

West Valley VIEW

The community newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ ❖ Phone (623) 535-8439

Friday, November 19, 2010

Art walk in Avondale today

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It's art walk time in Avondale again, and this time around, there's a harvest theme.

The Old Town Avondale Art Walk will take place from 5 to 9 p.m. today on Western Avenue. The thoroughfare will be closed to traffic between Fourth and Sixth streets to make way for artists and shoppers.

"This is the harvest theme, so we're going to have a nonperishable food drive to benefit St. Mary's Food Bank. As you prepare for your own harvest festivities and celebrations, you can help the community," said Ruth Clark, Avondale's revitalization project manager.

This month's event will feature street performances by Juicebox Dance Academy and Triplethreat Dance Co. and art demonstrations by members of Art League West and students from Estrella Mountain Community College.

"People can watch art being made and maybe wiggle their way on over there to get their hands on a paintbrush," Clark said.

Band Kevin James & Jam Good Music will be on hand providing entertainment, while local vendors such as Raul & Theresa's Mexican Restaurant and Kreative K cupcakes Bakery & Cafe will dish up the eats.

As for the artwork, "I think it's going to be people bringing out some of their best - a lot of art that will make really nice gifts," Clark said.

The November art walk will also be the first to feature a new project called windowARTspace. Students enrolled in EMCC's digital photography class are displaying their works in the storefronts of the currently vacant Sterling Plaza West building.

"In my opinion, it just gets more people to that site. The art exhibit attracts people and maybe through that, the word gets out about how neat this space is," said Jim Fike, art faculty member at EMCC.



LAST MONTH'S ART WALK on Western Avenue in Avondale drew an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people and featured displays by various city departments, including the Police Department, right, as well as booths exhibiting the works of local artists. View photos by Jim Painter

"It's a great opportunity to get the students' artwork out there," Fike said. "Hopefully they can serve as ambassadors, not just for their art but for the arts in general."

The digital works displayed are expected to rotate on a monthly basis until Sterling Plaza West is leased, officials said.

In the meantime, "the owners of the building get some positive visibility, the whole street becomes more interesting, and local artists get to get their work out into the community," Clark said.

Last month, some 1,500 to 2,000 people turned out for the art walk, which was combined with two other city events.

Such numbers aren't expected this time around, but "I think we'll get a lot of repeat attendees who came for one of the other events last month and now know about the art walk and are now coming back," Clark said.

Martha Sala, president of Art League West, whose members display and sell their works at the Old Town Art Walk, said she sees promise in the continued growth of the Avondale event.

"There was a lot of interest last time; there were a lot of people stopping by and looking to see what was going on," Sala said. "I think it went over well. There was a lot of community activity, and also the crowds were there. As far as Art League West goes, it was a success."

Next month's art walk, to take place Dec. 17, will feature a holiday theme. Santa Claus will be available for photos, and local nonprofits and schools will be stationing gift-wrapping booths.

"It will be right before Christmas, and people can really catch up on their holiday shopping," Clark said.

For information on the Old Town Avondale Art Walk, visit www.avondale.org or www.artleaguewest.com.

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