

NEWS FROM CITY HALL

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CITY OF AVONDALE ESTATES · AVONDALE ESTATES, GEORGIA
NEWSLETTER 397

March - April 2025

07

BEE CITY USA



15

WEEKEND WIND
DOWN CONCERTS



19

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Graham Reiney, Commissioner
Lisa Shortell, Commissioner
Michael Smith, Commissioner

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Jerry "J.D." Branch, Deputy Chief

Public Works Department

Marcel Jackson, Public Works Director
Don Huff, Public Works Supervisor

Cover Photo: Reid Ramsay/Beer Street Journal



Get those picnic blankets ready – the Weekend Wind Down Concerts return to the Town Green April 13.

Stay in Touch with the City of Avondale Estates

Stay connected with what's happening through the many communications channels used by the city.

Newsletter

To receive this bimonthly newsletter in the mail or electronically, please email communications@avondaleestates.org.

E-News

The city emails an electronic newsletter once a week and as needed for special announcements and alerts. To sign up, visit www.avondaleestates.org/e-news.html.



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News from City Hall - Newsletter Disclaimer

Purpose

The City Newsletter was created for the purpose of providing a written medium for regularly sharing information from City Hall. It is a vehicle for the Board of Mayor and Commissioners and the City Manager to share information relevant to issues discussed, actions taken, and plans made by the Board of Mayor and Commissioners, to share newsworthy information about our residents and businesses, and to provide a calendar of scheduled City events.

From the Mayor Pro Tem



by Lisa Shortell
Commissioner and Mayor Pro Tem, Board of Mayor and Commissioners

As Earth Day approaches, one thing most Avondale Estates residents can agree on is the desire for an environmentally friendly city. Advancing sustainable initiatives has been one of my goals as a commissioner since I started serving in 2018. While the city was already doing some things that benefited the environment, I hoped we could make a deeper commitment.

Over the years, and in multiple ways, we have. Whether it's a focus on native plantings or increasing walkability in our downtown, we are making progress. I am delighted to share the details about some of our efforts and upcoming "green" events.

Leading the Way to Sustainable Living

Roughly a year and a half ago, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners (BOMC) asked city staff to pursue certification as an Atlanta Regional Commission Green Community. The program recognizes local governments that reduce their environmental impact through actionable measures. This effort is a heavy lift, and city staff have put forth a lot of effort reviewing policies and practices through a green lens. Choosing to move ahead with the certification has encouraged us to reflect upon what we're doing and has added metrics, accountability, and new goals to our sustainability work.

The program provides a helpful structure for us to make step-by-step progress. Municipalities can achieve certification with a minimum of 175 points across ten categories:

- ▶ Green Building
- ▶ Energy Efficiency
- ▶ Green Power
- ▶ Water Use Reduction and Efficiency
- ▶ Trees and Greenspace
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Recycling and Waste Reduction
- ▶ Land Use
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Innovation

The certification aligns with many of the city's initiatives that have long been in the works. Items already completed or in progress such as the recently rewritten zoning code, which includes points for resiliency, the Complete Street Project, which will make our main street safer for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers, and the Historic Preservation Commission, which preserves the historical character of the city's architecture, all support this certification. We also added new projects that align with the city's goal, such as becoming a Bee City USA. You can learn more about how these initiatives foster a greener, healthier, and more livable city at a webinar on March 19. Scan the QR code to register.



Commitment to Trees



February was a busy month for recognizing the city's commitment to trees. I enjoyed celebrating Georgia's Arbor Day and the city's designation as a Tree City USA for its 41st year. Of the 150 communities in Georgia with the designation, only Columbus has been a Tree City USA longer than Avondale Estates. Additionally, in partnership with Trees Atlanta, forty more trees were planted in the city. The Tree City recognition isn't just platitudes. It's an important badge of honor for our community and recognizes the city's actions and commitment to growing and maintaining our trees for a healthy environment.

Pilot Compost Program

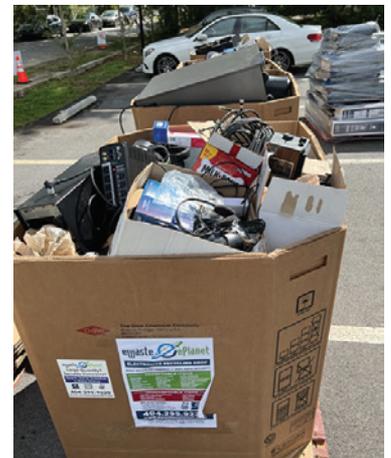
The city received funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and partnered with CompostNow, Dekalb County Super District 6 Commissioner Ted Terry, Food Well Alliance, and Roots Down to initiate this program. They may be small, but those little green bins you see on the streets on Wednesdays make a big impact. To date, 530 households have participated and diverted 69,833 pounds of food waste from the landfill.



Recycle and Upcycle for Earth Day

As we approach Earth Day, the city is offering a few events to collectively reduce our ecological imprint. Rather than sending vinyl banners from light poles and street corners to the landfill, the city has partnered with Fiber Parts and the Avondale Arts Alliance to repurpose them into reusable totes and bags. Come make your own one-of-a-kind bag on Sunday, March 23, at the Avondale Arts Center for free. On April 19, clear out old cell phones, laptops, TVs, and other items taking up space in your basement for the free electronics recycling event. And clean out your bathroom cabinets by recycling prescription drugs at City Hall on April 26.

I am so proud of the work the city, our citizens, and our businesses have done to become an even more sustainable community. Let's celebrate our positive impact and strive for continued success!



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Green info: Recycling Tips/Earth Day



Many Ways to Celebrate Earth Day

Earth Day, celebrated annually on April 22, highlights the importance of environmental protection and sustainability. It is a global call to action, encouraging individuals and communities to address climate change, reduce pollution, and preserve natural resources for future generations. Since its inception in 1970, Earth Day has grown into a worldwide movement, inspiring millions to participate in activities like clean-ups, recycling, and educational initiatives. The day emphasizes that small actions, when combined, can lead to significant positive impacts on the planet. With Earth Day approaching, it's the perfect time to revisit ways to make a positive impact on the environment.

Avondale Estates Seeks ARC Green Communities Certification



The Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities program encourages local governments to reduce their environmental footprint through actionable measures. Municipalities can earn certification (Bronze to Platinum) by accumulating at least 175 points across ten categories.

Interested in learning more? The City of Avondale Estates will host a live webinar on March 19 at noon to notify residents about current and upcoming initiatives to promote green and sustainable practices. Avondale Estates is looking to obtain the ARC Green Communities certification in 2025. This webinar will give more information on what the certification will look like and how residents can help.



Webinar Registration

Topics include:

- ▶ Stormwater education
- ▶ Green Infrastructure
- ▶ Zoning policies that promote pedestrian access
- ▶ Bee City and more!

To register for the webinar, scan the QR code (the webinar link will be posted on social media and emailed to all who register).

Recycling Tips

Recycling is one of the easiest ways to help protect the environment by reducing waste, conserving resources, and saving energy. As a community, it's crucial that community members not only understand the importance of recycling but also adopt best practices to make a real impact. Here are some key tips to help make recycling easier and more efficient:

1. **Know What to Recycle.** The city accepts all aluminum items, all cardboard (flattened), all paper products, and plastic containers labeled 1-5 and 7. Glass, Styrofoam products, and film bags are not accepted.
2. **Clean and Dry.** Rinse containers to avoid contaminating the recycling stream.
3. **Don't Bag It.** Plastic grocery bags or "film bags" cannot be processed for recycling. Instead, reuse or recycle them at designated drop-off locations such as grocery stores.
4. **No sorting needed.** Place all recycling items in or on top of the bin. Items outside the bin will be treated as trash.

Recycling is a shared responsibility. By following these simple steps, everyone can contribute to a cleaner, healthier community and a better planet. Let's work together to prioritize recycling and encourage others to join in!



Electronics Recycling Event – April 19

Help keep electronics out of the landfill. City residents can safely recycle used electronics, monitors, smartphones and more for FREE with eWaste ePlanet. Last year 5,505 pounds of electronics were recycled, including 594 pounds of LCD TVs and 4,911 pounds (about twice the weight of a Clydesdale horse) of mixed electronics, including monitors, desktops, laptops, smartphones and other devices. Let’s beat that total this year. All hard drives will be wiped to NIST 800-88 standards or destroyed by shredding. By recycling obsolete equipment, sensitive data is protected, and hazardous waste is kept from landfills. Stay tuned for more details.



Vinyl Upcycle Workshop with Fiber Parts and Avondale Arts Alliance

Join the city and Fiber Parts for a FREE upcycle workshop at the Avondale Arts Alliance on March 23 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., where attendees can repurpose old city banners into totes and bags. The event offers a creative way to recycle and give new life to previously used materials. Two instructors from Fiber Parts will be there to assist and they are bringing sewing machines to help with projects. Follow the city’s social media and E-News to learn more.



Buzz-Worthy News:

Avondale Estates Becomes a Bee City USA Affiliate

In January, Avondale Estates officially joined the Bee City USA network, reinforcing the city’s commitment to creating a healthier habitat for pollinators. As an affiliate, the city pledges to promote sustainable practices, enhance pollinator-friendly landscapes, and raise awareness about the crucial role bees and other pollinators play in local ecosystems. This designation aligns with Avondale Estates’ ongoing environmental initiatives, ensuring a greener, more vibrant community for residents and wildlife alike.



The Board of Mayor and Commissioners unanimously adopted a resolution to designate the city as an affiliate on December 11, 2024. Commissioners expressed support, noting the city’s commitment to green practices and emphasizing the importance of codifying such initiatives to achieve broader environmental goals. The measure reflects a shared vision of promoting eco-friendly community standards. The city was officially certified on January 26, 2025, and joins 16 other Bee City USA affiliates in Georgia and 434 Bee City USA Affiliates and Campuses in 47 states across the country united in improving their landscapes for pollinators.

Bee City USA is an initiative of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, a nonprofit organization based in Portland, Oregon, with offices across the country. Bee City USA’s mission is to galvanize communities to sustain pollinators by providing them with a healthy habitat, rich in a variety of native plants and free of insecticides. Pollinators like bumble bees, sweat bees, mason bees, honeybees, butterflies, moths, beetles, flies, hummingbirds, and many others are responsible for the reproduction of almost ninety percent of the world’s flowering plant species and one in every three bites of food we consume. Georgia is home to more than 500 native bee species.

“How each city completes the steps to conserve pollinators is up to them,” said Bee City USA Coordinator Laura Rost. “To maintain their affiliation, each affiliate is expected to report on their achievements and celebrate being a Bee City USA affiliate every year.”

Affiliates commit to holding public awareness activities, publicly acknowledging their commitment to the program through a standing committee, signage and web links, and preparing an annual report on habitat enhancement activities.

The Greenspace Advisory Committee is designated as the facilitating committee for the city’s efforts to engage the community in promoting pollinator conservation.

For information about four simple ways to help pollinators, visit the Xerces Society’s Bring Back the Pollinators page: <https://xerces.org/bringbackthepollinators/>

Safer Streets Ahead

The decision to pilot a traffic calming project on the cut-through streets in Avondale wasn't made lightly by the BOMC. Consistent feedback from the community highlighted rising traffic volumes and unsafe speeds. While "eye-dar" (visual perception) can make speeds seem higher than they are, the discomfort of pedestrians and cyclists is real. Even if the speeds aren't as high as perceived, the unease is significant.

Data-Driven Traffic Calming Measures: Addressing Speeding and Rising Traffic Volumes

After considering alternatives, like increased police presence, the BOMC chose traffic calming measures as a necessary and more effective step, even if it addressed a perception issue. The data on speeding proved more compelling than expected: before the measures, 10% of vehicles exceeded 30 mph, a dangerous speed for pedestrians and cyclists, with less than 1% exceeding that after implementation. At 30 mph, a pedestrian's chances of survival are only 50%, emphasizing the critical need to slow traffic.

Traffic volume increases were also surprising. Data showed rising traffic volumes across the city over several years, not just on Kensington. But contrary to what was anticipated, during construction of the North Avondale streetscapes, the volumes remained the same in downtown while they continued to increase in other parts of the city, suggesting construction is not the cause of increased traffic in the neighborhood.

The speed data from the city's new Scout Speed Trailer allows for real-time speed monitoring and has been used to track effectiveness before and after traffic calming measures. Additionally, the city uses Placer AI to track volume based on cell phone data, which, even after adjusting for bikes and pedestrians, still shows significant increases in vehicle travel in the neighborhood year over year.



Community-Driven Traffic Calming Pilot Informed by Professionals

In response to community input, the city worked with Lord Aeck & Sargent's urban design team to create a traffic calming plan, which was revised based on feedback from a well-attended open house and online comments. After careful review, the BOMC chose to test temporary measures on Kensington and South Avondale, where concerns were highest. The pilot kept the approach simple and cost low so as to focus on assessing impact before moving forward with much more expensive and permanent installations.

Once implemented, staff measured speeds and volumes and sought more feedback from community members and professionals. Kimley-Horn traffic engineers reviewed the project, confirming it was safe and effective. They also provided additional suggestions for problematic areas. Some critics cite the aesthetics of the project, particularly the vertical elements designed to slow traffic. While finding affordable, effective elements is challenging, wave delineators were chosen because they were more attractive than other options. The BOMC is currently exploring alternative options and reviewing potential locations to determine if any vertical elements can be removed or replaced with features such as planters or bollards to create a more visually appealing result.

Revised Plans Under Consideration

After thorough discussion, the BOMC directed the staff to present a few revised striping plans for the most controversial intersection for further consideration. These revised plans will reduce the striped area at Berkeley, allowing for smoother traffic flow. Additionally, the plans will extend the right-hand stacking lane from South Avondale to Clarendon and introduce a gored median at the intersection of Kensington and Covington Highway. The staff have also been tasked with continuing collaboration with the Georgia Department of Transportation to eliminate the free-flowing right-hand turning movement from Covington Highway to Kensington.

Summary

The decision to pilot traffic calming measures is a commitment by the BOMC to address both the real and perceived safety concerns that have long been voiced by our community. Data, combined with the clear discomfort expressed by pedestrians and cyclists, made it impossible to ignore the pressing need for action. Despite some necessary sacrifices, the city's move to implement these traffic calming measures is a proactive step toward safeguarding public well-being and ensuring the safety of all who walk, bike, or drive in Avondale. Tackling these issues now, through carefully considered, tested solutions, is crucial for maintaining the comfort and security of our residents.

The ongoing revisions to the plan, including updated striping and alternative visual elements, are a testament to the BOMC's commitment to finding balanced, effective, and aesthetically pleasing solutions that work for everyone. This pilot project will continue to evolve, incorporating valuable feedback, data, and expert insights, ensuring that Avondale remains a safe, walkable, and thriving city for all its residents. As the BOMC thoroughly evaluates the impact of this pilot, more permanent, long-term solutions will be considered. For the latest updates and details on the project, please visit the city's website.

What is a Bike Boulevard?

A bike boulevard is a residential street designed to make biking safer and more enjoyable while still allowing local vehicle traffic. It's a cost-effective way to encourage people to use bikes and other non-motorized forms of transportation and help reduce traffic congestion. In places like Avondale Estates, this is achieved through signs, pavement markings, and other measures that help reduce car traffic and create a safer environment for everyone. Unlike bike lanes or tracks, which are car-free zones, bike boulevards still allow cars but give priority to bikers and pedestrians. This makes it easier for everyone to safely share the road while promoting a more sustainable, community-friendly way of getting around.





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Avondale Estates Named Best Small Town Beer Scene by USA Today

Avondale Estates has once again claimed the top spot as the "Best Small Town Beer Scene" in the United States, as recognized by USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards. This marks the city's fourth win in five years, solidifying its place as a powerhouse in the craft beer community. This achievement would not have been possible without the dedicated support and votes from the residents and community of Avondale Estates, whose enthusiasm helped secure the title once again.

The annual competition features 20 small towns, each with a population under 30,000, vying for the coveted title. Despite being one of the smallest contenders, Avondale Estates has consistently stood out thanks to its vibrant and growing beer scene.

The city's craft beer landscape is anchored by beloved local breweries Wild Heaven, Little Cottage, and The Lost Druid, and the craft beer bar, My Parents Basement. These spots, along with community staples like The Stratford Pub and O'Keefe's Pub, offer residents and visitors a diverse array of beer experiences. This dynamic mix of breweries and pubs has made Avondale Estates a destination for beer enthusiasts.

Adding to the excitement, the town will host its annual Avondale Ale Day on October 25. This event highlights the best local brewing and brings beer lovers together to celebrate the community's craft culture.



Business License Renewal

It is time for business license renewals in Avondale Estates. Businesses should be on the look out for an email with instructions on how to renew their licenses starting in March. Businesses that need to update their contact information should contact the finance team at licenses@avondaleestates.org to make sure the city has the correct email, mailing address, and phone numbers on file. Businesses can expect their licenses within 14 business days after submitting their application and payment.

City Mourns the loss of Terry Gaiger

The Board of Mayor and Commissioners, along with city staff, sends condolences to the family of Avondale resident Terry Dean Giager, who passed away on February 18, 2025. Giager served the city of Avondale Estates for eight years in numerous roles, including mayor, mayor pro tem and commissioner.



Avondale Estates Recognized as Tree City USA for 41st Consecutive Year

For the 41st consecutive year, the Arbor Day Foundation has named the City of Avondale Estates a Tree City USA. The city also received its fifteenth Tree City USA Growth Award for its commitment to effective urban forest management. There are more than 150 Tree Cities in Georgia and more than 3,500 in the country. Avondale Estates is one of the three oldest tree cities in the state.

The Tree City USA program, administered by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, provides the framework for community forestry management for cities across America that meet specific requirements. The city achieved Tree City USA recognition by meeting the program's four requirements: a tree board or department, a tree-care ordinance, an annual community forestry budget of at least \$2 per capita and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.



The Growth Award is granted to Tree City USA communities actively engaged in enhancing tree care and community involvement throughout the year. This year, the city qualified by investing in staff training, adding 219 sites to its tree inventory, and planting 80 trees. The Georgia Forestry Commission defines cities that receive this award as going “above and beyond the requirements for urban forestry programs.”

The city and Avondale Estates Garden Club (AEGC) celebrated Georgia’s Arbor Day on February 21 by planting a swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) near the North Woods rain gardens. City staff, residents and members of the AEGC attended the tree-planting event, which included a tree proclamation read by Commissioner and Mayor Pro Tem Lisa Shortell.

Residents at The Willis Become Latest Composting Participants

The Willis is the first multi-family residence in Avondale Estates to join the curbside composting pilot, kicking off the inclusion of apartments, condominiums and townhomes to the program. This brings the total number of participants in the program to 530, totaling more than 69,000 pounds of waste diverted from landfills.

Composting plays a vital role in reducing methane emissions from landfills while turning organic waste into nutrient-rich soil. By diverting food scraps from the trash, communities can decrease their environmental footprint and contribute to healthier local ecosystems.

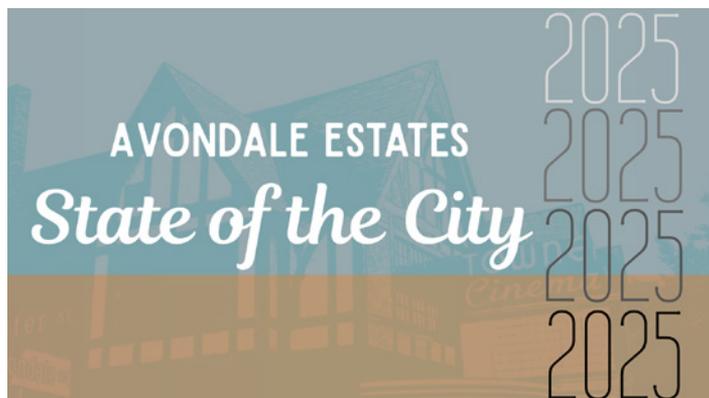
There’s still time to sign up for the (free!) curbside composting program and receive your composting bin. Just scan the QR code and follow the prompts.

This pilot program is made possible through a USDA grant and the partnerships of the City of Avondale Estates, Roots Down, Ted Terry’s DeKalb County Super District 6, Food Well Alliance, and CompostNow.



Save the Date: State of the City on April 2

The city invites the community to join Mayor Jonathan Elmore and the city commissioners for the 2025 State of the City address on Wednesday, April 2, at 6 p.m. at the Avon Theater (106 N Avondale Road). Stay tuned for more details.



Dunwick Stormwater Improvement Project to Begin Construction

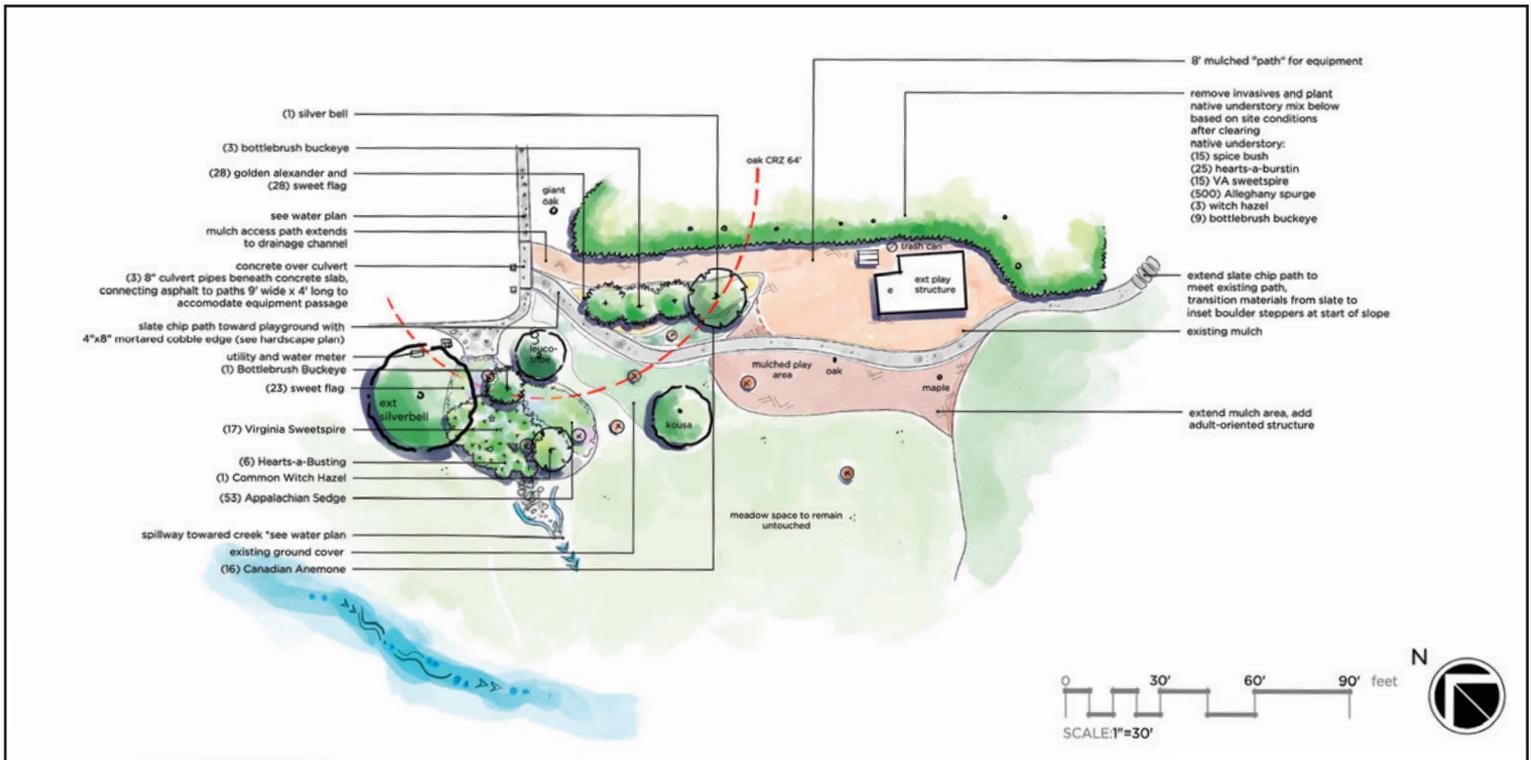
The Dunwick Drive Stormwater Improvement Project construction is set to begin in early April. The design includes piping an open channel between Berkeley Road and Banbury Cross. After the pipe is installed in native bioretention areas, riprap and native plants will be added to slow surface flow. The project is being partially funded by the 319(h) grant with the Georgia Environmental Protection division and will address flooding at the Dunwick and Berkeley intersection. The project is expected to be completed in eight to 12 months once construction begins.



AEPD Officer Promotion

Officer B. Johnson was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in the Uniform Patrol Division on Tuesday, February 18, 2025. Sergeant Johnson joined the Avondale Estates Police Department in December 2022. Before joining AEPD, Sergeant Johnson spent nine years with the Georgia Department of Corrections (DOC), where he advanced to the rank of Lieutenant. Sgt. Johnson transitioned from the DOC to law enforcement in 2021. He has completed all three levels of Supervision Training and is a certified Field Training Officer. Born and raised in central Georgia, Sgt. Johnson is the seventh of ten children in his family.





Fletcher Park Improvements Scheduled for April

Improvements to Fletcher Park are set to begin construction in early April and will take six to eight months to complete. During this time there will be sections of the park closed to ensure the safety of residents. Elements of the park improvements include:

1. Keeping the existing wooden playground equipment and giving it a small makeover by sanding the wood and removing older beams.
2. Adding wooden multi-generation playground equipment and small accessory play structure with signage to provide adult fitness options.
3. Removing invasive plants along the northeast property line, maintaining the established trees and hollies, and replanting the bank with native plants to prevent erosion.
4. Lining the Lakeshore Plaza entrance with rocks to direct water into a shallow rain garden.
5. Incorporating an ADA-compliant slate trail leading to the mulch playground area and improvements to the walking trail continuing to access Lakeshore Drive.
6. Modifying the stormwater solution on the north entrance to create a more efficient approach as suggested by the Greenspace Committee.
7. Moving the Swift Tower.



National Drug Take Back Day

The Avondale Estates Police Department encourages people to participate in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, April 26 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at participating locations, including Avondale Estates City Hall. The DEA's National Take Back event provides an opportunity for all Americans to prevent the misuse of prescription drugs, which often results in drug addiction and overdose.

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Events



Easter Egg Hunt at the Town Green

Join Gospel Hope Church for the annual Community Easter Egg Hunt at the Town Green on Saturday, April 19, from 10 a.m. to noon. All are invited for a morning of fun-filled activities.

Museum School 5k and Fun Run

The Museum School's (TMS) annual Explorer Dash 5K and Fun Run is on March 22. The race route starts and ends at TMS and winds through Avondale Estates. This family-fun event raises awareness about The Museum School and unites the community by highlighting the importance of incorporating healthy living and eating habits into everyday life. Proceeds from the event will benefit The Museum School PTO/Foundation and the school's continued progress.

Free Yoga Returns to the Town Green

Join Avondale Estates' Anurati Yoga

Studio on the lawn in front of the Town Green stage for a FREE yoga class on the first Tuesday of the month this spring on March 4, April 1 and May 6 at 6 p.m.

Bring a yoga mat and a water bottle. No experience is necessary. Classes will be accessible to all levels.

Yoga on the Town Green is possible with generous sponsorship from The Homegrown Real Estate Team.

Mister John's Music Free Baby Music Class

Mister John's Music will host a free baby music class geared toward 0-3-year-olds and their caregivers at the Town Green on April 6 at 3 p.m. with musical Easter surprises and a chance to take a photo with the Easter Bunny.

Classic Car Parade

On Easter, April 20, at 1:30 p.m., a parade of classic, special interest, and collector cars will cruise through the residential streets of Avondale Estates. Residents are encouraged to watch the festive display from their front yards and enjoy the unique vehicles as they pass by.



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Weekend Wind Down Concerts Return to the Town Green

The Weekend Wind Down concert series returns to the Town Green for its fourth year in April. Concerts occur one Sunday evening each month, April through June. The free series will take a break in the middle of summer and resume in the fall. The events are free to the public and food and beverages will be available for purchase.

Check out the first few bands below and save the dates.

Music will begin an hour after the event’s start time. Come early to enjoy the food trucks and vendors.

The Town Green is located at 64 N. Avondale Rd., Avondale Estates, Georgia 30002. Parking is available on streets in the downtown district unless otherwise marked. Public parking lots are located off Lake St. and at City Hall. Please respect the city’s businesses and do not park in their parking lots during business hours.

Sunday, April 13, 5-8 p.m.



Bird City Revolutionaries blend reggae, dub, Afro-funk, Ethiopian jazz, and psychedelic grooves to create a sound as dynamic and diverse as their members. Formed in October 2011, the band brings together veteran musicians from some of Atlanta’s most beloved reggae, dub and jazz projects, resulting in a genre-defying musical experience.

Sunday, May 18, 5-8 p.m.



Tire Fire, an electric Thunderclap of burning bluegrass sound, witnessing a Tire Fire performance is like grabbing onto a live wire of musical energy. Tire Fire will take you on a journey from the foothills of the Appalachians to the heights of your imagination, featuring a fast-paced, psychedelic use of acoustic instrumentation alongside Americana and Newgrass songwriting.

Sunday, June 11: 6-9 p.m.



The Jesse Williams Band, recognized in Creative Loafing as one of Atlanta’s most notable women in the blues and Guitar.com as a “young bluesbreaker making the blues fun again,” count on a night with old-school, downhome blues, tinged with southern influences from this self-described mountain mama grounded in sultry blues and soul.



Sunday, Sept. 15: 5-8 p.m.

COT Band, Atlanta’s favorite Latin band with a musical fusion of Caribbean Rhythms with elements of funk, pop and Brazilian beats, will be back to kick off Hispanic Heritage Month. Get your dancing shoes ready!

Sunday, Oct. TBD

Sunday, Nov. TBD

March 2025

calendar of events



SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THURS

FRI

SAT

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8

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Historic Preservation
Commission
6 p.m.

Free Yoga
at Town Green
6 p.m.

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Downtown
Development
Authority Regular
Meeting
5:30 p.m.

Board of Mayor and
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Work Session
5:30 p.m.

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Planning,
Architecture and
Zoning Board
Meeting
6 p.m.

The Museum
School 5K
8:30 a.m.

23/30

24/31

25

26

27

28

29

23 - Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
23 - Free Upcycle
Workshop with Fiber
Parts 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
30 - Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Board of Mayor and
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Work Session
5:30 p.m.

April 2025

calendar of events



SUN

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Free Yoga
at Town Green
6 p.m.

State of the City
6 p.m.

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12

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Mister John's Music
Easter Show
at Town Green
3 p.m.

Historic Preservation
Commission
6 p.m.

Downtown
Development
Authority Regular
Meeting
5:30 p.m.

Board of Mayor and
Commissioners
Regular Meeting and
Work Session
5:30 p.m.

13

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Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Weekend Wind Down
at Town Green
5 p.m.

Easter Egg Hunt
at Town Green
10 a.m.

Electronics
Recycling Day
9 a.m. - noon

20

21

22

23

24

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26

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Classic Car Parade
1:30 p.m.

Planning,
Architecture and
Zoning Board
Meeting
6 p.m.

Board of Mayor and
Commissioners
Regular Meeting and
Work Session
5:30 p.m.

27

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29

30

Avondale Estates
Farmers Market
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Avondale Estates Historic Theater Shines Again: Venue Reopens as Avon Theater with Nod to its Roots

Avondale Estates is celebrating a new chapter in its rich history with the opening of the Avon Theater. This beloved local landmark, which first opened its doors in 1938 under the same name, is once again ready to welcome the community. With its return to the original moniker, the Avon Theater bridges the past and present, embracing its historic charm while offering modern amenities to create a premier destination for entertainment.

Originally known as the Avon Theater, the venue was a cultural hub in Avondale Estates for decades. Since its debut the theater has played a significant role in bringing the community together for films, performances, and special events. After years of dormancy and changing identities, the decision to restore the theater to its original name reflects a deep commitment to preserving the city's heritage.

More than \$1 million has been invested in revitalizing the Avon Theater. The latest round of renovations, completed this year, includes the installation of a state-of-the-art sound and lighting system that enhances the experience for audiences and performers alike. Additionally, the iconic marquee sign is receiving a dramatic facelift, with the restoration bringing back its vintage tube lighting to echo the theater's 1930s origins.

The revitalization of the Avon Theater is expected to be a major economic catalyst for Avondale Estates and the surrounding businesses. By attracting performances, film screenings, and community events, the theater is poised to draw both residents and visitors into the heart of the city. Increased foot traffic will benefit local restaurants and shops, fostering a thriving business environment while enriching the cultural landscape.



"The historic Avon Theater is not only a cultural landmark, but also a vital economic engine for the downtown," said DDA Chair, Dave Deiters. "It draws visitors and fuels spending in surrounding businesses making it an investment in both heritage and prosperity. And, it's a really cool space that is fun to experience!"

Historic theaters like the Avon are more than just entertainment venues—they are living reminders of a community's shared history and cultural identity. Supporting these spaces ensures they remain vital and accessible for future generations.

The reopening of the Avon Theater is a testament to the power of community investment and a collective commitment to preserving the past while embracing the future. Avondale Estates residents now have the opportunity to experience the magic of live performances and films in a space that honors its storied past.

"We are grateful to have a community music venue that's walkable and gives us

the opportunity to enjoy a fun night out with friends," said Avondale Estates residents Steve and Amy Geddes, who recently attended The Doors tribute show at the theater.

Whether you're a lifelong resident or a first-time visitor, the Avon Theater invites you to be a part of its next chapter. Come out, enjoy a show, and celebrate the enduring spirit of Avondale Estates. For a listing of upcoming events at the Avon Theater, visit their website: avon-theater.com

Downtown Development Authority Annual Report - Watch Now

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Annual Report Video is here. The video features insights and updates from DDA Chairman Dave Deiters and DDA Member and City Commissioner Lisa Shortell, highlighting key accomplishments and progress made in 2024.

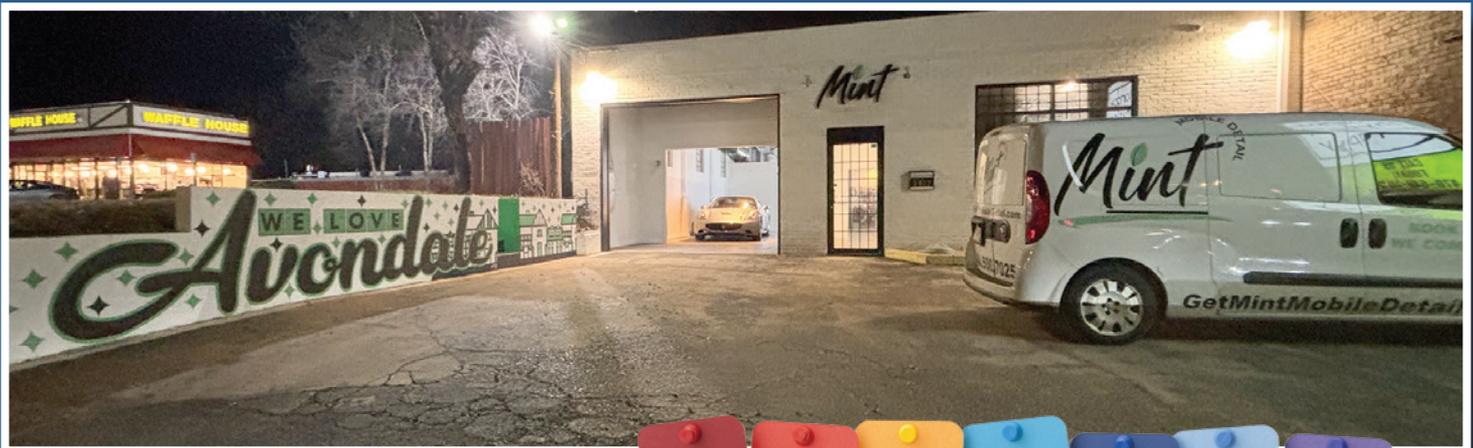
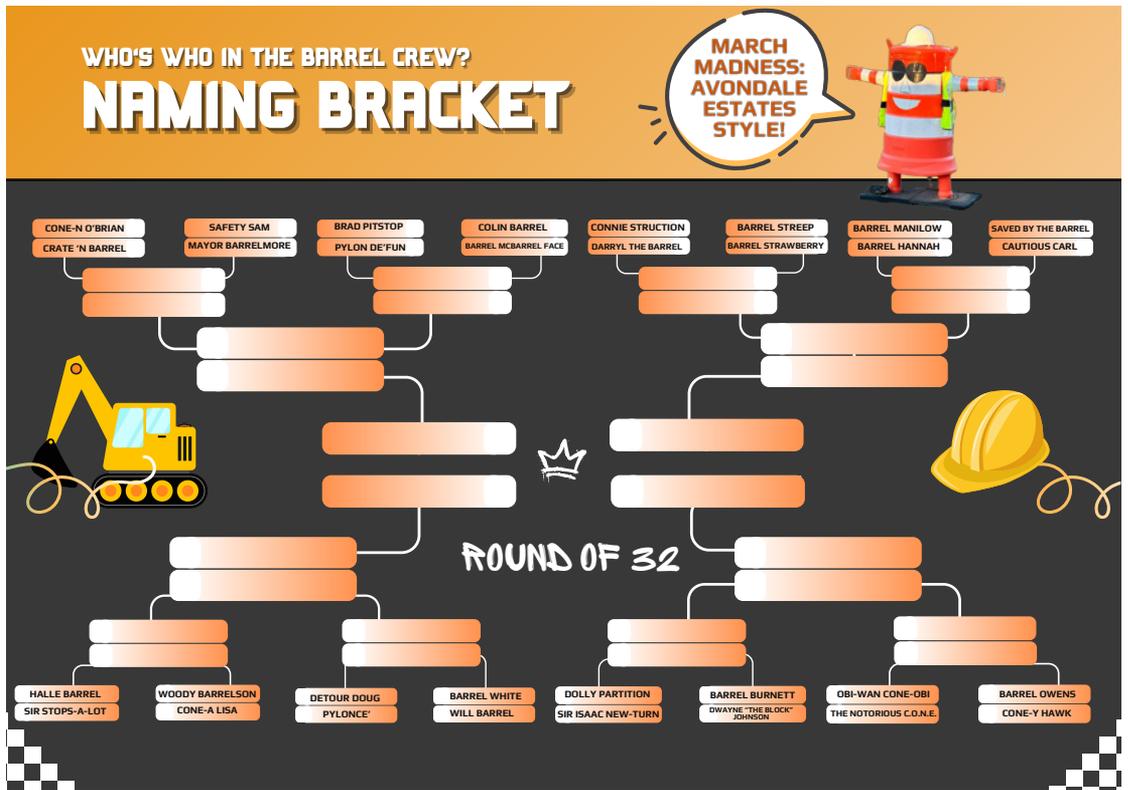
From economic growth to exciting downtown initiatives, this video provides a firsthand look at the impact of the DDA's work in shaping the community. Scan the QR code to watch and stay informed on how Avondale Estates is moving forward!



**March Madness:
Barrel People Edition!**

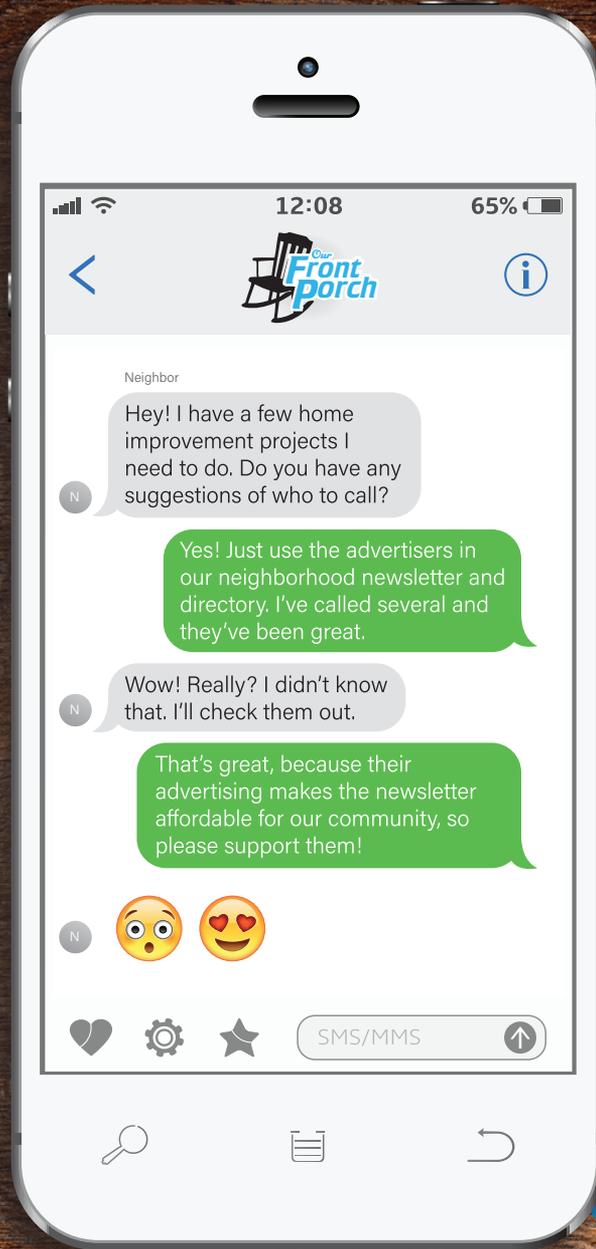
The bracket is set, and the top 32 Barrel People name contenders have been chosen. Now, it's time for the real competition to begin. Each week in March, names will go head-to-head, and your votes will determine who advances. By the end of the month, only four names will be left as the winners.

Cast your vote on the Explore Avondale social media channels, and make sure your favorite name makes it to the Final Four. Let the naming showdown begin!



**New Business - Welcome
Mint Mobile Detailing**

Mint Mobile Detailing, a well-known mobile car detailing service in greater Atlanta, has opened its first brick-and-mortar location in Avondale Estates. While they continue to offer convenient mobile services—bringing water, electricity, and expert care directly to their clients—residents are also welcome to stop by their new location during business hours to learn more about their services and find the best detailing option for their vehicle. Visit Mint Mobile at 2852 East College Avenue or getmintmobiledetail.com



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Five Questions with Resident Matt Phillips

Avondale Estates boasts a community of interesting and creative people, each contributing their talents to the city's cultural fabric. Among them, musician and professional luthier Matt Phillips has dedicated himself to the craft of building and repairing stringed instruments. With precision, passion and an eye for detail, he produces beautiful instruments and reflects the artistry thriving within the city.

The work you do repairing instruments seems tedious while also a labor of love. Talk more about it.

It's a very 18th-century thing and really isn't different from how things were done hundreds of years ago. I mainly use knives, planes, scrapers and files to do my work. I sharpen my tools, make glue and varnish from scratch, and try to use traditional techniques while keeping an open mind to new ideas. I started out doing guitar repair and building mandolins in my early 20s, so I use a lot of techniques adopted from the fretted instrument world.

What keeps you busy outside of repairing and building instruments?

I spend as much time as possible with my wife, Danielle. She's an amazing musician and person! She studied classical piano and got a degree in piano performance from Vassar. Music has been running in her family for generations, and she's fostered that love of music in her girls (my stepdaughters), Aria and Ava. Additionally, she's shared her talent for 30+ years with piano students all around town, many of whom live in the neighborhood.

After Danielle finished recording an album called "Two Flowers," she needed musicians to tour with her. Many of the folks who recorded lived all over the country, and her producer recommended me as an auxiliary musician for an album release tour and show at Eddie's Attic. That's how we met—playing her music along with her amazing band, which included her brother Pat from Wilco and Chris Ethridge from the Flying Burrito Brothers.

We love working in the yard together, which is her domain. She has a beautiful artistic eye for



What first got you into making guitar picks and why old poker chips?

Another pick company broke the ceiling price-wise for boutique guitar picks. I've loved them for a long time, but the drawback is they are brown. After working in the yard, Danielle and I often sit under the cherry tree and play mandolin or guitar. The picks were brown, so it was very easy for me to lose them in the mulch. Before long, there were hundreds of dollars of lost guitar picks in the yard.

I started looking for material I could make my guitar picks out of. I stumbled on the fact that Django Reinhardt used to make his guitar picks out of old suit buttons. As I started making picks out of old buttons, I found it limiting because buttons are small and have holes in them. But the button picks sounded amazing! Suit buttons are made from a material called galalith. I discovered that poker chips are made from the same material. Using poker chips allows me more freedom because they are bigger and flatter and come in a variety

of bright colors. But the particular poker chips I use are really hard to come by. They aren't your normal Vegas-style poker chips. I started making them for a jazz guitar player in Brazil, where I knew there was a history of the material being made. He found a guy up in the mountains whose uncle used to work at a poker chip factory in the 1930s. About once a year, we negotiate, and I buy a ton of poker chips.

I've been lucky to send my picks to musicians all over the world. People that play in amphitheaters as well as listening rooms—from monster bluegrass pickers to shredders to avant-garde jazz players. And, of course, just normal, nice folks, too. It's so fun to see videos of legendary players and then catch a flash of one of my picks in their hand—that makes me so happy.

Coincidentally, my work shed was the neighborhood poker spot several generations back. I guess all the men of Avondale would meet here and play poker.

balance, color, contrast and for making things really pretty. I just dig holes!

What are some of the more interesting/rare instruments you've worked on?

One of my favorite repair jobs was on a guitar that I completely stumbled across a few years ago. I barely ever go to garage or estate sales, but I checked one out in Roswell. I opened a door in the garage, and a Gibson guitar was sitting there in terrible shape. But it was an amazing guitar, a 1952 J-50. The top was badly distorted like an old jack-o-lantern with a caved-in face. It had been stripped, "Gibson" had been sanded off the peghead, "Elvis" was painted on the front, and the back was kicked into pieces. I paid \$5 for it. It took a solid six months to wrestle it back into shape. The back came off, and I used spruce from an antique piano to rebrace it and maple from an Ohio dance floor laid in 1911 for the bridge plate. Every bit had to be rebuilt. It's Danielle's main guitar now, and it's an incredible-sounding instrument.



What brought you to Avondale Estates, and what would you like to see in Avondale?

Danielle lived here decades ago and loved the area so much; we worked really hard to get back. We finally found our house on Dartmouth in 2019. We love everything about the area. Our neighbors are amazing, and the sidewalks, the trees, the lake, the architecture—the overall aesthetic just really suits us. We feel so fortunate to be part of this community!

A music venue like a listening room would be amazing. A place with a good sound system, a great sound person and a good piano—a place Danielle could rent for piano recitals. There are so many musicians living among us. I can think of half a dozen great guitar players and singer-songwriters within a stone's throw. Nick (Purdy) at Wild Heaven has done a beautiful job showcasing local musicians at his locations. I love playing there with my old-timey jazz band—the vibe is so great.

Avondale is such a vibrant community and a magical place to live with so many talented people. I don't think folks that live elsewhere really understand it completely.

Community Volunteer Spotlight: *Patti Puckett Ghezzi*

Submitted by resident Jane Darnell

A community grows stronger when it works together in service of others. Avondale Estates is building its service muscles thanks in part to resident Patti Puckett Ghezzi.



Patti's career as a journalist and non-profit professional often makes her aware of unmet needs in the community, and she tries to find solutions to those needs. From her involvement with Feet of Clay, Inc. and Dames Doing Good, Patti learned about children living in hotels who would not receive holiday gifts. Inspired by the architecture in the village, Patti designed English Tudor-style ornaments with gift suggestions and created an outdoor Giving Tree in her yard. Neighbors were invited to pull an ornament and return gifts to be delivered to the children. Avondale's generosity and Patti's ingenuity combined to provide local children a happier holiday.

Patti was instrumental in founding the Avondale Elementary School Foundation. She's worked with Avondale ACTION and Avondale Alliance for Racial Justice (AARJ) to collect school supplies in an annual drive. When a location for a Free Fridge could not be found in Avondale Estates, Patti created the Invisible Food Pantry, working with College AIM to provide grocery gift cards to college students struggling to make ends meet. She has addressed the needs of immigrants through El Refugio and always accepts gently worn men's and women's clothing and backpacks. Patti's research informed AARJ's work to discuss policing policies with AEPD and the city. The list continues. Without fanfare, Patti has become a community service leader, and Avondale Estates and the surrounding communities reap the rewards.

Avondale Estates Garden Club Celebrates Arbor Day and Hosts Plant Sale

Georgia Arbor Day, February 21, is a special time for members of the Avondale Estates Garden Club (AEGC). Each year, the club works with the City of Avondale Estates to plant a tree in memory of club members and their spouses who have died during the previous year.

This year the tree was planted in memory of Virginia Kinchin, Tommy Adams (former member and husband of Carolyn Adams) and Ted Waters (husband of Anne Kerner).

President Patricia Calcagno, on behalf of the AEGC, presented a check to the city for \$150 and worked with the city's greenspace manager and staff on selecting the tree and deciding the planting location.

The tree selected was a swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) that was planted on the east side of Berkeley Road near the North Woods rain gardens.

City staff, residents and members of the AEGC attended the tree-planting event, which included an Arbor Day proclamation read by Commissioner and Mayor Pro Tem Lisa Shortell.

Dreaming of spring flowers? Mark your calendar for April 19 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., when the Avondale Estates Garden Club will host its annual plant sale beside the Lake House at 59 Lakeshore Drive.

The rain or shine plant sale on the shore of Lake Avondale features hundreds of plants grown or curated by members. Shoppers will find native plants, pollinator plants, plants for shade, plants for full sun, popular perennials, and a selection of herbs and house plants.

"The sale has been successful beyond our expectations," Avondale Estates



Garden Club President Patricia Calcagno said. "Our members work incredibly hard getting ready for the sale, but the revenue has had a big impact in helping us support area environmental projects and charitable organizations."

Co-chairs of the 2025 plant sale are Ann Umbaugh, Susan Carney, Peg Wyse and Deborah Levine.

Proceeds from the plant sale and other AEGC fundraisers benefit organizations such as the Avondale Estates Elementary School Foundation, the Cherokee Gardens Library at the Atlanta History Center, the Garden Club of Georgia Scholarship Fund, CHaRM — the Center for Hard to Recycle Materials, and the Dunwoody Nature Center.

The annual sale coincides with Garden Week in Georgia, which is an ideal time for local gardeners to start digging in the dirt.

The AEGC added children's activities for the first time in 2024, encouraging small shoppers to plant seeds to get a head start on their gardens.

Garden club members, including plant experts and master gardeners, will be on-site to assist customers.



Buyers flock to the Avondale Estates Garden Club's plant sale every spring.



Ally Wright helps daughter Madi plant seeds at the children's table.



Avondale Woman's Club Happenings

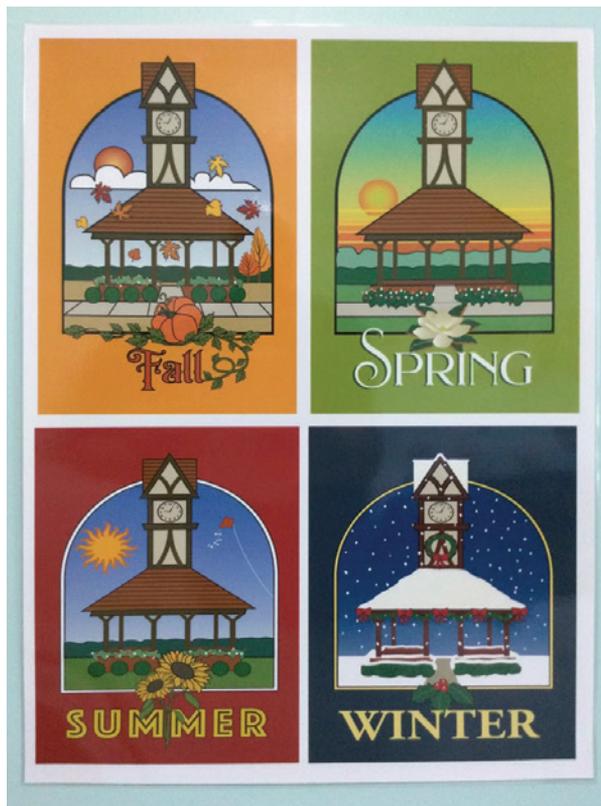
The Avondale Woman's Club's (AWC) next meeting will be a luncheon on March 27 featuring the theme "Don't Fence Me In." AWC members Bonnie Chafin and Robin Hughes will share their experience as real cowhands out West. After the luncheon, Marjorie Andersson of Andersson Gardens will lead a "Basket of Goodness" Spring Container Workshop. Attendees will design their own herb and fern baskets to take home, bringing a touch of spring indoors. Attendees can pay \$15 online or at the door on the day of the meeting. Guests are always welcome at AWC meetings. Email roxane.conticello@gmail.com for more info and to reserve your spot.



Organized 1957

A reminder that as spring approaches, it's time to brighten up the neighborhood by displaying the AWC spring garden flag. The seasonal flags are available to purchase online (avondalewomansclub.net) along with other items like stylish dog bandanas.

Be sure to mark your calendar for Friday, April 25, when the Avondale Woman's Club will host a special benefit concert featuring Andy Offutt Irwin. Andy is a national award-winning storyteller, musician, humorist and even a champion whistler (really)! Visit his website to learn more about the music at andyirwin.com. Don't miss this fun-filled evening of grown-up entertainment. All in the community are invited to attend. Tickets are available on the AWC website and 100% of the proceeds will go to local charities.



Avon Garden Club Garden of the Month



January: 976 Hess Drive, home of Jeanette and Matt Knopp



February: 3279 Kensington Road, home of Leah and Mike Dobbs



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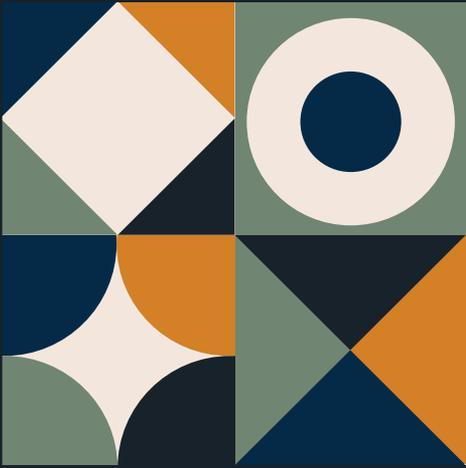
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