

Feb. 21 - March 6, 2015

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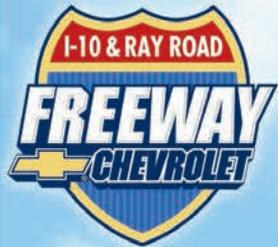
Wrangler NEWS

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Young thespians under the tutelage of longtime Kyrene Middle School drama instructor Julie Hackman present their version of the popular stage musical 'Annie' during performances Wednesday-Saturday, Feb. 25-28. Cast includes, from left, Sydney Holly as Grace, Cassie Rector as Annie and Logan Bridge as Mr. Bucks.

Wrangler News photo by Billy Hardiman (Details and more photos, Page 11)



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Area home prices seen rising; greater stability appears likely

Thinking about buying or selling a home in Tempe or Chandler this year? Despite what some of the nation's real estate pundits have to say, this may be the best time in a long time.

While many other cities around the country haven't seen a significant pace of recovery, the east Valley—particularly the 85284 and 85226 zip codes—has reached a positive “balance point,” say market analysts.

Balance point, in this case, refers to the approximately 5-month supply of listings which, while not excessive, is closer to pre-2007 levels. That's when distressed sales—bank-owned properties or those in foreclosure—exceeded 60 percent of the market. That number is now 5 percent.

Adding to the favorability factor is the arrival of spring, says longtime Tempe-Chandler Realtor Jeff Lucas.

“Our spring market has always been the best time of the year to buy a house,” he says.

“There's normally a disproportionate number of sales from the end of Super Bowl until about the middle of June,” a time span when selection tends to be better for buyers and prices lean more favorably toward sellers.”

Although seasonal timing is now at its peak, Lucas notes however that the demand side is not currently as strong as it historically has been, with the number of sales and listings per month remaining a bit below average. But not to fear: anticipated market conditions for the rest of the year indicate that the sky, real estate-wise, is not falling.

For owners who want to list their properties, current factors suggest that this is an even more important reason to first get their houses in the best possible shape.

“Many properties that are going to be offered for sale in this area are 30 years old or older, so if they haven't been updated, remodeled or refreshed in some way, the pricing for those is going to fall at the lower end,” Lucas said.

This can be attributed to a buyer's recognition that a significant amount of money will have to be invested back into the property to restore or modernize it to current styles and standards.

Therefore, says Lucas, sellers are well advised to perform at least the basic upgrades.

“Faced with the need for improvements, the biggest return on investment is fresh paint inside, as well as outside, if needed. Custom colors also can help, as can newer carpet.”

The payoff usually is significant, Lucas says, with the home often selling faster and for a better price.

“Who wants to buy a property knowing that a houseful of carpet has to be replaced, where the home doesn't show well,” he posits. “The owner going into a sale mode should make sure that the house is refreshed and cleaned. Because the spring season has arrived, it's also a great time for the landscaping to be rejuvenated, and for flowers to be blooming.”

As to what the local market has experienced in the past year, Lucas says appreciation has been on the lower end, at 1.5 percent to 3 percent, which is below the previous year's 4 percent to 6 percent. “The reason for this is that the demand side has been weaker in the last 12 months than previously, largely because investors have left the market,” according to Lucas.

This translates to a 15 percent to 20 percent drop on the demand side, a condition in which buying pressure has been moderate and appreciation lower.

Another factor cited by Lucas is the result of so-called “boomerang buyers,” those who have lost their previously owned properties through short sales or foreclosures, making them ineligible for financing for three to seven years, depending on which one of those modes caused the owner's departure.

Lucas quotes estimates indicating the number of such cases in metro Phoenix ranges from 350,000-400,000.

Editor's note: Carol Royse, one of the area's longest-term Realtors who has seen the area in transition in recent years, added her voice to a discussion of the market's current state. As did others, Royse saw reason for optimism in the near future.

Everyone wants to know, “How's the local real estate market?”

The area went through such a boom, and then a bust, during 2007 through 2010, homeowners are rightly asking and wanting accurate answers on their property values.

Many have felt somewhat trapped in their homes and would like to move, either by downsizing or buying a bigger home.

However, Royse says, the news from TV shows and even some newspapers can be confusing.

“Here the scoop,” she says...

“The market in South Tempe and North Chandler was sluggish in the last quarter of 2014. Instead of getting the post-Labor Day bounce we usually get, it was flat.

“The market stayed relatively flat through October, November and December, however January did see improvement.

“While there was little appreciation in home sales, the fact there were more contracts pending is positive and should stay positive through the summer months.

“Seventy ‘active’ listings and 98 ‘solds,’” she noted.

“That's good news.”

'One-on-One Journey' opens a roadmap to Kyrene kids' mastery of technology

By Diana Whittle

A pilot program allows students at Aprende Middle School to use technology during class—and even at home—to broaden their learning experiences. Members of the Kyrene district's Governing Board recently saw how easily a third-grader used a laptop computer to create a presentation based on how a seed grows.

April Conyers, who attends Esperanza Elementary in Ahwatukee, another Kyrene school where the program is in use, explained how she was able to take the portable computer into the school's "Discovery Garden" and experience an outdoor classroom setting.

"It is a nice change to be outside, and the computers make learning more fun and more visual. I was able to draw pictures of plants with computer tools and show the steps it takes to make a seed grow," said April.

Kyrene's program, called the "One-on-One Journey," is a continuation of a district-wide initiative that started in 2003 to adopt technology for learning and instruction. Although not yet available at every school, students at Aprende can take their laptops home to use there, as well.

Damian Nichols, director of technology for the district, says that Kyrene teachers are empowered to use a variety of technology tools to improve student achievement.

"Technology is integrated into the curriculum and is an integral part of the daily lesson plans of all subjects—from math and reading to music and art," said Nichols. "While there are computer labs at every school, the district believes that the teachable moment doesn't always occur on a computer lab schedule, so flexible technology is provided in the classrooms."

Throughout the entire district, every K-8 classroom is enhanced with 5 to 8 wireless

laptops, a projector and a document camera so that students have hands-on access to technology as part of their everyday instruction and learning.

Each kindergarten-through-5th-grade classroom also has interactive whiteboards, commonly known as SmartBoards.

Students use industry-standard word-processor and spreadsheet programs, specialized graphics and education software, and web-based applications and information sources.

Teachers participate in regular staff development and mentoring programs to help them better use these tools.

Nichols said, "The goal by the 2017-18 school years is to establish a one-to-one environment within the Kyrene district, where each student has access to a computing device whenever and wherever they need it."

For current students, who already use electronic devices as easily and comfortably as previous generations used pencil and paper, keeping pace with 21st Century technology is critical as the students move forward in their educational future, says Dr. Cheryl Greene, a principal at one of the participating schools.

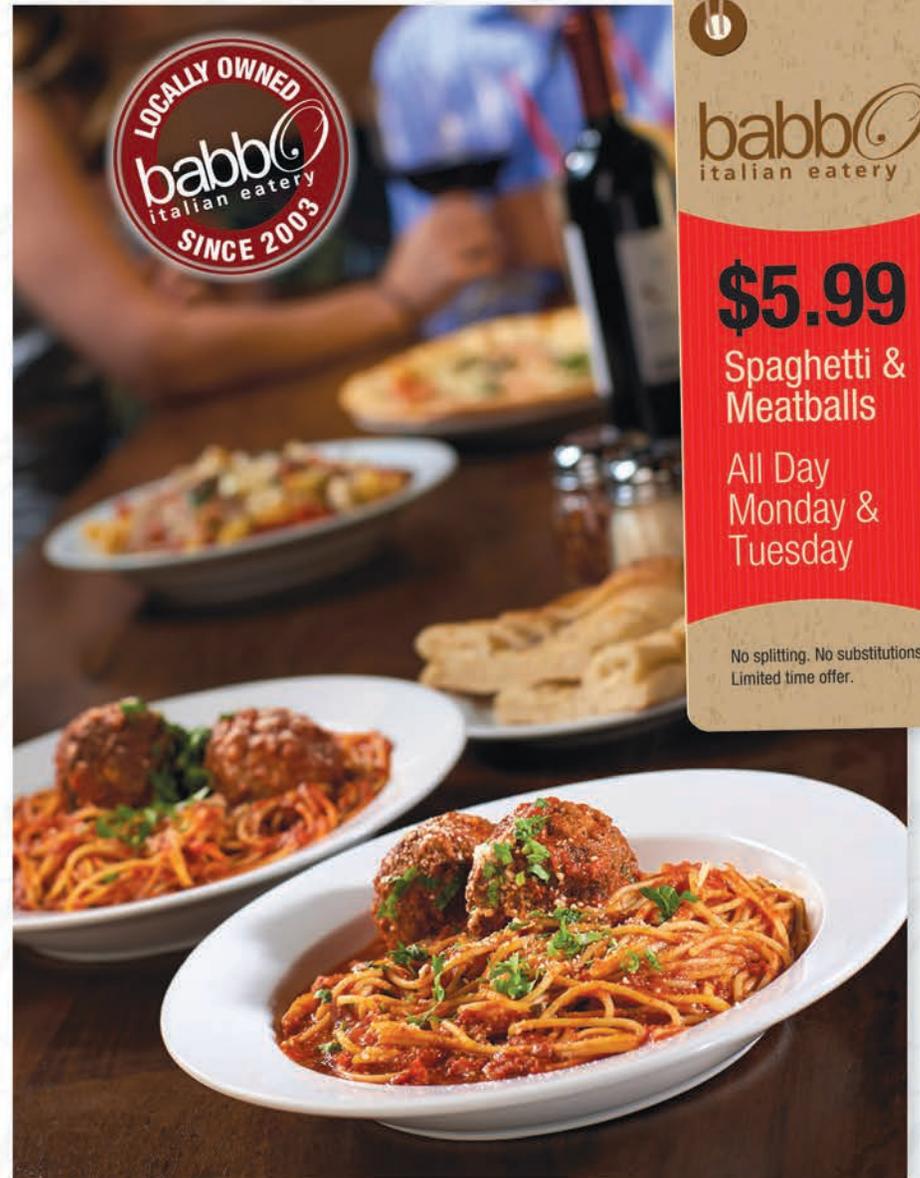
"Another benefit is (that) the increased use of technology allows teachers to personalize the learning experience to the ability of each child," said Greene.

The current effort provided 10 devices, including laptops and iPads, to classrooms in the two involved schools for students to share. Karen Schwartz, also a Kyrene teacher, believes that "students can only become proficient in technology by using it."

"We want to make learning accessible to all kids and to integrate technology into the classroom in new and innovative ways," said Schwartz. Students in the pilot program will create an electronic portfolio of their work, which will be on display at the next Parents Night.

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Sinema's bi-partisan strategy scores points with chamber group

By Joyce Coronel

Sometimes controversial U.S. Rep. Kyrsten Sinema seemed to walk on hallowed ground during her State of the District address to members of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce. Indeed, the cordial reception she received hardly could have been cast by a more welcoming audience.

Elected to Congress in 2012, Sinema represents Arizona's ninth congressional district, encompassing areas of Tempe, Chandler, Mesa, Ahwatukee, Scottsdale and Phoenix.

In her presentation to the chamber, held at the Rio Salado Community College conference center on Feb. 17, Sinema emphasized what she called her bipartisan approach to politics and support for the local business community.

Tempe Mayor Mark Mitchell, as well as members of the Tempe City Council and local business community, were on hand for the occasion.

"I approach this job with a perspective that's increasingly rare in Washington, and that's a commitment to reach across the aisle and work with anyone who is serious to find solutions to help our state move ahead and our economy forward," Sinema said.

"You all know that in business there are never just two perspectives—there are dozens of perspectives. So reducing conversations in Washington to an all-Democrats-think-that or all-Republicans-believe-that mentality is, frankly, ridiculous," Sinema told the group.



U.S. Rep. Kyrsten Sinema with Tempe Mayor Mark Mitchell, right, and Mitchell aide Tony Cani at a State of the District address Feb. 17 to members of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce.

— Wrangler News photo by Joyce Coronel

It was an approach that Glen Hayward, owner of Good Works Auto Repair of Tempe, said he found refreshing. Hayward said that although he thinks of himself as mostly a Republican, in his opinion, Sinema has the right attitude.

Her talk, he said, was "excellent."

"I think it's about time that more people who are like-minded in Congress take that approach and reach across the aisle and quit acting like a bunch of spoiled babies," Hayward said.

"I think she's got the right attitude. If her

demeanor in Congress is the same that it was this morning in the meeting, I would overwhelmingly be in favor of the approaches and the ideologies that she has," he added.

Sinema noted the areas she has focused on in Congress: reforming the tax code, improving the nation's aging infrastructure and dealing with the layers of regulation that are a burden to businesses.

Calling small business the "backbone of Arizona's economy," Sinema pledged to work toward reform of a regulatory system she termed "outdated."

"We have to make sure there are clear and fair rules for businesses in the regulatory process," Sinema said.

"Our current regulatory system is inefficient, complicated and downright confusing," she told the assembly.

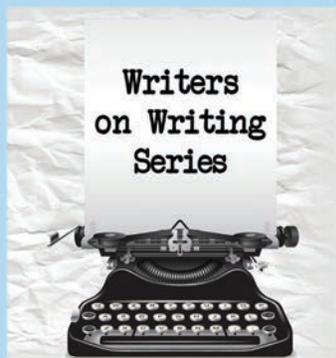
Sinema said business owners often tell her that the "best way to remain competitive is to have regulatory certainty that they can plan for, so they can plan ahead, hire and grow their company."

Mary Ann Miller, president of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce, called Sinema's presentation "eloquent" and said the congresswoman had reached out to all sides of the community.

"We appreciate the work that she's done on behalf of businesses and how easy it is to access her staff on behalf of the businesses we represent," Miller said.

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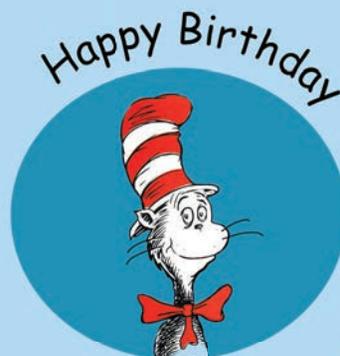
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Writers on Writing – Marc Mason

Holy comic books, Batman! Marc Mason, founder of Comics Waiting Room, will discuss writing and publishing graphic novels.

Feb. 28, 11 a.m.



Dr. Seuss

Get your picture taken with The Cat in the Hat, have a Seussical Storytime and create some wacky Seuss-inspired crafts at the Tempe Public Library. It's all free and in honor of Dr. Seuss's birthday.

The Cat in the Hat will visit the library for a special storytime at 10 a.m. and stay to take pictures with everyone until 11 a.m. Free crafts for adults and children will be available all day. Check out Seuss's books and movies, too. **March 2, 10 a.m. storytime; free crafts all day**



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Commentary Past indiscretions, revisited

By Deborah Hilcove

The news hit hard: Brian Williams, anchor of NBC's Nightly News, had received an unpaid six-month suspension due to his acknowledged exaggeration of a helicopter episode in Iraq.

The story reminded me of my one-time employer, Darrow J. "Duke" Tully, former publisher of *The Arizona Republic* and the *Phoenix Gazette*.

As society columnist for the *Gazette*, I often encountered him at charity balls. Whereas other guests wore black tie, Tully wore a lieutenant-colonel's uniform and talked about having been an Air Force combat pilot in Korea and Viet Nam.

The kicker? Until his December 1985 resignation, only a few close friends knew Tully had faked his military career.

Embellishment? Exaggeration? Outright lies?

For the past 10 years, Williams has anchored NBC Nightly News. His steady, well-modulated tones eased our concerns as he brought us the news. Now, suddenly, he himself has become the news. The headliner has become the headline.

Embellishment? In 2005, ensconced in New Orleans' Ritz-Carlton after Hurricane Katrina, he described the shock of seeing a body float past.

Exaggeration? We don't know.

In 2005-6, Williams gave varying accounts of risks faced when he reported the Israel-Hezbollah war. Early on, he spoke of being in a Black Hawk helicopter with an Israeli general and described the preceding rocket fire. Later, he offered another version, claiming he was in a military helicopter when Hezbollah's Katyusha rockets passed just below.

Outright lies? Again, we can't be sure.

Referring to Navy SEAL Team 6, Williams suggested he had once been embedded with the elite team that killed

Osama bin Laden. However, a U.S. Special Operations Command spokesman told *The Huffington Post* that journalists are not embedded with any unit conducting counter-terrorism missions.

His downfall happened at a recent New York Rangers game. Williams appeared with an Iraq war veteran, paying tribute to a retiring command sergeant major.

He later suggested the sergeant had protected him in Iraq when his helicopter was forced down. After a hasty landing by the wounded pilot, the NBC News team was rescued by U.S. Army 3rd Infantry. The pilot, he said, received the Purple Heart.

However, the military publication *Stars and Stripes* interviewed Williams, who admitted his error. There was no rescue, no wounded pilot, no Purple Heart.

At that point, Williams stepped aside. NBC has named Lester Holt the temporary anchor and promises a thorough investigation.

My concern is that the loss of credibility by journalists may lead more people to look for news in social media, in blogs and twitter accounts, many written by amateurs who may lack the contacts and networks available to professional journalists.

While some do present excellent work, others sensationalize stories to gain readership, and we readers are not always able to sift through the chaff.

This is why we depend on credible sources to bring us unbiased and balanced news. This is the responsibility of our social media, our television networks, our newspapers.

And this is our responsibility as an informed, intelligent public: to seek the truth, even when it hits hard.

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First Person

Celebrating Chinese New Year: Pass the moon-cakes, please

Story & photo by M.V. Moorhead

Once upon a time I didn't know the significance of a red envelope. Nor did I know what moon-cakes or egg-custard tarts were.

I knew, courtesy of the paper placemats in Chinese restaurants, that I was born in the Year of the Tiger and my wife in the Year of the Rat, but beyond that I couldn't have told you much about the Chinese New Year.

I couldn't even have told you with any real confidence when in the year it arrives.

That all changed four years ago this month, when my wife and I traveled to China to pick up the daughter we had adopted. We arrived there in very early March, just after the Year of the Rabbit had commenced, and there was still evidence of the big-time party that had just occurred.

Chinese New Year is celebrated with some events and festivities here in the U.S. On Saturday, Feb. 21, for instance, you could participate in the Chinese New Year 5k Run and "Wok" at Papago Park.

But over there we could see the true scale of the celebration, even having come just after it wrapped up. It wasn't until we got home that we began to learn the fascinating specifics about this most momentous of Chinese holidays, which runs for half



a month starting with the Lunar New Year—that is, the second New Moon after the Winter Solstice.

This year's fest, ringing in the Year of the Ram, began on Friday, Feb. 19, and is now in progress.

We soon learned, for instance, that it is traditional to give kids money in red envelopes—preferably in even amounts, for added luck.

We learned to relish flaky tarts filled with sweet

yellow egg-custard, as well as dense moon-cakes with bean filling, inscribed on top with lucky Chinese characters—actually a traditional autumn festival treat but no less delicious at the New Year.

We learned the supposed traits of the animals symbolizing the 12-year Chinese zodiacal cycle.

The irony, of course, is that while I have gotten a deeper understanding and appreciation of this cultural tradition, my daughter hardly thinks of it at all.

She looks forward, like so many American kids, to Halloween and Christmas, and she spent the early part of this month looking forward not to fireworks and lion parades but to Valentines. When we hand her a red envelope, she's happy enough to get the few bucks inside, but if we didn't, I doubt she'd notice the omission.

In the few years she's been over here, she's worked hard to become a "regular" American kid, and to a great extent she's succeeded—to more of an extent, in some ways, than I'd prefer.

But that food still gets her. Set sticky rice or pork buns or virtually any kind of dumpling in front of her, and there's no mistaking that, much as I hate to employ the cliché, you can take the girl out of China, but you can't take China out of the girl.



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Tempe has partnered with the Arizona SciTech Festival to present the 4th annual Geeks' Night Out from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday, March 5, at Tempe City Hall. Enthusiasts and geeks of all ages can 'Discover the Science' at the free, family-friendly event. On display will be a variety of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics projects and activities hosted by students from Tempe elementary-, middle- and high-schools, as well as colleges and universities, community organizations and representatives of the local business sector. Music and entertainment, along with the annual Phoenix Comicon costume parade and contest, will also be featured.

Information: www.tempe.gov/geeks.

Tempe's new landscape-renewal program helps weed out those less likely to do good job

It's a constant battle to beat back weeds growing out of a desert landscape and to keep green grass in the front yard from becoming a jungle.

To help people win the landscaping war and save residents money, the city of Tempe has started a new program, Tempe Landscaping Referral.

As part of the program's development process, city planners used the idea of buying in bulk to negotiate flat rates with three landscaping companies.

Residents may directly contract with these companies to keep their yards in compliance with city codes and to help keep their yards looking good.

The program costs the city of Tempe no money.

Rates, starting as low as \$35 a month, depend on the size of the yard and whether it is grass or desert landscaping.

Residents using the service are required to sign up for a year. Rates are generally lower than what most people could get independently due to the quantity of work anticipated by the landscapers.

Tempe City Council approved the program at a meeting Jan. 29.

"There are some people who simply don't have the physical ability to keep up their yard and others

who don't have the time or desire to do yard work," said Tempe City Councilmember Kolby Granville.

"(This) will give people cost-effective, pre-screened options because the services are being bought in bulk."

Contracted landscape companies include:

Artistic Land Management Inc., 480-821-4966, www.artisticlandmanagementinc.com;

J.A. Desert Greens Custom Lawn Care, 480-544-1203, <http://www.jadesertgreens.com/>; and *Somerset Landscape Maintenance*, 480-204-4693, <http://www.landscapeinc.us/>

All were selected through the city's procurement process.

Each has a one-year contract that may be renewed up to five times. The performance of each company will be evaluated before each renewal.

Residents will contract directly through each landscaping company. Any billing, service questions or concerns are to be addressed with the company, not the city of Tempe.

Residents are encouraged to use Yelp to rate the level of service they receive, and Yelp ratings will be one component considered when it is time to renew contracts with vendors.

Information: www.tempe.gov/code.

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\$4,100 grant to boost students' pursuit of technology

By Diana Whittle

As the global workplace becomes even more competitive, schools share in what has become a basic economic tenet: students who develop technology skills hold a much greater chance of landing jobs than their less-savvy counterparts.

Affiliated with one of the world's most recognizable financial-services companies, Dun & Bradstreet Credibility Corp. takes its knowledge seriously and has put that knowledge to work.

As part of a philanthropic outreach, D&B made a \$4,100 contribution to the Tempe Elementary School District in support of the STEM program at Fees College Preparatory Middle School.

The Fees approach focuses on teaching students science, technology, engineering and math, known as the STEM group of initiatives.

It was that approach that enabled Fees to receive D&B's EdAhead Challenge Grant.

Approximately 165 sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students are enrolled in the STEM-based curriculum at Fees, and about 40 more participate in an after-school STEM club, according to Kacy S. Baxter, Fees principal.

"Tyler Chandler is the teacher, and he does an amazing job. He is dynamic, energetic and excited about the content he teaches," said Baxter.

The donation allows the school enough funds to purchase and maintain additional equipment for its STEM lab, replace consumable materials for all STEM classes, provide a STEM-student field trip to the Arizona Science Lab, participate in the city of Tempe's Geeks Night Out, and enter in STEM



competitions.

The program requires an application, which can be made during the school's open enrollment period, now taking place.

"Students are currently expressing interest in STEM for the 2015-2016 school year, as they enroll or complete their registration. Our focus in the STEM curriculum is to prepare youth for the changing workforce," said Baxter.

"STEM is the wave of the future and prepares students for college degrees and jobs that don't yet exist," she said.

"When I became principal two years ago, our data showed a weakness in the area of mathematics, and that the majority of students didn't see the need for math later in their lives.

"STEM is a logical choice since it not only provides a vehicle for students to apply their mathematical skills, but it also shows them how these skills transfer to real life."

"The EdAhead program was created to support the next generation of leaders and innovators, so we are thrilled to help support these young, aspiring students who are interested in pursuing technology and engineering," said Jeff Stibel, chairman and CEO of Dun & Bradstreet Credibility Corp, which is based in California with an office in Phoenix.

"We encourage other local businesses to join us in support of public education in the local area."

Dun & Bradstreet Credibility's contribution is made through its EdAhead initiative, which is the nation's first education savings program with a multiple match.

The company first matches employees' annual contributions to their 529 college education plans up to a certain amount.

Employee-matched contributions then activate a second match, with the aggregate per office donated to the local public school systems.

The contribution to Tempe's elementary school district is based on the matched amount of contributions that the company's local employees made to their 529 education accounts.

Baxter said Fees will put the funds to good use.

"The additional support allows us to expand and enhance our (STEM) program, which ultimately benefits our students and paves the way for their future."

For more information on Fees College Preparatory Middle School visit www.tempeschools.org

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Under veteran instructor, KMS production of 'Annie' promises to entertain

Since 1982, play has delighted audiences around the world



What do you get when you combine the Great Depression, a dilapidated orphanage run by an alcoholic, and costumes reminiscent of a thrift-store collection? Throw in some musical numbers and you get Annie, a story that has been enthralling audiences for more than 35 years.

Although it originally began as a Broadway play, the rags-to-riches tale gained fame, in large part thanks to the film version released in 1982, starring a raft of big name stars.

Now it's back, with a whole new cast of aspiring thespians from Julie Hackman's theater production class at Kyrene Middle School.

Performances in the school's multi-purpose room are at 7 p.m. Wednesday-Friday, Feb. 25-27 and 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 28. Tickets, at \$7, are available at the door.



— Wrangler News photos by Billy Hardiman





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Go to angels.com for complete game information.
Tickets can be purchased that Tuesday at the gate.



Diversions . . .

Hits from Big Band era's Glenn Miller
due Feb. 22 at Chandler arts center



By M.V. Moorhead

This sounds like a particularly fine way to spend a weekend afternoon: listening to the music of one of the great figures of the Big Band era, played by the ensemble that still bears his name.

The opportunity presents itself at 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 22, when the Glenn Miller Orchestra performs at Chandler Center for the Arts.

When you consider the number of pages that Miller's hits can claim in the Great American Songbook, it's pretty impressive—"Moonlight Serenade," "In the Mood," "At Last" and the geographically themed "I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo," "Pennsylvania 6-5000" and "Chattanooga Choo Choo," to name a few.

What's perhaps almost more

impressive is that, 70 years after Miller's passing, these tunes are remembered by plenty of people who weren't even born when they were hits.

Beautiful melodies all—if sometimes with corny, gimmicky lyrics—most of them ("At Last" is perhaps an exception) are recalled not just as standards but specifically as Glenn Miller standards.

When we think of "In the Mood" or "Moonlight Serenade," we hear them in our heads in Miller's lush, seamless, reed-favoring versions.

Miller was a Midwesterner, born in 1904 in Iowa, reared in Nebraska, and playing trombone by his early teens.

By the early '20s he had dropped out of the University of Colorado to become a full-time musician, performing with and arranging for

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giants like Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey, among many others.

Miller formed his first band of his own in 1937. It failed, but his second, its members recruited the following year, would become the best-selling American recording ensemble of the World War II era, and Miller and his band would appear in numerous movies as well.

Miller entered that war as a captain in 1942, and he founded the Army Air Force Band, playing hundreds of concerts for servicemen.

In December 1944, having attained the rank of major, he disappeared over the English Channel in an airplane bound to Paris, where his band was scheduled to perform.

His civilian band was reformed shortly after the war under his name, initially led by the great saxophonist and vocalist Tex Beneke.

Under one leader or another, the Glenn Miller Orchestra has been touring, off and on, ever since—the Chandler show is the one of at least a half-dozen dates in February alone.

As far as I'm concerned, it would probably be worth the price of admission just hear "I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo," my own favorite.

I'm listening to it as I type these words, sung by Beneke and then sung and danced by the Nicholas Brothers in 1942's *Orchestra Wives*, and it's put me in a good mood.

In *the Mood*, you might say.

Tickets start at \$28; go to chandlercenter.org or call 480-782-2680.

Arizona music icon to trace heritage of Western lore

The heritage of Western music in Arizona is the featured topic at the next *Our Stories* guest-speaker presentation from 10:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, Feb. 28, at west Chandler's Sunset Library.

"Don't Fence Me In" will be presented by musician and storyteller Igor Glenn.

Through music and stories, Glenn will share the cowboy songs, yodeling, Western swing and mariachi music that are all part of the heritage of music in Arizona. He will also talk about the mission and programs of the Musical Instrument Museum in Scottsdale, where he is a docent.

The family-friendly program will include hands-on opportunities with instruments used in Western music, and possibly an opportunity for singing along.

Glenn has lived and played music in Arizona since the 1960s. In addition to many string instruments, he plays harmonica, kazoo, and foot percussion. He is perhaps best known in Arizona as the leader of Igor's Jazz Cowboys, a high-energy band that plays a wide range of styles, including New Orleans, Western swing, old-time gospel and Tex-Mex.

When not providing tours at the Musical Instrument Museum, Glenn enjoys teaching children about music and performing in local venues.

Our Stories is presented by the Chandler Museum, Chandler Historical Society and the Chandler Public Library.

Information: 480-782-2751 or www.chandleraz.gov/museum. The Sunset branch library is at 4930 W. Ray Road, just east of Rural Road.

Pet Adopt-a-Thon set Feb. 21

More than 30 animal-rescue groups will show off hundreds of their most appealing—and, hopefully, most adoptable—dogs, cats and assorted critters at a pet Adopt-a-Thon coming to west Chandler on Saturday, Feb. 21.

The event, sponsored by the Phoenix Animal Care Coalition, or PACC911, and Earnhardt Ford, represents the eighth year in a row that the two groups have teamed up to help pets find new homes.

A PACC911 spokesman said the goal for the event, scheduled from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Earnhardt dealership at 7300 W. Orchid Lane, is finding 60 adoptive parents.

This year's event theme is "Happiness is Adopting a Pet," designed to continue the success of a program launched in 2009 that has resulted in more than 500 pets finding homes.

At the event, animal-rescue groups will gather in the dealership's east parking lot, with hundreds of adoptable pets.

Entertainment, prizes, food and vendors will be on hand, along with other animal-organization representatives available to answer questions and provide services. Grimaldi's Pizza will be sold at the event to benefit PACC911'S Emergency Medical Fund, which provides financial aid to Valley nonprofit animal welfare groups needing assistance with medical costs.

All animals for adoption are spayed or neutered, vaccinated and evaluated.

The dealership is at 7300 W. Orchid Lane, Chandler, just east of I-10 and north of Ray Road.

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Kyrene schools chief takes to Twitter as a way to increase parent, public dialog

By Michelle Hirsch

His management style may not differ from the norms of longstanding convention, but Kyrene School District Superintendent Dr. David Schauer is definitely a modern-day man when it comes to the nuances of social media.

Schauer is tweeting his way around the district—part of a strategy to report on his visits to schools, discussions about education issues with elected officials, and meetings with parent and community groups.

Schauer tweeted a photo from a recent Tempe/Kyrene Business Advisory Council meeting with two fellow superintendents, Tempe Elementary's Christine Busch and Tempe Union's Dr. Kenneth Baca.

All three were joined by business partners and community leaders discussing the group's focus areas for the 2014-15 school year—transitions from middle- to high-school and from high-school to college/career, and advocacy in school districts.

The three superintendents answered questions at the meeting from representatives of the business community about new teacher and principal evaluations, mandatory testing and teacher shortages.

The superintendents emphasized the need for increased community support for teachers as professionals to better recruit and retain teachers in Arizona school districts.

Last school year, the TKBAC group focused on advocacy, promoting the theme that quality schools contribute to safe neighborhoods, increased business opportunities, jobs and property values, along with encouraging the development of future leaders, good citizenship, and lifelong learners.

Twitter-connected residents can follow the Kyrene superintendent @KyreneSuper and Kyrene district news at www.twitter.com/KyreneSD; on Facebook they can "Like" Kyrene's page at www.facebook.com/KyreneSchoolDistrict

Residents also can keep up with Tempe Union on Twitter @TUHSD_News and "Like" the high school district Facebook page at www.facebook.com/TempeUnion. It's also now possible to stay informed with Tempe Elementary School District on Twitter @TempeElementary and "Like" the district Facebook's page at www.facebook.com/TempeElementary

Corona's Feb. 21 sale aids 'Beads of Courage'

Members of the Corona del Sol High School Key Club have invited the public to participate in a day-long sale and fund-raiser from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 21, in the school amphitheater.

The event will benefit patients in the Phoenix Children's Hospital Beads of Courage program. Activities will include making stuffed-sock animals, get well cards, craft bags and more. Admission is \$3.

The Key Club chapter is sponsored by Tempe Sunrise Kiwanis Club.

Community-garden plant sale will feature seasonal favorites

Friends in Gasca Garden—a group comprising supporters of Tempe's FIGG Community Garden—host their third plant sale from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 7, to benefit the garden and its community outreach programs.

Members will offer plants for the current growing season that are adapted to spring and summer heat.

Vegetables, flowers, herbs, succulents and more will be on sale. Gift items such as one-of-a-kind garden art, plant markers and herb mugs also will be available.

Since its inception five years ago, FIGG has planted garden beds dedicated to the raising of vegetables which are grown for the sole purpose of donating the fresh produce to the food pantry at Tempe Community Action Agency.

The beds are planted and tended by garden members and volunteers from the community.

In seasons past, the garden has given nearly 1,000 pounds of food to TCAA's food pantry.

In addition to the food-bank donations, a bed is dedicated to children's education, and FIGG has hosted numerous groups from the YMCA, Kyrene de los Niños school and scout troops.

The garden is on Warner Road a block east of Rural Road in Tempe.

Information: freshoffthevine-figg.blogspot.com. *Membership:* friendsingascagardens@gmail.com

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Teen comedy 'THE DUFF' scores with directness

Bianca, the heroine of the high school comedy *The DUFF*, is actually the title character. *DUFF*, you see, is an acronym for Designated Ugly Fat Friend.

When Bianca has the term applied to her, she realizes that her best pals Casey and Jessica are two of the school hotties, while she's a frump with a snarky sense of humor who loves horror movies (where were all the girls like this when I was in high school?).

She finds herself wondering if her purpose in the trio is to make Casey and Jessica look even cuter by comparison.

She promptly freaks out, cuts off relations with the two friends, and strikes a deal with the swaggering jock next door to help her gain confidence and style.

The object of these tutorials is to get a date with her crush, a guitar-strumming pretty-boy to whom she is—literally—unable to say three words.

In other words, in terms of theme and plot, we're on standard John Hughes teen comedy turf here. Indeed, *The DUFF* is so self-consciously of the Hughes School that it has a *Breakfast Club* reference in the first line of the narration, and it goes on to ring its own variations on the obligatory scenes of the genre: the Big Suburban Party, the Big Dance Climax, the Cafeteria Scene in which high school social stereotypes are broken down anthropologically.

The DUFF is more charming than all this makes it sound. The script, by Josh A. Cagan (from Kody Keplinger's novel), isn't without some heavy platitudes and some clumsily trendy references to social media, but the best of its dialogue is crudely, bluntly funny, and it has a generous streak—it's immediately clear to the audience, for instance, that Bianca's misjudged Casey and Jessica. Ari Sandel's

direction zips along swiftly, and while there are poorly-timed gags that don't come off, most of them land skillfully.

The true strength of the movie, however, is the acting. As usual in such films, there are some slumming character players as the grown-ups, like Allison Janney as Bianca's distracted motivational-speaker Mom, Romany Malco as the wound-up Principal and Ken Jeong and Chris Wylde as daffy teachers. Robbie Amell is brashly likable as the Jock Next Door, and Bella Thorne is effective as the mean-girl villainess.

But the film is really a showcase for Mae Whitman as Bianca. Having seen the TV ads for this movie, I'll admit I walked in with a chip—Whitman, who has the droll adorableness of a slightly less elfin Ellen Page, seemed to conform to the usual convention in a film with an "ugly duckling" heroine.

And as with other movies of this sort, the makers of *The DUFF* didn't seem to get that preaching to us about how everyone is beautiful in their own way while refusing, for box-office reasons, to cast an actress who really might be seen as unattractive or overweight is an offensive attempt to have it both ways.

But Whitman's performance broke me down on this preconceived point. A former child actress, she's a veteran of more than 20 years in show business—among many, many other roles, she's the current voice of Disney's Tinkerbell.

Yet as Bianca she transcends her own showbiz slickness—for all her sitcom timing, she has an emotional directness to which you can feel the audience respond.

The DUFF is rated PG-13 and opens this weekend at Harkins Tempe Marketplace, Chandler Fashion 20 and other multiplexes Valleywide.

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Positive Paths to honor Man, Woman of Year

Tim Bricker, president and CEO of Dignity Health Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers, and Trinity Donovan, CEO of Chandler Christian Community Center and former Chandler councilwoman, will be honored as East Valley Man and Woman of the Year at Positive Paths' East Valley Night of Heroes on **Thursday, May 7.**

The organization, a non-profit focused on providing women with self-sustainability through mentoring and education, will hold its Evening in Paris-themed gala starting at 6 p.m. at the Hilton Phoenix East Mesa.

Positive Paths is a non-profit organization established by a group of forward-thinking leaders to encourage public-spirited citizens to invest in the future of women within local communities. Despite the advancement of women in recent decades, women still face unique challenges, said Jane E. Hanson, communications chair for the event. Positive Paths helps remove barriers and obstacles that prevent East Valley women from succeeding, said Hanson.

Marcos performing arts students in rehearsals for musical 'Footloose'

Students in the Performing Arts Department at Marcos de Niza High School will present the musical "Footloose" from **Wednesday-Saturday, March 4-7.**

Performances begin at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for students/senior citizens, \$10 for adults.

Advance-purchase tickets are available through the Marcos bookstore or at the box office 30 minutes prior to performance times. Information: 480-838-3200, ext. 47640.

BBQ, events to mark fitness center's second anniversary

Elite Sport & Fitness will celebrate its second year in Chandler with a barbecue and other activities from noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 28.

The event will be held at Elite's location at 4320 W. Chandler Blvd., between McClintock Drive and Rural Road.

Information: 480-779-7505 or elitesf.com.

Grace Community School sets dinner, auction as a fundraiser

Denim & Diamonds, a dinner and auction benefitting Grace Community Christian School, will be held starting at 5:30 p.m. **Friday, Feb. 27,** at Crystal Barn, Rustler's Rooste, Phoenix.

Information: 480-966-5022 or www.gccsaz.org

Arizona Community Church to be site of Feb. 22 blood drive

Arizona Community Church will host the United Blood Services Bloodmobile from 8 a.m. to noon **Sunday, Feb. 22.**

All blood types are needed, however type-O negative remains in greatest demand, says a UBS spokeswoman.

The church is at 9325 S. Rural Road, Tempe.

Tempe community-needs study to continue through Feb. 28

The city of Tempe and Tempe Community Council will continue through Saturday, Feb. 28, their community needs assessment to determine where city resources can best be directed for human services.

Residents can share opinions on line at www.tempecommunitycouncil.org/survey.

Information: 480-858-2311.

MCC tutoring program certified

Tutors who hone their skills at Mesa Community College have received a five-year stamp approval from the College Reading and Learning Association, the international rating organization that evaluates tutor qualifications. CRLA members promote the implementation of innovative strategies to enhance student learning.



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Sports Area teams remain in hot pursuit of state title

Reporting by Alex Zener • Photos by Billy Hardiman



Pre-game routine helps keep Aztecs on a winning streak

The high school basketball season is winding to a close, but it's not yet over for the four local boys teams: every one made it into the state playoffs this year. The first round started Feb. 19 and continues until the finals March 2.

The Aztecs prevailed in the Super Sectionals to become the No. 1 seed in Division I—despite bad starts, inspired opponents and nail-biting moments—in their 66-63 win against Phoenix Central.

Corona easily defeated Westview (70-34) on Feb. 11 before getting into a real battle against Central on Feb. 13.

The game against the Bobcats may have been one of the Aztecs' worst and then one of the best they've played all season. They came out flat; shots didn't drop, defenses were a step slow and fouls were called.

Central deserves a lot of the credit. They were athletic and pumped to dethrone the three-time state champs after defeating No. 2 ranked Desert Vista in

overtime the game before.

Most important, the Bobcats were well-prepared and did a good job in the first half of taking Corona's players out of their game, especially 6-foot-11 freshman **Marvin Bagley III** who struggled in the paint most of the first half.

At one point the Aztecs were down 12 points before the halftime score had the deficit as 9 points at 26-35.

The Aztecs came out in the second half more focused, outscoring the Bobcats 40-28 to finally pull ahead 60-59 on a trey by **Alex Barcello** midway through the fourth quarter and never looking back, ultimately winning the game 66-63.

"In the first half, Central out-hustled us and got every loose ball," said Coach Sam Duane Jr. "In the

second half we came out more determined and played harder."

Central came within one point during the last three minutes and even had several chances to tie or

go ahead on free throws, but failed to convert.

Corona was led by Barcello with 27 points, but Bagley had some high points in the second half, too, including one for the highlight reels.

After blocking a Central shot, he turned and dribbled the ball end-to-end to score on a slam dunk, which not only got the Aztec bench up and the Corona crowd screaming but put a dagger in the Bobcats' confidence.

It was Bagley who came roaring back in the finals with 29 points, 13 rebounds and 6 blocks when Corona defeated St. Mary's 98-80 to win the tournament the next night.

It was great for the Aztecs to get **Cassius Peat** back from injury in time for the Super Sectionals and the state tournament. He takes up a lot of space in the paint on defense with a knack for rebounding and creating havoc for defenders on offense because he can shoot outside and inside, and drive for layups. The Aztecs will need his skills and experience on the court in the state playoffs.

"Cassius brings three years of experience and leadership as well as adding another player into our rotation who can score," said Duane. "It's great to



Marvin Bagley III

have him back.”

Saben Lee, a spark for the Aztecs off the bench, was injured in the Putnam game Jan. 17, but may be cleared by the doctor in time for the state playoffs, according to Duane.

Corona (28-1) with a bye in the first round, was due to play at home against the winner of the Apollo-Desert Ridge game Saturday, Feb. 21, at 7 p.m.

“We are happy about getting the bye,” said Duane. “We can get in some good practice time, clean up some things and get ready for state.”

The Aztecs would most likely play the winner of the Central-Cesar Chavez game in the third round, Feb. 27, at 7 p.m. at Wells Fargo Arena.

No. 9 Cesar Chavez (25-3) defeated No. 8 Central (24-5) twice in the regular season, most recently 65-57, but the Bobcats may be more confident in the state tournament after defeating Desert Vista and coming so close to beating Corona.

“We could face Central again, but right now we need to worry about our first game and focus,” said Duane. “Central played very well, so if we do play them again we will have to do a better job defensively and take care of the ball better.”

The semifinals, if Corona continues their quest for its fourth straight DI state championship, are scheduled Feb. 28 at Grand Canyon University at 7:45 p.m., with the finals March 2 at Gila River Arena at 8 p.m.

Division II State Basketball Tournament — Tempe, Marcos de Niza and McClintock boys basketball teams battled it out in the regular season in

Division II but all three still made it into the playoffs.

Tempe (19-8) is seeded No. 14 after starting the season strong, despite problems that had them closing out games toward the end of the season. The Buffaloes, who started strong, run into trouble at season's end by not being able to close out their last two games, losing 86-86 to McClintock on Feb. 3 and to Camp Verde 81-78 Feb. 5.



McClintock's Adam Wright and Josh Brewer reach for a rebound

The Buffaloes rebounded to defeat Marcos de Niza in the first round of the Super Sectionals, Feb. 11, 98-90 but lost in the 2nd round to Gilbert Christian in another close 68-66 game.

The Buffaloes are scheduled to play No. 19 Moon Valley in the first round Feb. 19 at home. If they win, they will face No. 3 seed Cienega at Cienega.

These games will be the last ones for seniors **Shaquawn Moore, JaShawn Brown, Trey Holley, DeLano Jones, Emanuel Gant, Ty Lewis and Kalun White.**

Marcos de Niza, 15-10, comes into the state playoffs at No. 21. The Padres are led by senior **Sean Wood** who averages 16.5 points, 10 rebounds and 3 assists per game and sophomore **Mason Stark** with 15 points and 3 assists a game.

Fellow sophomore **Chris Wright** is not far behind

averaging almost 12 points, 3 rebounds and 4 assists per game followed by junior **Bryan Battle** with 9 points and 7 rebounds per game.

The Padres are scheduled to play against No. 12 Saguaro on Feb. 19. If they win, they will meet No. 5 Flagstaff on Feb. 21. One of these games could be the last of the high school basketball careers for seniors

Luke Nguyen, Ismail Ahmed and Jake Bayfield.

McClintock, 18-8, comes into the state playoffs as the final seed at No. 24 and is scheduled to play No. 9 Sunnyside there on Feb. 19.

The Chargers have two dynamite junior players in **Amiri Chukwuemeka** and **Malique Washington** who will be back next season. Chukwuemeka averages 25 points, 4.4 assists, 3.6 rebounds and 2.7 steals a game. So far this season he has made 661 points shooting 58%, but most impressive are his three-pointers. He had made 100 treys shooting 40% before the state tournament.

Washington is a close second with 18.6 points, 5.3 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 2.8 steals a game.

Senior **Todd Battle** is the team's leading rebounder with 6.8 per game; he also shot 57% with over 226 points on the season along with senior **Josh Brewer**, who has played in all 26 games, shooting 58% and averaging 6.5 points a game.

The leading rebounder is junior **Davion Green**, who was averaging 5.5 rebounds a game while playing in only six games.

Senior **Jordan Holley** and sophomore **Adam Wright** also played in all 26 games so far this season, with Holley averaging 4 points a game and Wright over 4 points and 4 rebounds a game.

National Signing Day — Corona had four athletes sign letters of intent outside the front office Feb. 4.

Maddie Wolf signed to play soccer at Arizona State University while Corona's cross country and track star **Marcus Wheeler** will be running at Central Arizona College next fall.

“Maddie Wolf is a great teammate and leader, which will aid in her transition to playing at ASU next year,” said coach **Matt Smith**. “She is an extremely smart player, who is very capable of understanding her strengths and weaknesses and adjusting her game as a result.”

“Maddie previously played for ASU's head coach Kevin Boyd as a club player and I think they both

— SPORTS, Page 21



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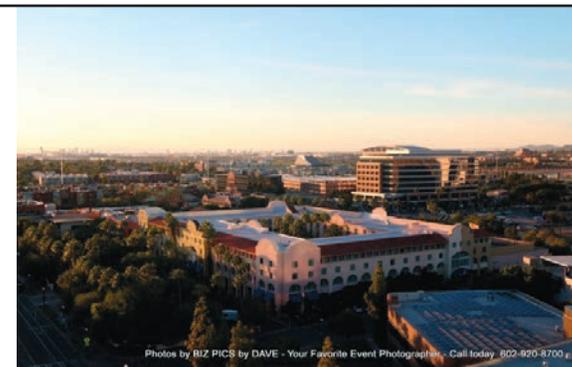
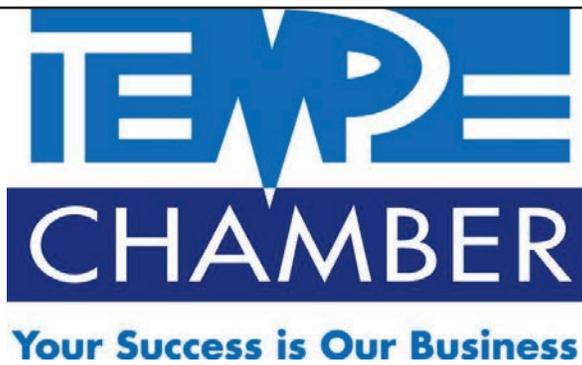
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March 26



Recruiting and Hiring the Right People
Presented by Ginny McMinn

Many owners and managers struggle to attract good candidates and to hire excellent employees. This session provides training for achieving great hiring results repeatedly. Attendees receive tools that can be used when hiring and lists of sample questions to use and not to use.

April 23

Registration, networking, and breakfast will take place from 7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. and the formal program will run from 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. each session. Cost per session is \$25 for members and \$35 for the general public. For full details and to register, please visit www.tempechamber.org or call 480.967.7891.



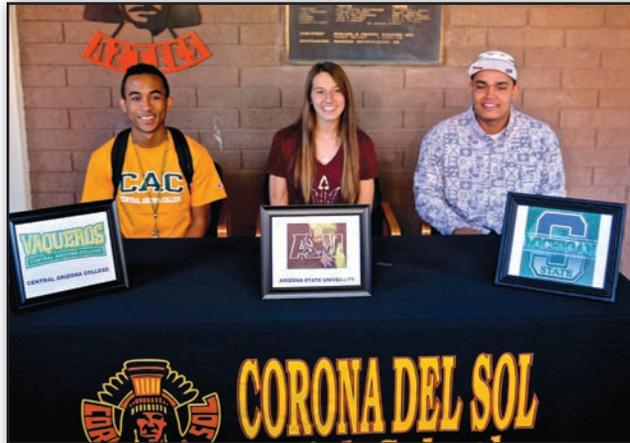
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Sports

From Page 19



Signers Marcus Wheeler, left, Maddie Wolf, Cassius Peat — Photo courtesy Kris Cartwright

understand what the other is capable of and wants, which should help her transition into college ball.”

Jakob Begay signed to play football at Arizona Christian.

The fifth-ranked 2015 football recruit by acentral sports, **Cassius Peat**, who originally committed to play outside linebacker at UCLA, switched at the last minute and pulled a Michigan State cap out of his bag just before signing.

“I realized a couple of days before I was supposed to be signing that I felt most comfortable with the staff at Michigan State,” said Cassius.

“They visited me every week and came to watch my basketball games. I felt there were a lot of opportunities for me there.”

“Michigan State has one of the top five teams in the nation and the defense is one of the best. I just felt their physical, gritty defensive-style of play fit my game best.”

Some of you may have seen big brother **Andrus Peat** at some of Corona’s basketball games. Andrus, a junior offensive lineman this past season at Stanford, is in the Phoenix area training for the combine, according to Cassius. Some of the NFL Mock Drafts have Andrus going as high as No. 10 to the Rams.

Tempe High School signees — Tempe’s **Max Hartgraves** signed with Montana State to play baseball, while **Andi Blodgett** and **Mary Mentz** signed to play softball in college—Blodgett at Chowan University in North Carolina and Mentz at Chandler-Gilbert Community College.

For Tempe football, **Kenan Sahman** signed with Mesa Community College, **Robbie Acosta** with Glendale Community College and **Travis Kountz** with Phoenix College.

Marcos de Niza had **Andrew Rodriguez** sign to play football at Mesa Community College and **Trai Myers** of McClintock signed to play football at Arizona Christian.

State wrestling results — Corona qualified nine wrestlers for state this season, including freshman **Camron Upshur** (113-lb. weight class); sophomore **Cole Bernstein** (120-lb.); junior **Ryan Farina** (126-lb.); freshman **Nick Ramirez** (132-lb.); junior **Marc Farina** (138-lb.); sophomore **Hunter**



Corona’s wrestling team took sixth place at the Division I State Tournament in Prescott Valley Feb. 14-15. Participating in the meet were, from left, front row: Coach Carmona, Marc Farina, Cole Bernstein, Nick Ramirez (Taylor Rico behind him) Camron Upshur, Bradley Buchholz, Justin Sorenson, Coach Martinez. Back row: Coach Goodsite, Coach McIntosh, Coach Clare, Coach Thornton, Dylan Conner (in back) Chris Moore, Nick Ruffalo, Coach Dayoob, Ryan Farina, Johnny Waddell, Diego Fill, Hunter Carmona, Ryan Spadafore. — Photo courtesy Jim Martinez

Carmona (145-lb.); senior **Ryan Spadafore** (160-lb.); senior **Taylor Rico** (170-lb.); and senior **Chris Moore** (195-lb.).

After the first day of the state tournament held in Prescott Valley on Feb. 13, things were looking bleak for the Aztecs, but Ryan Farina showed the rest of the team how to fight hard by winning the state championship. Corona came back to win sixth place overall.

Rico, with 61-31 career record, who finally started to believe in himself this year, according to coach **Jim Martinez**, ended up taking third at state.

— SPORTS, Page 22

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Sports

From Page 21

Marc Farina pulled out a miraculous victory for fifth place, according to Martinez.

Spadafore, a three-year starter with a career 79-33 record who made others on the team better as well, according to Martinez, finished in sixth place.

The Aztecs were without senior **Matt Churchill**, a four-year starter amassing a 103-48 career record at Corona and a three-time state entrant, who was injured just before state according to Martinez.

Moore, with a 44-31 career record, was an over-achiever who beat the odds again and again, according to Martinez.

Senior **Johnny Waddell**, 31-14 career record, wrestled at a weight disadvantage all year, according to Martinez, but still gave Corona a chance to win.

McClintock wrestling — McClintock took 11th place with 52.5 points at the Division II state wrestling tournament over the weekend at Prescott Valley on the backs of freshman twins **Gator** and **Marco Groves**, who both

won Division II state championship titles.

Gator (52-1) won the 102-lb. weight category by beating out senior Josh Olson from Cibola, while his brother Marco (47-4), defeated another senior, Kyle Ford, from Gila Ridge at 132 lbs.

Noah Bello (43-7) qualified at 152-lbs., winning his first round.

Marcos de Niza wrestling — The Padres qualified eight wrestlers for the Division II state wrestling tournament at Prescott Valley, taking 19th out of 48 teams.

The top finisher for the team was senior **Ryan Sondrup** (47-3), who was 2nd in the 130-lb. weight bracket after losing in the finals to Dietz from Liberty. Liberty took 2nd place as a team.

Samuel Johnson (41-13) made it all the way to the 3rd round before being knocked out of the winners bracket by Ford at 132 lbs.

Senior **Gerardo Gayosso** (30-18) in the 106-lb. weight category, **Ammon Mortimer** at 113 lbs., **Camell Dargon** at 126 lbs., **Alejandro Torrez** (29-10) at 145-lbs., **Kendrick Reif** (35-11) at 170-lbs. and **Marcus Green** (33-14) at 182 lbs. were the other qualifiers for Marcos de Niza.

Corona girls soccer — Corona's girls soccer team, seeded No. 7, defeated No. 10 Willow Canyon 3-0 in the first round of the Division I state tournament before losing in the quarterfinals to Chandler in a tight 4-3 game on Feb. 7.



Corona players console each other after a tough 4-3 quarter-final loss vs. Chandler. Their season ended with 13 wins, 5 losses and 3 ties.





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Workshops focus on urban gardens

If adopting healthier eating was among your New Year's resolutions, a series of workshops being held at Mesa Community College could support your goal.

MCC's Center for Urban Agriculture, along with Brooks Community School, have announced the remaining schedule for a series of free environmental workshops, "Urban Farming: Healthy Foods and Healthy Living."

The center serves as a community hub for K-12 and college STEM education through horticulture and sustainable urban agriculture. It also houses a localized hub for the study of aquaponics, a food production system that combines raising aquatic animals such as snails and crayfish with growing plants in the water.

Information about the center and its pursuits can be found at www.mesacc.edu/cua.

Click on the "About Center" link in the left navigation bar for a brief overview of its development and mission. Click on "Resources and Media" for more information about the EPA grant, which was awarded to the school and used to develop the workshop series.

Workshop attendees learn about a variety of environmental topics in the classes, which are held locally on the third Thursday of each month.

The series began in January and

continues through October.

The workshops are held at 6 p.m. at MCC's Southern and Dobson Campus, 1833 W. Southern Ave., in Mesa.

Peter Conden, director of MCC's horticulture program, said the sessions are in response to increasing interest in the subject.

"The workshops are fantastic opportunities for community members to learn and participate in urban agriculture projects in a fun, educational setting," he said. "Our desired outcomes are successful, clean, healthy, sustainable, revitalized communities where people can work and live in safety."

In addition, MCC offers several full-semester classes through the college in the Urban Horticulture program, including Aquaponics, Gardening and Urban Plant Care, which are for-credit courses.

Workshop schedule: Feb. 26—Vegetable Garden Design; March 26 Nutrition & Health; April 23—Aquaponics; May 28—What is S.T.E.M. Education?; June 25—Composting and Soil Amending; July 23—Integrated Pest Management; Aug. 27—Water and Energy Conservation; Sept. 24—From Backyard Business to Enterprise; Oct. 22—Backyard Orchards; and Nov. 19—Healthy Cooking

Home Prices

From Page 4

So while he is quick to acknowledge that conditions are not as good now as they once were, and while the trajectory of appreciation that has been lost has not yet been fully regained, he remains confident that the road to recovery remains wide open.

"We've moved from instability to stability. The market should improve on the demand side in the next 12-18 months," said Lucas.

He cites renewed economic growth in Tempe and Chandler, the arrival of

such giants as GoDaddy, the dynamics of a growing Price Corridor and the expansion of the technology sector as major contributors to what he expects to be a significantly brighter future.

"When you listen to the national reports (on housing conditions), they mean nothing. We got hit a lot harder in the downturn; we were the Katrina of the recession," said Lucas.

"Other areas lost 10 percent of their real estate economy, we lost 50 percent."

And that, he concludes, is one more reason that today's real estate numbers equate to some of the best buying opportunities in recent years.

— Don Kirkland

Correction to page 5 of Summer Fun and Learning

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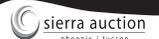
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Out & about

a camera's-eye view of what's been happening in our neighborhood



Tempe Councilmember Corey Woods, left, Mayor Mark Mitchell, Councilmember Joel Navarro, Congresswoman Kyrsten Sinema and Councilmember Kolby Granville were on hand to receive Google's 2014 eCity award. — Photo courtesy Tempe Public Information Office



On hand for a pet Adopt-a-Thon sponsored by the Phoenix Animal Care Coalition from 10 am-3 pm Saturday, Feb. 21, at the Earnhardt dealership at 7300 W. Orchid Lane, Chandler. Since 2009 PACC911 pet adoption events have resulted in more than 500 pets finding homes.

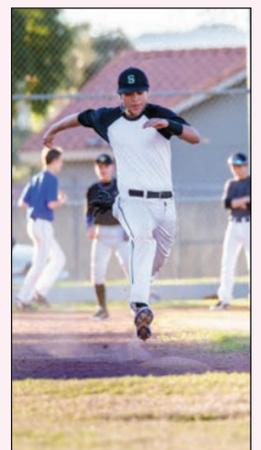


Little League ballplayers at Nozomi Park in west Chandler will enjoy a new working scoreboard this season, thanks to the generosity of Susan Farmer and the family's friends. The scoreboard was donated in memory of Susan's late husband Mike who had a great love of the game. Friends and family came from all over the country to help celebrate the occasion. Joining the group were, front, left, Mike and Susan's grandchildren Alyssa and Sergio Muñoz. — Wrangler News staff photo



PLAY BALL

Baseball season is just around the corner, and kids from Aprende and Kyrene middle schools could hardly wait to try out for their respective teams.



Disappointingly, no Tempe team survived this year's high school soccer playoffs. But the games drew at least handful of area fans, who were in the stands as Chandler High won for the boys and Highland High took honors for the girls. In all, there were plenty of moments of joy, except for the girls of Desert Vista High, below, right, who lost to a Highland goal in the last 6.4 seconds of an overtime cliff-hanger.



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New to Market



Rare find! Sharp 5 bedroom, 3 full bath South Tempe home with 3 car garage and pool!! Home is move-in ready. Newer roof, large lot and low HOA. Located in the well-known Kyrene School District. Excellent location close to grade school, community park, ASU and Chandler Mall. Mid \$300's

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