

SMOKE SIGNAL

The Staff of the Smoke Signal
wishes you a healthy and happy

2024



Several members of the Smoke Signal Staff celebrate the holidays at the home of BoD President, Bob Esby,

Smoke Rise Country Club Celebrates Re-Opening

By Susan Gilbert, Staff Writer

One hundred and fifty grateful SRCC members celebrated the reopening of the main Clubhouse with an Ugly Christmas Sweater party on Sunday afternoon, December 17th, almost a full year after the deep freeze last December 26th that caused a flood in the main clubhouse. It took months for demolition of the entire interior, then many more months to put it back together.

The renovation permitted reorganization of space to make the building even more useful. One of the many exciting changes was moving the fitness center to an exterior wall where, not only does the space have windows now, but also, the plan is to eventually have keycard access so that members can access it on off hours. The biggest change was to the downstairs area known as the 19th Hole, the place golfers stop for lunch or after playing golf or tennis to socialize. It is being converted into a sports bar for casual dining, watching sporting events on big screen TVs, and just hanging out with friends and neighbors right here in the heart of Smoke Rise. The upstairs of the club has kept the same design of the past, but with a much more updated and bright look.

SRCC Board Chairman, Art Wood, made the rousing announcement of more changes in the works and shared exciting news of the successful membership campaign being conducted. If you have not been to the Club and would like a tour, email Scott Shepard at membership@smokerisccc.com.



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Free Christmas Tree
Residential Curbside Collection!

The DeKalb County Sanitation Division is offering free Christmas tree curbside collection service for county residents until Jan. 5, 2024.

Trees will be collected during residents' regularly scheduled sanitation collection service days. To participate, remove all decorations from your tree and place it curbside. Tree length must be seven feet or less. Trees that cannot be trimmed to the required size may be taken to the county-owned Seminole Road Landfill or collected by the Sanitation Division's Special Collection unit (fees may apply).

This service provides an opportunity to dispose of your holiday tree sustainably and free-of-charge. All trees will be recycled and converted to mulch!



For more information about free Christmas tree curbside collection, or to arrange for a special collection for larger trees, contact the Sanitation Division's Customer Care team at (404) 294-2900 or sanitation@dekalbcounty-ga.gov, or go online to www.dekalbsanitation.com.

Rev. Dr. MLK Jr.
Legacy of Service
by Victoria R. Crosby

What are you doing for others is a question often asked by many of our great leaders of the present and the past.

It is life's most persistent and urgent question, according to the Rev. Dr. King, and by offering a helping hand great blessings you will bring.

For this country to be a united nation there must be more participation, not just a small percentage of the population.

Helping people everyday is the best way to fulfill the dreams of MLK.

You have to fight for freedom, as freedom isn't free. The marches and protests changed the way things used to be.

"The appalling silence of the good people" was what Dr. King wrote.

You have to fight for what is right with your words and with your vote.

You won't achieve cooperation if you grab them by the throat, but by being kind, and being thoughtful, not deceitful, cruel and awful.

Treat others as you would be treated so that the Golden Rule is never, ever defeated.



Smoke Signal

P.O. Box 1038, Tucker, GA 30085

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

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ATTENTION ADVERTISERS:

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

JANUARY 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 JANUARY 10

SMOKE SIGNAL FLYER INSERT POLICY

Cost: \$150 by check to *Smoke Signal*

Deadline to Receive: 6:00 p.m. on 19th of month

Flyer inserts should be 8 1/2” x 11” (flat, not folded)

Please provide 2,300 copies


Reservation Required:

Contact Barbara Luton, (770) 491-6711 by 15th of month.

“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.

Baby, It’s Cold Outside!



Three Things to Do for Your Plumbing

1. Don’t forget to disconnect your outside hoses and drain them when the temperature drops below freezing. You can also wrap outdoor faucets with insulators available at all big box stores.
2. If your indoor plumbing (ex. Kitchen sink) has little insulation between it and the outdoor wall, you may want to put a light underneath the cabinet to warm the space or open cabinet door so ambient warmth keeps the pipes from freezing.
3. If you are traveling for any length of time, you could shut the water off at the street or shut off the master cut-off. You don’t want to come home to a flood from a busted pipe.



Three Things to Do for Your Car

1. Plan ahead on frosty days so you can scrape your windshield. Get the heater going and scrape away.
2. Keep emergency blankets, water in the car and maybe an extra pair of shoes in case you have to walk. Handwarmers could also save your pinkies if you get stuck by the side of the road.
3. Keep your driveway clear of ice. Don’t Procrastinate when it snows, shoveling your driveway may be the difference between being able to get to work and being stuck at home. If you are in a hilly area. Maybe you SHOULD stay home.

Keep your house stocked with necessary items so you do not have to go anywhere on the ice.

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Smoke Rise Baptist Church

Dr. Chris George: Senior Pastor
Danny Vancil, Minister of Music & Worship
Telephone: (770) 469-5856
SmokeRiseBaptist.org

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

Eastminster Presbyterian Church

Pastor ~ Rev. J. Caleb Clarke III: cclarke@eastminster.us
Executive Director of Ministries ~ Jeanine Fulton: jfulton@eastminster.us
Director of Family & Outreach Ministries ~ Mark Sauls: msauls@eastminster.us
Director of Weekday Ministries ~ Celeste Sears: csears@eastminster.us
5801 Hugh Howell Road ~ Stone Mountain, GA 30087
770-469-4881 ~ www.eastminster.us

Sundays:
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: Rev. Elroy Christopher
Congregational Acolyte: Bill Hitz
(770) 491-7250, (770) 755-8289
www.gamoravian.org

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

Incarnate Word Lutheran Church

4950 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain, GA 30087

Sundays: 8:45 a.m. Worship


Mountain West Church

Pastor: Mo Huggins
(770) 491-0228 ~ www.mwchurch.com
4818 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain

Sundays: 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Worship
Thursday: 10:00 a.m. Neighborhood Bible Study
In-person and streaming online on Facebook and mwchurch.com

Digital copies of the *Smoke Signal* are posted to the archives at www.smokesignalnews.com.

Extra copies may be picked up at The Smoke Rise Community Garden on Hugh Howell Rd.



This photo was taken mid-December on Gauley River. AT&T is installing new fiber-optic cable in Smoke Rise. The installation method is called the Stitch where they punch holes in the ground at set distances near the curb to pull the cable along. Their intention is to restore the property as they found it, but neighbors should keep an eye on the work to be sure it is done to their satisfaction and let the crews know if their lawn needs more attention. Getting something fixed after the crews are gone would likely be more difficult than addressing the situation while they are still on site.



Celebrate and Investigate MLK Day

January 15 is MLK Day. If you want to Celebrate Martin Luther King or Investigate (learn) about what his legacy birthed, consider these venues and activities on January 15.

- Visit Ebenezer Baptist Church
- Hike the Martin Luther King, Jr National Historical Park.
Visit the “I Have a Dream” International Peace Rose Garden.
Fire Station No. 6 - the first desegregated fire station.
The BEHOLD monument
[Note: MLKs birth home is closed for renovation.]
Visit <https://www.nps.gov/malu/index.htm> and sign up for a civil rights walking tour.
- Atlanta History Center
Civil Rights-themed crafts and activities from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Family-friendly.
Visit atlantahistorycenter.com for more information.
- Hands on Atlanta - Visit handsонатlanta.org to explore dozens of volunteer opportunities.

Tucker Parks & Recreation: Check Them Out

If you have never been on the City of Tucker Parks and Recreation Website or Facebook page, you are missing out on all kinds of great activities to sign up for and participate in. Here are a few for January from their facebook page:

Join Kid-N-Play every Tuesday at Tucker Recreation Center from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. starting January 9! These workshops are perfect for ages 2-9 to explore new scents and textures through a variety of fun activities. The cost is \$12 per child.
For questions or to register email kidnplay@intentionalfunn.com.



Tucker Seniors: The next senior outing will be on Thursday, January 11 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to the Civil and Human Rights Museum. The cost is \$15 per person and transportation is provided.
To register today, visit <https://tucker.recdesk.com/Community/Program/Detail...>

MLK Work day:
The Friends of Johns Homestead and the City of Tucker are partnering to host an MLK Day of Service workday. We will continue working on removing invasive plants throughout the northern half of the park, as part of FOJHP’s commitment to provide 1,500 volunteer hours as part of the match for the \$2.52 million grant we received from the State of Georgia DNR. This is a great way to spend time in the outdoors with your family. Ivy pulling is for all ages. Come dressed in long sleeves/pants, gloves can be provided, but feel free to bring your own. ****Parking at Rehoboth Baptist Church****

JANUARY 15

MLK DAY

Join us in honoring

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

with a Day of Service

at Johns Homestead

TRAIL

MAINTENANCE

MAKE IT A DAY ON, NOT A DAY OFF

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City of

Tucker

JANUARY HAPPENINGS

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at Tucker City Hall, 1975 Lakeside Pkwy, Ste 350B, Tucker, GA 30084

JANUARY 1

All City Buildings will be closed in observance of New Year’s Day

JANUARY 2, 6:30 P.M.

Downtown Development Authority Meeting

JANUARY 8, 5:30 P.M.

Special Called Meeting for Swearing-In of New Council and City Manager

7 P.M. – Regular City Council Meeting

JANUARY 15

All City Buildings will be closed in observance of the Birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

JANUARY 16, 7 P.M.

University of Government Affairs Tucker

JANUARY 18, 7 P.M.

Planning Commission

JANUARY 22, 7 P.M.

City Council Meeting

tuckerga.gov

SRA

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2024

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The grand, holiday display, “A Whole Lot of Christmas,” at 1833 Smokerise in the Summit continued the festive sights and sounds once again in 2023. The Economy family has been spreading smiles and cheer in this way since 2012 and continues collecting for Make A Wish. They hope, when the numbers are totaled, the 2023 season raised enough to grant another wish for the new year.



ART Station held its Volunteer Appreciation Party for those who volunteered to make “The Tour of Southern Ghosts” a success. Michael Hidalgo welcomed the guests to a preview of the December play at the ART Station. Lunch was served to those attending. Pictured (left to right) are Nelda Lunsford, Michael Hidalgo, and Marty Bryan.

Kanawha Community Association
Celebrates the Holidays

Susan Gilbert, Staff Writer & Kanawha Resident

On a cold, blustery Tuesday evening in December, the Kanawha Community Association (KCA) held their annual Holiday Party for the members of the community who pay dues and/or donate to keeping up the neighborhood. Held every year at the Smoke Rise Country Club, this year had special challenges, due to last December’s flood that wiped out the kitchen. Undaunted, the KCA officers arranged a fabulous Italian feast for the 60 attendees, provided by Bambinelli’s. A neighbor provided his DJing equipment and talent for an evening of socializing, getting to know neighbors, singing carols, and dancing.

Neighbors Dennis & Jane Cummings who bought their Kanawha lot in 1984 were some of our first residents and have been ardent KCA supporters over the years. For 39 years, they have called their corner lot where Kanawha Drive meets Mountain Shadow home. You may have noticed they radiate their patriotism, decorating their curbs with hundreds of American Flags on several of our nation’s holidays.

Dennis comes from a family of pharmacists. His pharmacist father owned a drug store and Dennis and his brother both got pharmacy degrees. However, while studying at UGA, Dennis entered ROTC and fell in love with flying. That led to a career with the Air Force and then with Eastern Airlines, where he served as a commercial pilot. It was during his time at UGA that he met and married Jane, the love of his life.

While he was off flying Eastern’s jets, Jane spent her career teaching 4th, 5th, and 6th grade - first at Stone Mountain Elementary School and then at Smoke Rise Elementary. That job allowed her to get to know many of the Smoke Rise children and their families.

On December 15, Dennis and Jane celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary! They raised three daughters in their Kanawha home, all of whom are now in their 60s, and their youngest granddaughter is 27. We are proud to call Dennis and Jane our Kanawha neighbors!



We Need You!

Smoke Rise - this is YOUR paper! The Smoke Signal began more than 50 years ago and remains, to this day, a community newspaper created, written and produced by volunteer, Smoke Rise neighbors for the entire neighborhood. PLEASE consider becoming a contributor, editor or joining our staff. It’s a rewarding way to give back to your Smoke Rise community! Contact us today. staff@smokesignalnews.com

Art Wood
#YourMortgageGuyForLife

Zillow

★★★★★

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smokerisehomes.com

Saturday, January 20, 2024
9:30 a.m.

**13th Annual
Tucker Walk to Remember**
Smoke Rise Baptist (upper parking lot)

*The event remembers seven lives lost too soon in our community due to driving accidents.
The walk is free. Donations are accepted to fund driving scholarships for deserving students in our area.*

Check Facebook for possible weather issues
<https://www.facebook.com/TuckerWalkToRemember/>

Meet Your Smoke Rise Elementary School Leaders!
By Tonna Jones, Gifted Liaison, Smoke Rise Elementary School



Dr. Syreeta A. McTier
District Educational Support
Professional II of the Year
DeKalb County School District
2023-2024

Syreeta A. McTier, Ph.D., is a devoted leader and compassionate educator with 21 years of experience in the DeKalb County School District. For the past 11 years, Dr. McTier has proudly served as the assistant principal at Smoke Rise Elementary School. During this time, she has played an integral role in collaborating with the principal, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members to improve student growth and achievement. Dr. Syreeta McTier is known for her steadfast dedication and inspirational leadership. We are elated to announce Dr. McTier as both the Area II Educational Support Professional II of the Year and DeKalb County School District’s 2023-2024 District Educational Support Professional II of the Year. Dr. McTier is grateful for the opportunity to serve the Smoke Rise community and families of the DeKalb County School District.

Mrs. Beverly Amy Yang
Teacher of the Year
Smoke Rise Elementary School
2023-2024

Mrs. Beverly Amy Yang has been an educator for 20 years and has played a significant role at Smoke Rise Elementary School for the past 15 years as the media specialist and teacher-librarian. Mrs. Yang exhibits outstanding professionalism and enthusiasm every day while collaborating with teachers, students, and parents. It is evident she is passionate about integrating media technology into her daily instruction. Most importantly, Mrs. Yang is loved by all the students for celebrating their reading success. We are proud to recognize her as Smoke Rise Elementary School’s 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year.



Ms. Carmecia Askew
Educational Support
Professional I of the Year
Smoke Rise Elementary School
2023-2024

Ms. Carmecia Askew has been an educator at Smoke Rise Elementary School for nine years. Within this time, she has been a para-professional and now serves as the Library Media Assistant. Ms. Askew is a very passionate and nurturing educator who takes pride in helping ALL students. Because of her dedication and commitment to the Smoke Rise family, we are happy to recognize Ms. Askew as Smoke Rise Elementary School’s 2023 -2024 Educational Support Professional I of the Year.



**Connect
DeKalb**

A new public safety initiative enabling the people of DeKalb County to help keep their community safe.



What is Connect DeKalb?

The Connect DeKalb County Initiative gives private residents and business owners the ability to register their cameras in an online portal accessible only by DKPD to create a map of the location of private cameras.

Participants may choose between two levels of camera integration:

Level One: Participants register their camera with DKPD which enables investigators to know a camera is present at a location & easily request video evidence should an incident occur.

Level Two: Participants have the option to voluntarily integrate their camera system allowing DKPD direct access to the camera feed. Integration is opt-in and subscription based, which allows 24-hour access to recorded footage/real time streaming.

Interested parties are encouraged to visit connectdekalbcounty.org to learn more and to register their camera.



[For more information, call 770-724-7435.](https://connectdekalbcounty.org)



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Do This, Not That

By Cheri Schneider, MD

Have you ever read the book or read an article titled *Eat This, Not That*? It usually details healthy alternatives to unhealthy choices in food. Today, I wanted to generalize the idea to overall health and well-being. Here is my little list for the upcoming year:

DO	DON'T
Sleep 6-8 hours a night with a set bedtime	Stay up late hours on screens and devices

Having a set bedtime helps your body clock work best. Most adults need 6-8 hours of sleep. The body clock of the elderly shift to earlier sleep cycles. This may mean that older adults ‘feel’ they are not getting enough sleep when they wake up early. In reality, their sleep cycle has shifted back to an earlier time.

Intersperse your exercise routine with high intensity period of exercise	Do the same work-out year-round
---	--

High intensity training really works. Try sprinkling 60 second spurts (or more) of high intensity walking or jogging or power walking into your usual daily walk. Your metabolism will increase and stay up beyond the time you resume your usual pace. This can apply to any type of exercise! Remember your body gets used to your pace and adjusts the blood pressure and pulse and possibly the metabolism to this. This is called a conditioning response. Change up your routine. Take a hill, Spin faster to a song or change your pace to the next mailbox!

Use this year to catch up on preventive healthcare practices	Procrastinate or avoid prevention
---	--

So many people procrastinate on getting ‘that mammogram’, the colonoscopy or having regular checkups to monitor cholesterol, blood sugar and more. This is a particularly bad DON’T. I have seen patients push back or refuse mammograms, colonoscopies, cholesterol medicines and other preventions and pay for it with life changing diagnosis. Many times the ‘imagined’ risk or discomfort of the procedure is just that... imagined. We live in an educated world. Ask questions of your health care provider and know the reasons and alternatives available for prevention.

Jump on the latest diet bandwagon	Change your eating habits for life!
--	--

Diets have been a part of American life for decades. I once wrote an article on diets. It was shocking to see the differences and the claims made by the different diets. Unfortunately, our society is saturated with food advertisements, along with too many choices and options. We drive by dozens of good smelling restaurants and fast food places as we drive home. We hear all the latest on how to lose weight: miracle medicines, eating only at certain hours, not mixing certain food types, not eating certain food groups.

Consistently, the Mediterranean ‘diet’ has come out on top. It is focuses on daily vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds. Fats include olive oil and low saturated fats and dairy. Weekly portions of fish, poultry and some lean red meat round it out. All other foods are condiments to the diet. This eliminates no food group and gives so many choices. There is no MAGIC diet or medication to help lose weight. There are many healthy ways of eating. The Mediterranean plan can be used for life and comes out on top year after year.

Be an educated Vegetarian if you want to avoid meats	Be a Vegetarian who is not in ‘the know’
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Vegetarian and Vegan diets can be healthy. HOWEVER, may people don’t put in the effort to learn what a healthy vegetarian diet is. It is vital to have enough protein and vitamins and minerals in your diet... especially during the teen years and old age. Many vegetarians often miss how to properly find all the amino acids of protein needed in their meatless diet (balanced protein). They are proud to not eat meat, but do not know how to replace the protein from it. Vegans also miss dairy and therefore important sources of calcium while bones are still growing.

BE AN EDUCATED VEGAN or VEGETARIAN. Learn how to mix foods to give whole proteins vitamins and minerals. Find sources of calcium in other foods or take a supplement.

I hope this Do This/Not That article has given you something to think about this year. Be Well!

THE GALAPAGOS (part 2)

By Bob Espy

Our last days of our Galapagos adventure have come. If you want to go on a similar adventure, re-read the first days chronicled in the December edition.

Day 4 - Cerro Mesa & Garrapatero Beach

This morning we met our guide for a full day of exploring Santa Cruz. The morning drive took us to the eastern part of the island. At 490 m above sea level, Cerro Mesa Reserve offers spectacular views of the largest crater on Santa Cruz, exotic plants, seven unique subspecies of finch and the elusive vermillion flycatcher. We enjoyed light hiking before lunch at a local restaurant. Next, we enjoyed the scenic drive to the beautiful yet little-visited Garrapatero Beach. There we saw local families enjoying the water and few tourists. We saw sharks, rays, turtles, and sea birds in the clear blue waters and walking the short distance to a brackish lagoon, we saw stilts, plovers, pintails, and flamingos.

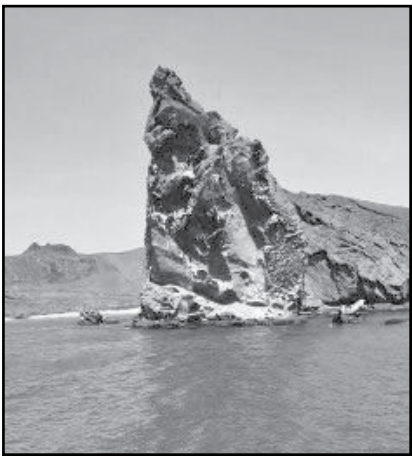
Day5 - Tortuga Bay

This morning we enjoyed a scenic walk to Tortuga Bay, considered by many to be the most beautiful beach in the Galapagos Archipelago. With our guide, we walked along the 3-kilometer boardwalk, surrounded by opuntia cacti and palo santo trees. We were rewarded with a picture-perfect view of the horseshoe-shaped bay with white sand & turquoise waters as far as the eye can see. We then visited a coffee plantation and sampled a variety of fresh coffees.

Day 6 - South Plaza Island

The day started with a short sail to our first stop, Punta Carrion Bay. We swam and snorkeled for an hour before. Continuing to South Plaza, which is on the southern half of two small crescent-shaped islands. It is one of the smallest islands in the Archipelago, but one of the richest in flora and fauna. We walked uphill to the cliffs that overlook the ocean past Sally Lightfoot crabs, yellow-gray land iguanas, and swallow-tailed gulls. Red-billed tropicbirds, Nazca, and blue-footed boobies lazily glided along the wind currents. The turquoise waters of the channel between both islands contrast brilliantly with the black lava rocks, green seaweed, scarlet-colored succulents, and verdant prickly-pear cactus.

Day 7: Our vacation has ended. Our flight home from Santa Cruz Island to mainland Ecuador brought us back to reality. This is a vacation I will never forget.



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NEWS YOU CAN USE

By Aviva Hoffmann

A Neighborhood Resolution for Safer Travels

It’s not necessarily a scientific conclusion, but one thing I’ve noticed is many of us are exhibiting less patience on the roads these days. I’m going to blame the COVID-19 pandemic for that... But, what if we all made a resolution this year to be kind to one another – especially while traveling? As far as new year’s resolutions go, this one might be achievable!

A recent report by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has delved into the risky behaviors exhibited by drivers, shedding light on prevalent habits that contribute to road safety concerns. While the findings are concerning, the study doesn’t aim to preach; instead, it seeks to provide insight into the varied driving behaviors that shape our roads.

The AAA Foundation’s Traffic Safety Culture Index survey identified six distinct driver profiles based on self-reported behaviors. Speeding, distracted driving, and aggressive driving emerged as the most common dangerous behaviors. Surprisingly, only four in 10 surveyed individuals fell into the category of “Safe Drivers.”

As our daily routines and traffic volumes return to pre-pandemic levels, the study underscores a troubling trend – traffic fatalities remain high, with fewer traffic stops reported. The report emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to promote safe mobility.

The study’s six driver profiles range from “Safe Drivers” to the more concerning categories of “Most Dangerous Drivers” and “Impaired Drivers.” Notably, speeding drivers comprised a significant portion, indicating a prevalent attitude that speeding is not perceived as extremely dangerous.

While most drivers acknowledge the danger of certain behaviors, there’s a persistent gap between perception and action, as many admit to engaging in unsafe practices.

The AAA Foundation’s research highlights the need for continued efforts to bridge the gap between awareness and action on our roads. By understanding the diverse profiles of drivers and their behaviors, we can likely develop effective strategies to promote safer driving habits. Credit goes to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety for its dedication to preventing traffic deaths and injuries through insightful research and education.

Now, I may not lose unwanted pounds this year, but I’m sure to be more mindful on our roads. Happy resolution making and Happy New Year!



Feeling Our Way Into 2024 with Intention

By Amber Voss

As we begin 2024, it’s remarkable how swiftly 2023 passed, almost like a fleeting moment. Many of us find ourselves reflecting on the events of the past year, while others eagerly anticipate a fresh start in the year ahead. Perhaps, some of us are doing a bit of both, and that’s perfectly understandable.

As the tradition goes, with the dawn of the new year, many will embark on the journey of setting resolutions. However, the familiar pattern often unfolds – resolutions are made, only to be broken within the initial weeks or months. This process tends to lead to self-judgment, labeling ourselves as either “good” or “bad” based on our ability to adhere to said resolutions. If you happen to be among the rare few who can commit and stick to resolutions, kudos! Feel free to share your secrets. But for those who haven’t been able to maintain their resolutions, it’s crucial to release any associated shame or guilt.

What if, instead of resolutions, we reframed our approach and aimed for intentions in 2024? How is an intention different, you ask? Unlike a resolution that often focuses on changing something in the future, an intention involves guided actions that may lead to a goal or desired outcome. Intentions place emphasis on how you want to feel rather than the outcome itself.

Consider the common resolution of losing weight and getting in shape. Reframing this resolution into an intention might look like this: “I will intentionally and joyfully move my body x times per week. I will prioritize healthier foods daily to nourish my body from the inside out.” Notice how it carries a different tone and resonance?

Setting intentions is about invoking a desired quality—whether it’s peace, health, joy, or anything else you want to manifest in the coming year. This approach is akin to what I offer my students at the beginning of most yoga classes. It allows them to set an intention, working with a quality or energy they wish to call into their practice and day. The impact of intention setting has proven significant in my own yoga practice and personal new year’s resolutions.

So, what do you want to call into your life in the year ahead? Take a moment to mindfully consider how you wish to feel as you step into January. Envision embodying the energy or energies that will support you. Spend time reflecting or meditating on your intention, allowing it to resonate throughout your entire being. Let it be your guiding light as you embrace 2024.

Here’s to a mindful and intentional new year ahead! May you cultivate compassion for yourself and others, finding joy, love, and wonder in both the smallest and grandest moments. May your intentions fully support you as you step into 2024. Happy New Year, y’all! Blessings and peace to everyone as we turn the page.

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HEALTH NOTES:

Holiday Health Hazards

By Pat Baumann, MD

The holidays are a busy time of year and are often the busiest time for hospital emergency rooms. Avoid an unwanted trip by keeping in mind the following seasonal health concerns:

One of the main reasons people are hospitalized during the holidays is falls. Getting up on a ladder to put up decorations can be hazardous, especially for those older than 60 years. You do not need to fall from a great height to seriously injure yourself! Make sure your ladder is steady and that someone is nearby to lend a hand, or to call for help if needed.

Another holiday hazard could be decked out with ornaments in your living room. Your beautiful tree might still be hanging around – and could be an accident waiting to happen. If you have a faux tree, make sure your tree is fire resistant, and kept it away from heat sources. Live Christmas trees dry out when not properly watered, are cut too early, or are left up too long. Make sure Christmas lights do not have broken cords or loose bulbs. If you have little ones, or pets, avoid hanging ornaments that look like food, are too close to the ground, have sharp edges, or can be a choking hazard.

Holiday food may be a problem. The safe prep and handling of your holiday feast is essential. Here are a few tips: If food such as cheese has been on a table for more than two hours, toss it. Ensure raw meat does not touch any other food or any other objects, including knives, chopping boards, or other utensils.

Tis’ the season to drink responsibly. Weekly alcohol intake increases over the festive season. Whether you are hanging decorations, cutting the holiday meat, or driving, you should not be under the influence of alcohol. If you are in charge of the bubbly, take precautions. Champagne corks can cause injuries. Hold the cork down using a towel and aim the bottle at a 45-degree angle away from you and others.

Toy related trauma is something to watch out for. Skateboards, hoverboards, rollerblades, bikes, and scooters are popular gifts at Christmas. They also are among the most hazardous. If you’re giving a present with wheels, make sure you give the gift of a helmet as well.

Transmissible viruses pose a risk during holiday gatherings. Avoid people when you are sick. Wash your hands frequently, and take proper precautions such as making sure you are up-to-date on vaccinations.

Enjoy the holidays, and make sure to take precautions to stay safe.

Out the Window

Article and Illustration by Beth Henson

Gazing out the kitchen window, I couldn’t help but notice the gay bird party in full swing in my normally quiet side garden. Two fat robins were enjoying an icy cocktail from the birdbath, while a puffy towhee was skillfully dancing under the now bare-limbed yellow bells. Mr. and Mrs. Cardinal were also merrily bouncing around, checking for insects and seeds that had recently made it to the cold, hard ground of winter. To my delight, I also spotted a tiny, red-crowned kinglet flitting limb-to-limb in the tightly woven branches of the hedge. His fiery-red head feathers mimicked a fun party hat that was a stark contrast to the drab taupes and grays of the frigid afternoon.

Enjoy your celebration my dear, chilly friends. Warmer weather will soon be on the way!



Ho-Ho-Holiday Cheer!

Members of the GFWC Stone Mountain participated in the Stone Mountain Village Christmas parade. Smoke Rise neighbors Kathy Gallo and Jackie Cornett were part of the fun.

Angie's list

Angie's List

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Victoria Crosby’s Poetry at The Vibrary

Award winning poet Victoria Crosby, read from her humorous, inspirational, and British themed works at The Vibrary in Stone Mountain recently. Following the reading, she signed copies of her various poetry books.

The Vibrary Wine and Bookbar serves wine by the bottle or glass, charcuterie boards, and nonalcoholic beverages. It’s a popular venue for musicians, authors, and poets. The neon sign inside states “Good Vibes Only.” The Vibrary is owned by Candace Walker, and it’s the perfect place to relax and read, write, or purchase a book.

Victoria has been a Smoke Rise resident for two years, after moving from Long Island, New York, where she was poet laureate of the City of Glen Cove since 1994. Originally from Cheshire, England, Victoria continues to write for The North Shore Leader in New York, for the Smoke Signal and Our Town Gwinnett Magazine. Victoria’s poetry has been featured in many newspapers and magazines in New York and California, and in the now defunct Our Town DeKalb Magazine.



Grandmommy’s Garden of Thoughts - My Puzzling Addiction

By Linda Karr, Staff Writer

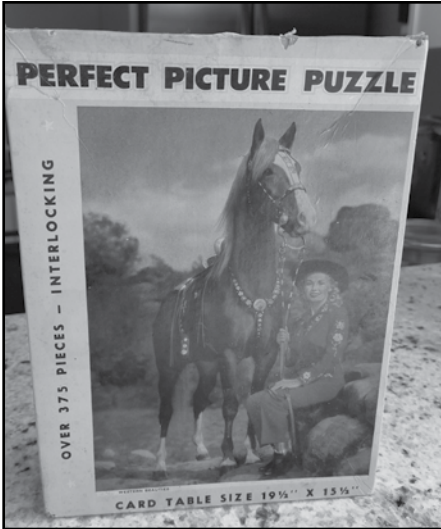
I have been “puzzling” since I was a kid. My parents often had a puzzle out on a card table in the den. Being the nostalgic person that I am, I still have many of those puzzles with ridiculously small pieces which are not so easy for the aging eyes! Stronger dollar store glasses and a magnifying glass do help.

I’m not much on the round or odd shaped puzzles and definitely not excited about 3-D puzzles. My favorites are the 1,000 pieces. Since I’ve retired, I can put these together pretty fast, unless I have a project going on that sidelines my attention. My preferred puzzles come from White Mountain. I particularly like the nostalgic (yep – there’s that word again) ones like The Games We Played, Television History – and all Christmas puzzles. Once I’ve put the puzzle together, it’s fun to take a look to see what I have memories of and can identify. Some, I think must have really come before my time or, my memory has faded just a little.

The ultimate? My stepdaughter, Rebecca, and her family gave me a 3,000-piece puzzle for Christmas (hmm- was it something I said or did?). She knew I would take on the challenge. It required a much bigger table than the one I usually use, so the dining room table was overtaken by this puzzle. It took quite a while to get the edge done, and I was a little overwhelmed by how to get through the other 2,000 plus pieces. I ended up putting a card table to the side to help spread out the pieces. All 3,000 of those pieces were finally put into place!

I believe it will make a great present to regift to Rebecca!

Every day is an adventure – some better than others. Enjoy life!



Artificial Intelligence and Business

By Pat Soltys, Staff Writer

Next year will likely be an exciting year and a good one for business. Just as computers changed the world, Artificial intelligence will change the world of business. AI will potentially affect many categories of business, from Medical to Manufacturing, Customer service and even Agriculture. It may seem a little like science fiction, but the real applications in these industries will give businesses ways to leverage information with predictable results and at a reduced cost.

We have gotten used to a world in which even our portable phones are a sophisticated computing device—and they are more powerful than the first mainframes. We have gotten used to aggregated data and information that is bought and sold as a commodity. Now bring in AI which is constantly learning and mining all the data collected. It can now learn to use experiential information and what it learns can be applied with near human application and problem-solving capabilities to many areas of business.

We are presented with so much information on the Internet that it is becoming more difficult to know which information is reliable and true and which is built by scam artists. Businesses that can portray trust, reliability and service will stand apart, making trust a key performance indicator that generates dollars. AI may become responsible for this area of growth in business - developing trust in the customer experience.

How does all of this translate for smaller local businesses? Expect that the convenience orientation we have will place a demand for more services, yet we will be willing to pay for consistent, better quality that is well delivered.

-Businesses offering convenience dining services (personalized eat in, carry out) will remain in high demand. However, the high cost of food will mean there must be strong budgeting to make a profit.

-Medical services will thrive as our population ages, however areas for the highest growth are not in traditional medical care, but are more in the convenience and concierge services.

-Financial services will still enjoy a market with a lot of available cash and funds but will reward customized services that are not blanket solutions.

-Real estate will be an economic leader. Despite higher interest rates, appreciation has been better than average. This is because there is currently a pent-up demand and low inventory. This will resolve to more normal by mid-year. Commercial real estate will continue to be slow as commercial buildings are being repurposed while many traditional uses of buildings are being abandoned for the new.

-Work from home and flexibility are here to stay. Who would have ever thought telemedicine and virtual courts would become standards. It is doubtful that we will ever revert entirely to a go to work employment population.

Watch for the two biggest items – AI and Trust to be huge impacts in all businesses.

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Hope and Prayer

By Joel Gilbert, P.E., Staff Writer

As I reflect on the Christmas holidays, I admit it is an awkward time of the year for me. Partly because I am Jewish and grew up celebrating Chanukah instead, and partly because of my fond memories of making gifts for my daughters in hopes of delighting them on Christmas morning.

I remember hoping I would get a Gilbert Erector Set for Chanukah and indeed I did. I can still remember that morning opening it up, and I must have spent the next three days working on one of the projects that could be built with it. By the way... no ... I am not related to that Gilbert. My birth name is Goldberg. My parents changed it to Gilbert out of antisemitism concerns.

Did I need that educational toy? Of course not, but the process of hoping and even praying you would get something seems to be part of the fabric of childhood and carries forward into adulthood.

Every week, at Smoke Rise Baptist Church, our Sunday school class prays for the needs of our community. Do we believe God is listening and writing down our requests as if it was a wish list? Or, by voicing our hopes in the form of prayers are we simply enunciating something deeper within us and by doing that supporting each other in our times of need?

The answers to questions like this are deeply personal, and far be it for me to suggest I know the answers to these existential questions. But, I do know that the lack of hope is devastating. There seems to be no better way to destroy a person than to kill their hopes and dreams, making them less than they can be.

As an engineer, I know hope is not a strategy, and to simply hope for something is truly wishful thinking. We must work individually and together to bring about the best in this world. I am reminded of Steve Jobs' encouraging words of wisdom of when he led Apple:

"Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do."

We celebrate hope during the holiday season and as we begin a new year but perhaps we don't see it as we should. Are we nourishing the hope in others that they indeed can make this world a better place for themselves and others? Or are we the Scrooge who is bitter within ourselves and use this bitterness to diminish others?

My hope for you as we begin 2024 is for you to see how important you are in other people's lives as a source of encouragement and support. We all really need each other ... deeply.

I will close by sharing that it is touching to know that several of those handmade toys I hoped would please my daughters are still owned by them.



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Georgia Iris Society Meeting

The Georgia Iris Society invites you to attend the first meeting of 2024 on Saturday, January 13 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Bartholomew Episcopal Church, 1790 Lavista Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30329.

Georgia Iris Society member, Donita McDonald, will present “Great Iris Beginnings.” Meetings are free to the public, and all are welcome to join for education, beautification and recreation. For more information, contact Quill Duncan, (770) 414-4766.

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Holiday Fun with Morning Glories

By Quill Duncan, Morning Glories Member

I hope all of you enjoyed a delightful holiday season with your family and friends and Happy New Gardening Year to you!

The Morning Glories gathered at the home of Glenndolyn Hallman for our holiday meeting. This year we had a new experience... waxing amaryllis bulbs! This was a YouTube sensation last year, and one of our members tried it and reported great results. Plain bulbs are purchased, roots trimmed off and the bulbs peeled and then soaked for several hours. After a few hours of drying, the bulbs are ready to be dipped in hot wax and then cooled in a water bath. You can dye the wax if you want a colorful bulb or later spray paint the bulb portion or attach moss sheets for another effect. The finished bulb can be placed in bright light and on a plate or bowl but no need to water. The bulb will bloom, and you can enjoy the lovely trumpet like flowers for quite a long bloom time. The jury is out as to if you can then successfully plant the bulb for rebloom, but you would need to remove the wax before planting. Our hosts set up an assembly line of sorts for the members to wax their bulbs. We enjoyed lots of laughs and good fun for everyone!

On another note, one of our garden club members reported she was scammed in December by an email from a con artist. She responded to an appeal, then it was a phone call from this person, and then she was directed to go to her bank and withdraw funds and purchase Apple gift cards. She then supplied the access codes to that person for their gain and her loss. This scam resulted in her losing \$4,500.00 and certainly her peace of mind. She reported the scam to the police, but nothing could be done. She asked that I share her story with all of you readers as a warning to question these sorts of emails or calls from unknown people asking for help or weird tales supposedly from friends overseas who are needing funds. Be aware that this is a huge con industry designed to take your money. Don't engage! When in doubt, delete or hang up!

Our January 9 program will feature Felicity Davis who is a Landscape Architect with GA Department of Transportation. She will tell us about the wildflower project for GA roads and byways. If you are interested in joining or attending the meeting, please contact President Janet McGinnis at (770) 939-8878.



Waxed amaryllis bulbs with Joy Zaidan, Glenndolyn Hallman and Kim Fair

Mountain Mums Garden Club Wraps up a Productive Year!

By Maureen Fraser, Mountain Mums Garden Club Member



Mary Lou Still displaying her rum cake at the Holiday Luncheon

As the last horticultural therapy project of the year, six members recently visited residents of Atria Senior Living Center to help usher in the holiday season. The members led a seasonal craft project, helping residents make a door hanger for their apartments. Provided by Kelley Samaras, the door hangers included a painted winter nature theme exhibiting a fully-dressed snowman encircled with birch bark.

The club's Holiday Luncheon and Gift Exchange was held at the Smoke Rise Tennis Center where Chef Greg and his assistant, Alan, provided a delicious lunch and club members brought desserts. The desserts included Mary Lou Still's extra-special rum cake, which has become an annual tradition!

As we ring in 2024, the club is already planning activities for the new year. Everyone is invited to attend the upcoming 2024 Annual Walk to Remember on Saturday, January 20 beginning at the Smoke Rise Baptist Church. The walk is held to recognize and honor young drivers that were lost too soon in car accidents. More information is available on the Tucker Walk to Remember



Mountain Mums members with Atria Senior Living Residents and their finished door hangers

Facebook page.

For more information on joining or visiting at the next meeting, contact Mary Jacobson, Membership Chair, at mjacob1010@gmail.com.

Top right:
Lucy White presents Kelley Samaras with 839 corks (over 9 lbs!) donated by her neighbor for use in making wreaths and other crafts throughout the year

Bottom right:
Connie Henry was the proud winner of the "Mums the Word" basket at the Holiday Luncheon



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MLK Day	Monday, January 15	Collection service will run one day late for all customers.
Presidents Day	Monday, February 19	Collection service will run one day late for all customers.
Memorial Day	Monday, May 27	Collection service will run one day late for all customers.
Juneteenth	Wednesday, June 19	Collection service will run one day late for Wed. and Thurs. customers.
Independence Day	Thursday, July 4	Collection service will run one day late for Thurs. customers.
Labor Day	Monday, September 2	Collection service will run one day late for all customers.
Veterans Day	Monday, November 11	Collection service will run one day late for all customers.
Thanksgiving Holiday	Thursday, November 28 Friday, November 29	Thursday customers will be serviced on Friday.
Christmas Day	Wednesday, December 25	Collection service will run one day late for Wed. and Thurs. customers.

For more information, visit DekalbSanitation.com or call 404-294-2900

Food & Home Fixin'

by Joyce Ray

I have been a homebody for as long as I can remember. I love the kitchen, as you might have suspected, but home décor, updating, organizing, and hosting are other favorite activities which might have helped lead into my real estate career. I have loved researching new recipes for this column (and trying them out before sharing them). However, this year, I want to change the focus to include some of those other interests. I hope you will still enjoy the recipes but also the tips on ways to keep a healthy, safe, clean, well maintained, organized home that not only helps protect your investment, but also makes you happy and not stressed when you walk in the door.

This Simple Old-Fashioned Potato Soup recipe is one you might have already memorized. With the coldest months of the year looming ahead of us, I hope you will enjoy it often, with friends – it serves 6-8.

3½ Pounds peeled and diced potatoes. (7-8 medium). Use Russett potatoes, because they have more starch than any other variety. Add just enough water to the pot to cover the potatoes by about 1 inch. Boil to fork tender but not falling apart. Drain but reserve about 1 cup of liquid. Heat 3 tablespoons butter in Dutch oven or soup pot. Add one diced medium onion to butter and cook until soft. Add drained potatoes to the pot with onions. Add 1 ½ teaspoon salt 1 tsp. ground black pepper. Add 6 cups of whole milk. Simmer gently for 10 minutes. Use a potato masher to mash about half of the potatoes. If soup needs to be thinned, add the cooking liquid to desired consistency. Remove from heat. Serve with your favorite garnishes, such as bacon, grated cheese, or chopped green onions.

For those of you who have not taken down your Christmas decorations, here are some suggestions of how to store and make Christmas 2024 decorating a little easier.

First, evaluate where they will be stored. Three things that can sabotage your best packaging are temperature, moisture and security. If your space is not air cooled, such as in an attic, make sure you are not packing snow globes or anything with wax or gel. Heat can destroy the glue in some of your ornaments. If your storage is in a basement area, you should be concerned about moisture and mildew. Dust, rodents, and insects can be a problem in garages or basements. For any area, remember to remove all batteries from battery powered decorations.

Plastic bins with tight-fitting, see-through lids are the #1 best investment. I like the wreath storage cases with see through lids. Wreaths can also be hung by clothes- pinning them to a large clothes hanger, then put it inside a heavy trash bag which can be gathered at the neck of the hanger and hung in attic or closet. If wired ribbon bows are beginning to look tired, you can freshen them by taking them apart, roll the ribbon tightly around a piece of cardboard and remake the bows next year. I have saved ribbon this way for years and always have a great selection from which to choose for wreath bows and other decor.

To make any storage project more efficient a few (free) things that you can start saving are: silica gel packets that come in shoes and other packaged items – to absorb odors and to keep items dry.

All bubble wrap, tissue paper, and the large plastic wired twist ties in new packaged items, especially with small electronics – they are the best!

Ornament boxes with dividers are great for your favorite and most fragile treasures; however, they do take up lots of space. Zip lock bags are great to hold ornaments that have been wrapped in tissue paper or thick plastic sheet wrap.

Wrap strings of electric lights and label where each set goes to save time trying to figure it out next year.

Take pictures of your décor. This will help you remember where everything fits or determine how you want to change it up next Christmas.

I hope you will enjoy my tips to help you whether you are fixin' something around your house or fixin' to cook dinner with all the fixins. I wish for each of you a happy and healthy New Year.



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