

SMOKE SIGNAL

VOLUME 57, ISSUE 1

Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968

April, 2024

www.smokesignalnews.com



The Walk to Remember 2024

By Mary Lou Still, Mountain Mums Member

The 12th Annual Walk to Remember, on March 16, was a resounding success. The weather was certainly better than our usual January date. What a wonderful crowd, including neighbors, friends, and of course dear family remembering their loved ones who were young teens/adults when they lost their lives too soon.

Special thanks also go to many others for their contributions and/or participation, including Sen. and Mrs. Steve Henson, Tucker Mayor Frank Auman, Councilmember Cara Schroeder, former Councilmember Matt Robbins, the Smoke Rise Civic Association, DKPD – Tucker Precinct, Smoke Rise Agents Pat Soltys, Eastminster Boy Scouts of America Troop 876, Young Life East Atlanta at Tucker HS, and the Mountain Mums Garden Club.

We gather every year to remember the “Triangle of Trees” at Hwy. 78 - Exit 7 that honors those seven teenagers! Also, the event raised enough money to support three more Taggart Driving Scholarships next year.

TRIANGLE of TREES *By Mary Lou Still (2007)*

A small group of Gardening ladies wanting to perform a Good deed- Considered the Smoke Rise Community with a special need.

All around us are busy highways and crazy drivers we all fear- It isn't like driving in the “Country” around here!

Sadly over the years, Friends and families have shed many tears.

Teens and young adults we once knew, Lost their lives in traffic accidents, unfortunately there have been quite a few.

As a garden club we wanted to create a SPECIAL place- For those children only GOD can now embrace.

In honor of **Mandi Smith, Brandon Hubbard, Brandon Stovall, Matt Taylor, Charlie Wellman, Julian Carter, and Ben Lolie**s--the Mountain Mums have planted a small tree- In a nearby highway TRIANGLE for ALL to see!

Seven flowering Magnolias that will forever bloom, And an eighth for HOPE -- where there is always room.

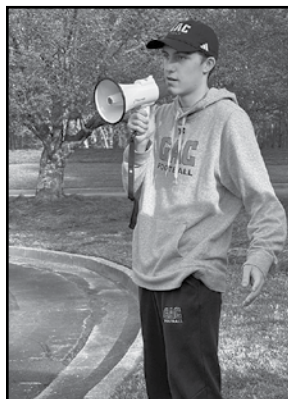
Together we will nurture these “MEMORIAL TREES” so they can thrive and be- A symbol for everyone to “PLEASE DRIVE SAFELY!”

Taggart Scholarship Recipients

The Georgia Driver's Education Commission presents the Georgia Driver's Education Grant Scholarship Program to offer driver's education to Georgia students. The grant scholarship program is open to Georgia residents ages 15 through 17 who possess a valid Georgia Instructional Permit or Driver's License and wish to satisfy the Joshua's Law driver's education requirement.



Malachi Washington



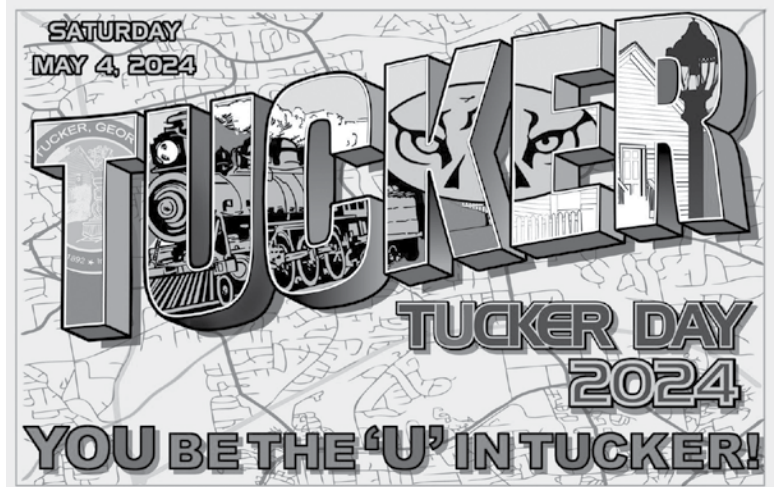
Beau Smith

The Mountain Mums offers Taggart's Scholarships to deserving applicants, through its Facebook page, The Walk to Remember (TWTR). The students apply and write a short essay about

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Join Tucker's Main Street for Tucker Day 2024!

This one-day, 65+ year-old iconic Tucker celebration will include food and beverages, crafts and goods, vendors, great music, a parade, a kid's play zone, a scavenger hunt, and a whole lot of family fun!

Tucker Day opens on Tucker's Main Street at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 4 with the parade kicking things off at 10:00 a.m. Music, food and beverages, kid's zone and vendors will continue throughout the day until 4:00 p.m.

This year, Tucker Day highlights non-profits, in and around Tucker, that are working hard every day to improve the lives of others – be they civic groups, park supporters, churches, social clubs, assistance programs, etc. Come learn about, and perhaps sign up to be involved with these amazing organizations in our Tucker YOUNited area.

Main Street Tucker Alliance is the non-profit hosting Tucker Day. Proceeds from the event go toward improvements to Main Street and the downtown Tucker area.

More information may be found at www.tuckerday.com

Act Now: Purchase Your Tires Before Price Surge!

Amidst the deluge of political discourse, a significant but often overlooked bill, House Bill #HR3665 and its Senate counterpart #S3665, has quietly made a mark in Congress. Aimed at tackling a major source of pollution—automobile tires—these environmental measures demand attention.

While it's common knowledge that tires wear down with use, the fate of the worn rubber remains a lesser-known concern. While some of it manifests as tire marks on roads, a Federally funded \$4M, five-year study by the Asphalt Social Society (ASS), found this accounts for less than 2% of the rubber loss, but slightly more in areas of high male teenage demographics, as young men try to impress others. The study further found the remaining 98% undergoes a chemical transformation into a noxious gas known as “2Uloof,” posing a serious threat to the ozone layer.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Congress has taken decisive action through bills HR3665/S3665. These measures mandate the installation of vacuum systems along major

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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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Meet the Board of the Smoke Signal



Sonia Hellen, Associate Broker at Smoke Rise Agents, holds the pivotal role of treasure within the Smoke Signal team. With a profound sense of honor, Sonia embraces the responsibility of managing our community paper's resources with unwavering diligence and care. Her passion for creativity and unwavering dedication underscores her commitment to serving our readership. Sonia's vision is clear: to help maintain the Smoke Signal as a vital conduit, fostering connectivity across our neighborhoods. Sonia understands the importance of our paper as it highlights the stories and enterprises that lend vibrancy to our community. She believes we can all appreciate our beloved paper, "Together, let's continue to nurture and celebrate our shared bonds, enriching the fabric of our beloved community."

Smoke Rise Baptist Church

5901 Hugh Howell Road
 Senior Pastor: Dr. Chris George, cgeorge@smokerisebaptist.org
 Phone: 770-469-5856
 SmokeRiseBaptist.org

SUNDAY

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
 Interim Pastor: Dr. Jim Simpson, jims@eastminster.us
 Phone: 770-469-4881
 Website: Eastminster.us

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

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

Incarnate Word Lutheran Church

4950 Hugh Howell Road
 pastor@incword.org
 Phone: 404-936-0628
 Website: Incword.org/

SUNDAY

8:45 a.m. Worship

Mountain West Church

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

SUNDAY

8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 11:30 a.m. Worship

THURSDAY 10:00 a.m. Neighborhood Bible Study

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

ATTENTION ADVERTISERS:



The *Smoke Signal* has reached its ad-space limit and we are now keeping a waiting list for future advertisements. Please send your ad requests to staff@smokesignalnews.com and you will be contacted as space becomes available, in the order requests are received.

Classified ads and flyers are still available!

Smoke Signal Deadlines

APRIL 13

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

Articles and photos should be sent in .doc or .docx format. Articles sent in .pdf format cannot be edited. Photos and graphics should be submitted in .jpg or .pdf format.

Deadline for classified ads is APRIL 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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You can also visit our Facebook page to view postings of newsletter pictures and stories throughout the month.



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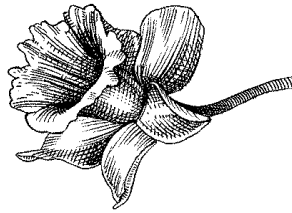
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**Georgia Iris Society Show and Sale
"Iris Goes to the Movies"**

That's this year's Iris Show theme, open to the public from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, April 27 at St. Bartholomew Episcopal Church, 1790 Lavista Road, NE, Atlanta. Many varieties of potted iris will also be for sale.

For more information, call Quill Duncan at (770) 414-4766.



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Baptist Church**

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(Admission is Free)**



Garden Tour Coming

Be sure to mark Saturday, May 18, on your calendar. The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club will have its annual "Art of Nature" garden tour. Five gardens will be featured. Four of them are in Smoke Rise and located conveniently together. One garden is in Winding Woods in Tucker. The tour runs from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., rain or shine. Donations to take the tour are \$30.00. Tickets can be purchased on line at StoneMountainWomansClub.org or in person at Wine and Whimseys, 2344 Main St., Tucker. Whimseys is open Wednesday - Sunday. All members of the club have tickets for sale. Participants get to see local gardens that would not normally be open to the public!

**Save the Date: Shredding Services
Return on May 18**

Following overwhelming demand from Smoke Rise Residents, the Smoke Rise Civic Association (SRCA) is delighted to announce the return of its secure document shredding event. In collaboration with "Shred-It" and the "Mar Thoma Church Atlanta," SRCA will once again provide this essential service on May 18, starting at 10:00 a.m. and concluding at 1:00 p.m. at the Mar Thoma Church property at 6015 Old Stone Mountain Road, Stone Mountain, GA 30087.

Residents interested in utilizing the shredding service are kindly asked to contribute a donation of \$5.00 per vehicle to help cover the \$1,000.00 cost of the event. Now's the time to mark your calendars and start gathering your confidential documents. Don't miss out on this opportunity to securely dispose of your sensitive materials!

April is Poetry Month

Poet Victoria Crosby will return to The Vibrary for a reading of her humorous and inspirational poetry on Thursday April 11 at 7:00 p.m. This is a free event open to everyone. (Snacks and beverages may be ordered.) The Vibrary is located at 970 Main Street in Stone Mountain.

For more information visit www.thevibrary.co.



Smoke Rise Academy of Arts
www.SmokeRiseBaptist.org/arts
ArtsAcademy@SmokeRiseBaptist.org
(678) 533-0562

**Willy Wonka, Jr.
May 2 - 4**

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and 2:00 p.m. Saturday matinee
Ticket information at:
www.SmokeRiseBaptist.org/Arts



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12:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
Rising K-7th Graders



For more information, visit
www.SmokeRiseBaptist.org/Arts
or, to register, scan
this QR Code:



"Enjoy a stroll through Tucker's Nature Preserve at this free Tucker Parks and Recreation event featuring wine, light refreshments and water. Drinks are limited to two per attendee and ID is required. Venue: Tucker Nature Preserve, 4440 Lawrenceville Highway, Tucker, GA 30084"

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Book Clubs Meet

The Tucker Book Club and the Stone Mountain Woman's Club Book Club joined together for a meeting in February. JoAnn Patterson, a Smoke Rise resident, is a member of both clubs and organized this event to hear an author speak about her book. Justine Cowen, author of THE SECRET LIFE OF DOROTHY SOAMES, joined the meeting to talk about her mother's secret life and how her life was affected by this. She answered questions and talked about her writing process. Justine lives locally and was entertaining and informative.

If you are a member of a book club, the Smoke Signal would love to publish news about your club and what you are reading. Book clubs are a great way to meet people and broaden your horizons with different genres of books. Book clubs encourage people to step out of their comfort zones and read books that one would not normally select.

Plus, they are fun social events. Please send us your book club news—staff@smokesignalnews.com.



Jim Richards Celebrates Nine Decades

By Connie Henry, Guest Contributor

James L. (Jim) Richards, born February 8, 1934, in Logan, Ohio, celebrated his 90th birthday with style at his home in Howell Highlands. Jim received not one, but two big birthday surprises. The first surprise was February 8 when Jim answered the doorbell to find his daughter Janet Richards from White Bear, Minnesota, standing there holding a birthday cake with 90 candles!

As if that wasn't enough, the second surprise came on February 9. Although Jim knew a couple of people were going to drop by that evening to wish him a happy birthday, he was astonished and amazed that the doorbell kept ringing, and more and more friends kept arriving. By the end of the evening, 30 of his church friends and neighbors had come to help him celebrate this milestone in his life, and Jim was beaming from ear to ear. His wife Ruth, 87 years young, was also beaming at pulling off the two surprises.



Janet and neighbor, Lauren Nicholson, coordinated the festivities with beautiful 90th birthday decorations and delicious finger foods and refreshments, while Jim and Ruth entertained their special guests. Everyone had lots of fun reminiscing about Jim's wonderful life and times over the past nine decades.

Jim and Ruth have been married for 68 years, have two incredible children, Janet and Steven, two amazing grandchildren, and four marvelous great grandchildren. Jim retired from Transamerica Insurance Company in 1993. For many years, they enjoyed a second home in Navarre Beach, Florida. They were avid golfers, and they will always hold a special place in their hearts for the many beloved Labradors that were part of their family over the years. They are long-time members of Stone Mountain First United Methodist Church.

For Jim, it was an evening filled with happy moments shared with those closest to heart. We pray that God will grant him many more years of love, good health, and happiness.

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Tucker High's TigerCon: Comic Extravaganza Recap!

By Robbie "Roberta" Barber, Ed.D., Teacher-Librarian

Tucker High School hosted its 5th Annual (except for 2020) TigerCon, a mini-ComicCon on March 1 in the Media Center. With the generous support of the Tucker High School Foundation and the Infinite Realities Comics store, organizers hosted nine guests including authors, comic writers, comic artists, comic publishers, and CosPlay experts. The public library shared resources and signed up students for a new library card. Between 12:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. the event hosted more than 500 students. At 3:30 p.m., the school rock band Tucker Rocks!, under the direction of Mr. Sean Keane, performed. Thank



you to everyone, especially the teachers, who made this possible!

Photos courtesy of TigerCon 2024

Find more photos at: <http://tinyurl.com/TigerCon24>



Stone Mountain Community Garden's New Little Library

By Quill Duncan

Many of you may know that the Stone Mountain Community Garden is a very active Master Gardener and community volunteer project in the Village of Stone Mountain. The Stone Mountain Community Garden was established as a partnership between the City of Stone Mountain and the DeKalb County Extension Service. The SMCG is open 365 days per year and is completely operated by volunteers. It is located at the Stone Mountain VFW Park at 888 Gordon Street. Volunteer Columbus Brown is the Master Gardener project site leader and a Smoke Rise resident.



L to R: Larry Edwards, Jonetta Moyo and Columbus Brown

With community gardening, sunny garden plots are available for a small annual fee. The site provides water and plenty of advice from Master Gardeners and fellow volunteers. A portion of the vegetable crops that are raised there are donated to the Stone Mountain Cooperative Ministry for distribution to the community.

On March 4, a Little Library was installed on the site by Master Gardeners Columbus Brown and Larry Edwards. The Little Library was painted and decorated by Vanessa Edwards, Larry's wife. Jonetta Moyo of Smoke Rise donated the Little Library. Jonetta owns "My Inspiration Studio." The Library will be used to share books on gardening, pollinators and wildflowers; as well as seeds, and gardening information. Donations of gardening books can be made by placing them inside the Library.

Stop by any time and see what is happening at the garden and donate a book or two or some seed packets! The website is: https://www.stonemountaincity.org/residents/community_garden.php

Smoke Rise Civic Association Report

By Michael J. Huerkamp, SRCA President

Our annual membership campaign is underway. Please watch your mail for our appeal, including the list of our accomplishments. Unlike the resurgent flora of spring, the SRCA has been progressively withering, running operational deficits in 2021 (-\$2,042.00), 2022 (-\$1,181.00), and 2023 (-\$2,171.00). Our 2023 income was \$24,988.00 against expenses of \$27,159.00 and distributed as:

Landscaping: \$18,465.00 invested in the iconic Rosser Road stack, other chimneys, the US 78 entry triangle, and the slope across from Bill Probst Park.

Irrigation and electrical at those locations: \$1,807.00

Insurance covering the board & community garden location for liability and the value of the Rosser Road landmark: \$3,160.00

Shredding in 2023: \$1,926.00

Property taxes for the community garden: \$627.00

Donations to the school, high school foundation, and Smoke Rise Sharks neighborhood swim team: \$600.00

Operating expenses: \$574.00

We are bringing shredding back on May 18 (see the separate announcement on page 3) and are angling to buy a tent for the elementary school to spare them high rates on rentals for field day and other mixers. Fewer than 700 homes of the 2,200+ in Smoke Rise support the SRCA. Without reinvigorated funding from our community, what we can do will become progressively less. Every donation is tax-deductible and is invested 100% in our community. Every board member pays dues, so please join us in making your Smoke Rise the best possible.

To submit donations or dues online, go to: <https://smokerise.org/>

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Email submissions to staff@smokesignalnews.com

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Youth Golf Soars on the Rise

Susan Gilbert, Staff Writer

Could it be the “Charlie Woods” effect is attracting America’s youth to the sport like his father, Tiger Woods, did for sport years ago? New data from research by the Aspen Institute presents an exciting trend in golf in America. The Institute’s annual report shows participation levels among youths are soaring. The 2019 to 2022 change was noted as 32.6%, with 1.7 million kids participating in golf in 2022.



Another confirming study indicates a growth in various categories during four years, 2019 through 2022. While all categories are growing, what stands out is the enormous growth among younger players in both numbers (+900,000) and percentage (+36%) increase.

A Invitation from Joe Shirey, Director of Golf at Smoke Rise Country Club

Recognizing this trend in youth golf, this spring, we are proud to host our first PGA Jr. League right here in Smoke Rise on the magnificent 175-acre, 18-hole golf course. This is an opportunity to introduce your children to the game of golf in an engaging, close-to-home setting presented by PGA and LPGA Coaches and Associates.

Open to members and non-members, boys and girls ages 17 and under of all skill levels will have the chance to learn the game with expert coaching. All players will wear numbered jerseys and compete on teams with friends in a fun, two-person scramble format. Through one-on-one drills and teambuilding exercises, young players will be exposed to competitive golf in a challenging and engaging way.

Practices begin on April 9 and the program begins on April 11 with a finish date in early June. Limited spots remain, so please reach out and get registered today, and stay tuned for additional youth sporting camps offered year-round!

To register, follow the QR Code or contact Joe at jshirey@smokerisecc.com or call (770) 908-2582 ext. 1, if you have any questions.



The Summit Swim & Tennis

Nestled within the tree-lined neighborhood of The Summit in Smoke Rise (near the old Smoke Rise Elementary School) is The Summit Swim & Tennis, one of the few remaining neighborhood operated swim and tennis locations in Smoke Rise! (The location of the club is 2051 Silver Hill Road, Smoke Rise, GA 30087.)



The Summit Swim & Tennis offers outdoor swimming in nature’s surroundings with plenty of parking, restrooms, certified lifeguards, a beautiful saltwater pool, and a deep diving area. The tennis courts are brand new and were completely replaced in 2023. The club also offers social events throughout the seasons from Kona Ice truck treats to Labor Day celebrations.

The club offers tennis or swim-only membership, or combined swim and tennis membership. Courts are open all year round, and the pool opens May 27.

Memberships are available now. The current early bird rate is valid until May 1. Incredible value for summertime relaxation with the family! To find out more, visit www.thesummitatsmokerise.com.



With the onset of warm weather approaching, the Smoke Rise Country Club is excited to announce its pool will be opening soon. Open from Memorial Day weekend through the end of summer (Labor Day), the Smoke Rise Country Club pool has been a popular spot at the club for many years.

The club offers a Junior Olympic pool, a Tot/wading pool, a fun water feature for children, a hot tub, and rock watering feature as well as Gentlemen’s and Ladies locker rooms including private showers and changing areas.

The pool provides ample lounge and sun areas along with private cabanas which can be used for private parties, such as birthday parties or small corporate events. Food and beverage services are available, and the entire facility provides a very relaxed dining setting and allows members to bring guests in a limited capacity. The pool is available for adult fitness and lap swimming, and swimming lessons are accessible throughout the season.

Access to the pool is available only to members of the club, which requires a yearly membership of the club. For more information about membership at Smoke Rise Country Club, contact the membership department at (770) 407-3164.

Mountain Creek Swim Club Announces 2024 Swim Season!

The Mountain Creek Swim Club (MCSC) is a private neighborhood swim club nestled in the trees. (The location is 2092 Mountain Creek Ct., Stone Mountain, GA 30087.)



The club offers fun for all ages and provides a peaceful retreat for those sweltering Georgia summer days. Families and individuals are welcome!

The club hosts numerous family-friendly events every summer:

- FREE Holiday Grill (burgers and hotdogs) and Potluck every Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day!
- Big-screen movie nights for the kids!
- Live Surf Bands!
- Adult-only events (such as wine tastings!)
- Kid-friendly ice cream socials!

Memberships are available now at www.mountaincreek-swimclub.com. Use discount code SMOKE SIGNAL to get a special *Smoke Signal* reader discount of 10% off during the month of April.

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Nothing is Certain About Death and Taxes

By Joel Gilbert, Staff Writer

Well, it's that time of the year again that many of us dread... filing our state and federal tax returns. As attested to by one of our founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, more than 235 years ago in 1789, nothing is more certain in our lives:

"Our new Constitution is now established and has an appearance promising permanency. But nothing can be said to be certain in this world except death and taxes."

However, the taxes Franklin was referring to were not income taxes. They were mostly sales taxes by the British and our government on goods being bought and sold here.

The history of income taxes in the United States is remarkable in that it is so recent. It was only 150 years ago (1862) that President Lincoln signed into law a revenue-raising measure to help pay Civil War expenses, creating a Commissioner of Internal Revenue and the nation's first income tax. It levied a three percent tax on incomes between \$600.00 and \$10,000.00 and a five percent tax on incomes of more than \$10,000.00. The income level threshold was an enormous amount of money back then, so most paid little to nothing in taxes.

It may be surprising given how small this tax appears to us today, but there were terrible reactions to this new tax. By 1867, just five years after it was introduced, public opposition was so fierce that Congress cut the tax rate, and in 1872, the income tax was repealed. From 1868 to 1913, 90 percent of all tax revenue came from taxes on liquor, beer, wine, and tobacco. Today, we call these "sin" taxes. A few years later, prohibition killed that golden goose.

In 1894, the Wilson Tariff Act revived the income tax and an income tax division within the Bureau of Internal Revenue was created, but a year later, in 1895 the Supreme Court ruled the new income tax unconstitutional on the grounds that it was a direct tax and not apportioned among the states based on population. The income tax division was disbanded. So, what started in 1862 ended in 1895.

Then in 1909, President Taft recommended Congress propose a constitutional amendment that would give the government the power to tax incomes without apportioning the burden among the states in line with population. Congress also levied a one percent tax on net corporate incomes of more than \$5,000.00.

The arguments for and against taxes have provided full employment for accountants and lawyers. Just ask any accountant these days how complex the tax code is. Do you remember Herman Cain's 2012 campaign called the 9-9-9 Plan? It called for the replacement of all current taxes, such as the payroll tax, capital gains tax, and the estate tax, with a 9% personal income tax, 9% federal sales tax, and a 9% corporate tax.

So, based upon this very quick review of tax history, I would hope you agree that taxes are far from certain. Being taxed is certain... we just aren't sure how much and how it will be extracted. Each year, most of us rely on professionals to tell us what this all means and what we must do to comply.

So, eat, drink and be merry! Taxes can be viewed as a blessing or a curse, depending on your perspective. How we view them reminds me of the Texas politician's explanation of his position on whisky. This funny and true story is from Armon Sweat, Jr., a member of the Texas House of Representatives. In 1952, Armon was asked at a campaign rally about his position on whiskey, which was a contentious campaign issue. From the Political Archives of Texas, what follows is his answer to the question about his stance on alcohol:

"If when you say whiskey, you mean the devil's brew, the poisonous scourge, the bloody monster that defiles innocence, dethrones reason, and takes bread from the mouths of little children. If you mean that evil drink that topples Christian men and women from the pinnacles of righteous and gracious living into the bottomless pit of degradation, shame, despair, helplessness, and hopelessness. Then, my friend, I am opposed to it with every fiber of my being.

However... if when you say whiskey you mean that oil of conversation, that philosophic wine consumed when good people get together, that puts a song in their hearts and the glow of contentment in their eyes; if you mean the drink that puts a spring in the step of an elderly man on a frosty morning; or that enables man, if for a moment to forget life's great tragedies, heartbreaks and sorrow; if you mean that nectar of the gods through the sale of which pours untold millions of dollars each year into our treasuries, providing tender care for crippled children, the infirmed, and builds highways, hospitals, and colleges in this nation. Then my friend, I am absolutely, unequivocally in favor of it.

This is my position, and as always, I refuse to compromise on matters of principle."

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

By AvivA Hoffmann

Veterans Alert: Don't Pay for Service Document Fillings!

Veterans are being advised to safeguard their military discharge records by filing them with the DeKalb County Superior Court Clerk's Office. These records, including the DD-214 forms, are crucial for accessing benefits and services and are stored at the court for retrieval by the veteran or their family members.

Recently, officials have discovered "third party businesses" charging unnecessary fees for filing and obtaining these military service documents that include information such as a veteran's dates of service, military occupational specialties held, awards, education, and overseas service.

DeKalb County Clerk of Superior Court, Debra DeBerry, emphasizes there is no cost for veterans to file their DD-214 forms with her office, ensuring confidentiality and secure record-keeping. Often referred to as the "Report of Separation," the information contained in these forms is essential for benefits, employment, and membership in veterans' organizations.

DeKalb County veterans can file their DD-214 forms at the DeKalb County Clerk of Superior Court Office, located on the ground floor of 556 N. McDonough St. in Decatur, - free of charge!

For more information on filing procedures, contact Vivian Cook at vcCook@dekalbcountyga.gov or call (404) 687-3814.

Remember, protect your records without unnecessary fees.

Driving Scholarships...continued from page 1

WHY they should be granted a scholarship. If approved, the students attend 30 hours of classroom work and six hours of actual driving with approved instructors. They also get the benefit of having their Auto insurance discounted.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the latest recipients of the Mountain Mums Taggart Scholarship, Beau Smith and Malachi Washington. Wishing them safe travels as they embark on this important educational journey!

Buy Your Tires...continued from page 1

roadways to capture and neutralize the harmful gas emitted by tires. Starting July 1, 2024, a 25% tax surcharge will be imposed on all automotive tire sales, generating an estimated \$4.8 billion annually to fund this initiative.

The solution involves deploying massive vacuum systems to extract the "2Uloof" gas, which is then processed into a fragrant mist—a curious twist for those fond of the smell of rubber. While there are technical challenges to overcome, including inadvertent ingestion of insects and small creatures by the suction fans, progress marches forward with acceptable losses.

In light of impending price hikes, prudent consumers are advised to stockpile tires before June 30 to mitigate costs. Despite potential storage expenses, the long-term financial benefits are undeniable.

Happy travels to all, and remember, happy April Fools' Day! P.S. - Incidentally "3665" spells "Fool" on the phone and "2Uloof" backwards is "foolU2."

[Thank you to Michael Shaw of Stone Mountain for this submission.]

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HEALTH NOTES:

ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT CANCER? Cancer Myths

By Cheri Schneider, M.D.

One of the most feared diseases known in the western world is cancer. Personal stories about cancer deaths, chemotherapy horrors and missed diagnosis or missed prevention are part of almost everyone’s biography. We all know that “someone.” How can you be at peace with the world, knowing you have done all you can to prevent cancer in yourself and those you love? The following Cancer Myths may be part of your belief system. Correcting your perspective may help you do the right thing- and prevent cancer.

MYTH NUMBER ONE: Cancer is one disease.

All cancers are not alike. They have differing causes and differing origination sites. Scientists do not know what causes most cancer cells to appear and multiply. They have gained understanding about risk factors and have developed screening strategies for most cancers though.

Cervical cancer and some liver cancer tumors are caused by known viruses. Each of these viruses has an associated vaccine that can prevent cancer. Cervical cancer rates have decreased by 45% since the HPV vaccine has been introduced. Many people do not know that you can get this vaccine up to the age of 46.

Lung cancer is caused by the toxicity of inhaled substances burned in cigarettes or by Radon (second cause of lung cancer) and sometimes asbestos.

Head and neck cancer can be triggered by chronic exposure to chewing tobacco, snuff, smoking or drinking alcohol.

Some cancers are genetically driven, as in some breast cancer patients with the BRCA gene(s) or those with a strong family history of colon cancer, ulcerative colitis, or Crohn’s disease.

Bone and blood cell cancers can be triggered by radiation damage to bone marrow DNA. (Think Chernobyl and leukemia).

MYTH TWO: Cancer prevention should be avoided because it is “gross.”

A good example of this is screening for colon cancer. Many patients refuse to have a colonoscopy or do stool screening because they think dealing with poop is “gross.” They do not want to do the prep or shudder at the thought of having a scope go through their intestines. They find it repulsive. The truth is that Colon Cancer ITSELF is gross. It is rarely a tame cancer, often spreading to the liver and inside the abdomen and elsewhere. It is often a painful way to die. In contrast, a colonoscopy every five to 10 years is a very small price to pay. Removal of polyps, the small grape like structures inside the colon during the procedure can prevent their transformation into cancer over time. Doing a Cologuard in low-risk individuals every three years is even easier.

MYTH THREE: All cancers are a death sentence.

Prostate cancer is an example of the fallacy of this myth. Although some men do die of prostate cancer, new recommendations allow a significant number of patients to monitor the cancer, without having to do potentially invasive surgeries. Autopsies on elderly men who died of other causes showed high rates of cancer in the prostate of men above 50 years of age. CLEARLY, this was not the cause of death in any of these men. This seems to indicate that prostate cancer may not be deadly in all individuals. (It should be monitored, though). Cancer screening is designed to catch cancers early, when treatment is not invasive, toxic or deadly.

MYTH FOUR: All cancers require Chemotherapy. And chemotherapy is terrible. You will lose your hair!

There are many types of chemo, not all of which are “terrible.” I have had several patients use the excuse that they do not want to be screened for breast or colon cancer because they would “never agree to chemo” or “do anything about it if they had cancer.” What these people are missing is that cancer screens are preventive and designed to pick up early cancer or pre-cancer. Polyps of the colon that are removed NEVER BECOME CANCER. Breast tissue that shows early cancer may be treated by hormonal therapy (not chemo) or lump removal. PREVENTION is designed to catch cancers early. Before it spreads.

Some blood cancers never need chemotherapy. Many prostate cancers are just followed. Early skin cancers are just removed. The list goes on.

Ask your doctor what cancer prevention tests you should be getting. This should be a yearly conversation, when you are seen for your physical. Do what you can do. That is all you can do.



New Orleans

By Bob Espy, President, The Smoke Signal

If you have never been to New Orleans, I suggest you make the time! Late October and November are the best times to go. Not too hot and the humidity is low(er). We arrived on a Saturday morning, and spent a fun-filled week there. We went straight to our hotel, the JW Marriott which was centrally located for our purposes. The first day, we walked (a lot). I prepared the family for this trip, telling them that New Orleans is a very walkable city, so start walking around your neighborhood. There are parts like any city that are unsafe, but the French Quarter and Garden District are great to walk. We also used a ride share service sometimes to get around.

We used Haunted History tours for many of our excursions. They included The Voodoo Tour, True Crime Tour, Cemetery Tour Louis No. 3 (4 Different Cemeteries: Masonic, Catholic, Potter’s Field, Protestant), Movie Site Tour, and The French Quarter Ghost & Legend’s Tour. Some other of our tours included: Swamp Boat Adventure and Oak Alley, St. Louis Cemetery No. 1, Walking Tour Jackson Square, Steamboat Cruise up and down the Mississippi, Garden District Walking Tour, Mardi Gras World, WWII Museum (need at least five hours), Audubon Park (self-guided), Tulane & Loyola Campus’, Historic Voodoo Museum, The Cabildo which has a history of Mardi Gras/New Orleans/Katrina, The Presbytery, 1850 House, Museum of Death, Confederate Memorial Hall Museum of the Civil War, Insectporium, and Vue Orleans. Vue is in the old Trade Center and takes you on a history of New Orleans. Once finished with the 3D interactive portion, you are allowed to go to the 32 and 33 floors to get a 360° view of New Orleans and the surrounding areas! Most tickets were purchased before we arrived, cutting down on our wait time and insuring our access. Many places sell out, so buying in advance is a smart move.

We also made reservations for dinner, as many places book out months in advance. New Orleans is a Food Lovers’ paradise. We suggest eating at the following: Brennan’s (Banana Fosters originated here), Napoleons, Pat O’Brien’s (Hurricanes), Acme Oyster House, Cochon, Café du Monde (breakfast – beignets), La Petite Grocery, Galatoires, Café Fleur de Leis, and Commander’s Palace (where Emeril Lagasse got his start). All our meals were wonderful!

New Orleans has great shopping from high end to souvenirs to antiques, etc. Royal Street and The French Markets are always fun go down. Try and ride the trolley’s Red Line (Canal Street) and the Green Line to the Garden District. This is a great city with interesting and nice people. If you like food, shopping, history, and music, then make the time and GO. An eclectic culture of American, French, African, Native American, English, and Spanish make it a place for everyone.



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Out the Window *Article and Illustration by Beth Henson*

Gray Comma Butterfly

Glancing out the dining room window, I couldn't help but notice the ever-changing spring day. The cloudy, cool morning had given way to a blue, sunny sky, dotted with a few white, almost transparent clouds. The soft breeze was beckoning me to our gaily-striped hammock gently swaying on the nearby grassy hill. As I stepped out onto the warm brick patio, a flickering motion caught my immediate attention. Flitting and floating over a brilliant, orange tulip was the first butterfly of the season! Like the tulip, he was also a beautiful tangerine, but with a sprinkling of gray spots. On closer inspection, he opened his wings to display the most dramatic (and a little frightening) dragon-like instruments of flight I had ever seen! A rare Gray Comma had come to visit. This beauty is mostly native to extreme northeastern Georgia and Appalachian area. Gray Commas are elusive and rarely leave the mountains and secluded woodlands.



Thank you for stopping by to see me on this beautiful day. Safe travels as you continue your fanciful journey.

Spring Cleaning for the Birds

By Beth Henson, Contributor and Illustrator



With the arrival of spring, our thoughts turn to the garden and what needs to be done to prepare for the much anticipated, growing season! As we diligently work in our flower beds and lawns, we also need to remember to get ready for our feathered friends. Bird feeders and houses also require a spring cleaning!

To clean your feeder, take apart as much as possible and clean with a bleach solution (one part bleach and nine parts water) or hot soapy water. Be sure to rinse well and make sure it is completely dry before refilling. Disease can be spread to birds through bird feeders, including bird conjunctivitis and salmonella. Also be sure to tidy up underneath the feeders so rodents won't be attracted. Bird baths can also use a good scrubbing this time of year!

Nest boxes also need to be emptied and cleaned in spring. Birds will be nesting from now until June 20 in Georgia. Most birds will not use a nesting box with an old nest occupying it. As you clean your boxes, here is a guide of what type of nest you might find!

- Cardinal- coarse twigs, grasses, stems, rootlets, trash, leaves and pine needles
- Bluebirds- pine needles and twigs, straw, grass
- Titmice- moss, leaves, bark strips, grass
- House finch- Stems, leaves, string, wool and feathers
- Chickadee- mostly moss, twigs and often fur or hair

Another easy tip to help nesting is to remove your human hair from brushes and leave out for the birds to line their nest. Happy cleaning!



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techtalk by Joel Gilbert, Staff Writer

Something Old ... Something New

More than 50 years ago, as I traveled through Maine on a summer vacation, I stopped at a garage sale and fell in love with a partially finished model ship hull that a skilled craftsman had artfully carved but never completed.

It was just over three feet long and carved from a single piece of maple. There was no description of it, but I was struck by the beauty of the curved hull's lines. I was in my 20s and bought it for \$20.00, thinking that one day I would finish it. During the next year, I researched what kind of ship this would have been and found it was a brigantine: a two-masted wooden ship, probably dating from the early 1800s.

With no instructions, and clearly no pieces and parts to finish the model, I found a catalogue of model boats and bought the plans for the only brigantine they had, the Newsboy. However, the complexity of the project and my bustling career led me to set it aside. Living in apartments without space for woodworking added to the challenge.

As I moved, the boat was eventually put into a storage carton and then transported from house to house at least 10 times from houses in Upstate New York, to Washington DC, and finally multiple moves in Atlanta. It sat in that carton for about 30 years until my wife, Susan, decided to clear out our storage room.

We finally opened the mysterious carton that had journeyed with us through countless moves. Susan asked what we should do with it. Well, now that I am retired, I said I would finish it. That began my adventure into how to do that. With the sail and rigging plan from my original research, and the internet at my disposal, I delved into understanding the intricacies of crafting the brigantine.

I quickly realized that without a "kit" where someone provides all the parts and instructions, I had to find or make the necessary tiny pieces. This journey has shown me how little I know about modeling, but how much I could learn if I was willing to watch countless hours of online videos created by professional modelers.

In January, Susan watched me do the research and begin the project to build the rest of the boat around the graceful hull. The first step was to finish the deck. I realized I needed "scale lumber" to do that so I could "plank" the deck in precisely the pattern used at that time aboard ships. I found a model boat kit that had lots of lumber in it already sized to the exact scale I needed. This kit also had many of the small pulleys and deadeyes I would need for the rigging.

After sanding down the hull to get it ready to refinish, the next major task was cutting each plank to the proper size and shape. The tricky part was that the edges had to curve with the shape of hull. That required a tool many have not encountered, a contour gauge. When pressed against the inside of the hull, the pins are pushed in, making a pattern so the plank can be carved to that exact arch.

With the planks made, each then had to be blackened along the sides, imitating the caulking used in boats of that era. Then, each of the tiny planks had to be placed and glued down. It was a lot of tedious work, but the result made it a worthwhile accomplishment.

So, here we are after the first major step: The planked hull is now ready for the deck houses and fittings. It is coming together pretty quickly now, and I expect to complete it by the end of April. Stay tuned for the next installment.



Spring has Sprung

**Earth Day
April 22**

marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970.

**National Arbor Day
April 26**

encourages us to celebrate and plant trees.

Georgia Arbor Day

is celebrated on the third Friday of February (during planting season).



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For more information, contact Quill Duncan at (770) 414-4766.

www.georgiairis.org

SMOKE RISE GARDEN CLUB

By Deb Halley, SRGC Member

Our March meeting was held at the home of Amy Carubba with co-hostesses Jane Culbertson, Denise Finley and Adrienne Holcomb providing the refreshments.

Amy’s husband, Dominic, is a member of the American Legion Post 207 on Pine Valley Road in Tucker. He spoke to us about the need for gardening design and planting. The post burned to the ground in March of 2019, and is just now about to be finished with the rebuild. He suggested all the garden clubs in Tucker could get involved with the landscaping re-do as a service project. They would also like to install raised bed vegetable gardening to get veterans involved and also supply food banks in the area with the harvest.

Our March speaker was our newest DeKalb Extension Service agent, Caston Noorullah. Caston has her BA in horticulture from UGA. After graduating, she worked on a farm and at a retail nursery, then at the Chattahoochee Nature Center before becoming an extension agent. She talked to us about growing more unusual edible plants and shrubs for our area, some of which are roselle (a type of hibiscus), sunchoke, lemongrass, butterfly pea and pineapple guava (which we have one growing at the Kelley Cofer Pollinator Garden). Bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) will grow here and has much more flavor than dried bay leaf you buy at the grocery store.

In April, we will be doing a field trip to Wild Roots Native Nursery.

We will have our annual plant sale on Saturday, April 27 on Antelope Lane from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Look for the signs!

Our club meets on the first Monday of the month September through May at 7:00 p.m. in a member’s home. If you are interested in joining us for a meeting, please contact Gina Dilley at ginadilley@gmail.com.

Mountain Mums are Blooming

By Cheri Schneider, Staff Writer

The Mountain Mums Garden Club is growing! Our club has been getting bigger these past few years, and we are almost at capacity! We have a great group of ladies and love to learn about gardening, see gardens, look at plants and do projects with the community. In March, we again joined our friends at Atria Tucker Senior Living for a project. They love the creative projects the Mums bring for them to do. Our next project will be an Easter Bunny creation for the table.



Kathy Rhinehart, Lisa Armistead, Marsha Smudde, & Connie Henry at the home of Marsha Smudde

The Mountain Mums have completed phase one of a landscaping upgrade for the Tucker Police Precinct. It is amazing how trimming, cutting and removing scrub can make such a difference. Member Kelly Samaras will soon complete a landscaping design for the station. Keep an eye out for the changes!

The March 12 meeting was held in the home of Marsha Smudde of the Summit. It was impressive to see how interested and attentive the club was when Brandon Merz, Forest Health Specialist with the Georgia Forestry Commission spoke about the Southern Pine beetle disease in Georgia. There were lots of intelligent questions for the speaker! When he passed small jars of the “critters” around for us to see, we were amazed to see how TINY the beetles really are.

If you have a stressed, struck (by lightning), or squeezed (too many trees in one space) tree - look for telltale signs of beetle infestation. Growing too many trees in a small area is the most common cause of an outbreak. During an outbreak, one infested tree can lead to disease in many acres of woods.

Signs of beetle infestation are bark loss and signs of “galleries” (burrows) in an S shape on the backside of the bark. Evidence that woodpeckers have been after the tree and sap running down the tree may also mean the beetles are a problem. Cutting the tree and disposing of the wood, or burning, is the best “treatment.” It is almost impossible to get insecticide to the site on the tree that would be helpful.

Prevention of pine beetle disease means removing stressed, “struck trees” and thinning pine groves, so there are no “squeezed” trees. Removal of the leading edge of infested trees can prevent further movement of the beetles during an outbreak in the forest. This can be critical, as healthy trees can become overwhelmed and succumb during outbreaks. Our speaker showed us that over the decades, pine infestations and outbreaks are fewer than in the early 1900s. They are present though, and our modern media to a large degree has exaggerated the current environmental impact southern pine beetle infestation has caused.

Our next meeting is at the home of Gaye Auman. Our speaker will be Karen Werner. We will meet at her house and tour her shade garden. Call Mary Jacobsen if you would like to attend at (770) 316-3225.



New Officers for the Smoke Rise Morning Glories!

By Quill Duncan, Morning Glories Recording Secretary

Our March meeting held at Park Springs was the installation of our new officers for the 2024-2026 term. Officers serve for two-year terms and are responsible for the various duties of the office. Our club meets September – May, and we offer programs at each meeting for educational opportunities for environmental issues and all types of gardening topics.

Garden Club of Georgia’s Scholarship Chairman and member of the Conyers Garden Club, Susan Turner, conducted the formal installation. Susan first thanked the outgoing officers for their dedication and leadership and gave each one a pair of gardening gloves. Next, she introduced each new officer and explained their job responsibilities and handed each one a floral bouquet. The bouquet contained flowers that signified their new roles using the Language of Flowers concept.

The new officers are: President Amie Walsh, 1st Vice President Bonnie Pennington, 2nd Vice President Glendolyn Hallman, Recording Secretary Quill Duncan, Corresponding Secretaries Melanie Chastain and Faye Long, Treasurer Joy Zaidan and Parliamentarian Janet McGinnis. Congratulations to the new officers!

The Smoke Rise Morning Glories are very active in our community through many service projects and with all the levels of the garden club. Members serve as officers with other garden clubs and serve on the DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs board and the Garden Club of Georgia board.

Our April meeting will be a Small Standard Flower Show held at the home of our new President. Members will enter horticulture and petite table designs and offer two educational exhibits. This show has been planned for months, and we are excited to be able to showcase our club’s talents and interests in floral design. Members are all asked to submit at least five samples of horticulture, and the design categories have been filled by members who will have a chance to create some fun floral displays. The show will be judged, and the winners will receive special recognition for their efforts. Watch for photos in the *May Smoke Signal!*

If you are interested in the club and want to know more about what we do, contact President Amie Walsh at (404) 729-4871.



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

April Fool's Day

By Victoria R. Crosby

What is the origin of April Fools? That day when people break the rules. The day that so many folks trick others with their silly jokes. The origin of its history seems to be a mystery.

There are many legends that seem to say it resembles festivals from far away. In France, they call it called April Fish which sounds just like a tasty dish. In Scotland it's called Gowkie Day, a symbol of a fool they say.

A day to joke and to tease has been observed for centuries. It's really hard to tell its original home, it could have been India or Ancient Rome. Whatever country started this trend don't take the jokes personally, my friend.

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Food & Home Fixin'

by Joyce Ray

Welcome Spring! Not only do our eyes get to enjoy the lavish colors that grace our gardens and roadsides, but fresh markets and grocery produce departments provide us with many options for fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables to eat. Do you sometimes find that the tempting vegetables you bought on Saturday have a ticking clock of peak freshness on Wednesday? It is important to store them so you can enjoy them before they start to go bad. Here are some tips for extending that timeline:

The main enemies of our fresh produce are bacteria, water, and heat. We are cautioned not to wash our vegetables and fruit before storing them due to the amount of water they could retain, however, just one bad strawberry can breed bacteria that will cause the entire basket to go bad. There are various products on the market to help kill the bacteria, but one easy and inexpensive solution is with products you have on hand in your kitchen. Run a clean sink full of cold water and add ¼ cup of white distilled vinegar and 2 tablespoons of salt. Allow veggies to sit in a colander in the solution for about 20 minutes. Rinse well and spread on clean towels to allow them to completely dry before storing in refrigerator or on the counter depending on the variety. Periodically wash down your refrigerator drawers to kill any bacteria that might have been brought in on unwashed produce.

To keep spinach, berries or leafy greens fresh, wash as above. Discard any bruised or bad leaves or fruit. Lay paper towels in the bottom of an airtight container and lay the completely dry spinach in layers between more paper towels. They should last for up to 5 days or possibly longer. Asparagus is actually a flower, so it should be stored the way you store fresh, cut flowers. After the vinegar bath, dry completely and cut about ½ inch off the bottom of the stalk. Fill a mason jar with 1 inch of water and stand the stalks in it. Cover the tops loosely with a plastic bag. Mushy tips indicate that it's time to discard it.

How to treat Avocados depends on when you want to use them. There are three stages of avocados, that can be determined by looking at the little cap on the stem end. Green means that it needs to ripen a little more. Brown and still slightly firm means that it is ready to eat and missing means that it is well passed its prime. Once an avocado has been cut, air is the biggest enemy. If you plan to store a cut avocado, don't peel the side you are storing. Cut in half, take out the pit, brush the flesh with some olive oil and store with the cut side down on a plate or in an airtight container. Use it as soon as possible.

Spinach is highlighted in the savory pastry and flavors of Spanakopita. Enjoy this easy recipe for a nice addition to a Springtime brunch or lunch.

Spanakopita: Greek Spinach Pie

3 Tablespoons Olive Oil
 1 large, chopped onion
 1 bunch green onions, chopped
 2 cloves minced garlic
 2 pounds fresh spinach rinsed and chopped
 ½ cup fresh chopped parsley
 1 cup crumbled Feta cheese
 ½ cup ricotta cheese
 2 large eggs, beaten
 8 sheets Phyllo dough
 ¼ cup olive oil to grease pans and brush between layers of Phyllo

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly oil 9x13 baking pan or dish. Heat 3 Tablespoons oil in large skillet over medium heat. Sauté chopped onions and garlic until soft and lightly browned about 5 minutes. Stir in spinach and parsley and sauté until spinach is limp (2 minutes). Set aside to cool. In Medium bowl place feta cheese, ricotta cheese and 2 large slightly beaten eggs. Mix well and stir in spinach mixture. Lay one sheet of Phyllo dough in greased pan. Brush top with oil and continue with three more sheets and brush each with oil. Tuck overlapping Phyllo into pan. Spread spinach mixture over Phyllo sheets. Cover with remaining layers of Phyllo sheets, brushing each with oil. Tuck overlapping Phyllo into pan and brush top with oil. Bake for 30-40 minutes. Cut into squares and serve while hot.

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