

COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills • November 2020

A joint publication of the City of Vestavia Hills, Vestavia Hills City Schools & Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce

CELEBRATING 70 YEARS!

Jeff Downes, Vestavia Hills City Manager

It is fairly common for November newsletter articles to shower adulation to people and circumstances that we are thankful for during the previous year. This month, I am going to keep this tradition with a slight difference. I want to call out a series of “thanks” in honor of the City of Vestavia Hills’ 70th birthday. Many individuals and leaders have engaged in our community to make this wonderful city a place that is in high demand to raise a family and live a serene life. There are so many people to be thankful for – many more than can be named in this brief space – who have created the “Life Above” which we enjoy.

Thanks to Charles Byrd and his family who first envisioned a city of “at least a thousand residents” and invested in a residential development that would “tame the wilds” of Shades Mountain and, later, invested in the first shopping center in Vestavia Hills. Thanks to the incorporators of Vestavia Hills in 1950, who voted, 88-8, to incorporate our city and later elected, 54-31, Mayor Verner L. Adams as its first mayor. Thanks to Mayor Robert Guillot who focused on bringing a certain quality of life to our city in the form of parks, a library, public safety services and its own educational system. Furthermore, these two pioneers ushered in a growth period that would establish Vestavia Hills as a welcoming home to many residents. Thanks to the many volunteers from civic clubs, recreational organizations and churches who laid a foundation of volunteerism that continues

to this day.

Thanks to Bill Harbert and his family for their service to the community in so many forms, not the least of which is the heavy lifting associated with the placement of our iconic Sibyl Temple at the City’s gateway.

The growth of our city and its maturity continued under Mayors Sara Wuska and C. Pat Reynolds. Many thanks to these elected leaders and their councils who facilitated an emphasis on senior services and ultimately prepared the City for an economically sustainable future with the annexation of Liberty Park. All during this past and continuing to this day, community stalwarts like State Senator Jabo Waggoner and City Attorney Patrick Boone guided the decision making so that our community could serve as a beacon of cutting edge municipal best practices.

The most recent periods have seen efforts of mayors and councils move government and City activities to a professional and comprehensive set of activities that deserve many accolades. Mayor Scotty McCallum generously retired from his lead position at UAB to take the helm of a city searching for



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The events and dates provided are subject to change. Please refer to the calendar on the City of Vestavia Hills website at <https://vhal.org/calendar> for the most up-to-date information.

November 2020

- 2** Investiture of Municipal Officers, City Hall, 10 a.m.
- 5** Design Review Board, Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 8** City of Vestavia Hills 70th Birthday
- 9** City Council Meeting, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 10** Veterans Day Celebration (Virtual), Visit vhal.org event information
- 10** Chamber Luncheon, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30 a.m.
- 12** Planning and Zoning Commission, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 16** Council Work Session, Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 17** Parks and Recreation Board, Executive Conference Room, 7 a.m.
- 19** Board of Zoning Adjustment, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 23** City Council Meeting, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 26 & 27** Municipal Offices Closed, Thanksgiving*

* There will not be garbage collection on Thanksgiving Day: Thursday customers will be serviced Friday; Friday AND Saturday customers will be serviced Saturday.



Members of the first council and three of the first appointed officers. Pictured seated, left to right: Joseph King; R.M. Maddox; Louise King, Town Clerk/Treasurer; Verner L. Adams, Mayor; A. Murray Cabill; Henry S. McReynolds; and H.J. Tillia. Standing, left to right: Joe Dean, Policeman; and Robert W. Gwin, Town Attorney.



SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Todd Freeman, Ed.D., Vestavia Hills City Schools Superintendent

“The wise man built his house upon the rock ...
the foolish man built his house upon the sand
... the rains came down and the floods came

up ... and the house on the rock stood firm ... and the house on the sand went splat!” These paraphrased lyrics from a children’s song are still locked in my memory after all these years. The lesson of the importance of a solid foundation is etched in my mind forever.

Like all organizations, communities and families, Vestavia Hills City Schools has adapted to functioning in a time of great disruption, confusion and uncertainty. Our mission to provide every student the opportunity to learn without limits continues to be the pinnacle toward which we climb. The limits to learning look much different than they did only seven months ago. What we believe, however, has not changed and continues to be the foundation undergirding the work in our schools.

The VHCS team believes all people deserve respect, each person deserves to be safe, and every person has value. These beliefs are our structure for supporting students; the pillars of character, or our core values, form the foundation.

For the past several years, VHCS has been partnering with The Hope Institute at Samford University whose mission is “equipping educators to cultivate character.” This partnership has guided our approach to emphasizing core values such as honesty, integrity, love and perseverance. Our schools frame the importance of those values as the impetus for how we treat others, no matter the circumstances.

For its efforts, Vestavia Hills Elementary Cahaba Heights was named a National School of Character earlier this year by Character.org. Dr. Alicia Hunsberger commented, “As a school, we have committed

to teaching character through daily class meetings called Heights Huddle ... Our teachers are utilizing children’s literature to teach diverse perspectives, reflecting on how to respond and value our differences.

Through Heights

Huddles, students have the opportunity to lead, share and celebrate learning, leadership and service.”

Vestavia Hills Elementary West principal Kim Hauser said, “Our involvement the past three years with The Hope Institute has increased our desire to be intentional with character education and modeling and instilling essential core values in our students.” The West Way was also recently recognized by Character.org as a Promising Practice in character education.

Values are the bulwark in a storm, a bastion of safety in a crisis and the bridge that connects us over rough terrain. Reaching our goal of confronting the challenges faced by students, families and the community is more achievable when our foundation is built on these stable rocks.



CELEBRATING 70 YEARS!

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an inclusive decision making process and a business approach to its operations. Mayor McCallum recognized the need to connect Vestavia Hills into its present form by incorporating Cahaba Heights. His top assistant, Butch Zaragoza, would carry his mantle of professionalism. In his terms as mayor, Zaragoza streamlined governmental services while enhancing certain opportunities for the convenience of its residents. I would be remiss not to mention his selfless act of promoting a new form of government, as well, that led to the creation of the position I currently hold.

These pioneers and hard workers have made Vestavia Hills what it is today. Mayor Ashley Curry and the current council continue to carry on the work of these fine individuals and should also be thanked for their tireless efforts. The giving people of our community and its leaders should be proud. On our city’s 70th birthday, we can celebrate the fact that Mr. Byrd’s vision of “at least one thousand people” is now shared by nearly 35,000 people who enjoy the fruits of the labor of so many people. Thanks to everyone as we near the end of a challenging 2020. The future is bright, and I send a note of optimism and thanks as we reflect during this birthday celebration.



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Ashley Curry, Vestavia Hills Mayor

We will remember this year for several reasons.

First and foremost, the COVID-19 pandemic.

I recently heard that health officials are projecting an increase in the number of cases as flu season approaches. While we have all experienced inconveniences caused by the pandemic, including the inability to gather with friends at church, sporting events, restaurants, etc., I ask that you remain vigilant in practicing the recommended public health directives. Together, we can hopefully put COVID-19 behind us.

In spite of the pandemic, there are several positive things to celebrate and remember this year. Our school system is celebrating its 50th anniversary and 2020 marks the 70th anniversary of our city's founding. Can you believe our city is 70 years old this month? From the early 1900's settlers attempted to settle on and around Shades Mountain, so named because of the dense, shaded woods in the valley between Red Mountain and Shades Mountain. The south side of Shades Mountain (what is now Vestavia Hills) was problematic because it was difficult to cross over the mountain. There were no roads from the southern side of Shades Mountain into Birmingham. According to Marvin Whiting's book, *Vestavia Hills, A Place Apart*, it was well into the 1920's before homes were built and occupied, and there were only around 600 residents in 1950. The incorporation of the City was finalized on October 24, 1950 when 88 of 96 voters approved the incorporation.

The City grew and prospered with some major events such as the formation of the Vestavia Hills School System in 1970, the acquisition of the Liberty Park area in 1992, and the annexation of the Cahaba Heights area in 2002. From that humble beginning Vestavia Hills has grown to over 35,000 in population and is the 15th largest city in Alabama per the U.S. Census estimates of 2010. This growth is not surprising in light of the quality of life that we enjoy.

We can also celebrate the success of our City school system. I recently attended their 50th anniversary celebration event. It is obvious that the quest for excellence in education, envisioned by City officials, has come to fruition. The "culture of excellence" was well represented by the five inductees into the inaugural class of the Vestavia Hills City Schools Hall of Fame. The inductees are Coach Buddy Anderson, Helen Holley, David Miles, Carlton Smith and Kay Tipton. Each of these inductees represent the excellence that makes our school system one of the best in the country.

As always, November is the month in we which are thankful for the blessings that have been bestowed upon us. This Thanksgiving we should celebrate our storied history, the quality of life that our city offers and the continued excellence of our school system. I wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving. We have much for which to be thankful.

RECYCLING PROGRAM

The new sanitation contract with Amwaste is underway. There have been a number of questions as throughout the transition, but the most frequently asked questions are about recycling – what is accepted and how does the program “work”?



Nearly everything is accepted and recycled, other than: food, organic waste (dirt, rocks, grass, etc.) and glass. Of the remaining materials, RePower South (RPS) converts approximately 70% of this waste into two products:

1. **Sold commodities.** Recyclable commodities, such as cardboard, paper, plastic bottles, metals/cans, etc. are baled and sold into established commodity markets.
2. **ReEF fuel.** For some materials, such as non-recyclable papers and plastics, there isn't a market for that product. Therefore, it is not able to be sold as a commodity in its current state. RPS processes these materials to “recycle” them into ReEF fuel, which is used as a replacement for coal in industrial and energy utility boilers. ReEF fuel burns cleaner than coal and is desired by industrial and energy utilities for energy generation.

There is no need to sort or clean recyclables – RPS accepts bagged recycling and household waste co-mingled. All materials collected on the second service day each week are transported to RePower South, where they enter a system of sorters that separate waste materials from recyclables.

For more information about City of Vestavia Hills waste collection, visit bit.ly/VH-waste-collection or watch a short video outlining the RPS recycling process at <https://youtu.be/qOxJaOQOkPM>.



Have you registered to receive the bi-weekly digital newsletter from the City of Vestavia Hills? Sign up today so you won't miss a thing. It's easy! Visit www.vhal.org, scroll to the bottom of the home page and simply enter your email address to have the newsletter delivered directly to your inbox!



Happy fall! Even with the craziness of the coronavirus, the weather is gorgeous and fall is in the air. It is also inspiring me to embrace

the holidays that are just around the corner. As I reflect on Thanksgiving coming up, I want to say how thankful I am for our incredible community. When I am asked why Vestavia Hills is so special, I immediately respond that it's the people. While we have a beautiful community and are blessed beyond what any of us deserve, it would not be what it is without the countless residents that give so selflessly to make a difference in Vestavia Hills, and for that, I am thankful!

I am also thankful for the wonderful businesses that strive every day to serve our community. Their contributions to our community assist in providing so many things that we value, including outstanding police and fire departments, updated parks and recreation facilities, public services, an amazing library and an incredible City staff and elected officials. We have much to be thankful for.

City revenue is generated primarily by sales tax dollars and ad valorem taxes. As such, please remember to support our brick and mortar



businesses – they are the mainstay of our city. The pandemic shutdown this spring and summer has resulted in so many of our businesses taking a huge financial hit. Some are struggling to stay afloat. So, when you are thinking about your holiday shopping, please patronize our local businesses. It is harder to replace

a business than it is to keep one. Let's do our part and NOT take the easy way out by shopping online! Support our brick and mortar businesses ... it DOES make a difference to our community.

Holiday in the Hills kicks off this year with SHOP. DINE. PLAY. in Vestavia Hills the week of November 16. We are planning some fun events with the different business districts throughout the city so be sure and participate in all of them for a fun start to the holiday season.

On behalf of the Chamber of Commerce, we wish you and your family a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday.



DON'T INVITE VHFD TO DINNER

As Thanksgiving approaches, we look forward to visiting with our families, friends and enjoying the delicious food associated with the holiday. However, did you know that 47% of house fires begin in the kitchen and account for 45% of injuries nationwide? With all the fun that comes along with Thanksgiving, it is important to note that the holiday brings the highest number of cooking fires. The Vestavia Hills Fire Department and the National Fire Protection Association suggest you follow these simple steps to avoid inviting VHFD to your gathering:

- If frying a turkey, follow the manufacturer's guidelines for safe operation of your fryer.
 - Make sure the fryer is level and in an open area away from all structures, trees and shrubbery.
 - Keep the fryer off of wooden decks and out of garages.
 - Be sure the turkey is fully thawed and completely dry. Water and hot oil will make for a bad day and possibly a trip to the hospital.
 - Wear protective gear (goggles, gloves and apron) in case the oil splatters.
 - Do not put too much oil in the pot.
 - Do not leave the turkey cooking unattended.
 - Keep an ABC extinguisher close by in case of a fire. NEVER try to extinguish an oil fire with water.
 - Consider using an oil-free fryer.
- Stay in the kitchen while frying, boiling, grilling or broiling. If you leave the kitchen for any amount of time, turn off the oven.
- If you are simmering, baking or roasting food, check on it periodically and set a timer to remind you.
- Keep anything flammable away from the stove top including pot holders, towels and wooden utensils.

Stay safe and call 911 if you have an emergency. We would rather you call us and not need us, than not call and do need us. Have a Happy Thanksgiving!



Presented by the City of Vestavia Hills & the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce
Visit www.vestaviiahills.org for more details and an extended list of events.



Shop, Dine, Play Week

November 16-21

Kick off your holiday shopping with Vestavia Hills merchants and shop local this holiday season!

All is Bright

November 19

Vestavia City Center, 6:00 pm
700 Montgomery Highway

Join the Vestavia City Center for their first annual Tree Lighting to kick off the holiday season!

A Rockin Christmas Carnival at Rocky Ridge

November 20

Rocky Ridge Business District, 6:00-9:00 pm

Let's be jolly in Rocky Ridge with a Christmas Carnival for kids and adults!

Deck the Heights

November 21

Cahaba Heights, 2:00-8:00 pm

Join the merchants of Cahaba Heights for family fun, entertainment and holiday cheer!

Tree Lighting Festival

December 1

Vestavia Hills City Hall, 6:00 pm
1032 Montgomery Highway

Enjoy entertainment, merchant give-aways, a visit with Santa and the lighting of the tree!

Breakfast with Santa

December 12

Vestavia Hills Civic Center, 7:30-10:00 am
1975 Merryvale Road

Bring the whole family for a pancake breakfast with Santa! Free to attend-Breakfast courtesy of the City of Vestavia Hills. Check www.vestaviiahills.org for more details on how things will work this year.

Vestavia Hills Christmas Parade

December 13

Liberty Park Sports Complex
to Alston Meadows, 2:00-4:00 pm

Enjoy the city's official parade!
Register to be in the Parade! Find the form at www.vestaviiahills.org.



LIBRARY IN THE FOREST

CHILDREN & TWEENS

Birth-Grade 2 & Grades 3-5

TEENS

Grades 6-12

ADULTS

Ages 18+

MAKERSPACE

All ages, unless otherwise noted

TECHNOLOGY

Ages 18+

NOVEMBER 2020

- 3** Closed to the public; open as a polling place **ONLY**
12 Bel^ow, 2pm, YouTube
Smash Bits!, 4pm, YouTube
- 4** **Writing Group**, 4pm, Zoom
- 5** **Tic-TECH-Toe: Create a Digital Escape Room**, 4pm, YouTube
Read & Feed Book Group, 6pm, Zoom
- 6** **Open Gaming Goes Online**, 4pm, Discord
- 10** **Storytime Stars, 10:30am**, YouTube
Tara's Creative Corner – Brown Paper Art, 4pm, YouTube
Librarians Try Not to Laugh Challenge, 4pm, YouTube
Eighth of March Book Group, 6pm, Zoom
- 11** **Digital Breakout**, 4pm, Zoom
- 12** **Kara Recommends**, 3pm, YouTube
- 13** **Open Gaming Goes Online**, 4pm, Discord
- 17** **Pick Up S.T.E.A.M!**, 2pm, YouTube
Doodles with Derek: Doodles on Demand 3, 4pm, YouTube
- 18** **Teen Scavenger Hunt**, 4pm, Zoom
- 19** **Tech in Ten: Google Drive**, 4pm, YouTube
- 20** **Open Gaming Goes Online**, 4pm, Discord
Library Libations: Apple Cinnamon Moscow Mule, 6pm, YouTube
- 24** **Storytime Stars, 10:30am**, YouTube
Teardown Tuesday, 3:30pm, YouTube
Lauren's Book Buzz, 4pm, YouTube
- 25** **Art Group**, 4pm, Zoom
- 30** **Intro to 3D Modeling – Tinker-cad**, 4pm, Zoom

The Library in the Forest will be **CLOSED** Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27 in observance of Thanksgiving.



Art Group Enjoy drawing, sketching, or simply doodling? Join us to play drawing games like Drawful 2 along with basic drawing exercises you can do at home.

Digital Breakout Join us online with other teens to see if you can crack our puzzles and codes before it's too late!

Doodles with Derek: Doodles on Demand 3 Derek doodles your request for the third time! Let's make it challenging for him!

Eighth of March Book Group *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Abi Dare.

Intro to 3D Modeling (Tinker-cad) In this introductory class, participants will learn their way around this free 3D modeling platform. Set up your free account at tinkercad.com.

Kara Recommends ... *Real Queer America* by Samantha Allen.

Lauren's Book Buzz Looking for a new book to dive into? Check out Lauren's latest Book Buzz to find your next favorite read!

Librarians Try Not to Laugh Challenge Join our Teen librarians to see who can keep a straight face as they watch increasingly funny videos!

Library Libations Cocktails & Mocktails Learn to make an Apple Cinnamon Moscow Mule, a delicious holiday spin on a fan favorite.

Open Gaming Goes Online Join the fun on Discord and play Super Smash Bros and Jackbox.tv games. (Link available on vestavialibrary.org event calendar.)

Pick Up S.T.E.A.M! Ms. Holly brings fun online STEAM-themed activities for all school-aged kids. Most activities planned with things you have at home so you can play along!

Read & Feed Book Group *American Sherlock: Murder, Forensics, and the Birth of American CSI* by Kate Winkler Dawson

Smash Bits! We've combined our teen's best Smash Bros plays together into one hard-punching reel! Want to make our next highlights? Join us in Open Gaming Goes Online every Friday at 4pm!

Storytime Stars Join Ms. Anjie and Ms. Lisa for stories, songs, puppets and learning fun. For ages five and under.

Tara's Creative Corner: Brown Paper Art Tara creates gorgeous fall leaves using brown paper and a white pencil! Free Craft To-Go Bags available while supplies last; call 205.978.4678 to reserve your bag.

Teardown Tuesday Join us in the "Breaker Space" where we tear down small appliances and electronic devices to see what makes them tick, learn about their components and harvest parts.

Tech in Ten: Google Drive Learn – in 10 minutes or less – to use Google's cloud service to store and sync files.

Teen Scavenger Hunt How many items from our list can you find around your house before time runs out?

Tic-TECH-Toe: Create a Digital Escape Room Learn to create your own digital escape room that can contain riddles, educational challenges or other mysteries to solve.

12 Bel^ow Features trivia, games, challenges and activities online for school-aged children.

Writing Group Build writing skills while providing feedback to one another. We will use Zoom and Google Docs to share ideas.

THANK YOU!

A HUGE shout out to everyone who participated in the Vestavia Hills Annual Blood Drive on October 5, 2020! The American Red Cross collected a record total of 32 pints which has the ability to save a total of 96 lives! So, if you contributed – THANK YOU! And if you missed the opportunity this time, no worries, we will host another one in 2021.

From the Red Cross: “Your commitment to host a blood drive with the American Red Cross truly made a difference! Your team registered 29 total donors, collected 32 pints of blood and recruited 4 first-time donors. Your efforts have helped boost the community blood supply and ensure hospital patients have the lifesaving blood they need.”

SENIOR SERVICES

Drive-In Bingo

Stay safely in your car and roll down your windows down for cool breezes and conversation with friends at the next



Drive-In Bingo, **November 5, 2020 at 11am** at New Merkel House. Bring your mask for the “Seventh Inning Stretch” to get out of your car and stretch your legs.

VESTAVIA HILLS

Salute to Veterans

Honoring Those Who Served

After careful consideration of current health guidelines and to ensure the health and safety of our guests, this year’s “Salute to Veterans” event will be presented virtually. **The program will be pre-recorded and available online at <https://vhal.org/community/city-events> Tuesday, November 10, 2020.** The recording will feature patriotic-themed musical performances, along with a special presentation by Rear Admiral W. Kent Davis, USN, (Retired), who currently serves as the State Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs.

RECREATION NEWS

Gym

Basketball season is underway, but there is still plenty of gym space available for you to join us every weekday morning beginning at 7:00 a.m. to get in some “Early Bird” steps! Don’t forget to check the Parks & Recreation website (<https://vhal.org/departments/parks-recreation>) and follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/VestaviaHillsParksandRecreation>) for schedule updates and open gym play times!



Pickleball

Pickleball combines the elements of tennis, badminton and table tennis and is fast becoming THE sport around town.

Whether you are an experienced player or just wanting to check it out for the first time, there is an opportunity for you to play! Evening and midday playing times are offered each week and participation is FREE for Vestavia Hills residents. For more information, call 205.978.0166 or email Jeff Corley (jcorley@vhal.org).

Senior Softball League

Did you know Vestavia Hills now offers a Senior Softball League? The fall season was played at Liberty Park over the course of 12 weeks and was wildly popular! There were four



co-ed teams and each played a game on Wednesdays. They displayed the true meaning of sportsmanship and the love of the game!

If you missed it this fall, don’t worry – the league will start up again this spring and we would love for you to participate. For more information, please contact Sandi Wilson at swilson@vhal.org or 205.978.0163.



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