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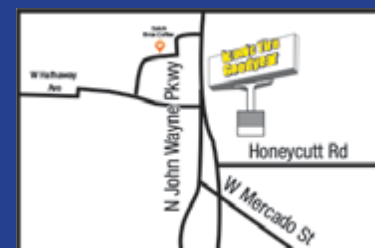
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CONTENTS



56



16



72

LEADING OFF

Editor's letter **4**
Contributors **4**
History photo **6**
Curtis: Oatman massacre **8**

COMMUNITY

Couple breeds top dogs **10**
Snowbird's Christmas miracle **14**

BUSINESS

Shortage hits Pinal farmers
hard **16**
Business briefs **20**
Multiplying the success **22**
Execs' takes on jobs **26**
Restaurant inspections **28**

EDUCATION

Gallery **30**
Heavy toll if override defeated **32**
Siegel: proof of override
success **34**
Irving MUSD's 'heart and soul' **56**

HOME

Homebuyers' biggest
challenges **64**
Harrington: vine is furious
climber **66**
Most/least expensive homes **67**
Petersheim: real estate
observations **68**
Morgan: seasonal
sluggishness **69**

SENIOR LIVING

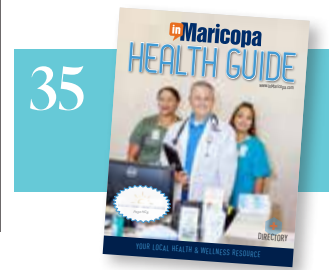
Later starter, great finisher **70**
Quilting on the block **72**
Smith: facilitating 'the talk' **74**

THINGS TO DO **76**

BUSINESS DIRECTORY **79**

TRENDING **86**

PARTING SHOT **88**



35

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Past, present and future

WHILE MARICOPA HAS A PROSPEROUS future, its proud history has a few black marks. Western author and historian C.M. Curtis writes about one, taking us back in time to the horrible scene of a 19th-century atrocity.



is as kind as he is generous.)

Despite the tireless efforts of Jim and others, the future for MUSD is less certain as it asks the voters to renew a budget override that allowed it to hire about 70 teachers and provide a computer for every student. Learn more on page 32.

The future for area farmers is also murky. Jay Taylor tells the story of how the drought is impacting their water rights.

If fresh snowbird BJ Lingren has her way, one lucky Maricopa family will not only have their “Best Christmas Ever” in 2021, they will be set on a path that will change generations in their family. This Minnesotan is definitely going to make her mark on Maricopa.

You will also find stories on more all-star citizens whose hobbies include cycling, quilting and breeding show dogs. Plus, our annual Health Guide with news on what Maricopans have been impatiently waiting years for — a hospital.

Thank you for reading *InMaricopa*.

Enjoy,

SCOTT BARTLE | PUBLISHER
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TOM SCHUMAN

Just weeks into retirement, the former Hoosier is putting his Ball State journalism degree to use.



VICTOR MORENO

The popular, local pro is credited with the cover and many other beautiful photos in this issue.



BOB MCGOVERN

Our friend and former editor is still contributing, including penning this month's cover story.

ON THE COVER

Community volunteer Jim Irving was photographed by Victor Moreno at Butterfield Elementary School. Joining Irving are first-graders (standing) Zander Lopez, Joelle Green, Aaron Dimas, Emily Garcia, Yaniha Hill and (kneeling) Michael Bell and Jaxson Ly.



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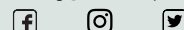
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Lunch Room Hangout

Earl Goodwin, far right, and a group of men stand outside the trackside Lunch Room next to the Williams Hotel on the south side of railroad in this 1911 photo. Two years later, the hotel burned down. Goodwin was in charge of hotel and Lunch Room for a few months in 1911 when this picture was taken.

THIS MONTH BACK IN...

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



2004

The city marked its first birthday as a city on Oct. 16 with a Founder's Day celebration at The Duke attended by hundreds. When it incorporated in 2003, Maricopa was the first new city in Arizona in 10 years and the first new city in Pinal County in 25 years. It quickly became the fastest-growing city in the state.



2007

Maricopa loves Halloween and there is no more evidence needed than the enthusiasm displayed each year as residents decorate their homes with ghosts, goblins and other spookiness. In 2007, the city's Parks, Recreation and Libraries Department organized the first Mysterious Mansion Mayhem. The contest continues to this day.



2012

The mid-air crash of two single-engine aircraft in the skies above Casa Blanca Road, about four miles east of State Route 347, forced both pilots to make emergency landings. One plane landed at the Volkswagen proving grounds in east Maricopa, the other at Gila River Memorial Airport. Both planes had significant damage, but no serious injuries were reported.

Maricopa Historical Society



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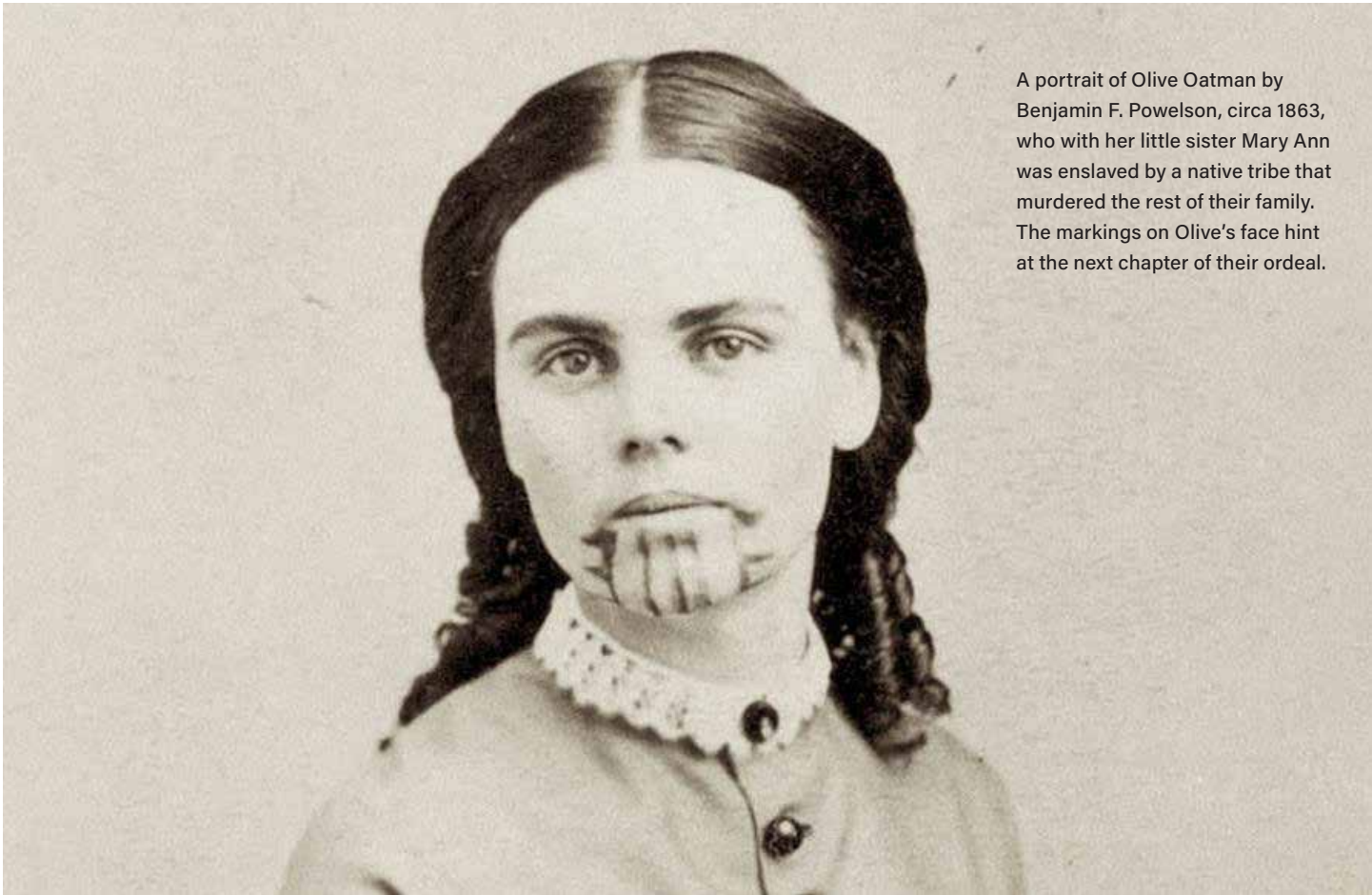
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A portrait of Olive Oatman by Benjamin F. Powelson, circa 1863, who with her little sister Mary Ann was enslaved by a native tribe that murdered the rest of their family. The markings on Olive's face hint at the next chapter of their ordeal.



The Oatman Massacre: Shock at Maricopa Wells

BY C.M. CURTIS

THE MASSACRE OF THE OATMAN family in 1851 sent a shock wave through the Arizona Territory. Undoubtedly, the residents of Maricopa Wells (ancestor of the current city of Maricopa) were particularly affected, in view of the fact the Oatmans had recently stayed there and left just a few days earlier. The family had left Independence, Missouri in August 1850 as part of a large wagon company en route to California. In early 1851, traveling with a group of about 30 wagons that

had split from the main company, they stopped in Maricopa Wells, which was populated primarily by Pima and Maricopa natives. There was word of some trouble with natives on the trail between there and California, so the other travelers decided to wait until it became safer to travel. But Royce Oatman decided to take the risk, and he and his family continued on alone. It was a very bad decision. You may know by now I believe history is best experienced through the personal perspective, so we will put ourselves in the places of Olive Oatman and little Mary Ann Oatman, two of Royce and Mary Ann Oatman's seven children.

OLIVE OATMAN
You are 13 years old. Four days out of Maricopa Wells, you and your family are traveling alone in one of the most desolate and hostile parts of the southwestern desert — indeed, of the world — when your 15-year-old brother, Lorenzo, sees a group of 19 natives approaching. They act friendly and ask for food. Your father gives them some; they eat it and demand more. Your father refuses, saying there is not enough for his family.

The natives go a short distance away and have a brief discussion, after which, with deafening war cries, they attack your family with clubs. They kill your parents and four of your siblings, including a baby boy and a 3-year-old girl. You are also clubbed in the head and unconscious for a short time. You awake to a horrific scene. Your 7-year-old sister, Mary Ann, is at your side. She cries, “Oh Mother, Oh Mother! Olive, Mother and Father are killed, with all our poor brothers and sisters.” Your oldest sibling, Lucy, lies dead, cradling the body of your baby brother. Your mother groans. You spring toward her but are held back by one of the attackers. Your brother, Lorenzo has been clubbed. You see he is bleeding copiously from his nose and ears. He stirs and tries to get up, but the attackers pick him up and hurl him over the edge of the mesa, roughly a 20-foot drop. You and Mary Ann are forced to watch as the natives strip the bodies of your loved ones and ransack the wagon. They take your bonnets and shoes and force you to walk barefoot to their camp, miles away. Your feet are worn raw by the rocky, volcanic terrain, but if you falter you are beaten.

National Portrait Gallery

Yubert Fang

At their camp, the men laugh and mock as the two of you sit sobbing. They offer you food but you are unable to eat; your grief and fear are too great. The next day you begin a four-day march across the desert.

MARY ANN OATMAN
You are 7 years old. Your world has just been turned upside down. You have seen things no one should ever have to witness, much less someone your age. Now you are being forced to walk barefoot on the rocky desert floor, expected to keep up with the fast-walking men. You fall frequently and are beaten with a whip until you get up. When you lag behind, you get the whip. Olive helps you as much as she can, but she too is struggling. You tell her you want to be allowed to die. Finally, you fall to the ground, unable to walk another step. One of the men picks you up and slings you over his shoulder like a sack of flour and carries you the rest of the way. In this manner, walking and being carried by one of the men who slaughtered your family, you travel about 90 miles to the village of your captors, where you and Olive are subjected to cold, hunger, overwork, ridicule and beatings, and treated as slaves.

It will never be known for certain to what tribe the men who killed your family belonged.

OLIVE OATMAN
Life in the village of your enemies is a nightmare for you and Mary Ann. Later, referring to that time, Royal B. Stratton, who will write a controversial book about your experiences, will pen, “Much of that dreadful period is unwritten and will remain unwritten forever.”




Once accessible by an off-roading trail, the site of the Oatman family massacre just west of Gila Bend is now on private land. A memorial grave-stone was placed by the Arizona Society of Daughters of the American Revolution in 1954.

One can only imagine the horrors you both suffer. This village is in the mountains and it is winter. Your clothes have fallen apart, and you have no protection from the cold. You weave some coverings out of plants, which do little to keep you warm. Mary Ann becomes malnourished and weak. You both pray constantly to be rescued from this hell you are enduring. It takes great strength to merely survive from one day to the next. What must be your anguish when you see an article of clothing that was taken from the body of one of your loved ones being worn by one of your captors? Do you dare hope for rescue? You wonder if anyone even knows about the massacre. And if they do, how could they possibly know where to look for you? Everything seems bleak and hopeless. But you force yourself to remain alive, for the sake of your little sister.

(To be continued in the November edition of *InMaricopa* magazine.)

C.M. Curtis, American Western author and historian, is the best-selling author of 11 books, including eight westerns. His books can be found on Amazon.com and atcmcurtisauthor.com.



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Rancho couple goes extra mile for their dogs

BY JAY TAYLOR



TRAVELING THE WESTERN UNITED States in a motor home for extended periods of time requires you enjoy your companions.

Vie and Bill Day do.

The Rancho El Dorado couple obviously enjoy each other's company – they have been married for 42 years — but they also love their Coton de Tulear dogs, which they breed and show all over the country.

The Days, Maricopa residents since 2003, have been breeding and showing the breed for 17 years and taken things to a very high level. The couple visits dog shows as far away as Austin, Texas each year, putting thousands of miles on an RV customized to accommodate their 10-pound pets — males Remington and Ouzo, and their female Aspen.

The couple used to breed and show Wheaton Terriers, but found they were having health issues. Vie and another breeder decided to work with a different breed and began researching smaller hypoallergenic dogs. They landed on Coton de Tulears.

“The breed was not recognized by the American Kennel Club at that time,” Vie said. “So, we went to rarity shows looking at breeds and started seeing a lot of Cotons. We chose to work with them because of their personalities.”

And what personalities they have. The Coton de Tulear (COE-Tohn DU Tu-lee-YAHR), also known as the “Royal Dog of Madagascar,” is described by the AKC as a small, immensely charming dog whose “primary job is to provide amusement, comfort and companionship. The bond between Cotons and their people is so tight

Vie and Bill Day relax at home with Remington (left) and Ouzo, their Coton de Tulear companions. Not pictured is Aspen, who is on the East Coast show circuit with a handler.

that owners discuss it in human terms and Coton owners describe them as ‘witty’ companions ‘at times boisterous but never demanding.’”

Their abundant white coat is described as soft as cotton (or, as the French say, “coton”).

Once they decided on the breed, Bill and Vie attended a show in Seattle, where they met a breeder they liked and trusted. In 2004, Vie and another breeder bought dogs to breed.

This was nothing new to the Days. Their first business together — in the ‘70s and ‘80s — was a pet store where they groomed and boarded for

Ian Roberts

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13 years. But the breeding of Cotons was going to be next-level.

COMPETITION BREEDS SHOW DOGS

“We got into this when our kids left the house,” Vie said. “Bill and I looked at each other and said, ‘Now what do we do?’ Your whole life changes.

They are both extremely competitive, she said, and had enjoyed showing dogs in the past.

“So we decided to get into showing dogs again. We do it for fun, and for companionship. It is competitive and a challenge to produce really great puppies.”

Vie said when her dogs produce a litter of puppies, five of the six (the usual size of a litter) are typically show-quality. The couple is very particular about who can buy their puppies. In fact, they have a waiting list of more than a year and prospective owners have to complete a rigorous screening process to get one.

One competitive advantage for the Days’ Cotons is they keep their kennel, which they call Daydreaming Cotons, small. Cotons are very social dogs and need to form a bond with their people, so the couple only has three or four dogs at a time, while other breeders may have dozens of dogs.

Vie and her breeding partner, Tiffany Laitner, who lives in Michigan, decided they would only work with a small group of five breeders around the country to preserve the breed’s standards.

“These dogs were feral and have been domesticated,” Vie said. “They are like wolves — they had never been bred with other breeds when they were in the wild on Madagascar since the 1400s. And since they are a companion dog, they really have to be socialized. We just found that other breeders weren’t doing things the way we wanted to do them, so we put together our own group that we trust.”

ON THE ROAD

Cotons thrive in small places and make excellent dogs for people in big cities or apartments. Or in the Days’ case, an RV.

In anticipation of traveling to many shows, Bill got busy building a comfortable space to accommodate the dogs on their trips. He installed a custom four-plex of crates for the dogs specifically designed to fit in the RV. The crates can be configured to be attached — “like an apartment building,” Bill said — or used individually. Each crate has a rubber mat on top so it can be used as a grooming table.

“We took the kitchen table out of the motor home and anchored the crates to the wall for safety,” said Bill, who is the business manager at Maricopa Wellness Center, which he owns with his daughter, Kristina Donnay, its medical director. “We also designed a trolley that does the same thing, so we can take them out of the RV and into shows.”

The travel isn’t all long-haul stuff. Vie said

Arizona is a hotbed of dog shows in November and December, with about 15 shows in that period.

They take them seriously.

Ouzo is currently one of the top 10 dogs in the breed nationally, and in 2013, their female, Peggy, was ranked number No. 1. Those rankings are important because the higher the rank, the greater the fees they can command for their bred puppies.

And as one might imagine with significant money at stake — the Days get \$3,000 for each pup — it’s not always fun and games at the shows — though they try to keep it light.

“If you’ve seen the movie ‘Best in Show,’ sometimes it’s really not too far off from that,” Bill said. “We actually bought the DVD of the movie, and we’ll put it on in the RV at a show and match the characters from the movie to the people at the show. It can be hilarious.”

And while the Days undoubtedly love their dogs, theirs is not a lifelong pairing. They re-home the dogs at 5-6 years of age, because they do not want to breed the females after age 6.

“We usually re-home them with an older couple,” Vie said. “They get a health-tested, trained, champion-quality dog for about \$2,000 that is great with people and kids or grandkids. Lots of folks don’t want to have to train a puppy, and with these dogs living 15-18 years, they get a nice long life with them.

“It’s a great situation for the owners and for the dogs.”

HISTORY

Cotons de Tulear, named for the seaport town of Tulear, were once the preferred lapdog of the nobles of Madagascar. The island nation lies some 250 miles off the southeastern coast of Africa, but the population is primarily related not to African peoples but rather to those of Indonesia. Because of a bond with France that resulted from former colonial rule, Madagascar developed strong links with the French-speaking nations of western Africa. French is still widely spoken by Malagasy elites, hence their little white dog’s French accent.

The island’s aristocrats were jealous guardians of their fluffy little comedians, even passing laws that prohibited Coton ownership to commoners. “They were also extremely reluctant to allow any of their pets to leave the island,” a canine historian wrote, “with the result that these dogs remained isolated from the rest of the world and were breeding true for centuries.”

Source: American Kennel Club



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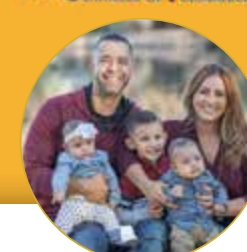
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BJ Lingren, with husband Scott and “crazy doodle” Fletcher, is looking to have a major impact on her new community of Maricopa.

New snowbird looks to gift worthy families with Best Christmas Ever

BY JAY TAYLOR

MONSOON SEASON HAS ENDED and fall has begun, putting many in the holiday mood.

BJ Lingren is in the Christmas spirit all year long and wants others to join her — for a good cause.

The new Rancho El Dorado resident is bringing the nonprofit Best Christmas Ever to the city from Minnesota for the first time this year.

“We recently bought a house in Maricopa, and I couldn’t imagine a Christmas without Best Christmas Ever,” Lingren said.

Lingren and her husband Scott were looking to become snowbirds — their sons AJ and Cody are out of the house and married — and they wanted to be in Arizona, but not

a large city. They looked at places between Tucson and Phoenix and chose Maricopa.

“We definitely wanted to be close to golf,” she said.

Lingren owns eLogger, a software company that sells logbook software to the utility industry. Her position allows her to work remotely, which gives the Lingrens the opportunity to live here during the winters. But being away from Minnesota meant she’d be away at Christmas.

As the chair of the board of directors of Best Christmas Ever in her hometown of Cromwell, Minnesota, she wasn’t willing to sacrifice the joy she gets from her volunteer work just to winter in the sunny Sonoran Desert.

So, she brought the program with her.

‘DOER AND A DONOR’

The Best Christmas Ever, founded in 2010, serves families who have fallen on tough times through no fault of their own. The charity partners with local leaders and businesses to bless families with a gift package tailored to their unique situations. The organization also provides continuing support to families beyond the special Christmastime.

Lingren became familiar with BCE in Minnesota out of a desire to help families who were victims of circumstance, and not bad decision-making. Before her involvement with the charity, her own family would help another family for the holidays.

“We would try to bless a family every Christmas, working with the Salvation Army.

We would have them find a family for us and give them what they need most,” Lingren said. “But the families we were blessing were making a lot of bad choices to put themselves in need, and eventually I didn’t feel that good about it.”

Then she saw a video about BCE and started making some calls. The founder of the organization, Don Liimatainen, was in her office “about 20 minutes later,” Lingren said.

The connection feels more personal to Lingren with BCE than other charities with which she has been involved. She said when a donation is made to an organization like United Way, Salvation Army or the Red Cross, the donor typically writes a check and never gets to see where their money goes. With BCE, the volunteers present donations directly to the family, making it much more personal and gratifying.

According to Liimatainen, Lingren sets a wonderful example of what BCE is all about.

“She’s one of the great people we have involved,” Liimatainen said. “She’s one of these people who’s a doer — she’s a doer and a donor. She puts money where her mouth is. She’s not afraid to roll up her sleeves and do whatever it takes to give these families an amazing Christmas. Whatever family gets blessed (in Maricopa), it’s going to be life-changing for them.”

BCE’s efforts are driven by volunteer “captains” responsible for soliciting donations and reviewing applications. Their careful research of applicants includes vetting on social media, talking to nominators and running background checks.

When a family is selected, their captain notifies the nominator that their family has been selected. But the family is not told; the gifts are always a surprise.

WANTED: SPECIAL FAMILIES

Now, Lingren is looking for worthy Maricopa families in need of a special Christmas.

There are just three rules for nominating a family, she said:

- Families cannot nominate themselves.
- Families must have fallen on hard times through no fault of their own.
- There must be minor children in the home.

“We are looking for people who have been living a normal life, doing great on their own and a tragedy comes and just derails them,” Lingren said, citing cancer, car accidents, housefires and deaths in the family as situations faced by previous award recipients.

In the early going, Maricopans have shown their characteristic generosity, Lingren said.



BJ Lingren and fellow BCE volunteers at a 2019 wrapping party in Cromwell, Minn. “We helped a single mother with three school-age children overcome some major life obstacles,” Lingren said.

“*Best Christmas Ever is about more than just Christmas Day. It’s a life-changing event, what we do for these families. Their whole life trajectory is different after this.*”

DON LIIMATAINEN

Liimatainen said the personal nature of the gifts helps set BCE apart.

“Everything carried through that family’s door is custom to them,” he said. “Every gift item is like a good friend picked it out for them. It’s like if you had a friend and they happened to fall ill during the holidays, and they’re good people, you might say to yourself, ‘I wish I could do something for them.’ This is like that but times 10.”

To ensure donors’ generosity has a lasting impact on the family, the recipients are asked to do two things — and are further rewarded when they do. First, they are encouraged to complete the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University program, which teaches people how to manage their money. If a family completes the nine-week, online class it earns \$1,000 toward any bill they have to pay.

The second item is an eight-week health course teaching diet, nutrition, exercise and other healthy-living habits. Upon completion, the family receives a \$1,000 gift card to the grocery store of their choice to implement that new knowledge.

“Best Christmas Ever is about more than just Christmas Day,” Liimatainen said. “It’s a life-changing event, what we do for these families. Their whole life trajectory is different after this.”

Nominations of deserving families can be made at BCEMovement.com until Nov. 1. Nominators are asked not to inform the family they nominate.

BCEMovement.com

Pinal farmers bear brunt of water shortage

BY JAY TAYLOR

When the well is dry, we know the worth of water. —Benjamin Franklin

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation declared in August the first-ever emergency water shortage in the Colorado River Basin — with mandatory consumption cuts beginning in 2022 — and farmers in Arizona will take the first hit.

It looks particularly bad for farmers in Pinal County.

The decades-long, climate change-fueled drought in the West has led water levels in key reservoirs to record lows. At 35% full, Lake Mead is at its lowest level since 1936, when the Hoover Dam was completed, and the lake filled. Mead is part of a system that provides water to about 40 million people.

Certain states will see reductions in how much water they get from the river, with Arizona set to lose nearly 20% of its supply next year. With about 70% of the river supply going to agriculture, it's likely farmers will eventually see big reductions across millions of acres of land.

In 2023, it's likely Colorado River water will dry up completely for county farmers, according to a June briefing by Central Arizona Project, known as CAP.

"Agriculture in central Arizona takes the first hit on these cutbacks," said Chris Udall, executive director of the Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona, who described a difficult future ahead for farmers in the state.

"It's not a pretty picture, but it's been understood and planned for over many years," he said. "We'll see reductions in water delivery to agriculture, and it's a big chunk. It's not a good number for them and a lot of growers are going to have to be cutting back."

Many farmers — including some in and around Maricopa — rely on water from the CAP to irrigate their crops.

CAP is a series of canals built over 20 years beginning in 1973 to deliver water from the Colorado River to metropolitan Phoenix and Tucson. The federal government paid for most of the \$4 billion project to move 456 billion gallons of water annually. Central and southern Arizona suddenly had a seemingly endless supply of water.



Bryan Hartman, whose family has farmed in Stanfield since the 1930s, grows alfalfa, corn, cotton, sorghum and oats. He said he will likely have to fallow 25-30% of his 2,000 acres.

But in exchange for that new source of water, some Arizona farming centers, including Pinal, accepted low priority among the Colorado River Basin states when it came to potential cutbacks. The basin is divided into two segments — the Upper Basin (Utah, Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico) and the Lower Basin (Arizona, California, Nevada and Mexico).

With significantly less water delivered by CAP next year, local farmers could be forced to fallow many of their fields.

Udall said at least one farmer has told him he might have to cut his active acreage by 50%.

Bryan Hartman, whose family has farmed in Stanfield since the 1930s, grows alfalfa, corn, cotton, sorghum and oats. He said he will likely have to fallow 25-30% of his 2,000 acres.

"There will be some of us that survive and some of us who won't," he said.

THE HARD LESSON

Local farmers have only two sources of water: surface water (from CAP) and groundwater, which is pumped from the aquifer beneath the ground.

Hartman's farm, like most in the area, used to get most of its water from CAP, but over the years that has dropped to about a 50-50 split. With the emergency declaration, that is about to change dramatically.

Hartman, who is president of the Maricopa-Stanfield Irrigation and Drainage District, uses about 4 feet of water per acre for a total of 8,000 acre-feet per year. An acre-foot is 325,851 gallons, enough to meet the water needs of three residential homes for a year. Put another way, Hartman's farm uses as much water annually as 24,000 homes.

At about \$60 per acre-foot for CAP water and about \$45 per acre-foot for groundwater, Hartman spends about \$420,000 a year to irrigate his crops.

With the emergency declaration, Arizona's allotment of surface water in 2022 will be reduced by 512,000 acre-feet, about a fifth of the state's total CAP entitlement. Farmers in the MSIDD will get 30,000 acre-feet of mitigation water from the Drought Contingency Plan, water that comes from municipalities, to help offset the loss.

"That means a lot more fallowed land," Hartman said. "It's about the same percentage of fallowed acres as the percentage of water we'll lose. But it will be different for individual farms. Some have good well systems that can supplement the CAP water and some farms do not. It was this way before CAP and, unfortunately, now we're going back."

Ian Roberts



Irrigation pivots, like the one being used here on an alfalfa field on Bryan Hartman's farm, could soon become a more common sight as more area farmers become more reliant on groundwater, he said. A pivot uses a lower flow of water than flood irrigation.

"The CAP was great; it supplemented us, it brought up the water table, it was a godsend," he added. "And now we're going back."

The crisis point for CAP customers in Arizona was reached over the past two springs. April-July runoff in the Upper Basin was just 26% of average this year, despite near-average snowfall, and in April-July 2020, runoff was just 52% of average. This triggered the shortage declaration and demonstrated the severity of the effects of 20-plus years of drought.

About 95% of the land in nine Western states is in some level of drought, with 64% in extreme drought or worse. It continues a 22-year megadrought that some experts believe may be the region's worst dry spell in 1,200 years. The beginning of that drought, 1999, was the last time Lake Mead was at capacity.

“There’s room for Maricopa and that area to keep growing, and what’s happening on the Colorado River isn’t going to impact the availability of water for that growth Agricultural users are different story because they are lower-priority users.”

TOM BUSCHATSKE, DIRECTOR OF THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

"Basically every drop in the river is being utilized. And so everyone wants a piece of this river and there's nothing left over," Brad Udall, a climate scientist at Colorado State University, told KUNC-TV in an interview. "The hard lesson we're learning about climate change is that it's not a gradual, slow descent to a new state of affairs."

Hartman isn't too optimistic about ever seeing CAP water allocations again.

"There's always the hope," he said. "If the Upper Basin states get a huge year, yes, we could see something. Two or three years ago this happened; Lake Mead was dropping and the Bureau of Reclamation told us to get ready for a Tier 1 shortage and we had a miracle year of snowstorms and got our allocations."

GOOD TO GROW

As dire the situation for farmers in the Maricopa area, the situation is far more secure for residents, city planners, developers and industry.

Global Water provides municipal and industrial water from groundwater in the Maricopa Stanfield sub-basin of the Pinal Active Management Area.

In fact, the aquifer — a body of porous rock or sediment saturated with groundwater — under Pinal County is "absolutely enormous," according to Jake Lenderking, Global Water's vice president of water resources and legislative affairs.

"The state does groundwater modeling for the assured water supply program," he said. "In the greater Maricopa-Stanfield sub-basin, we have an almost limitless supply."



A Central Arizona Project canal carries water from the Colorado River to farmland in Pinal County.

A 2020 Pinal Active Management Area (AMA) Water Report prepared by the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center, indicated abundant groundwater, with much of it stored in the aquifer for thousands of years.

As more ranches and farms in Maricopa are sold and converted to residential developments, that already-promising situation for non-farmers gets even better.

“We’ve been retiring agricultural land, which is a big water user, and putting in houses, which use far less water than farms do, which will stretch the supply even further,” he said.

Lenderking said the aquifer is only projected to drop by 100-200 feet over the next 100 years.

“Other areas are projected to go down 600-700 feet,” he said. “Maricopa is located in a good part of the aquifer. The state only models to 3,000 feet below the surface of the ground. In Maricopa, the depth of bedrock exceeds 6,400 feet below the surface, so we have 3,000-plus feet of water beyond what the state has even modeled.”

In addition to being incredibly deep, the aquifer is also quite close to the surface. Lenderking said in one area of Maricopa the water level is just 65 feet below the surface, making it easier and less expensive for some farmers to pump water.

Developers and municipalities are required to show proof of an assured 100-year water supply to build. That means all the houses in the city — and those approved for future development — have that assured water supply.

The city is using nowhere near the amount of water to which it currently has rights, according to City Manager Rick Horst. Its allocation of 23,000 acre-feet per year is more than three times actual usage of about 7,000 acre-feet.

That means ample water for those who live here and the hordes who will someday. As many as 8,000 acres will be developed over the coming decade, bringing perhaps 30,000 homes and more than 75,000 additional residents.

Tom Buschatske, director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources, confirmed development in Maricopa will not be impacted by the drought, at least not yet.

“There’s room for Maricopa and that area to keep growing, and what’s happening on the Colorado River isn’t going to impact the availability of water for that growth,” he said. “It won’t affect their assured water supply.”

NO EASY SOLUTION

“Agricultural users are a different story because they are lower-priority users,” Buschatske added, noting farmers have told his agency they might have to fallow 30%-40% of their land.

Before CAP water became available, farmers pumped more groundwater than the amount that was recharged, shrinking available supplies. The over-pumping resulted in some farmers having to dig deeper wells, land subsidence and earth fissures. Artificial recharge with renewable water or non-groundwater sources has helped rebalance the AMA’s groundwater situation.

With CAP water available, it became a bottom-line choice for farmers on how to irrigate their fields.

CAP water costs more, but Hartman said it is far easier to move around the district than pumped water, which has to be moved through a pipeline or a lateral canal. And then there is the issue of getting to the groundwater.

“Not all farms have as much groundwater, or good access to it,” Hartman said. “The water table could be 500 feet below the surface at one farm and 60 feet down at another. If it’s 500 feet down, with the pumping costs, it would be cheaper to use CAP water than to pump your own.”


But now Pinal County agriculture may have to return to a reliance on groundwater.

“We really have no choice but to pump now,” he said. “In ’22, we’ll have the mitigation water, the 30,000 acre-feet, but in ’23 we’ll have nothing.”

And so, for now, Pinal farmers will bear the brunt of climate change and its diminishing effect on the water supply. Their farms will become less profitable as they produce fewer crops and incur costs to pump groundwater.

Hartman knows the next few years will be tough, but he’s cautiously optimistic.

“It’s going to be hard on all those landowners and growers for the next couple of years until they get acclimated back to just using groundwater,” he said. “I know we can do it. We did it for 50 years before the CAP came along and we know a lot more now about how to manage the water in our fields.

“We’ll be alright.” 



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Business, development around town

Mod Pizza is beginning the improvements on the interior space of its suite at Sonoran Creek, 20320 N. John Wayne Pkwy. **Jimmy John's** received zoning compliance for its new restaurant in the same plaza.

The ongoing landscaping and beautification project in the median of John Wayne Parkway from Honeycutt Road to the northern border of the city is being done for the **City of Maricopa** by Hayden Building Corp.


Sequoia Pathway Academy will spend \$140,000 to add new pre-manufactured metal bleachers to expand the seating capacity at the school's sports field, 19265 N. Porter Road. The work is being done by Willmeng Construction Inc.

Century Communities will erect a \$12,000 shade structure at Cholla Park in The Trails neighborhood. Shade N Net of Arizona Inc. is doing the work.



A permit was granted to build a new multi-family development including eight 3-story apartment buildings, a clubhouse and amenities at **West Maricopa Village** on State Route 238 east of Loma Road for Maricopa 35 LLC.

The city granted a minor General Plan

amendment change to Levine Investments LP for its **Tortosa NW** subdivision, 36351 W. Honeycutt Road, allowing the subsequent rezoning of the 19.95-acre parcel at the southeast corner of Hartman and Honeycutt roads from commercial (CB-1) use to high-density residential (HDR). 

IMAGINE

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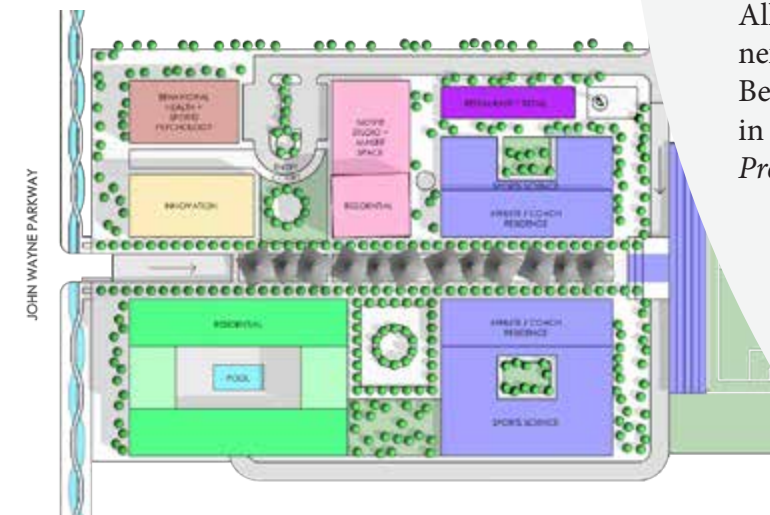


Maricopa has the momentum, assets, leadership and resolve to build a 21st Century city. We believe in its Prosperous Future and we are honored to work with the City to make the City's vision a reality. – Dr. Ed Johnson, Board Member, S3 BioTech

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* Images are conceptual only

***YOUR IMAGINATION
TURNS INTO REALITIES***



*For any who dream, imagine, create, innovate, and take initiative,
we invite you to come build a city with us.*

[illegible]

City has plenty of success to sell new businesses

BY BOB MCGOVERN

THE AUGUST OPENING OF Sprouts Farmers Market in Maricopa drew a day-long throng of thousands.

It was, perhaps, a standard turnout as Sprouts openings go, according to a company official, with a couple hundred people turning out early in the morning for a ribbon-cutting and to get a first look at the long-awaited, 23,000-square-foot, upscale supermarket that anchors the new Sonoran Creek Marketplace shopping plaza.

But another, smaller segment of the crowd caught the attention of Nathan Steele, who was attending the festivities in his role as the city's director of economic development.

There among the city's elected leaders, invited guests and 150-or-so excited shoppers who queued up to be among the first in the store were several presidents and executives of commercial real estate companies representing nationally known franchises.

"They saw the crowd and they saw the line," Steele said. "They were excited to bring their clients to Maricopa."

"That's the kind of thing I'm looking for," he added. "Something like that indicates that interest is growing in Maricopa."

PLUGGING THE LEAK

It's already pretty clear — businesses are successful in Maricopa, whether a small local business or part of a larger franchise.

"We have this small-town atmosphere that is attractive for residents to live here but at the same time we have a market of about 100,000 people," said Steele.

He tallies the 60,000 residents who live within city limits, plus those in unincorporated areas and within the two Native American reservation communities.

"If you include all of those together, we have a pretty significant market that has over the last, I'd say, probably two or three years, gotten the attention of some of the big-name franchises, chains and retailers," he said.



Pat Kieny, who opened Native Grill & Wings in Maricopa in 2005, knows competition is on the way. But he remains bullish on his restaurant's prospects for continued success.

Victor Moreno

Several factors come into play, including a well-educated population (65% have been to college) and relatively high income (mean household income of \$87,000).

"When you put all of that together, along with it being young families, retailers see that we need places where people eat, we need places where people can shop because there is expendable income here within Maricopa," Steele explained.

Warren Forsythe, president and CFO of StarCorp, a Carl's Jr. franchisee that plans a return to the city with a new restaurant, pointed to the rate of population growth as a major factor.

"Maricopa is the fourth fastest growing community in Arizona by percentage growth — at a rate of 33.68% — but we pinpointed this area long before the U.S. Census put out their numbers, because of our simple belief in community and where we want to be — and stay — as we look at our business footprint over the next five, 10 and 25 years.

Another important factor seen in 2020 is the \$370 million of annual retail leakage, an economic term describing how much money is being spent by Maricopa residents outside the city.

That number stands out to Steele. In fact, he has made reduction of that number — as much as possible — one of his priorities.

"I share that number with restaurateurs, and they get excited because they see that \$35 million a year (of that leakage) is just on food and drink," he said.

The businessman who will open a Cold Beers & Cheeseburgers sports bar in the spring next to Sprouts saw that number early on, according to Steele. "He said, 'Absolutely, I'll bring a restaurant to town.'"

Steele is using those leakage figures to cultivate interest from other retailers, too.

Decreasing retail leakage means more businesses are opening and Maricopans are spending more of their money in town, instead of in Casa Grande or Chandler. The creates a kind of domino effect, with new businesses spurring more new businesses to open in town. The city's small businesses profit as well as consumer behavior changes.

"There are several recognizable names looking at Sprouts saying, 'Let's see how successful they are.' Once they can see Sprouts' success, they will also want to come to be part of it."

Already, Steele has plenty of other success stories to share with prospective businesses.

BUSY BAHAMA BUCK'S

For starters, consider the case of the city's first Bahama Buck's franchise, which was opened in November by Collins and Adelaide Appiah.

For weeks, cars lined up around the shaved ice emporium on Porter Road at The Wells. In January, two full months after the opening, their store led all 100-plus locations in the chain in sales.

"We're happy where we are in Maricopa for sure," said Collins, who noted they also considered locating their shop in Tempe.

The Appiahs, like many of the other businessowners interviewed for this story, declined to discuss specific sales figures, but they made it clear they are pleased with the way business is going one month shy of their first anniversary.

"The community has been very, very fantastic," Adelaide said. "They've been very supportive of us since we started, and we genuinely see the joy in their faces anytime they come by the store."

"We are so grateful to be part of the community," she added.

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Maricopa is fast closing in on population numbers that could support a second Bahama Buck's in town. Though corporate decides when to add a location — it generally uses a number of one store per 50,000 population — the Appiahs have right of first refusal in town.

“With the type of success that we’ve had, we intend to grow with the community,” Collins said. “If the opportunity comes for us to put up a second store, we’ll jump at it.”

READY FOR BATTLE

Other success stories include Fry’s Marketplace, which is one of the division’s top sales performers for its Kroger parent company, according to a spokeswoman.

Ace Hardware in Maricopa has the strongest sales volume of the five stores run by owner David Karsten and is one of the larger stores in the region, he said.

One of the biggest reasons for that success, as the store celebrates its 15th year in business, is the sense of community, according to Karsten.

“It was my impression before we took over that store, and it certainly is reinforced today, that it’s a strong community that thrives on supporting each other,” he said.

That sense of community comes from within the store as well, since just about all his team members live in Maricopa, Karsten said.

“The team really thrives on serving their neighbors,” he said.

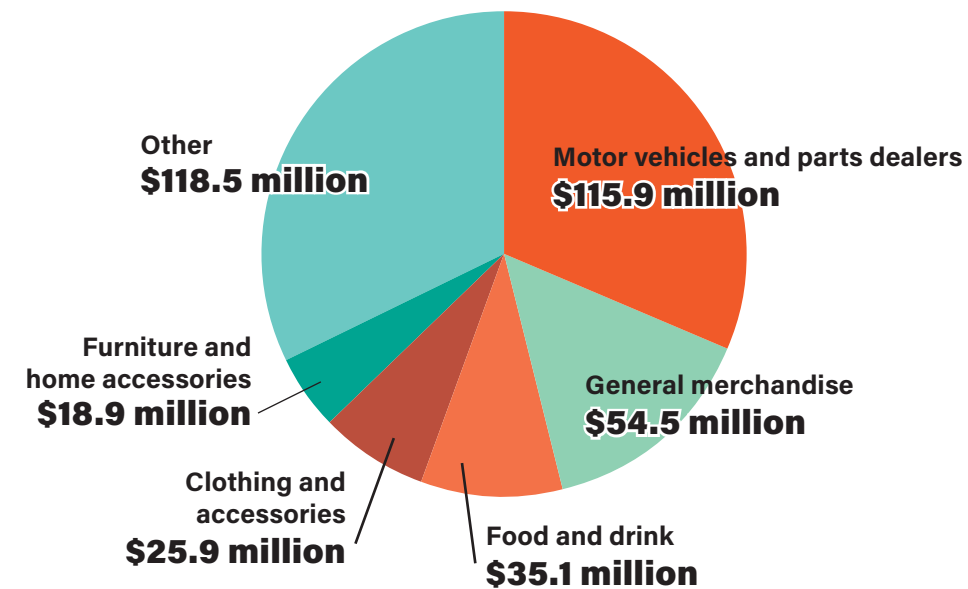
Another reason, Karsten acknowledged, is the absence of a Home Depot or Lowe’s in town, a business advantage that Ace will eventually lose. But don’t expect the business model to change.

“We grew up in the hardware business competing with the big boxes,” Karsten said. “For as long as I’ve been in business they’ve been around and in the market. They’re real, they are a force, no doubt about it. So, when we go into a market like Maricopa, where those competitors aren’t there today, but more than likely will be, we go in with the attitude that they are there today and we’re battling them today and we’re going to do business as if we were competing directly with them in that market.”

Ace’s advantage is faces on the floor, he said. “Our key differentiators are people,” he said, noting the level of customer service is higher, both in numbers — associates to customers — and the quality of the team.

“That model is labor-intensive and certainly it’s an expensive model as compared to a big box, but that’s what we drive toward, and we feel confident that the big guys simply can’t do

BREAKDOWN OF RETAIL LEAKAGE OF \$369.8 MILLION IN MARICOPA IN 2020



Source: 2020 ESRI Retail Marketplace Profile

it because of their size. That’s really our weapon — customer experience.”

BRIGHT FUTURE

Perhaps no other business in town has earned its success more than Native Grill & Wings, which launched 16 years ago as one of the first sit-down restaurants in a city of about 6,000.

“In 2005, it was exciting, but you didn’t really know what you’re going to get in Maricopa because it was so new,” said owner Pat Kieny.

The initial response was good, but the restaurant has had to ride out a number of crises, including the Recession of 2008, which devastated the local economy for years.

“Everybody walked away from their houses and businesses were closing and everybody was



At Ace Hardware, superior customer experience will give it an edge over any eventual competitors, owner David Karsten said.

afraid to spend money,” he recalled. “That was very, very difficult but now, overall, the economy in Maricopa and the whole country, in general, has been good for the last 10 years or so.”

The pandemic, of course, forced Kieny to adapt to public health mandates for many months, but the restaurant recorded some of its best sales numbers ever as people spent their money in town. It could be a harbinger of the future.

Kieny, for one, is bullish on that future — both for the city and his restaurant.

“More people are moving in, they have decent jobs, they have money to spend, and they want to work on their houses and go out to eat and do entertaining things,” Kieny said.

Like Steele, the restaurateur sees all the economic activity underway and in the pipeline giving city residents even more reason to stay and spend in Maricopa.

“I have a very positive attitude about (Native’s) future,” Kieny continued. “I think it’s going to do well. What will happen as new places that are more direct competitors open, of course, people are going to try them. You always end up with a little dip for a while but then you know things kind of even back out, especially since more and more people are coming into town.

“I would say over the next 10 years things for me look very positive and for everybody.”

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Execs share job history, insight on current market



JON CORWIN
VICE PRESIDENT &
GENERAL MANAGER
Global Water Resources

45
Maricopa Employees

What was your first job? A friend’s father owned a lawn-mowing business, so I mowed lawns during the summer in high school as my first job.

How much did you earn? \$7 per hour.

What was your most-fulfilling job (current role excluded)? The opportunity to serve in the U.S. Air Force. It was great because it was a way to give back to our country, I served with some outstanding and committed people, and I was able to do some amazing things and experience amazing places I never would have been able to do otherwise.

What do you look for when recruiting talent? People with an ownership mindset is something I always look for in a candidate. Do they operate as if the company is their own business.



Jon Corwin at his 2003 Air Force Academy graduation.

What is your assessment of today’s job market? With growth it seems as if many companies are hiring so the job market is competitive right now.



JOHN SCHURZ
PRESIDENT &
GENERAL MANAGER
Orbitel Communications

30
Maricopa Employees



John Schurz, pictured with his 1998-99 Resurrection High School (Chicago) freshman girls basketball team, says he deploys lessons on teamwork learned from his players to this day in his role as president and general manager of Orbitel Communications.

What was your first job? Well, I was a newspaper delivery boy at age 10, but I am assuming you mean first actual job. I was a sports- and police-beat writer for the Bloomington (IN) Herald-Times.

How much did you earn? Approximately \$25K.

What was your most-fulfilling job (current role excluded)? Freshman high school basketball coach at Resurrection High School in Chicago. It was amazing to watch those kids learn each day, work hard, work together as a team. I learned so much from that group and still

implement lessons learned on teamwork in business today. Go Bandits!

What do you look for when recruiting talent? Passion. You can teach people certain skills to perform their job well, but you can’t teach passion.

What is your assessment of today’s job market? There are plenty of jobs available for those willing to work. We currently have open positions in technical that we would love to fill with dedicated people.



DAVID KARSTEN
OWNER
Karsten’s Ace Hardware

37
Maricopa Employees

What was your first job? My first job was at age 16 working at Scottsdale Airport for the Cessna center there. I was basically a gopher and custodian. Eventually, I got to move on to washing private planes using a van that was outfitted with a mobile, high-pressure steam cleaner — much more exciting!

How much did you earn? \$3.15 per hour.

What was your most-fulfilling job (current role excluded)? I worked for a billboard company in college doing almost every part of the business. It was basically just me and the owner. I loved the variability of the job. I learned a lot from my boss and mentor about customer service, how to run a small business that grew into a pretty sizeable business, having a good attitude and mindset, and having fun doing what you do.

What do you look for when recruiting talent? Hands down, we look for people who enjoy people. We look for folks who enjoy serving others and want to help provide solutions to their neighbors. We look for people who appreciate receiving amazing customer service, so they provide that amazing experience to others. We can train the technical skills of our business, but you can’t really train how to care.

What is your assessment of today’s job market? We have gone from a “healthy” unemployment rate to ultra-high unemployment and back down again. The pandemic has changed all our lives in many ways. Many people have decided to retire, to shift to a single-earner household. Some have taken advantage of subsidized benefits to reflect on what is truly important to them before returning to work, and some have changed careers. Like all businesses today it seems, we have seen a recent reduction in qualified applicants.

PAT KIENY
OWNER
Native Grill & Wings

63
Maricopa Employees



What was your first job? Newspaper boy in Omaha, Nebraska at 13 years old.

How much did you earn? I probably made \$20 a week.

What was your most-fulfilling job (current role excluded)? I enjoyed my time as the Food Service Director at Friendship Village in Tempe. I managed several dining rooms, hosted special event parties, and interacted with the residents. Their average age was 85.

What do you look for when recruiting talent? Desire to work at Native, availability, experience, professional appearance and a connection to Native (customer, friend works there, etc.).

What is your assessment of today’s job market? The really good workers are still around they are just harder to find. With all the turmoil in the country during this pandemic, things can change quickly. Some potential employees have chosen to stay home for various reasons.



TOM BECKETT
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN
RESOURCES
*Maricopa Unified
School District*

917
Maricopa Employees

What was your first job? Clearing weeds from a commercial lot with my dad and brother.

How much did you earn? Roof over my head, three meals a day and loving parents.

What was your most-fulfilling job (current role excluded)? Community Relations Manager of Cardinal Center in Warsaw, Indiana. Working in an organization the served developmentally disabled children and adults was very fulfilling. I loved my time there.

What do you look for when recruiting talent? Energy. People who love kids.

What is your assessment of today’s job market? It is a “buyers’ market,” but it is an opportunity for Maricopa Unified schools. Schools have a distinct advantage of offering jobs that make a difference. Money is important, but so is happiness. 📞


Find jobs with these and other local businesses at InMaricopa.com/Jobs.



Summary of Aug. 16-Sept. 14
food inspections by Pinal County
Environmental Health Services.



Proper cooling time and temperature

Internal temperatures of marinara vodka sauce held in a deep, metal container in walk-in cooler 46-47°F. Reviewed cooling methods to include shallow pans and/or the use of ice baths or ice wands.

Proper cooling methods used; adequate equipment for temperature control
Ambient air temperature of dessert display case 55°F versus required ≤41°F.

Proper cold-holding temperatures

Internal temperatures of cheesecake, flan, pudding held in cold-holding display case 47-50°F. Manager was instructed to move temperature controlled foods in this case to the working walk-in cooler.

Thermometers used and accurate
Ambient air thermometer in display cooler broken.



Time as a public health control; procedures and record

Control-time stamp not present on cut tomatoes on prep line. Time stamps expired by two hours on cut tomatoes, cut lettuce and cheese located on fry area prep line.

Non-food contact surfaces clean

Build-up of debris on surfaces of fryers, fry station, upright warmers and ice cream machine.



Proper cooling time and temperature

Internal temperatures of rice, beans and soup held in deep, plastic containers in walk-in cooler 47-52°F. This is the third consecutive cooling violation. A Risk Control Plan meeting must be scheduled to address proper cooling of temperature-controlled foods.



Proper cooling methods used; adequate equipment for temperature control

Internal temperatures of cut lettuce held in closed, plastic, five-gallon buckets in the walk-in cooler for 71-77°F. Internal temperatures of cooked chicken held in deep, plastic container in the walk-in cooler 78-81°F. Manager instructed to reheat chicken to at least 165°F then reduce to smaller, uncovered containers.

Hot and cold water available; adequate pressure

Hot water not available at back hand-sink. Facet broken.



Hands clean and properly washed

Cook handled raw shrimp then continued with food prep. Employee immediately stopped, manager notified to instruct employee to remove soiled glove, wash hands and don clean gloves.

Food separated and protected

Raw sausage lightly wrapped in plastic wrap and open container of raw shrimp held above ready-to-eat containers of cooked meat and sauces in walk-in cooler. Reviewed potential for cross-contamination and proper storage of raw animal foods. Pork and shrimp moved to bottom shelves.

Proper hot-holding temperatures

Internal temperatures of beans held in steam well 77-97°F (versus required 135≥°F).

Consumer advisory provided for raw or uncooked foods

Offering raw shrimp/ceviche without complete consumer advisory.

GETTING TO
know

ERIC BENSON
GENERAL MANAGER
Rosati's Pizza of Maricopa

Hometown: San Diego

Reside in: Maricopa

Maricopan since: 2007

Family: 4 girls

Pets: Sadie, lab-husky mix

Hobbies: Fishing, golf

Pet peeve: You owe me!

Dream vacation:
Scotland golf trip

**Like most about
Maricopa:**
Small-town feel

**Like least about
Maricopa:** Flies



FAVORITE ...

Charity: JDRF.org

Book: Anything by
Clive Cussler

Movie: All Star Wars

Actor: Harrison Ford

Musician: Eric Clapton

Team: Chargers, Dodgers

Athlete: Mike Scioscia

Food: Pizza

Meal: Kung pao

Getaway: San Diego

Words to live by:
Lead by example.

EXCELLENT

- Butterfield Elementary School
- CVS Pharmacy
- Leading Edge Academy
- Legacy Traditional School
- Maricopa Elementary School
- Province Community Association - Clubhouse
- Saddleback Elementary School
- Sequoia Pathway Academy - K-6
- Sequoia Pathway Academy - Secondary
- Sunrise Preschool
- True Grit Tavern

SATISFACTORY

- Brooklyn Boys Italian Restaurant & Pizza
- Burger King
- Cilantro's Mexican Cocina
- Riliberto's
- Tacos N' More

Source: Pinal County

EXCELLENT No violations found.

SATISFACTORY Violations corrected during inspection.

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

UNACCEPTABLE Gross, unsanitary conditions necessitating the discontinuation of service.

Learn more about Eric at InMaricopa.com/Community/Getting-to-Know.



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1



2



3



4



5



6



7

1. Senior McKinley Hacker, a standout soccer player at Maricopa High School, is kicking for the football team this season. *Victor Moreno*

2. Cadets with the JROTC program conduct a flag-raising ceremony at Maricopa High on the Sept. 11 anniversary. *Brian Petersheim Jr.*

3. Sequoia Prep defender Nolan Cook (17), a senior, prepares to stop Arete Prep quarterback Matthew McClelland during a Sept. 3 home game. The Pumas beat the Chargers, 42-40. *Sammantha Herbaugh*

4. Lt. Col. Allen Kirksey, Air Force JROTC senior aerospace science instructor at Maricopa High School, speaks during a flag-raising

ceremony at school for the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terror attacks. *Brian Petersheim Jr.*

5. Desert Wind Middle School held a Toy Expo on Sept. 16. Among the Blended Learning students who created, designed and marketed their own toys were eighth-graders (from left) Daniel Flores, Roxanna Perez and Parker Girouard. *Brian Petersheim Jr.*

6. Maricopa High School sophomore Kenton Wilson takes a swing during boys golf practice at The Duke at Rancho El Dorado. *Ian Roberts*

7. Homecoming Princess Emily McCullough and Prince Devin Huffman pose for a quick photo during the Rams' Sept. 17 homecoming football game against Casa Grande Union. *Sammantha Herbaugh*



1



2



3

1. The Maricopa High football team rushes onto the field for their Sept. 10 home game against Mesa Skyline. The Rams won, 7-5.

2. Rams cheerleaders and other supporters rally during Sept. 16 RamFest festivities the night before the big Homecoming football game.

3. Freshman swimmer Santiago Moreno competes during Maricopa High School's Sept. 2 meet against Mesquite and North at Copper Sky. The Rams won.

4. Members of the Maricopa High girls volleyball team cheer a point during the Sept. 1 game against Queen Creek.



4



Failure to extend override could mean loss of 70 teachers, MUSD projects

BY JAY TAYLOR

MARICOPA VOTERS FACE A BIG decision Nov. 2.

While the off-year election may not shape national or state policies, it could be crucial to the city and the future of its schools.

The ballot consists of Proposition 457, which will determine the fate of the district's 10% budget override for Maricopa Unified School District. Supporters stress the override is not a new tax — a "Yes" vote simply extends a funding mechanism in place since 2017.

The election will be conducted entirely by mail, with ballots mailed to registered voters Oct. 6. Maricopa residents have until 29 days prior to the election, or Oct. 4, to register to vote in the election.

In an open letter to InMaricopa, Mayor Christian Price underscored the importance of

the election not just to the school district, but the city as a whole.

"Money used in our community schools is a direct investment in ourselves and into our local economy," he wrote. "In 2016, the override for MUSD helped attract quality teachers to our district and our city. These dedicated professionals have helped lower class sizes, increased graduation rates, advanced all-time high scholarships awards, taught hundred more students each year, and so much more."

The current override, approved by voters in 2016, allows the district to exceed its budget by 10%, about \$5 million per year. The additional funding has a big impact on schools.

"That \$5 million equates to about 70

teachers and counselors," said Superintendent Tracey Lopeman. "Most of the funding goes to (salaries). Also, \$500,000 goes to the RAM Academy and \$500,000 to technology, for which the last override helped meet the district's 1:1 goal of a laptop for every student and teacher."

Christine Dickinson, the district's technology coordinator and member of the Yes for Maricopa Schools Political Action Committee, said the override has led to some amazing changes in the district.

"We have a computer for every child," Dickinson said. "The district now has an inventory of over 8,000 computers, and every teacher has their own laptop. Our new, updated technology, thanks to the override, is much more efficient and more mobile, so during the pandemic they could take the computer home with them. (The override) is a necessity."



Tracey Lopeman



Christian Price



“What if we can get teachers to invest in, and move to, and stay in Maricopa? That elevates our whole community.”

SUPERINTENDENT TRACEY LOPEMAN

If each student didn't have their own laptop, "we would have been in really rough shape with the COVID outbreak," Lopeman said. "We would not have been able to conduct remote learning like we did with all our students."

Funding has been an issue for MUSD schools for years. In 2019, MUSD asked voters to approve a \$68 million bond issue to build the new high school. It was defeated.

The state's failure to adequately fund education is always a challenge, according to Councilmember Bob Marsh.

"The upcoming vote Nov. 2 is for continuing the school district budget increase we Maricopa voters approved in 2016," Marsh says in a PAC testimonial. "It helps make up for reductions in school funding coming from the state, where the Legislature has a history of meager education funding."

As Maricopa's population has soared over the past decade, so have the number of district students. Enrollment in the nine MUSD schools has risen from 6,184 in 2015-16 to 8,088 this year, a 31% increase. Enrollment is projected to be 9,441 in 2025-26.

Supporters say the override is crucial to keep pace with that growth.

The cost to continue funding the override is 38 cents per day per \$100,000 of assessed home value. That would be \$14.82 per month for a homeowner with the average assessed value of \$130,340.

Lopeman said perhaps the primary benefit of the override is smaller class sizes — even with the massive growth in student population. Prior to the 2016 override, the district's target for class sizes in K-5 was 32.7 students per class. With the override in place, the K-5 targets were lowered to 26.

"When you have class sizes that are low, that's one way to attract and maintain quality teachers," Lopeman said. "When we attract and maintain quality staff, the quality of our product continues to elevate. One of the biggest benefits to this is having class sizes that are enviable."

A failure to extend the override would potentially stark consequences. While the quality of education will remain high due to the district's high-quality teachers, Lopeman said, the educational experience for children, and the work environment for the teachers and staff, would be diminished.

A loss of override funding would likely mean a reduction of 6-8 teachers in each of the six elementary schools, up to 11 fewer teachers in each middle school and another 11 at the high school, the district projects. Other cuts

could include a RAM counselor, a RAM teacher on special assignment, three elementary school counselors, two instructional tech specialists and one elementary school librarian.

Lopeman said in addition to addressing the shortcomings in the state's funding of schools, the override can have broader implications for the community.

"The State of Arizona does not fund low class size," Lopeman said. "It does not fund technology the way that it should. So, when we have this additional funding that the voters approved, it creates class sizes and systems that are attractive to teachers. When we can tell a teacher their community supports them, that's attractive."

"What if we can get teachers to invest in, and move to, and stay in Maricopa? That elevates our whole community."

MUSD is not alone in seeking an override extension. Several other area districts have them in place. The Kyrene, Tempe Elementary, Tempe Union and Chandler Unified districts all have 15% overrides; the Casa Grande Elementary and Casa Grande Union High School districts are at 10%.



Bob Marsh

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RAM Academy proof of MUSD override success

BY MURRAY SIEGEL

IN 2016, THE VOTERS OF Maricopa approved a budget override for the local school system, Maricopa Unified School District. The funds were used to meet three objectives: purchase needed technology, hire additional teachers to reduce class size in the elementary schools and create an alternative high school. This column focuses on the third objective.

It is well established that the lack of a high school diploma has a serious, negative effect on an individual's lifetime earnings and,


thus, that person's quality of life. Research has demonstrated some students cannot succeed in a standard high school environment, and an alternative school, typically a school within a school, can provide an opportunity for students to earn that elusive diploma.

The MUSD alternative high school is the RAM Academy, which has already helped more than 100 students earn their diploma. In addition, the program has assisted other students in recovering credits that allowed these students to successfully graduate from Maricopa High School. How does the RAM Academy motivate students on a path to dropping out of school to succeed?

The program uses the following steps to help its students find success:

- Dedicated, experienced, supportive and personable teaching staff
- Credit recovery (Students can earn eight or more credits per year.)
- Students can work from home in addition to their regular campus attendance to finish faster.
- Students can take the specific classes they need to fulfill state-mandated graduation requirements.

- The program follows a four-day afternoon/early evening schedule with optional Fridays for extra help.
- Classes are taken through an online learning platform and supplemented with in-person teacher support.
- Free lunch
- Finally, students are reminded the key to success lies in their own motivation and willingness to attend class regularly, stay focused and work hard.

Next month, voters will be asked to approve an extension of the MUSD override. Certainly, the RAM Academy, which has already taken more than 100 potential problem citizens and converted them into positive contributors, by itself, justifies a YES vote on the override extension. Programs that effectively utilize taxpayer money deserve to be continued. 

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

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SUN LIFE FAMILY HEALTH CENTER
Page HG8

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SURVIVOR FORMING COVID SUPPORT GROUP



Grace Gomez and her family have suffered tremendous loss due to COVID-19.

Grace Gomez has had four generations of her family infected with COVID-19. She knows first-hand how valuable a support group could be, so she is starting one to help Maricopans cope with, recover from and prevent the disease.

Gomez, her mother, a daughter and a granddaughter all have been infected with COVID-19, with her mother and daughter passing away from the virus earlier this year. She believes the city’s residents have the resources to help each other get through the pandemic together.

“I’d like to get a group together to talk about how we deal with the loss we’ve had, recovery, prevention, all those issues,” she said. “I would love to have a registered nurse or a doctor from the area come to educate us about COVID and the vaccines. I believe there are a lot of people in Maricopa besides me who could benefit from something like this.”

Anyone interested in joining such a group can contact Gomez at 520-518-2015 or GomezFamily901@gmail.com. The group will meet at the InMaricopa office, 44400 W. Honeycutt Road, Suite 101, with the date and time of the initial meeting to be determined.

Gomez believes such a group will be helpful not just in today’s climate, but for the future.

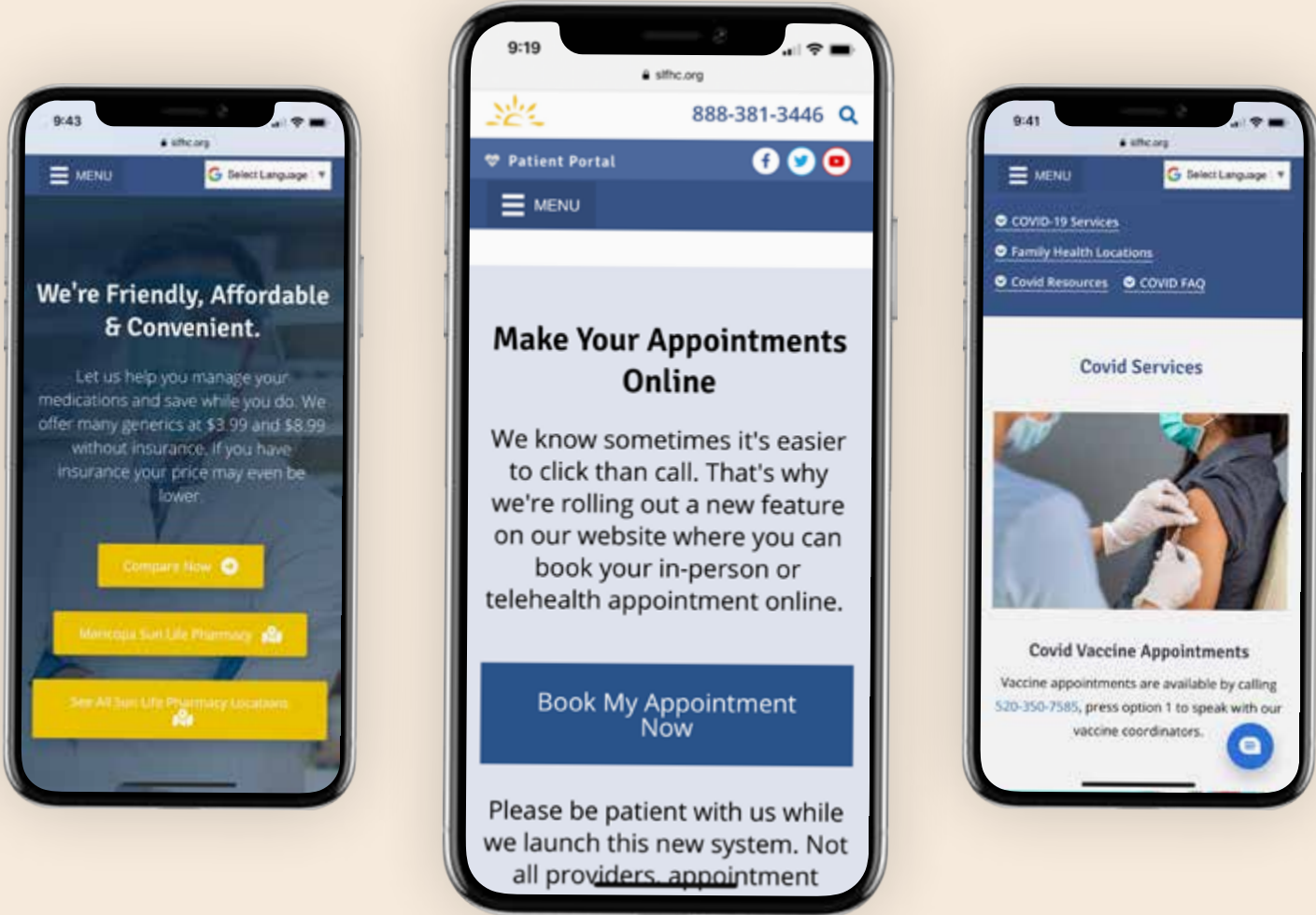
“This is not going to be the last time we’re going to have a pandemic,” she said. “We need to learn how to cope with them.”

Pinal County among lowest in Arizona for COVID-19 case fatality ratio.

By county as of Sept. 14

	Cases	Deaths	Deaths/Cases
Graham	6,647	97	1.46%
Pinal	65,274	961	1.47%
Maricopa	666,798	11,016	1.65%
Coconino	20,514	342	1.67%
Greenlee	826	14	1.69%
Pima	130,914	2,541	1.94%
Yuma	40,039	871	2.18%
Santa Cruz	8,626	188	2.18%
Cochise	13,591	308	2.27%
Yavapai	24,746	603	2.44%
Gila	8,626	250	2.90%
Mohave	29,655	875	2.95%
La Paz	2,809	85	3.03%
Navajo	19,020	580	3.05%
Apache	12,793	457	3.57%

Source: CDC. Case fatality ratio, the proportion of diagnosed individuals who die from that disease, is a measure of severity among detected cases.



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ON THE COVER: Sun Life Family Health Center staff members Vanessa Moreno, MA, Scott Thompson, FNP, and Bridsenia Zuniga, MA.



Exceptional Community Hospital is under construction along John Wayne Parkway just south of the railroad overpass.

CITY TO FINALLY HAVE ITS OWN HOSPITAL(S)

Maricopa's booming growth brings lots of things — new stores, more traffic, rising home prices — and soon, two new hospitals for a city that has survived for a century without one.

Texas-based Exceptional Healthcare will open the city's first hospital in December at the southwest end of the overpass on John Wayne Parkway. The \$20 million facility's initial phase will bring a 24-hour emergency department to the city, eliminating the need for patients to travel 20-plus miles to receive emergency care in Chandler or Casa Grande.

The hospital will be a single story and have 10 private rooms, 10 emergency department rooms and space for radiology. The state-of-the-art facility also will feature a digital-imaging suite including CT Scan, X-Ray, mobile MRI and ultrasound, an in-house lab, and inpatient and outpatient hospital beds for acute admissions and overnight observation of patients.

The operation is expected to create 60 to 100 jobs.

Exceptional Healthcare also will feature a landing area for air ambulances to ensure the fastest possible transfer of patients needing a higher level of care.

Bruce McVeigh, the chief operating officer of Exceptional Healthcare, said his company is excited to be part of the Maricopa community.

"For one thing, we get to build a relationship with the community," McVeigh said. "We've been saying that since the groundbreaking — we are all about the community. We want to make a difference in the lives of people in the community. Clearly, in Maricopa it was an access-to-need problem. Our company is doing the ERs we do so well and putting them in areas where there's a need."

Mayor Christian Price said Exceptional Healthcare's hospital fills a vital need for the city.

"For over a decade now, the City of Maricopa has been working diligently to assist healthcare options to locate here," Price said.

Opening December 2021



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HOSPITALS

“We are extremely excited to see Exceptional open the city of Maricopa's first 24/7 ER and hospital. This new facility will provide desperately needed medical services to our ever-increasing population, and we are so very appreciative for their large investment in our city.”

Price said the hospital will be the catalyst for bringing in doctors, nurses, physician assistants and other highly skilled professionals to the city.

“It sends the message that this is a great place to do business,” Price said. “Everywhere you go, people are finding they need more and more health care, and I think we are on the way to having many more options here in town. They will all find their niche. We’ll need all that health care and more, as we continue to grow.”

McVeigh said the initial phase of Exceptional’s campus may not be the final product.

“We’ve got quite a bit of land we purchased at that spot, and we have phase 2 and phase 3 plans at that site that include imaging, medical office space, family practice space for clinical space,” he said. “We’ll see what the market wants over the first six months. Now we can grow with the community.”

If the market wants more, it is going to get it. The city’s appetite for hospitals was underscored in June when S3 BioTech LLC announced before the city’s first hospital was complete, a second was on the way.

S3 BioTech initially bought a 4-acre parcel along Bowlin Road between John Wayne Parkway and North Graythorn Drive, near Copper Sky, for a hospital to be operated by Nutex Healthcare of Houston. In August, S3 BioTech announced plans to more than double its concept with the purchase of 4.7 more acres at the southeast corner of West Bowlin Road and John Wayne Parkway.

The initial plans include a medical campus with a “specialty ER hospital” of at least 100,000 square feet and 25 beds along Bowlin Road. Other services could include an ambulatory surgery center, a catheterization lab, and offices to house additional medical services and physicians’ practices.

City Manager Rick Horst said the developers of the initial parcel came back to the city almost immediately to ask to buy 12 adjoining acres for further expansion of the project.

The expansion is more of a mixed-use development that includes a hotel and condominiums. A conceptual sketch presented to the city council showed a hotel with about 125 beds and a seven-story condominium tower sitting atop a smart parking structure.

S3 BioTech’s initial expansion plans also call for an Innovation Center along the east side of John Wayne Parkway, between La Quinta Inn & Suites and Palo Brea.

In Horst’s presentation to the city council – in which he emphasized that the plans were preliminary and conceptual only – the Nutex hospital and Innovation Center campus could include:

- Research labs, coworking space and startup office space of about 100,000 square feet.
- Behavioral health and sports-psychology facility with about 120 beds.
- Academic classroom, fitness center and multipurpose gymnasium building of about 100,000 square feet.
- Student/staff housing, auditorium and cafeteria building of about 80,000 square feet.
- A 350-unit, rent-to-own condo/apartment building with a pool.
- A film production studio integrated with a maker’s shop.

Dr. Ed Johnson, member of the S3 BioTech board of directors, said his group is an ideal fit for Maricopa – and vice versa.

“Maricopa gives us the opportunity to grow with the community, and the types of hospital-related services (S3 BioTech) offers and want to scale seem to fit perfectly with what the city is looking for,” he said.

The timing on the Nutex hospital is a little less clear, but Johnson said it should be underway soon.

“It will be sooner than later,” he said about breaking ground on the new facility. “Because the city is being so helpful, we’re pushing each other in a positive way. But it’s going to be this calendar year. We’re going to turn a shovel as soon as it’s humanly possible.”

One city council member said when it comes to health care and hospitals, more is better.

“Just a year ago having one hospital in the city of Maricopa was a dream,” Councilmember Vincent Manfredi said. “But today, we’re on the verge of having two. I could not be happier with this news.”



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At Sun Life, the focus is on the whole patient and making sure the treatment programs developed for each patient have the best chance for success. They do this by involving the patient in their care.

How is that different from other doctors' offices? According to Samantha Reinhard, Sun Life's director of community outreach, it starts by including things in an office visit for which Sun Life may not be able to bill your insurance, such as a visit with a clinical pharmacist about medication management.

"We have programs that insurance doesn't always consider as billable, but we feel like they are valuable to patients for their care. Those items are included as patient perks," Reinhard said.

From infants to seniors, Sun Life offers a full continuum of care, often referred to as integrated care as opposed to the traditional models of healthcare silos.

Reinhard said that is Sun Life's biggest advantage over other healthcare providers.

"We don't work in silos," she said. "The care team can look at a chart from each service line. If one of the doctors wants to know what our OB team did, they can just look at the chart instead of relying on the patient to remember what happened at their OB appointment, or the OB's office sending the records. We don't have to spend time going through siloed systems or dealing with a medical office phone system, so our patients get whole care, not siloed care."

Most patients newly diagnosed with diabetes, for example, are reluctant to change the behaviors that affect their condition, like their diet, exercise habits or glucose monitoring.

Sun Life offers the ability to address all those needs in its Maricopa location. The lab work can be done on site, and the prescriptions filled at the pharmacy just down the hall. Diabetes counselors work with patients to help determine effective treatments, and in-office, integrated, behavioral health professionals help develop strategies for making the lifestyle changes needed to achieve the patient's health goals.

One patient said consolidation of her medical needs was exactly why she chose Sun Life for her healthcare.

"It's just so convenient," she said. "They have the labs and pharmacy here in the office, and that's very practical; I can fill my prescriptions here and everything is at the same place. I should have looked up Sun Life about seven years ago. I'm one happy camper."

As part of its unique approach, Sun Life also teaches patients about nutrition, exercise and medication management to give patients an understanding of how each aspect of care works, how they interact and what their benefits are. The staff also talks with patients about their habits and listens for red flags that could impede the patient's ability to manage their condition.

At Sun Life, the medical providers and staff want to make the whole patient better, not just one aspect.

"We are affecting the whole patient, the whole you," Reinhard said. "We look for things you might not be looking for. If we're talking about nutrition, we don't just talk about eating better, we make sure you have access to good food. We want to treat people the way we would expect someone to treat our mom or grandma; we take that level of care."



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Maricopa boasts Pinal's best of growing med-spa industry

BY KRISTINA DONNAY, FNP-C



IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR NONSURGICAL treatments to rejuvenate your skin and body, you're not the only one. Countless Americans are, too, and with the increasing demand for less-invasive cosmetic options the past 20 years, there has been an increase in the number of med spas.

A med spa is a combination of an aesthetic medical center and a day spa that provides nonsurgical aesthetic medical services under the supervision of a licensed medical provider known as a medical director. Who you trust with your face and body are important.

Top med spas have experienced aesthetic professionals who work closely with the supervising medical director to develop the treatment menu, oversee operations and even consult directly on certain cases. There are good reasons why states require the involvement of a medical director in a med spa's operations.

With more and more med spas opening as less-invasive procedures are gaining popularity, how do you know which one is best for your skin and beauty needs? Searching for a top-quality med spa doesn't have to be a luck-of-the-

draw affair. Taking the time to do your research upfront will save you money, avoid hassle and help you find for the right provider.

Maricopa Wellness Center has been voted Best Med Spa in Pinal County for 2021 and Kristina Donnay, FNP-C, has been voted Best Medical Provider in Pinal County. The staff at Maricopa Wellness Center is honored to be so recognized.

Maricopa Wellness Center opened in April of 2019 and has won numerous awards.

Maricopa Wellness Center has won Maricopa Small Business of the year 2019, Best New Med Spa in the West of 2019 and Kristina was voted Local Businessperson of the Year 2020-2021. Maricopa Wellness Center was also the first Head to Toe Body Contouring by InMode facility in Arizona.

Maricopa Wellness Center is a licensed medical facility specializing as a full-service med spa utilizing cutting edge technology for comfort offering patients the latest treatment options for their bodies and skin.

Maricopa Wellness Center is run by a father-daughter team and strives to provide top quality care. Kristina Donnay FNP-C is a

family nurse practitioner and board-certified in aesthetics, board-certified in anti-aging and a Certified Master Injector. Kristina is the onsite medical director and her father Bill Day is the office manager. Their focus is helping people look and feel better in their own bodies combining medical-grade services in a relaxing spa-like setting.

Maricopa Wellness Center's treatment menu includes laser services, laser hair removal, skin tightening, body contouring, acne treatments, Morpheus 8, micro-needling, Botox, fillers, chemical peels, IPL, dermaplaning, Oxygeneo facials, customizable facials, rejuvenation services, medical weight loss, IV therapy, Lipo MIC B-12 shots, bio-identical hormone replacement and much more.

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ZUWA FAMILY CARE: WHERE MODERN AND HOLISTIC MEDICINE MEET

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Ben Franklin's bit of wisdom seems to be a guiding principle for Ashley Hanners, the provider at Zuwa Family Care, an integrative medical practice in Maricopa.

Both Hanners and her husband, Sam Oviawe, who opened their practice in August in the Shops at Maricopa Village, have extensive health care experience. While earning her degree as a certified family nurse practitioner, she was an ER nurse at Chandler Medical Center. He ran several different divisions for nursing and rehabilitative care centers.

Hanners grew up in Oregon, while Oviawe was born in Nigeria. They met working as nurses for the same Arizona-based home health company.

The couple has a desire to not only treat illnesses, but to work with patients to prevent the occurrence of problems in the first place.



Zuwa Family Care owners Sam Oviawe and Ashley Hanners with daughters Osayame, 4, Adanya, 8, and 3-year-old twins Obosa and Ivie.

DEFINING INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

The Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona describes integrative medicine as “healing-oriented medicine that takes account of the whole person, including all aspects of lifestyle. It emphasizes the therapeutic relationship between practitioner and patient and is formed by evidence and makes use of all appropriate therapies.”

In a sense, it's an approach combining the best of advanced medical treatments and holistic medicine. While Western medicine is practiced, there's an emphasis on finding the root cause of an ailment, instead of focusing just on the symptoms.

Hanners said a driving force in her desire to open a practice was to find the cause and cure of illnesses and ailments, instead of managing them.

“We're in the position to do things the right way, the holistic way. Not just to make profit, but to make an impact in that person's life.”

SAM OVIawe

“You don't learn a lot about preventative medicine while you are in school,” Hanners said. “There is definitely a flaw, in my opinion, in our health care system, where we focus very much on a disease process and what medications we can give for that process. There's not a lot taught on the underlying cause and how we treat that underlying cause.”

Still, Hanners is quick to point out that modern medicine is a blessing.

“I've worked in an emergency room where many lives have been saved by Western medicine,” Hanners said. “But what I also saw were patients who would come in with several comorbidities. They are on medications to counteract the side effects from the other medications they were on.”

There's not enough of a focus on educating patients – not enough of a proactive approach to health care,

according to Hanners. In effect, it's sometimes waiting for bad things to happen before any action occurs.

“We are managing, instead of treating the disease process,” she added. “I felt like there had to be a better option. People didn't know why they were taking all of the medications they were on.”

FORGING A DIFFERENT PATH

As a unit manager for a team of nurses at a large facility in Scottsdale, Oviawe gained a lot of valuable experience in the field. While successful, he longed for a situation where he could make more of an impact.

“When you work for someone else, you don't always have a lot of control,” he said. “The good thing about our situation now is that we can focus our decisions on how to provide the best health care for the citizens of Maricopa and anyone who comes to our practice.”

Zuwa?

The namesake of the practice, Zuwa, is a phrase from the Edo language that means to choose the path of wealth through one's health. While English is the official language, there are many different dialects in Nigeria. Edo is spoken in Benin, Nigeria, Oviawe's hometown.

Oviawe pointed out that with ownership of their practice, he and Hanners get to hone in on what they find to be most important.

“We're in the position to do things the right way, the holistic way,” he said. “Not just to make profit, but to make an impact in that person's life.”

The best way to have that impact is taking time to listen to patients and to become personally invested in their health and wellbeing.

“I'm excited that we have time to answer their questions, encourage and point them in the direction they need to go,” Oviawe said. “One of the greatest satisfactions is when someone in the community who we have helped tells someone else, ‘Try this, I did it and it's working for me.’”

ENHANCING CARE

At Zuwa, even a basic medical test is being enhanced to elevate care.

At most practices, a patient's bloodwork – and its levels of cholesterol, glucose, vitamin D, testosterone and estrogen, for example – are graded on a pass/fail basis. There's a reference point for each value. A patient is considered fine if the levels fall within accepted levels, until one day, your levels fall out of the prescribed range.

Such a process feels counterintuitive to Hanners.

“Do you wait until you fail an exam to study for it?” She asked. “It seems like a silly question to ask. People study before they take the exam. Why in health care are we waiting for patients to fail in order to do anything about the symptoms they are experiencing?”

“Just because you are not failing, it doesn't mean that you are necessarily doing well.”

Instead, Hanners grades bloodwork on an A-B-C-D scale and works with patients to improve any C or D levels.

Hanners' approach can identify potential issues with patients' health before they become problems. She looks for imbalances in hormones like testosterone and estrogen, which can show up in unexpected places.

“People think that testosterone levels are just a concern for men,” Hanners said. “But women need it also and can have problems there, too. And the same for men with estrogen.”

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Brian French said he has benefited greatly from the therapy at Zuwa. He broke his foot while coaching a soccer match, sustaining serious nerve damage.

"I've had this foot injury for the last five years," French said. "I've had multiple operations and been to doctor after doctor and haven't been able to get any relief."

French, an active young man of 42, said the injury had slowed him down to the point where he'd gained nearly 60 pounds. After getting the treatment in August, he's been able to return to a physically active lifestyle and lose nearly 20 pounds.

"It's made a real difference in my life," he said.

The treatment isn't covered by his insurance, but French said he gladly pays for it out of pocket.

Kristan Boardman, another Zuwa patient, had similar results. A pinched nerve in her lower back was so painful she found it difficult to stand or walk. She tried adjustments by a chiropractor and massages and took Tylenol in an attempt to alleviate the pain.

"Nothing was really working," she said

Boardman said she underwent the treatment of about 20 injections and despite some tenderness at the injection site, the results were impressive.

"It wasn't 100%, but I felt relief immediately," she said. "At first, I would say that it cut my pain in half, and a week later, I felt no pain. It was awesome."

In the second week of September, the practice put up a sign to let people know it was open for business. In the six weeks before the sign went up, however, the practice had amassed 140 patients through word of mouth, Hanners said.

"Once we launched, it's been nonstop," Oviawe said. "The community has been supportive. The people who come, seem to tell their friends, their neighbors and spouses about the services we have to offer."

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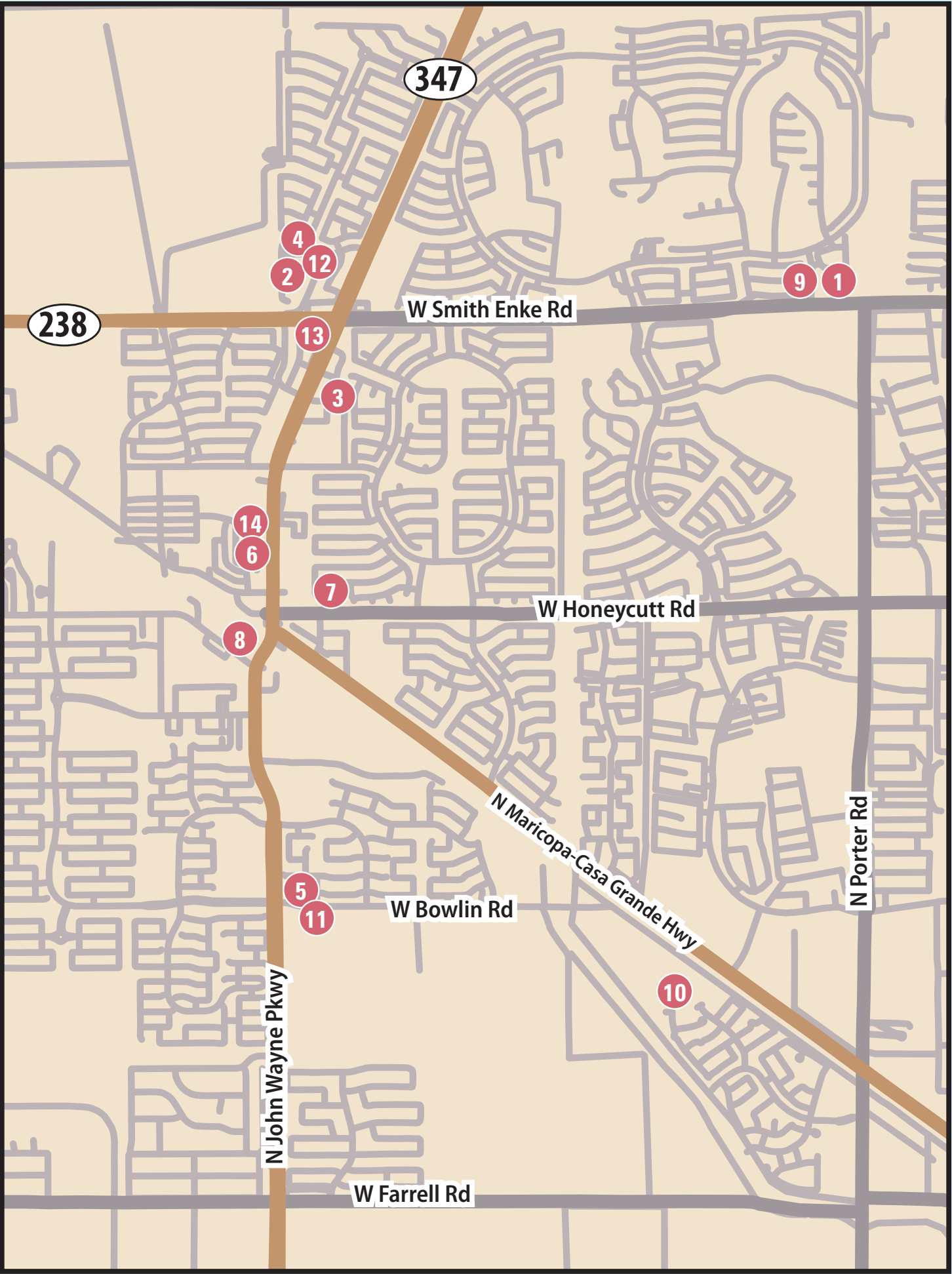
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Super-volunteer Jim Irving, the ‘heart and soul’ of MUSD

BY BOB MCGOVERN

JIM IRVING IS 82 GOING ON 62.

That’s a good thing because the retiree logs as many weekly hours as a volunteer for the Maricopa Unified School District as most people do at their full-time jobs.

An educator and administrator for much of his career, Irving is a super-volunteer for the district. He somehow finds time to lend his enthusiasm and expertise to no fewer than nine other organizations and boards in the city.

Talk to enough people about the man — truth be told, he is as close to a living legend as Maricopa may have — and a profile in leadership emerges: he’s described by friends and colleagues as smart and decisive, professional and personal, dedicated and humble.

None of that is important to the longtime resident of The Villages, of course. Just one thing matters — the kids.

It’s been like that his whole life. And for the last 16 years, he has done whatever he can to improve education for district pupils. Regular contact with them, whether high schoolers or kindergarteners, helps keep him young.

He prefers to do little else.

“Yeah, I’m not going to join a golf club,” he joked.

Irving sets quite the example for a whole legion of MUSD volunteers, according to Dr. Tracey Lopeman, district superintendent.

“Jim Irving personifies selfless dedication,” she said. “As a former governing board member, he has an unrivaled historical perspective and has never met a stranger. Because of him, multigenerational volunteers give their talents and time to our students.”

Ted Yocum, a longtime volunteer in the city who has been friends with Irving for about six years, said one thing sets the man apart.

“He cares,” Yocum said. “No matter where he goes, what he does or who he is with, he cares.”



File

MOVING TO MARICOPA

Irving was primed for a career in education early in life.

Born in Peoria, Illinois, he grew up in nearby Aurora, where he lived for many years.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in history and education from Drake University in Iowa and a master’s degree from Northern Illinois University, where he went on to do post-master’s work in secondary education. He became a teacher and principal in Illinois.

“My whole life’s been around education,” he said. “My mom was a teacher and my aunt was a university professor, so I’d always loved teaching and education. I just love that kind of thing.”

He met Deanna, his wife of 52 years, at a school, and they married in 1969. He was an only child; she was one of 13 kids. But that wasn’t the only difference between them.

“My wife is Caucasian and I’m African-American, so we always say our marriage was illegal in about 15 states,” he laughed.

It’s a happy marriage, Irving said. “The only problem we’ve had is I’m a sports fan and she hates it,” he laughed again.

The Irvings raised their two children in Aurora.

Today, Chad, 50, is an administrator with Charles Schwab and minister. He and his children live in Ahwatukee.

Volunteer Jim Irving is recognized with a Community Spotlight award by MUSD Superintendent Tracey Lopeman and Board President AnnaMarie Knorr in 2019.

“*My mom was a teacher and my aunt was a university professor, so I’d always loved teaching and education. I just love that kind of thing.*”

JIM IRVING

Victor Moreno

Daughter Kara, 46, who has always shared her father's interest in sports, is assistant director of athletic communications at Michigan State University.

"We don't get together as often as we'd like, but that's pretty much the group," Irving said.

Leaving formal education, he became the director of juvenile corrections in Illinois before semi-retiring in 1993 and taking a teaching job at a local community college and working at his wife's Montessori school. They moved to Sarasota, Florida in 1997, where he worked for a private corrections company for four years before officially retiring in 2001. He volunteered as a counselor at a high school until 2005, when the couple moved to Maricopa to be near their two grandchildren.

THE BIGGEST SATISFACTION

Almost immediately after moving to town, Irving started looking for a place to work with kids.

"When I came to Maricopa there wasn't really much going on for youth — no rec programs way back then — so I went to the high school," he said. "It really was a perfect time because the district was just growing by leaps and bounds."

He began assisting the athletic director at a time when the middle school and high school shared a campus. His tasks would vary from day to day.

"I did everything," he recalled. "One day, the middle school girls basketball team had a game and the coach was sick. So, the secretary and I, we went down and we coached the girls basketball game. I mean whatever he wanted me to do, I did."

He would help set up for games and take tickets in the pre-booster club days. He also assisted with the ropes challenge course at Maricopa High School before it was razed later as part of a campus renovation.

Soon after, he transitioned to the counseling office at the high school, where he helped out for about three or four years.

"I wound up really sort of serving as a career counselor until they started to hire people to do that. That was really fun because we set up college visits and tours," he said. In addition to helping plan college fairs and working with students on SAT prep, he dispensed practical advice to students to ease the transition to college life.

In 2013, MHS graduate Sara Troyer told InMaricopa she enjoyed Irving's enthusiasm and encouragement and said her peers felt the same way. Despite original plans to attend community college, she said he helped change her mind.

"He told me all about Arizona State University and let me know about all the scholarships," Troyer said at the time. "He opened my eyes to more possibilities beyond community college."

(She went on to earn a marketing degree from ASU and was the executive director of the Maricopa Chamber of Commerce for a year in 2016 before leaving to take a business advisor position in Irving's native state.)

When Carrie Vargas resigned her position on the Maricopa Unified School District Governing Board in 2011, then-board president Scott Bartle asked Irving, whom he had gotten to know well, if he'd be interested in joining the panel.

Irving said he was, but with the understanding that he would not seek election two years later. He was appointed by the county superintendent of schools. Good to his word, he served until his appointed term was up in 2013.

At his farewell meeting, Irving was showered with praise from teachers and colleagues, including Butterfield Elementary School teacher Kristin McMullen.

“

There's nothing that will make you more humble than talking to a group of kindergarten kids, I always joke," he said. "You go around Christmas and the big debate is Santa Claus. Really, how do you answer? Or a third grader who tells you she's in love."

JIM IRVING

ON THE OVERRIDE

As someone with a front seat on Maricopa public education for many years, Jim Irving has seen what the budget override has meant to students in the last five years. In November, voters will decide whether to extend the 2016 override, which has provided millions of dollars to implement initiatives to improve the quality of education.

In 2018 and 2019, the override allowed the district to hire about 70 additional teachers, reducing class

sizes from the mid-30s to the mid-20s.

"I support it without a doubt," he said.

For Irving, the ability to hire more elementary teachers to dramatically lower class sizes has been the most important benefit of the override.

"I know way back it wasn't uncommon to have 27-28 kids in kindergarten. That's just ridiculous," he said.

"If you ask any teacher, one of the main things they'll say is, 'Just give me the tools and the resources to do my job,'

and that's what the override has provided," he added.

Irving also pointed to the investment in technology, which meant MUSD was one of few districts that had the funds to give computers to all students when the pandemic forced a move to virtual learning.

"The community support through the override, which really isn't a new tax, it's just vital to maintain the quality of education," he said.

Irving said his granddaughter is a junior at Desert Vista High School in Ahwatukee.

"Tempe Union (High School District) is really worried about their enrollments dropping and one of the reasons, they say, is because they're not getting Maricopa kids anymore. We can provide programs the same as those (Valley) schools can, so the overrides are a huge, huge part of that."

"You know, when people move in here, they ask a few things," he added. "No. 1, how safe is it — police and fire — and they always ask about the quality of our schools. And that's what's helped us grow."

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JIM IRVING

Age: 82

Hometown: Aurora, Illinois

Maricopan since: 2005

Residence: The Villages

Family: Wife Deanna (pronounced Dee-na); son Chad and two grandchildren, Isabella and John; daughter Kara Fisher and son-in-law John.

Career: Teacher and principal, then retired from juvenile corrections

Super-volunteer: Volunteer coordinator, Maricopa Unified School District; Planning & Zoning Commission member; Friends of the Maricopa Library; Rotary; COPA Cares; Maricopa Education Foundation; Maricopa Community Foundation; Community Advisory Board for Maricopa High School's Career and Technical Education program; Sunday School teacher at Mt. Moriah Community A.M.E Church; and Citizens Serving Our Community, a group that works to expose children to African-American art and literature.

Away from volunteering: Watching plays at ASU Gammage; reading mystery fiction and inside politics non-fiction; travel

Recent books: "A Rule Against Murder: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel" by Louise Penny (fourth in a series); "Becoming" by Michelle Obama: "I love that book," he said; "On the House," by John Boehner

On social media: "I'm not on Facebook and I am amazed how much I miss because people will say, 'Well, I saw it on social media.' I never know about it."

She recalled at the time when Irving told her and fifth-grade students about the opportunity to participate in the Society of Auto Engineers' A World in Motion program, designed to teach students about science and engineering.

"He explained to us that we would be teaching force and motion while experienced engineers looked on," McMullen told those gathered. "I think my exact words to him were, 'Are you nuts?'"

"But he was right," McMullen added, saying the program which had Nissan engineers mentoring students was "a great opportunity as a teacher to step outside of my comfort zone and challenge myself."

That program illustrates what Irving takes away from all his volunteer efforts.

"The biggest satisfaction is to work with the younger kids and see them get excited about education," he has said.



But even as he stepped down from the governing board, another role — a vital position he continues to fulfill to this day — was in the offing.

VOLUNTEER IN CHIEF

About the same time, the district was forced to cut a number of positions for budgetary reasons.

"Since I was a volunteer, somebody said, 'Oh you might be interested in volunteering to build up our volunteer program,'" he recalled. "So, as soon as I got off the board, I took on that role and they gave me a little office over at the district. I've been doing that eight years."

As coordinator, he has built up the program to about 700 broad-based volunteers, including a number of members of city council and the governing board. In total, they accumulated more than 30,000 hours of service during the 2018-19 school year.

Butterfield Elementary School named its physical education room in Jim Irving's honor last year. Among the contributions Principal Janel Hildick says Irving has made to BES are helping start sixth-grade interscholastic league, recruiting Nissan engineers to work with third- and fifth-grade students, helping establish an advanced math class, recruiting volunteers to read to students, organizing and training library staff, facilitating program in which second-graders interview senior citizens.

Credit

"It shows commitment from a lot of people," he said.

Among others, Mayor Christian Price is quick to come out and talk with students and Vice Mayor Nancy Smith has been involved with the middle school Rocket Challenge program, Irving said.

"I think we're really blessed as a community when you have all your councilmembers who are also volunteers for the schools and the same thing is true with our school board," he said.

Irving does not spend a whole lot of time recruiting volunteers, as parents, grandparents and others readily step up on their own to ask how they can help the schools. From time to time, however, he works to find volunteers for a specific need. (*See Help Wanted on next page.*)

"It's just a matter of finding out their passion and plugging it in, and making sure they know it's really making a difference," he said. "Working with kids is a pretty easy sell, so it's not that difficult. It's just a matter of trying to coordinate it and getting around to meet the people."

On just about every school day, Irving makes himself available, spending 2-3 hours in his office. But most of his time is spent visiting and participating at MUSD schools. He attends late-afternoon meetings and events on Saturdays, logging a total of 40-45 hours weekly. (Deanna is a longtime volunteer as well, now working with kindergarteners at Santa Rosa Elementary.)

Incredibly, Irving estimates he has volunteered tens of thousands of hours at MUSD over the last 16 years.

"Jim Irving is underappreciated and, certainly, underutilized by MUSD," said Murray Siegel, a retired educator who started teaching advanced math at Butterfield Elementary six years ago with Irving's help.

"Part of the problem is that Jim presents a friendly, almost grandfatherly, façade, which belies the significant experience he has had in administering schools."

For his service, MUSD has honored Irving with its Recognition of Exemplary Service award as a governing board member and its Best of the Best Award for his volunteer service. He has also been recognized with its Spotlight award.

He was also nominated in 2016 for the Maricopa Chamber of Commerce's Renate Chamberlin Volunteer of the Year award.

"Jim does so much for so many. And it's 100% altruistic; he wants nothing except to help others," Bartle said.

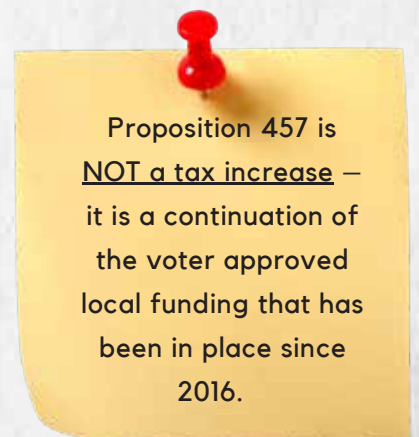
"Jim always has a smile on his face and is

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YET ANOTHER ROLE

In 2014, then-Councilmember Marvin Brown appointed Irving to the city Planning & Zoning Commission, a role he still enjoys.

“I didn’t really know what that was” when Brown asked him to join the commission, Irving admitted. “I like the planning part, so I told him I’d do it and it’s been fascinating to watch the city grow.”

“What I’ve loved about planning and zoning is to be able to sit down with (city) staff and make sure we’re thinking about all aspects of growth,” he added. “One of the concerns I’ve always had is we’re building, but I’m not always sure we have the infrastructure.”

To illustrate his point, he mentioned development along the Porter Road corridor, from Honeycutt Road to Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, where there are five charter schools, a public school, a preschool and the campus of Central Arizona College along the road or just off it.

“If you have ever driven that area around 3:30 (in the afternoon) you’ve got all these schools getting out. It’s just crazy.”

He said he would like to see a public park as part of the development of the Seven Ranches area because “the city needs more recreation space for all these people moving here.” He is also a proponent for more dog parks and bike lanes.

“Jim doesn’t think about Jim,” said Yocum, who also sits on the P&Z Commission. “Jim thinks about the community, he thinks about the issue, he is always looking at the greater good and it doesn’t matter whether it would negatively affect him or people he knows. He is looking for the greater good and that’s very evident in the way he talks, the questions he asks and the responses we get when we have our meetings.”

Irving acknowledged hearing residents criticize city officials, including the P&Z, for approving the construction of apartments and high-density rental developments, claiming they lead to more crime and lessen the quality of life in Maricopa.

He disagrees, and points to a comprehensive study in recent years that highlighted a need for alternative housing.

“I mean that’s where this started and I think the city has done a good job of trying to promote that, but within reason,” he said. “I try to alleviate their fear, their image of apartments. A lot of people have moved out (here) and their idea was to move out to the country and it’s going to be this. Well, it’s not anymore.”

Irving noted the commission has also approved bungalows and as well as single-family and multi-family rental homes to vary available housing.

“Maricopa is in a good place” moving forward, he said.

SPREADING THE MESSAGE

Irving’s insatiable need to help others has benefited other organizations.

He said it is fun to use his management background to help structure community groups and establish bylaws, but part of his motivation to get involved with the Friends of the Library, the Maricopa Community Foundation and COPA Seniors, for example, will come as no surprise — the kids.

“I try to encourage them to be active in promoting education in the schools,” he said, “and almost all of them do. I like to get in those groups that help promote the schools.”

That might include pushing for creation of student scholarships or just promoting intergenerational activities in the schools.

“Senior citizens love coming in and doing things with the younger kids,” Irving said.

Jamila Miqbel, who chairs the board of directors of the Friends of the Library, said Irving has been involved for years. He sits on the board (again), while

HELP WANTED

Jim Irving needs your help ... to help the librarians in MUSD schools.

Many of them work all by themselves, having lost some help when COVID-19 hit.

“I’ve really been looking out, especially in this day of a pandemic where people might not want to come in, for volunteers to spend a few hours helping out in our elementary libraries, either putting books away or helping kids with books,” he said.

“So, that’s been my No. 1 push.”

He said volunteers are always needed to help the PTOs at their local schools — something as simple as helping children off the bus in the morning — and at the high school with the band and sports boosters. Interested in volunteering?

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leading the book sorting and sales committee and serves as liaison between volunteers and library staff, she said. He is also working to improve systems for book sales as well as collections and sorting.

“Now that we have a brand-new library, we have to refine processes to make it as easy as possible for donors as well as volunteers, and Jim has the know-how and expertise to make this project a success,” Miqbel said. “He knows many people in our community and is able to make all of the connections that we need to continue to grow and help the library succeed in its mission.”

“Everyone loves working with him, because he is very positive and has wonderful ideas and connections to make all of our projects happen,” she added.

Irving, with his deep connections in the school district, was instrumental in finding a meeting place for the COPA Seniors group after its home was razed to make way for the overpass, Yocum said. Members were kind of bouncing around until Irving heard about their plight, and said he thought he could help.

Within months, Irving had helped work out an agreement between the school district and city manager to secure the use of two classrooms for the seniors.

“Jim was the catalyst that put all of that together,” Yocum said.

‘FOCUSED, GROUNDED AND YOUNG’

For Irving, one of the most satisfying aspects of his volunteer work is seeing how many of the students he has worked with now teach in the district. The last time he counted, he said, there were 15 or so.

He also loves visiting schools and getting an earful from the innocents.


“There’s nothing that will make you more humble than talking to a group of kindergarten kids, I always joke,” he said. “You go around Christmas and the big debate is Santa Claus. Really, how do you answer? Or a third grader who tells you she’s in love.”

Irving recently attended lunchtime with some kindergarteners.

“If listening to the discussion and debate doesn’t keep you focused, grounded and young,” he laughed again, “I don’t know what will.”

He has no plans to quit, and that is good news for district students, teachers and administrators.

“Mr. Irving is an ambassador, a liaison and all-around gem,” Lopeman said.

“He is the heart and soul of the MUSD family.” 

A BUSY MAN

Here’s a look at what was on Jim Irving’s calendar for two weeks in September — beyond his daily MUSD duties:

THURSDAY, Sept. 9

Copa Seniors meeting, 9:30 a.m., Maricopa Community Center

MONDAY, Sept. 13

Friends of the Library meeting, 5:30 p.m., Maricopa Public Library; Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, 6 p.m., City Hall



MONDAY, Sept. 20

Maricopa Community Foundation meeting, noon, School District Office; Maricopa Education Foundation meeting, 5:30 p.m., School District Office

WEDNESDAY, Sept. 22

Community Advisory Board meeting for Maricopa High School’s Career and Technical Education program, 6 p.m., Culinary Arts building

SATURDAY, Sept. 25

Maricopa Education Foundation Open House, 9-12 a.m., Maricopa Public Library

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What is the biggest challenge for buyers in today's Maricopa real estate market?



Jim Carlisto (72Sold, Hague Partners): Staying positive! So many buyers are worn out from putting in offer after offer, only to get beat out due to various reasons like cash buyers, higher offers, etc. The other issue is the home may sell before they ever got a chance to see it.



Dayv Morgan (HomeSmart Premier): Buyers who need to sell their home to buy another home have to write an offer that is contingent upon their home closing. But sellers are often reluctant to accept an offer with a sale contingency, meaning buyers have almost no chance of getting their offer accepted when there are multiple offers. They may have to wait until their house closes, move into a short-term rental and then try to buy a house, essentially moving twice within just a few weeks.



Brian Petersheim (HomeSmart Success): Getting a buyers' offers accepted is by far the largest issue, but getting to see the property in a timely manner and having to make quick decisions on whether to make an offer is the first step. Without being able to act quickly, the offer won't even be considered. What about the folks that were in Arizona last week to look at homes and were unable to get one under contract while they were here? In the current market, when a house is listed that matches the buyer's needs, both the agent and the buyer should go on high alert to view and make an offer in an expedited manner. Photos, videos and FaceTime can be used and are almost as good as in-person showings.



Justin Greer (Ensign Properties): One of the biggest challenges is the limited inventory of available homes. There are simply more buyers searching than there are homes available to buy. In previous years, purchasing a new-build home was a viable option, but in today's market of waiting lists and lotteries, it is no longer as attractive an option. We have also seen the selling price of homes increase significantly over the last year. When submitting an offer on a home, buyers must become creative to make their offer stand out. Buyers are also struggling to compete against investors who can pay cash for a home. These stumbling blocks might make homebuying more stressful, but definitely not impossible.



Dawn Dutra (D. Dutra Realty): Time. Buyers need to be ready to make purchase-decisions quickly. Therefore, a buyer needs to be flexible, patient and willing to compromise with what they want, so they can make their highest and best offer as soon as they see a home that suits their families' needs. Buyers used to be able to leisurely peruse homes and take their time deciding. Now, the market moves swiftly, and listings are under contract in weeks to days. Buyers should set their expectations to fit their needs and be realistic in their purchase choices. Ultimately, this is one of the biggest purchases they will make in their lifetime, so committing quickly to a home a buyer will come to love and can afford is of utmost importance.



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Tangerine Beauty Crossvine is furious climber

BY SUZANNE HARRINGTON

TANGERINE BEAUTY CROSSVINE is easy to grow and can get big in a short time.

The vine is in the *Bignonia* genus and *capreolata* family. It is related to Common Trumpet Creeper (*Campsis radicans*), also classified as *Bignonia radicans*) and Cat's Claw Vine (*Bignonia tweediana*), which is classified as "aggressive growing."



Bignonia capreolata is described by Peter L. Warren, Pima County Cooperative Extension urban horticulture agent, as a "...vigorous, fast-growing, woody vine that climbs by branched tendrils with adhesive disks...evergreen foliage...turns reddish-purple in fall with subsequent leaf drop in the colder winter areas of its range."

Warren's description of Tangerine Beauty Crossvine is accurate. This vine has become a beautiful addition to our home landscape, climbing and covering our east-facing patio trellis to provide shade. We didn't expect it would grow so quickly,

but admittedly our research prior to planting the vines was minimal. Since transplanting our three vines from 3-gallon pots into our landscape in fall 2019, they've grown vigorously and climbed beyond the trellis onto the roof!

Tangerine Beauty is not described as an invasive species in any articles I've found. The leaves turn a beautiful reddish-purple color in fall and some drop in winter, but the vines have not died back. Warren noted that *Bignonia capreolata* stems may die to the ground in severe winters and roots will sprout new growth the following spring.

Its vigorous growth has kept my attention.

Fellow master gardener and teacher Ron Bernier thoughtfully suggested cutting our vines down in late fall-winter to check the vigorous growth. My husband didn't like that idea and recently tackled the vines by pulling them away from our roof tiles. Gratefully, they came away easily, falling upon growth below on the sloped trellis, and nothing suffered.

According to Warren's publication, Tangerine Beauty is grown primarily for its attractive tangerine flowers and ability to rapidly cover structures with attractive foliage.

"The vine is easily grown in average, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade; it tolerates full shade, but best flower production occurs in sun," Warren's review says. "A cross-section of stem reveals a marking resembling the Greek cross, hence the common name."

One feature worth mentioning is the fire hazard this vine apparently presents. According to North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox, it has an "extreme flammability rating and should not be planted within the defensible space of your home."

Yikes! 🙄

Suzanne Harrington is a Pinal County Master Gardener.

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

most expensive HOME SOLD



41073 W. Hopper Drive

Aug. 28

\$ \$600,000

The entry to this two-story in Homestead North features custom, iron, double doors into the formal living with expansive ceiling height. The home has a gourmet kitchen and wet bar, and the main floor features an in-law suite with full kitchen and private entrance. The upstairs master bedroom has a private balcony. The backyard has a salt-water pool, outdoor kitchen ramada and gas firepit. The home was on the market a little over a month and sold for \$100 over asking price.

Community: Homestead North
Square feet: 4,085
Price per square foot: \$146.87
Days on market: 36

Builder: DR Horton
Year built: 2008
Bedrooms: 5
Bathrooms: 3½

2. 41823 W. Sussex Drive, Glennwilde \$567,000
3. 42121 W. Rummy Road, Province.....\$520,000
4. 41715 W. Summer Sun Lane, Province.....\$519,000
5. 17798 N. Kari Lane, Maricopa Meadows.....\$495,000

least expensive HOME SOLD

38160 W. San Alvarez Ave.

Aug. 31

\$ \$264,225



The least expensive home sold still fetched more than \$200 per square foot. The Rancho Mirage home features tile floors, neutral colors and new appliances. It sold for \$775 below asking price.

Community: Rancho Mirage
Square feet: 1,317
Price per square foot: \$200.62
Days on market: 45

Builder: DR Horton
Year built: 2020
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2

2. 40084 W. Catherine Drive, Smith Farms \$270,000
3. 22199 N. Braden Road, Rancho El Dorado.....\$281,000
4. 38055 W. San Alvarez Ave., Rancho Mirage.....\$281,000
5. 36071 W. Madrid Ave., Tortosa.....\$281,899

Brian Petersheim Jr.

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Observations from Realtor Brian Petersheim

The large inventory increase in August 2021 is accurate but looks to be an anomaly. It is due to an increase of listings and a large decrease of homes pending over the month.

Median listing price is continuing to rise and is currently \$381,878. Home prices will continue to rise slowly until inventory evens out with demand.

The least expensive subdivision per square foot is Santa Rosa Crossings, which is unique because they are all brand-new homes.

The subdivisions with the highest average sales price are Cobblestone, which has Maricopa's only basement homes, and Palo Brea, which has some of Maricopa's largest floorplans at 4,400 s.f. and a large portion of brand-new homes.

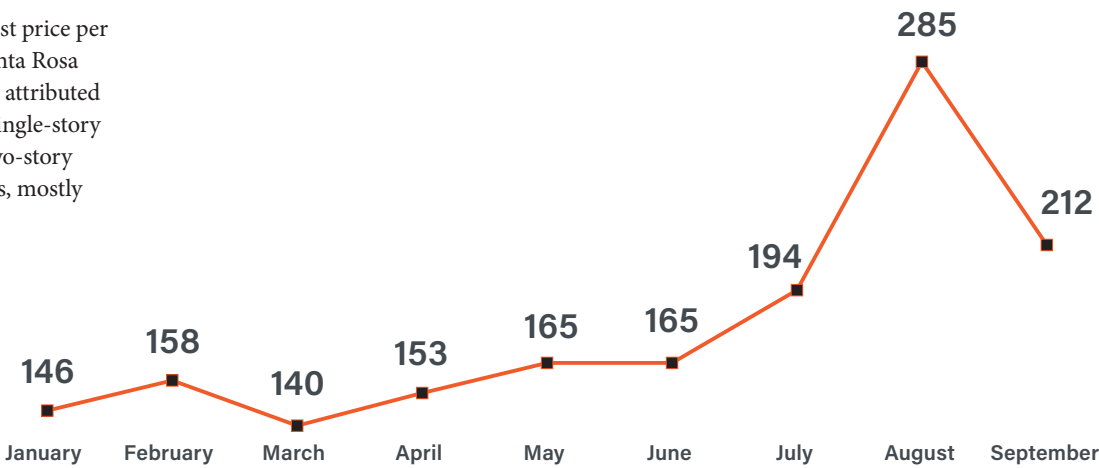
The subdivisions with the highest price per square foot are Acacia Crossing, Santa Rosa Springs and Sorrento, which can be attributed to the large percentage of smaller, single-story homes. Sorrento has some larger two-story homes, but in the past three months, mostly single-level homes have sold.

AVERAGE PRICES

Homes sold in city limits June 15 - Sept. 15

	Purchase	Per square foot
Acacia Crossings	\$316,838	\$191
Alterra	\$352,299	\$177
Cobblestone	\$409,160	\$174
Desert Cedars	\$347,653	\$162
Desert Passage	\$328,891	\$176
Glennwilde	\$373,183	\$180
Homestead	\$368,418	\$187
Lakes at Rancho El Dorado	\$376,840	\$177
Maricopa Meadows	\$345,488	\$163
Palo Brea	\$423,298	\$174
Province	\$369,714	\$195
Rancho El Dorado	\$365,272	\$185
Rancho Mirage	\$331,292	\$184
Santa Rosa Crossings	\$340,214	\$157
Santa Rosa Springs	\$350,090	\$194
Senita	\$356,000	\$167
Sorrento	\$350,915	\$196
Tortosa	\$334,065	\$183
Villages at Rancho El Dorado	\$391,128	\$173

2021 ACTIVE LISTINGS IN MARICOPA



Sources: Realtor Brian Petersheim, Arizona Multiple Listing Service



Seasonal sales sluggishness par for the course

BY DAYV MORGAN

THE HOUSING MARKET IS BEGINNING TO CALM WITH inventory rising and prices flattening a bit. And with the typically slower fall season coming, residents looking to sell should not worry — a cooling of the market this time of year is normal in Maricopa, and not the sign of a market crash.

Despite the weather being much more ideal for moving, the fourth quarter is often the slowest of the year. And though homes are still selling quickly, sellers should no longer expect 10 offers over the asking price the first day on the market like their neighbors saw just a few months ago.

The end of summer usually brings sluggishness to our market. For example, according to Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service, in September 2018 the median price for a resale closing was \$209,250, and it stayed basically the same through December when the average was \$210,000. The same was true in 2019, when the median price decreased by \$950 in the same period.

That trend is also seen in the average sales price in 2020. Even in the hottest market in memory, prices only rose \$2,000 – from \$271,600 to \$273,600 – between September and December.

Several signs point to 2021 being similar to previous years. The first is inventory levels. The number of active listings has nearly tripled in the last 90 days. Buyers now have more choices and can spend a little more time looking for that perfect home instead of rushing to make an offer.

Another indicator of the slowing market is the ratio of sales price to asking price. In June, July and August, homes sold for 104%, 104% and 102% of asking price, respectively. Fewer homes are eliciting bidding wars, which is keeping prices in check.

The exception to this trend is Province, which will likely see an uptick in sales. Last year, more homes sold in December than in June and July combined. This may be because as a 55+ community, sales are less tied to the school year than in other communities.

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



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Retired educator Dave Kies went from walking on a treadmill to Ironman triathlete. He credits a balanced diet, diversified exercised and good sleep for helping maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Late starter, but great finisher

BY TOM SCHUMAN

DURING 35 YEARS AS A FIRST- and second-grade teacher in his native Wisconsin, Dave Kies' athletic endeavors were fairly conventional, including weekend basketball, frequent walks with his wife Sherry and long bicycle rides. That all changed — in a big way — after retirement for the Maricopa resident, who moved to town earlier this year after living several years in the Valley.

He began running.

"I went from working with seven- and eight-year-olds to 70- and 80-year-olds," Kies, 68, who left the classroom to work with a social assistance program that required a great deal of computer work that led eventually to weight gain.

He moved from the treadmill to extensive walking and shorter runs, participating in a 5K at age 55.

"I just wanted to go out and run," he said. "I got second place in my age division, had fun and really enjoyed the people I was with."

With his wife's support and encouragement, the late starter kept running — to bigger and longer challenges.

UNLIKELY DESTINATION

Kies increased his distances over time, but never thought he go longer than a half-marathon. Eventually, however, he ran fast enough at an Arizona race to qualify for the 2014 Boston Marathon — the ultimate goal for many long-distance runners. He decided to take a shot at

the prestigious race.

His trip to Boston came one year after two terrorists set off homemade bombs during the April 15, 2013 race. Three people died and hundreds were injured in a tragedy that shook the city and the nation.

"That was probably the highlight of anything I've done," Kies said. "Anyplace you went, people were thanking you for coming back. On the subway, they would announce, 'We have a marathon runner on board,' and people would clap. They treated us so nicely."

Sherry, who waited for her husband about six blocks from the finish line, vividly recalls the crowd chanting, "Take back our city. Take back our race."

People always line the route with "cool signs" but there was a special aura that year with runners thanking and paying tribute to military and first-responders throughout the race.

Dave traversed the hilly 26.2-mile course in 3:54.07 to finish 308th in his 60-64 age group, an impressive finish that was secondary to the "emotional experience" and the joy of taking part in such a special event, he said. He ran a couple more marathons and again qualified for Boston, but he never went back.

Ian Roberts

"Something was missing (in the subsequent races)," he recalled. "I said at the time, 'I don't think we can ever recreate that. I don't want to lose that.'"

Still, he sought new challenges — and so began a march toward longer distances.

He started with a half-triathlon (1.2-mile swim, 54-mile bike ride and 13.1-mile run) before deciding to give it a shot in a full Ironman (2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and 26.2-mile run) in November 2019 in Tempe, site of the Arizona Ironman.

Kies said he went all in on the Ironman despite "not being a very good swimmer" and having much to learn about the sport.

He finished the event in 15:12:58 (1:42.46 swim, 7:26.38 ride and 5:25.12 run), good enough for 11th in his age group.

Along the way, he was cheered on by family members volunteering at a water station.

'TOTAL EUPHORIA'

Family is important to Kies. While planning for the Arizona Ironman in 2018, his daughter was involved in a life-threatening mountain climbing accident. He calls his daughter "an inspiration" as she continues to battle back from the accident and other medical challenges.

Sherry is there with him throughout the training and competitions. He trained for the Arizona Ironman for eight months.

"I've never had a coach," Kies said. "I learned through trial and error, reading on the internet and picking things up from other people."

Although he has not competed in another full Ironman, his "addiction," as Sherry calls it, has changed his life. These days, his minimum exercise session is 100 laps in the pool, a six-



Tom Schuman

Dave Kies had impressive finishes in both the Boston Marathon and Arizona Ironman.

mile run or a 30-mile bike ride.

"It's total euphoria, no matter what race you are in," Kies said. "The camaraderie with other runners — people telling each other 'Great job. Keep it up' — is special."

The Kises enjoy many special experiences together, including trips to 41 countries. He lists Peru and Morocco among his favorites; Sherry, a middle school teacher before her retirement, cites Russia as a most interesting location.

Meanwhile, they are thrilled to call Maricopa home while continuing their travels and supporting their grandchildren in Colorado.

And living the healthy life. 🗨️

A SENIOR APPROACH TO FITNESS

Infrastructure — in a different form than we sometimes think of — paved the way for Dave Kies and his wife to move to Maricopa in 2021 after six years in Gold Canyon.

Ample walking and running paths, plentiful bike trails and safe places to gain that valuable exercise were among the key considerations. And that's not all.

"When we asked people the best thing about Maricopa, they always said 'the people.' That was a big selling point for us," Kies said. "And I read a quote that the city was getting bigger but still has that small-town feel."

Kies listed some of the keys to a retirement lifestyle change that resulted in the loss of 70 pounds. All can benefit from similar steps.

- Eating a balanced diet.
- Understanding the importance of protein to help repair small muscle tears.
- Pilates (three times a week) helped reduce injuries.
- More — and better — sleep.
- Diversifying exercise and pacing oneself. "Start off slow. You can't do it all at once. You've got to be willing to take time off, take a break."

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Terri Austin, president of Maricopa Quilt Divas, works in her Province studio.

Quilters bring fabric to life

BY TOM SCHUMAN

ONE CAN TURN TO VARIOUS places in Maricopa to find accomplished quilters. The similarities, however, overshadow the differences in this passionate pursuit.

And while individual talents and dedication are at the forefront, the “team” aspect comes into play through clubs, camaraderie and special relationships.

“You build great friendships,” said Glennwilde resident Cynthia Horst, a quilter since the early 2000s who moved to Maricopa three years ago. “I met someone from Gilbert, and we were friends online for 10 years before I moved here.”

The Maricopa Quilt Divas have come together for more than a dozen years. The 20-or-so members haven’t let Zoom meetings since the start of the pandemic impact their ability to collaborate.

Rancho El Dorado resident Joyce Hollis, a past president of the club who started quilting in 2007, described a current project in which each member will work on a block with black and white fabric before colors are inserted and the quilt is sewn together for donation to a local charity. Groups often auction the quilts off as fundraisers.

“We might do one large one like that every other year,” she said.

While the limitation on in-person gathering has been difficult, Zoom has helped keep the group together, allowing those with health issues or in faraway locations to participate.

Terri Austin, current Divas president, noted another local club in the Sisterhood of the Traveling Quilts and two groups in the Province community that meet regularly. All share another similarity.

“I learn so much from fellow quilters,” said Austin, who lives in Province. “Everyone has a gift, an expertise. Talking to other quilters opens up other ways of fixing or finishing something. We do a lot of teaching in the Divas, people helping each other.”

Linda Arney specializes in baby quilts, many of which are donated to a pair of charities. While she benefits from her work — “I need to feel like I’m doing something that matters to somebody” — the ultimate goal is that recipients like the quilts as much as she enjoys making them.

BY THE NUMBERS

One should not confuse quilting with “easy work.”

“In the Garden,” a colorful favorite of Austin’s, was entered in an international show. It included more than 3,700 pieces of fabric and

took three years to craft. She works on multiple projects at once and has several rooms in her home dedicated to her calling.

“I love the challenge of it: Can you do it and can you do it well?” she said. After spending 40 years in the sometimes-dark land of Alaska, she said she “absolutely loves” the colors, and that a creation is “all up to your imagination.”

One of Horst’s favorites is “Comforts of Home.” It came from a pattern, but she personalized it to tell the story of her family. All hand-embroidered, one block, with more than 60 pieces of fabric, took as long as 10 hours to complete — with 150 hours or more dedicated to the full quilt.

Another one that hits close to home is “Paper Dolls,” a quilt dedicated to her two oldest daughters.

Like Austin, working on 8-10 projects at once (some taking months, others years) is not unusual for Horst. “I love picking colors, she said. “I’m especially drawn toward bright colors.”

A 2021 passion has been crafting quilts for each of her 15 grandchildren for a family reunion at Thanksgiving. She will make more than 20, so the youngest are still left with choices of their favorites.

Tom Schuman



“I do this for the people I love. I think of them while I am doing it,” Horst said..

FUN AND A WHOLE LOT MORE

All four women benefited from plenty of childhood sewing experience, with Austin making her own clothes starting at age 11. Horst’s mother was an artist, and her three

Cynthia Horst, who has been quilting for two decades, invested more than 150 hours on one of her favorite quilts.

daughters are engaged in creative professions.

Austin and Hollis are both long-time educators. While leading a charter school, Austin would have third-, fourth- and fifth-graders make graduation quilts for the eighth-graders.

Hollis described the thinking she goes through — one likely adopted by many quilters.

“It’s most fun when you’re doing something for someone else. I want it to be special for them; it drives the creative process,” she said. “To me, quilting is like doing a jigsaw puzzle — with fabric.”

There is no shortage of places to start for those looking to begin quilting or increase their proficiency. Quilt and fabric shops are reliable standbys. Instagram and YouTube are popular visual outlets. Horst has her own blog — Dream. Quilt. Create. — and follows other blogs. Hollis reminded of another tried-and-true resource.

“Sit down like I did and have somebody guide you through a pretty simple project.”

That basic beginning may well lead to the quilting joy shared by so many women in Maricopa and beyond.

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Tools available to facilitate 'the talk'

BY RON SMITH

LAST MONTH, I EMPHASIZED THE need for planning during the third phase of our life. A very important part of end-of-life planning is starting the conversation with the ones you love.

Five Wishes and Prepare for Your Care offer tools that can help. They address personal, medical, spiritual and legal wishes in a way that facilitates the discussion with loved ones and caregivers. You want these people to know exactly what you want and not have to guess.

Both tools help develop documents that meet the legal requirements for advance health care directives in Arizona, too.

A bit of a warning about advance directives. Without discussion and participation with your family, they might not provide a complete picture as check-marked decisions don't always fit real-life medical scenarios.

For example, COVID-19 treatment might require the use of an incubator to assist your lungs. Choices in your advance directive might preclude such a treatment. If you discussed the choices with your family, they might have a better understanding of the context in which your choice was made. A written narrative may be useful as an addendum to a prepared advanced directive.

When preparing advance directive documentation, consider:

- Identifying who you want to be your health care proxy – someone you trust to fulfill your choices. They should share your views and values, be able to respond quickly and meet any legal requirements established by the state.
- Establishing a backup proxy should your

first choice be unable to serve.

- Appointing a legal/financial agent to manage your will and finances.
- Speaking with your medical team to better understand the implications of your medical choices.
- Completing Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment and Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment forms for additional clarity.
- Making multiple copies of your documents and storing them where they can easily be found by your proxy. Advance directive documents can also be stored in the Arizona Healthcare Directives Registry.
- Periodically reviewing and updating your documents.

As humans, we are remarkably good at making decisions and handling adversity. We usually have a good idea of our values and what gives our life meaning. Sudden illness or incapacitation can cloud that process. Hence the importance of documenting in advance.

Take your time to help confront difficult questions, such as:

- How long do I want to continue medical treatment in the face of terminal illness?
- How long do I want to continue treatment in the face of dementia?
- Am I willing to lose a critical ability (to walk, speak, eat, etc.) and continue living?
- When do I want to begin palliative care?
- Do I want to donate my organs?
- Do I need to have all family members in agreement with my decisions?
- How do my spiritual beliefs play a part in my decisions?

Once you have had time to consider your thoughts, gather your family and use an attorney or one of the available advance directive tools and have "the talk."

Source: NCOA Aging Mastery Playbook, Firman & Stiles, p. 83

Ron Smith is an aging-in-place advocate, a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) and a Certified Living in Place Professional (CLIPP).

[AgingWithDignity.org](https://www.AgingWithDignity.org),
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OCT
16

Teen Hall set

The teen years are often seen as an unfortunate developmental stage that adolescents just need to get through.

Be Awesome Coalition knows this is a critical and necessary time that doesn't have to be a struggle but can be a time to thrive.

To help teens navigate this time, Be Awesome will hold a Teen Hall on Oct. 16 at the Maricopa Library and Cultural Center.

The one-day conference/expo on the teen experience with speakers focusing on issues relevant to teens and their parents as well as resources and teen-focused entertainment. Local experts will discuss on internet safety, suicide prevention, financial aid, parent teen communication and other topics. Teens will be able to talk with local business leaders about future careers.

An open mic from 4-6 p.m. on the library lawn will offer teens an opportunity to showcase their talents.

Food trucks will be available on site for additional costs.

IF YOU GO

Time: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Location: Maricopa Library & Cultural Center

Cost: Free

Register: BeAwesomeYouth.Life



calendar 10.21

4

Maricopa City Council meeting
5 p.m.
Maricopa Library and Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

5

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

9

Maricopa Flood Control District meeting
6 p.m., via Zoom
MaricopaFCD.com/Notices

11

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

Friends of the Library meeting
5:30 p.m.
Maricopa Library and Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

13

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

16

Maricopa Teen Hall
10 a.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

17

Evidence Quartet in Concert
8 a.m., Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

21

Facebook Live with Councilmember Vincent Manfredi
6 p.m., Facebook

24

Silent Heroes charity golf tournament
Noon, The Duke at Rancho El Dorado
42660 W. Rancho El Dorado Parkway

29-30

Israel Calderon Benefit Softball Tournament
Copper Sky Recreation Complex
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

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

Teen Support Group
6:30 p.m., Northern Lights Therapy, PLLC
21300 N. John Wayne Parkway, Suite 103

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.

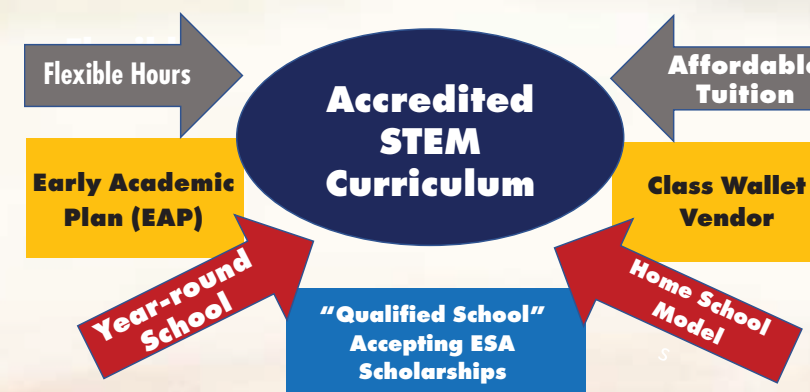
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THINGS TO DO



Charity softball tourney, home run derby set for Oct. 29-30

Players will take the field for The Israel Calderon Benefit Softball Tournament Oct. 30 at Copper Sky. The tourney will be preceded by a home run derby Oct. 29.

The 5th annual event raises money for the family of Israel "Izzy" Calderon, including wife Gloria and a 15-year-old son. Calderon, 47, suffered a serious brain injury in a 2016 auto accident on State Route 347.

The entry fee is \$300 per team with a maximum of 14 teams. To register a team for the tourney or to be in the home run derby, contact Kevin McDill at CoachKevinM@yahoo.com.



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advertiser index

3-Day Blinds.....	7
72SOLD.....	11, 29
911 Air.....	BC
A+ Charter Schools.....	75
Almentia Academy.....	77
Be Awesome Youth Coalition.....	76
Brewer's Air Conditioning & Heating, LLC.....	HG6
Caliche Senior Living.....	HG11
Central Arizona College.....	63
City of Maricopa.....	21
CS CPA Group.....	34
CubeSmart® Self Storage.....	87
Distinctive Earthscapes, Inc. at The Avocado Nursery.....	67
Electrical District No. 3.....	9
Exceptional Healthcare.....	HG5
Express Flooring.....	2
Giovanni's Custom Flooring and Renovation LLC.....	85
Golden Sword Services.....	13
Golfand Entertainment.....	78
Harrah's Ak-Chin.....	3, IBC
Health Markets.....	HG16
HomeSmart Premier - Dayv Morgan.....	67, 69
Iconic Garage Door Services.....	65
Iconic Tire and Service Centers.....	IFC, 1
InMaricopa.....	79
InMaricopa.com.....	71
Insurance and Consulting.....	HG9
J. Warren Funeral Services.....	HG13
Jiffy Lube.....	73
Karsten's Ace Hardware.....	66
Leading Edge Academy.....	34
Lizard Heights Glass.....	63
The Maids in Maricopa.....	HG15
Maricopa Foot & Ankle.....	HG7
Maricopa Wellness Center.....	HG10
McLaughlin Air Conditioning.....	25
MHG Real Estate / Brian French.....	20
Mobile Elementary School.....	55
My Maricopa Plumber.....	69
Native Grill & Wings.....	HG18
Orbital Communications.....	5, 59
Premier Cardiovascular Center.....	HG9
Premier Orthodontics.....	HG20
Sananga Care Homes.....	HG19
Sequoia Pathway Academy.....	19
The Suites at Maricopa Business Center.....	81
Sun Life Family Health Center.....	HG3, HG8
Treasured Smiles Children's Dentistry.....	74, HG14
The UPS Store.....	81
Vekol Market.....	23
Victor Moreno Photography.....	78
Wildcat Landscape Supply.....	64
Yes for Maricopa Schools P.A.C.....	61
Your CBD Store.....	HG13
Zuwa Family Care PLLC.....	HG11



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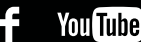


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MARICOPA POLICE

Officer Karma named by 5th-grader

Failure to extend override could mean loss of 70 teachers, MUSD projects

Maricopa Remembers: Locals reflect on the 20th anniversary of 9/11

Lane closures upcoming on Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway

Roberts resigns House seat

TRENDING

Local photographer donating business portraits

Carl's Jr. making a Maricopa comeback

MHS girls golf to take season 'one swing at a time'

Sonoran Creek tenant improvements among permits granted

Realtor: Home prices expensive, but only by Maricopa standards

City council members mixed on mask mandates

Access to parks to improve for Maricopa dogs, owners

Shoppers thrilled as Sprouts opens long-awaited store

Suspected thief arrested mile away - before crime reported

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parting shot



Ann Marie Brown

During a walk around North Alterra Parkway, the Alterra resident photographed this hummingbird with her Nikon D5600 using an f/6.3 aperture and a 1/4000 second exposure at ISO 500.

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consideration as next month's "parting shot."



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