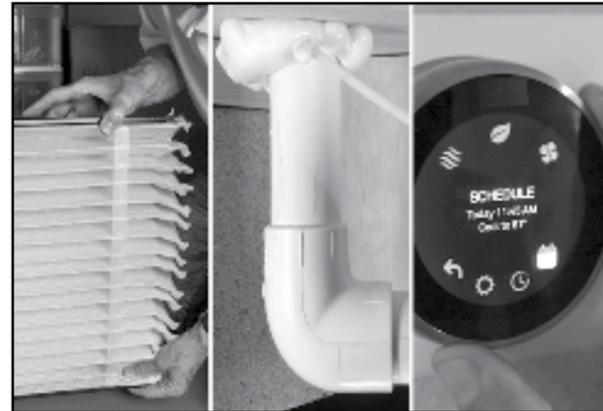
Next month, in Part 3 on this topic, we will cover some of the most popular games available and how people are using Virtual Reality.

**Preparation Pays**

*By Susan Gilbert*

As we bid farewell to winter for another year, this is a great time to get your home ready for the inevitable summer heat and humidity to come. Doing so can make your home more comfortable and save you some money on energy bills. Following, are some ideas to consider.

Spring Preventative Maintenance. The change of season, as we go from heating to cooling, is a good reminder to change your filters. Left unchanged, they block airflow causing the system to work harder and making your home less comfortable. This is also the best time to have your cooling system serviced. Scheduling now during the contractors' slower months has some advantages like getting a convenient appointment time and getting your system in peak operating form early, which is good for the system... and your wallet! Given that heating and cooling make up half of most homes' energy bills, there is money to be saved. Plus, preventative maintenance avoids costly emergency calls during the time when contractors are busiest.



During a service, the contractor will inspect the air conditioner and air handler blower assembly for proper operation, electrical functions, and condensate drainage. They also check the system's refrigerant level. Keep in mind, if the refrigerant level is low, your contractor should check for a leak, NOT just replace the refrigerant. If it is determined that there is a leak, your contractor will either fix the leak or replace the component that is leaking.

What About That Thermostat? While you are thinking about your cooling system, take a look at the thermostats that control its operation. Are they old-style ones that simply hold the temperature you set? If so, consider more modern, smart thermostats that allow you to schedule varying temperatures based on your lifestyle, or to let the thermostat do the scheduling for you. Your thermostat gives you control of your energy savings, which can be about three percent on your cooling bill for each degree that you raise the setpoint. Smart thermostats can be set to automatically raise the cooling setpoint when you are away from home or when your electricity rates are higher.

Try some additional actions to improve comfort as you find the thermostat setting that is right for you. For instance, closing drapes or blinds on sunny days will keep the sun from heating the room, and using a ceiling fan will cool people in a room. Just remember to turn the fan off when the room is unoccupied.

Seal Leaks. Another way to save on utility costs and increase the comfort of your home is by improving its air tightness. This means keeping the inside air in and the outside air out. Holes made for plumbing and wires allow air and pests to enter your home. Look for holes from inside the house starting with under sinks and behind toilets, and seal them with caulk or expanding spray foam. Also look for holes in your basement or crawlspace ceiling under bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms and where wiring or plumbing goes into walls. Smaller holes can be sealed with caulk and expanding spray foam. Larger holes, typical around toilets and pipes, may require using a solid material such as foam board or plywood. If you have a fireplace, one large hole can be its flue. Make sure that its damper is closed for the summer.

As you enjoy the mild temperatures of these spring months, let them be a reminder to you that preparing for summer pays in lower cooling bills, comfort, and peace of mind.

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## ST. PATRICK'S DAY: A BRIEF HISTORY

(Sources: National Today and The Oprah Magazine)

St. Patrick's Day, on March 17, is the one day each year that everyone and anyone calls themselves Irish - if not by birthright, then in spirit. Initially a day to honor patron saint St. Patrick of Ireland, over time the holiday has evolved into a fun and festive celebration of Irish culture, the luck of the Irish, and all things green. It is celebrated in more countries around the world than any other single-day national festival! So, how did it all begin?

The Catholic Church first recognized March 17 as a feast day commemorating Ireland's best-known and most beloved patron saint, Saint Patrick, in 1631. With rare exception, the day always fell during the Christian holy season of Lent, when alcohol consumption was prohibited by the Church. But on Saint Patrick's feast day, the ban on alcohol was lifted for the celebration.

Saint Patrick's feast day in Ireland remained a traditionally pious religious day. Irish laws eventually curtailed the use of alcohol during the feast on March 17 by mandating that all pubs remain closed on that day. This was Irish law until it was repealed in the 1970s. The day continued to be and still is observed as a feast day by the Church of Ireland, the Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Lutheran Church. However, when the Irish government became aware of a growing interest in St. Patrick's Day by American tourists in the mid-1990s, they launched a national campaign to convert America's fascination with St. Patrick's Day and Irish culture into tourist dollars.

Meanwhile in America, more than one million Irish men, women and children were immigrating through Ellis Island in the 1800s. They faced oppressive discrimination in America, leaving most unemployed and living in severe poverty in New York City tenements. As their numbers grew the Irish discovered strength in unity and rallied together to celebrate their beloved patron saint with a parade every March 17. The practice of St. Patrick Day parades and festivals followed Irish immigrants as they made their way across America's heartland and into the deep south seeking cheap farmland and job opportunities.

In 2021, though the pandemic will surely affect how the Irish holiday is celebrated, St. Patrick's Day is historically observed through a number of traditions. These include: preparing food like shepherd's pie, colcannon, corned beef and cabbage; drinking some sort of beer or cocktails made of whiskey or Bailey's; musical gatherings called "céilí."; decorating with symbols like shamrocks and leprechauns; and pinching people not wearing any green garments. Whichever of these traditions you choose for your St. Patty's celebration this year, here's wishin' you a pot o' gold, and all the joy your heart can hold!



## Plastics, Pollution and Recycling

February's Smoke Rise Morning Glories meeting was very educational. The meeting, presented via Zoom, featured four speakers who were members of the Avon Garden Club in Avondale Estates. Their club was curious about the various recycling categories and began to do some research on this last year.

What they discovered about plastics in our environment was sobering. Plastics were first manufactured on a large scale in 1950; since then through 2018, we have produced 8.3 billion metric tons of plastic and the vast majority of that plastic still lives. It does not biodegrade. It is in landfills and in all the oceans, worldwide. Now there are many more initiatives in place to create plastics that can be reused and recycled. There are symbols on plastic products that indicate the type of plastic and how it can be repurposed. Symbols with a 1 or 2 are easy to recycle. Examples are water and soda bottles but not the caps. Milk jugs and detergent bottles can also be recycled easily but items like PVC pipes, Styrofoam and straws are difficult, if not impossible.



The Avon club recommended that we "pre-cycle" by looking for products that are in paper cartons, using bars of soap and shampoo instead of plastic bottles, and bringing reusable cloth bags to the store. Terracycle, a firm in Southeast Atlanta takes paint and all the items that are not suitable for your normal recycling bin.

Dekalb County's recycling bins have limitations on what they can contain so be sure to check the county website for more details on that. Glass must be taken to the Dekalb fire station on Montreal Road or the Dekalb Farmers Market for recycling. Publix takes plastic bags and egg cartons in their recycling bins so you can drop them off there.

Members at Tucker First United Methodist Church making a unique use of plastic bags by crocheting them into sleeping mats for the homeless. Lightweight and portable, they provide some insulation and comfort. The Morning Glories will be participating in this community service project by collecting the bags, and prepping them for workdays at the church, twice a week. If you are interested in volunteering with this project, please contact Vivian Nickelsen at vnickels@comcast.net.

The club will continue to Zoom for the foreseeable future and feature educational programs on many diverse topics. You are welcome to participate even if you are not a member. For more information on our club, please contact our President Joyce Ray at joyceray126@gmail.com.

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## Amen, Let's Eat!

by Joyce Ray



*Cooking for just one or two can be challenging when most one-dish casseroles or main entrees are scaled for 10-12 servings. It can be easier to just open a prepackaged frozen meal or get takeout, but that gets old after you have exhausted the frozen food section or cannot stomach another restaurant burger. This month I am offering some quick recipes that will provide new options for small quantities and that have a good track record for freezing for another time. When freezing, keep in mind that you should not wait until you classify it a "leftover" to stick it in the freezer. Instead, when the food is fresh (and as soon as it has cooled enough to freeze), take out portions to place into freezer containers and put them in the freezer. Invest in some good freezer containers with tight fitting lids and be sure to "burp" the air out before freezing. I love the FoodSaver vacuum seal system! It is one of the best money and time-saving appliances that I have. I use it almost every day and appreciate the convenience of just taking supper out of the freezer on busy days.*

### Individual Cheddar Meat Loaf

1 egg	¾ cup milk
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese	½ cup quick cooking oats
½ cup chopped onion	1 tsp salt
1 lb. ground beef	½ cup packed brown sugar
2/3 cup ketchup	1½ tsp. prepared mustard

In a medium sized bowl, beat egg and add milk. Stir in cheese, oats, onion, and salt. Add beef and mix well. Divide into individual portions about the size of a fat burger. Place in a greased 13x9 inch baking dish. Combine ketchup, brown sugar, and mustard. Spoon over loaves. Bake, uncovered at 350° for 45 minutes or until the meat is no longer pink or the meat thermometer reads 160°. To freeze, wrap loaves individually into plastic freezer bags before storing into freezer box containers. When loaves are frozen, you can remove the freezer box and keep them stored in the bags.

### Burst of Lemon Muffins

¾ cups all-purpose flour	¾ cup sugar
1 tsp baking powder	¾ tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt	1 egg
1 cup lemon or vanilla yogurt	1 Tablespoon lemon juice
1/3 cup butter or margarine, melted	
1-2 Tbs grated lemon peel	½ cup flaked coconut
Topping: 1/3 cup lemon juice	¼ cup sugar
	¼ cup flaked coconut

In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In another bowl, beat the yogurt, egg, butter, lemon peel and juice until smooth. Stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Fold in coconut. Fill greased muffin cups two-thirds full. Bake at 300° for 18-20 minutes. Cool in pan for 5 mins. Remove from pan to a wire rack. In a saucepan, combine lemon juice and sugar. Cook and stir until sugar is dissolved. Stir in coconut. Using a toothpick, poke 6-8 holes in each muffin. Spoon coconut mixture over muffins. Serve warm or cool to room temperature. Yield: 1 dozen. If these do not get snatched up right away, they can be frozen in individual bags. Then place those bags in a protective larger bag or hard container.

### Individual Sausage Quiche

¼ cup bulk pork sausage	1 egg
1 1/3 cup milk	dash of salt
1 slice white bread, crust removed, cut into cubes	
1 green onion, chopped	
1 Tablespoon shredded cheddar cheese	
¼ teaspoon each of salt, pepper, and ground mustard	

In a small skillet, brown sausage and drain. In a small bowl, beat egg, milk, salt, pepper, and mustard. Set aside. Place bread cubes into a greased custard cup. Top with sausage and onion. Pour egg mixture over top. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. This makes one serving. Any substitutions of meat, cheese or vegetables can be used such as broccoli, ham, spinach, Swiss, Monterey Jack, etc.

### Banana Pudding

1 cup sugar	1 Tablespoon cornstarch
1 ½ cups milk	1 egg, beaten
¼ tsp vanilla extract	8 vanilla wafers
1 large banana	whipped topping for garnish

In a saucepan, combine sugar and cornstarch. Gradually stir in milk until smooth. Cook and stir over medium heat until thickened and bubbly. Reduce heat; cook and stir 2 minutes longer. Remove from heat. Stir a few tablespoons hot mixture into egg, return all to the pan and bring to a gentle boil. Remove from heat; stir in vanilla. Allow to cool for 15 minutes. Layer vanilla wafers and banana slices in parfait glasses. Top with pudding. Chill. Serve with whipped cream. Note: any favorite cookie or fruit may be substituted.

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