

SMOKE SIGNAL

VOLUME 58, ISSUE 6

Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968

October, 2026

www.smokesignalnews.com



Tucker to Celebrate 10th Anniversary with Ten-Tober Festival

Tucker is wrapping up its year-long 10th-anniversary celebration with the Tucker Ten-Tober Festival on Saturday, October 17. The free community celebration begins at 3:00 p.m. at Tucker Town Green and Main Street, with Oktoberfest activities, live music, traditional games, family activities and selections from six local breweries.

Football fans can watch the UGA vs. Auburn game at 3:30 p.m. on the giant screen at Tucker Town Green. The celebration continues into the evening with a concert on Main Street featuring Starship with Mickey Thomas, whose hits include “We Built This City.”

The event is FREE and open to all. Attendees may bring lawn chairs and blankets for seating at Town Green, and lawn chairs will also be permitted on Main Street for the concert.

Main Street will be closed to traffic from 6:00 a.m. until midnight on October 17. Outside alcohol and glass containers are prohibited. Tucker Town Green is located at 4236 Railroad Ave.



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A Solemn Remembrance of the 9/11/01 Tragedy

By Quill Duncan, Smoke Rise Resident

DeKalb County's Public Safety Headquarters in Tucker was the site of a 9/11 memorial service commemorating the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attack on our nation. The service was attend-

...Continued on page 8

A New Home for Tucker's Firefighters

By Aviva Hoffmann, Staff Writer

Tucker's Fire Station No. 5 is getting a major upgrade. DeKalb County recently broke ground on a new \$10.5 million fire station that will replace the existing Station No. 5 at 4013 Lawrenceville Highway. The current station was built in 1955, making it one of the oldest operating fire stations in DeKalb County.

The new station will be constructed at 4329 Cowan Road and will feature a two-story, 14,600-square-foot facility designed with modern firefighting needs – and firefighter health and safety – in mind.

Funded through the county's Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) program, the project is one of three new DeKalb County fire stations scheduled to begin construction this year. Among the most notable features of the new Station No. 5 will be designated “hot” and “cold” zones designed to reduce the potential for cross-contamination. Soiled turnout gear and laundry facilities will be separated from the station's living areas, helping limit firefighters' exposure to carcinogens that can be carried on contaminated equipment.



Photo Courtesy of Frank Luton, Staff Writer

The new facility also will provide individual sleeping quarters, a commercial-grade kitchen and a workout room to support firefighter fitness and wellness. Other features include designated restrooms for all gender-identifying crew members, a multipurpose room for community use and exterior landscaping. The improvements are particularly significant because firefighters spend a substantial amount of time at their stations - not only responding to calls, but also training, eating, sleeping and recovering between shifts. The new design incorporates areas intended to support rest, recovery and overall wellness while keeping contaminated equipment away from living spaces.

...Continued on page 4



OCTOBER 10
FINAL CRUISE IN FOR 2026
SECOND SATURDAY • 10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.
MAIN STREET TUCKER



SATURDAY
OCTOBER 3
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Special Thanks to Joel and Susan Gilbert for sponsoring the October full-color edition!



Smoke Signal

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

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OCTOBER 13

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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.

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October at Eastminster: Faith, Heritage & Community

By Christina Wetzel Sizemore, Office Coordinator, Eastminster Presbyterian Church

October brings opportunities to worship, celebrate tradition, connect with neighbors, and enjoy the season at Eastminster Presbyterian Church.

On Sunday, October 4, at 10:30 a.m., Eastminster will celebrate World Communion Sunday, when Christians around the world share in the Lord's Supper and remember their unity in Christ. Worship will reflect the diversity of the global church through music in different languages and a display of breads representing Communion traditions from various cultures.

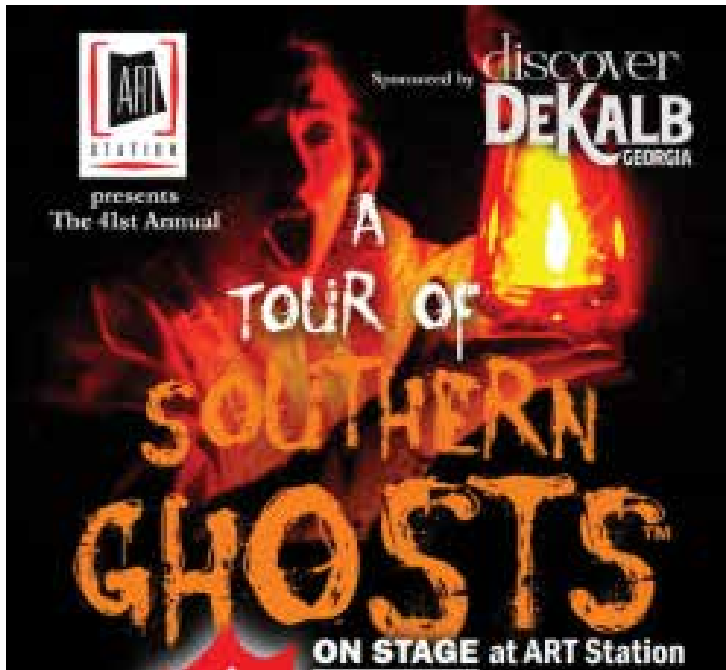
Rolling registration continues for the Eastminster Community Children's Choir (ECCC). Children, and youth ages 3 through 12th grade are invited to discover the joy of music during Thursday afternoon rehearsals. Whether experienced singers or simply children who love music, every voice has a place. No prior experience or church membership is required. Learn more or register at eastminster.us/childrenschoir.

On Sunday, October 25, at 10:30 a.m., Eastminster will celebrate the annual Kirking of the Tartans during Reformation Sunday worship. The service honors the church's Scottish heritage with the presentation and dedication of tartans and traditional bagpipe music. A reception with shortbread cookies will follow worship.

Families throughout the community are invited to Trunk-or-Treat on Saturday, October 31, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Decorated vehicles, candy, games, a bouncy house, and plenty of fall fun will make this a festive morning for children and families. Costumes are welcome, and those who would like to decorate a vehicle and hand out treats can also take part in creating the fun.

Eastminster will offer a Healing & Wholeness Service on Wednesday, November 4, at 6:00 p.m. Those facing illness, grief, uncertainty, strained relationships, or simply longing for peace are invited to find a quiet place for Scripture, gentle music, reflection, and prayer. The service will center on God's comfort and mercy and the understanding that healing and wholeness can be a continuing journey of grace. Personal prayer will also be available for those who wish to receive it. Come with your hopes, hurts, and questions, and find a place for prayer, rest, and the assurance that you do not carry these things alone.

As October unfolds and November approaches, Eastminster celebrates a faith that reaches across cultures, honors traditions, nurtures children, and makes room for both celebration and quiet reflection. Eastminster Presbyterian Church welcomes neighbors and friends to discover a place of faith, connection, and belonging.



Southern Ghost Stories Move Indoors for 2026

If you're looking for some Halloween fun with a Southern twist, A Tour of Southern Ghosts is returning to Stone Mountain - but with a change of scenery this year. The popular storytelling tradition is moving indoors for 2026, from its traditional lantern-lit setting at Stone Mountain Park to a seated stage production at ART Station in Stone Mountain Village.

The performances take place Thursdays - Saturdays, October 15 - 24, with shows at 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. each evening. A rotating cast of professional storytellers will share tales of famous (and not-so-famous) Southern ghosts. The stories are spooky and often humorous but are designed to be family-friendly and appropriate for young children.

Proceeds benefit ART Station, a nonprofit contemporary arts center founded in 1986 that provides cultural and educational opportunities for the community, with an emphasis on Southern art and artists. (Stone Mountain Park admission tickets and Mountain Memberships are not valid for this event, since the 2026 performances are being held at ART Station.)

Tickets are available online, by phone or in person at ART Station. For more info: (770) 469-1105 or visit artstation.org

Peak Fall Colors Just for Us

You don't have to go far to enjoy the beauty of the fall changing colors. Try Oakland Cemetery, Grant Park, Piedmont Park, Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area, the Atlanta Beltline's Eastside Trail, Chattahoochee National Forest, Gibbs Gardens, and our own Stone Mountain.

And don't forget to drive through some of our neighborhoods or sit and enjoy your own backyard.

Metro Atlanta Chorus Welcomes New Singers

By Karen Bates, Publicity Chair, Metro Atlanta Chorus

The Metro Atlanta Chorus (M.A.C.) continues to celebrate 20 years of existence with our Holiday concert on Saturday, December 5 at 4:00 p.m. in the Smoke Rise Baptist Church Sanctuary (5109 Hugh Howell Rd Stone Mountain GA). Selections include carols, spirituals, sacred compositions, and contemporary classics.

If you love to sing with other music lovers, we invite you to join our chorus. Dues are \$25 per semester, which covers our expenses for printed music. We rehearse on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Thursday evenings at Briarlake Church, which provides free space for our rehearsals. Our concert at Smoke Rise Baptist Church is free to attend, and we gladly accept donations.

Contact Peggy Ray, Director, at metroatlantachorus@gmail.com, if you would like to join our group. Our next rehearsal is Thursday, October 1 at 7:00 p.m., at Briarlake Church.

Dietre Ffrench

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Victoria Crosby Supports Young Musicians Through ANAM Georgia

By Robin Biro, Smoke Rise Resident

Smoke Rise resident Victoria Crosby has spent much of her life opening doors to the arts. She now brings that experience to the board of Agape National Academy of Music Georgia, known as ANAM Georgia.

ANAM Georgia is a nonprofit, community-based youth development organization serving children and families in Metro Atlanta. Its free programs use music and the arts to help young people develop confidence, creativity, academic skills, leadership, self-expression and positive relationships. Locally, ANAM Georgia holds its programs at Smoke Rise Baptist Church, providing families with a trusted and welcoming community setting.

Crosby’s background makes her especially well-suited to this work. A published author with a master’s degree in education, she has taught piano and violin, developed and directed a mentoring program, and managed a music festival. She also founded the Glen Cove Arts Council, now the Chris Crosby Foundation, in honor of her late son. The nonprofit is dedicated to introducing underserved young people to the arts.

Crosby has served as poet laureate of Glen Cove, New York, since 1994 and now also holds that distinction in the City of Tucker. She continues to share her love of music locally by teaching piano to young beginners at the Arts Academy at Smoke Rise Baptist Church. Through her service on the ANAM Georgia board, Crosby is extending her lifelong commitment to music, education and young people while strengthening opportunities for children close to home.

To learn more about the organization and its programs, visit anamgeorgia.org.



Victoria Crosby and ANAM Executive Director Samson Tarpeh

New Fire Station...continued from page 1

The groundbreaking ceremony brought together DeKalb County elected and public safety officials, City of Tucker Mayor Anne Lerner, representatives of the Tucker-Northlake Community Improvement District and members of DeKalb County Fire Rescue. The ceremony concluded with the traditional turning of the dirt, officially marking the start of construction.

For Tucker residents, the project represents the replacement of a nearly seven-decade-old facility with a modern fire station designed to support the firefighters who serve the community.

The project is being supported through DeKalb County’s SPLOST Program Management, with Cooper Construction Management & Consulting and Pond & Company also involved in the project.

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EARLY VOTING

DATES AND TIMES

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OCT 13
to
OCT 30

7 a.m.
to
7 p.m.

SAT

OCT 17
and
OCT 24

9 a.m.
to
6 p.m.

SUN

OCT 18
and
OCT 25

12 p.m.
to
6 p.m.

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OCT 23

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Red, White, and Blue Day
By Barbara Luton, Staff Writer

GFWC Stone Mountain Woman’s Club celebrated Red, White and Blue Day at the September general meeting. It was in celebration of the 250th birthday of our country and in remembrance of 9/11. Jelani Linder, Mayor of Stone Mountain, presented the program on the present and future of the village. Smoke Rise resident, Pat Soltys, gave the inspiration which related her time in New York at the 9/11 disaster. It was touching and inspiring. Members were asked to dress in red, white and blue and the decorations were red, white and blue commemorating the occasion.

For information on the club, please go to stone-mountainwc.org. Meetings are the second Thursday each month at 10:30 a.m. Please consider visiting and learning about the work of the woman’s Club.

Tucker Biro Earns Eagle Scout Rank with Smoke Rise Bat House Project

By Robin Biro, Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop 876, Smoke Rise

Smoke Rise has new homes waiting for some very useful nighttime neighbors, thanks to the Eagle Scout project of Tucker Biro of BSA Troop 876.

For his project, Tucker planned and led the construction and installation of bat houses in six Smoke Rise cul-de-sacs. The houses are mounted on 16-foot south-facing poles, creating elevated outdoor roosting sites for bats and supporting a natural approach to insect control in the neighborhood.

The Smoke Rise Civic Association served as the beneficiary of the Eagle Scout project and approved the plan before the work moved forward.

The idea came from a problem several local residents had experienced. Bats were roosting in the attics of multiple Smoke Rise homes, and one neighbor even found bats inside the living area of the house. Tucker began looking for a project that could offer bats appropriate places to roost outdoors while recognizing the valuable role they play in our ecosystem.

Studies show that bats consume about 1.5 to 5.7 mosquitoes per minute. That broader benefit matters. Encouraging insect-eating bats offers an alternative to relying solely on chemical insect control. Insecticides can also affect beneficial insects, including bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Reducing unnecessary chemical use can help protect those species, including our declining monarch butterfly population.

Tucker raised \$850 for the project, and the entire troop pitched in to help build and install the bat houses. Cofer Brothers in Tucker provided the lumber at cost.

Completing the project was one of the final major steps in Tucker’s journey to becoming an Eagle Scout, the highest rank in Scouting. The achievement represents years of advancement, leadership, service and commitment.

Tucker is now attending Berea College in Kentucky on a full scholarship. As his dad, one of the proudest things I have heard him say is that Boy Scouts prepared him for college more than anything else. Scouting taught him how to plan a complex project, raise money, lead a team, solve unexpected problems and follow a commitment through to completion - skills he now carries with him into college for his 3/5 dual degree program in physics and electrical engineering.

We hope our neighbors enjoy the bat houses and the thought behind them. It may take time for bats to discover and occupy their new homes, but the project has already brought Scouts, residents and a local business together in service to Smoke Rise.

BSA Troop 876 welcomes new Scouts of middle-school age and older. The troop meets Mondays at 7:30 p.m. at Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Smoke Rise. Families interested in Scouting are invited to visit - Email robin@robinbiro.com for more info.



BSA Troop 876, Bat House Installation Eagle Scout Project

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HEALTH NOTES:

By Patricia Baumann, M.D., Staff Writer

Cyclosporiasis

Have you developed a fear of salads? If you’ve followed the recent news about lettuce and cyclospora, it not surprising! In August, the first two deaths from cyclosporiasis were reported in Michigan. These were the first two deaths in the United States from the current outbreak. Both individuals had significant underlying health conditions along with severe intestinal illness and dehydration. It still makes you think twice about lettuce!

One of the largest outbreaks of cyclospora was linked to iceberg lettuce supplied from central Mexico by Taylor farms de Mexico, and served at Taco Bell restaurants. The company voluntarily recalled the affected lettuce in July. Despite the rising case count, federal officials continue to reassure consumer that the U.S. food supply is safe. The FDA remains confident that all iceberg lettuce related to the cyclospora outbreak was effectively removed from the market as of the July 17 recall.

On August 4, the CDC announced 47 states reporting lab confirmed cases of cyclosporiasis. Since the outbreak began on May 1, officials have documented 10,468 confirmed illnesses, 517 hospitalizations, and two deaths tied to this foodborne parasite. The CDC notes more than 12,255 additional reports await confirmation. While cases have spread across nearly the entire country, a handful of states continue to the largest share of cases. Michigan remains the epicenter, reporting 11,000 illnesses and 193 hospitalizations since early May. There is typically a six-week delay between when someone becomes sick and their illness is reported.

The microscopic cyclospora parasite spreads when fresh food items—most often leafy greens, cilantro, basil, or berries—come in contact with contaminated agricultural water or soil during growth or processing. It does not live inside plant tissues, instead it lives and matures on the outside surface of the plants when contaminated by human feces. There is no direct transmission. You cannot catch cyclospora directly from another person. The parasite in stool needs 1 to 2 weeks to mature in the warm outdoors, before it can infect someone else. Tracking infections take time, because the parasite does not grow in lab culture and patients often sicken weeks after eating the contaminated food.

Cyclospora is killed by heat of at least 158 degrees F. It is not killed by standard produce washes, vinegar, chemical disinfectants, freezing, or alcohol. Doctors treat active infections based on CDC guidelines using trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (Bactrim or Septra).

On August 11, the acting director of the Food and Drug Administration stated that Americans should feel confident in eating fresh produce, as the agency had updated guidance for producers and suppliers for sanitation control, supplier verification and refrigeration, and that all contaminated foods should have been removed from the market. The FDA shared on social media platform X: “Cyclospora contained. American food safe.” However, the FDA and CDC say the investigation is ongoing. It’s best to stay up-to-date on the latest Cyclospora news and maybe avoid lettuce for the time being.

What you Can Do: Check the CDC website to see if any bagged salads or brands in your fridge are part of active recalls. Thoroughly wash all fresh fruits and vegetable, although washing does not guarantee eliminating the parasite. Watch for watery diarrhea, stomach cramps, fatigue, and weight loss, which can start two to 14 days after exposure. Contact a healthcare provider if you have symptoms of cyclosporiasis.



Around the Corner:
A Commercial Real Estate Update

By Robin Biro, Commercial Real Estate Specialist

Welcome to a new monthly section reporting publicly available information about commercial real estate and infrastructure developments in the 30084 and 30087 communities. In 30087, Costco has opened as the anchor of Mountain Marketplace, a 31-acre development at the former Stone Mountain Olympic Tennis Center site. Published plans for the development also identify a Chick-fil-A, Whataburger, bank, community park and the 248-unit Flats at Mountain Marketplace apartment community.

In 30084, Crescent Communities is developing NOVEL Tucker at the former Tucker Exchange office property at 2059 Northlake Parkway. The project is planned to contain 312 apartments and resident amenities. Construction was reported to have begun in early 2026. Several restaurant projects have also been announced. The City of Tucker approved a special-use permit for a Whataburger with a drive-through at 4453 Hugh Howell Road, the former Wendy’s site, where the existing building will be renovated.

Hungry AF, a locally owned, fast-casual wing restaurant, has announced plans to open a Tucker location in the former Pizza Hut building nearby. Renovations have been underway but appear to be temporarily paused. Please be patient - these projects sometimes take a while.

Taqueria Los Hermanos purchased the former Enzo’s Pizza property in June and is preparing to relocate to the larger building. Its existing restaurant near the former Publix - now Crunch Fitness - contains approximately 2,633 square feet. The former Enzo’s property contains approximately 3,900 square feet and includes a patio. No opening date had been announced as of publication.

We have great news about Keke’s Breakfast Cafe in the former Applebee’s building at 4353 Lawrenceville Highway: The restaurant recently posted job openings for management, kitchen and front-of-house positions. An official opening date had not been announced as of publication, but the recent job postings are an encouraging sign that it may be preparing to open soon.

I know you’re also wondering about Shorty’s Pizza - as of publication, no reopening date or redevelopment plan had been publicly announced.

Two separate infrastructure projects are advancing along Hugh Howell Road. At Hugh Howell and Rosser roads, the city is pursuing an intersection safety improvement. The City Council approved a time extension related to the project in August 2026. City Engineer Ken Hildebrandt said the city is making every attempt to implement the safety project while maintaining the community’s “smokestack” monument sign.

The city has separately awarded a design contract for Phase III of the Hugh Howell Trail, extending from Stratmor Drive to Silver Hill Road. The trail is under design, but construction is currently unfunded; therefore, no construction schedule has been announced.

When we reached out to Smoke Rise Civic Association board member Whit Garland for comment, he said the association has been in regular communication with the city about preserving or relocating the smokestack monument as part of the Rosser Road intersection project. Garland also reminded neighbors that SRCA has an online survey about the project at smokerise.org, where residents may also donate to support the association’s work on community projects such as this one.

** This column reports only publicly available information and does not express a position on any pending or future matter that may come before a City of Tucker board or commission on which the author serves **

A new chapter for
Tucker’s Main Street!

Black Dog Books, a new independent bookstore owned by Tucker native Heather Lutz, offers books, community events and a welcoming place for neighbors to gather. Learn more at blackdogbookstucker.com.



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~ 6 ~

What's New in Tucker?
by Linda Karr, Staff Writer

Here are the most recent newcomers (or ones you may not know about) to Tucker:

Ogle School (specializing in cosmetology and esthetics) at 4013 Lavista Rd



Tucker celebrated the **Johns Homestead Park** dam rehabilitation project and added amenities with a ribbon cutting last month. Check out the updated trails, covered boardwalk, bird blinds and additional parking with ADA access off Stapp Drive. (photo at left)

Challenges, Games and Comics (comic book & games store) moved from Northlake Mall to Northlake Festival Shopping Center.

Elevated Energy Exchange at 4162 Lawrenceville Hwy.

A familiar face in the Tucker community is bringing a new focus on wellness to the neighborhood.

Lasha Lalana, who has lived in the Tucker community for more than 20 years, recently opened Elevated Energy Exchange, a new yoga and wellness studio at 4162 Lawrenceville Highway. The City of Tucker celebrated the new business with a ribbon cutting on September 9.



Lalana spent 17 years teaching in DeKalb County Schools, including 13 years at Smoke Rise Elementary School. In 2019, she left education to focus on her tutoring business, The Math Depot, on Main Street. After years of putting others first, Lalana said she realized she needed to make more time for her own well-being. She returned to yoga after discovering classes at Crunch Fitness in Tucker. As her interest in yoga and fitness grew, she earned her personal training certification and eventually began teaching yoga.

That personal experience inspired Elevated Energy Exchange, which offers yoga, meditation, fitness and wellness classes for people of different ages and experience levels. Lalana says yoga has helped her not only physically, but also by slowing her down, increasing her self-awareness and helping her let go of anxiety and pressure. Now, she hopes to provide that same opportunity to others in the community.

Elevated Energy Exchange is open seven days a week and welcomes participants of all skill levels. For more information, visit elevatedenergyexchange.com.



On Aug. 26, the City held a ribbon cutting for owner Dontricia Dunnum aka Nurse “Taye,” of **Nurse2Beauty**. Located at 2206 Hanfred Lane, Ste. 104. Mayor Anne Lerner and Mayor Pro Tem Virginia Rece along with councilwoman Cara Schroeder were on hand to celebrate.

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Corbett Jordan and Jason Oldham

Meet Your Neighbors
Corbett Jordan and Jason Oldham

By Victoria Crosby, Staff Writer

Corbett Jordan is a woman of many talents. She and her husband Jason Oldham, who have lived in Smoke Rise since 2016, are both involved in the arts. I first met Corbett as the realtor who sold me my house in Smoke Rise in 2021. She had also sold my son his house in Lilburn several years earlier, which is how we ended up moving from New York to Georgia.

At Corbett’s request, I donated some of my books for a silent auction at a fundraiser she was chairing and attended the successful event. Corbett also paints watercolors, and she painted one of St. Michael’s Mount in Cornwall, which I included in my collection of British themed poetry in my book BritCentric. She’s been creating art for only three years. First with drawing classes at the Spruill Center then acrylic classes at the Tucker Recreation Center.

Corbett sings with a group called the Festival Singers of Atlanta, a nonprofit community chorus directed by Artistic Director Keith Walker. This year marks their forty-fifth season. Several fundraising concerts are held during the year with a focus on Renaissance, Baroque and modern 20th and 21st Century repertoire. Auditions are open to singers from all walks of life.

“Singing with the Festival Singers gives me a front row seat to something truly special. A big part of that is our director Dr. Keith Walker, who brings a thoughtful and artistic approach to every rehearsal and performance. He has a unique ability to draw out the best in each singer while also emphasizing the importance of preparation and professionalism. That balance creates a sound that is both polished and deeply expressive.”

Corbett has a degree in vocal performance and sang with the Michigan Opera Theater for three seasons before teaching music for 20 years and then starting her career in real estate.

“Being part of the Festival Singers has been a gift. It’s that rare space where talented people come together, work hard, laugh a lot, and create something meaningful.”

Jason Oldham has a background in theater and short films. He loves working with Main Street Theater and especially in improvisation. He’s worked in several of their productions.

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Smoke Rise Neighbors Block Party

By Victoria Crosby, Staff Writer

An end-of-summer block party on Oxbow Circle brought Smoke Rise neighbors together for an afternoon of food, fun and fellowship.

Children enjoyed a water slide and games, while an ice cream truck provided cool treats. The entertainment included local band Ian McCarthy and the Hamstrings, along with Rhett Huffman, who kept the music going by spinning vintage vinyl.

Neighbors signed up to contribute a variety of delicious foods and beverages, making it a true community potluck. The successful event was organized by neighbors, with sponsorships from fellow residents and local businesses.

Smoke Rise has enjoyed monthly Sunday Potluck dinners for some time, but this marked the neighborhood’s first annual block party. It was a wonderful opportunity for longtime residents to connect and for new neighbors to meet and become part of the community.

Kudos to the neighbors whose vision - and hard work - made this celebration happen!



9-11-01 Memorial...continued from page 1

ed by DeKalb County Fire and Police brigades, DeKalb County CEO Lorraine Cochran-Johnson, other county officials, DeKalb County residents and a contingent from the DeKalb County Federation of Garden Clubs, including representatives from all three Smoke Rise garden clubs.

The Star-Spangled Banner was sung by Sargent Tanya Gaither. Battalion Chief Doug Harms played the bagpipes leading the Color Guard representing the DeKalb County fire and police departments. Taps was played in the distance. Smoke Rise resident, Victoria Crosby, read her poem which is a tribute to those who lost their lives that day and for those who continue to serve bravely today. Prayers were offered in support and respect for our nation and our citizens.

The commissioned wreath was escorted by Senior Officer D. A. Wisdom and Iwalani and Jim Barbazon who were American Airlines employees at the time of the attack. The DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs donates the wreath each year in honor and memory of those lost lives.

The memorial plaza has six granite markers noting the site of each tragedy that day with details of each deadly attack. The plaza also contains a metal sculpture of a raised wing constructed of steel from one of the two World Trade Towers in New York City that was destroyed in the attack. The sculptor of the piece is Chief Warrant Officer Curtis Miller who serves with the 20th Special Forces Airborne Division. Officer Miller escorted Ms. Crosby to the podium for her reading.

This service reminds us of what we lost that day and reinforces our American values that we hold so dear. As was stated that day and will be said forever, “We Will Never Forget.”

techtalk By Susan Gilbert, Staff Writer

Press-On Nails – Impressive Improvements!

If you haven’t tried press-on nails in the past several years, you may be surprised at how much they have changed. Improvements in adhesives, fit, materials, and designs—particularly over the past five to seven years—have transformed the old-fashioned press-on nail into a surprisingly convincing alternative to a salon or at-home manicure.

One of the biggest improvements is the adhesive. In the past, removing artificial nails could sometimes leave natural nails feeling thin, rough or damaged. Newer press-on nail adhesives are much gentler. Rather than pulling away the top layer of your natural nail during removal, the glue on the ones I use balls up somewhat like gum and can be gently rubbed away. You can then clean up any stubborn residue with nail polish remover.

Perhaps the greatest attraction, however, is convenience.

Applying a set of press-on nails can take as little as five minutes once you get the hang of it. Select the correct size for each nail, apply the adhesive as directed, press the artificial nail firmly into place, and you are finished. No appointment to make, no drive to the salon, and no sitting around waiting for a manicure to be completed.

Even better, a properly applied set can last about two weeks. During that time, you won’t have to worry about chipping or daily touch-ups. When you are ready for a change, simply remove the set according to the manufacturer’s directions and choose another style or go back to your preferred method.

Plenty of styles are available. Press-on nails are now available in an enormous assortment of colors, shapes, lengths, and designs. You can find everything from short, natural-looking nails in soft pinks and neutrals to French manicures, seasonal colors, sparkling finishes and elaborate nail art. For those who prefer a more conservative look, many styles are difficult to distinguish from a professional manicure. Next time you are in a beauty store, look at the dizzying displays of press-on nails. While stores like CVS have a large selection, beauty supply stores like Ulta and Sephora have entire walls filled with them.

They can also be considerably less expensive than regular salon visits. For someone who gets a manicure every two or three weeks, the savings over a year could be substantial. All this convenience does raise an interesting question: Could the growing popularity of press-on nails eventually hurt the nail salon business?

Possibly—but salons still offer plenty that a box of nails cannot. Many people enjoy the pampering and social experience of a professional manicure and pedicure. Nail technicians also provide cuticle care, shaping, specialty treatments, and intricate custom designs. For others, however, saving both time and money may be hard to resist.

Press-on nails may be especially appealing when you suddenly need attractive nails for a party, wedding, vacation, or special event and don’t have time for a salon appointment.

So, if you haven’t tried press-on nails since the old-fashioned versions of years ago, you might be surprised. With improved adhesives, better-looking designs, quick application, and weeks of chip-free wear, this beauty shortcut may deserve a second look.



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NEWS YOU CAN USE

BY AVIVA HOFFMANN, STAFF WRITER

HOGS IN DEKALB? WHAT SMOKE RISE RESIDENTS NEED TO KNOW

Feral hogs may not be a common sight in Smoke Rise, but a recent DeKalb County workshop serves as a reminder that these invasive animals are a problem worth understanding (and preparing for) throughout Georgia.

This summer, the DeKalb County State Soil and Water Conservation District partnered with the City of Stonecrest and state and federal agencies to host a free workshop on feral hog control. The program focused on damage feral hogs can cause to wildlife habitat, natural resources and property, as well as ways communities and landowners can manage the animals.

The problem is especially relevant in parts of southern DeKalb County, including the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area. But, that doesn't mean residents in northeastern DeKalb County, including Smoke Rise and Tucker, should simply dismiss the issue as someone else's problem.

Feral hogs are an invasive species and have been reported in all 159 Georgia counties, according to the Georgia Association of Conservation Districts. That doesn't mean every community is experiencing the same level of feral hog activity, but it does make awareness important for residents across the state.

These animals can be surprisingly destructive. They root through soil looking for food, damaging vegetation and habitat in the process. They can also damage agricultural areas, lawns and other property and compete with native wildlife for food and resources. Across Georgia, feral hogs cause an estimated \$150 million or more in damage each year to agriculture and natural areas, according to the University of Georgia.

For Smoke Rise residents, the takeaway isn't to panic, or to even expect to suddenly see wild hogs roaming our neighborhood streets. Instead, it's a reminder to stay aware of what's happening in our surrounding natural areas and to know what to do if feral hogs ever become a problem closer to home.

If you spot feral hogs, avoid approaching or attempting to handle them. Instead, document the location, if it can be done safely, and contact the appropriate local or state wildlife authorities for guidance. A regional feral hog reporting hotline is now available at (866) 878-4647.

DeKalb County Television produced a video about feral hogs and the county's efforts to understand and manage the problem. You can watch the video here: https://youtu.be/_gUv_YcixjA

Additional Sources:

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA)
<https://agr.georgia.gov/feral-hogs>

The DeKalb County State Soil and Water Conservation District
[Facebook.com/DekalbSWCD](https://facebook.com/DekalbSWCD)

The Georgia Association of Conservation Districts (GADC)
<https://www.gacd.us/dekalbcounty>





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Hummingbird Friend

By Barbarba Luton, Staff Writer

This hummingbird has been a constant visitor at my feeder which is right outside my kitchen window. I call it a she, although it may be a boy! I have been amazed that she comes and spends lots of time just sitting and eating. I have never seen one linger for so long. She even has a buddy who will sit on the hook for the feeder and seems to protect her from the other hummingbirds. I usually only have a couple of hummingbirds who both act like bullies and run others off from the feeders. I know the time for her to stay is short as migration south has begun. It has been a treat to watch while she was here.

By early October most of our hummingbirds have migrated to Mexico and Central America. However, we can have some late stragglers, so it's good to leave your hummingbird feeders up through October. These tiny birds need lots of fuel to get them to their winter home!



A Tribute to Dolly Parton
Victoria R. Crosby

She was a singer, a songwriter and a movie star who was loved by people near and far. She's in both the Country and the Rock 'N Roll Halls of Fame and like all superstars is known by just her first name. She's known for her business acumen and every funny remark with her razor-sharp wit, and her famous theme park.

Loved for her work with literacy, her self-deprecating humor and life philosophy. A woman who was universally adored, she won eleven Grammys and an Emmy Award. She was admired as a great philanthropist and her achievements are too many to list.

She and her idol Elvis were both raised in poverty but each gave back to their community. They never forgot their Southern roots even when wearing rhinestone suits. Often donating anonymously for the greater good of society.

As a tribute from King Charles in the UK the Royal Band was asked to play her song "Nine to Five" at the changing of the guard. Life without Dolly is going to be hard. She made the world a better place, as she was the epitome of amazing grace.

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Note from the Editor: Part of Victoria Crosby's poem, "Forgiveness is Healing," was left out of the September issue. The complete poem will run in a future issue.

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

Coneflower Visitors

Looking out the living room window, I was delighted to see several goldfinches perched on the garden coneflower stalks, greedily devouring the crisp, newly ripened seeds. For the past few years, my oldest daughter has been giving me her flower volunteers, hoping that I might finally have some luck growing this showy plant. She has a very green thumb, and her garden is filled with every variety of flower, attracting not only helpful bees and butterflies, but also a variety of seed-eating birds in the fall.

The purple coneflowers I coveted are native to our region, making them especially well-suited to Southern gardens. Their tall, stately stems and hardy nature allow them to withstand our hot, dry summers, while their resistance to deer is an added bonus in our area. Even their name has an interesting connection to nature. Echinacea comes from the Greek word echinos, meaning hedgehog, a reference to the plant's prickly seed head. And while I love them for their beauty, coneflowers have long been valued for their herbal uses as well, with the flowers and roots traditionally used in teas and supplements. After several attempts, I finally managed to get these beautiful flowers established in my own garden. And now, watching the goldfinches balance on their sturdy branches and happily feast on the seeds, I realize that perhaps the best part of growing flowers isn't just seeing them bloom. Sometimes, it's what they bring with them. In this instance, the beautiful finches!



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Smoke Rise Garden Club

By Victoria Crosby, SRGC President
www.smokerisegardenclub.com

The Smoke Rise Garden Club is one of the oldest in this area and was founded in 1969 by charter members Wilma Coney, Ann Dean, Helen Heinze, Jean Lutz, Helen Owenby, Sara Anne Pepper, Millie Ratcliffe, Monti Reed, Billie Jo Rountree, and Jane Williamson. Some of these women became Legends and some Life members. Our Club motto is “The smallest thing, well done, becomes artistic.” Our flower is the chrysanthemum and our colors are green and gold.

The objective or mission of our club is; The stimulation of interest among amateur gardeners, the study of flowers and landscapes gardening, environment and conservation, and the beautification of home and neighborhood grounds.

One of the summer highlights of the SRGC was the visit to the lovely garden of members Liam O’Marah and Tim Miller. With creative landscapes to view and music on flute and bassoon by brothers David and Andy George, whose father is the head pastor at Smoke Rise Baptist Church. Guests gathered around the garden for refreshments and enjoyed the music, along with some garden-themed poetry presented by yours truly.

We meet at the home of a member on the first Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. If you’d like to join us, please contact Marisa Fernandez at (305) 590-7186 or marisa.fernandez0212@gmail.com



Find Happiness Where You Plant It:
Mountain Mums Garden Club Begins a New Year

By Maureen Fraser, Mountain Mums Publicity Chair and Newsletter Co-Editor

What could be happier than gardening with friends? That was the perfect sentiment as the Mountain Mums Garden Club gathered for its September meeting and began a new year filled with gardening, friendship, learning and community service.

Co-President Lynn Malone opened the meeting, and Kathy Rhinehart provided an inspiring message about the connection between gardening and friendship. Kathy compared tending plants to cultivating relationships—both need a little care, attention and nurturing to flourish. Her message was especially fitting, considering the club’s 2026–27 theme: “Find Happiness Where You Plant It.”

The meeting continued with an informative presentation by Kimiya Long, Landscape Architect, of the Georgia Department of Transportation, who shared the fascinating history of Georgia’s Wildflower Program. The program began in 1974 when Mrs. Virginia Hand Callaway, then chair of the Birds and Wildflowers Committee of the Garden Club of Georgia, Inc., spearheaded an effort to plant and protect wildflowers along Georgia’s roadsides.

For gardeners ready to bring a little more wildflower beauty into their own yards, the presentation offered plenty of helpful information. Wildflowers thrive in well-drained soil, areas free of competing vegetation, and locations that receive plenty of sunshine. Fall is an especially good time to get started, with most perennial wildflower seeds planted between October and December.

Love cosmos? The popular cosmos mix can be planted from mid-April through mid-May for summer blooms and again from July through mid-September for a colorful fall display.

Angie Ballard also shared Environmental and Gardening notes, giving members even more ideas and inspiration to put to work in their gardens.

With a new year underway, the Mountain Mums are ready to dig in! From gardening projects and educational programs to community service and the friendships that make it all worthwhile, there is plenty to look forward to.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, October 14, at the home of Pat Baumann, with Deb DeWitt, Central Regional Director for the Georgia Beekeepers Association (GBA) and President of the Tara Beekeepers Association in East Point as the guest speaker.

Interested in gardening, learning something new and meeting a wonderful group of fellow garden enthusiasts? Guests are always welcome. Contact Mary Jacobson at mjacob1010@gmail.com to learn more about attending a meeting. Photos and information about the Mountain Mums’ activities and community projects are also on the club’s Facebook page.



Planting the Seeds of Inspiration! Mountain Mums hostess Susan Gilbert (far left) with co-hostesses (left to right) Lynn Malone, Rita Maloof, Maureen Fraser and Colette Riefkohl show off wildflower seed packets shared by the Georgia Department of Transportation speakers following their presentation on Georgia’s wildflower program. A wonderful way to take the conversation home - and into the garden! (Missing from photo: Angie Ballard)

Smoke Rise Morning Glories – Community Service Activities

By Quill Duncan, Recording Secretary, Smoke Rise Morning Glories

The Morning Glories joined fellow members of the DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs in honoring the lives lost on September 11, 2001, during the 25th-anniversary memorial ceremony at DeKalb County’s Public Safety Headquarters in Tucker. Each year, the Federation provides a commemorative wreath as a lasting expression of remembrance. Six Morning Glories attended this year’s ceremony, continuing our garden club’s tradition of participating in this solemn annual observance.

In October, the club and all the DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs collect new underwear, clothing and socks for the patients of Georgia Regional Hospital-Atlanta. We call this program “Drop Your Drawers!” This simple kindness is very welcome to the patients, many of whom are full-time residents at the facility and are indigent. The clothing is delivered several times a year for distribution by the hospital staff.



Another community service project for October is “Holidays for Heroes.” We partner with the Order of the Eastern Star to send holiday cards to our military men and women serving overseas. The cards offer a simple message of care and good wishes for the holidays. Club members write messages on glitter free cards, and they are collected for distribution by the military from Fort Gordon. Last year, more than 3,000 cards were sent from DeKalb Federation club members.

Our October 13 meeting will feature a lecture by Melissa Strager on our lovely Tucker Butterfly Garden. Melissa is a DeKalb Master Gardener who has volunteered for years at the garden located on LaVista Road at the Tucker Rec Center. It’s always fun to hear about butterflies and our native pollinators, and we are happy to welcome guests to the meeting and luncheon at Park Springs’s club house. Contact President, Kim Fair, if you would like to attend (404) 384-7851.



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Garden of the Month: A Garden of Two Visions, One Harmony

Honoring Dr. John L. Moseri, MD & Deborah Moseri

2084 Spencers Drive, Stone Mountain

By Dr. Joy Moseri-Cooper, Daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Moseri

What makes the Moseri garden exceptional is the balance between two distinct yet complementary passions. Deborah Moseri, a retired preschool teacher, is the heart behind the flowers, color and beauty. While a landscaping team maintains the lawn, hedges and mulch, Deborah lovingly protects her flower beds: "You can do everything else but don't touch my flowers."

Her connection to gardening began after retirement, when she sought something meaningful to fill her time. What she found was more than a hobby - it was peace. "It's therapeutic... the birds are chirping, butterflies are everywhere, it's just very tranquil." From blooming roses to her beloved Japanese maple, Deborah finds joy in nature's rhythm: "You wake up in the morning and something has changed overnight... it's amazing."

Dr. John L. Moseri brings a different energy to the garden. His focus is fruits and vegetables - tomatoes, peppers, apple trees, peach trees and nectarines - creating a space that nourishes the body as much as the flowers nourish the spirit. For Dr. Moseri, gardening is also therapeutic. "When you're outside, you're grounding yourself. The earth, the air, the sun, they harmonize your energy. The body heals itself."

Beyond its beauty, the Moseri garden is a place of life and laughter. Their grandson Mason can often be found planting seeds, watering the garden and running barefoot across the lush lawn. It is a space where generations connect and lessons are passed down through shared moments in the soil. With 34 years of marriage, seven grandchildren, and a life filled with love and travel, the Moseri's have cultivated more than a garden - they have cultivated a legacy. Having lived in Smoke Rise for nearly two years, they appreciate the calm and security of their neighborhood. "It's peaceful... everyone minds their business, but we wave and look out for each other."

Through the Mountain Mums group and the Smoke Rise Country Club, Deborah is finding her place in the community. Dr. Moseri offers a simple reminder for building connection: "Sometimes it starts with a wave... and maybe next time, an invitation."

In a community filled with beautiful homes, the Moseri garden stands apart not because it is the most elaborate, but because it is the most intentional.

It is a garden that: Heals the mind; Nourishes the body; Brings families together; Reflects a life of purpose and love.

Congratulations, Deborah and Dr. John L. Moseri, your garden is more than a landscape - it is a reflection of who you are. The most beautiful gardens are not just grown with soil and water... they are cultivated with heart.



Food & Home Fixin's

by Joyce Ray, Staff Writer

Classic Desserts That Can Handle The Heat

Flaming desserts have roots in French cuisine in the 19th century. Its charm was as much about the visual spectacle as about the dish itself. In this process, the dessert is fully cooked, and just before serving, a small amount of alcohol is poured over it and lit by a flame. The flame burns for about 30 seconds or until all the spirits are burned out, leaving behind rich flavors and a dramatic presentation. Over the years, it has made its way into some of the World's finest restaurants that desire to add an unforgettable trademark to their dining experience. As holidays approach, you might want to get a headstart on perfecting this culinary skill and wow your guests with some simple, but flavorful, flaming options.

This month, I am providing recipes for two favorite versions of flaming desserts: Caramel Apple Flambe' and Bananas Foster. Each of these is served over vanilla ice cream. The alcohol choices for these are Brandy, Bourbon, or aged Rum.

Tips and Techniques:

Do Ahead:

Scoop vanilla ice cream into bowls and place them in freezer before you begin cooking to save time at the crucial point when the dessert is ready to be served.

Gather all ingredients and tools before you begin, including a 40-proof spirit measured into a cup or bowl. NEVER pour the alcohol directly into the hot pan from the bottle! Your flame source should be a long-handled match or kitchen torch, and the pan you choose should be suitable for flaming, like a skillet or flame-proof pan. Ensure that your workspace is clean and clear of any flammable materials such as paper towels or dish towels.

Prepare your dish. After cooking, turn off heat and remove pan from stove. Have your choice of liqueur already measured into a cup. It usually takes about 1-2 ounces. Pour the measured liqueur over the hot dish directly into the pan. DO NOT STIR. Carefully ignite the spirit. Hold the flame close to the surface of the dish, but at a safe distance. The flame will catch quickly and burn with a steady, blue or orange glow. If it does not ignite immediately, do not pour more alcohol or stir the pan. Wait a few seconds for the fumes to concentrate, before trying again to light it. The flame will burn for about 30 seconds. Do not try to blow out the flames. Allow it to extinguish naturally and then proceed to serve your guests.

For Safety:

- 1) Never lean over pan while igniting.
- 2) Wear apron and long sleeves.
- 3) Keep fire extinguisher handy.
- 4) Never pour alcohol directly from bottle over heated pan.

Apple Flambe'

2 firm sweet-tart unpeeled apples like Honeycrisp, Fuji or gala, (cored and sliced or wedged)
2 T of butter
3 T of sugar
Pinch of cinnamon or more to taste
2 or more ounces of brandy or bourbon

Heat large skillet over medium heat. Add the sugar and let it melt into a light amber color (about 2 minutes) without burning. Add apple slices to the sugar and cook for 3-5 minutes until slightly soft. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Turn off heat.

Pour in the brandy and carefully ignite the alcohol, using a long lighter. Let flames burn out naturally. Serve over ice cream

Bananas Foster

Created in New Orleans and first served at Brennan's in 1951 for a visiting politician, this desert defines NOLA. If you have Banana Liqueur on hand to use in place of the brandy, you will have the authentic recipe!

6 Tbsp unsalted butter
½ cup light brown sugar
½ tsp ground cinnamon
1 pinch ground nutmeg
pinch kosher salt
3 medium ripe but firm bananas (split in half crosswise and then lengthwise)
¼ cup banana Liqueur or aged rum

Melt butter and brown sugar in skillet along with a pinch of salt and spices. Add bananas and cook as caramel forms for approx. 3 minutes. When caramel is smooth, turn off heat. Add rum and light. Tilt pan as needed to burn off all liqueur. Serve over vanilla ice cream.