



ARBOR HILLS
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE ARBOR HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION, MADISON, WI

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

Holiday Decorations Contest

By Jackie Cooper

This was my first year as a judge for the Holiday Decorations Contest - and I just have to say WOW! Our neighborhood is a really fun one to live in when it comes to holiday spirit. My neighbor (Caroline Thompson) and I drove around one night in mid-December trying to find the best decorations - and to say it wasn't an easy task is an understatement. There were so many beautiful, fun, creative, bright, amazing decorations that narrowing it down to just three was near impossible. If you have never taken the time to drive around the (entire!) neighborhood during the winter holiday season, do it! I guarantee you will not be disappointed.



1st place - Adam and Shannon Riddle (3222 Heatherdell Lane)



2nd Place - Laurie and Keith Triller (3002 Post Rd)



3rd Place - Matt and Samantha Castro (2910 Nottingham)



Peoples Choice (2710 Ardsley Lane)



Earth Day Cleanup
Sat. April 25 10am -12pm
Arbor Hills Park

Arbor Hills Garage Sale
Fri. May 15 - Sat. May 16
Throughout the Neighborhood

Make Music Madison
Sat. June 21 1pm - 4pm
Arbor Hills Park

4th of July Parade & Picnic
Sat. July 4 11am - 1pm
Grandview & Kingston to AH Park



Fiesta de Sabores y Sonidos
(Flavors & Sounds Party)
Thurs. July 23 5:30-7pm **NEW**
Arbor Good Neighbor House

Annual Gathering & Celebration
Tues. October 13 6:30pm - 8pm
Arbor Good Neighbor House (2509 McDivitt Road)

Halloween Parade & Trunk or Treat
Sat. October 25 4pm - 5pm
Grandview & Kingston to AH Park

Food Trucks: Arbor Hills Park,
Thurs. 5:30pm - 7pm
May 21, August 20, & September 17

Holiday Decoration Contest
Throughout December
Judging by the 14

Cookie Decorating
December 5 2-4pm
Arbor Good Neighbor House **NEW**

From Leopold Student to Farm Owner

Meet Patty Grimmer, Owner - Wonka's Harvest

By Jackie Cooper



Read the FULL article at ArborHills.org – scroll to see Recent News on the home page

How many times have we been asked - or asked the question of our children, "what do you want to do (or be) when you grow up?" Many kids will answer that they want to be a superhero, a sports star, or a princess - but not many say "farmer". This definitely wasn't the career Patty Grimmer thought she would choose while attending Leopold Elementary, Cherokee Middle, and West High School.

What made you decide to become a farmer?

Patty Grimmer: I was studying geology at Arizona State University and I was bored of looking at rocks. But by an unexpected turn in a hydrology class, I started connecting larger dots to our food systems. The Sonoran Desert, which spans across Arizona and California, is where we grow the most lettuce in the United States. It's a virtually inhabitable place, yet it's where we choose to grow a vegetable that is virtually all water. Why, in a state that can grow produce all year around, was such a vast population of the city food insecure?

I started volunteering at a local community garden that grew food for mutual aid. I absolutely loved it. It was tangible, physical work - you could see directly what your energy and investment was doing. I transferred to the University of Minnesota to study Environmental Science and Environmental Education on their agricultural campus. I worked for nutrition programs that focused on family food modeling to promote healthier food choices and preparation practices for families, helped develop programming to increase produce access to food insecure areas, and worked in many schools teaching students about the importance of food sovereignty. From that point on, I knew growing food was my future.

Did your time attending Leopold/Cherokee/West provide you with any skills or experiences that have helped you as a farmer?

PG: Despite growing up in an exclusively white family that didn't often discuss cultural differences or socio-economic complexities, I attended schools that generally highlighted and celebrated students' differences. I recognized at a young age that not everyone had housing and food stability and security like my brother and I. I knew a lot of my classmates needed to get to school early enough to make sure they got their breakfast at school. I didn't live that reality, but I did know it was there. I don't believe that all of my educators knew how to address and communicate that reality openly in a way that removed the heavily present shame or stigma around it, but there were a number of staff and

spaces that leaned in on facilitating challenging or sensitive topics, promoting compassionate and thought provoking discussions on our socio-economic systems and their designs. And as a farmer today, I am very thankful for those experiences that largely shaped my worldviews today. I grow food for people. I work alongside people with new ideas and optimism for our future. I laugh with my fellow farmers across language barriers. I grow food, and in exchange I gain a sense of community.

Your farm uses the method of "no till farming", can you explain what this is and why you chose this method?

PG: I started Wonka's Harvest in 2020 with my partner. We are both first-generation farmers. We wanted to build a farm that would be replicable for others at smaller scales, which meant having low or no reliance on tractors and large implements for growing. We decided to commit to a no-till vegetable farm. Tilling a field, whether it is a scale of acres or just in your backyard, is the process of mechanized turning of soil. It breaks the crust of the soil and disrupts the layers of soil. Farmers and growers till for a number of reasons; it makes it easier to plant or seed into by aerating the soil which encourages germination and root development, it terminates an existing crop or crop residue, and it temporarily kills weeds on the soil crust. Though it is helpful for growers short term, it is incredibly detrimental to soil health long term. Because tillage turns up all of the soil layers, there is no structure to hold it in place which accelerates soil erosion with wind and rain events. By turning soil layers, it also exposes sensitive soil bacteria and microbial life to conditions that can kill it. And the microbial life in the soil is the building blocks to nutrient cycling and nutrient availability for the plants we are trying to grow. Many weed seeds can only germinate if they are in the first few inches of the soil, so when you mix everything up, you are bringing in all of the other weed seeds back up that would have otherwise been too deep in the soil to germinate. By committing to a no-till practice, we experience less soil erosion, better water retention, have a small reliance on nutrient fertilizers, less fossil fuel reliance because we do not need mechanized equipment, have less soil compaction, and far fewer weeds long term. No-till farming is great for small-scale, especially backyards! You can practice this by building a traditional raised bed system or tarping a section of your yard to terminate grasses and weeds. Compost, or a nutrient rich soil additive is a great start. Many backyard growers

practicing no-till will even start their bed building directly on cardboard or newspapers. The cardboard will kill the grass and prevent weed seeds, slowly breakdown, and can be layered with your compost and mulch to build solid organic matter.

What vegetables would you recommend growing for an at home gardener or someone who is new to gardening in our neighborhood?

PG: For someone starting out a garden, or even just wanting to grow a few things in containers on their porch, I would stick to some crops that you can transplant first. It is awfully hard to sow seeds into the ground and expect great germination unless you are timing it well with rain OR if you are irrigating daily (if you do go this route, easy crops that germinate well are loose leaf greens, radishes, beets, and some herbs like cilantro and dill). If you choose the transplant route, you can either buy transplants at your local nursery OR start the seeds on your own! If choosing to start your own seeds, find a place in your home that is warm with good light. Plant the seeds just under the soil in a container that will drain well with some potting mix. Make sure your potting station stays warm and moist until you see germination. Once emergence happens, make sure your seedlings are getting as much light as possible and staying moist! You can keep your seedlings in the vessel you seeded it in if it's deep and wide enough to ensure proper root development. When the transplant has several true leaves and good root development, you can transplant it outside in your garden or containers once it is warm enough. Most pressure that comes from insects and critters are at the earliest stages of the plants. The most tender and tasty leaves are always going to be the earliest maturity stages of a plant so by transplanting you are giving the plant the best chance for survival.

Tell me a little bit about Wonka's Harvest and your Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program - why are CSAs important to your farm?

PG: If you didn't inherit the green thumb but want to be better about supporting local farmers and eating fresher, more nutrient dense foods, I'd highly recommend finding a CSA that works for you. CSA, which stands for community supported agriculture, is a produce program model that allows people to become "members" of a farm for a season. This helps farms cover upfront expenses in the winter and early season, and also guarantees avenues to distribute the food we grow throughout the season. To learn more and sign-up, head to wonkasharvest.com/csa/

Protecting Children in our Digital Age

By Representative Renuka Mayadev – Assembly District 77

Dear Neighbors,

It is my great honor to be your State Representative. In January, I had the pleasure of meeting the Arbor Hills Neighborhood Association Board (AHNA) at their monthly meeting. I am impressed with the ways Arbor Hills connects through neighborhood block captains, the newsletter, and the many neighborhood events. As you get to know me as your State Representative, I hope you will find my office as a resource. I appreciate the letters, phone calls, and visits focused on how we can improve the lives of our neighbors and community together.

One topic that I have discussed with fellow parents across the district, including at the AHNA meeting, is the use of digital media and cell phones by our children.

Given there hasn't been any comprehensive regulation to date, I was delighted to be appointed to an Assembly Task Force focused on protecting children in a digital age. Our Task Force heard directly from experts across Wisconsin who are researching and witnessing first-hand the impact of digital use on our children. The testimony detailed the growing ways in which social media platforms, algorithm-driven content, and AI-generated interactions can expose children to inappropriate material, manipulation, and exploitation. We also heard about the emotional and developmental toll that constant digital pressure places on children, from

anxiety and depression to body-image distortion and social withdrawal. If you are eager to learn more, I would encourage you to check out Jonathan Haidt's book, **The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness.**

Too many parents, families, and young users are unaware of the full scope of harm from social media platforms and digital screen use. This is by design. Like Big Tobacco, Big Tech has not been forthcoming about the harms of their products and has deliberately marketed their addictive products to our children.

To help Wisconsin school districts manage classroom distractions, Governor Evers signed Wisconsin Act 42 (2025), which bans cell-phone use during school instructional time. I have also introduced legislation, AB 960, which has bipartisan support to require social media platforms to provide mental health warning notifications. While legislation regulating digital platforms and chatbot providers is essential, there is also a place for action to ground the childhood experience we do want for our children. What I hear most often from parents is that a child was reluctantly given a cellphone because they didn't want their child to be left out. The digital age we are in is not easy to navigate alone. So I was delighted to hear about a group of neighborhood parents in the district who, through shared concern and action, have embraced handlines so their children can connect for chats and playground meet-ups.

While my work in the Capitol will continue to hold Big Tech accountable, I look forward to staying connected. Please email rep.mayadev@legis.wisconsin.gov if you are interested in connecting on this topic or if you would like to receive my office's e-newsletter.

Forward,

Rep. Renuka Mayadev





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My First Experience At The Repair Cafe

By Caroline Thompson

I heard about the Repair Cafe at one of the AHNA board meetings and decided to give it a try. I had an old oscillating fan (from my college days in 1978 - yikes!) that I loved because it was so quiet compared to the new model I had recently purchased.

I took my fan to Arbor Good Neighbor House, where the Repair Cafe is held quarterly. I was greeted by Peter Morris who told me how the Repair Cafe worked and directed me to Steve, a volunteer who worked on electronics.

I explained the problem my favorite fan was having as best I could and he went to work. I was told I could sit and wait to see if he could figure out the problem and fix it.

I found a group of people chatting with each other while snacking on donuts, cookies, chips and assorted beverages as they waited for their items to be repaired. I introduced myself and started asking questions about the Repair Cafe and what their experience was. I must say I had a wonderful time meeting new people and felt so comfortable enjoying my visit.

It did not take long for Steve to fix my fan. I was overjoyed and promptly asked, "Do you think you could fix my Sony 5 CD player?" I explained that the player would not rotate or play CDs. Steve said he'd give it a try. So I quickly gathered up my fan, drove home and returned with my CD player.

Again, I waited, thinking it probably could not be fixed as I didn't want to get my hopes up. However, to my surprise, Steve fixed it! I was ecstatic as I love listening to music and had not been able to use our CD player for quite some time.

I thought to myself, since two of my favorite items have been fixed, then why not try or another? So I asked about bringing our Sony sound bar for the TV. I did not really know how to explain the problem, just that it wouldn't work anymore. Unfortunately it could not be fixed, so to the recycling center it went.

My overall experience was fantastic and I had to inquire about how this Repair Cafe came to fruition. I asked Peter to tell me more about it.

He told me the Repair Cafe originated in Amsterdam to help with the fostering of a "fix-it" culture and encourage recycling of items versus throwing them away and filling our landfills. He said he heard about it on NPR.

Items that can be brought to the cafe include small electric appliances (but not gas or oil), small wood repair, sewing items in need of mending, jewelry repair, and I even noticed a person brought in an electric bicycle. All of the repair work is provided by volunteers. I was amazed at all the volunteers who repair lamps, radios, clothing, jewelry, bicycles and so much more. Some volunteers are from Memorial United Church of Christ, other Repair Cafes in the community, and from word or mouth. What a great idea for our world!

If you have something that you are hoping can be repaired then stop by and join the fun! Visit agnh.org for upcoming dates.



Congratulations to our neighbors!

Long time Arbor Hills residents Lakisha Johnson and Lonnell Richarson Sr. have had both of their businesses (Unique Hair Accessories & More and Ancestral Tribe Custom Apparel) selected as part of the first phase of the **Madison Public Market** (tinyurl.com/yzya48ny). The Market is a small business incubator and accelerator located at 202 N. First Street. Read more about Lakisha and Lonnie in our Summer 2025 newsletter "Know your neighbors" article (arborhills.org/resources).



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Free Trees for Arbor Hills from the Urban Tree Alliance

From Urban Tree Alliance

Urban Tree Alliance (UTA), a non-profit organization serving the Greater Madison area, has been working with local partners to enhance and expand the urban forest canopy through our Neighborhood Forest Project. Arbor Hills falls within the project area in Madison's South Side meaning you're eligible to submit a request for a free tree! **To learn more about this initiative and to request your free tree, visit urbantreealliance.org/our-work/neighborhood-forest-project/.**

In partnership with Wisconsin EcoLatinos, UTA invites neighbors to participate in the upcoming Tree Stewards workshop series. Through these workshops, you'll learn about Greater Madison's urban trees, how to identify them, their benefits, and how to select the species best for your home. You'll also have the opportunity to plant trees and enjoy a walk through the Arboretum. All workshop events are presented in both English and Spanish.

Sign up info: wisconsincolatinos.org/tree-stewards

Remembrances



Karen Johanssen

**June 3, 1959 -
December 26, 2025**

We commemorate the life of Karen Johanssen, who passed away on December 26, 2025.

She was a West High School graduate, class of 1977 (Go Regents!). She was a proud alumna of the Florida Gator, receiving her bachelor's degree in Horticulture from University of Florida in 1981. Karen spent her early career at a wholesale tropical plant nursery in Florida before returning to Madison to join her family's business.

Karen was the daughter of the original proprietors of Johanssen's Greenhouse, a respected family business that served the Madison community for more than five decades prior to its closure in 2013. The greenhouse, previously located at the intersection of Todd Drive and the Frontage Road—now an undeveloped parcel of land—was well regarded in the area for decades. It was a true neighborhood fixture where Arbor Hills residents were dedicated patrons. Many of us remember running into each other at the garden center while benefiting from Karen's professional expertise and genuine enthusiasm for her craft.

Widely recognized for her cheerful outlook and vibrant personality, Karen was a familiar face beyond the greenhouse as the "Green Gardener" on local news programs. She also frequently shared her horticultural knowledge at our neighborhood association meetings, and the Arbor Hills garden club, where her commitment and expertise were highly esteemed.

Following the closure of the garden center in 2013, Karen dedicated most of her time to scuba diving and traveling throughout the Caribbean. She developed a deep affinity for Antigua and had been living in Antigua and frequently shared updates on social media about her horseback riding tours, highlighting

her deep connection to the island and its tourism community. Karen never forgot her roots and divided her time between the island and Madison while building meaningful connections in both communities.

Karen will be remembered for her valuable contributions, unwavering commitment to our community, dynamic character, professionalism, kindness, compassion, and distinctive sense of humor.

Read Karen's full obituary at cressfuneralservice.com.



Grant James Makovec

**August 25, 2013 —
December 1, 2025**

Grant James Makovec, born in Madison on August 25, 2013, died on December 1, 2025. Grant was bright and inquisitive, a born engineer and tinkerer who loved space and dreamed of going to MIT to design rockets he could yeet into outer space. He cultivated a passion for airplanes and could identify a plane flying over just by how it sounds. His Grandma D and Mima encouraged his love of science with projects and science experiments.

He loved gaming, including video games (Star Wars, Roblox, any outer space-themed games), card games, board games (the more complex the better), and dungeons and dragons, where he once played a ferocious half-cat, half-human warrior named Mittens. He had an ear for language honed through years of dual language immersion at Leopold and Cherokee Heights schools, and endless conversations with Papa. He also had an ear for music that allowed him to excel at piano and cello, and a love of theater, but only if he could work in the shadows. He loved athletic activities: biking with dad, running with mom, skiing and snowboarding with his cousins, and fishing, camping and canoeing with Grandpa Fred.

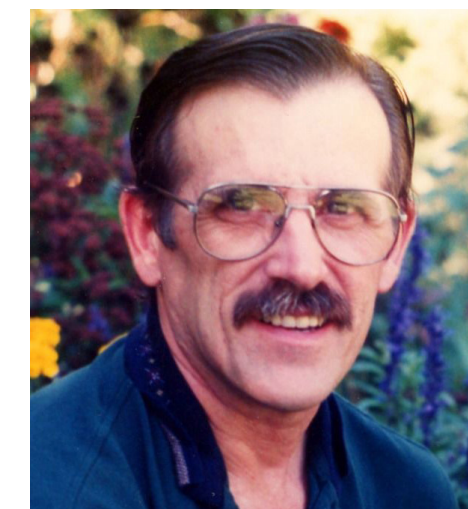
Grant was well-loved by all who came to know him, because of his kind, caring, silly and warm personality. He wore shorts and sandals as long as the temperature was above freezing. Grant could always be relied on to entertain his friends and

family with his silly faces and goofy antics, like saying "Toes!" and then grabbing you with his toes. Grant loved helping his sibling Emmett with their math and Spanish homework, leading Emmett on outdoor adventures and laughing together. Gone too soon, he will be missed by his dad David Makovec, his mom Jen O'Leary, his younger sibling Emmett, and his most ridiculous semblance of a dog Sir Reginald Bananas. Grant was in the seventh grade at Cherokee Heights Middle School.

Read Grant's full obituary on cressfuneralservice.com.

To donate to a fund for a bench honoring Grant, visit this Go Fund Me page:

gofundme.com/f/bench-in-memory-of-grant



Larry Kraak

**August 20, 1948 -
November 02, 2025**

Larry W. Kraak, age 77, died of Alzheimer's, on Sunday, November 2, 2025, at The Meadows Memory Care Unit in Fall River, WI.

Larry was born in Muscoda, WI on August 20, 1948. He grew up on the Kraak family farm in the Town of Pulaski, with his parents, Elmer & Veda (Crary) Kraak, & his brother, Steve. Larry attended Prairie School & graduated from Muscoda High School. He married Liz Beyler on August 25, 1984 in Madison. He & Liz made their life together in Madison for the next 33 years until she passed away from Alzheimer's.

Larry thoroughly enjoyed the many trips he & Liz made to their cabin on Lake Namekagon in Northern Wisconsin at Cable. He was a woodworker, making furniture & turning wood into beautiful bowls. Larry retired as a groundskeeper at the UW Madison, where he found much joy designing flower gardens on campus & tending to them. His greatest & proudest accomplishment was his 44 years of AA sobriety.

Read Larry's full obituary at ryanfuneralservice.com

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Lanterns On Leyton Marks 7th Year

By Ashley Gibson and Madeline Uraneck

Flickering candles glowing softly out of icy lanterns have become a beautiful winter tradition on Leyton Lane and Leyton Circle. Neighbors from across Arbor Hills came to enjoy the evening magic on two weekends in late January and early February. During January's cold snap, lantern-makers filled five-gallon buckets with water, waited a night or two for them to freeze, then carefully removed the ice to create transparent cylinders. The makers lugged the heavy ice chunks to line both sides of the street and circle, then went out at sunset to light them. It's a homemade, neighbor-created, work-intensive endeavor that puts a sparkle in dark winter nights.

Thank you to the neighbors who led the effort, including Susan Uraneck, Thad Schumacher and Michelle Chui, Kaitlyn and Steven Fons, Bill and Janell Morehead, Nicholas Griffiths, Eric and Nancy Liljequist, Chad Sachs and family, Tom Greenhaigh, Lisa Weinlander, Josh Grotheer and family, and Brian Ronk, among others.

Did you miss the notifications about Lanterns on Leyton? Reach out to info@arborhills.org and we'll be happy to add you to the email list.



Get Involved in Arbor Hills: Become a Volunteer!

One of the most important factors that makes our neighborhood association successful is our amazing team of volunteers! If you are looking for a way to contribute to the neighborhood that doesn't require a lot of time or a long-term commitment, offering to be a volunteer could be a great fit. Throughout the year, we need volunteers to help with:

- Day-of events support: distributing food, directing traffic for parades, sitting at the membership table, etc.
- Behind-the-scenes coordination: support planning and prep for events
- Communication & writing: write articles for the newsletter, draft communications, etc.
- ...and more!

If you would like to be added to our list of volunteers, please reach out to info@arborhills.org or call Events Coordinator Erich George at (608) 628-9030. Let us know if you have specific interests or experience that you'd like to put to use. We'll connect with you when we have a specific volunteer need and you can jump in if you're available.

2026 NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY



We want your input - please scan the QR code or visit <https://forms.gle/386wsEV2UdMEXuY97> to complete the short survey!