# SMOKE SIGNAL

VOLUME 58, ISSUE 7 — *Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968* — November, 2026

www.smokesignalnews.com




## *Happy Thanksgiving*

*from the Staff of the Smoke Signal!*

*Look inside for...*


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## A Letter to Friends and Supporters for the Future of The Smoke Signal News

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Since 1968, *The Smoke Signal News* has been the heartbeat of our community—bringing neighbors together, sharing important local stories, and amplifying voices that might otherwise go unheard. As a long-standing local community newspaper, our mission centers on fostering community connection, providing a platform for diverse voices, and promoting civic engagement through accessible, reliable journalism.

Over the decades, *The Smoke Signal News* has played a crucial role in informing the public about local government decisions, community events, educational initiatives, and public safety issues. Beyond reporting news, the paper acts as a unifying force that preserves the unique culture and spirit of our community. By featuring human interest stories, local history, and profiles of community leaders and everyday citizens, it strengthens communal bonds and encourages active participation in local affairs.

In an era where many local papers struggle to survive, *The Smoke Signal News* remains a vital resource that ensures our community stays informed and connected. It supports local businesses through advertising and provides opportunities for aspiring journalists within the community, promoting education and professional development.

To secure the future of this essential community resource, we are launching a Reserve Fund. This fund is designed to provide a steady, reliable source of income that will protect the paper's independence and allow us to continue delivering trustworthy, community-centered journalism, no matter the challenges ahead.

**Why Your Support Matters**

Supporting *The Smoke Signal News* through the Reserve Fund offers significant benefits:

- Financial Stability: The Reserve Fund provides a stable financial foundation, allowing consistent publication without the pressures of fluctuating advertising revenues or economic downturns.
- Quality Journalism: Stability enables investment in quality reporting, attracts and retains talented reporters, and expands coverage that highlights diverse voices and stories within our community.

*...Continued on page 9*

## Stone Mountain Establishes Downtown Entertainment District

The City of Stone Mountain has established a downtown entertainment district that allows patrons to consume alcoholic beverages within a designated area.




The district encompasses nearly a dozen restaurants and venues that offer food, beverages and live entertainment.

The district aims to support businesses in Stone Mountain Village and increase pedestrian traffic in the heart of the city. Mayor Jelani Linder said the district is another effort to help make Stone Mountain a destination for metro Atlanta residents and visitors seeking a fun and engaging day trip.

"We have a lot to offer, from fine and casual dining to music and seasonal events, all encompassed by a rich heritage and history," Linder said. "This district will help us capitalize on our town's uniqueness and its small-town charm."

On September 15, the City Council unanimously adopted a resolution establishing the district and an ordinance allowing the consumption of alcoholic beverages within its boundaries.

The district operates from 11 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week. Beverages must be purchased from a participating, licensed establishment within the district and served in a clear, disposable container with a City-approved sticker. Glass containers are not permitted.
Participating merchants must hold a valid City alcohol license for on-premise consumption and receive City approval to operate within the district.

Karen Patton, a chef who has operated The Sweet Potato at 5377 Manor Drive for 15 years, called the concept "a great idea."

"It will greatly benefit those of us who are down here," the chef said, "and it gives people another reason to come down and support us."

## Women of Empowerment Scholarship

The General Federation of Women's Clubs' Stone Mountain Woman's Club will be awarding a $500 scholarship this fall. It will go to a deserving woman who is currently enrolled in a college, technical school or training program to complete her education or one who is returning to school to complete her education. If you are interested in applying or if you know of someone who would be interested, please request an application from Kathy Gallo, kgallo@gsu.edu . The deadline for applying is Monday, November 30, 2026.










**The *Smoke Signal* is enhancing some of our issues with COLOR!**
**Find out how to become a Patron or Sponsor a color edition at Staff@smokesignalnews.com**

**Special Thanks to Joel and Susan Gilbert for sponsoring the color in the November edition!**

# Smoke Signal

**4500 Hugh Howell Rd., Suite 490, Tucker, GA 30084**

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

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Digital copies of the *Smoke Signal* can be requested at Staff@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.



## 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*.

## 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
Rev. Jeanine Fulton, Pastor
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 |

## Mountain West Church

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

SUNDAY 8:45 a.m., 10:15 a.m., 11:45 a.m. Worship
MONDAY 7:00 p.m.

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

## NOVEMBER 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 NOVEMBER 10**

"Like" us on Facebook at
**www.facebook.com/SmokeSignalNews**
You can also visit our Facebook page to view postings of newsletter pictures and stories throughout the month.




Looking for a way to give back to your community? The SMOKE SIGNAL is looking for a few more writers or people with a passion for storytelling. SEND YOUR INQUIRY TO: staff@smokesignalnews.com

## *OUR FLYER POLICY HAS CHANGED:*

Reservations Required:
Email Noelle Joy at Staff@smokesignalnews.com
by 15th of the month

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## Eastminster Presbyterian Church Offers Healing, Hope, and Celebration This Holiday Season

As the holiday season approaches, Eastminster Presbyterian Church invites the community to gather for music, worship, and festive celebrations. The season also offers opportunities to pause, find support, and connect with others. Whatever the holidays bring, there is a place for everyone at Eastminster.

The season begins with a Healing & Wholeness Service on Wednesday, November 4, at 6:00 PM. This gentle service is open to those experiencing illness, grief, uncertainty, strained relationships, or a need for peace. Scripture, music, reflection, and prayer will offer comfort and reassurance, with personal prayer available for anyone who wishes to receive it.

On Sunday, November 8, at 3:00 PM, Eastminster invites the community to Songs from the Stage, featuring acclaimed singers Esther Maloof, Thainara Carvalho, and Megan Reader. Join them for an afternoon of stories told through song.

On Wednesday, November 11, at 6:00 PM, the Vespers Service will provide another opportunity to pause amid the busyness of the season. Blending familiar traditions with contemporary expressions, the evening will include music and prayer in a peaceful setting designed to renew the spirit and prepare hearts for a time of gratitude.

Eastminster Presbyterian Church will host a Grief Recovery Workshop led by Rev. Dr. Trisha Senterfitt, a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist, November 13–15, 2026. The workshop will be held on Friday from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM, Saturday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and Sunday from noon to 3:00 PM. It is based on the methods in The Grief Recovery Handbook, 20th Anniversary Expanded Edition, by John W. James and Russell Friedman. Before the workshop, participants should purchase the book, read the first nine chapters, and complete the "Loss History Graph" in Chapter 9. Please bring the handbook and a notepad. Dinner will be provided Friday evening; participants are encouraged to bring lunch Saturday, and box lunches will be ordered for Sunday. To register or ask questions, email Rev. Dr. Senterfitt at tsenterfitt@gmail.com.

Advent begins with a special worship service on Sunday, December 6, at 10:30 AM, featuring piano and organ duets by musicians Carole Mitchell and Susan Ray. Cherished hymns and seasonal favorites will fill the sanctuary with the hope, love, and joy of Christmas.

The festivities continue with a Winter Social on Wednesday, December 9 at 6:00 PM. Guests of all ages can enjoy hot chocolate, play festive games, decorate cookies, and take pictures at a holiday photo booth. Everyone is encouraged to wear favorite seasonal attire and enjoy an evening of laughter and cheer.

On Sunday, December 13, at 10:30 AM, the annual Lessons and Carols service will share the story of Christ's birth through Scripture readings, instrumental music, beloved carols, and selections by the adult choir and Eastminster Children's Community Choir. This treasured tradition brings the Christmas story to life through words and song.

The music continues with a festive Hymn Sing on Wednesday, December 16, at 6:15 PM. Those attending will have an opportunity to request and sing favorite hymns and Christmas songs, while enjoying the warmth of singing with others.

Eastminster's seasonal observances conclude with the Christmas Eve Service on Thursday, December 24, at 5:30 PM. The evening will include congregational singing, the presentation of ornaments, Holy Communion, and the glow of candlelight. As voices rise in a beloved carol, worshipers will celebrate the hope and light that Christ brings to the world.

Everyone is welcome at Eastminster Presbyterian Church to come as you are and find a place among us.




## Tucker Parks & Recreation November 2026 Programming

**Fall Restoration Volunteer Day at Tucker Nature Preserve**
Saturday, November 7, Time: 9-11 a.m.
Contact Charlie Chavez | cchavez@tuckerga.gov

**Skateboarding Clinic at Brook Run Park**
Saturday, November 7, Time: 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Tucker Recreation Center
(Transportation provided to and from TRC)
Ages 8-12, $45 per person
Contact Stacey Harris | sharris@tuckerga.gov

**Native American Heritage Workshop**
Sunday, November 8, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. (noon)
Kelley Cofer Peach Pit
All ages, $5 per person
Contact Charlie Chavez | cchavez@tuckerga.gov

**Houseplant Propagation & Plant Swap**
Friday, November 13, 6-7:30 p.m.
Tucker Recreation Center
Ages 16+, $5
Contact Charlie Chavez | cchavez@tuckerga.gov

**Tucker Outdoors Club Hike: Brasstown Bald**
Saturday, November 14
7 a.m. at Tucker Recreation Center | 4898 Lavista Road
Group transportation available for $5 per person
Note: Open to Tucker Outdoors Club members only
Contact Charlie Chavez | cchavez@tuckerga.gov

**Self Defense Class for Youth (Revved Up Kids)**
Saturday, November 14, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. (noon)
Tucker Recreation Center
Ages 6-12, $5 per person
Contact Stacey Harris | sharris@tuckerga.gov

**Self Defense Class for Teen Girls (Revved Up Kids)**
Saturday, November 14, 12:30-3 p.m.
Tucker Recreation Center
Ages 12-18, $5 per person
Contact Stacey Harris | sharris@tuckerga.gov

**Senior Lunch & Learn: Thankful to be in Tucker**
Wednesday, November 18, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Tucker Recreation Center, Free
Contact Stacey Harris | sharris@tuckerga.gov
https://tucker.recdesk.com/Community/Program/Detail?programId=2192

**Fall Bouquet Workshop**
Wednesday, November 18, 6-7:30 p.m.
Tucker Recreation Center
Ages 16+, $35 per person
Contact Charlie Chavez | cchavez@tuckerga.gov

**Dancing Through the Decades**
Wednesday, November 18, 7-8 p.m.
Tucker Recreation Center, $10 per person
Contact Stacey Harris | sharris@tuckerga.gov

**Tucker Page Turners**
Wednesday, November 18, 7-8 p.m.
Tucker Recreation Center, Cost: Free
Book Selection: *The Oligarch's Daughter* by Joseph Finder
Contact Stacey Harris | sharris@tuckerga.gov

**Thanksgiving Nature Candle Making Workshop**
Saturday, November 21, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Tucker Recreation Center
Ages 16+, $65 per person
Contact Charlie Chavez | cchavez@tuckerga.gov

**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

## Where Mud Meets Magic

*By Joyce Ray, Staff Writer*

The Zen and Now pottery studio was introduced to me by a long time Smoke Rise resident, Ann Pass. I visited on a recent Saturday when the studio was holding an open house and I was much impressed with the works of art that are turned out from this group of dedicated women (and one man) who perfect their craft by sponsoring classes, learning from each other and sharing ideas. It was obvious that deep friendships have been forged among this group and they work together on the causes that they have chosen to represent, such as Atlanta Humane Shelter and the successful Empty Bowl Fundraiser, an annual community service event organized by the Brookwood High School Art Department. Throughout the year the Zen and Now members build pottery soup bowls which are then donated to the school. Community members come together to an event to raise money for students and families with food insecurity. Attendees are invited to purchase a $10.00 ticket to enjoy a warm soup dinner and take home a handmade ceramic bowl crafted by Brookwood students and local artists.

Zen and Now is located at 2730 Mountain Industrial Blvd. Suite 105 in Royal Atlanta Business Park. The non-profit Co-Op was opened in 2004 and is governed by a board of directors. They currently have 38 members who use space and equipment at the airport. Dues paid by the members are used to rent the facility, provide supplies, and pay utilities.
Ann began learning pottery as a hobby when she retired from nursing. She loves that the friends she has made have brought a deeper dimension to perfecting the art she enjoys.

The studio will have their annual Holiday Pottery Sale on December 5 from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

If you are interested in learning how you can make some magic at this delightful studio go to www.zenandnowclaystudio.com

## Smoke Signal Friends & Supporters...*Continued from Page 1*

- Civic Engagement: By keeping residents informed and connected, the paper fosters civic participation vital for a healthy local community.
- Cultural Preservation: *The Smoke Signal News* archives our community's history, celebrates achievements, and provides a platform for dialogue.
- Legacy: An endowed fund acts as a lasting legacy, ensuring the paper remains a unifying force that reflects and amplifies our community's unique character.

Your Tax-Deductible contribution is an investment in the future resilience and cohesion of our community. It safeguards a valuable source of news while promoting vibrant community life, informed citizenry, and cultural preservation.

**How to Donate**

We invite you to join us in this important endeavor by making a gift to *The Smoke Signal News* Reserve Fund. Every contribution, no matter the size, makes a meaningful difference.

1. Visit our secure donation page at www.smokesignalnews.com. Select "Reserve Fund" as your designation and follow the prompts to contribute via credit card or PayPal.
2. Send a check payable to *The Smoke Signal News* Reserve Fund to:
   *The Smoke Signal News*, Attn: Reserve Fund
   4500 Hugh Howell Road, Suite 490, Tucker, Georgia 30084
3. Call our Treasurer, Mike Canova, at 770-480-7022 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, to donate with a credit or debit card.

Together, we can preserve the heart of local journalism and keep *The Smoke Signal News* thriving. Your support today will help secure its legacy as an enduring pillar of our local identity. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our community.

With gratitude, *The Smoke Signal News* Reserve Fund Committee

## What's New in Real Estate Appraisals

*By Pat Soltys, Staff Writer*

Perhaps one of the most significant changes in many years will come to the appraisal processes on November 2, 2026. Titled UAD 3.6, this changes the requirements for appraisals. This will affect all loans that are tied to real estate valuation, not simply sales.

A core part of this is changes to the URAR (Uniform Residential Appraisal Report). Reports will now be digital from onsite input and related pictures through reporting and distribution. Appraisers will have a higher requirement to document conditions, upgrades, issues and concerns. Real estate agents will soon see changes to the real estate input that feeds the listing services relative to items that will now be evaluated in the comparables used for valuation. Drop down and dialogue fields capture condition, special features and property characteristics more consistently and comparatively with associated pictures.

Major renovation, additions and systems with approximate dates will be a part of the new reports. Documentation may be required including permits, warranties, invoices and plans. Special features such as ADU (Additional Living Units), converted spaces, solar, energy features, pools, outbuilding and disaster mitigation improvements, as well as facts related to room use, finished areas, property rights and known repairs will be included. Impact of all of these will need to be evaluated relative to market conditions and preferences that add or take away value.

The impact to this will be longer times for appraisal turn around especially at adoption, probable increase of the cost of appraisals as these will take more time. The buyer in a sale will receive more information and while the appraiser is not an inspector, they are required to evaluate and score condition.

Changes being implemented now and by November 2, 2026, adoption is mandatory. All legacy systems will be retired May 3, 2027.

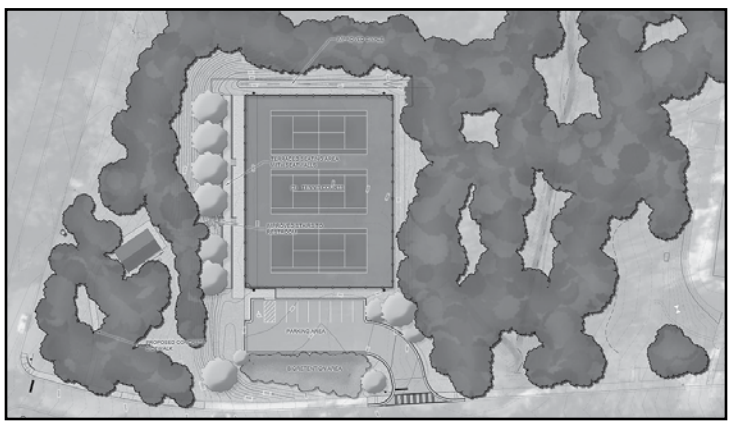
Sellers are encouraged to keep all documentation, warranties and information related to their homes going beyond current disclosures. You will likely need this for the future.









## Construction on the Rosenfeld Tennis Courts is Underway!

The project will enhance the experience for park visitors, players, and spectators through court improvements, upgraded lighting and fencing, accessible pedestrian connections, and new terraced seating. Additional landscaping and shade trees will create a more comfortable setting for users.

The improvements also address infrastructure needs. Grading, drainage, and stormwater management improvements will support the site's long-term functionality, while retaining walls and parking improvements will enhance the surrounding area.

As with any large-scale improvements, the start and the middle can be uncomfortable. We understand there is concern about the tree removal, but please rest assured that only the trees in the designated area of the approved plan will be removed to make way for the aforementioned improvements. The last step is beautification, where 14 trees and additional shrubs will be planted as approved.

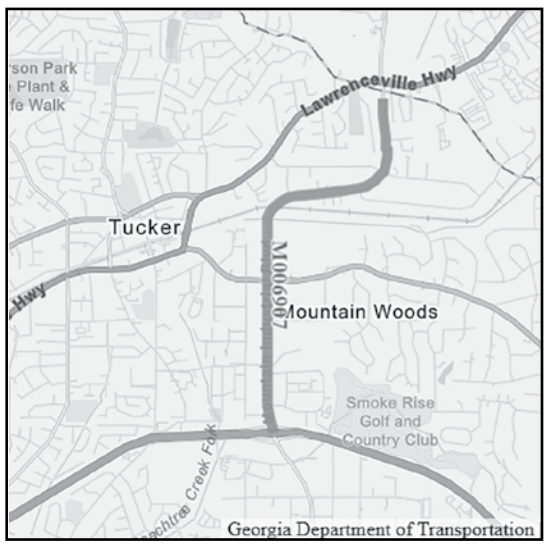
The project rendering offers residents a preview of the planned improvements. Project completion is expected in early 2027. Together, these upgrades represent continued investment in a welcoming community space where residents can stay active, enjoy the outdoors, and connect.

## Mountain Industrial Boulevard to Receive Nearly $12.8 Million in Improvements

*By Matthew Lee, Tucker-Northlake CID*

For the thousands of people who travel Mountain Industrial Boulevard each day, nearly $12.8 million in improvements will mean smoother pavement, safer intersections and easier access to one of Tucker's busiest business corridors.

The state is paying nearly 78% of the cost, bringing about $3.50 in state funding to Tucker for every dollar invested by the City of Tucker and Tucker Summit Community Improvement District (CID).




The Tucker City Council unanimously approved the agreements for the US 78 interchange project on October 13.

The improvements have been nearly a decade in the making. In 2016, the Tucker Summit CID commissioned a traffic study identifying needed improvements. The CID, funded by local commercial property owners, helped pay for the project. The City of Tucker followed with additional safety studies, design and preparations for construction.

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is contributing $7.5 million to the interchange project, while a state grant provided $600,000 for design. GDOT is also paying for the resurfacing.

The first improvements are already underway. On October 8, GDOT began resurfacing Mountain Industrial Boulevard from US 78 to the Gwinnett County line.

The $1.88 million project covers about 2.8 miles. Work was expected to last two to three weeks, weather permitting, mostly overnight between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m.

More than 39,000 vehicles use this busy corridor each day, carrying people to work, customers to businesses and trucks delivering goods.

The larger project, totaling about $10.93 million, will improve Mountain Industrial Boulevard between Greer Circle and Elmdale Drive, including the US 78 interchange.

The need for safer roads is clear. From 2017 through 2021, the area experienced 761 reported crashes, resulting in 292 injuries and two deaths. Behind those numbers are families, commuters and neighbors whose lives were affected.

Planned improvements include a center median, safer highway ramps, additional turn lanes, better traffic signals and accessibility upgrades.

Construction at the interchange is expected to take approximately 18 months once work begins. A starting date has not yet been announced.

What began as a local traffic study in 2016 has grown into a major investment in Tucker's safety and future, demonstrating what can happen when businesses, local government and the state work together.

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## Local Girl Scout Goes for Gold with Composting Project

*By Kalpana Patel, Smoke Rise Resident*



Congratulations to Dhyana Patel of Girl Scout Troop 15239 on earning her Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest achievement in Girl Scouts.

To receive the Gold Award, a Girl Scout must complete an extensive leadership project requiring at least 80 hours of work and receive approval from the Girl Scout Council before beginning. For her project, Dhyana focused on educating the community about the benefits of composting. She conducted research, created educational flyers, organized a presentation, and demonstration, and engaged community members in conversations about how composting can help reduce waste and support the environment.




Dhyana also assembled a dedicated team to help bring her project to life. Special thanks go to Suzanne Borchert, Becky Caldwell, Eileen Stone, Graham Jones, Brookwood Printing, Friends of Tucker Parks, and the Tucker Recreation Center for their support and contributions throughout the project.

We are proud of Dhyana's accomplishment and grateful to everyone who helped make her Gold Award project a success.

To learn more about composting go to https://www.tuckerparks.org/post/composting-101

## City of Stone Mountain Mural Unveiling

Six children stand shoulder to shoulder, arms linked, looking toward the horizon as if pondering life and inviting us to join them in imagining, *"What if?"*

To dream big.

That's the message behind the City of Stone Mountain's newest mural, a vibrant work of art covering the side of Stoned Pizza Kitchen at 965 Main Street. Visual artist Charity Hamidullah, who spent 120 hours creating the mural, has named it "We Met in the Middle."

"Peace lives here along with a common love," Hamidullah said. "It kept replaying in my mind that no matter what we came from or why we came, somehow, we met here in the middle for a greater purpose. I am proud of that message."



On August 27, the City of Stone Mountain held an official unveiling of the mural, with city officials and residents on hand to meet and thank Hamidullah.

"Public art like this personifies Stone Mountain because it enhances the spirit of our community and speaks to what we are about and where we are going," Mayor Jelani Linder said. "This mural captures our efforts to look toward the horizon as we come together to make this a premier city for residents and visitors alike."



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## A Visit to the Ronald McDonald House

*By Barbara Luton, Staff Writer*

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club toured the new Ronald McDonald House located near the new Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's Arthur Blank Hospital in the north Druid Hills area. This new house has come a long way from the 4-bedroom original house near the Emory Hospital. The Woman's Club delivered meals, painted bedrooms and supplied food to the original house and to the subsequent facilities that have been built. The club is presently collecting snack items and water to add to the pantry for patients and parents to be able to pick up quickly and carry with them.

The tour included the new cafeteria with a chef on duty, meditation rooms, game and TV rooms, and art rooms. There is a five-story indoor playscape and an outdoor play area which includes a large patio area. There is a large dining room with adjacent rooms for special dining needs of the children. Children stay along with a parent or caregiver. Anyone outside a 50-mile radius can be recommended to stay and may stay one night or multiple nights.

You may wonder how the House is funded as the stay is free. Funds come from the McDonald's Corporation, local franchise owners, customer contributions, and public donations. There is free parking within walking distance of the new facility that is attached to the children's hospital.

As an extra note, you may have noticed buckets in businesses around Tucker. The Mountain Mums Garden Club has placed these to receive the tabs from soda cans. This aluminum is then contributed to the Ronald McDonald House. The collection of tabs has also been an ongoing project at the Woman's Club for many years. You can help support the House and all of the children who benefit from it by saving and contributing your drink tabs!



## What's New in Tucker?

by Linda Karr, Staff Writer



Welcome to
**Yini Massage & Wellness Center**
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in Northlake Festival

And goodbye to the **'Yellow House'** on Lawrenceville Hwy across from Starbucks.

## The Smoke Rise Community Garden Is Ready for Fall and Winter Planting!



Thanks to the amazing efforts of Cub Scout Pack #867, the Smoke Rise Community Garden is getting a fresh start for fall planting. Scouts and their dedicated parents joined in and worked hard to clear weeds from 13 garden plots, preparing them for new renters.

The garden's good fortune doesn't stop there. An anonymous donor has generously donated wood to replace the garden's existing deteriorating beds. We are so very grateful for this wonderful community support!



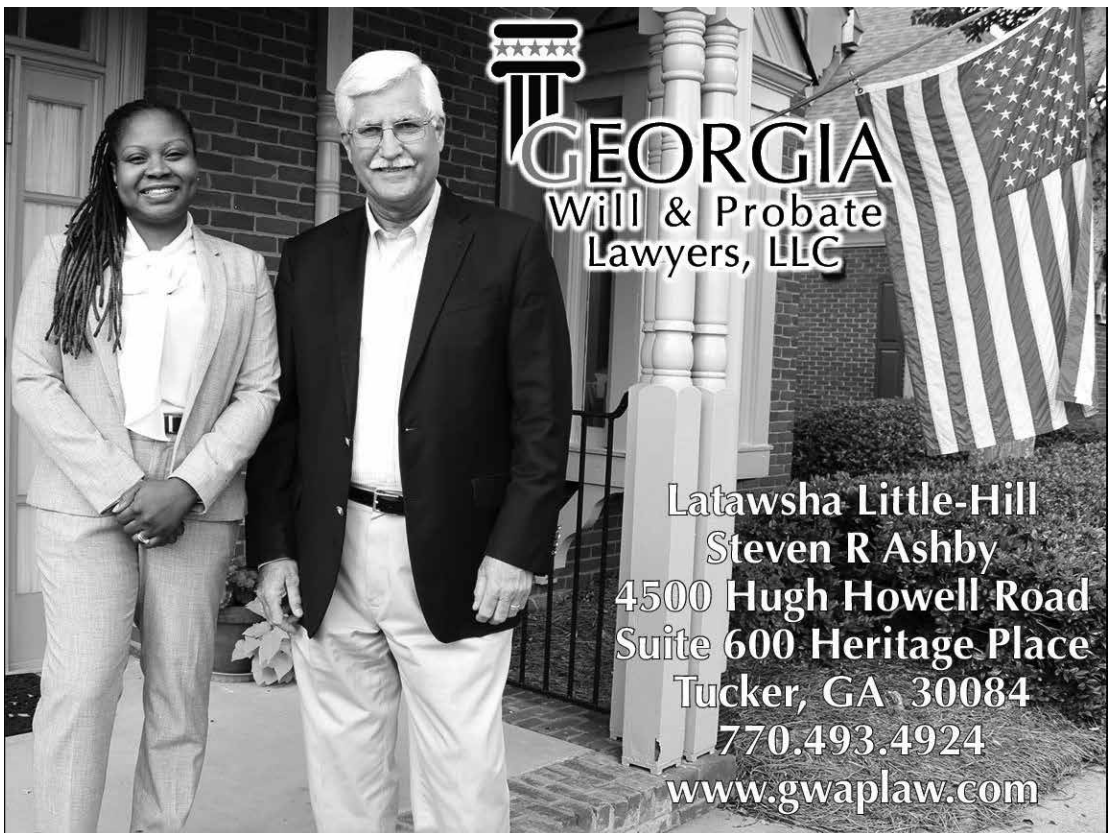
Now, we need YOU! It is the perfect time to plant cool weather crops like kale, lettuce, carrots, radishes, turnips and broccoli. Don't worry if you are new or inexperienced, there is a place for you in our garden community!

Interested in renting a plot? Call or text Eileen Stone at 404-583-3091. She's happy to chat with you, answer your questions, and help you get growing!

## Happy Anniversary, FODAC!



In September at their Tucker headquarters on Lewis Road, Chris Brand, FODAC President and CEO welcomed guests to the celebration of FODAC's 40th anniversary of helping disabled people get the equipment and devices they need. FODAC has helped more than 300,000 Georgians with disabilities access the medical equipment they need.




## Kids Day in the Park a Hit with Tucker Families

*By Robin Biro, Smoke Rise Resident*

Families gathered at the Church Street Greenspace on Saturday, September 19, for the Tucker Optimist Club's Kids Day in the Park, a free celebration featuring games, crafts and storytelling. Children enjoyed sack races, egg-and-spoon races, ring toss and cornhole, along with ornament decorating and pinwheel building. King of Pops served cool treats, while the Smashdogg food truck dished up lunch.

Tucker High School Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps. (JROTC) cadets helped keep the activities running smoothly, bringing energy and enthusiasm to the day. The Tucker Optimist Club raffled off two bicycles and helmets, and the winning families were thrilled with their new rides. Smoke Rise resident Victoria Crosby hosted three book readings for children and families, sharing her love of reading and storytelling.

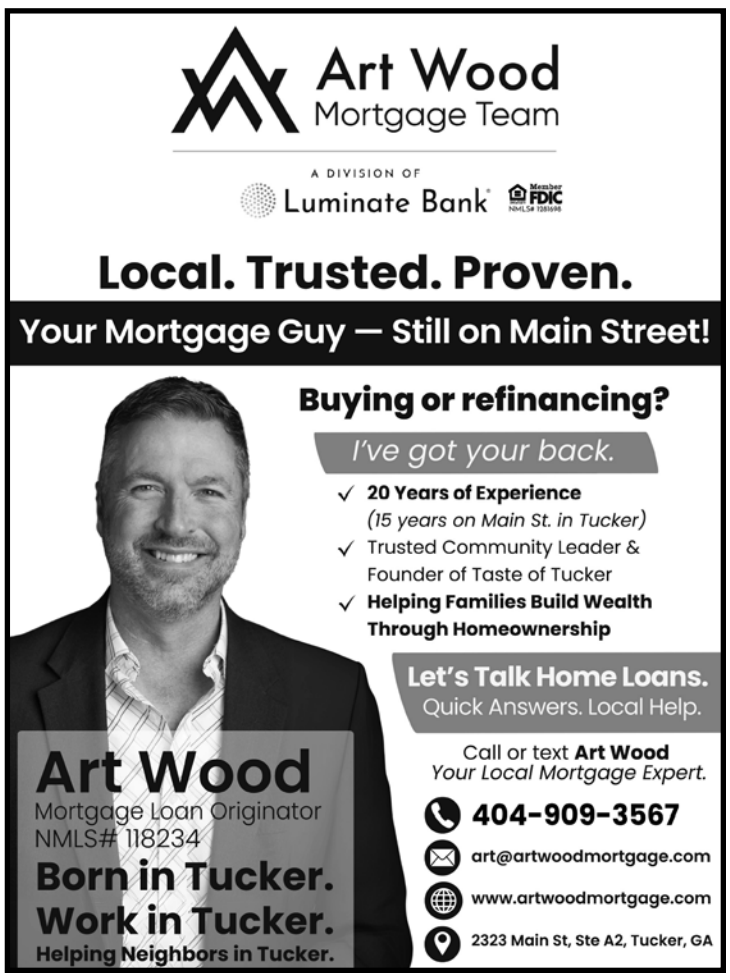


Founded in 1970, the Tucker Optimist Club has served local youth and families for 56 years through programs that promote optimism, education and positive experiences. Kids Day in the Park continued that tradition, bringing neighbors together and creating memories for the next generation.

Perhaps the best measure of the day's success came from 4-year-old Hatcher Underwood. When his grandmother asked, "Which game was your favorite?" he answered, "All of them!"

To learn more about the Tucker Optimist Club or become a member, visit tuckeroptimistclub.org.



# HEALTH NOTES:

*By Cheri Schneider, M.D., Staff Writer*

## Anatomy of Waste Disposal: Detoxing the Body Naturally

I constantly hear people talk about going on 'liver cleanses', body 'detox programs' and diets and regimens to 'flush out' their kidneys by drinking more water. Is there any evidence that these programs are necessary or even work? The short answer is NO. Let me explain...

Our bodies are wonderfully made. One of the most interesting and most efficient parts of the body is the waste disposal system. The body constantly detoxifies and filters out the substances that the body can be harmed by or cannot use. The liver, kidneys, lungs and GI tract do an admirable and tireless job daily. Here are a few things they do:

Liver: metabolizes medications, toxins and substances absorbed by the upper intestinal tract. It breaks these down into smaller pieces and neutralizes these pieces using enzymes or proteins so they can be eliminated in the gastrointestinal tract as a water-soluble product. The live and biliary system also touch almost every food substance coming down the GI tract, aiding in its further digestion down tract.

Kidney: the kidneys are the filter organs of the body. These two organs need good blood flow to be healthy. After all, they filter all the waste, excess water and other unneeded substances from approximately 47 gallons of blood plasma that daily flow through them. The kidney not only filters--it reabsorbs things like sugar, amino acids, and water. It also determines when sodium, potassium and other electrolytes need to be reabsorbed to keep all systems 'go'. One part of the kidney 'refilters again' and releases the final waste products and water as urine. The kidney can only filter so much fluid at a time. This is why sudden fluid or water overload can cause water intoxication or heart failure.

Skin: plays a very minor role in excreting salts, water and some other substances. Foods in the allium family like garlics and onions have sulfur particles that when released in skin or breath may interact with bacteria and smell unpleasant. Some spices like cumin can do this as well. The body does not sweat out heavy metals or environmental pollutants significantly.

GI: The gastrointestinal tract digests and reabsorbs valuable nutrients, water and glucose from the foods we eat. These then go through the blood stream to where they are needed. Digestion occurs in the mouth- through the saliva- the stomach, small intestine and finally the large intestine. Unnecessary fiber, water and excess substances pass through the GI tract and are discarded as stool.

Lungs: the lungs breathe in air and extract oxygen. Some 'volatile' products are breathed back out. You can generally smell these on a person's breath. Alcohol, certain general anesthetics, and volatiles like the sulfur in garlic all fit into this category.

The bottom line: you do not need special Detox Program. Your body is already doing this on a continual daily basis. There is no scientific evidence that 'detox' diets or supplements do what they promise. You may feel better--because detox diets are generally full of healthy, non-processed foods--but they do not 'detox'.

How to help your body be the best waste manager it can be:

Avoid known liver or kidney toxins. If you have a decrease of function due to age, disease, let your doctor know, so they can choose a medication that is broken down by an alternative route. Tylenol overdose is the most common cause of liver failure. Alcohol and some viruses are also high on the list. Anti-inflammatory medications like Ibuprofen -used long term or in high doses can damage your kidneys. Check all prescribed and over the counter medications you use. Supplements and vitamins should be treated as medications. Just because they are 'natural does not mean they are safe.

Manage strictly chronic diseases like heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. Eat real unprocessed foods and Let your body does what it does best: take out the trash.

# techtalk

*By Susan Gilbert, Staff Writer*

## Our Rip Van Winkle Moment

How do we prepare our children for a world that changed while we were watching?

Rip Van Winkle is the key character in a book by Washington Irving by that name. In the story, he fell asleep for 20 years and woke to find that his community had changed beyond recognition. Today, many of us feel something similar. The difference is that we were awake the whole time.

We watched computers arrive, bought smartphones, joined social networks and saw artificial intelligence move from science fiction into daily life. Yet the combined effect can still feel sudden. The advice we gave our children—study hard, earn a degree, get an entry-level job and build a career—may no longer work as reliably as it once did.

AI can draft reports, analyze documents, write computer code and answer complex questions in seconds. Those abilities help businesses and workers accomplish more. They also raise concerns for parents, employers and young people: If a machine does the beginner's work, where will the next generation of experienced workers come from?

Most of us learned by doing modest tasks first. We made mistakes, watched more experienced colleagues, and gradually developed judgment. A young accountant, journalist, engineer or lawyer still needs those opportunities, even if software can complete some of the assignments faster.

That is a challenge our community can address. Schools and colleges can teach students to use AI while requiring them to explain their reasoning and check its answers. Employers can give new workers meaningful experience instead of assuming software will handle every starting task. Parents and grandparents can encourage curiosity: "How do you know?" "What might be missing?" "Who could be affected by this decision?"

Those questions matter because information and wisdom are different things. An AI system may produce a persuasive answer that is incomplete or wrong. It cannot take responsibility for a decision on our behalf. We need people who can test a claim, listen to others, change their minds when evidence warrants it, and consider the consequences of their choices.

For those of us guided by faith, this moment also brings an older question into focus: What gives a person value? Our children should never believe their worth depends on outperforming a machine or holding a particular job. The Christian conviction that people are made in the image of God speaks directly to that fear. Whatever work changes, human dignity does not disappear.

That belief calls for action. A machine can compose a kind note, but a neighbor must show up when someone is grieving. A machine can describe forgiveness, but a person must choose to forgive. It can offer advice, but families, teachers, and mentors help young people practice courage, responsibility, and love.

No one can promise a child which careers will be secure 30 years from now. We can, however, prepare young people to keep learning and to serve others as circumstances change. That means teaching technical skills alongside sound judgment, resilience, and character.

Rip Van Winkle slept through his revolution. We have watched ours unfold, and we still have choices to make. The question for our schools, businesses, churches, and families is how we will help the next generation gain experience, find purpose, and make wise decisions in the world they are entering.



## Skip the Kitchen This Thanksgiving

*By Barbara Luton and Linda Karr, Staff Writers*

Are you free from cooking this Thanksgiving? Are your children going to the in-laws for the holiday? Is the family traveling? Or maybe you have just decided to take a break from cooking all that turkey and trimmings?

Here are some suggestions of local restaurants that will be serving up Thanksgiving lunch or dinner for your dining in needs. Both Matthews Cafeteria and Magnolia Room will be open for the day. Fox BBQ, the Old Hickory House, Longhorn, Collard Green Cafe and Jim and Nicks will be serving. There are always the chains—IHOP, Cracker Barrel and Waffle House. If you want to go a little farther, the Colonnade will open at 4:00 and Mary Mac's will be serving. Maggiano's at Perimeter, Benihana's and several steakhouses will be open. Many of these require reservations and are already filling time slots. If you are interested, call early.

You can find many options on Open Table and Yelp with a little searching.

Want to order in instead? Pick up the phone or grab your computer and order a full Thanksgiving meal from these local restaurants/stores:

- Publix 4650 Hugh Howell Rd Bldg. 100, 833-722-8377
- Kroger Rockbridge Village 1227 Rockbridge Rd, 770-225-1877
- Cofer Crossing 4357 Lawrenceville Hwy, 770-934-1104
- Costco 1915 West Park Place Blvd, 678-748-3918
- Matthews Cafeteria 2299 Main St, 770-939-2357
- Magnolia Room 4450 Hugh Howell Rd, #10 770-864-1845
- Piccadilly 2000 Crescent Centre Blvd, 770-414-0879
- Sprouts 4310 Lavista Rd Ste A200, 470-260-2368

Most locations require orders in advance, so call early to reserve yours. Whatever you decide, enjoy your meal and Happy Thanksgiving!

## Smoke Rise Real Estate Stats – October 2026

*By Pat Soltys, Staff Writer*

The real estate market in Smoke Rise started changing from a robust seller's market to one that has definitely favored buyers since June 2024. The market we have now is much more of a buyer's market. Stats from FMLS specific to Smoke Rise follow. Please remember that these are averages and do not necessarily apply to individual properties.

At current sales rates, we have a 5.9-month supply of listings. This means that, on average, a home put on the market will take longer to sell. A year ago, the average time on market was 93 days. Condition and upgrades are very important. The current supply is the highest in the past five years.

Sales prices average $621,000, which is less than a year ago, when the average was $659,000. The percentage of list price is currently 96.4%. This is slightly up from a year ago. There have been fewer showings, which is reflected in the increasing time on market. Currently, showings average 3.8 across all inventory.

Appreciation has continued, with the average sale price per above-grade square foot currently at $201.40. The average time from listing to closing is 101 days, including relisting periods. Last year ended with an average of $198.55 per above-grade square foot and 80 days from listing to closing.

The current highest-priced home on the market in Smoke Rise is $3,100,000, and the lowest is $495,000. The highest sold price year to date is $1,700,000, and the lowest (excepting a burnout) is $336,000. There have been 75 homes sold year to date, exceeding all of 2025.

These are averages and are indicators. Individual properties will vary depending on size, price, amenities, and condition.

## NEWS YOU CAN USE By Aviva Hoffmann, Staff Writer

### Your Vote Matters: Election Day is November 3

Have you voted yet? If not, there's still time to make your voice heard! Tuesday, November 3, is Election Day, and your participation helps shape the future of our community, state, and country.

Georgia has seen an impressive, record-breaking number of voters participate in early voting this year. If you haven't cast your ballot, Election Day is your final opportunity to vote in this election.

Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on November 3. Visit your assigned Election Day polling location, which may differ from early voting sites. If you are in line by 7:00 p.m., you can still vote. Find your polling place and check your registration status at the Georgia Secretary of State's My Voter Page: https://mvp.sos.ga.gov/s/.

Bring an acceptable form of identification, such as a Georgia driver's license (even if expired), valid government-issued photo ID, a U.S. passport, military or tribal photo ID, government employee ID, or student ID from a Georgia public college or university.

DeKalb County offers voting assistance for people with disabilities, age-related needs or reading difficulties. Voters age 75 and older, and those with physical disabilities, can request priority access without waiting in line.

Every election is an opportunity to weigh in on the decisions that affect our daily lives. Make a plan, bring your ID, and vote on November 3. Your voice matters!

For polling information, registration status and other election details, you can also visit www.dekalbvotes.com or call DeKalb Voter Registration and Elections at (404) 298-4020.

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## *Thank You Gloria Steinem*

**Victoria R. Crosby**

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For women's rights she opened many doors
by fighting relentlessly for a cause.
Gloria is the woman you should thank
for having your own account at the bank.

She was a voice for the voiceless, a pioneer,
empowering women out of lives of fear.
For rights for women Gloria fought very hard.
You can also thank her for your credit card.
Paid maternity leave
and to serve on a jury in every state
were also freedoms that she helped to create.

"None of us can be liberated if others are not"
She was known to say,
echoing the sentiments of MLK.
The life she lived was productive and long.
Gloria spoke her mind and remained strong.
A journalist and activist,
publisher of a successful magazine.
For many women in America, Gloria was a queen.

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## More Than Just Mahjong

***By Kathy Rhinehart, Smoke Rise Resident***

I've been playing Mahjong at Smoke Rise Country Club since February, and I'm proud to say: Yes, I've Mahjonged! Now, before you become too impressed, let me add this: I'm convinced Mahjong is the hardest game ever invented. Mahjong takes strategy, concentration, memory, patience, and a good bit of luck.




There are Bams, Craks, Dots, Winds, Dragons, Jokers, and, of course, that National Mah Jongg League card that we all study as though the answer to life itself might be hidden somewhere among those little numbers and symbols!

But somewhere along the way, I realized that Mahjong is about so much more than the tiles.

We chat, we giggle, and we truly have the best time together. There is something so special about girlfriends in a woman's life. We encourage one another, enjoy each other's company, and sometimes laugh at ourselves when we have absolutely no idea what we are doing!

Most of all, we are making memories. We are spending time with treasured friends while also welcoming new ones into the group. That may be one of my favorite parts of Mahjong — the friendships that grow around the table.

My husband has a ritual question when I walk in the door after playing: "Did you win?" I always tell him, "Mahjong is a noun and a verb. You play Mahjong, and you Mahjong!" Technically, of course, when you Mahjong, it is a win — but somehow that explanation still makes me smile every time.

We enjoy a meal together on the first and third Thursdays at 5:30 p.m., and we continue playing every Friday at noon. We don't judge; we encourage one another. Whether you are experienced or just learning, you are welcome to join us. So after months of playing, have I mastered Mahjong? Not even close. But I have Mahjonged — more than once — and I consider that quite an accomplishment!

Come join us. There's always room at the table — and who knows? You just might Mahjong, too!

## Main Street Theatre to Present Holiday Classic

Tickets are now on sale for "Miracle on 34th Street," which will be staged by Tucker's Main Street Theatre Thursday through Sunday, December 3-6, and Thursday through Sunday, December 10-13, at the Tucker Recreation Center, 4898 LaVista Rd.

Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. for Thursday, Friday and Saturday performances, and Sunday shows begin at 2:30 p.m.

Tickets are $20 for adults, $15 for seniors and students, and $10 for children. Online ticket sales for each performance end four hours before showtime. The Box Office opens 45 minutes before showtime, and doors open 30 minutes before the show.

For tickets and more information, please visit www.mainstreettheatre.org.

## The November Garden

Fall brings a quite different look to our garden as it shifts into a state of transition due to cooler temperatures and less sunshine. However, it doesn't mean we've lost our color and blooms. In November we see abelia, coreopsis, butterfly bush, grasses, salvia, Turk's cap, camelias, clematis, flame acanthus, echinacea, orange zest, chrysanthemums, roses, catmint, anemone, Lenten rose, tea olive, lantana, amsonia, aster, and lavender all showing their fall colors now. What's blooming in your garden?

**Have chickweed or henbit in your yard?**

Put a post-emergent out by early November to help control these weeds while they are actively growing. They are much easier to control now than waiting until spring when they have matured and flowered.

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## Smoke Rise Morning Glories on the Playground!

*By Quill Duncan, Recording Secretary, Smoke Rise Morning Glories*

In 2025 The Morning Glories established a youth garden club at the Mountain Park United Methodist Pre-School for the children ages 3-4. The club's name is Grow with Us Little Gardeners. Over the course of the school year, volunteers from the garden club led by Amie Walsh created garden themes for the children and taught them every two weeks. They started the year off planting plastic worms in the raised beds, learned about spinning cotton and planting pansies and created peanut butter and seed pine-cone bird feeders together. A wide variety of subjects were covered on the environment and included books and lots of hands-on activities.

The program was such a hit that the club returned this August for another school year. Amie has recruited Erin Vaugh from the Avon Garden Club to advise on the curriculum as Erin is a retired pre-school teacher. Club members will continue the bi-weekly schedule, and the school has requested more outdoor activities for the children this school year. Using raised beds and donated planters, the children will plant winter vegetables and cold tolerant herbs this fall.

In September, Morning Glories President Kim Fair presented a lesson on different types of mint plants. She mentioned that families have similarities and differences and showed the preschoolers a photo of her family. She demonstrated a wide variety of plants in the mint family: rose, rosemary, bee balm and orange and chocolate mint. The children were able to smell and touch the plants and discussed the various ways mint can be used. The classes planted different types of mint and were reminded to water their new plants! These are fun lessons for students and volunteers and the teachers at the pre-school.

In other garden club news, The DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs will hold the 22nd annual Leading Lights fundraising event at Callanwolde on November 12, 2026. The event will feature a fashion show by Carolee Fashions, vendors, raffle baskets, door prizes and a catered luncheon. For information on this great party or questions on garden club activities, contact President Kim Fair at 404 384-7851.

## Smoke Rise Garden Club Donates to STEM Program

A presentation was given by Scott Lange, Executive Director of AWARE Wildlife Center, at the September meeting of the Smoke Rise Garden Club. Along with a PowerPoint Scott provided the club with helpful information about what to do and what not to do if you come across an injured animal.

Ms. Bernadette Cummings, a Smoke Rise Elementary STEM teacher, was introduced by retired teacher and SRGC member Ann Weisz. SRGC President Victoria Crosby presented Ms. Cummings with a check to purchase picnic tables for an outdoor classroom, where the students can study environmental issues.



*(L to R) Retired teacher Ann Weisz, SRGC President Victoria Crosby and Smoke Rise Elementary STEM teacher, Ms. Bernadette Cummings*

SRGC is a member of the National Garden Club, Garden Clubs of Georgia, Redbud District and the DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs. We meet on the first Monday of the month from September through May, at members' homes in the evening. Membership is close to capacity but, if you would like to attend a meeting as a guest contact membership chair Marisa Fernandez at 305-590-7186 or email marisa.fernandez0212@gmail.com

## Mountain Mums Garden Club Updates

*By Maureen Fraser*



*Deb DeWitt, Master Beekeeper, Central Regional Director, and 2025 Beekeeper of the Year for the Georgia Beekeepers Association*

Members gathered at the home of Pat Baumann to celebrate the beginning of Fall and to learn about bees! President Lynn Malone opened the meeting, and Kathy Rhinehart shared an inspiration entitled "Small Gifts, Sweet Blessing," which reminded everyone about simple pleasures – warm welcomes, good friends, and the beauty of God's creation all around us, including bees. Bees are one of the smallest creatures, and we don't always notice their work behind the beautiful blossoms that we see throughout the year.

Deb DeWitt was the featured speaker who is a Master Beekeeper at Cornell University, Central Regional Director and the 2025 Beekeeper of the Year for the Georgia Beekeepers Association. Recently her honey was awarded the Blue Ribbon for the best-tasting honey from the Metro Atlanta Beekeepers Association. She shared tastings of creamed Honey and Flavored Honeys, including Cranberry, Ube and Earl Grey!









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All classified ads are limited to 20 words, with the *Smoke Signal* reserving the right to edit any copy. Ads are $240 per year. Please submit a copy of ad to staff@smokesignalnews.com with your full name, address and phone number. Make checks out to *Smoke Signal* and mail to 4500 Hugh Howell Rd., Suite 490, Tucker, GA 30084. We require full payment prior to ad placement.

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

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

# Out the Window

*Article and illustration by Beth Henson, Staff Writer*

## Blue Daze



Looking out the dining room window, I couldn't help but admire the long-lasting Blue Daze hanging basket, still in full bloom despite the cooler fall days. All spring and summer, I had enjoyed its striking profusion of indigo, tiny, funnel-shaped flowers cascading among miniature leaves.

Surprisingly, Blue Daze belongs to the morning glory family, another one of my favorite flowers, which is unfortunately often considered a weed. Like the morning glory, its tiny flowers open as the day warms and close in the evening. It also sheds its blooms daily, so it never needs deadheading like many of my other bloomers.

Because it is native to South America, Blue Daze loves heat and sunshine and rarely seems to wither. In North Georgia, it is grown as an annual because it cannot tolerate our colder winter temperatures.

Months away when spring once again arrives, I'll be adding another Blue Daze to my garden. Until then, I'll just have to wait patiently for another season of these beautiful blue blooms. After all, spring wouldn't be the same without a little Blue Daze!

***A Prayer of Thanksgiving:***

*Father, we thank you for the love that is between us, the friends beside us, the memories that cheer us, the homes that shelter us, and the food that delights us. Most of all, we thank you for your love that sustains us.*

# Food & Home Fixin's

*by Joyce Ray, Staff Writer*

*As days get shorter in Autumn and we watch the amazing showcase of colors that surround us, we can truly be thankful for the bounty of wonderful flavors from the fruits and vegetables that are available to be served on our tables and shared with loved ones. This month I am featuring the amazing sweet potato that is versatile enough to be cooked as a dessert, a side dish or just a simple baked and buttered economical companion to any meat.*

---

**Sweet Potato Anise Soup with Ginger Lime Crème**

Equipment: large Dutch oven and a crockpot

3 large, sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped – about 2 ½ lbs.
1 medium chopped yellow onion
2 t. grated ginger for the soup + 1 t. for the ginger lime crème
1 qt. chicken broth
2 t. salt
2 t. anise seed
1 pint Half & Half
4 T. olive oil

In large Dutch oven, sauté the onion in the olive oil until onion Is translucent. Add the grated ginger, anise seed and salt. Add chicken broth and potatoes. Cover and cook over medium heat until sweet potatoes are fork tender. Cool mixture to lukewarm.

Using blender or food processor, puree the potato mixture a little at a time and add about ½ cup of half/half to each new batch in the blender. Pour pureed mixture into the crock pot and add any remaining half/half. Taste: if you prefer a more intense anise flavor, at this point you can add some crushed tarragon to taste as it has a similar flavor.

Set on low and allow to cook until bubbly, then turn to warm setting until you are ready to serve. Garnish with Ginger lime crème:

1 cup dairy sour cream or plain yogurt
1 t. ground fresh ginger
1 T lime juice
½ t. salt.

Mix well and refrigerate until use. Makes approximately 10-12 servings.

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**Sweet Potato Muffins**

1 cup mashed cooked sweet potatoes
1 c. white sugar
½ c. olive oil
1/3 c. water
2 large beaten eggs

Mix together and set aside.

1 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
1 t. cinnamon
1 t. baking powder
1 t. salt
1 cup chopped pecans.

Mix well and add dry mixture to egg mixture, fold gently and stir until all batter is moist.

Preheat oven to 350°. Using 12-cup muffin pan, line with paper cup liners. Spray lightly. Divide batter equally between muffin cups and bake for 20-25 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.

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**Sliced Apples with Caramel Sauce**

This caramel sauce recipe makes about 3 cups. It will keep in the refrigerator for several weeks. My tip to keep fresh apples from turning brown for this and other recipes is to wash apples and slice from the stem to the bottom. Remove the core and cut into slices. Add 1 teaspoon of salt to 4 cups of water. Add apple slices. I prefer Honey Crisp or Gala apples. Let set for 5 minutes. Drain and wash apples. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Caramel Sauce:

In medium saucepan over low heat melt ½ cup butter, then add 2 c. brown sugar
1 c. light corn syrup
1 can sweetened condensed milk
2 T. water
1 T. Vanilla extract.

Stir constantly until all ingredients are melted and smooth. Keep heat low as it cooks, so mixture does not burn.