

SMOKE SIGNAL

VOLUME 55, ISSUE 12

Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968

March, 2023

www.smokesignalnews.com

The Staff of the Smoke Signal
wishes you a
Happy St. Patrick's Day!

The Way It Was

by Jane Brown (excerpted)

This is a throwback article from the Smoke Signal February 1981 - Volume 13, No. 11 highlighting 13 years in print. The first edition of the Smoke Signal was printed February 1968 - Volume 1 No. 1. This article takes us down memory lane to appreciate how it all started.

On the *Smoke Signal* staff were Pat McCurdy, Tally Sweat, Gwen Gray and Serena Wilde. Starting up a community newspaper was the “brainchild” of Pat McCurdy. She was the Ways and Means Chairman of the Woman’s Club that year and Pat Kelly, the President, told her she had to raise \$400 (for the Woman’s Club).

Pat McCurdy *was* that first edition of the SMOKE SIGNAL! She wrote the copy, sold the ads, had it typeset and printed, then delivered it to the residents of Smoke Rise. She spent several sleepless nights wondering how she had ever gotten into it!

With experience limited to Penelope Pratt’s social column on a college newspaper and a couple of writing courses, Pat found The Hicks Printing Company. A converted chicken coop (“and it still had the ambiance of one,” said Pat) housed a total family operation. The father ran the printing shop, the daughter did the typesetting and the brother and brother-in-law helped when they weren’t driving school buses! There was room there to do “paste-up” and put the paper together and that’s where Pat learned how.

“We made \$1,800 that year,” she said. “We did so well, I didn’t have to have a benefit bridge.” (As a fundraising game for the Woman’s Club).

Serena Wilde remembers the time she finally got her first Classified Ad and the advertiser’s telephone number was printed incorrectly. “Pat and I spent one entire day correcting that number in every single copy of the *SMOKE SIGNAL*!” she said. There must have been a few hundred less copies that year than what we now deliver each month! (Now we deliver to 2,200 homes).

Tally Sweat was the next editor and by then the *SMOKE SIGNAL* was no longer a fund-raising project of the Woman’s Club. It was incorporated, and independent. The eight or ten staff members met regularly to plan each issue and determine policy. “That was the year we had enough money to buy our camera!” says Tally.

Things have changed a lot in 13 years. The paper has grown and so has the Mountain Shadow area. (Smoke Rise was known as Mountain Shadow then). Its circulation has “thirteenth” as Tally puts it. Inflation has erased the yearly profits and we have changed printers twice since the Hicks Printing Co went out of business.

Surprisingly, in a suburban area we consider somewhat transient, most of the people who made the news in that first edition still live here! All five winners of the Christmas Decorating Contest—the Smiths, Eaves, Primms, Wrights, and Newmans remain though the contest has ended, and the energy shortage has curtailed holiday decorating. “It was quite a contest in those days,” Millie Smith says. Bill Probst, developer of Smoke Rise, gave a colored television for first prize and a lot of people decorated their houses. Smoke Rise was

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SAINTS PRESERVE US!

by Victoria R. Crosby

On the Seventeenth of March I was wondering why Saints Andrew, George and David, seem to get passed by

Why don’t we celebrate their story?
Why does St. Patrick get all the glory?

Andrew is celebrated on Scotland’s flag
with a white cross on a field of blue,
St. George is England’s revered Saint
for the dragon that he slew.
St. David is the Saint of Wales,
a daffodil is his flower,
a red dragon adorns the yellow flag,
a symbol of their power.

So why don’t we celebrate their days?
Why does St Patrick get all the praise?

Now I’m not saying St. Patrick isn’t worth adoration
but don’t the others deserve more celebration?
St. Patrick wasn’t even Irish, by the way.
He was from a Roman family they say,
and it’s not certain but he may
have been born in England
or Scotland or Wales,
depending on the many legends and tales.
And as for him ridding Ireland of snakes,
they never had any to begin with,
for heaven’s sakes!

So eat your corned beef
and drink your green beer,
and wherever you come from,
be of good cheer,
but remember the thistle,
the daffodil and the rose.
Let’s make Andrew, David and George
the saints that everyone knows!

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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.

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Smoke Signal

P.O. Box 1038, Tucker, GA 30085

A non-profit service organization devoted to furthering neighborhood cooperation with the aid of good neighborhood communication.

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ATTENTION ADVERTISERS:



Some sizes of ads ARE NOW AVAILABLE! contact Staff@smokesignalnews.com for information.

Digital copies of the *Smoke Signal* are posted to the archives at www.smokesignalnews.com. You can also visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SmokeSignalNews to view postings of newsletter pictures and stories throughout the month.

Smoke Signal Deadlines

MARCH 13

Please e-mail articles to: **staff@smokesignalnews.com** (Word documents or text file attachments preferred)

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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Link to the digital version of the Smoke Signal at: Archives (smokesignalnews.com)

Preferred Formats for Smoke Signal Submissions

When sending articles and photos to the *Smoke Signal*, articles should be sent in .doc or .docx format. Articles sent in .pdf format cannot be edited or changed in any way. Ideally, photos and graphics should be submitted in .jpg or .pdf format. Thanks for helping us make your neighborhood paper the best it can be!

Smoke Signal Political Policy

It is the policy of the *Smoke Signal* to print one article on political candidates prior to each primary and/or general election. The candidate must submit the article to the paper by deadline, in order for it to appear in the following month's issue. No staff member will be responsible for any political articles on candidates, nor will the Smoke Signal solicit articles from candidates. Articles are to be submitted on a voluntary basis.

Political flyers – See below left for information. No political ads will be run in the classifieds.

ATTENTION GRADUATES, NEWLYWEDS, AND HONOREES

Please send in your picture and a brief article for publication in the *Smoke Signal*. Email submissions to staff@smokesignalnews.com



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*.

BRING A BOOK – TAKE A BOOK



Don't forget to check out the Little Libraries near the swim clubs.

The Smoke Signal Has a New Post Office Box!

P.O. Box 1038
Tucker, GA 30085

Smoke Rise Baptist Church

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
Jim Smith: Pastoral Care Associate
Danny Vancil, Minister of Music & Worship
Hannah Vassar: Minister of Youth and Congregational Connection
Rashette Walker: Director of Weekday School
Denise Burcham, Director of Academy of Arts
Telephone: (770) 469-5856
SmokeRiseBaptist.org

SUNDAY

9:45 a.m. - Attend Sunday School through Zoom or In-Person
Schedule Available at smokerisebaptist.org/streamingatsmokerise/
11:00 a.m. - Attend Worship via Live Stream or In-Person
Live Stream Available at smokerisebaptist.org/streamingatsmokerise/
WEDNESDAY
5:00 p.m. - Attend our Wednesday Dinner
6:00 p.m. - Followed by activities and Bible Study for all ages
Live Stream at smokerisebaptist.org/wednesday-evening-activities/

Eastminster Presbyterian Church

Pastor ~ Rev. J. Caleb Clarke III
Director of Spiritual Formation ~ Jeanine Fulton
Director of Family & Outreach ~ Mark Sauls
Interim Director of Music/Organist ~ Carole Mitchell
Financial Coordinator ~ Jan Zabarac
Director of Weekday Ministries ~ Celeste Sears
Office Coordinator ~ Christina Wetzel-Sizemore
Music Interns ~ Elizabeth Daly & Jose Azurdia
5801 Hugh Howell Road ~ Stone Mountain, GA 30087
770-469-4881 ~ www.eastminster.us

SUNDAYS

9:15 a.m. Adult and Children's Sunday school in person and via Zoom
10:30 a.m. In-Person and Live streaming of Worship service
Child care is available for young children during the Sunday school and worship times.

MC3 Church

Senior Minister: Art Stansberry
Outreach and Family Life Minister: Gerardo Mancilla
(770) 783-1035 ~ www.mc3.life
4415 Stone Mountain Hwy., Lilburn, GA 30047

Sunday Schedule:

10:00 a.m. Coffee and donuts
10:30 a.m. Worship service (in person and online)

Life groups throughout the week
check out our website for 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
(770) 491-7250, (770) 755-8289
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

Pastor: Mo Huggins
(770) 491-0228 ~ www.mwchurch.com
4818 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain
Sunday Services: 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
Thursday Neighborhood Bible Study with Pastor Mo: 10:00 a.m.
All Welcome!
In-person and streaming online on Facebook and mwchurch.com

Latest News on Smoke Rise Country Club

By Susan Gilbert

The cold snap over the December holidays caused a break in the kitchen fire suppression piping, which flooded both the upstairs and downstairs at the Clubhouse. Ten years ago, we experienced the same disaster and used it as a reason to provide much needed improvements to the building. This time, given it just had a million-dollar renovation, we are in a better position to recover, but the damage from this break is worse than the previous one. The silver lining is that our community will have an updated Clubhouse and public/private event facility once all the repairs are complete.



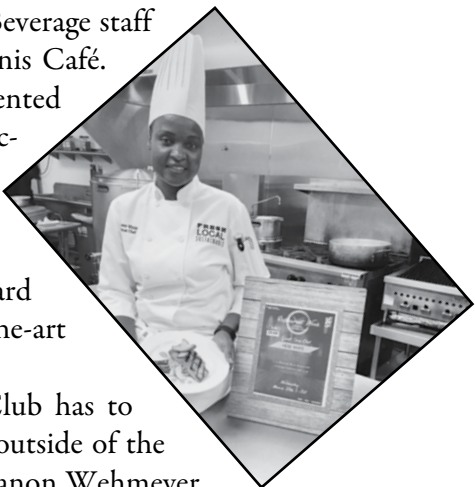
We are fortunate to have just hired a strong General Manager, Jack Sauers, whose vast experience is paying off as he is undaunted by this challenge. Jack is running the place with the confidence that comes from being a GM at multiple successful clubs across the southeast and handling whatever gets thrown at him.

ServePro disaster recovery were on site within hours of hearing the news, and they have worked diligently to get the building dried out and remediated. The club is now working on planning for the “re-build,” which we expect to take several months.

Along with this unforeseen renovation, the Club has some aggressive membership building goals. To achieve these goals, we brought in Capstone Hospitality. The firm came highly recommended and have achieved remarkable results at other clubs across the country. Their goal is returning Smoke Rise to a totally private country club as it once was, and to cement its status as an anchor to the community. Key to their success is a multifaceted approach that includes increasing initiation fees at key time intervals, and improving communications between the Club, the existing membership, and prospective new members. To that end, they just unveiled a beautiful new website you can visit to learn more at: Smokerisec.com.

More good news, the word is getting out that something magical is happening in the heart of our community at the hidden gem that we all know as Smoke Rise Country Club. If you are a golfer, you will notice the changes we have made to the golf course. In 2022, we improved the bunkers, repaired the cart paths, and removed countless trees to allow out tee boxes and greens to thrive. There are more improvements planned in 2023.

Golf and tennis have never been busier, and while the Clubhouse is being renovated, the amazingly talented Food & Beverage staff are serving lunch and some dinners out of the Tennis Café. Led by Executive Chef Hesie, the remarkable talented team, even cooking from the Tennis Café, are producing meals rivaling any high-end restaurant in our area. We can't wait to see what she and her team can do with a totally new kitchen to work from when the Clubhouse reopens. Members too can look forward to a remodeled exercise room with all new, state-of-the-art equipment.



Everyone is encouraged to check out all the Club has to offer. If you are interested in a tour of the facilities outside of the Clubhouse while it is under construction, contact Canon Wehmeyer membership@smokerisec.com to make arrangements.

CELEBRATE ST. PATRICK'S DAY AT ART STATION



ART Station, in Historic Stone Mountain Village, will hold its 27th Annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration and Fundraiser, “Raising of the Green” on Friday, March 17, from 6:00–10:00 p.m. The event features silent and live auctions, “A Taste of Stone Mountain,” music and complimentary green beer. Tickets are \$25 at the door or \$20 in advance. For more information or to purchase tickets call 770-469-1105 or visit artstation.org.

The live and silent auctions offer artwork, theater tickets, meals at Atlanta restaurants and various goods and services. All items in the auction have been donated to ART Station by local theater companies, restaurants, businesses, and ART Station's individual members. Proceeds benefit ART Station. “A Taste of Stone Mountain” highlights restaurants and caterers in the Stone Mountain area. Complimentary green beer, good music, and lots of fun make The Raising of the Green one of Atlanta's most unique St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

Calling All Bird Lovers!

Local Smoke Rise resident and artist, Beth Henson, will be featured at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia in Athens. The one man show, The Art of Birds, will be held March 12th through April 30th.



Beth has a Fine Art degree from Auburn University and has had many shows and awards throughout her career. She currently sells her work at the Swan Coach House in Atlanta.

She is both a watercolorist and oil painter and paints “living things”. Her main emphasis is on birds, being a bird enthusiast.

You are invited to attend the opening reception March



12th from 2-4pm at the Great Room, Main Conservatory, State Botanical Garden of Georgia, 2450 S. Milledge Ave., Athens. Garden admission is free! Hope to see you there!

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Upcoming Community Events:

Spring Beginner Tennis Courses
at Smoke Rise Country Club
Tuesday Course: March 7, 14, 21
Sunday Course: March 5, 12, 19
Contact: jrichards@smokerisec.com

Lunch and Learn at FOX Theatre Institute
March 7 at 12 p.m.
Leigh Burns, Director of the Fox Theatre Institute
will discuss Historic Theaters in DeKalb County, the
Fox Theater Institute, and their grant to ART station.
Free attendance. Bring lunch.
Contact: selem@dekalbhistory.org

The Way it Was...continued from page 1

a sight to see at Christmas and streams of cars drove in and out all during the holidays.”

Bobby Belk (who had a picture in the first edition as a new Eagle Scout) is now an engineer doing pipe designing for nuclear power plants and moves from place to place. He and his wife presently live in Charlotte, NC. All but two of the seven new residents welcomed in the first edition still live here, as are many of our bowlers and bridge players... but somehow, only three charter members are still on the bowling league!

Of the original staff, only Gwen Gray has moved away. Pat McCurdy stayed on the paper for only a year and a half. She said she guessed she burned herself out! Tally stayed on for a few years and then went back to school to earn a degree in Journalism at Georgia State. Serena and her husband still live here with their now grown son.

This thirteenth Anniversary Edition of the *SMOKE SIGNAL* was put together by twenty-two times more people than Volume 1 Number 1. I guess you could say MORE people are writing MORE news about MORE things for MORE families to read.

We thought everyone might like to know “the way it was!”



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Updates by Tucker Summit CID

Southern Carlson opens new location
TSCID is excited to welcome Southern Carlson to the district! The national distributor of construction packaging, manufacturing and facility maintenance tools and supplies recently leased a building at 4719 Hugh Howell Road from Link Logistics.

The new Tucker location, which is tentatively scheduled to open later this year, joins seven other Georgia locations.

Major Matthew Harden appointed new Tucker Precinct Commander
Major Matthew Harden has been with the DeKalb County Police Department since 2005 and was sworn in as the new Tucker Precinct Commander on January 21, 2023. As the Tucker Precinct Commander, Major Harden will oversee all the operations for the precinct, from patrol to investigations. Major Harden is no stranger to Tucker and served as a Sergeant with the Tucker Precinct for quite some time prior to his promotion.



Throughout his extensive career in law enforcement, Major Harden has been assigned to various areas in the region and involved in many roles that include serving as an Officer at the South Precinct and Detective in the Special Victims Unit, specializing in the online sexual exploitation of children and human trafficking, Sergeant at Tucker Precinct, Lieutenant at the South Precinct working in the Support Services Division and SVU, a Captain at North-Central Precinct and SVU and finally in the East Precinct before this promotion to Major over the Tucker Precinct.

Major Harden’s main priorities for the district are to provide the best possible service to the citizens of DeKalb County and work to foster improved partnerships with the community. His focus is on the reduction of any criminal activity through these partnerships and shared responsibility.

The major is married with a son and loves to travel. His goal is to explore the world because life is too short to only see one place.

Congratulations Major Harden! Our district is no doubt safer in Major Harden’s hands.

NETWorks Cooperative Ministry Food Pantry Ribbon-Cutting
The NETWorks Cooperative Ministry Food Pantry has officially opened in its new location at 4296 Cowan Road in Tucker!

To show love for the people, Tucker’s VIPs attended the food pantry’s ribbon-cutting last month. The new pantry is a grocery store-style experience for visitors to select the needs of their household. The pantry was created to serve the community in a time of short-term crisis to help eliminate food insecurity.

The new location provides more than just food but is offering new services as well. The NETWorks Cooperative Ministry also offers counseling in an effort to help the unhoused find jobs and homes. TSCID Board Chair, Joey Chapman, has shown his support by donating \$1,000, leading district members to contribute.





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Smoke Rise Civic Association Report

By Michael Huerkamp, President

Spring heralds the annual membership campaign of the SRCA. To conserve resources, instead of the traditional mailing at this time of year, we are experimenting with a membership insert in this issue of the *Smoke Signal*. Please re-up or join today with your fully tax-deductible contribution of at least \$40 using check, Zelle or PayPal. As with recent years, the SRCA continued to operate at a deficit with \$27,343 in revenue, while expenses summed to \$28,866. The SRCA finished the 2022 calendar year with \$30,298 in cash assets. One hundred percent of income goes to program and where 64% of expenditures were for landscaping at the major stacks on Hugh Howell, 19% for insurance, 4% for the 2022 membership campaign, and 4% for taxes and utilities.

The remainder covered the cost of donations to the school and community initiatives (\$800), the www.smok-erise.org web site (\$526), and fees and office supplies (\$231). The SRCA board met 8 times in 2022, has been involved in the planning for the Charlie and Ruth Lord Park, and has been the beneficiary of strong, regular interest from our city council representatives. Our community garden was the source of over 250 lbs. of produce donation to local food banks. Please support your SRCA now with your annual contribution. Lori Jones contributed substantially to this report.



*Looking for a way to give back
to your community?*

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is looking for a few more writers
or people with a passion for storytelling.
Contact: staff@smokesignalnews.com

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Woman’s Club Honors Members

By Barbara Luton

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman’s Club chose Sheila Hortman as their 2022 “Club Woman of the Year”. Sheila serves as Co-Chair of the Membership Committee. In this capacity she has organized the club participation in the Stone Mountain Christmas parade, the Mardi Gras parade, and the Trunk or Treat for Halloween. Sheila worked on the tickets and advertisement for the club’s garden tour. Additionally, she created a new club directory for 2023 and helps organize orientation for new members. Sheila is a person who steps up to help whenever and wherever there is a need.

George Ann Hoffman and Becky Sanders received their “50 years of Service” pins. They both joined in 1973, are long-time residents of Stone Mountain Village and their children attended DeKalb County schools. George Ann has served as club president, district president and held positions on the state level. Becky has served as club president, treasurer and department chair. Becky’s mother was also a long-time member of the Woman’s Club.



Sheila Hortman



Becky Sanders and George Ann Hoffman

Lawanna Goodman, Elizabeth Wells and Marty Bryan received “40 Years of Service” pins. Both Marty and Elizabeth have served as club and district presidents. Marty, a Smoke Rise resident, has worked with Safe Kids of Georgia, the Women’s Resource Center to Stop Domestic Violence, Take a Veteran to School Day and many programs to help our community.

If you would like to join these ladies in service to Tucker, Stone Mountain, our county and our state, please visit stonemountainwomensclub.org. Volunteering is a great way to make friends and learn new things.

St. John’s Welcomes a New Minister of Music

By Victoria Crosby

A new music director began his music ministry recently at St John’s of Lattingtown. Rector Mark Fitzhugh, the Vestry and congregation welcomed Ruairadh Sutherland, pronounced Ru-ree, as the new organist and choir director. Sutherland is originally from the UK, as was Christopher Brayne, the previous Music Director who was at St. John’s for five years.

Rev. Mark Fitzhugh said “We are thrilled to welcome Ruairadh has joined our wonderful ministry team here at St. John’s.”

Ruairadh graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 2006, and served as organist at the Parish of St. Barnabas at Christ’s Chapel, Dulwich, England, and as organist at Christ’s Hospital, West Sussex, England. He was Director of Music at Christ Episcopal Church in Rye, New York for eight years. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of organists and said that he was looking forward to getting to know the special Gluck organ at St. John’s.

For further information about the music ministry at St. John’s visit stjlat.org

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Ready, Set, Go Tucker Tigers Baseball!

By Kathryn Turner, Tucker High School Dugout Club

Over the past couple of months, the Tucker Tigers Baseball Team has been preparing for the upcoming Spring season. The team has been conditioning, practicing, and working on and off the field to not only get READY to play ball, but to get out and serve in the community! Although the team got off to a slightly late preseason start, the Tucker Tigers Baseball Team SET their course of action and then jumped right to it. The team began training in December with team workouts in preparation for the next month's tryouts.

After breaking to enjoy their holidays, they returned and an actual roster for Varsity and Junior Varsity was made along with a more formal practice routine. In January, they continued working as a team during field day by cleaning up the dugouts, concessions area, locker rooms and doing field work. It took hard work, diligence, muscle, and of course, teamwork. The Tigers Baseball Team did some impressive work on the field, but even more impressive was their teamwork off the field!

In honor and observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, members of the Tucker Tigers baseball team participated in a community project as a "Day On not a Day Off". Head Coach Johnathan Farley, Assistant Coach Alfred Turner and several of the Tucker Tigers baseball players participated in the community clean-up project at Johns Homestead Park by way of the Tucker Recreation Center. The coaches, players, and even some parents pulled up lots of ivy and moved large pieces of broken tree parts to help clear safe walking paths for the trails through the park. There were several hundred people spread out through the park helping with this massive project. By the end of the project's three hours timeline much work was accomplished. It was a true success and as the Tucker Tigers Baseball Team prepares to start their upcoming season, we look forward to their success on the field too! GO Tucker Tigers Baseball!

Please support and/or follow the Tucker Tigers Baseball Team by visiting Dorsey Field or one of the below platforms:

- www.tuckertigersbaseball.com
- https://www.facebook.com/tuckertigersbaseball/
- https://twitter.com/Tuc_Baseball
- tuckertigersbaseball@gmail.com



Tucker High Baseball volunteering at Johns Homestead Park on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Tucker High School News

By Genevieve O. Johnson

Congratulations to our STAR student and STAR teacher of 2023. The STAR student recognition is presented to the student from each senior's class who scored highest on a single scholastic aptitude test or SAT on a single test date and is in the top 10% of their class. This year's STAR student is Alyssa Walker Porter. The STAR Teacher is Mr. Kevin Mooney. He was chosen by Alyssa for having made the most significant contribution in her scholastic development.



Mr. Kevin Mooney and Alyssa Porter Walker

Anginelle Victor (9th grade) has made it to All-State Chorus and will be performing in the Classic Center in Athens along with other top choir students from all over GA! All-State Chorus is a state-wide event, the top 7th-12th grade students in the state are selected through the rigorous audition process and come together to sing and work with acclaimed musicians/conductors.

The following 2023 Tucker High School seniors are in the Top 10% of the 2023 graduating class:

Carlos Aguirre, Fathi Ahmed, Abraham Alemu, Joshua Anderson, Camille Battle, Inez Chancey, Riha Cook, Nishant Das, Meitte Dufera, Jayla Ford, Yedenekal Gebrehana, JiNeigh Grant, Dylan Hall, Alanna Inniss, Lindsey Iverson, Zunairah Jamal, Julius Johnston, Matthew Larkin, Steven Le, Cindy Lin, Isabella Morledge, Ashlyn Newton, Hoc Nguyen, Amarachi Nnabue, Evan Perlmutter, Dawit Retta Dadi, Stephanie Sanchez, Jennifer Vu, Phillip Vu, Jimmy Vu, Alyssa Walker-Porter, Anna Wampler, Natalie Young.

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You are invited to attend the American Daffodil Society’s National Flower Show March 10th 2-11 p.m. and March 11th 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

Free and open to the public! Located at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Ravinia 4355 Ashford Dunwoody Road (parking fees apply). The show will feature thousands of daffodils and designs by youth and adults. There is a special Daffodil Discovery Zone for youth that will be fun and interactive learning opportunity. Come be astonished by the sights and scents of daffodils for a breath of Spring 2023!

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HEALTH NOTES:

by Cheri Schneider, MD

Is your Living Space Killing You?

It seems like fear-producing reporting is our constant companion on TV with the newest addition being stories about gas stoves contributing to indoor pollution and possibly disease. This is old news! Today’s column will discuss some common indoor pollutants, a few of the diseases they cause and how to prevent harm.

Radon is a colorless, odorless gas pollutant common in indoor spaces. It is found in all kinds of ‘ground’ but is in higher levels in granite. Since we sit on underground granite outcroppings in Smoke Rise, you can imagine that it is a problem in many homes. Before we moved into our Millstone Lane house in 1995, I read a story about Radon gas— the second most common cause of lung cancer apart from smoking. In 2005, two credible studies showed a direct link between radon gas exposure and lung cancer risk. We decided to have a radon test done.

We called a company who came out and placed a radon meter in the basement. We were to keep all basement doors and windows closed while the readings were taken. We were shocked to discover that our levels were very high (but not constantly high). Since we planned a playroom in the basement for our four young children, this was a no-brainer! We needed radon mitigation. The mitigation technique includes placing a pipe under the foundation attached to a fan that sucks the foundation air up the side of the house through a pipe and into the air--- where it is not harmful. We can hear the fan going (very faintly) on the side of the house nearest our bedroom. Our radon levels have remained in the safe zone for decades.

Indoor pollutants:

Candles and incense and many essence oils can release chemicals into the air that may be ok on the skin or for an occasional ‘sniff’ but can be harmful to the body otherwise. Higher than recommended levels of Benzene and formaldehyde- both known to increase some types of cancer- were seen in most products-especially in incense. The CONE types of incense were much worse than the stick type. Candles of the paraffin wax type release Benzene, Toluene, Formaldehyde and acetaldehyde. I did not research beeswax. Crack windows, put on a fan and limit how long candles and incense are used.

Gas stoves release small amounts of methane when ignited. This breaks down to nitrous oxide- a compound that can cause asthma type symptoms, especially in children. This is not new information. Since the 1980s when studies first came out, this type of pollution has been known. The ‘fix’ for this is to turn on your ventilation hood. Three fourths of homeowners never use their vent hoods while cooking! If installing a new stove, make sure the ventilation hood exhausts outside. This is much better than just blowing it around the kitchen. Ovens, particulate matter from any type of cooking —think smoke, steam – also release substances into the air that can trigger lung problems. An answer is to use crock pots, insta-pots, toaster ovens and other enclosed cooking devices more often. And again, to use your ventilation hoods on all indoor cooking.

Asbestos is huge in the legal ‘infomercial’ world. In 1978 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) required all home and commercial building materials to eliminate asbestos. Asbestos is a cause of restrictive (scarring) lung disease and certain lung cancers. Building suppliers were allowed to sell off their current stock. This means that into the early 1980s some building materials were still sold with asbestos in them. Asbestos is primarily seen in popcorn ceiling materials/ textured paints and wall patching compounds; roofing and siding shingles; the backing on vinyl sheet flooring and tiles and adhesives for the same. It is also seen in heat proof insulation for stove pipes and steam pipes, boiler insulation and electrical insulation. Some wall board as well.

Asbestos fibers must be inhaled to be dangerous. For instance, if you still have vinyl flooring with asbestos in the adhesive or backing in your current home and the flooring is covered with carpet or is fully intact, it is considered inert. It will only become a concern if you want to pull it up or if you are remodeling. If the material is inert and intact it is not dangerous. All homeowners with homes built before the 1980s should check for asbestos. Many houses in Smoke Rise fit this category. If you decide to remodel and find you have asbestos, a remediation will be necessary. Since asbestos-containing products must be properly disposed of, it is best to leave this to the experts.

Many more pollutants exist in the form of room sprays, cleaning supplies and paints/ thinners (thinking of all the artists!). Do the right thing! Check if you think you have radon and asbestos and use common sense.

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Eleanor Patrick, Realtor

Confessions of an EV Owner... Are EVs for You?

Part 3 of 4

If you are considering purchasing an Electric Vehicle (EV), you are likely looking at the financial implications, so let's look at the numbers. Last month's article shared that EVs usually cost less to drive. The cost per mile for an EV charged at home runs between \$0.04 - \$0.06 per mile. By comparison, our gasoline powered car costs about \$0.13 per mile, or more than double the charge-at-home amount. We put about 10,000 miles on our cars each year, so the EV is running \$500/year and our gas vehicle is running \$1,300, or \$800 more. Our office building offers free charging, so our true cost for the EV is closer to \$0. So, if that was the only criteria in the evaluation, you might call this a no-brainer. But there is more to the story.



Taxes. Registering our cars each year used to cost about \$25. Eight years ago, when we purchased our EV, that is what it cost, however that rate didn't last. Our roadways are maintained with money generated from the gas tax on every gallon of gasoline sold, so the State legislators realized EVs are not contributing their fair share to this fund. The second year, the rules had been changed and registering the EV went up to \$225, which erodes the fuel savings.

Tires. Tires for an EV are built to hold the road under the high torque the car can produce when it accelerates. Ours cost twice that for our gas vehicle. A set of four new tires for the EV runs \$500 each vs. \$250 for our gas car, or \$2,000 for a new set of four vs. \$1,000, so that cuts into the savings by another \$1,000 if you replace them ever two years, or \$500/year.

Insurance & Repair. The average insurance premium for a Tesla Model S runs ~\$250/month or \$3,000/year while the same insurance for our gas-powered car is \$2,000 or \$1,000 less. Seems illogical since the EVs with all their sensing devices get into fewer accidents. The reason for the higher amount is linked to the cost to repair them. Parts can take months to get, meaning the insurer will have to pay for a rental vehicle for longer amounts of time. Also, the vehicles are often more expensive in the first place and can be more expensive to repair.

Battery Life. When we bought our EV eight years ago, Tesla guaranteed the battery for eight years. We asked if they had data showing what would happen in eight years and were told they did not. The reason being the batteries were a new design and they had not been around long enough to be tested for their longevity. We were all learning together and took the risk. Our battery started out with 228 miles of range. After eight years and 55,000 miles, it is down to 214 miles, a 6 percent drop in capacity. We are fine with that but don't know what the future holds.

Some Other Considerations. We have enjoyed never having to replace the brakes because the car uses recuperative braking. That means the car recharges its battery using the energy of the brakes. The car never needs tune-ups, sparkplugs, or oil changes, the radiator never leaks. But, when something does go wrong, getting spare parts can take time and cost more than regular cars.

Safety. EV drivers must be aware that people can't hear you in parking lots and will walk right in front of your car. We had been warned about that but are still surprised when it happens.

Bottom Line. As a happy EV owner, I will admit, it is not the car for everyone, and you certainly don't buy a new one to save money, but they are worth consideration because they have so many remarkable characteristics including our favorite: it is just so much fun to drive.

NEWS YOU CAN USE by AvivA Hoffmann

Take Steps to Stop Cybercrime

Smoke Rise, like many other neighborhoods across the country, has seen a rise in cyber-crime incidents. Criminals are using a variety of tactics to trick people out of their personal and financial information, and the cost of these scams nationally, runs into billions of dollars every year. To protect yourself from cybercrime, it's important to be aware of the most common tactics used by criminals and take steps to safeguard your information.

"Phishing" and "spoofing" are two of the most common tactics used by cybercriminals. In a phishing scam, criminals send fake emails or messages pretending to be from a legitimate source, such as a bank or online retailer. These messages are designed to trick users into revealing personal information, such as passwords or credit card numbers, which the criminals then use for fraudulent activities. Spoofing, on the other hand, involves falsifying the sender's information to make it appear as if the message or call is coming from a different source. This tactic is often used to trick people into giving away personal information. These schemes can target you in several ways, including via text messages, e-mails, and phone calls. To limit your chances of falling victim to cybercrime, it's important to take the following measures:

- Don't click on links in emails or messages from unknown sources.
- Be skeptical of offers or deals that seem too good to be true.
- Be wary of calls, emails or messages that ask for personal information.
- Beware of communications that urge you to take immediate action.
- Don't send money to anyone who asks you to wire funds or send prepaid cards/gift cards
- Use strong and unique passwords for all online accounts.
- Keep software and security systems up to date.

If you are a victim of cybercrime, it's important to contact law enforcement immediately. The DeKalb County Police Department is working with local businesses and residents to share information about the dangers of cybercrime and investigate incidents. If you have given away sensitive information, you should also contact your bank or financial institution to take additional measures.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is the United States entity that collects reports and helps in the event of a cybercrime attack. If you think you've been a victim of a phishing attack or have clicked on a link that may be malicious, you can report a phishing attempt online at <https://www.usa.gov/stop-scams-frauds> or by calling 1-877-382-4357.

By staying vigilant and taking steps to protect your information, you can help reduce the risk of falling victim to cybercrime. Remember to be cautious of any unsolicited communications and report any suspicious activity to the appropriate authorities.



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Out the Window

by Beth Henson

Cedar Waxwing

Glancing out the den window, I couldn't stop the instant, unappealing frown from crossing my face. Hundreds of new gumballs were littering my formally pristine driveway. I had spent the evening before, whisking off every pinecone, needle and alas, the persistent sweetgum debris. Peering into the culprit's adjacent looming tree branches, I was surprised to not only see millions of gumballs still hanging, but a rather large flock of silhouetted birds perched on every branch.

Suddenly, one of the sizeable groups swooped down and landed in a nearby dogwood, devouring a few juicy berries, left over from fall. To my surprise (and delight) I got a close up look at one of my visitors, a gorgeous cedar waxwing. He definitely lived up to his name with his sleek and silky nut-brown plumage, complemented by accents of slate, crimson and bright yellow, and a mysterious black mask.

I knew these beauties lived mostly in the northern forest of our state, but visited the metro area in winter and early spring searching for urban berries. Like many birds they are "food migratory". They had originally received their name from eating the red berries from cedar trees.

Happy hunting, my lovely friends. You are a welcome sight, even amongst the dreaded gumballs!



The Digital Distraction Dilemma

By Joel Gilbert, Staff Writer

It may be just too easy to blame the anger and despair most people are feeling today on the simple fact that we are still reeling from being indoors for two full years of COVID. Yep, it has been two years of social distancing, masks, vaccines, and fear for our wellbeing. If you are a student, you have been forced to try and learn using video conferences. Teachers had to learn new ways of teaching. If you were fortunate in your job to continue working, you also coped this way.

We were already headed down these digital tracks for almost two decades with the introduction of the smart-phone and the explosion of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. These digital distractions came after a few decades of games that started out as "first person shooter" designs like Pong, and quickly moved to Internet enabled massive multiplayer designs.

If you are a parent, you have been coping with this pervasive, addictive screentime that has literally threatened family life. Watch any family gathering and count the number of people glued to their phones. My daughters would sit at the dinner table and text each other on their phones keeping them under the table just out of my view while still commenting on my conversation with them!!

While there are always good things you can find that resulted from this technology, I think it is fair to say that most parents are concerned that these digital distractions are combining with social distancing to disable the social learning we have always found helpful in community life. It is all too easy to retreat to your favorite place and immerse yourself in a digital world that makes you happy.

That is what the designers of these deliberately addictive digital media want you to believe: that they can make you happy by watching and interacting with their channel or service. You think Google just wants to answer your question? Nope, they want to dish up ads from their paid subscribers once their artificial intelligence (AI) detects how to get your attention. You think Facebook is just about connecting with your friends? Think again.

It is fascinating to think that the people who brought you all these ideas have now become alarmed at the monster they created! I encourage everyone to watch The Social Dilemma on Netflix for a chilling look inside what is going on at the powerful, extraordinarily wealthy, social media companies. According to Wikipedia, this movie is a 2020 American docudrama that examines how social media's design nurtures addiction to maximize profit and its ability to manipulate people's views, emotions, and behavior and spread conspiracy theories and disinformation. The film also examines social media's effect on mental health and in particular, the mental health of adolescents and rising teen suicide rates.

The film features interviews with many former employees. Some of the interviews qualify that social media platforms and big tech companies have provided some positive change for society as well. The interviewees discuss social media's role in political polarization in the United States and the influence that algorithmic advertising has had on political radicalization.

The film also examines how social media platforms have impacted the spread of fake news and how governments have used social media for propaganda. These interviews are presented alongside scripted dramatizations of a teenager's social media addiction. These dramatizations draw attention to the rising concern of the radicalization of youth on the internet.

One of the most chilling lines in it was this: "We have always worried about the time when artificial intelligence would overwhelm human strengths and intelligence. What we failed to see was how it has overwhelmed human weaknesses." To sum it all up, the movie promotions express that "the technology that connects us...also manipulates us, polarizes us, distracts us, monetizes us, divides us, controls us, and manipulates us".

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National Learn About Butterflies Day

By Linda Karr

Celebrated annually, March 14th is National Learn About Butterflies Day. Spring and summer are just right around the corner, so it’s a great time to take a few minutes and learn something new about butterflies and appreciate their beauty.

Butterflies need our help to survive as they rely on flowers and other natural sources for survival. We can help them by planting more flowers.

- There are more than 20,000 types of butterflies worldwide.
- Their wing spans can range from 1/2 inch to 11 inches.
- Butterflies in their adult stage can live from a week to nearly a year, depending on the species.
- Many butterflies migrate over long distances. Particularly famous migrations are those of the Monarch butterfly from Mexico to northern USA and southern Canada, about 2500 to 3000 miles.

To attract butterflies, we need plants that help to support all the stages of their life; places for the insects to lay their eggs, food plants (such as some of our native plants) for the larvae, places to form chrysalides, and nectar (like milkweed) for the adults. The National Wildlife Association has a list of native plants by zip code and how many types of butterflies each one attracts. The list can be found by following this link <https://www.nwf.org/native-plantfinder/plants>

Opportunities in the garden for March:

- Fertilize pansies.
- Cut back your liriop.
- Plant your bare root roses.
- Plant beets, cauliflower, cabbage, eggplant, lettuce, snap peas, mustard, spring onions, broccoli, kale, leeks, radishes, and turnips in your garden. Direct sow leaf lettuce and spinach weekly this month to assure a continual harvest. Use mulch between the rows and around the plants to keep the weeds under control.
- Clean up the spent blossoms from your camellias to prevent disease.
- Divide hosta as they start to emerge.
- Clean up your rose beds and refresh the mulch. Make sure you get up all the leaves that fell from last year to help prevent disease.
- It’s a good time to plant trees and shrubs before it gets hot.
- Use some Water Gloves (cause that water is still cold!) to clean the debris from your water gardens. Add the debris to your compost bin. Fertilize your water plants.
- March is a great time to plant berries such as blueberries and strawberries.
- Apply horticultural oil (Neem) on your fruit trees now before they leaf out. The oil will kill overwintering insects and disease.
- Apply a pre-emergent to your lawn if you didn’t do it in February but don’t do it if you’re planting fescue. You’ll need to wait 6 weeks.
- Spread lime across your lawn at a rate of 40 lbs. per 1000 square feet.
- It will soon be time (but not yet!) to move your indoor plants to the outside. It’s a great time to repot them as you do it.



Spring’s approaching, let’s get gardening

By Linda Karr

General Beauregard may not have seen his shadow on Groundhog Day which means we should have an early spring, but that doesn’t mean we won’t have cold weather anymore. Christmas brought us a deep freeze and the potential loss of plants and of many viable buds. However, have you walked around your garden? Plants are already rebounding, and we can see spring is around the corner (March 20th).

In my walk around the garden a couple of days ago I was wowed by the difference from my last month’s report until now. Chrysanthemums, phlox, coreopsis, penstemon, alstroemerias, crocosmia, asters, autumn sage, bee balm, catmint, spiderwort, veronica, sedum, tulips, muhly grass, anemone, pulmonaria, clematis, black-eyed susans, sunflowers, and wood poppies have all started to push their way up through the ground. Roses, abelia, daphne, hydrangeas, gardenias, viburnums, and otto luyken laurels all have new growth. Our “fried” rosemary even has new growth as does the evergreen clematis. The daffodils and Lenten roses are blooming, and we even have a few blooms on our azaleas. There are buds on the Carolina jessamine, pieris, illicium, and banana shrub. Now if we don’t have another hard freeze, they will be fine. We still need to wait a little longer to see how the freeze affected all our plants.

Some people are getting ready to plant their seeds outside. Remember that the temperature of the soil is key to the success of the seeds germinating. Cool-weather plants prefer soil temperatures of 50-65°F, while warm-weather crops prefer 70-80°F soil temperatures. Wait until all danger of frost is past before setting out your warm weather crops like tomatoes.

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Morning Glories
Meet Monet the Gardener

By Quill Duncan

Valentine’s Day 2023 saw a delightful journey to Giverny, France for the Morning Glories who enjoyed a very special presentation by Dianne Smith. Dianne has traveled to France several times and has become a student of Monet’s works and his love of gardening. Monet was a world-renowned French painter and founder of impressionist painting as well as gardener extraordinaire. Her beautiful photographs of the garden and his home featured his unique style of garden design. Monet favored using a “color box” method of concentrating same or similar colors in mass to create a block of bloom. He used white as an accent within the garden beds to draw the eye to move across the whole space. As the garden aged, he added new elements and enlarged the pond to create the famous water lily water gardens and the iconic bridge. In his lifetime he painted over 300 scenes of water lilies. And interestingly, French water lilies were white until color was introduced from hybridizing in 1889. He welcomed the new color ranges and immediately added them to his water gardens.



Presenter Diane Smith

He stated that he was good at two things in life: gardening and painting. We can all appreciate and enjoy his special gifts as his legacy. Monet lived from 1840-1926. After his death and the ravages of World War II on the grounds, the gardens were in disrepair. An American couple who had helped restore the grounds of Versailles stepped in to save the gardens. Opened to the public in 1980, the gardens welcome and inspire several million visitors a year.

The Morning Glories met this month at the Imperial Gardens Restaurant and enjoyed a lovely luncheon and fellowship with members and guests. President Janet McGinnis reminded the club that we have several garden club events to look forward to this spring. On March 10-11, 2023, the American Daffodil Society will hold their National Convention at Ravinia. The show will be a standard flower show co-hosted by the Redbud District and will feature thousands of daffodils and designs by adults and youth. Free and open to the public, the show is open March 10th from 2-11PM and March 11th from 7AM-8PM. Our club members will be hosting, submitting horticulture, clerking and designing lovely displays for the show. It promises to be a spectacle! Ask a club member for more details. The April Garden Club of Georgia convention will be held at the Evergreen Resort at Stone Mountain April 18-20th. Our member, Kim Fair, will be installed as our Redbud District Director and Joy Zaidan will be the new recording secretary. The convention will feature many speakers and workshops and an awards night banquet.

The Morning Glories next meeting will be March 14th at 10:30AM at the Imperial Gardens Restaurant. If you are interested in attending, please let Janet McGinnis know at (770) 939-8876.



Building New Skills: Mountain Mums Learn About General Construction

By Maureen Fraser

Eighteen members attended the Mountain Mums Garden Club February meeting hosted by Lynn Malone. Co-hostesses Gaye Auman, Connie Henry and Rita Maloof provided a bountiful breakfast including heart-shaped cheese straws and bananas foster muffins. Connie Henry opened the meeting with an inspiration called “One Day the Carpenters Tools Held A Conference” (author unknown) about how hammers, screws, planes, rulers and saws must labor together to build a structure or fix something correctly. In translation, all of us must work with one another with our varying gifts, abilities, and unique personalities on club projects and in our personal lives to be successful.

Kathy Rhinehart introduced the speaker, Hillman Lewis who is the Owner and President of Lewis Construction & Consulting, Inc. Lewis is a registered professional engineer with a BS in Building Construction from Georgia Tech. His company specializes in general construction of city, county and state parks and recreation facilities throughout Metro Atlanta. Types of projects include sports complexes, football/baseball/softball fields, tennis courts, park facility buildings, gymnasiums, swimming pools, running tracks, walking trails, and pedestrian bridges. He has worked on several such projects in the Tucker area, including Cedar Park, walking trails behind the old Smoke Rise Elementary School and on Hugh Howell and Lilburn-Stone Mountain Roads, and Henderson Park.



Hillman Lewis and Kathy Rhinehart

Lewis outlined the process of managing a project - from securing the plans, preparing/finalizing the bid, being awarded the contract, securing permits, holding pre-construction meetings with the client, building and finishing it, including final touches on the punch list, as well as negotiating change orders throughout the lifespan of the project. He shared that



February Hostesses Lynn Malone, Connie Henry, Rita Maloof, Gaye Auman

when bidding, you need to take into consideration how many others are submitting a bid, as well as where it is taking place and how long it will last. Depending upon the size of the project, it may be one year later or longer before a project is complete.

Completion dates can be impacted by weather and supply chain issues. But regardless of speed, safety is of utmost importance throughout the project. Lewis advised everyone to be sure that anyone doing work on your home has both general liability and workers compensation insurance. It’s best to ask to see the certificates and not just take their word for it. He also recommended that everyone stay away from construction sites when there is tape or fencing around it.

Lewis emphasized the importance of building good relationships with clients, subcontractors, and suppliers. Honesty, integrity and trust are essential to success in business as well as in our personal lives.

The Mountain Mums’ next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 8 at the home of Colette Riefkohl. The speaker will be Doug Reynics who will provide an update on the Smoke Rise Community Garden. If you are interested in joining or would like more information about the Mountain Mums Garden Club – which is celebrating the theme “Where Flowers Bloom, So Does Hope (Lady Bird Johnson), contact Mary Jacobson, Membership Chair, at mjacob1010@gmail.com.

Smoke Rise Garden Club Updates

By Victoria Crosby

Ladies of the Smoke Rise Garden Club attended the meeting at Callanwolde for the lecture by Dottie Myers on “Gardening as we age.” She showed slides of her parent’s garden and how she had modified gardens for people as they age, by making gardens low maintenance.



Several members also visited SRGC member Janice Gummertsol’s greenhouse to view the orchids in bloom.



Dottie Myers at Callanwolde

Victoria Crosby in the orchid greenhouse

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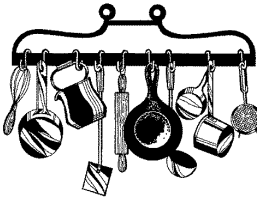
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Amen, Let's Eat!

by Joyce Ray



“Lemons... Simply the Zest!”

What better way to lighten up the menu for Spring than adding a little citrus to your menu! Lemon can be part of the main course when baked with fish or chicken. It can add a delicious surprise in desserts, be zested for its punch to flavor many recipes and used in beverages.

Avgolemono... Greek Lemon Chicken Soup

This velvety soup recipe is easy, relatively quick to make and hearty enough to be served as the soup course or as stand-alone luncheon meal. Add some delicious bread or toasted pita chips and a salad.

- 8 cups well-seasoned chicken broth
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- ½ cup shredded carrots
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- ¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- ¼ cup all- purpose flour
- 6 egg yolks
- 1 cup cooked white rice
- 1 cup diced, cooked chicken
- Thinly sliced lemon rounds

Combine chicken broth, lemon juice, carrots, onions, and white pepper in a large pot. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat and simmer until vegetables are tender.

Blend melted butter and flour in a small bowl; gradually stir into soup mixture, simmer, stirring often for 8 to 10 minutes.

Beat egg yolks in bowl until light in color. With ladle, pour in a thin stream of hot soup while quickly whisking the egg yolks. Slowly add egg mixture to the soup pot, stirring as you pour. Add rice and chicken and simmer until warmed through, stirring often. Test for salt and add sea salt as desired. When warm, ladle into bowls and serve with lemon slice on top.

Microwave Lemon Curd was one of my favorite “finds” this winter and I was delighted with the small jars of it that I canned. It makes a great hostess gift. My Lemon Surprise Coconut cupcakes were a hit at a recent event. Make your favorite white cake recipe or use a favorite boxed white cake mix (mine is from Aldi), I baked them in cupcake pans without cupcake liners. When cool, I put them into cupcake paper squares (you can find these in all colors at Cake Art). Cut a Quarter size cone-shaped circle from the center of each cupcake and fill with lemon curd. Replace the circle of cake that you cut. Frost with buttercream frosting and top with a generous amount of sweetened shredded coconut. These would be great for your Easter table!

Microwave Lemon Curd

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup fresh lemon juice (about 5 large lemons)
- Zest from 3 lemons
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly

This recipe has a light, creamy pudding-like texture because the whole egg is used rather than being opaque as from recipes that only use the egg yolk.

In microwave-safe bowl, whisk together the sugar and eggs until smooth. Whisk in lemon juice, lemon zest and butter. Cook in the microwave for 5 minutes, stopping after each minute to stir. Toward the end, whisk every 15-30 seconds. DO NOT LET MIXTURE BOIL. Mixture is ready when it coats the back of a wooden spoon. It will thicken as it cools. NOTE: All microwaves are different. Mine is old and I cooked it on the regular setting, but it was ready after 4 minutes.

Remove from the microwave and pour into 4 half-pint jars if you wish to process it. Leave about ½ inch of head space in each jar.

Sugared Lemon or Orange Zest is great to add to desserts, top muffins, Use in pies or other desserts. Wash lemon in warm water and scrub well with paper towel. Use fine micro plane or nutmeg grater to scrape off the yellow rind. Do not zest the white part of the rind. To each tablespoon of lemon (or orange) zest, add two tablespoons of granulated sugar. Mix well. Mixture should look like coarse salt. Pack into plastic bags and refrigerate or freeze for future use.

Best Ever Buttercream Frosting

- 3 cups sifted powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons whole milk
- 2 tablespoons buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 tablespoons softened unsalted butter
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

Combine all ingredients in large mixing bowl. Blend until smooth and creamy. (For chocolate icing, add 3 tablespoons sifted cocoa powder to the powdered sugar).

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Annual Spring Fling

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