

**PEOPLE**

Prices find  
balance in  
busy marriage

**GOVERNMENT**

Long-range goals  
in transportation

**A Little  
Night  
Music**

Violist much more  
than just a player

**BUSINESS**

Native Grill  
keeps it in  
the family

**FAMILY**

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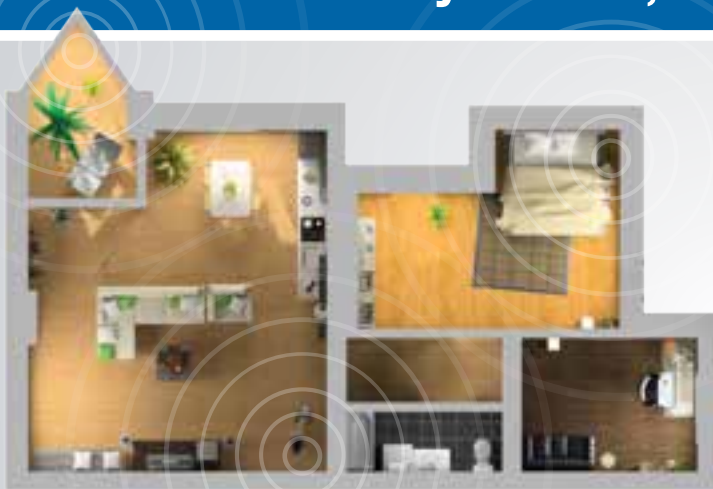
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# Time to celebrate

How do you celebrate the holidays?

For our cover subject this month, Laura Olivieri, the upcoming holidays meant transcribing Mark Lowry's sacred song "Mary, Did You Know?" for flute, viola and keyboard in time for this month's Christmas concert for the Maricopa Music Circle ensemble. She has been a violist for the group since 2012, but she has other not-so-hidden talents as well.

For some, the holidays mean family time. Look for things to do together in our "Things to Do" section. Harriet Phelps also shares ideas for family-bonding activities. At Native Grill & Wings, it always seems to be family time. Twenty out of 63 employees have a relative on staff. They explain the ups and downs of working together.

Christian Price said it's never easy finding a balance between work and family, especially when he's spending 70 hours a week on his "part-time" job as mayor. Cindy Price has her own take on how the family keeps it all together.

Victor Jones is currently on an artificial heart as he awaits a transplant. His wife Robin explains the stress and how they have been able to lean on family and friends during tough times. Also, find out how middle school teacher Walker Kyle goes the extra mile for his exceptional students and how the Fiesta Bowl rewarded him.



County Supervisor Anthony Smith reflects on the past year's economic development. And while impatient for action on State Route 347, you may look

at projects for the far, far future.

Happy reading and Happy Holidays.

RAQUEL HENDRICKSON | Editor

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520-568-0040



Kyle Norby

## History



Maricopa Historical Society

## Maricopa Midtown

A Brock family photo from the 1940s shows Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway entering Maricopa from Casa Grande. The Dehart home is on left. A service station is the white building at the end of the road where the highway meets State Route 347. Rhoto's grocery store is the adobe building at the end of the road on the right, which is currently the NAPA store. SR 347 is now carried over the area by an overpass.

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**Heather and Rene Garcia comprise one of several pairs of family members working at Native Grill & Wings.**

Kyle Norby

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Francesca is a freelance writer living in Maricopa who loves heart-felt storytelling.



#### JEAN SACRAMENTO

The master gardener moved from Weymouth, Massachusetts, to Mariopa four years ago.



#### MURRAY SIEGEL

A math whiz, he wants to spread math confidence to children all over town.

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# Finding crossings far, far down the road

By Raquel Hendrickson



**The City of Maricopa's proposed CIP budget would improve Farrell Road and create a high-water crossing over the Santa Rosa Wash.**

Raquel Hendrickson

As any plans for improvements to State Route 347 sit immobile awaiting an appeals court ruling, Maricopa has much-longer-range transportation projects in the chute.

Some depend on the pace of growth while others are connected to regional projects. At least two involve crossings.

Like the SR 347, the East/West Corridor is part of the Pinal Regional Transportation Authority plan, which was approved by county voters in 2016. The funding portion of that plan, also approved by voters, has been in the courts ever since. The state's Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in the case in September.

But a portion of that corridor is in Maricopa and is part of the City's capital improvement plan. In fact, the proposed CIP budget has it scheduled for planning and design this fiscal year to the tune of \$1.2 million through development impact fees. The goal is improving Farrell Road from SR 347 to Porter Road and creating a five-lane crossing over Santa Rosa Wash to Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway.

Amy Moran of Wilson & Company, who spoke to the City's Transportation Committee in November, said the overall EWC project is "focusing on 2030." That is where the county's Regional Transportation Authority has recommended \$1.95 million for design of the full project that takes traffic from Maricopa to Casa Grande and Interstate 10 along a realigned Val Vista Road.

Wilson & Company contracts with Maricopa Association of Governments as a transportation planner.

Though earlier traffic studies indicated the completion of the EWC would not be necessary until 2040, the pending Lucid Motors factory has pressed the issue. It is expected to break ground Dec. 2 and fill out its hiring by 2025 with up to 2,000 workers. County Supervisor Anthony Smith said the plant's workforce recruitment goal is to hire 25% of its employees from Maricopa.

"The East/West Corridor connects Maricopa with Casa Grande and gives us an alternative way to get over to I-10," Smith said. "More importantly, when Lucid is in there manufacturing, it gives the people of Maricopa a very convenient and expedited way to get over to that job market."

For the Farrell Road portion of EWC, the City anticipates budgeting \$3.1 million for further design and land acquisition next fiscal year. Construction and improvements are budgeted for the subsequent two fiscal years. The total cost of the City's four-year plan is estimated at more than \$21 million. That includes the bridge across the wash.

## Ready for another overpass?

On the very-long-range outlook for Maricopa's transportation corridors is another north-south route to carry traffic over the railroad tracks. That could include a second grade-

separation project west of the SR 347 overpass.

Moran pointed out the completion of the current overpass brought expectation of more housing coming to the south side of Maricopa.


That, she said, would eventually lead to a need for another track crossing, including a grade separation. The target roadway is Green Road, which is a piecemeal, north-south path on the west side of the Maricopa planning area. It is on the regional transportation plan, she reminded the Transportation Committee.

"It would involve building a road," Moran said.

Though that need is anticipated to be decades away, financially planning for the eventuality means looking at possible sources of funding now.

Currently, Maricopa's primary paths over the tracks are SR 347 (overpass) and Porter Road (at grade). There are also at-grade crossings in the city limits at White and Parker Road and Hartman Road to the east and Ralston Road to the west.

Moran said the county and City of Maricopa may start looking now for available federal funding for another overpass as they look to the far future.

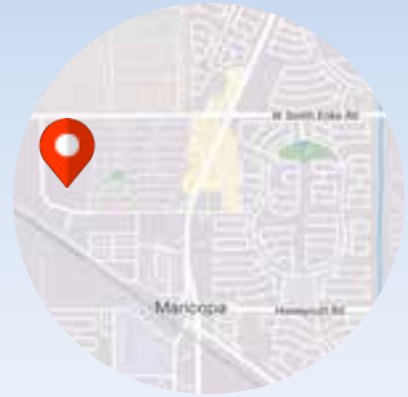
Compared to those projects, improvements to SR 347 are relatively close at hand, and Maricopa Association of Governments has an ongoing scoping study. Part of that effort is a survey MAG is conducting online at [SurveyMonkey.com/r/VRTSZFJ](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VRTSZFJ). 

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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*“During recent months, leading to our contracts and development agreements being approved by City Council, every hurdle presented to either side has been met with even handed, flexible tenacity. The result is not just a win/win at Estrella Gin Business Park, additionally we are now more interested in pursuing other projects in the City of Maricopa.”*

Joe Cook – President, Woodglen Opportunities  
(Developer of Estrella Gin Business Park)



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# Q&A with Anthony Smith

By Raquel Hendrickson



Kyle Norby

**A**nthony Smith is entering his last year as Pinal County supervisor for District 4, having previously announced his decision not to seek reelection. He has been supervisor since 2013 after serving two terms as mayor of Maricopa.

He sat down with InMaricopa to talk about activities in Pinal County in 2019, what may happen in 2020, his perspective of Maricopa, Interstate 11, transportation, future concerns for the county and more. To see the full interview, visit [InMaricopa.com](http://InMaricopa.com).

## Remind us of your background.

I was born in Indiana and raised there. I raised my children in Central Illinois. In 1997 I came to Arizona to work for Motorola and did that for 10 years. I've been married to Nancy Smith, who's a city councilmember for the City of Maricopa, for nearly 20 years now. So, we came to Maricopa in 2003 because, just like a lot of people at that time, we were looking for affordable housing. This was at the time about 15 minutes away from our Motorola plant at Queen Creek and Price Road. It's not 15 minutes' drive time anymore.

## Since you were mayor, how has Maricopa changed?

Well, during that time in which we were trying to figure out how long is this recession and how deep is it going to be, fortunately the previous city councils had put aside a lot of that one-time money received from growth that, once the prices dropped on land, we were able to make some very important strategic purchases. The purchases such as for the city hall, that large complex, came from basically

## ANTHONY SMITH

**Title:** Pinal County Supervisor, District 4

**Age:** 66

**Maricopan since:** 2003

**Family:** Nancy (wife), five grown children in blended family with seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren

**Education:** Bachelor of Science, Purdue University

**Professional background:** Project management professional; worked at Motorola 10 years

**Previous elected office:** Mayor of Maricopa, 2008-2010, 2010-2012

a fire sale on some properties that had finally dropped to the point that we could buy them at a reasonable rate. The same thing with Copper Sky. All that land for that beautiful park on the southern side of the city was all purchased at one time with the idea that we would keep

the frontage so that we could get commercial development. Fast-forward 10 years and that is finally happening with the prospect of hotels and retail and other things.

## Did it surprise you it's taken this long to break ground on a hotel?

Absolutely, it has. We did everything we could to help a hotel take hold. But it was a tough sell at a tough time. There [were] very, very much limits on capital investments at that basis. So, I think we just basically had the wrong dance partner.

## Let's look back on the past year. What are the biggest successes you think the county's had?

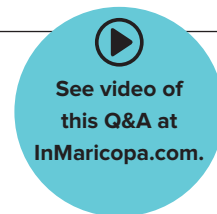
One of the big deals is that when ADOT selected the [Interstate 11] route that is south of the city of Maricopa, when they selected that as the recommended alternative, that was a big deal. Because the other alternative went down State Route 85 at Gila Bend and then on I-8. It did nothing for Pinal County. It did nothing for the city of Maricopa and its growth.

Another thing that I'm very happy that we've accomplished in 2019 is the finalization of a new county complex for the city of Maricopa. This project will probably break ground in January. We're out for bid for the entire project right now and we hope to complete it in October of 2020.

Dec. 2 we're going to break ground for the Lucid electric car manufacturing project. That's going to be about 2,000 employees. They're already hiring certain critical positions at this time. But it's going to be a big deal for the city of Maricopa because in the plan for workforce recruitment they are hoping to get 25% of their workforce from folks in the city of Maricopa.

We had a change in leadership. Anytime you have a change of leadership at the top, you hope for the best. With Louis Andersen taking the helm, I have confidence it will continue in the direction of strong economic development.

One of the things I continue to be very thankful for is the strong financial position Pinal County is in. Pinal County was the first county to regain all the jobs that we lost during the recession. We have a very favorable tax rate. In fact, we lowered our tax rate once more. We intend on lowering it, assuming the revenues







# Family-friendly has new meaning at local restaurant

By Joycelyn Cabrera Photos by Kyle Norby

**N**ative Grill & Wings creates a family-friendly atmosphere in more ways than one. About one-third of the sports bar's staff have relatives working with them.

At Maricopa's Native, there are 10 families working in the same restaurant, half of whom are siblings. Twenty out of 63 employees have a relative on staff.

"What's funny is, a lot of times at restaurants, friends work together, and sometimes siblings do and whatnot, but we have an unusual number of siblings and parents with their child," owner Pat Kieny said. "My theory is they must like working here, plus mom or dad can better keep track of what their child is doing."

Families working together may face obstacles at the restaurant when certain members hold supervising positions. Kieny said family sets that experience the most trouble with the dynamic are parent-child.



## **Tara Pelletier & DeAndray Curtis** (mother and son)

Tara Pelletier has worked at Native Grill for three and a half years. Her son DeAndray Curtis joined the team two years ago.

Tara said she needed to adjust to having her son at work, which included being easier on him while at work.

"She definitely made sure that I did my job to my full potential," DeAndray said. "When I first started, it was the standards that she's put me to, just because she knew that I could get to them and that I could work harder and be better at what I'm doing."

The now-18-year-old said he doesn't want to think about what it's like to work separately yet. The parent-child team said their family can be found at the restaurant rather than at home.

"I'm a single mom," Tara said. "I have one other daughter, but we don't have any family. Our regulars, we go to Christmas there, we go to Thanksgiving there, my boss has picked up my daughter from school when she's sick. I mean, my coworkers are my best friends. This is our family dynamic."



## **Rene & Heather Garcia** (husband and wife)

Other family sets face their own obstacles, such as keeping home at home, and work at work.

Rene and Heather have been married five years. They have worked together at Native Grill for about two years. Compared to the struggle of commuting out of town for work, the couple said Native Grill is the best choice for their working needs. The couple said they sometimes struggle keeping it separate.

"We do what we call hug it out, so we give each other a hug before we work the same shift and we tell each other that it's going to be OK that we're on the same team, basically," Heather said.

The couple have seen staff with relatives working together ever since they began working at the restaurant, so they were not surprised to see the trend growing.

"It's like a big family," Heather said. "Everybody just really tries to help each other a lot inside of work and outside of work. We're friends outside of work, so that helps."



## **Tiffany & Kelly Davis** (siblings)

Many staff members and their relatives shared their inside jokes created at the restaurant, and others discussed the support they receive from management and each other.



Kelly, 23, has worked in the restaurant since in high school. Her younger sister, Tiffany, 18, has only been working a few months. Coworkers and managers refer to Tiffany as “Mini Kelly.”

“Before Tiffany even started working here, the manager came in for work one time and he goes, ‘Oh look it’s Kelly, and look, it’s Mini Kelly. But Kelly’s already mini, so it’s mini-mini Kelly.’ They just kept teasing her about being the mini-me,” Kelly said.

“It’s not even just the owner anymore,” Tiffany said. “There’s someone who calls me KJ, which is Kelly Junior.”

The sisters said they love working at the restaurant because of the family atmosphere it has developed for its employees.

“I know that there are a lot of us that are related, but my coworkers are pretty much my family anyways,” Kelly said.



typically end up working on opposite sides of the restaurant, leaving a lot of room for independence at work.

“I get to work with (my mom) and meet new people,” Aly said.


### **Mark & Leah McCormick (in-laws)**

Mark and his sister-in-law Leah are two of the newest employees at Native Grill. While Mark has been working at the restaurant a few months, Leah began training in November. The two have worked together in a previous job, so while they are accustomed to working with each other, they said they were surprised to learn how many other coworkers were related.

“I was not surprised with one or two, but that there’s 12 or 15 people that have somebody related to them that works here,” Mark said. “I think it makes it a closer group.”

From Native Grill’s opening to the present, employment has dropped from 90 to 60. Kieny said the smaller staff size has resulted in closer relationships and a supportive environment among workers, thereby creating a positive experience for their customers.

“Really, we’re selling the same lettuce, the same cheese, the same Bud Lite, the same things as other people. The difference has got to be the people we have here working. The No. 1 thing for me, as an owner, are the employees,” Kieny said. “If I do that correctly, then the customer gets a really good experience.”

“Two of my daughters worked their way through college here, and three or four of the other people who work here currently, their parent or their spouse used to work here, too. So, we’ve got a lot of that going on, and it’s kind of nice. Sometimes they meet here.” 



### **Kyle & Katie Brentana (siblings)**

Kyle and Katie are not new to the Native Grill atmosphere. While Katie, 23, has only been an employee for about a year, Kyle, 26, has been in and out of the restaurant since high school.

“There’s a lot of people that work here that I actually went to high school with and graduated with, so it was really nice coming back here, No. 1, to a good job, and No. 2, for the familiar faces,” he said.

After losing their father, the siblings shared the support they received from management and coworkers.

“I’m very appreciative of the managers. Our father passed away Sept. 10 of stage-4 neck and throat cancer,” Katie said. “They were very caring, very understanding. They said, ‘Take as much time as you need,’ and a lot of businesses aren’t like that, so I’m very appreciative.”

### **Amber & Aly Miller (mother and daughter)**

Amber Miller has worked at Native Grill & Wings for 17 years, beginning as a hostess and now bartending. Her daughter Aly has worked at the restaurant as a hostess for about a month, getting the job shortly after turning 16.

The two said they sometimes struggle finding time to spend with each other outside of work by getting the same days off together.

“For instance, tomorrow’s my birthday,” Amber said. “I had requested the day off; she didn’t request it off, so she has to work now. She’s going to miss family dinners.”

“Oops,” Aly said.

The mother-and-daughter duo rarely work the same shifts and





## P&Z tables plans for Maricopa's 1st apartments

The Maricopa Planning and Zoning Commission grilled city staff and the developer of the first apartment complex planned for the community at its Nov. 5 meeting. The commission, being asked to recommend approval of the site plan, landscape, photometric and elevations for The Oasis at the Wells, ultimately tabled the project until some points of dispute could be clarified.

The Oasis at the Wells is designed to be 5.12 acres on the new Shea Road off Porter Road, between Walmart and Banner Health. According to the plan, it will be 120 units in five three-story buildings. The units will be one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom apartments.

The area was rezoned for mixed use last year. The developer, the Englewood Group, asked to reduce the required number of parking spaces for the complex from 263 to 180. However, a large mathematical mistake in comparison data caused a misrepresentation in the totals, making it appear Chandler required far few parking spaces per unit than Maricopa. Commissioner Dan Frank asked staff to fix the mistake and come back with correct numbers.

 [Learn more at InMaricopa.com](http://InMaricopa.com).

## Business news in brief

**La Quinta Inn & Suites**, 44345 W.

Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., received a permit for on-site improvement.

**Buff City Soap** received a commercial tenant improvement permit for work converting Suite E201 at 21101 N. John Wayne Parkway into a soap-making and retail space. Plans are to open for business in mid-December.

**Sacate Pellet Mill** received a certificate of occupancy for its site at 38743 W. Cowtown Road. It is owned by Red River Cattle Company.

**Apex Motor Club** received a permit for a subdivision final plat in its plan to construct 48 garage condominiums at its site at 22408 N. Ralston Road.

**Domino's Pizza**, in the process of moving into a former restaurant space at 20024 N. John Wayne Parkway, received its permit for a fire alarm and detection system.

**Wendy's** in Maricopa Fiesta at 21000 N. John Wayne Parkway added 336 square feet to the back of its premise for a fully enclosed walk-in cooler/freezer. In anticipation of New Year's Eve,

**Walmart** and **Fry's** received permits to sell fireworks and pyrotechnics.

*Happy Holidays!*  
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## Harrah's Ak-Chin hires marketing manager

Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino announced the company has hired Samantha Gulick as database marketing and advertising manager. In the role, Gulick will manage the direct marketing team, responsible for building successful marketing campaigns and monthly outreach strategies that will drive traffic and build brand awareness for the property. In addition, Gulick will oversee all advertising efforts.

Gulick has been with Caesars Entertainment for more than five years. Prior to her position at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino, Gulick worked as the marketing campaign manager for Harrah's & Horseshoe Council Bluffs in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Harrah's North Kansas City Hotel and Casino, where she was responsible for all outbound digital and direct mail marketing campaigns.

"Samantha is an outstanding leader with a proven track record," said Michael Kintner, director of marketing operations. "Her industry knowledge makes her an invaluable asset, and we're happy to have her on our team."



## Clean reports from food inspections

All Maricopa food facilities inspected by Pinal County health inspectors from Oct. 16 to Nov. 15 were given excellent scores.

### EXCELLENT [No violations found]

- Aliberto's
- Domino's Pizza
- Bashas' – AFC Sushi
- Bashas' – Bakery
- Bashas' – Starbucks
- Fry's Marketplace
- Fry's Marketplace – Bakery
- Fry's Marketplace – Deli
- Fry's Marketplace – Starbucks
- Fry's Marketplace – Sushi
- IHOP
- Jack in the Box
- JB Farmer's Convenience Store
- Maricopa Head Start
- Province Community Association Clubhouse
- Shamrock Farms
- Walmart
- Walmart – Deli



**SATISFACTORY** [Violations corrected during inspections]  
None

**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

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### Is Dr. Alex M. Stewart Board-certified?





Dr. Alex M. Stewart DPM, FACFAS, is Board Certified by the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery. He was recognized in 2018 by Top Doc Magazine 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 is 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 for the past eight years and has experience in treating 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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# Banner Casa Grande Wound Center helping wound patients heal faster



Wound care is a highly specialized service, and from time to time, the Banner Casa Grande Wound Center treats some of the most extreme cases one could possibly imagine. This includes wounds that are non-healing; and if left untreated, chronic wounds can be life-threatening. Often, these wounds linger because of limited blood flow resulting from surgery and/or an underlying disease that may slow the body's ability to heal. The Banner Casa Grande Wound Clinic has become a trusted and proven resource for residents, including those in Maricopa, whose wounds have not healed with standard treatment.

Every year, more than 6 million people in the U.S. suffer from chronic wounds caused by a variety of conditions, including diabetes and other circulatory problems. Diabetic patients suffer from some of the most severe wound cases, like ulcers. Unfortunately, half of all diabetics have or will develop neuropathy (numbness, weakness or pain) or some type of nerve damage in the lower portion of their body like the legs or feet. This condition can then lead to gangrene (a condition where body tissue dies) and, ultimately, amputation.

Technology and specialized treatment options at Banner Casa Grande Wound Center promote and accelerate the healing process for patients suffering from diabetic foot ulcers, soft tissue infections and other conditions. Specialized treatment options

such as Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy is used to help improve the circulation of blood to wounds and other damaged tissues to help fight infection, reduce swelling and promote healing. With Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, patients breathe 100 percent oxygen in a controlled chamber. For patients with adequate circulation, the treatment increases oxygen flow throughout the body and, ultimately, to the wound site to promote healing. Many amputations are prevented using Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy.

## Technology and specialized treatment options at Banner Casa Grande Wound Center promote and accelerate the healing process for patients suffering from diabetic foot ulcers, soft tissue infections and other conditions.

Other conditions treated at Banner Casa Grande Wound Center include:

- Infected wounds
- Ischemic wounds
- Ostomy management
- Radiation skin injuries


- Soft tissue and bone infections
- Surgical wounds
- Traumatic injuries
- Venous stasis ulcers
- Wounds caused by auto-immune disorders
- Wounds that have not healed within 30 days

In addition to offering leading-edge wound care technology, the hospital also has physicians trained in Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and wound management. Nurses at Banner Casa Grande Medical Center are trained in the care of serious and chronic wounds, and our staff can assist patients with appointments, medical records and any health insurance processing.

Patients who suffer from these conditions can have their primary care physician refer them to Banner Casa Grande Wound Center. Once a thorough examination is completed, our physicians will develop a comprehensive and individualized treatment plan. Patients and their loved ones can participate in that individualized treatment plan and are given the tools, education and resources they need to help care for their wound between visits.

Some of the other services we provide at Banner Casa Grande's Wound Center include:

- Fistula management
- Peri-stomal skin problems
- Pre-operative stoma site marking for colostomy, ileostomy and urostomy
- Problem appliance fitting and management

Banner Casa Grande Wound Center is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and is located at 1800 E. Florence Blvd. To make an appointment, please call 520-381-6150. You will get the most out of your visit by having your medical history completed and knowing the medications you are presently using. Banner Health also accepts most major insurances. If you have questions about your coverage, please contact your insurer before scheduling an appointment. 

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**FREE TOWING  
FROM MARICOPA**





1

1. Veterans were honored at a special breakfast at Maricopa Unified School District, especially its own employees who served, Nov. 8. *Kyle Norby*



2

2. The third annual Maricopa Veterans Parade Nov. 9 celebrated the community's military veterans. *Raquel Hendrickson*



3

3. Maricopa City Council hosted District 11 legislators to talk about a range of issues — school funding, public safety personnel and cancer presumptions, a legislative session preview, ballot initiatives and lines of communication. Front row: Councilmember Marvin Brown, Sen. Vince Leach, Mayor Christian Price, Councilmember Vincent Manfredi; back row: Rep. Mark Finchem, Councilmember Nancy Smith, Vice Mayor Henry Wade, Councilmember Rich Vitiello and Rep. Bret Robert. *Submitted*



4

4. Maricopa's VFW post launched a new auxiliary, with officers sworn in Nov. 9 — President Janae Kemery, Senior Vice President Anita Martin, Junior Vice President Jim Mickelson, Treasurer Matthew Dion, Secretary Sandy Hinners, Chaplain Lisa Foster, Conductress Gwen Golden, Guard Dawn Rud, First-Year Trustee Rainey Rose, Second-Year Trustee Pat Sommerfield and Third-Year Trustee Deb Carpenter. *Raquel Hendrickson*



5

5. Doug Whitbeck, plant specialist, discussed flora of the Sonoran Desert National Monument during a presentation to the Maricopa Historical Society. *Raquel Hendrickson*

6. Railcar expert Lon Orlenko of California led the process of straightening the Silver Horizon railcar, that was slightly off-bubble after being moved last year. *Raquel Hendrickson*

7. The Arizona chapter of Buffalo Soldiers of America spoke about the history of the military unit to students at Maricopa High School Nov. 14. *Raquel Hendrickson*



6



7





# **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Ak-Chin Masik Tas Celebration**

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# Renaissance Woman

Meet Maricopa's violist,  
author, agriculturalist

By Raquel Hendrickson

Photos by Kyle Norby



She plays, she writes, she studies grain crops. Laura Olivieri has talents in many fields. Dec. 14, she will be among the musicians of the Maricopa Music Circle ensemble and Maricopa Chorus performing the annual Holiday Musicale.

MMC is scheduled to play perennial favorites like Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite," Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride," Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" a ragtime version of "Jingle Bells" and Mark Lowry's "Mary, Did You Know?" Maricopa Chorus, led by Don Raffik, will join the ensemble with traditional carols, and audience members will be invited to join a sing-along of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" from "Messiah."

"Violists, like bassoonists, are relatively rare," MMC cofounder Judith Zaimont said. "So, it's especially nice that our city's chamber orchestra has Laura in our ever-changing mix."

A published author, Olivieri not only plays viola for MMC but has also transcribed and arranged music for the ensemble, notably their popular medley of music from Star Wars. She also designed the poster and handbills for the program.

## IF YOU GO

**What:** Maricopa Music Circle  
Holiday Musicale

**When:** Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** University of Arizona –  
Maricopa Agricultural Center,  
37530 W. Smith-Enke Road

**How much:** \$12 at the door (\$5  
children under 12) cash or check

**Preorders and info:**

MaricopaMusicCircle@yahoo.com,  
520-316-6268

## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT LAURA OLIVIERI

**Hometown:** Muskegon,  
Michigan

**Maricopa since:** 1998

**Family:** I live with my wonderful 19-year-old son Chayton and my best friend Kathy West. My parents, Pat and Gil Line, visit Maricopa often during the winter. My brother's family, Steve and Ashley Ochs and my niece and nephews come from the Northwest Valley for concerts, farm days and holidays.

**Education:** Associates of  
Arts in biology, Muskegon  
Community College

**Profession:** Research technician  
in plant ecophysiology for  
the USDA at the Maricopa  
Agricultural Center for 27  
years. "We have studied many  
different crops, but mainly  
cereal grains like wheat and  
barley and their responses  
to changing environmental  
conditions. Right now, our  
project studies how four  
different grain crops respond  
to increased temperatures.  
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now and in the future."

- I've been with Maricopa Music Circle since 2012 and have been honored to work with such a wonderful group of talented professionals. Everyone is so dedicated and inspirational. They really encourage individual growth and arts-forward community spirit.
- For performance purposes, I only play viola. But I tinker with other stringed instruments: guitar, piano and bass and will even try a wind or brass instrument, if its owner will let me.
- I started playing in fifth grade-11 years old. I saw





that viola in music class, and I was hooked!

- I think music is a form of universal expression for people and holds a lot of emotion and memories. It can be soothing, invigorating, romantic or even angry. Think about it. If you hear a song you love that you haven't heard in many years, it takes you right back to that time. Even if you're not really into a particular genre, it can remind you of someplace you were or someone you love.
- I love classical, 1920s-1940s Big Band, jazz and I'm a '70s-'80s baby, so classic rock is great too. My son and I always played a game when taking road trips in the car called "Mom, the human jukebox." We'd listen to the classic rock station and see how fast I can come up with the title, band name and year of each song. It always blew his mind that I know most of them.
- I really enjoyed playing Mozart's duos for violin and viola; the counterpoint is so mathematical, and the viola part is rich and challenging. I've also enjoyed Shostakovich, Debussy, modern movie themes like Star Wars, and mid-20th century arrangements for MMC like La Vie en Rose, Moon River and Diga Doo.

- As a teen, I played at Interlochen Fine Arts camp in the summers, and that was really fun. Locally, we've played at many churches, The Black Box Theatre and finally the main stage at the high school's Performing Arts Center for ArtsFest Maricopa this fall. But for several years, MMC has been performing at the University of Arizona's Maricopa Agricultural Center. It's a cozy and relaxed atmosphere with a lot of Maricopa history. I hope everyone will come see us with Maricopa Chorus in December.
- I started writing poetry and short stories in high school. I find that writing helps process feelings, aspirations and dreams. Performance poetry, like Maricopa's poetry slams, really helps people relate to each other and can be very dynamic and fun. Most of the poems I've written recently speak to the challenges of being a busy single parent, the obstacles of life and love, and even some funny memories. I've also published a children's book to help young children who have lost a loved one. I wrote it to help my son, who lost his father when he was 3 years old. It's called "Where Are You? A Child's Book About Loss." It's hard for a parent to know how to help little ones who are grieving. I'm really proud of this work and am glad to see it being used to help other children.
- I've been coming down to Maricopa Agricultural Center's research farm since 1992, when 347 was a two-lane road and Maricopa had only about 1,200 residents.



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# Personal, political lives collide in mayor's hectic schedule

By Joycelyn Cabrera

Christian Price goes beyond balancing his personal and political life — he melds the two together.

Maricopa's incumbent mayor began to pursue politics out of college and continued on the path for the next 20 years. While most full-time workers can put on two different faces for work and for home, many Maricopa residents say Price presents himself the same way both in and out of the office.

He is currently running unopposed for a fourth term.

"I can come in bright-eyed and bushy-tailed in 2012, but you're not going to get to make the overpass happen and see completion in one year or two years or sometimes in four years. It takes a long time to make these long-term processes happen," Price said. "The other side to that is, developers like continuity."

Price has been a Maricopa resident since 2004. He was involved in community-planning for his subdivision of Maricopa Meadows as president of the homeowners association board of directors for six years beginning in 2005. Meanwhile, he climbed positions in the League of Arizona Cities and Towns, landing as treasurer in 2016 and president of the executive committee in 2018.

Price first ran for mayor in 2012 and has been reelected for each term since then.

He networks with city and state officials all around Arizona. His social media can be seen with plenty of pictures from state conferences with Republican Sen. Martha McSally and Gov. Doug Ducey. Although he does not donate funds or have personal connections with state officials, Price stressed the importance of networking for the City of Maricopa.

"What people don't realize is we have problems here in this city that are federal problems," Price said. "We spend a lot of time in D.C. I had one moment with Jeff Flake when he was still a sitting senator; he came out of the door and he said, 'Mayor Price, what are you doing here? I think you're here more than I am.'"

Price is not a stranger to disagreements on social media from his constituents, on state government, or from within the city council. In 2014, former Councilmember



**Cindy and Christian Price work to find balance in their busy schedules.**

Victor Moreno

Leon Potter resigned from his position to run for mayor against Price as a statement on a disagreement between the two about another councilmember receiving a DUI.

"I decided to run at the time, but I didn't get the signatures for it," Potter said. "So, nothing came of it in that regard, but I just wanted to make a statement that the fact even

our leader of our city didn't speak against it, was disappointing."

Potter said he pulled a packet to run for city council in 2020 and the event from four and a half years ago is "water under the bridge."

Price agreed with Potter in response.

"From the beginning of being the mayor and being on city council, he was in the mix,"

Potter said. “I can’t say enough about how he had his mind set on what he wanted to do and then he just went out and did it.”

Henry Wade has served on the City Council for five years and the Planning and Zoning Commission for eight years previous. He is the current vice mayor on the council.

“Our responsibility to the city is public safety, transportation and economic development. There are no Republican police departments, there are no Democratic street-fixers, there is no independent economic development organizer,” Wade said.

Wade has served the city with Price for the past five and a half years and said he does not see a difference between Price the official and Price the neighbor.

“He is a politician, you know?” Wade said. “A lot of what he does goes around what he’s doing as a mayor. He knows how to let his hair down sometimes and relax, but there really is not much of a difference.”

Price’s neighbors see him more as a friendly face down the street instead of a city official.

Brian Petersheim, a local Realtor, has been a resident of Maricopa since 2006. His wife Suzanne has been a resident since 2011 and works in the public-school system.

“He is a very regular guy; you see him out there with his kids. They’re all running around, and whenever we’re driving by, he just automatically waves, not recognizing it’s us,” Suzanne said.

While they may see Price as just one of their neighbors, they also don’t hesitate to ask questions in regards to city affairs.

“He is his family’s designated mail-checker,” Petersheim said. “One day, Suzanne was out there working in the yard, and I saw him walking by and I said, ‘Oh lord,’ and I just smiled to myself. Sure enough, like an hour later I look out the window and she’s still talking to him about traffic and the state of the city.”

Since his reelection announcement on social media, Price has seen a trend of overwhelming popularity among his constituents. Wade said he still has work to do.

“He loves this city. I mean, we all do,” Wade said.

Price began his life in government affairs during college as a legislative assistant for the Arizona House of Representatives.

Price completed one year of law school in Houston but dropped out to return to Arizona while his mother was dying of cancer.

While studying to become a financial

advisor, Price learned about the legislative process in the state of Arizona and later turned to local government and politics. He continues his second job as a financial advisor in partnership with Sierra Wealth Group.

Price finds himself traveling out of state frequently to meet networking goals and adhere to his duties as mayor and league president. Price said he works an average of 60–70 hours a week with leadership positions alongside his partnership with Sierra Wealth Group.


Price also has four children aged 4–13, with his wife, Cindy Price.

“I knew I was going to be married to somebody that was in the political sphere,” Cindy said. “When I first met him, his email address was Price4Prez, so that was never a question. He’s always loved politics.”

For his daughters, having a dad in the civic spotlight is all they know. His oldest child, son Cooper, only experienced his dad outside of a city position before he reached age 6.

“I’m able to balance it, but I will tell you, my job and my family suffer because I put in 70 hours a week [as mayor]. I don’t say that for sympathy; I say that because I chose to run for this position,” Price said. “It’s hard; don’t think for a second that it’s easy.”

Price was faced with immediate support from many Maricopa residents on social media when he announced his running for reelection in 2020. In his last two elections for mayor, he ran unopposed.

“Now, it’s entirely up to the people,” Price said. “If the people want me, then I’ll stick around. If they don’t want me, then they can choose somebody else.” 

## Cindy’s Take

**C**indy Price uses holistic and natural methods to encourage wellness as a life coach after experiencing mental health strains early in her marriage.

She has been married to Mayor Christian Price for 17 years. Originally from Florida, Price travelled to Utah to attend Brigham Young University to study photography. She had already known Christian at this point in her life because of a family connection — he was best friends with her cousin and the best man at her cousin’s wedding.

They married after reuniting in Mesa in their mid-20s and later moved to Maricopa in 2004. After having their first daughter, Cassidy, Price lived with post-partum depression, saying she relied on her husband’s support.

“My 8-year-old was 6 months old when Christian was sworn in, and her first year of life was pretty high stress, she had some



medical issues, and I had post-partum depression. It was really hard for me to go out and do city events; I just felt like a mess. I felt like I was drowning all the time.”

Price said the experience led her to using essential oils and pursuing holistic life coaching. She is the owner of WaveMaker Essentials, an essential-oil business she mixes in with her holistic life coaching, encouraging personal growth among her consumers.

“It started from my own health issues, mainly around mental health,” Price said. “I teach people natural ways to be really

healthy and vibrant.”

She also owns Lily P. Studio, a photography business that specializes in portraits.

“Christian and I have things split up in different ways than a lot of families do,” Cindy Price said. “I travel internationally for work, as well as him traveling, so we kind of trade off. We have a balance that we’ve come to over the years.”

“We have a babysitter that we consider like a daughter and that helps us quite a bit. We get a lot of help from family, and we just make it work.”

# Maricopa goes artificial while waiting for new heart

By Kyle Norby

A Maricopa man is fighting for his life. Victor Jones, 54, and his wife Robin have had a stressful few months, to say the least. At the end of September, a routine hospital visit to check Victor's levels on a blood pressure medication uncovered inevitable heart failure.

"Victor has a history of high blood pressure and that started in 2015," Robin said. "He also has the hereditary factor, because his father also had a heart transplant, at the age of 48."

Robin recalled their experience going to Banner University Medical Center in Phoenix to speak with Victor's doctor about his medication no longer being efficient enough for him. After doctors took a few tests, Victor was placed under observation. They found his blood pressure was dropping drastically.

Doctors determined Victor's heart had become enlarged from his high blood pressure, resulting in what could become heart failure. The heart team determined immediate surgery was necessary.

With a long waiting list for hearts, doctors needed to install a TAH (total artificial heart). This temporary heart is used as a replacement and can last four years, depending on the circumstances. TAH takes over the work the failed heart could not perform, keeping Jones alive and functioning until a permanent heart becomes available for full transplantation.

The artificial heart was placed Oct. 5, with Victor being put into a medical coma due to the nature of the surgery and for the healing of a collapsed lung.

Robin Jones expressed her exhaustion with the long days and nights at the hospital on top of juggling personal responsibilities like driving her grandsons to and from school and getting enough sleep. She is also working for MUSD in the health office of Saddleback Elementary.

"I'm traveling constantly," Robin said. "I'm here almost 24/7, so I am just functioning from day to day. It's been a roller coaster."

Even with the stress and worry, a weight was lifted when Victor woke up from his coma about a month later.



**Victor Jones received an artificial heart in October and is on a long waiting list for a real one.**

Submitted

"He's been doing well, he's progressing," Robin Jones said. "He's in high spirits. He was a little confused because he had been asleep so long."

Robin said she was happy with Victor's strength and resilience during the process.

"Victor was a veteran. He served in the Army and was also a merchant marine for 15 years," she said.

In November, Victor Jones sat up on his own and took a few steps for the first time in over a month with help from hospital staff.

Victor and Robin Jones have received unwavering support from friends and family, including special support from their teenage grandsons Darian and Jaylin Abercrombie, who live with them. The boys created an e-sports company called Team Radius and plan on selling custom merchandise to their fans, donating the proceeds toward their grandfather's medical bills. Victor Jones loves playing videogames with his grandsons, and they often game together in their free time.

Local radio host and vlogger Marc Montgomery had Jaylin, 15, on his radio show


to speak about his grandparents and how people can help.

"We're just selling stuff, like stickers and stuff," Jaylin said. "You can just buy that, and it'll help us a lot, to pay off some of the bills we have."

Montgomery has been a close friend of Victor and the Jones family for several years and wanted to help as well. This came in the form of a GoFundMe.com page for people to donate to "Grandpa Jones" medical expenses and the heart transplant.

"A very good friend of mine, a close friend of mine, almost died last week," Montgomery said in October. "Victor was the first person I met a long time ago at Pacana park."

Despite all the hardships and sleepless nights that have come with Jones's heart failure, the Jones family and friends remain optimistic and hopeful.

"We've got the boys and Marc," Robin Jones said with a laugh. "And Victor's doing great right now." 

 [GoFundMe.com/f/grandpa-jones](https://www.gofundme.com/f/grandpa-jones)



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**Family:** Husband Kerry, children Morgan (24), Zach (22) and Chanlyr (20)

**Pets:** Chocolate lab named River

**Cars:** Honda Accord and a Mini Cooper convertible

**Pet peeve:** Negative people on social media and drivers who don't use their blinkers

**Like least about Maricopa:** I wish Maricopa had more local restaurants with unique offerings. The 347 intimidates the heck out of me.

#### FAVORITE ...

**Charity:** American Diabetes Association & US LBM Foundation

**Song:** Harvest Moon by Neil Young

**Team:** Green Bay Packers

**Drink:** Moscow Mule

**Meal:** Salmon at Arroyo Grille

**Getaway:** The beach

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- Support your student's specific extracurricular activities

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Use the donation form on the right and follow the steps below. Or, visit us at [musd20.org/taxcredit](http://musd20.org/taxcredit) to make your donation online.

### STEP 1

- Complete your contact information
- List student name(s) if you are donating for program participation fees for a particular student(s)
- List the MUSD School that will receive the donation (*Butterfield Elementary, Maricopa Elementary, Pima Butte Elementary, Saddleback Elementary, Santa Cruz Elementary, Santa Rosa Elementary, Desert Wind Middle School, Maricopa Wells Middle School, Maricopa High School*)

### STEP 2

- Choose the area(s) you would like to support:
  - Greatest Need: *Check these to donate to any MUSD school that needs the funds the most; or for a program at a specific school that needs the funds the most*
  - High School Only and Elementary/High School Options: *Check the box of the program(s) you would like to receive your donation*

### STEP 3

- Designate: If you checked a box with a "\*" you will need to state specifically where your donation should be used.  
*For example:*
  - If you checked "Clubs" you might list: "Photography", "AmerInd", etc.
  - If you checked "Standardized Testing" you might list "SAT" or "AP"

### STEP 4

- List the Tax Year you would like your donation applied.
- Add all the amounts from Step 2
- Mail and postmark on or before April 15, 2020 to include in your 2019 tax return.
- Make a check or money order payable to Maricopa Unified School District, or use a debit/credit card online at [musd20.org/taxcredit](http://musd20.org/taxcredit)
- Mail form to:  
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**44150 W. Maricopa Casa Grande Hwy.**  
**Maricopa, AZ 85138**
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**GREATEST NEED** **AMOUNT: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

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☐ I would like my donation to go toward the school(s) listed above for their greatest need.

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☐ \*Standardized Testing

**ELEMENTARY/HIGH** **AMOUNT: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \*Athletics Participation Fee

☐ \*Athletics Undefined

☐ Character Education

☐ \*Clubs

☐ \*Educational Competition

☐ \*Field Trip

☐ \*Performing Arts

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☐ \*Visual Arts

**Designate** – If you selected an activity above with a "\*" next to it, list the name of the specific program/fieldtrip/sport/test/club/etc:

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**TOTAL CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT: \$** \_\_\_\_\_



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1



2



3





1. David Luna, a senior at Maricopa High School, was one of 15 winners of a \$10,000 STEM scholarship (and the only one from Arizona) during alliantgroup's annual Think Tank Summit. He is attending the University of Advancing Technology in Tempe and majoring in Cyber Security. *Submitted*

2. Ilijah Johnson (2) came down with this pass for Maricopa High School as the Rams wound down the 3-7 season. Johnson was named Second Team in 5A San Tan. *Raquel Hendrickson*

3. Students from the newly open Heritage Academy cheered on the girls during a PowderPuff flag football game at Pacana Park. *Raquel Hendrickson*

4. MHS Red Ribbon Week art winners (from left), third place Grant Hall, second place Samantha Bayless, Principal Brian Winter and winner Riley Burke. *Kyle Norby*

5. Senior Gavin Buchberger was a key player for a Sequoia Pathway football team that was undefeated in the regular season and reached the championship game. *Raquel Hendrickson*

6. The MHS Air Force Junior ROTC was busy during Veterans Day week, presenting the colors at events like the Central Arizona College ceremony. *Raquel Hendrickson*

7. Derek Blakely and Haley Lemon stole scenes in MHS Theatre Company's "Peter and the Starcatcher." *Raquel Hendrickson*



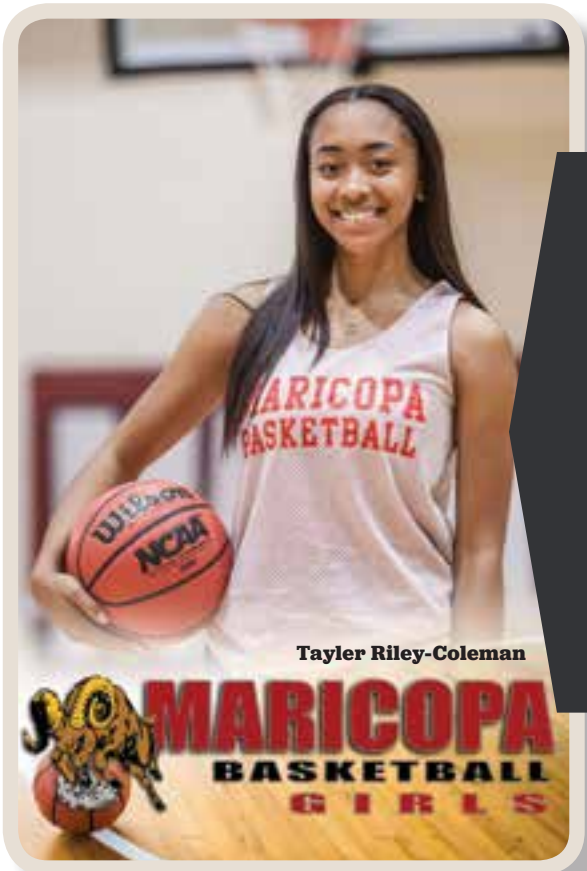


# MHS winter sports heating up

By Raquel Hendrickon Photos by Victor Moreno



See full story at  
InMaricopa.com.



Taylor Riley-Coleman

## Girls' Basketball

Rashawn Calvert is in her second year of coaching the varsity Rams, coming off a successful 21-9 season that saw them in the 5A playoffs.

While graduating seniors took with them a big chunk of the team's scoring from last year, juniors and sophomores are stepping up into leadership roles.

"The hard work ethic of this team is what's going to make us competitive every game," Calvert said.

Tryouts brought in 45 girls. Calvert said she will have 12 on varsity, with a set 10 on junior varsity and another set 10 for freshmen, and players moving among the three levels.

Among players returning are juniors Brooke Smith, Evone Santiago, Tayler Riley-Coleman and Shakira Gillespie.

"They're gelling, they're working things out," Calvert said. "It's nice to have players I don't have to beg to give their all."

## Boys' Basketball

The Maricopa High School boys' basketball program has a new head coach and a mostly new varsity team.

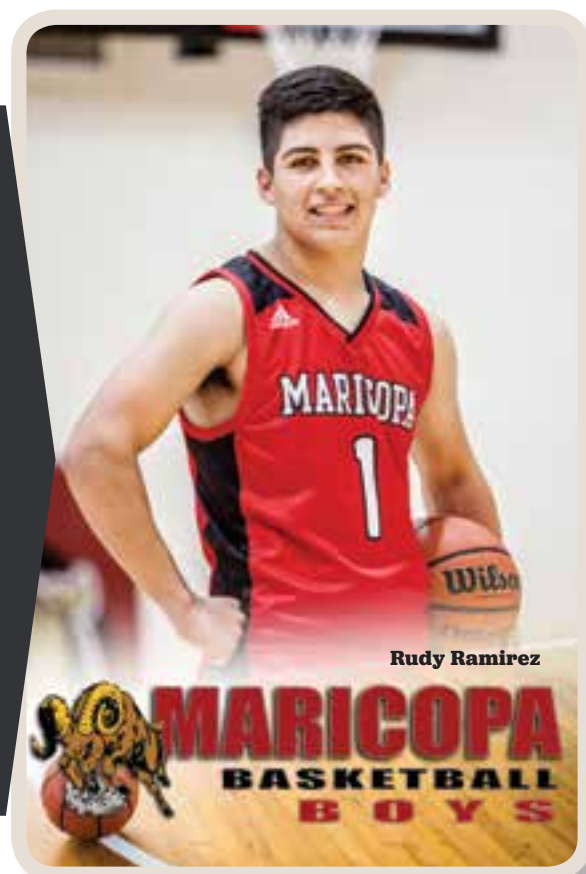
Paul Gretkierwicz came from Paradise Honors in Surprise, where he was an assistant four years as the team became state contenders in 2A and then 3A. Earlier, he was an assistant under the same coach at Desert Edge in Goodyear. After moving to Ahwatukee last year, he cast about for a school closer to home and found Maricopa.

"I first came here in March, and we had open gyms and workouts, and I got to know some of the kids," Gretkierwicz said. "We had a really busy June. We played 20 games in June."

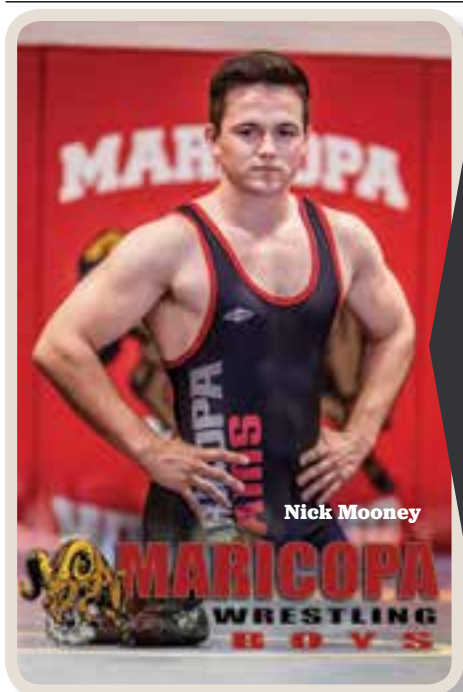
He said he has just three players with varsity experience. There are additions to this year's squad with proven athleticism in other sports, such as football standout Ilijah Johnson.

"I knew it was kind of a rebuilding program with not a lot of wins in the win column (2-21)," Gretkierwicz said.

He plans to run four or five guards on the floor, saying their speed and athleticism could make up for lack of height. Where the Rams do have height, there is little experience. He will be focusing on playing pressure defense, too.



Rudy Ramirez



Nick Mooney

## Wrestling

A program that sent five wrestlers to the state tournament is growing in numbers. Coach Erick Fierro said his team is “definitely young.”

The one returning wrestler with state experience is sophomore Gabriel Garcia. While only a couple of the seniors participated last year, they may be set up as leaders strictly based on age because it can be difficult for a 15-year-old to jump into a team-leadership role, Fierro said.

The program this year consists of 30 wrestlers. That includes 10 freshmen and 11 sophomores.

“We’re young, but that’s good,” the coach said. “With all the sophomores, we are hopeful for the next few years.”

The lower weights have the most depth for the Rams, though coaches are still analyzing their wrestlers. Nicholas Mooney, for instance, will likely move up a weight class to 182.

“That’s the beauty of wrestling; it can change at any moment,” Fierro said.

## Girls’ Soccer

A decade ago, Cortney Kelleners coached the girls’ soccer team at MHS. After 2010, he coached boys’ high school soccer and college soccer and coached club soccer for boys and girls, but he hasn’t been in charge of high school girls since. Until this season.

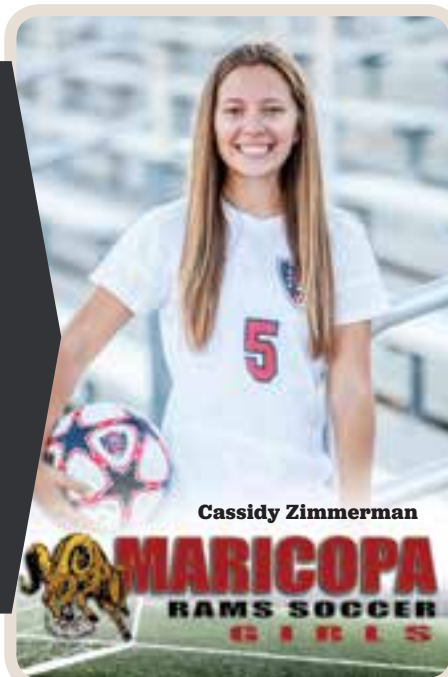
Saying he was tired of seeing the turnover at the head coach position, Kelleners agreed to coach both the boys’ and girls’ varsity teams for MHS. The feat has required some shifts in the schedule, playing on the same day at the same school as much as possible.

“And I made sure I have a good JV staff,” he said.

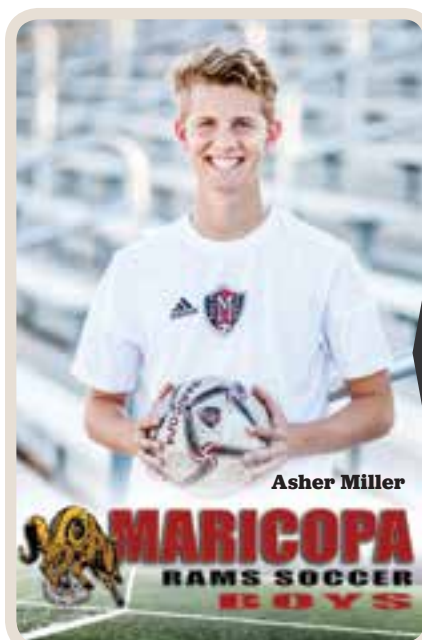
Last season, the girls were 9-10-1 overall and struggled in the 5A San Tan Region. But they come back experienced.

“The core of the group is coming back,” Kelleners said.

Though they are starting the season with key senior Payson Hacker sidelined by a torn ACL, the Rams want to push farther into the post-season. A key is to keep everyone with the same goal in mind.



Cassidy Zimmerman



Asher Miller

## Boys’ Soccer

The MHS boys’ soccer team is regrouping after graduating 12 seniors. This year’s team boasts around 38 players, with 20 on junior varsity.

“We had to bring up a lot of kids, so there are a lot of kids that this is their first year on varsity,” Kelleners said.

Senior Taylor Russo has been a “solid anchor” at center back since his freshman year. Junior Dakotah Barchus is expected to be an effective utility player. “I can put him anywhere on the field and he’ll be able to be useful.”

Kelleners said the Rams will be a scrappy team, with impact players available in all grades. Kevin Vasquez was last year as just a freshman.

Last season’s team was 5-14 and was outscored by opponents collectively by 29 goals. So, there is plenty of room to improve.

“A lot of them are excited they made varsity, but the older players are aware they’ve got some work to do,” Kelleners said.



# Exceptional Students teacher goes extra mile in time, money, supplies

Story and photos by Raquel Hendrickson



**Walker Kyle with his sixth-grade students Jeremiah Bennett, Noelia Elizondo, Liliana Urias-Soto, Jazmin Muniz, Chloe Fondeck, Cesia Gonzalez, Tatum Terrell, Carter Orozco and Aiden Simpson.**



On the campus of Maricopa Wells Middle School, Walker Kyle is referred to as Dr. Kyle.

But his relationship with his students isn't quite as formal as that. In his first year at Maricopa Unified School District, he has learned the needs of his six classes of Exceptional Student Services,

inside and outside the classroom. He's also been savvy enough to find a source to fund those needs besides his own pocketbook.

Kyle was one of 200 Arizona teachers awarded \$5,000 each by Fiesta Bowl Charities Wishes for Teachers as it gave out \$1 million in grants.

"When we heard about it, we were very

excited," sixth grader Jazmin Muniz said.

The grant money will go toward technology like computers and laptops to help them with math concepts and reading. It will also provide classroom supplies. ESS determines special education programs, policies and procedures.

"This award will really help our students. I think it's a big step. Typically, I spend \$200 to \$300 a month out of my paycheck to get the kiddoes what they need in order to be successful," Kyle said. "This year alone, I have bought boxes upon boxes of folders, markers, pencils. It's to a point where I'm working a second job in order to make sure I can continue my ministry. I look at education as a ministry."

He also offers afterschool math tutoring to about 25 students. His typical day on campus starts at 6 a.m. and ends at 7:30 p.m. or later.

"With my learners I have to build four or five lesson plans to be sure I catch where they are at," Kyle said. "I believe tests and scores are not everything. We have student portfolios and we look at the progress from when they come in to their progress in December, their progress in March. I feel like if we can gain two or three major concepts in my class, we've made progress."


The application for the grant had to go through the district business office. Kyle stressed the need for math and reading help. Fiesta Bowl disbursed the funds to teachers in K-12 classrooms.

"He's doing great," Principal Thad Miller said. "I love when they apply for grants. It's going to be good."

Kyle's ESS classrooms have about 10 students each. He came to MUSD from the Dysart Unified School District, bringing 16 years of experience. His care for his students goes beyond buying school supplies and even gym shorts and hygiene products. One of his students may soon be adopted into Kyle's family.

"When I was a kid, I had a teacher really



pour into me," he said. "If it wasn't for Mr. Pickens, I don't think I would be here where I am today. I was a pain in the butt in sixth grade. He came up to me and he said, 'I'm not giving up on you, Walker, but I will hold you accountable.'" 

**Walker Kyle's classroom is receiving \$5,000 from Fiesta Bowl Charities Wishes for Teachers.**

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# What's in a grade? Arizona school letter grades

By Bernadette Russoniello

Every fall, the Arizona Department of Education releases school letter grades. But how is that grade determined? How does it impact your child or their school?

For high school letter grades are a combination of state testing scores, growth and improvement for identified sub-groups, English Language Learner (ELL) proficiency and growth, college and career readiness measures, and graduation rate.

State testing equals 30% of the total score. State testing includes English and Math scores measured by the AzMerit exam for grades 9-11. This year, schools can opt to use the ACT exam for 11th graders.

Sub-group improvements provide 20% of the letter grade. Sub-groups include specific populations of students related to race, socio-economics and special education. Schools

have to show growth and proficiency in test scores, graduation rate and drop-out rate for these sub-groups disaggregated from the overall student performance.



Bernadette Russoniello

Another 20% of the grade comes from college and career readiness indicators. Schools report data from a multitude of sources including AP test scores, SAT score, ACT scores, Accuplacer (College Placement) testing, FAFSA completion, participation in Early College programs, CTE program completion, industry certifications,

work-based learning and internships, and student attainment of the 16 core courses for university admission (four English, four math, three lab science, two social studies, two second language, one CTE or fine art). Maricopa High School made significant growth in this category for the 2018-19 school year.

Graduation rate accounts for another 20%. This score is distributed among the graduation/completion rates of students over the past four years, dating back to the class of 2014, plus the overall improvement of graduation rate for the current year. For the class of 2019, MHS had a 10% increase in graduation rate.

The final 10% of the letter grade comes from ELL proficiency and growth. This number comes from performance of ELL students on the AzELLA English Language Acquisition proficiency exam and the growth of students in ELL programs. MHS also experienced a significant increase in this measure.

For K-8 schools, measures include AzMerit English and Math proficiency (30%), student



growth — increasing scores from past year's performance (50%), ELL proficiency (10%) and a variety of results including attendance and sub-group growth (10%).

So, what do letter grades not include? Student wellness, character education, leadership, state and national award-winning programs, competitive activities, teacher qualification and certification, and a myriad of other categories that contribute to high-performing schools.

For more information regarding your school's letter grade, visit [AZSBE.az.gov/f-school-letter-grades](http://AZSBE.az.gov/f-school-letter-grades).

Bernadette Russoniello is the College and Career coordinator at Maricopa High School.

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# Be Awesome: Make family plans to reduce holiday stress

By Dr. Harriet Phelps

**H**oliday planning, shopping and preparing are very exhausting. When the family budget does not stretch to meet your needs, stress can build. Now is the time to call a family meeting, ask some questions, and make plans that reduce some stressors.

Begin with the parents having the first discussion. Determine what the next holiday is and how to meet your family needs to celebrate. Ask each other what is important about this time together. Traditions are an important part of family life. It honors the family values and special cultural meaning. This year may be the year to establish your family traditions. For example, I carried over from my childhood finding an apple and orange in my sock under the tree. One of my sons remembered

the apple and orange in his sock. You are making memories.

Next, ask your kids what they like, dislike and want to include in the celebrations.



Dr. Harriet Phelps

Keeping the time to about 15 minutes, decide what fits your time and budget. Delegate chores to each family member that are age-appropriate. Planning, discussing and implementing are great skills to teach.

Here are some ideas:

**Turkey notes:** A short, silly rhyme made up for each family member and guest. The rhymes are three to four lines and the main theme is "Turkey." Each rhyme is folded and placed next to each place setting for the holiday meal. When the time is right each guest opens their note and reads aloud to the group. The sillier the better. Sit back and enjoy the laugh. Or tell

each person at the table what you are thankful for about them.

*Ideas: Turkey hobble, Turkey gobble, Eat too much and you will wobble!*


*Turkey crown, Turkey dress, Disney should make you their next Princess.*

You get it.

**Coupons:** When money is tight giving does not cost money but time. Nothing is more precious than giving a few minutes of our time. At Christmas, make coupons to give to each person. Good for one hug, 30 minutes of baseball practice, one bedtime story, taking out the trash without grumbling.

Or get out the crayons and paper and make ornaments for the tree or walls, draw the child's spread-out hand to create a turkey or draw a picture about the holiday. Be sure to write the child's name and date. I still smile when I come across these drawings in my holiday box from my sons.

Parents, it doesn't have to be bought or big to be the best.

As always, be awesome. 

*Dr. Harriet Phelps is a volunteer at Be Awesome Youth Coalition.*



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# What is a 'gifted' student?

By Murray Siegel

**W**e understand what a gifted pianist or a gifted painter or a gifted athlete is. In each case, they produce results that are far superior to others' attempts at music, art or athletic endeavors. What does a gifted student produce?

Some say gifted students produce superior grades. During my 46 years of teaching, I have had the responsibility to teach in advanced, honors and Advanced Placement classes. I have seen students who were labeled "gifted" whose grades were lower than expected, and I had many students who did not qualify as gifted yet who produced consistently magnificent results on tests and projects.


So, what does it take to be gifted? Typically, this is based on IQ (intelligence quotient) where the mean (average) score is 100. A 10-year old with an IQ of 100 has a level of intelligence that matches the ability of a typical 10-year old. Most IQ tests have a standard deviation (a measure of variability) of 15, and scores are placed in brackets based on standard deviation. An IQ of 130 is generally used as the minimum IQ for a gifted program and is two standard deviations above the mean.

A 10-year old with an IQ of 130 has an intellectual level equivalent to an average 13-year old and approximately 2% of the population has an IQ of 130 or above. IQ measures potential, and some do not reach their potential while others exceed it.

To understand the gifted student, allow me to briefly provide examples of truly gifted students who I have taught. They each had an IQ greater than 145, with one in a thousand being in that class.

Jared entered fourth grade with a knowledge of logarithms. He sat in my university statistics class the next summer and received an A.

He took calculus at Georgia Tech after fifth grade and excelled. Andrew was a student whose love was foreign language. As a Slavic linguist, he saw something that no scholar had ever seen; a pattern in Czech irregular verbs. Ben was a 10th grader in my AP calculus class and excelled in a class of the school's brightest seniors. In 11th grade the school had no math class for him, so he took a differential equations class at a local college, to which the 15-year-old's mother had to drive him.

Gifted students have the potential to cure cancer, slow climate change or write a transcendental piece of music. Parents and teachers must help gifted students realize their potential. 



**Murray Siegel**

**In 2018-19,  
Maricopa Unified  
School District  
had 231 students  
participating in a  
gifted program,  
an increase of  
more than 200%  
since the 2013-14  
school year.**

*Murray Siegel, Ph.D., has 44 years of experience teaching mathematics. He is in his fifth year as a volunteer at Butterfield Elementary School.*

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## MOST EXPENSIVE HOME SOLD



Kyle Norby

### 1. 43376 W. Desert Fairways Drive, Rancho El Dorado

The most expensive home sold in the city of Maricopa Oct. 16-Nov. 15 was a four-bedroom hacienda overlooking the fourth hole of The Duke at Rancho El Dorado. The property, which is on a 10,000-square-foot lot, had only one owner since it was built in 2003. It took only a month to sell at \$10,000 under its initial asking price.

<b>Sold:</b> Nov. 8	<b>Bedrooms:</b> 4
<b>Purchase price:</b> \$340,000	<b>Bathrooms:</b> 3
<b>Square footage:</b> 2,851	<b>Community:</b> Rancho El Dorado
<b>Price per square foot:</b> \$119.26	<b>Features:</b> 3-car garage, backyard spa, Xeriscaping, game room, RV gate, citrus trees
<b>Days on market:</b> 30	
<b>Builder:</b> Hacienda	
<b>Year built:</b> 2003	

## LEAST EXPENSIVE HOME SOLD



Kyle Norby

### 1. 37137 W. Amalfi Ave., Sorrento

The least expensive home sold in the city of Maricopa Oct. 16-Nov. 15 was a three-bedroom home in Sorrento. Previously a rental, it was on the market just over a month before selling for its historically highest price, though that was still the city's most affordable.

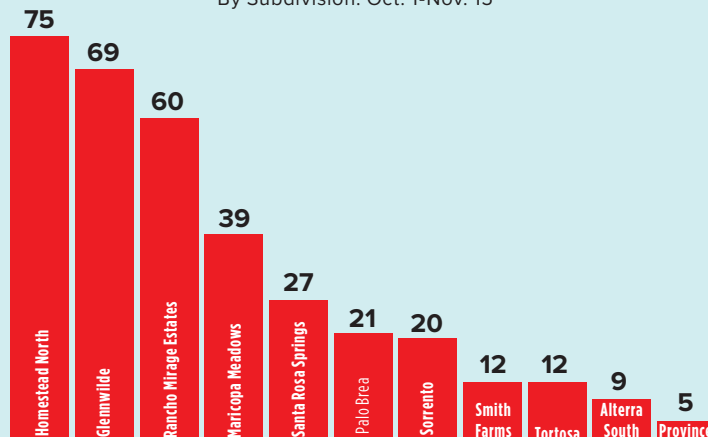
<b>Sold:</b> Nov. 15	<b>Year built:</b> 2008
<b>Purchase price:</b> \$169,000	<b>Bedrooms:</b> 3
<b>Square footage:</b> 1,370	<b>Bathrooms:</b> 2
<b>Price per square foot:</b> \$123.35	<b>Community:</b> Sorrento
<b>Days on market:</b> 39	<b>Features:</b> New paint and carpet, gravel landscaping, two-car garage
<b>Builder:</b> Unknown	

2. 36781 W. Mondragone Lane, Sorrento	\$170,000
3. 46024 W. Long Way, Maricopa Meadows	\$175,000
4. 46054 W. Starlight Drive, Maricopa Meadows	\$175,000
5. 21826 N. Braden Road, Rancho El Dorado	\$177,000

2. 42488 W. Venture Road, Rancho El Dorado	\$319,000
3. 42793 W. Whispering Wind Lane, Province	\$315,000
4. 21774 N. Sunset Drive, Cobblestone Farms	\$305,000
5. 21688 N. Sunset Drive, Cobblestone Farms	\$295,000

## Single-Family Home Building Permits

By Subdivision. Oct. 1-Nov. 15



Source: City of Maricopa



For a full list of last month's Maricopa home sales, see [InMaricopa.com/Real-Estate](http://InMaricopa.com/Real-Estate).



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# Vekol Market

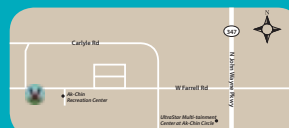


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# Massachusetts meets South America in Maricopa

By Jean Sacramento

The fast-growing jacaranda is really a front yard ornamental tree growing up to 10 feet a year. The University of Arizona arboretum website suggests it can span 20 to 50 feet in both height and width. Jacarandas can be pruned to keep them small, but this raises a possible risk of the trees not blooming. In general, avoid over-pruning a jacaranda.

This sub-tropical tree is only hardy down to 27 degrees Fahrenheit. On the other hand, they are also susceptible to sun scald during the intensely hot summers on the low desert. The tree in question here in south Maricopa thrives on the south side of a north-to-south oriented home that is also protected by nearby neighborhood homes. Jacarandas tend to produce more flowers during droughts and do best in sandy, well-drained soils.



Jean  
Sacramento

As is the case with many trees in the low desert, one needs to avoid over-watering. Of course, too little water can be harmful as well. As a rule, a low, slow drink of water only when needed suffices. A slow release granular fertilizer (10-10-10) between May and June will provide needed nutrients. Jacarandas do not do well in extremely windy areas, but this condition is rarely the case in Maricopa. Interestingly, throughout the Phoenix area this tree can be seen on many golf courses, so it is accepting of park-like landscapes.

Be advised this is not the tree to plant near a pool due to leaf and flower drop. During a rainy period, the fading blooms can drop to create quite a mess and become slippery. In late winter and early spring, leaves will also drop for a short time creating some litter. As with many other garden plants, aphids, scale and the glassy winged



sharp shooters can infest the leaves. These pests can be eradicated with insecticidal soap or neem oil.

The lifespan of this tree can be up to 200 years. The one in south Maricopa is but a child of a little over 10 years. 

 [macmastergardener@gmail.com](mailto:macmastergardener@gmail.com)  
 520-374-6263

*Jean Sacramento moved from Weymouth, Massachusetts, to Mariopa four years ago. She has been a Master Gardener for three years.*

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3. Utilize a timer for lights.
4. Incorporate reflective ornaments and tinsel in your décor; they are just as bright at night and multiply your resources for shine.
5. Use crock pots, toaster ovens and microwaves instead of your stove or oven.

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When Master Gardener Jean Sacramento moved to Arizona from Massachusetts, little did she know a native from South America named Jacaranda mimosifolia would grace the front yard of her newly purchased home in south Maricopa. Every spring starting in late May and again in the fall, it is covered with beautiful lavender blue blooms that have a mildly sweet, honey-like fragrance. Watering under the tree's canopy produces foot-long clusters that can last up to two months. No wonder people passing by stop to ask her about this tree.

# Why listing in December may not be a great idea

By Dayv Morgan

Trying to sell your home in December has its challenges, especially if you are listing around the Christmas season. If you can, it is best to wait until after New Year's Day, and here's why.

Real estate is in low demand. In December 2018, only 127 homes went under contract, the lowest of any month in the last year and about half the 220 homes that went under contract in March 2019.

Holiday décor can be a distraction and will look awkward in marketing photos if the house remains on the market after December. Buyers will still be viewing pictures of your Christmas tree in January and February, reminding them that it's been on the market for a long time.



Dayv Morgan

To give potential buyers a good view of your floor plan and allow them to imagine what it will look like year-round, you should go with minimal or no decorating, and that does not make for a very cheery Christmas for you and your family.


Even without holiday decorations, the outside of the house may not photograph at its best. Deciduous trees will be bare and look dead, and your landscaping will likely look a lot less enticing than it will in March. Countering that takes extra time, money and effort.

The days get dark earlier in December, limiting the number of hours available to display your home in full sunlight.

Showings can be a nuisance when you have guests for the holidays, since you

typically will leave to accommodate potential buyers.

Holidays can be busy and stressful enough without the added expenses for moving, repairs and demands of packing up your house by a certain date.

If you've already listed your home late in the year, you can take your listing temporarily off the market until after New Year's, and the "days on market" will not increase during this time. 

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

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# Memory Café offered by Pinal-Gila Council for Seniors

By Joan Koczor

A recent article by Ginger Fligger with Pinal-Gila Council for Seniors states 173,000 people in Arizona will live with Alzheimer's or another condition that causes the symptoms of dementia — memory loss, difficulty making decisions and communicating, and disorientation or confusion — by 2020.

In Pinal County the estimated number of individuals living with Alzheimer's is 2,440. Individuals living with dementia as well as their spouse, child or others who are close to them often become socially isolated, due to stigma and lack of public understanding about dementia, as well as the difficulty in managing daily tasks.

Fligger goes on to report, "However, we are fortunate in Pinal County to have a new program called Memory Café, which has

been implemented by Pinal-Gila Council for Senior Citizens."




Joan Koczor

The Memory Café is a welcoming, social gathering for people living with dementia and their families, friends and caregivers. The number of family caregivers continues to grow in proportion to the aging population. The demands on family caregivers are multi-faceted. Demands are physical, emotional, financial and spiritual.

Most of the caregivers PGCSC works with are caring for either a spouse or a parent. These amazing individuals make personal sacrifices every day, placing their loved ones' needs ahead of their own. PGCSC is offering an opportunity to put those demands to the side for a short period of time, enjoy a cup of coffee and make a connection with friends.

Guests are welcome whose dementia is due to any underlying condition, and at any stage of disease progression. The atmosphere is more like a coffeehouse or a neighborhood party than a clinical program. Guests are not asked their diagnosis. This way, individuals who have not been diagnosed or are not comfortable with their diagnosis feel welcome.

Information about resources and services is available for those who seek it. However, the Memory Café is to provide a break from focusing on disease and disability and just focus on having an enjoyable time.

The Memory Café meets the third Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. at the PGCSC office located at 8969 W. McCartney Road in Casa Grande. 

 **Ginger Fligger, 520-836-2758**

*Joan Koczor is a senior advocate and Maricopa resident.*



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# How old you feel may be more important than your actual age

By Al Brandenburg

Last month I wrote about the need for a cemetery and internment services in Maricopa. This month we'll address some things a bit more on the lighter side, especially with the holidays here.

The notion of how old you feel versus how old you really are has been attracting more attention from researchers and medical professionals. Recent studies have linked subjective age — the age that you feel — to a range of health outcomes, including depression, dementia and longevity. The findings: The younger you feel, the better off you may be.

Adults who feel younger report fewer chronic conditions than those who feel older. They also take fewer medications, visit the doctor less often and are more likely to maintain a normal weight, according to data collected from a large national study on health and wellbeing led by the University of Wisconsin.

Some people might feel younger if they go for a walk outside, or, if they can't walk, if someone takes them in a wheelchair outside, according to recent research. You might feel younger if you play a card game or an activity you did when you were younger. It's a matter of finding what you enjoy and, if you have to adapt it, figure out a way to do so.

There are tons of things for seniors to do in Maricopa from the various gyms in town to golf and myriad people playing card games. Soon we will have an operating senior center with all kinds of activities to keep you thinking younger.

Research companies are working on medications that slow the process of aging. One of these that show promise in humans is RTB101, a drug developed by a Boston-based biotech company.

Here are readily available things that are proven to slow down aging:

**Fruits and vegetables.** There are more than 20,000 different phytonutrients in fruits and vegetables, and each has a unique role in fighting age-related damage to our bodies.

**Lean protein.** Studies have shown that people hold on to muscle better if they eat

enough protein — at least 25 to 30 grams per meal.

**Strength training.** This can help improve metabolism and mobility by maintaining muscle.

**Aerobic exercise.** Walk, run, bike — move for a minimum of 30 minutes, five times a week.

**Sunscreen and shades.** They help reduce the sun exposure that activates free radicals and damages DNA.

**Weight loss.** Losing extra pounds, especially around the midsection, can help reduce inflammation.


**Vacations.** Offset chronic stress, which speeds aging by producing inflammation, by taking breaks. For acute stress, such as grief, counseling may help.

I wish my readers a healthy and safe



Al Brandenburg



holiday season. For your New Year's resolution, vow to think younger and do something to keep you that way. 

*Al Brandenburg is the director and secretary of Maricopa Senior Coalition.*

Sources: American Institute on Aging, Medicine Net, US News.com, AARP



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# Calendar

## DECEMBER

**2**

**Doug Hocking at Maricopa Historical Society Speaker Series**  
5:30 p.m., Maricopa Public Library  
41600 W. Smith-Enke Road



**3**

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

**4**

**A+ Charter Schools Groundbreaking**  
10 a.m., Allen Stephens Parkway  
West of Banner Health

**6**

**Merry Copa: Let It Snow**  
6-9 p.m., Copper Sky Regional Park  
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.



**6-8**

**12 Days of Christmas with Santa & Mrs. Claus**  
6 p.m., Maricopa South Pole  
44267 W. Cypress Lane

**7-8**

**Shamrock Farms Joy to the Herd**  
9 a.m.-3 p.m., Shamrock Farms  
40034 W. Clayton Road

**7**

**Santa Run 5k**  
4 p.m., Copper Sky Regional Park  
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

**Johnson Family Christmas Lighting Ceremony**  
5:30 p.m., 41339 W. Sanders Way

**Rykert Trio 2019 Christmas Tour**  
6 p.m., Maricopa Community Church  
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.



**Masik Tas Light Parade**  
7 p.m., Ak-Chin Indian Community  
West Farrell Road

**11**

**Bowling with Santa**  
6 p.m., UltraStar Multi-tainment Center at Ak-Chin Circle  
16000 N. Maricopa Road

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



For details on these and other local events — and to list your own — visit [InMaricopa.com/Calendar](http://InMaricopa.com/Calendar).



**DEC  
5-15**

# Masik Tas celebrates Ak-Chin history

By Fran Lyons

Masik Tas is an event held annually for the last 12 years to commemorate the formal recognition of the Ak-Chin Indian Community.

Masik Tas is a phrase derived from the O'odham language meaning birthday celebration. It is also a joyful festival and an opportunity for neighboring tribes and all the communities of Maricopa to participate. It's a time of coming together and recognizing unity and shared values.

Agriculture is the foundation of the Ak-Chin lifestyle and informs the culture and traditions of the community.

"Farming is our backbone and always will be," Chairman Robert Miguel said. "We have 16,000 acres designated to growing fruits, vegetables and traditional crops such as corn and alfalfa."

All are invited to join with the Ak-Chin people as they celebrate Masik Tas. Highlights include the Light Parade Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. and a concert by Ramon Ayala Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. At the carnival, kids age 3 and over can ride all day for \$10. Kids under 3 get in free.

The history of Ak-Chin in relatively recent years began when President William Howard



Taft signed a document in 1912 establishing the land for the Maricopa Reservation. Originally provided over 47,000 acres, which was later reduced, farming continued on the 22,000 acres the tribe still maintains today.

In 1961, the tribe's government was formally organized under the Federal Articles of Association. The Ak-Chin Community is governed by a five-member tribal council. Its governing body oversees all aspects of tribal and community affairs.

The O'odham word Ak-Chin translates to "mouth of the arroyo or wash" or "place that loses itself into the sand or ground." The term refers to a type of farming that relies on washes — seasonal food plains created by winter snows and summer rains.

"The Ak-Chin have always been farmers and have followed the Vekol Wash," Miguel said.

The first major enterprise of the community was Ak-Chin Farms, which currently harvests over 15,000 acres, making it one of the largest farming communities in the United States.

"Our jalapenos are distributed to Pace Picante for salsa, potatoes to Frito Lay, Poor Brothers and In-n-Out Burger, and our pecans are shipped overseas," the chairman said.



It also goes without saying this is how the Ak-Chin contribute to and nourish their own community and surrounding neighbors. Other crops, found in the wild, are harvested to support the creative endeavors of the community artisans.

"There are only 10 traditional basket-weavers in the community that can continue and pass on the heritage and artistry of this gift of beauty," Miguel said.

The community is well known for the unique patterns and intricate design of the baskets they create, which will be seen during Masik Tas.

## IF YOU GO

**What:** Masik Tas

**Where:** Ak-Chin Circle Field & Arena  
16000 N. Maricopa Road

**When:** Dec. 5-8: Basketball tournaments

**Dec. 7, 7 p.m.:** Light

Parade on Farrell Road

**Dec. 9, 11 a.m.:** Charity Golf Tournament,  
Ak-Chin Southern Dunes

**Dec. 13, 8 a.m.:** All-Indian Junior Rodeo

**Dec. 13, 4-10 p.m.:** Carnival

**Dec. 13, 4 p.m.:** Bull Bash

**Dec. 14, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.:** Carnival

**Dec. 14-15, noon:** All-Indian Rodeo

**Dec. 14, 7 p.m.:** Ramon Ayala Concert

**Dec. 15, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.:** Carnival

**Info:** [MasikTas.Ak-Chin.nsn.us](http://MasikTas.Ak-Chin.nsn.us)



# Calendar

**12**

**Citizens of Glory  
Christmas Concert**  
7 p.m., Maricopa  
Community Church  
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

**13**

**Masik Tas Celebration**  
4 p.m., Ak-Chin Circle  
16000 N. Maricopa Road

**13-15**

**12 Days of Christmas with  
Santa & Mrs. Claus**  
6 p.m., Maricopa South Pole  
44267 W. Cypress Lane

**14**

**Masik Tas Celebration**  
10 a.m., Ak-Chin Circle  
16000 N. Maricopa Road



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

**Maricopa Living Nativity**  
5-8 p.m., Community  
of Hope Church  
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

**Holiday Musicale**  
7:30 p.m., Maricopa  
Agricultural Center  
37860 W. Smith-Enke Road

**Nativities Around the World**  
5-8 p.m., Church of Jesus  
Christ of Latter-day Saints  
45235 W. Honeycutt Ave.



**15**

**Masik Tas Celebration**  
10 a.m., Ak-Chin Circle  
16000 N. Maricopa Road

**17**

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

**19**

**Zonta Club of Maricopa**  
5:30 p.m., The Villages  
Clubhouse  
20991 Butterfield Parkway

**20-22**

**12 Days of Christmas with  
Santa & Mrs. Claus**  
6 p.m., Maricopa South Pole  
44267 W. Cypress Lane

**21**

**The Streets Don't Love You Back  
11th Annual Toy Giveaway**  
Noon, Maricopa Police  
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## Snowy forecast for Merry Copa holiday party

When the City of Maricopa event coordinators subtitled this year's Merry Copa celebration "Let It Snow," they were serious.

The City is hauling in 50 tons of snow for the annual event for lots of sledding opportunities at the annual event, which this year is on a Friday. Kids will also find a bounce house and mechanical reindeer rodeo.

Santa will again be on hand to greet children, and the horse-drawn carriage will return for a "sleigh ride." There will be contests for ugliest sweater and fastest doughnut-eating. If you prefer your dough in a different form, there will also be cookie-decorating.

Techies can indulge in virtual reality and esports. Vendors and food trucks will also be on hand.

Maricopa Chorus will sing carols as will the school choir from Leading Edge Academy. Bring your ice skates for the faux ice rink and check out the reindeer ranch.

A hot-air balloon glow display is back, too.

Mayor Christian Price is scheduled to lead the tree lighting just before 9 p.m., when the City has planned a fireworks display.

Parking at Copper Sky will be \$5, but attendees can also park at Maricopa High School or Maricopa Wells Middle School, both on Honeycutt Avenue, and ride the free shuttle to and from the park.

The 5K Santa Run has built a following of its own and will run separately on Saturday at 4 p.m. Learn more at [Maricopa-AZ.gov/web/merrycopa-santa-run](http://Maricopa-AZ.gov/web/merrycopa-santa-run).

### IF YOU GO

**What:** Merry Copa  
**When:** Dec. 6, 6-9 p.m.  
**Where:** Copper Sky Regional Park, 44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
**How much:** Free entry, activity wristbands \$5, onsite parking \$5  
**Info:** [MerryCopa.com](http://MerryCopa.com)



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**DEC  
14**

## Nativity Celebration to keep spirit of the season

By Raquel Hendrickson

Two holiday events that have become traditions for those celebrating the spiritual side of Christmas are combining again.

Community of Hope Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, neighbors on Honeycutt Avenue, will host nativities Dec. 14. Community of Hope has its annual Living Nativity, which runs two or three times per hour, while the LDS church has hundreds of nativity scenes on displays in a Creche Festival.

Both events are free.

"It's come-and-go," COH Pastor Rusty Akers said. "You're not going to miss anything if you come at 7."

Both locations will also have refreshments like cookies and hot chocolate.

Bishop Brian Hoffman said there will be "a nice variety" of nativity sets, which are from around the world and lighted with care. Last year, almost 400 were displayed.

"There are going to be depictions from the life of Jesus Christ and some special musical selections," Hoffman said.

With the cast, choir and volunteers, the Living Nativity involves more than 60 people.

"We have live characters, we have live animals, and we just celebrate the first Christmas," Akers said. "It's a real special time."

### IF YOU GO

**What:** Nativity Celebration

**When:** Dec. 14, 5-8 p.m.

**Where:** Community of Hope Church, 45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 45235 W. Honeycutt Ave.

**How much:** Free



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[www.HomeSmartSuccess.com](http://www.HomeSmartSuccess.com)

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520-568-6100  
BES.MaricopaUSD.org

**Central Arizona College**  
17945 N. Regent Drive  
520-494-6400  
CentralAZ.edu

**Desert Wind Middle School**  
35565 W. Honeycutt Road  
520-568-7110  
DWMS.MaricopaUSD.org

**LEADING EDGE ACADEMY**  
18700 N. Porter Road  
520-568-7800  
LeadingEdgeAcademy.com

**Maricopa Elementary School**  
18150 N. Alterra Parkway  
520-568-5160  
MES.MaricopaUSD.org

**Maricopa High School**  
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MHS.MaricopaUSD.org

**MARICOPA**  
Unified School District #20  
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520-568-5100 • MaricopaUSD.org

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MWMS.MaricopaUSD.org

**Pima Butte Elementary School**  
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PBES.MaricopaUSD.org

**RAM Academy**  
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MHS.MaricopaUSD.org

**Saddleback Elementary School**  
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SES.MaricopaUSD.org

**Santa Cruz Elementary School**  
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520-568-5170  
SCES.MaricopaUSD.org

**Santa Rosa Elementary School**  
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TheUpsStore.com

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### Schools to look at new letter grades

One school in Maricopa Unified School District jumped a letter grade in the most recent assessment while another fell a letter grade.

### City Council ponders possible changes to ethics code

The possible changes are “based on the application of the Code of Ethics since its adoption and prior investigations, and to give direction on how to proceed” pursuant to state law.



### MPD arrests driver with hand-made license plate tags, missing checks

When questioned by police, the suspect allegedly stated she knew her tags were expired, so she made her way to a local store, bought a pack of white stickers and covered the registration year, ‘19, with the stickers for ‘20.



### YouTube Mom’ accused of child abuse dies in hospital

Machelle Hobson, a Maricopa resident being prosecuted for child abuse, has died at the age of 49.

For these and more stories every day, visit [InMaricopa.com](http://InMaricopa.com).



### Superintendent: Vote doesn’t change MUSD needs

MUSD’s request for a capital-improvement bond was defeated 58%-42% according to the unofficial totals.

### Thunderstorms lead to flood watch, power outages

A storm put Maricopa in a flood watch and briefly knocked out power to over 3,000 customers.



### Mayor highlights past, future economic development

Mayor Christian Price’s State of the City address covered many activities of the past year and explained plans for upcoming endeavors.



### Apex seeks final plat for 48 garage condos

Private Motorsports Group Vice President Matt Williams told Planning and Zoning Manager Rodolfo Lopez all 48 units have been reserved.



### MHS football loses at Casteel, leaves short-handed

Maricopa High School football suffered three ejections but only one was a player.

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