VOLUME 57, ISSUE 4

Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968

July, 2025

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***	Happy Independence Day from the Staff of the Smoke Signal!	

Joyous July

By Susan Gilbert, Staff Writer

The month of July has a fascinating history dating back to the Roman calendar and honors one of history's most iconic figures: Julius Caesar. July was named in 44 BC following Caesar's assassination, honoring the month of his birth around July 12, 100 BC. Before that, it was called Quintilis, the Latin word for "fifth," as it was the fifth month in the early Roman calendar that began in March. At the time, the calendar had only 10 months, with a long, undivided winter period.

In 46 BCE, Julius Caesar reformed the Roman calendar, introducing the Julian calendar that features a 365-day year with a leap year every four years. This renaming was a way to memorialize his impact and contributions, particularly the calendar reform, which was a significant advancement at the time.

The Julian calendar was used throughout the Roman Empire and much of Europe until it was replaced in 1582 by the Gregorian calendar, which is used today. July remained unchanged through this transition. Alongside August, named after Augustus Caesar, July is one of two months named for Roman leaders, reflecting their immense influence on Western history and culture.

July is the second month of summer in the Northern Hemisphere and winter in the Southern Hemisphere. It's associated with independence celebrations in many countries including our own Independence Day on the 4th, and the French Bastille Day on the 14th.

Known as a month for vacations, festivals, and celebrations, one of the largest and best being the fireworks and laser show at our very own Stone Mountain Park. The show was voted the "Best Place to see Fireworks in Atlanta" by Atlanta Journal-Constitution readers, a "Must-See Fireworks Show" by USA Today and one of Reader's Digest's picks for "America's Most Spectacular Fourth of July Fireworks."

This year, it's a week-long event called the "Music Across America Drone & Light Show" with a patriotic fireworks finale each night. Access to the light show and fireworks finale is included with an Attractions Ticket or Light Show Only ticket. Arrival before 5:00 p.m. is recommended, especially on July 4, as the park may reach capacity and gates will close even if you have pre-purchased a ticket.

For those seeking a more low-key experience, nearby neighborhoods and local churches often host family-friendly cookouts, concerts, and community fireworks displays. It's a perfect time to come together with friends, family, and neighbors to appreciate and celebrate our freedom. Can't locate one? Use the day as an opportunity to gather a group of friends and family together, creating your own celebration with a toast to Julius and our many freedoms.

Smoke Rise Garden Club Celebrates "Legend" Jeanne Lutz

By Denise Finley, SRGC member

Smoke Rise Garden Club honored our 'Legend," Jeanne Lutz, at the May 22nd DeKalb Federation meeting at Callanwolde fine Arts Center courtyard with a special surprise. Her sons Rick, Don and Tom, attended, as well as her daughter, Jeannie Earle. Jeanne was a Charter Member of our Club in 1968 having moved to Smoke Rise in 1966. She and her husband Fred, a Swill Air executive raised four children. She was a professional assistant to the manager of Druid Hills Country Club for many years. Jeanne volunteered for Club activities such as maintaining our Smoke Stacks, the Yellow



Daisy Flower Show, the Bluebird trail at Stone Mountain and our Youth Activities. She continues to be an inspiration as her sunny and bright attitude shines! Congratulation to our Legend Jeanne Lutz and her lovely family.

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MOVIES ON THE GREEN •MAY 29 -Mufasa FIRST FRIDAY CONCERT •JUN. 6 -

Chairmen of the Board

•JUN. 26 -**MOVIES ON THE GREEN** The Wild Robot

•JUL. 3 -**CELEBRATION OF INDEPENDENCE on Main St.** Fireworks, Food Trucks, Kids Zone, The Faster Horses

& DJ Fernando •JUL. 17 -**MOVIES ON THE GREEN**

•AUG. 1 -FIRST FRIDAY CONCERT Nick and The Knacks

•AUG. 21 -**MOVIES ON THE GREEN**

•SEP. 5 -FIRST FRIDAY CONCERT The Heartbreakers

MOVIES ON THE GREEN

TUCKERGA.GOV/SUMMER

The Fourth of July Picnic

The Smell of Burgers on the grill. Sticky fingers holding ice cream pops. The Splash of the pool fades into trails of water across the lawn. Crickets and Frogs begin to sing. The night is dark and blankets are spread.

First a whistle, then another. White bursts leave squiggly trails above. A chorus of screes and whistles and pops. Mingle with the sound of drum rolls and Cymbal clashes. Scribble scrabble marks across the sky.

Bursts of red and blue and white descend into a haze of red and yellow cloud. First one and then another then a chorus of many. Fountains of color in the sky.

Heads lean back. Children too. Others lay on blankets. Gazing up. Oohs and Ahhs from all around. 'Look, mom!' 'Wow!' and 'That is my favorite!' Filled with sighs at sights of wonder.

A gentle breeze blows the smoke away. Blankets are gathered and strollers packed as sleepy children nod. Low voices murmur and fade away. Crickets and Frogs are left to sing. Another Fourth of July picnic remembered with family and friends.

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Smoke Signal

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Smoke Signal Deadlines

JULY 13

Please e-mail articles to: staff@smokesignalnews.com

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Deadline for classified ads is JULY 10

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

Smoke Rise Baptist Church

5901 Hugh Howell Road

Senior Pastor: Dr. Chris George, cgeorge@smokerisebaptist.org Phone: 770-469-5856 SmokeRiseBaptist.org

9:45 a.m. - Attend Sunday School through Zoom or In-Person 11:00 a.m. - Attend Worship via Live Stream or In-Person

WEDNESDAY

5:00 p.m. - Attend our Wednesday Dinner

6:00 p.m. - Followed by activities and Bible Study for all ages

Eastminster Presbyterian Church

5801 Hugh Howell Road Rev. Jeanine Fulton, Pastor

Phone: 770-469-4881 Website: Eastminster.us

SUNDAY

SUNDAY

9:15 a.m. Adult & Children's Sunday School 10:30 a.m. In-Person and Live streaming of Worship service

First Moravian Church

Pastor: Reverend Elroy Christopher (770) 491-7250

Website: Gamoravian.org

Sunday School-Adults & Children 10:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m. Worship

12:00 p.m. Fellowship Time

Mountain West Church

4818 Hugh Howell Road Pastor: Mo Huggins 770-491-0228 Mwchurch.com

SUNDAY 9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 11:55 a.m. Worship

MONDAY 7:00 p.m.

In-person and streaming online on Facebook and mwchurch.com

Is your neighbor known for being an avid cyclist, a holiday decorations fanatic, an author, or the fastest dog-walker on the block? The Smoke Signal encourages folks in Smoke Rise to submit stories about how neighbors became friends. Submissions should be 300-500 words.

OUR FLYER POLICY HAS CHANGED:

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July, 2025 **let's go!**



Charlotte's Web

Play by Joseph Robinette
Based on the book by E.B. White
Directed by Tomiko Nichols

Saturday's July 19 & 26 at 11 AM & 2PM Sundays July 20 & 27 at 2PM Tucker Recreation Center 4898 LaVista Rd. Tucker, GA

In celebration of our 10th anniversary, Main Street Theatre is thrilled to bring a season of beloved theater classics to the main stage. We are excited to present Charlotte's Web this summer, supported by a generous grant from Dekalb County.

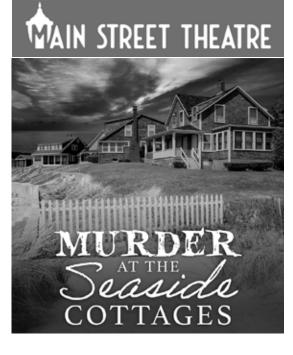
Based on "the best American children's book of the past two hundred years," Charlotte's Web brings us enchanting characters like Wilbur, the irresistible young pig who desperately wants to avoid the butcher; Fern, a girl who understands what animals say to each other; Templeton, the gluttonous rat who can occasionally be talked into a good deed; the Zuckerman family; the Arables;

and most of all, the extraordinary spider, Charlotte, who proves to be "a true friend and a good writer." Determined to save Wilbur, Charlotte begins her campaign with the "miracle" of her web in which she writes, "Some pig." It's the beginning of a victorious campaign that ultimately ends with the now-safe Wilbur doing what is most important to Charlotte.

Murder Mystery Dinner Performances

Thursdays & Sundays August 14, 17, 21, 24

The new owner of Seaside Cottages sunk everything she had into bringing the dilapidated old cottages on coastal Maine back to life. When the reservations didn't pour in as she expected, the situation became desperate. As a last resort, she offered cottages at an extreme discounted rate on Groupon. Through the magic that only theatre can conjure, classic TV characters from the 1800s through the 1980s purchased Groupons for the grand opening weekend of Seaside Cottages. They were hoping for a nice romantic weekend, instead they got a web of lies and MURDER.



Main Street Theatre is Tucker's community theatre and we love to cast folks of all sizes, abilities, and ways of being. If you've ever thought about breaking into theatre, consider this your sign!

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ART Station Theatre will Present Daddy Long Legs

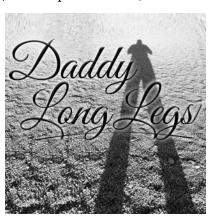
Book by John Caird Music Lyrics by Paul Gorgon

Performances run July 24 - August 3, Thursdays & Fridays at 8 pm. Saturdays & Sundays at 3 pm, with one 10:30 am matinee

on Wednesday July 30th (reduced-priced tickets).

All performances will be in the ART Station Theatre located at 5384 Manor Drive in the historic village of Stone Mountain. Ticket prices \$16-38. Tickets may also be purchased online at artstation.org. (770) 469-1105.

(770) 469-1105. Set in the early 1900s in New England,



Daddy Long Legs is the vivid account of Jerusha, a young orphan -- as she blossoms into a strong, intelligent, and vivacious woman. One day, a rich, anonymous benefactor decides to send her to college, but she must write him a letter once a month. She invents a nickname for him after seeing his elongated shadow: Daddy Long Legs.

July 4th Holiday Weekend Activities Around Atlanta

Tucker Celebration of Independence

Main Street Tucker with The Faster Horses in Concert. July 3 from 6:00 pm to 10:30 pm.

Sparkle in the Park at Lilburn City Park

Live music, food vendors and a fireworks spectacular July 3 from 6:00pm -10:00 pm Lilburn City Park 76 Main Street, Lilburn

Fantastic Fourth Celebration at Memorial Lawn at Stone Mountain Park

Enjoy a fireworks display following the Music Across America Light Show, July 1-7

Try out the campground, too!

Or rent kayaks and visit attractions at the PARK.

Star Spangled Snellville at Snellville Towne Green July 4 - Picnic at 4:00 pm and Fireworks at 9:30 pm.

Star Spangled Nights at Six Flags Over Georgia

Fireworks display synchronized to patriotic music, July 4-5. And also their website advertises for select dates between June 21 to July 6:

"Have fun in the sun and cool down at Six Flags Over Georgia with SPLASH! Water Parade. The Wacky Water Works Company and its troupe of partying plumbers are splashing and splishing throughout the park's midways. With buckets and blasters – mist, spray, and splashers – the parade is a thing you can't miss!"

Nearby Neighborhood Pools:

Summit, SRCC, Mountain Creek: Members only or be a guest of someone you know

Mountain Park with Lazy River: Public

Rosenfeld Park and other Tucker Park Pools: see Tuckerga.gov website under Parks

LAKE LANIER ISLANDS:

Try one of these activities: Outdoor cookout, Fireworks/ Live Music, Margaritiaville Cruises and FINS UP WATER PARK at Lake Lanier. Their website says: "Get ready for an unforget-table summer at Fins Up Water Park, the ultimate outdoor destination nestled within Margaritaville at Lanier Islands! With 13 thrilling waterslides and 4 exhilarating attractions—including a wave pool for big kids and a dedicated area for the

...Continued on page 3

American Legion Post #207 Rises "Out of the Ashes" of 2019

By Joyce Ray, staff writer

In 2022, Scott Brady, former active-duty Marine and new Tucker resident, noticed many cars in Tucker with Veteran's license plates and wondered why there wasn't an American Legion post in the city. Brady began researching and learned about the fate of American Legion Post #207 located at 4127 Pine Valley Road in Tucker. He discovered it had burned several years before and was on life support to pay for renovations. He contacted the current commander and found that the deadline of the fight loomed close, and that the commander had resigned after much effort and the disappointment of being denied coverage by the insurance company. It was the year of Covid when supplies and labor were short. Brady was motivated by the recent news at the time that 44 veterans per day committed suicide due to PSTD and he decid-

ed to take on the challenge.

When Brady signed up for the mission, he had two months to raise \$206,000 to pay for already completed work that had been started on the building. That was accomplished in about four months through his efforts to involve the com-



munity and get local businesses to cooperate with the project. Although he remained focused on the renovations needed on the building, Brady also began to build the membership. At the time he took on the challenge, there were only four active members. Brady proudly announced, "Through community awareness and member to member recruitment, that number has grown to almost 100, and we don't even have restrooms yet!"

The mission statement of the Joe Pritchett American Legion Post #207 is:

Rescue: - seek out and help veterans by addressing the suicide crisis

Restore Mind, Body and Spirit

Repay: Pay back with community support.

Brady desires to see that mission accomplished through events that will benefit his original motivation goal, to see the statistics of veteran suicides diminish as more veterans find places like American Legion to be rescued to a bright future of restoration and appreciation for their service.

The property where the 70-year-old partially destroyed structure is built encompasses 7½ acres and now includes a new handicapped-accessible community garden, funded by Home Depot. Plans are to use the wooded area beyond the community garden for a nature trail, and other outdoor features that members can access. Brady expressed his desire to see the building become a hub where veterans can forge friendships and have goals for shared events and projects.

Smoke Rise Resident, Dominic Carubba, got involved early on in the process of the rebuilding and transferred his membership from another post to Tucker. He met fellow Marine, Scott Brady, witnessed the value of the mission, and wanted to become a part of it. He admits to going through a "Dark Place" and was helped out of it by the shared experiences of giving back.

A recent bar-b-que fund raiser on Memorial Day was well supported by the community. The annual Veterans' Day walk-run will be their next fund-raising event. If you would like to become involved with this mission or sign up for events, please visit the website at tuckerlegionpost207.com.

Post officers are: Commander: Scott Brady Junior Vice Commander: David Cox Chaplain: Alvin Johnson Executive Officer: Larry Gentry

Senior Vice Commander: Dominic Carruba Adjutant: Christopher Morley, Finance Officer: Blake Byars and

ATTENTION GRADUATES, NEWLYWEDS, AND HONOREES

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Smoke Signal.

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features July, 2025



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Living with Arthritis in the Knees

Linda Karr, Staff Writer

Written in collaboration with Blake Hampton, PT, DPT

Owner/Clinic Director Team Rehabilitation Stone Mountain

In this third article in the series on living with arthritis we'll explore one of the most common joints to be affected by osteoarthritis - the knee. My husband, John, is affected by this and has learned some techniques to help.

Physical therapy plays a key role in his care. As he has learned, low impact exercise is the best thing you can do for arthritis of the knee. Activities including using a stationary bike with low resistance and walking (although it can be painful) are great low impact exercises. Avoiding hard surfaces by walking on trails or grass is ideal. Treadmills also have some shock absorbing capacity. Water aerobics is also a great way to get a good aerobic workout with minimal impact on the joints.

For those who aren't used to going to a gym or working out, strength training can be daunting. Most gyms have a wide array of weight machines that are easy to use and have low impact on the joints of the body. Increasing your strength will help to improve the stability of the knee and reduce pain. John is also learning to focus on strengthening his hips as they control the lines of force through the knee. If the hips are weak, forces on the knee will be altered that will lead to increased knee pain.

Gentle stretching of the muscles of the legs to maintain range of motion is important. Yoga, Tai Chi, and chair stretches offer low impact stretching for the muscles and help to promote balance.

Weight loss - this is a big one and a little bit goes a long way. For every pound of body weight lost, you will reduce the force on the knees by 4lbs. This means 5-10lbs of weight loss can make a tremendous difference with knee arthritis.

Supportive shoe wear helps to reduce stress on the knees. Get evaluated for the proper shoe for your gait pattern. Many shoe stores will do an evaluation with force plates and gait analysis. A simple google search should help you find one near you. Replace your shoes every 4-6 months even if they do not seem worn out. Shoes begin to lose their shock absorption capacity over time, and this is the reason for needing to replace them frequently.

Avoid prolonged periods of sitting or standing - break up these periods by changing positions, doing a short walk, or some general stretching. 1-2 minutes of movement is perfect in between long periods of sitting or standing. Consistent daily movement is better than one brief period of intense exercise. Movement is medicine for arthritis.

John uses Voltaren, a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory gel, at least once a day. He has also tried TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) a non-harmful electrical current with some success. Whether he is gardening or inside down on his knees working on a project he tries to use a knee pad/cushion to soften the exposure to his knees. Heat can be effective too – even just by spraying warm water on your knees during a shower.

Next month we'll explore arthritis in the shoulders. Stay tuned.

Do you know of other tools that help you manage your arthritis, please share with me (lskarr50@gmail.com) and I will add them into another article.

We Need You!

Smoke Rise - this is YOUR paper! The Smoke Signal began more than 50 years ago and remains, to this day, a community newspaper created, written and produced by volunteer, Smoke Rise neighbors for the entire neighborhood.

PLEASE consider becoming a contributor, editor or joining our staff. It's a rewarding way to give back to your Smoke Rise community! Contact us today. staff@smokesignalnews.com



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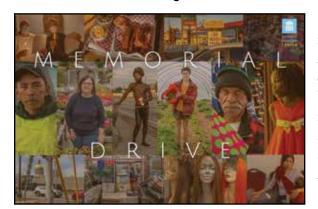
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What began as a thoroughfare leading from the State Capital building to the largest Confederate monument in the country has since become a diverse and bustling road teeming with life. Running from the heart of Atlanta through the interior of DeKalb County, Memorial Drive has become a central location to live, work, and conduct business.

This Dekalb History Center exhibit showcases a vibrant sampling of the peo-

ple and places that make Memorial Drive the animated, multicultural community it is today. Peter Essick's modern photography and gathered objects from local businesses present an

imaginative means to view this historic corridor. This stunning visual story is also supported by the history of how and why Memorial Drive came to be. This exhibit will be up for at least 18 months.







NETWorks Hydroponic Farm Helps Feed a Needy Community

By Frank Luton, staff writer

Right down Hugh Howell Road in Tucker on Cowan Road is an organization called NETWorks (N for Northlake, E for Embry Hills, and T for Tucker). NETWorks was formed in 2004 to serve the low-income community in the Northlake, Embry Hills, and Tucker areas. NETWorks serves a 39 square mile area to the north and west of Tucker. NETWorks has over 20 partner churches including Mountain West Church and Smoke Rise Baptist Church in the Smoke Rise community.

The largest efforts are the grocery store-style food pantry and a financial assistance program. This financial assistance program helps with overdue rent and utility bills to prevent eviction and homelessness. NETWorks can also provide short-term motel stays for families

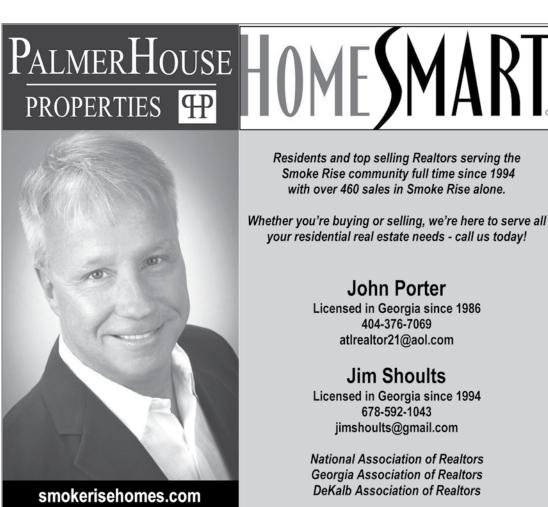
with dependent children. NETWorks food pantry is open Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 10 AM to 1 PM. In 2024 NETWorks distributed over 460,000 pounds of food and personal care items with 48% of the people they helped in 2024 being children and seniors. Food comes from a variety of sources with the largest sources from the Atlanta Community Food Bank and the Midwest Food Bank located in Peachtree City.



NETWorks recently opened their

own indoor hydroponic farm to provide fresh, nutritious vegetables to recipients.

Ways people can be involved include volunteering from helping in the pantry to helping in the office to helping in the farm to picking up donations from local grocery stores. Also making donations of funds, food, and personal care items; even holding a community food drive. You might also want to visit the NETWorks facility at 4296 Cowan Road, Tucker, Georgia on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 AM to 2 PM.





From the Sanctuary to the Schoolyard: Sharing God's Love One Backpack at a Time

Eastminster Presbyterian Church joyfully invites the community to participate in its annual Back-to-School Blessing & Supply Drive—a heartfelt initiative to support students and families, as they prepare for a new school year. Throughout the summer, we are collecting new school supplies and financial contributions to help fill backpacks with essential items for children in nearby schools. These items will be distributed to kids in need—extending God's care and provision beyond our walls. Our hope is that every student begins the year, not only equipped and encouraged, but also wrapped in the love and care of God and this community. For a list of needed supplies and to donate online visit: www.eastminster.us/backpacks.

Back-to-School Blessing & Celebration Sunday, July 20 | 10:30 AM Worship

As a new school year begins, let's surround our students, teachers, and school staff with love, encouragement, and prayer.

All students—regardless of their age—are invited to bring their backpacks or tote bags to worship, as a symbol of their learning journey. Teachers, administrators, and school staff are also welcome to bring a work bag or item representing their role in education. We'll offer a special blessing for all who are heading into a new school year, lifting them up with hope, courage, and faith.

After worship, join us in the parking lot for food, fun, and fellowship! Enjoy lunch from a food truck, a bounce house and games for the kids, and a joyful time to celebrate the start of the school year together.

Let's come together to celebrate, pray for, and support our children, educators, and neighbors, as they begin another year of growing and learning!



neighbors July, 2025

Books on My 'Round Tuit' Reading List

By Michael Schneider, Smoke Rise Resident

The Splendid and the Vile: by Erik Larson (NF): A story of true leadership. How Winston Churchill taught the British people in a time of terror during WW2 the "art of being fearless".

Theo of Golden: by Allen Levi (F): A sophisticated 86 -yearold man moves to Golden. He buys 92 portraits from the walls of the local coffee shop and begins to contact each of the portrait models. The results are life changing.

A Short History of Nearly Everything (F): by Bill Bryson: A funny read by the author of A Walk in the Woods.

Longitude by Dava Sobel (NF): The invention of an accurate time piece that would solve the problem of longitude during nautical navigation. The competition that changed navigation forever.

The Tale of the Dueling Neurosurgeons (NF): by Sam Kean: The strange true stories of how doctors learned about the brain from observing patients with curious brain injuries.

If Cats Disappeared from the World (F): by Genki Kawamura (translated from Japanese). A young postman who lives alone with his cat gets a life changing diagnosis. The devil appears and offers one extra day of life in exchange for making one thing in the world disappear each day. What will he choose?

The Mysterious Case of Rudolf Diesel by Douglas Brunt (NF): Rudolf Diesel the inventor of the revolutionary new Diesel engine left Germany prior to WW1 and completely disappeared. What happened on the steamship Dresden?

The Professor and the Madman by Simon Winchester (NF): The fascinating story about the compilation of the Oxford English Dictionary— Unknowingly aided by a madman.





Smoke Rise Country Club -- Winning!

Congratulations to our unstoppable Smoke Rise Diamonds for bringing home the ALTA B4 Women's City Championship in May! What a fantastic accomplishment by an incredible group of ladies who played their hearts out and shone every step of the way! They have made Smoke Rise proud with their talent, teamwork, and determination! Special shoutout to our fearless captains, Sharon Hoffman & Alycia Parker.

Members of the championship team are Rachele Branson, Joi Fairell, Patty Geltz, Natasha Golder, Debbie Granger, D'Ann Griffin, Erin Hendrick, Jess Johnson, Gidget Kettle, Maggie Kettle, Tara King, Katy Lehman, Heather Paden, Charlene Smith, and Karen Wood.

For more information about getting involved with the SRCC Tennis Program, contact Eric Hoffman (eric.a.hoffman@gmail.com) or Racquets Committee Chair Alycia Parker (Alycia.Donnelly@gmail.com).

GRADUATE

Alan and Ilona Armstrong are delighted to announce the graduation of their daughter, Kayla Armstrong, from Tucker High School.

Kayla's academic path began at Smoke Rise Elementary and continued through Tucker Middle School. She distinguished herself as an International Baccalaureate Scholar and graduated in the top ten percent of her class. In addition to her academic success, Kayla was actively involved in numerous clubs and served as the captain of the Varsity Soccer team.

Her deep love of learning and natural curiosity have inspired her to pursue a career in education. This fall, Kayla will attend Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, where she will major in Education with the goal of becoming an elementary school teacher.



We are profoundly proud of Kayla and all that she has achieved. We pray that her future is filled with purpose and joy, and that God continues to guide her every step of the way.

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features ______ July, 2025

HEALTH NOTES:

Do You Really Want a Killer Tan?

By Cheri Schneider, M.D. staff writer

Many of us remember the New Jersey tanning salon mom who was in the news in 2012. A compulsive tanning salon customer, she was accused of taking her 5-year-old daughter with her into the tanning booth. While the accusation was never proven to be true, when she appeared on news channels for interviews, we were all shocked and dismayed to see how out of touch she was with her appearance. At 44 years of age, she looked like she was in her 60's or 70's, and the depth of her tan was unnatural. One journalist used the word tanorexia to describe the 'tanning mom's' problem. Simply put, tanorexia is obsessive tanning-- accompanied with a distorted view of how dark your tan is.

Today's preoccupation with appearance has led many to the dangerous trend of over-tanning-- both in the tanning booth and outside in the sun. Along with this dangerous trend has come a sharp rise of skin damage, premature skin aging and skin cancers. This in turn, has kept dermatologists, plastic surgeons, and pharmaceutical companies busy trying to repair the damage.

By now, most of us are aware that ultraviolet radiation from the sun damages the skin. There are actually three types of ultraviolet (or UV) radiation: UVA, UVB and UVC. UVA radiation accounts for 95% of our UV exposure from the sun. UVA light penetrates more deeply into the skin and is thought to be responsible for most of the aging and wrinkling of our skin. While UVBs are the main culprits in causing skin cancer, some studies are showing that UVAs can be a causative factor. UVBs also cause sunburning, tanning, and accelerated aging of our skin. UVC rays are unimportant to our skin because they are filtered out by the ozone layer and do not reach the earth.

What does this information mean to you, especially during the hot summer months when outdoor activities are popular?

- 1. Be Sun Smart. No lotion, cream or skin procedure is a substitute for avoiding over-exposure to the sun. Stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Even on a cloudy day, 80% of the suns rays will reach your skin.
- 2. Regularly use sunscreen! Look for a product that is "Broadspectrum". These block both UVA and UVB light. Use SPF 15 or above, reapplying every two hours. Products over SPF 30 do not work any better than SPF 30 products. The words "waterproof" or "sweat proof" can no longer be used on sunscreen containers. If you see this on the label, the sunscreen is probably out of date. Newer products can use the words "water resistant", but must specify how long they are "water resistant". 'Instant dry' formulas are a great improvement if you follow the directions carefully!
- 3. Don't forget to protect your EYES. Wear UV blocking sunglasses and a hat when you are out in the sun. Cataracts, macular degeneration, and various eye growths, including skin cancer of the eyelids, can occur from prolonged sun exposure. This protection is especially important in children.
- 4. If you want a 'healthy glow': Use a gradual self-tanning lotion like Jergen's Natural Glow Revitalizing Lotion. The lotion in this product helps eliminate the chemical smell commonly found in self-tanners. Use of a self-tanner does not keep your skin free from sun damage. You must use sunscreen regularly even when using this type of product.
- 5. Use a Hat: Using a hat will protect oft burned skin. If you have thinning hair or are bald this is especially important. Your scalp skin is just as susceptible to skin cancer as skin elsewhere, and without a hat it may be exposed for longer periods of time.
- 6. Use protective clothing/ especially ones with a UPF label: A UPF label indicates how much of the sun's rays are blocked. UPF indicates blockage of both UVA and UVB rays. Use long sleeve clothing or pants/ skirts for best protection-especially if you are high risk for skin cancer. Wetting the material or stretching it will decrease its protection.

Enjoy the sun during the best parts of the day, be 'sun smart' and stay away from those 'killer' tans! And if you love a good tan, sweeten it up with a self-tanner and get some perspective from an outsider on how dark your tan really is.

(This article has been updated from its original format).

Unpaid Toll Scams

By Joel Gilbert, Staff Writer

On June 2, I received this text message:

Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Final Notice: Enforcement Penalties Begin on June 3. Our records indicate that you currently have an unpaid traffic violation. Under Section 15C-16.003 of the U.S. Administrative Code, if payment is not received by June 3, 2025, the following enforcement actions will be taken:

- 1. Report to the DMV violation database
- 2. Suspend your vehicle registration starting June 3
- 3. Suspend driving privileges for 30 days
- 4. Transfer to a toll booth and charge a 35% service fee
- 5. You may be prosecuted, and your credit score will be affected...blah, blah, blah...

It looked like a scam, so I deleted it, reporting it as Junk. Later that day, I saw an article about this con in *The New York Times*. It reported that in 2024, consumers lost \$470 million to scams that started with text messages, according to the FTC — a fivefold increase since 2020. With summer vacations starting and families hitting the road, many more people may start seeing scam toll and ticket text messages.

According to the FBI, cybercriminals are increasingly using artificial intelligence tools to make text messages more convincing. For example, generative AI programs help with translations, eliminate odd wording, and reduce spelling and grammatical errors — making it harder for consumers to catch scams through the old telltale signs.

Many of these fraudulent text messages originate overseas with texts often sent from an international number and instructing the receiver to reply with "Y" to receive a link that will take them to a sham website. The goal is to steal personal financial information, money or both.

Avoid Being Scammed

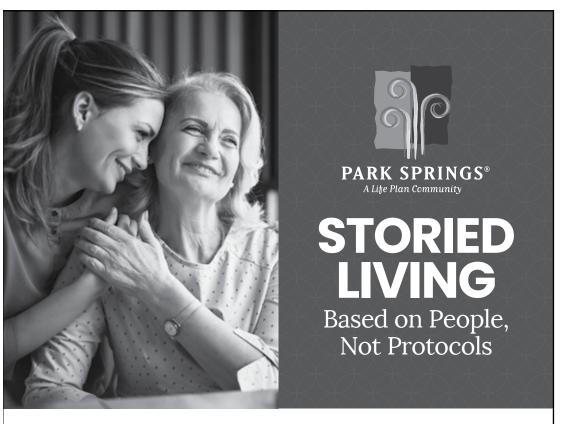
With so many people using cash-free toll lanes, you may think the text is legitimate. But do not engage with the text. Do not click on links, even if you suspect they are scams and want to see what happens. And never call any phone numbers provided.

Close the text and look online for your state's tolling agency. Georgia's State Road and Tollway Authority is at https://srta.ga.gov/, or you can go directly to Georgia's toll website, MyPeachPass.com. If you are Googling, be sure to verify what you are clicking on, as scammers can sponsor their websites, thereby moving them to the top of the list. On the website, you can set up an online Peach Pass account that allows you to check the status of your account easily. To open it, you will have to put \$20 on the account using a credit or debit card. They then mail you the barcode for your windshield.

If you already have another state's pass, such as Florida's SunPass, you don't need to create another state account. They share your information so that only one barcode needs to be displayed. One customer service representative with Peach Pass told me having multiple barcodes displayed could cause you to be billed by several states.

Alert the Authorities

Don't just delete the text. Law enforcement needs to be made aware. Make an effort to report it if you've been scammed. A reliable resource is the FTC, available at ReportFraud.ftc.gov. The FTC recommends using your phone's "report junk" option if available or forward the bogus text to 7726 SPAM, which helps wireless providers spot and block similar messages.



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July, 2025 features

Mold: The Fungus Among Us by Amber Seale, Smoke Rise Resident

After living in a mold-infested home for almost two years, I have learned more than I ever wanted to know about mold and its harmful effects on homes, humans, and pets. Did you know that 85% of Georgia homes contain mold? I learned this shocking statistic from the mycologist and mold remediation expert I hired. Given Georgia's high humidity levels year-round, this number is alarming but not entirely surprising.

When people talk about mold, they often mention black mold, Stachybotrys, as the most toxic. However, many other types are just as dangerous, including Chaetomium, Cladosporium, Aspergillus, Penicillium, and Fusarium. All molds produce spores, and some also produce mycotoxins, which can lead to severe health issues such as allergic reactions, respiratory distress, neurological disorders, brain fog, memory loss, and more.

Interestingly, about 80% of people have immune systems capable of clearing mold from their bodies. However, the other 20% are not as fortunate. These individuals may develop a range of health issues due to mold toxicity. Despite the significant impact mold can have on health, modern medicine often fails to acknowledge mold toxicity as a legitimate concern. I can assure you, though, that it is very real—I am currently recovering from the effects of long-term mold exposure in my home.

You may be wondering, "Why did you buy a home with mold in it?" Unfortunately, standard home inspections do not include mold testing. Much like radon testing, mold testing is an additional service that homebuyers must specifically request. Had I known my future home was full of mold, I would have walked away.

Mold is naturally occurring in the environment. To grow, it requires moisture (from water intrusion or high humidity) and an organic food source, such as wood or drywall.

The process of dealing with mold typically involves hiring a professional remediation company to inspect the home and determine the extent of the issue. Spore counts are measured both indoors and outdoors—if indoor counts exceed outdoor levels, there is a problem. Mold remediation can be incredibly expensive and is often not covered by homeowners' insurance, particularly if the mold results from water intrusion. Addressing mold requires professional removal, which may involve tearing out drywall, ceilings, and other affected materials. Additionally, the moisture source must be fixed to prevent recurrence, and humidity control measures must be implemented to keep levels below 50%.

If you suspect mold in your home, the first step is to call a mold remediation company for a proper inspection and testing. Once mold is confirmed, the source of moisture must be eliminated, and any water-damaged materials—such as wood, drywall, flooring, and even furniture in severe cases—must be removed. Effective remediation includes the use of antimicrobial treatments, air scrubbers, and HEPA vacuuming of the entire home and HVAC system. The final step is clearance testing to ensure that the mold has been successfully eradicated.

Thankfully, after a harrowing year of dealing with mold and the extensive renovations it required, my home is now EPA-certified mold-free. The experience was overwhelming, but I hope my story helps others recognize the dangers of mold and the importance of proactive testing and remediation.

July 4th Events...continued from page 3

little ones—there's something for every age to discover." https://www.margaritavilleresorts.com/margaritaville-at-lanier-islands/attractions/water-park

WHITEWATER SIX FLAGS:

The website says "At Six Flags White Water there's a lot to 'WOW!' about. Like pulse-pounding water slides, a relaxing lazy river, and multiple kid-friendly play areas – just to name a

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few! Get the inside scoop on information around the park for your next visit. Whether you're planning a weekend trip or multiple days of water park fun, the details are just a click away."

https://www.sixflags.com/whitewater/things-to-do

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

BY AVIVA HOFFMANN, STAFF WRITER

Recycling! What You Need to Know — Part Two

Last month, I shared DeKalb County's updated guidelines for single-stream recycling - what belongs in your blue bin, and what doesn't. But as important as curbside recycling is, it's only one piece of the sustainability puzzle. The bigger picture? Recycling alone won't solve our waste problem. Tossing cans and paper in the blue bin is a good start – but it's not enough. It's estimated that less than 20 percent of global waste truly gets recycled - the rest piles up in landfills.

That's where local action can make a difference. This summer marks the first anniversary of the DeKalb



Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHaRM). In just 12 months of operation, the facility has recycled, reused, or reengineered an impressive two million pounds of hard-to-recycle materials. From electronics, Styrofoam, and chemicals to musical instruments, tires, paint, and more, CHaRM DeKalb gives a second life to items that are too harmful or bulky for curbside bins – which in turn keeps them out of our landfill and waterways.

Open only two days a week, CHaRM DeKalb has already welcomed more than 21,000 visitors, who are serious about keeping harmful waste out of our landfill and waterways. But CHaRM isn't just a drop-off spot – it's a hub for sustainability education. More than 650 students from 20 DeKalb County schools have visited CHaRM DeKalb to learn about composting, reuse, and making greener choices.

And, then there's Kids Day, now a DeKalb Earth Day tradition. This free event combines hands-on eco learning with family fun – think composting games, bee education, reptile encounters, and upcycling crafts. Attendance has grown from 400 in 2023 to 600 in 2025, and this year's celebration featured more than 20 community partners, including Georgia Tech Solar Racing, Wylde Center, and the Avondale Arts Alliance. (Mark your calendar – Kids Day returns next April.)

Recycling is only part of the solution. Here are four tips to consider that may reduce your impact:

- 1. Get creative with reuse Turn egg cartons into seed starters or glass jars into pantry organizers.
- 2. Give it away Start a "free pile" for items that others might find useful. Or join a local "Buy Nothing" group on Social Media to share items you no longer need.
- 3. Donate, don't dump Keep gently used items out of the landfill and in the hands of those who need them.
- 4. Shop smarter Choose local products with minimal packaging. And, ask yourself: Do I really need this?

CHaRM DeKalb's goal is to reuse first, putting back as much as possible into the circular economy. The facility is located at 1225 Columbia Drive, Decatur, Georgia 30032. It operates Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. -2:00 p.m. and Saturdays 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Appointments are required.) Want to learn more or schedule a drop-off? Visit: https://www.livethrive.org/.



Out the Window Article and illustration by Beth Henson, Staff Writer

Handsome Cardinal

Taking a break from my early evening music practice, I glanced out the office window to see a flurry of twilight activity. Squeaky (our resident squirrel) and several friends were foraging on the freshly cut lawn, searching for hidden seeds and possibly a tasty mushroom or two. A rather large brown thrasher was also inspecting the grass for his evening meal of grasshoppers and other unsuspecting bugs.

As I watched the pink and yellow sunset paint itself across the horizon, a flash of brilliant scarlet caught my eye. A male cardinal swiftly landed on the



nearby bird feeder, hoping to grab a bite before darkness fell. To my surprise, his usual striking, showy red crown was completely missing! Luckily, I knew this was just part of the molting process. Cardinals and blue jays can go entirely bald during this time!

Still, he carried himself with the same confident charm, feathers or not. As dusk wrapped the yard in a soft hush, the little gathering of creatures continued their evening rituals, reminding me that even in the tiniest moments, nature has a way of putting on the sweetest show.

Seagulls By Victoria R. Crosby

I love the sound of the seagull's cry, they let me know that the sea is nearby. The sound of the waves crashing to shore tells me that I am home once more. The briny smell of the rolling sea is where I always want to be. To lie on a beach in the warm sand that's the life I've always planned. The salty taste upon my lips, as I swim and splash and watch the ships that pass on the horizon far away. I'll be back on that sunny beach someday.

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Georgia Iris Society Meeting

Ms. Caston Noorullah, UGA Dekalb Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent, will present "Best Practices for Successful Fall Gardening in Georgia"

Our meetings are free to the public and all are welcome. Join us for beauti-

Saturday, July 12, at 2:00 p.m. St. Bartholomew **Episcopal Church** 1790 LaVista Road, NE Atlanta, GA 30329

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fication, education and recreation.

For more information, contact

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If You Care, Leave Them There: **Responsible Wildlife Rescue**

By Alex Helton

I love that Smoke Rise abounds with wildlife and I consider my nibbled and beheaded day lilies to be a fair trade off. We've all read community posts asking how to help a sick or injured animal. How do we help our furry friends and stay safe-keeping in mind that wild animals have a better chance at survival when we disturb them as little as possible, even when they are sick or injured.

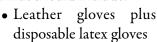
First, Call the Experts

Wildlife experts and injured animal rehabbers are there to help. So, if you see wildlife you are concerned about, watch your distance while you assess the situation, then ask for direction. These are some handy numbers to save:

- Animal Help Now:303-543-0755, ahnow.org
- AWARE Georgia: awarewildlife.org/contact (all inquiries via form, but they respond quickly)
- Georgia Department of Wildlife:706-557-3213
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources: 800-366-2661
- US Dept of Agriculture Georgia Extension: 706-546-5637

Have a Rescue Kit

If you are serious about helping, why not carry things that make your efforts successful? These items are good in lots of other emergencies. A kit should include:





- A small camping shovel or garden tool so you can move a stressed animal without touching them
- Flashlight or lantern
- Reflective vest to keep you visible if on a roadside
- A pillowcase or a flat sheet or two
- A towel
- Pliers, wire cutters, and scissors
- A small cardboard box or pet caddy for transport (best if without folds or gaps)

Species-Specific Pointers

Baby Deer - When a doe gives birth, she leaves the baby alone for up to 24 hours at a time to forage. The fawn lacks scent and so is safer when unattended since mama's odor cues predators. If you spot a newborn, leave it alone since mom is coming back.

Possums Big and Small - Possums are divisive. I'm a fan of these marsupials who control pests and in my opinion, are so dang cute. Yes, the teeth make a statement, but possums actually "play possum" when threatened. They also emit the smell of death to make sure you are convinced. That's great

If you spot a baby possum alone, observe first. If you see a recently deceased adult possum, check their pouch for babies while wearing gloves. Babies 8" long or more (not including the tail) are likely old enough to be on their own. If smaller than 8", send a message to AWARE via their con-

Baby Squirrels - If you see a baby squirrel, try to locate the nest. Then watch from a distance; the mother may be nearby and waiting for you to "amscray". If the baby is injured and no mother appears, call a rescue group.

Bats - Batworld.com has solid advice should you find an injured bat either inside or outside.

Birds and Raptors - Fledgling birds look like they are drunk or injured, but don't judge. You looked awkward when you were learning to walk. If the bird is fully feathered and hopping around, the parents are probably nearby. Birds with visible wounds or drooping wings should be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator, but never approach hawks, owls, and other raptors without expert help.

Call Georgia Department of Natural Resource at 1-800-366-2661 before taking any action.

July, 2025 garden clubs

A Mountain Mum Busts Garden Myths

By Maureen Fraser, Mountain Mum Garden Club Member

We all love sharing gardening wisdom, and many traditions passed down through generations are incredibly valuable. But sometimes, what we've always heard isn't quite the whole truth! Get ready to rethink some of your gardening habits as we explore common gardening myths and the scientific facts behind them.

1. Myth: Gravel or "Crocks" in the bottom of pots improve drainage.

* Fact: This is one of the most persistent myths! Adding a layer of gravel or broken pot pieces at the bottom of a container actually hinders drainage. Water doesn't easily move from a finer medium (potting soil) to a coarser one (gravel), leading to a "perched water table" where water accumulates just above the gravel, potentially causing root rot. Ultimately, all you need for optimal drainage is a drainage hole and good quality potting mix.

2. Myth: Watering plants in full sun will scorch their leaves.

* Fact: While it's generally best to water in the early morning or evening to reduce evaporation, water droplets on leaves don't act like tiny magnifying glasses that burn the plant. Plant scorching is more often caused by lack of proper hardening off for new plants or disease issues, not by water itself. While prolonged wet foliage can encourage fungal diseases, the water droplets themselves aren't the culprit for scorching.

3. Myth: Coffee grounds acidify soil.

* Fact: While fresh coffee grounds are acidic, used coffee grounds are largely neutral. Adding them directly to soil won't significantly change its pH. They are, however, a great addition to your compost pile, where they contribute nitrogen and organic matter.

4. Myth: Eggshells deter slugs and snails.

* Fact: The sharp edges of crushed eggshells are often thought to create an impassable barrier for slugs and snails. However, these pests can navigate over eggshells without much trouble.

5. Myth: Eggshells provide a quick calcium boost for plants.

* Fact: Eggshells are primarily calcium carbonate. While calcium is a vital plant nutrient, eggshells decompose very slowly, especially when simply crushed and sprinkled. For the calcium to be available to plants, the shells need to be ground into a very fine powder or added to a compost pile where they will break down over a longer period. For quick calcium needs, a more readily available form of calcium like bone meal or gypsum would be necessary.

6. Myth: Staking young trees is always necessary.

* Fact: While some very young or top-heavy trees might benefit from temporary staking, leaving a young tree to sway naturally in the wind actually encourages it to develop a stronger, thicker trunk and a more robust root system. If you do stake, remove the stakes within a year to prevent the tree from becoming overly reliant on them and to avoid girdling the trunk.

7. Myth: Digging is essential for improving soil fertility.

* Fact: For many gardeners, the idea of "no-dig" gardening is gaining traction. Excessive digging can disrupt the soil's natural structure and the beneficial microorganisms within it. Building up soil fertility through layers of organic matter (mulch, compost) on the surface can be more beneficial in the long run.

8. Myth: Organic pesticides are always harmless.

* Fact: Just because a pesticide is "organic" doesn't mean it's without risk. Many natural substances can be harmful if not used correctly. Always read and follow the instructions on any pesticide product, whether organic or synthetic.

9. Myth: Pruning in winter will kill plants.

* Fact: For many woody plants, winter (dormant) pruning is ideal. With the leaves gone, it's easier to see the plant's structure and identify dead or diseased branches. Plus, diseases and pests are less active in cold weather. However, it's important to know if your plant blooms on old wood or new wood, as pruning at the wrong time can reduce flowering. For spring-flowering plants, it's generally best to prune them after they bloom.

10. Myth: Ants help peonies bloom.

* Fact: Ants are attracted to the sugary sap produced by peony buds. They don't help the flowers open. In fact, they may protect the buds from other insects, but the peonies would bloom just fine without their presence.

By understanding these common myths, you can make more informed decisions and create healthier, more productive gardens! Consider joining the Mountain Mums this coming garden club year! You will be glad you did. Call Mary Jacobson 770-316-3225 for information.

Morning Glories and the Ga Regional Hospital Project

By Quill Duncan, Smoke Rise Resident

One of the most beneficial projects with The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. is garden therapy. Several clubs in Smoke Rise actively work with seniors in assisted living or in the case of the Morning Glories we work with the staff and patients at GA Regional Hospital in DeKalb County. This facility is a mental health facility that houses patients in long term residential care, individuals in a skilled nursing unit and a nursing home as well as some day patients. The property is located on Panthersville Road and covers over thirty acres of land.

In June, Morning Glories members and Master Gardeners Bonnie Pennington



and Quill Duncan visited the hospital to advise Art Therapy Coordinator Mary Cochran on their summer gardening projects. Mary is also a Morning Glories member. Patients plant, weed, water and harvest the fruits and vegetables in the large garden near the gym. One of the patients is a chef and he prepares the harvest for their enjoyment. The strawberry harvest was so prolific this year that they feed the staff and patients at a special event in early June with a huge bowl of freshly harvested strawberries. In addition, other locations across the campus have flowering pollinator and

vegetable gardens that are tended by patients and staff. The garden club members cannot work directly with the patients but can offer horticultural suggestions on best practices, plant selection and plant care. The project has received funding from the Morning Glories, DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs and the Garden Club of Georgia for the last seven years. The photo shows a picture drawn by one of the patients at Georgia Regional Hospital showing her love of the garden.

SAVE THE DATE FOR DAISY! SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2025 "CRUISIN" WITH DAISY" Standard Flower Show will be held at Tucker Methodist Activity Center.

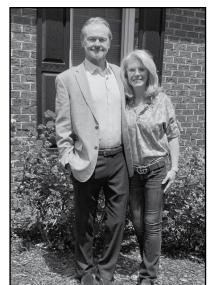
Show details to follow next month! Come enjoy a beautiful flower show!

Smoke Rise Gardens Featured

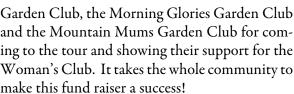
By Barbara Luton, Staff Writer

The gardens of Marian and John Fetzek, Kanawha, and Barbara Pettit, The Summit, were featured in the Garden Tour of the GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club. Guests toured gardens filled with Hostas, Japanese maple, Hydrangeas, and large outdoor decks and kitchens. Even a 400-year-old tulip poplar was seen in the Pettit yard.

Thank you to the Smoke Rise neighbors who came to the tour and supported the Woman's



Club charities and projects for the community. Thank you to the Smoke Rise



Along with the two gardens in Smoke Rise, three gardens in Tucker were part of the tour. Marian Fetzek of Kanawha, and Kelley Samaras of the Tucker Marydale neighborhood, are both members of the Mountain Mums Garden Club with their gardens on the tour.

Mark your calendar for next year for the Art of Nature Garden Tour on Saturday, May 16, 2026 when you will have the opportunity to visit more Smoke Rise gardens.





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Flyers: Barbara Luton at barluton@aol.com.

All classified ads are limited to 20 words, with the *Smoke Signal* reserving the right to edit any copy. Ads are \$240 per year. Please submit a copy of ad to staff@smokesignalnews.com with your full name, address and phone number. Make checks out to *Smoke Signal* and mail to P.O. Box 1038, Tucker, GA 30085. We require full payment prior to ad placement.

For information on display (box) advertisements or flyer inserts, see contact information on page 2.

Classified Ads

WAGNON LANDSCAPE GROUP

Residential, commercial, design and installation. Year-round maintenance, light tree work and cleanups. Licensed/insured SR resident with SR references. 770-381-3697.

TOTAL HOME CARE - Deep cleaning, decluttering, windows, auto detailing, house/pet sitting, pressure washing, light yardwork, errands. Call Dana @ 706-228-0593

PLUMBER

Plumbing-Electrical-H.V.A.C Repairs-Replacement New Installation Family Owned and Operated 38 yrs Experience, Senior Discount Call Troy-770-256-8940

AFFORDABLE LAWN CARE

Mowing, edging, pruning, trimming, etc. Reasonable, dependable, insured. Call Mark at 404-697-7426.

SOUTHEAST CRAWLSPACE CONSULTING

Your local experts for wet or moldy crawlspaces. Call or text 678.920.8128 for a free inspection.

SR Handyman - painting, household fixes, landscaping , stonework. Deliveries. No job too small. Also experienced with internet connection. Call Peter @ 770-595-0077

OUTDOOR LIGHTING & IRRIGATION Convenient one-stop outdoor lighting/irrigation. FREE assessment for first 10 callers mentioning *Smoke Signal*. 833-843-6957 or outdoorswelllit@gmail.com.

DOG BOARDING:

Loving dog care. Small, selective, safe, fun. Your dog will be glad you went on vacation!
Call 770-510-8641 or visit www.theshepherdsglen.com

PIANO TUNING AND REPAIRS Over 40 years of professional experience. Contact Smoke Rise resident Steve Duncan at 770-414-4766 or 1swd@att.net

DOG GROOMING

Smoke Rise Resident Call/Text Lisa 404-444-7763 Loving Care for your Under 40lb Furbabies Professional Groomer since 2006 Need a professional pet sitter? Call Critter Sittin' Sisters at 404-409-3765. We make your pets smile!

DAVE'S LANDSCAPING
Year-Round Lawn Maintenance.
Licensed and insured.
For an estimate,

please Call/Text 404-822-6319

PETS, PAPERS, & POSIES.

I'll take care of them while you're away. Smoke Rise resident 40+ years. Karen Bouchard

Please text or call 404-472-7348
WINDOW CLEANING IN
SMOKE RISE Let your windows sparkle. FREE quotes.
Inside and Out. 706-228-0593
Computer Service. Repairs,
Upgrades, Setups and Training
Trusted company working
with local community since
1995. References available. 770309-4735 www.thepclink.com

QUALITY BRICK, STONE, CONCRETE & TILE WORK. DECKS, FENCES & MORE...

Over 30 years experience 470-632-6067 allsouth365@gmail.com

The Smoke Signal currently has space available for more Classified Ads! Contact staff@smokesignalnews.com to get your ad in next month's paper!

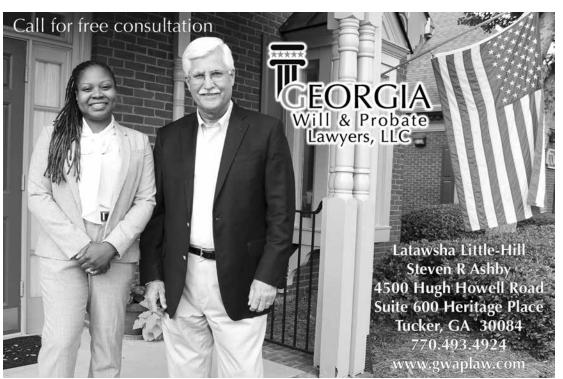
The purpose of the Smoke Signal classifieds is to advertise goods and services to the community.

Smoke Rise Academy of Arts Summer Camp at Smoke Rise Baptist Church

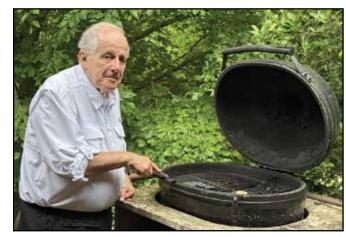








Food & Home Fixin's



Grillin' on the Cheap By Joel Gilbert, Staff Writer

It is the time of year for outdoor cooking, and grilling is a great way to prepare less expensive cuts of meat, giving them the extra flavor and texture from wood-fire cooking. If your grill is capable of "low and slow" cooking, this can also be a way for you to show off your abilities.

If you are new to this and don't have a grill designed for low and slow cooking, you can get decent results if you use lump charcoal, not briquettes, which burn too quickly, and reduce the amount of air to the grill to its minimum. Try not to get all your lump charcoal fully glowing or it will be too hot for slow cooking.

Another excellent choice is to put your meat in a crock pot and get it mostly cooked, then finish it on your grill to get the "bark" and wood-fired flavors. Slather it with your favorite BBQ sauce at the last stages...usually coating it at least twice, a few minutes apart.

A few definitions that may help make your grilled meal unforgetable:

Pork Butt (Boston Butt): It comes from the upper part of the shoulder, closer to the neck and shoulder blade. It has more fat marbling and a more uniform, rectangular shape, and is often used for slow-cooked dishes like pulled pork, tacos, and braised dishes. It is typically sold bone-in or boneless, with a thick fat cap but no skin. This is an excellent and inexpensive meat for slow cooking if your grill permits.

Chicken: Chicken on the grill can be tricky to cook fully without overcooking the outside areas, so lower temperature grilling is preferred. Some people partially cook their chicken breasts in the oven to get them fully safe and then flip them on the grill with sauces to give the outside the color, texture, and flavors we all love. My favorite is chicken thighs, but chicken wings on the grill are a party favorite.

Brining: Brine is essentially a fancy term for saltwater, but don't let its simplicity fool you. This humble concoction plays a crucial role in various cooking processes and has been used for centuries as a method of preserving food. It's made by dissolving salt (usually kosher or sea salt) in water, creating a saline solution that enhances flavor and moisture retention in meats and vegetables alike. Beyond its preservative qualities, brine also acts as an effective tenderizer, helping to break down tough muscle fibers and resulting in juicier, more succulent dishes. From pickles to cured salmon, brining is the secret behind many beloved recipes, infusing them with that extra dimension of taste. So next time you encounter the word "brine" in a recipe, know that it's not some magical potion; it is simply salty water working wonders for your taste buds.

Slow Cooking: Cooking steak over low heat for an extended period allows the meat fibers to break down naturally, resulting in a tender and juicy steak. Check online for the "slow and low" suggestions for your type of cooker.

Cutting Against the Grain: When serving, cut the steak across the grain (perpendicular to the muscle fibers) to shorten the fibers and improve tenderness. Also, you can cut thin strips like they serve in Mexican restaurants for fajitas to make it easier to chew.

Resting: Resist the temptation to serve your guests when the meat is done. Allowing the steak to rest after cooking allows the juices to redistribute, resulting in a more tender and flavorful meal. Use a covered casserole dish to keep the meat from drying out in this step.