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YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



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Celebrating 10 years

THIS ISSUE marks the 10th anniversary for Suwanee Magazine — and what a wonderful 10 years it's been! Since that first issue was printed in November of 2010, we've had the privilege of meeting so many wonderful people in the community, and many of them have appeared on the pages (and cover!) of our magazine. To celebrate this milestone, we caught up with a few of our favorite people (and a horse!) who've graced the cover to find out what they've



been up to since their Suwanee Magazine debut (p. 12), including our first ever cover model, **Kyle Maynard**, who has been busy traveling the world to share his inspirational story and *No Excuses*

mentality. We also caught up with rising country music singer **Andy Velo** and YouTube sensation (and local heartthrob) **Matty B**, along with boxing champion-turned-actor **Javon "Wanna" Walton**. We're so proud and inspired by this group and we can't wait to see what else the future holds for them.

In addition to celebrating our 10th anniversary, our November/December issue is also a time to celebrate the impending holiday season. In a nod to the diversity of our community, we took our annual **Holiday Recipes and Traditions** feature around the world on p. 44 to find out how people celebrate the holidays from South Korea and South Africa all the way to Haiti and the Dominican Republic. And what would the holidays be without

giving back to those in need? Turn to p. 28 for eight ways to give back in the community this season.

Speaking of giving back, we were excited to speak with **North Gwinnett Co-op's Executive Director Kim Phillips** ahead of the grand opening of their new expansion back in October, which doubled the co-op's space and allows it to serve even more in the community. During our interview, p. 35, Phillips talked about how the co-op is more than just a community food bank. The expansion allows the faith-based nonprofit to expand their services, including tutoring, adult education courses, medication and utilities assistance, and their Second Blessings Thrift Store, as well as add additional services such as a brand-new computer lab and recently announced partnership with the Gwinnett Good Samaritan Clinic.

Now that the weather is finally starting to cool off, we had the opportunity to partake in some Instagram-worthy hot drinks over at **Cafe Amico** at Suwanee Town Center, p. 48. Owner Andy Chon has expanded the drink menu to feature handcrafted coffees and other indulgent drinks such as their signature hot cocoa that comes topped with a number of sweet treats. The food menu also got an overhaul and boasts a selection of incredibly fresh breakfast, brunch and lunch menu items that will help tame your coffee buzz.

With that first issue 10 years ago, we set out to "spotlight the businesses making an impact on life here, to capture some of the memorable moments at the city's many events and to give residents a resource for upcoming happenings

in and around Suwanee." Today, we still uphold those values. Inside this issue you'll also find stories on local businesses such as **Discovery Village At Sugarloaf**, p. 19, which provides lifestyle programs and personalized care for its senior residents; Sugar Hill's new brewery, **Indio Brewing**, p. 56, which brings craft beer to the SHINE District; and Sip Happens' Co-Founder Laurie Collins gives us the 411 on healthier wines that are cleaner and better for us this holiday season on p. 52. As always, flip over to the calendar on p. 80 for a list of events and ways to celebrate the season.

And finally, thank you to all of the readers, advertisers, friends and family who have supported us over these last 10 years. We're grateful to be part of such an amazing community!

- Alicia



ALICIA CARTER,
MANAGING EDITOR

Alicia@suwaneemagazine.com

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Published by **VEUGELER DESIGN GROUP**

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Buford, GA 30518

SuwaneeMagazine.com

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- Alicia Carter, Managing Editor



Snapshots of the food, shops, events and more we're loving around town.

UNEXPECTED JEWELRY SHOP

C.C. Liquidations recently celebrated the opening of its new, larger storefront off of Satellite Boulevard in Suwanee. While the store is mostly known for its amazing selection of furniture and decor at exceptional prices, the diamond in the rough has to be the unexpected selection of jewelry for sale at the shop. Local jewelry designer Maricy Fernandes sells her custom pieces in-house alongside a selection of what owner Kim Douglass describes as "fun costume, boho-chic pieces." Be sure to check out the eclectic earrings, bracelets and more next time you're shopping for a sofa or area rug. CCLiquidations.com.



- Alicia Carter, Managing Editor

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WE RECENTLY had paint correction and ceramic coating applied to my husband's SUV by **Overalls Auto Detail** in Alpharetta. The entire experience was amazing and has saved us from having to worry about waxing the car for at least three years. I could not believe the transformation his 13-year-old 4Runner went through — it looks brand-new! The owner, Vini, has a passion for providing amazing auto detailing services backed by his love of cars. His attention to detail and superior service means your car will look amazing and you will be in awe of what he can do. From full auto detailing and headlight restoration to monthly auto spa packages and coatings to make your car shine, Overalls Auto Detail is my new go-to mobile auto detailing service. **Check out what Vini can do at OverallsAutoDetailGA.com or [Facebook.com/OverallsDetail](https://www.facebook.com/OverallsDetail).**

- Erica Abrams, Art Director



Chilling at Lake Lanier Islands

I TOOK a trip to **Margaritaville's Chill Snow Island** to take a ride down **Parrot Mountain**, a 575-foot-long, eight-story-tall snow tubing hill that is said to be the fastest in North America. Trust me, it lives up to the hype. After my brief adrenaline rush, I took a spin around the ice rink, had a mini-snowball fight with my younger siblings, and of course stopped by to grab a holiday-themed drink at **LandShark Landing**. Whether it is driving the seven miles through the **Magical Nights of Lights** or roasting marshmallows lakeside with a hot chocolate in hand, Margaritaville at Lanier Islands is the perfect place to ramp up the holiday spirit. LanierIslands.com.

- Lizzy James, Contributing Writer

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Catching up with some of our favorite people (and a horse!) who have graced the cover of Suwanee Magazine over the years.

BY ALICIA CARTER, LIZZY JAMES & ANGELA VEUGELER

IT'S HARD to believe that we're celebrating 10 years with this issue. Suwanee Magazine made its debut with the November/December issue in 2010 with Kyle Maynard gracing the cover (more on him in a minute). With the delivery of that first issue, we set out on our mission to not only become a local guide to all of the events and news around Suwanee and Gwinnett County, but to also become a source of inspiration by telling the stories of the people, places and things that make our community so special.

We're so lucky to have had many people grace our cover over the years. So in celebration of our big 1-0, we decided to catch up with some of our favorite former cover models to find out what they've been up to since they made their Suwanee Magazine debut. We caught up with Andy Velo, who has gone on to take the country music world by storm; Matty B, who continues to rake in YouTube subscribers nearly 10 years after his Suwanee Magazine cover; Javon "Wanna" Walton, who can now add television star to his long list of accomplishments; and others who have shared their stories with our readers.

We hope you enjoy this trip down memory lane, which also acts as a celebration of not only 10 years for our magazine, but also of the success that some of our favorite locals have seen over the years. It's a testament to the heart, drive and passion of our community, and we're excited to see what other success stories we'll be able to share over the next 10 years.

ANDY VELO

July / Aug 2011



➔ Since gracing our cover in 2011, Andy Velo has gone on to take the country music scene by storm. He relocated to Nashville back in 2014, gained a loyal fan base, and his video for "Half-Truths & Other Lies" was recently the No. 1 video on CMT for two straight weeks.

"It's been a long road for sure and I'm a blessed man to be able to create music that evokes emotion and experiences," Velo says. "I've had many people help me along the way and the town of Suwanee will always be the place where the roots of my dreams took to the ground. I've been able to release 24 songs, play across the country, and share stages with people who at the time only seemed like a dream."

Velo is finishing 2019 on a high note as he heads off to play international shows this winter and will round out December with a trip back to the studio. "The cool part is, we are just getting started," he says. "That feeling of having people come to my shows wearing my T-shirts and singing along to my songs is a high that I will never get over."

Andy Velo fans can find his music on Apple Music, Spotify, Amazon, or join him at any of his live shows. To continue following along with his success, visit AndyVelo.com or follow him on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.





MATTY B

May/June 2014

► Suwanee native Matty B rose to fame in 2010 for the remix videos he posted to YouTube. The aspiring rapper became wildly popular, and even earned a spot on Billboard's 2013 Top 21 under 21 list alongside big names like Justin Bieber, Miley Cyrus and One Direction. Matty B caught the attention of "Entertainment Tonight", NBC's "Today Show," Fox 5 News and of course, Suwanee Magazine. The young superstar graced our cover back in May 2014. "Living in

so many music videos throughout my childhood here made being on the cover of Suwanee Magazine extra special to me," he says. "Since my appearance, I have gone from 7.7 million YouTube followers to now having 12.6 million."

In 2015, he stopped recording and releasing cover songs and has since released more than 30 original songs and accompanying music videos. He's toured all over the United States and has continued to gain popularity with fans all over the world. 2019 has been a great year for new music, as Matty B released the video for "Monster,"



“ Don't seek fame or try to be something you are not. If you are genuine, you and others will enjoy your music and it will last a lifetime.”

which is about the struggles we face to make the right decision no matter what pressure we are under, and "Story of Our Lives" with his little sister Sarah Grace that addresses how we are all beautiful, perfect and unique on the inside and not measured by the outward appearance or the pressure to measure up on social media.

Although he has been in the spotlight for a while, Matty B tries to live a normal life. He attends high school and is actively involved in his school's football and lacrosse teams. When asked his advice to rising artists, he says it is important to "stay true to who you are and be authentic. Don't seek fame or try to be something you are not. If you are genuine, you and others will enjoy your music and it will last a lifetime."



MUCHO MACHO MAN

May/June 2011



PHOTOS BY KAT WALDVOGEL OF FORESTBIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

Owners Dean and Patti Reeves shared that the 11-year-old stallion is now a sire at Adena Springs Farm near Lexington, Kentucky, where he breeds anywhere between 80-100 mares per season. With nearly 10,000 likes on Facebook, Mucho Macho Man has quite the following. His oldest foals are 3 years old now, and many of them have won stakes races. Out of 69 foals that have run, 31 of them are winners and four of them have won black-type stakes, meaning they

have won in races of select importance.

In the world of thoroughbred racing, all horse names must be approved by the Jockey Club and it is common to name foals based on their sire's name, especially if they are from a recognizable bloodline. Some of Mucho Macho Man's foals include City Man, Mucho Gusto, Mucho Unusual, He's

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- ▶ 5 SECOND PLACES
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a Macho Man, Lady Macho and Mucho Amore. The Reeves have expanded their horseracing business and now own about 40 horses including about 12 of Mucho Macho Man's foals. When asked how being in the thoroughbred racing industry is going, Dean shares, "We keep trying to find the good ones. When you do win and have a big race, there is nothing like it."

➔ **THOROUGHBRED** race horse Mucho Macho Man, owned by Suwanee residents Dean and Patti Reeves of Reeves Thoroughbred Racing, graced our May/June 2011 cover when he was Kentucky Derby bound. At that time, the 3-year-old had eight starts which included 2 firsts, 3 seconds and 2 thirds with earnings of \$410,643. Just a few weeks after going to print with that particular issue of Suwanee Magazine, on May 7, 2011, he placed third in the Kentucky Derby and then went on to win the 2013 Breeders Cup Classic. Mucho Macho Man had a very successful racing career, with 25 starts that included 9 firsts, 5 seconds, 6 thirds and total earnings of \$5,625,410.



Kyle Maynard, day four climbing Mount Aconcagua, the highest peak in both the Western and Southern Hemispheres.



KYLE MAYNARD

Nov/Dec 2010

➔ **KYLE MAYNARD** graced the first ever cover of Suwanee Magazine in 2010. Maynard was born a congenital amputee, his arms ending at his elbows and his legs at his knees. But, that didn't stop him from becoming a champion on the wrestling mat and in his life. His best-selling book, *No Excuses*, tells the inspiring story of Maynard's battle against the odds. A Collins Hill High School alumnus, at the time of the article, Maynard had garnered a lot of attention from his autobiography, had been featured on "Larry King Live" and "The Oprah Winfrey Show," was a crossfit gym owner in Suwanee, and traveled around the country doing motivational speaking.

Since then, Maynard has continued to be an inspiration. In 2012, he became the first quadruple amputee to climb

– actually bear crawl – the 19,340 feet to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro without the aid of prosthetics. His 10-day ascent was widely covered by the press and raised money and awareness for wounded veterans as well as Tanzanian school children. Upon return, Maynard won his second ESPY (Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly) award for Best Male Athlete with a Disability.

Four years later, he reached the summit of Argentina's breathtakingly beautiful, and sometimes deadly, Mount Aconcagua – the highest peak in both the Western and Southern Hemispheres, standing at 22,838 feet. Following that epic summit, Nike featured Maynard in the powerful commercial "Unlimited Will," which debuted globally during the 2016 Olympics and was named the most memorable of all commercials during the 2016 Olympics by AdWeek.

These days, Maynard, who was described by Arnold Schwarzenegger as "one of the most inspiring people"



Kyle Maynard on Herman Gulch Trail in Colorado.

he's ever met, travels more than 200 days annually, across continents, speaking to hundreds of public and private schools and universities, events and conferences, and the many corporations that hire him to share his *No Excuses* philosophy and principles.

Maynard has appeared on "Good Morning America," "The Early Show," ABC's "20/20," and his story has been featured on ESPN's "SportsCenter," HBO's "Real Sports" as well as countless other television shows and editorials. In January 2016, a three-minute video profiling Maynard's epic story and achievements debuted on CNN's "Great Big Story" and immediately went viral, garnering more than 16 million views and 250,000 shares in the first week.

**“
I believe each of us has a disability to overcome – and not all of them can be seen. We choose whether we allow our lives to be defined by them or not.”**

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JAVON WALTON

Jan/Feb 2018

➔ IN 2018, then-11-year-old boxing champion Javon "Wanna" Walton graced the cover of our annual Fitness Issue. Walton had made headlines as the only person in Georgia to be named state champion in boxing and gymnastics, holding the title in both sports. When the issue was published that January, Walton had an impressive 66,000 followers on Instagram. Today, that number has tripled to more than 235,000 followers. This increase is likely due to his appearances in major television shows on Amazon and HBO as well as his continued success in the boxing world. There's no doubt that Walton's popularity has grown since his Suwanee Magazine cover debut.

Walton made his small-screen debut as the character Ashtray on HBO's breakout



Javon "Wanna" Walton poses with Drake.

series "Euphoria." The show also stars Zendaya, arguably one of the biggest stars out there today, and was a big hit with fans despite the touchy subject matter at the center of the show. "Euphoria" was recently renewed for a second season, meaning Walton will be reprising his role as Ashtray next year. Walton was also cast as Grant on "Utopia," Amazon's adaptation of the British series written by *Gone Girl* author and screenwriter Gillian Flynn. "Utopia" showed me another side of acting and playing one of the leads was really hard work," Walton says. "I had to relocate to Chicago for about six months. I was working

five to six days a week and it was a serious commitment. It was a lot of fun but showed me I had to take this acting thing very serious. I really appreciated all the work I had to put into Grant for 'Utopia.' I can't wait for everyone to see this project."

In addition to his recent turn as an accomplished actor, the Junior Olympic

boxing prodigy is sponsored by Under Armour and appeared in one of their commercials starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson for their "Will Finds a Way" campaign. "I've also had about 18 more amateur bouts since the [Suwanee Magazine] cover and have won 15 of those," Walton says. Needless to say, the future looks bright for Walton, and we're excited to see what he'll accomplish next.

For more information about Javon "Wanna" Walton, follow him at [instagram.com/onwardwanna](https://www.instagram.com/onwardwanna).



Walton with "Euphoria" co-star Angus Cloud.



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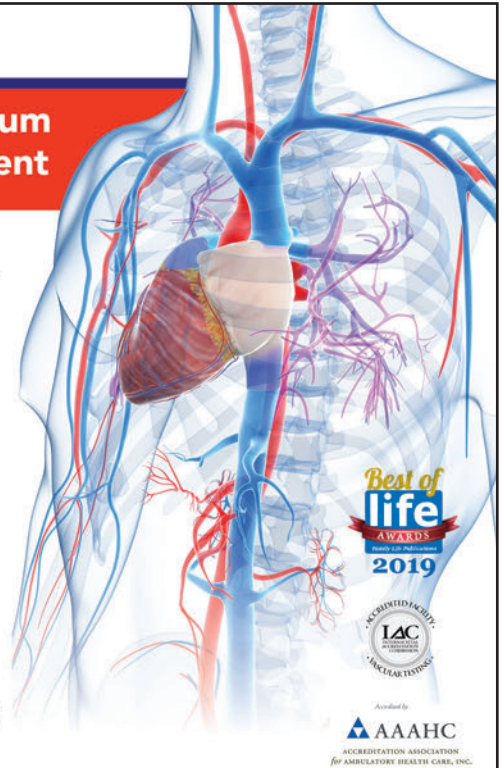
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suwanee business community news and info.

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Discovery Village At Sugarloaf

Discovery Village provides lifestyle programs and personalized care for its senior residents **BY ANGELA VEUGELER**



D

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CONTINUUM OF CARE OPTIONS INCLUDING INDEPENDENT LIVING, PERSONAL CARE AND MEMORY CARE. CONVENIENTLY LOCATED JUST MINUTES FROM I-85 AND SUGARLOAF PARKWAY IN SUWANEE, DISCOVERY VILLAGE AIMS TO CUSTOMIZE THE EXPERIENCE AND SERVICES FOR EACH RESIDENT BASED ON HIS OR HER SPECIFIC NEEDS.



➔ **ACCORDING TO** Executive Director Steven Custer, the many lifestyle options and personalized care available at Discovery Village At Sugarloaf

are some of the great benefits they offer. "A lot of the care we provide is catered to exactly what each resident needs, especially the personal care aspect. If a resident wants to age in place, they can stay on campus at our community as their care needs change." A resident or couple might start in the Independent Living program and can enjoy staying in a

AMAZING AMENITIES

➔ From a variety of lifestyle programs to personalized care services, residents and their families have choices based on what works best for them. With a full array of amenities, including a **Sensations** Dining Room, zero-entry heated pool, Health & Fitness Center, **Discovery Silver Cinema**, **Discovery Zone** Media Center & Library, **Rover's Run** Pet Park, horseshoes, **Lucky's** Card & Game Room, beauty salon with barber shop and more, there is no reason to go anywhere else. Genesis Rehab is even located on site to provide



Executive Director, Steven Custer

familiar environment if their need for care increases. In fact, several of the residents





Pastry Chef Tirue Worky excited to serve her homemade peach scone. Pictured with Culinary Director Alex Vargas.



rehab and physical therapy services to residents as needed. Residents love the full offering of exclusive lifestyle programs at Discovery Village. A full calendar of activities and events and group outings are offered several times a week. In October, one group went to Buford Corn Maze, another to the Botanical Gardens, and they had just gone to Jaemor Farms in Alto and enjoyed an afternoon barbecue lunch

in North Georgia. There is even a men's group that goes fishing and enjoys monthly tournaments along with a theater group that puts on monthly productions – October was Abbott and Costello.

RESTAURANT-STYLE DINING

► Discovery Village At Sugarloaf offers delicious meals for residents to enjoy, every day. The **Sensations** Dining Room offers a wide variety of menu options including a Discovery Burger made with fresh ground beef, and options such as steak and salmon are available daily. They also have their very own pastry chef who creates delicious desserts for residents to enjoy. Plus, **Bailey's** Bistro serves up light lunch offerings including sandwiches, cappuccinos, espressos, smoothies and more.

FLEXIBLE LIVING

► The Independent Living program offers modern one- and two- bedroom cottages with a single car garage as well as Clubhouse apartments. They also offer a Choice Plus option giving residents the ability to customize a plan that best suits their needs. If a resident is only interested in an apartment home with no services, they





“
**WE GIVE
 OPTIONS FOR
 EVERYONE TO BE
 ABLE TO ENJOY
 LIFE. THE CARE
 WE PROVIDE
 IS CATERED TO
 EXACTLY WHAT
 EACH OF OUR
 RESIDENTS
 NEEDS.”**

- Steven Custer, Executive Director,
 Discovery Village At Sugarloaf

have that. If they want a meal here or there, they have that too. Many independent living residents enjoy traveling and don't want to be tied down worrying about maintenance on a home. Living at Discovery Village gives them a community they can be part of when they are home, but without the maintenance and upkeep to worry about when they are away.

PERSONAL CARE AND MEMORY CARE SERVICES

» The Personal Care and Memory Care services at Discovery Village are catered to each resident's individual needs. Personal Care offers residents who require additional assistance support with activities of daily living, such as grooming, bathing, dressing and taking medications. Recently certified by Discovery Senior Living's SHINESM program, the new exclusive memory care program was designed with residents' happiness and well-being in mind. Before, during and after residents' transition into the SHINESM neighborhood, professionally trained

team members are learning everything about them including their wants, likes and dislikes, hobbies, preferences, passions and historical moments from significant life experiences to elevate their spirit throughout the day. This exclusive program is used every day to support the individualized activities developed specifically for each resident allowing them to thrive and live their best life. They also offer a lot of support to families and loved ones in addition to several support groups that meet there regularly.

According to Custer, "what makes Discovery Village At Sugarloaf unique is that we give options for everyone to be able to enjoy life. The care we provide is catered to exactly what each of our residents needs." ■

**Discovery Village At Sugarloaf
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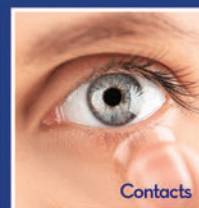
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INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

BY: Bill and Cindi Porter,
AILERON INVESTMENT ADVISORS

Q

WHAT ARE NEGATIVE INTEREST RATES AND HOW COULD THEY AFFECT MY INVESTMENT FUNDS?

+

A

► Incredibly, there are over 14 trillion dollars of negative interest rate government bonds held by investors around the world today.¹ That means instead of receiving interest payments as an inducement to purchase a government bond, the bond holders will be repaid less than the amount they invested. Those “investors” have volunteered to lose money. Why would they do that?

The answer may be that some people believe that the next potential financial collapse could have a drastic impact, and they would rather be assured the return of most of their money is guaranteed by the various governments issuing the bonds. Theoretically, it goes something like this: If someone has \$100,000 invested in the stock market and another 2008 event happens, they might be left with about \$50,000. If instead they had purchased a

\$100,000 negative interest rate bond which guarantees 98% return of principal, they would eventually have \$98,000 instead of \$50,000.

However, President Trump’s recent comment that “The Fed should reduce interest rates to zero – or lower”² perhaps identifies the real source of the issue. Governments around the world are up to their necks in debt. During the eight years of the Obama administration, the U.S. debt nearly doubled from the prior 232 years to almost \$20,000,000,000,000.³ President Trump has continued the fiscal folly. Like a credit card with a minimum monthly payment, governments must also make its required debt payments, or it would default like Venezuela. The higher the interest rate, the higher the required government payment. If interest rates were lowered, the required payments would also be lowered. Negative rates would reduce the government debt because they would pay back less than the funds they received for their bonds.

Artificially low interest rates can affect many investments. A serious discussion with a qualified financial advisor about your current financial situation would be time well spent.

1) Barron’s, October 7, 2019 Alexandra Scaggs. 2) <https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/11/trump-says-fed-boneheads-should-cut-interest-rates-to-zero-or-less-us-should-refinance-debt.html>. 3) The Street, Eric Reed February 26th, 2019.

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The Power of Logos

VEUGELER DESIGN GROUP OFFERS THREE REASONS WHY A QUALITY LOGO IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR OVERALL BRAND BY MADISON COATS

FIRST IMPRESSIONS are everything. From a first date to a job interview, the initial impression you make is a major part of what defines the experience. The same can be said for brands and their logo. Consider a logo as the face of the company, and it's walking into that interview. What lasting impression will it leave on its audience?

Considering that it only takes 10 seconds to form a first impression of a brand's logo, you better make sure it packs a punch and leaves the type of impression you want. With that in mind, here are three reasons why a quality logo is important to your overall brand.

1. LOGOS IMMEDIATELY CONNECT CUSTOMERS TO YOUR BUSINESS

Your logo should connect your customers to your brand without them ever reading your company name, and on the flip side, your company should be fully recognizable by only its logo. For this reason, your logo should express your company's values and, ultimately, define your entire brand. In order for your logo to leave a lasting impression on the audience, it should be memorable and simple in form. Think of the golden arches or an apple with a bite taken

out of it. With only a simple description of these logos, you know exactly which brands are being described. Your logo is the first and largest piece of the brand recognition cake and will set the stage for your entire company.

It only takes consumers 10 seconds to form a first impression of a brand's logo.

- ACTION CARD



72%
of American
consumers say their
purchasing decision
is influenced by
packaging design.

- Ipsos



2. LOGOS INVITE CONSUMERS TO YOUR BRAND

Think about walking through the grocery store — you need coffee, but you want to try a new brand. How do you choose which brand to buy? You'll likely be drawn to those with aesthetically pleasing packaging. The logo sets the mood for the brand, but the branding and packaging should be consistent to maintain a cohesive brand identity. Your logo should be strong so it catches the eye of your customers, and in turn, your branding should be equally as strong. After all, 72% of American consumers say their purchasing decision is influenced by packaging design.

3. LOGOS HELP SET YOUR BRAND APART FROM YOUR COMPETITION

One of the most important things to consider when designing a logo is how it will differentiate your business from its competition. There is a fine line to walk, however, when thinking about incorporating current trends in your logo design — you don't want to create a logo that is trendy today and out-of-style tomorrow. When choosing fonts for your logo, use a maximum of two, as more than this may create inconsistency in the design. Also consider the colors used in your logo. Studying color associations before incorporating them into your design will ensure that you don't carry the wrong message over to your customers through your color choices.

If you are considering creating a logo for your company or doing a re-brand, make sure you are working with a marketing team that fully understands your vision and the ongoing goals of the company. Visit vdgatl.com for more marketing resources or to contact a member of our team.

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WAYS TO GIVE BACK THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The holidays are finally upon us! We wait patiently all year and then — BAM! — the holidays arrive and we get swept up in all the commotion that comes along with them. In between decorating, traveling to see family and friends, shopping trips and everything else, we sometimes lose sight of the true meaning of the season. The holidays are a time to reflect and, when we can, give back to those less fortunate. Each year, we dedicate space in our Holiday Issue to highlight local ways we can give back to our community. From donation and volunteer opportunities to sponsoring a child in need, there's no shortage of ways to contribute during the most wonderful time of the year. **BY LIZZY JAMES**

1 SHOP AMAZONSMILE AND DESIGNATE SQUARE ONE FOR YOUTH AS YOUR CHARITY OF CHOICE.



THE MISSION of Square One for Youth is to help Gwinnett County's in-need youth succeed personally, academically and, ultimately, professionally. By investing

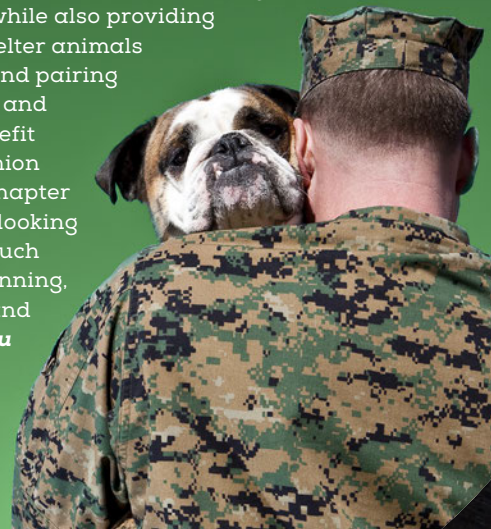
in the lives of local youth through vocational guidance, mentoring, academic tutoring and golf instruction, the organization helps open doors to opportunities that allow students in need to achieve success. Square One for Youth is always looking for people to get involved, and even offers the option to purchase supplies on Amazon and donate at the same time! To learn more about how you can get involved with Square One for Youth visit SquareOneForYouth.org.

2

DONATE YOUR SKILLS TO PETS FOR VETS.

PETS FOR VETS serves as a bridge that brings together military veterans and rescue animals. The organization

works to assist veterans who are transitioning back into civilian life while also providing a second chance to shelter animals by rescuing, training and pairing them with servicemen and women who could benefit from having a companion animal. The Atlanta Chapter is seeking individuals looking to volunteer in areas such as fostering, event planning, social media posting and more. **To learn how you can get involved visit PetsForVets.com.**



3 SPONSOR A CHILD WITH THE HAITI CHILD SPONSORSHIP

BASED IN SUWANEE, the Haiti Child Sponsorship Program empowers Haitian leaders to bring dignity, hope and a brighter future to the communities they serve. The program currently works with the people of the Good Shepherd School and Church in Pele, an impoverished community in Port-au-Prince, to help local leaders improve their living conditions in the areas of water, food and sanitation, as well as support Young Life Haiti in bringing spiritual transformation to the lives of young people. The Haiti Child Sponsorship currently serves more than 1,000 students in kindergarten through 10th grade and employs 44 staff members including teachers, administrators, cooks and security. The support of the school program depends on sponsors who pledge at least \$30 per month to help fund the school's needs. **Learn more about sponsoring a child at HaitiChildSponsorship.org.**



4 DONATE A CARE PACKAGE TO THE SLOVER FOUNDATION

THE SLOVER FOUNDATION was created with the sole purpose of helping people whose lives have been altered due to fire. For most families of burn victims, it is their first experience with the special care needed to protect the injured from infection and subsequent complications. A tragedy with the magnitude of life-threatening burns is difficult to navigate for families without help and a lot of support. The Slover Foundation works to help support these families through contributions from the community. **To learn how you can donate a care package or get involved through volunteering visit SloverFoundation.com.**

5 DONATE ITEMS TO ANNANDALE VILLAGE'S "WISH LIST."

SUWANEE'S ANNANDALE VILLAGE is a place where people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities can lead lives that reflect quality, independence, self-worth and achievement with the utmost care and compassion. Characteristically, individuals served are 18 years of age or older with a primary diagnosis of intellectual or developmental disability, and those who have experienced an acquired brain injury. Annandale Village works to offer a

comprehensive array of programs and services designed to improve the quality of life of each of these individuals according to his or her own unique needs and abilities. As a nonprofit organization, Annandale relies on "in-kind" donations as well as monetary contributions. **To see Annandale's full wish list or for more ways to contribute visit Annandale.org/wish-list.**

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6

BE SMILEY FOR KYLIE IN AN EFFORT TO FIND A CURE FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER.

IN 2014, Kylie Myers was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma, an aggressive bone cancer. Throughout her fight, Kylie developed a unique ability to steal joy even from cancer and fought back with a smile and a positive attitude. She made pictures and videos to share her joy with other fighters and her Smiley For Kylie followers. Toward the end of her radiation cycle, however, it was revealed that her cancer was deemed incurable, and sadly Kylie lost her battle with the disease on February 13, 2015. The Myers family created the nonprofit Smiley For Kylie in an effort to raise awareness of childhood cancer and support those families who are impacted by it. Its purpose is to help raise funding for research that will lead to safer and more effective cures for childhood cancer. **To learn more or donate to Smiley for Kylie visit SmileyForKylie.org.**

7

SPONSOR A CHILD OR SENIOR WITH NORTH GWINNETT CO-OP.

IN ADDITION to providing holiday meal boxes to families in need, which are filled with side items for a holiday meal in addition to a \$20 gift card for perishables, North Gwinnett Co-op also offers the opportunity for community members to play the role of Secret Santa to a child or senior this Christmas. Sponsor a child by donating a winter coat, set of pajamas, one outfit for school or church, one pair of shoes, and a toy (not to exceed \$30). Sponsor a senior by providing a winter coat, robe and/or pajamas, clothing or household need, one pair of shoes, and personal care items. Sponsors will receive the child's or senior's name and identification number, their sizes, favorite color and a few ideas for toys/gifts. **For holiday volunteer shifts, a list of meal box items and other needs, visit NorthGwinnettCoop.org.**

8

DONATE TO COOPER'S CREW.

COOPER O'BRIEN was diagnosed with Clear Cell Sarcoma Cancer at the age of 13 in May of 2013. Throughout his fight, Cooper faced each day with a strong and positive attitude that inspired everyone around him. He never let cancer get in the way of spending time with family, playing basketball and laughing with his friends. After a 14-month fight, Cooper passed away on July 5, 2014, leaving a hole in the heart of our community. Now, Cooper's Crew is dedicated to giving other kids, just like Cooper, the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest, too, by bridging the childhood cancer funding gap, finding a cure for Sarcoma, making wishes come true for children with cancer and granting scholarships for North Gwinnett High School students who have overcome unique adversities or hardships. **To learn how you can get involved visit CoopersCrew.com.**





PHOTO COURTESY SARAH ESTER PHOTOGRAPHY

BERT'S BIG ADVENTURE

ATLANTA NONPROFIT PROVIDES THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME FOR CHILDREN BATTLING CHRONIC AND TERMINAL ILLNESSES AND THEIR FAMILIES. *By Lizzy James*

For most people, a trip to Walt Disney World is an exciting memory that will last a lifetime. But for the families helped by Bert's Big Adventure, a trip to Disney World represents a memory-making escape for those who desperately need quality time together.

When radio host Bert Weiss launched his popular morning radio show, "The Bert Show," on Star 94, he knew he wanted to use his voice to make an impact on the Atlanta community. The result was Bert's Big Adventure, a nonprofit organization established in 2002 that provides an all-expenses-paid, five-day trip to Walt Disney World for children living with chronic and terminal illnesses and their families.

In 2003, Bert's Big Adventure launched by taking seven children and their families to Disney World and has since

grown into an annual trip that now includes 12 to 15 families. Many of the children who go on these trips, ranging in age from 5 to 12 years old, have been faced with illnesses that

not only take a toll on their bodies, but on their families as well. Many of the children have spent most of their lives in and out of the hospital, have undergone numerous tests and procedures, have endured surgeries and endless medications, and have felt the effects that never-ending medical bills have taken on their families. But through it all, they persevere. And while the illness takes its toll on their little bodies, the strength, compassion and love that they and their families exude is never defeated.

The team at Bert's Big Adventure has made it their mission to not only provide a joyful experience for the children but to also take some of the responsibility off of the parents' shoulders. In an effort to make this possible, not only are the trip's expenses paid for by the organization, but a medical



PHOTO COURTESY DASH PHOTOGRAPHY

staff also joins the trip and each child is paired with a Fairy Godparent volunteer to help make their experience the best it can be, while also letting them just be a family.

"The trip itself really provides families time to spend together without the stress of having to be on top of things all the time," said Molly Darby, Bert's Big Adventure's executive director. "The children get the full VIP experience with a private chartered jet decked out with Disney decorations and flight staff wearing Mickey ears, a red carpet rolled out for their entrance, and a devoted team that is dedicated to giving them pretty much anything they want during their five days at Disney World."

On the most recent trip, one child in particular stood out to Molly.

When the Bert's Big Adventure staff met 7-year-old Adrian, she was battling Leukemia and had recently been in and out of chemotherapy, which had really affected her. "Like most children who go through chemo, Adrian came to us very reserved and shy," Molly said. "There were so many times we introduced her and she hid behind her mom and didn't say much. As the group arrived at Disney, and the families started interacting with each other, you could slowly see Adrian come out of her shell." But it wasn't until that Friday that the Bert's staff really saw Adrian's personality begin to shine.

"Friday morning we took a group to the Disney Princess makeover boutique, and since Adrian had gone through chemo it had been quite some time since she had her normal hair," Molly said as she fought back tears. "The Disney Princesses put her in this beautiful dress and did her hair with some extensions to make it look full again. As soon as

she looked at herself in the mirror she was a different person. She finished off the day twirling through the park in her dress, dancing on the dance floor with all the other kids, and even did a cartwheel down the fashion show runway! She felt like a typical, healthy child and it really encouraged her to be herself."

It's stories like this that show how much of an impact Bert's Big Adventure has on the lives of these children and

their families. But as impactful as the Disney trip is, the relationship between the families and the organization doesn't end there. Bert's Big Adventure hosts four quarterly reunions where more than 500 children and family members gather together to recreate bonds, meet other families who are going through similar struggles, and simply get a chance to enjoy spending time together. Living with a chronic or terminal illness is not only isolating for the children, but also the families, and these reunions offer a sort of support group that

shows they're not alone and provides the encouragement needed to keep fighting.

Bert's Big Adventure's mission doesn't stop with the trips or the reunions. The organization works to not only provide escapes for the kids and their family, but also additional support when they need it the most. Anytime a Bert's Big Adventure child is admitted to the hospital, a volunteer with Bert's Big Adventure's Fairy Godparent program visits the child and their family every day with crafts, games, a warm meal and a shoulder to lean on during their stay.


"Most of our children have serious medical conditions that require them to spend long amounts of time in the hospital, and many parents haven't left their son or daughter's bedside since they arrived," said Molly. "Our Fairy Godparents really help to provide a mini escape for the child while also allowing their parents time to shower, eat, or take a much-needed break."

The organization is always looking for volunteers to help in any way they can. Those interested in becoming a Fairy Godparent can fill out an application on Bert's website. Potential volunteers will go through an in-person interview and background check, and must be able to commit multiple days a month to visiting the organization's children. If a volunteer is unable to commit that much time, but still wants to be involved, the organization has three other year-round opportunities.

"We understand that not everyone can set aside large amounts of volunteer time," Molly said. "Bert's Magic Squad is a group of volunteers who receive an email when the organization needs some extra hands. Their duties range from coming to the office to help mail T-shirts to helping at event check-ins. There's also our skill-sharing opportunity in which we ask someone with a specific skill-set to spare two hours a month and volunteer their skills to help at Bert's. Our final opportunity is our Social Sidekicks program. Here we ask volunteers to donate 30 seconds a day to help support us on social media. We put them in charge of checking our social pages, helping with posting, and really just wrapping their arms around and encouraging the kids in our program through social media."

It's hard to put into words the impact that Bert's Big Adventure has had on the lives of hundreds of children, just like Adrian, and their families over the last 17 years. The organization offers a magical opportunity for these "sick children" to simply be children. The laughter, smiles, and fun had on the trip provides an escape for not only the children who have endured so much, but for their families who only want their kids to be happy. Nominations for the yearly Disney World trip begin in April and generally close the beginning of September. If you have or know of a family with a child age 5-12 who has a chronic or terminal illness, has never been to Disney World, and lives within the radio listening area of "The Bert Show," you can apply for them to be considered at Bert's Big Adventure website beginning in April 2020.

Without the generosity and support of the community, the program wouldn't be what it is today. ***If you're interested in volunteering or learning more about Bert's Big Adventure visit BertsBigAdventure.org.*** ■



OUR FAIRY GODPARENTS REALLY HELP TO PROVIDE A MINI ESCAPE FOR THE CHILD WHILE ALSO ALLOWING THEIR PARENTS TIME TO SHOWER, EAT, OR TAKE A MUCH- NEEDED BREAK.



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FACES OF SUWANE: HANK FREEDMAN 40 // FAMILY MATTERS: TEACHING CHILDREN THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLIDAY GIVING 43

GOOD STEWARDS

North Gwinnett Co-op's recent expansion will allow the nonprofit to help even more people in the community through its food bank, thrift store and other services

BY ALICIA CARTER / PHOTOS BY KARL LAMB





From left to right: North Gwinnett Co-op's leadership team includes Mary Warren, Kristen Mullin, Kim Phillips and Kim Barry.

M

ANY KNOW North Gwinnett Co-op as a community food bank, but it's so much more than that. The co-op offers tutoring services, adult education courses, medication and utilities payment assistance, as well as their Second Blessings Thrift Store.

With its recent expansion, which celebrated the grand opening with a ribbon cutting on Oct. 8, the co-op doubled in size, growing from 6,100 square feet to just over 14,000 square feet. The expansion allows the faith-based nonprofit to serve the community in a bigger and better way, increasing their footprint and increasing the number and types of services they are able to provide.

We recently had the opportunity to sit down with Executive Director Kim Phillips, who has more than 20 years experience with nonprofits and will celebrate her sixth year at North Gwinnett Co-op in April. Phillips discussed the details of the expansion and how North Gwinnett Co-op is working to bridge the gap for people in our community.

Tell us a little about your background and your role at North Gwinnett Co-op.

When I got out of college I landed my first nonprofit job that I stayed at for just shy of 20 years. I guess the nonprofit world kind of gets in your blood. When I took a year off to be a mom and then started looking for work I was looking at some of the bigger nonprofits in Atlanta — my daughter was getting ready to start kindergarten, my son was getting ready to start middle school. I just kept praying that the Lord would find the right fit for me. I knew it was out there, it was just a matter of timing. I found out about this job on a Sunday, sent my resume on Monday, interviewed on Tuesday and got the job on Wednesday. I actually took the job in my church parking lot on the phone. It was very fast. I was really excited about the ministry they did here and being so close — my kids attend school here in Buford. My parents are aging, so I'm caring for my parents full time as well. I knew that we

needed to be close to here. It was just God's plan.

My charge here when I took this position was to make it bigger and better. So we spent a lot of time in the first year building relationships with the schools and people in the community, increasing the number of people in the community who receive service, and increasing the number of people who know about us. We changed a lot of policies when I started that allow us to serve more people and make sure that kids aren't hungry and seniors aren't hungry. We've had tremendous growth since I've been here in both clients and supporters. And we accomplished this [with the expansion].

We wanted to do it all in the right order, and I feel like we've done that. People know that they're safe to come here and that we're here to serve them and be of service to them and now we have the facilities to do it in. We used to do food for families once every 60 days, and it's just not enough for a family, so we really wanted to

increase it to once a month. Now we have the space to do it in which means we need even more community support to help us keep the shelves full because people will be coming more frequently.

What is the mission of the co-op?

We're a faith-based nonprofit. Our focus is on serving people. We offer utility assistance and medication assistance to people in need. We offer clothing through our thrift store. Our thrift store is also open to the community so we generate revenue out of that store and that helps us serve our clients. The money we generate through the store goes into the checkbook that we write checks out of. Last year we earned about \$90,000 in the store, between that and our eBay sales, but we gave away over \$220,000 in assistance. So I tell people it kind of softens the blow to the checkbook for us.

The food is our biggest wheelhouse and we're trying to increase that now. We know that a lot of families

depend on the schools to feed their children, so in the summer we do a program called *End Summer Hunger* where we ask people to donate funds to us so we can buy fruits, vegetables and meats. Food banks aren't known for nutrition; it's all shelf-staple stuff. So we want to be able to offer the fresh lettuce and fruits and vegetables and some meats that are a healthier choice during the summer. The families can come twice a month for groceries in June and July. This summer we did 50,000 pounds of food in just those two months — so we're quite busy.

For the holidays, our families can sign up for a holiday meal box, which means they get a holiday meal that's literally in a box. They get all of the sides for a holiday meal — they get one for Thanksgiving and Christmas. It's the sides plus a \$20 gift card for the perishables. Last year we did about 1,500 meal boxes.

We also offer tutoring for the kids we serve. We do that on Monday nights. That's part of the expansion. We're at capacity right now

with close to 50 children in a small space. So this allows us to expand in that classroom, plus it brings us the computer lab. We'll also use those two components in our adult education and resume and interview classes that we do.

We're partnering now with Good Samaritan of Gwinnett. We will be their first satellite clinic. It's another ministry that serves the uninsured. So it's similar to a quick clinic and we'll be able to refer our clients there, and we have a fund set aside to help our clients receive services. We also help pay for medication.

The last two fiscal years we've spent more money on medications than we have utilities. The Gwinnett population is aging so quickly that it's really impacting our community and we do have clients making a decision every day whether to eat or take their medications. We're trying to remove those barriers so they can eat and take their medicine.

Our biggest demographic is children. Last year we served over 16,000 people, 39% of which were children. Seniors were 25% and that demographic is growing every year.





Can you share some details of the expansion?

The main goal was to increase the pantry size so that we could serve families once a month instead of once every 60 days, and our pantry has now doubled in size. The other purpose of the expansion was that we needed space for our tutoring program. We are really at capacity with that program and we have a waiting list. Plus, the kids really need computers. Our tutors were bringing in iPads and it just wasn't working — it was difficult to help them in the way we felt we needed to, so the computer lab will be very helpful to them.

The adult education courses — the resume and interview coaching classes that we do — will also benefit from the computer lab. The library is a great resource but not everyone has a computer at home. Nowadays most jobs you apply for online and a lot of our folks need help walking through that process. One of the first classes we'll be doing in 2020 is for our seniors to help them learn about food stamps to make sure they're getting their food stamp benefits. Another class we'll have in 2020 is a finance class, so if we assist someone with a utility payment, we will require them to take some classes on finances before they're eligible for any future utility payments. I tell people that my goal is to teach people not to need me.

The capital campaign also includes expanding the thrift store in spring of next year so we can take

in some furniture items and some more baby items for our families. The campaign also includes the loss of income in the store for the couple months it will be closed during the expansion. It includes paying off the note for that building. And it includes a reserve fund. So by the time we're finished with everything we'll be debt free — that's our goal.

Just because we're a nonprofit doesn't mean we have to look like it. I wanted people to feel special when they come in, to feel loved. I wanted it to be a place that wasn't institutional — I wanted it to be top-notch for them, they deserve just as much as anyone else. That's what we were trying to achieve — to show clients how much we appreciate them and to honor them. Yes it's pretty, but there was a purpose behind the pretty.

What are the most in-demand food pantry items?

A lot of people don't understand that food stamps only pay for food, so it doesn't pay for toilet paper, laundry detergent, dish soap — things that are basic household supplies. Laundry detergent can be expensive if you're on a very fixed income so we try to keep those things in stock. Personal care items are needed, too. We struggle with having Depends for our seniors. Ensure as well — a lot of our seniors could benefit from that. We always seem to have a lot of peanut butter, but we very rarely have strawberry jelly. We

Second Blessings Thrift Store will undergo its own expansion in the spring.

usually have a ton of grape jelly, but no strawberry jelly. We also need canned fruit, other than pineapple, and spaghetti sauce. We have lots of pasta noodles but nothing to make with them. You could feed a family for a couple nights off of a pot of spaghetti, so it goes a long way and we like that.

What else would you like the community to know about the co-op?

We really are more than a food bank. That is what we do, but we do so much more. People think we serve the poorest of the poor, and we absolutely do that, but not all of us have a huge savings. Our society isn't good about that nest egg. We recently had a professional whose spouse's cancer had returned and it had decimated their savings. We helped them get through that. I tell people we're all a minute away from needing help. That's why we always want to be respectful to people. We're all so blessed that we're not in that place right now, but we could be tomorrow.

We serve your neighbor, we serve people at your church, we serve people who go to your kid's school. We're here to bridge the gap. People donate their money to us and it's our responsibility to be a good steward with that money.

The North Gwinnett Co-op is located at 4395 Commerce Drive in Buford. For more information about the co-op as well as volunteer and donation information, call 770-271-9793 or visit NorthGwinnettCoop.org.



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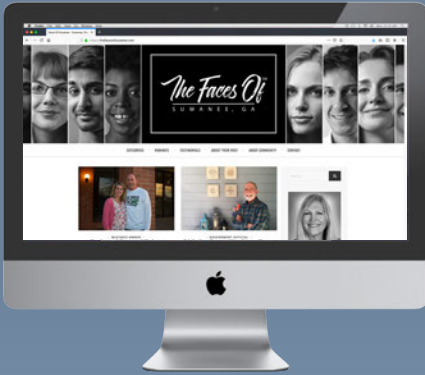
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Creating closer community is a big part of what we do here at Suwanee Magazine. That's why we're proud to bring you The Faces of Suwanee. Suwanee is a great community with great people. We'll be featuring conversations we have with members of our community as a way of telling the story of Suwanee, one smiling face at a time. The Faces of Suwanee shines a light on the people who live and work here. You can read all of the interviews at TheFacesOfSuwanee.com, and even nominate someone you think should be featured on the website. Be sure to follow Suwanee Magazine's Facebook page where we'll be sharing new Faces of Suwanee interviews weekly.

HANK FREEDMAN

FORMER WWII POW and RETIRED
RETAIL MERCHANDISER

INTERVIEW AND PHOTO BY JULIE PERDUE

It's almost impossible to believe that Hank Freedman is 97 years young when you have the honor of spending time with him and listening to all of the incredible things he has experienced and his philosophy on life. Once you meet him, you realize he is one of Suwanee's "gems." It was difficult not to share his whole story here, but we've captured some highlights. We hope that more people in Suwanee can meet Hank.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU OR LED YOU TO YOUR CURRENT CAREER?

I joined the Army in 1942 and trained as a combat machine gunner in Florida and then overseas in England, and then to France, fighting in the Ardennes forest over a 90-mile battlefield. My memory of this battlefield is very vivid, and I kept a diary of each day that I still have. We were the 422nd regiment of the 106th Infantry Division and our job was intelligence and reconnaissance to report back to Gen. Eisenhower. We saw that thousands of men and tanks were coming but our government did not expect an attack from the Germans in this forest. On Dec. 16, we were bombarded with 1,600 guns and it was sheer chaos. The artillery shells burst in the trees and we were subject to not only the shrapnel, but also the splintering wood, and we were running for our lives. It was freezing outside and four feet of snow on the ground, and we had no support due to the weather and the fact that no planes could land to bring us help or supplies. We

fought hard but were captured on Dec. 19. We were surrounded by 75-ton Tiger Tanks, and Capt. Foster, our commander, surrendered to the Germans. We were ordered to destroy our weapons and be at the mercy of our enemy. Our group of about 25 men were marched to a field where we feared being machine-gunned down as others had faced. This was the horrendous Battle of the Bulge.

Here they removed our personal items and a lieutenant discovered my diary, asking me what it was. Lucky for me, I spoke some Yiddish and could get the gist of the conversation between the sergeant and lieutenant, who were deciding whether or not to shoot us. I told the sergeant that I would like to record daily activities in my journal for him at his Stalag (prison camp) if he would let me keep it. He handed it back to me and wished me luck. I have always wondered if that diary helped to save our lives that day. I will never know for certain. When we were taken as prisoners, we were loaded onto boxcars, 60-80 men per car, for two and a half

days with no food, water or toilet, and taken to a freight yard on Dec. 25. We arrived at Stalag IX-B for a month, separated from the others because some of us were Jewish and this was the time of the Holocaust. Every day the guards would come by and beat us with the butts of their guns. At the second prison camp, we

were given a can of soup and a piece of bread each day. In March 1945, we were liberated, flown to France, and had the choice of going to Camp Lucky Strike and be shipped back or go to the hospital.

“I AM A THREE-TIME CANCER SURVIVOR, AND I AM NOW CANCER FREE. GOD HAS BLESSED ME IN SO MANY WAYS...”

I weighed 110 pounds and went to the hospital in Paris, and then was flown to Long Island, N.Y., on May 9, 1945. I stayed a few months and was discharged in January 1946. I went back to Boston and decided to move to Atlanta.

I had met a man, who later became Clark Howard’s grandfather, and he suggested that I go into retail merchandising. He was a manufacturer of women’s intimate apparel with the Lovable company. Davison’s department store hired me in January 1946, and I sold major electronics. I met my wife there at the store and we were both on the bowling team. I had a lot of ambition and was offered the assistant buyer position. A few years later, the general manager of Rich’s department store called, and in 1953, we both went to work for Rich’s, and I became the buyer of electronics and she was in women’s sportswear. I was promoted to merchandising manager for 33 years

and retired in 1987. So, it was a total of 41 years in retail merchandising.

My wife had a stroke and I took care of her for three years and then she went to a nursing center for two more years. She died in 2003. Once she was gone, I drove from Roswell to Suwanee to attend church with my son and family. I realized the gap in my life with my faith. I was baptized. I volunteered at Gwinnett Medical Center, on-call to help nurses with patients, pick up prescriptions, help moving patients

and I drove a courtesy cart in the parking lot.

My kids wanted me to be around more people so I moved into a retirement home in Johns Creek, and now I live in the new Heartis senior living facility in Suwanee. I had an engraved bench made in the park for my family, and I feel a special attachment to Suwanee. I am very happy to be here and feel honored to be part of The Faces of Suwanee.



Read more of Freedman's interview online at TheFacesOfSuwanee.com.



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Teaching Children the Importance of Giving During the Holidays

The holiday season is a perfect time of year for all of us to take a step back and reflect on everything we have to be grateful for. We are so fortunate to have our health, loving family and friends around us, and a place and community to call home. It can bring such great joy to shower our families with lots of love, treats, and gifts during the holidays to celebrate all of our blessings. While we have so many blessings, there are many in our community and across the globe who are less fortunate than us. It can be easy to get swept up in the business of the holidays and forget to find intentional ways to demonstrate to our kids the importance of giving back to others who are less fortunate than us. The good news is that it is human nature, even for kids, to want to give back and help others! With the right opportunities, you can get the entire family involved in giving back this holiday season.

Get them involved.

Even at a young age, kids can be involved in the process of gift giving to others. Ask them who the important people are in their lives and help them brainstorm what they would think a special gift for each person would be. Picking out gifts does not necessarily mean that you all have to go on a Black Friday spending spree as a family. Try to find homemade crafts or recipes that you could create together and gain the bonus of quality family time and fun memories during a busy time of year. If possible, have them give the gift to the special person so they can see the joy that comes with receiving a special gift.

Make homes for new toys.

In preparation for the new toys your little ones might be receiving over the

holidays, have them help pick out some older toys to donate. Having concrete ways that they can give back to others will help the idea of giving back feel more tangible and enjoyable. Help them pick out some toys they have outgrown and take them together to a donation center or shelter.

Pick a cause as a family.

You can help to model the spirit of giving selflessly by working together

as a family to help a cause. Find a charity, shelter, or relief effort that has a meaningful connection to your family. Have conversations with your kids about setting aside some of the family's holiday money for giving back to others instead of spending it on gifts for each other. Finding meaning in giving back to others will help spark the joy of charity in your kids.

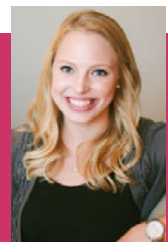
Make giving back go beyond the holidays.

Don't let the holiday season be the only time your kids see and hear about the importance of giving. Find regular time to get them involved in doing kind acts for others throughout the year. Get involved and volunteer with a local charity several times a year. Write thank you notes to people who help them or a kind get well soon note for someone who is sick. Go on a trash cleaning walk and pick up trash to help clean up the community. Create a spirit of giving and helping others all year long! ■



Laura Lebovitz, LMFT

Laura is a licensed marriage and family therapist who works in the Suwanee area at GROW Counseling. She received her Masters of Family Therapy from Mercer University School of Medicine. She works with children, adolescents, young adults, and families dealing with a variety of concerns. She specializes in working with anxiety, autism, self-harm, life transitions like divorce, and building healthy relationships within families.



Holiday

TRADITIONS & RECIPES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

EDITED BY NATALIE STUBBS



One of the most rewarding aspects of being a part of the Suwanee Magazine community is the abundance of opportunities to celebrate. Whether it may be success stories of the students, families, businesses and volunteers of our town, or the much-anticipated events and seasons throughout each year, we are constantly in search of new ways to celebrate the impactful individuals of Suwanee.

In our holiday issues in years past, we've opened up our Recipes and Traditions section for anyone who desired to contribute - and enjoyed each and every one of them! This year, however, as we also celebrate our 10th anniversary issue, we wanted to make a point to celebrate the variety of dynamic cultures that have helped cultivate our unique and thriving community over the last decade. So, as the holidays have arrived (in the blink of an eye ... again!), enjoy learning about some of your neighbors' recipes and traditions that make them feel at home this season. Happy holidays!



SOUTH KOREA
THE HAHN
FAMILY

Korean Bulgogi

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb. thinly sliced beef (tenderloin or ribeye)
- 3 tbs. soy sauce
- ½ cup pear purée
- ¼ cup onion purée
- 4 cloves of minced garlic
- 1 tsp. minced ginger
- 1 chopped green onion
- 2 tbs. brown sugar
- 1 tbs. rice wine
- A dash of ground black pepper
- 1 tbs. toasted sesame oil
- Several thin slices of carrot
- Several slices of onion

DIRECTIONS:

Mix all the marinade ingredients in a bowl. Add the sliced beef and mix well. Marinade for at least 30 minutes or overnight. Grill, pan-fry, or BBQ on the grill.





**DOMINICAN
REPUBLIC**
*THE SANCHEZ
FAMILY*



Dominican Pernil / Pork Shoulder

The pernil (roasted pork shoulder) is the main dish for the holidays, especially on Christmas Eve. We make at least five of them for the family! I've included the recipe, however, everything is made to taste and with lots of love with a pinch here and a pinch there!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ - 2 heads of fresh garlic
- 1 tbs. Dominican oregano (*Regular oregano will also work)
- 3 ½ tbs. salt (for a 7lb. pernil)
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- 2 tsp. fresh thyme
- ½ tsp. cumin
- 1 red onion
- 1 sopita, aka chicken bouillon cube
- 1 orange
- 2-4 juicy limes
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 cups water
- ¼ - ½ cup of white vinegar

DIRECTIONS: Poke holes all over the pernil using a cross method to get small to medium holes. Place in a large mixing bowl and add 1 cup of water and the vinegar. Massage the vinegar and water into the pork and let it sit for 5-10 minutes while you mix the marinade. Combine garlic, oregano, salt, sopita, cumin, onion, black pepper, and thyme in a food processor and blend. Add the freshly squeezed orange juice, lime juice, and olive oil. Mix again and set marinade aside. Drain the pernil (no worries if you don't use every single last drop of vinegar and water). Season the pernil thoroughly using the marinade. Be sure to massage the marinade into the holes you made earlier. It looks weird at first, but your taste buds will thank you later. Cover pernil with saran wrap and let it marinate for a minimum of 4 hours... best to marinate for a whole day. In a LARGE pot, add pork - skin side up - and add 1-2 cups of water. Be sure to include all of the marinade from the mixing bowl. Boil for 45 minutes to an hour. Switch pork - skin side up - to a sturdy pan and roast covered for 3 hours at 350 degrees making sure to baste it every hour. The pernil will become light golden brown and juicy during this time. At the 4th hour, take out 50% of the juices and roast uncovered for one more hour. (Optional) Once the pernil is done, broil for 5 minutes to get super crispy skin.

SOUTH AFRICA / BRITAIN
*THE RUMMEL
FAMILY
TRADITION*



Every Christmas dinner we sit down around the table and have "Christmas crackers" that you pull with the person next to you (friend or family member) and it pops. Inside there's normally a little decorative crown hat that you put on your head, as well as a joke and a little game that you can play.

Growing up in South Africa, our traditions were very much influenced by my parents who are British. My mom makes a Christmas cake - or "Christmas pudding" - every year and has been using this recipe for many years from a recipe book that is over 50 years old. It is covered with Brandy and brushed several times before it is left to age. Then, the cake is covered in a layer of marzipan and royal icing before a Christmas scene or a snow scene is added to the cake. The recipe is also commonly used for wedding cakes!

- Gillian Rummel

*Visit SuwaneMagazine.com for the Christmas Pudding recipe!

CANADA
*THE PAULIN
FAMILY*

Cherry Balls

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ cups of icing sugar
- 1 ½ cups coconut
- 1/3 cup butter
- 2 tbs. milk (or cream)
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 bottle of cherries
- Graham crackers

DIRECTIONS: Combine all ingredients, except the cherries and graham crackers. Carefully wrap a thin layer of coconut mixture around each cherry and roll it in graham cracker crumbs.



HAITI

THE FINN FAMILY TRADITION



Soup Joumou

Beginning on the night of Christmas Eve, some people attend a Midnight Mass church service, or might go out singing carols. Following the Mass, everyone returns home for the main holiday meal known as "reveillon," which is a French term meaning "to wake up" and also what the meal is called in France. This typically starts in the early hours of Christmas morning and lasts until dawn!

Our recipe is for "soup joumou," which EVERYONE eats in Haiti and in Haitian households abroad every New Year's morning! This meal pays historical homage to the success of Haitian independency (1804) where newly freed slaves ate the soup, which was not allowed to be consumed according to their French masters. Ingredients in the soup often vary and is usually cooked to taste.

**Visit Suwaneemagazine.com for a soup joumou recipe recommended by the Finn Family!*

HUNGARY
THE KLENIKNE FAMILY

A Hungarian Christmas

Our parents decorated the tree (without the children there), so when my sisters and I came in to see the tree, it was a great surprise and we were told that angels brought the tree for us! The main Christmas meal, always eaten on Christmas Eve, consists of fish (often fish soup

called "Halászlé" which is made with carp or other freshwater fish), stuffed cabbage (the leaves are stuffed with rice, mince pork, onion, garlic and other herbs) and a special kind of poppy bread/ cake called "Beigli" is my favorite dessert we made a night before with my mom and sisters together.



Sliced Beigli

Gingerbread is also traditionally eaten at Christmas in Hungary. The Midnight Mass service is very popular in Hungary. Our family has always gone to church after our Christmas meal. On Christmas Eve we also hoped that there would be some presents left under the Christmas tree. We were told that the presents were brought by Jesus, he's often called "Jézuska," a nickname or cuter version for "Jézus." We would wait outside the room where the tree is and when we would hear bells ringing, then enter, the presents would be waiting for us under the Christmas tree. On Christmas Day people visit their families.

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- Denise H.



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RESTAURANT SPOTLIGHT:

Cafe Amico

SUWANEES NEWEST COFFEEHOUSE SERVES UP HANDCRAFTED COFFEE DRINKS ALONGSIDE A CURATED BREAKFAST AND BRUNCH MENU AT TOWN CENTER.

By Alicia Carter / Photos By Karl Lamb



LOCATED IN Suwanee Town Center, Cafe Amico greets its guests with the strong and satisfying smell of fresh espresso as it swirls together with the sweet flavors of caramel, vanilla, hazelnut and cinnamon, among others, to create the flavorful, and oftentimes playful, drinks it's known for. The decor exudes comfortable coffeehouse cool but with a clean and sophisticated edge. Crisp white subway tile covers the rear wall, a stark backdrop to the kinetic energy behind the bar. Large Edison bulbs hang overhead, illuminating decorative

beakers that share space with the handcrafted lattes and frappes waiting to be picked up — the latter of which are especially refreshing on this hotter-than-usual autumn afternoon. There's a steady stream of customers ordering drinks to-go with a few guests sprinkled among communal tables enjoying lunch as they click away on their laptops. Outside, window shoppers stroll by as groups of children run through the fountains in the park. It's truly an ideal setting.

Originally opened in October 2018 under the name Cafe Vita, the Suwanee coffee shop and restaurant is the second location for Cafe Amico, but the first in the United States.

The Hot Nutella: the rim of a coffee mug is dipped in Nutella, rolled in rainbow sprinkles, filled with hot cocoa then topped with torched marshmallows and finished off with a drizzle of chocolate.



The original location is in South Korea, and Korean touches can be found throughout the Suwanee menu, including the **Korean BBQ sandwich**. Since opening last year, Cafe Amico went through a total rebranding process this past May. Owner Andy Chon revamped the drink and food menus with brand-new offerings, including stand-outs such as the **avocado toast and classic B.L.T.** alongside indulgent drinks like the **crème brûlée latte** and signature hot cocoa served with a cornucopia of toppings — but more on that later. Even after completely overhauling the menus, Chon teases that it's only the beginning.

Always one step ahead, Chon says Cafe Amico will soon begin roasting its own coffee beans in-house. The shiny new coffee roaster, handmade in Turkey, sits proudly at the end of the bar patiently waiting to begin roasting Cafe Amico-branded coffee beans this November. In addition, Chon is working to expand the menu from its current breakfast, lunch and brunch repertoire to include dinnertime staples like pasta and steak. Expansion into multiple locations is also a topic of conversation. While the future of Cafe Amico certainly looks bright, it's safe to say the restaurant is also enjoying a rather successful present.

The Goods

►► Cafe Amico prides itself on using only the most high-quality ingredients. Everything is made in-house with absolutely no pre-made ingredients to be found. In fact, Chon personally visits the market each week to hand-select all the ingredients to be used. While great emphasis is placed on the visual appeal of each dish served — and they are indeed beautiful plates of food — Chon stresses that it must also be the best tasting food possible.

The menu features a rainbow of ingredients: bright green avocado slices shine against crunchy slices of toast; red tomato sits atop a salad of fluffy arugula; and bright yellow cheese peeks out of a sliced croissant on a nostalgic ham and cheese sandwich. Breakfast items are served all day so it's never too late to pop in for the Amico Special. Featuring two runny eggs, arugula, tomato, balsamic glaze and your choice of meat on a croissant, it's perhaps the perfect dish to pad your belly after a late night out. In the mood for



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something more sweet than savory? You can't go wrong with the popular **fruit cronut** — a croissant-doughnut hybrid sliced in half and topped with strawberries, peaches and more.

Unique Drinks

▶ While the food menu keeps customers' tummies full and happy, the drink menu is what truly keeps them coming back time and again. The signature menu is home to drinks unique to Cafe Amico, including the **Ho Chi Minh City**, made with espresso and condensed milk, and the crème brûlée latte, featuring caramelized sugar.

If you're looking for something truly indulgent, however, the standout at Cafe Amico has to be the hot cocoa. But this isn't your Granny's hot cocoa. **The Hot Nutella** is an Instagrammer's dream come true: the rim of a mug is dipped in Nutella, rolled in rainbow sprinkles, filled with hot cocoa then topped with torched marshmallows and finished off with a drizzle of chocolate. It's sure to be a hit with the kiddos as we enter into the holiday season, when dreams of sugarplums, hot cocoa and other decadent delights dance in our heads.

Those less adventurous will find all the coffeehouse classics, including lattes and frappes served with your choice of flavor, along with Americanos, macchiatos, cappuccinos, cortados and the other usual suspects.

Hometown Appeal

▶ Suwanee Town Center is the ideal location for a restaurant like Cafe Amico. It's an intimate, friendly space that is perfect for grabbing



a bite to-go to enjoy in the park as the kids run out their energy or for sipping a hot drink as the weather finally starts to cool. Chon says that more than 60 percent of their business is to-go, touching on their close proximity to housing, offices and retail which allows for the heavy foot traffic that keeps the restaurant in demand. But that's not the only reason he chose Town Center to set up shop. "It's a common area in the city," Chon says. Families come out to enjoy time together.

The popular **fruit cronut** — a croissant-doughnut hybrid sliced in half and topped with strawberries and peaches.



Festivals are on regular rotation in the park. New and old businesses alike create a sense of community.

So the next time you're window shopping at the epicenter of Suwanee, stop by Cafe Amico for a quick pick-me-up to fuel your day or tame your coffee buzz with one of their tasty menu items. If you'd like to hang out for a while, grab the shaded picnic table outside and enjoy all of the artwork and people watching that the park has to offer. Or if you're like us, order the Hot Nutella, snap a carefully framed photo, and post it to social to make all your friends jealous. ■

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Organic foods are all the rage today. Lots of folks are trying to eat cleaner and are interested in foods that are less processed with less preservatives. So why not find wine that is cleaner and better for you?

Healthy Wines



LAURIE COLLINS

CEO and Co-Founder Of
Sip Happens Wine Shoppe

IN THE wine world, there's an abundance of certifications indicating a healthier wine: certified organic; made with organically grown grapes; biodynamic; sustainably farmed; dry farmed — and many more. IT'S SO CONFUSING! So, what is the dealio?

In an attempt to simplify, let's break these terms down into easy-to-understand concepts so you know what to look for in your wine.

It's important to keep in mind that the certification standards do differ slightly between U.S. and European wine-making



RAW Rosé from the village of Villanueva de Alcardete in the heart of La Mancha, Spain.

standards. In Europe, many winemakers have been making wine organically for years. Certification fees are costly. They grow and produce wines organically out of history and stewardship to the land. Farming organically is healthy for their family and the generations thereafter.

First, a word on sulfites... all wines have naturally occurring sulfites. Sometimes, winemakers choose to add sulfites to increase the wine's shelf life. Typically, organic wines and the like have little to no added sulfites.

Certified Organic

Certified organic wines are produced from organically grown grapes (no use of chemicals in the vineyard), are non-GMO, with no use of commercial yeast and no added sulfites.

A wonderful example of a certified organic wine is **Vento di Mare Nero D'Avola**.

On a side note, there is a difference between organic and vegan. The use of fining



A certified organic red wine from Terre Siciliane, Italy: Vento di Mare Nero D'Avola.

agents like egg whites can be used in the wine-making process with organic wine, which means the wine would not be considered vegan.

If you're looking for a vegan wine, give **RAW Rosé or White Blend** a try.

Organically Grown Grapes

Using organically grown grapes does not always designate that the wine is certified organic. In the U.S., there is a nuance that allows them to add "made with organic grapes" to the label. The winemaker must use grapes grown in a certified organic vineyard. However, during the wine-making process, they have the option of using native or commercial yeast and may add additional sulfites up to 100

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ppm. There are many excellent choices of wine in this category. **Lange Estate Pinot Gris and Volpaia Chianti Classico** are lovely options.

Biodynamic Certification

Also known as Demeter certification, biodynamic wine growing and making is the practice of balancing between vine, man, earth and stars. It is a very holistic approach to agriculture. All tasks in the vineyard, from planting to pruning to harvesting are done by the biodynamic calendar (root, fruit, flower and leaf days). Additionally, the winemaker does not use any chemicals in the vineyard or

manufactured additives, like commercial yeasts. However, they can add up to 100 ppm additional sulfites during the wine-making process.

OPS Garnacha by Loxarel is a tasty example of a biodynamic wine.

Dry Farmed

Dry farming does not mean the vines do not receive any water. Rather, the farmer depends solely on rain versus irrigation. Many winemakers believe wine should



reflect the terroir or sense of place. Irrigation changes may prevent the true expression of the varietal. However, some regions with hot climates, like South America, can't practice dry farming. They believe responsible irrigation actually produces higher quality wine for their region.

Looking to try a dry farmed wine? **Illahe Estate Pinot Noir** is quite delightful.

If you are choosing a wine that has any one of these designations certifying them organic, sustainable or otherwise, then know that you're headed in a healthier direction. The bottom line is that these wines have less additives and no chemicals used in the vineyard, which means they are definitely more health conscious. ■

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WHAT'S BREWING

Indio Brewing

JONATHAN MARTINEZ BRINGS THE CRAFT BEER SCENE TO SUGAR HILL'S SHINE DISTRICT

BY LIZZY JAMES / PHOTOS BY KARL LAMB



J

ONATHAN MARTINEZ has officially made his dreams of opening a brewery a reality. Marking himself as the first Hispanic to open a brewery in Georgia, Martinez is not only breaking down barriers but also pushing the boundaries on

creating a community-oriented gathering place for homebrewers and beer enthusiasts alike. The brewery's quaint location in Sugar Hill's SHINE District embraces Martinez's culture with live cactuses spread out throughout the brewery and long communal tables that encourage conversation. We had the chance to sit down with Martinez to learn more about the experience that Indio Brewing is bringing to Sugar Hill and how it's leaving its mark on the local craft beer scene.



Indio's beer menu boasts 8 unique beers, including a double dry-hopped IPA and a 19-hour yogurt sour.



What made you want to open your own brewery?

I had been homebrewing for six years, and my friends and family would tell me that they really loved my beer and thought I should pursue opening a brewery. So I did some research and figured out what I wanted as far as equipment. I knew I wanted it to be similar to my homebrewing equipment, so I met with the BREWHA team and ended up realizing they were the

Jonathan Martinez is the first Hispanic to open a brewery in Georgia.

Why the name Indio?

Back where I am from in Nicaragua, Indio is defined as “a native of the land.” Its true meaning is defined by your actions, not by your appearance. Indio is all about doing something other than the norm and separating yourself from the rest. Here at the brewery, that’s the type of thing we welcome. If you want to wear sandals with socks or eat tacos with chopsticks, you go right ahead! [Laughs]

a project basis. He is a very talented brewer, and his main focus is on creating and brewing innovative IPAs, stouts and sours.

How many beers do you currently have on tap?

We currently have eight beers on tap. Our beer menu features a 19-hour yogurt sour with wild strawberry and raspberry called Sour Patch; a double dry-hopped IPA with Idaho 7 and Citra called DDH; and even a Mexican IPA called Frida which mixes a traditional

German lager malt with flaked wheat, orange spice and white fruit.

What is the current favorite beer in the taproom?

Sour Patch is definitely our most popular beer in the taproom to date. Our Frida Mexican IPA is another favorite and sold out before we even had our grand opening.

If you could recommend a seasonal beer, what would it be?

Our Sour Patch for sure! It has been a fan favorite no matter what time of year it is!

Do you host any special events?

We try and host restaurant pop-ups twice a month, and we are looking forward to getting a Peach State Cornhole league every Wednesday. We also host trivia, salsa classes, and have salsa bands come and play outside as well.

What are your current hours?

We are currently closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, open from 4-10 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays; 3-10 p.m. on Fridays; noon-11 p.m. on Saturdays; and 2-8 p.m. on Sundays. ■



Head Brewer Matt Williams pours a glass of his popular Sour Patch Yogurt Sour.

the perfect fit! We placed an order and got our equipment flown in from Canada. The rest just kind of fell into place!

Why did you choose to open in Sugar Hill’s SHINE District?

When we started discussing the idea of opening a brewery, my wife and I immediately knew we wanted to be in Gwinnett County. We then learned of Sugar Hill’s expansion, and as soon as this location became available we jumped on it. It is so convenient for our customers to grab a beer and enjoy a concert at the Bowl or stop by after having dinner at Central City Tavern.

What sets you apart from other local breweries?

I don’t want to compete with the big guys. We want to stay local and keep the brewery as a location where homebrewers and beer enthusiasts can come together to connect, share and hang out.

Tell us a little bit about your head brewer.

Our head brewer’s name is Matt Williams. He has been in the craft beer industry for over 20 years, and has over 10 years of actual brewing experience working at places such as Grumpy Troll Brew Pub in Wisconsin, Dogwood Brewing Company, Five Seasons Brewing, and has even done consulting for multiple breweries on

➔ **Indio Brewing is located in Sugar Hill’s SHINE District at 5019 W. Broad St., M15. For a complete beer list and to stay up to date on everything Indio Brewing, visit IndioBrewing.com or follow them on social media.**



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Learn

It's time to A.C.T.

Assess student performance at the mid-year mark by taking time to **ACT: Accountability, Communication and Time Management**

BY MIKE WOOD, LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER AT NORTH GWINNETT HIGH SCHOOL

I ARGUE THAT the most difficult transition in a young person's life is the jump from middle school to high school. The beginning of high school, although exciting, can be stressful emotionally, socially and academically. The hierarchy change, along with the rigor of high school and the advancement in responsibility, can truly affect these adolescents. For some of them, school has always been easy, and now it is not. For others, school has always been a challenge, and now it's time to make adjustments and be serious about academics. Is school challenging because of a lack of effort or lack of skills? Class rankings, GPA, transcripts and resumes all become real! The most important choice we make as parents and teachers is to keep the conversation lines open to help our teenagers thrive.

► As a public school educator for far too many years and a father of four daughters, my views expressed in this article will be twofold: advice for parents of high schoolers today, and selfishly, advice for the future when my daughters are at an age when their interest in dialogue about their life with my wife and I has substantially waned. I imagine this future to be true. However, the hope will always be for open communication. Presently, communication with my 9, 7, 4, and 2-year-old daughters comes easily. As their parents, my wife and I are the most important voices in their lives. Fast-forward 10 years and I'll probably be referring back to this article! In order to ensure the success of our students, parents and teachers of high schoolers need to ACT: encourage accountability, create open communication and facilitate time management skills.

COMMUNICATE

As parents, we need to find a way to communicate and connect with the teenagers in our lives. Most teenagers are not known for being great conversationalists. How do we prevent "teenager" and "conversationalist" from being an oxymoron? What makes a great conversation? Common ground is one component. Parents, take time to read what your child is reading in language arts class and talk about it. Don't just check the Parent Portal for the overall grade; ask your child what a specific assignment is about. Ask your child to teach you a concept or lesson. Especially if your son or daughter is struggling in school. My daughter received an S for citizenship two weeks straight in second grade. BOOM! Consequences. Conversation. What happened? All parents did this when kids were in elementary school. Why does it stop? Because we want our young adolescents to be mature and responsible, yes, but as parents we can still converse and hopefully get to the root of the problem if kids are having a difficult time in a subject area. And if they're doing great in school —

...if parents notice that their son or daughter is falling behind, they must find the cause. Is it from a lack of effort or not understanding the content? Lack of skills? This needs to be done before the mid-year point of the school year.

great! — still ask questions and have conversations.

Conversing about a problem or struggle in school does not mean a parent should take that struggle from his or her son or daughter. But if parents notice that their son or daughter is falling behind, they must find the cause. Is it from a lack of effort or not understanding the content? Lack of skills? This needs to be done before the mid-year point of the school year. All schools send out progress reports at key points in the semester: 6 and 12 weeks. If your child's school emails them, check your junk mail! Do not just look at the overall grade, instead ask your child to explain what the assignments are that are missing or earned low grades. Students must be familiar with all late-work and make-up work policies of all of his or her teachers. (Hint: check the course syllabus distributed at the beginning of the year.)

If the student is going sideways by November, intervention needs to happen. Don't wait until December; they may have already failed a class or two. In middle school, the half-way point is not stressed as much as the end of year. Ask them about missing work or if they need help in a subject. Sometimes consequences at home can provide the extrinsic means to get students back on track (if lack of effort is the issue).

I have had many conversations with parents throughout the years about parents taking away phones, video games or extracurriculars (yes, even athletic team practices or performance ensembles) to motivate their teenagers to get back on track academically. At the mid-year point or even before, parents may decide to alter the schedule or make it stricter, depending on the performance of the students in his or her classes.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Is your child getting enough sleep? Are they too busy with extracurriculars? A job? Time management for the student is so important and a struggle for many. I teach so many procrastinators! Time management is important not only after school but during school! Prioritize time. Please know: A major shift has happened in public school education regarding homework. Teachers do not assign as much homework on a daily basis as in the previous generation. I would venture to say that many low grades or missing assignments are attributed to students not using time wisely in class and/or individual study time. Time management is a skill that needs to be reinforced on the home front.



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ACCOUNTABILITY

If parents fear it is not just low effort or time management issues, rather skill level, then parents definitely need to contact the teachers. But before we go down this route, stress to kids the idea of accountability. Teachers will contact parents if they reach out, but in the long run, having the student approach his or her teacher to talk builds that student-teacher relationship, fosters a safe environment to practice good communicating, and in the long run will produce a more confident student.

Students can be the ones to schedule times to get extra help with the teacher. Students can get tutoring. Emailing a teacher is the best possible way to communicate with most teachers. All emails should

have been given to parents at orientation or open house, but the email addresses can also be found on school websites. If parents are worried and not getting answers from their teenagers, or getting 50 percent of the truth (Who am I kidding? I'm already getting false narratives from my fourth grader!) then definitely contact teachers. Parents can find out if their son or daughter needs extra assistance, tutoring, or the reasons behind missing work grades. Hopefully, during ninth grade year, students can move toward accountability without mom or dad's intervention. This empowerment is best for all of us, and parents will be preparing their sons or daughters for 10th grade and, more importantly, for adulthood.





>> January - May
>> Grades 6-12
>> Team Play

**MYSPORT
SPRING BREAK
2020**

>> March 30-April 3
>> Grades K-5

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For those parents with upperclassmen, these students should be “taking care of business” in their academics. The finish line is near! The need to intervene in their academic career hopefully is moot. But if they are not succeeding, well, then ACT! I would add this note to all parents: The counselor’s office at the high school is a great resource. At this stage, credits and transcripts are significant. If your son or daughter is struggling and possibly losing a necessary credit to graduate in the next year (seniors, for example) then contact the counseling office. Counselors are readily available via email or through appointments to help parents with these situations.

*We’re all in this together to help nurture the future. Advice and commentary are easily attainable for raising, teaching and supporting children in the primary years but, unfortunately, not for the high school years. We need parents, teachers, counselors and administrators all on one team to yield the best possible potential from our teenage youth. Don’t forget to **ACT** (Accountability, Communication, Time Management)! ■*

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THE LATEST
FROM IN
AND AROUND
SUWANEЕ



StillFire Brewing Celebrates Grand Opening

THE CITY OF Suwaneе raised a glass to celebrate the opening of Suwaneе's hometown brewery, StillFire Brewing, on October 10. Members of the media along with Mayor Jimmy Burnette and fellow city officials attended the ribbon cutting ceremony. "We could not have done this without the support of the city," said Co-Founder Randall Veugeler. "My wife, Angela, and I live in and love this city. Opening a brewery has been a dream of mine for as long as I can remember and there is no place we would rather be."

StillFire Brewing officially opened its doors with a grand opening weekend celebration that kicked off October 19. The 20-barrel brewery and taproom boasts a selection of 18 original craft beers, a to-go window for customers to walk up and grab a beer while taking advantage of Town Center's open container policy, an outdoor stone patio where patrons can play games, enjoy live music, and much more! **StillFire Brewing is located at 343 US-23 across from Suwaneе Town Center. For more information and hours, visit StillFireBrewing.com.**



Tom Doran

Gwinnett County Administrator Appoints Veteran Police Officer as New Police Chief

BACK IN September, Gwinnett County Administrator Glenn Stephens announced the appointment of Deputy Chief Tom Doran to succeed Police Chief A.A. "Butch" Ayers, who retired after 35 years of service to Gwinnett County.

Stephens said, "The Gwinnett County Police Department is a prime example of the succession planning and leadership development that

the County strives to cultivate and develop in all of its departments. Doran is the fifth police chief in a row to begin his career as a police

officer and rise among the ranks to assume the role of police chief. I credit the superior level of expertise that exists within the leadership in our police department, including the tremendous leadership of Chief Ayers, for this tradition. Like his predecessor, who we will miss greatly, Tom has gained valuable knowledge and honed his skills with each step in his career. He is a person of strong character who is dedicated to public service, highly respected within the department and Gwinnett community, and will be a valuable addition to our senior management team."

Doran, a 26-year veteran of the Police Department, will officially assume his new role on November 15.

Special Needs School of Gwinnett Breaks Ground on New Campus

► The Special Needs School of Gwinnett celebrated the groundbreaking of its new campus on August 27. The groundbreaking ceremony, located at their new campus site on Davis Road in Lawrenceville marked a significant step in Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC US's years-long partnership with the Special Needs School of Gwinnett, as the board members of the Mitsubishi Electric Classic Golf Tournament unanimously voted to make the school the primary charity recipient of the annual event.

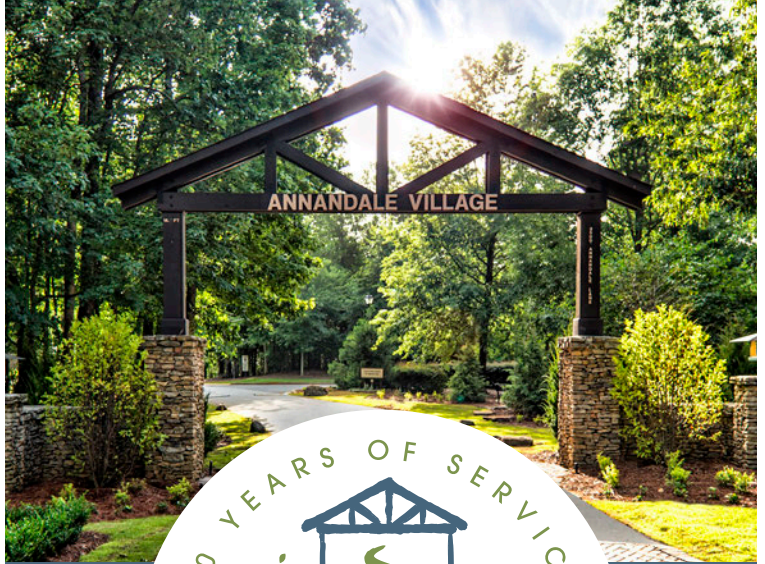
The groundbreaking marked the start of the second phase in the school's four-part development plan. The second phase includes the construction of a new building that will house seven classrooms, two therapy rooms, staff offices, lunchroom and reception area, as well as an expansion to the retention pond and renovations to an existing building for the young adult program.

"We are beyond thrilled to witness a new beginning for the Special Needs School of Gwinnett," said Mark Kuntz, CEO for Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC US. "We've been huge supporters for quite some time and are pleased to help the organization move into an all-new facility that will better support the needs of the students and the dedicated staff that serve them."

For more information on Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC US or the Special Needs School of Gwinnett, visit MetaHVAC.com or SpecialNeedsSchools.org.



PHOTOS BY TMO AGENCY



Annandale Village celebrates 50th anniversary



Local nonprofit Annandale Village is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Founded in 1969, Annandale Village is a nationally recognized leader among nonprofit organizations and is the only nonprofit in Georgia to offer consistent service and care to men and women with developmental disabilities and acquired brain injuries.

To commemorate this monumental accomplishment, Annandale will hold various special events and fundraising efforts throughout the rest of 2019 and 2020, including its flagship annual fundraising event, Jazzy Thing (spring 2020), which raises awareness for the individuals it serves; and Annandale Village's Annual Family Weekend which welcomes hundreds of families and friends to a weekend of celebration in the fall. "Annandale's mission is to turn disability into possibility for the hundreds of men and women we serve each year," said Annandale's CEO Adam Pomeranz. "For the past fifty years, the generous support we've received from individuals, foundations and corporate contributors has helped grow our services exponentially, allowing us to provide a comprehensive range of programs designed to improve the quality of life of each Villager served."

Annandale's Board of Trustees Chairman, Steve Gaultney, reflects on Annandale's unique mark in the community: "Annandale Village is one of only three organizations of its kind in the entire United States. I am so proud to be serving alongside men and women with unique abilities as they live their lives as independently as possible."

For more information regarding Annandale's 50th anniversary visit Annandale.org.



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Suwanee Library to Host Atlanta Radio Theatre Company Performance

► Gwinnett County Public Library in partnership with Atlanta Radio Theatre Company is bringing a Halloween live performance to adults on Saturday, November 9, at 7 p.m. The Atlanta Radio Theatre Company has been performing for 34 years and often has a very specific focus on science fiction, horror and fantasy. The nonprofit educational corporation is dedicated to the production and distribution of quality audio dramas and performs for adults at a wide variety of events such as Dragon Con, Mythic Journeys, and the World Fantasy Convention.

The Atlanta Radio Theatre Company was founded in 1984 and operates its own studio and produces original work. Volunteers with ARTC can participate in a number of ways. The November 9 show will be a great opportunity to see if you'd like to try your hand at a later program by writing, voice acting, producing engineering or any number of other ways.

The Gwinnett County Library Suwanee branch is located at 361 Main St., Suwanee, 30024.

Level Minds CBD Health Club Celebrates Grand Opening with Ribbon Cutting

► LEVEL MINDS CBD Health Club celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 12. Local husband-and-wife team Shiloh and Nelson Bigles, both alternative health business owners, have opened Level Minds to promote the health benefits of hemp CBD, which has been shown to help with pain relief, reduce inflammation, reduce anxiety and depression, help with PTSD symptoms and so much more.

Level Minds CBD is located at 3550 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road, Suite 108, in Suwanee. For more information call 678-765-2228 or visit LevelMindsCBD.com.





'Tis the Season!

The City of Suwanee is finishing the event year strong with seasonal events designed to get you into the holiday spirit

You'd better watch out, and you'd better not cry
 – Santa Claus is coming to Town (Center)!

Join us on Friday, December 6 at 6:30 pm for our annual **Jolly Holly Day** celebration. Santa Claus will magically arrive to meet with children and families, while performances from local elementary school choruses and dance groups grace the stage.

Parents, be sure to bring cameras or phones to snap your own photos! Kids: Don't forget your wish lists! After lighting the Town Center tree and taking photos with all of the good little boys and girls, Santa will return to the North Pole to prepare for his Christmas night journey. Holiday goodies available while supplies last.

Come back to the park Saturday morning for the **Run, Run Rudolph 5K** at 8 am, followed by **HappyFeat's Jingle in the Park Holiday Market** on Sunday from noon until 5 pm.

The Holiday Market features a shopping extravaganza of specialty merchants from across the Southeast, photos with Santa, entertainment on stage, and a live nativity.



Upcoming Suwanee Events



Suwanee Wine Fest

Nov 2 | noon



Bark in the Park *New Event!*

Nov 9 | 9 am



Suwanee Classic Car Show

Nov 10 | 10 am



Jolly Holly Day

Dec 6 | 6:30 pm



Run Run Rudolph 5K

Dec 7 | 8 am



HappyFeat's Jingle in the Park Holiday Market

Dec 8 | noon

Sweater Weather in the Sweet City



AS TEMPERATURES (finally) dip and our sweet city prepares for the winter holidays, there's plenty of opportunity to explore all that Sugar

Hill has to offer. **The largest real ice rink in the Southeast will open on November 1** with hours for parties or a quick skate around downtown through February 9, 2020. For more information visit HaidRink.com.

The Sugar Hill Player's Guild will proudly present their latest production, **The Game's Afoot**, on weekends November 8-17 at The Eagle Theatre. Styled in the genre of a "whodunit" murder mystery, this production follows William Gillette, an actor well-known for his portrayal of Sherlock Holmes. When a very real murder occurs, Gillette puts his expertise (or acting skills?) to use in the midst of the mayhem that follows. Tickets for this delightful show are available at EagleatSugarHill.com.

Sugar Hill's annual holiday celebration will be held on Saturday, December 7. Join in classic holiday fun like photos with Santa, ornament decorating and the community tree lighting. Continue celebrating the season in style at **Tim Shelton's A Very Vintage Christmas concert** at The Eagle Theatre on December 19. Bringing together



tunes from Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Bing Crosby, Dean Martin, Glen Campbell and others, Shelton honors the classic stylings of carols and Christmas tunes. Perfect for our 1930s-inspired Eagle Theatre, Tim Shelton's A Very Vintage Christmas will recreate the Christmas magic of the past and set the tone for a merry and bright holiday this year. Tickets for this production are \$35 and can be purchased at EagleatSugarHill.com.

With friends and family in town for festivities, the **E Center** offers the ideal opportunity to enjoy time visiting a new restaurant, trying a new seasonal drink or shopping for gifts at **Perazim Boutique** (or a gift card from restaurants for hard-to-please present recipients). Even if you've been a little naughty this year, we hope you'll have a splendid time celebrating the holidays in the sweet city! ■



Sugar Hill is celebrating the season with a number of events, including the opening of the largest real ice rink in the Southeast and the city's annual holiday celebration and tree lighting.

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citybuzz

PEOPLE & PLACES



>> Suwanee Fest

Saturday, Sept. 21st
& Sunday, Sept. 22nd

TOWN CENTER PARK

PHOTOS BY:
KARL LAMB

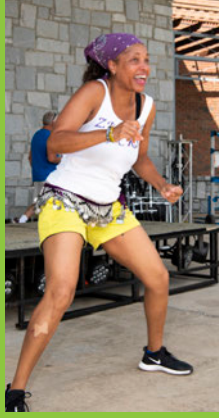


➤➤ **Suwanee Health & Fitness Fest**

Saturday, Aug. 24th

TOWN CENTER PARK

PHOTOS BY:
KARL LAMB



➤➤ **Annandale Village 5K**

Saturday, Sept. 7th

TOWN CENTER PARK

PHOTOS BY:
JULIE PERDUE



>> Suwanee Fine Arts Festival

Saturday, Oct. 5th & Sunday Oct. 6th
TOWN CENTER PARK

PHOTOS BY:
KARL LAMB



>> Taste of BBQ

Saturday, Oct. 12th
TOWN CENTER PARK

PHOTOS BY:
JULIE PERDUE

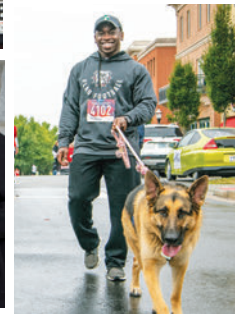


>> **Bridge the Gap 5K**

Saturday, Oct. 19th

TOWN CENTER PARK

PHOTOS BY:
KARL LAMB



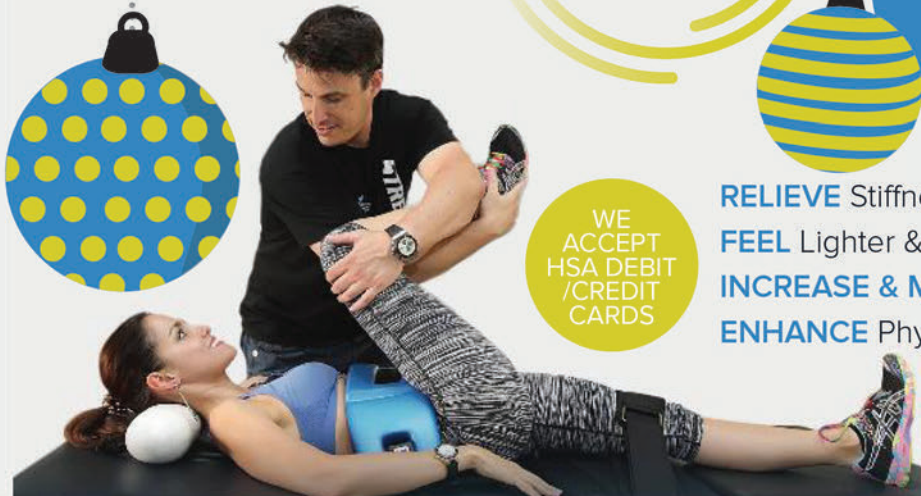
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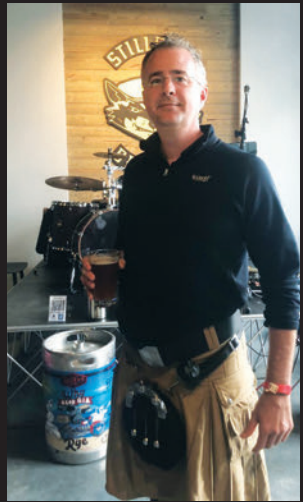
ENHANCE Physical & Athletic Skills

**>> StillFire Brewing
Grand Opening
Weekend**

Saturday, Oct. 19th
& Sunday Oct. 20th

STILLFIRE BREWING
PHOTOS BY:
LIZZY JAMES and
ANGELA VEUGELER





Calendar

November



15
BEAR'S BEST ATLANTA CHARITY CLASSIC
 Noon-8pm
 Bear's Best Atlanta
 Sign up at classic.als.net.

1



SUGAR HILL ICE RINK OPENS

4-10pm

Sugar Hill

City of Sugar Hill. For more information visit haidrink.com.

9

BARK FOR LIFE

9am-noon

Town Center Park

A noncompetitive walk event for dogs and their owners to raise funds and awareness for the American Cancer Society. More info at relayforlife.org/barkgwinnettga.

10

SUWANEЕ CLASSIC CAR SHOW

10am

Town Center Park

For more information visit ngaa4arts.com.



2



7TH ANNUAL SUWANEЕ WINE FEST

1-4:30pm

Town Center Park

Enjoy unlimited samples of over 150 wines, plus craft beer, college football, great food and music. Tickets available at suwaneewinefest.com.

9



SUWANEЕ WINTER FARMERS MARKET

9-11am

Town Center Park

Second Saturday of the month through April 2020.



14

CHRISTMAS CANTEEN 2019

Through Dec. 23 @ 8pm

Aurora Theatre

Purchase tickets at auroratheatre.com.

22

LICENSE TO CHILL SNOW ISLAND AND MAGICAL NIGHTS OF LIGHTS

Through Feb. 23

Lake Lanier Islands

Entrance to Magical Nights of Lights begins at \$45 per vehicle. Tickets to License to Chill begin at \$29.99.

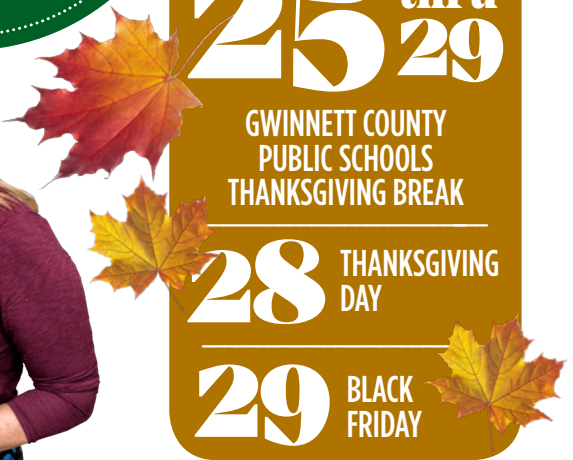
25 thru 29

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS THANKSGIVING BREAK

28

 THANKSGIVING DAY

29

 BLACK FRIDAY

December

6 HOLLY JOLLY DAY

6:30-9:30pm

Town Center Park

Ring in the holiday season at this family-friendly event with performances by local schools, the lighting of the tree, free crafts, s'mores, hot chocolate and a photo with Santa!



7

HAPPY FEAT'S RUN RUN RUDOLPH 5K

8am

Town Center Park

More information at happyfeat.org.

8

HAPPY FEAT'S MISTLETOE MARKET

Noon-5pm

Town Center Park

Town Center will be transformed into a pop-up holiday market with homemade gifts and décor. Proceeds benefit Happy Feat. More information at happyfeat.org.



23 thru Jan 3

GWINNETT COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WINTER BREAK

25 CHRISTMAS DAY

31 NEW YEAR'S EVE



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123

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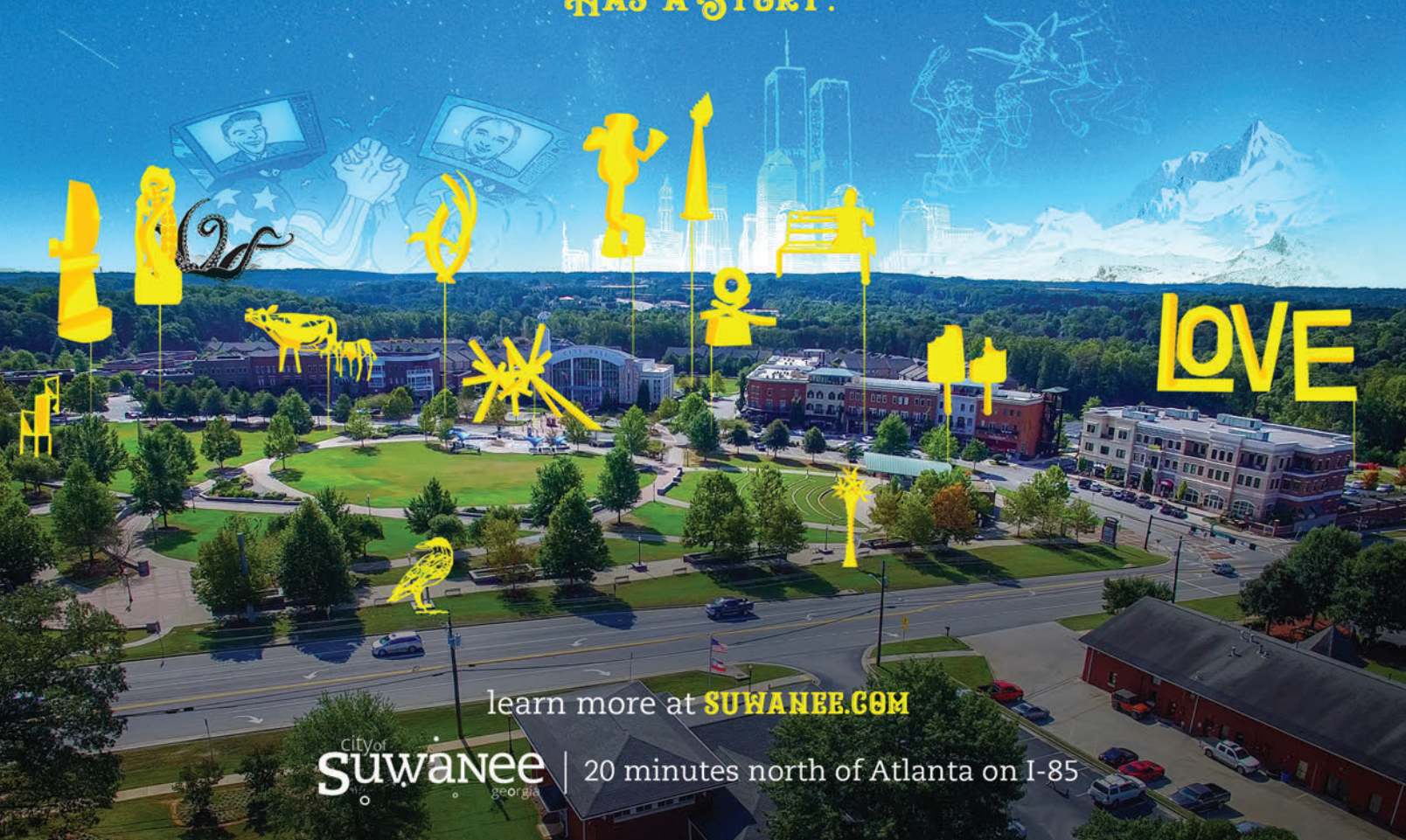
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