



Avocet Talks

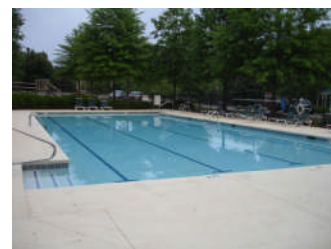
Sign up for email delivery of the newsletter: just send an email with your house address to bod@avocet-hoa.org

Note: Issues are now being posted on the website and in the next few months, we will start delivering them also by email (for those who sign up), to save printing costs & time. Let us know if you'd like an emailed copy.

Avocet Homeowners' Association

The Pool & Clubhouse are OPEN!

The pool is open and the work on the clubhouse is complete! If you'd like to rent out the clubhouse for a party or event, the clubhouse is available to be rented out for a fee of \$50 per day.



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Pancake Brunch - Saturday, June 10th

To celebrate the re-opening of the clubhouse, the opening of the pool and general camaraderie, come on down to the clubhouse for a pancake brunch from 9:30 to 11:30 on Saturday, June 10th. There will also be the first meeting to discuss the special assessment (see Finance report, below), so come, meet your neighbors, see the reopened clubhouse, and enjoy some pancakes and juice! Anyone want to help flip pancakes? Email Blake at vicepresident@avocet-hoa.org

Finance Report

By now you should have received a letter from Heritage that describes the financial details and the need for a one-time assessment. Please bring your questions and your vote to the meeting at the clubhouse on Thursday June 29th at 7:00 pm. There will also be small town hall meetings, starting with one during the pancake breakfast at the clubhouse.

Ways to Save Energy & Reduce Utility Bills

Air conditioning myths: Contrary to popular belief, it does not take more energy to cool a house if you turn the AC off during the day. If you are going to be away for more than a few hours, you will save money by turning the AC off while you are gone. You can make it even easier by installing a programmable thermostat to turn the AC off (or up to 90 F) while you are at work, and then cool it back down starting an hour before you return).

Be sure to put the blinds down during the day, especially on the sunny sides of the house. They will reflect a lot of heat away and prevent fading of fabrics and furniture.

Editor: Blake Slemmer,
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Welcome Your New Neighbors!


Almost every month, we have new homeowners in our neighborhood. Please reach out and make them feel welcomed and at home. To join Avocet Yahoo Group, go to <http://www.avocet-hoa.org>. Contact your board members for an invitation to join. And let us know so we can organize a welcome!

Protection from Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes haven't been too bad yet this summer, perhaps due to less rain and the drainage improvements, but with the risk of West Nile Disease still present, it is wise to take precautions. The most effective deterrent, by far, is DEET, which is used in OFF and most other brands of mosquito repellent. However, all formulations do not have the same effectiveness. Consumer reports current issue has a comparison of the major brands. They found that the highest concentrations of DEET are the most effective. (98% DEET formulations offer a 92 rating, while 30% concentrations are around a 72. The commonly found 5 to 7% formulations are far less effective. The concentration is also related to how long it lasts, too. DEET is considered safe for adults and children as young as 2 months (sparingly at that age) and has been used since world War II. Children's formulations are limited to 10% DEET and provide reasonable protection for about 4 hours. The bottom line is: look for at least 35% DEET in the ingredients. "Deep Woods Sportsmen" formula is one of the best, and is available at Target. Non-DEET alternatives include pyrethrin (a derivative from chrysanthemums), Oil of lemon eucalyptus (another plant-derived repellent), and Permethrin, a repellent sold in sporting good stores. None of these are as effective as DEET-based products, though.




On the left, the 98% DEET pump, at right, the 30% aerosol



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family.commuterrewards.com **commuter rewards**

Lawn And Garden in May

The summer heat takes a toll on your vegetables, flowers, shrubs and trees. They need a deep layer (4 to 6 inches) of a mulch (leaves, compost, grass clippings, pine straw or shredded bark). This mulch will accomplish 4 major goals: reduce evaporative loss of water, break down and add nutrients to the soil, buffer the plant's roots against scalding temperatures and virtually eliminate the need to weed. Without a mulch and hot, dry days, you'd better be watering almost every evening to keep the soil moist.

Vegetables: It's not too late to plant most vegetables and flowers! But you'd better do plant tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, corn, winter squash and pumpkins before mid June, as it will be too hot for the plants to get established. Also, there won't be enough time for these plants to mature before the short days arrive. Some vegetables can be planted throughout the season, as they have a quick time to maturity. These include beets, carrots, greens, summer squash, and anything that says 60 days or less to maturity on the package!

Flowers: You can still plant drought-resistant annuals like Lantana and begonias, and tender annuals like Impatiens (if you water frequently), but it's better to hold off on most trees, shrubs and perennials until the Fall.

Lawns: Now that the summer heat is here, your Bermuda grass should start growing rapidly again. It will need to be fed (fertilized) about every 6 weeks, and mowed weekly. Mowing: most homes in Avocet have common Bermuda grass is best mowed between 1 1/2 --2 1/4" with a rotary mower during the hot months.



For fertilizer, there are many brands, of which Scott's is the most well known. Scott's recommends Scotts® Turf Builder® With SummerGuard™ (see <http://www.scotts.com/index.cfm/event/ProductGuide.product/documentId/3de395878188d47556052128594e8c13>) which includes insect control but another common type, which includes weed control instead of insect control and can be used any time is [Scotts® Turf Builder® With PLUS 2® Weed Control](#). There is also a Scotts® Turf Builder® with Fire Ant Killer for Lawns if you see a lot of ants.

Scott's has a lawn care calendar, too. This link will take you to their page for our lawns: <http://www.lawncare.com/index.cfm/event/article.whattodonow>

Maintenance Tips: Lawn Mower Care

Let's start with the lawn mower. Once a year you should either replace or sharpen the blade, change the air filter and spark plug and change the oil. They make it easy with a simple kit that costs about \$10 at Home Depot, Lowe's Wal-Mart and Sears. It includes everything except for the blade, which you purchase separately for \$15 to \$25.

Start by changing the oil. If you have the instructions that came with the mower check those, but generally, you remove the oil filler cap, tip the mower on its side and drain the oil out into a pan. It is best to do this when the oil is warm but not hot; say, an hour after you cut the grass. Set the mower back on all four wheels and pour the fresh oil in, checking the level (usually with a dipstick that is attached to the filler cap) so you don't overfill. Pour the used oil into the new oil's now empty container and drop it off at an oil change station for recycling.

The air filter and spark plug are easy to change. The air filter is usually enclosed by a metal or plastic lid that is held down by 2 to 4 screws. The new filter just drops in. There's only one way it will fit, so it's hard to mess up. The spark plug requires a wrench, and a spark plug wrench (\$2 at Wal-Mart) makes it easy. Disconnect the spark plug wire (just gently pull it off the plug), then unscrew the plug with the wrench. Hand screw in the new spark plug. Don't over tighten the new plug. Just turn until it seats (first touches down) and then add 1/4 turn.

The mower blade is also surprisingly easy to replace. There's only one big nut holding it down, so just disconnect the spark plug wire (so the mower can't start on you!), wrap an old towel around the blade so you can grip it without getting cut or dirty, then using a wrench (adjustable or fixed) unscrew the bolt. It may take a good tug to loosen or a gentle tap on the end of the wrench with a hammer. The new blade will go on in the same manner, so note which way the old blade is facing before you remove it.



Summer Fun Activities

The pool is open, the clubhouse has been renovated and it's time to think about day trips and vacations. If your budget doesn't yet allow for that round-the-world backpacking trip (while the kids are in a summer rock quarry boot camp), here are some suggestions for local fun. If you get the email version of this newsletter, you can just click on the links below!

[Amicalola Falls State Park](#)

Star Route, Box 213, Dawsonville, GA 30534. 706-265-2885
Georgia's tallest waterfall (729 feet), and Springer Mountain approach trail, which leads to southern end of the famed Georgia-to-Maine Appalachian Trail. Open year round; 19 miles west of Dahlonega.

[Atlanta Botanical Garden](#)

Piedmont Avenue at The Prado, Atlanta, GA 30309. 404-876-5859. The \$5.5 million Fuqua Conservatory is a tropical paradise of exotic and endangered plants from around the world. And outside, blooms and activities draw visitors year round. Located in Piedmont Park, a green urban oasis with a crystal lake, ball fields, tennis center, bike trails.
<http://www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org/>

[Chastain Park Concerts](#)

A concert under the stars is a perfect evening either with the family or as a romantic evening. And Chastain Park in north Atlanta even has candlelight and catering. Stop by Eatsi's or WholeFoods for a light evening picnic meal and see a concert. You can find a list of the concerts, parking tips and more here: <http://www.classicchastain.com/index3.aspx>

[Georgia's Stone Mountain Park](#)

Highway 78, Stone Mountain, GA 30086. 770-498-5600 & 770-498-5702. The world's largest exposed rock rises 825 feet above the surrounding 3,200-acre park. There are the carvings, evening laser show, climb the mountain's more gentle slope or take a skylift to the top. Also enjoy fishing, swimming, tennis, golf, a 19-building antebellum plantation, ice skating, steam locomotive or paddle-wheel riverboat excursions, and a Civil War exhibit. <http://www.stonemountainpark.org/>

[Lake Lanier Islands](#)

6950 Holiday Road, Lake Lanier Islands, GA 30518. 770-932-7200 or 800-840-LAKE
A 1,200-acre resort surrounded by a 38,000-acre lake. Beach, water park, stables, rental boats, picnic facilities, camping. 35 minutes northeast of Norcross.

[The Lanier Museum of Natural History](#)

2601 Buford Dam Road in Buford, houses a collection of live animals. At any given time, it is home to some 50 to 60 critters, including an owl and a number of reptiles and amphibians that are native to Gwinnett County. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. Admission is \$1; free for ages 3 and under. 770-932-4460.

[Panola Mountain State Park](#)

2600 Highway 155, SW, Stockbridge, GA 30281. 770-474-2914. A 100-acre granite mountain. See rare Piedmont plants and native animals. 18 miles southeast of Atlanta.

Hiking trails and nature programs.

Parks – Northridge Road, Medlock Bridge, Roswell—

There are quite a few beautiful nature trails, some by the river and with waterfalls, within 10 miles of Avocet!

Medlock Bruidge National Park - There is a great National Park and trail along the river, just off medlock bridge, just past where Medlock Bridge merges with Peachtree Parkway. There is a map of the trails here: <http://www.nps.gov/applications/parks/chat/ppMaps/ACF5FF.pdf>

An even bigger and better National Park, Island Ford, is along the Chattahoochie just off the Northridge road exit from Georgia 400. See this page for the map: http://www.nps.gov/chat/ppmaps/Island_Ford.pdf

But, the best of all is Vickery Creek in Roswell. It is huge, has great trails, up hill and level, and when you're in the middle, you'd swear you were a 100 miles from civilization. There is even a waterfall! Here is a map of the park: <http://www.nps.gov/applications/parks/chat/ppMaps/ACF20B8.pdf>

You can find driving directions to these and all of the area National Parks can be found on this page: <http://www.nps.gov/chat/travel.htm>

[Pick-Your-Own Fruit and Vegetable Farms](#)

What could taste better than fresh picked strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, corn, tomatoes, figs apples, and other delights? Did you know that there are many farms with 30 to 60 minutes drive, where you can pick your own fruit and vegetables? Some also have corn mazes, pumpkin patches and cut-your-own Christmas trees. You can find a list of all of these and easy canning and freezing instructions on this page www.pickyourown.org/GAEJ.htm

[Six Flags Over Georgia](#)

7561 Six Flags Parkway, SW (at I-20), Austell, GA 30001. 770-948-9290. A state-of-the-art theme park with more than 100 rides, shows, and attractions. Thrill to the Looping Starship, Mindbender, and the Great American Scream Machine. Enjoy Broadway-style reviews. <http://www.sixflags.com/georgia/>

[Zoo Atlanta](#)

Grant Park, 800 Cherokee Avenue, SE, Atlanta, GA 30315 404-624-5600. Zoo Atlanta is home to nearly 1,000 animals - large, small, furry, scaly, feathered, hoofed, winged, striped, horned. They live among the trees, in the hills, alongside streams and watering holes, in naturalistic habitats that look and feel like their homes in the wild. This encourages the animals to "act naturally." <http://www.zooatlanta.org/homepage.html>

Maintenance Tips: Air conditioning systems

With another hot summer about to bloom, it's time to get your air conditioner in shape to handle it. There are a number of very easy fixes you can do to help reduce the cost of running your air conditioning and to make it less likely to break.

First, change the filters. If the filters aren't changed about every 2 to 3 months, they get clogged with dust (as show at right, new and after 90 days), and the efficiency of the system does down. That means less cool air and higher electric bills. If your system is on all the time, change them monthly. If you set the temperature high (like 82 F in the summer), you may be able to get away with every other month.



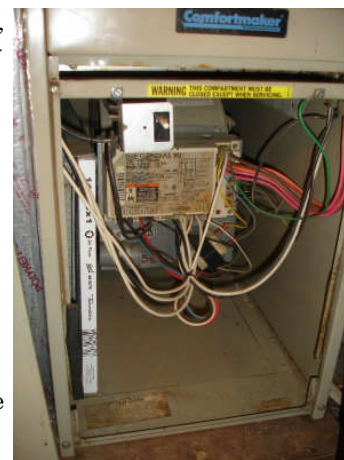
You'll need to go to Lowe's Home depot or Wal-Mart to buy new filters. Look for the pleated, HEPA type – Lysol makes a good one, but there are several to choose from. You will need to know the size, too, so look on the old installed filter.



Inside your house you will have either one or two blower units. One is in the attic; the other is usually in the garage near the door into the house. Just lift the cover plate up

and off and you will see the filter on the left in there. Read the dimensions on it. Mine is 14" by 25" x 1".

Once you have the new filter, pull the old one out (you may need to hold the wires out of the way), and slide the new one in exactly the same way. Notice that they have an arrow that points toward the blower (on the right). If you just observe how the old filter is installed and do the new one the same, you'll be fine.



Next, clear debris around the outside unit. It is recommended to clear a space of 3ft around the units to allow for free air flow.

If your air conditioning still does not provide sufficient cooling, it may need to be recharged or have the coils cleaned professionally. If it needs to be replaced (we have not heard of this being a problem in Avocet), keep in mind that the law changed (in our favor) on Jan 23, 2006. AC systems manufactured after that date must meet a tougher standard of efficiency (a SEER rating of 13 instead of 10). This means that units made after 1/23/06 should be 30% more energy efficient than those made earlier. Be sure they don't try to slip in an old unit on you!

Peachtree Ind Blvd corner development report

The shopping center on the corner of Peachtree Industrial Blvd and South Old Peachtree is about 30 days from breaking ground. Flagstar Bank is still on the corner. The other corner is still for sale. The back 4.2 acres is under contract to Bill Strack. The BOD plans to meet with him to hear his plans.

Group Discount on Lawn Care

Are you tired of doing battle with weeds? Having difficulty deciding when to fertilize Bermuda grass versus Fescue? Do you want to have a little more time spare time? Do you already have a lawn care service but are thinking about shopping for a replacement? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then we have some good news for you.

Our very own Rob Hiller has partnered with Leisure Lawn to keep our common grassy areas green and weed free. As a result of this partnership, Leisure Lawn is making an offer to all residents of Avocet, 10% off of a lawn care program. This program offers eight treatments a year (of which five are remaining in this year). These treatments include weed control, fertilizer, lime and spot treatments as needed. There is no contract required.

Price is based on the size of your yard. Based on the size of lots in Avocet, the estimated full price for each treatment could range from \$35 to \$45 per application. If you look at this with the discount your annual cost for eight treatments could be somewhere between \$252 and \$324. These, of course, are estimates. Your actual cost would depend on the size of your lot and the area to be treated.

You can contact William Thompson of Leisure Lawn at 678 859-9267 to set up an estimate to provide this service to you. Be certain to mention you live in Avocet and want to take advantage of this special offer.

Standard Notices



Monthly reminder: Dues

Please remember that if you pay monthly, rather than annually or semiannually, the monthly amount (\$40) for the homeowner's association dues must be received by our management company, Heritage Properties by the 1st of the month. Payments received after the 10th day of the month are \$50. Questions? Call Robin with Heri-

Monthly BOD Meeting - First Tuesday of each month at the clubhouse

Everyone's welcome at the monthly BOD meetings: -

It's a chance to hear firsthand what the issues are, (including a county representative who will discuss the speeding issues and speed tables.), provide ideas or help solve a problem. Of course, if you can't make it, and want to reach any of the Board, just email at the addresses above, or call Robin to pass on a message!

The BOD wants and needs your input about the issues ahead, such as the finances, the inspection process and ACC (Architecture process). These issues affect you directly, so regardless of your perspective, show up and let your voice be heard! We need to hear from you, about what you like as well as dislike, so that we can accurately represent everyone and implement the wishes of the majority of the community.

Board Member Contact List

Our subdivision is managed by Heritage Property Management Company.

The manager is Robin Steinkritz, 770-200-8256; Email: rsteinkritz@heritageproperty.com.

Our board members are:

President: Karen Finol, Email: president@avocet-hoa.org

Vice President: Blake Slemmer, Email: vicepresident@avocet-hoa.org

Secretary/Treasurer: Eugene Yu, Email: secretary@avocet-hoa.org

Board of Directors: bod@avocet-hoa.org

If you don't have email or internet access you can leave a written message for the BOD in the ACC mailbox (at the corner of Clubhouse drive), or call Robin at 770-200-8256.

Committees

There's no secret process to being on a committee: just tell someone on the committee or a BOD member that you'd like to help!

1. **Finance Committee**, finance@avocet-hoa.org
2. **Kid's Group** - bod@avocet-hoa.org
3. **Architecture**, architecture@avocet-hoa.org

4. **Information**, info@avocet-hoa.org
5. **Landscape**, landscape@avocet-hoa.org
6. **Pool**, pool@avocet-hoa.org
7. **COPS**, security@avocet-hoa.org
8. **Social**, social@avocet-hoa.org
9. **Sports**, sports@avocet-hoa.org

Inspection Report

Heritage (Robin Steinkritz) will conduct the next Inspection in early June. (after this newsletter was printed) .
