

# SMOKE SIGNAL



VOLUME 53, ISSUE 9

*Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968*

December, 2020

www.smokesignalnews.com

*Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays  
from the Smoke Signal Staff!*



**Wishes for a joyous and safe season!**

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## **Groundbreaking: Hugh Howell Marketplace**

On Thursday, November 5th, the ground-breaking ceremony for the \$25 million Hugh Howell Marketplace project took place with representatives from Branch Properties, City of Tucker officials, and local residents present. Mayor Auman pointed out the many obstacles that had to be overcome to reach this point in the project, including the pandemic and the uncertain finance and business climate.

"Branch, Publix, Tucker's staff and Council all had to work together, acknowledging that the future is coming fast, and we cannot wait for a better time," said Auman. "Today is the only day we have to prepare for tomorrow."

Construction began on Friday, November 6th with the project to be ready in the latter part of 2021. At this time the Publix anchor store and Chase Bank are the only confirmed tenants in the development.

Smoke Rise residents, now is the time for you to speak up. Let Branch Properties know specifically what types of stores you would like to see in the facility. Please contact Nicholas Telesca, President of Branch Prosperities LLC, at 3340 Peachtree Road, NE, Suite 2775, Atlanta, GA 30326 or ntelesca@branchprop.com.



*City of Tucker Frank Auman addresses the Hugh Howell Marketplace ground-breaking ceremony on November 5, 2020.*



*Branch Properties representatives and City of Tucker officials move the dirt to signal the beginning of the Hugh Howell Marketplace project at the corner of Hugh Howell Road and Mountain Industrial Boulevard on November 5, 2020.*

## **Healthy Holidays**

*by Joel Gilbert*

Most of us look forward to this season's holidays as a chance to escape daily routines, eat foods that bring us back to our roots, and participate in rituals that nourish our souls. This year, getting together with our friends and loved ones remains a challenge and runs risks of spreading the virus. Making matters worse, this time of the year can also be extremely painful as we remember loved ones no longer with us. The collision of these factors will leave some feeling sad, depressed, and lonely. So now is the time to make plans to keep spirits up with what we can do to stay happy and mentally healthy.

My first recommendation is planning a Zoom or other video conferencing event with the people with whom you would otherwise be spending time. These can be pre-scheduled morning coffees, afternoon teas, evening socials, or after dinner winding-down-together story-telling times of reminiscing. Come up with a host to lead the event and plan a theme to keep it fun and interesting. Make an agenda of topics with assigned speakers if you need to assure balance in the talking time. Even without video conferencing, "reaching out and touching someone" with a simple phone call can be quite meaningful.

Our editor and Health Notes writer, Cheri Schneider, M.D., has devoted her column this month to the mental and physical challenges and benefits of holidays. Let me offer some other thoughts that might be helpful this year with the obvious polarized politics we all experience. It is helpful to remember that for all our differences, we all should be so thankful to be living in this wonderful country with its bountiful freedoms. Yes, there are problems, but I encourage you to take this holiday season to focus on the positive.

One benefit of this new world we are living in is that online gift shopping is easy, but take time to consider my wife Susan's article in this issue about supporting our local businesses vs. the factories in China. Something even better if you can: make gifts yourself. Susan makes candied pecans that are incredibly addicting. In fact, the recipe was included in Joyce Ray's column, Amen, Let's Eat!

There was a time when I was raising four daughters and it was just not possible for me to get them each something significant for Christmas, so I made them each a pine box toy chest. It was a simple 18" x 30" x 24" box with a padded lid for a seat. I did not have any equipment to cut the wood, so I carefully thought through how long each piece had to be and bought it cut from the hardware store, simply nailed it together and varnished it. I inscribed each one with a note under the lid and signed the box. All these years later, my daughters still have their toy boxes with the padded lids.

My message for this season: don't be a Scrooge and stew at home in resentment of our current condition. Let's all make our holidays healthy by slowing down, saying thanks to the people sharing our lives, and by showing everyone how much we love them through our thoughts and actions. Happy Holidays!

## **HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS**

**ART Station Theatre Presents:**

*The Twelve Dates of Christmas* (A Virtual Christmas Play)

This heartwarming, one-woman play offers a hilarious and modern alternative to the old standard of the holiday season. Cast members include Francena Byrd and Aretta Baumgartner. The production will be available for virtual viewing through January 5. [www.artstation.org](http://www.artstation.org)

**Santa at Rhodes Hall**

The 23rd annual Santa at Rhodes Hall, featuring personal appointments and photos with Santa (and proceeds benefiting the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation), will be held weekends through December 19. Social distancing, temperature checks, and hand sanitizing stations are implemented to create a safe and enjoyable event for everyone. [www.georgiatrust.org](http://www.georgiatrust.org)



## Smoke Signal

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### Preferred Formats for Smoke Signal Submissions

When sending articles and photos to the *Smoke Signal*, it is helpful if articles could be sent in .doc or .docx format. Articles sent in .pdf format cannot be edited or changed in any way. Also photos sent in .jpg format can easily be opened and formatted to fit a particular space, so that is also a preferred method. Thanks for helping us make your neighborhood paper the best it can be!

The *Smoke Signal* is posted to [www.smokesignalnews.com](http://www.smokesignalnews.com) the first of each month. Go to the "Smoke Signal Digital" link. You'll also find the link posted to the *Smoke Signal News* Facebook page each month with posting of pictures and stories throughout the month. For questions, contact Pat Soltys at [pat@smokeriseagents.com](mailto:pat@smokeriseagents.com).

## Smoke Signal Deadlines

### DECEMBER 13

Please e-mail articles to:

[staff@smokesignalnews.com](mailto:staff@smokesignalnews.com)

(Word documents or text file attachments preferred)  
 PLEASE DO NOT SEND CLASSIFIED ADS TO THIS E-MAIL ADDRESS

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

Deadline for classified ads is DECEMBER 10

### SMOKE SIGNAL FLYER INSERT POLICY

Cost: \$150 by check to *Smoke Signal*  
 Deadline to Receive: 6:00 p.m. on 19th of month  
 Flyer inserts should be 8 1/2" x 11" (flat, not folded)  
 Please provide 2,300 copies  
 Reservation Required:  
 Contact Barbara Luton, (770) 491-6711 by 15th of month.

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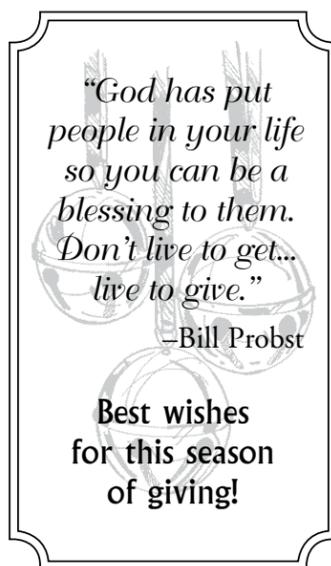


## Letter to the Editor and Thanks to the Patrons

Thank you for the *Smoke Signal!* We have enjoyed your interesting and timely articles since 1972! The faithful monthly publication has kept us well-informed and gives us a sense of "connectedness" with this whole neighborhood.

As our two sons and two daughters grew up, we were helped in many ways with the friendly and effective journalism. Considering the time and effort required for this job... Well done. I'm sure it must be a "labor of love."

Sincerely,  
 Betsy Allen, Gunstock Drive



### CHECK IT OUT!

*Smoke Signal's* new food review column "Dudes on Food" debuts in this issue! The Dudes checkout some of the great restaurants, bars and food stops in and around Tucker. They are not licensed critics but they are experienced foodies who know their stuff! If you would like to see a restaurant of your choice reviewed, send an email to [staff@smokesignalnews.com](mailto:staff@smokesignalnews.com) and let the Dudes do the heavy lifting before you go.



### DID YOUR PAPER GET WET?

EXTRA COPIES OF THE SMOKE SIGNAL ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT THE COMMUNITY GARDEN Look for the wooden box labeled *Smoke Signal*.

(They are no longer available on Smoke Rise Drive.)

## Smoke Rise Baptist Church

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 Becky Caswell-Speight: Minister of Families, Faith Formation and Connection  
 Jeremy Colliver: Minister of Youth, Mission and Communication  
 Jim Smith: Pastoral Care Associate  
 Amanda Coe Burton: Ministry Director for Children and Families  
 Harrison Litzell: Co-Director of Weekday School  
 Stacey McNeil: Co-Director of Weekday School  
 Telephone: (770) 469-5856 • [SmokeRiseBaptist.org](http://SmokeRiseBaptist.org)

SUNDAY  
 9:45 a.m. Attend Sunday School Online  
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 11:00 a.m. Attend Worship via Live Streaming  
 Live Stream Available at [SmokeRiseBaptist.org](http://SmokeRiseBaptist.org)  
 5:00 p.m. Outdoor Children and Youth Activities  
 (Activities are outside with social distancing and masks)

MONDAY  
 5:00 p.m. Weekly Devotional Video Link at [SmokeRiseBaptist.org](http://SmokeRiseBaptist.org)

WEDNESDAY  
 6:00 p.m. Journeys Spiritual Formation and Bible Study  
 Opportunities Online and In-Person  
 Schedule Available at [SmokeRiseBaptist.org](http://SmokeRiseBaptist.org)  
 (In-person events are outside with social distancing and masks)

## Eastminster Presbyterian Church

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 Pastor of Senior Adult Ministries ~ Rev. Jeanne Simpson  
 Director of Mission & Youth ~ Mark Sauls  
 Office Coordinator ~ Christina Wetzel-Sizemore  
 Director of Weekday Ministries ~ Celeste Sears  
 Director of Respite Care Center ~ Helen Wilborn  
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 Organist ~ Carole Mitchell  
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 5801 Hugh Howell Road ~ Stone Mountain, GA 30087  
 770-469-4881 ~ [www.eastminster.us](http://www.eastminster.us)

Sundays:  
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[www.mc3.life](http://www.mc3.life)

Sunday Worship at Parkview High School Auditorium  
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## First Moravian Church

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 Congregational Acolyte: Bill Hitz  
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[www.gamoravian.org](http://www.gamoravian.org)

Sundays:  
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 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Time

## Incarnate Word Lutheran Church

Please join us for worship on Sundays at 8:45 a.m. at the First Moravian Church sanctuary  
 4950 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain, GA 30087

## Mountain West Church

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 4818 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain  
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 Sundays at 9:00 a.m and 11:00 a.m.

**Patrons of the Smoke Signal**

*In the interest of keeping our advertising rates low and continuing the 52-year legacy of our neighborhood paper, the all-volunteer staff who create the Smoke Signal each month would like to recognize those in our community who join us supporting the paper as Patrons making financial contributions.*

*These members of our community have donated to help us accomplish our mission. We hope you will consider supporting our good cause of keeping our local news flowing. Thank you!*

- Frank and Gaye Auman
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- Ken and Vickie Carpenter
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- Dan and Ruth Debow
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- Anonymous

**GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club Supports The Giving Closet**

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club supports and volunteers with The Giving Closet at Tucker High School. The Giving Closet supports homeless students and families by supplying personal items and food and is managed by Carolyn Collins, a custodian at the school.

Most recently, Women's Club members contributed items to stock the Closet for the holidays and donated money and gift cards for families assisted by the program. With this support, Ms. Collins was able to prepare Thanksgiving dinner baskets for 15 families that each included a Walmart or Kroger gift card to help recipients purchase additional food and personal items they may need this season.



*Left to right-- Carolyn Collins, JoAnn Patterson (Smoke Rise resident)*

There is an ongoing need for help at The Giving Closet as there are many more families to serve. If you would like to contribute, please contact Carolyn Collins by calling 678-874-3702, the main number for Tucker High School, or emailing Ms. Collins at Carolyn\_collins@dekalbschools.ga.org.

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**Rotary District Grant Provides COVID Food Assistance in Tucker**

by L.A. Dison

Five DeKalb Rotary Clubs worked with Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC) to host a food distribution event for county families and children experiencing food insecurity during the pandemic. Funded by a grant from Rotary District 6900, 1,152 meal boxes (each containing five pounds of meat, five pounds of dairy including a gallon of milk, and twelve pounds of produce) were delivered to the FODAC warehouse on a Saturday morning in late October. Various metro Atlanta food coops (including Tucker’s NETWorks Cooperative Ministry) were there to pick up loads and transport them to pop-up distribution events scheduled that day throughout DeKalb County. The event represented over 22,000 individual meals delivered.

FODAC staff and volunteers from Rotary Club of Tucker, Rotary Club of Stone Mountain, Rotary Club of Emory Druid Hills, Rotary Club of Emory-Clifton, Decatur Rotary Club, and Rotaract Club of Atlanta worked to unload the pallets, break them down, and then load boxes on each of the coop trucks.



Smoke Rise resident (and Tucker Rotarian) Bob Wallace helps load food boxes in a coop truck.

**Rotary Club of Tucker Inducts New Officers and Board for 2020-2021**

by L.A. Dison

The Rotary Club of Tucker has a new president and board for the 2020-2021 Rotary year. The induction ceremony was held during the club’s weekly member lunch on July 2 in the Fellowship Hall of First Christian Church of Atlanta in Tucker. The oath of office was administered by Rotary District 6900 Past District Governor Margie Kersey with Assistant District Governor Chris Brand attending. Johnathan Clark, Financial Advisor with Edward Jones, was installed as the club’s new president, along with the club’s new board members:



(Left to right) Rotary Club of Tucker President Johnathan Clark, and Smoke Rise residents Graham Stovall (fundraising chair) and Bob Wallace (community services chair).

- Kellianne King (Public Health Analyst and Project Officer, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), President-Elect
- Marc Lisenby (President, Master Building Services), Secretary
- Wayne Gresham (Agent, State Farm Insurance), Treasurer
- Renie Halford (Retired, DeKalb County School District), Sergeant At Arms
- Renie Halford and Wayne Rush (Veterinarian and Owner, DeKalb Animal Hospital), Senior Advisors
- Bob Wallace (Owner and President, Highland Park Holdings, LLC), Community Services Chair
- Joe Williams (Visionary, Men in the Kingdom), Club Administration, Newsletter Editor, Programming Chair
- Joe Williams and Kristen Kametches (G2 Surfaces), Webmasters
- Onuzulike “Nat” Nwizu (Administrator, GPA Treatment), International Svcs., Rotary Foundation Chair
- Penny Stovall (Retired, DeKalb Board of Education), Literacy/Youth Services Chair
- Johnathan Clark and Kristen Kametches, Rotary Youth Exchange Chairs
- Johnathan Clark and Penny Stovall, Rotary Means Business Fellowship Chairs
- Rose Arnold (Director, Positive Growth, Inc.), Membership Chair
- Graham Stovall (Retired, Stovall Marine), Fundraising Chair
- Tom Edmondson (Senior Pastor, First Christian Church of Atlanta) Rotarian Action Group/Addiction Prevention Chair

“Rotary International’s theme for the year is ‘Rotary Opens Opportunities,’” said Clark. “2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic have presented significant challenges to the Tucker Club, but our members have turned obstacles to opportunities – from keeping connected via Zoom meetings while we couldn’t meet in person, to re-imagining and re-scheduling fundraisers and other significant events to keep our club moving forward.”



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### Happy Holidays from Your Smoke Rise Country Club Team!

We hope our friends in the community are enjoying a safe holiday season. Smoke Rise got into the spirit a little earlier this year by hosting Turkey's To Go for anyone in the community who wanted to take it easy and leave the cooking to others this Thanksgiving. After all the challenges faced in 2020, we thought this was a great opportunity to share with those around us. The Club will also be hosting an event for the 15th annual Arthur Wood Salvation Army Golf Tournament on December 5, 2020. There will be a toy drive at the Tournament, make sure you stop by and help this wonderful cause.

December is a great time of year to celebrate and congratulate. It is not too late to get into the swing of the season. We would love to host your holiday event and we have just



the place to do it! If you have never visited the club, you are welcome to come check it out by contacting Rylee Palmer, our new Membership Director (rpalmer@smokerisecc.com or 770-908-2582 ext.4) for a tour or to join us as a member for a day. Even the Holidays are better on the Rise! We wish you a healthy and happy holiday season!



Rotary Club of Tucker President Johnathan Clark and member (and Smoke Rise resident) Graham Stovall unload end-of-life computer equipment during last month's Electronics Recycling Day.

### Local Rotary Clubs Collect Five Tons of E-Waste in Recent Recycling Event

by L.A. Dison

During the recent Electronics Recycling Day, sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of Tucker and Stone Mountain, volunteers collected over five tons of working and non-working electronics and home medical equipment (HME). The event was held on November 7 in the parking lot of Ace Handy Hardware in Tucker; proceeds benefited Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC), a non-profit organization providing recycled mobility equipment for children and adults during or after a health crisis.

During the five-hour event, vehicles maintained a steady line of traffic while Rotarians and FODAC team members unloaded a wide range of electronics and HME, as well as collected cash donations totaling almost \$2,000. Working electronics will be sold in FODAC's Thrift Store; non-working will be sold for parts or to recycling companies. HME will be refurbished and redistributed to those in need.

FODAC is based in Tucker but serves the Metro Atlanta community. A pioneer in recycling and re-use, FODAC keeps 400 tons of materials out of landfills each year through its programs, and is recognized nationally for green best practices.

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**City of Tucker's Citizen of the Month: Ray Ganga**  
by Frank Luton

Once again, a Smoke Rise resident has been recognized by the City of Tucker as Citizen of the Month. Congratulations to Ray Ganga, the November Citizen of the Month!

Ray dedicates much of his time giving back to many of Tucker's community groups. He is a founding member of Main Street Theatre and continues to serve the theater in many ways. He is currently Chair of the Friends of Tucker Recreation Center while also working with the Tucker Civic Association to organize and host the annual Rivers Alive event that attracts a large number of Tucker volunteers for cleaning up a local waterway. In 2016, Ray founded (and continues to organize) the Tucker Job Fair, initially created to help veterans seeking employment and now open to anyone seeking employment.



Ray also volunteers with the annual Atlanta July 4th Peachtree Road Race, where he served as race director and waved the flag to start each wave of runners.

Ray is truly a gift that keeps on giving for all of his many contributions, not only to the City of Tucker and many of its community organizations, but to Atlanta and beyond. We are exceedingly grateful to Ray for all he has done and continues to do.

**SRP: Holiday News**

by Grier Kellett

Smoke Rise Prep (K-8), Stone Mountain's best kept secret, focuses on the core values of character, culture, and curriculum. In order to shape well-rounded students, our teachers and parents create an atmosphere that aligns with those core values. One way that we accomplish this is to create a healthy balance between academic rigor and enriching activities.



Smoke Rise Prep has almost wrapped up a wonderful first semester. We have safely and successfully implemented a phased-in hybrid model. Our teachers have been busy incorporating engaging, project-based lessons that challenge our students both in person and virtually. Our small class sizes create the optimal learning environment for our students. Our school continues to rigorously follow all CDC-recommended safety precautions. All students, faculty, and staff must wear masks (with daily mask breaks), social distance, wash hands frequently, and receive daily temperature checks. Our number #1 priority is providing a quality education as safely as possible while providing flexible options according to our families' comfort levels.

Smoke Rise Prep operates on a 4-day academic week, Monday to Thursday, with Fridays being Enrichment Days from home. Virtual Enrichment sessions are typically 30 minute sessions led by parents or other community members for volunteer credit. This month's spotlight is Photography Basics led by an alum, Jayla Cochran. Jayla is a dual-enrolled senior at Parkview High School and is completing her internship with Smoke Rise Prep. She is extremely talented and previously led a session called "Talks with a Teen" and is now working with middle schoolers on one of her passions, photography. She has been a tremendous asset to the Virtual Enrichment circuit. Some other fun and engaging Enrichment activities include art classes, Minecraft groups, Disney karaoke challenges, multiplication practice, and much more! Check back next month for our next spotlight!

We are winding it down in December but still have some great events. Are you interested in learning about high school options? On Thursday, December 10, we will host a live, virtual high school fair from 6-7:15pm. The live event will consist of breakout rooms where parents, students, and caretakers will be able to join in to ask questions and obtain additional information from your school's representative.

To hear more about specific grade levels, find our and to learn about additional offerings, contact [info@smokeriseprep.org](mailto:info@smokeriseprep.org). Spaces are limited!

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**HEALTH NOTES:** by Cheri Schneider, M.D.

**How Do You FEEL About 2020?**

No doubt about it, the year 2020 has left most of us feeling anxious and a bit uncertain about what the future holds. It seems like everything that can be shaken has been shaken. Coronavirus hit hard and the isolation, anxiety, and fear that went along with it took many by surprise. And Coronavirus was just a start – we have all been affected in some way by the events this year.

This brings me to the topic of what to do with the feelings you have. Some of you already deal with a sad or depressed feeling this time of year and you don't know why. Some of you are now gripped with a fear and anxiety that is overwhelming. You have fears about loss of health, exposure to disease, financial uncertainty, and worries about the future of our country. This is not a good way to start the happy holidays.

These basic habits can lay a framework for dealing with the stress and change:

- Get enough sleep. Set a scheduled time to go to sleep and to wake up. Resist sitting in front of the TV, computer or your phone late into the night. Turn off all screens at least 30 minutes before bedtime. Initiate a 'bedtime routine' that includes a calming ritual like a warm bath, cup of herbal tea and a book, or stretching exercises. Check your calendar and set your clothes and gear out for the next day. Getting enough sleep gives you the energy you need to deal with daily stresses.
- Eat fresh. Try new recipes with fresh, healthy ingredients and enjoy the natural taste of dishes without all the glop, salt and sugar added. Reinvent 'family dinner' and connect again.
- Exercise regularly. Aim for a minimum of 150 minutes of exercise per week. Get fresh air, sunshine, and a little wind in your hair daily. Establish a regular after-dinner walk. Your dog will love you for it, and your whole family could benefit! Dress for the weather and just do it.
- Make an indoor exercise plan for bad weather days. Your morning routine could incorporate 30 minutes on an exercise bike or treadmill while you listen to a program you enjoy. OR, try an online program like Silver Sneakers, Pilates, stretching, or a total body or stretchy band workout.
- Minimize alcohol. Alcohol can be a depressant. It can also cause rebound insomnia. This means you may fall asleep easily, but then awaken four hours later and not be able to go back to sleep.

A few other comments: Some of you have lost loved ones to COVID-19 or other diseases. It has been especially hard, because the hospitals and elder care facilities are not allowing family members to accompany or visit those who are sick. Some of your loved ones died alone. Some may have died at home because they were afraid to go to the hospital and risk being alone. These situations are not your fault! Journaling your thoughts will encourage you on your journey through the pain. Write a letter to this special person and tell them how you feel and how you love them. Plant a little memory garden to honor and remember your loved one. Meet online with a grief group. Call friends to pray with you or to be a listening ear. Accept help and care from your family and friends. If no one calls you, then reach out to others yourself. They may not have called because they are afraid of saying the wrong things. Reach out to others you know in similar situations or those who have lost loved ones in the recent past. They may still be missing their loved one too and have the energy to listen to your story.

If you are drowning in tears, you feel like life is not worth the struggle or are sleeping all day and can't seem to do the usual tasks of life, tell someone. Be accountable. Call your physician. Antidepressant and anti-anxiety medications are not an indication of failure. They can help stabilize your mood until you can grieve, work through your situation, and come out on the other side. A counselor or life coach can walk you through the rough spots. Remember the ones you have to live for and leave a legacy of life for them by getting the help you need.

**techtalk** *Holiday Gift Ideas*

by Susan Gilbert

When we used to visit my mother-in-law at her Florida condo, she had one strict rule: Nothing comes in unless it is consumable during your visit. At the time it seemed a little harsh but now, as I age and accumulate just as she did, I get it! Our houses do tend to fill up with trinkets, vases, trophies, decorative plates, pictures, and books. This memory reminded me that gifting can and should take on a different meaning and method, particularly during these challenging times with Coronavirus running its course. Here are some ideas that won't clutter someone's home and can help our struggling local businesses, many owned and operated by your neighbors.



This memory reminded me that gifting can and should take on a different meaning and method, particularly during these challenging times with Coronavirus running its course. Here are some ideas that won't clutter someone's home and can help our struggling local businesses, many owned and operated by your neighbors.

1. House Cleaning. I stumbled on this one during a call with my sister one day when she overheard the cleaners in the background at my home and remarked, "Wow, that must be nice having someone clean your house!" Ding, ding, ding! I called a local cleaning company in her town in Alabama and asked if they would allow me to "gift" her a surprise cleaning for her home. The company was all-in and had fun delighting her with a house cleaning she never expected.

2. Yard Service. Who couldn't use some help with their yard? There is always something that needs mowing, pruning, raking, cutting down or removing. So, whether it is a one-time annual visit or something more regular, this is a gift that keeps on giving.

3. Landscape Design. This idea was also inspired by my sister, who loves to work in her yard but struggles to know what to plant where and when. Encouraged by my success with the cleaning service, I searched for (and found) a local landscaping company just a mile from my sister's house that was happy to take my call and provide a landscape design for her property. Now, she has a gardening plan and knows exactly where and when to plant her favorite flowers.

4. Restaurant Gift Card. If you know a person's favorite restaurant or type of food, treat him or her to a restaurant gift card to show your thoughtfulness.

5. Gift Card at any local merchant. We have so many great small businesses here in our community, and every one of them would appreciate us purchasing gift cards or consumables from their shops. The list of locals includes Edible Arrangements, Georgia Gifts, Garden Enthusiast, Rosenfeld Jewelry, Cofer Brothers, Ace Hardware and so many more.

6. Pre-Paid Visit to a local barber, hair or nail salon. We have plenty of these places too! You can make someone special in your life feel truly cared for by giving them a relaxing spa day or personal care service nearby.

7. Gift Basket of themed items from your home. This can be a win-win! Gather up some "like new" items you already have in your home, i.e. Georgia Tech memorabilia, Georgia Bulldog mementos, or dishes, and gift them to a recent graduate or newly-wed just starting out.

8. Pet Services. If your gift recipient has a pet, there are lots of ways to build on that! The gift of grooming or future boarding at the local groomers or veterinarian could be the perfect gift.

Factories in China and around the world are buzzing with activity to produce the gifts we purchase this time of year. This year, let's step back and invest here where our gifts are magnified by pleasing the receiver and helping our neighbors. I encourage you to think outside the box and give a gift of gratitude for our neighbors who are working hard to keep their businesses going.

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### Out the Window *By Beth Henson*

Dinnertime was swiftly approaching as I stirred the aromatic, bubbling concoction on my warm stove. I knew 6:00 p.m. had rolled around when the meadowlark on my bird clock began to merrily sing. As I glanced out the kitchen window, a blanket of velvety darkness had already settled in. I always dreaded the time change and shortening of the late fall to winter days. The weather had stayed unseasonably warm giving a false sense of Jack Frost staying at bay. Peeking out again into the nightfall, I suddenly heard a substantial screeeeech coming from the silhouetted scraggly oak overhanging the driveway. My heart gave a few frightened jumps at the sheer magnitude of the noise, but my peaked curiosity spurred me to tip-toe out to investigate. Screeeeech! There it was again, but this time followed by a roll of deep and resonant hoo-hoo-hoo-hoos. Mr. Owl had come by to visit and possibly join us for dinner. I had seen him recently on my daily walks, magnificently perched in my neighbor's too-small tree. He was definitely a great horned owl sitting a stately two feet tall with his tiger striped body, enormous piercing yellow eyes and long, earlike downy tufts (giving him his name). I knew he lived almost everywhere in North America, but tended to like areas with woods bordered by open fields. My driveway had obviously provided him with a nice expectant dinner plate tonight. As I approached the oak tree, I heard the swift swoosh of his vast four and a half-foot wings on silent takeoff. Thanks for coming by big guy, but I prefer for you to dine elsewhere tonight!



*Great Horned Owl by Beth Henson*

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## Dudes on Food

### Episode 1: Hola, que esta cocicando?

On a random Wednesday night, the decision on where to kickoff our food adventures was a tough one. Debating a bit, hunger settled in and we decided on Taqueria Los Hermanos. We have been going to this authentic Mexican restaurant since they opened in 2001.

Los Hermanos is located at The Centre on Hugh Howell (just down from Publix). Tucker can claim this gem as the origin of a small family chain of now five locations, owned by three “hermanos” (brothers). It used to be half the size with a line out the door. Although it has grown, it has not lost its local neighborhood feel. You can almost be certain to run into somebody you know (as always, we actually did). The number of tables in the restaurant has been reduced and seem to

be a good 6 feet away from the next.

Okay, on to the food part. Being greeted and seated immediately, a warm basket of fresh chips, accompanied by a molcajete of the freshest salsa followed in seconds. And, the chips kept coming! Since it is a staple, we added cheese dip with pickled jalapeños. Of course, two ice-cold Negro Modelos kicked things off.

Wow, what a menu. Not quite War & Peace but if you are new, be prepared to read the descriptions. Use the quiet reading time to order another Negro Modelo, when the server arrives to ask if you are finally ready to order. The friendly waitstaff will not mind and will certainly answer questions or make suggestions.

Quick side note here: we remember when they

introduced the brisket tamales. We would make sure to come early on Fridays, before they sold out – definitely worth it.

As creatures of habit, we decided to move away from the ol’ standbys. We made our choices, knowing we would not be disappointed either way. Already big fans of their awesome corn chowder, we decided to start with the Charro Bean Soup instead. For the entrées, we landed a “surf and turf” approach, going with the “Res Ahumada” (smoked beef) brisket in a chipotle pepper sauce and the “Burrito Acapulquenoñ,” a grilled seafood burrito in a roasted poblano pepper cream sauce.

While the brisket, served with nicely seasoned sautéed spinach and roasted potatoes, did not

disappoint, the seafood burrito was the clear winner, even for a beef eater. We enjoyed the assortment of grilled sea-creatures, such as scallops, shrimp, calamari and tilapia, with perfectly charred asparagus and other vegetables, to be pulled through the delicious poblano pepper sauce.

Heads down in our entrées, we realized with much relief that we were missing our bean soup. With not much room to put it anywhere anyway we decided to save that for another day, allowing room to get desert instead.

After letting our entrées settle, with assistance from another Negro Modelo, we were ready for dessert. We went with the “Pastel De Tres Leches” and the “Bread pudding in a Tequila Sauce.” The

Tres Leches is a three-milk sponge cake topped with whipped cream and mixed fruit. It is a Mexican favorite and ours as well. It will satisfy any sweet tooth and is a great way to finish. The bread pudding was a bit more like a desert version of a French Toast, with the warm tequila sauce served in a small ramequin, being one of the more interesting selections we have tasted.

So, if you are a regular, you get this place. If you have not been in a while, time to head back. And, for those of you that are new to Tucker or have not been to Los Hermanos, head over and be ready for authentic Mexican in the great city of Tucker.

We must be on to something... Los Hermanos is the *AJC* winner for best Mexican food in Metro Atlanta 2020.



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NEWS YOU CAN USE

By AvivA Hoffmann

Good Trees Make Good Neighbors

Smoke Rise is a picturesque, wooded community. The trees had a lot to do with my family's decision to put down roots here two decades ago, and I am sure the same is true for many others! However, our lush landscapes can cause trouble. Following severe weather, we are used to losing power for a few hours or a couple of days. But, property damage from falling limbs and trees can be even more concerning.

You should examine your trees after a storm and periodically throughout the year. The University of Georgia's DeKalb County Extension division suggests looking out for the following:

- large broken or hanging branches, especially over electrical lines;
- dead branches within the canopy;
- cracks in the main tree trunk or at branch connections;
- large trunk wounds, cankers and galls;
- large tree hollows or cavities;
- cracks or separations in the soil, which may indicate excessive root movement;
- leaning trees that are already partially uprooted;
- mushrooms growing on trunks, at root flares or farther out but attached to the roots;
- excessive mistletoe (parasitic plant) or ivy growing up the tree.

For a proper tree inspection, use the coun-

ty extension service, the state forestry commission, a certified arborist, the county arborist or an urban forester. Georgiaarborist.org has a listing of GAA arborists, tree services, consultants, etc. The site also has information about liability.

Generally, ownership of a tree is determined by the location of the tree trunk. If the tree trunk stands entirely on a property, that tree is entirely that property owner's responsibility. In Georgia, "the owner of a tree is liable for damages and injuries from a falling tree only if he or she has preexisting knowledge that a tree is diseased, decayed, or otherwise considered to be dangerous. If the owner has no reason to suspect a problem—the tree has leaves and its general appearance is normal—then, in general, the owner is not at fault. However, if the owner reasonably should have known, then he or she is responsible." (Tree Ownership and Responsibility Pamphlet, UGA Extension) This means you must document the tree problem, to prove the owner should have known. There are different ways to document, like an arborist's inspection report mailed to your neighbor, an email, etc. I suggest the best way to maintain "neighborhood harmony" is to begin handling all tree (and other) disputes with friendly, in-person communications!

For debris removal, the DeKalb County Sanitation department will collect properly placed debris stacked neatly at your curb on your regular collection date.

Branches and limbs must be trimmed of twigs, vines and leaves, and cut to a maximum of four feet in length. The removed twigs, vines, and leaves must be placed in approved receptacles. Trees must be cut where each piece does not exceed a maximum of 50 pounds. Tree limbs that are cut by professional or hired contractors should not be left at the curb for collection by the Sanitation Division.

DeKalb County has officially designated the preservation of existing trees as, "a public purpose that protects the public health, safety, general welfare and aesthetics of DeKalb County and all its citizens." There are regulations on tree removal in our neighborhoods. Dead, diseased or hazardous trees may be removed at any time. However, homeowners may only remove up to five healthy trees on their property per calendar year, with some restrictions. If you need to remove more than five trees, you must have all trees assessed by a certified arborist and forward tree assessments in writing to the county. (County Code; Chapter 14: Land



Development, Article Two: Environmental Control, Sec. 14-39 - Tree Protection, © Exemptions)

All DeKalb County Code of Ordinances can be read online. ([https://library.municode.com/ga/dekalb\\_county/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances](https://library.municode.com/ga/dekalb_county/codes/code_of_ordinances))

Finally, a note for the holidays: DeKalb's Sanitation Division provides county residents free curbside Christmas tree collection from

December 26 through the end of the second week in January. You must remove all decorations from trees and place them curbside for pickup on your collection day. Trees should be seven feet or shorter (cut down to size, if needed). All trees are recycled and converted to mulch. For more details, go online to: [dekalbcountryga.gov/sanitation/collection-procedures](http://dekalbcountryga.gov/sanitation/collection-procedures)

Happy Holidays!!!



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### 1000 Orchids? Can you imagine it?

by Quill Duncan

November's Morning Glories meeting featured Janice Gummersall of Lilburn sharing her passion: orchids! Janice has over 1000 orchids in a greenhouse on her property and she brought a number of the plants to our meeting at the Smoke Rise Country Club. She became interested in orchids in 1977 and that early interest grew into quite a commitment to propagation and cultivation of orchids, which are the second largest flowering plant family in the world after grasses. Interestingly, Janice dismissed the concept of "ice cube once a week" for orchids, explaining that orchids have specific water needs and a small dose of lukewarm water, once a week or less, is actually the best procedure. Repotting every six months to two years encourages growth and flower production, and indirect bright light is very important for bloom. Orchids require a special medium, like a bark, instead of soil for the best growing conditions. The Vanilla orchid is actually a vine, and the vanilla bean is the orchid's seed pod. Some orchids, such as the chocolate orchid, have a scent while others have no scent. Happily, two beautiful blooming orchids were raffle prizes won by two lucky ladies: MaryAnne Anderson and Brenda Jones!

"In Autumn, every leaf is a flower," said President Joyce Ray, quoting plantsman Jim Gibbs on his favorite season. This fall has been spectacular as our beautiful hardwoods in Smoke Rise show off their colors.

The club welcomed three new members to the meeting: Taffey Bisbee, Dolly Moy and Amie Walsh. We also collected over 70 new toys for the Wellroot Family Services foster care agency to give to the foster families in their service area. Club members had fun selecting the toys that will be enjoyed this holiday season. As the photo indicates, Chairman Ruth Ann Hill filled her car with the bounty.



Chair Glendolyn Hallman asked for Christmas cards to be collected for the essential workers at the Veteran's Hospital in Decatur. Club members are asked to write notes of thanks to the workers for their service to those in their care. A wreath was placed at the Blue Star Marker at Smoke Rise Elementary School commemorating Veteran's Day on November 11th, 2020. The club will also decorate the exterior of the historic Wells Brown House in Stone Mountain Village in early December with period appropriate greenery and fruits. Happy Holidays and Happy Gardening, friends!



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas everywhere you go! That sentiment is definitely true at 1833 Smokerise Summit. The Christmas season is in full swing and the lights are shining brightly. As in years past, **donations are being collected for the Georgia Make-A-Wish Foundation.** Please note that 100% of collected donations go directly to this worthy charity. Help us exceed last year's total of \$7,043 and reach our new **goal of \$10,000.**

To help achieve this goal we are asking individuals and local businesses to get involved and match donations or a portion of donations so that we can bring as much cheer as possible to local children through the Georgia Make-A-Wish Foundation. Since 2012, a total of \$36,700.13 has been collected for charity. For information on matching donations, please call Victor at (404) 786-1330.

Merry Christmas and be sure to come by and enjoy the lights with your loved ones!

### FODAC Seeks to Raise Funds During "12 Days of Christmas" Virtual Event

by L.A. Dison

For many years, Breakfast with Santa, held annually in December at the Atlanta Evergreen Marriott Conference Resort in Stone Mountain, has been a major fundraiser for Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC). This year, COVID has forced the FODAC development team to come up with a virtual fundraising event that would safely celebrate the holiday.

The FODAC "12 Days of Christmas" Virtual Event will raise funds for its Pediatric Home Medical Equipment (HME) Program by sharing the stories of how FODAC changes the lives of pediatric clients and their families. From December 1-12, this virtual event will share videos, pictures, quotes and more about FODAC kids and families, online and on social media, to raise awareness about the program while celebrating the holidays and spreading cheer.

By providing pediatric equipment, FODAC eases the burden on caregivers and allows children with mobility challenges to be more independent and self-sufficient. With the proper equipment, children can participate more fully in school, social engagements and community activities. Without FODAC support, many families could not afford equipment, or with insurance might have long waiting periods or high deductibles. Providing equipment for children is challenging; children often outgrow items before insurance or program regulations allow replacement, or are limited in the number or types of items covered.

All donations for FODAC "12 Days of Christmas" Virtual Event will support FODAC Pediatric HME program, helping children throughout Georgia and the Southeast. Donors are encouraged to post on social media pictures of what makes their holidays special; use the hashtag #FODAC12DaysOfChristmas and FODAC will share posts on its social media feeds during the event.

For information about sponsoring "12 Days of Christmas," contact Laurie Ann Kimbrell at laurieannkimbrell@fodac.org or call (770) 491-9014 ext. 128. Sponsors will receive recognition prior to and during the twelve days of the event. FODAC is also looking for companies to host toy drives, as they give a free toy to every pediatric client it serves throughout the year.

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## Amen, Let's Eat!



by Joyce Ray

Let's make cookies! I practiced for years to learn how to make the camera-ready decorated Christmas cookies that look so pretty in magazines and cookbooks. I finally found the perfect recipe (below); however, I am not skilled or gifted with patience to decorate and make them look picture perfect. Gene's all-time favorite is the old-fashioned fruit cookies, and that is more my style. I can just dump everything together and drop them out and bake them. The house smells wonderful from all the spices and there are plenty to share or store for later.

During this year when COVID-19 is in the forefront of our holiday plans, try making a variety of your favorite cookies and share them with friends. Pack them immediately after they cool into individual bags or purchase some cute tins or boxes from the dollar stores.

### Rolled Sugar Cookies

1½ cups butter, softened	2 cups white sugar
4 eggs	1 tsp. vanilla extract
5 cups all-purpose flour	2 tsp. Baking Powder
1 tsp. salt	

In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugar until smooth. Beat in eggs and vanilla, stir in the flour, baking powder and salt. Cover and chill dough for at least one hour or overnight.

Preheat the oven to 400°. Roll out dough on a floured surface to ½ inch thick. Cut into shapes with cookie cutters. Place cookies 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake for 6 to 8 minutes in the preheated oven. Cool completely. NOTE: You can make ahead and freeze the entire cookie sheets with the cut-out cookies – wrap in plastic wrap.

### Sugar Cookie Icing

This icing dries hard and shiny and the colors stay bright.  
1 cup confectioners' sugar      ¼ tsp. almond extract  
2 tsp. milk      2 tsp. light corn syrup  
Assorted food coloring

In a small bowl, stir together confectioners' sugar and milk until smooth. Beat in corn syrup and almond extract until icing is smooth and glossy. If icing is too thick, add more corn syrup. Divide into separate bowls and add food colorings to each to desired intensity. Dip cookies or paint them with a pastry brush. You want the icing to be thin enough to spread but not so thin that it soaks in the cookie. The icing will harden as you work so work fast and thin as you need to. If desired, add sprinkles/ decorations before icing dries.

### Butter Pecan Turtle Cookies

Crust: 2 cup all-purpose flour  
½ cup unsalted butter, softened  
1 cup firmly packed brown sugar  
Pecan halves

Preheat the oven to 350°. Mix sugar, flour and butter until particles are fine. Pat firmly into an ungreased 13x9x2 inch pan. Sprinkle pecans over the unbaked crust.

Caramel Layer: In a heavy 1-qt. saucepan, combine 2/3 cup butter and ½ cup brown sugar. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until the entire surface of the mixture begins to boil. Boil ½ to 1 minute. Pour caramel layer over crust. Bake at 350° for 18-22 minutes or until the entire caramel layer is bubbly and the crust is light golden brown. Remove from the oven. Immediately sprinkle 1 cup milk chocolate chips over the pan. Allow chips to melt for 2-3 minutes, then lightly swirl chips as they melt. Allow to cool completely, then cut into 2-inch bars. Store in a covered container in a cool, dry location.

### Thumb Print Cookies

2 cups flour	¾ cups confectioners' sugar
1 cup finely chopped nuts	1 cup cold butter
1 tsp. vanilla	
Red Current or any tart red jelly for center	

Combine flour, sugar and ½ cup nuts. Cut in butter. Mix dough with a pastry blender until smooth. Shape in 2-inch balls and place on a non-stick pan. Use finger to indent center. Fill the center of each with ¼ tsp. jelly. Bake 350° for 15-18 minutes.

### Fruit Cookies

1 cup butter	1 cup light brown sugar
3 eggs	3 cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda	1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. nutmeg	½ tsp. ground cloves
½ cup milk	2 cups chopped dates
6 slices chopped candied pineapple	
1 cup candied cherry halves	
7 cups coarsely chopped walnuts or pecans	

Sift dry ingredients and add spices. Cream butter and sugar add eggs and milk. Add flour mixture. In a large bowl prepare fruit and nuts, sprinkle lightly with 2 tablespoons flour (to keep fruit from sticking together). Add batter and stir until all fruit is covered. Mixture will be stiff. Drop by tablespoons on a well-greased cookie sheet. Bake at 300° 20-30 minutes until cookies are firm to the touch. Makes approximately 7 dozen.

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