



## WINTER 2024 NEWSLETTER



Photos by George Roesch Johnson

This year we had one of the largest turnouts in recent memory for the Halloween Parade and Trunk or Treat. The beautiful weather likely helped! Thank you to all of you who joined us for a silly and spooky parade down Grandview, and special thanks to all who brought their cars and treats to the park.

# ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

The annual meeting for the Arbor Hills Neighborhood Association was held on October 8th at the Arbor Good Neighbor House (formerly known as Arbor Covenant Church). For those who couldn't make it, here's a recap of the highlights and key speakers.

### President's Report & Bylaw Vote

The evening kicked off with a welcome from Ashley Gibson, AHNA President. Ashley expressed gratitude to everyone who volunteered over the past year, including block captains, event volunteers, and board members. She also shared these highlights:

- **Event magnets:** We introduced magnets with all event dates, hand delivered to every household in the neighborhood, which helped with event turnout.
- **Grants:** We awarded two one-time grants from our savings, including \$1,000 to the Arbor Good Neighbor House Essentials Pantry and two \$500 scholarships to West High School seniors who attended Leopold Elementary.
- **Community Advocacy:** We worked with the City of Madison on various issues, from removing shoes from a phone line on Todd Drive to addressing park concerns like graffiti and broken equipment.
- **Newsletter changes:** In 2025, the newsletter will be delivered via USPS using their "Every Door Direct Mail" service rather than hand delivered by block captains. This will help with challenges we've seen with timely distribution. Unfortunately, the area covered by this mailing will exclude a small section of the neighborhood, so we will make copies available at Arbor Good Neighbor House (in addition to continuing to post it online).

We will still have block captains and ask that they deliver event magnets and remittance envelopes (just one delivery per year rather than four). To cover the cost of mailing, in 2025 the newsletter will have a black and white interior with a full-color front and back.

The membership voted to approve two bylaw amendments to remove the membership coordinator role (as these duties are being absorbed by the treasurer and other board members) and to remove the responsibility of newsletter distribution from the block captain coordinator (as we are moving to have USPS deliver newsletters).

### Treasurer's Report & Budget Vote

Next, Jackie Bastyr Cooper, Treasurer, presented the 2024 budget. She highlighted some unplanned expenses, including event magnets, "thank you" postcards, and porta potties for the Make Music Madison event. Despite a dip in advertising income and membership numbers (159 for 2024, short of our goal of 185), we ended the year with a balanced budget thanks to extra contributions from members. She thanked members who contributed more than the standard dues and proposed a 2025 budget with a reduced membership goal of 165 and an increased advertising budget. The budget was approved by the membership.

### AHNA Board Member Elections

Sheri Carter, AHNA Member at Large, led the board member elections. We're happy to announce the elected members for the 2025-2026 term:

- **President:** Ashley Gibson
- **Block Captain Coordinator:** Chuck Friedrichs
- **Communications Coordinator:** Cathy Means
- **Members at Large:** Lisa Fernandez, Nanci Horn

For reference, the following board members will continue their 2024-2025 terms: Jackie Bastyr Cooper (Treasurer), Aaron Eicher (Events Coordinator), Sheri Carter and Caroline Thompson (Members at Large).

Following the meeting, Hope Bank agreed to step in to serve as the interim newsletter coordinator.

We're still looking for a Vice President, so if you're interested, please email

Ashley at [akgibson17@gmail.com](mailto:akgibson17@gmail.com).

### Community Updates

Pastor Peter Morris from the Arbor Good Neighbor House shared updates on their efforts to strengthen community connections. The Creek Day School continues to operate. The AGNH supports the refugee community through various initiatives, including the Essentials Pantry and will continue hosting a "Repair Café" where tinkerers and handy folks volunteer to help people fix things that are broken.

Marisa Flowers, Principal of Leopold Community School, highlighted the school's dual language immersion program, literacy growth initiatives, and increased staff retention. She encouraged neighbors to volunteer. Those who are interested can visit: [leopold.madison.k12.wi.us/families/volunteer-opportunities](http://leopold.madison.k12.wi.us/families/volunteer-opportunities).

Matt Veldran, our District 4 Supervisor, provided updates on the county budget and reminded us to keep leaves out of the street to prevent clogging drains.

### South District Madison Police Department

Captain Harrison Zanders addressed community concerns about speeding, vandalism, and fireworks. He reassured us that overall crime is down and emphasized the importance of being proactive ("If you see or hear something, say something."). Captain Zanders is working with response teams and local schools to address juveniles fighting and encouraged us to be kind and understanding towards our neighbors.

### Closing

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making our neighborhood a better place!



# Q&A WITH THE MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT MOUNTED PATROL UNIT

This fall, some neighbors might have noticed some guests of the equine variety marching down Grandview Boulevard. These gentle giants are part of Madison's Mounted Patrol Unit. Why does Madison even have horses on staff, and what are the benefits? We caught up with Officer Molly Thomson to find out.

### Why does Madison have a Mounted Patrol Unit?

**Officer Thomson:** The Madison Police Department's Mounted Patrol Unit is a unique way to connect with the community we serve. These gentle giants draw all sorts of people out to meet them and enable the officers to have conversations that would have otherwise not happened. We are a slower form of patrol than most residents are used to seeing, so we provide a very approachable side of the department.

We currently have 7 horses in our unit and 10 riders. All of our horses are draft or draft crosses, meaning these are big working type horses. Most commonly you'd see them pulling wagons or plows. Their ages range from 5 to 22 years old. On the human side, only two of our riders do this as a full-time assignment during the riding season. The other 8 riders are assigned to other duties for the majority of their days, only riding 4 times a month. During our off season, the full-time riders report back to squad cars and work patrol.

### What are some of the things that make a mounted patrol unique?

**Officer Thomson:** Horses are incredibly approachable, making them perfect for community policing. People are naturally drawn to them, which encourages interaction between officers and the community. This interaction helps officers discuss community safety and address any local issues.

They also help with visibility. Mounted officers are highly visible, making them effective in deterring crime and increasing community presence. The sight of a police horse

often brings neighbors together, fostering a sense of community and safety. It is very common that when we ride away, we leave a group of neighbors standing together catching up and talking about neighborhood events.

### One of the things I've heard about mounted patrols is that they're useful in big crowds. Why is that?

**Officer Thomson:** Because of their size, it is said that one mounted officer is equivalent to more than ten officers on foot. Their height gives them a great vantage point, making them easy to spot in a crowd. This height advantage allows us to see longer distances in the crowds in order to see if there is a problem that needs police attention. People are also much more willing to make space for the horses walking through a crowd than an officer on their own feet. This makes it easier to move crowds back for things like ambulance escorts or to clear the street at the end of an event.

### Is there anything else that neighbors might find interesting about mounted patrols?

**Officer Thomson:** Not only do we use them for crowd management and community outreach, but we also use them for searching for missing persons and sometimes even evidence. Once again, being on horseback provides officers with a higher viewpoint, allowing them to see over and into thick brush and foliage. Horses can navigate areas that are difficult for vehicles and can move through thick terrain faster than someone on foot. We work alongside our K9 and our UAS (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) teams in order to provide the best outcomes for these vulnerable people.

### If we see you out and about, can we pet the horses?

**Officer Thomson:** While our horses are working animals, during our

daytime shifts we do typically allow community members to pet the horses. Please ask the rider before petting though so they can let you know if it is okay and where to touch the horse. Be sure to request a trading card for that horse too so you can learn all about them!

### Where can we see the Mounted Patrol Unit in action?

**Officer Thomson:** Our riding season starts at the beginning of April and runs through the end of November. We typically have two horses out somewhere in the city almost every day. Sunday through Thursday we are usually found riding the early afternoon into early evening hours. Throughout the year we try to cover as many different neighborhoods as we can during these rides. Friday and Saturday find us deployed to the entertainment district in the downtown area. We work overnight addressing disorderly behavior around the bars and doing our best to ensure that everyone can make good decisions to get home safely. If a community group or neighborhood is holding an event that they would like to request the Mounted Patrol to make an appearance at, they can complete a Community Corral request form found on the police department's website, and we'll be in contact about the specifics with the requestor.

To learn more, visit [cityofmadison.com/police/field/mountedpatrol](http://cityofmadison.com/police/field/mountedpatrol).



Two officers riding Torres and Cooper along Grandview Boulevard drew neighbors out to say hello.

# KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

## Chad Sachs, Elise Gresch, Indy, Colter, and Yasmin

This August, the Arbor Hills neighborhood welcomed new residents Chad Sachs and Elise Gresch to Grandview Boulevard, along with their three children Indy (15), Colter (13), and Yasmin (9). Elise, a Wisconsin native, and Chad, originally from Houston, Texas, have spent the last five years living abroad and are excited to be back in the Badger State.

Elise grew up in Sussex, a suburb of Milwaukee, and the couple chose Madison for its central location between her mother and brother. Chad and Elise met during their college years at Georgetown University and have since lived in various places, including several years in San Francisco.

Most recently, the family resided in Lima, Peru, for four years. Chad works for a non-governmental organization that focuses on social enterprises, which are companies working to help vulnerable populations, particularly smallholder farmers in rural areas of the Amazon and Andes in Latin America. Elise, with a background in data science, contributed to a chain of private schools by establishing a centralized data operation to support students and teachers.

Now as they get settled in Madison, Chad continues his work with the NGO remotely, managing funds in Peru, Colombia, and Brazil. Elise is currently focused on getting their new home in order and helping their children adjust to their new surroundings. She plans to start job hunting in the new year, with interests in public education and women's reproductive rights.

Indy is a freshman at West High, Colter is in 7th grade at Cherokee Heights, and Yasmin is in fourth grade at Leopold Elementary. When choosing where to live, it was important to their family that Indy, Colter, and Yasmin were able to continue their education in Spanish, so Madison's Dual Language Immersion program was a draw. Indy and Colter, both basketball enthusiasts, are eager to connect with other kids in the neighborhood for pickup games. Yasmin enjoys archery,

rock climbing, karate, and would love to walk people's dogs or dogsit to prove to her mom that she is ready for a pet of her own.

Since moving to Arbor Hills, the family has actively participated in neighborhood events. They attended a block party on Leyton Lane before even unpacking their boxes and enjoyed a food truck night in the park in September.

"People have been really friendly," said Elise. "It has been really sweet to see how well the community is organized."

Chad and Elise are happy to be closer to family, including Elise's relatives and Chad's sister, who also lives nearby. They have also been enjoying Madison's excellent bike routes, a stark contrast to the larger cities of Lima and San Francisco, where biking was more challenging. Chad, a native Texan, is a bit apprehensive about the upcoming winter weather, but Indy, Colter, and Yasmin are excited for snow.

The couple shares a love for live music and enjoyed many outdoor concerts over the summer and will soon start salsa dancing lessons. They are also

looking for a place to start taking salsa dancing lessons. Elise is an avid reader who looks forward to finding other like-minded bookworms to join in on book discussions. She also loves strategy board games if folks are interested in playing.

Living near the University of Wisconsin, Chad and Elise are excited to participate in lectures, live music, and campus sporting events. As a family, they enjoy hiking and camping, having explored the Apostle Islands over the summer and taken a road trip to California to pack up their stuff, visiting several National Parks along the way. They are excited to learn about great places to camp in Wisconsin. Their future travel plans include exploring more of the U.S. and visiting friends in Mexico City.

The Sachs-Gresch family is eager to meet more neighbors and make new friends. Indy and Colter are looking for other teens interested in basketball, and the family would love to connect with others for walks or casual get-togethers. Feel free to reach out to Chad at [chad.sachs21@gmail.com](mailto:chad.sachs21@gmail.com) and Elise at [elisegresch@gmail.com](mailto:elisegresch@gmail.com) to connect.



The Sachs-Gresch family poses with their packed-up pod in San Francisco, ready to head to their new home in Madison.

# REDUCE YOUR FOOTPRINT WITH MGE'S RENEWABLE NATURAL GAS OPTION

By Madison Gas and Electric (MGE)

MGE is offering a new sustainable energy option for our natural gas customers. Our new Green Power Tomorrow (GPT) renewable natural gas (RNG) option, known as GPT RNG, combines the environmental benefits of renewable energy with the reliability of natural gas. MGE is the first utility in the state to offer this option to customers.

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### How GPT RNG Works

Under GPT RNG, customers pay an incremental charge to participate, selecting either a set number of therms each month to offset through GPT RNG or a percentage of their monthly usage. Renewable Thermal Certificates (RTCs) are purchased by MGE on the customer's behalf to offset the emissions associated with the customer's use of natural gas. RTC units are added as an incremental energy charge of \$1.78 per therm to your monthly natural gas bill (either as a set number of therms or as a percentage of your usage).

### Why the Added Cost?

Since this technology is new, collecting, processing and converting organic materials into pipeline-quality gas is an expensive process today. As demand grows for RNG, it's expected production costs will decrease. MGE does not set the price of the RTCs—it is a pass-through cost set by the market. We apply a nominal administrative fee to cover costs associated with administration of the program. The purchase of RTCs is traced by M-RETS, a nonprofit organization that tracks environmental attributes.

### Net-Zero Methane Emissions by 2035

MGE has a goal to achieve net-zero methane emissions from our natural gas distribution system by 2035. This new GPT RNG option is another way MGE is building on our commitment to advancing safe, reliable and sustainable energy. Visit [mge.com/RNG](https://mge.com/RNG) to learn more.

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# HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS – CHEER ON THE REGENTS!

Did you know you can watch Madison West High School student athletes compete in a variety of sports around town this winter? You can attend in person - or stream at home (via the NFHS Network for a fee). In person home events are held at West HS (boys & girls basketball, boys swim & dive, boys & girls wrestling), Madison Ice Arena (boys & girls hockey), and Memorial HS (gymnastics). But you can also catch these athletes competing around town! Tickets are \$6 for adults and can be purchased via the GoFan App or at the gate with a credit/debit card or Apple Pay/Google Pay. Cash is not accepted (except for concessions). Think you may attend five or more events? Purchase a "Madison West All Sport Pass" through the GoFan App for only \$30 and get into ALL regular season **home** events for the rest of the school year **at no additional cost**. Schedules and more information can be found at: [MadisonWestAthletics.com](http://MadisonWestAthletics.com)



# 2024 AHNA BOARD MEMBERS

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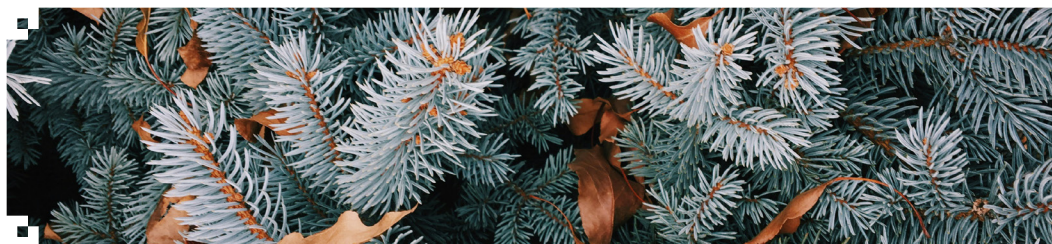
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# WILDFLOWERS OF WISCONSIN MURAL

## Madison Public Art Project

Wildflowers of Wisconsin, a fiber art mural commissioned and organized by Madison Public Art Project, is now on display in McKee Farms Park in Fitchburg through August 2025. Created by lead fiber artist Kiersten Darling, and assisted by Sapphira Afifi and Karen Jahns, the mural spans 30 feet long and is comprised of oversized crocheted flora native to the state of Wisconsin.

Darling created flower patterns with the goal of inclusivity. MPAP welcomed the community into the art-making process with this project. The crochet patterns were available at no cost, both online to download, and in-person at our free monthly Community Crochet Day workshops facilitated by Afifi. In this artist-led environment, attendees learned how to crochet the different flower petals that were then incorporated into the final fiber mural. The flora species presented in this colorful display include Coneflower, Black-eyed Susan, Butterfly milkweed, Swamp milkweed and the State Flower of Wisconsin, the Blue Violet.

MPAP developed a Public Art Education Activity Guide as an additional online resource to this expressive mural installation, which features six original iPad coloring book pages created by Afifi specifically for this project. We invite you to download this comprehensive additional art and learning material that explores the connections between art, nature, and sustainability. The coloring book pages are designed for all ages.

"The creation of the mural became an event participants looked forward to each month," said Jillian Talarczyk, MPAP Founder and Creative Director, about the Wildflowers of Wisconsin project. "It was so rewarding to curate an ongoing opportunity for the public to join us in this beautiful project. Participants of all ages and backgrounds came together, laughed, shared stories, and learned so many different beautiful flower patterns in the process," said Talarczyk. I love that this project brought so many people together and was touched by so many hands."

The Wildflowers of Wisconsin raises awareness about the realities of climate change and encourages greater stewardship of the land for generations to come. Pollinators play an important role in keeping our ecosystem healthy. Pollination is a vital part of the life cycle of our flowering plants, and without important pollinators, flowers cannot be fertilized. Darling highlighted the mural pollinators in a special way through her artistic language of color, shading, and using shimmer threads in this tactile and impressive installation. Viewers are invited to look within the flora of this mural to find a special sparkling Monarch, Honeybee, and shimmering Hummingbird.



## BECOME A MEMBER FOR 2025

We hope you will consider becoming a member of the Arbor Hills Neighborhood Association in 2025! Membership dues pay for this printed newsletter, lighting of the neighborhood sign, insurance, neighborhood events, and more! Annual Budgets can be found on our website ([arborhills.org](http://arborhills.org)).

To become a member: pay online at [arborhills.org](http://arborhills.org), use the PayPal App (just scan the QR code), or pay by cash or check and mail with payment to: Jackie Cooper, AHNA, 3314 Heatherdell Lane, Madison, 53713.

Thank you for supporting our neighborhood!



Membership year is October 1 through September 30

### Seed - \$20



Covers the printing of 8 newsletters

OR half of the ice cream for our annual Independence Day picnic

OR 5% of the annual cost of lighting our neighborhood sign

### Sapling - \$30



Covers the printing of 12 newsletters

OR a quarter of the hot dogs for our annual Independence Day picnic

OR three signs to advertise our events

### Tree - \$50



Covers the printing of 20 newsletters

OR a quarter of the cost of a musician for Food Truck Night

OR a third of our annual website cost

Please complete and return this form with a check payable to AHNA.

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