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WRANGLER NEWS



Noah Schroeder, a junior on Corona's JV baseball team, gets shorn for the bi-annual program to Stand Up to Cancer — STORY & MORE PHOTOS by Andrew Lwowski, Pg. 26

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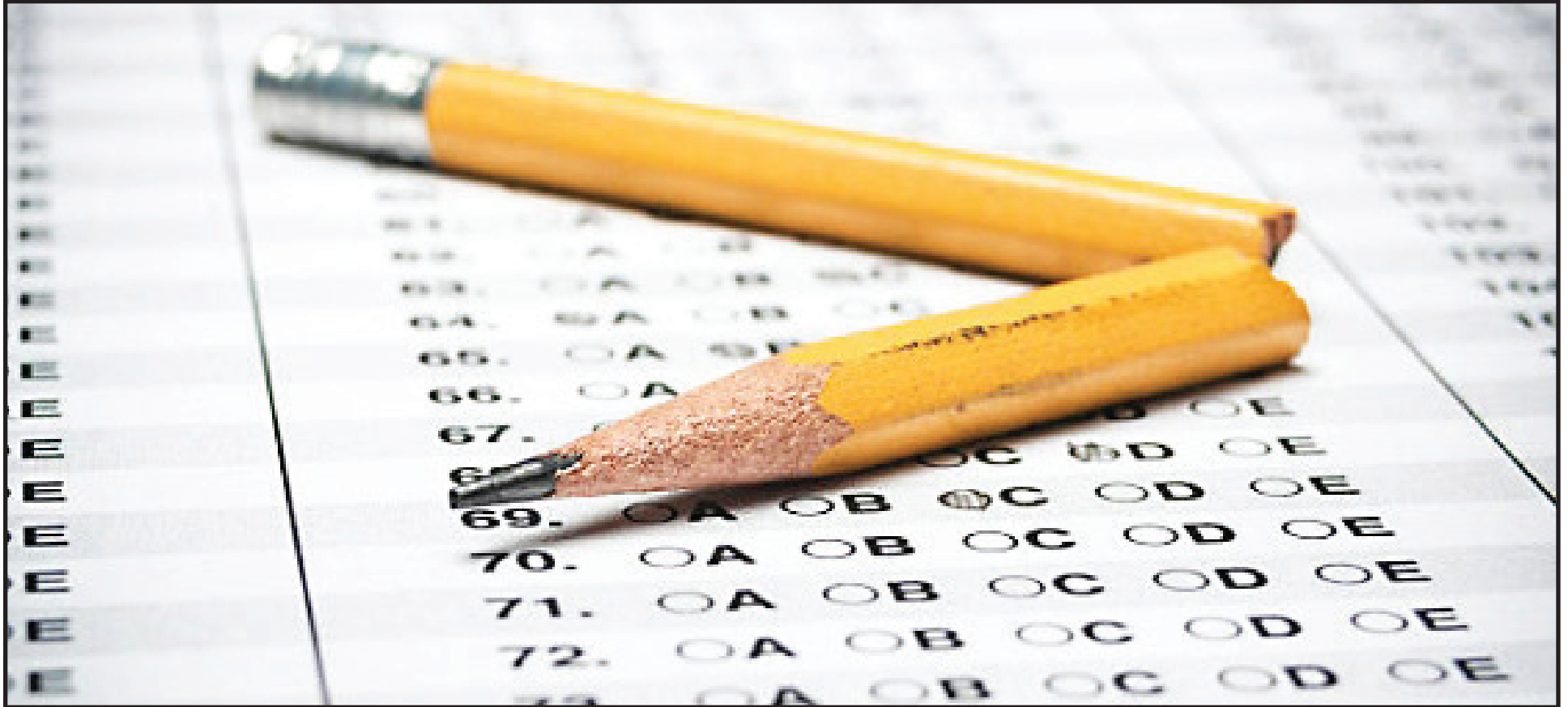
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Beyond the bubble sheet

How TUHSD is preparing students for college in an ever-evolving testing arena

By Barbi Walker-Walsh

The pandemic disrupted the testing landscape for college applicants, sparking debates over the fairness and validity of the SAT and ACT. Test scores are optional,



but are they obsolete, and are these tests really the best way to measure students' potential?

Standardized tests

such as the SAT and ACT are widely used by US colleges to assess the reading, writing and math skills of applicants, as well as to award scholarships.

— Continued on Page 20



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Colleges add 3 new execs to strategic decision-making

Three new executives are among leadership additions at Mesa and Chandler-Gilbert community colleges, both of which attract students from Tempe and West Chandler.

Selection of Lee Ann Bohn, chief operating officer; Dr. Heather Carter, senior vice chancellor of external affairs; and Dr. Lisa Armour, executive vice chancellor and provost—has been announced by district officials.

Bohn began her role on Dec. 11, filling a position that has been vacant since June 2021. Bohn will play an integral role involving strategies relating to the institution's daily operations.

Carter joined MCCCDC in November, overseeing planning, development, and coordination of MCCCDC's strategic workforce, economic, government, and community affairs initiatives. She will be instrumental in shaping and implementing workforce development programs that support

public and private sectors.

Armour, who started with the district Dec. 4, holds expertise in student academic affairs, strategic planning, and baccalaureate degree programs are valuable additions as MCCCDC continues to develop additional bachelor's degree programs that will address critical workforce gaps throughout the growing region.

Additionally, she will collaborate with Arizona's universities, fostering partnerships involving pathways for baccalaureate degree graduates to further their pursuit of graduate degrees.

Prior to joining MCCCDC, Armour was a vice president at Santa Fe College in Gainesville, Florida. She led a team of faculty, staff and administrators to help ensure student success across associate degrees and certificates, applied baccalaureate degrees, early college high school programs, continuing education, workforce development and customized training programs.

Said MCCCDC Chancellor Dr. Steven R. Gonzales: "Our employees are our most valuable assets," "We've put a great emphasis on expanding our executive leadership team, attracting those whose industry experience and knowledge align with our strategic vision."



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COMMENTARY

General Plan 2050: 'A living document' for Tempe's future

By Jennifer Adams

Ballots are out, and the Tempe City election is March 12! I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about Proposition 478 regarding General Plan 2050: a community-led effort that protects single-family neighborhoods, creates new housing opportunities, supports our small businesses, incorporates sustainability and includes critical transportation upgrades.



Our General Plan is a living document that guides how Tempe plans for development, land use, transportation, mass transit, economic development, historic preservation, neighborhood enhancement, public art, cultural amenities, human services, recreation, and open space.

It also guides the City of Tempe in planning for sustainability, climate change, environmental improvements, and in achieving a good quality of life and community well-being.

All Arizona cities are required to update their general plans every 10 years.

These plans are created in concert with residents, area businesses and other interested parties. Tempe Tomorrow: General Plan 2050 is Tempe's effort to create an updated general plan that is forward-thinking, sustainable, achievable, and inclusive of everyone in the community.

Two years of planning went into creating this document, with input from City leadership, industry experts, stakeholders, community groups, business leaders, the 2050 Commission, multiple public forums, surveys, and resident feedback. Resident input was a

big part of the process, and more than 100 changes were made to the plan over the course of its creation to reflect and incorporate the feedback received from our community.

As the overarching policy document for the City of Tempe, General Plan 2050 reflects the community's vision for the future and is an expression of how the community wants to grow and change over the next 30 years.

Overall, there are numerous similarities between the General Plan 2040 – previously approved by Tempe voters in 2014 – and the updated General Plan 2050. In fact, the language regarding our efforts to create a "20-Minute City" is identical in both plans. What I'd like to highlight are some of the main differences between the plans.

As co-chair of the Sustainability and Economic Vitality Council Committee, sustainability is very important to me. When the General Plan 2040 was drafted and approved, Tempe did not yet have a Sustainability and Resilience Commission, an Office of Sustainability or some of the water and energy conservation goals that we have today.

Now, with these things in place, Tempe is in a better position to tackle issues brought about by climate change.

The General Plan 2050 would codify those plans and allow for City Council to be more aggressive in our sustainability efforts as we move forward into the future. It also increases Tempe's focus on multi-modal transportation, allowing us to invest in bike lanes, sidewalks, and other public transit offerings that will help to reduce the amount of traffic on our streets.

Another highlight of the General Plan 2050 is to increase the housing density in areas of Tempe where housing density has already been approved by voters while preserving our established single-family neighborhoods,

and history.

We all know Tempe is landlocked with a rapidly growing population. Rumors swirl about what higher-density development brings to municipalities, but luckily Tempe operates based on data and facts. And the facts are on the side of housing density.

According to studies conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Multi-Housing Council, the American Institute of Architects, and the Urban Land Institute, higher-density development does not lower property values in surrounding areas, does not create more regional traffic congestion (and in many cases alleviates traffic compared to sprawling single-family developments), and does not lead to higher crime rates.

In fact, the EPA believes that increasing development densities is one strategy communities can use to minimize regional water quality impacts.

For those concerned about how increased density might affect Tempe's water supply or the heat-island effect, I encourage you to visit tempe.gov/SustainableTempe. There, you will find information about Tempe's plans for water conservation, extreme heat resilience, air quality, land use, and much more.

One final point I'd like to make – General Plan 2050 is a fiscally responsible document and its contents will not cost taxpayers any extra money.

I encourage everyone to vote in the March 12 election and have your voice heard regarding the future of Tempe.

As always, I welcome you to connect with me if you ever have questions or concerns at jennifer_adams@tempe.gov or call 480-350-8835.

Jennifer Adams is Tempe's vice mayor.



VIEWPOINT

Local or hyperlocal? Is there a difference, we ask

By Don Kirkland



One of the questions we're frequently asked is how we come up with ideas for the stories we tell online and in our print editions. In our early days, if I recall, we had to thumb through a seeming Mt. Everest of press releases from an assortment of farflung places, most of which couldn't be found anywhere on our driveway-delivery map.

It didn't take long, though, for the senders of those appeals to understand that we're focused exclusively on the confines of Tempe and West Chandler—photos, stories, even advertising for or about the folks who call these places home.

Oh, sure, we still dig through that emailed mountain requesting coverage, but we've learned that a simple click of the mouse dispatches them into our Deleted folder which, as of this writing, holds almost 144,000 messages that await a single click to finalize email euthanasia.

For that we say thank you to Matt Williams, the overlord of our technology world, for his exercise of patience involving this massive number of destruction-bound items. Among other possibilities, it seems, he has an aversion to—please draw no unintended similarities—summary execution.

So, on the subject of the origin of stories we cover, they come to us through the daily back-and-forth we have with our neighbors—teachers, supermarket friends, school and city acquaintances; the people we interact with almost every day as we

travel the neighborhoods near our home and office.

This phenomenon applies as well to the display advertising appearing on our pages. Although we welcome all businesses, no matter where they're located, who want to sell their product or services to our readers, we like to think that Wrangler News is most valuable to businesses right here in our own backyard.

Not only does their use of our pages signal their understanding of the neighbor-to-neighbor concept but a reinforcement of our founding principle that our print and online focus is and always will be local, local, local.

You can call that hyperlocal if you like, but "local" seems to work just fine for us.

Don Kirkland is the founder & publisher of Wrangler News.

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My first term as Mayor started off at the height of the pandemic. In that time, I learned more about our City than I ever had before. **We are resilient, compassionate, and determined to look out for each other.**

We've created more housing opportunities, strengthened our transportation and bicycle infrastructure, improved our parks, and made our community safer and more sustainable. What I'm most proud of is that we've done this while maximizing efforts to bring resident input into every decision we make.

I love this city, and I would be honored to have your support to continue serving as your mayor.

DON'T FORGET!

Vote YES on Prop 478 to approve General Plan 2050, a community-led effort which protects single-family neighborhoods, creates new housing opportunities, supports our small businesses, incorporates sustainability, and includes critical transportation upgrades.

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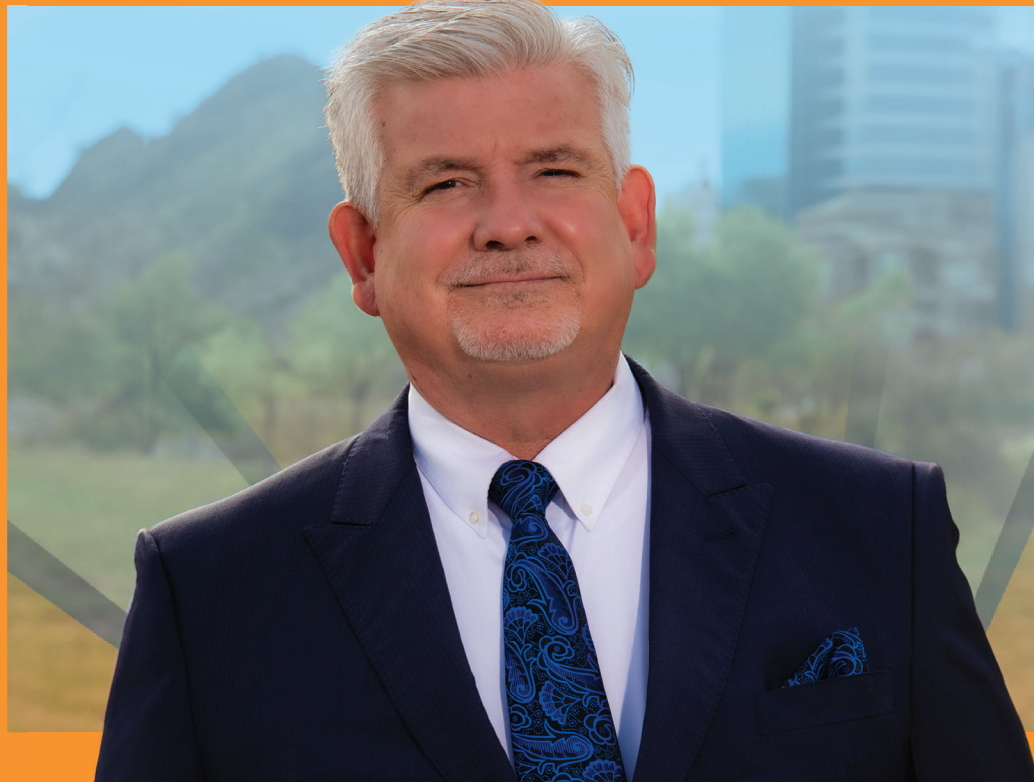
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Tempe has always been a community that values families, ensuring quality educational opportunities in safe environments for our children and community. Dr. Hugo Tapia has worked within our public schools serving our children and their families and is a community leader who leads the City of Tempe Human Relations Commission.

Dr. Hugo's Day-1 Priorities:

- ☀ Invest in Tempe's schools to ensure our children have a safe learning environment
- ☀ Protect Tempe's first responders, firefighters, and police officers from budget cuts
- ☀ Build more affordable housing for Tempe's working families
- ☀ Stand up to developers and special interest groups
- ☀ Reduce traffic congestion

VOTE BY ELECTION DAY, TUESDAY, MARCH 12.

Paid for by Tapia for Tempe. Authorized by Dr. Hugo Tapia.

Let's Pull Together

Do you know of a "golden" resident or veteran in Chandler that needs help with basic yard maintenance? Chandler's Neighborhood Programs Office has teams of volunteers ready to help and we need your assistance identifying those in need.

Contact city staff at 480-782-4362 or neighborhood.programs@chandleraz.gov to ask for help or to connect us with senior residents or veterans. If you're with a company or organization and looking for an opportunity to volunteer, let's connect! Learn more about city programs helping neighborhoods at chandleraz.gov/neighborhoods.



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Noted Tempe activist, benefactor recites a remarkable history in his own words

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Tempe Chamber of Commerce is again offering its revered Merle Fister scholarship, honoring the Air Force veteran credited with his support of the chamber's Military Affairs Committee. Fister has a long history in Tempe, having served as a founding director of the Tempe Lakes Community Association and an early member of Tempe South Rotary Club. He died in 2019 at the age of 98. The award in his name goes to a Tempe veteran and is based on character, leadership, academic pursuits and financial need.



1921 — Born on a farm in Guide Rock, Nebraska. I led the outdoor life of a poor dirt farmer until I was 16. I either rode a horse to school or walked the 2 miles. Dad would get me and my two brothers up at before first light to milk the cows, slop the pigs, and gather the eggs before we could go to school. Our school was a one room, one size fits all. We had

one teacher who taught all 8 grades. I also rode a horse to High School which was 5 miles away and ate lunch with him in a rented garage. As soon as school was out, I had to hurry home and milk the cows, slop the pigs, gather the eggs, feed the chickens and then run the cream separator.

1937 — I was 16 when we migrated to California in 1937. We were poorer than a church mouse. We drove a 1928 Chevy and pulled a small crank-up trailer. We slept in both the car and in the trailer (five of us). We drove north from Nebr. Up into Idaho, then into Wash. And down into northern Calif. Where we ran out of gas and food money. We picked grapes, tomatoes and walnuts to make enough money to buy food and to drive on into Los Angeles. My older brother and Sister Jeanette who went to Calif. In 1935 found jobs immediately. We all (7 of us) moved in together.

In **1939**, I graduated from High School and went to work. I knew that I had to make some money to help support the family, first as a ice cream sales boy on a bicycle cart and made \$2/ per day), then as a Western Union kid on a bicycle (\$2.25 per/day), next as a wood boring machine operator at 3.50 \$ /per/day), Roller skater for a Sears/Roebuck Warehouse at \$3.75 per day then as a magnetic machine operator Northrup Aircraft (3rd shift \$5.50 per/day/7 days/week). I gave most of my earnings to my mother.

1942 — Enlisted in the Army Air Corp and became a security guard in Atlantic City, NJ. I soon tired of that kind of duty and applied for aviation cadets, Eastern Flying Training Command. Pre-flight at Maxwell AAF, Montgomery, Ala., Primary at Lafayette, LA, Basic at Greenville, Miss. and Advanced at Columbus, Miss.

1944 — In January, graduated from Cadets,

commissioned a 2nd Lt. and joined a B-24 crew in Colorado Springs. We flew a new B-24 to Cerignola, Italy Landed on the 29th and immediately lost our new airplane to senior crews. Our seniors then said you are now members of the 738th Bomb Squadron, 454th Bomb Group. Now go get your combat gear from supply and get ready to fly 2 missions tomorrow. We took off in #3 position in a 7 ship box and found out later that each of the four Squadrons in our Group also put up 7 ships all going to the same target. We flew 50 relatively hairy bombing missions over Germany, Romania, France, Poland, Yugoslavia, in three months and that included a one week R&R on the Isle of Capri. We usually lost at least one B-24 on each mission. At that rate, we lost 28 ships in 28 missions. The odds didn't look too good. I do not believe that we ever flew a mission without flak holes in our airplane. One time, which was our hairiest mission, we counted over 100 holes. It was some a miracle that no member of our ten man crew was hit by shrapnel.

The rest of the crew returned to U.S. I stayed and volunteered to fly another tour of duty in P38's. The P-38 Squadron Commander agreed to check me out in the 38; however, General Nate Twinings' Headquarters said OK only if I took a 30-day rest first. I said no and came on home to fly more B-24's. First at Orlando, then Victorville, CA.

1945 — Promoted to 1st Lt and assigned to Lemoore AAB as Engineering Officer. I flew the P-38, BT-13, AT-11, and C-45 and supervised the retrofit of B-25's which were destined for the South Pacific. The Big Bomb took care of that so they all went to the junkyard someplace.

— Continued on Page 31

Chandler mayor, council seek solutions to teen violence

By Kayla McDonald

The increase in teen violence led to multiple teenagers being murdered in the East Valley over the last few years, according to officials.

"Our community, like many others, is seeing some outrageous acts of brazen teens, and we're trying to raise the bar higher," said Chandler Mayor Kevin Hartke.

The parents of teenagers who were murdered stood before Chandler City Council during a recent meeting to speak about and bring awareness to teen violence in their community.

"I hate that the reason I am standing before you is that our son's life was taken due to teen violence... We lost a valuable human being to society," said Melissa Ciconte, the stepmother of a teen who was murdered named Preston Lord.

Chandler City Council voted unanimously in favor of pursuing a solution to teen violence in Chandler. Hartke said the resolution declares "... our fight against teen violence, our allegiance with those who are coming alongside our declaration of what we're currently doing."

Olga Lopez, the mother of Jeremiah Aviles, a teen who was murdered, related her son's story and suggested how neighboring cities should work together with Chandler on the issue of teen violence.

"I wasn't planning on speaking today. I just wanted to be here to support the fact that you're even acknowledging the need to address teen violence... and I hope and I pray that the neighboring cities would take a look at what Chandler is doing... and lock arms in community," said Lopez.

Mark Jacobo, the father of teen Stephen Jacobo, who also was murdered, spoke about his son's

death and offered ideas about what other cities should do in response to Chandler's actions against teen violence.

"We appreciate you taking charge... We're all one state. These kids are getting killed daily... from other cities, and hopefully, these other cities could piggyback with you guys on gathering together to take proper actions to not allow any other parents to go through what we're going through," said Jacobo.

Councilmember Mark Stewart confirmed that a few of Chandler's council members were working with other cities on this issue. "We're talking to Queen Creek and Mesa Councilmember Julie Spilsbury. We're going to come together," said Stewart.

Kayla McDonald is a student in ASU's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

TEMPE COUNCIL CANDIDATES . . . IN 'REAL LIFE'

When the topic of candidate profiles came up at a recent Wrangler News brainstorming session, we agreed on a couple of things, which in itself was an unscheduled diversion. (1) That the usual listing of motivations by those running for office can be found almost anywhere and (2) that those awful postage-stamp-size pictures don't tell us much about the people we'll be voting for.

So we sent emails to those appearing on the city's March 12 ballot, asking for photos that capture them in friendly, casual, unposed snapshots — depictions, simply said, of "real life." Those who responded appear here. We liked the way it turned out. So maybe this is how we'll always do it. *You like?*



Randy Keating: Destination, outer space



David Lucier: Me with my sweetheart Shirley and dog Fitz.



Corey Woods: On the campaign trail.



Nikki Amberg, left, with daughters Tyler and Jessica. Tyler graduated from Corona and attends UA. Jessica is at CdS and is active in girls lacrosse and choir.



Doreen Garlid: An afternoon stroll along Mill Avenue.

'State of the City' a chronicle of worth to residents

Reported by Wrangler News staff

In the view of Chandler Mayor Kevin Hartke—and presumably others who keep tabs on the city's yearly accumulation of accomplishments—all is well.

Hartke unveiled an impressive listing of achievements recorded during the past year, a highlight of the mayor's annual State of the City report, presented Feb. 15 to an audience of welcoming residents.

Among highlights, noted Hartke: "Chandler is consistently recognized among the safest cities in America, and best places to live."

It has been named the No. 1 city in the nation for renters, he reported, plus a standout among family friendly cities, and those where veterans choose to live.

The accolades don't stop there, however.

"We're among the best places to start a 'side-hustle' and where Black Americans can fare the best economically," he noted.

Also, said Hartke, "we're a city recognized for technology and finding innovative ways to address challenges."

Also among grades listed by Hartke were those indicated in an accounting of resident satisfaction:

Quality of life, 99 percent; care by first responders, 98 percent; city services, 96 percent; return on taxes, 94 percent; and feeling of safety, 92 percent.

Hartke went on to list some of the standouts of his most recent year as mayor.

"We're experiencing the fruits of our investment in growth, as more high-tech, manufacturing and innovation companies expand operations."

Intel's presence, he said, is nearing 45 years and today is a centerpiece of the semiconductor industry. The company's investment supports a growing presence of semiconductor innovators, and has helped position the city for growth of that industry.

As to what the future holds, Hartke said city planners plan to continue their focus on providing services that can be called excellent, along with sound fiscal practices.

"We have the lowest rated cost of taxes and utility services in the Valley," he said, as well as a sales tax that is the lowest in the entire state.

In their action, councilmembers lowered property taxes for the eighth consecutive year, also supporting an initiative to pay off the city's public safety obligation.

"Chandler is an appealing place, and we have many exciting things to come this year," said Hartke.

Among those, he noted, are continuing to welcome more world-class companies and innovators; refreshing the Sister City program while broadening its international relationships.

"We'll create a plan a 70th park; focus on community service rather than partisan division; and continue to serve as innovators—"inspired by possibilities."

In summary, Hartke noted: "We take responsibility for shaping our community's future."



Chandler Mayor Kevin Hartke offers annual 'State of the City' update

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It's Time for an Update.

WHAT IS IT?

Proposition 478 represents the General Plan 2050, a document that was meticulously crafted by Tempe residents, city staff, and elected leaders. Arizona law requires every city to adopt a long-term, comprehensive General Plan that guides a city's physical growth.

WHY NOW?

It's time for an update. The current General Plan 2040 is effective for up to ten years from the date the plan was adopted by Council (December 2013) and ratified by Tempe voters (May 2014). The changes are necessary to effectively plan for the future by incorporating feedback from current residents and utilizing up-to-date data. Passing Prop 478 fulfills that requirement.

WHO IS SUPPORTING IT?

At a candidate forum on January 17, 2024, all five Tempe City Council candidates indicated that they support the General Plan 2050. Voting "Yes" on Prop 478 is also supported by your firefighters, police officers, local businesses, neighborhood leaders, Mayor Woods, and your City Councilmembers.

ON
78
GETHER



Vote Yes to Protect our Neighborhoods.

WHAT WILL THE GENERAL PLAN 2050 ACCOMPLISH?

DOES NOT: change any of Tempe's existing single-family neighborhoods

DOES: ensure Tempe keeps up with our neighboring cities and is prepared to face the challenges of tomorrow by:

- Incorporating climate resiliency and environmental stewardship that will ensure Tempe remains a regional leader in sustainability
- Creating a diverse range of new housing options to give Tempe residents a chance to buy their first home or rent where they work
- Supporting improvements to Tempe's roads while upgrading bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Embracing emerging national trends such as micromobility and remote working
- Investing in protecting the quality of life for every Tempe resident while responsibly preparing for our shared future.

Learn more about why Tempe residents are voting "Yes" on Prop 478 at
www.TempeTogether.org

Improving community safety through innovation, leadership

Commentary

By Kenneth McCoy



I moved to Tempe from Alaska, trading months of long nights and freezing weather for Arizona's record heat. I love this city and intend to stay here with the goal of improving public safety for our community and our first responders.

My vision for the Tempe Police Department is to become the most professional and compassionate agency in the country. Achieving this requires thoughtful planning, innovation, continuous training, and strong leadership.

Our commitment to professionalism includes embracing the tools of tomorrow.

We are implementing a Real-Time Operations Center (RTOC), a cutting-edge version of the Real-Time Crime Centers used nationwide. The

RTOC integrates traffic cameras with public safety professionals, enabling us to assist first responders during incidents and review footage for evidence.

These cameras can also be utilized for non-emergency purposes, like monitoring graffiti or assessing the condition of public areas. By leveraging technology, we can enhance our ability to protect and serve the community more effectively.

We are also expanding our Vision Zero initiative to reduce serious injuries and fatalities at high-traffic intersections.

We have already tripled these areas from four to 14 citywide, using increased patrols and prominent signage to encourage motorists to slow down, pay attention, and prioritize safety. The lives and properties saved by this campaign make it indisputably worth the effort.

Last year, TPD responded to over 135,000 calls for service. We need to find ways to help us respond to calls safely and quickly and efficiently. Technology like Real Time Operations Center, gun-shot detection and license plate readers are important to gather evidence of crimes. Those tools

also save staff time and support the in-field work of our officers.

But technology only takes us so far. It's vital that our officers get to know the people in our community. When community members know their area patrol officers, they build relationships with them. This helps prevent crime and resolve issues faster.

I intend to prioritize community policing as a means to create a safer, friendlier city. When you see an officer at your neighborhood coffee shop, at a special event or on patrol, take a moment to say hello.

Last year, we saw a 40% reduction in violent crime in west Tempe. Overall, crime in our city was down from 2022. I hope to continue that trend.

As police chief, I am fully committed to leading TPD on a path of trust, accountability, and excellence. Together, we will build a better, safer future for Tempe, our community, and law enforcement as a whole.

A father of three, Chief Kenneth McCoy joined Tempe PD in June 2023.

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SATs

Continued from Page 3

However, the role of these tests in college admissions has been challenged by recent changes and trends in the testing landscape.

One of the major shifts was the adoption of test-optional and test-blind policies by many colleges during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the difficulties of taking the tests in person. Test-optional means that students can choose whether to submit their test scores or not, while test-blind means that colleges do not consider test scores at all.

“Many schools who required test scores went optional during COVID due to students not being able to get to places to take the test,” said Diana Miller, College and Career Readiness Coordinator of the Teaching & Learning team at Tempe Union High School District.

According to data from Common Application, a non-profit organization that simplifies the college application process for students, test score submissions are still at pre-pandemic levels despite the return of in-person testing for college applicants.

Before the pandemic, numerous colleges were dropping the tests for admissions requirements amid concern that they were biased against students from low-income, minority and first-generation backgrounds. Research has shown that higher ACT and SAT scores are strongly linked to higher socioeconomic status, a mother’s education level and race.

Colleges were concerned that the tests hurt diversity and did not reflect the true potential of students. However, a recent article in The New York Times indicated

that research doesn’t back that up. According to data collected by Opportunity Insights, students who entered Ivy League colleges from 2017 to 2002 (excluding 2020), test scores and college grades are strongly related. The study goes on to say that students from diverse backgrounds with similar SAT/ACT scores achieve comparable grades in college. Adding that a high school GPA doesn’t do a good job of predicting academic success in college, according to the report. Only 36 percent of U.S. graduates took the ACT test in 2022, when the national average score dropped to 19.8, the lowest since 1991, according to ACT data.

Despite that, many colleges and universities continue to make tests optional. Miller said that there are different options for students depending on whether the schools they are applying to require test scores. For test-optional schools, there is a place on the application for students to provide their scores or usually a button to click that the student is opting out of providing them. Miller said there are many options for students.

“For students with great scores, they are encouraged to provide them, as it can only help them in the admissions process for private schools and qualify them for potential additional scholarships,” she said.

Adding that for students with average to decent scores, counselors will talk to them about whether those scores can help or not. If students have below-average scores, then not reporting them is usually the recommendation as it could lower their chances of admission to private schools, Miller said. She added that submitting high test scores to public universities does not impact students’ admissions but can help with additional scholarships on top of

automatically awarded merit scholarships.

Miller also shared her thoughts on other changes and trends in the testing landscape, such as the online and adaptive testing and the alternatives and innovations in testing.

She said many of these new(er) options allow students to have more control, which can be beneficial. For example, allowing students to decide whether or not to share their scores means that they are in control of whether to release information that would benefit them (or not).

However, she also noted that standardized testing continues to create potential inequity for students, as test questions may have language or other concepts that some students may be unfamiliar with due to a lack of background knowledge or context.

Miller said that TUHSD offers counseling at the district’s different high schools to help students decide which option is best for them based on their strengths, goals and preferences. She said students should research the requirements and policies of the colleges they are interested in and take advantage of the resources and support available to them.

She also addressed the misconception that students have to have a good test score to get into most colleges.

“As most colleges continue to move towards making admissions decisions that are more holistic (considering all parts of a student’s ability from academic, extracurricular, community service, etc.) a test score is just a small piece of that picture,” Miller said.

“When it comes to testing, there is no one-size-fits-all answer. Students need to make informed decisions that work for them.”



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Play ball!

Spring training is a home run! Cactus League spring training is underway at Tempe Diablo. The season runs through the end of March.

Get tickets to enjoy a nice spring day at the ballpark at mlb.com/angels.



Election Day March 12

The City of Tempe is holding a Primary Election on Tuesday, March 12 to nominate and/or elect the Mayor and three members of the City Council, in conjunction with a Special Election giving Tempe voters the opportunity to vote on the General Plan 2050.

March 1: Last day to request a replacement ballot. Request.Maricopa.Vote for details.

March 4: In-person voting locations and ballot replacement centers open. Locations.Maricopa.Vote for details.

March 12: Election Day. Election night results will be posted online after 8 p.m. at Results.Maricopa.Vote.

Find election information at tempe.gov/election. View the general plan at tempe.gov/2050.

Affordable housing, historic preservation funding may be on November bond election

Increasing funds for affordable housing, protecting Tempe's historic places and restoring Tempe's streets may be on the ballot this November as part of a proposed bond election. Among the considerations:

- Ensuring excellent street conditions by requesting \$180 million to restore all Tempe streets within four years at a cost of an estimated \$1.3 million per mile.
- Accelerating Tempe's affordable housing efforts and adding more housing opportunities - approximately \$32 million is being requested over four years.
- Boosting Tempe's preservation efforts with approximately \$12.3 million requested to restore, maintain or purchase historic properties.

Questions regarding the November bond election will come back to Tempe City Council this month at a future Work Study Session. The City Council would need to call the election in April to have questions on the November ballot.

Get updates at tempe.gov/bond.

Tempe Health and Human Services Day

On March 18, Care Fair returns as part of Tempe Health and Human Services Day! Join us for this free event 9 a.m. - noon at the Tempe Community Complex, 3500 S. Rural Road.

Visit more than 50 nonprofit info booths to get help or learn about volunteering, plus enjoy live entertainment, a fun zone for kids, on-site services, food vendors and giveaways.

The event is hosted by Tempe Community Council and Tempe's Community Health and Human Services Department.

Get details about volunteering, donating, becoming a vendor or reserving booth space at tempehumanservicesday.org or by calling 480-858-2300.

Dive into a rewarding job

Tempe is now recruiting lifeguards, swim coaches and swim lesson instructors for the upcoming 2024 swim season with pay starting at \$17 per hour.

We're searching for motivated, passionate individuals who want to join our water safety and drowning prevention team.

Employment opportunities are at Kiwanis, Escalante and McClintock pools – plus the new Clark Park pool opening soon! No experience is necessary, and training is provided.

Learn more at tempe.gov/lifeguard.

Register for spring classes & swim lessons

As the weather warms up for spring, it's the perfect time to head outside and try something new! Tempe offers classes and activities for every age, interest and ability.

Choose from exercise and fitness, arts, sports, boating and so much more. Peruse all offerings and register by visiting tempe.gov/play. Registration begins Feb. 21 for residents and Feb. 27 for nonresidents.

Classes begin in mid-March. Knowing how to swim is an invaluable lifesaving ability that is important for all ages.

The City of Tempe strives to reach the goal of zero drownings by offering affordable beginner swim lessons this spring for all ages.

Learn more and sign up at tempe.gov/swim.

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SPORTS



Senior Jayson Covington throws down a dunk in the fourth quarter of the home play-in playoff game versus the Mountain Ridge Mountain Lions. The Aztecs notched a 16-point victory in what was likely the last home game of the season.

Corona slams its way into 6A postseason

Story & photos by Andrew Lwowski

In a game of dramatic runs, the Corona del Sol men's basketball team (15-11), which comprises 13 seniors, closed its final home game with a 70-54 win over the Mountain Ridge Mountain Lions (8-19) and earned a berth to the 6A playoffs.

The Aztecs paced to an early 7-0 lead in the opening quarter, but after a n early timeout, the Lions roared back with 18 unanswered. Any shot the Aztecs threw up found a way to bounce or slide off the rim, and the game and season appeared to be slipping.

The slow start was uncharacteristic, especially for this time in the season, said coach Neil MacDonald.

"We seemed a little confused early, which we shouldn't be this late in the year, and I think some of that was just probably the moment a little bit," he said. "Once we settled in and then we started to execute, and when we executed, it looked good. We just weren't running the stuff we were trying to run. We would run half of it but even our offensive tempo was really slow and that kind of translated to the defensive end, too."

The Aztecs quickly regrouped, holding the Lions to just five and six points in the game's middle

quarters. The offense, after shaking off its nerves, found its groove and cracked the game open.

The game seemed trending for a blowout, but the Lions kept clawing back, forcing the Aztecs to keep their foot on the gas. Mountain Ridge registered 25 points – 46 percent of its total points – in the fourth quarter, while Corona cruised for 33.

"We know how tough they are," MacDonald said of the Lions.

"Their region is ridiculously hard. Every team in the region outside of them went to the open – Sunnyslope, Boulder Creek, Pinnacle liberty, Sandra Day O'Connor. It's just they're battle-tested and

they have had leads on a lot of those teams.”

Senior Jayson Covington and senior Bo Dolinsek shared a pair of dunks in the game's waning minutes, both sending the Aztecs' student section and fans into a frenzy.

For Dolinsek, who stands 6-foot-7, it was his first slam in an Aztec jersey. It was a proper sendoff for the Central Region Player of the Year, who led the conference in scoring.

“I was tired, but I knew I had to dunk it because it's probably my last play here at Corona,” Dolinsek said.

“I didn't even realize (that) until I came out here (the breezey). It felt good to dunk on my last play here.”

Meanwhile, senior Crew Swearingen, who often ignited the offense during the season, shared the emotions about leaving the gym for his final time in a Corona jersey. “It sucks man,” he said. “The crowd was great tonight; the student section was great. I'm going to miss this gym.”

It wasn't pretty, but it was how the Aztecs had been grinding all season, and now have a seat in the postseason yet again.

Aztecs girls soccer falls in opening round

By Alex Zener

Corona's girls soccer team ended the regular season as the No. 9 seed with an 11-7-1 overall record, just shy of the top eight teams that get an automatic bid to the 6A state playoffs.

As the No. 9 seed, the Aztecs had to play in the 6A Conference Play-In tournament against No. 24 Chandler on Feb. 8. Corona defeated the Wolves 2-1 and moved on to the first round of the state championship playoffs to confront the No. 8 seed Hamilton.

Unfortunately, the Aztecs lost to the Huskies, 2-1, and were eliminated from the playoffs on Feb. 14.

Corona girls basketball

Corona's girls basketball team lost its last regular season game in a heartbreaker Feb. 5 by two points, two points, 58-60, which had huge ramifications on their state playoff rankings.

With that loss to Desert Ridge, the Aztecs ended up ranked No. 30 in the 6A conference, barely missing the opportunity to play in the 6A Conference Play-In tournament by one ranking. The cutoff was at No. 29.

Corona did win its last home game, held Feb. 2, when traditionally the team honors its senior players, by defeating Queen Creek, 60-19.



Eight seniors, including **Ashlee Peters**, **Nyomi Dugi**, **Victoria Gomez**, **Isabella Montero**, **Madison Wasson**, **Amarie Garza**, **Deven Kircher** and **Raeven Rohlsen**, received recognition for their skills and commitment to Corona's girls basketball program.

Peters, playing point guard, led the team in several categories including assists, with 35 or an average of 1.3 assists a game, while Kircher and Garza were next with 30 and 28 assists, respectively.

Peters also led the team in steals, with 62 or 2.4 steals per game, while Garza and Kircher were tied at 1.8 steals.

Garza was first on the team in blocks with eight, while Kircher had the highest free-throw percentage at 74.

Wasson, who played in 24 out of the 26 games, was second on the team in blocks, tied with Peters.

Rohlsen played in 19 games, scoring 22 points and averaging close to two rebounds a game, while Dugi, Gomez and Montero saw action on the court in 14 games.

Montero scored 12 points along with 10 rebounds, two assists, four steals and one block, while Gomez had six rebounds, three steals and four points. Dugi had four rebounds and one steal.

Along with the eight seniors, the Aztecs had two juniors and five underclassmen who contributed to the team's efforts on and off the court.

For instance, Peters was second on the team in points with 178, but the leading scorer on the team was freshman **Aaliya Van Heel**, who had 232 points or an average of 9.7 points per game.

Sophomore **Penelope Williams** scored 166



Top: Senior Mihail Kostadinovski pulls up for a shot between two Mountain Ridge defenders. **Bottom:** Junior DeShaun Johnson drives toward the basket in Corona's playoff game.

points shooting 42 per cent, the highest on the team in field goal percentage. She was also first on the team with 149 rebounds or 6.2 rebounds per game.

Junior **Bryce Watson** played in 23 of the 26 games at the small forward position, pulling down 26 rebounds, with three assists, six steals, 17 points and one blocked shot.

Freshman center **Monica Mantini** was third on the team in rebounds with 92 or 4.8 rebounds per game. She scored 63 points along with five assists, seven steals and three blocks in the 19 games she played.

Junior **Kiana Reinking** at small forward played in 13 games, scoring five points, three rebounds and three assists while freshman **Mya Upshaw** saw action in 9 games and sophomore **Alana James** in six.



Corona men's baseball players held their annual scrimmage, barbeque and bi-annual shaving, where players lined up to buzz their heads for a cause. Afterward, coach David Webb led the cutting and posed with the mountain of hair.

Stepping up to the plate for a cause

Story and photo by Andrew Lwowski

We've all been impacted by cancer in one way or another. My first experience came in 2015 when a friend and fellow teammate on the Corona del Sol volleyball program was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia before his senior year.

On my initial visit to open gyms as a freshman, Ridge Vanderbur was the first one to introduce himself. I played alongside him leading up to tryouts. I even saw him daily during lunch period. I wasn't on varsity with Ridge, but I knew the type of person he was and why he was loved not only within the volleyball program but throughout campus.

Aztecs baseball coach David Webb recalled his own grandmother, who he said was the first in his life to succumb to the disease. One of his more recent interactions was a 21-year-old former North Carolina baseball recruit, Chase Jones.

"I met (Chase) back in North Carolina when I worked for USA baseball. He was on his way to play

for UNC, a big-time program, and he found out he had cancer—he was only 17. So, Chase actually went into a children's ward...he saw all these little kids with cancer.

He ended up beating the disease, but he knew lot of kids passed away from it while he was there and, it just broke his heart. So, when he was finished with treatment but couldn't play baseball again because of all the chemo, he started a foundation called Vs Cancer.

Inspired by Jones' journey and coinciding with Ridge's battle, the baseball program decided to give up something baseball players cherish most—their hair.

With a goal of \$7,000 in mind, the baseball team stepped up to the plate (literally) and shaved their heads to donate. The movement was the first of its kind and has since grown and become a staple of the Aztec community.

"We were the first high school in the country to ever do it," Webb said. "And then a bunch of big-time college programs like Vanderbilt, North Carolina and all these other big programs did it."

While the players' hair is no longer donated, the program and its players remain active in charity. Yet, every year on home plate, full heads of hair are buzzed, and players sign cards with the names of those they are representing.

Senior and varsity catcher Jack Trimble participates in honor of his grandpa on his

mother's side who had both lung and colon cancer. "It's great for all of our players to get into and go about as a team," he said. "You're walking around school and see your teammate with a bald head, and everyone knows we're part of something bigger than just baseball."

Junior outfielder and second baseman Tanner Douglass is representing the late country artist Toby Keith, his own aunt Berta and his grandfather. He said the experience helps the team bond and provides a sense of selflessness that is needed during an often grueling season. "Literally straight into the dugout with your teammates, not caring about yourself, putting others in front of you and putting the team in front of you."

Trimble and Douglass have shaved their heads in years past, but Webb says for some, it can be intimidating. "It's paranoia for some of them at first," he said with a laugh. "I'm like, 'you wake up in the morning you don't have anything, you know, all your hair gel products and stuff don't cost anything anymore. No shampoo and conditioner, those bills go down. And then you can head out and go to school. You can sleep in a little bit more,' but you get used to it. So for many of them, their hair grows back really quick and they kind of realize it's not that big a deal. It's a small price to pay."

It's a small price to pay that goes a long way, but it's not only for a cause, but a tone for the Aztec baseball program.

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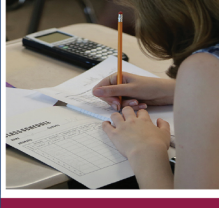


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DIVERSIONS



Teen horror comedy-romance uneven but both good & silly

By M.V. Moorhead

Our teenage heroine's misfortunes start with her name: Lisa Swallows. The title character of *Lisa Frankenstein* survived the murder of her mother by a masked maniac, the remarriage of her father into a new family, complete with a tirelessly perky stepsister, and her transfer to a new school.

The understandably morbid-minded, socially awkward, vaguely Goth Lisa spends her spare time in an abandoned cemetery, tending the grave of a long-departed young fellow on whose romantic-looking memorial statue she has a bit of a crush.

The young man is jolted back to



something like life by a lighting bolt, but he's still a moldered corpse until Lisa starts supplying him with new body parts, obtained from irksome people who end up dead around her.

This process involves needle and thread, and a terribly strange tanning bed. With each new addition, *The Creature* becomes a bit, well, hunkier.

Released in the middle of the February Island of Misfit Movies dump, this off-the-wall teen horror comedy-romance, directed

by Zelda Williams from a script by Diablo Cody, is every bit as broad and silly as it sounds, but in a good way. Cody has attempted horror before, with the misfired *Jennifer's Body* in 2009. This one works better, even though it's uneven and sloppy at times, and the story makes less sense than that of the earlier film. This may even be part of the reason it works better; the wispy, nonsensical plot makes no claim that it's anything but a pretext for Cody's ornately loopy dialogue, and for some good-natured gross-outs.

And, more importantly, it's a pretext for the acting. Cole Sprouse manages to be both bestial and Byronic as the revived Creature, and he may have the best aggrieved monster moans since Peter Boyle in *Young Frankenstein*. Carla Gugino hams it up as the self-adoring wicked stepmother, and Liza Soberano, as the stepsister Taffy, is a charming surprise; in a characteristic touch of Cody generosity, she's allowed to be genuinely instead of insincerely sweet.

But what really makes *Lisa Frankenstein* worthwhile is Kathryn Newton. Her performance is a comedic tour de force, at least as good as her riotous turn in 2020's *Freaky*, layered and mannered and truly funny, with the puckish slyness of the young Susan Sarandon. Newton could be the next big scream queen, not because she does a lot of screaming, but because she's a scream.

Also, this movie is a period piece, set in 1989. This allows Newton to sing a pretty good cover of REO Speedwagon's "Can't Fight This Feeling." More importantly, it's remarkable how refreshing it is to see a teen flick without a cell phone in sight.

Lisa Frankenstein is rated PG-13 and plays at Harkins Tempe Marketplace, Chandler Fashion 20 and other multiplexes Valleywide.

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Continued from Page 13

1946 — Married Lee Kelly and then assigned to Merced AAF as Physical training Officer. Flew B-25's on training missions over the Pacific Ocean. On one mission the Navy shot at us as we flew towards the offshore Islands. You would think that we were the enemy! And then on to Davis Monthan, where I flew the B-29.

1947-48 — Enrolled in the radar course at Boca Raton, Florida. Hurricane came through and wiped us out. Moved the School to Biloxi, Miss. Graduated in 1948 and was asked what I kind of a job I was interested in. I said anything but an Instructor. So I became an instructor and course supervisor at Keesler AFB. Flew the B 25, B-17 and B-26 and T-6.

1949-51 — Went to Germany as a member of the occupation forces. First duty station was at Hof and then on to Giebelstadt. I was OIC of maintenance for our MPS-5 Radar set and also an intercept controller. We would track Mig 15's as they headed towards the German border. We would scramble F-84's for interception. The Russians tested us and we tested them. I Flew the F-80, F-84, C-47 and L-5.

1952 — Returned to the States and was assigned as an Air Force ROTC Instructor and commandant of Cadets at Wayne State University, Detroit. Flew the C-45, B-25 and C-47 and took some of the Cadets along for the ride.

1956 — Returned to Keesler, AFB for Advanced Communication - Electronics course.

1957 — Sent to Korea (Taejon & Taegu), as Commander of an Air Force Advisory Detachment. The ROKAF Colonel had an L-5 and a Korean Pilot; however, he always asked me to fly him to Seoul, Pusan and K-13. He nicknamed me Mr. Chang. I

nicknamed him Headlight Kim and then his wife flashlight Kim and his kid's penlight Kim. I really enjoyed working with the Koreans. They would take me on hunting trips. One time they shot a small deer and hauled it down to the nearest farm house. They cut it open and took a bamboo reed and drank the hot blood. Naturally, they gave me a reed and said try it. I chickened out. I flew the L-5, L-20, C-47 and the ROKAF C-46. Since the Koreans were not allowed into Japan, we flew their C-46's to Hong Kong for IRAN (maintenance).

1958-60 — Promoted to Major and assigned to Fairchild AFB as Squadron Commander of Air Force Communications Service (AFCS). I was responsible for the control tower, the GCA and the Nav-aids. Flew the T-33 and C-45.

1960-62 — Promoted to Lt/Col and assigned to Turkey (Karamursel) as Squadron Commander of AFCS. I had three Detachments. Two on the Black Sea and one inland. We provided the long haul communications for those collecting intel on the Russians. Flew into Lebanon, Cairo, Athens, and Madrid. I hosted General Grant when he flew into Istanbul. Flew the T-29, C-47 and L-20.

1963 — Assigned to University of Nebraska (Omaha) to complete Bachelor's in Education.

1964 — Sent to Tinker AFB as Central Comm. Region Planner (AFCS).

1965-67 — Assigned to Wheeler AFB as Director of Plans and Programs for AFCS, then to Hickam AFB as a Comm-Elect Planner for PACAF. Promoted to Colonel and assigned as Commander, 1957th Comm. Group with Detachments at Johnson Island, Guam, Pago Pago and Australia.

1968-70 — Sent to the Pentagon as worldwide planner of communications & electronics, Air Force OPR for the sale of the Alaskan Communications System which we sold to RCA for \$31 Million. Then to the Dept. Of Commerce to help them

understand this sale so that they would not intervene to delay the process. Next assignment was as commander of the 2044th Comm. Group in the Basement of the Pentagon. And then on to up to work with the DOD staff for Comm-Elect matters.

1970 — Retired as Colonel after 28 years of an outstanding Air Force life.

1971-91 — Moved to Arizona. Attended ASU and received a Master's in Public Administration. Employed as Executive Director of the Lakes Community Association. Then started, owned and/or operated a tax & accounting service, two beauty shops, a dry cleaners and two rental units. My first wife, Lee, died after 44 years of a great marriage. Then, by some miracle and while visiting relatives in the San Bernardino Mountains, I found the girl I first dated in 1941. June was a recent widow living in Lake Arrowhead and caring for her 98-year-old mother. I courted her real good, and we got married a year later. (How sweet it is!) I am now a 'father' of two beautiful, married daughters, a grandfather to 4 grand kids and a great grandfather to two.

1991-06 — Sold my businesses and retired again. Too busy to work. Active in Tempe South Rotary Club (Past President), Tempe Republican Men's Club (Past President), Tempe Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs and Daedalians (Military Pilot Fraternity). We also attend military reunions of the 454th Bomb Group and the 603rd AC&W Squadron.

2007 — Moved to a \$25 million mansion (Retirement Complex) in Redmond, WA to be near our youngest daughter and Grandkids. Life is good! While in our Fairwinds Retirement home, June and I started the Old Rooster's Club, The Employee Holiday Fund, The Garden Club and co-chaired the committee which started our residents association.



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