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August 2022

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survived Holocaust,
built life in America



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ON THE COVER

Maricopa resident Lea Stockhammer, a Holocaust survivor, was photographed by InMaricopa's Bryan Mordt.

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A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity

LAST WEEK, I LEARNED A HOLOCAUST survivor was living in our midst here in Maricopa.

Lea Stockhammer resides in Province, but she's lived through more history than a library full of books.

There are so many lessons to learn from a woman who has lived such an eventful life, especially during the times in which we now find ourselves.

Lea spent a total of 13 months in two concentration camps and was in Eastern Europe on Liberation Day when World War II ended.

Those two instances alone would be enough for a host of stories.

But so many other aspects of Lea's life represent important lessons for people to learn. She shares some of her experiences on page 8 of this month's issue.

These days, there seems to be a fascination with socialism in portions of our society.

A lot of that comes from idealism and what those philosophies mean on paper.

Lea lived in Yugoslavia during a communist regime, and she'll tell you it wasn't all bad.

But Lea also told the story of how she and her late husband, Dan, refused to join the Communist party and had trouble advancing their careers as a result.



It got so bad that Lea and her husband wanted out. They were willing to leave behind everyone and everything they knew.

Think about that.

The 2016 U.S. Census found only 11.6% of people leave their hometown in the United States.

Consider how difficult it was for Lea and Dan, who spoke very little English, to move halfway around the world. The language barrier is tough enough. But imagine learning a whole new set of customs.

It's the epitome of bravery.

That's why we need to take time and listen to what people like Lea have to say. Many of the mistakes we are making as a society today, they witnessed decades ago.

There's a wise saying: Those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it.

Lea is one of the few people on this earth who have lived long enough and has the life experiences to understand the truth that rings out in those words.

As always, thanks for reading our magazine.

JUSTIN GRIFFIN | EDITOR

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KRISTIN DONNAY

Kristin turns a laser focus on technological breakthroughs in the treatment of toenail fungus and acne, along with other complicated skin issues.



HARRIET PHELPS

This month, Harriet pulls double duty, discussing two topics near and dear to her heart — mental health and gardening. The endeavors have similarities in that both require consistent effort.



RONALD SMITH

After taking last month off, Ronald is back and he's done some pretty comprehensive research on walk-in tubs, so you don't have to.

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Volume 17, Issue 8
InMaricopa
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BOY GEORGE & CULTURE CLUB CONCERT: The Events Center Box Office will open 3 hours prior to the show start time and close 30 minutes after the event starts. The Events Center Box Office is located on the first floor of the casino, next to the Oak & Fork Restaurant. Will Call tickets can be picked up during the Box Office hours of operation on the show day. Customers must present the actual credit card used to purchase tickets, a valid photo I.D. and the confirmation number. Free garage parking. Our casino facility is ADA compliant. There is accessible seating available for all shows. The Events Center is located at the Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino in Maricopa, AZ. Photo I.D.s are required to enter the facilities. Cameras and recording devices are never allowed at concerts unless otherwise notified. Outside food or beverages are not permitted inside the building. Guests wearing obscene or indecent clothing are not allowed to enter the building. Guests using foul or abusive language or gestures will be escorted out of the venue. Laser pens and pointers are not permitted. Policies subject to change depending on the nature of the event. No refunds, no exceptions. Harrah's Ak-Chin is a casino facility, therefore, all minors must be accompanied by adults 21+ at all times.

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Rattlesnakes and other critters

These days, there are many exterminator services to call in Maricopa to keep the creepy crawly creatures away, but in the town's early days, wildlife ran, well, wild.

Donald DeHart, whose family was here from 1926 to 1936, recalled rattlesnakes and scorpions were everywhere. His mother would run her hands through all pants, shirts, shoes and socks before allowing her boys to get dressed. DeHart said they would often step out the door to discover a large, coiled snake waiting to attack. In 1949, rattlesnakes were still common as shown in this picture of Mr. Pruitt, the signal maintainer for the railroad and a friend of the DeHart family.



THIS MONTH BACK IN...

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



2004

In August, the Pinal County Narcotics Task Force, with the assistance of the marked patrol division, seized 2,927 pounds of marijuana from two vehicles near Stanfield. The marijuana-filled construction-type panel trucks were headed to the Phoenix area but stopped short of their destination by law enforcement.

A search of both vehicles resulted in the arrest of three Mexican nationals. They were charged with numerous drug offenses.



2006

At the start of 2005, the city had 11 volunteer firefighters and just three paid positions. By August 2006, the Maricopa Fire Department had grown into a force of 36 professional firefighters working at three fire stations. In addition to the original station next to the Sheriff's Office and the (old) City Hall, there was a temporary station in Tortosa. The new station at Alterra was set to "open soon." In 2006, the fire department handled 101 calls, including 78 for emergency services. The department responded to 6,159 calls in 2021.



2012

A trifecta of heat, humidity and standing water left mosquitoes feeling right at home in Maricopa in August. And Maricopans were itching like mad. The good news: The influx of skeeters likely did not carry the West Nile virus. The bad news: They were seemingly everywhere. Brent Billingsley, the city's director of development services, was on clean-up operations after heavy rains caused sewage overflow in Tortosa. "I've been out most of the last two days," he said, "and I've been eaten alive."

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Surviving evil

Maricopa woman lived through Holocaust, World War II

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN

Maricopa resident Lea Stockhammer has quite a story to tell.

A survivor of the Holocaust, she has seen history — and some of its worst horrors — in person.

At age 5, Stockhammer was sent to a concentration camp in 1941. Thereafter, she lived in war-torn Croatia, and was there the day World War II ended.

Now 87 years old, Stockhammer has many memories she holds dear, and one of them came years after emigrating to Chicago from communist Yugoslavia in 1966.

"On the way to the courthouse, where we were to be sworn in, we stopped at a fancy department store, Marshall Field's, and immediately bought an American flag," Stockhammer said of the day in 1971 she and her late husband, Dan, became citizens of the United States. "Hand in hand, we carried the flag all the way to the courthouse."

"There it is," she said, pointing toward the American flag in her Province backyard.

And much like the guidance Stockhammer can offer through her life's stories, that full-sized flag, lighted and flying from a pole set in concrete, serves as a guidepost in many ways.

The flag flies above Province Parkway, the community's main thoroughfare. It's tall and large enough to serve as a navigation point for people in the neighborhood trying to find their way around.

Citizenship in the United States was an



important step in the life of the Stockhammer family, not only for the future it represented but for the transition it offered out of a past full of hardship.

A unique perspective

During World War II, the Axis powers invaded and occupied Yugoslavia and split it up. The Independent State of Croatia was formed and served as a Nazi satellite state, ruled by the Ustaše, a fascist militia group that established and operated its own concentration camps to murder hundreds of thousands of Jews, Serbs and political dissidents. The group established and ran Jasenovak, which soon became one of the largest and most violent concentration camps in Europe.

At the time, Stockhammer's father, Alexander Kohn, was a successful tailor, specializing in suits. Her mother, Katinka Kohn (formerly Strenger), was a stay-at-home mother.

One of Stockhammer's earliest memories as a little girl was a sign of things to come.

"People came into our home and made us put on yellow armbands with a Jewish star," Stockhammer said. "It's hard to remember exactly, but they told us we could not ever take them off and that we could not be on the streets after five or six o'clock in the afternoon."

A few months later, she was sent to Kruščica, a concentration camp in Vitez, Bosnia, now part of Croatia.

Kruščica was established and operated by the Ustaše between August and October of 1941.

Prisoners were given a ladle of bean soup each day and eventually had to eat grass and leaves to survive. Stockhammer remembered an incident in the soup line one day.

"I walked a little bit out of the line and the guard pushed me and spilled my soup and my mother gave me her soup," Stockhammer said. "That was the only food each day, and a piece of very hard bread."

In October 1941, Kruščica was dissolved. On Oct. 1, 250 Jewish males were sent to Jasenovac. The next week, Stockhammer and

Bryan Mordt

1,200 other Jewish women and children were sent to Loborgrad, a camp established for women and children. Prisoners were subjected to torture, robbery and, for "undisciplined individuals," murder.

Stockhammer had an aunt married to a Catholic man who knew a priest who got her out of Loborgrad a few months before it was closed in 1942 and prisoners were sent to Auschwitz, where many were murdered.

"My father's sister, Dragica [who lived in Zagreb] sent a letter to a Catholic priest with the Croatian Church," Stockhammer recalled. "He was very well known and was helping Jewish children. She told him my father was a good man who helped her and her husband with their business, and they would like to take care of me."

Stockhammer's aunt sent the letter without knowing what would come of it.

"One day, I just showed up" on Aunt Dragica's step, Stockhammer said. "She took care of me and two more children."

While Stockhammer narrowly avoided



Lea Stockhammer is pictured with her son Dean, daughter Ruth and late husband Dan in 1996.

likely transfer to Auschwitz, her safety was anything but assured.

"There was danger all around," she said. "My aunt wouldn't let us go out and play with children because she was afraid that somebody or the neighbors would tell that she was hiding three children."

During World War II, Croatia, along with most of Europe, was destroyed by the ravages of war. Economies were devastated and shortages of life's staples were widespread. It was a struggle just to survive.

Stockhammer never forgot what her aunt did for her during those trying times.

"When I was in the concentration camp, I was always cold, I was always hungry, and I always felt that I was all by myself," she said. "When I came to live with my aunt, I got care, loving care, and at that time, whatever was possible for us to have, she found it and gave it to us."

IF YOU GO

Lea Stockhammer will share more details of her imprisonment at two concentration camps during World War II at an upcoming engagement sponsored by Chabad of the East Valley.

WHEN: 7 p.m. Sept. 7

WHERE: Chandler Center for the Arts

TICKETS: Start at \$18 for adults, \$12 for students.

DETAILS: ChabadCenter.com/lea

As World War II ended, Stockhammer knew she had lost her mother and older brother, Vladimir, in the concentration camps, but she held out hope her father, Alexander, would one day return.

"It was very difficult," she remembered. "On the day of liberation, I sat outside of the house, on the edge of the sidewalk and I had a loaf of bread in my lap, and I was waiting on my father to come home. I waited for two days, and my aunt came out and said, 'Lea come in. If your father is alive, he's going to find us.'"

"And he never did. He never did."

Finding a new normal

Stockhammer was affected in so many ways by her experience during World War II and her time in the concentration camps. Crucially, it delayed the start of her education by years; she didn't begin elementary school until she was 10.

"One of the biggest difficulties I had was in school," she said. "I was absent-minded. I couldn't concentrate, and I was put in the first grade. I was a lot older than the other kids and the children made fun of me. You can imagine what children do to you, and I had a hard time finishing school."

Years later, Lea met the love of her life, Dan Stockhammer, a fellow concentration camp survivor. The two dated and married after he graduated college. It's a day Lea remembers with a smile.

"November 28, 1958," she said. "He graduated at 12 o'clock that day and at 5 o'clock that day, we got married. You see, during those times, if you were a student and you got married, they wouldn't let you graduate."



The American flag flies in Lea Stockhammer's backyard in Province. The lit flag sits next to Providence Parkway, the main thoroughfare in the neighborhood, and serves as a guidepost for people looking to find their way around the neighborhood.

Navigating a new world

When World War II ended, Yugoslavia was once again reunited. In 1953, Joseph Broz Tito came to power and would remain the country's leader until 1980. While the country's direction was decidedly communist, some regarded Tito as a benevolent dictator, while others regarded him as something more sinister.

While Stockhammer has no love for the communist government she and her husband left behind nearly 60 years ago, she's also quick to point out it wasn't all bad.

"Joseph Broz Tito was good to the Jewish people," Stockhammer said. "If Jews wanted to go to Israel, he would let us go. The government would pay for whatever we wanted to take with us, except if you owned real estate, you had to leave it with the government."

It was that understanding that would soon pave the way for the Stockhammers to make their way to America.

But those who refused to join the communist party, including Lea and Dan, a doctor, found their lives affected adversely.

"If you were not a member of the communist party, you could not get what you wanted," Stockhammer said. "He couldn't get a residency or a chance to practice his specialty. We couldn't get an apartment in the bigger city, so we had to live in a smaller town. We weren't happy."

It all started to change when Lea, who was part of a folklore dance group that performed for prominent people in Yugoslavia, performed in free countries including France and Italy. Dan had spent time in Switzerland as part of a business trip with a Jewish community.

As Lea explained, they had tasted freedom and wanted more.

"We decided that we wanted more for our children," she said. "We wanted to give our children a better life than we had."

With that in mind, Dan started taking English lessons in secret and planned to go for post-graduate studies in America.

It wasn't easy, however.

"They needed doctors left and right," Stockhammer said. "He'd quit his job and (Yugoslavian officials) expected what we were going to do. They knew we had a family and they told him they wouldn't give him a visa to go."

"He told them that we are going for just one year and they told him, 'OK, you can go but your wife and your daughter (Ruth, who was not even 6 years old), will stay here. We will take good care of them.' My husband said, 'No, that is just one chance in a lifetime and if I go, my wife and my child are going with me.'"

The Yugoslavian government apparatchiks were skeptical. But as Lea explained, Dan had one more card to play and it got him and his

family out of the country and to America.

"He told them, 'I'm Jewish and I can go to Israel.' And at that moment, they gave him the OK," Stockhammer said.

Lea explained the Yugoslavian officials realized the family could just move to Israel, and then to America. Their trip to the United States was approved.

Living in America

The Stockhammers sold everything they owned in Yugoslavia and went to Chicago. With just enough money for two plane tickets, they had to borrow money for a third fare.

"By the end of my husband's residency [in Chicago,] I was able to save enough money to pay back the money for that plane ticket," Stockhammer said.

There were a lot of firsts in the Windy City for the Stockhammer family. Lea marveled over their apartment and unlimited running water.

"My daughter took three bubble baths a day," she said. "It was also the first time I'd had peanut butter and American cheese."

But Stockhammer never forgot her roots. She still remembered how to live frugally.

"I remember walking to the store that had milk for 45 cents per gallon and chicken backs and necks, they were 7 cents a pound," she said. "I always had a decent piece of meat for Ruth, and my husband ate at the hospital. This is how we made it through our first year in America."


Another first came in 1967, when Lea and Dan welcomed their first offspring born on American soil. Dean was born within a week of the blizzard of 1967, which is on record as the biggest snowfall in the history of Chicago — 23 inches in a two-day period and drifts as deep as 15 feet.

But Lea and Dan were never too far from their pasts. Their experience in the concentration camps affected them even in safe and secure America.

"My husband and I were always scared of uniformed people," Stockhammer said. "If they were walking on our side of the street, we would go to the other side."

That trepidation followed them to Chicago. "We still had that fear in us," she said.

Stockhammer's past remains a part of her life today and who she is. But she strives to see the positive in life.

"You never forget," Stockhammer said. "But you cannot live with hatred for your whole life. I've tried to have a normal life as much as I can." 

Bryan Mordt

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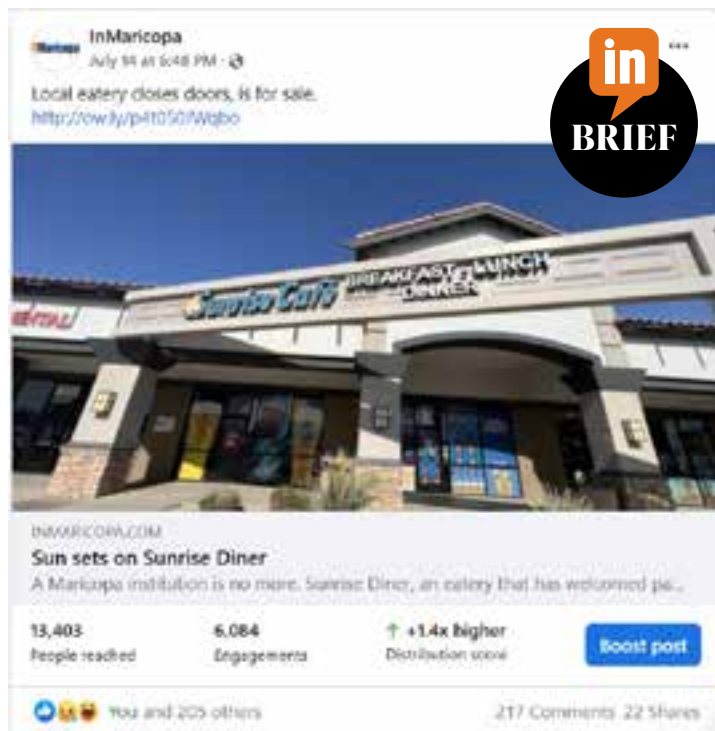
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Maricopans react as Sunrise Diner closes its doors for good

The sun has set on a Maricopa institution.

Sunrise Diner, an eatery that has welcomed patrons in Maricopa nearly as long as the city has been incorporated, has closed.

The reactions on InMaricopa's Facebook page have been varied. Some called out the establishment's recent health code issues. Earlier this spring, two inspections during a three-day period uncovered 22 violations.

People pointed out their experiences good and bad at the restaurant and others lamented the fact that the city lost one of its few sit-down eateries, a sore point for many Maricopans.

Others speculated about whether another restaurant may come into the vacant space.

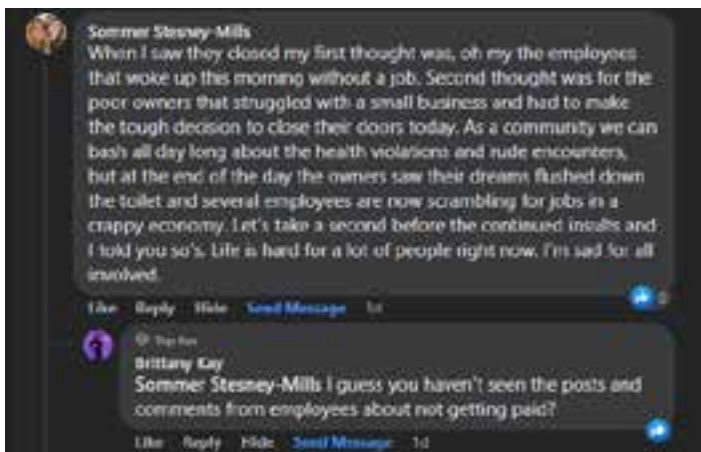
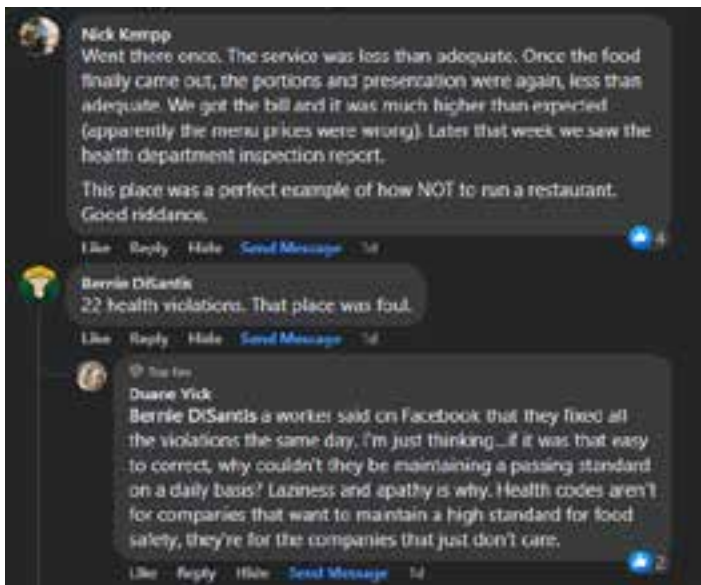
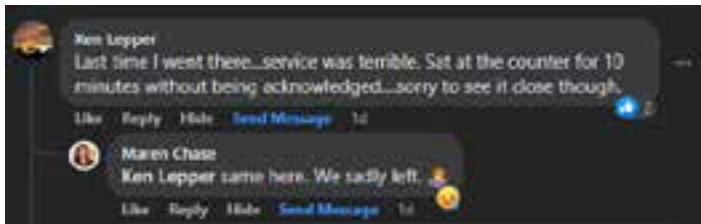
Formerly called Sunrise Cafe — the sign was never changed — the eatery at 20917 N. John Wayne Pkwy. near Fry's Marketplace has been under new ownership since 2020 and been plagued recently by poor health inspections and flagging business.

Owner Billy Godwin is trying to sell the diner for \$195,000, according to a listing on BizBuySell.com. Management lamented the need to sell in a post on its Facebook page.

"We want to sadly announce that Sunrise Café has officially closed its doors for good," the post read. "With the decline of revenue by about 50% and the current landlords unwilling to work on a solution nor use our \$15,000 deposit given at the time of purchase, to help in such instances."

InMaricopa previously reported Godwin paid \$90,000 for the restaurant in 2020.

The restaurant closed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is when Godwin purchased and remodeled the space.



Facebook.com/InMaricopa

Exceptional Community Hospital earns Gold Seal accreditation



Exceptional Community Hospital has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for Hospital Accreditation by demonstrating continuous compliance with its performance standards. The Gold Seal is a symbol of quality that reflects a health care organization's commitment to providing safe and quality patient care.

Exceptional Community Hospital underwent a rigorous, unannounced, onsite review June 1-2. During the visit, a team of Joint Commission reviewers evaluated compliance with hospital standards spanning several areas including emergency management, environment of care, infection prevention and control, leadership, medication management, and rights and responsibilities of the individual.

The Joint Commission's standards are developed in consultation with health care experts and providers, measurement experts and patients. They are informed by scientific literature and expert consensus to help health care organizations measure, assess and improve performance.

"As a private accreditor, The Joint Commission surveys health care organizations to protect the public by identifying deficiencies in care and working with those organizations to correct them as quickly and sustainably as possible," said Mark Pelletier, RN, MS, chief operating officer, Accreditation and Certification Operations, and chief nursing executive, The Joint Commission. "We commend Exceptional Community Hospital for its continuous quality improvement efforts in patient safety and quality of care."

"We are pleased to receive accreditation from The Joint Commission, the premier healthcare quality improvement and accrediting body in the nation," said hospital CEO Saeed Mahboubi. "We strive to deliver the highest level of safety and quality care. Joint Commission accreditation signals the medical excellence patients can expect when they seek care at Exceptional Community Hospital."

Permitting around Maricopa

Dish Wireless will spend \$45,000 to modify a cell tower at 43929 W. Bowlin Road, with work to be done by Joe Test Electric, LLC.

A new cell tower will be built for the **Maricopa Fire and Medical Department** at 36930 W. Bowlin Road in Rancho Mirage Estates, Phase 2. The monopole will include an antenna and ground equipment constructed by Arizona West Builders and Communications Inc.

Browning Ferris Industries will build a new commercial biogas delivery and receipt meter station for \$330,000 at Ak Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club, State Route 238 and North White Road. Western Industrial Resources Corp. will perform the work.

A new shade structure will be built at the **Apex Motor Club** facility at 22408 N. Ralston Road for \$116,000. The 160-foot by 40-foot structure will be built by Shade N Net of Arizona Inc. for Apex Landco LLC.

Meritage Homes will construct a shade structure over the playground equipment at The Trails, Phase 1A, 19220 N. Diego Way, for \$53,000, with work done by Exerplay Inc.

Nando's Mexican Cafe received commercial construction permits to begin work on its 5,125-square-foot restaurant in Edison Pointe at 44460 W. Edison Road, for \$1.82 million. Proposed is a restaurant shell building on Lot 6, a vacant 2.87-acre parcel zoned Commercial. The building will be of Type V-B construction, fully sprinklered, with wood-frame construction. No restrooms or interior lighting will be installed under this permit, except for required battery-operated emergency lighting. Rooftop mechanical units will be installed. The work is being done for Queen Creek Fiesta LLC by Integrity Building Corp.

Integrity Building Corp. will also construct a 23,287-square-foot retail shell building in Edison Pointe for \$2.7 million. The building will be parsed into a major commercial retail tenant shell of about 12,500 square feet for national pet retailer Petco, and the balance into a commercial multi-tenant shell that will be subdivided. Petco will hire Integrity Building Corp. to perform \$1.5 million of tenant improvements at the site.

Stepping Stones will make commercial tenant improvements to its facility at 19756 N. Maricopa Road, Suite 104, in Maricopa Manor Business Center, with work done by 1889 LLC.

A major development review permit was

Restaurant inspections returning soon



A technical glitch with Pinal County Environmental Health Department has slowed the reporting of restaurant inspections. There have been just seven reports made available since April 20.

Dunkin Donuts received a Satisfactory rating. Details of that inspection were not available as of press time. The following establishments had Excellent ratings: **International House of Pancakes; Bashas' Starbucks; Bashas'; Wingstop; Bashas' AFC Sushi; Helen's Kitchen** and **CAC Maricopa Campus-Culinary.**

InMaricopa will continue to monitor the situation and as soon as inspections become available again, we will once again include them in our monthly magazine and online.

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

granted to Maricopa 35 LLC for its **West Maricopa Village** single-family-home-for-rent community at 21055 N. Village Parkway.

Estrella Gin Business Park at 20655 N. Estrella Parkway received an amended final plat for its office/warehouse project.

Richmond American Homes will spend \$10,000 to build a new model home office at 40432 W. Bedford Drive in the Lakes at Rancho El Dorado, Phase 3. The company will convert the garage into a sales office, doing the work itself.

Meritage Homes will convert the garage of the home at 35395 W. Catalan St. into a sales office for \$20,000. The home is in The Trails, Phase 1A, and Meritage will do the work.

Anderson Palmisano Farms requested review and approval for a preliminary plat for a 150-lot, single-family residential subdivision at 17394 N. Freeland Lane. The site covers about 74 gross acres at the southeast corner of Hartman Road and Anderson Farms Boulevard.

Carniceria Sonora was granted a temporary sign permit for its future location at 19568 N. Maricopa Road so it can install a temporary banner reading "Carniceria Sonora Coming Soon" on the facade of the existing freestanding canopy structure. The owner of the property is D&N Financial LLC.



Laser focus from acne to toe fungus

BY KRISTINA DONNAY, FNP-C

EVERYONE HAS AESTHETIC GOALS they aspire to achieve, but reaching those goals with over-the-counter products and at-home remedies is not possible for many skin concerns. Challenges like rosacea, broken vessels, toe fungus, acne, melisma, facial hair and scarring usually need a more advanced intervention with aesthetic treatments.

At Maricopa Wellness Center, we believe in the power of advanced technology treatments, such as Aerolase, a revolutionary laser treatment to rejuvenate, refresh and restore your skin.

Laser Facial

Our Aerolase Neo Elite laser specializes in treating 36 FDA indications. One of our favorite treatments is our Laser Facial. The Laser Facial treats acne, sunspots, melasma, facial hair, laxity, facial veins, builds collagen and more. This treatment is 30-45 minutes and offers no downtime. The unique combination of high power within a short-pulse duration allows treatment to be performed without the use of anesthetics, skin cooling or risk of adverse effects commonly found with the previous generation of lasers.

After your treatment, the best practice is to protect your skin from any UV rays by wearing broad-spectrum SPF graded 30 or higher. You should wear sunscreen even if you plan to be inside since windows will not protect you from all types of UV ray exposure.

The Neo laser can treat skin conditions on any patient of any age or skin type.



Toe Fungus

Onychomycosis, or nail fungus, is an infection of the toenail in which the nail changes color, thickness and quality. In addition to an unhealthy appearance, it can cause pain and difficulty walking.

Our Neo Laser treatment for nail fungus is safe, quick and highly effective. Most patients can be clear of their infection with 6-10 treatments. Laser procedures for nail fungus are proven to be a safer and more effective method than oral medications and topical creams.

One of the key aspects of eradicating nail fungus is penetrating the laser energy into the nail bed. This area needs significant heating

to ensure the fungal material is destroyed, requiring a deep-heating and powerful laser. The Aerolase Neo Elite offers patients the ideal laser for such treatment. After the treatment, patients can resume their daily activities as normal.

Laser treatments are increasingly popular aesthetic options for people who want to treat complicated skin concerns, but no laser systems are as versatile as the Aerolase Neo Elite laser treatments. Whether you want to restore skin tightness, treat toe fungus, or manage complex rosacea or melasma, this laser is an ideal option for most people.

Overall, laser treatments are fast, painless appointments. Before your appointment, you will need to avoid direct, unprotected sun exposure to the treatment area. Your treatment appointments will take 15-45 minutes depending on the size of the treatment area and the condition of your skin. You may require multiple treatments spaced 2-4 weeks apart to accomplish your goals.

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Scenes of Summer

The sun sets over the city of Maricopa one summer afternoon, while geese get some time at the pond. On the opposite page, a dust storm envelopes Maricopa in July and an owl stands watch. A hot summer's day comes to an end and a crane gets ready to enjoy a tasty fish.



Bryan Mordt



'Not Interested'

Local woman's search for biological father ends in disappointment

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN



Dawn Houle

FOR MARICOPA RESIDENT DAWN Houle, a bid to learn more about her family tree recently came to an unceremonious conclusion: She located her biological father and reached out to him, only to be turned away.

For Houle, the journey to learn the twists and turns of her family "stump," as she calls it, has been wrought with frustration.

After discovering the woman she thought was her mother wasn't, Houle told her story to InMaricopa a few months ago and from there, a local genealogist, Phyllis Lewellen, reached out to Houle to help solve the rest of the puzzle.

Houle turned over the data from her search to Lewellen who, after a bit of work, helped Houle locate her biological father, a man named John Brooks, who lives in Polo, Illinois.

Lewellen explained it was a little quicker process than normal.

"Most of the time, we're having to start fresh," she said. "With Dawn's story, we had one of the parents figured out, so that helped."

Houle and Lewellen both wrote letters to Brooks. Lewellen wrote to explain the process and how she concluded that Houle and Brooks were related as father and daughter. Houle wrote to tell Brooks about her family and to explain that she wasn't interested in anything financial or of material value. She only wanted to connect and learn about her family.

A week later, Houle went to check her mail and found what looked to be a fat letter of response from Brooks.

"I had included a self-addressed stamped envelope in the letter I sent him," Houle said. "So, when I'm checking my mail and I saw my own handwriting, I was shaking like a leaf. It looked like a thick letter, and I was hopeful that he'd responded to tell me his story."

Instead, Brooks had returned the entirety of the correspondence that Houle and Lewellen had sent and scribbled his response on the back of one of the pages: "Not Interested."

"It was an utter disappointment," Houle said. "And I just started to wonder, how many more people are going to reject me?"

The journey has been a challenging one for Houle. She was looking for Brooks' side of her story and maybe a chance to learn more about the family she never knew she had.

Reaching out

Anytime someone decides to learn more about their family tree, they must be ready for whatever may come of that decision.

No one knows this better than Houle, whose own genealogical search before meeting

Lewellen would reveal how little she really knew about her relatives. And about the family secret kept from her for decades.

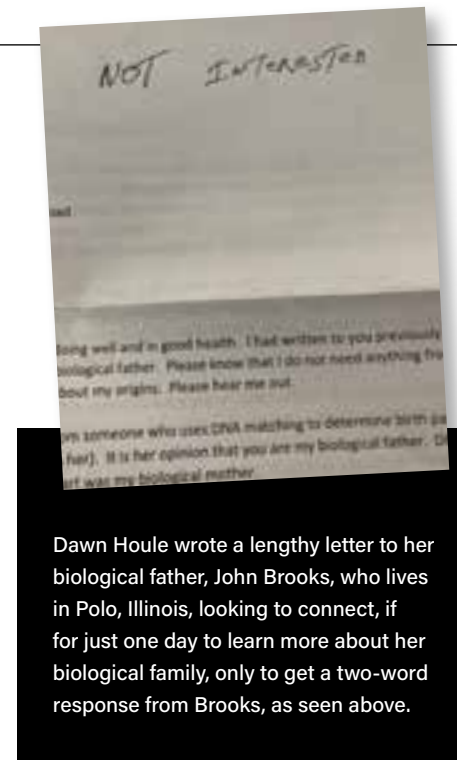
"I thought I was reaching out to find possible relatives," she said, "not realizing I would have this bomb dropped in my lap."

"What they did was illegal," she told InMaricopa in March.

Houle's journey began in 2013 when she took a DNA test and requested to be alerted to matches with other users of the website, Ancestry.com.

Houle waited six years for an answer and finally, in 2019, there was an email alerting her to a hit on her DNA and that it was a niece, which was odd considering she was an only child.

Over the next two years, Houle researched her genealogy and asked questions only to discover the mother who raised her, Carol Whitt, was actually a friend of her birth mother, Barbara Hughart. The two women had agreed to a scheme in 1969: Barb would use Carol's name when she checked into the hospital in Rochelle, Illinois, to give birth, and then hand over baby Dawn to Carol and her husband.



Dawn Houle wrote a lengthy letter to her biological father, John Brooks, who lives in Polo, Illinois, looking to connect, if for just one day to learn more about her biological family, only to get a two-word response from Brooks, as seen above.

Dawn would grow up in the nearby rural farming village of Ashton, about 75 miles west of Chicago. Carol's husband was "out of the picture" by the time she was 7, she said.

The shocking discovery came after Houle asked an aunt, Whitt's sister, to take a genetic

test. The results came back showing they shared no DNA.

Adding to the pain was the fact some members of the family kept this whole arrangement a secret for 40 years.

Both mothers passed years ago, Carol dying in 2009 of natural causes and Barb dying in a car crash in her 30s. But there was one more major question to be answered: the identity of her biological father.

Untangling the web

Lewellen and some friends in Scottsdale work together to help people in their respective communities search for their biological parents.

Most of the time, they help people who were adopted.

"For the most part, the resolutions are positive," said Lewellen, who has helped 25 others find long-lost relatives. "Every now and then, you have a situation like Dawn's, and it's unfortunate."

"I'm really proud of the way that she's handled it."

Houle's story is unique in that she didn't know who her mother was. Most of the time,

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people do not know the identity of their true father.

"I'm part of a Facebook group called, 'Not parent expected,'" Houle said. "There are a ton of people on there who have found out as adults that their father wasn't their father. It causes them a lot of pain."

DNA testing has opened many doors that were previously closed. While bringing the truth into the light can be painful, there are some positives, as Houle explained.

"It's kind of a mixed bag," she said. "DNA doesn't lie, obviously. I hope that it will force people to be more open and honest with their families, instead of keeping all this in the closet."

While the response from her biological father was disappointing, Houle doesn't regret the journey. It's supplied her with some of the answers she'd long sought.

"I think the best thing is that now, I look in the mirror and see my mother and where I came from," Houle said. "I used to try to see the similarities between me and my fake mom and there just weren't any. But now I can see

"I used to try to see the similarities between me and my fake mom and there just weren't any. But now I can see the similarities between me and my biological mom, and it makes me happy."

—DAWN HOULE

the similarities between me and my biological mom, and it makes me happy."

With her birth mother's early death, there's a lot of genetic health history that Houle will likely never know. She had her DNA analyzed by 23 and Me, and most everything came back as she would expect.

"It was all good," Houle said. "Nothing

scary. I'm a white woman, so of course it said I'm likely to have high cholesterol. Nothing shocking there."


The next piece of the puzzle Houle figured out was that her half-brother, Shawn Brooks, who lives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is her full brother. The two share the same father, John Brooks.

If anyone is looking to take a similar journey as Houle, she has a little advice.

"I'd tell them to be prepared for the unexpected and to not take things too personally," Houle said.

And the experience also left no doubt that all these years later, her real father, at least in spirit, is Ambrose Little Bear, Carol's second husband. Her stepfather. She honored his memory with a tattoo on her back.

"He was the best thing that came into my life," Houle said. "I learned a lot from him. He taught me about respect, self-respect and being a good person."

"I absolutely have the right guy's name on my back," she said. "Ambrose will always be my dad." 

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GETTING TO know

MICHAEL GUTIERREZ

Loan Officer, Coastal Pacific Lending

Hometown: Bayard, N.M.
Maricopan since: 2020
Occupation: Loan officer

Family: Wife Michelle, son Rudy and his wife Maritza, and son Xavier and his wife Daisy

Hobbies: Hiking, sports, grilling and chilling in my man cave

Pet peeve: Drivers on the 347 that don't move over to the right lane

Like most about Maricopa: Clean, quiet and friendly people

FAVORITE ...

Book: "The Milagro Beanfield War" by John Nichols

Movie: Nacho Libre

Song: Hotel California

Drink: Old Fashioned or a cold Modelo

Meal: Green chicken enchiladas, rice, beans and a sopaipilla with honey

Restaurant: Si Señor in Chandler

Getaway: Rocky Point or Las Vegas

Quote: "The pessimist complains about the wind, the optimist expects it to change, the leader adjusts the sails."

Words to live by: Three types of people to stay away from: the uninspired, the unexcited and the ungrateful.

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



Oops, you did it again

BY JIMMY AND SYLVIA RIOS

MAYBE YOU USED THE CREDIT CARD to buy something you didn't really need, even though you've sworn not to time and time again. Maybe you found yourself clicking "checkout," even though you promised to stop online shopping. Or maybe you just found yourself discouraged by the number in your bank account... again.

Either way, you've had a financial relapse — you did something to set back progress toward your goals, even though you knew better.

It sucks. It's enough to make you throw up your hands and quit.

But here's the truth: It's part of the process.

Research¹ suggests there are six steps to changing behavior:

1. Pre-contemplation
2. Contemplation
3. Preparation



4. Action
5. Maintenance
6. Relapse

Why is relapse the final step? Because it's an opportunity. It reveals the limitations in your strategy, unnoticed behavior triggers and, above all, new areas for growth.


This is good to acknowledge, but it's a far cry from how relapses make you feel. They feel like proof-positive that you'll never change, that you didn't change. You fell back into your old behaviors.

But nothing could be further from the truth. The reality is relapses merely point you to deeper truths about yourself — and what you are capable of.

So, next time you feel down about a hard-to-break financial habit, give yourself some grace. Examine what happened, and integrate what you learn into your strategy.





Consider meeting with us to formulate a plan. We can help you process what happened, refocus on your goals and create a strategy to prevent future relapses.

We created Next Level Credit to educate and help people in all areas of financial matters. We have more than 300 case studies to show you how others have done it (Nextlevelcredit.net/case-studies) and can lead you to setting the proper blueprint for your financial wellness through an easy-to-follow, five-step process that can be found at NextLevelCredit.net/credit-education.

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Jimmy Rios has been an entrepreneur for 20 years in the financial services areas. Jimmy and his wife Sylvia Rios are licensed in real estate and life and health insurance.

¹ "Prochaska and DiClemente's Stages of Change Model for Social Workers," Yeshiva University, May 11, 2021

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Understanding mental health — and the stigma of mental illness

BY HARRIET PHELPS, PSY.D.

DEFINING MENTAL HEALTH OR its opposite — mental illness — is a daunting task.

Mental health includes our emotional state: how we feel, how we think and our social well-being. It was once believed physical and mental health were separate, but research and increased understanding of how we think and feel has linked mental and physical health.

The brain does not know the difference if an idea is a thought or a real event.

There are many factors that contribute to our mental health. The age-old research question has been: Is this nature or nurture? Nature indicates biological factors such as genes or brain chemistry. Nurture is a result of life experiences like trauma or abuse.

It's complicated and potentially beyond our control. Sometimes, people living with mental illness are blamed for their condition. Such thinking is misguided. Mental illness is not a choice.

A little history

Prior to the 1800s, there was a separation of mental and physical health. Many cultures — Egyptian, Indian, Greek and Roman, for example — believed mental illness was a form of religious punishment, a demonic possession or a personal problem. During the Middle Ages, the mentally ill were believed to be possessed or in need of religion.

This attitude persisted into the 18th century in the United States, leading to the stigmatization we know today. Most were locked away. In the 1840s, Dorothea Dix lobbied for better living

conditions for the mentally ill and for the funding of 32 psychiatric hospitals.

In 1963, deinstitutionalization efforts under the Community Mental Health Centers Act moved care from psychiatric hospitals to local community-oriented centers, to improve quality of life for patients.

The stigma, however, continues to this day, as we fight against the perception of mental illness as a condition that reduces one's humanity.

What's normal?

On a continuum from 0 (meaning no indicators of concern) to 10 (a high number of indicators) good mental health is somewhere in the middle.

For most of our lives, due to the circumstances of life in general, we will be outside the norm for depression or mania. Simply put, life is full of ups and downs. The other parameters that stay outside the norm are generally beyond our control and require other interventions.

Medical and psychological definitions depend on a format that applies a number or definition to our condition. They may help determine what's going on, but they don't define us.

Mental health has its challenges and, currently, our medical care provides medications that can assist in achieving a balance and enhancing the functionality in our lives.

Unfortunately, those who require medication and begin to feel better with the prescribed medication, often stop taking it. Then, once the individual falls back into the challenges of function, problems occur.

Such a decision makes no sense. Would a diabetic stop taking medication because they had a few good blood sugar readings?

Mental health is as important as your physical health, and you should pay attention to both. There is a balance to maintain and there's no shame in reaching out for help to do so.

There is no simple explanation. Health is very complex and subject to many factors. Understanding why a person has a certain behavior includes the complexity of many of these factors.

Start with the simplest of resources. Consult with your physician and mental health professional to meet your needs.

May your families remain safe from danger.

Harriet Phelps, Psy.D., is a volunteer with Be Awesome Youth Coalition.



6 reasons to plan your own funeral

BY KRISTIN GRAMANDO, J. WARREN FUNERAL SERVICES

HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED? It's an important decision. Preplanning your funeral now, before the need arises, puts you in charge of how you will be remembered and ensures your funeral will be meaningful for your loved ones.

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1 Remove the guesswork.

If left to plan your funeral, family or friends may be unsure of your wishes. If you create an advance plan, you will reduce the decisions

your family must make during a stressful time, allowing loved ones to focus on their grief.

2 Be remembered how you want.

Your funeral service should reflect your life and wishes while offering comfort to your loved ones. Planning your funeral gives you the opportunity to decide which arrangements and service you prefer.

3 Cover expenses now.

By prefunding your funeral arrangements, you ensure your family is not burdened by the cost. Preplanning also gives you time to consider all your options.

4 Lock in today's prices.

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protect yourself and your loved ones against rising costs.

5 Take your plan with you.

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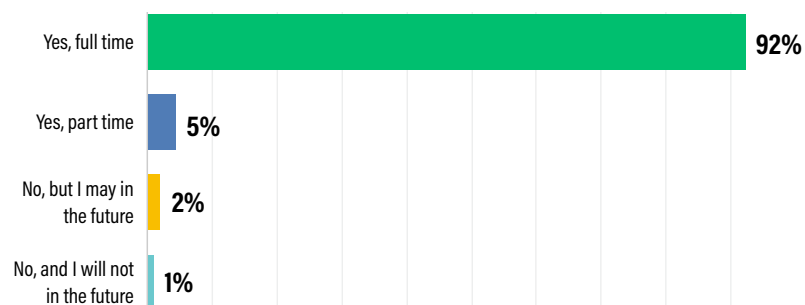
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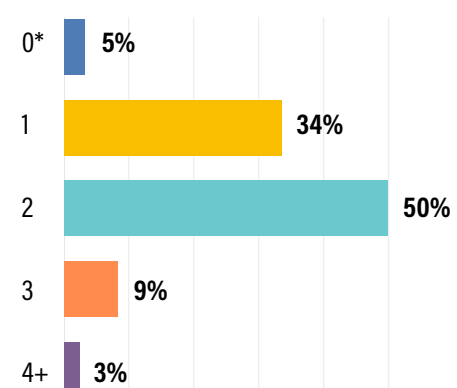
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If you were one of the 557 respondents to our community news survey May 1-June 15, thank you. Your feedback helps us better understand our community and how we can best contribute to it. Here are some takeaways you might find interesting, too.

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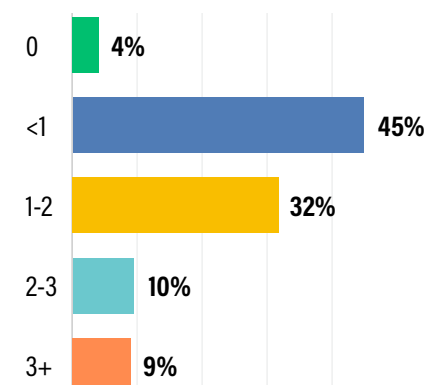


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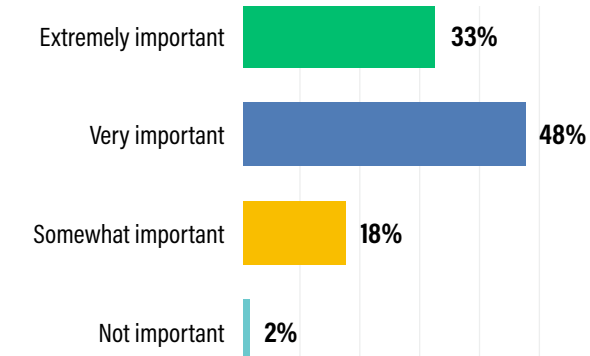


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Top: Student-athletes were on hand the week before Desert Sunrise High School's opening day to model the jerseys for the school athletic teams.

Above: The prep room is seen for the school's cafeteria.

Right: A crowd was on hand at the school's soft opening earlier this year.



'World-ready'

Unique learning model imbues new
Desert Sunrise High School

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN



WHEN EFFORTS BEGAN TO conceive and plan Maricopa's second high school, the Academy Model inspired the educators, architects, planners and contractors who helped make Desert Sunrise's July 21 opening a reality.

Marlene Armstrong, the school's principal, feels the innovative approach will play to the students' advantage.

"I believe that the most unique facet of Desert Sunrise is the Academy Model experience," she said. "Students will be enrolled in a career academy and will be in small learning communities. Through this academy experience, students will have the opportunity to earn industry credential certificates and learn the 22 essential skills to transition into adulthood successfully.

"Our goal is that each and every student is 'world-ready' upon graduation."

Getting there

The Academy Model requires a commitment from the outset.

Nearly two years ago, when the new high school was still in the planning stages, Architect Saravanan Bala of Orcutt Winslow Architects said the school's academic building would have two "academies, or learning communities" on each floor, with each academy having classrooms, a lab and a maker space.

"We are trying to maximize instructional space," Bala said.

The model encourages learning from collaborating and doing.

MUSD Superintendent Tracey Lopeman said earlier this year part of the master plan for the school was to have "fully-equipped classrooms, complete with technology, first-rate furnishings and dynamic teaching spaces."

"We will create a space that fully meets the needs of our students," she said. "There are a lot of collaborative spaces, and we support that kind of teaching."

But the vision shared by Lopeman and Bala was going to take money, and a lot more of it than the \$21.5 million the school system was provided by the state School Facilities Board.

MUSD needed a friend in a high place. Up stepped then-state Rep. Bret Roberts, a Maricopa resident, who tucked an additional \$18.8 million into the state budget for construction. With the late allocation, the school's budget nearly doubled to \$41 million.

Roberts has since left Arizona for the greener pastures of South Carolina, but, at least in some part, his legacy remains in Maricopa as

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Marlene Armstrong | PRINCIPAL

You were the founding principal at another new high school. Which one, and how has this experience been different?

I was the founding principal of San Tan Charter High School in Gilbert. This experience has been different in many ways and much the same as well. I would say that the biggest difference has been the collaboration with the construction team at Chasse, our district team, the design team at Orcutt Winslow, the team at Facility Management Group, and our focus groups. It truly has been an outstanding experience. During every phase of planning, the students have been the focus and decision-making litmus test. We asked ourselves how the students would use this space to better their educational experience. Then the team worked tirelessly to ensure that it happened.

What are the challenges of starting a new high school in general and the ones that have been unique to Desert Sunrise?

The biggest challenge of starting a new high school is coming to a consensus on what the identity of the school is. We were so blessed that this was a very collaborative experience, and the community was very supportive in planning for our daring and diverse learning environments. Unique to this building project have been the nuances of working through COVID, supply-chain issues and pricing changes. They were a challenge for sure, but with this team, we have been able to navigate these challenges and put everything in place to be ready to open for students on July 21.



Phillip Verdugo, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

From an educational and a personal standpoint, offer a little bit about yourself.

I was born and raised in the beautiful state of Arizona. I attended Hamilton High School in Chandler and was a student-athlete. I graduated from Hamilton High School in 2005.

Next, I attended Arizona State University and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Cross Categorical Special Education. I then returned to Hamilton High School as a special education teacher and coach.

After spending the majority of my career at Hamilton, I taught at North High School in Phoenix for two years. Then, I taught and coached at Marcos de Niza High School in Tempe, before coming to Maricopa Unified School District.

I am entering my third year with MUSD as a Golden Hawk, and I am blessed to be a part of this amazing team.

What are some of the projects you will work on long-term, and with what day-to-day tasks will you be charged?

As the athletic director, I have been given the opportunity to help create and build our athletic programs. I am also pleased to announce we will be competing in the 4A East Sky Division. With the help and support of our school board, school district and community we will be offering 16 different sports programs for our students. We are excited for this school year to begin and even more excited for our students to have many different opportunities to have a great high school experience.



Left: The school's gym.
Below: Top-of-the-line garment printing equipment is seen in one of the "maker" rooms, including a pre-treating machine, a screen printer and a direct garment printer.



the greatly-enhanced school opened in July to its first two classes of students.

Without Roberts' 11th-hour push, the school would have lacked a library and administration building. Six classrooms would have been converted into administrative space.

Biby Carbonneau, associate and project manager for Orcutt-Winslow Architects, said the multimillion-dollar boost was crucial.

"Once we found out we would have more funding, we looked for what else we could bring for the kids – things like more natural light in the hallways, bringing in operable partitions to facilitate community-based learning, and little touches that could comfort them.

"We knew that if we got an additional million dollars, we'd be able to do this much, and if we got \$5 million, we could do that much," she explained. "That all came from our experiences, and that way we were able to prioritize and get the most out of the budget."

Forging ahead

Armstrong marvels at how the structural assets of the school will support the education of its students.

"The design of Desert Sunrise is incredible," she said. "Each and every learning space was purposefully designed to encourage collaboration and communication. Through this daring and diverse learning environment, students will be actively engaged in their learning."

Phillip Verdugo, the school's assistant principal, agreed.

"The design of our school was very purposeful," he said. "The team not only created a place that students, staff and community

IN THEIR OWN WORDS



Jonathan Clark | FOOTBALL COACH

You've coached in North Carolina, Mohave Valley and Maricopa. That's quite a diverse background. Can you offer a bio about yourself and the journey you took to get here?

I grew up in Hamlet, North Carolina, and played in a perennial powerhouse football program within the state (Richmond Senior High School). In October 2004, I was blessed to meet my wife while on vacation. She is originally from the Phoenix area and so that is how I ended up in Arizona.

Football is not only a passion of mine; I feel the need to work with and develop young men and women is a calling. I began coaching in North Carolina at the age of 21 and have been coaching ever since. In North Carolina, I was a freshman offensive line coach for a while, then I called the offense for one of the local middle schools.

Coming to Arizona in 2012, I started coaching at Maricopa High School. I was extremely lucky to coach under two distinguished coaches, Cory Nenaber and Chris McDonald. In 2018, I took over the River Valley program, which had compiled a record of 3-7 the previous year. In four years, we achieved a record of 27-14 and three straight playoff appearances.

All the while at River Valley, I still had the urge to return to Maricopa. Since moving to Arizona in 2012, it has truly been my home and I am and was always proud to be a part of this community. I jumped at the chance to help create a staple program and school within the community of Maricopa.

Where will Desert Sunrise play its home football games this year?

The goal is to play our home games at our school location. Our field has been installed, however, there is a period we have to wait for the sod to set correctly. With that foresight, [Athletic Director] Mr. [Phillip] Verdugo did a great job of scheduling our home games in the month of October. He scheduled us a game with both Sequoia Pathway (Sept. 1) and Maricopa High School (Nov. 9) if the community can't get out to one of our home games (Oct. 5, 19 and 26).





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members could be proud of, they created a place where all students could learn, explore and become future-ready."

The "academies" housed in the academic building include Leadership, STEM and Health.

Jonathan Clark is the school's football coach. As an educator and a parent, he took notice of the school's curriculum.

"The Academy Model is one that I have never seen but fell in love with immediately," he said. "My oldest daughter will be entering ninth grade this year. She is a very strong, independent young lady. Placing her in the Leadership academy is only going to enhance her natural abilities along with providing her with college credits and/or credentials to get a quality job straight out of high school."

Many 'firsts'

There are many challenges to starting a new school. Of course, there are classrooms to set up. But more importantly, a culture has to be defined and developed.

Armstrong in the past has discussed how a balance has to be struck between the school's individuality and its connection to the community of Maricopa.

THE ACADEMY MODEL EXPLAINED

According to Kathy Baron, a writer for Edutopia, a project founded by Star Wars creator George Lucas, "The Academy Model is an organization that includes specific themes or grades-based organizational groupings within a single institution. These are sometimes referred to as 'Career Academies' or 'Career Pathways.'"

The school may be organized along largely departmental or integrated models, with specialty courses geared toward the theme or focus of each academy provided within each academy, with students following their academy's prescribed course of study while taking courses in different departments. Alternatively, the school may be organized with each academy providing its own core and specially themed courses.

"I would say that the biggest challenge of starting a new high school is coming to a consensus on what the identity of the school is," Armstrong said. "We were so blessed that this was a very collaborative experience, and the community was very supportive in planning for our daring and diverse learning environments."

Clark, who will also teach physical education, lauded the efforts of Armstrong and Verdugo to unite a dedicated staff.

"We have a strong administration with Ms. Armstrong and Mr. Verdugo," Clark said. "This is not Ms. Armstrong's first rodeo when it comes to opening a school, so that is a huge benefit and comfort to me as a teacher. The positivity that radiates from this group will do wonders for establishing the culture we want at Desert Sunrise."

Verdugo pointed to Armstrong's experience as a huge asset for the first-year school.

"This is my first time opening a brand-new school," Verdugo said. "However, Mrs. Armstrong has opened other schools throughout her career and her experience has helped our team navigate potential challenges. I am grateful for her guidance and professional support as we continue to do great things for our students, staff and community."

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College comes early

Heritage girls complete high school in 3 years

BY TOM SCHUMAN

E VALUATING COLLEGES AND making the proper choice to continue one's education is an annual rite of passage for many teens.

It was no different for 2022 Heritage Academy graduates Emily Turik and Peyton Gray. But these friends for the past year-and-a-half are ready to move on to college after only three years of high school.

It's not an unprecedented leap but one that is far from commonplace. Many high schools today focus on advanced placement, dual credit, and other options that allow their graduates to get a "head start" on college. Emily and Peyton took the lead, however, in planning their expedited paths. Both will begin freshman year at Arizona State University later this month.

Graduating high school in three years is not an easy feat and, for Emily and Peyton, required continual motivation to cope with expanded high school class schedules.

Perseverance was critical.

"There was definitely a feeling of relief and accomplishment," Peyton said. "I took the time, I pushed myself, and now I get to start college early and a new chapter in my life. I'm looking forward to meeting new people. It's nerve-wracking but exciting."

Emily benefited from some pep talks to herself.

"There were a lot of times I was like, 'This is a lot of work, do I really want to do this?' I said, 'I'm already halfway done; I'm just going to push through and finish this.'"

Their perseverance didn't just get them to graduation — they finished with the top two GPAs in their class of 38, an achievement even more impressive since neither student entered high school with a three-year plan in mind.

Making it happen

Peyton, who was born in Chandler, has lived in Maricopa most of her life. At 17, she is the oldest of three children, with 14- and 12-year-old brothers. (They have two dogs and a cat.) She transferred to Heritage about halfway through her freshman year.

"I didn't have a lot of friends who went there," she recalled. "I really didn't want to be there when one of the only people I knew wanted to graduate early. So, I started looking into how I could possibly do that, too. Why go through another whole year when I don't really have to?"

Working with the school's college adviser, she drafted a plan outlining the classes she'd need to take at Heritage and beyond.

The proposal was then approved by the principal.

"I first met Peyton and she said she was planning to graduate early," Emily said. "I looked and saw that I only needed three additional credits ... Why go through a whole school year where I get eight credits?"

—EMILY TURIK

The plan commenced with three summer school classes. One was with Edgenuity (a Scottsdale-based provider of online K-12 curriculum) and two with Central Arizona College. She took an additional Edgenuity class in geography during her final year at Heritage.

Emily, 17, moved to Maricopa five years ago. Born in Texas, she spent a short time in Italy at age 5 and later lived in Goodyear after coming to Arizona. She said her household is all-female, with her mom and 15-year-old sister, plus four cats and three dogs.

She doubled up on math classes as a sophomore and did the same in the sciences as a junior. She and Peyton became friends when their U.S. history teacher paired them as partners for group projects.

"I first met Peyton and she said she was planning to graduate early," Emily said. "I looked and saw that I only needed three additional credits." Like her new friend, she eventually asked herself: "Why go through a whole school year where I get eight credits?"

So, she decided to try and do it in three years. But that decision resulted in an 11-class load — the eight classes at Heritage, two online courses through Edgenuity, and one administered by Rio Salado College.

"I had dancing every day, except Sunday, and also a part-time job," she said. "It was a lot, but once I was working my way through it, it became easier. I tried to do a lot of (the online work) over fall break and spring break."

Self-motivation was essential for both.

"For me, I just have really bad procrastination issues," Peyton admitted. "When it's online, and you don't have the teacher actively saying, 'You have this and this and this,' you have to really motivate yourself to get that work done or it's not going to get done. You can't really put things off until the last minute — and if you do, you're the one responsible."

Emily added, "It's really hard to get yourself to do it, especially when you're doing homework for other classes. You don't really get a break. Most of my days were going to school, come home, do homework for Heritage, go to dance and then come home and do my online schoolwork."

Choosing a school

The road to ASU was not a direct one for either overachiever.

"I originally wanted to go to Brown (University) in Rhode Island," said Peyton.

"But I've never lived by myself before; it's a place really far away, a place I've never been," she said. "With school and a job, and getting used to a new place, I thought it would be good to stay somewhere closer to home. ASU is a good school. It's not that far away, but I also will have that experience of living by myself."

Peyton contended she's "never known what I wanted to do with my life," but her first choice for a degree was biological sciences.



When it came to their high school educations, Emily Turik, left, and Peyton Gray took the path less traveled and opted to squeeze four years of academic work into three years and graduated this past spring.

Submitted

“Then I got a job at a medical billing office, saw how much work it really is to be a doctor,” she said. “I looked at the course load I would have to take, and this was just the fall semester, and it was a lot. I don’t really like math and science that much and I said, ‘Why am I putting myself into this position where I would only be doing math and science?’”

Peyton realized she wouldn’t take any English or foreign language classes, some of her favorite subjects.

“So, I switched to English,” said Peyton, who wants to specialize in creative writing. “I did take a creative writing class in high school, and I really enjoyed it. I liked having the freedom to write about the things I want to write about. I also took English 101 and 102 in high school and found that I was pretty good at writing. Even though I did good at math and science, it wasn’t something that kept me interested.”

Emily, who enjoys arts and crafts in addition to reading, said having scoliosis catalyzed her interest in pursuing the biological sciences.

“I knew I wanted to go into the medical field. My doctor would talk to me about it, and I knew because I personally went through it. It’s really interesting to me.”

Emily added her mother, Kasey Turik, encouraged her to at least begin her college days close to home. Both her parents are University of Arizona graduates, however, and diehard Wildcat fans. But the combination of strong medical and dance programs at ASU won out.

“My whole family makes fun of me for wanting to go to ASU,” she said, smiling. “I told my doctor I was going to study what he did and basically wanted to do what he did. He also went to U of A and so he also made fun of me.”

Kasey Turik, a longtime teacher, said she has always had a wall in her classroom devoted to the Wildcats. Former students would ask her what would happen if one of her children wanted to be a rival Sun Devil.

“As long as they’re furthering their education, getting the major that they want, I’ll be happy wherever they end up,” she said. “Yes, we’ll give her a hard time about it the next four years, but it’s great. She will be closer than Tucson, and we will get to see her more often.”



Emily Turik participates in a dance competition, which is a remarkable feat, given her scoliosis.

Turik said the accomplishments of both girls — each earned college credits through their high school classes — deserve recognition.

“It’s impressive how all their hard work has paid off,” she said.

Offering guidance

Both girls say their friends had questions about how they accomplished an early graduation.

When asked for advice on pursuing such a compressed path, their answers are thoughtful and straightforward.

“If you’re going to make the decision, you need to stick with it,” Peyton said. “The extra classes, especially like Emily, when it’s during the school year on top of all your normal classes, can get very overwhelming very quickly. You need to make sure you’re the kind of person who can handle that stress and can stay on top of it. Because if you just forget about it, then you’re just wasting your time, wasting your money and you’re wasting other people’s time.”

Emily agreed.

“The biggest thing is not to procrastinate any of your schoolwork,” she advised. “And try to make your plan your freshman year so you don’t have to take a bunch of extra classes your final year. You can spread them out over three years.”

Overcoming an obstacle

Emily Turik has competed in dance since fifth grade, a remarkable feat given the scoliosis condition she lives with.

A visit to a back specialist the summer before fourth grade revealed “an S curve, two curves. Each was probably about 20 degrees at that point,” she explained.

“I had four back braces from fourth grade to eighth grade so it wouldn’t get worse. I wore them every night.

“But as I grew, it got worse. The top curve was 60 degrees, the bottom curve 80 and my spine was rotated before surgery. I have two rods on either side of my spine. They go from the base of my neck all the way down to my tailbone. They will be with me for the rest of my life. There’s still a slight curve there and it’s still slightly twisted.”

Emily battles through it all. It’s a challenge, but one that she’s up to.

“Some moves cause me pain,” she acknowledged. “And now, after surgery, I don’t have any flexibility in my back, so there are just a lot of moves that I am not able to do.”

The condition might slow her down but certainly does not stop her desire and ability to compete with her dance routines, which she hopes to continue at Arizona State.

Submitted



WELCOME TO THE FAMILY MADRIGAL!

How does a city the size of Maricopa capture the interest of the #1 Yelp ranked restaurant in the entire country? Turns out, our city has been on the radar of owner Leo Madrigal for a while. Then Maricopa’s recent growth signaled the time had arrived to make a move.

“About a year ago I returned to Maricopa and I saw the growth, how many new homes are being built and apartments and so a lot of people are moving to Maricopa and I started looking. The opportunity is really big!” - Chef Leo Madrigal, Owner of Cocina Madrigal

Even with all that promise, it took an ice-breaking initial approach from City staff to set the wheels in motion; staff who saw the potential of adding a restaurant of this caliber to the menu in Maricopa.



Chef Madrigal is no stranger to uncovering opportunity where others can’t. His current location in south Phoenix has thrived thanks to his critically-acclaimed menu and family-oriented approach to business. Now for his second location, Madrigal says he’s found the partner he was searching for in Maricopa.

Just like Chef Madrigal, our employees know that opportunity can strike anywhere, even in the center of a bustling restaurant. The City of Maricopa is on the hunt for those with the vision and courage to seek it out.

Come find your place in one of the fastest growing cities in the nation, where we raise the bar every day by inviting innovation and challenging the status quo. To those who aspire to do business differently, you’re invited to COME BUILD A CITY WITH US!

Discover all we offer and how you can be a part of the action by visiting www.Maricopa-az.gov



How do you value water? Let's count the ways!

BY SHAINA SHAY, CONSERVATION SPECIALIST
AT GLOBAL WATER RESOURCES

DESERT-DWELLERS LIKE US KNOW water is a precious and valuable resource. Using water wisely can help save us money now and preserve water for the future. Take this short quiz to see how your conservation practices add up. Give yourself a point for each of the water wise practices you implement.

Indoor water conservation practices:

- 1. I turn the water off when I brush my teeth. ____
- 2. I use my dishwasher rather than washing dishes in the sink with running water. ____
- 3. I check for leaks in my home at least once a year (like testing your toilets for faulty flappers). ____
- 4. If I see a leak, I fix it immediately. ____
- 5. I track my household water use to make sure I use less than 6,000 gallons every month so I can get the Global Water Conservation Rebate. ____

Outdoor water conservation practices:

- 1. I time how long I am watering when using a hose. ____
- 2. I use drip irrigation with a smart irrigation timer. ____
- 3. I only have grass installed where it is being used regularly by pets and/or family members. ____
- 4. I adjust my irrigation timer to water with the season (more often in summer, less often in winter, none when it rains!). ____
- 5. I have signed up for automated leak alerts on the Global Water Portal to warn me if a leak is detected in my home. ____

Community water conservation practices:

- 1. If I see a leak in a common area (like a park or at my HOA) I tell someone immediately. ____
- 2. I talk to my friends, family, and neighbors about water and how to use it wisely. ____
- 3. I practice rainwater harvesting to reduce stormwater runoff and reduce my water needs. ____

Which kind of water steward are you?

(1-5 points) Water Saving Novice
Time for you to start saving!



(5-10 points) Water Saving Apprentice
You can save more!



(10-13 points) Water Saving Hero
You're leading the way!



How did you do? Let us know at conservation@gwresources.com. For more water saving tips, visit GWResources.com/conservation-education.



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SPONSORED CONTENT



Non-paying tenants a huge headache – and expense – for investors

BY SHERMAN AND EUPHEMIA WEEKES

PROPERTY OWNERS RELY ON RENTAL income to pay mortgages, maintain properties, and help meet other expenses. When rents are not received, these expenses must still be paid, creating an unnecessary hardship for the property owner.

What happens to self-managed landlords when rent payments are not made?

Tenants always have a reason why the rent is late. Rather than engaging in conversation and losing valuable time, begin the process by issuing a Five-Day Legal Notice to the tenant, delivering by hand or certified or registered mail. After the notice is issued, evaluate whether this is a long-term or short-term problem. If it is short-term, negotiate a payment arrangement. Any payment plan must be in writing and signed by the tenant.

If the tenant's inability to pay is due to a long-term situation like a job loss, try to get the tenant to move out voluntarily. If the tenant will not voluntarily move, proceed with the legal eviction process, which was started with the Five-Day Notice.

Next, file a complaint with the court to repossess the property.

Hiring an attorney to help with the eviction is less costly than the amount you may lose trying to do it on your own. Remember, the cost of the attorney, court costs and process-server fees should all be paid by the tenant (if you can collect). When done correctly, the process will yield a judgment for all unpaid rent plus costs incurred in filing the case.

The court will also order immediate possession of your property, providing the opportunity to file a Writ of Restitution within five days.

It can take about 30 days to get the tenants out of the property.

Conduct a thorough inspection after the eviction and get bids to complete repairs to get the property ready to rent. You must also do the security deposit disposition.

A non-paying tenant is a headache and probably the most stressful aspect of property management. Evicting a tenant, coordinating, and paying for repairs, and re-marketing the

property will reduce your profits. And the longer it takes, the greater your loss.

Accessing professional help — and understanding the Landlord & Tenant Act — will help by quickly and efficiently moving through the process. Property managers are well trained and understand the eviction process and can be a great resource for you. The cost of professional property management services is negligible compared to the losses landlords can suffer when self-managing investment property.

active members of the National Association of Residential Property Management with a Certified Residential Property Management designation.



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HOME

most expensive HOME SOLD

42206 W. Capistrano Drive

June 17

\$ 660,000

This two-story home in Glennville on an oversized lot has many upgrades, including a three-car, epoxy-floored garage with an extended paver driveway leading to an RV gate. The main floor features a gourmet kitchen with upgraded cabinets, quartz counters and custom lighting. The master bedroom is on the main floor with two additional bedrooms, a guest bedroom with an ensuite bathroom, a large loft and a double-door theater room upstairs. The backyard has an oversized pool, travertine custom pool decking and a grass side yard. The home was on the market for 35 days and sold for \$60,100 over the original list price.

Previously sold: \$420,000 on Aug. 29, 2020

Community: Glennville

Square feet: 3,283

Price per square foot: \$201.03

Days on market: 35

Builder: DR Horton

Year built: 2017

Bedrooms: 4

Bathrooms: 3.5

2. 22155 N. Cline Court, Rancho El Dorado.....\$640,000

3. 44572 N. Granite Drive, Cobblestone Farms.....\$630,000

4. 21987 N. Balboa Drive, Rancho El Dorado.....\$610,000

5. 41855 W. Laramie Court, Glennville.....\$610,000

least expensive HOME SOLD

36997 W. Amalfi Ave.

June 29

\$ 329,000

This single-story home in Sorrento features professionally stained concrete floors throughout. The master features a large walk-in closet. The home sits on a corner lot with north/south exposure and desert landscaping. The home was on the market 17 days and sold at list price.

Previously sold: \$164,000 on Aug. 4, 2018

Community: Sorrento

Square feet: 1,370

Price per square foot: \$240.14

Days on market: 17

Builder: DR Horton

Year built: 2008

Bedrooms: 3

Bathrooms: 2

2. 19039 W. Ventana Lane, Glennville\$330,000

3. 40760 W. Sunland Drive, The Lakes\$343,840

4. 40020 W. Rio Lobo Drive, The Lakes\$344,480

5. 40012 W. Tamara Lane, Desert Passage.....\$345,000

Source: MLS, June 10 - July 9

Brian Petersheim Jr.

HOME

Improving curb appeal can lead to quicker sales

BY DAYV MORGAN

WHEN I TAKE POTENTIAL BUYERS TO look at a home, they begin making their decision on whether they like the property from the moment they get out of the car. Here are some focus areas and simple things you can do to improve the first impression of your home:

Paint

Over time, the exterior paint will fade and make the house look older than it is. Instead of repainting a whole house, you can give it a fresh

Porch

As buyers are standing on the porch waiting for the front door to be unlocked, they are examining the area around them. Make sure the ground is swept, cobwebs are removed from the ceiling, and lights are dusted and cleaned of any bugs. Also invest \$10 to \$20 in a new welcome mat and give the front door a fresh coat of paint, if needed.

Lawn

The majority of homes have desert landscape, so if you have grass in the front yard it can really be a nice feature. If the grass isn't lush and green, the buyer will assume it is too much work to maintain and view it as a negative. Replacing the existing grass with new sod is not that expensive — a professional landscaper can purchase and install it in a 10-by-20-foot area for about \$500.

Flowers

A burst of color from some flowers can provide a nice accent amid all the shades of tan paint and

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41



I T'S AUGUST, AND WE HAVE NOT QUITE GIVEN UP ON summer and are wondering when it will end. The temperatures are consistently in the triple-digits, and we do as little as possible outdoors. The tomatoes stopped putting on blooms or did not survive once the temperatures hit the 90s at night.

But there is work to do.

By mid-August, we should begin to prepare a new vegetable garden bed for the cooler, fall-winter plantings. Begin by removing all the spent or dried-

Grounds are also a good source of mulch material around landscape plants. But there is a risk of fungus developing as grounds pack down and have less aeration, so it is best to let the grounds dry out. And occasionally stir the coffee grounds to aerate them. Using too much coffee affects the pH (potential Hydrogen) level of the soil just as it does in our bodies. The pH level is a measure of acidity or alkalinity in number values.



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Walk-in tubs: what you need to know

BY RON SMITH

I RECENTLY HAD A READER ASK for information regarding walk-in tubs. My experience with them is limited to a neighbor who purchased one for her mother who was living with her. After their house was sold, the new owner immediately tore out the tub. So, I did a lot of research to share with you.

Walk-in tubs have a hinged, water-tight door, a low threshold and built-in, chair-height seat. It may have therapy options, such as aerotherapy, hydrotherapy or chromotherapy.

Walk-in tubs provide safety and comfort. Entering a traditional tub can be risky for anyone with mobility issues. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that one in four Americans over the age of 65 falls each year getting in or out of a tub.

There are six primary types of walk-in tubs:

- soaking tubs (still water)
- aerotherapy tubs (bubbles)
- hydrotherapy tubs (water jets)
- bariatric tubs (designed for the safety and comfort of larger people)
- wheelchair-accessible
- combination of features

Specialized tubs are also available for double occupants and lay-down use.

There are some considerations before deciding whether a walk-in tub is advisable. If your ability is somewhat impaired or your health (or your roommate's) is compromised, you should check with your physician or occupational therapist first to determine any risks or potential hazards. A person's range of motion, strength, balance and coordination should all be taken into consideration, as should medical issues such as open wounds.

The average cost of the tub units, materials and installation is \$10,000. But the range of costs can vary considerably. The cost of the walk-in tub units alone can vary from \$2,000 to \$12,000, and installation can



vary from \$2,000 to \$10,000 depending on plumbing requirements, upgrading heaters, new electrical, widening the bathroom door or other renovations needed to install the unit. Some manufacturers may offer selective discounts, rebates or special financing. Get multiple quotes for comparison.

1. Is it worth it? If you have reasonable mobility and no major medical limitations, a walk-in tub could be a major improvement to your lifestyle. If your mobility is moving downward, check with your doctor or therapist for a recommendation. How do you feel about the potential installation issues and disruption? Are you comfortable with the project costs? How long do you expect to stay in your house? Like with a pool, there is no guarantee installation of a walk-in tub will raise the resale value. But for the right buyer, it could be attractive in a retirement community.

Making your decision

There are no independent reviewers of this type of product. Almost all online reviews are by companies compensated by the manufacturers. Compare reviews for differences. Make sure you decide which options you really need. Utilize input from your doctor or physical/occupational therapists. Check neighbors or friends for recommendations. Check references from the vendors and contractors.

Be certain of your financing, and check your area agency on aging about Medicaid or veterans assistance. There is no support from original Medicare, but future Medicare Advantage programs might help. If the walk-in tub is prescribed by a doctor, it could be considered a qualified medical tax deduction.

More features

In addition to the safety and therapy options, consider other features:

1. **Height of the entrance step threshold.** This can vary by manufacturer.
2. **Installed grab bars.**
3. **The fill and drainage times** for the unit. Note that fill times will be determined by the capacity of your plumbing and your water heater. Quick-drain units are totally dependent on the capacity of your drain plumbing. So, determine if your home's existing plumbing meets manufacturer's specifications. Otherwise, you might be faced with some expensive modifications to support the installation.
4. **A backrest or heated backrest** will reduce chills while the tub is filling or draining.
5. **Non-slip surfaces** in and around the walk-in tub installation.
6. **Inward vs. outward tub doors.** A wheelchair transfer is greatly enhanced by an outward swing, but also consider the space taken by the door when open. Small bathrooms may not have enough room for

an outward swing and the bather's arm may not be long enough to pull the door closed. Swing-in doors may infringe on the space needed to pull one's legs and feet into the tub. Swing-out doors are easier to open in an emergency. Make sure the width of the door is sufficient.

7. **Self-cleaning functionality.** Cleaning a tub may be hazardous for seniors. Not keeping a tub clean can lead to mold and skin infections. A self-cleaning tub has spray jets that treat the tub with antibacterial and anti-mold chemicals. The plumbing can be treated and purged as well. Some manufacturers use ultraviolet lights or ozone to help sanitize their tubs. If not self-cleaning, become familiar with what is required to keep the tub clean and safe.
8. **Added water heating capacity.** An inline or tankless water heater may be needed to meet the demand of the tub. Tub size often exceeds the capacity of the existing water heater. Find out how much water the tub holds and compare that to your current water heater capacity. Insist on an anti-scald valve.
9. **Shower options.** Many manufacturers

offer a tall shower option integrated into the walk-in tub as well as a handheld showerhead.


Steps for purchasing a walk-in tub

1. **Establish a budget** for cost of the unit, installation and project contingency.
2. **Identify must-have features.**
3. **Find a reputable walk-in tub contractor.** Will the manufacturer require their own installers, or do you need to hire your own contractor? Kohler, for example, requires you use their installers.
4. **Ask the contractor these important questions:**
 - Are you licensed and insured?
 - Do you have experience (and with which manufacturers)?
 - Will permits be required?
 - What are the plumbing requirements?
 - Will plumbing have to be relocated?
 - Will a supplemental heater be required?
 - What are the electrical requirements?
 - What are your warranty and service policies?


PROS & CONS

- PROS:** Comfort, potential health benefits, safety features that help to reduce risk of falls, independence for people trying to age-in-place, ADA-compliant standards
- CONS:** Expensive, increased maintenance costs, may be difficult to install, potential for increased water usage, may be difficult to keep clean, more time-consuming to use

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

Scan this code or visit InMaricopa.com/ Opinion for more tips on whether to purchase a walk-in tub, how to purchase a tub and more features to consider.



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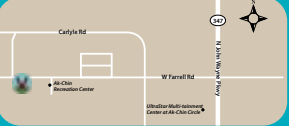
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THINGS TO DO

AUGUST

1

Maricopa Historical Society meeting

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

2

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Workshop

1 p.m., Virtual
Register by email: maryg@pgcsc.org

9

Maricopa Planning & Zoning Commission meeting

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

10

MUSD Governing Board meeting

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

13

Dance for Tatas Women's Expo

10 a.m., Central Arizona College
17945 N. Regent Drive

16

Maricopa City Council meeting

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

24

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 Ave.

Mondays

Narcotics Anonymous

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

Alcoholics Anonymous

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

Tuesdays

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

Celebrate Recovery

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

Wednesdays

Alcoholics Anonymous

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

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.

Narcotics Anonymous

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

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

ALL EVENTS ARE TENTATIVE



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

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If you're ready to put more play in your summer playcation, it's all waiting for you in the city of Maricopa! Need some relaxation? Chill in a poolside cabana or relax at The Spa. Ready to get your game on? Find your favorite slots or get in the action with table games like craps and roulette. Play your way at Harrah's Ak-Chin!

Harrahs
AK-CHIN CASINO

PLAY FOR ALL.®

* Food Credit offer is redeemed as 1,000 Reward Credits. Guests must earn at least one Tier Credit within six months of offer redemption to prevent Reward Credit expiration. Reservations are recommended at Chop, Block & Brew. Other discounts do not apply when redeeming Reward Credits. Only new members of the Caesars Rewards program are eligible at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino. New members are defined as those individuals 21 years of age or older who sign up for a first time Caesars Rewards membership at the Caesars Rewards Center at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino at any time NOW – September 30, 2022 at 11:59PM. New members must then accept offer at the slot machine. If offer is not accepted at the slot machine prior to the Prize Expiration, the offer shall be forfeited. When depositing Free Slot Play to your bank, balance expiration is based on time of deposit and will expire 72 hours after deposit if not downloaded to a slot machine. Re-deposited Free Slot Play will expire within 24 hours after re-deposit. Please see Caesars Rewards for expiration details. Valid only at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino. Management reserves the right to change or cancel this promotion at any time without prior notice. Must be 21 or older to gamble and take advantage of this offer. Know When To Stop Before You Start.® Gambling Problem? Call 1-800-522-4700 or 1-800-NEXT STEP. ©2022 Caesars License Company, LLC. See official rules at the Caesars Rewards Center for complete details.



parting shot



In bloom

Zoe Joy Webb is an aspiring photographer at 13 years of age. She took this photo of a cactus in bloom at sunset outside her home in Maricopa Meadows using an iPhone 11 Pro Max.

Have a great photo of Maricopa?
Submit it to Photos@InMaricopa.com for
consideration as next month's "parting shot!"

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