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LEADING OFF

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Submitted

Espresso will be a popular highlight color in home designs in Maricopa in 2018.

BUSINESS

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THINGS TO DO

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Maricopa's Homepage



ON THE COVER Kelly Campbell, with her twin girls Emersyn (left) and Brooklyn, shares her 2017 experience for 2018 mothers-to-be in Maricopa. *Photo by Mason Callejas*

On with the new

Happy New Year, Maricopa.

We plan the future by evaluating the past, looking back to look forward. Newborns are fresh-faced symbols of the hopes wrapped up in a new year, and they come with their challenges. Maricopans who became parents in 2017 want to share their experience — and offer some warnings — to those expecting in 2018. Not surprisingly, the city's proximity to a hospital was a hot topic.

We count down the biggest stories of 2017, determined by our readership, in public safety, economic development and the community in general. While Maricopans gravitated toward crashes and crimes, they also had their eye on stories that will continue into 2018, such as transportation improvements and the construction of Edison Pointe.

Also in this month's issue, meet the teacher who received a great gift from the Fiesta Bowl, and the student who gave a great gift by saving a life. See what interior colors are trending in Maricopa

homes. Learn why a local CPA considers school tax credits a no-brainer.

Find out what's going on with the business development proposed around Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church and the hopes for a senior center somewhere in Maricopa sometime in the future.

Read what some of your neighbors want to see in Maricopa in 2018 on our Faces in the Crowd page.

Check out some of the activities coming up in January, such as Family Fishing Day and the Senior Info/Expo. And get ready to plant those tomatoes!

These stories and much more are in the January issue of InMaricopa. Have a fantastic 2018.



Raquel Hendrickson

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Volume 13, Issue 1
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What would you most like to see happen in Maricopa in 2018?



Patty Lyon

"It's a traffic issue for me! I'd like to see a law put in place that bans texting while driving at a city level or state level. If law is violated, a hefty fine imposed to driver."



Ellie Whitaker

"More activities for kids and places for kids and their families to participate and play together. Also, more dining and shopping options for adults. I'd be willing to spend more money in Maricopa if shopping and dining, beyond fast food, was more convenient."



Tracy Vargas

"We definitely need a hospital or medical facility like a 24/7 Urgent Care center. Also, more primary care doctors and pediatric specialists for our children. It's a horrible feeling for a parent when your child is injured and in serious pain and there aren't many local options for immediate care. Moms and Dads really talk about this situation a lot."



Beth Lloyd

"I would LOVE for Maricopa to get a nice, semi-upscale romantic restaurant; one that prides itself on wonderful food and excellent service. Although there are many choices of places to eat here, we are pretty limited to fast food and sports bars. I'd like to see a place where people can dress up for a special, quiet night out."



Trina Lara

"Personally, I like Maricopa just the way it is! The small-town feel and business atmosphere is why I moved here. I love the way my son is welcomed every morning either by his teachers or the principal when he arrives at school. It's great."

Contributors



FRANCESCA "FRAN" LYONS

The freelance writer has been in the world of creative writing and corporate marketing for 20 years and is also a life coach. Though she often writes business stories for InMaricopa, for this month's issue she tracked down wishes for the new year (page 7). "I had so much fun talking to people."



JOAN KOCZOR

Originally from Illinois, the advocate for seniors has been involved with local and countywide efforts to find resources for the elderly. This year she began writing a senior column for InMaricopa. She said she had a tough time this month writing about all the many changes coming (page 49). "This, I thought, was timely - maybe depressing. [Husband] Ray said the article is a little scary."



CHRISTIAN PRICE

The mayor of Maricopa took some time from his hectic schedule to write about the importance of listening in the middle of doing business (page 35). "Too often, those in positions of leadership, be they corporate, political, entrepreneurial or simply in our very own families, often forget that being 'in charge' does not mean we know everything."

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Gallery



The annual Holiday Golf Cart Parade in Province raised \$3,000 for F.O.R. Maricopa Dec. 3. *Jerry Debeaumont*



The one-mile Santa Fun Run was a centerpiece to Merry Copa at Copper Sky, won by Giovanni Fentes (center) Dec. 2. *Jordan Robertson*



Maricopa Chorus and Step into the Music students, with Mayor Christian Price, entertained at the City Hall Tree Lighting Dec. 5. *Mason Callejas*



Roping competitions were among the rodeo events during Masik Tas celebrations at Ak-Chin in December. *Mason Callejas*



Country music star Clay Walker entertained a large crowd at Ak-Chin Circle Dec. 8. *Michelle Chance*



The 14th annual Living Nativity at Community of Hope celebrated the meaning of Christmas Dec. 9. *Mason Callejas*

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Top 10 Community Stories 2017

Most-read stories related to community issues:

10 'Blighted' properties cleared from Heritage District

City Council approved the demolition of three Heritage District properties in July considered to be in "blighted condition." Demolition began in August and was paid for by a Community Development Block Grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

9 Maricopan drops 110 pounds in 5 months

With exercise, a nutrition plan and encouragement from his wife Stephanie, Kelly Antone lost 110 pounds in five months last year. Antone has lost an additional 64 pounds since June, inching him closer to his 200-pound weight loss goal.

8 Stage Coach Days Carnival pops up at Copper Sky

A surprise carnival by Frazier Shows set up at Copper Sky during Stage Coach Days in October — a two-week celebration of Maricopa's heritage — intriguing residents looking for something to do. The carnival had received a last-minute approval from City Hall.

7 City seeks dramatic budget cuts at Copper Sky

The aquatic center could see a cut in hours of operation and members could experience a rise in fees at Copper Sky. These considerations and more are part of a continuing discussion between City Council and the Budget, Finance and Operations



Raquel Hendrickson

The addition of a bus line between Maricopa's Amtrak station and the Valley drew a great amount of interest.

subcommittee, which began in August as part of an effort to mitigate costs associated with the recreation center.

6 Maricopa food bank finds new location

2017 was a year of adaptation for a local food bank. F.O.R. Maricopa food bank relocated three times due to a move forced by ADOT in preparation for construction of the overpass. The food bank plans to construct a new building adjacent to the Maricopa Business Barn, which it purchased in July. Currently, the food bank operates out of a temporary space inside Santa Cruz Elementary.

5 Maricopa schools get grim new letter grades

The majority of local schools received lowered A-F letter grades this year since the scores were last released by the state in 2014. Sequoia Pathway Academy, which received "C" ratings in both its K-8 and high school, is the only school in Maricopa to appeal its scores. Its status is "under review" by the Arizona

Department of Education.

4 MHS principal on leave, assistant in charge

Administration shakeups between Maricopa High School and Maricopa Wells Middle School left parents and community members with many questions. After reassignments and resignations from principals and vice principals, Thad Miller and Rick Abel are acting principals until the end of the school year. District officials have not specified the reasons behind the sudden resignations of former MHS Principal Renita Meyers and former MWMS Assistant Principal Mallory Miller.

3 City Council considers restricting left turns at Smith-Enke intersection

Even though only one accident had occurred in a year at a residential intersection on Smith-Enke Road near the Maricopa Public Library, city officials planned to restrict left turns from Desert Greens Drive in July. The proposal was due to safety concerns of drivers turning east

on Smith-Enke, officials said. The plans were postponed, however, amid backlash from residents.

2 John Wayne at 110: Man meets myth in Maricopa

Actor John Wayne would have turned 110 in May. His presence in Maricopa began more than 60 years ago when he bought nearby farmland, and the impact he left in the community is still displayed throughout the city.

1 Amtrak starts shuttle service in Maricopa

Amtrak began shuttling passengers in Tempe and Phoenix to and from Maricopa in May. The Thruway bus connects passengers who travel on the Sunset Limited/Texas Eagle service. The stops include Terminal 2 at Sky Harbor Airport.

Visit InMaricopa.com to read these and other Maricopa community stories.



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Larger-than-life trading-post operator left O'odham legacy

By Patricia Brock and the Maricopa Historical Society



Goldie and Marion Tracy with furs from animals they trapped to trade at the post.

Courtesy of Arizona Historical Society

Goldie Tracy Richmond stood 6-foot-4 and weighed about 350 pounds. She wore a man's size 13 shoe. She sewed her own clothes by hand because of necessity and her size. For 34 years, she operated Tracy's Trading Post in San Simon.

Maricopa's Jim Slack often spoke of this most extraordinary woman he encountered on his

business trips selling automotive parts in the isolated desert of the Tohono O'odham Reservation. Richmond also promoted the sale of thousands of Papago baskets for local artists and quilts she made from 1932 to 1966, and assisted the Papagos wherever needed throughout the years.

Goldie was born in Kansas in 1896. When

she was 21, she married Marion Tracy, who was 40 years older. In 1921, they moved to Quijotoa. It was here that she became a prospector, an animal trapper, hunter and later a trading post operator to make a living for them.

In 1932, Marion and Goldie opened Tracy's Trading Post and ran it together until Marion's death in 1936. Goldie continued to operate the trading post for years, sending advertisements for the beautiful baskets made by the Papagos from California to New York. The sales were great, and the Papagos sold the baskets as fast as they could make them. Her many Papago friends went out of their way to trade with Goldie, and an assortment of government officials and visitors constantly came into the shop. Eventually, Goldie married Jim Richmond and they operated the post until 1966.

When Goldie died in 1972, the O'odham had not been able to go to her funeral and held a service on the reservation in her memory. She was a gifted artist, and her hundreds of beautiful quilts became her legacy to the Tohono O'odham people she loved and the rugged Arizona desert that became her home.



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‘Stellar’ teacher rewarded for creative thinking

By Michelle Chance Photos by Mason Callejas



Stephanie Arturet, a third-grade teacher at Santa Cruz Elementary School, promotes creativity in her classroom, which is now helped by a surprise \$5,000 grant from Fiesta Bowl Charities.

children’s unique learning styles.

“Not everyone is going to learn just sitting in a desk listening to the teacher talk, and so the more teachers can mix it up and vary how they’re providing the information, the more experience they can give those kids,” Arturet said.

The largest investment purchased through the grant will be a technology board, which resembles a “giant tablet” that will provide students a new way to learn. It’s an expensive gadget Arturet and her students couldn’t access otherwise.

This is not the first opportunity the teacher has taken to promote creativity in her classroom. Last year, Arturet applied for and won fitness tracker wristbands from UNICEF. The more steps the students took, the more food sent to children in developing countries.

“If you can find something out there that teaches global citizenship in a way that hasn’t been approached before, why not introduce them to those new opportunities and those new reasons to learn something?” Arturet said.

Santa Cruz Principal Loraine Conley called Arturet a “stellar teacher” who embraces the “no cookie-cutter classroom” philosophy inside the school.

On a chilly morning in late November, third-grade teacher Stephanie Arturet walked into her classroom and was met with a big surprise.

School staff, students and news reporters greeted her as representatives from Fiesta Bowl Charities presented Arturet with a \$5,000 check for her Santa Cruz Elementary School classroom.

Arturet had applied for the grant months before and was shocked to learn she won.

“I enjoyed the surprise. It definitely caught me off guard, but that day I walked around in a fog; it took a while for the adrenaline to fade,” Arturet said a few weeks later.

In January, Arturet will receive the funds she will use to purchase cutting-edge technology and flexible seating for her classroom.

Currently, students are seated in traditional chairs while at their desks, but Arturet wants wobble stools and floor cushions to support

“She does creative, real-life projects with students. When you walk into her classroom, all students are engaged in the learning,” Conley said.

Midway through her 16th year in education, Arturet came to Santa Cruz last year after teaching first and second grade in the West Valley.

For more than a decade, Arturet taught at the Pendergast Elementary School District in Phoenix. It’s also where the Arizona native attended grade school years before.

But then love brought her to Maricopa. Arturet decided to move south to be with

“She does creative, real-life projects with students. When you walk into her classroom, all students are engaged in the learning.”

—Loraine Conley, Principal, Santa Cruz Elementary

her then-boyfriend, Andres, whom she recently married. The couple live in Maricopa with their children, Andres Jr. and Amelia.

The family has no plans of moving from the community anytime soon — giving Arturet more chances to create unique experiences for students inside her Santa Cruz classroom.

“I want to give them these opportunities because it’s just going to help them that much more,” Arturet said. “I have students of all ability levels and I just really want to make sure that all of the kids can get all of the information that I can give them because they are like little sponges and I want them to soak it up.”

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Maricopa High School Air Force Junior ROTC hosted a series of speakers on leadership, starting with Police Chief Steve Stahl Nov. 27. *Submitted*



Junior Jesse Kimbrough (26) has scored two goals for MHS boys' soccer, both in one game against Poston Butte. The Rams started the year 3-4-2. *Raquel Hendrickson*



MHS girls' soccer started the season 2-4, led by six goals from junior Shannon Coutr . *Victor Moreno*



Choirs from Maricopa Unified School District presented their lively fall concert Dec. 7. *Mason Callejas*



Senior Jayla Johnson was the scoring leader for the MHS Rams to start the season, averaging more than 16 points per game. *Raquel Hendrickson*



Grace Becking and Evelyn Bates dance with the MHS Performance Group during the Winter Recital Dec. 2. *Mason Callejas*

3 ways to get involved with your kids, and the reasons you should

By Priscilla Behnke

It is important for parents to be involved in their kids' lives, especially teens. Here are three ways to connect and why.

1. Eat dinner with your kids around the table at least once a week. Talk to them about their day, their successes, their challenges and your expectations.

Why it matters: The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University has been researching substance abuse and prevention policy for over a decade. They have found teens who always have dinner with their families are less likely to drink, smoke and use drugs than the teens who don't. It's a simple prescription.

2. Join a parent teacher organization (PTO). Why it Matters: With all the focus on the new state grades assigned to local

schools, it's important to remember parent involvement is part of the equation for student success. According to Alicia Coatney, a parent of Maricopa Unified School District students and president of the Maricopa Elementary School PTO,



Priscilla Behnke

there is a huge benefit to being involved in your local PTO. It isn't just about funding: "There is plenty of research that links parent involvement in schools to improved academic achievement and reduced absences. Students with involved parents typically earn higher grades and test scores, as well as exhibit better social skills and markedly improved behaviors. Parent involvement provides support for children who might face academic hurdles or other challenges with friendships or extracurricular activities."

3. Mentor a student who needs individualized attention. Often, students who need it can't always get it due to home situations and class sizes. You can help. Be Awesome works with the MUSD to provide students with screened, trained and caring mentors.

Why it matters: Decades of empirical data shows children who have mentors are more likely to perform better in school, graduate high school, be less likely to attempt suicide, commit crimes or engage in substance abuse. It's a simple solution to an array of problems currently plaguing our youth. Unfortunately, the time commitment is a challenge for working families, which has led to a long waiting list for kids who could benefit right here in Maricopa. If you or someone you know could help, contact us; we'd love to connect you.

520-428-7750
mcaasa.org, Facebook.com/
BeAwesomeYouthCoalition, PBehnke@macaasa.org

Priscilla Behnke is program director for Maricopa CAASA and Be Awesome Coalition.

Improved MUSD academic programs would slow bus traffic to Kyrene

By Murray Siegel

Each school day morning, school buses transport elementary students who reside in Maricopa to school in Kyrene.

Why should citizens of Maricopa care about these buses? Each bus represents state funds that are provided to the Kyrene district at the expense of Maricopa Unified School District (MUSD). Why do parents place their children on a bus to travel about 20 miles to attend school when MUSD schools are much closer?

Two Maricopa families who send their children to school in the Kyrene district were queried. One family of professionals recognized their son had real ability in mathematics. He had attended an MUSD school in fifth grade, but the parents saw that Kyrene offered a better middle school

program. In sixth grade, he would take seventh grade math. In seventh grade, he would be taking pre-algebra, and in eighth grade his math class would be honors-level algebra. The family's research revealed MUSD had nothing to compare and so their son rides the bus.



Murray Siegel

When the older child of a second couple was ready for kindergarten, they investigated several school districts and charter schools. What Kyrene had to offer was well-suited for their child, who is now in sixth grade in Kyrene. The couple talked about sending their younger child to kindergarten in Maricopa but discovered Kyrene was initiating a dual language program in kindergarten. The mother reported the decision, "became a no brainer. The benefits of our child being bilingual far outweighed the convenience of having our

children closer to home." Prior to November 2016, the voters of Maricopa rejected a sequence of ballot initiatives to authorize overrides that would have funded supplemental projects. During that period, Kyrene voters approved overrides that enabled the growth of special programs.

MUSD must take actions to get those children off the Kyrene buses. A plan should be constructed that will both improve the academic offerings in local elementary and middle schools, and, of equal importance, allow the public to learn of these upgrades.

The initial stage should include surveying parents who send their children to Kyrene to discover what it would take to have their children attend MUSD schools.

A resource that has not been utilized is the retired educators who reside in Province. There are retired school superintendents, retired principals and scores of retired teachers who have served in schools all over the nation and certainly have ideas that might benefit those seeking to reduce the busing to Kyrene.

Murray Siegel has a PhD in MathEd and 42 years teaching experience.

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New moms say preparation key for 2018's mothers-to-be

By Michelle Chance Photos by Mason Callejas

The New Year baby has long symbolized the opportunity for fresh beginnings. For parents expecting an infant in 2018, the start of a new life can bring as much fear as it does excitement.

A few local moms who gave birth last year said bringing a baby home doesn't have to be scary for parents — so long as they're prepared.

One obvious service missing in Maricopa for expectant parents is a hospital and birthing center, so navigating State Route 347 as due dates draw near is a common worry for soon-to-be mothers.

It became a very real fear for Christine Avino, who was stuck in traffic on the 347 earlier this year with her contractions only minutes apart.

Before she left home, an accident involving a motorcycle clogged the main route to the hospital.

"Don't take the chance of 'Oh I have plenty of time,'" Avino said. "You never know if you have plenty of time, especially on that long road."

Luckily for Avino, she arrived at the hospital in time and later gave birth to a healthy baby boy named Killian.

Avino suggested parents leave for the hospital as soon as they suspect labor may be on its way, just in case the 347 greets them with its notorious delays.

Having a backup plan for trips to the hospital is also the advice of Maricopa



Opposite: Emersyn, Brooklyn, Killian and Aurora were all born in 2017. Clockwise from above: Emersyn and her sister spend time at the library, which their mother Kelly Campbell said is one of the few places to take babies for recreation; Aurora, with her mother Rhiannon Williams, was born in September; Killian with his mother Christine Avino, who would like to have a mother's network in Maricopa; Rhiannon Williams advises new parents not to sweat the small stuff – "Everything is not an emergency."

resident Kelly Campbell. During her high-risk pregnancy with twins, Campbell traveled weekly to the Valley for prenatal appointments.

"Have a backup plan, always, especially with the 347. It was always on my mind," Campbell said.

Her husband's hectic work schedule meant Campbell prepared for emergency trips to the hospital by ensuring two other people were always available to drive her there.


Campbell's fear of giving birth on SR 347 ended when her twin girls, Brooklyn and Emersyn, were born by scheduled C-section 10 months ago.

Local mother Rhiannon Williams also recommended being prepared by meeting with

potential pediatricians and reviewing hospitals before the baby's arrival to ensure the medical services are the right fit for their families.

Williams is the mother of 3-month-old Aurora, her second child. With her eldest, Williams recalled worrying over every cough and mild fever.

She suggests new parents not sweat the small stuff.

"I learned that not everything with your first born is an emergency," Williams said. "I delivered my second daughter at Mercy Gilbert in September and have since realized that a lot of things that I was so worried about before are not as big of a deal or as bad as I thought they would be with my second." 



Honoree

Saving a life earns MPD Explorer top honor

By Joycelyn Cabrera

Sixteen-year-old Dreama King was awarded the Maricopa Police Department Explorers' "Explorer of the Year" after she prevented a peer from committing suicide over the summer. King stumbled upon an online group chat and discovered a young lady who had described the desire to harm herself and end her life due to her living circumstances. King convinced the teen to message her privately and prevented her from taking her own life by helping her realize her own



Joycelyn Cabrera

self-worth. Today, both young women have connected as close friends and continue to talk regularly. After discussing the series of events with the lead advisor of MPD Explorers, Officer

Dreama King with Officer Chris Evans at Maricopa High School.

Chris Evans, she was nominated to be named 2017's MPD Explorer of the Year. King received the honor in early November at the Maricopa Police Foundation awards dinner. King, a junior at Maricopa High School, has been a part of MPD Explorers since her freshman year, after contemplating a career in military service or law enforcement. She rose to executive commander and second in command among the Explorers after only two years. Evans nominated King due to her achievement in protecting a life as well as her drive and motivation among the Explorers. "It's pretty easy working with someone who has that drive. She definitely earned it," he said. Evans oversees training among the Explorers and describes scenario-based situations to be prepared for real-life emergencies. Additionally, Explorers are exposed to potentially dangerous scenes when they participate in ride-alongs with officers. The goal is for every Explorer to know how to react in any situation. Evans and King agree it was the training that primarily guided King through what to do, what to say and how to say it. King said she was shocked and honored to receive the award. She believes anyone currently struggling should try to seek help. "There's a lot of people that care. You can't have a rainbow without a little rain."



Seasonal Energy Savings Tips

1. Open curtains during the day for natural heat and close at night to keep heat inside.
2. Use programmable thermostat to set heater back while away or asleep.
3. Set ceiling fan to spin clockwise to blow rising hot air down.
4. Weather-strip around doors and windows to keep warm air from escaping.
5. Schedule service for your heating system.
6. Turn down temperature on water heater to warm setting (120°F).

Source: Energy.gov



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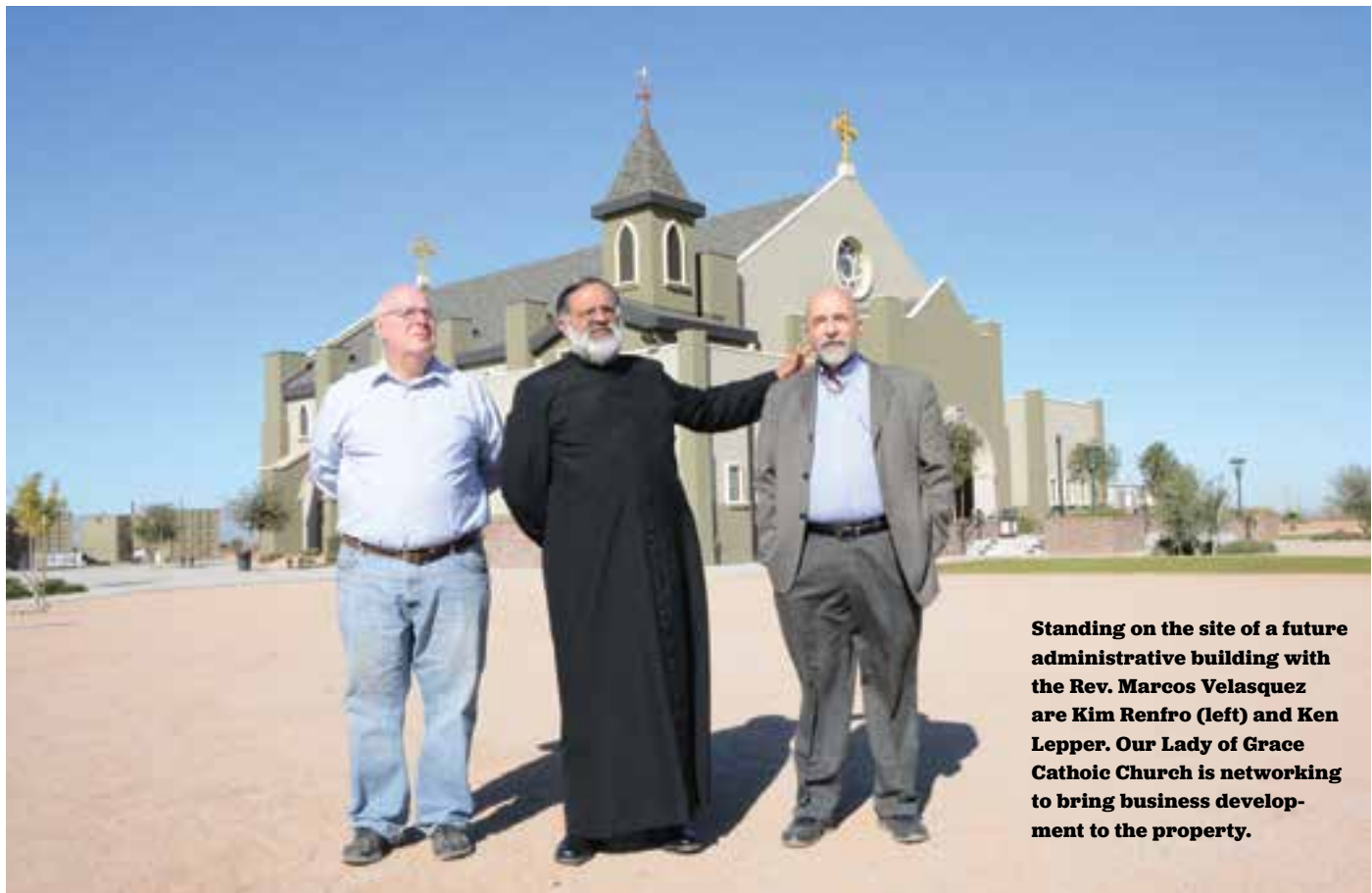
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Standing on the site of a future administrative building with the Rev. Marcos Velasquez are Kim Renfro (left) and Ken Lepper. Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church is networking to bring business development to the property.

Raquel Hendrickson

Our Lady of Grace gets down to business

By Raquel Hendrickson

The Catholic church intends to create its own village center that will be a mix of businesses, housing and a school. The property known as The Crossing is 20 acres surrounding Our Lady of Grace's two-story church.

The building was decades in the making, but it was only the first step in the development vision. Now Our Lady of Grace is ready to get down to business.

"We're going to focus on unique," said Ken Lepper, chairman of the Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church Construction and Design Oversight Committee.

Lepper came from The Woodlands, a planned community in Texas, where he sat on village boards and the overall community board. He would like to see a similar village concept of a maintainable, walkable community at The Crossing.

"It will be a two- to three-year development effort to get things moving," Lepper said. "There's a chance that [in 2018] we'll have some stuff starting or at least contracted."

Kim Renfro, chairman of the finance committee, touted the idea of senior living and assisted living facilities as well as residences for Alzheimer's patients. A parishioner at Our Lady of Grace for a dozen years, he said the committee is also looking for a "high, high-end charter school" and apartments.

"The city really needs apartments," Renfro said.

The Crossing is pre-zoned for high-density housing. The committee has looked at HUD-funded grants, which require scoring well on government scorecards. The committee found one thing it does not score well on is distance to a hospital.

The plans also include retail, professional

offices, medical offices and a grocery. Lepper said the school is an important element.

"What kind of school we don't know yet — Catholic school, charter school, private school, military school," he said.

"The concept is to get a mix of businesses that people will want to come to and housing that people will want to live in, with services that are nearby."

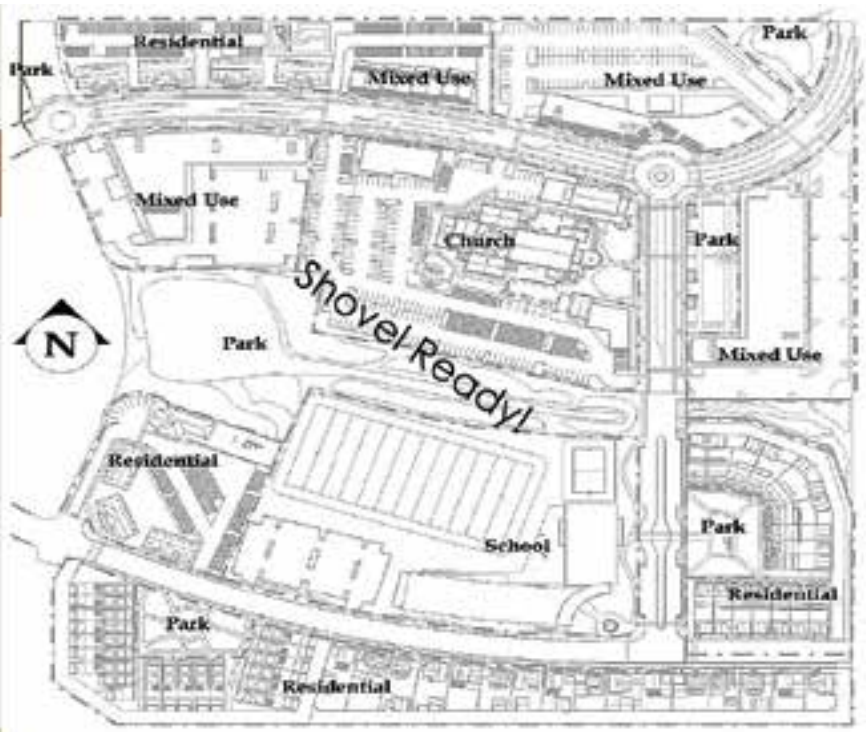
The church's plans were city-approved in 2012. In the years since, changes in Maricopa's marketplace have caused the church's development committee to alter its plans.

"When this was first envisioned, there weren't near as many retail outlets as there are now," Lepper said. "The city has really changed in terms of what's available and how it's growing, so we need something that's a draw."

They have even been approached by the developer of a microbrewery.

As a tax-exempt entity entering the world of business, Our Lady of Grace is still forming the legal framework.

"We will probably have a separate entity that the church will control through CC&R's and some others, assuming real estate law tells us it's what we have to do," Lepper said. "The bottom line is, we'll do whatever we



legally have to do to develop the property and maximize the benefit to the church."

The Crossing is shovel-ready. To keep it looking prime and ready for development, Our Lady of Grace has leaned on the volunteer labor

of generous members who were vital to the building of the church.

Rev. Marcos Velásquez said that kind of dedication has been very important to the development of The Crossing. The church itself

is emblematic of the devotion of the members, with many elements created or donated by parishioners. That has happened with the grounds as well.

"Before we even started building over here," Lepper said. "Mike Mills [of Ellison-Mills Contracting] came out after church at our old place and he said, 'Here's my card. I run a construction company, and we work primarily with movement of dirt, plumbing, electrical, trenching, all that stuff.' And he said, 'If I can ever help, let me know.'"

Two years later, Lepper took him up on the offer. Mills moved dirt to fill in an unnecessary retention basin, cleared land for the annual fair, worked weed control, watered down dirt (with water he paid for) to control dust and paid to clean the private streets. It all helped Our Lady of Grace meet its maintenance requirements.

"I've always been taught if you receive grace, you should be giving back," Mills said.

Besides reaching within the congregation, the church is busy networking and forging new relationships in the community and marketplace to begin developing The Crossing.

"It's staged," Lepper said. "It's ready for the right investment and interest level. There's no doubt that this can be successful."

Investments in local businesses prep for growth

The developer of a **Jiffy Lube** received a commercial permit to build at 42100 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy. The project on a 2,612-square-foot lot is valued at \$182,000. Primary contractor is HRW Builders.

The **Muslim Community Mosque** at 44370 W. Arizona Ave. was granted a permit for grading and drainage by ABC Asphalt. The project is valued at \$28,000.

Besides applying for a business license, **SV Gourmet Kitchen Food Truck** owner Miller Dao received a zoning permit to be a mobile vendor.

After a fire in September, **Agnes Centers for Domestic Solutions** received a remodel permit Nov. 17 for repair to the roof trusses, drywall and mechanical work, all worth \$20,000.

Developers of Edison Pointe received a permit to use the right of way to remove curb, install driveway and patch asphalt. The work, valued at \$46,000, was done by **Pro Low Joint Venture** as the new shopping center continued construction.

Also at Edison Pointe, **Christy's Signs** received a sign permit for VP Edison, and Equity Sign Group received a sign permit for the Goodwill Store.

Getting underground fireline and hydrant permits for flow tests were **Mt. Moriah Church** on Gunsmoke Road and the new **Denny's** lot on John Wayne Parkway.

Liberty Tax received a permit for an exterior wall mounted sign at 20800 N. John Wayne Parkway, Suite 104. Desert Eyecare Center received a permit for an aluminum wall sign at 21300 N. John Wayne Parkway, Suite 2-105.



Harrah's Ak-Chin opens wine bar

As part of its ongoing remodel, Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino opened its small-plate wine bar, Oak & Fork, Dec. 18. Customers chose a fine wine and pair it with steak, chicken, lobster, lamb or other selections, including a meat-and-cheese board and a seafood tower.

The store had operated as a drive-thru with inside seating, one of only seven among the Sonic chains. Customers who came inside to dine had to order over a telephone. Carter said customers complained the phones didn't work or they were concerned about germs.

Inside changes included a drop-down ceiling to combat the echo, new equipment and new furniture. Outside, five drive-in stalls were erected with digital touch screens.

"That was the No. 1 thing Maricopa would not leave me alone about. 'We need stalls out here,'" Carter said. "I told them the most I could do was five."

Customers can also order from their phones, type in what stall they're in, and their order will be delivered to them. Carter, who has managed the Maricopa store three years and has worked for Sonic since she was 16, said the menu has also been pared down, with least-ordered items taken away to simplify service.



Sonic undergoes remodel to meet customer demands

Maricopa Sonic now has traditional drive-in stalls outside and a manned counter inside after weeks of remodeling. Store operator Maegan Carter said the changes came from customer feedback.

Fulton Homes to open new Glennwilde communities in January

Fulton Homes has returned to Maricopa to build 400 homes in Glennwilde. The four new neighborhoods will be named Raintree, Sonoma Coast, Calistoga and Cottonwood. The homes have 49 new

floorplans ranging from 1,595 to 4,732 square feet and starting in the \$190,000s.

"We are thrilled to be back in Maricopa," said Doug Fulton, CEO of Fulton Homes.

"We certainly expect to see some repeat buyers from Cobblestone Farms who are looking to upgrade to the more modern floorplans, energy efficiency and indoor air quality standards."

Fulton built 900 homes in Cobblestone Farms nearly a decade ago. In December, the company received permits for new signs in Glennwilde on Sussex Drive and Barcelona Drive as the company prepared to open its latest residential lots.

Fulton Homes' Glennwilde communities will be located at Honeycutt and Porter Roads. They are set to open in January.

Health inspectors find issues at Province, Sunrise Café

Two of the nine Maricopa eateries inspected by the Pinal County health department Nov. 16-Dec. 14 received black marks. While the **Province Clubhouse** had more observed infractions, netting an "S" rating, **Sunrise Café** received a dreaded "N" for one ongoing problem.

Province had various infractions concerning the hand-wash sink, hand-washing practice and use of gloves. Sunrise Café was dinged for appliances cold holding at 47-49 degrees instead of the required maximum 41 degrees. It was written up for having no food manager certification present, noted as a repeat violation since December 2016.



- EXCELLENT [No violations found]**
- Children's Learning Adventure
 - Chipotle Mexican Grill
 - Circle K, 18141 N. John Wayne Parkway
 - Firehouse Subs
 - McDonald's, 41710 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy.
 - QuikTrip
 - QuikTrip - Kitchen

- SATISFACTORY [Violations corrected during inspection]**
- Province Community Association Clubhouse

- NEEDS IMPROVEMENT [Critical items noted during inspection cannot be corrected immediately requiring follow-up inspection]**
- Sunrise Café

- UNACCEPTABLE [Gross, unsanitary conditions necessitating the discontinuation of service]**
- None

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Top 10 Development Stories 2017

Most-read stories related to business and economic development:

10 Props 416/417 approved by county voters

Voters approved a countywide transportation project scheduled to begin next year. Unofficial results from November's election showed Prop 416, Pinal County's Regional Transportation Authority, passed with 57 percent approval. Prop 417, the half-cent sales tax that would support the transportation projects, also passed, albeit by a slim margin of less than 1 percent. Phase 1 of the RTA includes the widening of State Route 347 from four lanes to six lanes up to the county line as well as an east-west corridor.

9 APEX and City Hall win in court, so far

Controversial legal battles brought forth by a political action committee and a Maricopa resident this summer challenged a conditional use permit approved by the city for the elite racetrack APEX Motor Club. The petitions aimed to stop construction of the track proposed on a parcel at the northwest corner of State Route 238 and Ralston Road. Courts threw out the resident's suit for "lack of standing" and denied the PAC's appeal in September.

8 Maricopa job fair brings 45 employers to applicants

Hundreds of applicants arrived dressed for interviews this summer during a job fair hosted by Arizona@Work Pinal County. The event was held at the



David Durst

Maricopans were highly interested in the construction of Edison Pointe.

Maricopa Unified School District Administration Building and featured 45 employers.

7 Firestone replacing Fletcher's after acquisition

Fletcher's Tire & Auto Service in Maricopa was one of 31 stores in Phoenix and Southern Arizona that became Firestone Complete Auto Care earlier this year. The local store moved into Maricopa Fiesta plaza in 2005 and began converting to Fletcher's in April.

6 Plans for Maricopa hospital on ice

Although Dignity Health announced it would build a hospital here in 2012, Maricopa is still without one five years later. The company bought nearly 19 acres on the northeast corner of John Wayne Parkway and Smith-Enke roads with the intention of building a 34,800-square-foot emergency facility and hospital by 2016. The land has sat untouched since.

5 Developer pitches apartments to council

Affordable, multifamily housing

could solve Maricopa's rental gap, according to apartment developer Englewood Group, which intends to develop apartments in the city. Construction of the proposed complex is still years out, however, as re-zoning could take until the summer of 2019. The city conducted a housing-needs assessment earlier this year, revealing a need for diverse housing options.

4 Breakfast diner under construction, seeks employees

An opening date for the 4,041-square-foot Denny's diner is still unknown, but as workers continue to construct the building, the company has advertised opportunities for job applicants. The restaurant is located near the southeast corner of John Wayne Parkway and Smith Enke Road. Construction began in September.

3 Peñascos closes after 11 years

The quiet closure of a family-owned restaurant in Maricopa sparked surprise reactions

among residents in September. The building's landlord said the "tenants abandoned" the building, but Penascos owner Rosalinda O'Hare disputed that. O'Hare said a variety of factors contributed to her decision to close the doors to her business, which opened more than a decade earlier.

2 First gas station not on John Wayne Parkway approved for development

What will be the third Circle K in Maricopa received recommendation for a development review permit from the Planning & Zoning Commission in September. The 5,881-square-foot convenience store and gas station is planned on 1.8 acres at the southeast corner of Honeycutt and Porter roads.

1 Residents await Edison Pointe groundbreaking

The 130,000-square-foot retail development broke ground at the end of July along State Route 347 and Edison Road, shortly before losing one of its larger prospects, Petco. It's estimated Edison Pointe will create at least 100 jobs for Maricopans with confirmed businesses Ross, Goodwill, WingStop, Planet Fitness, Brakes Plus, Burger King, Dunkin Donuts and a nail salon. Stores are scheduled to open in early 2018.

Visit InMaricopa.com to read these and other Maricopa business stories.



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MUSD NEWS

MUSD blended learning receives state award

The K-8 blended learning program of the Maricopa Unified School District was presented with the 2017 Arizona School Board Association's "Golden Bell Award" for excellence in education programs. MUSD's blended learning program was one of three school district programs in the state of Arizona that were recognized.

The presentation was made Dec. 14 in conjunction with the ASBA Annual Conference. The outstanding work of all 18 blended learning teachers from Maricopa Wells Middle School, Desert Wind Middle School and Santa Rose Elementary were recognized by this award, including: Erin Bell, Jennifer Cameron, Nicole Cantrell, Rebecca Drury, Jackie Hahn, Janell Hudson, Kyrie Hughes, Shannon Hull, Amy Hunt, Brittany Parsons, Robyn Rice, Jennifer Szoltysik, Joe Szoltysik, Laura Tietz, Jennifer Titus, Kasey Turik, Jacque Witte and Mindy Ma.

In addition to being recognized at the awards luncheon, teachers from the blended learning program were asked to present a 50-minute informational session for conference attendees that afternoon. Teachers making the presentation included: Nicole Cantrell, Shannon Hull, Amy Hunt, Robyn Rice, Jen Szoltysik and Joe Szoltysik.

MUSD began the blended learning program in 2012 for 50 students in grades 6-8 at Maricopa Wells Middle School. Since then the program has increased in size at MWMS to 180 students and six teachers. Desert Wind Middle School has an almost identical program with 135 students and four teachers, so there are now 315 middle school students enrolled. In addition, all classrooms at Santa Rosa Elementary School in grades 3-5 serve 169 students in blended classrooms. For 2017-18, the total number of students in grades 3-8 enrolled in blended learning is 484. All MUSD schools use some blended learning, but these three schools have emphasized it the most.

In blended learning classrooms students experience personalized learning. Much of their academic work is done on a personal laptop completing teacher-made lessons and using online curriculum materials. Students receive large and small group instruction with an emphasis on project based learning. ■



MUSD teachers accepted the Golden Bell Award at the Dec. 14 ASBA Annual Conference.

Claim a 2017 Tax Credit for MUSD through April 15

Did you know there is an easy way to help MUSD schools that won't cost you anything? Arizona tax law allows married taxpayers filing jointly to receive a tax credit of up to \$400 (or \$200 for individuals) for donating money to certain public school programs. This allows Arizona taxpayers to donate to the MUSD extracurricular program of their choice and then receive a dollar for dollar tax credit!

This deduction is a "win — win" situation for taxpayers, and MUSD encourages each resident to consider this financially savvy opportunity. Arizona tax payers can claim the deduction on 2017 taxes as long as the donation is made by April 15, 2018.

There is an informational video about Arizona's school tax credit program that explains the tax advantages of this unique program as well as the impact these funds have on extra-curricular and character education programs for MUSD students. The video link is located on the homepage of the MUSD website at www.maricopausd.org and can be accessed by clicking on the button labeled "Tax Credit Info."

MUSD is grateful for the efforts of the Maricopa Education Foundation which provided the funding for the video. For more information about the tax credit program, please contact the MUSD District Office at 520-568-5100 and ask for Student Activities Specialist Lisa Baker. ■

The mission of the Maricopa Unified School District is to ensure all students achieve excellence by preparing them to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens who value innovation and global diversity.

Elementary
gifted students
present inventions

Fifth grade students in the MUSD elementary gifted program from Saddleback, Pima Butte, Butterfield, Maricopa Elementary and Santa Cruz put on their best clothes for an exciting presentation to students, teachers and parents on Nov. 16.

This event was the students' final presentation of their Invention Unit. The first part of the project included researching an invention or inventor and reporting the information through a research paper. The second part had students form small groups and invent something that would "better our lives."

Students created business plans, formulated the solution (their product), developed a target market, researched competition and costs, and then calculated potential revenue and profits. These plans were put into a Google slideshow, and students presented their ideas using posters, laptops and their prototype invention. The event was very successful and Mrs. Redfern would like to thank students, parents and staff for their support of this program. ■



MHS students at Fall Junior
State of America state competition

On Dec. 9, the Maricopa High School chapter of Junior State of America (JSA) competed at the fall state competition held in Tucson.

Forty-three MHS students worked with students from all over Arizona to debate, discuss and learn.

Advisor and MHS teacher Mr. Jason Goodwin commented, "This was by far the most

successful conference we have attended to date. We had multiple debate winners, best speaker awards and a scholarship recipient."

Debate winners were: Hannah Bailey, Freya Abraham, Mahonri Santos and Rachel Knight. Best speaker winners were Freya Abraham and Zyled Rodriguez. Jasmin Dimas was awarded a half scholarship to attend Junior State Summer School at Princeton University. ■

MHS band competes in Arizona Marching
Band Association Championship

Under the direction of Mr. Ivan Pour, the Maricopa High School Marching Rams had an exciting and busy day on Nov. 11.

In the morning, the Marching Rams celebrated veterans with an appearance in the Maricopa Veteran's Day Parade. In the evening, the Rams took to the field at Perry High School in Chandler for their final performance of the 2017 season as part of the Arizona Marching Band Association Championship. The Marching Rams posted their best performance so far this season of their program "Bases Loaded," improving their overall score by more than 7 points from their previous appearance.

"I want to thank our band parent volunteers for their many hours of assistance and hard work building and moving props and equipment and feeding our hungry

band students," stated Mr. Pour. He went on to say, "I want to thank the MHS faculty and administration as well as MUSD administrators for their support. I am also grateful to the Ak-Chin and Gila River Indian Communities for their generous support of the band and orchestra programs and the recent grant funds they have provided. Finally, I want to acknowledge the hard work of the rest of the band staff - Assistant Director Roger Wagner and Colorguard Coach Taylor Austin. These two, along with a great group of student leaders, do a large amount of work as we prepare for our performances. Their hard work gets us ready to share the field with bands who often have many more staff members than we do. What we do would not be possible without all of us taking on multiple roles and working hard. A big thanks to all!" ■

Middle school essays
recognized by VFW

Members of Maricopa chapter of The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. (VFW) visited Desert Wind Middle School blended learning classrooms recently to award student winners of VFW's Patriot's Pen Essay Contest. This year's topic was "America's Gift to My Generation."

Students completed these essays as part of a social studies assignment in October. There were 148 essays submitted this year from all Maricopa middle schools which included MUSD and charter schools. Of the top ten essays, eight winners came from Desert Wind Middle School.

The top three essays are being judged in the VFW district competition. If a student's essay is best at district it will advance to the state competition, and if it is best in the state it will advance to the national competition. The first-place national award is \$5,000 plus an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., for the winner and a parent or guardian.

The top three winners received a framed certificate, a Patriot's Pen medal, and a cash prize. Winners from Desert Wind Middle School were:

- 1st place-Delaney Krenke
- 2nd place-Baily Martinez
- 3rd place-Keegan Walters
- 4th place-Mia Ryska
- 5th place-Rizelle Nolasco
- 6th place-Colter Asbell
- 9th place-Molly Jorgensen
- 10th place-Abigail Judd



In addition, Desert Wind Middle School teacher Shannon Hull received the Maricopa VFW's Teacher of the Year Award. ■



MHS theatre
students excel at
AZ Thespian Festival

On Nov. 17-18 students from the Maricopa High School Theatre Class and the Technical Theatre class competed at the Arizona State Thespian Festival at the Phoenix Convention Center. This two-day event brought almost 3,000 students from all over the state to compete as well as attend workshops and performances.

Student performances/competitions included:

Senior Collin Martin and junior Antonio Gonzales, duet musical of "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" from Kiss Me, Kate (superior).

Senior Britney Montgomery, solo musical of "Glitter and Be Gay" from Candide (superior).

Junior Alex Hurley, monologues from Death of a Salesman and Picnic (excellent).

Seniors Jalen Reyes and Lisa Moore and juniors Kjirsten Lemon and Aleyna Call, group musical of "You're Going Back to Jail" from Bonnie and Clyde (excellent).

Two teams of Technical Theatre students competed in the Tech Challenge, including events of knot-tying, costume quick changes, cord wrapping, and prop switches.

The one-act event of "Tracks", was performed by seniors Collin Martin, Logan Spaulding, Rachel Knight, Carlos Aguilar, Adrian Perdomo, Ivie Keene, and Chaienne Zoller, and by juniors Taryn Story, Aidyn Curtis, and Antonio Gonzales.

Students received recognition for the following:

The Tech Team took 1st place (against 64 other schools) in the knot-tying event.

Britney Montgomery competed in college and thespian scholarship auditions, and was awarded the Amy Bennett Musical Theatre Memorial Scholarship. She also earned straight-superior scores from the solo musical event judges. ■

MUSD launches staff recruitment effort for 2018-19

The Maricopa Unified School District is about to begin its teacher and support staff recruitment efforts for the upcoming school year with a Job Fair on Saturday, Jan. 27, 10 a.m.—2 p.m.

As a result of the passage of the 2016 override, the district was able to hire 50 new certified staff members for the 2017-2018 school year in addition to the 35 certified positions that needed to be filled as a result of attrition. The exact number of certified positions needed for 2018-19 is unknown at this time, but the number will probably be 30-40. Some jobs are currently posted on the district's website.

The district is asking for support from the community and encouraging all internal and external stakeholders to share the news about

this job fair with family, friends and professional acquaintances.

The Job Fair will be at the District's Administrative Office Building located at 44150 W. Maricopa/Casa Grande Highway. Administrators and supervisors will be present to discuss opportunities and also to conduct interviews for projected openings. Interested candidates should access the District's online application at [MUSD20.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx](https://mUSD20.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx) and complete the appropriate application prior to the Job Fair.

For more information about career opportunities with the Maricopa Unified School District please call 520-568-5100 or visit the District's website at www.maricopausd.org. ■

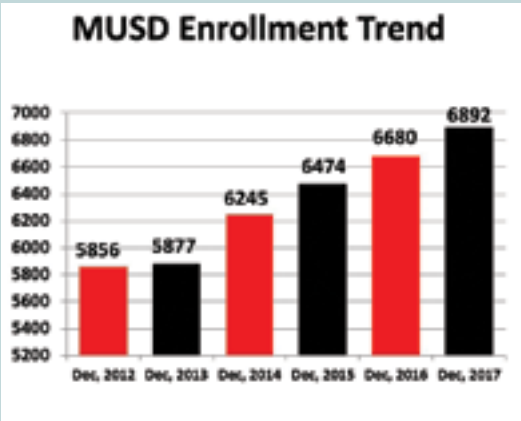


MHS Air Force Junior ROTC cadets assist with Snowball Express

Since 2006, the Snowball Express organization has supported the children of military fallen heroes who have died while on active duty since 9/11. American Airlines is a major corporate sponsor of the organization. Each December the organization brings children together from all over the world for a four-day experience filled with fun activities, like sporting events, dances, amusement parks and more. The Maricopa High School Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (AFJROTC) cadets were invited to be escorts for children participating in this program through Phoenix-Sky Harbor Terminal 4 to their waiting flights on December 9th. Lieutenant Colonel Allen Kirksey, Senior Aerospace Science Instructor for the MHS program stated: “This was the second year that our cadets participated in this event, and oh what an emotional sight and life experience it was to watch our cadets in action representing Maricopa High School.” This year’s chaperones were: Dawn Odell from American Airlines, Melodee Nowatzki, MUSD School Psychologist, Mike Kemery, Maricopa VFW Representative, and Torri Anderson, MUSD Governing Board Member. ■

MUSD enrollment hits a new high

Enrollment continues to grow in the Maricopa Unified School District. On Dec. 1, enrollment hit an all-time high of 6,892. One year ago enrollment was 6,680 students. Maricopa High School currently has 2,101 students, which includes 100 students enrolled in the new Ram Academy program. Enrollment has increased 2.8 percent on average over the last five years. ■



Maricopa Wells Middle School student to be recognized

Maricopa Wells Middle School student Chloe Lopez-Kennison is a winner in the 33rd annual Arizona State University 2018 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration essay and poster contest. ASU received more than 1,800 entries concerning this year’s theme: Look Deeper Speak Louder.” Chloe and her family have been invited to the award breakfast at ASU on Jan. 18. Congratulations to Chloe! ■



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Hometown: Marjorie, Carson, California, and Hank – aka The Motivator, Fort Plain, New York

Maricopa business owner since: 2009

Family: My lovely wife Marjorie and five boys

Dream vacation: Paris, France

Like most about Maricopa: Generous and caring community

Like least about Maricopa: There is no nice, sit-down, family restaurant

FAVORITES

Charity: Food bank

Actor: Chuck Norris

Song: God Bless America

Team: Arizona Cardinals

Quote: "Stay Motivated"

Words to live by: Honor, Courtesy, Respect and Commitment

Joke: I'm so hungry, I ate my toe nails



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Listening with intent to learn, implement, is key

By Christian Price

For those of you who know me, you know I can carry on a conversation with “the best of them.” I love being engaged in all types of conversations with friends and colleagues, business acquaintances and completely new people. And for as much as I love to talk, what I really love about these conversations is the age-old practice of listening.

In my opinion, listening isn’t just the act of not having something coming out of your mouth every other second; but rather engaging in the conversation with the intent to approach the ideas discussed with an educational bent and a concentration on possible implementation of those good ideas expressed. In short, it’s showing a genuine interest and concern in the person and the subject at hand.

Too often, those in positions of leadership, be they corporate, political, entrepreneurial or simply in our very own families, often forget that being “in charge” does not mean we know everything. While these leaders may have the broader vision and concern of the organization in the forefront of their minds, sometimes, it’s the little things that can help catapult both the individual and the group forward the most. Being open to these suggestions, opinions and ideas as they are presented may be the resulting difference between success and failure, growth or decline, or learning what you simply would never have known otherwise to advance the organization to greatness.

To this point, one of my favorite stories about the powerful and successful CEO listening to a frontline worker was told to me by my 11th grade history teacher. We were studying the Industrial Revolution and discussing the “American Dream” and how many of these now uber-wealthy individuals like John D. Rockefeller, Cornelius Vanderbilt and Andrew Carnegie had risen from poverty to prosperity with hard work and business acumen. As my teacher was relating many fascinating stories about these larger-than-life personalities, one stood out to me and helps guide my perspective about leadership and listening to this day.

He said one day, Andrew Carnegie, who is perhaps best known for the fortune he built through his growth and sale of the Carnegie Steel Co. of Pittsburgh, instituted what we call today the suggestion box. While I can’t say if he actually invented the concept, he certainly understood its possible repercussions. To encourage and foster good ideas and their possible implementation, Carnegie offered a reward equivalent to a worker’s entire month’s wages if the suggestion favored the success and efficiency of the organization and was chosen to be enacted.

During this era, when newly fabricated steel came off the line, it was thinly layered into massive rolls, kind of like a roll of toilet paper. To keep the final top flap from coming loose and risk the roll unravelling during transport, they placed three drops of molten steel on the loose flap to seal it and keep it together. Upon arrival at the destination, the drops creating the seal were broken and the fresh steel utilized.

One day, the worker in charge of applying these “three drop seals” suggested applying only one drop would be equally sufficient in strength and in keeping the flap in place until delivered, thus saving two drops of steel per newly produced roll that left the company’s production line. Due to the colossal volume and quantity of steel the United States and world was using during this Gilded Age, this simple suggestion saved the Carnegie Steel Co. millions of dollars and led to greater profits.



Christian Price

While Carnegie didn’t know exactly what this simple suggestion would ultimately lead to, he knew enough about listening to his “on-the-job experts,” and that at a very minimum, to give their suggestions credence for the benefit of the company.

I have referred to this story many times in my life, and it has provided me with the perspective that teamwork is best at helping any organization fire on all its cylinders, while maintaining and respecting an individual’s specific skillsets and talents. While most of us think the leadership position we hold brings a certain air of authority (and perhaps it does), what we cannot assume is we know the very best course of action in every given situation. I can personally attest those leaders who practice listening with an open mind to a subordinate’s comments and ideas, those who promote an open and conversational work environment with the intent to better the organization’s situation, foster and cultivate a positive culture of sharing, trust, confidence and earned loyalty that is second to none... and always pays dividends. 🗨

Christian Price is managing partner of Pantheon Investments and mayor of Maricopa.



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Timeline: Infamous double-murder case heads to trial

By Mason Callejas

After more than two years, a Maricopa double-murder case is set to go to trial Jan. 23. Jose Ignacio Valenzuela Jr., 40, who lived on Papago Road in the Thunderbird Farms area, is accused of killing two of his neighbors — Tina and Michael Careccia.

The husband and wife were found shot to death and buried on Valenzuela’s property. Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty.

A timeline based on law enforcement and court records

June 21, 2015: Father’s Day, the Careccias held a family gathering, which Valenzuela attended. The couple was last seen by family members around 9 p.m. Michael Careccia’s phone made several calls to Valenzuela between 9 and 11 p.m.

June 22, 2015: The Careccias did not show up for work. A family member filed a missing person’s report with Pinal County Sheriff’s Office at 7:16 p.m., and the search for Tina, 42, and Michael, 44, began. The Carreccias’ car was found on North Ralston Road at 10:09 p.m. Blood traces, later determined to be Michael Careccia’s, were found inside the vehicle.

In subsequent days, investigators and volunteers combed the area near their home on Mayer Boulevard in the unincorporated community of Thunderbird Farms, roughly three miles south of Maricopa. Valenzuela was initially questioned by investigators about the phone calls. PCSO also questioned Valenzuela’s roommate, Felix Nuñez.



Jose Valenzuela is accused of first-degree murder in the deaths of Mike and Tina Careccia.



June 24, 2015: A \$3,000 reward is offered for information about the missing couple. The case began to draw statewide and national media interest.

June 30, 2015: After being tight-lipped about the search, PCSO announced the department’s belief that foul play was involved.

July 1, 2015: Valenzuela was formally questioned as a “person of interest.” At 3 p.m., Careccia family members held a press conference. At 3:15 p.m., a search warrant was served on Valenzuela’s property at 50669 W. Papago Road, two blocks north of the Careccia’s home, and a .22 revolver was recovered from the house. PCSO forensic teams began digging in the yard.

July 2, 2015: At around 2 a.m., the bodies of Tina and Michael Careccia were found buried in a six-foot grave next to the house. Valenzuela was arrested.

July 8, 2015: Formal charges of two counts of first-degree murder were filed against Valenzuela after a grand jury indictment. Public Defender James Mannato became Valenzuela’s attorney. Local attorney Kent Volkmer was appointed guardian of Valenzuela’s son.

July 17, 2015: Valenzuela pleaded not guilty, claiming self-defense. His bond was set at \$2 million.

Aug. 28, 2015: A report by the Pinal County Medical Examiner’s Office found the Careccias both died from a gunshot wound to the head. The coroner’s report also indicated the presence of methamphetamine, amphetamines and alcohol.

Jan. 15, 2016: The state filed notice of intent to seek the death penalty.

March 7, 2016: The case was remanded to a grand jury when it was determined certain information presented to the first grand jury was not submitted into evidence.

April 6, 2016: A second indictment was handed down.

May 25, 2016: The state again filed notice of intent to seek the death penalty.

July 29, 2016: A trial date of Jan. 23, 2018, was set for Valenzuela.

Aug. 30, 2016: Volkmer defeated County Attorney Lando Voyles in the Republican primary election. He was unopposed the general election.

Jan. 3, 2017: Volkmer was sworn into office and subsequently recused himself and PCAO from the prosecution of the case.

Feb. 27, 2017: Navajo County attorney Gary Husk was appointed by the state to be special prosecutor.

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Top 10 Public Safety Stories 2017

Most-read stories related to police, fire and emergency events:

10 Murder-suicide suspected in couple's death

A Maricopa couple was found deceased May 7 from what Maricopa Police Department suspects was a murder-suicide. The 69-year-old husband and the 67-year-old wife were found dead from apparent gunshot wounds after a report of gunshots heard in the area. The woman was apparently suffering from terminal cancer.

9 MCSO: Fatal crash caused by passing in oncoming traffic

A fatal crash Sept. 5 on State Route 238 was likely caused by one of the vehicles trying to pass a commercial truck in the path of oncoming traffic, Maricopa County Sheriff's officials said. The vehicles collided when both drivers made evasive maneuvers, meeting head-on on the shoulder, killing both drivers and injuring two teens in one of the vehicles.

8 2 teens die after crash on Papago

Two teenagers died after a minivan they were riding in struck another vehicle and rolled over Oct. 29. The second vehicle allegedly ran a stop sign at the Ralston Road and Papago Road intersection when the minivan struck the car and ejected one of the teens. Five of the six passengers in the van were transported to the hospital where the 16- and 17-year-old boys, both of whom were wheelchair-bound, later died.



Scott Bartle

Three people died in a Thanksgiving week crash on SR 347.

7 MPD arrests man on multiple child molestation charges

An area handyman accused of sex crimes involving a minor was arrested by Maricopa Police Nov. 28 for his alleged inappropriate contact with a 14-year-old child. Ronald Bragonier, 54, was arrested after the victim notified authorities of multiple incidents that occurred earlier in 2017 in multiple cities and states.

6 Maricopa teen charged with assault after 'bragging' on social media

A Maricopa teen was arrested Oct. 7 on multiple charges stemming from an alleged assault he bragged about in video posted to his Facebook page. Willie Lofton, 19, allegedly started multiple fights at Copper Sky Regional Park several days before his arrest. He then went back to one of the locations of the fights and began filming blood stains on the ground and on his shoes.

5 Road rage caught on video leads to charges

Charges of disorderly conduct and disturbing the peace were

filed against two Maricopa motorists June 27 when an incident of road rage was captured on video that went viral on social media. James Kingery was filmed by another motorist allegedly punching Holden Elsea through the open window of his vehicle at an intersection on John Wayne Parkway. Elsea then reacted by striking the rear window of Kingery's vehicle with a tire iron or similar object.

4 2 dead in crash on SR 347

A man and a woman died as the result of a three-car collision on State Route 347 Oct. 28, just north of Riggs Road. DPS said the deceased male was driving the vehicle that struck two others stopped for a red light at Riggs Road. He was not wearing a seatbelt and suffered "major head trauma," while a gravely injured woman was transported to Chandler Regional Hospital where she later died.

3 Maricopa family grieves loss of 4 children in Illinois fire

A Maricopa mother lost her four oldest children in a residential

fire Nov. 21 near the city of Dixon, Illinois. The children, once residents of Maricopa, moved to Illinois to live with their father and stepmother, who also perished in the blaze. Tragically, the family also suffered a loss in 2013 when their 4-month-old son died from sudden infant death syndrome.

2 3 charged in armed robbery at Maricopa ATM

Three suspects were arrested for armed robbery Nov. 21 after a cellular phone stolen during the heist was tracked by law enforcement. The three allegedly approached a woman sitting in her car at the Bank of America ATM around 12:30 a.m. One suspect allegedly pointed a gun at the victim, robbing her of \$260 and the phone. The trio was arrested roughly two hours later by Chandler PD.

1 Vehicle crossed over median before fatal crash

Two men and a woman, all members of the Gila River Indian Community, were killed Nov. 29 after the vehicle they were in, heading southbound on State Route 347, crossed over the median north of Casa Blanca Road, rolled over into oncoming traffic and was struck by a semi. One other passenger in the Ford Ranger survived the crash and was transported to Chandler Regional hospital, while the driver of the semi was uninjured.

Visit InMaricopa.com to read these and other Maricopa business stories.



Download the InMaricopa App to be the first to receive community news.

CPA: Giving to schools through tax credits 'a no-brainer'

By Michelle Chance

Through November, extracurricular programs within the Maricopa Unified School District received a funding boost of almost \$40,000 in 2017.

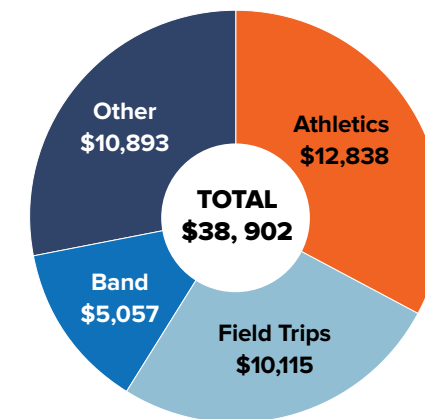
Donors submitted \$38,902 to MUSD and received tax credit in exchange.

Certified Public Accountant Jim Chaston, who previously served as president of the MUSD Governing Board, said about 40 percent of his clients take advantage of tax credits every year. He'd like to see that percentage increase.

"I think everybody who is eligible should do it because it doesn't cost anything other than the time between them paying it, and when they get their refund back," Chaston said.

It's also a way to help local students be involved in sports, music and other recreational activities. It's up to donors to

MUSD DONATIONS THROUGH NOV. 30.



decide which school and what extracurricular programs they would like that money to go to. Public and private schools are eligible to receive tax credit donations.

As in previous years, the MUSD programs that received the most funding were athletics, according to Aron Rausch, MUSD Business Services director.

Athletic programs at Maricopa High School and the district's two middle schools received 33 percent of 2017's donations so far.

More than \$5,000 was donated to the district's various band programs, mostly earmarked for Maricopa High School.

Field trip funding received more than \$10,000 from donors. Rausch said most of those dollars went to the district's middle and elementary schools, and nearly \$11,000 went to miscellaneous programs at MUSD.

"Most of the donations at the elementary schools are for general extra-curricular usage and field trips," Rausch said.

The deadline to donate is Tax Day, April 15.

Chaston said his office informs clients about tax-credit opportunities every year through newsletters and during appointments.

"Every tax return that we do, we ask about state tax credits because it's a no-brainer," Chaston said.

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White, espresso popular in 2018 house design trends

By Dayv Morgan

As construction returns to Maricopa neighborhoods, new model homes give us a sneak peek into upcoming design trends in our region.

Last year, five builders opened model homes in six subdivisions and another three are scheduled to build new models in 2018.

White and espresso seem to be the dominant cabinet colors displayed in the model homes for builders locally, with granite or quartz countertops in almost every home; a few with just Formica laminate.

That design combination is also popular with many of the investors I work with.

Province Sales Associate Amy Jo Schoeberl said in her community most homes sold have

white cabinets, with fewer buyers choosing espresso compared to two years ago.

Flooring choices inside the models were predominantly tile, in imitation "wood plank" style or in 12-by-24-inch size. A few of the homes had wood floors, and there were also some with vinyl floors that looked like wood.

Almost every new model I toured had gray- or beige-toned paint on the walls. The exception was Starlight Homes in Sorrento. They painted the walls white. Starlight is also somewhat unique in that the drywall corners featured in the model are straight corners instead of rounded. I was told that look is becoming popular. In fact, straight corners with this builder are actually an upgrade with an additional cost.



Dayv Morgan

Meritage Homes at Homestead also has a model with white walls and straight corners, leaving out a design option for rounded corners.

Fulton Homes in Glennwilde, Costa Verde Homes in Santa Rosa Springs and Scott Communities in Sorrento are opening new models this year. It will be interesting to see what design aspects they pick.

One thing to keep in mind is that design trends are cyclical, so don't stress if you feel your home is out of style. Give it enough time and it will be trendy again.

2017 MODELS:

■ **Homestead (Meritage Homes):** One model with cherry cabinets

■ ■ **Homestead (DR Horton):** Two models. One with white cabinets and the other with espresso

■ ■ **Santa Rosa Springs (DR Horton):** Two models. One with white cabinets and the other with espresso

■ **Glennwilde (DR Horton):** One model with white cabinets

■ ■ **Glennwilde (KB Homes):** Two models. One with white cabinets and the other with espresso

■ **Sorrento (Starlight Homes):** One model with espresso cabinets

■ **Rancho Mirage (LGI Homes):** One model with espresso cabinets

■ ■ ■ **Province (Meritage):** 9 models. Three with cherry cabinets, three with white, two with gray, and one with espresso

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Mason Callejas

The most expensive home sold in Maricopa Nov. 16-Dec. 14 was a golf-course property in Rancho El Dorado. The luxury home's history tells the story of the recession in Maricopa housing. It sold for almost \$500,000 in 2007, then lost 45 percent of that price in less than a year. It recovered well by 2013, inching back to \$425,000, but lost 13 percent by its most recent sale. It sits near the 18th green and has a pool and Jacuzzi with wonderful views.

Sold: Nov. 22
Purchase Price: \$370,000
Price per square foot: \$85.23
Days on market: 101
Builder: Hacienda
Year built: 2005
Bedrooms: 5
Bathrooms: 3

Community: Rancho El Dorado
Features: Pool and spa, fireplace, balcony, covered patio, formal dining room, loft, artificial turf
Lister's agent: Pat Lairson, The Maricopa Real Estate Company
Seller's agent: Jay Shaver, The Maricopa Real Estate Company

- 2. 18575 N. Stonegate Road, Glennwilde, \$330,000
- 3. 43410 W. Venture Road, Rancho El Dorado, \$320,000
- 4. 42521 W. Abbey Road, Province, \$312,500
- 5. 22183 N. Reinbold Drive, Rancho El Dorado, \$308,000

For a full list of last month's Maricopa home sales, see InMaricopa.com/Real-Estate.



1. 42512 W. Bunker Drive

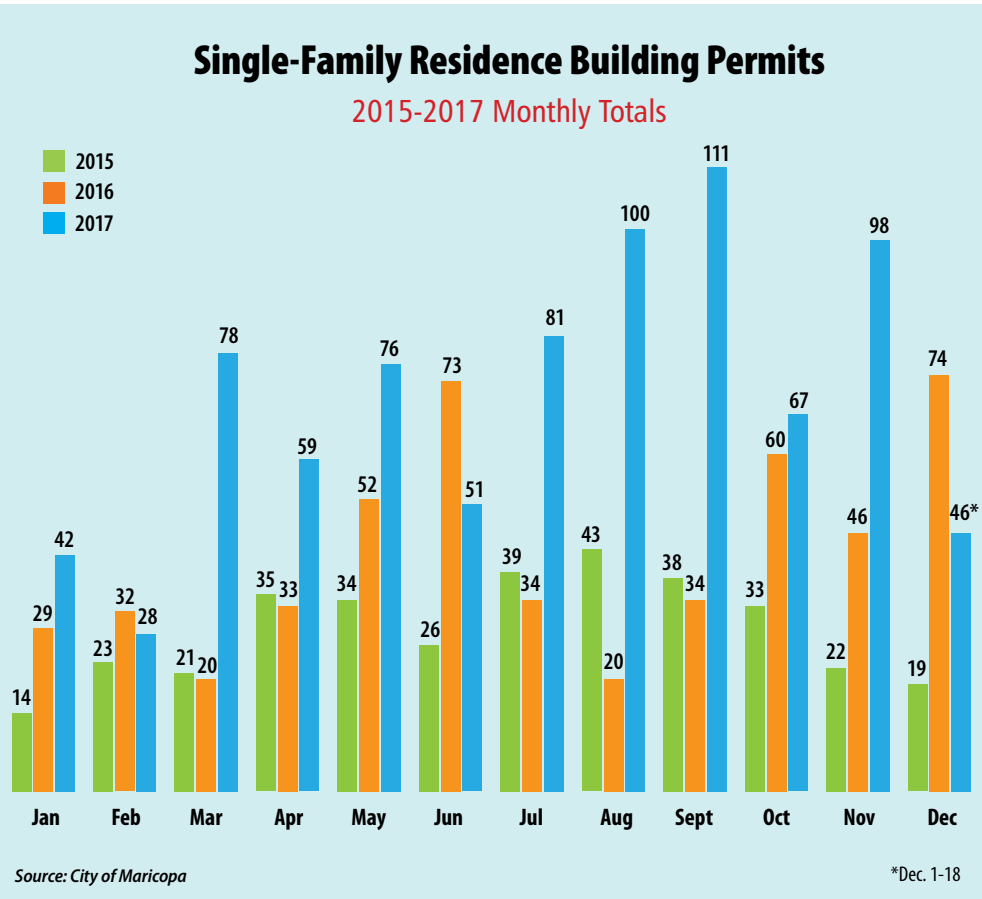
Mason Callejas

The least expensive home sold in Maricopa Nov. 16-Dec. 14 was also in Rancho El Dorado. It was the fifth time the house sold in 11 years, and it was immediately put back on the market for \$33,000 more than it sold for. The one-story home has all the basics and is "move-in ready."

Sold: Dec. 4
Purchase Price: \$132,500
Price per square foot: \$104.58
Days on market: 9
Builder: Unknown
Year built: 2003
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2

Community: Rancho El Dorado
Features: Split bedroom plan, vaulted ceilings, extended patio, turf grass
Lister's agent: Raiza Schwartz, My Home Group Real Estate
Seller's agent: Raiza Schwartz, My Home Group Real Estate

- 2. 19296 N. Costa Verdez Ave., Tortosa, \$139,900
- 3. 17453 N. Avelino Drive, Sorrento, \$142,500
- 4. 20700 N. Dries Road, Homestead North, \$152,000
- 5. 45158 W. Sage Brush Drive, Alterra, \$154,465



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For home-grown tomatoes, start seedlings inside this winter.

Robeson and Celebrity. For cherry tomatoes, I recommend Sweet Million and Sun Gold. San Marzano and Roma are great sauce varieties. For sweet peppers, North Star (bell) and Italia do very well here. For hot peppers, Joe E. Parker or any of the chiles and serranos will do well.

Select the ideal location for planting in the soil. Tomatoes and peppers require at least 6 hours of sunlight a day. Make sure you plant them in a location that gets shade in the afternoon, so when the weather heats up and the sun is higher in the sky, your plants will survive much better. Plant tomatoes and peppers at least one foot apart and deep enough for the soil to be just above the very bottom leaves. Make sure the hole is four times wider than your root ball. About the first week in May, place shade cloth over your tomatoes to keep the plants from stressing. You can build a framework out of wood or PVC pipe to create a proper frame for the cloth.

Use a good support and water regularly. Most tomatoes require staking. You can use wooden stakes, a trellis, or any other means of support. Some varieties of peppers grow very tall, so some support will help the branches from sagging. Water every other day in the spring and once a day for an hour when it starts to get hot. Do not overwater; it is the No. 1 reason for plant failure here in the desert. To help keep those pesky white flies off your plants use NEEM oil (readily available in garden stores) mixed with some safe-to-use insecticide. Spray under the leaves once a week. You should have tomatoes and peppers by mid-April, so get ready to feast on your favorite sandwiches and sauces. ☎

☎ **520-374-6263**
MacMasterGardener@gmail.com

Al Brandenburg is a Master Gardener and Maricopa resident.

Growing tomatoes, peppers in your desert garden

By Al Brandenburg

Coming from upstate New York, I've always had several varieties of tomatoes and peppers in my garden. For those of you who have tasted a freshly grown tomato, you know that store-bought tomatoes don't even begin to compare in taste or texture.

So, maybe you have decided to try growing tomatoes and peppers this year. If so, I would like to give you some tips that may help you grow wonderful tomatoes as well as delicious sweet or hot peppers. So, let's get started:

Determine the right time to plant. If you are growing from seed, the first week in January is ideal as both tomatoes and peppers require at least 6 to 8 weeks from sowing seed in pots to planting. Tomato seeds should be started indoors and then transplanted to your beds once they have a few leaves and an established root system. Tomato seeds need a constant soil temperature of at least 60 degrees, and preferably 80 degrees, to germinate. I put my started plants in the ground the last week in February (assuming no danger of frost) or the first week in March.

Planting seeds indoors. You will need a good light source. I use fluorescent 4-foot lamps with GE grow lights (not regular lamps) hanging from chains so I can adjust the height as the seedlings grow. Soilless potting mix

(available at any garden center) is the medium of choice. Cell packs are OK for starting seeds, but a better idea is to use a small pot at least 3 or 4 inches tall and wide so the seedlings can grow to a healthy size without their roots being constricted. Plant two seeds in each pot to assure germination success. A heat mat and controller will greatly help warm the soil as well as accelerate the growth process. Be careful not to overwater as you will risk dampening and killing the seedling.



Al Brandenburg

Selecting seeds and plants. Tomatoes are classified as either Determinate types (puts out fruit just once) and Indeterminate types (puts out fruit for the entire growing season). If you decide to buy ready-to-plant vegetables in your garden, keep in mind the garden centers get many varieties from their vendors that don't necessarily grow well here. As an alternative, on the first Saturday in March each year the local Master Gardener group has a plant sale at the Maricopa Agricultural Center. They offer varieties that have proven to do well here.

If you decide to plant from seed, many of the seed catalog houses offer a wide spectrum of regular and heirloom seed varieties. For regular tomatoes, I have had great success with Super Sioux, Black from Tula (both draught and heat tolerant), Cherokee Purple, Paul

Local Realtor pays for homeowner upgrades

Dayv Morgan takes risk to ensure clients sell homes quickly, for maximum value

When it's time to sell or invest in a home, Maricopans have a unique opportunity to benefit from using a local agent who is so committed to selling a home that he's willing to pay out of his own pocket for improvements. Dayv Morgan of HomeSmart Success offers to cover the costs of renovating and updating a home before putting it on the market, in order to increase its value and marketability.

All homes experience wear-and-tear over the years, and Dayv counters that by installing new carpet, fresh paint and even full kitchen remodels when necessary. The selling price can then be increased to cover, and usually exceed, the cost of the improvements.

"Move-in ready homes sell much faster and for a significantly higher amount," he commented. "When a buyer walks into a home that looks and feels like it was just built, because it has new paint, flooring, and appliances, they will pay a premium."

Dayv, who sells over 100 homes annually, advised that such improvements not only help the seller make more money but also benefit the buyer as well. "Most buyers in Maricopa don't have the money, after they buy a house, to fix it up. They would much rather pay a slightly higher price and finance the upgrades through the mortgage. If they paid \$10,000 for improvements and put it on a credit card they would end up paying 14 to 18 percent interest. If that \$10,000 is instead done by the seller and included in the price of mortgage, now they're only paying 4 or 5 percent."

The program Dayv developed allows a seller to access his pool of preferred contractors, with whom he has negotiated reduced fees, or sellers can use their own referrals to make the repairs. Regardless of who completes the work, he pays up front for the improvements and is reimbursed from the proceeds of the sale, without charging any interest to the seller.



Dayv Morgan



The idea came to him after seeing companies like Open Door and HomeVestors "low-ball" sellers to buy their home as-is, and then after making a few cosmetic improvements they would list the home on the MLS and resell it for a profit. He was surprised to see how much equity owners were giving away by selling their home direct to an investor. As a listing agent he created a process that allows sellers to "flip their own house" and keep the profit themselves. "It doesn't cost the owners anything out of pocket, and it increases their return," Dayv noted. "It's a win-win for everyone involved — the buyer, the seller, myself as the Realtor, and even the city of Maricopa as it helps the neighborhood values to increase." ☎

A 10-year resident of Maricopa, Dayv Morgan lives in the Palo Brea subdivision with his wife and four sons.



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Keep the giving spirit throughout the year

By **Andrew H. Jones**
Community Relations Coordinator
Sun Life Family Health Center



Submitted

Nonprofit Organizations Are Everywhere

Almost every cause or charity you can think of has a nonprofit organization that you can support and donate money to. But, you may be thinking, "I work hard for my money, why should I give it away!" Although on the surface this seems like a valid point, there are benefits in donating to a nonprofit organization. Not only does it feel good but you may also be able to receive a tax reduction.

So How Do You Choose A Nonprofit To Support?

First and foremost, choose a specific cause that you feel is important and are passionate about. Whatever the cause, by donating to a nonprofit organization, you are directly helping produce a remedy for a problematic issue at hand by giving monetary support.

Plus it feels good, there's no doubt about it, "dang it feels good to help others and donate to a nonprofit organization." Don't keep that good feeling a secret. Let your friends and family know that they too can feel good by donating to a charity that matters to them.

Plus You Might Get A Tax Deduction

Depending on the size of your donation and the type of nonprofit you choose you may even get a reduction on your income taxes. If you are considering donating to a charity, do some

research before you give. You can check out sites like www.guidestar.org to make sure the charity you have chosen is a verified nonprofit who will put your donation to good use.

So How About Choosing Sun Life?

Sun Life Family Health Center is asking you to support your local community health center. In the past year, the organization served 46,578 individuals, many of whom would have no access to care if it were not for Sun Life Family Health Center. You may be surprised to know that last year 2016, 30% of Sun Life's patients cared for were children. 1,195 children were served through Sun Life's Community Dental program. Sun Life participates in the Reach Out and Read program, our pediatricians give a book to each young pediatric patient at his or her well-child visit. In addition, in 2016 through Sun Life's dedication to wellness and education we provided 3,344 people with diabetic education classes. This year 2017, marks Sun Life's 4th annual Crucial Catch free breast cancer screening event in partnership the American Cancer Society and the National Football League.


What many people do not know about Sun Life is that in addition to primary care services, Sun Life also offers Integrated Clinical Pharmacy as well as, Integrated Behavioral Health Services that provides care and treatment for an average of 18 patients

daily for anxiety, depression, and PTSD. In addition to these services throughout our 13 locations, Sun Life continues to offer patient assistance programs.

In 2016, 58% of donations came directly from Sun Life's very own staff. This is testament that at Sun Life, our staff truly abides by and believes in our mission to provide high quality health services, wellness and education to all people.

We are asking for your support and generosity in helping us make a difference in your community. We want to do so much more. Your donation can help Sun Life Family Health Center make a big difference.

If you are interested in donating to Sun Life Family Health Center, contact Renee Louzon-Benn, Director of Community Outreach by email at Renee.Louzon-Benn@SLFHC.org or call for more information (520) 381-6366.

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Nonprofit pushes on for senior center

By **Raquel Hendrickson**

A local nonprofit is trimming its expectations of building a community center, focusing instead on a senior center.

"Maricopa is the only city in Arizona without a senior center," Al Brandenburg said, an officer for the Maricopa Multi Cultural Consortium. "Why not? Why don't we have one here?"

The group took up the cause last year as reality sank in that the Copa Center would be demolished for the overpass. They formed the Maricopa Multi Cultural Consortium to acquire land and build a building, envisioning meeting rooms, kitchen, stage, classrooms, museum and storage. But that stalled.

In an agreement the City worked with Maricopa Unified School District, seniors now have dedicated space at Santa Cruz Elementary School for recreation. "And that's wonderful for the moment," said Bob Marsh, another MMCC founder. "But people need a place to land."



Raquel Hendrickson

Ted Yocum (from left), Bob Marsh and Al Brandenburg are co-founders of Maricopa Multi Cultural Consortium.


MMCC will be one of about 30 exhibitors at this year's Senior Info/Expo Jan. 20 at City Hall.

"We've talked to folks," said Ted Yocum, an MMCC co-founder. "They tell us, 'We would love to have Mom and Dad living near us, but there's nothing in Maricopa for them.'"

The needs, Marsh said, are more than having a place to play cards. They want a gathering spot with room for senior programs on health, taxes, exercise, meals and entertainment. They need grant-writing expertise to fund both a building and the programming.

MMCC continues to battle the misconception that all seniors have access to Province, which is a high-end, gated community with amenities available only to its residents. Yocum said about a third of seniors are living on Social Security checks of less than \$1,000 a month.

2018 is an election year for city council, and Marsh said MMCC is "going to intersect with people running for office" in hopes that a segment of the population with a lot of votes will get more attention.

"There's a voice that needs to be heard," Yocum said. 



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Go with the flow and create something new

By Sherielyn Curry, Comfort Keepers Franchisee

January is synonymous with new beginnings, restarts, and do overs. It is also the time of letting go of the old, looking forward and creating the new. You see this play out as people make New Year's resolutions, and set personal and professional goals for the year as they ponder the question "What would you like to accomplish in 2018?"

As you make your assessment, look at the people around you. Are you energized or drained after being in their presence? Do you feel good about yourself? Do you feel celebrated, or only tolerated? What about the choices you make as it relates to how you spend your time and money. Do they contribute positively to your life? Are there things you want to learn,



Rev. Sherielyn Curry

talents you want to share, or new friends you want to make? What about a hobby that you can turn into a business? Finally, what about you, personally? Any self-care you want to put into place?

If you go with the flow, you can create something new for 2018. Think of it like a traffic light, directing the flow of your thoughts, actions and outcomes. There will be some things you start, continue and stop doing in order to create something new.

Here's the process:

Green - GO - These are the things you will start doing. Go ahead, sign up for that class. Consider that new opportunity. Often times, these actions will flow as a result of what you stop doing (see below).

Yellow - CAUTION - What works well for you to meet your desired outcome? What thoughts, ideas and behaviors support your goals in a positive, loving manner? Where do you feel the most energetic and creative? These are the things you want to continue.

Red - STOP! - These are the people and things that don't serve you well, drain your energy, or cause you to procrastinate. Whether it is a person, a thought pattern, or an old habit, if it draws you away from your purpose it is interfering with your creative flow.

Yes, you can create the new...if you go with the flow.

Happy 2018.

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Are you ready for changes in 2018?

By Joan Koczor

As with every new year, we can expect changes in 2018.

The increase in transportation costs, fires and flooding throughout the United States all have an impact on the cost of food and household goods.

Expect an increase in the most popular health insurance plans. The demand for natural gas is expected to exceed supply, resulting in an increase in cost. According to the National Park Services, entry fees for America's most popular national parks will rise during peak visitation times.

The U.S. Postal Service announced price increases for letter delivery and priority mail. UPS announced an average of 4.9 percent for package, air freight and freight delivery. FedEx will raise rates for express, ground, freight and FedEx One Rate Pricing.

Movie theaters are considering increasing the ticket price of the more popular movies and

lowering the price of less popular movies.

Changes in Social Security in 2018 have yet to be announced. Sixty-six million Americans, including 46 million seniors, may be affected.

The Social Security Administration released its "adjustment reports" for 2018. Changes you can expect to Social Security in 2018 are:

- A "sort of" raise. This year, seniors will receive a 2-percent increase in Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA hasn't been this high in six years), which amounts to \$27 per month on average.
- The maximum Social Security benefit for those who will begin collecting benefits at full retirement age will increase to \$2,788 in 2018.
- Full retirement age will rise in 2018. Those born between 1943 and 1954 must wait until they reach 66 years of age to receive 100 percent of their monthly benefit. Full



Joan Koczor

retirement age for those born in 1956 is 66 years and 4 months.

- More security features will be added to the Social Security website. A two-factor authentication will be required to access personal information. To log on, users must enter a one-time code and a username and password.
- New Medicare cards will contain a combination of letters and numbers offering a better level of protection.

This is just a sampling of what to expect in 2018. Understandably, change is not always welcome. We become accustomed to our day-to-day and don't appreciate something new. For some, change can add a level of anticipation to see what the day will bring.

Embrace each day — changes and all.

Joan Koczor is a senior advocate and a member of the Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee.

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AHWFAC.com

15810 S. 45th St., Suite 190

Just south of Chandler Blvd.

Things to do



Submitted

JAN
12

"Neither Wolf Nor Dog" is an unusual road-trip film coming to UltraStar.

Cultures collide in Lakota film coming to Ak-Chin

By Raquel Hendrickson

An independent film about bridging the gap between "white America and the Native American world" is coming to UltraStar Multi-tainment Center Jan. 12 for at least a week.

Neither Wolf Nor Dog, an adaptation of the novel by Kent Nerburn, stars legendary Dave Bald Eagle as a Lakota elder who brings a white author into South Dakota's Pine Ridge reservation culture. This is not your average road-trip movie.

"It is very much from the reservation out rather than from Hollywood in," said director Steven Lewis Simpson, a Scot who has lived in Lakota country for 18 years documenting native stories.

Bald Eagle was 95 when the film was shot. He died in 2016 at the age of 97. Bald Eagle's relatives were at the battle of Little Big Horn in 1876 and Wounded Knee in 1890, and he absorbed their stories. He was a paratrooper during World War II (left for dead at Normandy), a champion ballroom dancer, stuntman, professional athlete, actor, educator and tribal chief.

Simpson said he brought more to the role than could be written in the novel or screenplay. "Dave had a closer relationship with Wounded Knee even than the character he plays," he said.

Because of that, Simpson set up scenes, encouraged improvised dialogue and "got out of the way." After shooting a pivotal scene at the end of the film when the characters end up at Wounded Knee, Bald Eagle told Simpson, "I've been holding that in for 95 years."

Another actor was involved in a 1973 incident at Wounded Knee along with activist Russell Means, who brought Simpson in to film *Neither Wolf Nor Dog*. But the story is more relatable than resentful and has a "shocking" amount of quiet humor, Simpson said.

With a small budget for filming and distributing, Simpson took a different path than is the Hollywood norm. It was a crowdfunded project. Most of the screening locations have been at theaters owned by Native American enterprises. Word-of-mouth was spread primarily through social media. Movie-goers have scored it 95 percent positive on RottenTomatoes.com, and IMDB.com reviewers scored it an 8.2 out of 10.

Now Simpson is trying the same distribution tactic in Europe. "We have to work it very, very hard, but we've done better than the film that won Cannes last year."

Things to do

JANUARY CALENDAR

SUNDAYS

Narcotics Anonymous
7 p.m., Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

MONDAYS

Seniors play Pinochle
8:30 a.m., Santa Cruz Elementary School
19845 N. Costa del Sol Blvd.

Senior Bowling
10 a.m., UltraStar Multi-tainment Center
16000 N. Maricopa Road

Narcotics Anonymous
7 p.m., Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

Parents of Addicted
Loved Ones (PAL)
7 p.m., 19395 N. John Wayne Parkway, Suite 16

TUESDAYS

Seniors play Pinochle
8:30 a.m., Santa Cruz Elementary School
19845 N. Costa del Sol Blvd.

Seniors play Canasta
1-4 p.m., Santa Cruz Elementary School
19845 N. Costa del Sol Blvd.

Coffee with Friends of the Maricopa Library
1:30 p.m., Maricopa Public Library
41600 W. Smith-Enke Road

Celebrate Recovery Coffee & Karaoke
5 p.m., Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

Celebrate Recovery Large & Small Group Meeting
7 p.m., Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

Al-Anon Meeting
7 p.m., Community of Hope Church
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

WEDNESDAYS

Creative Sisterhood
9 a.m., Santa Cruz Elementary School
19845 N. Costa del Sol Blvd.

Harrah's Club 777 Toastmasters
3 p.m., Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino
15406 N. Maricopa Road

S.M.A.R.T. Kids
3:30 p.m., Maricopa Public Library
41600 W. Smith-Enke Road

Maricopa Police Explorer Post Meeting
5 p.m., Maricopa High School
45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

AWANA
6:30 p.m., First Baptist Church
18705 N. John Wayne Parkway

THURSDAYS

Seniors play Pinochle
8:30 a.m., Santa Cruz Elementary School
19845 N. Costa del Sol Blvd.

Seniors play Farkel
9 a.m., Santa Cruz Elementary School
19845 N. Costa del Sol Blvd.

Seniors play Canasta
1 p.m., Santa Cruz Elementary School
19845 N. Costa del Sol Blvd.

Family Story Time
4 p.m., Maricopa Public Library
41600 W. Smith-Enke Road

Narcotics Anonymous
7 p.m., Ak-Chin Social Services
48227 W. Farrell Road



For details on these and other local events — and to list your own — visit InMaricopa.com/Calendar.



Raquel Hendrickson

JAN
13

Families enjoy a morning of fishing at Copper Sky Lake.

Cast a line at Family Fishing Day

By Michelle Chance

Anglers, both novice and experienced, will take to the lake at Copper Sky for the city's annual Family Fishing Day.

The 14th annual event begins at 8 a.m. on Jan. 13. Participants can register online or onsite the morning of the event at 7. Fishing licenses are not required for participants.

The five-acre lake will be stocked with bass, catfish, rainbow trout, bluegill and white amur.

Each participant can keep up to four fish, said Niesha Whitman, City of Maricopa events and marketing coordinator.

As in previous years, the Arizona Game and Fish Department will provide fishing clinics and the city will issue "loaner" fishing kits with a rod, reel and bait to each participant. A fishing pole can also be purchased for \$5.

The city will offer a barbecue lunch for participants at the event. The meal consists of a hot dog or pulled pork, cupcake, potato chips and a drink for \$5.

One dollar can also buy children a goodie bag filled with prizes, Whitman said.

IF YOU GO

What: Maricopa Family Fishing Day

Where: Copper Sky Regional Park

When: January 13, 8 a.m.

Info: Maricopa-AZ.gov



File

The community will gather to see local residents honored by the Chamber of Commerce Jan. 20.

Chamber awards to include new honoree

By Mason Callejas

Maricopa Chamber of Commerce will host its 11th annual Chamber Awards Jan. 20, and this year the Chamber is offering up something new.

With a night of food, dancing, raffles and awards, the Maricopa business community will celebrate recent achievements at the Elements Events Center from 5:30-11 p.m. The Chamber’s chairman is adding a sixth award to recognize an individual who went above and beyond to support the community.

In the past, awards have been limited to the five the chamber’s board collectively votes on; The Waz Award, Small Business of the Year award, Sonny Dunn Business of the Year Award, Non-Profit of the Year Award and the Renate Chamberlin Volunteer of the Year Award.

The Chairman’s Award, Maricopa Chamber director Terri Crain said, is a way for the leader of the board, Chris Cahall, to hand-pick someone who has done something extraordinary for the community.

“It can be given to anyone for doing something good,” Crain said. “It’s at the sole discretion of the chairman.”

The awards serve not only as a way to recognize past achievements, Crain said, but also as a way to “build a bridge to the future.”

Crain started the awards banquet in 2006 with the guidance of then-board member Bill Wasowicz, and it has proven to be a major source of pride for the business community, she said.

“It’s a great way for the community to come together and support small businesses and recognize our volunteers,” Crain said.

Having recently rejoined the Chamber, Crain sees it fitting to be a part of the tradition she helped create more than a decade ago.

Expected dignitaries include Mayor Christian Price, County Supervisor Anthony Smith and his wife, City Councilmember Nancy Smith. Tables of 10 can be reserved for \$500, and reservations can be made until Jan. 18.

 MaricopaChamber.org

Things to do

FRIDAYS

Seniors play Pinochle

8:30 a.m., Santa Cruz Elementary School
19845 N. Costa del Sol Blvd.

Al-Anon Meeting

7 p.m., Community of Hope Church
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

2

City Council Work Session

6 p.m., Maricopa City Hall
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza

City Council Regular Session

7 p.m., Maricopa City Hall
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza

5

8-Bits Video Gamers

4 p.m., Maricopa Public Library
41600 W. Smith-Enke Road

6

Wilderness & Remote First Aid

8 a.m., Copper Sky Multigenerational Center
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

8

Maricopa Historical

Society Meeting
5:30 p.m., Maricopa Public Library
41600 W. Smith-Enke Road

9

Casa Grande Ruins

9 a.m., Copper Sky Multigenerational Center
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Maricopa Lions Club Meeting

5 p.m., Copper Sky Police Substation
17985 N. Greythorne Drive

10

MUSD Governing Board Meeting

6:30 p.m., MUSD District Office Administration Building
44150 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy.

11

Chamber Breakfast Mixer

7 a.m., Elements Event Center at Ak-Chin Circle
16000 N. Maricopa Road

13

2nd Saturday Market

8 a.m., Sequoia Pathway Academy
19265 N. Porter Road

Family Fishing Day

8 a.m., Copper Sky Multigenerational Center
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Wilderness & Remote First Aid

8 a.m., Copper Sky Multigenerational Center
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Coffee with the Chief

9 a.m., Maricopa Police Department
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza South

All-Arizona Poetry Slam Championship

7 p.m., Honeycutt Coffee
44400 W. Honeycutt Road, Suite 109

16

Verde River Train Ride

8 a.m., Copper Sky Multigenerational Center
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

City Council Work Session

6 p.m., Maricopa City Hall
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza

City Council Regular Session

7 p.m., Maricopa City Hall
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza

19

8-Bits Video Gamers

4 p.m., Maricopa Public Library
41600 W. Smith-Enke Road

20

Senior Info/Expo

10 a.m.-2 p.m., Maricopa City Hall
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza

Things to do

Community Awards Banquet

5:30 p.m., Elements Event Center at Ak-Chin Circle
16000 N. Maricopa Road

21

Watoto Children’s Choir

7 p.m., Maricopa Performing Arts Center
45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

23

Kartchner Caverns

9 a.m., Copper Sky Multigenerational Center
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Maricopa Lions Club Meeting

5 p.m., Copper Sky Police Substation
17985 N. Greythorne Drive

24

MUSD Governing Board Meeting

6:30 p.m., MUSD District Office Administration Building
44150 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy.

26

Multigenerational Game Night

6:30 p.m., Copper Sky Multigenerational Center
45345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

30

Sonoran Desert Museum

9 a.m., Copper Sky Multigenerational Center
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Feb. 1-3

The Mousetrap

7 p.m., Maricopa Performing Arts Center
45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

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Submitted

Laura Olivieri, who finished second in the All-Maricopa Slam, is set to compete in the All-Arizona Slam.

Maricopans to compete at All-Arizona Slam

By Maricopa Arts Council

A vigorous artistic contest will take place Jan. 13 at the Maricopa Arts Council’s All-Arizona Poetry Slam Championship.

Slam Poetry offers works revealing the innermost thoughts and feelings of the poets. The 14 competitors include representatives of the Phoenix

Slam, Sedona Slam and Flagstaff Slam, and the top two poets from MAC’s All-Maricopa Poetry Slam, Alex Hurley and Laura Olivieri.

National Slam rules will prevail: Each poem must be the poet’s own creation and should be no longer than three minutes. Judges are chosen from those present in the audience, and every performance is rated by each judge Olympics-style. At the close of each round, the competitors will successively be cut down in numbers until only five poets compete in the final round.

MAC is offering the top three cash prizes with \$400 earmarked for the winner.

The 14 starting poets in the first round were selected online Dec. 11 from a month-long lottery run by MAC’s Slam Master, nationally-known poet and shark enthusiast Bernard Schober, who performs as The Klute. A poetry expert who has written 10 books and performed at the National Slam 10 times, The Klute has supervised and led all MAC’s poetry slam events since Maricopa ARTS Council introduced this type of Arts event to the city in August 2016.

The Slam Championship event will be preceded by a different type of artistic “prelude,” also a tradition introduced to Maricopa last year by MAC: “On-the-Spot” drawings on Honeycutt Coffee’s chalk-board and window will be created 5:30-7 p.m. by several Maricopa artists specially selected for this event.

IF YOU GO

What: All-Arizona Poetry Slam Championship

When: Jan. 13, 7-10 p.m.

Where: Honeycutt Coffee, 44400 W. Honeycutt Road, Suite 109

How much: \$5 at the door

Info: Facebook.com/events/333528660452933



For details on these and other local events — and to list your own — visit InMaricopa.com/Calendar.

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Things to do



Mason Callejas

Expo offers seniors free workshops, resources

By Michelle Chance

Resources, exhibitors and informational workshops will return year to the third annual Senior Info/Expo at City Hall.

The Jan. 20 event is free open to the public.

As in previous years, attendees will have access to information on dementia and Alzheimer's, Community Emergency Response Team volunteer opportunities, city transit services, crime prevention, victim advocacy, fire and police services, and senior legal issues and concerns.

Popular workshops on Medicare, Social Security, identity theft and fraud will return this year, as well as hearing and vision screenings among many others, said Arnold Jackson, Age-Friendly Committee coordinator and event organizer.

New this year are workshops on preventing falls and unintentional injuries, and resources for caregivers.

As the event grows, so does its list of vendors. Jackson estimated this year's event will include a 25-percent increase in the number of exhibitors compared to last year.

"(In 2017), we had over 300 people that attended, so I would anticipate that will continue to grow as well," Jackson said.

A main goal of the City's Age Friendly Committee is providing seniors opportunities to connect with other generations. Jackson said the expo is one way to do that with exhibits on recreational trips and excursions and information on other social events.

IF YOU GO

What: Senior Info/Expo
When: Jan. 20, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Where: Maricopa City Hall, 39700 W. Civic Center Plaza
How much: Free
Info: 520-316-6817, Arnold. Jackson@Maricopa-AZ.gov

Things to do



Submitted

African children's choir to perform free concert

The Watoto Children's Choir, a group of 18 orphans from Uganda, will continue its six-month U.S. tour in Maricopa on Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. at the Maricopa High School Performing Arts Center, featuring a brand-new concert, "Signs & Wonders."

The concert will feature songs that share the stories of the children and the joy they have because of God's love. The children will share stories of how their lives have been changed and how they have been called into a life of purpose to transform their communities. All performances are free and open to the public.

Abandoned at a hospital in Kampala, Esther Kahangi was rescued by Watoto as a premature baby and spent her first weeks in critical care. Now, she is a healthy, joyful 8-year-old who has toured with the choir.

"I am excited to be a part of 'Signs & Wonders,'" Esther said. "I know that I am a wonder because I am chosen by God as his child."

Since 1994, Watoto Children's Choirs have traveled the world sharing the plight of Africa's orphaned children. Each child in the choir has suffered the loss of one or both of their parents, but they have been rescued and now live in a Watoto village. Watoto is a holistic child-care solution initiated to serve the dire needs of the people of Africa. The model involves physical care, medical intervention including HIV/AIDS treatment, education, counseling and emotional wellbeing.

IF YOU GO

What: Watoto Children's Choir
When: Jan. 21, 7 p.m.
Where: MHS Performing Arts Center, 45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.
How much: Free
Info: 520-252-6381, Info@COHMaricopa.com

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