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Stories of triumph

“THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRY AND triumph is a little umph.”

Those words by author and speaker Marvin Brown help capture the essence of two Maricopans we write about this month.

Vito Simplicio, a retiree putting up a good fight against old age, finds vigor in music. Whether playing his guitar or composing music, he keeps his mind sharp and his body fit, triumphing daily over entropy. Earlier this year, he published 21 of his original compositions on CD, in part to preserve his own musical legacy, but also to remind his fellow seniors: it's never too late to chase your dreams.

Dalton Hardman had a dream, too. He wanted to graduate from Maricopa High School on time in May, despite having brain surgery in the middle of his junior year and getting far behind in his classes. He decided to try and make up all the schoolwork he missed, in addition to his senior



class load, a daunting challenge he took on with loads of determination, family support and umph. He needed all that and more when a last-minute obstacle put his graduation mission at risk.

The moms were featured in June; this month it is the dads' turn. We introduce you to the winners and nominees of the Best Dad InMaricopa contest.

We chat with Nathan Steele, the city's economic director, and ask him to describe Maricopa in 2040, and learn about a passion he shares with his children.

Also, check out the details on the home that recently sold for \$640,000.

Plus, restaurant inspections, gardening advice, city sales tax proceeds and the latest business and development news in town.

Enjoy the magazine.

Bob McGovern

BOB MCGOVERN | EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
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AL BRANDENBURG

With a background in corporate and educational facilities, he now advocates for seniors and puts his green thumb to use.



KEVIN VASQUEZ

Headed into his senior year at Maricopa High School, he enjoys both regular and drone photography.



JOAN KOCZOR

An advocate for seniors with an interest in history, Joan's favorite film is "Gone With the Wind."

ON THE COVER

Vito Simplicio was photographed by Victor Moreno playing his beloved Takamine guitar in the backyard of his Rancho El Dorado home. He has lived in Maricopa since 2012.



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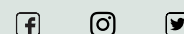
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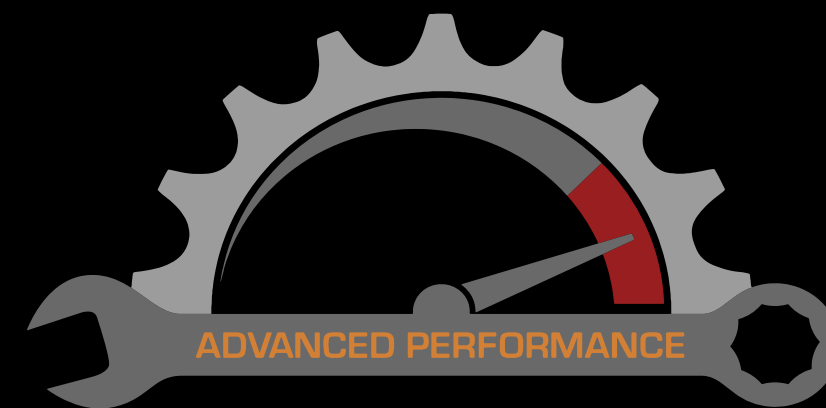
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High school scene

This view of Maricopa High School was taken in 1998 by Gray Photographs of Phoenix. The high school, which opened in 1955 with a freshman class of 35 students, had about 300 students at the time. District enrollment is about 7,600 today. The drone photo taken in April shows how much the school has expanded in the last 23 years, including the addition of Ram Stadium.



1998



2021

THIS MONTH BACK IN...

For these and other historical stories, visit InMaricopa.com.



2005

The Native New Yorker restaurant opened in Bashas' Fiesta Center on July 25, bringing pizza, salads and chicken wings to Maricopa. (The restaurant changed its name to Native Grill & Wings in 2015.) Owner Pat Kieny has said he and his family drove through Maricopa for a couple decades on the way to visit relatives in San Diego, and it seemed like a great opportunity.



2007

Two Maricopa firefighters were fired July 29 after their involvement in a bar fight nine days earlier on the patio of Ramsey's American Grill. The incident prompted the restaurant owner to call them "an embarrassment to the city." A melee ensued after one of the firefighters punched a patron who was arguing with another firefighter.



2010

A 3,929-square-foot, five-bedroom home listed for sale in Cobblestone had amenities galore, including cherry wood flooring, 18-inch Brazilian tile and a fully landscaped backyard with patio and 18 palm trees. The two-story "features high, sweeping archways and pass-through windows, giving the home an elegant castle feel." The price? \$179,000.

Gray Photographs, Phoenix via Maricopa Historical Association; Kevin Vasquez

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Q&A: Nathan Steele, city economic director

BY JAY TAYLOR

NATHAN STEELE IS having a big impact on your life. You just may not know it.

As the City of Maricopa's director of economic and community development, he helps blaze a path for Maricopa's economy and recruits new businesses. In his two years working with City Manager Rick Horst, the city has seen considerable growth.

He and his wife Diana live in town with their four young boys and are eagerly awaiting the arrival of their fifth. A Utah native, Steele earned both bachelor's and master's degrees from Brigham Young University, served his church mission in Texas and gained more responsibilities in public administration positions in Utah, Wisconsin and California before taking the Maricopa position.



WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO MARICOPA BESIDES THE JOB? I love how family-friendly it is here. I love going to Copper Sky for a football game with my kids and seeing hundreds of other kids and families having fun. There's nothing better.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE MARICOPA IN 2040? As we grow, I see Maricopa becoming less reliant on the Phoenix area, as more services and jobs will be provided here locally. Yes, we will continue to get more and more higher-quality retail and dining options, but we will also see more jobs and services in hospitality, healthcare, manufacturing and others from every industry. I would hope that, more than anything else, Maricopa continues to be all the things that Maricopa is now that make it such an incredible place — a tight-knit community that is still growing and welcomes families and individuals from all backgrounds to come live here.

WHAT WOULD PEOPLE BE SURPRISED TO LEARN ABOUT YOU? I have a great passion for music. My poor kids regularly get lessons from me on what good music is, from rock and rap to R&B and bluegrass. I love it all!

Nearly everyone in the house plays music. We all play piano, and my kids play a variety of instruments (violin, cello, drums, etc.) and I love listening to it all. I have played piano all my life and in the last few years have picked up guitar and banjo.

WHAT IS THE BEST THING YOU'VE DONE OR SEEN IN ARIZONA? My love of music is probably only matched by my love for food. We have found some incredible hidden gems of food throughout the state. You can bet that after I find particularly good ones, I'm talking to the staff in charge about expanding to Maricopa! As for good food, I always prefer to go local.

WHAT'S ONE THING YOU HAVEN'T DONE IN ARIZONA YOU WANT TO? We love hikes in our family, but for one reason or another, we haven't all visited the Grand Canyon yet. Once our youngest gets a little bit older, we will absolutely go check it out together. We've loved just getting lost around the Superstition mountains. I'll take my boys there every now and then and just pick a different route each time and we'll all just explore. 📍

"I would hope that, more than anything else, Maricopa continues to be all the things that Maricopa is now that make it such an incredible place — a tight-knit community that is still growing"

NATHAN STEELE

Brian Petersheim Jr.

MARICOPA



Tax Reductions

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The City of Maricopa has recently worked to finalize its Fiscal Year 2022 budget. The budget is the key to unlocking "Present Possibilities" and the potential for extraordinary accomplishments. This fiscal year budget allows for the continuation of exceptional service levels while also funding the building and maintenance of critical infrastructure. It also provides for resiliency and elasticity in responding to every changing norms and events that are ever more prominent in the world today.

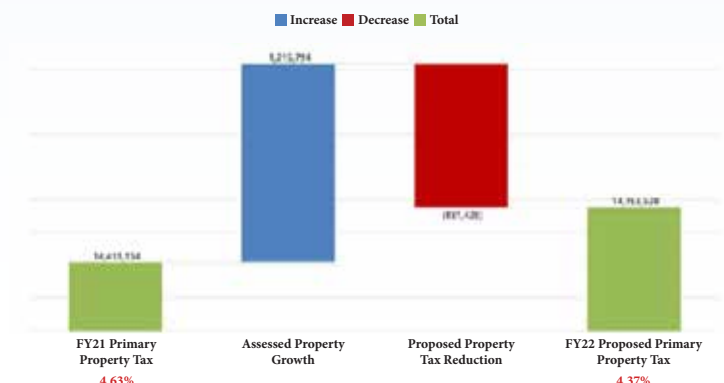
The City of Maricopa has recently worked to finalize its Fiscal Year 2022 budget. The budget is the key to unlocking "Present Possibilities" and the potential for extraordinary accomplishments. This fiscal year budget allows for the continuation of exceptional service levels while also funding the building and maintenance of critical infrastructure. It also provides for resiliency and elasticity in responding to every changing norms and events that are ever more prominent in the world today.

Cities face multiple external forces for which we have little or no control over. The demand for more services and reduced taxes remain the standard-bearer. We listened, we heard, and we are proud to state that our FY21/22 budgeted expenditures is less than the previous year. We proclaim that, for the second year in a row, both our Primary and Secondary Property Taxes will be reduced and the Maricopa Fire Bond Tax, originating from before the City was incorporated, will be eliminated in its entirety. The City of Maricopa is truly doing more with less.

As the City continues to move forward and assess our future possibilities, we remain enabled with an insight and direction that focuses on both short term and long term strategic planning. Maricopa is positioned to take full advantage of these opportunities with a partnership approach to enable the leveraging of private investment.

We are confident that the results of our efforts will demonstrate our commitment to providing excellent services, investing in our future, and proactively responding to the ever changing marketplace of ideas and innovation.

FY 2022 Primary Property Tax Levy Reduction



FY 2022 Secondary Property Tax Levy Reduction



For more information visit us at:
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Graduation returns at MHS

1. Members of the Maricopa High School Class of 2021 stand for the National Anthem at Ram Stadium as the sun sets during their May 26 graduation ceremony.

2. Katherine Gores, left, and Kamila Gonzalez were among a small group of Class of 2020 graduates who walked a year later after their ceremony last May was canceled due to the pandemic.

3. A group of 2021 graduates celebrates. From left: Hunter Taylor, Mister Chavis, Kyron Shields and Anabelle Dayley.

4. A beaming Sarah Bailin holds her 2021 diploma high.





Readers capture wild horses

A request for photos of wild horses led readers to post many sensational shots on Facebook.com/InMaricopa. Here's a sampling:

1. Courtne Lucas, a recreational photographer, caught a lone horse against a mountain backdrop last fall on the west side of State Route 347.

2. These two playful horses were captured in 2016 off SR 347 by amateur shooter Tina Nilsen.

3-4. Professional photographer Brian Mordt captured a wild horse kicking up a fuss and another amid the swirling desert dust on July 3, 2019, along SR 347 heading out of town.





Vito Simplicio plays guitar for The Revelairs while bandmate Bill Humphrey looks on during a 1961 performance at Live Oak Park in Manhattan Beach, California. He joined the surf band at 15 while growing up in neighboring Redondo Beach.

Guitarist hits right note in fight to stay young at heart

BY BOB MCGOVERN

FOR VITO SIMPLICIO, MUSIC IS A way to fight entropy.

Defined as the gradual decline into disorder, entropy is a part of aging. Mental faculties degrade. Bodies weaken.

But Simplicio, 75, a resident of Rancho El Dorado, fights the process with finger-picking gusto.

The former clinical psychologist and retired sales executive is a self-described “amateur guitarist” who plays classical guitar.

A musician since he was 14, growing up in the South Bay area of Los Angeles, he played lead guitar for a well-known surf band in the early 1960s. Earlier this year, he self-published a CD of original compositions.

“Most people think I’m more like in my middle 60s,” he said. “I’ve always been that

way, and so fighting entropy is a really big deal to me. It’s kind of what drives me. Even younger people sometimes, they stop learning, they stop growing. I’m going to keep going as long as I’m on this planet. I’m going to grow. I’m going to learn.

“And that’s what I’ve loved about the guitar. Even today I’m learning new pieces. I have all these songs that I’m learning, and I can remember them all because I practice them and play them.”

JOINING A SURF BAND

Simplicio’s adventures in music began in the late 1950s.

As a seventh grader, he was prodded into music by his father, an accomplished saxophonist who entertained diners at the family’s Italian

restaurant in Redondo Beach, California. At his father’s urging, he tried to play his older sister’s accordion after she had given it up. But it was nearly as big as him. That led his father to suggest guitar. That sounded good to young Vito.

He had some early traditional lessons in reading music but found it boring. He wanted to quit. But his father tried a different tack, getting Vito with a guitar teacher who taught him how to play chords. Soon, he was strumming to his older brother’s drumming, backing up his father at the restaurant.

He developed a repertoire and was invited to audition for The Revelairs, a surf band, as lead guitarist. Just 15, he was more talented than their lead guitarist, who was sick with mononucleosis with big gigs coming up, but it was no slam dunk.

Victor Moreno (right); Courtesy of Bill Humphrey





“When I was growing up in the ‘60s there were basically two types of kids: surfers and hodads,” he recalled. “Anybody from Southern California is going to know what that means. A hodad is not a surfer. He doesn’t have the parted hair. He doesn’t have that whole surfer look. He looks more like a greaser, like John Travolta in ‘Grease.’”

“I didn’t consider myself a hodad,” he said. “I wasn’t a surfer. I was just Vito.” Despite his pompadour — and the concerns about a lack of surfer cred — he was invited to join the band and played with them for several years.

Linda Barbour, who attended high school with Simplicio, remembers him as a “very sweet guy. I always liked him. He had a great sense of humor.”

In 1965 the band broke up and he joined the Army a year later, losing interest in the guitar for years.

SWITCHING TO SOLO

As Simplicio got older and he was traveling with work, he picked up the guitar again, but the thought of putting together a band didn’t seem to make sense. Playing as a soloist — and not having to rely on other people — seemed more agreeable.

In 1978, he took a six-month camping trip around the United States and thought he would use his time around the fire to teach himself how to finger-pick the guitar.

VITO SIMPLICIO

Occupation: Retired sales professional, Woodside Homes

Maricopan since: 2012

Community: Rancho El Dorado

Family: Coral, wife of 33 years, and son Gino, 27

Favorite guitarist: “Tommy Emmanuel, in my estimation, is probably the best guitar player living. His performances will just knock your socks off. He’s a fingerpicker who plays a steel string guitar, but he’s just incredible.”

Favorite non-musical activity: “I love to cook. I’m a big stir-fry guy. I’m the guy that goes to the refrigerator and goes, ‘OK, we’ve got to eat the stuff up before it goes bad’ and I just throw it all together.”

Odd fact: Unable to grow fingernails anymore on his playing fingers, he wears acrylic tips to be able to finger-pick his guitar.

The Revelairs, with Vito Simplicio at bottom right, pose for a photo by the beach. The instrumental surf band played all the major Southern California dance venues, released a single and recorded eight songs.

“I’m a pretty intense guy. I like to keep moving,” he recalled. “I was a little worried about traveling on my own and not having enough to do, so I thought this is a great opportunity to learn how to play, how to become a soloist.”

Before the trip, he said, he took three or four classical guitar lessons, using a steel-string acoustic guitar. After telling his instructor he was done with lessons, he said he wanted to get a good classical guitar.

“He and I went to a music store in Long Beach, California in 1977, and there were like 60 classical guitars on the wall and we went through every one of them,” he remembered. “We chose a Takamine guitar. Not an expensive guitar, it’s considered more like a student guitar. After Coral (his wife), that’s my next big lover.”

His Takamine has nylon strings, which create warmer, softer sound than metal strings. He has a couple of other guitars, but it remains his favorite.

As a finger picker, he plucks a melody and at the same time plays bass with his thumb while using his middle fingers to play chords. Unlike a typical band, with a lead guitar player hitting single notes and somebody else playing rhythm, Simplicio does it all himself.

“If you listen to my music, none of it’s been redubbed,” he said. “That’s all me playing at one time.”

He again became inspired to play classical guitar, but this time he abandoned the idea of playing classical music and started pursuing other fingerpicking styles but always on the classical guitar.

About 20 years ago, he started to compose songs out of the blue.

“I started composing music for the first time,” he said. “It was not my intent; creativity just oozed out of me.”

Simplicio uses a software program that enables him to input the notes while he plays them. That converts his musical notes into a MIDI, or Musical Instrument Digital Interface, a protocol that allows for easy, note-by-note editing of his music.

“I’ll start scoring and memorializing it. Then I’ll listen to the MIDI and go, ‘Oh wait, that’s not exactly right.’ With the software program, I end up transposing what I learn on my own and I put it into music.”

Courtesy of Vito Simplicio



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PRESERVING MUSIC AND LEGACY

Simplicio's road to Maricopa was a long, zig-zag route.

From 1966 to 1969 he spent three years in Berlin in the Army, then returned to California to get his master's degree in clinical psychology. He moved to Sandpoint, Idaho, where he lived about seven years, went through a divorce and again put down his guitar.

In the mid-1980s, he moved to Orlando, where the arts brought his wife and him together. (They met at a club social.) After marrying a few years later, a series of promotions for Simplicio took the couple cross-state to Tampa, north to Virginia and west to Las Vegas. Another promotion took them back east to Raleigh, North Carolina, before they landed in Scottsdale in 2005 for another position.

By the time they moved to Maricopa in 2012, Simplicio was playing again. As he retired in June 2020, he was thinking about his own legacy and his desire and determination to have people hear his music. After all, he'd long had regrets about his dad's music never being preserved.

At Coral's urging, and with her assistance, he went into a Tempe studio to record 21 original compositions. The CD, titled "It's Never Too Late," came out in March. The couple collaborated on the project, including post-recording work and a CD case created by Coral, an artist in her own right who works primarily with fused glass.

"Music has been my little secret," Vito said. "I just want people to hear my music."

"It's chill music and I'm hearing that a lot."

Bill Humphrey, founding member and drummer of The Revelairs, said he, too, encouraged Simplicio to record his music, something Humphrey has done with his own work.

"I almost dared him to do it," Humphrey said, noting he told his friend, "You have to go in the studio and put that stuff down, man. Even if just for yourself and your family."

"It just came out great. I'm just so proud of him."

Humphrey, who still lives in the South Bay area, plans to join Simplicio in the studio soon to record something together.



Keith Barbour, husband of Linda and a member of the New Christie Minstrels folk group, who later had a solo 1969 hit with "Echo Park," called Simplicio's music "beautiful and calming."

"The tonality of that CD is astounding," he said. "He writes wonderful melodies."

But the music is only half the story for Simplicio.

"To me the compelling story is that I did all of this at a very old age," he said. "So, the message is, if you're out there and you're older and you're retired, just keep going, follow your dreams."

"I don't care how old you are, it's never too late."

To purchase the CD, visit
VitoSimplicio.com or Amazon.com.



THE REVELAIRS VS. THE BEACH BOYS

Vito Simplicio played with The Revelairs, one of the most prominent instrumental surf bands in the early 1960s. But the wave of popularity crested in 1964 — until Quentin Tarantino's 1994 film "Pulp Fiction," with its heavy surf music sound, ignited a resurgence of the genre. In fact, The Revelairs were well-represented on a 1995 compilation CD called "Rare Surf 2." Eight of the band's songs appeared, including "Dark Eyes" and "Riding High." The CD earned positive comments in *Billboard* magazine. "It's a great history," Simplicio said, drawing a distinction between instrumental surf and vocal surf, a later form popularized by one of the biggest bands in history. "Guys like The Beach Boys were not surfers, they were pop singers," he explained. "They did a beautiful job with their harmonies and stuff, but my guys were like, 'That's not surf music.'"

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PLEASE VOTE YES ON THE MUSD OVERRIDE CONTINUATION!

The upcoming vote on November 2nd is for continuing the school district budget increase we Maricopa voters approved in 2016. It helps make up for reductions in school funding coming from the state, where the legislature has a history of meager education funding. For more than 30 years, Arizona has experienced a decline in public education budgets, leaving us near the bottom of the country.

Our school districts do their best to do more with less, but this override is critical for investing in new technology, for the important RAM Academy HS Graduation program, and for maintaining approved class sizes.

We all want the best education possible for our children, for their adult futures, and for the future of our city and state.

Please join me in VOTING YES FOR THE MUSD OVERRIDE CONTINUATION!

Bob Marsh



Long COVID may result from autoantibodies

BY AL BRANDENBURG

AN INCREASING NUMBER OF COVID-19 survivors are experiencing symptoms weeks or months after the infection has cleared in what is known informally as “long COVID.”

The illness isn’t gone after those 14 or so days of battling the active infection. Several studies have shown the variety of symptoms — breathing difficulties, fatigue and pain, for example — that long-haulers can experience,

with doctors highlighting the severity of this complication.

Now, a new series of studies might offer an explanation for long COVID symptoms. When the body defends itself against a foreign element like the novel coronavirus it mounts an immune response to get rid of the pathogen, according to researchers. Specific antibodies are created to neutralize the virus, as white blood cells adapt to recognize the pathogen and fight it again upon reinfection.

But researchers note many studies are focusing on a type of antibody that does not block the virus. These autoantibodies, part of the immune response to the virus, can attack your own body and can persist for several months after the infection. That could explain why COVID-19 symptoms can last so long. The conclusion comes from a limited-scope study that needs more validation. Doctors at Boston Medical Center observed nine COVID-19 patients, five of them showing autoantibodies for at least seven months after infection. An October study also showed autoantibodies present in some patients before they were infected, then attacking their

own immune response to the coronavirus. A November study showed half of the subjects had autoantibodies that could cause clots and blockages in blood vessels and another study in December showed COVID-19 autoantibodies targeting the immune system, brain cells, connective tissue and clotting factors.

Some of these antibodies might disappear in time, Harvard University immunologists recently said. The symptoms might go away, too. As more studies are completed there may be a light at the end of the tunnel for long-haulers.

Hopefully, all have been vaccinated against the disease.

In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy and enjoy the summer.

Al Brandenburg is a member of the Maricopa Senior Coalition.

Sources: [NYTimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), [MayoClinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org), [CDC.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus), [Health.harvard.edu](https://www.health.harvard.edu)

[InMaricopa.com/Columnists](https://www.inmaricopa.com/columnists)



An involved citizenry strengthens community

BY RON SMITH

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

For some it is civic engagement, or active participation in your community, perhaps voting, volunteering or joining organizations. According to Thomas Ehrlich of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, “Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skill, values and motivation to make that difference.”

In its simplest form, it means taking time to learn what’s happening in your community and being a good ambassador when conversing with others about city activities and events, candidates for election or proposed public policies. Better yet, it means taking some action when you disagree. It is easy to understand how an involved citizenry strengthens a community through the collective energy and wisdom. But why is this important to you as an individual?

Studies indicate “engaged” individuals may perceive benefits to their health, self-esteem and relationships. But some of those same studies found civic engagement can have a downside. Stress or exhaustion based on too many commitments may drain a person’s time, energy and even financial resources. Civic engagement needs to be tempered to fit an individual’s personal style.

Spending time with friends, neighbors and new acquaintances can bring us companionship, humor, advice and comfort. Sharing with our closest friends can bring meaning to our daily lives. Community engagement helps create more and better



connections that can result in a richer, fuller life for ourselves and our community of friends. A commitment to helping each other makes everyone stronger and better able to take care of themselves with a sense of vitality.

Ron Smith is a Maricopa resident and aging-in-place advocate. He is a member of the Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee, a member of the Maricopa Senior Coalition and a certified Aging-in-Place specialist.

[InMaricopa.com/Columnists](https://www.inmaricopa.com/columnists)

Connection direction

It is estimated 20% of adults over the age of 65 live alone and face isolation from peers and community. Researchers believe it is seriously detrimental to our physical and mental health. So, how do we make those connections? Well, we can:

- Actively search for activities to invest time in helping our community or neighbors.
- Pursue groups that share similar interests (perhaps a challenging game of cards).
- Check out the calendar of upcoming activities in the city at the senior center, Copper Sky or the new Library and Cultural Center. A bus trip to a mystery museum, tea party or lunch with a friend may do the trick.
- Listen to City Manager Rick Horst when you have the opportunity or attend a city council meeting. A good donut and coffee are hard to resist.







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A senior center, defined

BY JOAN KOCZOR

WITH A SENIOR CENTER opening soon here in Maricopa, it's an appropriate time to consider what one should provide.

Senior centers should:

- Serve as a place for people over the age of 50 to hang out, have a hot meal and enjoy social time with friends.
- Create and maintain a warm, safe, social environment for seniors who are otherwise alone.
- Be physically accessible. It should be clean, attractive and ADA-compliant, with sufficient regular and accessible parking.

• Stress the importance of seniors keeping active, which has extreme health benefits. Research shows senior center participants, compared with their peers, have higher levels of health, social interaction and life satisfaction.

Today, nearly 11,000 senior centers serve 1 million U.S. adults age 50-plus every day. About 70% are women. Three-quarters visit their center one to three times per week and spend an average of 3.3 hours per visit.

Accreditation program recommends activities


The National Council on Aging's National Institute of Senior Centers is working to advance the quality of senior centers nationwide with the nation's only National Senior Center Accreditation Program. It recognizes facilities that meet the highest standards of excellence. It says activities

and resources should include:

1. Low-impact, exercise classes for folks who want to help maintain their mobility and strength.

2. A place to play card games, puzzles, Scrabble and other games to help stimulate the mind.

3. Practical daytrips and longer trips for seniors, plus accessibility to programs in fine arts and crafts, music and dance, lifelong learning, and fitness and health.

Senior centers are not what they used to be. Today, the goal is to connect seniors to community services while helping them to remain active and independent. 

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

 [SeniorLiving.org](https://www.SeniorLiving.org)

 [InMaricopa.com/Columnists](https://www.InMaricopa.com/Columnists)

4. Information on services and resources for healthcare, taxes, Social Security and legal affairs.

5. A kitchen with a refrigerator, industrial microwave, coffee pot and other kitchen essentials.

6. A hot lunch daily, with the choice of an alternative cold meal. The cost can be determined by age or flat fee.

7. A senior advisory board/council that provides direction to the management.

NCOA.org,

SeniorCenterDirectory.com

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Dedicated dads voted the best

BY BOB McGOVERN



BRYAN KREMER WAS VOTED BEST Dad InMaricopa for 2021 in the annual contest.

The father of Nicholas, 3, led the field of two dozen dads nominated for their dedication in this year's contest presented by Maricopa Ace Hardware and hosted by InMaricopa.com.

Kremer was nominated by his wife Randi. They live in Rancho El Dorado.

"He has been such an amazing Dad to our little boy since Day One," she wrote. "He works hard daily to be a great provider for our family."

Kremer, 42, said he likes being a father.

"I enjoy being around the little man and teaching him the right way," he said.

Kremer works fulltime for Liberty Mutual Insurance Co. and helps out at the family pet

shop, Copa Critters.

Randi Kremer included with her nomination side-by-side photos of father and son dressed as Blippi, a fun character known for his signature blue and orange outfit and his educational videos for children.

Bryan Kremer thinks his photo — depicting a father who will do anything to entertain his kids — may have caught the attention of voters.

Kremer selected the "Whole House" paint package awarded by contest sponsor Ace Hardware, which included 25 gallons of Dunn Edwards EverShield Exterior Paint and an eight-piece painters' kit. It was valued at up to \$1,500.

In addition, Kremer won prizes worth \$1,175 from other businesses:

- Victor Moreno Photography — Family Photo Session (\$350 value)

The top three fathers in the Best Dad InMaricopa contest picked up their prizes at Maricopa Ace Hardware. From left: store owner Dave Karsten, Mark Webb Sr., Bryan Kremer with son Nicholas, Max Weidle and Victor Zamora, assistant store manager.

- Planet Fitness — 1-year Black Card Membership (\$300)
- Electrical District No. 3 — \$200 bill credit
- Window Tinting by Rosie — \$150 gift certificate
- Wildcat Landscape Supply — Ace Hardware \$100 gift card
- Barro's Pizza — \$50 gift card
- Native Grill — \$25 gift card

Brian Petersheim Jr.

Mark Webb Sr. — Second place

Mark Webb Sr. is the kind of father who is available 24/7 for his family.

In her nomination of her grandfather, 12-year-old Zoe wrote, "My papa works nights so he doesn't get much sleep, but he will give up his sleep to help, often working all night then driving over to take care of a sick grandchild or broken AC. He deserves the moon but would never ask for it."

"I make my rounds," Webb, 62, said of his role as grandfather, father and fixer, his sense of humor showing.

A 40-year-plus machinist, he works four, 12-hour days and as much overtime as he can get.

And the Thunderbird Farms resident spends a lot of time with his family, including four children.

"I love my kids and my grandchildren," he said. "That's what it's all about. I love being around them."

Webb selected the Napoleon Rogue 525 propane gas grill prize from Ace Hardware, which has a \$749 value.

In addition, he won prizes worth more than \$500 from other businesses:

- Advanced Performance — gift certificate for one complete service (\$250 value)
- Window Tinting by Rosie — \$100 gift certificate
- Just Weeds — \$80 full-property treatment
- Roots Eatery — \$25 gift certificate
- Barro's Pizza — \$25 gift card
- Native Grill — \$25 gift card
- Mike's Irrigation — \$25 Starbucks gift card

Max Weidle — Third place

The father of four sons, Max Weidle was nominated by his wife Ciara.

"He works so hard to provide for us," she wrote. "Night shifts and overtime hours are a norm in our household. Even when he has worked 12-plus hours, he asks to be woken up early so we can spend quality time together as a family."

Weidle, 30, is a specimen processor for Sonora Quest Laboratories. For the last six years he has worked the 6 p.m.-4:30 a.m. shift. COVID-19 testing this past year made things

even crazier, he said.

A resident of Maricopa since February 2020, he said he already appreciates the sense of community here compared to Mesa, his former home.

"I'm super-grateful just to be nominated," the Tortosa resident said.

The couple's four boys are Brayden, 14, Harrison, 7, Nolan, 3 and Finley, 6 months.

They also have two dogs, who will benefit from Weidle winning an Ace Hardware prize package of a year's supply of AvoDerm Dog Food. He will get one large bag per month for 12 months valued at more than \$600.

In addition, he won prizes worth \$175 from other businesses:

- Donovan's Landscaping — \$75 gift certificate
- Roots Eatery — \$25 gift card
- Native Grill — \$25 gift card
- Mike's Irrigation — \$25 Jersey Mike's gift card
- Barro's Pizza — \$25 gift card

MORE GREAT DADS



Frank Abeyta: I would love to nominate my dad Frank Abeyta. Not only is he such a wonderful husband, he is an amazing Dad to not only two kids but the perfect bonus dad to five more kids he gained through his marriage, and the most caring grandpa of six grandchildren and one on the way. Life has thrown so many curveballs his way and no matter what, he always manages to take it by storm and conquer the day with his patience and positivity. Our dad is such a hard worker as Chef Frank but always makes sure his family comes first, no

questions asked. We couldn't have asked for a better Dad and Grandpa, and we couldn't have done it without you Dad! We love you. Nominated by his family



Lou Barkley: I just want to thank you for being there every day through thick and thin, sleepless nights, going to appointments, changing diapers, making the boys smile and wiping their tears. You have been so patient with all of us because I know we don't make it easy for you — working long hours, settling fights, helping with the household — you still manage to keep us anchored. We love you for being who you are and all that you do for us. You haven't been in the game that

long, but you are an amazing Dad, and you are loved very much. Nominated by Mandy



Darren Barney: I would like to nominate my husband, Darren Barney, who is the father of our four beautiful kids. He is a hardworking individual. He loves his family with everything he is. We had to relocate out of the Valley in 2017. Our kids and I ended up moving to Payson to live in my mother's vacant house. My husband stayed in Phoenix to work and live with his sister. We only saw each other on weekends or every two weeks. This happened for three years. The past year of 2020 my husband worked 817 hours of overtime to be able to

save up enough money to make a down payment to be able to get his family into our own home. We closed on a home in Maricopa in December 2020. Because of his selflessness, hard work and dedication, his family of six now has a place of their own to call home. I am so proud of my husband and all his accomplishments. We are lucky to have him as a husband and as a father. Please vote for him. He is well deserving of a Best Dad Award. Nominated by wife Natasha



Steve Bejar: My dad is incredible. He works three jobs a week so we can not only live in a good home, but so we can have nice stuff. Even though

my dad works a lot he always makes time for us. We like to watch movies and build stuff with him. Our latest project was putting up lights outside so he and my mom can dance. My dad is also very caring. He plays with all the kids in the neighborhood and teaches them how to play baseball. He also takes care of his own dad. I love my Dad so much. Nominated by his daughter April Bejar



Michael Booth: My husband is an absolutely amazing father. Nine years ago, I married this most amazing man. He became a father of two more children and never once used the term "Stepdad." He was only Dad. He hasn't missed anything they have done, from marching band/ concerts to choir and every graduation they have had. He works very odd and long hours but always has time to help with homework or volunteer during marching band comps or just talk with them to see how they are doing. He was completely there for them when they lost their Papa and our daughter within the same week last year. He has shown them what a father truly is and the love that they deserve and absolutely nothing less! Nominated by wife Victoria



Samuel Caputo: Our dad is the BEST DAD IN MARICOPA, hands down. Our dad is always teaching us new things. Our dad is always being silly, goofy and joking. Our dad always

takes the time to be patient with us. Our dad shares our love of drones, cars, vacations, RZR rides, swimming, playing, and most of all sweets! Our dad will always be there for us even when we are a handful. We love you Dad, you are the best dad ever, not just in Maricopa! Love Leo, Dominic, Luca, Roma & Momo



Caleb Fulks: I'd love to nominate the BEST dad in Maricopa. He's the protector, provider and a role model. He's a teacher and coach. He's the comedian and the nurturer. He'll guide them to success and pick them up if they fall. He's an Army veteran. He's their best friend. He is a full-time daddy and refuses to take a sick day. He's not just a father, he's "Dada." And he loves them with all his heart. I cannot thank him enough and I am just beyond grateful. He is not only Maricopa's BEST dad, he's THE best dad!



Raymond Hernandez: I nominate my dad, Raymond Hernandez, for best dad because he would go above and beyond for his family. He is very loving and caring. He loves playing the piano and is very good at darts. We all love you Dad, and you deserve the world. Love always. Nominated by his daughter Jasmine

Harry Hodil: I would like to nominate Harry Hodil. He is always there for me. Working around the house, fixing things



and yardwork. And taking care of my mom with health issues, going to the doctor's every week. All time rock star. Nominated by Tony Biles



David Horner: I want to nominate my husband David Horner for being the best dad ever. He works so hard to provide for our eight kids. He worked for five years doing industrial construction. He broke his leg in three places, had two surgeries, then went back to work getting blisters on his feet all the time because his stride was off from breaking his leg. Kept working in that job for two more years, then after hurting his back, he is now trying to go back to school for nursing and still provide for his family. He loves his kids and wife very much and works very hard to provide for us. Thank you so much for considering my husband for this nomination. Nominated by wife Tianna



Dennis Killman: My Dad is a really great dad and person. He lives in Maricopa and is a Maricopa handyman. He is a good father, so great that he has taught myself and my sisters so many things and is still teaching

us more all the time. He is so smart on a lot of things. Some have come up to my sisters and I to personally tell us about how we have such a wonderful dad. Nominated by daughter Aviva



Chris Leftwich: This is the best papa in the world, Chris Leftwich. Every day he wakes up and works so hard to provide our family with everything we need and want. When he gets home, he barely has time to change before he is off again to coach soccer, basketball, football (which he has been doing in the city of Maricopa for eight years now!) or helping me shuttle the kids somewhere. If you asked our kids, they would say he is the best wrestling dummy, quarterback and Ken doll voice EVER! Nominated by wife Heather



JJ Maiers: It's been said that any man can help make a child, but it takes a special man to help raise one. A stepdad is extra special because he makes the choice to love a child when he doesn't have to. He loves and cares for our daughter Layla unconditionally, always keeps a smile on her face, supports her through her highs and lows, plays an active role in parenting, is a protector and provider and, most importantly, is an exceptional role model! JJ is all around an amazing dad! And I can't forget, an awesome cheer dad to boot! Nominated by wife Alina

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Andre Owen: Hello, I nominate Andre Owen, my husband. He has been an amazing father not only to his daughter, but also accepted my two girls as his own since meeting them and have treated them like his very own ever since! He often wears one of his favorite shirts that says, "I'm not the stepfather, I'm the father that stepped up!" He's now a grandfather of two and also cherishes them like his own! There's nothing he won't do for us! BEST DAD & GRANDDAD EVER! Nominated by wife Roma



Sergio Pulido: He is my very own stepdad. I don't see him as a stepdad. I see him as my own dad. He has done so much for me, and he doesn't have to. He doesn't have any responsibilities with me, but he has gotten me so much stuff in my life. He has done everything for me. He is making me a better person. I want to do the same for him somehow. I really love my Dad. I hope he can be picked, so everyone else can see what a great Dad he really is. He is a hard worker and loves his job. He is the director of transportation for the Maricopa Unified School District. Nominated by son Robert



Aj Robinson: Since my husband Aj and I became a blended family, our lives have been full

of happiness. Getting married, having two more beautiful children, starting a business and buying our first home. We have also suffered immense pain with the loss of our mothers and saying goodbye to our business and dream home after years of our only son battling leukemia. Even more of a struggle when he had to battle a second time. We are so grateful for his ability to be the strongest rock and foundation that our family needed to stay smiling, full of happiness, and still make fabulous memories together through the most devastating times of our lives. Nominated by wife Sosy



Marc Rueckert: My dad Marc Rueckert has always been there for me. He's always there with a helping hand and a smile on his face. He knows how to settle me down when I get overwhelmed or sad. He knows the right thing to say to lift my spirits. I have always had a great and close relationship with him. Nominated by daughter Laceylynn



James "JT" Ryan: Honestly, he is the best daddy ever! I couldn't be anymore thankful. He was put in my son's and my path for a reason. He immediately stepped up and became No. 1 daddy to my two-year-old, now three. We now have a five-month-old baby girl together. He works 12-hour shifts from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., to make sure we have everything we need. Though he is always working, he makes time for us, plays and teach our kids, to clean the yard, gives mommy time off to sleep in a little longer, and so

much more. He has never seen my/our son any different than our daughter. I can say my son loves him and calls him daddy straight from the heart, and my little girls eyes spark as soon as she sees him! Nominated by wife Sarahi



Erik Schroeder: Erik Schroeder is the best dad in Maricopa. He works a full-time job with the military and always makes time to spend with his wife Kristine and four kids — Zachary, Easton, Taylor and Matthew. From teaching them lessons for their next big adventures (how to weld, shoot rifles and bows, perform car maintenance, upkeep of home landscape and the neighborhood, and raising livestock) to spending personal time with them (playing video games, playing in the pool, playing basketball, riding dirt bikes and scooters, watching movies, playing weekly games and reading together) — this man does it all. He is our best dad! Nominated by wife Kristine



Steven Sentell: My husband Steven Sentell is the best husband and father anyone could ask for. When we were young and didn't have kids, he stayed with me and adopted my nieces and nephew, which any 20-year-old would run away from. We were parents of my two nieces and my nephew overnight. It was a lot to take in and we went through many trials and errors, but he was always there making the situation the best that he could with me. He never left my side, and he was such a good role model and became a father figure in their lives. Then we recently started

having kids of our own. We have a two-year-old boy and a three-month-old girl, and they are his pride and joy. My kids look up to him and are so attached. I'm truly lucky to have a husband like him. I love watching him play with our sons in the pool or at the park. He gives it his all and works a full-time job and works really hard at it so that I can be a stay-at-home mom for our kids. He is the best I can ever ask for. Nominated by wife Laceylynn



James Urtz: My dad wears many hats. He's an incredible husband, father, grandfather, friend and much more. He is there for anyone who needs him, regardless of how he feels or what he needs to sacrifice. Life has not always been easy, but he has made sure his children were always taken care of. He is unmatched in kindness, strength, care and love. We can always count on him to be there for us and he truly is the best dad, not only in Maricopa, but in the world. Nominated by daughter Jami Urtz Howell.



Jerry Williford: Pastor Jerry has in past years undergone kidney failure and blindness. The Lord has blessed him with a successful kidney transplant and sight in one eye. During his difficulties he remained a positive influence to his wife and four beautiful daughters. He continues to faithfully encourage them to be whom they are meant to be in God. Jerry Williford's confidence and encouragement is extended into the church and the community. He is always ready and willing to help others in need. He is amazing.

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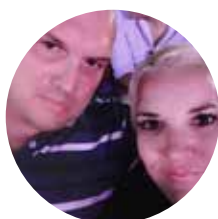
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Bryan Mordt



Crystal Knight



Dan Becker



Daniel Vega



Ian Breheney



Izzy Piwowar



Jamie Morano



Jeff Stock



Kevin Jen Morris



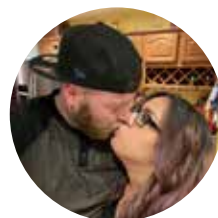
Lisa Michelle



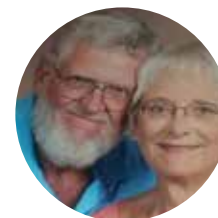
Liz Seymour



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Maricopa artist puts peddle to the metal

BY JAY TAYLOR



NOT EVERY ARTIST'S STORY is one of inspiration, or about a tortured soul finding an outlet for their grief and torment.

For some, like Maricopa metal artist Ajay Butler, it stems from a serendipitous meeting. He was hiking the Continental Divide Trail when opportunity struck.

"I met a guy in New Mexico and he offered me a job in his metal shop," Butler said. "I worked there and enjoyed it. It was easy to do and it was put in front of me."

Butler, 32, seized the occasion and began working with him, discovering his own talent and enjoyment for the craft, even though he downplays the beginnings of his crafting career.

"Someone just offered me a job who was already doing it for years," said the former

Maricopa Meadows resident who moved recently to Hidden Valley. "I worked in the shop and worked on the product from the steel sheets, to cutting it out, to welding it, doing the artificial rust, painting, all that. I did that for four years."

It was the fortuitous beginnings of his own business, Rusted Metal Arts, which sells decorative metal artwork in designs ranging from landscape scenes to Kokopelli and other figures.

But it took some time to get there.

In 2017, he came to Maricopa to be closer to his sister and brother-in-law, Augusta and Jacob Graven. Then he moved between New Mexico, Brazil and Norway, studying various languages and cultures as he tried to determine the direction of his future.

Ajay Butler applies clear coat to one of his metal creations at a storage space in town. Shortly after launching his business early last year, pandemic-related closures forced him to sell his inventory in Montana.

While Butler may not have foreseen a career as an artist, his sister did.

"Oh yeah," Augusta said, when asked if he always exhibited artistic talent. "He was always great at drawing and doing fantastic cartoons and landscapes. He started all that when he was about seven, eight years old. The more he progressed with it, I did see a future for him as an artist."

Brian Petersheim Jr.

Metal sheets already shaped by a plasma cutter sit in a shop in Las Cruces, New Mexico, awaiting artificial rust and painting. Butler transports the finished wares 370 miles to Maricopa for sale.

BUSINESS ON WHEELS

Early last year, Butler started selling his own creations at local craft shows and events like the Salsa Festival. But COVID came right after he launched, leaving him with a robust inventory of metal art but nowhere to sell it as stores, outdoor events and other sales venues shut down.

"It just stopped the business completely," he said. "I had to go to Montana because some stuff was still open up there. I spent most of the summer up there around Whitefish, Kalispell and Glacier National Park."

Butler, who said he once lived up that way and still has family there, was able to sell all of his inventory there last summer and have some spare time to do some logging.

Now with post-pandemic life getting back to normal, Butler sells his wares primarily at Arizona festivals, fairs and craft shows, including in the northern part of the state during the summer, but still does fabrication in Las Cruces. His manufacturing process requires space and equipment he just doesn't have in Maricopa, for now.

The process combines artistry, technology and manufacturing sense. The first step is to create a design, which is drawn on a computer. Most pieces are based on what is in greatest demand at the time, and pieces he knows will sell.

"Sometimes I just randomly think of something," he said. "The other day I was thinking that it would be cool to have a cover, or a gate, around pool pumps. People build block walls around them but that's not really any prettier. So, we could do something with an elk or a Kokopelli or something with a hinged gate that would make it a lot prettier."

Kokopelli are a common theme in his work, but no matter the subject he enjoys the work.

"It's fun to do and it's fun to put it together yourself," he said. "Although sometimes it's not fun to play with the acid we use to rust it."

In order to make the initial drawings as realistic as possible, he researches the subject to get a feel for the shape, texture, motion and lines. He then begins to move toward the manufacturing process.

Submitted



Ajay Butler's booth features a range of styles and sizes. He sold his creations earlier this year at the Salsa Night Market.

After 16-gauge sheet metal is marked up with a stencil, it is cut by plasma cutter, which uses compressed air and electricity.

Once cut, the pieces are ground to take off the sharp edges. This step comes with some occupational hazards.

"I got the grinder caught in my shirt one time," he said. "It was all caught up in there, and I got all cut up."

'IT'S JUST BEAUTIFUL'

Butler is looking for warehouse space in Maricopa so he can avoid the 740-mile round-trip trek to Las Cruces and back to replenish his inventory.

"I'd like to open a shop in Maricopa so I can make the art here and it's not a big hassle to go all the way over there all the time," Butler said of his New Mexico shop. "For right now it's the cheapest thing for me to do."

His work is starting to be noticed by fellow artists and vendors who are impressed by Butler's talent.

Butler said he sells pieces at stores in northern Arizona, and also locally at The Meeting Place Boutique in the Stagestop Marketplace. His creations range from magnets for as little as six dollars to larger pieces in the \$400-\$600 range, depending on metal costs and manufacturing time.

"Everywhere I go that he's also showing, his booth is very popular," said Josie Abernethy, the owner of Que Syrah Décor in Maricopa. "People were flocking to it and buying up his iron work because it's just beautiful."

"I love my work — it's just different."

[Facebook/rustedmetalarts;](https://www.facebook.com/rustedmetalarts)
[rustedmetalarts.com](https://www.rustedmetalarts.com)



RF microneedling improves tone, texture

BY KRISTINA DONNAY, FNP-C

DURING THE AGING PROCESS, OUR skin slowly starts to lose the healthy supply of collagen, hyaluronic acid, and elastin. This results in the appearance of wrinkles, and a reduction of skin volume and elasticity causing our skin to sag. As we get older, most of us would like to slow down this process and continue to enjoy smooth skin and defined contours.

Many non-surgical techniques have been developed in recent years to address skin-related concerns for patients who are not yet ready or willing to consider surgical solutions. Microneedling treatments create tiny punctures, or micro lesions, in the superficial layer of the skin to stimulate a healing response causing an increase in the production of collagen, elastin, and new skin cells. Radio-frequency treatments, like Forma and Fractora, are proven to generate collagen remodeling with their use of thermal-energy.

Morpheus8, by InMode, is a revolutionary and ground breaking technology that will dramatically tighten lax skin, improve the appearance of facial lines and wrinkles, smooth rough or uneven texture, treat hyperpigmentation and acne scarring and even reduce unwanted fat.

Morpheus 8 combines the two technologies of microneedling and RF to deliver the thermal energy of radio-frequency waves to deeper layers of the skin and tissue with adjustable microneedles. This combination allows RF energy to reach both the dermis and epidermis for maximum results.

The Morpheus8 is FDA approved as a Sub-dermal Adipose Remodeling Device, or SARD, unlike standard microneedling treatments. The Morpheus 8 treatment can adjust the ultra-fine microneedles to a depth of up to 6 millimeters, deeper than any other microneedling device currently available. This fractional treatment penetrates deep into the skin and fat for a smoother and sleeker appearance.

Morpheus8 is a minimally invasive treatment that is most popular to treat the face, jawline, and neck, it can also be used anywhere on your body, including the abdomen, above the knee, thighs, or buttocks.

This treatment is safe and effective for use on all skin types and tones. Unlike other resurfacing methods, the Morpheus8 has minimal risk of post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation. Patients should expect little to no thermal damage to skin. (Can treat skin type VI).

Our patients' comfort during treatment is a top priority. Prior to treatment a topical anesthetic is applied to the skin. After 45 minutes the patient is ready to receive treatment. The patient will experience a warming sensation to the skin with little discomfort. We also offer complimentary ProNox if needed for comfort.

Morpheus8 can cause permanent and lasting results that withstand the test of time. With the proper treatment plan and annual maintenance treatments patients can sustain ongoing collagen production and major reduction in skin laxity.

Morpheus8 can be paired with other treatments, including IPL treatments. We call it the "Tight and Glow" package. During July 2021 Maricopa Wellness Center is offering a compliment IPL treatment for all new Morpheus8 clients. Call for your free consultation today and see if the Morpheus8 is the right treatment for you. 📞

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Business, development around town

Sonoran Creek Marketplace at 20300 N. John Wayne Pkwy. will add landscape irrigation electric service along Edison Road at lots 2 and 3. Work will be done for John Wayne Pkwy Maricopa AZ LLC by Nesbitt Contracting. FMI West Inc. will pour a foundation at 20240 N. John Wayne Pkwy. for Halle Properties LLC. The cost was \$30,000.

Volkswagen of America, DBA Vorelco Inc., received permits for \$150,000 in mechanical and electrical HVAC renovations at 17169 N. Murphy Road, with work to be completed by Trane US Inc.

Apex Motor Club received a construction permit for four, 12-garage condos at 22408 N. Ralston Road, with work done by John D. Hensler LLC. The project is estimated at \$1.18 million.

At 18000 N. Stonegate Rd., Bldg. D, **Omni Maricopa Land Acquisition LLC** will build three self-storage facilities that include outdoor RV storage. The first is a \$534,262 project to construct an 8,564-square-foot self-storage facility. The second is a 5,596-square-foot facility for \$350,085. The third is a 7,996-square-foot facility for \$500,230. The work will include a 2,892-square-foot office and manager's quarters for \$195,411. The outdoor RV storage facility, valued at \$5.6 million, spans 70,466 square feet. In addition, the company will spend \$6 million for on-site water and sewer improvements. All work will be done by James A. Campbell Construction.

Trojan Fire Protection LLC will install a 113-head fire sprinkler system at **Sonoran Creek**-Second Edition at 20320 N. John Wayne Pkwy for John Wayne Pkwy Maricopa AZ LLC.

The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado submitted improvement plans for paving and landscape on Phase II, parcel 52 at 40331 W. Wade Dr. Work will be done for Metro Red-1 LLC by Otago Development Inc.

Santa Rosa Crossings will make on-site improvements in Phase 3 at 18184 N. Presley Lane. Work is being done for Pulte Homes by Knochel Bros. Inc.

Right of way was granted to the **Tortosa Homeowners Association** to get fiber optics routed from Tortosa down Murphy Road to Farrell Road to provide internet at



Construction continues at the community hospital at John Wayne Parkway and Honeycutt Avenue.

the city's new high school. The first section will be underground to the first ED-3 pole on Murphy Road. Native Technology Solutions will do the work.

Ellison-Mills Construction LLC will remove and replace damaged sidewalk panels at North Santa Rosa Drive and West Smith-Enke Road and install handicap ramps at two pergola locations on Alan Stephens Parkway in Glennwilde.

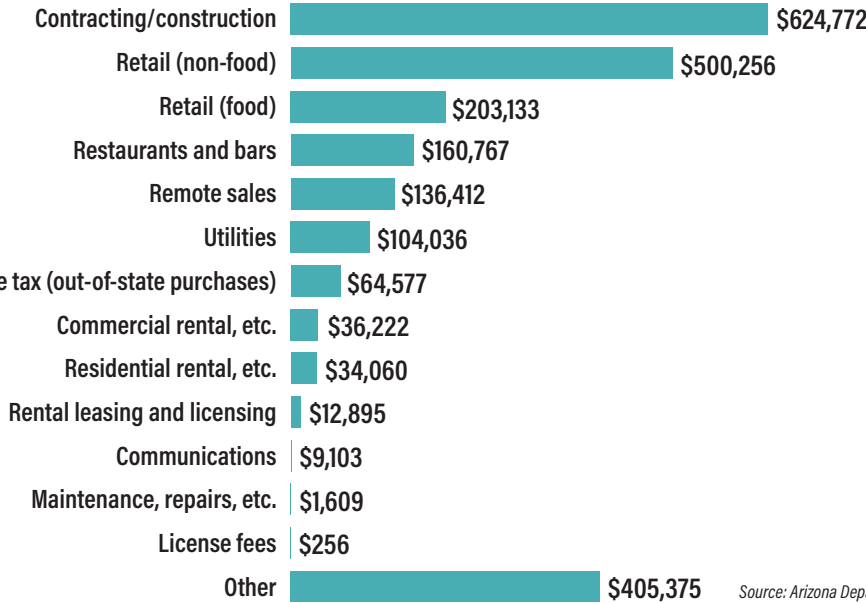
At Honeycutt Avenue and State Route 347, Tee Pee Contractors received a right of way permit to conduct a directional bore across Honeycutt for **Exceptional Healthcare**.

A temporary use permit was granted to **DR Horton Inc.** and The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado for a model complex in Phase III at Parcel 59 at 41039 W. Sunland Dr. 🗨

Ian Roberts

Maricopa Sales Tax Collections

In May, businesses paid nearly \$2.3 million in transaction privilege taxes. Here's where people spent money based on the amount of sales tax collected:



Source: Arizona Department of Revenue



Jon Corwin is VP/GM of Global Water Resources.



Shirley Ann Hartman, with husband McD, served the board for 33 years.



Jackie Guthrie is foundation president.

8 elected to CAC Foundation board

EIGHT INDIVIDUALS WERE recently elected to three-year terms on the board of directors of the Central Arizona College Foundation. They were Scott Bartle, Brett Benedict, Kitty Carlisle,

Jim Garrett, Jordan Rose, Jack Stonebraker, Alice Wilcox and Joan Wuertz.

Shirley Ann Hartman departed the board after 33 years of distinguished service.

Seven individuals were appointed to one-year terms on the executive committee. They are Jackie Guthrie, president; Jon Corwin, first vice president; Brett Benedict, second vice president; Stacy Gramazio, secretary; Alice Wilcox, treasurer; Jack Stonebraker,

member-at-large, and Darrell Wilson, member-at-large.

The Central Arizona College Foundation's mission is to help students and communities realize their educational and cultural hopes and dreams.

The non-profit foundation works to increase resources, raise funds, and create friends and partnerships to support the mission of Central Arizona College. 🗨

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GETTING TO know

BONITA BURKS
Owner | Health Markets

Hometown: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Reside in: Rancho El Dorado

Maricopan since: 2002

Family: Husband Jim and five adult children, plus my adorable 18-month-old granddaughter

Hobbies: Jigsaw puzzles

Dream vacation: Alaskan cruise

Like most about Maricopa: Small-town feel

FAVORITE ...

Book: "The Bodyguard"

Song: "Fly Me to the Moon"

Musician: Frank Sinatra

Meal: Fish fry

Teams: Green Bay Packers, Arizona Cardinals and Phoenix Suns

Restaurant: Sunrise Diner

Words to live by: Live, laugh, love

[Learn more about Bonita at InMaricopa.com/Community/Getting-to-Know.](https://www.inmaricopa.com/Community/Getting-to-Know)



Restaurants marked down by inspectors

Six Maricopa eateries were tagged by Pinal County health inspectors from May 15-June 14.

Cilantro's Mexican Cocina

Internal temperatures of cooked steak being held in covered, metal pans in the walk-in cooler were 51-53 degrees. Per the manager, the steak was cooked the night before. Inspector reviewed cooling methods, time and temperature parameters. A cooling handout was provided. The manager voluntarily discarded steak.

Internal temperatures of cooked chicken held in stacked, covered metal pans in the walk-in cooler were 105-109 degrees. Per the manager, the chicken was cooked about one hour earlier. The manager was instructed to remove chicken from pans and place on flat sheet pan in the walk-in cooler to chill quickly. Cooling methods were reviewed.

The inspector observed a missing overhead light shield in the food prep area and asked for replacement.

The Duke at Rancho El Dorado

Internal temperatures of cole slaw, potato salad and cheese held on a bed of ice at the outdoor grill for about two hours were 59-67 degrees. Manager voluntarily discarded the items and was asked to maintain foods for cold holding at or below 41 degrees. (Outdoor cooking is limited to cook and serve. All prep and holding must be done in the kitchen, according to the inspector.)

The inspector observed pasta and baked potatoes held in the walk-in cooler with expired date

marks. The manager discarded these items. Chicken salad, roast beef, refried beans and gravy were observed being held in the walk-in cooler and prep coolers without dates. The manager stated the items were made within the last two days and provided date marks. The manager was asked to maintain and monitor date marks daily.

The inspector observed a build-up of debris on the stove, grill, oven and prep coolers. The manager was asked to clean at a frequency that negates build-up.

Gyro Grill

Internal temperatures of cut tomatoes, lettuce and cheese held in the upper compartment of the prep cooler were 51-53 degrees. Internal temperatures of baba ghanoush (made in-house with cooked garlic), tzatziki sauce and tapas being held in the lower compartment of the prep cooler were 55-56 degrees. Internal air temperature of the unit was taken in the lower compartment and recorded at 58 degrees by the inspector. Owner/cook also confirmed air temperature from their ambient air thermometer. Owner was instructed to move all temperature-controlled foods to the working reach-in cooler in the back kitchen.

Ambient air temperature of the prep cooler was recorded at 58 degrees and resulted in a cold holding violation. Owners were instructed to not use the prep cooler to hold temperature-controlled foods until it can be repaired to hold internal food temperatures at or below 41 degrees. Re-inspection was required to verify correction within 10 days.

Internal temperatures of cut lettuce being held in a deep, plastic-covered pan was 78-80 degrees. The owner stated it was cut at about 10:30 a.m. and the temperature taken at noon. The owner was instructed to place cut lettuce in the freezer or rinse with ice water to chill quickly, and the lettuce was put in the freezer. Temperature was taken again 30 minutes later and recorded at 76-78 degrees. Cooling methods were reviewed to include adequate holding equipment and location and shallow, metal, uncovered containers, the use of ice-baths and reduced prep times that occur in hot or room temperature areas.

Native Grill & Wings

Internal temperatures of cooked chicken removed from grill and plated for service was 150-157 degrees. Raw chicken must be cooked to at least 165 degrees.

Chicken was returned to the grill. A probe thermometer was calibrated and provided to the cook.

The internal temperature of red sauce held in the steam well was 90 degrees. Per the manager, the sauce was removed from the cooler and placed directly into the steam well about 1.5 hours earlier. The cook was instructed to reheat the sauce to 165 degrees and maintain foods in hot holding at or above 135 degrees.

The inspector observed several chemical spray bottles with liquid in them in the kitchen and bar areas without identifying labels. The manager labeled bottles for sanitizer, degreaser, water and window cleaner.

Roots Eatery

The inspector observed steaks held in plastic, reduced-oxygen packaging in the walk-in cooler and in a pot of water. The internal temperature of the steaks was 117 degrees; water temperature was 122 degrees. Foods for hot holding should be maintained at or above 135 degrees. The manager stated they were using the ROP process for steaks and was notified the process requires an approved variance and instructed to immediately stop the use of ROP. The manager was notified that all ROP steaks were embargoed and all steaks were voluntarily discarded.

Tacos N' More

Inspector observed open containers of the following being held in the walk-in, reach-in and display cooler with expired date marks: cooked beef, cooked vegetables, green salsa, cooked vegetables and mild salsa. Manager voluntarily discarded items and was asked to monitor date marks daily not to exceed seven days, including the make date.

EXCELLENT

[No violations found]

- Circle K, 41433 W. Honeycutt Road
- Circle K Made to Go, Honeycutt Road
- Brooklyn Boys
- Fry's Marketplace Murray Cheese
- Fry's Marketplace Sushi
- Helen's Kitchen
- Province Clubhouse
- Raceway Bar & Grill
- Rob's Convenience
- QuikTrip

SATISFACTORY

[Violations corrected during inspection]

- Cilantro's Mexican Cocina

- The Duke at Rancho El Dorado
- Gyro Grill
- Native Grill & Wings
- Roots Eatery
- Tacos N' More

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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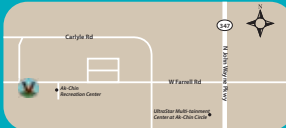
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Brain surgery can't keep MHS senior from walking with class

BY JAY TAYLOR

SENIOR YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL IS tough. There's pressure to graduate, make plans for the future, and all the other difficulties that go with being 17. Throw in a global pandemic and life becomes even more fraught.

The challenges faced by Dalton Hardman on his path to a diploma were even more daunting.

After brain surgery in January 2020 to address a seizure disorder, his treatment and recovery put him almost a year behind in his classes. Almost immediately after the operation, he was ready to resume his studies as a Maricopa High School junior, just months before COVID-19 hit.

He had to decide if he was going to try make up all the credits he was missing to graduate in May 2021 with his class.

He decided to go for it, taking all his classes online.

His mother Shanna said the family urged him not to put too much pressure on himself, but he was insistent.

"We told him he could wait and take them in summer school and graduate after his class," Shanna said. "But he didn't want to. He wanted to walk with the class."

"I didn't want to be at that school anymore," Dalton said. "It was my time to move on."

It wouldn't be easy, especially with a last-minute obstacle to overcome.

A SCARY DIAGNOSIS

Dalton's saga began when he was just 2 weeks old. His parents, Shanna and Nathan, noticed he had jaundice and was sleeping more than normal so they took him to the emergency room in Vernal, Utah, where they were living at the time. The news wasn't good — he had spinal meningitis.

"We were told to brace ourselves, and that he probably wouldn't survive the night," Shanna said. "And if he did, he would probably be having seizures. I was devastated."

The infant surprised doctors by making it through the night. Though he looked better, Shanna and Nathan were told that, clinically,

he was worse. He was helicoptered to Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City.

Dalton then developed normally until he hit the fourth grade, when he started complaining about his hearing. Testing confirmed significant hearing loss in both ears. And then came the seizures. "Then he started having these episodes, that at the time we didn't realize it, but they were seizures," Shanna said. "A lot of times when people think of seizures, they think of someone on the ground and convulsing, like an epileptic seizure. His are different. "But you can always tell by the look in his eyes. He'll smack his lips a little bit, and for the longest time we didn't know that's what it was. We ended up finding out after we took him to a neurologist." Finally, Dalton was diagnosed with Complex Partial Seizure Disorder, which causes focal seizures with the primary symptom being "alteration of consciousness."

That began an odyssey of trying to determine the exact cause and location of his seizures, so doctors could determine a treatment path.

The family moved to Maricopa in 2016, and over several months Dalton underwent a barrage of tests. One, in-patient monitoring, involved his doctors trying to trigger a seizure to determine the part of the brain where the seizures were occurring. They fed him lots of sugar and caffeine and kept him awake all hours of the day and night to try to trigger a seizure without luck. Finally, he had a seizure, but it wasn't as prominent as the doctors wanted, according to Nathan.

"They drilled holes in his skull and put leads directly onto his brain," he said. "He went 28 days before he had a seizure. He couldn't even get out of bed to go to the bathroom because the electrodes were screwed directly into his skull."

The testing eventually paid off, however, revealing the seizures were coming from an unanticipated part of Dalton's brain. Doctors implanted a responsive neurostimulator (RNS) in his skull to continually monitor brain activity and be ready to send a brief pulse of electrical stimulation if a seizure was detected. The device



With his family's concern and encouragement, Dalton Hardman pushed hard to complete the credits he needed to graduate from Maricopa High School in May.

Brian Petersheim Jr.

Not only did Dalton Hardman walk with his class at graduation, he enjoys walking on stilts outside his home.

“

I had to start on the extra classes right away, so it was really hard. I didn't think I was going to be able to do it. But I had my brother and a ton of people saying I could do it, to just get through it, push just a little bit further.”

DALTON HARDMAN

also could help pinpoint the activity location, giving doctors a chance to perform a potential lobectomy to deaden the area at the site of the seizures and eliminate them.

'GOING THROUGH A TON'

At that point, with the RNS working in his brain, things were looking up for Dalton. In January 2020, he prepared to start school. When meeting with teachers to formulate a plan to get him caught up, Dalton's parents found many of his teachers were not aware of the extent of his medical issues.

“He gets extremely tired after a seizure,” Shanna said. “When we met with some of the teachers, they didn't realize he had this seizure disorder. They thought he was just bored in class and spacing out. He'd put his head down and fall asleep on his desk and they were annoyed by him.”

One of those teachers was English teacher Talitha Martin, who ended up becoming quite close to Dalton.

“As his teacher, I knew he was going through a ton,” Martin said. “He fell behind on his schoolwork because of all the time in the hospital and lost a ton of credits. He was in my English class this year and he was working so hard to make it.”

He was going to school online while a teacher from Maricopa High School visited his home to help him get caught up. The seizures continued but became less frequent as doctors fine-tuned his RNS.

“If I were in person, I don't think I would have actually been able to get all that work done,” Dalton said. “Not this year, because I was doing a bunch of extra classes, plus my regular senior classes, plus night school and summer school online.”

Working his tail off all year, he was ready to graduate on schedule.

But two weeks before graduation came yet another obstacle. Dalton said his counselor determined that due to a clerical error he still had to complete two additional electives — a fitness class and psychology — to graduate.

“So, I finished two whole semester classes in 10 days on top of the other seven or eight classes I was already taking,” he said.

“Literally he was up till 3 or 4 a.m. every night,” his mother added. “He lived off a couple hours of sleep a night and did nothing — nothing — but school.”



DALTON HARDMAN

Age: 18

Resides in: The Villages

Skill: Self-taught in American Sign Language

Future plans: Attend Central Arizona College as the first step toward a career in medicine

Activities: Prior to surgeries, started dog clean-up and yard work businesses

Family describes him as: Wise beyond his age, compassionate and willing to help anyone in need

That schedule created some rough moments for Dalton.

“It just seemed like too much,” he said. “I had to start on the extra classes right away, so it was really hard. I didn't think I was going to be able to do it. But I had my brother and a ton of people saying I could do it, to just get through it, push just a little bit further.”

He pushed enough.

On May 26, Dalton donned his red cap and gown and walked into Ram Stadium as one of 422 graduates in the Class of 2021. Against all odds, he had earned his diploma — on time.

A SEIZURE-FREE FUTURE?

As Dalton strapped his heavy academic burden on back and marched toward graduation, another extraordinary thing was taking place that gave the whole family hope. His seizures had tapered to zero. “Before the RNS, doing that much work and being all stressed out, he would have had seizures all through that time,” Nathan said. In fact, Shanna said Dr. Matthew Troester at Phoenix Children's Hospital in mid-June revealed Dalton hasn't had a seizure since November.

“He went from daily seizures to this,” she said. “His RNS device is really helping.”

His health improving, Dalton is turning his attention to the future.

“I've been thinking for a few years I want to be a nurse practitioner, working in neurology or pediatrics,” he said. “But I think after this I might just work my way up to be a doctor.”

That quest will begin online with Central Arizona College, where he plans to get his associate degree before deciding where to continue his education.

Martin, Dalton's English teacher, said she wouldn't bet against him achieving what he sets out to do.

“I always tell my students to get what they came for,” she said. “If Dalton had said, ‘I need another year,’ nobody would have blamed him ... he would have had every reason to stretch it out.”

“He wanted to go get it and he did, he went and got it.

He decided early on that it was important to him to graduate with his class, and he dug in and made it happen.”



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EDUCATION



Preparing for the future

BY MURRAY SIEGEL

WITH THE GROWTH OF TECHNOLOGY CONSTANTLY accelerating, as a nation we must prepare the students currently in school to be ready for the challenge of technological development when they become the leaders of our country.

What is the Maricopa Unified School District doing to meet that challenge?

Its two middle schools continue to develop programs to ensure students have the mathematical background to be ready for developments such as artificial intelligence, cyber warfare, micro technology, genetic procedures to overcome serious diseases, and combating the dangerous growth of natural disasters.

To learn more about MUSD middle school programs in mathematics, I talked with Jackie Hahn, a member of her school's Blended Learning faculty, a former academic coach and a peer mentor at Maricopa Wells Middle School. An experienced middle-grades teacher, she began teaching after spending 22 years as an engineer at Johnson & Johnson, where she was a program director and project manager. She has a degree in industrial engineering and a graduate degree in education, and is a National Board Certified Teacher.

The district understands the importance of mathematics preparation in the middle school, according to Hahn. A required math-prep class taken by sixth graders bolsters their math foundations. Student needs are assessed and addressed in smaller classes so that individual needs can be targeted.

Students who are found to be significantly behind in math achievement are assigned to a remediation/intervention class with individualized instruction based on data analysis, she said. Students at both middle schools — Maracopa Wells and Desert Wind — can get the assistance they need to succeed from a math coach who works with teachers and helps with the analysis of data.

The ultimate goal, Hahn said, is to prepare all students for algebraic concepts, since success in algebra is a key to achievement in future math and science studies.

What about sixth grade students who are high achievers in math?

Students identified with advanced skills are placed in honors math classes during sixth grade, according to Hahn. The classes will ready them to take algebra in eighth grade, and, eventually, calculus at the high school.

A great effort has been made to see the district's middle school students have the tools they will need to meet the challenges of the future. The citizens of Maricopa should take satisfaction knowing teachers with the skills and dedication found in Jackie Hahn are working with our children. 📧

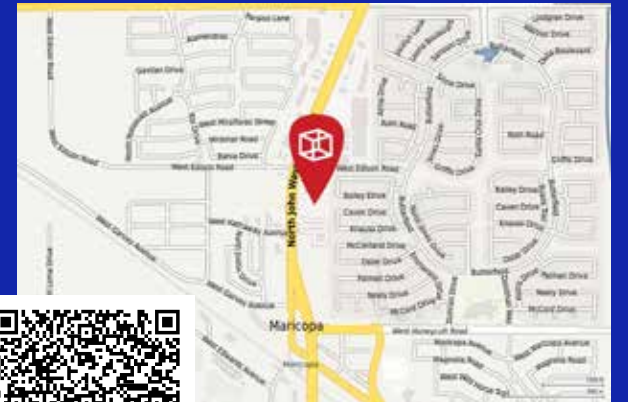
Murray Siegel, Ph.D., has more than 44 years of teaching experience and volunteers at Butterfield Elementary School.

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“We have phenomenal parent and community participation in all our activities and it’s really beautiful,” said Teri Dominguez, superintendent of the Mobile Elementary School District. “It’s a very community family feel that I’ve never seen anywhere else.”



Mobile Elementary, a learning oasis in the desert

BY BOB MCGOVERN

IT’S EASY TO MISS THE SMALL white building along State Route 238, but there is an interesting story taking place under the six towering palms at South 99th Avenue.

Mobile Elementary, a public school for students in grades K-8, is unassuming. The facilities are modest — several classrooms, an outdoor activity area and a small administration office — even as its view north to the Sierra Estrella mountains is grand.

Teri Dominguez is superintendent at the Mobile Elementary School District. An elementary and special education teacher for 14 years, she started teaching grades 6-8 at the school in 2010. Four of her children have attended the school and the fifth is a current student. She moved into administration two years ago but continues to function as the school’s special education teacher and school nurse.

“I came here because I loved the difference,” she said. “Where I was before, it was just kind of move them on, move them on. I noticed the difference in culture here. You stop, you care, you work with the kids. That’s why I stayed and that’s why I put my kids in the school, too. I wanted them to be in a school where people did care about them. Not that other schools don’t, I’m sure every school does, but the feeling of it was different, and it was obvious.”

Dominguez has worked to burnish that culture at the school, which is 12 miles west of Maricopa. The blueprint for student success relies on small class size, regular teacher-parent communication and parental involvement, and the staff’s willingness to do whatever it takes for their students.

Class sizes are 12-15 students per multi-grade-level class. Since teachers follow their students through several grades, the teachers have the opportunity to learn and build on each

student’s individual strengths and learning style. That combined, with innovative curriculum and programing, has led to high levels of student academic achievement.

As a year-round school, students go to classes for 10 weeks then have three weeks off. Students take art, physical education, music, culinary and Spanish. There is a five-week summer break and summer school is offered to students who need to brush up on a skill or two.

Mobile is a CEP, or Community Eligibility Provision, school, which means it offers breakfast and lunch to students at no charge. Mobile Elementary also runs a food bank through St. Mary’s the first and third Friday of the month. The school provides busing to and from Maricopa, Hidden Valley and Mobile.

Smaller classes make it possible for teachers to monitor their students more closely, Dominguez said. That enables teachers to spot learning gaps.

Ian Roberts

“Some students are going to get further behind unless someone cares enough to take the time and go back and remediate that gap,” she said. “I think that’s what sets us apart. We care. I think we’re special and unique in that way. We work and we find a way to meet those educational needs, whatever they may be.”

‘MORE FOCUSED’

The intense focus on all students has benefited her children, according to one mother.

Tonia Crew, a Maricopa resident since 2011, said her kids have thrived at the school, making the Principal’s List and Honor Roll. Her son Arquavian was just promoted from the school and daughter Aryana will be starting eighth grade when school resumes July 6 from summer break. They transferred into Mobile Elementary in third and second grades, respectively.

“They’ve done very well,” Crew said. “They enjoy it. And the small class size contributes to their success. They are more focused with the teacher.”

A smaller student body also allows a level of supervision for teachers to keep tabs on their students’ mental health and ensure a no-bullying culture.

“A lot of parents come here and they’re very happy their students finally have a place that’s safe,” Dominguez said. “They have a place their kids can go and focus on learning, instead of just surviving in that environment.”

Cindy Koontz, a 22-year educator who will be starting her seventh school year, teaches K-2. She said small classrooms do more than just offer personalized, differentiated instruction.

“The multi-age classroom offers children educational exposure to curriculum at multiple levels, ensuring all children access to learning at their level and ability,” she said. “Students also blossom socially and develop friendships over many grade levels within one classroom.”

The quality and dedication of teachers and staff is perhaps the biggest difference from some other schools, she added.

“One of my philosophies is you hire people who care about kids, who care about the school, who care about what happens to the kids after they leave here,” Dominguez said. “How they’re doing in the community, how they’re doing mental health-wise and academically.”



K-2 teacher Cindy Koontz will start her seventh year at the school this month.

Palm trees tower over a school courtyard where students have activities.



TERI DOMINGUEZ

Occupation: Superintendent, Mobile Elementary School District

Maricopan since: 2010

Family: Five children — four sons and one daughter

Hobby: A home improvement buff, she has renovated a kitchen — top to bottom — and is currently working on a full overhaul of a bathroom. “It was fun, a learning experience because you have to learn — you have to read, go on YouTube, find out how to do it — and then you just do it. I make a lot of mistakes and have to go back and correct them, but you just keep trying and eventually it comes out.”

‘A BEAUTIFUL ENVIRONMENT’

During the height of the pandemic, teachers never stopped teaching a regular school day in their classrooms, livestreaming lessons to students at home. To make sure all of her students could tune in daily, Dominguez visited homes to troubleshoot technology problems. The school provided laptops, cameras and hotspots to families without internet, she said.

When she became superintendent, Dominguez instituted weekly communication between teachers and parents to provide updates on their children’s progress. “It was especially valuable during COVID with

children off-campus and more communication needed,” she said.

Teachers and administration also have regular meetings to talk about individual students and their challenges, and share successful classroom strategies.

“Most parents appreciate that the teachers take the time and care about their students,” Dominguez said. “We’re keeping parents abreast on their progress toward meeting their goals and grades. I think it helps to get parents and students and teachers on the same page.”

And while that quality education already occurs in modest surroundings, the school is making improvements even as it prepares for a population boom in the coming years — in a new location. Residential development in the area is expected to accelerate with the construction of I-11, a new interstate that, as proposed, will run right through the school property.

As the population grows, the school will likely need to expand in that new location, perhaps in one of the new residential communities nearby, according to Dominguez.

But the superintendent doesn’t expect a bit of expansion to diminish the flourishing small-school culture treasured by parents and staff.

“We have phenomenal parent and community participation in all our activities and it’s really beautiful. It’s a very community family feel that I’ve never seen anywhere else,” she said. “That’s one of the reasons why I moved my kids here and why I stayed, because it’s unique. It’s just a beautiful environment for kids to grow in. It always has been, and I want to keep it that way.”

4 secrets about early childhood education in Maricopa Unified School District

1 MUSD OFFERS SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

MUSD is offering two preferred preschool options for the upcoming 2021-22 school year — a Community Preschool, open to children three to five years of age, and a Dual-Language Immersion Preschool option for children four to five years of age. A Dual-Language Immersion Kindergarten program is also available tuition-free to children who turn five before Sept. 1, 2021.

The MUSD Community Preschool provides fun, skills-based activities that help children explore science, literacy, math, art, music, dramatic play, technology, physical education, and more. A rich curriculum aligns with Arizona Early Learning Standards to build skills and promote healthy social-emotional development. Students work and play together to explore their curiosities, build confidence, and develop problem-solving skills for a life-long love of learning.

The Dual Language Immersion Program aims to introduce preschool and kindergarten students to a second language. The world of bilingualism, biliteracy and cultural competency comes alive as students receive instruction and delve into content in both English and Spanish. Dual Language Immersion develops the building blocks that will prepare students to be fluent speakers of a second language.

Benefits of the dual-language program include developing higher self-esteem and confidence, improved reading abilities, enhanced problem solving, greater cognitive stimulation, higher levels of engagement, promotion of bilingualism and biliteracy, and greater cultural competency.

2 MARICOPA'S FIRST CHOICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING IS ALSO AFFORDABLE

Maricopa Unified School District offers full-day Community Preschool and Dual Language Immersion Preschool for \$570 per month. And full-day Dual Language Immersion Kindergarten is always tuition-free. Extended-day childcare is also available for an additional fee.



3 FULL-DAY ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING IS LED BY CERTIFIED TEACHERS

Both the Community Preschool and Dual-language Immersion programs offer full-day academic programming led by certified teachers who deliver the research-based curriculum. Each classroom is also staffed with a paraprofessional to assist the teacher with daily activities. Classes are offered Monday-Friday from 8:35 a.m.-3:35 p.m. Kindergarten and preschool programs are open the entire school year, from July 22, 2021 to May 26, 2022.

4 OPEN TO ALL, BUT SPACE IS LIMITED

Community Preschool and Dual Language Immersion programs are located at Santa Rosa Elementary School, but enrollment is open to anyone who wishes to take advantage of the innovative offerings. Parents should enroll their children as soon as possible, space is limited and a waiting list will be established when the programs reach capacity. Call 520-568-6150 to begin the enrollment process. You may also visit www.musd20.org/preschool or www.musd20.org/duallanguage for more information.

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So, what is backyard orchard culture?

BY RITA BRICKER

THERE IS A PHILOSOPHY advanced by Dave Wilson Nursery in California, wholesale supplier of fruit trees to many of the better nurseries in Arizona, that espouses high-density planting, enabling homeowners to plant several fruit tree varieties with different ripening windows in small spaces like our typical residential backyards.

Dense planting of different varieties can extend the normal 1-2 weeks of fruit harvest to 10-12 weeks and provide better cross-pollination of trees like pears, apples, plums and cherries.

Here are several approaches to consider: planting 3—4 trees in the same hole, espaliered trees or planting in hedgerows. For example, up to four trees may be planted 18-24 inches apart in a 4-foot-by-4-foot hole. Trees in hedgerows can be planted as close as 3 feet apart. Espaliered trees are trained flat against a wall or trellis, taking up very little space.

The key to success with these methods, although counter-intuitive, is SUMMER pruning! How does this work?

Reducing the tree canopy in summer reduces the number of leaves, in turn reducing photosynthesis, which reduces new growth as well as the food materials and energy to be stored in the root system during late summer and fall. Consequently, the ensuing spring growth is also reduced, thus controlling tree size. Dwarf or semi-dwarf rootstock will NOT accomplish the same thing.

Proper pruning for the first three years of a deciduous fruit tree is an important start for good form.

Apply summer pruning to successfully



control the size of a fruit tree after the third year. Pick a height that will allow for easy pruning, thinning, netting and harvesting for YOU. Cut back any vigorous shoots that grow above that point then cut back all growth by half in late spring or early summer. Vigorous growers like apricots may need to be cut back in spring, early summer and again in late summer. Prune to outside buds and encourage horizontal branching; always remove dead, dying or diseased branches.

Single trees in a hedgerow should be pruned to vase shape (open center, no central leader). For multi-plantings in a single hole, thin out the center of the tree group to allow sunshine into the interior of the grouping; cut back all trees in the group to the same height.

To espalier or create a fan shape, cut back all branches that don't grow flat and train the rest along the trellis for support.

You, too, can grow an extensive fruit orchard in your backyard by following these guidelines. Your trees will take up less space, allowing you to plant more of the fruit trees you like. And you will enjoy an extended harvest and easier maintenance. 📌

Rita Bricker is a Master Gardener.

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 📞 **More on early pruning from University of Arizona: <http://ow.ly/VMuK50Faqlp>**
 📞 **macmastergardener@gmail.com**



Selling with solar? Emphasize your savings

BY DAYV MORGAN

THE ABUNDANT SUNSHINE IN Arizona makes rooftop solar panels an appealing feature for homebuyers considering a resale home.

Market indications show the value of solar panels is often less than sellers hope for when selling, however. Out of the 2,415 Maricopa homes sold in the last 365 days through MLS, only 134 (5.5%) were listed with a solar energy system. About half of those were leased.

Solar panels can be owned or leased.

Owned solar: In Arizona, the average cost of a solar panel installation ranges from \$7,988 to \$10,807, after the 26% federal solar tax credit, according to EnergySage.com. With a 5kW solar system generating about 8,760 kWh of solar energy annually, the average solar payback period is about 7 years.

When selling, a solar system will increase the sale price, depending on the size of the system, but generally about \$1,000-\$1,500 per kW.

Leased solar: These panels are not considered to be part of the home. In fact, a new owner of the home may have to qualify with the solar company. Buyers may need a higher credit score than even the mortgage company requires to assume the lease, which may still have years remaining. Homes with leased solar typically sell slower than homes with no solar and may even sell for less. Furthermore, leased solar does not add value on the appraisal and lease payments may increase annually. Also, with most lenders, it increases a buyer's debt-to-income ratio and, thus, decreases a buyer's purchasing power.

Tips for selling: Emphasize how much money you save. (Don't be afraid to brag!) Provide buyers with written documentation on annual savings to help them understand kW and panel efficiency; they are more likely to see value if you can quantify the savings. Is it \$100 per month? Three hundred? Include info in the MLS or leave a copy of recent electric bills on the kitchen counter.

Bottom line: Help buyers recognize the value over the long term. 📌

Dayv Morgan is a Maricopa Realtor and owner of HomeSmart Success. He is a 15-year resident of the city.

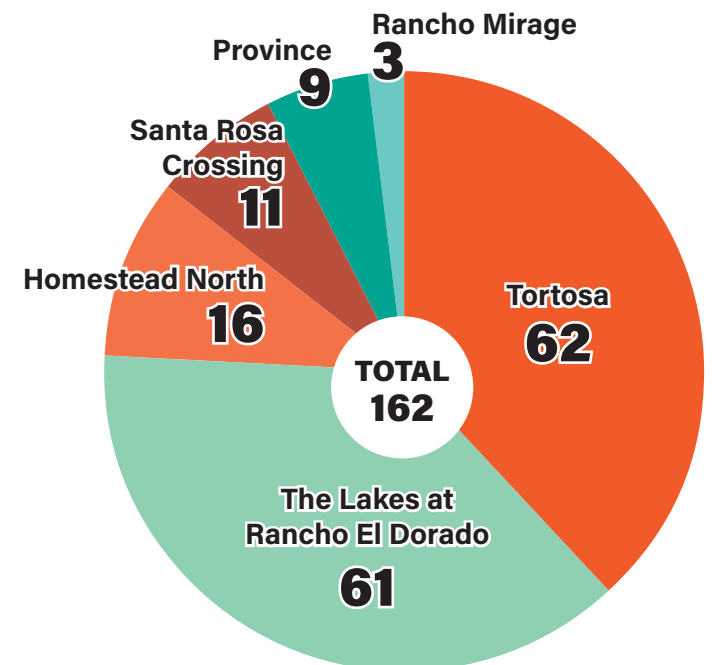
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Brian Petersheim Jr.



SINGLE-FAMILY HOME PERMITS

By subdivision for May



Source: City of Maricopa

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most expensive HOME SOLD	18106 N. Stonegate Road, Glennwilde	May 22	\$ \$640,000
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The most expensive home sold in Maricopa May 13 through June 12 was a single-story in Glennwilde. The custom home has an open floor plan with formal dining and kitchen/living space. The kitchen features quartz counter tops, white cabinets, gas cooktop with pot filler, built-in oven and microwave, oversized island and beautiful tile backsplash. The great room features a gas fireplace with tile surround and TV niche above. The backyard has a large pool with waterfalls and jacuzzi, tiled patio/ pool surround, and a pergola with adjustable overhead and side blind. This highly upgraded home was on the market 45 days and sold for \$10,000 under list price.

Square feet: 2,527	Features: Paver driveway/ walkway, four-car garage with epoxy floor, artificial grass, RV gate, tile floors, upgraded carpet in bedrooms, wallpaper accent walls, tray ceiling in master, plantation shutters, pool, spa, tile patio and pool surround, pergola, view fence.
Price per square foot: \$253.26	
Days on market: 46	
Builder: Fulton Homes	
Year built: 2019	
Bedrooms: 3	
Bathrooms: 2.5	
2. 22338 N. O'Sullivan Drive, Rancho El Dorado.....	\$560,000
3. 40756 W. Parkhill Drive, The Lakes.....	\$555,000
4. 41011 W. Walker Way, Homestead North.....	\$530,000
5. 43247 W. McClelland Drive, The Villages.....	\$530,000

least expensive HOME SOLD	35859 W. Costa Blanca Drive, Tortosa	June 9	\$ \$210,000
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The least expensive home sold in Maricopa May 13 through June 12 was a three-bedroom single-story in Tortosa. This home features vaulted ceilings, tile throughout, split floorplan and newer stainless steel appliances. The home was listed for less than a month and sold for \$30,000 under list price.	
Square feet: 1,302	Year built: 2007
Price per square foot: \$161.29	Bedrooms: 3
Days on market: 21	Bathrooms: 2
Builder: Unknown	
2. 18266 N. Calacera Street, Glennwilde.....	\$235,000
3. 40537 W. Hillman Drive, The Lakes.....	\$246,490
4. 35875 W. Costa Blanca Drive, Tortosa.....	\$249,900
5. 40562 W. Hillman Drive, The Lakes.....	\$256,490

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Maricopa Historical Society meeting
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Maricopa Library and Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive
- 8**

Maricopa Flood Control District meeting
6 p.m., Zoom
MaricopaFCD.com/notices
- 12**

Maricopa Planning & Zoning Commission meeting
6 p.m., City Hall
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza
- 14**

MUSD Governing Board Meeting
6:30 p.m., Maricopa Unified School District Office
44150 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy.
- 17**

Friends of the Maricopa Library book sale
10 a.m., Maricopa Library and Cultural Center atrium
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive
- 20**

Maricopa City Council Meeting
7 p.m., City Hall
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza
- 28**

MUSD Governing Board Meeting
6:30 p.m., Maricopa Unified School District Office
44150 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy.
- 31**

Cole Swindell concert
7 p.m., The Events Center at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino
15406 N. Maricopa Road
- Sundays**

Narcotics Anonymous
7 p.m.
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.
- Mondays**

Narcotics Anonymous
7 p.m.
16540 N. Porter Road
- Tuesdays**

Maricopa Cruise-in
5-9 p.m.
behind Burger King
20699 N. John Wayne Pkwy.
- Alcoholics Anonymous**
6:30 p.m.
50881 W. Papago Road
- Celebrate Recovery Small Group Meeting**
7 p.m.
Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.
- Thursdays**

Maricopa Police Cadets meeting
6 p.m.
Maricopa High School
45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.
- Narcotics Anonymous**
7 p.m.
Ak-Chin Social Services
48227 W. Farrell Road
- Fridays**

Al-Anon
7 p.m.
Community of Hope
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.
- Alcoholics Anonymous Open Meeting**
7 p.m.
50881 W. Papago Road
- ALL EVENTS ARE TENTATIVE

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

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Sequoia Pathway grads urged to consider their legacy in life

MHS graduates revel in a 'normal' ceremony

Conservative lawmakers label Riggs Road overpass as 'pork'

MUSD repurposing pecan trees from new high school site

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☐ Traffic lights on a highway

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☐ Left-lane dwellers

☐ Rough surface in cruising lane



P.A. Muldowney

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