IN A FEBRUARY 2020

BUSINESS PEOPLE Catholic AZ minimum priest wage hits \$12 adapts to Maricopa HOME Ideas for 'aging in place' On the Right Track Model railroading adds STEAM to school club Business

directory



INFORMATIONAL MEETING

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What do you love?

flowers and lasting love, but not every day is Valentine's Day, and it takes a special chemistry to keep it all together for any length of time. Ask the VanHoutens, who have made their marriage last 42 years, despite or because of a passion for model railroading. The Province couple

shared their extensive, hand-made set

with us and explained how the hobby

is becoming a productive educational tool in the STEAM classroom as they near retirement.

The lead pastor at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church illuminated a different kind of love that led him to his vocation, which brought him from Nogales to Maricopa. And if you want to talk to young Maricopans who love their jobs, chat up the "amigos" at APEX Motor Club.

Also in this issue, businessowners and employees describe the impact of the minimum-wage increases. Pinal County Superintendent of

¬ ebruary brings notions of hearts and Schools Jill Broussard talks about the challenges flowers and lasting love, but ahead in a Q&A session.

Art student Lexie Nordhoff gets scientific about the impact of art on psychology as she helps organize the second community Art for the Heart Arts & Crafts Festival. And the newest member of the Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee has strong opinions about designing homes for "aging in place."

There is something for everyone is this issue of *InMaricopa* magazine.

Happy reading,

May of Six

RAQUEL HENDRICKSON | **Editor** Raquel@InMaricopa.com 520-568-0040

Contributors



JOAN KOCZOR
She recently turned over her collection of recent history to the Maricopa Historical Society.



MURRAY SIEGEL

Murray Siegel received recognition from MUSD for his volunteerism.



WENDE GEHRT
The Midwesterner picked up the nuances of desert gardening very quickly.

ON THE COVER: Patty and Jim VanHouten display a model train set that fills a room of their Province home. *Photo by Victor Moreno*



Publisher SCOTT BARTLE

Editor
RAOUEL HENDRICKSON

Writers
AL BRANDENBURG
JOYCELYN CABRERA
WENDE GEHRT
RAQUEL HENDRICKSON
JOAN KOCZOR
DAYV MORGAN
KYLE NORBY

Photographers
JOYCELYN CABRERA
RAQUEL HENDRICKSON
VICTOR MORENO
KYLE NORBY
BRADY STAMP

HARRIET PHELPS

Designer
CARL BEZUIDENHOUT

Advertising
SCOTT BARTLE
JAIME HARRISON
VINCENT MANFREDI
MICHELLE SORENSEN

Volume 15, Issue 2 InMaricopa 44400 W. Honeycutt Road, Suite 101 Maricopa, AZ 85138

520-568-0040 Tel • 520-568-0050 Fax

News@InMaricopa.com Advertising@InMaricopa.com

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History

At the station

A photo taken in Maricopa circa 1910 facing west shows the Southern Pacific tracks passing by a water tower, the Maricopa Train Station, along with what appear to be travelers waiting for the next train. In 2020, little is left at the location except the water tower and the tracks, which now belong to Union Pacific Railroad.





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Q&A with Pinal County Superintendent **Jill Broussard**

By Raquel Hendrickson



JILL BROUSSARD

Pinal County superintendent of schools

Age: 41

Hometown: Westerville, Ohio Residence: San Tan Valley

Pinal County resident since: 2004

Family: Husband Dan and two teenage sons

Education: Bachelor's degree in elementary education and teaching from Arizona State University; master's degree in educational

leadership and administration from Northern Arizona University

Politics: Elected to current post as a Republican 2012, reelected

2016, running in 2020

Previous work: Taught sixth grade and kindergarten **Worst-kept secret:** Has fostered dogs for Great Dane

Rescue Alliance of Arizona

Kyle Norby

ill Broussard grew up in Ohio two towns away from Pinal County Attorney Kent Volkmer and now works out of a former grocery store that is the Florence office of the county superintendent of schools. She sat down with InMaricopa to talk about working with Pinal County's 19 school districts, the Legislature and test scores.

Please remind us of your background.

I came to Pinal County in 2004 and we moved to San Tan Valley. I had taught for a couple of years. My husband joined the Arizona Army National Guard, and I decided to stay home with the kids since we weren't really sure what his schedule was going to look like. After staying home for a couple of years, I was speaking with some other community members, and they encouraged me to run for county school superintendent. I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

What are successes you've had in office so far?

When I first came in, we worked really hard with the juvenile detention facility to revamp that program over there and really work in some transition skills so those students have some skills that really apply to real life when they get out. Yes, we're working on getting

them credits and catching up. We're trying to get them graduated from high school, but we're also teaching them how to budget, how to interview, how to research and investigate different avenues they can take when they get back out on their feet.

See more at InMaricopa.com.

VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS Superintendent duties:

"A typical week is really all over the board. I don't even have a typical day."

Working with state lawmakers:

"I really do feel like I am in a position where I can advocate for the districts of Pinal County."

Accommodation School success:

"They are getting some of the top scores in the county and the state."

Juvenile detention education:

"It is pretty costly to educate those students."

Another one, we had Justice Sandra Day O'Connor come, and she spoke to our superintendents and students about her iCivics program. That was just really fun, and to be able to get your picture with an icon like that and have her come and speak to our kids and inspire them was really amazing.

We have a business and education partnership that we started with Pinal Partnership. We do a summit every year and we highlight different programs that are happening between businesses and schools in the communities as well as different things we need to focus on as a community.

With what are you struggling?

One of the things I do struggle with actually in this position is really I don't have the authority over the districts. I'm not saying I need authority over the districts. It's just when I see a great program working somewhere else and I would love to see it in our districts here, it can't always be done. They may have something else in place; they may just have a different vision than I do.

But what really kind of haunts me, and it's a question that's asked me all the time, is how do we get our parents involved and engaged in our students' education, because that makes the largest impact on a student's success.

Across the state, lots of schools had bond issues and overrides on the ballots. Many of them did very well; Pinal County did not. What was your reaction to that, and do you have any advice for them in the future?

Historically, the bonds and overrides, when I first came into office, they weren't passing then either. Then we had a little stretch where we had some good passage and support. This time was not as great. It is a little disappointing to see, coming from a state where anytime a bond or override came onto the ballot it was just the culture to just say yes to whatever. I think our voters here are a little more discerning, maybe a little more concerned about how the money is spent. Where I've seen the most success for districts is when they get out into the community and they really discuss the needs and the reasoning behind going out for a bond and override.

How long did it take you, moving here from Ohio, to get up to speed on how things operated in education?

There's some wonderful things that come with having a huge retirement population here in Arizona. And there's some not-so-great ones, like, "I don't have any kids in the school system, so why should I pay for your kids to go through?" I have a great argument for that — somebody paid for their kids and paid for them to go to school — but as far as getting up to date I was definitely in this office before I really had a good grasp on what it looked like here in Arizona. It's huge. It's vast. I'm learning something new every day in this position.

One of the "fun" things you get to do is, when there is an opening on a district school board or the college board, you get to make that appointment. What is your thought process?

I make a selection based on what that board needs. A recommendation from the board goes a long way. When I do the CAC governing board, I tend to form an interview committee or panel. I try to make sure I have, I may possibly have an elected official, I've had one or two employees of CAC, I try to have community members, business members. I try to represent many facets of the population in that area. And then I have them help me with the interviews. That one's a tough one because it affects the tax rate for the entire county.

And a note to anybody who applies — if you don't mention kids in your interview, you really don't have a chance of getting appointed to a school board. But it happens all the time.



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Paying the Piper

ow much does it cost for the City of Maricopa to put on Major special events, which include Salsa Festival, ■ Great American 4th, Merry Copa and more, were budgeted around \$300,000 in 2019. According to data provided by the City, expenses were \$203,179 compared to the budget of \$297,872 during the fiscal year.

Cost recovery was 15%.

At the same time, the City waived use fees amounting to \$9,466 for outside parties to use Copper Sky and Pacana Park for events in 2019. Those events included benefit tournaments, community celebrations and Relay for Life.





FAMILY FISHING DAY

Budget \$5,100



COPA **COLOR RUN** Budget \$27,850 Expenses \$36,212 Revenue **\$4,815** Cost recovery 139

Expenses \$873

2019 Requested waivers Approved waivers

MERRY COPA

Expenses **\$54,636**

Revenue \$14.077

Cost recovery 26%

#1 MOST DIVERSE SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE PHOENIX AREA Niche.com - 2020

#2 BEST PLACE TO RAISE A FAIMILY homesnacks.net - 2020

#4 MOST DIVERSE SUBURBS IN ARIZONA Niche.com - 2019

#10 BEST PLACES TO LIVE IN ARIZONA AreaVibes.com - 2019

NEW PINAL COUNTY ANNEX

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

City of Maricopa

The new Pinal County Annex had a groundbreaking ceremony on January 17th! The project will include new administrative offices for several Pinal County departments in an 8,300 square foot building on the north side of the property. The Justice of the Peace Courts building will be expanded to approximately 33,000 square feet when finished. Temporary buildings will be used during the construction phase and will be located just across the street from the existing building.

To view this project, and ev- WHAT'S erything else happening in town, check out the "What's New Maricopa?" map at Maricopa-AZ.gov



"The new county complex will bring vital county services much closer to the people in the fast growing area of Western Pinal County and the City of Maricopa. In addition to adding about 150 new jobs, it will be another great anchor to the

County Supervisor Anthony Smith

rapidly evolving Heritage District."





For more information contact: Jennifer Bostian Economic Development Project Manager 520-316-6812 jennifer.bostian@maricopa-az.gov

SUCCESS YOU CAN SEE

A day in the life of APEX staff

hen people think of a country-club racetrack like APEX Motor Club, they might think of rich folks lead-footing their upmarket sports cars for kicks. But the heartbeat of the still-developing complex is the staff.

According to co-founder Matt Williams, six of the track's nine employees are local, and another relocated to Maricopa for the job. Four of them chatted

with us about their typical day and how they landed their jobs.

Track experience: "They take you for a ride,

give you a hot lap. It's pretty fun."

See more at InMaricopa.com

showed me everything. So that was pretty cool."

Nico Bandin

SUPPORT STAFF

Bandin graduated from Maricopa High School last spring and attends Park University in Gilbert to play baseball. His family moved to Maricopa when he was 7. Foot-in-the-door moment: "I've liked cars since I was like 12. I got a job at the City Hall for an internship. I worked there with the economic development team. They had the grand opening for APEX, and I met Jason [Plotke] and Matt through photography there. I was brought out here a few times to take photos for them. Eventually, when they opened up, they offered me a job." Daily duties: "Lighting system, pit crew. The tower up there, we have a whole array of lights around the track. People know either it's good, it's green, something's not wrong. And then red, something's wrong, come in the pits. Then we have passing lights and debris lights to warn the drivers. The drivers don't have radios or anything." Future: "Hopefully still be a part of this. I'm playing college baseball right now. If that doesn't work out, I've got this to come back to." Current vehicle: "Dodge Charger. It's for sale if you want to buy it."





Bailey Davis

GATE STAFF

A 2019 graduate of MHS, Davis is a student at Grand Canyon University and an auto neophyte. She gained her previous customer-service experience at Barro's Pizza. She has lived in Maricopa 18 years. Foot-in-the-door moment: "I was friends with everyone who worked here through high school. Then they all started working here and told me about it. I showed up a couple of months ago. It was just kind of to say hi and talk to everyone. And then they offered me a position." Daily duties: "I work five days a week. I welcome people, so I'm the first person that they see when they come on. I don't know exactly if there is a title for that. I'm a people person, so I didn't have an issue with it. I actually really enjoy it. All the people on the staff are supernice. I was really nervous when I first came on because I was like new to everything and I didn't know anyone except the kids." Future: "I know they're thinking of moving me to the pit lanes to be more involved with people." Current vehicle: "I drive a standard Chevy

Prism. It's not a nice car."

Track experience: "I have been on it from the previous time I'd been here before I worked here."



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Sonoran Creek develops agreement with City

Thompson Thrift Development, planning the Sonoran Creek Marketplace on John Wayne Parkway next to Culver's and Dutch Bros. Coffee, developed an agreement with the City of Maricopa that would sell 4.22 acres of the 20-acre lot to the City for "future commercial development."

Those acres are known as Lot 3 and are on the west side of the development. The purchase agreement requires the City to purchase Lot 3 and a bordering drainage area for \$4 per square foot, equaling more than \$735,000.

The Development Incentive Agreement would require Thompson Thrift to begin construction of Sonoran Creek by March 30, 2021, and open by Nov. 30 of the same year. For its part, the City would waive development fees. City officials have not publicly described what use is planned for Lot 3.

Economic development

Pinal County broke ground on a new court administration complex at 20025 N. Wilson Ave. Jan 17. It will include improved court facilities, sheriff's office facilities and satellite offices for clerk of Superior Court, assessor, recorder, supervisor's office and more.

The future **Roots Eatery** is transforming the former pizza shop of Dominos at 20046 N. John Wayne Parkway, Suite 104, as it transforms itself from a home-based business of catering and cooking classes into a restaurant.

Iconic Tire & Service Center has a commercial permit to build a 6,277-square foot facility at 19945 N. John Wayne Parkway. The same development, the city's Planning and Zoning Department has the plans for Maricopa Animal Hospital, a 4,000-square-foot structure on the south side of Maricopa Self Storage. North of Maricopa Self Storage, an AAMCO is under construction. That

development also has plans for John Wayne Parkway Self Storage under way.

Agave's Restaurant reopened after a four-month renovation, marking the final chapter of the expansion of Harrah's Ak-Chin Resort and Casino. The interior and menu were updated for the restaurant, which seats 118 inside and poolside.

Bahama Buck's, a shaved-ice eatery, has a development review permit at 17452 N. Porter Road, where the city replatted to accommodate the business needs.



Agave's Restaurant

Leading Edge Academy received a commercial permit for a planned 5,000-square-foot charter high school at 18700 N. Porter Road.



Central Arizona College

Central Arizona College is expanding its driveway and firelane at its campus at 17945 N. Regent Drive.

Global Water Resources installed new waterline liner along Honeycutt Road east of White and Parker Road to decrease the likelihood of line breaks.

My Home Group real estate office officially opened Jan. 25 at 20046 N. John Wayne Parkway, Suite 106.

4 eateries tagged by food inspector

In Pinal County's health inspections of 16 Maricopa restaurants Dec. 16-Jan. 15, four eateries performed less than excellently.

Cilantro's had two containers of menudo and a container of beans not properly cooled in its refrigerator. Cold-holding items should be at 41 degrees F or under, but the two containers were at 64 degrees, and beans were at 60 degrees. The inspector discussed proper cooling for large containers.

At McDonald's on Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, an employee with artificial fingernails was working on premade salads. Artificial or polished nails are not allowed. A bag of ice was stored in a bin with unbagged ice. The inspector also noted "many non-food contact surfaces need additional cleaning to maintain in a sanitary manner."

Say Sushi had a refrigerator not keeping food under 42 degrees. That affected dumplings, raw chicken and cream cheese balls. The unit was required to be serviced.

True Grit Tavern had a few issues, according to the inspector. A refrigerator was not holding food items cold enough, and warm foods were not kept warm enough. The inspector noted it was the second notice on the refrigerator. A handwashing sink had no soap. A dishwasher was not dispensing sanitizer properly and required maintenance.

EXCELLENT [No violations found]

- · Brooklyn Boys Italian Restaurant
- · The Duke at Rancho El Dorado
- Dunkin Donuts
- Good Donuts
- Gvro Grill
- · Li's Garden
- Maricopa High School
- · Maricopa High School Culinary Arts McDonald's (John Wayne Parkway)
- · Native Grill and Wings
- Wendy's
- WingStop

SATISFACTORY [Violations corrected during inspections]

- · Cilantro's Mexican Cocina
- McDonald's (Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway)
- Sav Sushi
- · True Grit Tavern

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

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

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Businesses, employees adjust to \$12 minimum wage

By Joycelyn Cabrera



the final fixed increase to minimum wage hits, local businesses are adjusting.

Jan. 1, the state of Arizona increased minimum wage from \$11 to \$12, after several increases from previous years. In 2021 and beyond, Arizona's minimum wage will change based on the cost of living in the

Local business owners shared the struggles of running a home-grown business under rising minimum wage, costing the employers more money from limited resources.

Headquarters Restaurant and Bar owner Alma Farrell discussed tough choices the eatery has to make. Since the raises started in 2016, she has had to raise prices.

"You have to keep your customers happy because they don't want you to raise the prices, but how can you not raise them? How do you keep your vendors happy?" Farrell said. "That's the biggest issue, is trying to find the balance to raise the wages for your employees, keep the vendors that you have, and keeping the layoffs and cut hours while the restaurant customers happy."

Arizona voters passed Proposition 206, the Fair Wages and Healthy Families Act, in November 2016, when minimum wage was \$8.05. The initiative implemented two measures into law: minimum wage increases until 2020 and paid sick-time requirements.

Brooklyn Boys has been a locally owned restaurant in Maricopa since 2007. The owner of the New York-style Italian restaurant, Vincent "Vinny" Fiordilino adjusts the budget with each minimum-wage increase.

"Looking at a different point of view as an owner, especially when business is kind of slow, it hurts. It hurts a lot because you're always on a tight budget," Fiordilino said. "It's a rough business, no matter what kind of store you have, but you adapt and you go with the differently. flow. You try to make the best out of it."

The Industrial Commission of Arizona implements and enforces Prop 206's

The current state minimum wage far exceeds the federal minimum wage of \$7.25, which Arizona has been above since 2010, when the state last matched the nation's hourly wage. According to the U.S Department of Labor, in 2011, Arizona raised its minimum wage 10 cents above the federal wage and has been increasing it ever since.

Maricopa's Native Grill and Wings is part of a chain of locations across Arizona, Texas and Illinois. The raises since 2016 have caused figured out ways to reduce supply costs. Native Grill also had to recover from a months' long closure in 2019 after a fire.

"Some places end up closing and stuff like that when minimum wage continues go up. It's too early to tell how it's going to affect us," owner Pat Kieny said of the latest increase. "Hopefully it's not too damaging. So, all we can do is wait and see and keep moving forward."

Another demographic affected by the

minimum wage increase is the employees. Maricopa High School graduate Harrison Edmondson, a full-time Arizona State University student studying supply-chain management, said his major gave him a lot more insight into how minimum wage can affect people within the same community very

"Small business-wise, they rely so much on community support and community engagement, that when they have their operating costs increase, they're going to have to lay people off or cut hours, benefits," said Edmondson, who works as a community assistant for ASU and previously worked at Fry's. "But, unfortunately, if they can't afford to pay these workers and decrease the profit margin a little bit to cut the labor cost, I just feel like they may need to reevaluate the business model."

Edmondson said he has struggled to keep up with expenses despite the increases in pay.

"Budgeting was always something that I tried to do, but considering the amount of money I made, I still wasn't able to cover my basic expenses. I had to get a credit card to help cover the expenses, so I have a little bit of credit card debt right now," Edmondson said. "Personally, whatever medical expenses come up for me, I am basically not able to pay

According to the U.S Department of Education, the average cost of in-state college tuition in Arizona was \$9,337 from the

2018—19 academic year. This does not include housing or other costs. This is \$1,114 less than the previous year (10.7% decrease). This also is representative of one academic year; students will typically pay four to six years of university

Arizona now has the fifth highest minimum wage in the country, tying with Maine and Colorado, which share the \$12 hourly wage, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Only Washington, California and Massachusetts are higher.

Maricopan Antonio Gonzales is a fulltime ASU student who also has to make ends meet working entry-level jobs while attending school. He is currently employed at a Chipotle.

"I think it's a good thing, but I don't think it's going to solve all of the problems that everybody thinks it will," Gonzales said. "Minimum wage jobs aren't for people that are trying to support a family and pay off the house and all that stuff. It's an entry-level job, and then people use that and build into a career where they can afford that stuff."

Local government is also affected by minimum-wage jumps, as many minimumwage employees provide various services for the City of Maricopa. Spokesman Adam Wolfe said the City has 71 employees impacted.

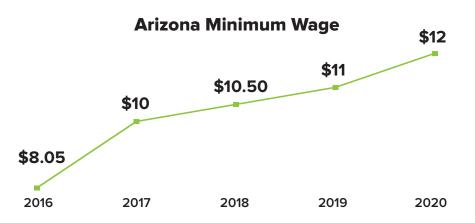
The 2018 median household income for Maricopa sits at \$68,908, 16% higher than the state's \$59,246, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Over the past decade, the average annual cost-of-living adjustment has been about 1.5%. The cost of living in Maricopa has risen 2.2% during the past year, with the biggest increases in transporation and food, though housing is edging up, too.

Minimum wage will continue to increase

to accommodate any rising cost of living, which means some years may see no increase, large increases or small increases depending on what is deemed necessary by the Industrial

"Hopefully, it'll get easier from this point on," Fiordilino said. "I'm all for this for the employees, because I used to be an employee once before being an owner, and I understand what kind of hardship they go through, making a living. However, being an owner has its perks and disadvantages. Owning a business is not easy."







How do you take care of your skin?

By Kristina Donnay, FNP-C

rofessional facials are an essential part of skincare and beneficial to men's and women's skin alike.

care routine at home. Daily routines help maintain your skin. But, once in a while, you should let the professionals take care of your skin. If you think facials are nothing but a frivolous way to pamper your skin, you are wrong. Even if you do not have blemishes, hyperpigmentation, severe acne, fine lines, oily skin, dry skin, excess hair growth or other problems, your face needs to be pampered by a trained professional to keep

it healthy and free of skin issues.



There are many benefits to facials. One Most people have a daily skin is reduced stress. According to a study

> published in the Biomedical Research Journal, facial massage activates your sympathetic nervous system, reducing anxiety levels and uplifting moods. Other benefits of facials include increasing blood circulation in the face, decreasing signs of aging and a deep cleaning Medical Director of the skin. Professional facials reiuvenate detox, exfoliate and tighten the skin: treat acne and acne

scaring; decrease sunspots; and increases the skin's ability to absorb other products.

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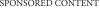
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A facial massage activates your sympathetic nervous system, reducing

anxiety levels and uplifting moods." Learn more about different facials to fit the skin needs and address certain issues like laser facials, hydro-facials, dermaplaning facials, enzyme facials and stem cell facials. Call or stop in to meet Maricopa Wellness



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Water softener maintenance made easy

By Terry Leamon, My Maricopa Plumber

eriodically giving your water softener checkup will keep it running efficiently and help you avoid maintenance costs associated with hard water. Here are some DIY best practices:

Avoid salt bridges and salt-mushing

A salt bridge occurs when a hard crust forms in the brine tank and creates an empty space between the water and the salt, preventing the salt from dissolving into the water to make brine. Without brine, the resin

beads that soften your water can't do their job. Common causes of bridging include high humidity, temperature changes and using the wrong salt. You may have a salt bridge if your salt tank appears full but you know your water isn't soft. The quickest way to test for a salt bridge is to take a broom handle and carefully push on the top of the salt, using a little bit of pressure to break it up.

Salt-mushing is the more serious of the two problems and happens when dissolved salt recrystallizes and forms a sludge on the bottom of the brine tank. This thick layer of salt keeps the water softener from properly

cycling through the regeneration process, leaving your water hard and creating a serious blockage in the tank.

To avoid these salt issues, opt for high-quality salt pellets, which greatly reduce the potential for any problems — especially salt-mushing. Additionally, don't overfill your brine tank with salt. Keeping it half-full

prevents older salt from sticking to the walls of the tank. It's also important to manage the humidity level around your water softener.

Be selective with your salt choice

There are three basic types of water softener salt: rock, solar and evaporated. Rock salt, the least expensive, contains higher levels of insoluble minerals or impurities. Over time,

this can result in a muddy tank, decreasing the softening efficiency while leaving impurities in your water. Solar salt, which is much more soluble than rock salt, is obtained by the evaporation of seawater and is found in both pellet and crystal form. The best option is evaporated salt, which is obtained through a combination of mining and evaporation. This is the purest form of salt at 99.99% sodium chloride.

In general, look for high purity salts, which will leave less storage tank residue lowering the likelihood of salt bridges and salt-mushing and resulting in less maintenance. High-quality salts — and salts in pellet form — help eliminate bridging problems. Additionally, many leading brands also offer salt products that address specific issues, such as high iron concentration, rust stains and sodium alternatives.



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- 1. Maricopa firefighters check out a smoky fire at Edwards Circle Jan. 2.
- 2. Bernard Schober organized and Susan Cameron provided live art for the All-Arizona Poetry Slam Championship. Raquel Hendrickson
- 3. City and county officials were on hand for a groundbreaking for a new Pinal County complex in Maricopa. Raquel Hendrickson
- 4. Actors Brittany Randolph and Mario Bandin were leads in Maricopa Community Theatre's "The Importance of Being Earnest." Raquel Hendrickson
- 5. The Streets Don't Love You Back's Rob and Lucinda Boyd led a present distribution before Christmas. Kyle Norby
- 6. The inaugural Copa Glow hot air balloon festival packed in a crowd at Copper Sky Jan. 18. Raquel Hendrickson





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Our Lady of Grace pastor sees room for growth

By Kyle Norby



/ictor Moreno

The Rev. Jay Juczak became pastor of Our Lady of Grace parish in 2019.

hen it comes to the small-town atmosphere many Maricopa residents love, the Rev. Jay Luczak is no different. Having been a priest for over 27 years, Luczak has spent all his career in tight-knit communities in Arizona.

Luczak, known by the parish as Father Jay, took over as pastor of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church in August.

"I like small-town atmospheres. Miami was a small copper-mining town," Luczak said. "Then I was in Nogales.I still had three years left in my term there and I was planning on staying there for at least those three years. But the bishop asked me to come here."

In effect, he traded posts with Our Lady's previous pastor, the Rev. Marcos Velásquez, who had served in Nogales before coming to Maricopa and then returned to Nogales in 2019.

Being in the Catholic church all his life, Luczak had always felt a close relationship with God. He and his three brothers and two sisters attended Catholic school until the eighth grade.

"My dad was a police officer; he's retired. My mom stopped working when she had six kids. She went back to work once my youngest brother was in school," Luczak said.

After spending the first 19 years of his priesthood in the mining town of Miami, Luczak became the headmaster of Sacred Heart Catholic School in Nogales for three years.

"The principal ran the school and there was a really good school board there," Luczak said. "I was in charge, but I can't really take credit for running the school."

Luczak sees a lot of opportunity and room for growth at Maricopa's parish and has

enjoyed his months in the community.

"He's a good priest, a good homilist, but he also has a strong business background," said parishioner Ken Lepper.

Saying Our Lady of Grace may be the only parish in the diocese with such an extensive development plan, Lepper said the new pastor has the experience to face the challenge of developing The Crossing and leading the church forward.

The Crossing is the parish's 20-acre property surrounding the church. Our Lady of Grace plans to develop it with mixed-use commercial and residential components. Unconnected with the parish, Heritage Academy charter school occupies the south side.

While being fiscally responsible and first taking care of some of the parish's debt, Luczak looks forward to future projects such as a parish hall for board meetings and classrooms.

"We're using the high school for our classes, so it would be nice to have classrooms onsite, especially for a DRE (Directors of Religious Education)," Luczak said.

Taking over the role of pastor from Velasquez was no small ordeal but an honor, according to Luczak. Having known each other more than 30 years, the two priests have become good friends with an understanding of their influence on the parish. Velasquez left the parish well organized and in good standing for his replacement, Luczak said.

"I've always admired and respected him," Luczak said. "It was a little intimidating coming here kind of in his footsteps, and when I was in Nogales, I was kind of in his shadow there, too."

Father Jay's chosen profession has been a rewarding one, with the most memorable moments being with the people he has met along the way. "Wherever God's people are is a good place."

The 59-year-old said his motivation has hardly faltered. And that motivation, he said, is "Jesus. Trying to please him. Do what he wants me to do. God's will."

While he describes his time with the people of the church as warm and welcoming, Luczak admitted he doesn't know how long he expects to be in Maricopa. In a lot of ways, he said, it isn't up to him.

"I was expecting to be in Nogales until I retired. So, I really don't know."

When asked about keeping his faith through all the years, hardships and the unknown, Luczak's answer was quick and simple.

"I'm not always positive," Luczak said with a laugh. "But you have to pray. Trust God and remember it all comes down to love."



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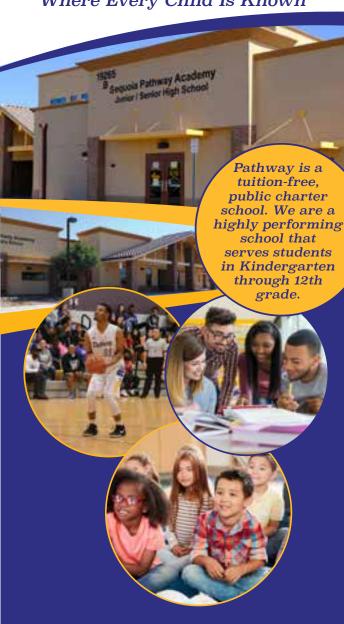


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Latest research on student performance shows early bias

By Murray Siegel

hroughout the year, results gleaned from education research are released in an attempt to communicate what has been learned about improving student accomplishment. Unfortunately, unless you subscribe to an educational research journal, these results are most likely unknown



A study in New York ("The Acquisition of Gender Stereotypes about Intellectual Ability: Intersections

with Race") involving more than 200 kindergarten and first-grade students revealed these young children already had biased beliefs about gender and academic excellence. These primary students "know" males are more brilliant than females. Think how this belief affects the confidence of young females to tackle academic challenges.

Perhaps an outcome of this early-onset bias is that although women earn more than half of all undergraduate and graduate degrees, and that girls outperform boys in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) subjects, far fewer women than men pursue STEM careers.

Another study demonstrated a bias against African American elementary school students. Fewer black students who had high test scores were assigned to gifted programs than their white equals. Only if the teacher was black was there an equivalence in these recommendations.

Another study revealed a strong relationship between parent and teacher beliefs and student academic performance, especially for girls. It was also revealed some teachers are successfully utilizing artificial intelligence to determine the best method for teaching specific students.

As a nation, we are concerned about mathematical accomplishment. Research discovered that math scores improve for low-confidence students when these students silently repeat to themselves that they will make their best effort. Furthermore, teachers are significantly more effective when the teacher understands the student's cultural background.

A substantial portion of Americans seem to be proud they were never successful in mathematics. They believe their personal accomplishments occurred without a mastery of math. You will find few who are proud that they never mastered the ability to read.

Students, and some parents, ask, "Why learn math?" or "When will we ever use this?" A recent study found a meaningful positive correlation between mathematical ability and health status.

Math-y folks tend to be healthier, but why? A study indicated that individuals who were mathematically confident were more likely to evaluate health risks using data as opposed to making decisions based on emotion. Furthermore, mathematically able adults are wiser consumers of numerical medical results.

It appears that children will benefit as adults from being properly inspired by parents and teachers to do their best and become proficient learners of mathematics.

Murray Siegel has a Ph.D. in MathEd and 42 years of teaching experience. He and his wife Sharon are volunteer teachers of advanced math classes at Butterfield Elementary School.



Be Awesome: Family Night

By Harriet Phelps

ecently, Be Awesome Youth Coalition reported on the Arizona Youth Survey that about 24.3% of high school students were excited about their future. Locally, only 38% believe that good things will happen for them. Sadly, only 22% believe their future will turn out well for them.

Subsequently, 43% of county youth are turning to the consumption of alcohol, 36% used e-cigarettes, and 29% have used marijuana. Teen suicide rates have increased by 56% since 2007. These numbers are alarming.

It is time to pay attention, and there is something we all can do. Parenting is stressful at best and very draining with the demands on home life. Many households have either parent or a single parent working around the clock shifts, workplace stress, and commute time. It is an overwhelming task for a parent walking in the door tired from work to confront busy children.

Start by doing a reality check on the rules regarding substance usage and acceptance in the household. If there is an existing problem, does it need to be addressed and support sought. Determine the rules for your family and always tell your children they matter.

Bring back family time together. Start by planning a one- to two-hour period with all family members involved. Schedule the best time that meets work and school schedules with the least conflicts. Everyone is expected to attend. Traditionally, this time together was Sunday dinner.

Plan a meal and a short event such as a movie or a game considering the youngest participant. The cost involved may be a carryout meal of \$5 pizzas, mac 'n' cheese or peanut butter sandwiches with celery and carrot sticks or apple. It is easy and all can help. Games can be purchased cheap at the thrift store and movies at DVD vendor boxes.

Program Director Priscilla Behnke indicated there are supports to help connect and develop confidant and successful youth.

Communicate: Talk with your children to assure them you will help support them and keep them safe. Ask about their day, their frustrations and victories.

Mentor: The coalition is seeking adult volunteers to mentor the youth in our schools. They need willingness to give time during the week to meet with children in all school levels. Contact Be Awesome Youth for the mentor programs. There is a waiting list for young people to be mentored. The only requirement is a desire to help with consistent and dedicated time. I am a volunteer and mentor with the Be Awesome coalition.

Support: The coalition offers after-school programs and special events and parenting information for parents. Check the calendars.

As always, be awesome.



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InMaricopa.com | February 2020





Art therapist

Meet Lexie of Art for the Heart

By Raquel Hendrickson

or the second year, students at Maricopa High School are hosting Art for the Heart, Maricopa's community art festival selling creations to benefit the American Heart Association. Displaying her art and helping organize the event is Assistant Director Lexie Nordhoff, a 15-year-old student-artist working with graphic design teacher Maria Pour.

The daughter of Teri and Steve Nordhoff, she has lived in Maricopa since she was 5 years old. Through her art, she also explores human psychology, but she has displayed other skills as well. Two years ago, she was the MUSD Spelling Bee champion, and she is on the MHS swim team.

from

What to know about **LEXIE NORDHOFF**

Residence: The Villages **School:** Maricopa High School Year in school: Sophomore

How did you first learn you had an artistic talent?

When I lived in Indiana, my parents owned a pottery store, and I began painting pottery at a young age. This was the beginning of my artistic career. I loved the smells and tactile experience of painting ceramics. My parents always supported my artistic endeavors. As I grew older, I moved away from painting the various bisque structures to painting on canvas.



One of Lexie's favorite paintings is Claude Monet's "Pheasants and Plovers."



Lexie Nordhoff's art is often surreal, including "Pink Lady" (center), which portrays drug abuse.





than I was without it.

I appreciate surrealism; it allows me to remove myself from my preconceived notions of art and escape from reality.

One of my favorite pieces is rather strange. It is



IF YOU GO

What: Art for the Heart Fine Arts & Crafts Festival

When: Feb. 15, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Where: Copper Sky Lake, 44345 W.

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Art4HeartAZ.wixsite.com/home

What is your favorite medium?

Watercolor. I enjoy the freedom and ease of the medium, even when I make a mistake with watercolor, I can incorporate it into the piece. The medium is often difficult to manipulate, which has made me become a stronger artist

What is your favorite genre?

Describe your favorite piece of art.

a Monet piece titled "Pheasants and Plovers." What I enjoy about this piece is it's wispy and

ethereal; it draws you in and captivates the audience with its peculiarity.

With which of your own works are you most pleased?

My favorite piece that I created is a surrealistic/ pop-art portrait of a girl with a hand coming out of her mouth. It is titled "Pink Ladies," which is a street term for barbiturates, which are highly addictive sedatives. This is a part of my sustained investigation based on indulgence. My work has explored many types of indulgences from gluttony, materialism, infatuation, abuse, cosmetic alterations and even celebrity culture and the negative effects that come with fame. The hand coming out of her mouth represents the struggles being masked by drug abuse.

Outside of art, what are your hobbies/

Leadership, which I pursue with the MHS Graphic Design CTSO, being their vice president, and community services, which I accomplish as being the assistant director of the Art for the Heart Festival.

What do you plan to do with art as an

I would like to pursue my passion for psychology. Art therapy is an avenue I want to explore. Art is a reflection of one's psyche, the internal toil, happiness and things that we keep from others. That's what a therapist helps







Building, adapting homes for aging population

By Raquel Hendrickson

From width of doorways to styles of doorknobs, design and remodeling of homes for an aging population has drawn notice from the construction industry since the 1990s.

Though the topic is uncomfortable for many to talk about, surveys have found many seniors or soon-to-be seniors want to stay in their homes as they age. According to AARP, that's 89%. The idea of having to move to a new living space to accommodate the issues of health or just slowing down is just not palatable.

Incorporating concepts of "universal design," what became known as "aging in place" became an industry designation. It is no longer only about the lifestyle needs of the elderly but all who want to stay in their homes when health and mobility issues are directing them toward care facilities.

began offering certification for aging-in-place specialists, called CAPS. The organization wanted to emphasize home designs and redesigns that were not only accessible and safe but also aesthetically pleasing.

The newest member of Maricopa's Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee said he does not think the talk about aging-in-place precepts among architects and builders has transitioned into action well enough.

"It turns out we have one of the few homes in Province that has adequate doors, adequate said.

hallways," Ron Smith said. "We have grab bars. I didn't want them installed; I just wanted the blocking in the walls. I just wanted to be ready."

Though he has spoken to several residential developers, the aging-in-place design options remain limited. He finds that frustrating, because the U.S. Census predicts the number of older adults (code for age 65 and up) will double by 2060 and surpass the number of cludes 36-inch-wide doors and hallways, children being born.

"It's marketing," Smith said. "People buying these homes are coming in for a lifestyle. You don't advertise grab bars to them."

Lennar introduced a Legacy Series of designs for age 55 and up in Texas communities, using aging-in-place guidelines. D.R. Horton introduced its Freedom brand in other parts of Arizona. Meritage and K. Hovnanian have 55+ communities.

The Smiths are not elderly or impaired. Like National Association of Homebuilders many, however, Ron and Helen had to meet the needs of their own aging parents. Seeing before retiring in 2014. the issues that came up was enlightening.

height and especially grab bars became topics

"That's the one thing that really annoys people are grab bars," she said. They often look institutional and are also a physical reminder that age is creeping on. Too often a fall is the

"Until it happens to you, it's not real," he

National Institute on **Aging Remodeling Tips**

- 1. Don't use area rugs and check that all carpets are fixed firmly to the floor.
- 2. Install grab bars near toilets and in the tub or shower.
- 3. Replace handles on doors or faucets with ones that are comfortable to use.
- 4. Install a ramp with handrails to the front door.
- 5. Reduce fall hazards: place no-slip strips or non-skid mats on tile and wood floors or surfaces that may get wet.
- Place light switches at the top and bottom of stairs and remember to turn on nightlights.

While building a home for accessibility costs more than a standard home, retrofitting a home to meet mobility needs often costs much more but is still less expensive than moving into a care facility.

"What aging in place is all about is educating the homebuyer, so that they understand what they may face and be prepared for it," Ron Smith said. "You can build a house initially to have the right footprint so you can have wide doors, wide hallways when you frame it."

The NAHB Aging in Place checklist innon-slip flooring, lever handles on doors and faucets, low- or no-threshold doorways, low windows with lots of natural light and 5-by-5-foot turn space in main rooms.

Smith said the aging-in-place concept inspired him to leave his work as a college administration IT and go back to school 15 years ago to learn more about universal design and aging in place. For about five years, he worked for an interior design company that did cabinetry. With the recession, he returned to college admin for more than three years

"A lot of my work was in planning," Hall width, flooring, paint color, counter he said. "I'm one of those guys that like to think down the road. I love architecture and building and construction. All these things were coming together."

> Aging-in-place concepts go beyond adapting a home to age-related limitations to "universal design." Unexpected health crises or physical injury can change a lifestyle in a second for anyone at any age and put surprising demands on your home.



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The least expensive home sold in Maricopa Dec. 16-Jan. 15 was in an older neighborhood of Rancho El Dorado. Its selling price was nearly 13 percent less than its previous, pre-Recession sale price in 2006. A three-bedroom home with all the basics, it touts a new paint job inside and a grass backyard that needs some TLC.

Sold: Dec. 22 Purchase price: \$174,200 Square footage: 1.093 Price per square foot: \$159.38 Days on market: 115 **Builder:** Continental Year built: 2003 **Bedrooms: 3**

Bathrooms: 2 Community: Rancho El Dorado Features: Extended patio, twocar garage with painted floor Listing agent: James Mickelson, **HomeSmart Success** Selling agent: Pamm Seago-Peterlin, Century 21 Seago

2. 36480 W. El Greco St., Tortosa	\$189,000
3. 42609 W. Lucera Court, Glennwilde	\$190,000
4. 42068 W. Hillman Drive, Rancho El Dorado	\$196,000
5. 37118 W. Mondragone Lane, Sorrento	\$196,000

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

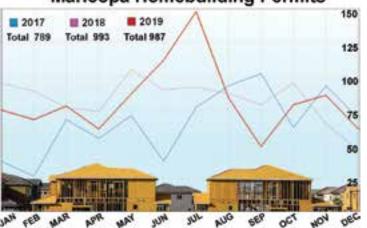
The most expensive home sold in Maricopa Dec. 16-Jan. 15 was a four-bedroom, two-story Villages home with a pool and a putting green. Its price rose 150% since the last time it sold in 2011. Much of that was due to many interior upgrades and the finely landscaped backyard. The home sold for \$6,000 above its list price.

Sold: Jan. 1 Purchase price: \$325,000 Square footage: 2,450 Price per square foot: \$132.65 Days on market: 53 **Builder:** Hacienda Year built: 2004 **Bedrooms: 4** Bathrooms: 2.5 Community: The Villages at Rancho El Dorado

Features: Lots of open spaces, storage and counter space, stainless-steel appliances, three-car garage, sparkling pool with jetted tub, covered patios, gazebo, upstairs loft **Listing agent:** Christopher Michael Haller, HomeSmart Selling agent: James Mitchell, James Mitchell Real Estate

2. 44487 W. Redrock Road, Cobblestone Farms	\$318,000
3. 19569 N. Ventana Lane, Glennwilde	\$312,500
4. 45348 W. Windrose Drive, Alterra North	\$310,000
E 42226 W Mariaana Ava Sanita	\$30E 000

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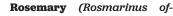
Herb-alicious tips from garden to table

By Wende Gehrt

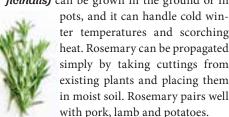
Gardeners have long valued herbs for their culinary uses, and they're easy to grow, even

in the desert. An entire plant can be grown for less than purchasing a precut sprig at the grocery store, and it will be available as you need it.

Most herbs don't require special soils and can thrive in any spot in the yard but can also be grown in pots or even on a windowsill. As with vegetables, grow what you like to eat.



ficinalis) can be grown in the ground or in pots, and it can handle cold win-





Wende Gehrt

Mint (Mentha spicata) is a fast growing, spreading

plant so you must give it a place to spread without

getting in the way or plant it in a pot. Mint sends out runners that spread quickly, forming large patches. Mint varieties include spearmint, peppermint, sweet mint and chocolate mint. Fresh mint complements

lamb, poultry, fish and vegetables such as peas, new potatoes and carrots. Mint is refreshing in tea or lemonade.

Italian parsley (Petroselinum cris-



pum) is more heat tolerant than curly parsley and has a richer flavor. Frequent cuttings benefit the plant and will pro-

duce new shoots. Parsley adds flavor to meat and egg dishes, potato and pasta dishes, rice, vegetables, salads, soups and herb butters. Add chopped parsley at the very end of cooking or just before serving to preserve its fresh

Mexican oregano (Poliomintha maderensis) is more flavorful than its European cousin. It thrives in the alkaline soils we typically have in the South-

west. Mexican oregano enhances the flavor of fresh or cooked salsas. meat mixtures for bur-

ritos and tacos, enchilada sauce and classic braised pork.

Cilantro (Coriandrum sativum) thrives in full sun but will tolerate some shade. It's best used fresh since it loses its flavor if dried.



Fresh cilantro is delicious in sour cream, salsa, pico de gallo, salad dressings, soups, stews, rice, and many Mexican dishes.

Some people have a variation of olfactory-receptor genes that allow them to perceive the aldehydes in cilantro as a "soapy taste."

Basil (Ocimum basilicum) loves the sun and benefits from frequent cuttings, espe-

cially to remove any flower buds. It darkens after chopping so it should be added just at the end of cooking. Basil pairs



well with Italian cuisine or anything toma-

Maricopa Master Gardeners cultivate desert-friendly herbs along with vegetables and flowers, offering them at their annual plant sale March 7.



macmastergardener@gmail.com **©** 520-374-6263

A Wisconsin transplant, Wende Gehrt is the newest member of Maricopa Master Gardeners

HEATING TIPS

1 Set programmable thermostat on a comfortable low in winter and lower setpoint when sleeping or away.

Clean or replace furnace filters once a month or as recommended.

Turn off exhaust fans within 20 minutes after cooking or bathing; when replacing fans, consider installing high-efficiency, low-noise models.

✓ During winter, keep draperies and shades on south-facing windows open during the day to allow sunlight to enter and closed at night to reduce chill you may feel from cold windows.

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Homebuyers should give south side of the tracks another look

By Dayv Morgan

There is a stigma attached to being on the "wrong side" of the tracks, and that has played out in Maricopa for years.

When I would ask a buyer what area of town they were interested in, they would

often say, "I don't want to be south of the railroad tracks." I have lived on the south side since coming to Maricopa in 2006, and when I would tell people where I lived, they would say, "Oh, that's too bad."

That sentiment affected the price of homes, resulting in prices that were about 10% less than homes in northern Maricopa.

But times are changing. Homebuyers have good reason to give the south side another look.

After the real estate market hit its low point in 2010, development on the south side began to turn some heads. The Ak-Chin opened the UltraStar Multi-tainment Center

in 2012. Then the City of Maricopa opened Copper Sky in 2014.

With a high school, middle school and elementary school already in place, and entertainment, city festivals, recreation, swimming and sports tournaments within easy distance, homebuying has become more

enticing.

The biggest accomplishment has been the completion of the overpass across the tracks. That eliminated traffic delays caused by trains and also widened the four lanes to six lanes to improve the flow of commuter traffic.

The City plans more commercial

Dayv Morgan

development at Copper Sky. Homebuilders like Lennar, Richmond American and K Hovnanian have returned to Alterra, Palo Brea and Maricopa Meadows, identifying the south side as the place to be.

Besides the amenities unique to the south side, Richmond American is the only builder in the city offering homes with attached RV

garages — just another consideration for homebuvers.

Where improved lots are available for construction, only Santa Rosa Crossing (east of Desert Cedars) and areas in the flood plain are not seeing current homebuilding.

But there is still a lot of room for new subdivisions within the city boundaries south of the tracks, and home values on the south side are now about equal to those on the north side, and may even exceed them in the near future.

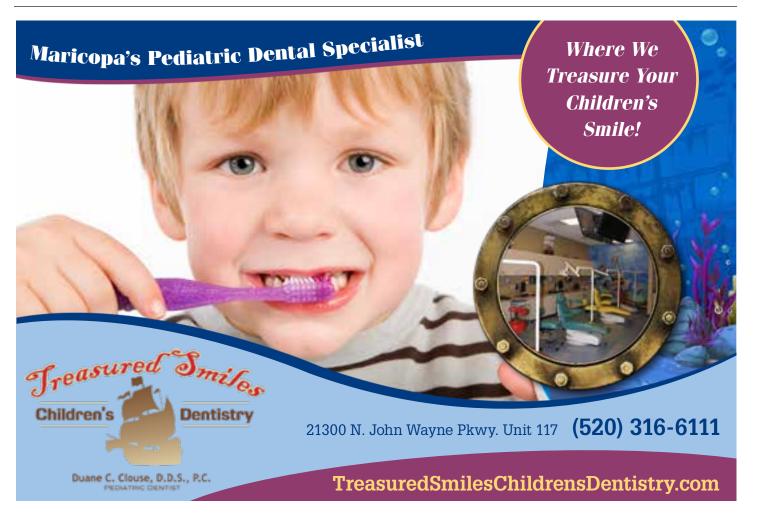
Soon homebuyers may reconsider which side of the tracks in Maricopa is the "wrong

Dayv Morgan is a Maricopa Realtor and owner of HomeSmart Success.



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Full STEAM ahead

Couple's lifetime of model railroading becomes new education

By Raquel Hendrickson

Part toys-for-grownups, part engineering marvel and part art project, the model train layout fills an entire room of a Province home. More than anything, it is very personal nostalgia.

Jim and Patty VanHouten have created a miniature replica of Jim's hometown, Moberly, Missouri, and its environs. But, wait, the triple-decker layout also includes nearby towns of Glasgow and Clark and a re-creation of Durango, Colorado.

Five at a time, Wabash, GM&O and Missouri-Kansas-Texas trains run through the set, over bridges and through mountain gorges. By walking a visitor through the twists and turns of the layout, Jim VanHouten is really telling them the story of his youth.

"My mom started my two brothers and I in this hobby when I was 8 years old," he said.

That was in 1960. Now, as he prepares to retire from the construction business, he uses model railroading to enhance STEAM education at elementary schools. It was Patty's idea.

As a library aide at Jacobson Elementary in Chandler, she saw Jim's retirement date approaching in March and knew he needed an occupation. She asked him about starting a kids' club on campus for model railroad.

In the classroom

When he agreed, Patty got the word out at the school, using the pull line, "Learn to build, wire and landscape your model railroad layout." The 10 slots filled up quickly this semester and there is a waiting list. Patty is in charge of the club, which meets weekly for 15 weeks.

Working in teams and individually, the children are responsible for their own piece of track. When all connected, it will be 18 feet long and six feet wide. Using kits, each child builds a freight car and a building. They each get an 18-inch backdrop to paint, and they paint their own roads.

The Sun Lakes Short Line Model Railroad Club donated boxes of miniature buildings for the children to add to the layout. The VanHoutens will show them how to make mountains and trees.



Jim VanHouten incorporates great detail into his reimagining of his hometown and other communities.

"We're using STEAM — science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and the A is for art," Jim VanHouten said. "So, we're using the STEAM terminology."

The "we" is telling. The model train hobby has been part of their marriage for four

On the move

When she married Jim 42 years ago, Patty knew what she was getting. Her uncle had a model train layout in his house that was absolutely hands-off. Jim wasn't that persnickety, but Jim and his train layout came in the same package.

"When I met him, he had his furnished apartment; he lived upstairs in some old lady's house," Patty VanHouten said. "He had a little layout then."

At the time, they were both in engineering for the construction of a nuclear power plant on Long Island, New York. Patty, who is from Queens, was in charge of all the design changes as her full-time job while going to school at night. He was on his first project out of college as a civil engineer.

Because they worked out of different trailers, they had to speak on the phone. He claimed he could barely understand her, and she thought he was from Texas. In person, however, they could communicate just fine.

During their marriage, they have moved 16 times. Along the way they had two children (one of whom is an engineer) and three grandchildren. Patty said the longest they have lived anywhere has been the 14 years in Maricopa.



A deciding factor in how they chose their Province home was the necessary space for a model train layout.

"When we picked the house, we saw the room," she said, "and I said, 'OK, this will be perfect for the train. You can watch football. You can do whatever you want. I know where you are at all times."

Bringing only bridges he had built earlier and one corner, Jim began building a new layout from the moment they moved in. The train room was the first room to be painted.

"I'm a civil engineer," Jim VanHouten said. "I guess I'm artistic. I've made these bridges from scratch, and they were on the previous layout when we lived in Chandler for six years before we moved here."

Hometown tribute

A focal point in his re-imagining of Moberly was a model farmhouse his mother made when she introduced Jim and his brothers Larry and Aubrey to the hobby all those years ago. His family owned a John Deere dealership, so all the farm equipment is John Deere. His grandfather owned a coal company, so a coal company features prominently.



His grandparents' home and his childhood home are next to each other, along with his grandmother's pink picnic table used so frequently for family gatherings and a backyard baseball field. Canoeists paddle past Durango. Guys on a bridge "moon" passing traffic. There is a powerplant, a brewery and a meatpacking warehouse along with standard all-American hometown stores and homes.

In some instances, when he has recreated a real building for the miniature set, he included a photo of the building on the wall behind.

Jim's early experience working on a bridge gang, section gang and rail gang for Norfolk and Western Railroad also shows up on the

Expert eves

"You can't actually take in everything in one visit," said Joe Algozzini, model train buff and relatively new Maricopan who is well known among model train collectors because he has literally written the book on post-war train

collections. "I feel like I'm 12 years old again

In his blog at ToyTrainHallOfFame. org, Algozzini wrote extensively about the VanHoutens and how he came to discover them after moving to town.

Viewing the train layout through professional eyes, he wrote, in part, "Jim's cleverly constructed and fine detailed layout highlights just a few of the many places, times and events associated with those wonderful years gone by, but never truly forgotten."

And Patty VanHouten is not an innocent bystander in all this.

"I do the scenery. I do the paint colors. I do plastering," she said. "A little bit of everything."

Algozzini goes so far as to credit her with much of the work while Jim directs the action. Patty said there is a therapeutic component to know." Jim's constant work on the set.

"He's always creating, always thinking," she said. "And it keeps him out of trouble."

It has also kept him close to his brothers,

who still live in Missouri and have train layouts in their basements.

"In the summers we didn't have air conditioning, so we'd go to my grandmother's basement to play in there," he said. "We still do things for each other. My older brother makes cedar trees. My younger brother does all the detail stuff on decals. I make a lot of freight cars and make decals. I customize them — I either put the last digits of the year they were born, the month they were born, the day. You'll find the exact series of cars that the Wabash had, so I customize the numbers just to match them."

How much have the VanHoutens invested in a lifetime of the model train hobby?

Jim cheekily responded, "\$200."

"Liar," Patty said. "He doesn't want me to

"You're never finished with it. You just keep adding detail and improving things," he said. "I just want everybody to understand the hobby, and I want to share it and expand it."

Make an end-of-life checklist

By Joan Koczor

An unpleasant subject? Something you don't want to talk about? Does your family cringe when you bring the subject up? Consider it a final gift to your family and loved ones.

An End-of-Life Checklist can avoid any confusion or questions that may arise among different family members.

Take the time now to consider your wishes, gather information and, most importantly, write everything down. A listing of all your assets and important personal information is a guarantee that

nothing is missed or lost. Estate Planning Worksheets are available online to guide you through the process.

Add any specific directions you want to make that is not already included in your will or other documentation. Appoint an executor, one you trust, who will carry out your wishes.

Personal information should include your name, birthday and Social Security number, the location of key documents and items,

birth certificate, marriage license, military discharge paperwork, will, power of attorney, medical directives, ID cards, medical insurance cards, house and car keys and burial plot.

What is the source of your income? Note information on pensions., retirement accounts, 401(k) or 403(b) — include company and contact — account number, date of payment, document location and when/how received.

Include all medicine and medical equipment used and the location of these items

Check locations of the following items: bank documents, titles and deeds, credit cards, tax returns, trust and power of attorney, mortgage and loan, personal documents, types of insurance — life, health, auto, home, etc. Include the account number and contact for the company and the location of the policy.

You may also want to consider adding a list of online passwords, in printed form, in a secure location for your loved ones to use to access and check accounts.

And be sure to keep your End-of-Life Checklist in a secure place, like a safe or safety deposit box since it contains sensitive information. Inform your executor where it is located.

Joan Koczor of Maricopa is a senior advocate.

Assisted living and what it means to you

By Al Brandenburg

The Maricopa Senior Coalition has three longterm goals. Internment and funeral services in Maricopa, digital-photo storage services and a livable/age-friendly community.

As part of the latter and considering the growing size of our senior population, assisted living services becomes important. At some point, some of us will no longer be able to fend for ourselves. Most seniors wish to age in place in their own homes, but sometimes the best option for keeping an aging loved one safe, healthy and active

is to consider a move to an assisted-living community.

In the next year or so, Maricopa will have its own assisted-living senior facility near Copper Sky. Senior care exists in two

scenarios. Independent living being the least restrictive and assisted living which is also minimally restrictive but, as the name implies, offers assistive services and supports.

Independent living can also be referred to as an active adult community, senior apartments, a retirement community, a 55+community or a retirement home.

Assisted-living communities

with specialized memory care units for seniors with cognitive impairment often feature increased security measures (e.g. locked doors d-living and extra surveillance equipment) and may

not allow residents to have kitchens in their apartments, due to safety concerns.

So, when is the right time to consider this

move? Timing a transition to senior living

can be tricky because it is highly personal. It depends on how well your loved one is faring in their current home, their present health status, and their future medical and personal needs.

Some things to consider:

- Is the senior capable of getting around safely?
- Are they wearing fresh, clean clothing each time you visit?
- Can they bathe themselves, groom adequately, and launder their clothes, towels and linens?
- Is the senior remembering to take their medications correctly, with the right dosages and at the right time?

If the answer to any these questions is "no," it may be time to begin researching local assisted-living communities.

MedlinePlus.gov/assistedliving
HealthInAging.org/age-friendly-

Al Brandenburg is director of the Maricopa Senior Coalition.

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Calendar

FEBRUARY

StageStop Shopping Celebration 9 a.m.-3 p.m., StageStop Marketplace 44301 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwv.

ArtsFest Maricopa "Song and Story" 7 p.m., Maricopa **Performing Arts Center** 45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

MAC Farm Desert Aq-Venture 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Maricopa Agricultural Center 37860 W. Smith-Enke Road.

Maricopa Historical Society: The Gadsden purchase 5:30 p.m., Maricopa **Public Library** 41600 W. Smith-Enke Road

MHS Boys' Soccer vs. Higley (Senior Night) 4 p.m., Maricopa High School 45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

MHS Girls' Soccer vs. Higley (Senior Night) 6 p.m., Maricopa High School 45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Pathway Boys' Basketball vs. Imagine Prep 7 p.m., Sequoia Pathway Academy 19287 N. Porter Road

MHS Boys' Basketball vs. Higley (Senior Night) 7 p.m., Maricopa High School 45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

MAC Farm Desert Ag-Venture 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Maricopa **Agricultural Center** 37860 W. Smith-Enke Road

Heritage Boys' Basketball vs. Sequoia Pathway 7 p.m., Heritage Academy 41000 W. Heroes Way

Leading Edge Academy's Multicultural Resource Fair 11:30 a.m., Leading Edge Academy 18700 N. Porter Road

Pathway Boys' Basketball vs. Western SciTech 7 p.m., Seguoia Pathway Academy 19287 N. Porter Road

MHS Girls' Basketball vs. Casteel

7 p.m., Maricopa High School 45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

7-9

Our Lady of Grace **Community Festival** 4-8 p.m., Our Lady of **Grace Catholic Church** 18700 N. Saint Gabriel Way

Shred-a-Thon and **Canned Food Drive** 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Copper Sky 44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Copa City Dems Meeting 4 p.m., Copper Sky Police Substation 17985 N. Greythorn Drive

Pathway Girls' Basketball vs. Heritage-Mesa 7 p.m., Seguoia Pathway Academy 19287 N. Porter Road

MHS Girls' Basketball vs. Gilbert (Senior Night) 7 p.m., Maricopa High School 45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

15

Art for the Heart Fine **Arts & Crafts Festival** 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Copper Sky Regional Park 44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.



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All Proceeds will benefit Against Abuse Inc's, women and children's DV Shelter in the City of Maricopa.



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Calendar

Zonta Club of Maricopa General Monthly Meeting 6 p.m., The Villages Clubhouse 20991 Butterfield Parkway

Farm Science Day 10 a.m.-2 p.m., USDA Arid-Land Agricultural Research Center 21881 N. Cardon Lane

27-29

MHS Theatre Company Spring Musical: "Newsies" 7 p.m., Maricopa High School 45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

28-29

Krystin Diehl Softball TBA, Maricopa High School 45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

29

Seeds of Change Gala 6-11 p.m., Province Town Hall 20942 Province Parkway

SUNDAYS

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

MONDAYS

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

Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL) 7 p.m., Maricopa Behavioral **Health Services** 21300 N. John Wayne Parkway, Suite 103

TUESDAYS

Senior Donuts & Coffee 1-4 p.m., Copper Sky Multigenerational Center, Room A 45345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Celebrate Recovery Coffee & Karaoke

5 p.m., Maricopa **Community Church** 44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

WEDNESDAYS

Babytime 9:30 a.m., Maricopa Public Library 41600 W. Smith-Enke Road

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.

THURSDAYS

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

FRIDAYS

Senior Game Time 9 a.m.- noon, Copper Sky Multigenerational Center, Room A 45345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Learn to Bowl like a Pro — with a Pro 6 p.m., UltraStar Multitainment Center 16000 N. Maricopa Road

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



MAC to host free **Farm Science Day**

Whether you want to spit a cricket, ride an auto-guidance tractor or learn about remote-sensing instruments, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will have something for you to enjoy at Farm Science Day.

The Arid-Land Agricultural Research Center, University of Arizona and Maricopa Agricultural Center welcome all to the free, family-friendly farm and science activities at their location on Smith-Enke Road at Cardon Lane on Feb. 22.

If you've ever wondered what is going on at the USDA farm, now is the time to learn about their research and resources. Attendees can watch the "world's largest field scanner," plant their own cotton and learn how biotechnology and irrigation technology are changing modern farming.

IF YOU GO

What: Farm Science Day

Where: U.S. Arid-Land

How much: Free

Info: tinyurl.com/

There will be face painting, cricketspitting contests, temporary tattoos and kids' crafts, as well. Wild at Heart will return with its live raptor display, and everyone can enjoy the interactive When: Feb. 22, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

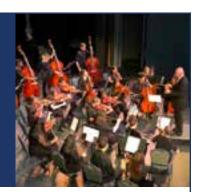
Maricopa Master Gardeners and Agricultural Research Center, Arizona Farm Bureau will be on hand 21881 N. Cardon Lane for the day.

Since the 1980s, U of A's Maricopa Agricultural Center has been on the USDA-Maricopa land once owned by Fred Enke and

John Smith. The mission of the university's College of Agriculture & Life Sciences is to develop the "best-integrated agricultural technologies for problems faced by Arizona consumers and producers." At the Maricopa farm, it focuses on cotton, alfalfa, small grains and new specialty crops to be used for fibers, oils and pharmaceuticals.

USDA's Arid-Land Center opened in 2006. It was created to develop sustainable agricultural systems and protect natural resources in arid areas. Research results will be in the spotlight for the Saturday event.

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

RenFestInfo.com

Seeds of Change Gala a Roaring '20s benefit for abuse victims

By Joycelyn Cabrera

Against Abuse Inc. hosts its 15th annual Seeds of Change Gala Feb. 29 to fund maintenance and operational expenses for its Maricopa shelter for women and children, La Casa de Paz.

The event will be held at Province Town Hall. Tickets are available for \$50 and will be limited to IF YOU GO

"It's always been a way for businesses to come What: Great Gatsby Seeds of together and network and share their passion of Change Gala helping the community with one common goal," said Torri Anderson, Gala chairperson and Against Abuse board member. "And that's what the shelter does."

This year's gala, advertised as a "Great Gatsby Gala," is Roaring '20s themed. Costumes are welcome, and the night will include food, DJ, raffle and silent auction.

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The first gala was held in February 2006 and raised \$60,000 to fund construction for the Maricopa shelter. Against Abuse Inc. received a \$300,000 donation from the Ak-Chin Indian Community for completion.



Now, funding goes directly to upkeep and operations.

"To keep the building open, it takes about \$100,000 a year," Anderson said. "That can go up or down depending on if a waterline

breaks or a freezer goes down. That's what we plan on for people, salaries, light, electricity, kind of everything for an entire year."

Against Abuse Inc. has provided services and support for survivors of violence in Pinal County since 1981. Fundraising for the organization in Maricopa began in 2005, and the Maricopa emergency shelter was opened in 2015. Against Abuse has been continuously raising awareness of local resources for survivors of violence.

After years of selling out, those considering attending are advised to purchase tickets early for

the 21-and-older event. "People can come up in their Great Gatsby outfits, have a good time and support a cause that's near and dear to your heart," Anderson said.

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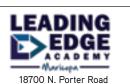
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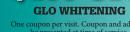
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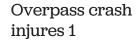
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