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ON THE COVER

Photographer Bryan Mordt snagged this shot of Maricopa Historical Society volunteers Kent Charles, Richard Cane and Denny Hoeh working to clean the exterior of the California Zephyr, while Ron Angwood, John Rimmasch and his son Clayson work on the top of the railcar in a lift. Rimmasch owns Wastach Railroad contractors, a group contracted to assist with the renovation which is expected to take another year.

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Volunteers make our city a better place

APRIL IS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH. In Maricopa, however, it seems like every month is volunteer month.

There's no shortage of people in this community who are willing to step forward to make a difference in their neighbors' lives.

Our idea was to write a story where we focused on these efforts. But what I found was an extensive culture of volunteerism that exists in this city that no one story could ever encompass.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of this city. Do you want proof? Two of this city's most important boards consist of volunteers: The city's Planning and Zoning Commission and the Maricopa Unified School District Governing Board.

Volunteers impact the growth of this city and what its educational system is going to look like. Not to mention, these people work for free, and they are willing to take the public scrutiny that sometimes comes along with their jobs.

When you get down to it, I think that goes a step beyond volunteerism.

It was also overwhelming to hear about volunteers who literally give until they don't have much time left to give. Some work 40 hours a week.



Their efforts often include mind-numbing clerical work and other times, back-breaking physical labor.

From time to time, people are honored for giving large cash donations to causes. And while monetary donations are always appreciated, the act of giving your time might be even more valuable.

Don't ever underestimate the value of time spent working to further a cause.

It may be harder to quantify the donation But, in some cases, an hour spent might be worth more than the money you were going to give.

Volunteers with the Mariocopa Police Department's Volunteers In Police Service (VIPS) program gave more than 8,700 hours of their time in the 2021 fiscal year. To put it in perspective, a full-time employee who works 40 hours a week will work 2,080 hours a year. That's four full-time positions from just one group of volunteers.

As always, thanks for reading our publication, and thanks for volunteering.

JUSTIN GRIFFIN | EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
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With a background in corporate and educational facilities, Al is a senior advocate and master gardener.



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BOB MCGOVERN

Bob, a past editor at InMaricopa, tells the story of an infant diagnosed with leukemia — and her fight to live.



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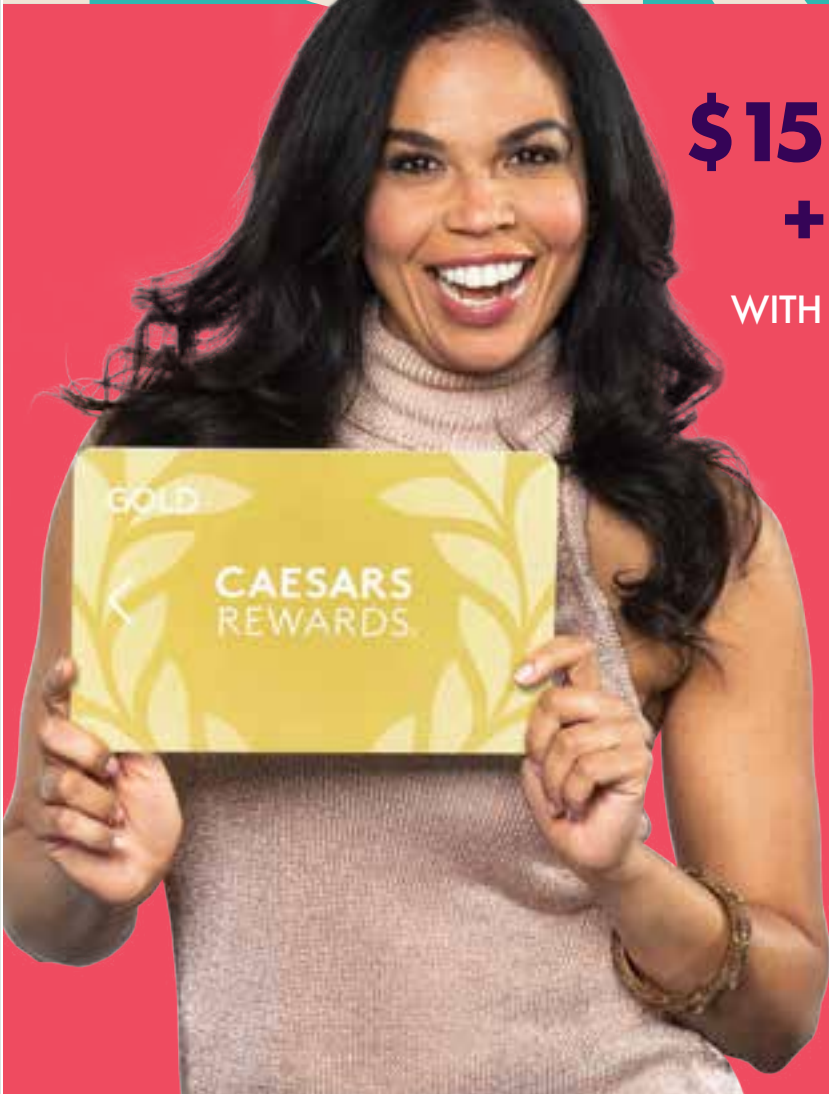
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Student explosion

The Maricopa High School campus has grown considerably over the years. The football players and cheerleaders pictured were among the 28 MHS students — all freshmen — in 1955. Today, enrollment is about 2,400 with a second high school, Desert Sunrise, scheduled to open in July.



2022



1955



1955

THIS MONTH BACK IN...

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



2004

Outside the Box Media, a Maricopa company founded by Scott Bartle, launched 85239.com, which quickly became a real-time news center for the fast-growing city. The website offered local news, business and real estate listings, free classifieds and feature stories on the people and places that make Maricopa unique. At the time, two monthly newspapers published in the small town of about 4,000 people. "They didn't serve the community like I thought they could have," said Bartle, who is still publisher of what is now InMaricopa.com.



2006

Maricopa experienced a fire for the ages at the Hyponex mulch-processing plant. Firefighters were on scene for seven hours at the facility off Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, east of White and Parker Road. A 50-mph wind created a wall of burning embers. A power pole with live lines burned and fell in the middle of the site, igniting a loading dock. About 14,000 gallons of water were used to prevent spread. The Gila River and Ak-Chin fire departments assisted. Spontaneous combustion was the cause, officials said.



2014

Longtime Maricopa farmer and former NFL player Fred W. Enke Sr., 89, passed away in April at his home in Casa Grande. He and farming partner and friend John Smith built one of Maricopa's best-known roads as a way to get to the cotton farm they owned. From 1954-1983, Enke farmed in what would become Maricopa. He sold the farm, which is now home to the Maricopa Agricultural Center, to the University of Arizona. After selling his portion of his farm, he grew grapes in Hidden Valley until about 2000.

Maricopa Historical Society; Brian Petersheim Jr.

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Oasis at the Wells,
Maricopa's lone
Apartment complex.

Apartments fill a need in Maricopa and its growth

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN AND JAY TAYLOR

FOR YEARS, HOUSING IN Maricopa came in one form: single-family homes.

But as rapid growth continues in Maricopa and the region, efforts to meet the need for diverse housing are on the rise.

There is currently only one apartment complex in Maricopa, Oasis at the Wells, which opened in spring 2021. But others are coming.

Copa Flats, a 312-unit, three-story apartment complex broke ground in March and represents the crest of a wave of multi-family communities — and more than 900 additional units — on the way.

To better understand the past, present and future of multi-family communities in Maricopa, it is best to start at the beginning.

A brief history

Apartments were never illegal in Maricopa. They were a difficult investment due to unfriendly zoning laws. That changed in 2017 when the city put forth a housing plan that improved zoning requirements for apartments and other housing options.

But one of the biggest hurdles to building an apartment complex in Maricopa was the market itself. The housing market crashed in 2008 and a home could be bought for less than \$50,000. As Maricopa Mayor Christian Price noted, that meant cheap mortgage payments.

“Why would you rent an apartment for \$1,200 with two bedrooms, when you could buy a house for \$800 a month and have four beds, three bathrooms and a yard?” Price said.

For years, buying in Maricopa was more affordable than renting.

“The market didn't allow it [apartments] to happen,” Price said. “Then we went into the recession, that exacerbated the problem because homes were being purchased for \$30,000 and \$40,000.”

Apartments were impossible at every level. “Those mortgage payments were \$300,” Price said. “How am I going to build an apartment complex, at how many millions of dollars, and charge you \$1,500 rent?”

“How many people do you think you're going to have lined up waiting to come into that marketplace? Zero. So that's a failed concept. There's no bank in America that would have given you a loan to do that.”

Bryan Mordt

“

There are certainly too many variables involved to conclude apartments increase crime. In my experience, apartment buildings in desirable communities with low crime have a positive economic benefit to the community by creating housing options based on the individual's stage of adult life.”

MARICOPA POLICE CHIEF JAMES HUGHES

Battling perceptions

Apartments are a touchy subject for some residents who fear they will change the fabric of the community.

City Manager Rick Horst feels public perception is misguided.

“This thing about apartments and higher-density housing creating crime is a misnomer,” Horst said. “The facts bear that out. As soon as we hear something happening in an apartment, we jump to conclusions.”

Maricopa Police Chief James Hughes said both in studies and in his personal experience, crime in apartment complexes mirrors the surrounding community.

“Many studies have not found a correlation between apartment buildings and an increase in crime,” Hughes said. “There are certainly too many variables involved to conclude apartments increase crime. In my experience, apartment buildings in desirable communities with low crime have a positive economic benefit to the community by creating housing options based on the individual's stage of adult life.”

Hughes said that given Maricopa's already-low violent-crime rates, statistics can be misleading.

“The numbers (here) look to be within normal parameters,” Hughes said. “Maricopa enjoys small sample sizes regarding violent crime; therefore, two or three incidents can cause a larger percentage increase.”

There were 1,899 crimes reported in Maricopa in 2021, with 28 (or 1.2%) of them occurring at Oasis at The Wells. Six percent of

all the burglaries in the city and 5% of assaults/shootings were reported at the complex, according to MPD statistics.

Most people associate federally-funded housing with apartments. Horst explained that in Maricopa, that's not the case.

“These, for the most part, are market-rate housing. They're not HUD housing.

“Matter of fact, most people don't know it, but we do have some HUD housing in town.

“They've been in town way before the city was formed. We've never had an issue with those places. They look great. They are clean, they're presentable and most people don't even know they exist. There are less than 20 units.”

Damages already done

Maricopa has suffered from a lack of housing options for years. Horst believes that may have already affected Maricopa in an unfortunate way.

“There is a circle of life, and it implies that you have that young person, or young couple, getting started in life,” Horst said. “And when I think about those people, I think about my police officers, my firefighters, our schoolteachers. People like that, who cannot afford to jump into a \$400,000 house, which is now, our starting average here in Maricopa.”

As a result, many service employees settle in bordering communities and counties where they can afford to live. Their kids attend the schools and they become part of the social fabric of that community, even though they work in Maricopa.

“So, what do they do?” Horst said. “They have to have a place to live, so we asked them to live in another community, but work here. Years ago, our police officers and firefighters had to live in another community. Because frankly, we didn't have any homes.”

It also affects older people, Horst explained.

“And then at some point, they're an empty-nester and want to downsize from that three- or four-bedroom house,” Horst said. “They can't afford the cost of the maintenance or maybe they want to enjoy life.

“Where do they go? Do we ask them to leave the community, to leave their church, to leave their families and friends, to go somewhere else? Or do we provide an opportunity for them to start downsizing? What happens when you lose a spouse?”

The apartments, Horst said, also serve another purpose. Service employees who would typically work at the sit-down restaurants that residents are clamoring for need somewhere to live.

“Who's going to take those \$16-, \$17-, \$18-an-hour jobs?” Horst said. “They are not the people coming from Chandler or somewhere else. They are not going to drive all the way here for our \$17- or \$18-an-hour job.”

Price said part of healthy growth for the city is allowing people of different economic and social backgrounds the chance to settle and build a life in Maricopa.

“If we don't have attainable housing, then we are literally shutting people out,” Price said. “This is a city that is growing exceptionally rapidly. In doing so, we have lots of new areas for stores coming online. We have lots of new police officers and nurses and firefighters, etc., and all these people make a great living and do a wonderful service. But if they're just starting out in life, they have no place to live.”

Growth is coming

The Phoenix area is expected to grow by 881,000 people this decade, according to research conducted by the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC). While that number seems astronomical, it would only be the third-highest growth decade the Valley has seen. Metro Phoenix grew by 1.013 million in the 1990s and 941,000 in the 2000s. By the end of the decade, the Valley will be home to 5.4 million people.

PLANNED APARTMENTS IN MARICOPA

- **COPA FLATS**, a 312-unit, three-story apartment community planned at 17485 N. Porter Road, just north of Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway.
- **FUZE 520**, a 342-apartment project of one-, two- and three-story buildings on 14 acres at State Route 238 and Loma Road
- **ROERS MARICOPA**, a 200-unit, multi-family project located near Central Arizona College
- **STERLING AT STONEGATE**, which will feature 414 multi-family units at Stonegate Road and Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway

In addition to these 1,268 apartments in the works, another 1,000-plus units of single-family home-for-rent, condominium and townhome communities are in the construction or planning stages.



Oasis at the Wells is Maricopa's only apartment complex. It opened in 2021 and is the first of a collection of multi-family communities that will open in the coming years.

Along with new residents will come new jobs, according to the same GPEC study. While experts hesitate to project job growth out more than a year or two, the forecast for the next two years is rosy. After 4% job growth in 2021, employment is expected to grow by a whopping 5.3% in 2022, followed by a robust 4.3% in 2023. And that takes into account population growth of about 90,000 people in each of those years.

There is a perception Arizona has an older population, but demographic statistics say otherwise. In fact, the five most populous ages in the state are those 25-29; each of those ages has more than 105,000 people. And the next six most-populous ages are 19 to 33, the only other groups with populations of more than 100,000 statewide.

Skyrocketing costs

Home affordability is another issue in a skyrocketing housing market. According to a study performed by research firm Elliot D. Pollack and Company, the only professions that could afford to buy a home of nine surveyed in 2020 were nurses and police

Bryan Mordt

officers — and they could only buy in eight and seven of the cities profiled, respectively. Fast forward a year to 2021 and only the nurse, making about \$83,300 a year, can afford to buy, and only in three cities: Avondale, Glendale and Peoria.

Another factor in the need for apartments is the lack of existing home inventory. The Pollack study found the long-run average days of inventory for homes on the market priced at \$350,000 or less in metro Phoenix has been 51 days; the current average is 10 days.

The total inventory long-run average supply has been 69 days, but currently sits at 23 days. In terms of total home inventory, in mid-2020, the average daily inventory of homes was 1,631; it's currently 542. That's the total number of resale homes available in a market of 4.5 million people.

It's not just the price of buying a home that's surging.

Eric Omdahl, a partner with Minnesota-based Real Estate Equities, developer of Copa Flats, said many would-be renters are being priced out of the market in the Valley.

"Our target is people who live in this community who have seen the 20% spike in rent they're paying in the Valley over the last year," Omdahl said. "There are a number of new employment uses coming to Maricopa as part of the growth of the community, and we see this as a viable housing choice for people who don't want to get priced out of the market with single-family homes, which are now exceeding \$2,000 a month on a rental basis.

"Not everyone can afford to put money down and get financing for a loan, so this is a good opportunity to provide a rental housing choice," he said.

Bill Bisanz, CEO of the Real Estate Equities, noted while many areas in the region need apartments, Maricopa's situation is unique.

"There was a combination of reasons that this was attractive and interesting for us here," Bisanz said. "Your community, your state, is going through tremendous growth, and when that happens it adds even more pressure to housing affordability.

"There's a huge need, a huge need we felt we could help with. Also, the circumstances were positive with some of the financing resources and the availability of tax-exempt bonds was favorable as well. Eric had experience here, and we wanted to expand, and we like the business climate as well. Those are the main reasons."

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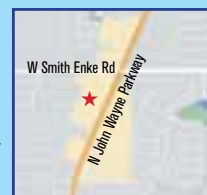
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Large aquifer, responsible water management key to city's future

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN



AS MARICOPA GROWS, ONE OF its biggest assets is water supply. The city sits on the Maricopa Stanfield Sub-basin aquifer, which includes 23,000 acre-feet of water, making it one of the biggest in the region. One acre-foot of water represents 325,000 gallons of water, enough water to serve three-plus houses for a year. Water supply is cautiously monitored and maintained by Global Water Resources.

Jake Lenderking, the utility's vice president of water resources, is quick to point out that while there's a lot of water under the ground, it's a finite resource.

"The groundwater is not really considered a renewable resource," Lenderking said. "So, you have to be careful."

"There's a lot there, but not enough to waste."

The Arizona Department of Water Resources, through its Assured Water Supply program, issues assurances for a 100-year supply of water. In most municipalities, developers need that assurance before they can begin construction.

Global Water Resources has 100-year assurance, not only because of the abundance of water in the ground, but due to water reclamation and conservation efforts,

Global Water Resources Vice President General Manager Jon Corwin, shown in front of the ultraviolet disinfection unit at the Global Water Resources treatment facility in Maricopa, works to provide ratepayers with the technology they need to conserve water. Above, the Integrated film activated sludge tank for wastewater can be seen.

according to Lenderking.

Lenderking said GWR proved to the Department of Water Resources there is both physically available groundwater and a recycled water supply through its philosophy of total water management by using smart meters and recycled water.

The designation is particularly valuable when you consider that new 100-year assurances are no longer being issued.

The source

Maricopa sits on in the Maricopa Stanfield Sub-basin aquifer, which is quite a resource.

"We're using about 7,000 acre-feet and we have 22,914 acre-feet in our designation," Lenderking said. "Is it good positioning? Definitely.

that. So, if you're thinking about Pinal County and water supply issues, that's one of the big ones."

There are two predominant types of aquifers in Arizona — alluvial aquifers most often found in the valleys and fractured rock aquifers more prevalent in the mountains and foothills.

Alluvial aquifers are found under rivers and other bodies of water and, for the most part, have more water than fractured rock aquifers.

The Maricopa Stanfield Sub-basin is an alluvial aquifer that extends throughout the city's current borders and beyond.

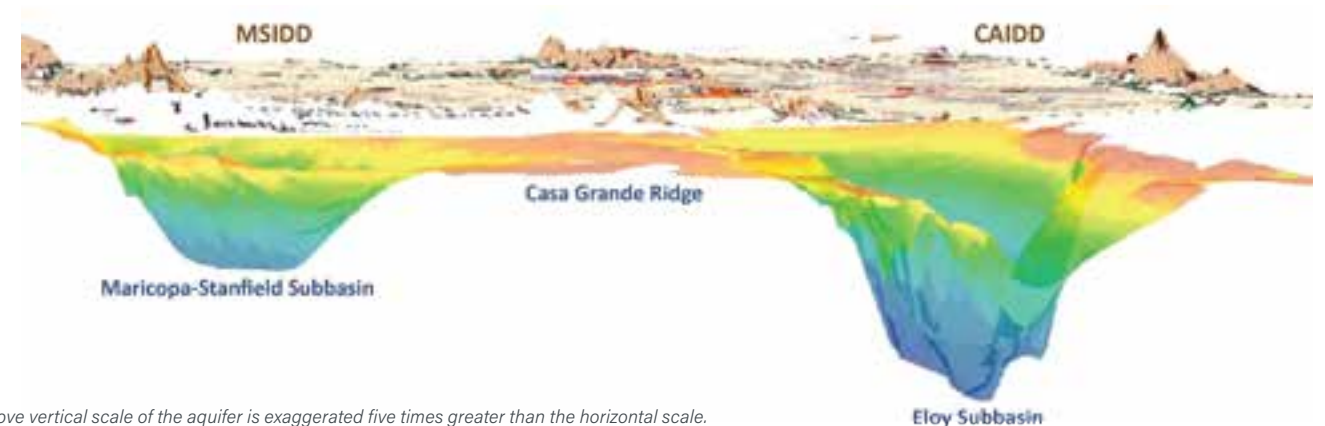
At some points, the aquifer is 3,000 feet deep. (That's more than two-and-a-half Empire State Buildings.) But the most attractive part of this source is water can be found at surprisingly shallow depths.

Bryan Mordt

ASSESSING THE LOCAL WATER SUPPLY

To put water supply and demand into perspective, it helps to look above and below the aquifer. The local water system is controlled by a variety of factors, human and natural. The majority of local groundwater is stored within two distinct, historically productive groundwater subbasins: The Maricopa Stanfield Subbasin and

the Eloy Subbasin. The area in between these subbasins, where the depth to bedrock is shallow, is known as the Casa Grande Ridge. Bedrock is the hard rock that lies below the porous, unconsolidated sediments of the aquifer (e.g. sand, gravel and soil). The saturated thickness of an aquifer sits above the bedrock and below the water table, representing potentially extractable water.



The above vertical scale of the aquifer is exaggerated five times greater than the horizontal scale.

"We have a well that's only 65 or 70 feet below land surface," said Jon Corwin, vice president and general manager of GWR.

Lenderking added in a desert state like Arizona amid a severe drought, many wells are 300-400 feet deep.

"Oh, it's really variable," Lenderking said. "It's really going to depend on site-specific conditions in the greater alluvial aquifers. Think about the Greater Phoenix metro area and the Maricopa Stanfield Basins in and around Pinal, those are big alluvial aquifers, you know, the water table can vary in places.

"We are really fortunate where we're at with the water table 65-70 feet below land surface. We use a lot of recycled water, which helps keep that water level up," he said.

Which begs the question, where did the water come from in the first place?

Lenderking said most of the water has been there for quite some time.

"It's percolated over many, many years; hundreds, maybe thousands of years, and that's a large part of the water that's there today," he explained. "Streamflow also recharges the aquifer. So, when the Santa Cruz and the Santa Rosa (rivers) run, they replenish and add to the aquifer. The Gila River adds to it. There's also mountain front recharge where again, rainwater would go against the mountain at the foot of the mountains — it's an area of increased recharge of the aquifer."

Bryan Mordt



Wastewater is processed in a secondary clarifier at the Global Water Resources facility in Maricopa.

Water makes it into the aquifer in other ways, too.

"There's what I call incidental recharge," Lenderking said. "The agricultural sector uses water. And that water doesn't just stay in the root zone. Often, it goes past the root zone and percolates down to the aquifer. So, a portion of what the farm fields use ends up back in the aquifer, as well as in municipal and industrial applications or municipal settings."

To a lesser extent, leaking lines and irrigation and other sources contribute a negligible amount of water.

"All those also contribute to the aquifer," Lenderking said. "But the lion's share of the water has been there for a very long time."

Whether to recharge

Some utilities in other areas may recharge by putting excess water back into the aquifers.

It may sound like a straightforward operation to pump excess water back into an aquifer for later use, but it is a complex decision with potentially widespread effects.

"Citing research, large recharge facilities can be difficult," Lenderking said. "For example, if you are going to put a lot of water in the aquifer and raise the water table, all the way to the ground surface, that could have negative consequences. That is why there is a permitting process for that.

"So, for example, if you raise the water level up into an existing landfill, you might bring contaminants out of the landfill and mobilize them into the aquifer."

Global Water has received a permit from the Arizona Department of Water to recharge the aquifer with no risk to the environment. Although recharging is two or three years away, the utility will use its Groves Recyclable Water Management Facility to help with the process.

“We’ll store the water in the facility and then, when it’s needed for the recharge component, it’ll be available,” Corwin said. “We have the infrastructure there to do that.”

Enhanced beauty around the community

Driving around Maricopa, it’s sometimes surprising how a city in the middle of the desert can have so many ponds and lakes.

It’s not by chance, however. Most bodies of water are maintained by Global Water and its water recycling efforts.

For example, when you flush a toilet, that water is treated to the highest non-potable standard, “Class A Plus” recycled water, and used to fill many local lakes.

Class A Plus water is clean enough water for irrigation and beautification projects, but it’s not treated to drinking water standards.

Corwin noted a good portion of that water comes from the Groves facility.

“Once we treat the wastewater Class A Plus recycled water, we send it out to the community. We also store some of it there and then that helps us with some of our distribution to other locations, some of the

lakes that are on kind of that far south and west part of town.”

How much growth is possible?

Mathematically, the Maricopa Stanfield Sub-basin aquifer allotment can support a Maricopa that is three times its current population, but Lenderking was conservative when asked about it.

“We’re using about a third of our water supply,” he said. “But it is more nuanced than that. It is kind of a hard question to answer. It is based on the supplies and then the renewal and then the end of the renewal period.

“So, the short answer is there’s a lot of room for growth. Probably, doubling in Maricopa, no problem.”

City Manager Rick Horst thinks water, and Global Water’s management of it, has the city in a prime position to handle future growth.

“The private sector does it generally better and cheaper than local government or any government can,” Horst said. “They have been a good partner with us and they, through their efforts and through our efforts, have put together a Designated Water Supply, or DWS, which provides a hundred-year guarantee of water.”

“Of all the designated assured water supply providers, our use per capita is the second lowest in the Greater Phoenix and Pinal County area.”

JON CORWIN, GWR GENERAL MANAGER

Horst said every time the City approves a new subdivision or development, a 100-year DWS is attached to the project to prove sufficient water is available to support it for the next century.

“We have plenty of room to grow in the foreseeable future,” he said. “Now, long term, there are still issues, but the other reason we’re in a good place is, if you look at the maps, the groundwater is closer to the surface where we are than just about anywhere else in the state.”

Looking ahead

It’s difficult to tell what the future may hold, but Maricopa has one of the best water situations of any municipality in the state.

Part of that is because of the huge aquifer, but Global Water’s efforts to recycle water and to educate ratepayers also play big roles.

Corwin explained Maricopa has another feather in its cap.

“Of all the designated assured water supply providers, our use per capita is the second lowest in the Greater Phoenix and Pinal County area,” he said, referencing a recent Arizona Department of Water Resources report.

The lowest usage was found in the Apache Junction Community Facilities District, which has a heavy concentration of mobile homes on small lots that don’t require a lot of water.

The reductions in the flow of the Colorado River and cutbacks in surface water allowances to Pinal County farmers have made national news.

“Big picture, of course, we’re in a big drought,” Lenderking said. “Our water supplies aren’t directly affected by the Colorado River water supplies, but they are



Recycled water churns in the Integrated fixed film activated sludge media tank at the Global Water Resources facility in Maricopa.

affecting our neighbors. Our agricultural neighbors are seeing a reduction in the amount of water coming out the Colorado River for their crops.

“I think, big picture, we are always concerned about the drought and having enough, so that is one area of concern. The other piece is that aquifer and its allocations. We must be mindful on how we grow and use up this resource.”

Until then, Global Water will continue efforts to educate, inform and motivate where possible, Lenderking added.

“We want to give tools to the customer,” he said. “We have our advanced metering infrastructure that will send an alert to a customer that they have a higher-than-normal usage. That really drives a lot of efficiency in how water is used as well, because people have tools to be efficient in how they use water, and people want to do that.”

And if education is not enough, Corwin pointed out there is a financial motivation.

“We also have a pretty innovative conservation rebate as part of our billing structure,” he said. “In the city of Maricopa, customers that use less than 6,000 gallons in a month, which is approximately the average usage for a residential user in Maricopa, receive a 60% rebate on their consumption charge.”

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Business, development around town

Scott's Miracle-Gro Hyponex Corp. will spend \$1.8 million to build a 6,500-square-foot addition to its facility at 14419 N. White and Parker Road, with the work to be done by Barker Contracting Inc., which also will erect a 1,033-square-foot metal shade canopy.

Copa Flats Apartments will begin construction on buildings D and E, each of which will be 25,386 square feet and have 24 units at 17485 N. Porter Road. This phase of the project, to be built by Johnson Carlier LLC, will cost \$6.18 million. The owner is El Dorado Porter 27 LLC. The contractor also will build a 320-square-foot maintenance building at a cost of \$43,748, a 1,920-square-foot clubhouse building for \$394,694 and a 2,785-square-foot fitness building at a cost of \$380,745.

The **Circle K** at 41433 W. Honeycutt Road will spend \$45,000 to install new food reheating equipment in the employee area and relocate



Stakeholders from the City of Maricopa and Real Estate Equities break ground at Copa Flats apartments last month.

food cabinets and equipment. The work will be done by K by Go 2 Services.

Neaux Coffee Company and owner Chad Molyneaux will make commercial tenant improvements in the 540-square-foot store at 19428 N. Taft Ave.

Maricopa Unified School District will begin construction of the track and field facility at Desert Sunrise High School, 16200 N. Murphy Road.

A Planned Area Development amendment

was issued for a single-family residential community with a maximum of 700 homes at 43054 W. Farrell Road. The site is on about 200 acres along Farrell Road near the southwest corner of State Route 238 and the Bowlin Road alignment.

Temporary road restrictions and closures will be in place at 19189 N. San Pablo St. near the intersection of Honeycutt and Murphy roads for work at **Tortosa** NW Parcel 11 by Knochel Bros. Inc.

Brian Petersheim Jr.

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Collagen peptides: Powerhouse supplement or edible hoax?

BY KRISTINA DONNAY, FNP-C

COLLAGEN IS A UNIQUE PROTEIN that accounts for as much as 30% of the body's total protein. It's a primary structural component of connective tissue. Collagen constitutes 75% of skin, 70% of ligaments, 65-80% of tendons, 50% of cartilage, 30% of tooth dentin, 16% of bone, 10-11% of muscle fibers. It also plays a part in the structure of the arteries and veins.

The amino acid composition of dietary collagen is extremely similar to human collagen, making dietary collagen peptides an ideal source for supporting body collagen turnover and renewal. To keep our body in optimal condition, it is important to have enough raw materials to build healthy new tissue.

Compared to other proteins, collagen has a unique amino acid composition. Collagen is an effective choice in supporting strength and flexibility of bones, tendons and cartilage, appearance of skin and nails, and GI tract health.

Many people, the elderly in particular, do not consume enough protein. Those with higher protein intake are still deficient in adequate sources of collagen unless they utilize the richest sources of collagen like animal skins, bones, and tendons.

If a person does decide to supplement their bodies with collagen, they must look for one that is hydrolyzed. This means the collagen has been broken down into small peptides that are easy for the body to digest and transport to the cells where they're needed.

Benefits of collagen peptides

- Healthy skin elasticity, thickness, hydration and appearance.
- Improvement of brittle nails, damaged hair and fine lines and wrinkles.
- Multiple studies have found that collagen peptides improve the symptoms of osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis by reducing joint pain. It also improves joint tissue health and function involving cartilage, tendons, and ligaments.
- Research shows that collagen peptides may improve gut health and reduce symptoms



of irritable bowel syndrome. It also strengthens the immune system, making a person less likely to suffer from infections or allergies.

- Collagen peptides improve recovery time and joint function in athletes.

Starting in your 20s your body starts losing collagen. By the end of 40, you're likely to lose 1% of your bodily collagen per year. Although we all can't be Jennifer Aniston, we can take a page out of her youthful playbook and take a scoop of collagen peptides daily, which she swears by. Taking collagen peptides can help prevent unwelcome health woes by replenishing some of your body's collagen supply.

Collagen peptides come in a powdered form and are typically made from bovine (beef) or porcine (pork) sources. Marine collagen supplements, made from fish, are also available. Currently, there are no vegan sources

of collagen supplements, as collagen itself comes from the bones and skin of animals.

Here at Maricopa Wellness Center, our collagen peptides contain three highly potent forms of collagen. FORTIGEL®, FORTIBONE®, and VERISOL®. This ensures we get all the various benefits listed above in an easily digestible form. It is non-flavored and can easily be mixed into hot or cold drinks. One scoop provides 12.5 grams of collagen peptides. Call today to learn more about our collagen peptides. ☎

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Properly managing your credit report can open many doors

BY JIMMY AND SYLVIA RIOS

AS AN UNDERWRITER FOR OVER 20 years in the all the financing arenas, I've learned how to read the single most important financial documents in your life: Your credit reports. You might have negative items — inaccurate or otherwise — dragging down your score. This can result in problems getting financing, service through insurance or utility companies, and now even getting a job.

Here are five tips to clean up your credit report and potentially bring up your score and open the financial door the future may hold:

1. Pull your credit reports
2. Lower your credit utilization ratio
3. Take care of collections
4. Go through your credit reports line by line
5. Challenge any errors

Pull Your Credit Reports

While it's great that you can get your FREE credit report from Equifax, Experian and Transunion once per year (annualcreditreport.com), There are a few shortcomings: You don't get to see your scores and you don't see a side-by-side comparison with the other bureaus in one sitting. This is very important as every bureau could report different items and it doesn't help if you can't see a clear picture off all three bureaus to see where the errors lie.

Lower Your Credit Utilization Ratio

One of the biggest contributors to your credit score falls in the amount of available credit that you have. Most people don't know that they should strive to keep their debt to limit ratio around 30-40% of their limit. So, if you owe \$700 on a \$1,000 credit card this puts your debt to limit at 70% and forces huge changes to your score. A simple solution is to call your creditor and ask for an increase. The simple act of changing the limit from \$1000 to \$2000 puts that limit to 35% and you didn't have to pay anything.

Take Care of Collections

Oversight or plain disregard of a debt can lead to a collection. Many times, there are errors in billing or even Identity theft that causes an account to show up on your credit. The misconception with many is that if you just call and pay the debt,



it automatically will come off your credit. The REALITY is that many collection accounts are sold to collection agencies for pennies on the dollar and these collection companies many times don't follow the laws to properly collect this debt. They also don't follow the necessary protocols to get the item removed once paid.

With our guidance at Next Level Credit, we discern the best course of action for each item and get your credit reflecting properly to get rid of those eyesores.

Go Through Your Credit Reports Line-by-Line

In October 2017 there were 317,200 complaints to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Of these, 85,000 had credit reporting problems and it could be much higher as many don't report to the CFPB.

When looking through your credit line by line look for the following:

- A. Creditors who reported incorrect accounts as being charged off or in default
- B. Accounts you don't recognize
- C. Inaccurate reporting of late payments
- D. Judgments against you that weren't issued
- E. Addresses or names you've never used

Next Level Credit can come in to do the work for you and make sure it's done right.

Challenge Any Errors

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act you have the right to challenge an item on your credit report. If the creditor or reporting agency can't verify the item's accuracy, it must be removed from your credit report. You'll get a written summary of the results usually within 3 to 4 weeks after the process is complete.

Next Level Credit, LLC is owned by Jimmy Rios, who has over 20 years in the mortgage and lending field and is also a licensed Real Estate agent with EXP Realty. After seeing the problems that homebuyers sometimes face, Jimmy teamed up with his wife, Sylvia Rios, who serves as his credit manager, to create a "boutique" company in Maricopa to help the community with a serious problem that many people, sometimes through no fault of their own, have to deal with.

Jimmy or Sylvia Rios live in Maricopa and can be reached at:

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A summary of the Feb. 17 – March 15 food inspections by Pinal County Environmental Health Services



Certified Food Protection Manager
The posted manager's food safety certificate expired.

When to Wash
Employee handled dishes without washing hands.

Equipment Food-Contact Surfaces and Utensils-Frequency
Buildup of debris on the guard plates of the hamburger oven.

Equipment, Food-Contact Surfaces, Nonfood-Contact Surfaces, and Utensils
Heavy buildup of encrusted food debris on the food probe thermometer.

Sanitizing Solutions, Testing Devices
Chlorine-based sanitizer testing strips not available.

Floors, Walls and Ceilings — Cleanability
Floors throughout facility dirty. Concrete floor in the walk-in cooler damaged, holes in walls throughout the facility and walk-in cooler, ceiling tiles damaged/missing, tile baseboard damaged under the three-compartment sink and around ice machine.

Cleaning Ventilation Systems, Nuisance and Discharge Prohibition
Buildup of dust on air vents above food prep areas.



Saddleback Elementary

Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food, Hot and Cold Holding
Internal temperatures of lasagna held in upright warmers were 112-123°F. Proper temperature: ≥135°F.

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- Leading Edge Academy
- Legacy Traditional School
- Maricopa Elementary School
- Maricopa Wells Middle School
- McDonald's (20700 N. John Wayne Pkwy.)
- Pima Butte Elementary School

- Santa Rosa Elementary School
- Sequoia Pathway Academy — K-6
- Sequoia Pathway Academy — Secondary
- Taco Bell

SATISFACTORY

- Maricopa Shell / Dairy Queen
- Saddleback Elementary School

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.

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Sequoia Pathway Academy

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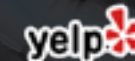
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in Focus

Mayor explains why cities see need to keep Legislature at bay

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN

MARICOPA MAYOR CHRISTIAN Price keeps an eye on what's going on in Phoenix this time of the year. He must: The Arizona State Legislature is in session.

State leaders can pass laws that either help or handicap municipalities. A big concern for local leaders comes from the unintended consequences of these new laws.

The perfect example is the advancement of House Bill 2674, a piece of legislation referred to as the Affordable Housing Bill.

While it sounded like a noble effort to help alleviate the rising costs of housing, the bill would enable leaders in the Arizona Legislature to set blanket zoning regulations for residential housing in every municipality in the state.

As Price explained, the bill wasn't just going to send a wrecking ball through local residential zoning codes; it had the potential to cause far more damage.

"It was termed as an affordable housing bill," Price said. "But in reality, what it did was obliterate all zoning."

Intended to lower the cost of residential housing, the old rule of unexpected consequences applies, Price said.

"If this bill had passed, any group that came in and said, 'I'm going to build something called affordable housing' could do so, and no undue burden could be placed on them," Price explained.

The way the law was written, affordable housing could take precedence over the state's water management regulations, he said. And it

could go beyond that.

"If they wanted to put up a seven-story building right by the Ak-Chin Indian Community's airport, which is right in their flight plan and would make it an immediate danger to the FAA, they could."

Moreover, Price believed the legislation could stunt the city's commercial growth.

"We have some really cool commercial projects ready to come out of the ground," Price said. "But we have saved them as commercial areas for a reason, because of their location."

Such a law would enable a developer to "swoop in" and buy a piece of land in the middle of a commercial area for a five-story, affordable housing complex that would "destroy the whole rest of the thing," according to Price.

Bryan Moritt

"They can do it" under such a measure, he said.

Price said the magic words in the bill were "undue burden."

"To heck with the economic development you were trying to get done," Price said. "And to heck with all the stores and the master plan that you created. You cannot put any undue burden on the developers."

The bill, while not dead, isn't likely to move this year, thanks to a concerted effort by local lawmakers and citizens alike.

"We threw up a stink and it came from everybody," Price said. "It came from members of the public ... many thanks to them, for all the folks that wrote to their legislators, that called them. Their phones were ringing off the hook and under no uncertain terms, that committee knew where people stood."

Sponsors of the legislation realized quickly it wasn't going anywhere.

But House Bill 2674, or something like it, will happen in the next few years, according to Price. He said the sponsors will enlist the help of a group of stakeholders, including the Arizona League of Cities and Towns, to get it passed.

"We know that bill is inevitable," Price said. "We know that bill is coming in some fashion at some point in the next five years."

Before the latest version of the bill came out, Price said leaders of cities across the state reached out to offer concessions for a bill that that wouldn't harm municipalities.

"Let's work on the very best bill we can design together," Price said of the message to legislators. "And they (the sponsors) said that's a great idea. And guess what they did? They dropped the bill in the hopper and never talked to us."

The sponsors came back to the table and now the measure has been converted into a striker bill, meaning all the language has been stricken and contains no language whatsoever. But striker bills retain all the legislative progress made to get to committees. With the addition of new language, it can pass later with fewer legislative steps.

"We're trying to be very helpful and trying to be very gracious and very outreaching," Price said. "We told them there's a need for this, but we don't want you to write something that's so detrimental, that destroys our ability to zone."

Tit for tat?

Also in this session, the State Legislature put forth House Bill 2099, which would limit the fees the Arizona League of Cities and Towns could charge its members.

Bryan Moritt



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MAYOR CHRISTIAN PRICE

"The last time I checked, this was a conservative legislature and conservatives typically believe in lesser government and they typically believe in not sticking their head into the nature of private entities.

"There's no mandate that a city has to join," Price said.

Price explained the role of the Arizona League of Cities and Towns.

"We protect two things, as a league of Arizona cities and towns," he said. "We protect Arizona's state shared revenues, and we protect local control. Those are really important to us."

League members seek to protect those priorities from legislative interference.

"Every time we turn around," he lamented, "they're chipping it away from us."

To Price, the conservative legislature in the last few years has been a little too productive.

"This year, 1,532 bills have dropped," Price said. "That's 1,532 new laws that Arizona feels that you need to live by. I don't know about you, but I think we have enough laws on the book, and I don't know why we need that many more bills. Multiply that number times a decade."

Laws are still needed, however

Price isn't interested in doing away with laws. He sees the value in careful consideration of new measures.

One example is a new code recently considered by the city to prevent street dumping.

For example, when some homeowners buy a load of rocks to landscape their yard, and the contractor may not be so courteous while unloading the materials, a pile of rocks ends up in the road that could potentially block drainage inlets and lead to flood damage.

"Well, you've got to remember the street is a public thoroughfare," Price said. "It's owned by all the taxpayers. It's not owned by me even though it's in front of my house, so if the dump truck that dumps that load and scratches the road and it has to be fixed, is it fair that taxpayers have to pay for that?"

Still, the city doesn't want to penalize residents who want to change rock or put grass in their yards.

So, Price pointed out, a solution was needed that didn't penalize homeowners but also didn't put other people's property at risk. "We have a flood control problem," he noted. "It doesn't rain here that often but when it does, it runs. And when it runs, those streets

are specifically designed to carry that water to the end of the road and into a retention basin away from your home.”

Price went on to say if those gutters and drainage ditches are full of dirt and rock, homes could be in jeopardy. The laws are still being considered.

Growth must be managed

While the exponential growth in Maricopa may seem like it's strictly a local issue, laws in place at the state level can tie local officials' hands.

“Every day, I get people that ask me, ‘Christian, why can't you stop building until we have better road infrastructure?’ Price said. “You know, in a perfect world, that would make a lot of sense, right?”

“If I suddenly issue that edict or moratorium, you know what's going to happen? The state legislature's going to come down on us like a ton of bricks. They're going to issue a 1270 complaint.”

Such a complaint, in effect, would accuse the city of violating state laws and request the state attorney general investigate the City of Maricopa, he explained.

Halting building permits without reasonable cause — no more development until the infrastructure keeps up, for example — isn't practical in the eyes of the state.

“There's all kinds of legal precedent on this,” said Price, adding the fallout from being sued by the state could potentially be devastating.

“We'd lose half our state-shared revenue and the ability to operate the city,” he said. “That means your police are all let go, your fire department are all let go. Parks are all shut down because we won't be able to operate a city.”

Price said the whole idea that roads must be built before development can occur has been tried before, and with little success. There are practical reasons roads aren't built preemptively.

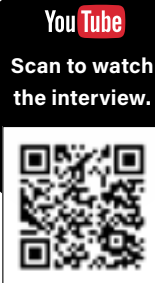
During the real estate bust in Maricopa during the Great Recession in 2007-09, many developers had already built roads through developments before they went broke and had to abandon their projects.

“The roadways were in,” Price said. “The curb and gutter was in, but they didn't have the houses. None of the foundations were there. But the roads were in. Do you know that because those roads sat there in the sun without any maintenance or any cars driving over them for 10 years that they had to all be redone? Completely redone.”

Price explained traffic helps maintain roads. “The cars leak oil. Cars spill gas,” Price said, pointing out that the asphalt contains petroleum products.

Price said building a road that might sit for a few years before a development can catch up could be a costly proposition.

“If you let it sit and you leave it, it actually has to be rebuilt and it costs more,” Price said. “People do not understand how expensive roadways are.”



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Sgt. Elliot Sneezy, the training sergeant for the Maricopa Police Department, tries his hand at a simulation.

Use of force

Training officers for the unknown

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN

FOR ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, the decision to use force is difficult. When Maricopa police officers respond to a call, they are walking into a situation where they have no idea whether the subject is armed, or what is on that person's mind.

Elliot Sneezy, training sergeant for the Maricopa department, works to help ensure officers are mentally prepared to protect the public and themselves.

Sneezy pointed out officers have to consider using force and what may come from it, and what could happen if they do not use force.

Obviously, de-escalation is first choice for police officers. But what happens if that's not possible?



Officer Adam Pittman, shown running a simulation, is the Maricopa Police Department's expert on the VirTra Simulation program.

An officer can learn how to deal with a situation physically and can work on his marksmanship, but there's also a need for the mental side of their job, which is where the VirTra simulator comes into play.

The \$163,400 simulator, purchased by the City with AZCares coronavirus relief funds, includes three television screens at least six feet tall and eight feet wide.

With lasers and infrared lights situated throughout, plus about 1,000 preprogrammed scenarios, the simulator helps prepare officers for whatever situation they may encounter.

Adam Pittman has been with the force 10 years. MPD's training coordinator, his charge is to serve as the expert for the VirTra Simulator.

While the simulator's focus is the mental aspect of the job, there's also an effort to make the simulation as realistic as possible.

"We use a converted Glock pistol," Pittman said. "They are the exact same as our officers would carry. The only real difference is, we take out the regular barrel and put in a barrel with an infrared laser in it (that) runs off of compressed food-grade CO2."

Pittman said the mock Glock is like shooting a paintball or an airsoft gun. There's a recoil, but it's about half that of a real firearm.

While parts of this simulator may feel a little bit like a video game, the mental side of the training takes precedence. Officers are

placed into specific situations that require mental and physical acuity. Pittman adjusts each one in real time during the simulation.

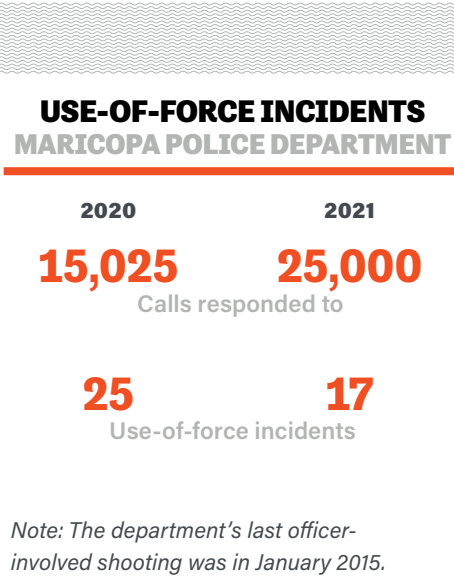
These simulations offer the chance for officers to learn by engagement, but it also allows for their techniques to be critiqued, including how he or she dealt with the subject verbally. The equipment can evaluate officers' posture and hold on the weapon.

"It can document where the officer shot, or where the bad guy is and how they responded," Pittman said. "We can also record the officer and keep it for a short time, so that we can go through and say to them, 'What were you thinking here? This is how you reacted here,' and so on. It allows us to provide more personalized training for the officer, so that we can set them up for success in a real-world situation."

While the system is useful, it's just one tool needed by officers.

"The VirTra system can't take over other training," Pitman said. "We still need live firearms training, real driving training and real interaction with people."

Regardless of whether a contact has a gun,



that person must be taken seriously, as Sneezy noted.

“I’ve gotten into this discussion with a lot of people before,” Sneezy said. “They’ll say, ‘Aw, the person just had a knife, why not just shoot them in the leg?’

“Well, I’ve seen people run up to someone and stab them a lot. We used to train officers who worked in the prisons, and we’ve seen career criminals stab a person nearly 100 times in a few minutes. All it takes is one stab for you to die.”

The training allows officers to develop mental muscle memory and to prepare for difficult situations.

“Whenever you become stressed out, some people either rise to the occasion, or they start to slump into ‘Hey, I don’t really know what to do right now,’” Sneezy said.

The goal is to help officers think on their feet, make better decisions, and arrive at positive outcomes.

Some simulator scenarios include common

interactions, like walking up to somebody and asking them to talk, or conducting a welfare check, Pittman explained.

“As long as the officer is saying the right things, we can make the adjustment where the subject calms down because the officer says, ‘Hey, I just want to talk to you for a minute, you’re not violating any laws or anything like that, but let’s talk.’ That’s what we want to see.

“The training isn’t just about escalating, but it’s also about de-escalating.”

MY SIMULATED ATTEMPT AT LAW ENFORCEMENT

I may as well have put an iron star on my chest and called myself Matt Dillon, the sheriff in the long-running television show “Gunsmoke.”

I’ve been to firing ranges and know the proper way to handle a gun, but when I was handed that mock Glock, all my know-how went out the window as I engaged in two simulations at the Maricopa Police Department’s training room.

It was fun, no doubt, but it was also an experience that fully demonstrated how woefully unprepared I was to handle these situations.

The first simulation involved a mentally unstable man at a park with a tomahawk. “I can’t believe I did three tours and I come back to this?” the man shouts.

Sitting at a picnic table, he starts banging the table with his tomahawk. I had my gun out and ready, but when I realized he wasn’t armed in the same way, I let down my guard.

The next thing I know, that virtual tomahawk is flying right at me.

I may have passed the test for restraint, but I likely would have ended up with a tomahawk

lodged in my right thigh.

For heaven’s sake, I thought it was a hammer.

Afterward, training coordinator Adam Pittman alerted me to the danger I was in had it been a real-life situation.

“So, that happened quick, right?” Pittman said. Can you see, that even if it was a hammer, you could have been hurt pretty badly?”

Pittman said Arizona has a brandishing law.

“He’s giving us threatening body language, the tapping of the hatchet on the wood,” he said. “Those are all things he’s doing and saying to try to threaten or intimidate.”

And while the man didn’t have a gun, Pittman explained that drawing my weapon may have communicated the serious nature of the situation to him.

“We’re just trying to respond in kind to make sure we’re safe, so that way we’re not caught well behind the power curve and have to respond super late,” he explained. “Because obviously, that happened pretty quick.”

THE SECOND SIMULATION was a little more straightforward. I was responding to a call for a couple who requested help. The man’s ex-girlfriend was stalking him and showed up at their residence despite a restraining order.



The stalker sits in a white Ford Explorer, engaged in a shouting match with the man’s current girlfriend. When I show up, the current girlfriend demands I arrest the ex-girlfriend immediately.

The request inflames the ex-girlfriend, who pulls out a gun and starts firing. I had my gun drawn and got off five shots, hitting all around the door and pillar post but missing the woman.

After the shots are fired, she gets out of the SUV, and I order her to drop her weapon and hit the ground.

Of course, once she was on the ground, I anticipated she would go for the gun she had just dropped, and she did. I fired a shot into her chest, killing her and ending the simulation.

I thought I did pretty good. But not really.

“Nice shooting there, Tex,” Pittman quipped, suggesting I should have used a two-arm hold on my weapon instead of the one-armed technique seen on television.

He was right. If I’d used that technique with a real gun, my shoulder would have been sore days later from the recoil and my aim might not have been so accurate.

Elliot Sneezy, the department’s sergeant of training, also noted the verbal commands I missed.

“You should have told the other people to go into the house,” he said. “You have to consider their safety.”

And Sneezy told me where I wasn’t careful enough with my own safety.

“You also didn’t direct the woman where to throw her gun and to stay away from her gun,” he added. “You allowed her to get close enough to it after she put it down to where she might have been able to sneak up on you.”

Sneezy was right. While I shot her before she could shoot me, in real life, better verbal commands on my part may have prevented her death.

–Justin Griffin

Bryan Mordt

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Bryan Mordt

Volunteers improve quality of life for neighbors, selves

BY JAY TAYLOR, JUSTIN GRIFFIN, BRIAN PETERSHEIM JR.

IN MARICOPA, THERE DOESN'T seem to be any shortage of volunteers willing to step forward and dedicate their time to making the community a better place to live.

Volunteers are all around. They help feed the hungry. They serve on city boards. They help maintain city landmarks. They fill positions one would guess were unpaid. They quietly work behind the scenes to improve quality of life.

A common thread among volunteers is the importance of finding an activity, cause or group they love or identify with to make the time spent more rewarding.

Regardless of one's skillset, there's a way to make a difference. Sometimes, it's from ability or wisdom gained in the workforce and other times through the sweat of one's brow. In Maricopa, the two go hand-in-hand.

April is National Volunteer Month. In Maricopa is proud to recognize a few of the countless volunteers who donate their time, talent and treasure to the community.

DOROTHY CHARLES MARICOPA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dorothy Charles spent 27 years working in the federal government, first with the National Parks Service as a park ranger at Grand Canyon, Death Valley and Badlands national parks, then with the Office of Personnel Management. So how does that tie into her volunteer work with the Maricopa Historical Society? Well, it doesn't — and she said that's kind of the point.

"When we moved here, I wanted to get to know about the area and meet people," Charles said. "I volunteered to help out when the Historical Society was only about a year old. I've been in Maricopa about 11 years and 10 of them have been with the Historical Society. When I got involved, I found out there were not a lot of resources for us. It's been exciting and occasionally nerve-racking. I get the nitty-gritty stuff because I like details."

Those details include helping coordinate a move from the group's earlier location to its new digs in the former veterans hall on Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, where it is setting up a city visitor center and renovating the Silver Horizons train car.

Her volunteerism isn't just a passing fancy. The retiree puts in 60-70 hours per month. But for her, the time is worth it.

"I want to spend my time making life in Maricopa exciting and fun," she said. "I work on historical collections, membership, organizing guidebooks — a lot of office work. That's the un-fun part of it, but it's something that has to be done right."

Despite the "un-fun" parts, Charles does reap rewards from her work.

"I really enjoy helping people and learning things," she said. "I'm learning a lot about Maricopa and would like to be able to share all of that a little better."



MARDELL SANDSTROM MARICOPA POLICE DEPARTMENT

When you talk to Mardell Sandstrom, a VIPs Support Service Coordinator with the Maricopa Police Department, you will never hear her use the word "I."

Sandstrom gives 40 hours a week at the Maricopa Police Department. She started volunteering in 2020 for two reasons. First, with a successful career in health information management concluded and her kids grown up, she wanted to contribute to the community. Second, she grew tired of the negative publicity being heaped on police nationally.

"It's so different here," Sandstrom said. "When you see how much our police officers here care, it is amazing. They all are considerate people who are working hard to serve our community, and I wanted to do something to support them."

Sandstrom is one of many volunteers who work as part of Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) to support the day-to-day operations of the force and special events.

Sandstrom is proud of the program for many reasons, including the amount of time invested by the department's 50 volunteers and 10 volunteer chaplains.

"We just did the accounting a day or two ago and there were 8,718 hours of work performed by our volunteers for 2021," she said.

To be a volunteer, you have to think about others. When asked about what she does, Sandstrom took the time to break down the whole volunteer operation.

"There's Operations, Mary Terwilliger is the coordinator," Sandstrom said. "They take care of vehicle maintenance. There's also transport, which will take a vehicle to Phoenix if a major piece of equipment needs to be installed."

Sandstrom also included the Radar team, which sets up mobile radar trailers and calibrates them to the correct speeds to alert the public as to how fast they are driving. And there's also the Cops on Patrol.

Sandstrom also spoke of the Victim Service Unit, which is coordinated by Barry Vogel. It includes YANA (You Are Not Alone), which calls people who are confined to their home as part of community outreach. There's also a Crisis Response team and Victim Services Unit, which includes chaplains and a comfort dog.

Sandstrom's work also consists of clerical support for the department, including evidence, records and communications.



Superintendent Tracey Lopeman (far right) honors Maricopa Unified School District Governing Board members with a "Pulling for Kids" award in recognition of Board Appreciation Month in January. The volunteer board members are (from left): the late Jim Jordan, Robert Downey, AnnaMarie Knorr, Torri Anderson and Ben Owens.

ANNAMARIE KNORR MARICOPA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Serving on the Maricopa Unified School District is the mother of all volunteer gigs. So, it makes sense that Knorr, a mother of four, would choose to serve her community that way.

Not every volunteer position requires winning a city-wide election just for the privilege of being criticized and insulted for decisions you've made — and think are in the best interests of students and teachers.

So why do it?

"I believe in community, and the importance of being active in your community, and helping make it a better place," said Knorr, community outreach coordinator at Exceptional Community Hospital — Maricopa. "Schools and children in the community are our most important asset. When I got involved with schools and started seeing how people were dealing with budget cuts and things like that, I knew we needed to have a voice from a parent on the board, so now here I am."

The criticism that comes with her position — especially in today's polarized climate — doesn't bother her. She has been on the governing board for nine years; her first of three winning campaigns was in 2012.

"I don't have a problem with people disagreeing with me," Knorr said. "When I make a decision that I believe is in the best interests of the students in our schools, I can live with any criticism I might get. But not everyone is OK with that, and those people should look for other opportunities."

Knorr said the driving force behind her volunteerism is the belief in the importance of community. She feels everyone has a duty to try to make their city better in some way. And by doing that, personal gratification follows.

"Every student that walks across that stage on graduation night to get their diploma is rewarding to me," Knorr said. "To know I was a small part of that and helped make it possible is rewarding. Things like helping create the RAM Academy, which allows those kids who needed it to get on with their lives and graduate, was rewarding. The implementation of our preschool, with teachers giving these kids such a leg up by having that early learning opportunity, is rewarding. It was something lacking in Maricopa and now it's not. It's everything the district provides that helps these kids succeed."





Tim Bennett loads drinks into the warehouse at the Maricopa Food Pantry. Bennett works around 40-50 hours a week to assist 1,200 families battling food insecurity.

TIM BENNETT MARICOPA FOOD PANTRY

He may not make a salary from it, but Tim Bennett has a job at the Maricopa Food Pantry he takes seriously.

"I pull food from the trailers down to the ground, so other people can basically get it prepped to put into boxes," Bennett said.

It's hard to define Bennett's work. He mainly loads and unloads trailers, but he fills in anywhere needed.

"If we're short-handed on people, I fill boxes," said Bennett, who also serves as a handyman around the site and even fixes trailers.

You know how some people take weekends off? Not Bennett.

"Saturday is my longest [day]," Bennett said. "I'm there 10-12 hours on Saturday."

While Bennett is modest about his contributions, Food Pantry director Jim Shoaf is not.

"He works 40-50 hours a week for us," Shoaf said.

The Maricopa Food Pantry serves about 1,200 families a week. As Shoaf explained, it's a big operation.

"We've got anywhere from 35 to 40 people onsite the days the trucks come in," he said. "For those days, it's the same process as a grocery store."

For Bennett, the days are long, but he said he rests well at night, "knowing that I give people hope, and that I help put food on their table."



Volunteer Henry Payne offers directions as a truck is unloaded at Maricopa Food Pantry.



TED YOCUM COPA SENIORS

Ted Yocum has a lot to offer Maricopa as a volunteer and has advocated tirelessly for the city for years.

"I love Maricopa," said Yocum, who came here from Philadelphia in 2006. "I just hope that when the day comes that I'm done with whatever I'm doing, the city is in better shape than when I found it."

Yocum works with Copa Seniors, a group that plans social activities for the community and seniors in general. He's also a member of the city's volunteer Planning & Zoning Commission.

Perhaps the most fun Yocum has had as a volunteer was working with the Maricopa Advocate Program, a now-defunct program in which the City enlisted citizens to be hometown evangelists.

"They wanted to get folks who were interested in Maricopa to become even more interested," Yocum said. "They wanted us to become more knowledgeable about the city, how it works and who does what in the city, and they wanted us as ambassadors to go out and talk to whoever would listen to us about what is Maricopa."

Yocum excels in retail volunteerism. As a Maricopa Advocate, he was, and remains, comfortable striking up a conversation with anyone.

One time, while at the grocery store, Yocum overheard a conversation.

"One woman was saying to the other, 'No, I don't think Frank is going to be interested in coming into Maricopa and starting a store' and the other woman said, 'Well, why not?'"

The woman went through a litany of issues that, one-by-one, Yocum refuted, in a polite and friendly yet convincing manner.

Yocum also served on the Maricopa Board of Adjustment.



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BILL ROBERTSON PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

For Bill Robertson, the desire to volunteer and give back to the community began early. When he was 17, he started as a volunteer firefighter in New Jersey. That was the profession that sticks with him to this day, even as a volunteer member of the Planning & Zoning Commission.

"It's giving back to the community," said Robertson. "As a retired fire chief, my specialty is going to be fire protection, fire services, and when it comes to reviewing developer plans, of course, I'm making sure that the fire hydrants are adequately installed. They've got to meet the required fire flow of so many gallons a minute, and that the roads are adequate and wide enough."

While zoning in and of itself might be a dry topic for most people, it's an important aspect of how Maricopa will grow, in size and character.

As a volunteer position, the focus is on the community, Robertson explained.

"We answer to the code," Robertson said. "The city building codes, the city General Plan, the zoning codes — that's our sole purpose — to make sure that when a developer comes in, they're checking all of the boxes in terms of what's required to develop in our community."

Robertson said the most important thing for a member of P&Z is to take their opinions out of it.

"You can't arbitrarily deny someone from developing if they are in the proper zoning area and if they meet all the requirements.

"It's not about a personal agenda," Robertson said. "I can't go in and vote a project down because Bill doesn't like apartments. If I vote against something, it has to be because the code isn't being adhered to."

Roberts has worked in public service for most of his life. Prior to coming to Maricopa, he was the fire chief for Farmington, New Mexico, which he says reminds him a lot of Maricopa.

"It was a city about the size of Maricopa when I lived there," Roberts said. "I did my time there, retired out, and we hit the road in an RV for a few years before we settled in Maricopa."



HOW VOLUNTEERS CAN FIND A GOOD MATCH

Before you offer to volunteer, it's important to ensure your commitment matches the organization's needs. Ask yourself:

- Would I like to work with adults, children, animals or remotely from home?
- Do I prefer to work alone or as part of a team?
- Am I better "behind the scenes," or do I prefer to take a more visible role?
- How much time am I willing to commit?
- What skills can I bring to a volunteer job?
- What causes are important to me?

And, remember: volunteering should feel like a fun and rewarding hobby, not another chore on your to-do list.

A list of nonprofits can be found on page 66.



Volunteering is mutually beneficial

BY JOAN KO CZOR

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH in April celebrates the impact volunteers have on our lives and encourages active volunteerism for generations to come.

An extension of National Volunteer Week, the recognition was first made in 1943 to pay tribute to the unwavering contributions of women during World War II who collected supplies and helped wounded soldiers.

It was in the early 20th century that organized volunteering reached its peak. Numerous groups were created to escalate humanitarian services, many of which are still active today, such as the Red Cross.

In 1990, the week-long observation was lengthened to National Volunteer Month to be celebrated every April.

With a total of 1.8 million non-profit organizations in the United States alone, the opportunity to volunteer is close to never-ending. In fact, Americans volunteer 8.8 billion hours annually, the Urban Institute says.

Volunteering, putting empathy into action, can build stronger, more connected communities where people feel happier, healthier and more welcome.

There are mutual benefits to volunteering.

Giving to others can help protect your mental and physical health. It can reduce stress, combat depression, and provide mental stimulation and a sense of purpose. Volunteers find their efforts lead to a natural sense of accomplishment and added zest to life.

In every community, volunteer opportunities are available. The key is to find a position that you would enjoy and are capable of doing. Think about why you want to volunteer. What would you enjoy doing? The opportunities that match both your goals and your interests are most likely to be fun and fulfilling. ☎

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

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66

I'm ringing the victory bell over here at Province and want to extend a HUGE thank you to Jaime and Michelle!

We've hired a Compliance Coordinator and she was attracted to the position directly by our InMaricopa job ad. We received quite a few qualified candidates and appreciate the exposure your publication gave us.

Thank you!"

Michelle Trujillo

Communications Coordinator
Province Community Association

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VICTOR MORENO PHOTOGRAPHY

SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

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GETTING TO know

GENEVIEVE RODRIQUEZ Owner, The Maids of Maricopa

Hometown: Born in Friedburg Germany. Grew up on U.S. Army bases.

Maricopan since: 2019

Family: Four kids

Pets: Fresh water fish

Pet peeve: People who do not follow through.

Like most about Maricopa: I love the community here in Maricopa. We have a wonderful library, post office and many incredible small businesses. I love all of the events the city puts on.

FAVORITE ...

Charity: I donate to causes that support women, childbirth and children.

Musician: Misterwives

Food: Karla Wear at Sweet Cravings makes the best chocolate cake.

Meal: Tacos

Restaurant: Side Street Inn (We went on one of our first dates here.)

Quote: "The only thing that stands between dreams and reality is persistence."
— Abhijit Naskar, Conscience over Nonsense



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

Infant fights rare cancer — with a smile

BY BOB MCGOVERN

MYLIZA MADISON IS A SWEET BABY GIRL.

A recent family photo features the 7-month-old's huge smile; another shows a face that is expressively inquisitive.

"She's just a very bright, loving, personable child and loves people, loves looking at faces, is very receptive to conversation," said her mother, Charity Madison.

Her older sister has lovingly bestowed on her a host of nicknames, including Looey, Chub Chub, Chunky Cheeks and Lizie Lou.

On the exterior, Myliza appears happy and healthy. Indeed, she is in the 100th percentile for weight at her age. And that wide smile.

But on the inside, she is fighting for her life.

On Dec. 30, Myliza was diagnosed with infant leukemia, a rare disease that strikes just 160 children under the age of 1 every year in the United States. She has been undergoing treatment — chemotherapy and immunotherapy — ever since, spending day upon day in the hospital.

"She has been through more trauma than I have in my lifetime," her mother said. "She is still so quick to smile when she sees someone enter the room. That says so much to me about her character and resiliency.

"She is a very calm, tempered child, and doesn't fuss a lot even though she's been poked and prodded and touched many different times in not-so-pleasant ways."

Acknowledging the road ahead is long and difficult, Charity says months into the fight that Myliza's indomitable spirit, bolstered by the support of family and community members, looks to be winning the battle.

A grandmother's intuition

Myliza started with a fever on Dec. 3 while 4-year-old sister M'Rylee was also feverish with a cough, sore throat and runny nose. But Myliza's fever was high, so her mother took her to get checked out by her primary care physician. The doctor assured her it was likely just a virus.



“She is still so quick to smile when she sees someone enter the room. That says so much to me about her character and resiliency.”

CHARITY MADISON, MOTHER

The fever would pass as the infection ran its course, the doctor said, and they returned to their home in The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado, where the family has lived for more than four years.

But then Myliza started projectile-vomiting, her skin turning pale and a bit yellowish. They went back to the doctor and left this time with anti-reflux medication and advice to follow a dairy-free diet.

A week later, Charity noticed her baby's health declining slowly, her reflexes and interactivity diminishing.

"Her eyes were tired whenever she woke up from a nap," she said, "so there were a lot of signs that just something wasn't right. But I had been taking her to the doctor, so I was just trusting his judgment."

It was Charity's mom who implored her to take Myliza to the emergency room. Call it a grandmother's intuition.

"On Dec. 29, I get a knock on the door at 8:30 p.m. and it was my mom," Charity recalled, her voice breaking. "She was having almost a panic attack. She said, 'Something's not right, you need to take Myliza to the ER right now.'"

Charity's mom told her she was working a puzzle, in solitude, when the Lord spoke to her, telling her something was seriously wrong with her granddaughter.

"I was very angry at her, and I said, 'Mom, I'm getting both girls down for bed,'" Charity recounted. "'This is ridiculous. I've been taking her to the doctor. I'll take her to the doctor tomorrow.' Well, she insisted."

So, Charity Googled the nearest children's hospital, grabbed a few items, put her daughter in the car seat and headed to Banner Desert Medical Center in Mesa. Flustered by her mother's insistence, she would not remember much of the 35-minute drive north.

At the ER, Myliza was fast asleep in her car seat while Charity checked in. As she sat down and looked around — there were other kids coughing or showing other signs of being outwardly sick. "I was just thinking the whole time 'this is ridiculous,'" she said. "I just want to be home in my bed."

Four hours later, they were called back, and then another couple hours passed before they started to draw blood. Right away, nurses became concerned at the color of Myliza's blood. A doctor soon came in to feel around the baby's tummy and discovered she had enlarged organs. He immediately ordered scans and a full blood workup.

Soon thereafter, the doctor was back. They're having a hard time assessing her blood,



M'Rylee Madison's nicknames for her Myliza include Looey, Chub Chub and Lizie Lou. Myliza enjoys FaceTiming with her big sister from the hospital.

Charity heard him say, it could be an oncology problem. She didn't hear the rest of his words.

"Finally, it started to sink in, my daughter might be really sick," Charity said.

Later, nearly 11 hours after arriving at the ER, a new doctor came in, her eyes pinned to the floor.

"I said, what's wrong with my daughter?" recalled Charity, who by then had been joined in the ER by her husband, Glenn. "Tell us what's wrong. Do you have any answers yet?"

"Your daughter has leukemia," the doctor responded.

Charity screamed.

"I think the whole hospital heard me. My husband grabbed me, and we just cried" as they watched their baby sleeping, she said.

A rare diagnosis

Leukemia is a type of cancer that affects the blood cells made by the body. Typically, infants can make the proper number of white blood cells to fight off illness and infection. Infants with leukemia make too many white blood cells, making it impossible for the body to have the right amount of other blood cells, including red blood cells and platelets.

Myliza was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), which begins in the immune system and affects a type of immature white blood cells called lymphocytes. About 90 cases of infant ALL are diagnosed every year, according to a 2016 review of studies. (A second type, acute myeloid leukemia, which begins in the bone marrow, represents about 70 diagnoses annually.)

Myliza also has the mixed-lineage leukemia 1 (MLL1) gene, which means a more difficult fight, her mother said.

Interestingly, more females are diagnosed with infant leukemia and more males are diagnosed beyond the first birthday, according to the National Cancer Institute. Infants with leukemia tend to get sicker much faster and have more severe symptoms than older children.

Within hours of her diagnosis, doctors had given Myliza a "PICC" line, a catheter to provide easy access to large central veins near the heart — so that induction treatment could start immediately.

Induction treatment is an intensive and extensive initial course of chemotherapy. Myliza received 40 consecutive days of several chemotherapies. The barrage of powerful chemicals attacks unhealthy and healthy cells alike to eradicate the cancer and can decrease red blood cells. That reduces the amount of



Glenn Madison lifts his daughter Myliza so she can look out the window at Banner Desert Medical Center in Mesa. The infant received seven blood transfusions during the first two months of leukemia treatment.

You hear the cliché, "Donate blood. Save a life," but you really don't know the magnitude of that statement until you see a face attached to it."

CHARITY MADISON

oxygen circulating through the body and can bring on anemia, which can result in extreme fatigue and potential problems with the heart, brain and nerves.

Cancer patients often need platelet transfusions if their bone marrow is not making enough. This happens when platelet-producing cells are damaged by chemo or radiation therapy.

So far, Myliza is in Month Three of her eight-month regimen of in-patient chemotherapy and immunotherapy. Mom and daughter get occasional two-week-long respites at home. Outpatient treatment will then continue for another year.

"It is a very long journey," Charity said.

When InMaricopa talked with Charity in mid-March, Myliza was 58 days into treatment.

Over that time, she had required seven blood transfusions — both for hemoglobin and platelets — to rebuild blood cells.

"So, that's seven people that have graciously donated blood for my daughter," Charity said. "She definitely gets a lot more energy after a blood transfusion."

She will likely need many more transfusions.

A face on blood donations

Myliza has been able to get blood when she needs it, her mother said. Still, the nation is facing its worst blood shortage in over a decade, according to the American Red Cross, which reported at least 10% fewer donors since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To show gratitude for the blood donations sustaining Myliza's fight, and to do its part to increase donations amid the shortage, her family will hold a blood drive in association with Vitalant, the nation's largest independent, non-profit blood services provider. The organization regularly holds blood drives in Maricopa.

The event, scheduled for April 2 (see box), is being coordinated by Lindsey Kreider of the Family Friends and Neighbors program, which focuses on supporting in-home childcare providers.

Kreider said she took advantage of a contact within Vitalant to organize the event, which hopes to draw 30-35 donors, but can accommodate more. She is promoting the drive

Submitted



The Madison family, clockwise from bottom left: Myliza, mom Charity, dad Glenn and sister M'Rylee.

on social media and placing flyers around town.

Charity hopes the blood drive will bring more awareness to the benefits of blood donation.

"You hear the cliché, "Donate blood. Save a Life," but you really don't know the magnitude of that statement until you see a face attached to it," she said. "Just attaching Myliza's face to the meaning behind that is all I can ask for. Just awareness of how impactful it can be in someone's life by taking time and donating a piece of your heart, essentially.

"My hope is that the next time someone gets approached to donate blood, they will say yes with no hesitation."

The blood drive is just one example of the support received by the Madisons from family, friends and the community.

Charity works a flexible schedule from home on the hiring team for Trumpet Behavioral Health, a national autism treatment provider, where fellow team members have donated unused time off to make it easier for her to spend days at the hospital.

Her parents, Rick and Ronda Gillespie, who live in The Villages, have been very supportive, watching M'Rylee when Charity is at the hospital and Glenn is at work.

A GoFundMe campaign raised more than \$20,000 to help defray medical expenses and Charity's brother raised another \$5,000. A

t-shirt campaign by her sister also raised funds and a yard sale organized by the Maricopa Running Club garnered \$3,500.

"I don't know how someone could do it without the support of family," Charity said. "There's just a lot of outreach, and I feel like that needs to be recognized because it really has taken a village to get through this."

And perhaps most surprising, Charity has found an unlikely font of support just next door to Myliza's hospital room at Banner Desert, where a girl of the same age — they were born eight days apart — also battles leukemia.

"It is crazy how God brought us here together because we could have gone to Phoenix Children's or anywhere else," Charity said. The other girl is about six weeks ahead in her treatment.

"I talk with the other mom everyday about our struggles. We lift each other up when the other is down," she said. "We share what works, what doesn't. So, we're living this nightmare together. I would never wish this on anyone, but I'm truly thankful for her friendship."

Reason for optimism

Charity Madison is talking about how her daughter's cancer battle cancer is going. With manageable side effects so far, the news is encouraging.

"She is amazing," she said. "Usually, infants need feeding tubes because they're nauseous and



DONATING BLOOD FOR MYLIZA

April 2

In Honor of Myliza Madison

Bloodmobile

Maricopa Library & Cultural Center

18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Walk-ins permitted; appointments

recommended.

April 23

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

20565 N. Homestead Drive

8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Vitalant Donation Center

1989 W. Elliott Road, Suite 32

Chandler, AZ 85224

877-25-VITAL

don't want to eat. She has been breastfeeding this whole time."

As if on cue, Myliza has awakened hungry and ready to nurse — she is managing to gain weight during treatment — as Charity talked via phone from her bedside at Banner Desert. During their long hospital stays, Charity sleeps on a pullout couch in the room.

"I have made this my home," she said, adding the hospital even moved a treadmill to her floor so she can exercise nearby when Myliza is sleeping.

Myliza's dad visits often and she loves to FaceTime with her sister, who is not permitted to visit the hospital because of strict COVID protocols.

She is currently on blinatumomab, a monoclonal antibody and targeted therapy anticancer drug, which was fortuitously publicized in December as a successful immunotherapy treatment, Charity said.

"The month she was diagnosed, it came out there was a 90% remission rate for infants who receive the therapy upfront before the rest of the treatment," Charity said. "That what she's doing now, 28 days of blinatumomab where she is attached to the IV pole and cannot be detached for any amount of time."

After the induction chemotherapy, doctors extracted a bit of Myliza's bone marrow and sent it to Seattle Children's Hospital for testing to determine how many of 100,000 cells were cancerous.

'She's going to be OK'

"She's currently in remission," Charity said. "It was great, great news. The doctor explained to us (the cancer) is like a tree. We've gotten rid of the branches and the trunk, now the rest of treatment targets the roots to make sure this doesn't come back."

Myliza's mom still remembers what a doctor told her at the initial diagnosis.

"The doctor said these simple words: 'She's going to be OK.' And that meant the world to me."

She would encourage parents going through a similar ordeal to view their child's cancer diagnosis as just the beginning.

"Embrace every moment you have with your child because this is a story they're writing ... When I first heard the news, I thought Myliza's life was over. But her life is not over, it's just begun. You'll find it's not a death sentence, it's just a different story that no one could ever prepare for. But they're special and God has His hands on them."



Maricopa boys inaugural volleyball season

In its first season, the Maricopa High boys volleyball team has compiled a 1-6 record through March 20. The team consists of: Dylan Tauriainen (1); Alonzo Martinez (2); Gabriel Garcia (3); Ty Reiman (4); Dylan Hahn (5); Thomas Able (6); Devin Huffman (7) Jacek Bitter (8); Christian Perez (9); Marco Gutierrez (10); David Abercrombie (11); Bryan Arrela (12); Carlos Pino (16) and Jan Doctoma (18). The Rams are coached by Tia Kannapel, who is assisted by Wyatt Scott.

Victor Moreno



CAC students selected for All Arizona Academic Team

BY ANGELA ASKEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING

CAC STUDENTS CRISTAL DESANTIAGO, Jenna Bishop, Kristi Hill, Rachelle Black, Liliana Flores, and Wynonna Pulma have been selected to the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society All-Arizona Academic Team.



Cristal DeSantiago

DeSantiago is a history major at the Aravaipa Campus. She intends to transfer to Northern Arizona University, where her objective is to achieve a master's degree in history. Cristal plans

to use her degree to gain a position at a museum, preferably overseas. While attending CAC she has assisted at the Saddle Brooke Food Bank, catered for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Arizona and fostered dogs.



Jenna Bishop

As a student at the San Tan Campus, Bishop is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and is on the President's honor list. She plans to transfer to Northern Arizona

University to earn her bachelor's degree in hotel and restaurant management. Though she has many career goals, she ultimately hopes to run a hotel of her own where both her guests and coworkers can feel safe and appreciated.



Kristi Hill

Hill, a current student at the Signal Peak Campus, plans to transfer to Northern Arizona University to complete a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and ultimately earn her Master

of Science in Nursing. Her career goals are to become a nurse educator. She served as a front-line worker during the Covid-19 pandemic while attending classes. She is active in her community as a Sunday School children's leader.



Rachelle Black

Black is a Medical Laboratory Technician major at the Signal Peak Campus. She will be transferring to Arizona State University College of Health Solutions to obtain a BAS in

Medical Laboratory Sciences. Her goal is to earn a Doctor of Medicine degree and work as a Clinical Geneticist to research and develop a cure for hereditary health conditions. She volunteers her time with the Rural MV elders COVID assist initiative, at Tse'bi'i'nidzsigai Elementary School, and at Monument Valley Community Health Center as a native language translator. Additionally, she is a National Society of Collegiate Scholars nominee and member.



Liliana Flores

Flores is an art major and will transfer to Arizona State University to further develop her skills as an artist. Her career goal is to obtain the required degrees that will

enable her to teach art. As a student at the Superstition Mountain Campus, she serves as Vice-President of College Project in Phi Theta Kappa. She helped create a food drive sponsored by PTK and represented the disabled community at the Pinal County Food Bank.



Wynonna Pulma

Pulma will complete an Associate of Business and pursue a bachelor's degree in accountancy at Arizona State University's W.P. Carey School of Business. Her career goal is to be a Certified Public

Accountant and/or a Certified Management Accountant. She is a Phi Theta Kappa officer at the Superstition Mountain Campus and Bayanihan E-Konsulta project volunteer. Pulma was named a 2021 Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholar.

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EDUCATION



Accelerated learning program to kick off in kindergarten

BY MURRAY SIEGEL

IN RECENT YEARS, THE MARICOPA UNIFIED SCHOOL District has made a concerted effort to improve the assessment of the learning that occurs in its schools. One recent step in this effort was the hiring of Sheryl Rednor as director of academic services, bringing vast experience and high-powered energy to the district.

Rednor received her undergraduate education at Northern Arizona University and earned a master’s degree at Arizona State University.

After teaching fourth and sixth grades, she moved into supervisory positions, first as a principal in an elementary school and a middle school. Her next step was to become director of curriculum for the Higley Unified School District in Gilbert, followed by her elevation to executive director of teaching and learning at Scottsdale Unified School District.

When Rednor was interviewed at MUSD, she saw an opportunity to apply all she has learned about education in an environment conducive for her vision of how a great school system should function.

She is proud of a district plan to create an advanced class in kindergarten through fifth grade.

The pilot for this program will be implemented during the 2022-23 school year in a kindergarten class at Saddleback Elementary School. The class will be academically accelerated, with above-grade-level delivery of Arizona standards in math and English Language Arts.

Each year in the future, one more grade will be added, until all elementary grades contain this accelerated class.

Rednor pointed to the Advanced Placement (AP) Capstone Program at Maricopa High School.

A previous column detailed the value of AP for college-bound students, and the program at the high school offers a maximum opportunity for students to get a meaningful head start on their university experience. The new high school will enhance the career and technical education (CTE) program there, thus providing wonderful opportunities for students whose future might not include college.

Under Rednor’s direction, MUSD will strive to provide a rigorous education for all students in all grades, continuing to build what was already in place here when she arrived. MUSD schools will offer what is best for students and the community. The high school course guide will be improved to offer more options for high school students. A focus will also be applied to needed professional development for teachers to enhance their success in the classroom.

Rednor is married and has two adult children. She said she is proud her children are successful products of a public-school education. ☑

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



Mobile Elementary Teacher Feature

Jodi Boich: Changing the Face of Middle School Education

Teacher quality is the key factor to student success. Students, especially those struggling in math and reading, or those in need of enrichment, need a teacher with experience and intervention skills that can only be developed over years of classroom experience.

Jodi Boich, a master teacher and native of South Korea, grew up in Hutchinson, Minnesota, and has more than 11 years of experience successfully teaching at many different grade levels. Her skill set also includes several years of teaching Montessori. As a mother of five children, Boich understands the importance of teacher quality and experience, “My instructional philosophy is to provide the right tools for successful learning.” Boich uses a variety of innovative and effective teaching methods to address the individual needs of her students. Boich utilizes critical thinking skills, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning modalities so that each students have the opportunity to master critical skills in a way that makes sense to them. Boich’s classroom also has state-of-the-art technology which she utilizes in her classroom so that her students are proficient in 21st century skills, including computer and digital device skills and typing.

A New Model for Middle School that Fosters Student Achievement: Having multiple classes and teachers can be confusing and difficult to navigate for middle school students. It often means many different sets of expectations, rules, behaviors, and homework which can be overwhelming and hinder



Mrs. Boich enjoys home improvement projects and recently completed a fire pit in her backyard.

learning. Mobile Elementary utilizes the single teacher model for middle school and according to Boich, the model has fostered incredible academic growth for her students. The single teacher model is especially effective for students who need more structure or need help with focus and attention to task. Teri Dominguez, the school administrator states, “with the single teacher model for middle school we have seen many students from larger and less structured environments make positive total academic turnarounds. Having one set of structured rules and academic expectations can make a huge difference for students who need it. Also having constant access to one-on-one and small group help from the teacher helps students understand the content and master the skills they need to be successful, learn, and grow at the middle school level.”

Small Class Sizes in Middle School are fundamental: Small class sizes make a big difference in developing higher level thinking skills. Reading is one of the fundamental skills

young children learn in school, and even more so as students read for critical information in the middle grades. Often, students in other schools have experienced class sizes of 30 or more students, so the teachers were not able to focus on the needs of individual students or ensure that these fundamental skills have been mastered. Mobile Elementary strives to keep class sizes under 15 so that students can have the teacher attention, supervision, and guidance they need to excel in all subjects. Boich notes, “My middle school classroom is special to me because of the small class size. All the students get one-on-one help from me.” In her small class size multi-level classroom, Boich works closely with students to develop high level critical thinking skills and provides highly personalized intervention and one on one instruction to struggling students. This makes a huge positive difference her students’ achievement in reading and math, resulting in higher test scores and better overall grades. The small class size also allows her to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of advanced learners that need to learn by discovery and problem-solving techniques and foster social/emotional learning. ☑

☎ 520-568-2280



Selling with nowhere to go

BY DAYV MORGAN

HAVING A HOME THAT SELLS IN A MATTER of days sounds great, until you realize that once it sells you will become a buyer in that same competitive seller's market. To make matters worse, you have to submit your offer with an added contingency of your home selling first, which makes it less desirable to sellers. And you only have 30 days before you have to move out. So, what can you do to avoid becoming homeless? You could sell your home and move into a short-term rental while you search for a home to buy. This requires you to move all your belongings

twice, which is not very convenient, and unfurnished, short-term rentals are very difficult to find. Out of the 66 homes for rent on the MLS in Maricopa today, how many will accept a lease of less than 12 months? Exactly zero. You could try to find a home to buy first before listing yours. While this sounds like a simple approach, it's the hardest to execute. Sellers are not likely to accept your offer and take their home off the market with no idea if or when yours will sell. A better option is to try to get a contract on your current home first and ask for a longer closing period. In Maricopa, the typical escrow takes about 30 days. If you negotiate a 60 day close, that would give you time to get under contract on a home to purchase, and you could close simultaneously. Or, if the new owners aren't in a hurry, you could negotiate a lease-back, where you live and pay rent in the house you just sold, thereby giving you some extra time to find your next home. Most buyers, however, are not very comfortable with this scenario. And if they purchased the home with a VA or FHA loan, which requires the home to be a primary residence, there may be restrictions with the buyers collecting rent from you. Another option is to sell your home to an investor. This usually results in the lowest amount

of stress, however it comes at a steep cost. By the time all their fees are subtracted you will net about 3-5% less than if you sold it on the MLS. With the average home price in Maricopa approaching \$400,000, it means you are paying up to \$20,000 to avoid some short-term inconvenience. Recently I discovered a newer solution that makes a lot of sense. I partnered with a company called Homelight that has a home "Trade-In" program. For about a 1% fee they will make a non-contingent cash offer on the house you want to buy, close on it, let you move in, and then I will list your house for sale once it's vacant. This option eliminates a lot of the stress and uncertainty that comes with trying to buy and sell. It's a challenging time to be navigating the real estate market. But, having a plan, and a good Realtor, could be the difference between having a place to stay during a difficult transition, or being forced to live in a hotel, or even worse, your car. *Dayv Morgan is a Maricopa Realtor and owner of HomeSmart Success.*

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Moringa tree offers shade, nutrition

BY AMANDA RICE

THE MORINGA TREE IS A FAST-growing, desert-thriving tree that provides shade and is a source of highly nutritious greens.

Many trees are noted to grow fast, but few can grow more than 10 feet per year in the native Arizona alkaline desert soils, preferring full sun and the high temperatures of summer. In fact, the moringa tree is successful in the harshest of areas, such as against a west-facing block wall that reflects the heat back to the

tree. As a young sapling, the moringa requires regular watering. But once established, it prefers to be watered deeply once a week during warm weather.

This drought-tolerant tree reaches a mature height of 40 feet in as few as three years if not pruned to a smaller size. Moringa have high success from a seed planted directly in the soil where the large fragile tap root has ample room to grow. While these trees are capable of being grown in containers, they thrive when planted directly in well-drained soil.


Also known as the Drumstick or Horseradish Tree, moringa have small leaves in multiple clumps with small bunches of white flowers that attract pollinators and produce long slender seed pods. A deciduous tree, the moringa sheds leaves in the winter in response to frost and colder temperatures, but due to the small size of the leaves, the tree does not create large amounts of leaf litter.


Originally found on the Indian continent, the moringa tree is now cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions around the world as a food source and medicinal plant.

The major food source from the moringa

are its leaves, which are eaten fresh like spinach, dried as a powder or used to make a tea.

In Arizona, the leaves are harvested in multiple large or continuous harvests throughout the growing season, ensuring a continual supply of edible leaves for eight months a year. It should be noted for ease of harvesting, the tree should be trimmed to a manageable height of three to four feet in the spring after the last frost. If the tree is not pruned, a large majority of the leaves could be challenging to harvest from a 20-foot-tall limb!

The low water requirements of the established trees, in addition to the rapid growth and food source product, make the moringa a sustainable option for landscapes in the area. 

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Amanda Rice is a Master Gardener volunteer with the University of Arizona.



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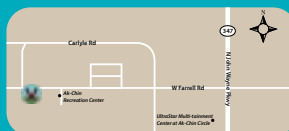
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most expensive HOME SOLD



19815 N. Puffin Drive

Feb. 14

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\$699,000

This single-story home in Province sits on the waterfront and has a solar-heated pool, oversized covered patio and built-in BBQ. Inside, there is a gourmet kitchen with large walk-in pantry, family room with gas fireplace and plantation shutters throughout. The master suite has coffered ceilings, multiple closets and vanities, and a large shower. There are two additional bedrooms and a casita. The home was on the market for 30 days and sold at asking price.

Previously sold for \$505,000 on 5/31/2018

Community:

Province

Square feet:

3,101

Price per square foot:

\$225.41

Days on market:

30

Builder:

Engle

Year built:

2006

Bedrooms:

4

Bathrooms:

4

2. 42061 W. Rummy Road, Province\$670,000

3. 22122 N. Reinbold Drive, Rancho El Dorado\$625,000

4. 21807 N. Greenway Drive, Rancho El Dorado.....\$616,500

5. 21947 N. Desert Park Court, Rancho El Dorado.....\$615,000

least expensive HOME SOLD



43726 W. Sagebrush Trail

March 3

\$

\$275,000

This single-story home in Rancho El Dorado features desert landscaping in the front yard with a covered patio and large grassy area in the back. Inside features include tile floors throughout and carpet in the two bedrooms. The eat-in kitchen also has a sizeable breakfast bar. The home was on the market for 166 days and sold for \$14,900 under list price.

Previously sold for \$196,000 on 5/10/2005

Community:

Rancho El Dorado

Square feet:

1,277

Price per square foot:

\$215.35

Days on market:

166

Builder:

Unknown

Year built:

2002

Bedrooms:

3

Bathrooms:

2

2. 43764 W. Arizona Ave., Senita.....\$280,000

3. 20543 N. Lemon Drop Drive, Province\$295,000

4. 20643 N. Lemon Drop Drive, Province\$300,000

5. 40040 W. Tamara Lane, Smith Farms.....\$300,000

Source: MLS, Feb. 13 - March 9

Brian Petersheim Jr.



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Province resident Doug Mossing moved to Maricopa in 2005. He was a serious player in the real estate industry for years, winning, losing and living to tell the tale.

Living and learning

Renaissance man revels in career, personal experiences

BY TOM SCHUMAN

CALL HIM A RENAISSANCE MAN. Province resident Doug Mossing has seen and done it all — well almost, anyway.

He spent two decades as a real estate investor with hands-on property management as part of the mix and played a key role in the development of Maricopa’s first apartment complex.

He wrote a book, “Successful Real Estate Investing in an Ever-Changing Market,” based on firsthand lessons learned in the business as a licensed general contractor, Realtor, real estate broker and home inspector.

But Mossing has plenty of experience in life’s pursuits, too.

He’s been a musician for the last 15 years, reprising a professional career from 50 years ago in his native Ohio, and leads three groups.

He also travels the globe; he and his wife,

Cherie, have visited 63 countries.

“We realize how fortunate we have been,” Mossing, 69, says modestly.

But good fortune comes to those who earn it.

A new home and career

Mossing rode a motorcycle across the country in 1980 — all his possessions on the back — to house-sit for his parents in Paradise Valley. He’s been an Arizonian ever since.

With some accounting experience, he started a small bookkeeping service and worked for several CPA firms. In that role, he met someone involved in real estate and admits he “started investing in apartments and houses at the worst possible time.”

Between 1983 and 1986, he accumulated 45 rental units through six apartment complexes and two homes. But he bought during a “seller’s market,” paying high prices with low

down payments and substantial mortgages. The elimination of the capital gains tax break contributed to his accelerating debt.

Mossing decided to pay off the mortgages rather than declare bankruptcy. The first three years of the payback period, he writes in his book, were particularly difficult.

“It took me seven years to dig out of that hole, but I paid back everything I owed,” he said.

With lessons learned from his initial setbacks, Mossing began successfully investing in and managing properties throughout the Valley in the early 2000s. He had as many as 17 people working for him at one time, but he was always heavily involved in everything from maintenance to collecting rent.

In the process of compiling his book from 2000 to 2001, he noted “credit card debt had reached unprecedented levels and per-capita savings were lower than ever.”

Brian Petersheim Jr.

“Because many unworthy people have been extended credit in recent years, I predict that defaults, foreclosures and bankruptcies will increase in record numbers during the 2000s,” he wrote at the time. “With that, inflation will rise and (predictably) unemployment will increase. With increased unemployment, the number of defaults, foreclosures and bankruptcies will continue to rise.”

That, of course, all came to bear during the Great Recession from 2007 through 2009. According to a 2011 report by the Federal Crisis Inquiry, the period of sharp economic decline was brought on by a housing market bust after total mortgage debt ballooned due to federal policy encouraging home ownership and low interest rates. Subprime and adjustable mortgages made it possible for borrowers who otherwise might not have qualified for generous home loans, which they could not afford when variable interest rates climbed and housing prices stagnated.

Market matters

Real estate market trends have been incredibly consistent since the 1930s, according to Mossing. The differences occur in just how long a seller’s or buyer’s market (for investors) will last before a shift takes place.

“It’s a natural progression,” he said. “They say the stock market is motivated by greed and fear; well, the real estate market is as well. Right now, we’re going to continue for two, three, four years, then have another bubble. But not as significant as 2007 or 2008.

“Even though markets will go down significantly, say in five years or so, it’s not going to be as dramatic in communities like Province—because of the Baby Boomers. They are a huge population, and they’re going to keep up the demand for this type of retirement community.”

Maricopa, of course, has been working to diversify its housing portfolio. Mossing worked part-time for 17 years for Indiana-based Englewood Group, serving as the Arizona broker for its property management arm. He estimates the company had as many as 2,000 apartment units across the state.

Mossing saw the need for more affordable housing alternatives in Maricopa.

“The City had come to that same conclusion. Officials really greeted us with open arms,” he recalled. “I told Englewood, ‘You guys need to explore Maricopa because there is a tremendous shortage of apartments there.’” In fact, there were none.

Mossing scouted potential sites for the Oasis at The Wells complex that opened in 2021. (He



An avid hiker, Doug Mossing has made the most of his time living in the 48th state.

retired from his work with Englewood in 2019).

The Mossings moved to Maricopa in 2005 as an escape from the rapidly expanding Phoenix area. Despite the boom in population here, the benefits remain, he said.

At the time, his wife was hired as lab director at the Casa Grande Medical Center. Mossing knew the area from his seven years in home inspections.

“We surveyed the whole area and just felt the best value was here in Maricopa,” Mossing said. “The traffic is nice compared to driving through the Valley. Maricopa is kind of on its own island and I like that.”

Global perspective

Speaking of islands, the Mossings have visited more than a few in their travels. Together for two decades, Doug and Cherie have traveled every year except for COVID-impacted 2020.

Some trips involve three or four countries (Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, for example), while others focus on just one. Sardinia and Sicily, the two largest Mediterranean Sea islands, are a possibility for 2022.

“I think I’ve pretty much completed my bucket travel list,” Mossing said, “but Cherie has some places she wants to go. We haven’t been to India, and Italy is a fantastic place to go. I want to go again, especially to Rome. The history of the world really soaked in there. You can see the evidence, and the Italians really take care of their artifacts.”

Mossing has snorkeled on the Great Barrier Reef and scuba-dived surrounded by 50 sharks (with no cage) in Fiji. That remains one of his most exhilarating experiences.

Those aren’t his only adventures, however. “We’ve done African safaris in Tanzania,

DOUG MOSSING AT A GLANCE

Age: 69
Wife: Cherie (20 years)
Past professions: Accountant, real estate investor/broker/property manager, general contractor, home inspector
Current profession: Musician
Resides in: Province
Hometown: Lyons, Ohio
Hobbies: Hiking, traveling, bowling
Favorite meal: Lobster
Favorite country to visit: Tanzania

Botswana and South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia. I got to ride in a little prop plane, and we had trouble landing because there was a giraffe on the runway,” he recalled. “We walked up to cheetahs, and they just sat there and watched us.”

The Mossings like to visit art museums and bring home souvenirs to remind them of their travels. They also enjoy television programs such as “The Amazing Race” and seeing sites they have visited in person.

Scaling the heights

Closer to home, Mossing is preparing for his 14th Grand Canyon hike. It’s an avocation he says he picked up as soon as he crossed into Arizona after coming from the flat landscape of northeastern Ohio.

“One time in August, we camped on the North Rim. The first night my water froze.

By the time we reached the bottom the next day, it was 110 degrees — an 80- to 85-degree temperature change in eight or nine hours.”

Mossing helps lead a local hiking group and enjoys the solitude of being on his own.

“I love it. I love being out in the nature,” he said. “Our cabin (in Forest Lakes) is in the largest ponderosa pine forest in the world. I go hiking by myself. All the animals that you run into — mountain lions, bears, hundreds and hundreds of elk, maybe a hundred deer. It’s just kind of fun to stop and watch them.”

Hiking, he says, has many benefits.

“One of the reasons I hike is because, as a saxophone player, I need the cardiovascular work. Otherwise, I’m not going to make it those eight years (he hopes to continue playing).

Musical melodies


Mossing started playing the saxophone in school. Friends later formed a rock band, where he picked up the keyboard and later the flute and other instruments. The classic rock focus led to as many as 300 gigs a year in Ohio and Michigan. Disco and its growing presence in clubs was one of the factors leading to a career change.

But 25 years later, a tiny saxophone gift from his sister helped reignite his passion. He played in a musical group at his daughter’s church and “I just felt all the emotion, how wonderful it was to perform.”

After moving to Maricopa, he formed a band with other Province residents. They played as many as 40 times a year before COVID. Today, his three bands include Jazzona (jazz), 11th Hour (variety dance band) and Classic Winds (classical music, show tunes and big band songs). They perform at corporate events, holiday programs, restaurants and more.

Mossing’s first instrument, the saxophone, remains his favorite, leading to a special affinity for the Jazzona performances.

“It’s such a release to perform for people that are really enjoying it, and they acknowledge you for the work,” Mossing said. “I told [singer] Elise [Hurst] I would try to play for another eight years; that’s my target. She goes out of her way to pick out songs that have really good sax parts in them.”

Just consider it one of many high notes in Mossing’s most interesting career and life. 

FAVORITE ADVENTURE

**Scuba diving for the first time
— surrounded by 50 sharks
in the waters off Fiji.**

As part of a 16-person group that first traveled to Australia and New Zealand, Mossing saw a dive shop sign that read: “Shark dive tomorrow. Beginners welcome.” A master diver who was part of the group said, “Let’s do this.”

“I had done a lot of snorkeling, but never had been scuba diving. I had to go at 7:30 the next morning for a lesson, then do another dive,” he recalls. “There were three guides and about 10 of us.

“The sharks knew when the boats came around those underwater containers with fish that it was time to come and be fed. We were in the middle with about 50 sharks around us, the biggest probably about seven feet. There were all kinds of other big fish. That was the most exhilarating experience.”



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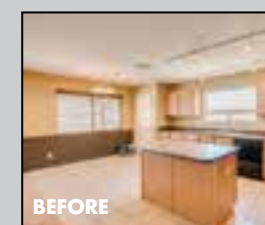
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Danger in the air for older Americans

BY AL BRANDENBURG

HERE IN ARIZONA, WE ARE ALL exposed to desert dust every time the wind blows. This can lead to lung problems such as Valley Fever (a fungal infection) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Older Americans who regularly breathe even low levels of pollution from smokestacks, automobile exhaust, wildfires and other sources face a greater chance of dying early,

according to a recent study by researchers at the Health Effects Institute. The group, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency as well as automakers and fossil fuel companies, examined health data from 68.5 million Medicare recipients across the United States.

Researchers found if the federal rules for allowable levels of fine soot had been slightly lower, as many as 143,000 deaths could have been prevented over the last decade.

At the outset of the pandemic, when lockdowns were widespread, places that had been saturated with pollution suddenly cleared. The sky over Los Angeles turned blue. Snow-capped mountain ranges normally obscured by pollution glistened. The reason, of course, is hardly anyone was driving. It will be interesting to see if the push toward electric automobiles and solar and wind power will be as beneficial as promised.

Burning fossil fuels, whether in an automobile or home furnace or power plant, produces copious amounts of fine particulate pollution. Earlier research found exposure to

particulate matter contributed to about 20,000 deaths a year in the United States. Other studies have linked fine soot pollution to higher rates of death from COVID-19.

A new study is the first in the United States to document deadly effects of the particulate matter known as PM 2.5 (so named because its width is 2.5 microns or less) on people who live in rural areas and towns with little industry.

The national standard for PM 2.5 is set at a yearly average of 12 micrograms per cubic meter, a level higher than that recommended by the World Health Organization. Researchers concluded that 143,257 deaths could have been prevented between 2006 and 2016 if the standard had been tightened to 10 micrograms.

And then there is the wildfires near cities that have become almost commonplace in the West. In 2021, the reach and intensity of the dangerous air pollution they produce was the worst on record.

Americans in populous, urban areas endured smoke for longer than previous years. Some places experienced unhealthy or hazardous air from wildfires for the first time.

By law, the EPA is required to review the latest science and update the soot standard every five years. The previous presidential administration opted not to strengthen the standard when it conducted the most recent review, despite growing scientific evidence of the harm to public health caused by particulate matter.

The current administration has increased regulation of emissions from power plants, factories and other industrial sites as part of its strategy to address environmental change. According to the EPA, the agency is expected to propose a draft rule by summer and to issue a final rule by the spring of 2023 to reduce air pollution from all sources.

Sources: AARP, medicinenet.com, arstechnica.com, consumer.healthday.com

Al Brandenburg is a member of Maricopa Community Advocates.

InMaricopa.com/Columnists



Medical alert devices: Do you need one?

BY RON SMITH

LAST WEEK, I WAS HELPING MY wife install a home key box for a Province resident when she asked me what I knew about medical alert systems. It was a good question. I knew quite a bit about them 10 or 12 years ago when I did the research to pick a system for my mother who lived alone in Florida.

The stimulus was a fall my mother sustained in her home. She was on the floor for hours before a neighbor found her. She ended up being OK, thanks to the neighbor, but my sister and I both lived hours away and knew the odds of another fall were good. We researched medical alert systems to help our mother and give us peace of mind.

About that time, the first systems including a fall detection option along with a monitoring service were being introduced. Along with her panic button and monitoring pendant, we installed a Realtor-style lockbox with a key for her door. A few years later, she fell getting out of bed and broke her hip. This time, the medical alert system quickly summoned medics, who used the key from the lockbox to get into the house. The service dispatcher had given the lock box code to the medics when they were dispatched. The fall detection and the lock box did their job.

The home key box I installed for our neighbor was purchased through a program offered by Maricopa Seniors Inc. and the Maricopa Fire & Medical Department. The home key box provides an alternative to a forced entry resulting in a quicker response and no damage to the front door. These boxes can only be opened by a member of the Maricopa Fire Department. For individuals living alone, this is a great program and very affordable.

You should consider the medical alert device, too. Why? Because about 20,000 people die from unintentional falls every year. The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Preventions says one-fourth of Americans age 65 and older fall each year. About \$50 billion is spent annually on medical costs related to non-fatal fall injuries, with \$754 million spent on fatal falls. If you have fallen once, the chances of another fall are good.

In simplest form, a medical alert device has a button that when pushed communicates to a 24/7 emergency monitoring service. The service determines your status and places a call to dispatch an emergency response unit to aid you.

Modern medical alert systems now come in many forms. For example, some smart watches can provide the fall detection, GPS location finder and communication to allow a person to maintain an active lifestyle in and out of the

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE BUYING AN ALERT DEVICE

GPS. GPS is probably not needed by people who primarily stay in or near their home. But they should check the communication range of a system to communicate with the base console. People living in a large house or who are often outside definitely need to consider communication range. Those on the go probably want to have GPS tracking and will need to consider what underlying technology (3G, 4G, 5G) is used for communication to their monitoring service. For home systems, check the system battery life for backup if the power should go out.

Waterproof. An alert system device needs to be waterproof so it can always be worn in the shower or at the pool or beach.

Fall Detection. Fall detection is the game changer. Based on the circumstances around a fall you might be unconscious or unable to push a button. Like your car's automatic crash detection, your fall detection system can make the call for you. Good systems rely on multiple technologies to better assess the situation and minimize

home. (And it doesn't shout "I've fallen, and I can't get up!") All those features can cost a bit, but how much do you value peace of mind for yourself and your loved ones?

Before deciding on a solution, consider your lifestyle, budget and possible medical conditions. Your lifestyle will help determine what kind of alert you need. Are you primarily a homebody or are you regularly on the go? Devices are available for both.

Source: MaricopaSeniors.org for home key box info AARPorg/livable-communities/housing/info-2020/home-fit-guide for home safety assessment

Ron Smith is a living-in-place advocate, a member of the Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee, a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist and a Certified Living in Place Professional.

InMaricopa.com/Columnists

false alerts and possible charges for unnecessary emergency responses. Some older systems have added fall detection through additional devices rather than having a single integrated device. Some systems may only alert an emergency contact rather than a 24/7 emergency response center.

Cost. Be ready for a monthly cost of \$50 to \$75. There may also be upfront costs for equipment or activation. Consider what benefits or other options are included in the cost. For example, sometimes spouses are free. The plan might include caregiver tracking, medication reminders, extra devices, a choice of cellular networks or extra wellness features.

Redundancy. Check to see if the service has multiple emergency response centers in case one goes offline due to a power outage.

Comfort. Comfort is one of the most important considerations. A device cannot help if you are not wearing it. So, prioritize comfort and convenience and don't let social stigma keep you from enjoying the peace of mind, independence and safety these devices can provide.

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THINGS TO DO

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Maricopa Historical Society Meeting
5 p.m., Redwood Room
Maricopa Library & Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

5

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

8

MOPS (a group for moms) meeting
9 a.m., Copper Sky
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

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
& 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.

19

Friends of the Library Mini-Book Sale
10 a.m.
Maricopa Library & Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

Maricopa City Council meeting

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

22

MOPS (a group for moms) meeting
9 a.m., Copper Sky
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

27

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

Sundays

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

Mondays

Alcoholics Anonymous
6 p.m., Community of Hope Church
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Narcotics Anonymous

7 p.m., Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Road

Tuesdays

AARP Tax-Aide Income Tax Preparation (until April 13)
9:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.
Maricopa Library & Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

Celebrate Recovery

Small Group Meeting
5 p.m., Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

Maricopa Cruise-in

5 p.m., Parking lot behind
Burger King
20699 N. John Wayne Pkwy.

Alcoholics Anonymous

6:30 p.m., Mountain View
Community Church
50881 W. Papago Road

Wednesdays

AARP Tax-Aide Income Tax Preparation (until April 13)
9:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.
Maricopa Library & Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

Al-Anon — New Beginnings

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

Thursdays

Maricopa Police Cadets meeting
6 p.m., Maricopa High School
45012 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Teen Support Group

6:30 p.m., Northern Lights Therapy
21300 N. John Wayne Pkwy.,
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THINGS TO DO

Alcoholics Anonymous

7 p.m., Mountain View
Community Church
50881 W. Papago Road

Narcotics Anonymous

7 p.m., Maricopa Community Church
44977 W. Hathaway Road

Fridays

Al-Anon — Strength & Home AFG
7 p.m., Community of Hope
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Alcoholics Anonymous

7 p.m., Mountain View
Community Church
50881 W. Papago Road



Saturdays

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9:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.
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ALL EVENTS ARE TENTATIVE



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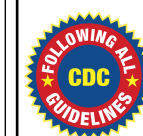
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History on the rails

An eastbound Amtrak rolls through town just after sunrise in February, right past Corey Nation's backyard. He took the shot with his Samsung Galaxy s21.



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