



Maricopa

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April 2020

BUSINESS

Going to
church
at school

PEOPLE

Coronavirus
hits Maricopa

FAMILY

Roll out
the barrel

THE RUNNING MAN

Kids' coach
keeps
competing

SENIOR LIVING

What seniors
need to know
about taxes



Business
Directory



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A changing world

It is only April, but it's clear 2020 will long be remembered, not so much as an election year but as a time of fear and uncertainty.

That played out as we were putting together this month's edition of InMaricopa magazine and watched families, businesses, organizations and events disrupted by the novel coronavirus COVID-19. It became clear that news we were reporting on the recent economy, education and sports could be turned upside down in the fallout. Amid fast-moving information, we've painted a picture of what the turbulent month of March looked like in Maricopa.

One of the many impacted by the virus is our cover subject. Corey Nelson is a sprinter who coaches high school track and field, but spring sports barely got started before competitions were canceled and schools closed. Nelson continues to train himself for Masters competition later this year in hopes he still has a chance to race.



Also in this issue, meet the new owner of Ace Hardware. Learn how Pinal County emerged from recession and why so many churches meet

in public schools. Find out why so many visitors bring their horses with them to Hidden Valley. You may even discover how many eyes a praying mantis has from our master gardener of the month.

Here's hoping for a calm and healthy springtime in Maricopa.

Happy reading,

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Moving from New Jersey (the Garden State) to Cobblestone Farms, she received her master gardener certification.



AL BRANDENBURG
He owns Maricopa Web and has promoted senior issues since moving from New York.

ON THE COVER: Corey Nelson is a track and field coach as well as a football coach in Maricopa while training for Masters competition. *Photo by Victor Moreno*

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LEADING OFF

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History

Fast Times at Maricopa High

Before it was relegated to its current status as the 600 Building, the library at Maricopa High School was the office. Between 2000 and 2006, high school enrollment grew by more than 250 students to 876. Since then, more buildings were added to campus, including a new front office. The parking lot was also paved. At the end of 2019, enrollment was more than 2,200.



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Q&A with Pinal County Economic Development Director Tim Kanavel

By Raquel Hendrickson

Tim Kanavel has lived in Arizona 35 years and has worked for Pinal County for a decade. He is the first and, so far, only head of the county's Economic Development program. This year, as the county has continued to grow commercially and residentially, workforce development was welded to economic development under his care.

He sat down with InMaricopa to talk about the booms and busts.

What is your background?

I've been in Pinal County a little over 10 years. I've been the economic development manager since then. I'm originally from Ohio, and I got tired of the mud and cold and decided I'd come to a place where we didn't have cold and mud all the time.

Describe the differences between what was happening here when you first came and what's happening now.

When I first came here in the fall of 2009, our unemployment rate was 13.2%. Things were bleak. It really wasn't a very attractive place to be. We had a lot of people that were abandoning their homes. It just wasn't getting any better for some time, probably until about 2012.

When we first started, it was probably the lowest this county's ever been financially. Morale was very low. We had a problem with one of our officials here at the county that was in trouble. [Then-county manager Stanley Griffis was incarcerated for embezzling over \$600,000, much of which was for road improvements.] We're still trying to get over that even to this day.

Then things started picking up a little bit. And then in 2012 we had a big election, and we went from three supervisors to five supervisors. That made all the difference. From that point on, from Jan. 1, 2013, until now, we've been able to get announced and bring in nearly \$8 billion worth of economic development projects.



Read the full interview and see the video at InMaricopa.com.

TIM KANAVAL
Director
Pinal County Economic & Workforce Development

Age: 63
Residence: Florence
Family: 3 children, 4 grandchildren
Education: Bachelor of Arts in regional development from University of Arizona, associate degrees from Pima Community College
Hometown: Frazeyburg, Ohio
Previous work: Sun Corridor, Arizona Commerce Department, Wickenburg Regional Economic Development Partnership
Worst-kept secret: Two-time recipient of Economic Development Distinguished by Excellence (EDDE) Award

What is the county's top selling point when you're trying to bring people in?

For us, it's location. Location, location, location — I know everybody's heard it a thousand times, but we are situated between the two largest metro areas in the entire state.

What are you fighting? What are your greatest difficulties?

One of the biggest issues we have to deal with almost on a daily basis is perception of the county. Perception is reality. We've been a mining and ag business county for a hundred-and-some years. Then all the sudden, now we're making our mark in the big industry, high-tech and things like that, and people are not quite ready in the state for that. We used to be the big void between Tucson and Phoenix. Now we're competing with both counties for big projects. We're actually winning a lot of those big projects.

Is there enough infrastructure in place, and are there plans for more infrastructure that will handle what you want to do?

We're probably considered adequate. But we're

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City of Maricopa

With the completion of the 347 Overpass, Maricopa Towne Plaza and Madison Pointe retail centers have been moving dirt and starting to go vertical! The city will welcome a new restaurant, new storage options and additional choices in service centers for our vehicles. Both centers still have pads available for more development. These are the newest businesses coming to the City of Maricopa and we welcome the new jobs and places to do business.

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Cubesmart Self Storage



Madison Pointe

The new Madison Pointe development is the retail center generally south of the Aaron's Rent to Own and north of Hathaway Ave. on John Wayne Pkwy. Currently, they are building an AAMCO Transmissions and Total Car Care store and a completely indoor storage facility known as Cubesmart Self Storage which will offer 45,000 SF of indoor storage space for rent.



Maricopa Towne Plaza

Maricopa Towne Plaza is south of the Maricopa Groves Self Storage and will be home to the new Maricopa Animal Hospital, a Riliberto's Mexican Fast Food Restaurant and Iconic Tire & Service Center.

Maricopa Animal Hospital



For more information contact:
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520-316-6812
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See page 38

Early ENROLLMENT



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always building. We're always talking about building on the East-West Corridor. As we build more roads and more roads, we're talking about that North-South Freeway. There's lots of things we have access to we don't even pay for. We have three major, international airports right on both sides of us that we have easy access to. But another thing that we're putting in is a tremendous amount of solar and alternative energy. We've already got one biomass plant open at Stanfield. We've got nearly 6,000 acres right now of solar. Plus, we also have the ethanol plant over near Maricopa. We're working with some international companies right now that are working with projects here, so we're competing at a global level, not just necessarily national or regional level.

How do you reassure them about the water supply given that you have an official government document saying there will be a water shortage?

That's coming. We've got a water board that we're working with. I know Supervisor [Steve] Miller is the chairman of it. They're the ones that will be setting the stage where we have something in writing. However, one of the things we do at the county, we don't go after companies that are big water-users. Nikola Motors is not a big water-user, neither is Lucid Motors.

Outside the county, what do people tell you is their first thought, top-of-mind, about Pinal County?

Workforce. Usually workforce development is absolutely No. 1. That is the reason we merged economic development with workforce. It's just a natural flow. They had to get started because we used to be tied with Gila County — it was the Gila County-Pinal County Workforce Board. We split with them about four years ago and created our own. It's taken us this long to get in shape.

The last thing residents want to see is a development that gets half built and then just sits there. What can the county do to prevent that?

It's very, very difficult to do that. Both the projects I know you're talking about, the Dreamport Villages and also PhoenixMart. We lower our risk as much as we can. There's always a risk. A lot of these companies, for whatever reason, they thought they had the funding, the funding goes away, national issues happen and things crash. None of these people do this and think they're going to fail. Like with PhoenixMart, something happened with EB-5 visa programs and stuff like that, they were not prepared for.

All the sudden, this thing takes their entire game plan away. Now they're stuck with a building, and now they can't do anything with it for a while. Now, that project is not dead; it's still going forward, as Dreamport Villages is.

PhoenixMart is a plan for a major marketplace near Casa Grande. Announced in 2011, the property had a groundbreaking in 2013 but construction was off and on for the 1.5 million-square-foot footprint. It changed hands and started putting up walls in 2016. It was to open in 2019.

Dreamport Villages was announced as an amusement park to rival Disney World near the junction of Interstate 8 and Interstate 10. The 1,500-acre plan was introduced in 2017 and was to include a waterpark and wild animal venues. Funding and infrastructure keep the project in delay mode.

What would you like to see happen in the next five years?

For one thing, these projects we're working on get completed. One will be announced [in March], It'll take probably two years to complete. I would like to see the Phoenix Mart come to fruition, also Dreamport Villages. Those are billion-dollar companies. I also want to see our tourism program we just now got started. We're putting together an incredible portfolio of photos. I mean we're taking hundreds and hundreds of photos. That's something we're going to be broadcasting on the website and our social media. So, that's something to be looking forward to in the next five years. 📷

VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS:
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Population:
We're still gaining about 13,000 to 15,000 people per year."

Water resources:
"That misinformation about the water issue has been incredible."

School-to-work:
"At Lucid Motors almost 90% of their entire workforce will not be a degreed workforce."

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Ace Hardware changes hands

Richeys sell to Ace veteran David Karsten, wife

By Raquel Hendrickson

He may be taller than his predecessor, but David Karsten knows he has big shoes to fill. The new president/CEO of Ace Hardware in Maricopa officially took the keys from Mike and Jacquie Richey in February. He said he has witnessed Mike Richey's deep involvement in the community and sees a long road ahead to earn equal respect.

Richey took over the store in 2010. Though he never lived in Maricopa, he joined or sponsored events for many local organizations and clubs, from the Chamber of Commerce and Maricopa Economic Development Alliance to Little League and Ak-Chin STEAM Foundation.

Richey acknowledged it takes time and work to earn trust in the give-and-take of community involvement.

"Operate your business as if, if you weren't there, the community would miss you," Richey said. "I've always taken that to heart. It's always been the core of what we do."

He said Karsten gets that. Karsten said it is his "goal and wish" that his team achieves that level of connection in Maricopa as part of its core values. He wanted the transition of ownership to be as seamless for employees as is for customers.

"That's what we strove for, and I think we have accomplished that, which is pretty cool," Karsten said.

That does not mean no changes. Some projects, programs and positions may not continue. The Karstens experienced some of what Maricopa Ace does on a regular basis. David Karsten said they are determining what will stay or go.

Karsten has four Ace stores, in Phoenix, Goodyear, Carefree and Queen Creek.

He has been a member of Ace's board of directors since 2011, chairing the finance committee. He's been part of the Ace company 17 years. In Maricopa, he saw a high-performing store and made inquiries.

Selling the store had not been top-of-mind for Richey, who said the transaction happened

quickly with talks starting in October.

Richey said Karsten's experience with retail in general and specifically the corporation's Pinnacle Performance standards made him feel he would be a good fit in Maricopa. He said it was imperative his employees "be taken care of" during the transition to Karsten's Ace Hardware. Troy Ricci remains as manager.

Richey's first day of retirement was Feb. 29, when he introduced David and Cheryl Karsten to the attendees at Against Abuse's Seeds of Change Gala. It was also a moment to donate \$8,000 to the nonprofit as a "swan song."

"Mike doesn't live in Maricopa, but everyone I've met feels as though he does," Karsten said. "That's impressive."

Tom Bechtel and Frank Polimene opened Ace Hardware in Maricopa in 2006. Designated "Pinnacle Performance Retailing" six years in a row, it is a top-10 performing store in Arizona and a state leader in raising funds for local Children's Miracle Network hospitals.

With no Lowe's, Home Depot or other home improvement specialty business in Maricopa, Ace's main competition has been out of town.



David Karsten and Mike Richey

Kyle Norby

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Development around town

City of Maricopa received a commercial permit for construction of a new library south of City Hall at 18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive near the intersection of Bowlin Road and White and Parker Road. Ground was broken on the project March 14. The library is to be 27,000 square feet.

Gehan Homes of Arizona, preparing to offer new construction in Homestead east of Continental Boulevard, is setting up shop at 40156 W. Crane Drive, where it has a permit for a flagpole.

Wade Jurney Homes also plans to fill in empty lots in Alterra South with new construction. In February, the company received construction permits for nine lots.

Owners of the once-defunct **Santa Rosa Crossings**, G4 RRJK International LLLP, received re-approval for Phases I and II at the previously platted subdivision next to Desert Cedars on Bowlin Road. They also received a haul permit at 43853 W. Cypress Lane. The housing development had been partially built when it became a victim of the economic downturn a decade ago. G4 RRJK purchased it in 2012, and the existing structures were bulldozed in 2015.

Molly's House of Little Feet is setting up childcare at 16540 N. Porter Road in an existing building that has housed a few businesses over the years. Owner KDJJ Enterprises received a minor development review permit as well as a temporary-sign permit for the property.



Santa Rosa Crossings



Molly's House of Little Feet

Electing not to travel due to coronavirus concerns, The Englewood Group opted out of ceremonial groundbreaking in March on **Oasis at the Wells**, 41535 N. Shea Way, and **Horizon at the Wells**, 41475 W. Shea Way, but the projects will go forward. Mountain Trace Development is building the city's first multi-family housing at the site, which is just off Porter Road. The properties received "at risk" grading and drainage permits, meaning late in the permitting process. When complete, the project will include one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units on the property behind Walmart.

Three businesses — **Maricopa Village**, 45873 W. Highway 238, **Iconic Tire**, 19945 N. John Wayne Parkway, and **Leading Edge Academy**, 18700 N. Porter Road — all had hydrant flow tests at their construction sites.

Health inspectors tag 2 Maricopa eateries

In county food inspections Feb. 16-March 15, **Dickey's Barbecue Pit** had an issue with its "hot-holding." All hot foods were above the required minimum of 135 degrees F except the brisket and ribs, which were 131 degrees. Both were discarded. The deli at **Fry's Marketplace** was cited for hot-holding and cold-hold violations. Warm chicken was found to be at 119 degrees instead of 135, which was blamed on a door being left ajar. Seafood salad and tuna salad were found to be at 43 degrees instead of the required cold-holding maximum of 41. Maintenance was called to fix the problem.

EXCELLENT [No violations found]

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- Bashas' — AFC sushi
- Bashas' — bakery
- Bashas' — deli
- Bashas' — Starbucks
- The Box Meat Shop
- Central Arizona College — Ace Vending
- Central Arizona College — café
- Central Arizona College — culinary
- Circle K (east)
- Circle K (east) — Made to Go
- Culver's
- Francisco's Mexican Food
- Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers
- Fry's Marketplace
- Fry's Marketplace — bakery
- Fry's Marketplace — Starbucks
- Fry's Marketplace - sushi
- Jersey Mike's Subs
- Papa John's Pizza
- QuickTrip
- Rosati's Pizza
- Walmart
- Walmart — bakery
- Walmart — deli
- Wendy's

SATISFACTORY [Violations corrected during inspections]

- Dickey's Barbecue Pit
- Fry's Marketplace — deli

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

None

UNACCEPTABLE [Gross, unsanitary conditions necessitating the discontinuation of service]

None

MEDA appoints 2 from Arizona Grain to board, ED3's Stacy returns

The Maricopa Economic Development Alliance appointed Eric Wilkey and Andy Kroese to its Board of Directors. Returning from a year's retirement is Bill Stacy of Electrical District No. 3.

Wilkey is president of Arizona Grain Inc., based in Casa Grande. He joined Arizona Grain in 1991, directing the merchandising and logistic activities for the company. Kroese is vice president and chief financial officer for Arizona Grain Inc. He joined the company in 2013 and is responsible for the company's accounting and finance functions along with information technology and human resources. He will serve as an advisory director to the MEDA Board.

"Agriculture and agribusiness still play an out-sized role in our local and regional economy," Mayor Christian Price said. "Having top executives from one of the most steadfast firms in this



Eric Wilkey



Andy Kroese



William Stacy

sector will help Maricopa capitalize on these critically important resources."

Stacy previously served as MEDA's chairman and CEO for eight years. In January, he assumed the position of interim general manager at ED3 while the firm searches for a new leader. He has been with the utility since 2008.

"My ties with Electrical District No. 3, the City of Maricopa and MEDA are deeply entrenched," Stacy said. "It is a bona fide pleasure and honor to be this engaged in the community, and I am very proud to see the progress that has been made on the economic development front in Maricopa."



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P&Z approves permits for bungalows, ‘man caves’

Review permits for a rental housing development and an RV storage complex received the approval of Maricopa Planning & Zoning Commission.

The Bungalows on Bowlin plan calls for 196 housing units, a combination of detached homes and multi-family duplexes. The project will occupy a little more than half of the empty acreage on the northwest corner of John Wayne Parkway and Bowlin Road.

Along with the residences, the plan includes 426 parking spaces, covered and uncovered. There would also be 60 garages, some included with homes and some for rent.

Meanwhile, MC Estates on Farrell Road will include RV garages and space for “man cave” activities, as proposed by owner Duane Rudnick. He described the project as echoing his intent to have a place to store his RV that could also be a place to indulge in his arts-and-crafts hobbies away from his Province home.

Both the Bungalows on Bowlin and MC Estates required hearings on zoning map amendments and general plan amendments. About 15 residents attended, but no one addressed the commission.



MC Estates is abandoned property off Farrell Road the new owner wants to turn into RV garages.

InMaricopa hires additional management

InMaricopa has gained an associate publisher. **Bob McGovern** comes to Maricopa from Pennsylvania, where he has worked as a writer, editor, producer and executive editor.

He was drawn to the West after taking a trip to Yosemite a couple of years ago and was struck by the “gorgeous scenery” that was very different from the East Coast.

With a bachelor’s degree from the University of Scranton, he worked in newsrooms in Hatboro and Pottstown, Pennsylvania, before working as a copy editor in St. Petersburg, Florida. He then returned to Pennsylvania to work in Philadelphia media, including the Inquirer, Philly.com and PhillyVoice.com.

McGovern brings 30 years of experience in journalism, with an emphasis in digital media and hyper-local journalism. In visiting Maricopa, he said he was struck by the similarities of the community to his Pennsylvania residence.

He has two sons, Finn, 19, and Cavan, 16.

“I look forward to getting to know the people in the community and our customers,” he said.



Bob McGovern with sons Cavan (center) and Finn.

3 ways to boost your immune system

By Kristina Donnay, FNP-C

Staying well is of utmost importance, particularly during flu and cold season. Our immune system plays a key role in optimal health. When we have an ineffective or compromised immune system, we are at a greater risk of developing infections and other health conditions.

In our daily lives we are continually exposed to organisms that are inhaled, swallowed or inhabit our skin and mucous membranes. Whether or not these organisms lead to disease is decided by the integrity of our body’s defense mechanisms, or immune system.

This is an optimal time to be proactive in boosting our bodies defenses and immunities. Below are some ways to do just that. (Note: These recommendations must be administered by licensed clinical professionals, such as Maricopa Wellness Center, which offer options including IVs for improving and boosting your immune system.)



Medical Director Kristina Donnay

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Churches call MUSD home in tough realty market

By Joycelyn Cabrera

“Unless something incredible happens, I think it’s possible that 10 years from now, we can still be at the high school,” said Grady Root, pastor at Maricopa Springs Church.

Root’s congregation is one of 11 renting space on Maricopa Unified School District campuses instead of holding worship services within traditional church buildings.



Submitted

Church of Celebration (top) has long leased Maricopa High School’s Performing Arts Center. Maricopa Springs Church (right) holds its Sunday service in MHS’ Multi-purpose Room. Pastor Grady Root (below with family) sees it as a necessity.

Property within the city limits can carry a high cost, ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000 per acre, depending on the location and commercial property rates, according to online real estate sites.

Some church leaders said they can begin discussions on buying property within 10 years, while others see themselves calling MUSD schools home in 2030 and beyond.



Joycelyn Cabrera

All nine campuses rent to at least one faith organization. The district’s hourly charges range from \$2.40 for a classroom to \$17.40 for a middle school multi-purpose room to \$92.60 for the Performing Arts Center at the high school. (See chart, page 18.) The district also collects a Sunday custodial fee of \$32.55 per hour.

The district estimated it brings in an



Submitted

Glenn and Janice Zimbelman of Maricopa Lutheran Church

average gross of \$13,000 monthly from facility rentals. However, in its effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus, MUSD canceled all rental agreements last month.

Maricopa Springs, which has about 50 families and 160 members, has held services in the multi-purpose room at Maricopa High School since 2017. It also holds additional youth services at Maricopa Elementary School on Tuesday evenings.

Some church leaders said buying land is not a viable option.

One is Glenn Zimbelman, pastor at Maricopa Lutheran Church, which meets at Desert Wind Middle School.

“We average about 60 [members] in the summer and 125 in the winter. Just meeting our daily expenses for an ongoing ministry is a challenge,” said Zimbelman, who is just five months away from retirement. “Just meeting, existing, budgeting is a challenge, much less trying to buy land for a building. That’s part of the reality.”

Of course, building a physical church goes beyond the cost of property. There is also the expense of construction, maintenance, and utilities. It all adds up to a financial albatross for smaller congregations

“For us to purchase six or seven acres, we’re looking at \$1.5 million just for the land,” Root said. “That’s a huge chunk of money for a church to come up with. Then you think of putting a building in on top of that, and you’re looking at another million dollars. To think about putting a \$1 million burden on 50 families, how much would that cost?”

Still, as the city of Maricopa continues to grow — population increased by 8% from 2015 to 2018, according to city records — the potential growth of their own congregations has to be considered by leaders of churches big and small who are discussing the possibility of purchasing property.



Joycelyn Cabrera

CHURCHES LEASING MEETING SPACE AT MUSD

Apostolic Tabernacle
Santa Cruz Elementary School

Church of Celebration
Maricopa High School

Discover Community Church
Saddleback Elementary School

Gospel Light Church of God in Christ
Santa Cruz Elementary School

Grace Fellowship
Santa Rosa Elementary School

Journey United Methodist
Maricopa Wells Middle School

Maricopa Lutheran
Desert Wind Middle School

Maricopa Springs Church
Maricopa High School

Propel Church
Pima Butte Elementary School

Walk By Faith
Butterfield Elementary School

Waypoint Church
Maricopa Elementary School

Source: MUSD



Joycelyn Cabrera

Discover Community Church (top) leased space at Saddleback Elementary. Pastor Mike Jimenez (above) said it has mostly been beneficial.

storage and technical issues. We have to take down our equipment, pack it and set it back up for every service. Sometimes we run into technical issues — that can really turn off any new families or members who are expecting to worship for the time they’re here.”

Jimenez said Discover pays \$905 per month for its lease, which includes classrooms and the cafeteria for a few hours each week. If they go over allotted time, it’s about \$20 per hour additional.

Growing congregations face the problem of predicting the appropriate size of the building needed before construction can begin, whether the community starts with 60 or 1,200. Congregations are also hesitant to consider loans.

Mat Balgaard, pastor of the Church of Celebration, which meets in the MHS Performing Arts Center, said his church of 1,200 members was gifted five acres of land in Maricopa, but it is holding off on plans for construction due to the size of the community and fluctuating interest rates.

“We have two services with around 700 people in each, and the auditorium can comfortably fit more than that. But if we

outgrow this space, we would probably need to have more services,” Balgaard said.

Even so, many places of faith hold the strong belief that a building is not needed for their congregations to thrive. Some churches would rather spend time and effort engaging in their communities than focusing on purchasing property.

“We want to build a building to be able to do things we feel that Jesus has called us to do for families in Maricopa,” Balgaard said. “We couldn’t have afforded the ministry that we have had over the past 14 years had we built a building right away. A lot of the money we would’ve brought in would’ve been spent on facilities. I don’t think we as a church were ready for that; it would’ve changed our priorities.”

Other churches have begun saving and looking at first steps toward a privately owned building but are prepared to wait several years.

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Parish, for instance, grew its building fund for decades before launching The Crossing. Members of Mount Moriah African Methodist Episcopal Church, Maricopa’s newest, stand-alone church building, took six years

MUSD Rental Fee Schedule (Class III)

Classroom	\$2.40/hour	\$14.40/day
Cafeteria excluding kitchen	\$11.60/hour	\$69.60/day
High school multi-purpose room	\$23.15/hour	\$138.95/day
Middle school multi-purpose room	\$17.40/hour	\$104.25/day
PAC with a/v, lights, chairs	\$92.60/hour	\$555.60/day
Sunday custodial fee	\$32.55/hour	

of concentrated effort to fund construction. Jehovah’s Witnesses are in the process of building a Kingdom Hall in Maricopa and currently meet out of town.

In a city approaching 55,000 people, it is easier to count churches in their own buildings than those that meet in school, residential or commercial settings. First Baptist Church of Maricopa has been in place more than 60 years. The Catholic church has had a presence in Maricopa since 1960. Maricopa Community Church has

been around 57 years. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been in town for decades and now has three buildings.

Others who meet in their own buildings include Masjid Bilas Ibn Rabah, Shiloh Fellowship, Community of Hope, Church of Christ and Maricopa Assembly of God.

Achieving and maintaining church ownership is not easy for congregations.

“It’s a long process of trusting God,” Zimelman said. “And having faith that God will provide in His timing.”

Coronavirus tax relief

By Chris J. Scoggin

The federal government, including the U.S. Treasury Department and the IRS, have taken remarkable steps to assist individuals and small businesses affected by the efforts to prevent coronavirus from spreading unchecked. These assistance efforts have been implemented incredibly rapidly for the federal government and should help those who have been negatively affected by the events of the past few weeks. The initiatives below were passed as of March 21, so there may be new legislative proposals over the next few days that are not listed here.



Chris J. Scoggin

Federal Tax Filing Date Extended

In addition to the deferment of 2019 Income Taxes due until July 15, the IRS has announced the filing of 2019 Individual and business income tax returns are now automatically extended to July 15. This automatic extension is penalty- and interest-free and no additional forms need to be filed to take advantage. The IRS does encourage all taxpayers expecting refunds to file as soon as possible.

Beginning April 5, large- and medium-sized employers (50 or more employees) will provide workers affected by the COVID-19 virus, (including the illness of a dependent) up to 80 hours of paid sick leave.

High Deductible Health Insurance Plans (HDHPs)

HDHPs are now permitted to cover the cost of testing and treating any covered individual afflicted by the COVID-19 virus BEFORE plan deductibles are met. As already permitted, any vaccination cost is considered preventative care and can be paid per current plan coverages.

Deferral of Tax Payments

Tax payments that would normally be required by April 15 have been deferred until July 15, with no penalties or interest assessed. This allows individuals and small businesses owing less than \$10 million in federal tax to delay payment by up to three months. This is for 2019 income taxes payable only and does not allow businesses to delay payment of employment taxes or employee withholdings.

Paid Leave for Workers

Beginning April 5, large- and medium-sized employers (50 or more employees) will provide workers affected by the COVID-19 virus, (including the illness of a dependent) up to 80 hours of paid sick leave. This includes time taken off because childcare is not available. This applies to all employers except those under 50 employees where the business may be threatened by the absence of critical workers. Companies that do allow this paid leave will be rapidly reimbursed through reduced payroll tax payments.

Arizona Tax Filing Date Extended

The Arizona Department of Revenue announced it would mirror the federal tax-filing deadlines, allowing all Arizona taxpayers an extra 91 days to complete their state returns. We expect most states to follow the IRS guidelines, but please call Chaston Tax at 520-568-3303 to check on a state other than Arizona.

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See page 38

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1. Maricopa Salsa Festival was reconfigured March 7 and moved to the soccer fields at Copper Sky. A crowd gathered for live music and the salsa tasting. *Raquel Hendrickson*
2. Joshua Judd announced his resignation from Maricopa Unified School District Governing Board, saying he did not have enough time to be his best at the position. *Raquel Hendrickson*
3. A Wings & Wheels Spring Break Extravaganza filled Millar Airport with classic cars, live music, food and visiting pilots. *Raquel Hendrickson*
4. Sandra Hopkins, one of the newest members of Maricopa Planning & Zoning Commission, listens to a presentation on a proposed rental housing development. *Raquel Hendrickson*
5. Victor Jones, with wife Robin, is back home after receiving a total artificial heart replacement. *Kyle Norby*
6. Katy Richey (left) and parents Mike Richey and Jacquie Richey show off their raffle-ticket winnings at the Seeds of Change Gala, which had a Roaring '20s theme. The gala raised \$40,000 for Against Abuse and was a kind of goodbye for Mike Richey, who retired as owner of Maricopa Ace Hardware and donated \$8,000 to Against Abuse on the way out. *Joycelyn Cabrera*

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‘He never quits’ Track coach still teaches by example

By Raquel Hendrickson

He may have come late to track and field, but Corey Nelson has kept going and going ... and going.

In his second year as head coach of Maricopa High School’s track and field program, after two years as its sprint coach, Nelson has coached kids to gold medals while continuing to compete himself at the Masters level.

Nelson is training for the USA Track and Field Arizona State Championship in May and then the USATF Masters Outdoor Track and Field Championships in North Carolina in July. He is trying to raise funds for the World Masters Athletics Championships in Toronto, Canada, also in July.

He’s been running track more than 20 years.

“I was a late bloomer; didn’t start track until I was a junior in high school,” Nelson said.

A football player at Rancho Cotate High School in Northern California, he was known for getting into mischief during the offseason. The head coach less-than-subtly suggested he try track to keep in shape — and out of trouble.

“So, I said, ‘OK, I’ll try it.’ I turned out to be pretty good at it, so I stuck with it,” he said. “And learned how to sprint. Learned how to breathe, how to use body mechanics, and the rest is history.”

Matt Transue was a friend and teammate at Rancho Cotate.

“Even in high school, we all knew Corey had something special,” he said. “He had a gift. He made it look effortless.”

Transue and the other throwers on the team would stop what they were doing and gather along the track to watch Nelson run the 200.

“The (runners) would come off the corner, and everyone else would be grinding and grunting, and he looked as though it was just a job. He had such fluid motion, he looked as though he had just woken up. He was amazing.”

Transue said Nelson was confident with “a glow around him,” but did not have the

swagger of arrogance he saw in many high-performance athletes.

Nelson set school records in the 200 and 400 and was a state qualifier in the 400. Then, at Santa Rosa Junior College, he set a school record and earned All American honors.

He then went on to Boise State University, where he played football and had a blazing-hot track season in 1999. He still holds the BSU record in the 400 (45.36) and is tied for second all-time in the 200 (20.57). He made Nationals and was named All American in both events. He was the Big West Conference Men’s Outdoor Track and Field Athlete of the Year.

Amy Christofferson, his sprint coach his senior year, said Nelson was one of her most talented athletes.

“He’s a lot more talented than even his accolades tell,” she said. “He doesn’t always believe in himself.”

That is something she suspects came through the pecking order of junior college track. Christofferson said trust quickly built between them. He became like one of the family.

After college in 2000, he qualified for the Olympic trials and was on the 4x400-meter relay championship teams in the Penn Relays and the Texas Relays.

He briefly went back to football. In the XFL he was a wide receiver for the Las Vegas Outlaws in 2001. The next year, he played for

the Amsterdam Admirals and the Scottish Claymores in NFL Europe. Then he qualified for the Olympic trials again in 2004, chasing a dream that never quite died.

“He never quits,” Transue said. “He never gives up.”

“I was fortunate to go onto the professional ranks and have a medium-sized career,” Nelson said.

He was an indoor national qualifier in 2003, 2004 and 2005. On the pro circuit, he called it “dash for cash” as athletes tried to at least earn their keep as they traveled internationally.

With USA Track and Field, he rubbed shoulders with childhood idol Michael Johnson nearing the end of his career. He was teammates with the great John Capel, Tyree Washington, Terrence Trammell, James Davis, Antonio Pettigrew, Dennis Mitchell and Derek Brew. They qualified for the Penn Relays and won gold in the 4x400 at the Drake Relays.

Christofferson was not surprised to see Nelson become a coach (he was an undergraduate assistant sprint coach), and she continues to give him advice in that realm.

“He’d come to me and say, ‘How did you do this? After one year, I’m worn out,’” she recalled. “You have to have patience. You’re going to find a lot of diamonds in the rough.”

Nelson became a sprint coach at his alma mater back in California and then was head coach for a couple of seasons at El Molino High School before moving to Arizona and coaching sprinters again at Independence in Glendale.

“I coach people how I would like to be coached,” he said. “I communicate everything, maybe too much.”

But he was also feeling the competitive bug.



“The (runners) would come off the corner, and everyone else would be grinding and grunting, and he looked as though it was just a job. He had such fluid motion, he looked as though he had just woken up. He was amazing.” – Matt Transue

Corey Nelson leads a track club, the West Coast Striders, while working as head coach of Maricopa High School’s track and field team and assistant football coach for Sequoia Pathway.

“I get the itch every year,” he said. “I’d call up my old coaches and say, ‘I still got it. I’m running with these high school kids and I’m beating them.’ Of course, nowhere near where I was.”

On the USATF Masters circuit, competing in the 35-40 age category, Nelson earned silver in the 200 indoors and gold in the 400 indoors during the 2013-14 season. Then he won gold in the 200 and 100 in the Grand Canyon State Games and the 200 in the Arizona State Games the next year.

Dempster Jackson, founder of the AAG Elite Club that became Phoenix Elite, pulled Nelson into the club to run the 200 and 400.

“He was an exceptional athlete,” Jackson said. “I thought he had a lot of gas left in the tank.”

Club track gives high-level athletes who have to train on their own the opportunity to compete. The club would get free training, travel, and fitness and massage therapy. In exchange, the athletes would train those in the youth program.

“It was a symbiotic relationship,” said Jackson, a former Masters champion.

Nelson’s athletes include Pjai Austin, who is now excelling in competition for the University of Arizona.

Sherry Dunn, who has two sons running for Nelson, said kids who achieved under his coaching have gone on to even higher competition, including Austin and Jacob Cowing, who were state champions with MHS’s 4x100 relay team two years ago. Cowing now plays football for University of Texas-El Paso.

“He’s someone who’s willing to work with the children,” Dunn said of Nelson. “If you want to work, he’s going to help.”

Dunn’s son Mister Chavis, an MHS junior and member of the West Coast Striders, has a good shot at making a college team in track and football, according to Nelson.

Dunn said her kids have responded well to Nelson’s fairness, structure and demand for accountability. “You know how there are some people in life you don’t want to disappoint? He’s one of them.”

Coming to Arizona, Nelson said, was all about chance.

“We had a dart board with Arizona, Nevada and Oregon,” he said, referring to his wife, Danielle, whom he has known since junior college. “We said, ‘Wherever the dart lands, that’s where we’re moving.’ So, Arizona.”

“Winning’s not always a gold medal. A PR is a win. A season-best is a win. Staying healthy the entire season is a win. Gaining teammates and friends is a win. Gaining a social group is a win.”

– Corey Nelson

The couple drifted apart when he went off to Boise but “circled back around” about six years ago. With two children, Danielle is part of the administration of the Phoenix Premium Outlets and Corey teaches and assists in the special education department at MUSD.

Starting in 2014, he gradually took on four coaching roles, all of which he continues today. He formed a nonprofit track club called the West Coast Striders to train runners from elementary school to adult age. He became a sprint coach at Mesa Community College. After two years as sprint coach at MHS, was named head coach in 2017 as well as a soccer conditioning coach. This year he became assistant football coach and defensive coordinator for Sequoia Pathway.

Meanwhile, Nelson is training again for the Masters circuit, recently moving into the 40-45 bracket, where he dominated.

Nelson’s dedication to his student-athletes and his own competitive goals is making an impression.

Sueann Chavez’s daughter Gianna runs in the 11/12-year-old bracket for the Striders after telling her parents one day she wanted to try running. Chavez said it was quickly obvious the club was a good thing for her daughter, who expects to reach new levels this year.

“Corey and his wife Danielle, it’s hard to find that kind of commitment,” Chavez said.

Gianna, a student at Legacy Traditional School, competed in the USATF Hershey Junior Olympics Track and Field Championships last summer in the 800 and 1500.

Nelson emphasizes academics comes first.

“To put themselves in a position for success, they have to be academically eligible. If you’re ineligible, obviously you’re not in position for success,” he said. “Secondly, consistency. They have to be at practice as much as they can if not every day and be consistent with the routine and be progressional. Last but not least, have fun. If you’re not having fun, then you’re probably not going to win. If you’re not going to win, you’re probably not going to have success.

“Winning’s not always a gold medal,” he added. “A PR is a win. A season-best is a win. Staying healthy the entire season is a win. Gaining teammates and friends is a win. Gaining a social group is a win.”

Ebony Griffin, 16, a junior at Maricopa High School, runs the 400, 200, 4x200 relay and 4x100 relay. She moved to Maricopa from Oklahoma her sophomore year and was excited to get more training for her running.

“He seemed very quiet and straight-forward,” she said of Nelson. “He’s very hands-on. I improved very much.”

Griffin and her teammates say they set their own goals, and Nelson works with them to achieve those goals.

“He’s helped me overcome some of my fears,” Griffin said. “Definitely taught me to keep trying and trust the process.”

Coreyuna Mitchell, 18, an MHS senior, moved to Maricopa from Michigan last year and had the stress of adjusting to a new school. But she found new friends on the track team, where she runs the 400, hurdles, 4x400 relay and 4x800 relay.

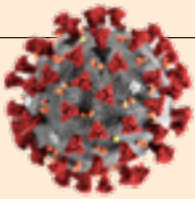
“He takes a lot of things seriously, but he’s a very good man. He cares about us a lot,” she said. “He’s a very caring man. He taught me not to cheat myself, not to quit myself. He’s amazing.”

“Those kids respect him,” parent Sherry Dunn added. “He’s teaching and he’s still doing it himself. That’s awesome.”

Meanwhile, because he is a self-described shark that doesn’t sleep, Nelson gained certification to officiate Arizona Interscholastic Association meets that don’t involve Maricopa and another certification to officiate at the USATF level, including NCAA and professional meets.

“I may not have made an Olympic team, but I might officiate one,” he said. 🏊

Coronavirus & Maricopans



A highly contagious novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 spread to Arizona in January. By March 22, there were 152 cases in the state. Several residents mandated to work from home or self-quarantining in retirement took advantage of the together-time to indulge in spring cleaning, family games, yard work or hobbies. Maricopans had lots of opinions about the coronavirus, government response to it and the actions of their fellow residents — and they shared them frequently on InMaricopa’s social media:

John Olson “This is being blown out of proportion to crush the economy since that is the only hope the Democrats have of defeating Trump.”

Margaret Graczyk “As we listen to the President and his talking points, take them all with a grain of salt. He may have ‘heard’ of such and such idea advances BUT they sure haven’t come to fruition yet.”

Josh Phoenix “People are hoarding now because they’re scared of other people hoarding. It’s just a snowball effect at this point. They see it and snatch it all up because they know if they don’t someone else will. The original reason for this is long gone.”

Robert Lee Shimkus “I’ve been under the weather last week, felt better this weekend. Thought I’d go shopping. Boy, what a surprise. I always have about a 2-month supply of food. Guess I will have to rely on that until people get a grip on life and a cold they know nothing about. Unlike the flu that more people have died from this year so far.”

Tony Schumacher “Medicines are gone, canned food, soups etc... it’s crazy.”

Amanda Stewart Hollingshead “It’s the panic buying & hoarding, cancellations and closures that worry me. If we aren’t careful, we can very easily catapult ourselves into another Depression.”

Ellen Hulslander “The virus is killed by heat and sunlight. I think AZ is probably one of the best places in the country to be.”



Coronavirus & Schools

Maricopa Unified School District and Maricopa’s charter schools were caught going into or coming out of spring break when the state opted to close all public schools for two weeks. That closure was then extended two more weeks through April 10.

“The current situation is concerning and fluid, and it changes hourly,” MUSD Superintendent Tracey Lopeman told parents.

State Superintendent Kathy Hoffman announced state assessments are being waived this year. Testing was to have started March 31.

Zanaa Ramirez, 18, senior at Maricopa High School, watched the disintegration of the track-and-field season because of school closures. But the Arizona Interscholastic Association did not immediately cancel any state championships.

CORONAVIRUS TIMELINE

- Dec. 26** First coronavirus case diagnosed in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China
- Dec. 29** Pinal County Detention Center creates screening protocol
- Jan. 26** First Arizona case of novel coronavirus reported
- March 6** Pinal County Public Health Department confirms first presumptive positive case of COVID-19, a healthcare worker in her 40s
- March 11** Gov. Ducey declares state of emergency
USDA cancels Farm Science Day at MAC
Consumers begin emptying Maricopa stores of bathroom tissue
- March 12** State universities begin closing campuses and moving classes online
Harrah’s Ak-Chin Casino and UltraStar Multi-tainment Center begin canceling concerts for March and April
- March 13** President Trump declares national state of emergency
- March 15** State closes public schools for two weeks
State, county and local events announce cancellations
Maricopa churches begin minimizing or canceling services
- March 17** Restaurants begin altering service
Shortages of tissue products, cleaning products, meat and canned goods reported throughout Mariopca
Income tax deadline extended to July 15

Maricopa utilities suspend disconnections and late fees

City of Maricopa cancels March and April events

March 18 Harrah’s Ak-Chin Casino announces closure

UltraStar Multi-tainment Center announces closure

March 19 State mandates closure of dine-in options in counties affected by coronavirus; pick-up, drive-thru and delivery only options allowed

Governor activates Arizona National Guard to help with food distribution

State closes bars, movie theaters and gyms

Some Maricopa stores alter hours or close

City of Maricopa announces changes to or cancellation of programs

March 20 City of Maricopa announces closure of City Hall, Copper Sky and library

State announces extension of public-school closings to April 10

Mayor Price declares state of emergency in Maricopa

Pinal County Board of Supervisors Chairman Anthony Smith declares state of emergency

First coronavirus-related death announced in Arizona

Data through March 22

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"I'm a little frustrated," said Ramirez, who runs the 800-meter run and 400-meter dash. "We were doing really well so far. My teammates worked really hard."

Those hoping for future benefits for their high school labors were particularly antsy. "It's very scary," said junior Ailed Cota. "I understand it, but am I going to be able to compete to get scholarships?"

The Heritage Academy network of charter schools has online learning platforms to keep classes going at least remotely. Its Maricopa students returned from spring break to be in a position to take up lessons again from home March 30. Board Chairman Jared Taylor told families, "We hope schools reopen in April so we may continue with activities such as graduation."

Edkey/Sequoia Schools CEO Mark Plitzuweit described the situation as "navigat[ing] uncharted waters."



Coronavirus & Business

Waxing economically philosophical on a day he declared an official state of emergency, Mayor Christian Price said the fallout could be similar to the Great Recession of 2008.

"The trajectory was a new America. It wasn't a bad America it was just different. I think that same thing is going to happen to us here," he said. "We're going to go through a challenge by which we all have to look at this and say, 'Well, this particular industry has died, this one is new.' And there's a whole new opportunistic, entrepreneurial spirit of America that will say, 'There's a niche here. I'm gonna rush in here and fill it.' And you'll see a whole bunch of brand-new folks who will become millionaires out of it."

Supermarkets, dollar stores, drug stores and convenience stores struggled to keep toilet paper, tissues, cleaning products, canned food, eggs, dairy products and fresh meat on the shelves. Arizona Law Dawgs, a firearm and tactical-weapons shop, saw a surge in customers, too.

"It's panic. They're panic-buying," shop owner John Callaway II said. "Nobody knows what's going to happen next. Some of the other states are experiencing people getting robbed."

The Box Meat Shop's Karen Pozzolo said, "Customers are coming from everywhere, all over Maricopa, outside of Maricopa, a lot of new customers. It's to be expected because there is no meat in town, so we're the only ones who have anything to buy for everybody."

Lee Feiles of ATA (Sunrise Taekwondo), a martial arts gym affected by the state's mandated shutdown, became creative and offered classes online. Bo Johnson of Yogurt Jungle, which traditionally operates as self-serve, instead gave topping duties to staff, what he called a change in the "Yogurt Jungle experience." As in all eateries, dining-in stopped.

"I go to the gym (at Copper Sky) every morning, and everybody's been following the rules and begging us not to close," Councilmember Rich Vitiello said the day all facilities were closed. "That's coming from 50-60 people. As for the businesses, they're screaming bloody murder."

"And the Canadians are leaving. The worst thing about it is the census. I bet you would lose about 300 to 400."

Foot pain Q&A

Can instability be causing my foot and ankle pain?

Yes. Most people have some form of instability. Whether you have a high arch or a flat foot you can have instability, which can lead to many common foot problems such as heel pain, tendonitis, ankle sprains and stress fractures.

How can instability be treated?

One of the easiest and most effective ways of treating instability is with custom orthotics. In our office, we take an impression of your feet and then make the necessary modifications to give you the support that you need, very similar to prescription eyeglasses. It is amazing to me that something so simple can be so effective in relieving foot and ankle pain and, frankly, life-changing!



Is Dr. Alex M. Stewart Board-certified?

Dr. Alex Stewart is Board Certified by the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery. He was recognized in 2018 by *Top Doctor* as one of the "Top Podiatric Surgeons in Arizona." He received his Doctor of Podiatric

Medicine degree from Midwestern University and completed his residency at The University of Texas Health Science Center — San Antonio in the department of Orthopedics.

His extensive training and current practice focus on foot and ankle trauma, diabetic care, reconstructive surgery and sports medicine. As a former collegiate baseball player and avid golfer, Dr. Stewart can relate to athletes of any age and performance level. Dr. Stewart has been at Maricopa Foot and Ankle eight years and treats everything from minor ailments to major trauma.

We at Maricopa Foot and Ankle understand that even a small foot issue can be very painful and debilitating, so give us a call and let us help get you back to your activities pain free!

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1. Joseph Figueroa, a second-year cadet in the Maricopa High School Air Force Junior ROTC program, leads the color guard at the groundbreaking for a new city library. He is trailed by MHS AFJROTC Corps Command Chief Nicholas Baker, a fourth-year cadet. *Raquel Hendrickson*
2. Pima Butte Elementary's Isabella Gomez (center) won the fifth-grade girls' competition in the annual Mile Meet. Jianna Reyes (left) of Butterfield was second, and Amiya Gutierrez of Butterfield was third. *Raquel Hendrickson*
3. Sequoia Pathway Academy girls' varsity basketball won the Canyon Athletic Association championship. Che'Leez Smith-Ralph was named player of the game and All State, Aleina Estrada was Division III Player of the Year and Dee Estrada was Coach of the Year. *Raquel Hendrickson*
4. Carson Carpenter was part of Heritage Academy's inaugural boys' basketball team that reached the CAA DIII championship game and took second place. Josh Deakyn was named All State, with Logan Porter receiving honorable mention. Sequoia Pathway's Jose Miguel was also All State. *Raquel Hendrickson*
5. After finishing Marine boot camp, Pvt. Daniel Rojas (left) of Maricopa and Pvt. Oswaldo Sanchez of Casa Grande visited home. *Kyle Norby*
6. MHS teacher and former professional baseball player Brad Vericker was named head coach of the Rams' baseball team, which saw the coronavirus interfere with its season. *Kyle Norby*
7. Institute of Transportation Engineers picked Maricopa Wells Middle School "Best Transportation System for the Community" special award at National Future City. Nicolas Yendreski, Marley Polosky and Allison Rice were accompanied by teacher Janell Hudson and engineering mentor Robyn Rice.

Talking stick

By Harriet Phelps

A talking stick is an item used to be sure everyone gets to have and finish their say in a conversation without being interrupted. Traditionally, a talking stick is a tool used by many Native American traditions allowing council members to present their sacred point of view.

Good communication may be challenging at the best of times. Two keys to effective communication, speaking and listening, are necessary in problem solving and understanding.

Begin by identifying one issue at a time. Is the issue involving all members of the family or just one or two? Call a family meeting involving all needed to be present.

Pick the right time. Not just before bed or arriving home tired and hungry or heading out the door to work or school.

Check your nonverbal signals. Many conversations are defeated by emotional outbursts and body language. Nonverbal language is what we pay attention to. Conversations deplete when the emotions take over and nothing is resolved. The same can be said about too much intellectual input. Over time, we develop patterns and use gestures, body language and facial expressions in how we convey our message. Show respect to all present and make good eye contact.

Organize your thoughts and choose your words. Words have power. Always say what you mean and choose words that motivate and inspire. Be clear, direct and understood. Use the "I" word, not "you." "I" reflects ownership — I want, I need, I feel. "You" reflects blame and finger pointing — You always, you don't, you never. Drop words always, must, should and never, which generally are not true. What is it you hope to achieve as a result of this conversation?

Use the talking stick. The stick can be a coaster, cup, pencil, stuffed toy or more traditional stick as a handy technique to guide the meeting and discussion. Place the stick in the center of the table and the person who picks it up begins the conversation. While holding the talking stick no one



interrupts, everyone listens. Everyone has their opportunity to speak. When finished, pass the stick to the next person.

Listening is the most important skill. Listening means I focus on the one talking, I do not think about what I will say next, I remain quiet to seek understanding for the other person. If you are thinking about what you are going to say next, you are not listening. Hold all questions until the speaker is finished, then

seek to understand their point of view. Your opportunity is coming up when they will seek to understand your point of view.

As always, be awesome. 

Harriet Phelps, Psy.D., is a volunteer mentor for Be Awesome.

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Barrel full of fun

Story and photos by Raquel Hendrickson

It's a rush. The pounding of hooves, spray of dirt, slap of leather, echo of a hollow barrel landing upright after tipping precariously. Maricopa barrel racers uniformly call it "a real passion."

"I've always loved the speed – to open a horse up and just feel the adrenaline," said Kristin Crocker.

Originally from Wisconsin and operating a Primerica financial services office in Queen Creek, Crocker moved to Maricopa two years ago and plans to build a local clientele. She is just one of scores of barrel racers who enjoy two rural rodeo arenas near Maricopa.

"It's been a passion since I was little," she said. "It's something that I just have loved and carried on to my daughter."

In barrel racing, riders must guide their horses around three barrels in a cloverleaf pattern without knocking any down. Fastest time wins.

Jordan Lytle, too, grew up with the sport. She is a frequent rider at both arenas with her main horse Skipper. She seemingly grew away from the sport when she became a young adult, but was drawn back.

"I felt empty without it," she said.

During snowbird season, the Thunderbird Farms Arena on Ralston Road is abuzz with local riders like Crocker and Lytle and scores of Canadians who truck in horses every year. The property includes two arenas, one for competition and one for warmup, and is owned by Pinal County.

TACC, an organization dedicated to improving the arena, leases it from the county and hosts frequent cash competitions. One of its responsibilities is taking care of the place.

"All the money that comes in goes back into the property for upkeep and maintenance on the equipment," said Jennifer Faunce, who, along with three other board members, has been in charge of the place for five years. "Like, this year we put in new LED lights, which is really expensive."

They lean heavily on volunteers, especially with the very busy warmup arena.

There are around 200 members, many of them from Canada. At its busiest times, equine events are held nearly every weekend at Thunderbird Farms Arena and at least every Monday at the Pomeranz Arena, a family-owned property even farther south in Hidden Valley.

Also a lifelong barrel racing enthusiast, Faunce gets her enjoyment "from the competitiveness of it and the time and effort it really takes to make a good horse," she said.

She defines a good barrel horse as "really gritty, one that just has the desire to go out there and make a run. Without that you're not going to be very fast."

When barrel racing was created is hard to pin down. When the Women's Professional Rodeo Association was formed in 1948, it was already a known sport for girls. WPRA made it a big deal, with prize money eventually equal to that of men in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association. Now it has become more common to see men competing as well, especially at grassroots arenas like those in Maricopa.

Crocker also races in Queen Creek and Gilbert. She even boarded horses for a time to help out friends. She, too, knows what she's looking for in a good barrel horse. Unsurprisingly, passion comes back into the conversation.

"One that has the mindset, that really has that passion," she said. "They have the same passion as you and really, truly love their job. It's like two hearts together."



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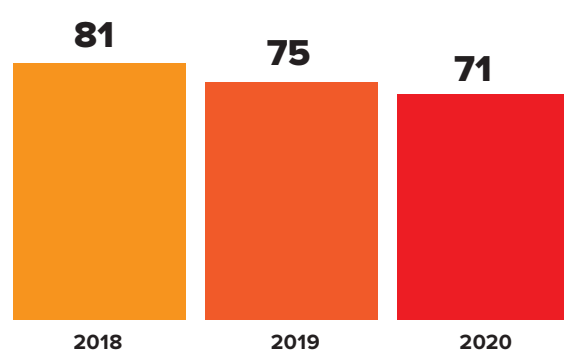
1. 42101 W. Rummy Road, Province

The most expensive home sold in Maricopa Feb. 16-March 15 was a 6-year-old Province property with a private pool and lakeside view. On the market for almost two months, its price dropped \$14,000 before selling. Its interior has a spacious floorplan, and the exterior includes tidy landscaping with synthetic grass and lots of room for entertaining.

Sold: March 10
Purchase Price: \$420,000
Square Feet: 2,044
Price per Square Foot: \$205.47
Days on Market: 56
Builder: Meritage
Year Built: 2012
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 3
Community: Province
Features: Tile flooring, pendant lighting, granite countertops, custom California Closet, pool, built-in barbecue, wet bar, pergola, travertine tile deck.

- 2. 42444 W. Blue Suede Shoes Lane, Province** **\$408,000**
- 3. 19860 N. Swan Court, Province** **\$400,000**
- 4. 41926 W. Capistrano Drive, Glennville** **\$352,000**
- 5. 40934 W. Robbins Drive, Homestead North** **\$339,000**

Single Family Home Building Permits
Feb. 16-March 15



Raquel Hendrickson

1. 43906 W. Carey Drive, Rancho El Dorado

The least expensive home sold in Maricopa Feb. 16-March 15 was a one-story house in an older neighborhood of Rancho El Dorado. The selling price was 127% higher than its previous sale in 2009. It went for almost \$5,000 under asking price.

Sold: Feb. 25
Purchase Price: \$181,000
Square Footage: 1,175
Price per Square Foot: \$154.04
Days on Market: 21
Builder: Continental
Year Built: 2002
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2
Community: Rancho El Dorado
Features: Vaulted ceilings throughout, large master, large covered patio

- 2. 45127 W. Yucca Lane, Alterra North** **\$183,750**
- 3. 22046 N. Braden Road, Rancho El Dorado** **\$184,200**
- 4. 42428 W. Michaels Drive, Rancho El Dorado** **\$185,000**
- 5. 44872 W. Miraflores St., Acacia Crossings** **\$186,000**

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

Home interior trends may change mid-year

By Dayv Morgan

What's trending in new home interiors for 2020?

The year started out with home designs looking very much as they did in 2019, with a gradual move from all-white kitchens and bathrooms to something more subtle. But expectations of a financial downturn caused by the coronavirus started new conversations among homebuilders about possible changes in those trends.



Dayv Morgan

Floors

A wood-looking floor continues to be the top-seller in 2020. Whites, lights and grays are on-trend for floor color, whether in vinyl or laminate. That holds true in tile, carpet and rugs, as well.

However, "Blonde" or honey-colored has also become popular, and dark-stained floors are gaining fans. While real hardwood is lovely, it is costlier in purchase and maintenance than laminates.

Walls

A mix of gray and beige, greige is the color of the moment. Greige is popular in countertops and backsplashes because it pulls together earth tones ranging from white to black to brown in the kitchen. It is popular on bedroom walls

because it seems to have a calming effect and brings lightness without the starkness of white.

Cabinets

2020 started with eco-friendly cabinetry being the darling of the industry. It is possible to find cabinet fronts that are non-toxic, recyclable and inexpensive. On-trend paint choices or laminates can keep a classy-looking front, while particleboard may outsell plywood for the box of the cabinet for economic reasons in a shaky market.

Homebuyers may not have the luxury of being trendy in the coming months, if the worst-case scenario plays out, but there are ways to be economical and stylish to make the home a great buy.

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

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Praying mantis: nature's bug killer

By Alice Batsche

If you look very closely, you may be able to find a praying mantis in your yard, even though they practically disappear on stems and leaves.

Considered a gift to gardeners, the mantids eat only live prey, such as beetles, crickets, cockroaches, aphids and butterflies. For some reason, they will not eat ants.

The European mantis (mantis religiosa) is the most common type found in North America. It is pale green, about two inches long, and most likely came from Europe with trade ships about a century ago. But there are about 2,000 types of mantids worldwide, with most living in Asia and tropical forests. All have big eyes, triangular heads and three pairs of legs. Lifespan is about six months.

With its alien look, this fascinating bug can swivel its head 180 degrees due to a very

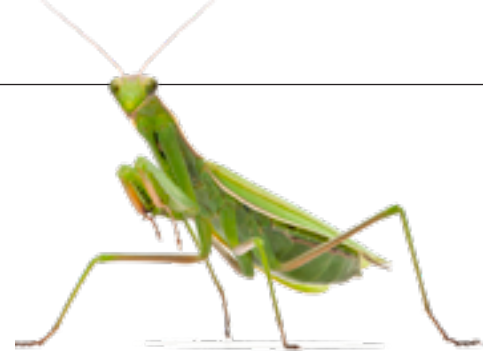
flexible neck. It has two large compound eyes with three smaller simple eyes in between allowing them to detect movement 60 feet away. Their antennae are used for sensing smells. Amazingly, the mantis has an "ear" on its abdomen. Well, not an ear like ours, but a round organ that uses the same ultrasonic frequency as bats. This is very helpful because bats are the biggest predators of the praying mantis.



Alice Batsche

In many cultures the mantis is a symbol of meditation and calmness. Since this insect holds its forelegs in a bent position resembling a pious stance, it is aptly named. These forelegs have spiky rows that catch and pin prey in place.

Spring is the best time of year to look for newly hatched praying mantises called "nymphs." Looking exactly like mini adults,



they simultaneously emerge from the egg case and are ravenous. Nearby siblings are usually a first meal for them. The nymphs have no wings yet, so they quickly jump from plant to plant feasting on flies, aphids and small grasshoppers.

Summer finds the mantis developing wings midway down its back. The female will fly when she wants to mate. She is larger than the male and will eat the male if she is hungry or if he is too slow to get away.

Autumn is when the female spins an egg case, called an "ootheca," to protect the 40-100 eggs during cold weather until spring.

If you are lucky enough to find a praying mantis, you could keep one as a pet. Just remember, they only eat live prey. 📢

Alice Batsche, a newly certified master gardener, lives in Cobblestone Farms.

Aging in place: Tips for buying that 'forever' home

By Ron Smith

Ready to find your "forever" home? Here are a few things to consider:

The community you are looking at for your forever home should have easy walkability or an excellent transportation system for shopping, going to the doctor or visiting friends.

Social opportunities and support groups should be plentiful. These are important considerations since isolation is often one of the most significant problems for seniors as they age.

So, if the community checks out, what should you look for in choosing your new home? Ideally, you will be looking for a single-story home with easy access in and out of your home with no step thresholds to minimize future problems with steps, walkers or wheelchairs. The landscaping should not create any additional barriers to navigation.

If you have your heart set on a two-story design, don't despair but consider future problems navigating stairs. To be safe, you should have a first-floor bedroom and full bath or a staircase that has enough width for handrails on each side and can support the future installation of a chair lift. Stair treads should be no greater than 7.75 inches in height and 10 inches deep. Well-designed homes for aging-in-place may provide for the future installation of a residential elevator.

In all home designs you will want to have an adaptable design with a suitable footprint for wider doors (minimum 36 inches), wider halls, lever door handles, backing boards in the walls around showers, toilets and halls for the installation of future grab bars or safety rails. There should be an open floor plan with limited obstructions. Other features to look for include lowered switches and raised outlets for use by wheelchair-bound residents.

Due to changing vision, the home should have suitable colors, extra lighting and contrasting finishes in flooring changes or at the countertops to assist with depth perception. In the bathrooms, there should be a walk-in shower/wet room, comfort-height toilets and skid-resistant surfaces. Lower air returns make it easier to change filters. LED bulbs and 10-year smoke alarm batteries will help keep you off dangerous ladders.

Kitchens generally can be retrofitted with variable height cabinets and counters, pull out shelves, shallow sinks and under-cabinet lighting. But the initial installation at the time of construction of rounded edge countertops, a pot filler, counter-height microwave, front-mounted controls on the cooktop and D-shaped cabinet/drawer pulls can save future costs.

Finally, consider the possible need for a live-in space for a home-care assistant or aide. Casitas, upstairs bedrooms or above-the-garage apartments can be very helpful in providing for such accommodations. 📢



Ron Smith

Ron Smith is an aging-in-place advocate. He is also a member of the Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee and a member of the Maricopa Senior Coalition.

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Make your hobbies active-leisure

By Joan Koczor

Have you ever been asked if you have a hobby and thought, “good question”?

Maybe you like to watch TV or go online for the news or play a game. These “passive leisure” activities — time-fillers — are OK temporarily but not as a steady diet.

With active leisure you lose yourself in a challenging project. You will notice how time flies when you are immersed in an activity you enjoy.

A hobby you love is more than a distraction. It's part of you, something you are energized by. A feeling of satisfaction when a project is completed. It can help you structure your time. Get your chores done, pay bills or other paperwork quicker so you have time to enjoy your hobby.

There was a time when being an active senior included activities like board games, sewing and dining out with friends. Times

have changed. Hobbies for the older generation have long been crossing over into what all ages enjoy.


Looking for something rewarding? Consider volunteering. Many community programs and nonprofits require the help of senior volunteers who give their time to get things done.

Seniors serve at veterans' homes, schools and churches and do everything from food prep to mentoring. Helping others provides physical activities and emotionally uplifting connections, and it fills needs for organizations.

Feeling creative? You may want to consider sketching or water coloring, sculpting or taking photographs. These hobbies can be for individual enjoyment, gift-giving or even extra income. Woodworking and carving

help promote nimble hands, relaxation, arm strength, eye focus and mind activity. And learning to play an instrument could showcase a hidden talent.

Is sports your thing? You might consider swimming, golfing or dancing. In addition to being fun, playing sports can improve your coordination, balance and flexibility as well as boost your energy levels. Sports can also increase socialization.

When choosing a hobby, think about what fits you. If you like being with your friends and meeting new people, take a class or find group activities that interest you. Think about something you enjoyed but stopped doing because life and its responsibilities got in the way. 

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



Joan Koczor

What seniors need to know about taxes

By Al Brandenburg

Well, here we go again. Another year, another round of trying to keep the IRS from getting the best of you.

Even with the U.S. tax-filing deadline delayed to July 15 because of coronavirus concerns, there are plenty of reasons to start your taxes now. If you're owed a refund — most taxpayers are — you'll get your money that much sooner.

Filing early will also reduce the risk a crook will hijack your refund, because a refund already claimed can't be stolen. And even if you end up owing the IRS, it's better to know that now, when you have time to come up with the money, than an hour before the deadline.

But perhaps the most compelling reason to start now is filing early will give you enough time to claim all the tax breaks available to you. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, now in its second year, nearly doubled the standard


deduction, which for 2019 is \$12,200 for single taxpayers and \$24,400 for married couples who file jointly. Only about 10% of taxpayers will continue to itemize.

Congress has recently enacted a bevy of tax credits and deductions for non-itemizers (Yay!). Overlook them and you could end up paying more to the IRS than you should (Boo!).

Homeowners who have a large mortgage are still good candidates for itemizing. For loans acquired after Dec. 15, 2017, you can deduct interest on a mortgages of up to \$750,000. For loans taken out before that date, you can deduct interest on mortgage debt of up to \$1 million.

If you had extraordinary medical costs last year, deducting your unreimbursed expenses could push you into the itemizing pool. However, you'll only be allowed to deduct a portion of those expenses. For 2019, you can

deduct unreimbursed medical expenses that exceed 7.5% of your “adjusted gross income.” If your AGI was \$50,000, for example, you would only be allowed to deduct the unreimbursed medical expenses that exceeded \$3,750.

If you're retired, as many of us are, it's even more important to start your tax return early. While you'll probably claim the standard deduction, you could be in for some unpleasant surprises, particularly if you're a new retiree. The money you've scrupulously saved in your 401(k) or traditional IRA will be taxed when you make withdrawals. A portion of your Social Security benefits may also be taxable. That means it's critical to take advantage of all the tax breaks available to you. 

(Sources: AARP, US Federal Tax Code, Kiplinger's)

Al Brandenburg is director of Maricopa Senior Coalition. He is a master gardener and has a master's degree from Binghamton University School of Management.



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APRIL

All events are tentative

7

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

8

MUSD Governing Board Meeting
6:30 p.m., Maricopa Unified
School District
44150 W. Maricopa-
Casa Grande Hwy.

MAY 2

Pinal 40 Gala Dinner
5 p.m., Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino
15406 N. Maricopa Road

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

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

THURSDAYS

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

FRIDAYS

Al-Anon Meeting
7 p.m., Community
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