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WRANGLER NEWS



With our new 'People' pages in this edition you'll learn about Tempe resident and ASU senior Ryan Bastuba's high-flying adventures in pursuit of clean water and environmental sustainability while advocating for a socially conscious future.

Pages 15 - 20

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SCAN FOR
SPECIAL
OFFERS





USMC veteran and longtime Tempe attorney was among community members and spectators from across the country at Iwo Jima flag raising observance.

Vietnam veteran, retired attorney, celebrates a special moment

Former Tempe Marine joins observance of Iwo Jima flagraising 79 years ago

Wrangler News Exclusive

For Glynn Gilcrease it was a longtime friendship relieved. For others it was a salute to one of this country's most memorable World War II moments: the flagraising of the American flag

over Iwo Jima.

Gilcrease, retired from the Marine Corps and now from his longtime career as a Tempe attorney, was on hand for a salute to Ira Hayes, one of the six Americans depicted in a ceremony in Sacaton,

the Native American community where he was born and grew up.

Upon his return from the warfront, Gilcrease played himself in the John Wayne film "Sands of Iwo Jima," along with two other flag-raisers. Hayes, also a Marine,

died a short time later at the age of 32.

Said Gilcrease: "I had the privilege of going to Sacaton for the celebration of life of Ira Hayes. It was the 79th Anniversary of the flagraising of the American Flag over

Iwo Jima where United States Marines had achieved a costly victory over Japanese forces which were entrenched in pillboxes.

"The Japanese waited until Marines had gone ashore and then began firing on them. Many

Marines were killed or wounded."

— See next page



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- From preceding page

As to Gilcrease's early years, he recalls growing up in Weslaco, Texas, the home of Harlon Block, one of the Marines invading the island. Iwo Jima was important as a refueling station for bombers because they did not have enough fuel to reach Japan without refueling.

Harlon was the flagraiser with his back turned toward photographer Joe Rosenthal.

It was Hayes who hitchhiked all the way from Sacaton to Weslaco, Texas, to assure Belle Block, Harlon's mother, that he would make sure Harlon was properly identified.

And, he did.

No car, no problem. No money, no problem.

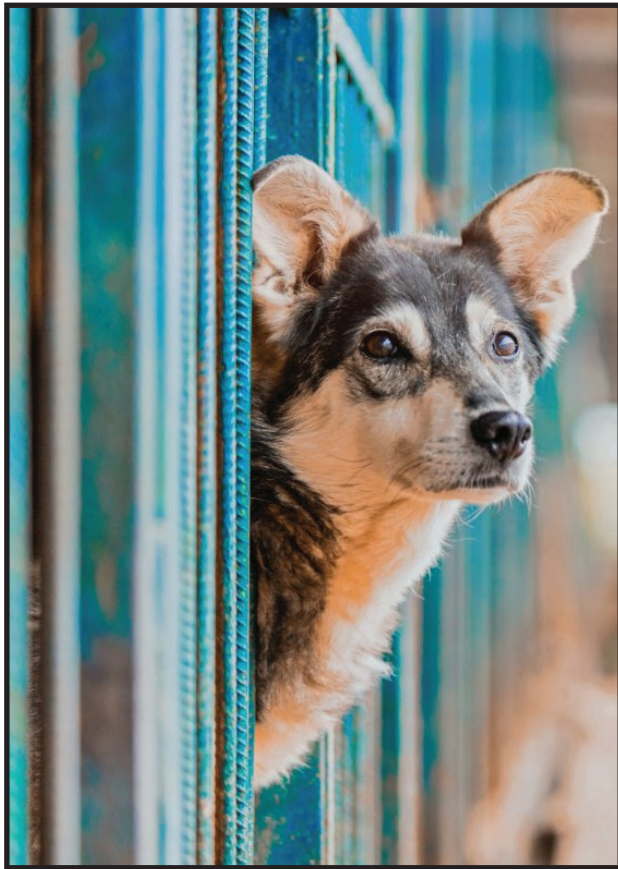
It was an era when commitment to friendships and America got it done.

U.S. President Harry Truman ordered the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the atomic bomb.

Japan surrendered and thousands of Marine lives were saved.



Photos, clockwise from above left: Gilcrease with a young Marine and relative of Ira Hayes at memorial observance; Hayes as a young Marine; Gilcrease with statue of Hayes next to the memorial bearing 6 stones from Mount Suribachi, one for each Marine in the flag raising.



Shelter opening an occasion to cheer new 'poster dogs'

With the loyalty, love and joy they bring into our lives, dogs can be great companions and true friends.

To celebrate the planned grand opening of its new animal shelter within a tennis ball's throw of Tempe/West Chandler in early May, Maricopa County Animal Care & Control is inviting Kyrene, Tempe Elementary and Tempe Union students to submit their original artwork for a 2024 Poster Contest.

Students in Grades 3-4 or 5-6 can submit posters using any medium with the theme "A Dog Is A Kid's Best Friend."

The entries should not feature any brand names.

Said Kim Powell, MCACC spokesperson:

"We know that many special new friendships will grow as families adopt pets from the new East Valley Animal Shelter this spring, so we think this

is the perfect way to help celebrate its opening."

The entries must include a brief message about how the poster supports the theme and should be large enough to be easily seen and understood. Posters will be judged on originality, artwork and message delivery.

There is no cost to submit an entry.

Deadline for entries is Friday, April 12. Winning entries will be displayed at the new shelter in Mesa.

Prizes will include complimentary park entrance coupons from Maricopa County Parks & Recreation, goodie bags from the Maricopa County Library District and more.

For information about how to submit an entry and other details, visit www.maricopa.gov/pupartcontest. MCACC is committed to finding positive outcomes for animals who enter the shelter, while also providing important resources for pet owners in Maricopa County.

More than 23,000 animals have arrived at MCACC since January 2022 and more than 14,000 were adopted into their forever homes.

Almost 3,000 were transferred to dedicated rescue organizations, and 3,200 were returned to their owners. MCACC maintains an average 94 percent save rate.

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COMMENTARY

Spring training scores dual home runs for baseball fans

By Arlene Chin

Arlene Chin is a member of the Tempe City Council

For us baseball fans, spring training in the Valley of the Sun is a special time of year when the vibe, memories, and excitement of our national pastime return to the top of sports entertainment.

We get to enjoy being outside in ideal weather while taking in a baseball game at Tempe Diablo Stadium.

Naturally, this alluring combination draws baseball fans from across the country and around the world to visit our state and city.



Chin

But you don't have to be a baseball fan to appreciate the positive impacts that Tempe residents receive from Cactus League games.

Spring Training games in Tempe generate a boost to our local economy.

According to a 2023 Cactus League visitor survey conducted by the Seidman Research Institute at the ASU W.P. Carey School of Business, most out-of-state visitors stayed three to four nights, with Tempe being at the top for visitors' lodging destination choice behind Scottsdale and ahead of Phoenix.

The survey also found that people who came to Tempe for Spring Training games contributed \$2.3 million in direct state and local taxes, with accommodation and dining being their top spending items. And with Tempe being the Spring Training home of the Los Angeles Angels, most out-of-state visitors came from California.

The revenue generated directly from Spring Training-related spending benefits Tempe services and programs, which maintains the level of service and quality of life that residents want in our city. Additionally, visitor and consumer dollars help support our local businesses and the people who work in Tempe.

While we can easily see the economic benefits from Cactus League games at Tempe Diablo Stadium, there is another important benefit to our community as well – charity. The Diablos generate funds through parking lot fees at Tempe Diablo Stadium from Angels Spring Training games. From these activities and partnerships with corporate sponsors, the Diablos raise about \$1 million per year.

– Please see Page 21

CONGRATS, COYOTES!



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- Delivering core city services
- An economy that works for everyone
- Keeping our community safe

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 Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona, Board of Directors
 National Charity League, Board of Directors, VP of Fundraising
 AZ State Girls Lacrosse Association, Board of Directors
 Waggoner, KMS, and Corona PTO Boards
 Corona del Sol High School Girls Lacrosse, Board of Directors

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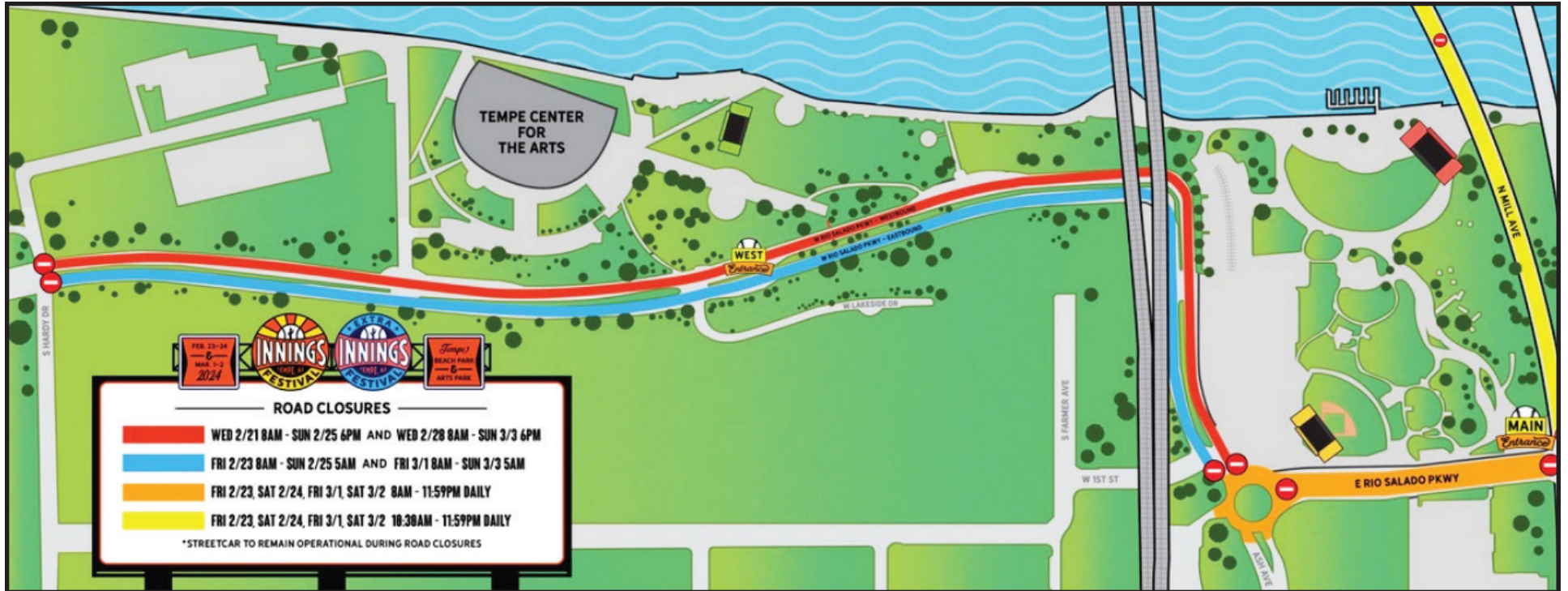
March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States in men and women combined – but it doesn't have to be. Regular screenings make early detection, and in some cases even prevention, possible.

Are you 45 or older? Scan the QR code to schedule your colon screening today.





SCHOOLS



Students show off their creativity at Arts Center

Student artwork from Corona del Sol, Marcos de Niza and other area high schools schools is being showcased at Tempe Center for the Arts through Tuesday, March 5 as part of the 51st annual Art Tempe exhibition.

More than 100 students created artwork for the event, which includes painting, drawing and ceramics. The exhibition has been made possible by the efforts of arts teachers across TUHSD.

The exhibition is being held at the Tempe center's Lakeside room, located near a Storytellers exhibition that is on display at the Gallery at TCA.

Two professional artists from the Storytellers event participated in a school residency program this winter. Artists Wabwila Mugala and Jan Talmadge Davids visited the participating high schools to talk about their own art careers and creative processes, as well as

leading a workshop with advanced level classes.

The Art Tempe exhibition, with its collaboration between Tempe Community Arts, professional artists and Tempe Center for the Arts, is designed to serve as an inspiration to young students illustrating that the arts are thriving in Tempe.

"The city of Tempe is thrilled to support the next generation of artists through this engaging program," said Vice Mayor Jennifer Adams.



“I am blown away by the powerful art pieces these students have created, and I’m inspired that we get to come together as a community to show our support and pride in these Tempe students.”

TUHSD Superintendent Dr. Stacia Wilson added her support of the event.

“We are immensely proud of all the work of our students and teachers put into this stunning display of creativity and talent. It’s moving to see the wide variety of mediums and perspectives showcased, and we hope this exhibition will encourage the next generation of artists as they continue their journeys in the Valley and beyond.”

Tempe City Councilmember and TUHSD Governing Board member Berdetta Hodge offered similar praise:

“We are thrilled to see and celebrate the creativity that’s happening right here in our backyards,” she said.

“It’s exciting to see this student work bolstered by the support of professional artists working in our community in such a beautiful venue like Tempe Center for the Arts.”

Details: tempe.gov/ArtTempe. Student artwork from Corona del Sol, Marcos de Niza and other

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Details: tempe.gov/ArtTempe.

Flower power

Area parks again offer breathtaking views of the natural beauty of spring

**Story & photos
by Sally Mesarosh**

Spring in Arizona is a pleasant prelude to scorching desert summers. Morning temperatures begin cool but climb steadily, sometimes reaching peaks of 70 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit by mid-afternoon.

These temperatures create the perfect environment for cacti to bloom and wildflowers to grow in the Sonoran Desert,

making it one of the lushest deserts in the world during spring months.

Cactus flowers blossom in early spring, attracting desert birds and animals. The flowers mature into a bright red fruit with a mild, sweet flavor that the desert animals enjoy.

You'll often see woodpeckers and doves atop the cacti, pecking into the cactus fruit, enjoying the fruit and staining their beaks with the red juice. Photo opportunities are plentiful this time of year.

Additionally, African daisies and desert lupine flowers bloom in certain areas of the

desert that have received enough moisture. To view the cacti, birds, rabbits and coyote amidst a field of wildflowers is a delight whether you snap a few photos or just enjoy the scenery.

The best spots to see the lushness are Desert Breeze Park in West Chandler (great horned owls are often spotted there), Kiwanis Park in Tempe (peach-faced lovebirds), the Riparian Preserve in Gilbert and Greenfield Park in Mesa. Bald eagles have been seen lately at Greenfield Park and the Riparian Preserve.

A bit farther out is Usery Park in north Mesa, where the nature center has bird feeders that attract small birds in the morning hours.





You're likely to see lovebirds, woodpeckers, goldfinch and warblers.

In Scottsdale, you can often view burrowing owls at Scottsdale Community College, near the north parking lot.

These small owls and their babies peek out of the student-made burrows by the parking lot. They do most of their hunting during dusk and dawn when they can use their night vision to their advantage.

Also in Scottsdale, you'll find eagles diving for fish in the lake at Chaparral Park on Hayden Road, plus Harris's Hawks and Osprey often appear there. Look closely atop the electric poles and wires to see these raptors surveying the area.

About 50 miles to the east of Wrangler

News' coverage area is Boyce Thompson Arboretum, the oldest and largest botanical garden in Arizona. You'll find an abundance of plants, butterflies and birds. September is the top month for butterflies, with 35 species easily found in our area. The butterfly pavilion at Boyce Thompson is an excellent place to view these beauties.

However, as climate change prolongs heat cycles in the desert, the heat takes a toll on humans and other species they share the environment with, including butterflies.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the period of extreme heat is lasting longer than in the past. Derek Kellogg, director of animal care at Butterfly Wonderland in Scottsdale, is concerned

that "large and spectacular migrations" of butterflies are under threat. Kellogg said that Arizona's extreme heat has resulted in less food for butterflies and caterpillars. Some scientists are less concerned about the numbers.

"Monarchs can rebound from almost nothing," said monarch scientist Andy Davis at the University of Georgia.

"Everything hinges on the availability of plants and resources in the spring."

From butterflies to birds to nature lovers, spring in the desert is not to be missed.

Make a trip today to your favorite park, garden or arboretum to encounter the Arizona desert full of color and blossoms.

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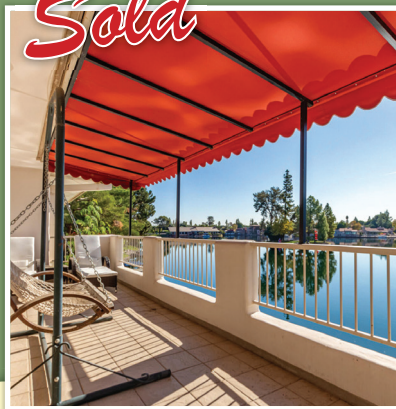
*Waterfront Condo
in Harbour Village*
5200 S Lakeshore Dr #233 \$535,000
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Sold



*Waterfront Home
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Sold



*Waterfront Condo
In Harbor Village*
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Sold



*Waterfront Townhouse
in The Village Landing*
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PEOPLE



Ryan Bastuba, 22, during a relaxing afternoon at the Széchenyi Baths and Pool in Budapest, Hungary — Story and more, Pages 16-20

Photos provided

CHASING THE FUTURE

A Wrangler News special section focusing on our community's rising stars

On the move

Wide open spaces, wide open future

By Don Kirkland

On the cover of this issue, and spread over these inside pages, you'll find a story and photos that capture the talents of a young, goal-oriented ASU senior, Tempe resident Ryan Bastuba.

We selected the story for prominent display in this edition because, as we became acquainted with Ryan, we realized that he represents what we believe

to be the type of young person who can and will help change our world's direction.

Most importantly, we think you'll agree, not a moment too soon.

With the many challenges Ryan's generation faces, it's incredibly promising to be aware that there appears to be a contingent of determined young people who are combining entrepreneurial energies with a visible sense of social consciousness.

Ryan, as it turns out, is just such a person.

Over the years during which we have used our pages to help build the framework of a truly community-based news source, we've been fortunate to have attracted some really worthy contributors. Not only in terms of their photographic and journalistic skills but in what we have seen as a commitment to make this a place we're proud to work in, participate in, and live and raise families in.

While few of us have an immediate, direct connection with the institutions of higher learning



Taking a jump break during a kayak trip along the coast of Nerja, Spain



Ryan and little brother Ben riding their dirt bikes in Arizona.

that surround this East Valley of ours—Mesa and Chandler-Gilbert community colleges, plus ASU, of course—we cannot help but realize that such a notable and varied academic environment offers enormous appeal to the select, motivated audience of young people who are drawn to our nearby campuses.

Take as an example the young entrepreneur mentioned herein and highlighted in this issue; one whose future seems certain to be among those trend-setters whose name will be recognized well into the future.

And while the focus of our conversations with Ryan was indeed open-ended, the time we spent with him provided us with what we believe to be important insight into where we should be headed in terms of our own goals in pursuit of an even better community.

That, as we look forward to exchanging ideas with this 22-year-old member of an exciting new generation, tells us that the information source of tomorrow will not be so much a product arriving in your driveway or by email but one coupled with a social media dynamic that already has captured the notice of forward-thinking, future motivated entrepreneurs like Ryan.

Stay tuned for news of his accomplishments and those of others like him.

And for learning how his inspiration can help us mold our own future to meet the needs of the unalterably changing times that lie ahead for us all.

Don Kirkland is the founder and publisher of Wrangler News.



Ryan's roommate Finn joins him during a hike to Delta Lake in Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming.



An afternoon marketing session via laptop, which seems to travel with Ryan almost everywhere he goes.

— Wrangler News photo by Andrew Lwowski

Bridging the generations

Popular Tempe coffee shop provides an ideal setting for traveling entrepreneurship

By Barbi Walker-Walsh

Barbi Walker-Walsh holds degrees in journalism from ASU and NYU. She is a regular contributor to Wrangler News.

Sitting in the corner by the window of the local coffee shop with his laptop open and working both his phone and keyboard, Ryan Bastuba almost doesn't stand out against

the other locals doing the same that morning at Steve's Espresso in Tempe.

Almost.

Bastuba isn't your average college student. The 22-year-old ASU senior isn't ditching class or scrolling through ego-deflating social media feeds. He's working and working hard.

The uber-focused young entrepreneur, dressed in the typical collegiate uniform — a university tee and casual sweats, is looking for an operations manager to run his day-to-day business, Varify, a

water testing kit that he sells on Amazon.

He is also a world traveler, a philanthropist, and a lifelong learner. He has a curiosity and an open-mindedness that make him great at working with people of all ages and backgrounds.

Bastuba's journey to entrepreneurship started when he was a high school student in Coronado, Calif., a San Diego suburb.

He admits that he was a bit of a troublemaker in his first two years. "I was just, like, very ADHD: rambunctious, kind of causing problems

in the neighborhood,” he said, adding that he caused problems for his mom, too.

But then COVID hit, and everything changed. He found out about Amazon’s FBA (Fulfillment by Amazon) business model online and decided to give it a try.

He did extensive research and study and found a viable product with high demand but low competition. He launched Varify in December 2019 and has been expanding on various products ever since.

Bastuba has a knack for seizing opportunities, whether learned or natural. His mom, Teresa Bastuba, said Ryan always had a quiet kind of confidence.

That and an entrepreneurial spirit.

When he was young, she said he did a lemonade sale and made quite a bit of money, even though that wasn’t his goal.

He just picked a lucrative location. “He set it up in a spot where a lot of runners and cyclists would pass by, and they were just so thirsty,” Teresa said. He was also very friendly, which helped him attract customers, she said.

His mother is right—he is friendly and easy to talk with, yet he has clear and firm boundaries around his time.

He is serious, but he is also very curious. And it is that curiosity that Bastuba credits with his success.

“It’s not even like, ‘Oh, I want to make a quick buck,’” he said. He is just really fascinated with how to sell to customers.

“I kind of got into it backwards,” he said. “Most people start a business, ‘Oh, this is the problem. I’m going to solve it and give it to the customer.’”

“The FBA model is just looking at a product that is already selling out there and trying to find ways to make it stand out.”

Bastuba did just that with Varify, a water purification system that he partnered with Water for Good, a non-profit organization based in Indiana, that aims to provide everyone in the Central African Republic access to safe and clean water.

“Our missions and purpose align,” he said.

He also used the partnership as a marketing aspect.

“While the partnership was initially seen as a

mutually beneficial marketing campaign; I have now gained a deeper interest and care for Water For Good.”

In June of this year, he plans to visit Africa and see the impact of his work firsthand. He is excited to take his dad with him and is proud to say that Varify is supporting his trip.

He hopes to grow the partnership throughout the rest of the year. “I believe that this donor trip will give me further inspiration on how we can collaborate,” he said.

Curiosity was a vital element

Bastuba’s curiosity and open-mindedness also extend to his education and personal life. He graduated from Coronado High School in 2020, during the height of the pandemic.

He used his time wisely and received the Coronado Chamber of Commerce Aspire Business Scholarship.

He was accepted into Barrett, The Honors College at Arizona State University, and is majoring in Technological Entrepreneurship and Management.

He also studied for a semester in Spain, where he learned about the culture and the language. He thinks every young person should do that, as it left an indelible mark on him.

Traveling, meeting new people and connecting with others are important to him. He enjoys being around people so much that he prefers working in coffee shops. And, with his laptop, he can run his business from anywhere in the world as long as he has a working wi-fi connection.

An eye-opening experience

Ryan’s affection for travel and learning about others and different locations led him to go road-trippin’ with his aunt and grandmother.

He met them in Albuquerque, N.M., and they drove to the Grand Canyon, then on to Zion National Park.

Not only was Zion amazing, he said, but it provided a cool opportunity to get to hang out with his aunt and grandma more—to get to know them better, especially since he doesn’t see

them often.

“It seemed spontaneous, adventurous and fun,” he said. Bastuba said his grandma is really enjoyable to be with, and she never has a bad word for anybody—qualities he has adopted as central to his own approach to life. “I personally aspire to respect and connect with anyone,” he said.

Spontaneity is another quality he admires. Bastuba says he prefers to dive head-first into most things. He doesn’t mind failing in trying to figure something out.

He points back to the FBA, saying that, on YouTube, you’ll find some guru guy saying how much money you can make if you take his course. But you can learn all that stuff for free. “You’ll learn more by, like, picking around and taking your own path to learning than someone’s course because the course is how they think,” Bastuba said.

Work to learn from others

He recognizes that he’s also blessed by not having to worry about food or rent while in high school while researching his business goals.

But everyone, not just his generation, has similar capabilities at their fingertips.

Technology allows people to connect with so many others, and that’s the positive side of social media. If social media is used correctly, he said, there are more pros than cons.

“Stuff is so digital now you don’t need to have a bunch of money to make money, with less money upfront as long as you are innovative and ambitious,” he said.

Unfortunately, it’s not always that way, and he worries that people can be so self-focused that they focus too much on themselves.

He thinks the best way to bridge the gap between people is having a desire to learn from each other.

“The biggest bridge I have towards connecting with others is learning,” he said.

He loves learning, in fact, and said it opens him up to talk with anyone with experiences they can share with him and vice versa.

“I think that the desire to learn is a powerful tool in bridging the gap between generations.”



Exploring the Saharan desert in Morocco with local buddy Said



White water rafting with his dad Martin at McKinley Park, Alaska

**Do you know another young person whose eyes
— and enthusiasm — are aimed skyward?**

If so let us know. We're hoping to feature such rising stars in future editions of Wrangler News. Simply send us an email with a summary of why you think someone you know should be featured in our pages. Make sure to include contact information for that person, the parent or parents, and yourself. We'll be in touch!

editor@wranglernews.com



The Tempe Diablos awarded \$300,000 in grants on Giving Tuesday to 45 area groups and agencies.

— From Page 6

This funds \$240,000 in scholarships and supports community programs like city of Tempe Movies In The Park.

For decades, the Tempe Diablos has been committed to improving the community by supporting and encouraging educational and youth opportunities.

Since the 1970s, Tempe Diablos Charities has raised money to offer grants to local organizations that fulfill needs in the community and provide partial scholarships to graduating high school seniors to

further their education in college or trades.

Additionally, Tempe Diablos Charites fundraise to celebrate our educators.

For the past 34 years, education faculty and staff in the school districts that serve Tempe students have been honored for their excellence in education at the annual Excellence in Education Awards Gala.

For more information on Angels Spring Training, visit tempe.gov/diablo.

To learn more about Tempe Diablos Charities and ways to support their efforts, visit tempediablos.org.

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- Google Review



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Lalibela among top food, drink honorees

Tempe's Café Lalibela has won a top award Devour Culinary Classic, Arizona's most prestigious food festival.

The restaurant was part of the inaugural Taste Tempe section of Devour, designed to highlight the amazing food and beverage culture of the

community.

Each year, Devour brings together 50 restaurants and more than a dozen wineries, distilleries and brewers for a two-day celebration of local cuisine.

The event is produced by Local First Arizona.

For the first time, the event showcased special Taste Tempe section with a dozen local restaurants, distilleries, brewers and coffee purveyors.

A panel of food critics and journalists

from around the country tasted dishes, scoring on taste, presentation, degree of difficulty and creativity.

Café Lalibela won a double gold medal for its red lentils and cabbage, chicken and yellow split peas.

Family-owned Café Lalibela has been a Tempe staple for more than two decades.

Two other Tempe restaurants, Lucero, the rooftop restaurant at Omni Tempe at ASU, and The Peppermill, won bronze medals.

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- Talk with our experts about the best ways we can assist you.
- Find out how to volunteer with us!





SPORTS



Aztecs sweep into season with win over Tigers

Story & photos by Andrew Lwowski

Despite taking the home and season opener in straight sets, Corona del Sol men's volleyball coach Geoff Horewitch noticed something that raised an eyebrow.

The Aztecs (1-4) were able to grind down the Gilbert Tigers (0-3), 25-23, 25-21, 25-15, but the first real test of the season uncovered concern. Fortunately, it's one that can be mended over time.

The Aztecs, injected with new players and lacking the experience of years past, showcased their capabilities against the Tigers. But despite the

sweep, coach Horewitch said the biggest concern is the lack of experience.

What comes with time and practice is the game instincts and chemistry that will propel the team to the step next.

The Aztecs are bound by senior libero Luke Vlcek and senior outside hitter Joseph Azzlyn Potts, both playing a substantial role in last year's team and now headlining 2024's squad.

Most of Horewitch's players have played club, but lack the continuity of playing together.

The lack the size is apparent, the one thing that

was an advantage from last year's team as a handful of basketball players joined once the season ended.

The only returner is Bo Dolinsek, the 6-foot-7 hooper, will be playing his senior year when healthy.

The novice is senior outside hitter Jack Lwowski, who is playing his first season of volleyball.

After sweeping their sectional opponent, the Aztecs were stifled by Sandra Day O'Conner, the top-ranked team in state, in straight sets before traveling to Chandler to partake in the Chandler Wolf Howl tournament.



The thrills and jubilation of a new season began as Corona del Sol men's volleyball took down Gilbert to open the 2024 season with a win. Senior libero Luke Vlcek's pesky defense and the fluid attack of the Aztecs' offense guided them, while all gained experience of playing together.



The Corona del Sol baseball team hosted its first game of the season against Red Mountain, but only plated one in the 7-1 loss, despite splash plays on defense. — Photos by Andrew Lwowski

Sports Notebook

By Alex Zener

Photos by Andrew Lwowski

Corona's wrestling team, competing against 38 other Division I teams, finished in third place to Sunnyside and Liberty at the 2023-24 AIA Division I Boys Wrestling State Championships held Feb. 16-18 at the Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

On Feb. 10, Corona, as a team, took first place in the Section III Tournament held at Desert Vista and qualified 14 wrestlers out of the 16 weight classifications for the state championships.

In order to qualify for the championships, a wrestler needed to be one of the top four in each sectional tournament.

Leading the way for the Aztecs was junior **Aidan Odom**, who took first place in the 215 lb. weight class.

Odom, with a 47-5 season record, was also first at the sectional tournament, where he qualified to participate in the state competition.

Odem defeated four opponents to take home the first-place medal in his category, including a Tucson wrestler who he pinned, or what's known as a fall, at the 5:54-minute mark in round one.

He went on to defeat a wrestler from Perry with a 5-2 decision in the second round and a Sunnyside wrestler in the third round in a 6-1 decision before moving on to the finals.

In that match, Odem faced a Shadow Ridge wrestler, senior Abel Garza, who had also taken first place in his sectional meet.

Garza, who had only lost twice in his senior season with a 34-2 record, turned out to be a formidable opponent.

The match between Odem and Garza was a close one that went into a tie-breaker before Odem was declared the champion with a 2-1 final score.

Junior **Joel Arias**, who took first place in the sectional in the 190 lb. weight class to qualify for the state championships, took home a second-place medal at state.

Arias defeated three wrestlers to work his way through the brackets into the finals. He first defeated a Westwood wrestler in a fall at the 2:39-minute mark and then moved on to defeat a Perry wrestler in the second round with a 10-5 decision.

In the third round, Arias won a 5-2 decision over a Brophy Prep wrestler to face Lucas Mata from Sunnyside in the finals.

Although Arias avoided a fall, he lost in a 9-2 decision to Mata but got to stand on the winners podium to receive his second-place medal.

Senior **Lucas Conrad** was the third top finisher for the Aztecs when he earned fourth place in the

150 lb. weight class. He had qualified to wrestle at state by winning first place at the sectional tournament.

Conrad won his first bout in a fall at the 3:28 minute mark against a Chandler High School wrestler and his second bout against a Tolleson wrestler with a fall at the 1:49-minute mark. His luck ran out in the third round when he was defeated by a Shadow Ridge wrestler and was moved into the losers bracket.

In Conrad's fourth bout, he defeated a Desert Ridge wrestler in a 10-1 Major Decision, established when a match is won by more than 8-14 points.

By winning this fourth match, Conrad moved up to compete for third place against Zandon Hopson from Liberty High School. Hopson won the match in a fall at the 4:56 minute mark to take third place.

Conrad stood on the podium with the top wrestlers in the 150 lb. category to accept his fourth-place medal. His season record was 22-7.

Junior **Brayden Johnson-Brown**, who took first place in the sectionals and had a 34-9 overall season record, just missed getting on the winners podium when he took fifth place in the 138 lb. weight category. Only the top four receive medals.

He easily defeated his opponent from Red Mountain with a fall at the 2:35 minute mark and defeated his second opponent from Shadow Ridge with a 4-1 decision. He quickly lost in round three to a Chandler High wrestler in a fall at 1:19 minute mark, which bumped him into the loser's bracket.

In the loser bracket, Johnson-Brown lost in his bid to wrestle for third place but ended up taking fifth by defeating a Shadow Ridge wrestler in a 3-0 decision.

Corona had three wrestlers: senior **Michael Winiker**; junior **Trevor Hamm**; and sophomore **Jonah Owens**, who finished in sixth place in their respective weight categories.

Winiker, wrestling at 113 lbs., came in second at

the sectional tournament and finished the season 32-13, while Hamm was third at the sectional and finished with a 31-13 season record.

As only a sophomore, Owens ended the season with a 33-15 record while getting second place at the sectional tournament. Corona's other seven wrestlers who qualified for at the state championships by finishing in the top four at the sectional tournament were seniors **Gavin Martinez** and **Kevin Santiago**; junior **Evan Soliz**; and sophomores **Caden Morris**, **Sebastian Martinez**, **Caden Gorishek** and **Jameson Reed**.

Gavin Martinez, who earned first place in the 120 lb. weight class at the sectional tournament finished the season with a 35-12 record while Santiago, with a season record of 36-12, was third at the sectional tournament in the 175 lb. weight class. Soliz, who finished second at the sectional tournament in the 126 lb. weight class, had a 31-12 overall record.

Sophomores gaining state tournament experience included Sebastian Martinez, who finished fourth in the sectionals with an overall record of 21-10 in the 144 lb. weight class; Gorishek, in the 157 lb. weight class, who took first place in the sectionals and ended the season with a 32-10 record; Morris, with a 28-20 record in the 165 lb. weight class, who took fourth place at the sectionals; and Reed, who was second at the sectionals and ended the season with a 11-5 record in the 285 lb. weight category.

Marcos de Niza results

The Marcos de Niza wrestling team, with five wrestlers qualifying to compete in the post season, ended up tied with Peoria for 25th place out of 48 teams competing at the Division III 2023-24 Boys Wrestling State Championships held Feb. 16-18.

Senior **Alejandro Reyes**, taking second place

in the 215 lb. weight category at the sectional tournament, on Feb. 10, was the top wrestler on the Padres team. In the first round of the state championships, Reyes defeated his opponent from Sahuarita High School in a 3-2 decision. In the second round he defeated a Florence High School wrestler with a fall at the 2:43 minute mark, giving him an opportunity to get into the finals.

Unfortunately, Reyes lost in the third round to a Snowflake wrestler in a fall at the 4:48 minute mark, causing him to be moved into the losers bracket where he ended up getting fifth place after defeating Gonzalez from Salpointe Catholic in a 6-1 decision. Senior **Tino Hernandez** won his first match at the Division III state playoffs, in the 165 lb. weight category, defeating a wrestler from Show Low with a fall at the 5:46 minute point.

He lost his second match and was relegated to the losers bracket where he was eliminated in the double elimination with his second loss.

Junior **Jy Von Gould** qualified to compete in the state tournament after taking third place in the sectional tournament. He lost and was eliminated in the first two rounds of the Division III tournament in the 175 lb. weight category but finished the season with a 12-14 record.

Sophomore **Nikolis Tongauiha**, wrestling in the 285 lb. weight class, with a 40-7 overall record, qualified to wrestle in the state championships after taking first place in the sectional tournament. He was eliminated from the state tournament after losing in the first round to a wrestler from Florence and in the second round to a Salpointe Catholic wrestler. Both losses were falls.

Sophomore **Taiwan Hopkins** qualified to compete in the 126 lb. weight class after finishing fourth in the sectional tournament. He lost in the first round to a Poston Butte wrestler in a fall. After his second loss, he was eliminated from the tournament. His overall record was 22-23.



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DIVERSIONS



Audience participation key to pleasure derived from 'Planet'

Film Fare

By M.V. Moorhead

We've heard that it's only a paper moon, sailing over a cardboard sea. But a paper planet? That's a new one.

It's heading to Tempe Center for the Arts this month, however. The interactive, immersive theatre-art experience *Paper Planet* comes to TCA from Thursday, March 21 to Sunday, March 24.

The Australian troupe fills the space with cardboard and paper foliage that gives visitors of all ages the sense of being in a fanciful forest setting. Better still, they're able to add their own creations to this brave

new world.

"It's hard to define," admits producer Rainbow Sweeney, by phone from Melbourne. "We call it a theatre piece. There are theatrical moments that happen, but it's not heavily



narrative." Despite the presence of "...a couple of classically trained performers... it's definitely not a 'sit down and watch it' theatre show."

The real focus, says Sweeney, is on play by the audience, as company members encourage kids (and grownups) to craft their own far-flung flora and fauna.

“Some kids really get into making themselves a character, or making a creature to add to the forest,” she says. “It’s surprisingly joyful for adults as well. We encourage families to participate together.”

Paper Planet was commissioned by the city of Melbourne in 2011 to activate a public space in that city’s famed Federation Square.

In the years since, Polyglot Theatre Company has toured with *Paper Planet* to venues ranging from Japan, China, Canada, the UK and American cities like New York and Philadelphia.

A team—“we call them artists,” notes Sweeney—of three performers, one musician and one artist recruited from the local scene set up the space and interact with visitors.

Sweeney is careful to emphasize that the guiding atmosphere of *Paper Planet* is genial, inclusive and fun; it’s not artistically pretentious. “It can happily exist without theatrical lighting,” she says. This makes it adaptable to many different venues.

“It’s purposely a little bit rough,” she also notes. The idea here is to make sure that kids—not to mention the more artistically-challenged adults, like this writer—aren’t discouraged by a too-polished setting to which they might be hesitant to contribute. “We don’t make perfect origami flowers.”

Paper Planet plays Thursday, March 21, Friday, March 22, Saturday, March 23 and Sunday, March 24 at Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 Rio Salado Parkway. Session times are 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. each of the four days. Tickets are \$15; \$10 for Experience Circle Members; free for kids 2 and younger. Call 480-350-2822 or go to tempecenterforthearts.com for details.

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Internships will be held during June and July.

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 - At least 16 years old prior to internship start date
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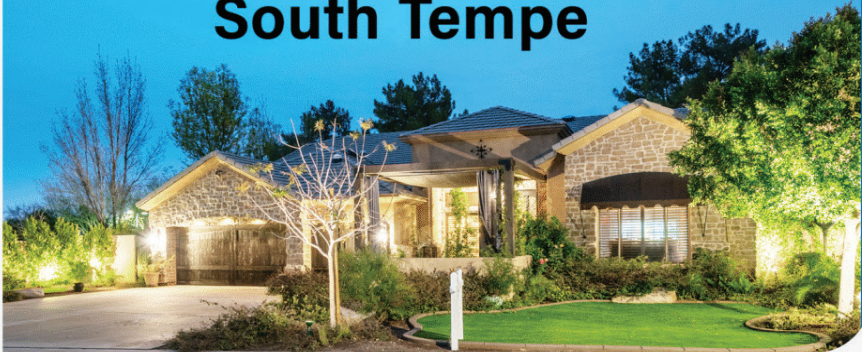
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