



TEMPE & WEST CHANDLER

WRANGLER NEWS

Dec 15, 2018 - Jan 12, 2019 • Vol 29, No 22

THE PLACE WE CALL HOME

INFLATE YOUR SPIRITS LIGHT UP THE NIGHT



Photographer Billy Hardiman made his neighborhood rounds once again this year, resulting in yet another collection of creative — and spectacular — Christmas holiday-light photos. A further selection appears inside, Pgs. 16 and 17

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There's a new constable in town, and you'll be surprised how he views his new job

By Sammie Ann Wicks

Forget everything you thought you knew about an Arizona constable's work—Tempe's new man in that job will tell you a far different story.

"I'm here to do this job in a spiritual way," says Kent Rini, newly elected constable of Maricopa County's Kyrene Justice Court Precinct. "And I want to encourage other constables to operate within that deeper awareness."

Yes, you heard the word "spiritual" attached to the sometimes gritty work of serving the area's Justice of the Peace and Magistrate courts' subpoenas, evictions, and all. Rini, a Democrat, defeated incumbent Brandon Schmoll, a Republican, in the Nov. 6 general election.

But Rini, after a lifetime in security and law enforcement, came by his spirituality the hard way—by narrowly escaping death

Basically, Rini says, "I died. Then I was transported to the spiritual dimension, where I talked to God." This after sustaining multiple injuries in a car accident in 1973 and passing through a classic near-death experience.

"One of the injuries was that I suffered a broken jaw," Rini remembers, "which in and of itself might have been OK, but the ER nurse misapplied the mouth tube, and when I threw up, I choked to death." At this point, says Rini, other, more transcendent, awareness ensued. "At the



A pillar of law enforcement — Kent Rini has pledged to protect and serve the community as the new constable for the Kyrene Justice Court Precinct.
— Wrangler News photo by Joyce Coronel

— CONSTABLE, Page 9

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Benzo gets vested with new protective gear, and a top-dog U.S. ranking

Chandler PD's K9 Benzo has received a bullet-and-stab-protective vest, thanks to a charitable donation from non-profit Vested Interest in K9s Inc., made possible by Chandler resident Renee Thomas and embroidered with the sentiment "Honoring those who served and sacrificed."

Vested Interest in K9s Inc. is a 501c(3) charity whose mission is to provide bullet- and stab-protective vests and other products for the dogs of law enforcement and related agencies throughout the United States.

The non-profit was established in 2009 to assist law enforcement agencies with lifesaving body armor for their four-legged K9 officers. Since its inception, the organization has provided over 3,100 protective vests in 50 states, through private

and corporate donations, at a value of \$5.7 million.

The program is designed for dogs that are certified, at least 20 months of age and actively employed with law enforcement or related U.S. agencies, according to Det. Seth Tyler, Chandler PD media relations officer.

New K9 graduates, as well as those with expired vests, are eligible as vest recipients.

The donation to provide one protective vest for a law-enforcement K9 is \$950.

There are an estimated 30,000 law enforcement K9s throughout the United States.

Information: 508-824-6978. The organization provides information, lists events and accepts tax-deductible donations at www.vik9s.org or via mail to P.O. Box 9 East Taunton, MA 02718.



The Chandler Police Department's four-legged partner Benzo is now safer from bullets and knives with a protective vest. — Photo courtesy Chandler Police Department

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Launch of science academy helps rocket kids to a digital future

By Diana Nelson

Students at Kyrene de la Mariposa Elementary School are now one step closer to the opportunities awaiting them in an increasingly digital future.

These recently honed digital skills are due, in part, to a progressive new curriculum with hands-on opportunities to learn, according to Principal Spencer Fallgatter, who has helped guide the school to its transformation as a Computer Science Academy, where students grades K-5 get full immersion into technology in every classroom.

With the implementation, kids are now able to gain computer science and coding skills—not to become more than just users of technology but critical thinkers, as well.

“We want our students to learn how to solve problems and to develop transferable skills to use across all subject areas and in any future career path,” said Fallgatter.

“When they acquire the basics of using coding, they can create solutions and they will have the knowledge and experience to become leaders and innovators of the future.”

During a recent presentation to the Kyrene Governing Board, Fallgatter explained how his staff used \$30,000 in what is known as Results Based Funding, which was awarded to the school based on its performance on standardized testing during the 2017 school year.

The funds allowed the school to expand upon its work, which was already in progress, to pilot a coding and computer science program during the 2018-19 school year.

The success of the program was acknowledged by Superintendent Dr. Jan Vesely, who said she expects the computer immersion initiative at

Mariposa can be duplicated as a best practice at other schools across the district.

Fallgatter explained that receiving the extra funds allowed 15 Mariposa teachers to be paid for work last summer, during which they spent a collective 880 hours to design and create coding lessons and integrated science projects.

The students’ lessons also may use content and standards from language arts and mathematics to broaden their learning opportunities.

“By the beginning of the school year, teachers had created new instructional study guides that involve lesson plans in coding projects. Each learning unit is a project, which is integrated into the appropriate grade-level science and social-studies topics.”

To help the kids absorb the technology lessons, Fallgatter says the school has invested in new devices.

“Our K-2 classrooms each received 12-15 iPads, in addition to their classroom laptops to utilize a program called Scratch Jr., which teaches and strengthens coding skills. Third-grade classes received additional laptops, so they have half a class set each, and by sharing with a buddy class it creates a whole class set.

And, he noted, fourth- and fifth-grade classes are one-to-one with laptops to encourage greater integration and accessibility. Classes have weekly time reserved in one of two computer labs with desktop machines, and teachers may sign up for additional time, as needed, to support student learning.

Additionally, Mariposa has a part-time computer-science specialist to support the full implementation of the immersion program and to provide both professional and curriculum development opportunities for staff.

In addition to K-5 grades, Mariposa

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\$95k grant to chamber learning program

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation has announced that the Tempe Chamber of Commerce has been selected to participate in its Career Readiness Lab, receiving \$95,000 to implement a work-based learning program to better connect students with learning opportunities.

TCC was one of five state and local chambers selected across the country.

"The Tempe Chamber is honored to have been chosen to receive this valuable grant that will directly impact our Career Ready Tempe workforce program," said Anne Gill, Tempe Chamber president and CEO.

"We look forward to partnering with the...foundation to implement this innovative program to connect students with experiential learning opportunities to graduate ready for college and career."

For the program, the chamber will strengthen its capacity to facilitate Career Ready Tempe.

In collaboration with the city of Tempe and the Tempe Union High School District, CRT will connect low-income, first generation high school students with work-based learning experiences.

Chandler site possible for 2,500 new jobs

An Allstate Insurance Co. site near McClintock Drive and Chandler Boulevard in West Chandler could be joined by yet another Allstate campus elsewhere in the city.

City officials say the proposal, if approved, could bring 2,500 new jobs to the area within the first five years of its operation.

In addition to the McClintock-Chandler Blvd. location, Allstate has operations in the Price Road Corridor and near the 101-202 freeway loop.

The Chandler City Council was due to vote on the proposal, which would include the city paying Allstate \$1.5 million over an extended period, provided that the company creates new jobs paying up to \$65,000 within the designated first five years.

The reimbursement would cover Allstate's costs of hiring, relocating and training employees.

A revised incentive plan with lower reimbursement would cover additional job growth up to 4,000 employees.

Kiwanis Tennis Center Reopening Celebration

Saturday, Jan. 12 | 9-10:30 a.m.
Kiwanis Tennis Center, 6111 S. All-America Way

Tennis drills for all ages (racquets provided)
Remarks from Mayor Mark Mitchell
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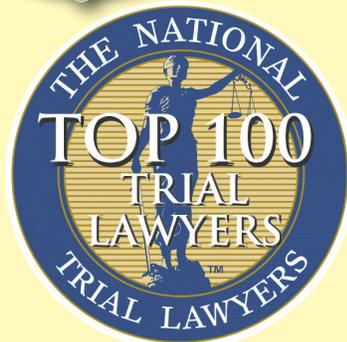
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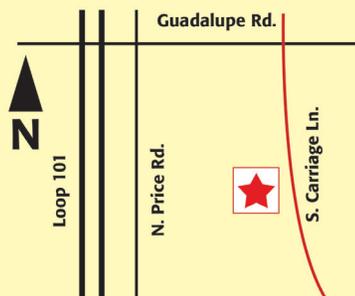
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Constable

From Page 3

moment of choking, I started floating up, and then I continued floating up through the ceiling," Rini says. "Finally, I began to experience something—it's hard to put into words—something like universal consciousness. Within that, I actually met God."

Such an experience was life-changing, says Rini, and ultimately caused him to make major changes in his life goals.

"As a college student, I got into acting, did radio and other shows for the public media networks," Rini remembers, "and in general tried to incorporate everything I could within the area of my communications major."

He received a B.A. in communications from Florida International University, went on to earn a communications M.A. from Arizona State University, and often worked as an actor, even landing a small part in "Jerry Maguire." But his brush with death, Rini says, changed everything.

"There I was, engrossed in my communications studies, and then the accident," Rini recounts. "With that experience, I decided to come back to this world and be of service."

The rest of his life seemed to follow on in good order.

"I knew it was time to focus my studies in a higher vein, something that would help foster spiritual growth," says Rini, and after receiving a doctor of divinity degree from Scottsdale's Logos Center, he became an ordained minister. He's quick to add the work of a constable and the role of a minister pose no great conflict for him.

"I believe my spiritual beliefs will shape my professional conduct more than anything else," Rini says, adding he hopes to change the approach to his area of law enforcement for the better.

"I'm not a redneck—I'm here to give constables a new idea," says Rini, "one that's pledged in its heart to truly protect and serve. I going to see that everybody is safe, and gets equal treatment."

The new constable notes he will use his long experience in security to help him broaden the duties required of him by the courts.

"I owned and operated a security and alarm company for 18 years," says Rini, "and learned a whole host of things that will help me be a better constable."

With an awareness that the position of constable carries more direct individual citizen contact than any other law enforcement position, Rini says he wants his constituents to know his outreach to them will be a major effort.

"Anybody who wants my personal cell phone number will get it," Rini says. "I'm even publishing my number in all my literature. And I'll have a constable car—I want people to see me." He plans to expand another area of community service as well.

"Not only do I want people to be able

to phone in 24/7," Rini says, "I also see myself as an educator—and I plan to offer safety seminars to the community as I have done in the past."

Rini worked for 12 years with Maricopa County Sheriff Paul Penzone in the county's Silent Witness program, and also offered safety courses for SEVRAR, the SouthEast Valley Regional Association of Realtors, where he is an affiliate director. He adds his time working with the sheriff's office was especially instructive.

"Sheriff Penzone started a new and better policing philosophy of action, reaching out to the community, and initiating such things as shutting down tent city," Rini says, "and I want to move in a similar direction in the work that I do." Rini also has plans for neglected populations in the community.

"Yes, I want to serve the whole community, and I will certainly do that," Rini promises, "but I will be especially protective of children and the elderly. The elder population in particular experiences abuse that sometimes goes unnoticed—I saw a lot of situations involving the elderly while working with Paul (Penzone)."

But that's the thing with Kent Rini: just when you think you've got a grasp on him as a committed law enforcement official, he shows you another vista into his motivations.

"Look. Everything is about higher consciousness—I want to always be drawing on that," Rini reflects. "That's what my death experience, and my involvement with Noetic Science, taught me." (In its modern practice, Noetic Science is dedicated to the study of, among other things, psychic phenomena, parapsychology and the Higher Mind, advanced in this country in the 1970's by former NASA Apollo 14 Astronaut Edgar Dean "Ed" Mitchell.)

And Higher Mind is what Kent Rini is all about.

"For me, it always has to come down to this: Every day I go out into the world, and I judge myself according to my spirituality. I strive to do everything in a spiritual way—and that's the way I will serve the people."

The holiday season has arrived, and we want you to be aware that our Wrangler News offices will be closed in observance starting Thursday, Dec. 20 and reopening at 9 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 2.

Our next edition will go to print on Tuesday, Jan. 8, so please be sure to be in touch the prior week if you have articles, photos or new ads that you'd like us to include in that first issue of 2019.

Thanks, and Happy Holidays!

Don Kirkland

Thanks for thinking of me, but Santa has already arrived

If you've had some sleepless nights lately agonizing over what to give me for Christmas, go back to bed and worry no more. I have all the gifts I need.

Actually, this has been the case for the past several years, and I should have mentioned it before this year's season of gift-giving was upon us.

I'm sure there are lots of guys who realize they don't need any more socks, ties, auto-repair gadgets or souvenir key fobs from Mt. Rushmore. In my case, it's not because I have all those things, or too many of them.



It's because my gifts have been piling up in the form of dedicated, deeply committed—did I mention talented? — young people who have joined us in the last few years while they work toward their college degrees.

Researching what, if anything, I had reported previously about this ongoing bit of good fortune (I have a

bad habit of writing some of the same stuff over again), I came across a column from 2014 recalling some of the college students I considered among our most memorable.

That dig through old copies of *Wrangler News* unearthed quite a few names, some of which went back as far as the late 1980s when I took on what was to be a temporary assignment editing the monthly newspaper for a local homeowners association.

While that particular job didn't require much of an in-house workforce, it wasn't long before we had started publishing eight other newspapers, and the knocks on my office door began to come more frequently.

Although I'm still not sure what aspiring writers and photographers thought they might gain from experience at such an outfit as mine, I began to take seriously what I saw as an obligation to mentor those young people who showed an unwavering resolve to be top performers in their chosen careers.

Now, as we approach our 31st year, comes the realization that many of those same young people, and quite a list of others, have either achieved success or are at its threshold.

If their accomplishments can be attributed even partly to the time they spent with us, that's perhaps the happiest news I can imagine receiving during this Christmas season.

A gift, you might call it, and the pile of them seems to grow larger every year.

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Digital

From Page 5

offers a pre-school program with “unplugged lessons”—those not using a technology device—to introduce pre-foundational concepts of computer science to the pre-school students through games and vocabulary exercises.

Fallgatter says the enthusiasm, support and feedback from parents, students, teachers, administrators and the community have been exceedingly positive.

“Students are highly engaged in class and enjoy the content, as well as honing a skill-set, which is vital to a successful future regardless of whether they choose to pursue a career in computer science or not,” he said.

As a sign of the whole school being enrolled in the computer immersion concept, on Dec. 3 students voted on and named a new school mascot, Chip the Challenger, an homage to computer chips and the failed spacecraft that crashed in 1986, just a year before Mariposa was built.

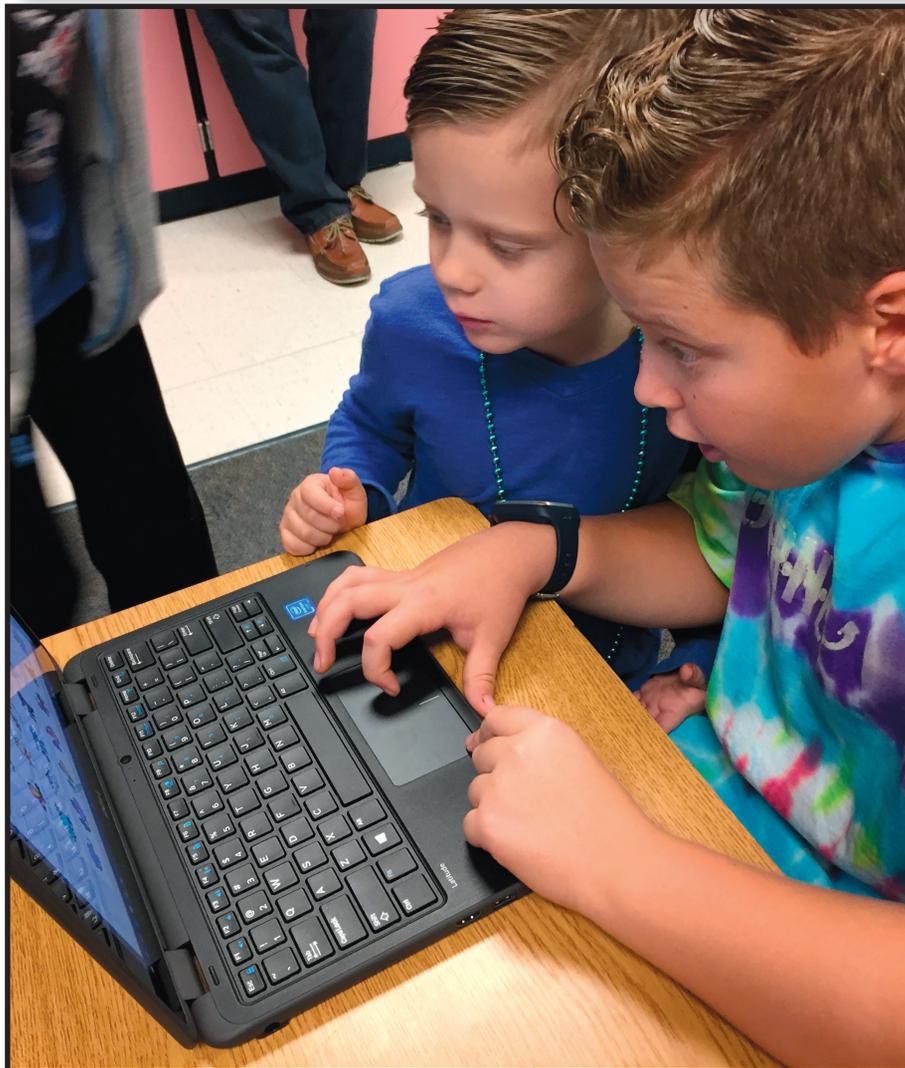
To move the computer immersion forward, Fallgatter said he expects that teachers will develop new teaching units for the next school year. His staff is also exploring additional ways to partner with different community members for assistance.

“Intel is interested in partnering with us to find meaningful volunteer opportunities for their employees, who want to help with student projects and learning,” said Fallgatter.

“We are working to build an educational pathway for our students, so they can continue their computer science studies in Kyrene middle schools and Tempe Union high schools, along with other school districts in the East Valley STEM Alliance.”

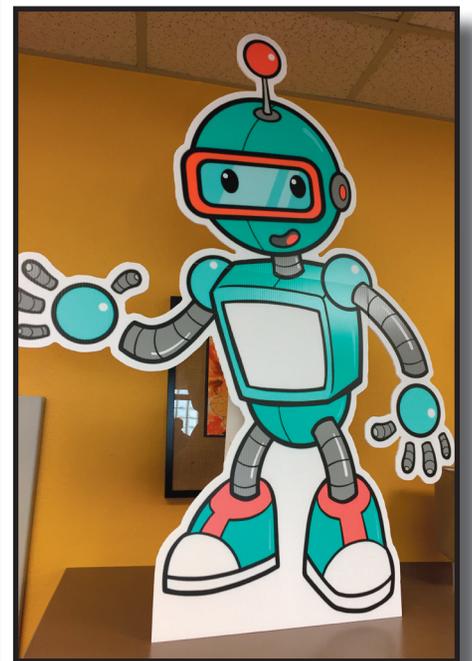
Fallgatter says he applauds the efforts of his staff and teachers as the school adopted the computer immersion program in just a short time.

“I am very proud of the work we’ve accomplished in just one year and expect to create new opportunities for our students to flourish at Mariposa.”



Fifth-grade students at Mariposa Computer Science Academy paired up with preschoolers to share their digital know-how to enhance learning for little ones by introducing the wonder of computers through games and vocabulary exercises. With an emphasis on computer science, students had the opportunity to name the new school mascot, Chip the Challenger.

— Wrangler News photos by Joyce Coronel



Bright idea: New venue for lights

By Michelle Hirsch

If you build it they will come... to the world's largest animated holiday drive-thru light show, right here in our little corner of the world.

Illumination: Symphony of Light has opened a second location at Tempe Diablo Stadium, after a successful debut season in north Phoenix last year.

Inspired to create this colorful array of festive moving lights synchronized to favorite holiday music, Yakir Urman and his partner Simon Kreisberger said they wanted to create a new, cutting-edge experience for Arizona families and friends to enjoy during the holiday season.

Each 25-minute drive-through journey takes guests on an approximate mile-long music and light display of nearly two million RGB LEDs showcasing colorful and animated holiday icons, from sparkling snowmen to giant snowflakes, towering trees and twirling candy wheels, singing Santas, twinkling menorahs and much more.

Exclusive to the Tempe location is

a 30-foot illuminated snowman, four times as tall as Shaquille O'Neal, and Santa's Portal, a 500-foot LED tunnel which holds the record of being the largest tunnel of its kind in the country.

Guests can video their own sing-a-long "car"aoke and share it on social media, with \$250 in prizes awarded weekly.

With a desire to keep the attraction affordable and open to all, the Tempe location is open seven days a week through Dec. 31, starting at 6 p.m., with weekly specials on Mondays and Wednesdays for \$20 per vehicle (plus taxes and fees, excluding holidays). "Twice Thru Tuesdays" gives guests the opportunity to drive through the experience twice for no extra charge.

Tickets, available online at worldofillumination.com in 30-minute reserved time increments for cars, trucks and SUVs, are priced at \$29 in advance (plus taxes and fees), or \$35 at the gate.

Reserving a drive-through time in advance reduces wait time at the entrance and saves on the cost of a

— LIGHTS, Page 12

Join Jennifer



85284/South Tempe



Councilmember Jennifer Adams is hosting a quarterly conversation series! Join Jennifer at her very first event.

Topics: streets, public safety, development at Rural and Warner roads & whatever's on your mind

Wednesday, Jan. 16, 6-7 p.m.

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— Photo courtesy Presley Hirsch

Lights

From Page 11

ticket. Tickets are per car, not per person, with hot cocoa, warm apple cider and popcorn sold at the entrance to help enhance the experience.

This year the display's planners partnered with Tempe Diablos, so when guests enter the coupon code **DIABLO** at their online purchase, 15 percent of the ticket proceeds go back to Diablo financial aid to local teachers.

A portion of each ticket also is donated to Banner Children's Hospitals.

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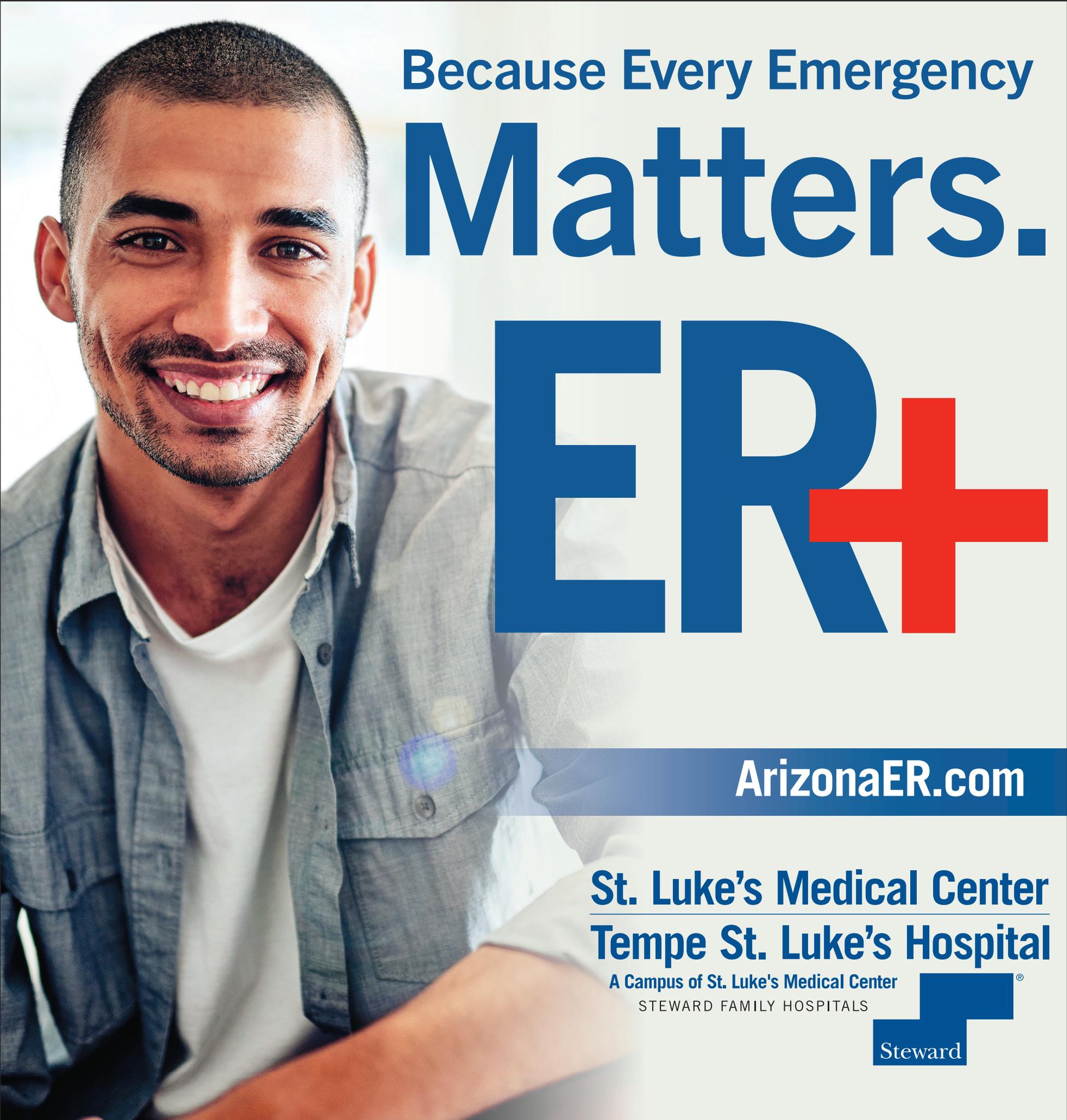


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At this celebratory time of year, can we unplug our devices for just a moment?

Commentary by Joyce Coronel

It's that time of year when our hearts turn toward home and we long to be with loved ones, reliving happy memories of days gone by and creating new traditions and moments of joy.

In my own family, we're counting down the days until our son, a Marine, returns from Quantico, Virginia, before shipping out to Japan for the next three years. Our Yuletide gathering will be bittersweet as we cherish a few short days together before he departs.

Johnny, who as a college student wrote for *Wrangler News*, has been in Virginia for the last six months for final training. During that time we've been able to call, email, text and instant message him, but even with Facetime, it's not quite the same as actually being together, sharing a meal or just catching up. And in this era of high-tech everything, that's something to ponder.

I'll be the first to admit my semi-addiction to my smartphone, Kindle, iPad and other electronic gizmos. I read almost everything digitally and do 90 percent of my Christmas shopping online. Yet I'm old enough to remember when reporters had to submit hard copies of articles and actual film to be processed, when we had to stop and ask for directions and neighbors really knew each other.

Those days are pretty much gone. We've become a society that lives a largely digital existence.

Of course, there's an upside. Tasks that used to take hours are now performed with a click. Need food? You can order your groceries or a take-out meal. Letter to your homeowners association? You can send an email and they'll have it within seconds. Want to donate to charity? There's a website for countless worthy organizations.

For the most part, we do things remotely. We don't join clubs. We don't gather for meetings. We keep to ourselves, staring at our screens.

The question is, what are the long-term effects on society of less and less personal interaction?

I thought of this the other day while trying on clothes at a local department store (I like to order some items from Amazon but sometimes it's nice to just wander the aisles and actually feel the fabric of clothes you might want to buy,

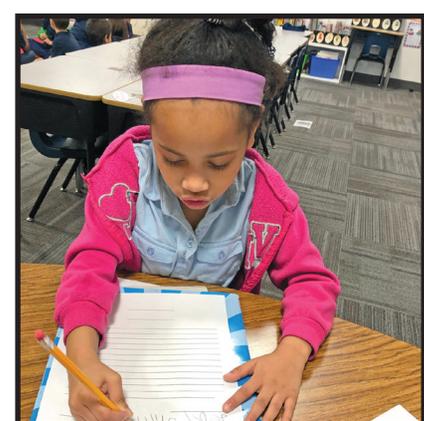
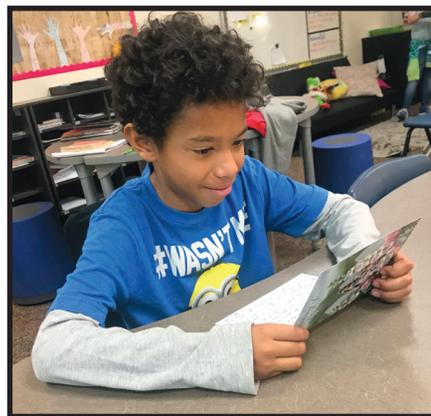
isn't it?)

Back in the dressing room with various jeans, skirts and blouses slung over my arms, I saw a grandmother watching over a 2-or-so-year-old boy strapped into a shopping cart. Mommy was trying on dresses in her stall and grandma had handed over her cell phone to the teething toddler who sat transfixed by a sing-a-long video—at least momentarily. At one point, he began to fuss and the mother was patiently firing off instructions on which website grandma should plug into next. I thought to myself: *This is different from when I raised my kids.* I can still see my mother endeavoring to distract a fussy toddler of my own, pushing a stroller as Michael (now 30 and awaiting the birth of his firstborn) cried and carried on. Today's hand-'em-a-device strategy is painless and I'm sure I would have adopted it. And it sure looks a lot less stressful!

And yet, what happens when we substitute more and more "face time" with the digital? Yes, it's convenient. I'm all for it. But how do we get people to leave the comfort of their devices and look in each other's eyes? How do we get them to attend meetings, talk to each other and interact? This is a challenge for families, service organizations, churches and businesses.

At this time when millions celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, it's a point worth considering. Notice that the one many of us claim as our savior showed up in person. He spent his 33 years on earth stepping into people's lives and having personal, one-on-one, face-to-face encounters with people just like you and me. He didn't ignore, but rather reached out to outcasts and pariahs, people others despised. If you read the accounts of his works, you'll see that he made a point of looking at and touching people. He loved them and they knew it.

As we move toward Christmas, we here at Wrangler are thankful for the many people who take the time to visit or call us, who get to know us and our vision of building community here in Tempe and West Chandler. We look back over the last year and give thanks for the countless interactions and interviews with those who make this a wonderful place to live and work. From our families to yours, we hope you'll have a very merry Christmas and happy New Year.



Pen Pals — Joanne Jordan, Amy Garza, Vanny McCoy and Susan King, top, write letters to students like Marland Williams of Hudson Elementary and Gianna Thompson of Arredondo Elementary. The program has proved so popular it is expanding.

Letter writing not a lost art, thanks to this 90-year-old

Story & photos by Robyn Martinez

Letter writing may seem like a lost art to some. But students in the Tempe Elementary School District are reviving it, thanks to the program Pen Pals for Seniors, initiated last year by Tempe Elementary Visual Communication Specialist Amy Garza.

What started as a way of communicating with Garza's grandmother over the years has blossomed into a program that has been steadily growing, recently having motivated 110 Tempe Elementary students and seniors at three different care centers to exchange letters.

"My grandmother is in her 90s and always loved writing letters and getting mail," said Garza. "We have always written back and forth, but now that she is older she can't write back."

Garza's inspiration came to her one day while reading the paper.

"After seeing a news story about a woman who started a pen pals

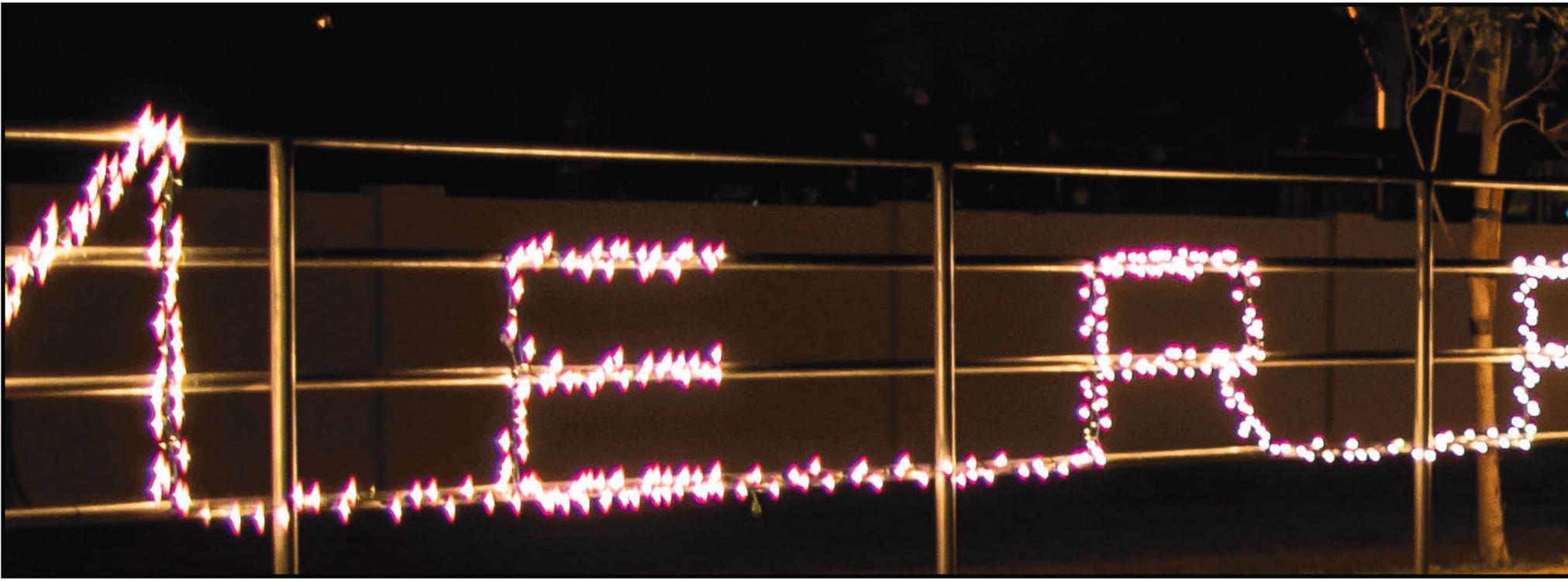
program, I immediately connected with the idea and was inspired to carry on my grandmother's legacy through a similar program for our students."

In her time outside of work, Garza set up a calendar system to organize the 14-day pick-up and drop-off cycle. Now, using the calendar alerts, one of the participants gets a letter, writes a response and returns it within two weeks.

"I love the feeling I get when I deliver the letters," Garza said. "Sometimes I take a peek at them, and I have noticed that even though there may be 70 or 80 years difference between the pair of writers, they have the same interests and things they like—favorite colors, foods and common activities."

"They are more alike than they are different."

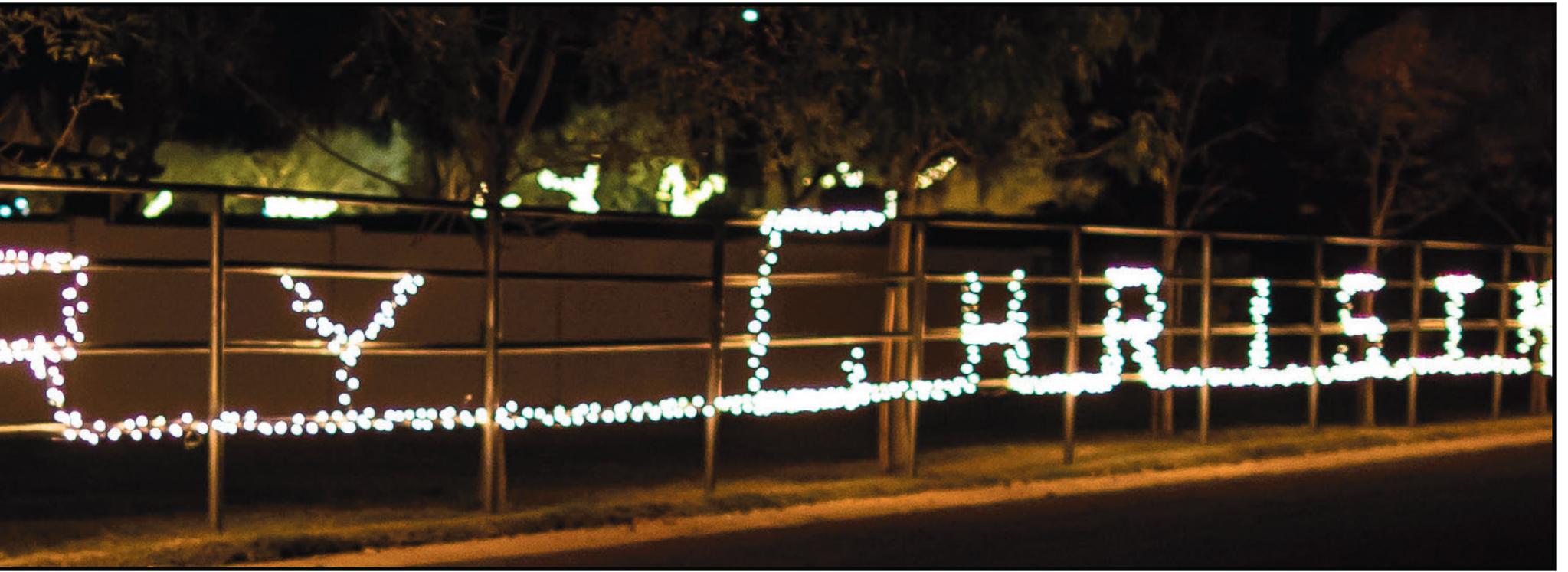
Garza says she has been told that the program is making a difference for all involved parties. Some seniors



Let the season begin ... with **LIGHTS**

Unbeknownst to many, photographer Billy Hardiman has an eye that is uniquely trained for holiday decorations due to years of designing, finding parts for and building his own family's spectacular display. One of our favorite reports comes from his mom, who was surprised to receive a call from Homeland Security agents one year while Billy was still a teen, curious why electronic circuitry was being shipped to their West Chandler address on a regular basis. A simple explanation was all that was needed: Hey, our son loves making the lights dance to accompanying holiday music broadcast to the car radios of passers-by on a special FM frequency. It was more affordable, according to Billy, to order the needed parts from China than to acquire them locally. With that story in mind, our Wrangler News editor dispatches Billy around this time every year, knowing he'll not only undertake the assignment gladly but at the same time enjoy comparing dozens of other neighborhood homes with his own electronic wizardry. To that, we say, OK, Billy: LIGHT UP!





Pen Pals

From Page 15

are in memory care, and the staff caring for them is noticing that it helps them to write letters and remember information.

“Many of our seniors don’t get much interaction with children, and many are lonely. To know they are receiving a letter from their pen pal really gives them something to look forward to,” said Jennie Mason, activity director at Friendship Village of Tempe.

Through letter writing, students are working on improving their handwriting, along with their verbal skills

and how they speak to others. In addition to working on their writing ability, students are also learning empathy because they really show care and interest in the pen pal’s comments, likes and dislikes. And, at the same time, learning that forming relationships can take place in the most unexpected ways.



Elementary shared about the program:

“I like that we get mail and they write to us.” – Taydem
 “They are always happy and nice, and like what we tell them.” – Gianna

“They ask us cool questions, and tell us cool things about their life.” – Brandon

One senior participating in the program, Joanne Jordan, smiled when she said that her pen pal asked her to write a letter in her own hand instead of typing it on the computer, “so she could see her beautiful handwriting.”

Jordan told her daughter in Seattle, who is a teacher, about the program, and the daughter is now considering implementing the program with her own students.

In this technological world of emails, texting and social media, Garza hoped the Pen Pals for Seniors program would be a simple way to keep the dying art of traditional letter writing alive.

There is something exciting about receiving a letter in the mail, and she wanted the pen pals to experience that feeling of eager anticipation.

“I enjoy hearing from my pen pal. It’s so fun hearing the things they say,” said senior Pen Pal Vanny McCoy. “When you are as old as I am, they bring me back to times when I was that young...and I recently discovered that we both love fried chicken!”

Garza was not expecting the program to grow as it has but is thankful for the impact it has been having. Her goal at the end of the school year is for the pen pals to meet in person to see each other face to face.

The pen pals at Arredondo are already planning to invite their pen pal seniors to the school’s Valentines season friendship musical performance.

“You can make a difference...just by taking a few minutes out of your day to simply talk to someone,” said Garza. “Something you may not think is a big deal could be a big deal for someone else.

“Everyone needs a friend and someone to talk to, tell stories and to share life with. Be that (friend) for someone, and you may find an amazing relationship you weren’t expecting.”

Information: amy.garza@tempeschools.org.



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Sports

with Alex Zener

CONFIDENCE WORKS WINNING GAMES EARLY A KEY TO CHAMPIONSHIP

Corona's boys basketball team started the season by winning the Fear the Hops Invitational at Mesa High School held Nov. 19-24.

Corona defeated Boulder Creek, Saguaro and Campo Verde in the semifinals, earning the right to play against the tournament host, Mesa High School, in the championship game on Nov. 24.

The Aztecs defeated the Jackrabbits 59-51 to win the championship trophy.

"It always helps with the players' confidence heading into the regular season if you win the first tournament," said coach **Neil MacDonald**. "The main benefit of winning games at a tournament early in the season is just getting some games under our belt with a new group of players."

— SPORTS, Page 20



Bottom Row: De Marco Smith, Mitch Laukonen, Jajuan Godley-Long, Max Faeth, Elijah McDaniel, Max Premeau, manager;
Middle Row: Aric Urban, Eric Blackwell, Derek Zarate, Sha-Vere Yarde, Roberto Yellowman; Top Row: Assistant Coach Alec Urban, Anthony Irvin, Finn Boyle, Jaron Reval, Keb Summers, Head Coach Neil MacDonald.

— Photo courtesy Herb Stokes

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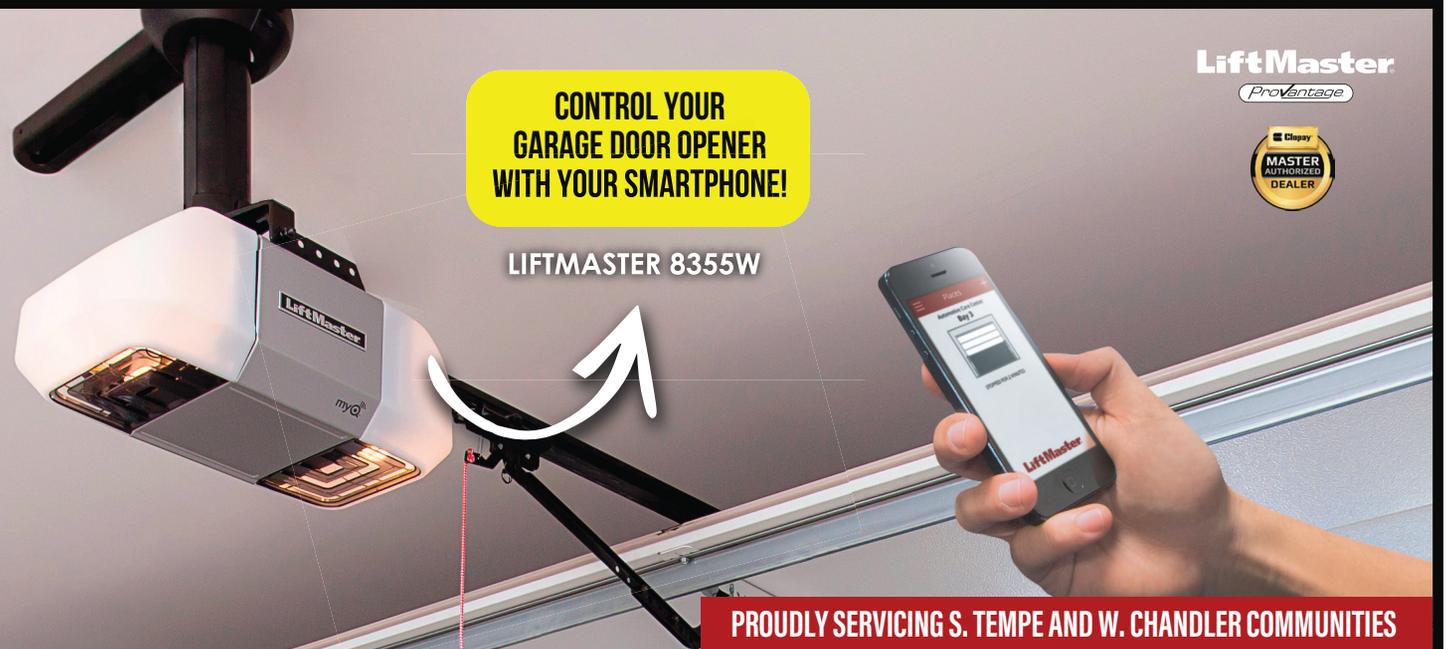
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Corona has six returning players out of the 15 on the roster, but only two were starters last season.

“Junior guard **Eric Blackwell** and 6-foot-6 senior center **Jaron Reval** are our only two returning starters,” said MacDonald.

“As a two-year varsity player, Eric was our co-leading scorer last season,” he noted.

“This year Eric, as a co-captain, will be counted on even more for leadership. He will also assume some of the point guard duties, which gives him even more responsibility. We have full confidence that he can handle it.”

Blackwell was named the Fear the Hop Invitational MVP for his impact on helping the Aztecs win all four games.

He was credited with scoring 23 of Corona’s 67 points, including four three-pointers, against Campo Verde in the semifinals.

The three-point baskets were falling for the Aztecs against Campo Verde. They ended the game with nine treys.

Three other returning players that MacDonald is expecting to have an impact are **Anthony Irvin**, **Sha-vere Yarde** and **Keb Summers**.

“Anthony is one of our top shooters, but he is also an excellent all-around player,” said MacDonald.

“He is one of our best defenders and is quickly developing into the type of player that you don’t want to take out of the game.”

Irvin, Corona’s 6-foot-2 junior guard, was credited with 11 points in the semifinals of the Fear the Hop Invitational.

“Sha-Vere is one of our strongest players,” said MacDonald. “He will be counted on for major contributions this year. Sha-Vere can score, is a tough defender, and really rebounds his position.”

Yarde, a 6-foot-3 senior guard, scored 11 points in the semifinals of Fear the Hop.

“Keb, a 6-foot-4 senior forward, is one of our returning players,” said MacDonald. “He is doing a good job contributing both in scoring and on the board this season.”

Other players contributing to Corona’s success on and off the court include four seniors: guard **Mitch Laukonen**, forward **Derek Zarate**, power forward **Jajuan Godley-Long** and center **Finn Boyle**; three juniors: guards **Demarco Smith** and **Aric Urban** and power forward **Max Faeth**; two sophomores: point guard **Roberto Yellowman** and small forward **Elijah McDaniel**.

Corona is ranked No. 7 in Division 6A by The Republic with a 6-3 record after their recent 66-77 loss to Eleanor Roosevelt, a school out of Maryland, at the annual Hoophall West basketball showcase at Chaparral High School on Dec. 8.

Corona was scheduled to play at Mountain View in a non-conference game on Dec. 11 and then a home game on Dec. 15 against Cibola, out of Yuma.

The Aztecs will not play again until Dec. 26-29, when they play in the Visit Mesa Challenge hosted by Mountain View.

Marcos de Niza basketball

The Padres, with a 4-6 record, have only four seniors on their roster but it appears that’s all they need when the four seniors are complemented by eight juniors, many with varsity experience.

Three seniors and two juniors lead the team in scoring while one senior and two juniors are the leading rebounders.

Senior **JJ Hill** has played in only eight of the possible 10 games but leads the team with an average of 11.3 points per game and 8.5 rebounds per game, while fellow senior **Torren Union** has played in 10 games and scored an average of 10.2 points a game along with an average of 3.5 assists a game.

Junior **Russ Lingruen** is next with 9.1 points per game, followed by his brother, junior **Tommy Lingruen**, with 8.3 points a game. Both brothers grab over five rebounds a game to be the second and third leading rebounders on the team behind Hill.

Senior **Ty Frazier** averages 8.1 points a game and over three rebounds, while fellow senior **Cole Fiscus** averages close to one point a game with a







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shooting average of 75 percent.

Marcos is coming off a two-game winning streak, including easily defeating Apache Junction 52-38 on Dec. 6. It was a tighter game at Greenway on Dec. 7 when they came away with a close 41-37 win.

Russ Lingruen led the way against Apache Junction scoring 15 points and hitting 80 percent of his shots. He also had four rebounds, one assist and three steals.

Hill led the team in rebounds with 11, plus he had three blocks.

In the Padres' 41-37 win over Greenway, Russ Lingruen scored 12 of the 41 points for the Padres to lead all players. He also had 12 rebounds.

Union was close with 11 points, eight of them clutch free-throws late in the game. Frazier had nine points. Tommy Lingruen had two blocks.

Team members who contribute to the Padres success on and off the court are juniors **Jaden Davis, Matt Canada, Jaden Upshaw, Camrion Bryant, Ethan Arroyo and Asael Worden.**

The Padres were scheduled to play Mesquite on Dec. 10 but no score had been reported by press time. Up next, Marcos was scheduled to play at home against Combs on Dec. 11 and away at Glendale on Dec. 14.

Starting on Dec. 26, they are scheduled to play in

the 2019 Holiday Shoot-Out hosted by McClintock. In the first round, starting at 10 a.m., the Padres are currently scheduled to play Cesar Chavez.

After the holiday break, Marcos will enter region play.

Their first game is scheduled for Jan. 8 at Arcadia, followed by a home game against Poston Butte on Jan. 10.

McClintock basketball

McClintock's boys squad has a senior-laden team with nine seniors and only four juniors, and one sophomore.

Three players lead the team in scoring, including one senior who has been instrumental in giving the Chargers an 8-2 record early in the 2018-19 season.

Senior **Josh Baker**, after only 10 games, has scored 233 points out of the team's 739 points. His field goal percentage is 58 percent on two-point shots, plus he has hit 33 of 56 of his attempted three-point shots making his three-point percentage an incredible 59 percent.

Baker is also the second leading rebounder on the team with 51 total rebounds. Add to those statistics 44 assists, 30 steals and three blocks.

Senior **Mekhi Rodgers**, with 58, is the only player with more rebounds than Baker.

Senior **Donavan Williams** has 49 rebounds. Senior **Jalen Calvert** has 39 rebounds playing in only six games, while senior **Rook Wood** has 38 rebounds.

Junior **Armani Williams** is the second leading scorer with a total of 180 points over 10 games, while Donovan Williams has put up 100 points over 10 games.

Calvert, at the center position, is a blocking machine with 35 of the team's 49 total blocks in only six games.

Senior **Jordan Martin** has played in all 10 games, scoring 69 points with 11 three-pointers.

Other members of the team who have contributed to McClintock's overall success on and off the court are seniors **Bryan Hernandez, William Roberts and Craig Gittens**, juniors **Isaac McCann, Chance Garland and Aiden Penry**, and sophomore **Darius Ward.**

McClintock was scheduled to play three home games before the winter break: Dec. 11 against Desert Mountain, Dec. 13 against Notre Dame Prep and Dec. 17 against Paradise Valley. After the break they play two away games: At North Canyon on Jan. 8 and at Cactus Shadows on Jan. 11.



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Tempe among celebrants of Valley Metro anniversary

Valley leaders past, present and future observed Valley Metro Rail's 10-year anniversary by announcing free rides on Dec. 27 that will take the public to Talking Stick Resort for yet another celebration. Tempe Mayor Mark Mitchell was on hand

for the observance.

Valley Metro CEO Scott Smith hosted rail-city mayors who were in office during the transformation that has occurred in their cities over the past decade.

"Since light rail opened," said Phoenix Mayor and Valley Metro Rail Board Chair Thelda Williams, "we've transformed from a quiet downtown into a bustling hot spot for innovation, education and business."

Dementia series

Caregivers who are finding ways to improve the quality of life for themselves and their loved ones will share their success stories, large and small, and offer suggestions, humor and hope to others going through this journey at sessions held regularly at Tempe Public Library.

Dementia Friendly Tempe presents a monthly series of free educational lectures to raise community awareness of memory loss conditions and help families access available resources.

Information: tempe.gov/DFT.



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In Tempe

Diversions

TV veteran 'lets it rip' in Tempe Arts Center's take on 'Christmas Carol'

By M.V. Moorhead

Curious to think that Charles Shaughnessy, the romantic lead on the long-running sitcom *The Nanny*, has reached the age where he can plausibly play Ebenezer Scrooge.

But not only does Shaughnessy, also a multi-year veteran of the daytime drama *Days of Our Lives*, play the iconic Dickens miser in the current Scottsdale Musical Theatre Company production of *A Christmas Carol: The Musical* at Tempe Center for the Arts — he lets it rip.



He gives a straightforward, traditional and highly satisfying interpretation to the role. Hunched over and sneering, he looks like a Cruikshank drawing come to life, and he keeps up a constant disconsolate muttering and grumbling; he talks to himself in the distinctive manner of an unhappy person who spends most of

his time in his own company. But he also displays a rich, expressive singing voice.

This version of the story features music by Alan Menken of *Little Shop of Horrors* and *The Little Mermaid*, and lyrics by Lynne Ahrens of many Broadway shows as well as TV's *Schoolhouse Rock!* It opened in 1994 at Madison Square Garden and played there annually at Christmastime for many years, with a variety of famous actors cycling through the role of Scrooge.

It's not my favorite adaptation of the tale. The story is extremely compressed—it clocks in at under two hours, without an intermission—and being almost (though not quite) “sung-through,” it loses a lot of the story's best dialogue and familiar situations, or shuffles them around in ways that cause them to lose their impact.

The SMTC production is energetic, however, and while the voices are inevitably variable, the vigor and commitment of the performers is infectious. Hector Coris stands out amusingly as a rather Rip Taylor-like Ghost of Christmas Present, and Matt Newhard is in fine voice as Bob Cratchit, as is Alexis Poulette

Discerning Diner: Sweetest Season Dual passions, singular success lend caché to new eatery



By M.V. Moorhead

For many people, this time of year is the sweetest season of them all. It's certainly the time during which many of us eat the most sweets. But at McClintock and Guadalupe in Tempe, Sweetest Season refers not to the holidays but to a new restaurant and bakery where things beckon with mouth-watering compulsion all year round.

As with the other Sweetest Season, founded in 2016 on Apache Boulevard, the new location specializes in yummy home-baked goodies, ranging from muffins to cookies to salted caramel cinnamon rolls to raspberry pop tarts to classic-style Belgian waffles to Cardamom French toast—“the lovely, snobbier twin of the traditional recipe,” according to the menu.

But the new Sweetest Season's from-scratch kitchen can also go to the savory end of the taste spectrum, with homemade breakfast and lunch treats like “Season's Benedict,” a sensational approach to eggs benny, or the “Gangsta Grilled Cheese,” featuring a “super secret sauce.”

According to “completely self-taught” chef Melody Elkin, the inspiration for all this is fairly simple:

“I've explored all types of food, and my motivation for what kind of food I want to make is what kind of food I want to eat. But then I put my own take on it.”

Although the Colorado Springs, Colo., native had dreamed of being a chef following a long history of watching the Food Network, she landed here in the Valley for entirely non-culinary reasons.

“I came here to Tempe because I played basketball at ASU, under Charli Turner Thorne,” she says. “I would invite my teammates over and require that

they dress up. No basketball shorts, no tennis shoes.”

This didn't always go over well with a bunch of athletes, but, notes Elkin, “it was free, so they usually complied.” After finishing at ASU, she was drafted by the (now-defunct) Portland Fire WNBA team, but left after draft camp.

“Basketball is not necessarily my passion,” Elkin explains. “I was good at it, but it wasn't my passion.” Cooking, on the other hand, was, but it would be a while before she came face to face with the entrepreneurial side of what was to be her life plan.

“I had many career paths,” she recalls. “I started off in sales for Xerox. I was a high school teacher and



coach in L.A. Most recently, I was with the Tempe Chamber of Commerce.”

Somewhere in there Elkin started selling baked goods at Tempe's Clark Park Farmers Market, and before long she was represented at several other such venues. This led to the founding, two years ago, of the first Sweetest Season.

Essential to the success of these enterprises is her husband, Todd Elkin. “He has about 20 years of restaurant management experience,” she explains. Perhaps because of his culinary know-how, he recognized her talent near the beginning of their relationship. “We're foodie people,” says Melody, “so when we were first dating he challenged me to a little cooking competition.

“He said, ‘you go first.’ I made him gorgonzola-encrusted lamb lollipops. When he tasted them, he threw in the towel.”

Sweetest Season Artisan Eatery is at 1835 E. Guadalupe Road, next to Fry's, in Tempe. Go to sweetestseason.com or call 480-867-1564 for details.

as his better half. The costumes are handsome, but the physical production is spare, with scene changes achieved through rear-projection and some less-than-atmospheric set fragments.

All the same, director David Hook and choreographer Hillary Conrad manage a couple of effective flourishes; chains that descend menacingly from the heavens while Marley (Patrick Lose) sings his big number, and the ensemble of sinister spirits in colorful, fluorescent masks that dance to almost cyberpunk effect during that same song.

Most visually striking, perhaps, is the towering female Ghost of Christmas Future (Kendall Luther); in a black dress with long, spidery, clawed arms, she might have wandered out of Edward Gorey's subconscious.

Despite some limitations, the SMTC production of *A Christmas Carol: The Musical* is an enjoyable way to get into the holiday spirit. A practical note, however: Leave home early to allow yourself plenty of time to drop off your party and find a place to park. Free parking is located northwest of the Rio Salado Parkway and Hardy Drive. Shuttles are available.

Information: tempecenterforthearts.com.

A Christmas Carol: The Musical runs through Sunday, December 23 at Tempe Center for the Arts. Tickets range from \$42-\$58 for adults; \$25 for children 10 and younger. Go to tempecenterforthearts.com or call 480-350-2822 for tickets and other information.



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Dr. Tyrone Holmes, Ed.D
Friday January 18th



Park Howell
Friday January 25th



Kathleen Duffy Ybarra
Friday February 1st



Deborah Ostreicher
Friday February 8th

When: Registration 8:00am – 8:30am Program 8:30am – 9:30am	Where: marinalink by State Farm 510 E. Rio Salado Parkway, Tempe	Pricing: Members \$25 / General Admission \$35 Discounted Series Passes Available!
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Tempe Chamber

How your tax credit helps our local schools

With the end of 2018 looming, school tax credit organizations are scrambling to remind Arizona taxpayers that there's still time to have an impact on students' lives, even if not a parent or grandparent.

Contributions do not require having a student currently enrolled to participate in the Arizona Tax Credit Program (A.R.S. 43-1089.01).

The program allows any Arizona taxpayer to donate up to \$400 if filing jointly or \$200 for filing singly to a school in support of extracurricular programs and get the entire donation back in the form of a state tax credit.

Schools in the Kyrene, Tempe and Tempe Union High School districts make it known that they rely on these donations to help fund extracurricular activities.

Through the years, Corona del Sol High School, for example, has used the money to support extracurricular programs such as the national finals of the We the People competition, athletic programs, robotics, drama and fine arts programs, and others.

In the case of Corona del Sol, donations can be brought to the Corona bookstore. Contributions to any Tempe Union high school can be made online at tempeunion.org/Page/152.

To donate to a Kyrene school visit kyrene.org/taxcredit. For Tempe Elementary, go to tempeschools.org/our-district/information-history/tax-credit-information/make-a-tax-credit-donation.

Our next issue is Saturday, Jan. 12

For advertising space reservations please let us know by 3 p.m. Friday, Jan. 4. For story or photo ideas, call 480-966-087 or email editor@wranglernews.com by 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 3. You're also welcome to drop by our office in Warner Century Plaza at 2145 E. Warner Road, just across the street from GoDaddy, any time 9-5 M-F.

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Chandler ♦ Arizona NEWS+ Events

chandleraz.gov/news-center

'Awkward Family Photos' exhibit at new Chandler Museum through Jan. 19

The first national traveling exhibition at the newly opened Chandler Museum is "Awkward Family Photos," a funny and memorable display of more than 200 photos of families immortalized in awkward moments and presented in funky and vintage frames. "Awkward Family Photos" will be on display through Saturday, Jan. 19. A free public reception for the exhibit will be held from 6-8 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 17.

Another current exhibition is "Gaman: Enduring Japanese American Internment at Gila River," which explores the experiences of

more than 16,000 Japanese Americans who were forcibly removed from their west coast homes at the beginning of World War II and placed in the Gila River Internment Camp, located south of Chandler. This all new presentation is an expansion of the museum's previous work on internment and features objects from the camp provided by museum collections across the nation. This exhibition will run through April 19, 2020.

The new Chandler Museum is located southwest of Chandler Fashion Center at 300 S. Chandler Village Drive. Regular hours of operation are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, 1-5 p.m. Admission is free. More information is online at chandleraz.gov/museum, or call 782-2717.

Christmas Tree Disposal and Recycling Options



Let the City of Chandler recycle your Christmas tree after the holidays. Christmas trees that are collected are chipped and reused in park landscaping projects. For safety, please remove tree stands, nails, lights, ornaments and garland before recycling, and do not place trees in bags.

Chandler offers several methods for tree recycling.

- Drop-off boxes are available at multiple locations from Dec. 26, through Jan. 11, 2019. Visit chandleraz.gov/recycle or call 782-3510 for locations.
- Trees also will be collected separately at the curb on your recycling collection day, from Dec. 26, to Jan. 11, 2019. You do not have to schedule this collection, but trees must be at the edge of your driveway (no more than four feet onto your property) by 6 a.m. on your recycling day. Do not place the tree in the recycling bin, on the sidewalk or street.
- Live potted Christmas trees can be donated for replanting at City parks by dropping them off at the City's Community Center or schedule a pick up by calling 782-2752.

Trash and Recycling Collection Days Shift for Two Week Holiday Period



There will be no trash or recycling collection on Tuesday, Dec. 25 or Jan. 1. Every household must place their can at the curb by 6 a.m. on the day following their regular collection day from Dec. 25 to Jan. 5, 2019. If your regular collection day is

Tuesday, place your container at the curb by 6 a.m. Wednesday. Residents with Wednesday collection switch to Thursday, Thursday to Friday and Friday to Saturday. Collection can occur anytime from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.

City offices will be closed:

- Tuesday, Dec. 25, for the Christmas holiday.
- Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019, for the New Year's Day holiday.

Resident feedback affects future budget priorities

The City of Chandler wants feedback from residents about issues affecting the community, including transportation, public safety, leisure and culture, utilities, customer services and more. Residents may complete the online Citizen Budget Survey at chandleraz.gov/budget through the end of December. Paper copies, in either English or Spanish, also may be picked up at various City facilities, or downloaded from the website. For more information, call 782-2252.

EVENTS

DECEMBER

- 15 Pictures with Santa at Santa's House, Downtown Chandler, 782-2735
- 15 Downtown Chandler Farmers Market, Dr. A.J. Chandler Park, 855-3539
- 18 Holiday Craft & Cookie Decorating, Community Center, 782-2727
- 19 Family Night at the TRC – Winter Wonderland, Tumbleweed Recreation Center, 782-2900
- 20 Sonoran Sunset Series featuring Holiday Songs by The Real Thing Band, Veterans Oasis Park, 782-2890
- 21 Drumline Live Holiday Spectacular, Chandler Center for the Arts, 782-2680
- 22 Downtown Chandler Farmers Market, Dr. A.J. Chandler Park, 855-3539
- 25 Christmas Holiday, City offices closed

- 26-31 Zoppé, an Italian Family Circus, Chandler Center for the Arts, 782-2680
- 29 Downtown Chandler Farmers Market, Dr. A.J. Chandler Park, 855-3539

JANUARY

- 1 New Year's Holiday, City offices closed
- 2-6 Zoppé, an Italian Family Circus, Chandler Center for the Arts, 782-2680
- 5 Downtown Chandler Farmers Market, Dr. A.J. Chandler Park, 855-3539
- 7 City Council Study Session, Council Chambers, 782-2180
- 10 Klezmer Film Screening and Concert, Center for the Arts, 897-0588
- 10 City Council Meeting, Council Chambers, 782-2180
- 12 Downtown Chandler Farmers Market, Dr. A.J. Chandler Park, 855-3539
- 13 Klezmer Musical Fest, East Valley Jewish Community Center, 897-0588

- 17-21 Chandler International Film Festival, Downtown Chandler, 455-5214
- 17 Sonoran Sunset Concert Series featuring Rockin' Memories, Veterans Oasis Park, 782-2890
- 18 Pink Martini, Chandler Center for the Arts, 782-2680
- 19 Downtown Chandler Farmers Market, Dr. A.J. Chandler Park, 855-3539
- 19 Chandler Multicultural Festival, Downtown Stage Plaza, 782-2735
- 20 One: Candlelight Vigil for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Downtown Stage, 782-2214
- 21 Martin Luther King, Jr./Civil Rights Day, City offices closed
- 24 FitDC, Downtown Stage Plaza, 782-2669
- 31 FitDC, Downtown Stage Plaza, 782-2669

For event details, visit chandleraz.gov or call the Chandler Special Events Hotline at 782-2735.

Mayor Jay Tibshraeny & City Council





Business Education & Advocacy

The Chandler Chamber of Commerce offers many opportunities to sharpen your skills and advocate for your interests. Register for these events at www.ChandlerChamber.com/calendar



Women in Leadership Luncheon Success to Significance Panel

Tuesday, December 18, 2018
Noon to 1:30 pm

SoHo63
63 E Boston St.
Chandler, AZ 85225

WIL takes a look at four C-level women executives who have made it to the top. We take a deep dive into the secrets to their success. Discover how each of these women have become not only successful, but significant. Meet Cina Sunderhaus, Chandler Fire Marshal, Kerry Hayden, Lobbyist, Bethanny Crouse, Executive Health & Wellness Trainer and Terri Kimble, Chandler Chamber President/CEO.

Register @ ChandlerChamber.com/calendar

Meet the Elected Officials Legislative Breakfast

Friday, January 4, 2019
7:30 am to 9:30 am

Avion Center
1733 E Northrop Blvd.
Chandler, AZ 85286



Guests will have the opportunity to meet the 2019 Arizona State Legislators, Federal, Local, and School Governing Board Officials, as well as hear an update from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber will unveil the new 2019 *How We Stand* legislative document, which depicts legislative agendas and priorities for the coming year.

Register @ ChandlerChamber.com/calendar



Apply for Chandler Chamber Community Foundation Leadership Institute

Backstage Pass to all that is Chandler
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This two year program educates attendees who are up-and-coming leaders or individuals already serving in leadership roles in the local community, become aware of everything Chandler has to offer, all while learning valuable leadership skills. Go behind the scenes with Fire and Police, Chandler Unified School District, local and federal government, healthcare, tourism and more. If you are interested please call 480-963-4571 or visit <http://bit.ly/2UAhk07> to download an application.

Register @ ChandlerChamber.com/calendar

SAVE THE DATE Economic Update Luncheon

Wednesday, January 30, 2019
11:30 am to 1 pm



Mark your calendars so you don't miss the first Economic Update Luncheon of the year designed to bring local and regional economic information to the business leaders of the Chandler community. Get an update on what is happening in Chandler as there are many new and continuing projects developing.

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First Person: Noah Kutz

Making our community better, one unlocked door at a time

Noah Kutz, lead member of our community outreach effort, is a global studies major at ASU. He lived for eight years in the Washington, D.C., area and has an informed perspective of national and world issues. The following column offers insight into his view of some of the ways we can make our communities better.

I stood outside the driver-side window of my car and pressed my face against the glass to confirm my idiocy. There sat the keys on the passenger seat, the little button on the door hopelessly switched, I was sure, to the “lock” position. Not a happy discovery.

I walked into my destination, Sweetest Season, a new café in the shopping center at Guadalupe and McClintock, and told a fellow 20-something who greeted me that I’d be needing some coffee and a place to sit for a while. Or maybe longer.

Despite my initial thought to call AAA, I found myself walking with one of the employees of this family-run restaurant a few minutes later—me no less despairing, him determined to pry my car door open to make room for the wire hanger he brought with him to be wiggled through the crack to disengage the “unlock” button.

With the help of two more table servers, two SRP workers who passed by in their truck and asked to help, and a stranger who saw the commotion and thought he’d join—seemingly all the kings horses and men willing to help—we opened the car in less than 15 minutes.

Triple A? With people like this around, who needs them? I had a wire hanger and a bunch of good-hearted Samaritans determined to help me out of a jam.

No matter what you say about people these days, you’ll find those who are simply the best anywhere you are. This is, in a way, what we preach here at your neighborhood newspaper. Although metro Phoenix can feel like an awfully big place sometimes, we hope you can find ways every day to make it feel just a little bit smaller.

By this I mean talking to people, face-to-face, and cultivating meaningful relationships with the community around you. This goes hand-in-hand with supporting local businesses, plus keeping your mindset locally influenced.

The other day I saw an ad in *The New York Times* that read:

“The truth is worth it. Subscribe now.” I actually considered hitting the online subscribe button, but continued to scroll through the pages that followed on the screen. This is no doubt because I’m part of this new generation that seeks to find the cheapest and most convenient way to consume things, which translates to:

There’s no way I’m going to pay for news that I probably can find elsewhere for free.

The same goes for shopping. Where are you buying your Christmas gifts this season? I think I can make a safe assumption that at least half of us are buying at least half our presents on Amazon.

There’s no shame in this; after all, it’s quicker and likely more convenient. Despite this continuously growing phenomenon of convenient methods to consume cheaper products, however, there’s something that big, distant corporations don’t have on small businesses: the experience.

My favorite part of going into small coffee shops and eateries is when they serve me a cup of exceptional coffee in a real mug. It may not seem like a big deal, but savoring my drink through a ceramic mug and sipping some delicious dark roast creates an environment I would like to experience again.

Some people know this same feeling when they hold a newspaper and flip its pages between their fingers. Local places make you feel like you’re home with your family as they bring you an experience that feels nothing short of comfortable, despite being in a place that may be completely unfamiliar.

We need more of this in our society. We need more people who desire to consume locally produced and locally owned products, because these things enable larger communities to maintain small-town mindsets.

If your mind is constantly in the clouds, away from the here-and-now, then all you will find is what’s in the clouds. But if you take a moment to come back down to earth and interact with your neighbors, your local vendors, your friends, your family, then you’ll be doing your part to help cultivate a community of harmony and friendship.

Before you seek the cheapest and easiest method of consuming your desired product, find a real coffee mug or real a local newspaper and pursue it with the people around you.

Here in this community, we seek to cultivate fellowship and sociability with our neighbors. And, by the way, if you see someone trying to get to their keys inside their locked car, help them out. It’s a sure way of making someone’s day.



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Artist Guild show starts Jan. 15

More than 20 Tempe artists skilled in the use of oil, acrylic, pencil, pastel, mixed media and watercolor will display original works at the Tempe History Museum from Jan. 15 through Feb. 17.

Tempe Artists Guild members are participating in the museum's changing exhibit, Humans of Tempe, which presents stories and images of everyday people who make Tempe what has been described as the diverse and unique city it is today.

The art relates to the museum's Time Machine theme and marks the seventh year that the artist group has partnered with the museum to feature locally generated work.

Said Dan Miller, the museum's exhibit coordinator, Dan Miller:

"Tempe History Museum's Community Room always takes on a very colorful look when

the Tempe Artists Guild presents a show there. It is especially insightful when the artists key off themes in our exhibit hall."

TAG President Janet Fagan added, "Our members are accomplished artists who bring unexpected and delightful interpretations to portraits and figural renderings.

These drawings and paintings are sure to make you look closer and see familiar local faces in a different way. If you live in Tempe, you might even recognize yourself on the wall."

An artist reception, open to the public, and is scheduled for 5:30-7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 18.

Tempe History Museum, 809 E. Southern Ave., is open to visitors Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10-5 and Sundays from 1-5. It is closed on Mondays.

Admission is free, but donations are welcomed.



Holiday schedule for trash pickup

The upcoming holidays will affect recycling and trash collection, with no collection occurring on Christmas Day, Tuesday, Dec. 25, or New Year's Day, Tuesday, Jan. 1.

For those holiday weeks, residents with regular Tuesday collection are asked to place their cans at the curb by 6 a.m. Wednesday. Those with regular Wednesday collection will have receptacles picked up on Thursday, and regular Thursday collection will change to Friday. Regular Friday collection will move to Saturday.

Collections scheduled for Monday, Dec. 24, and Monday, Dec. 31, will not change.

Collection can occur anytime from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. To ensure your can is picked up, make sure that cars parked on the street do not hinder the ability of collection trucks to service the cans.

Christmas and New Year's Day are two of only four holidays that the city of Chandler does not collect recycling and trash. Others are the 4th of July and Thanksgiving.

Floating islands part of pilot project to cut chemical use

The pond at Tempe's Selleh Park is now home to four floating islands that could help improve water quality without the use of chemicals—a pilot project that, if successful, could be used at other parks in the city.

The experiment is one of nine Innovation Fund projects designed to inspire new ideas to improve the Tempe community.

Experts say that floating islands occur naturally in water bodies across the world. Mimicking them in park lakes and ponds can provide a natural method to improve water quality, provide safe habitats for existing park wildlife, and attract new types of wildlife.

Studies show that the floating islands act as a filter in the water, providing a surface for microbes and good bacteria, which pull pollutants from the water. The resulting ecosystem also provides a habitat for plants and other wildlife, as well as shade and cooler water designed to help the pond's fish thrive.

City staff will be analyzing the islands through June to gauge their effectiveness at cleaning the water, and to understand the amount of maintenance required to keep the islands healthy. If the \$7,000 pilot project is successful, more floating islands could be used at Selleh and other Tempe parks.

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