



September 2023

# Maricopa

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24570R17 Yokohama Geolander G015	\$237.99
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26575R16LT Yokohama Geolander G015	\$279.99
27560R20 Yokohama Geolander G015	\$299.99
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20565R16 All Season Radial 99H	\$104.99	23565R17 All Season Radial 103T	\$141.99
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22560R16 All Season Radial 98H	\$114.99	23545R18 All Season Radial 100W	\$127.99
23570R16 All Season Radial 107T	\$114.99	23550R18 All Season Radial 101W	\$129.99
21555R16 All Season Radial 95W	\$92.99	23555R18 All Season Radial 104V	\$149.99
21545R17 All Season Radial 91W	\$102.99	23560R18 All Season Radial 102T	\$147.99
22550R17 All Season Radial 98W	\$110.99		

OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE. 40,000 Mileage Warranty

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27560R20 Truck Radial 119H	\$193.99		
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OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE. 40,000 Mileage Warranty

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27555R20 Eagle LS-2	\$240.99
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26550R20 Fortera HL	\$262.99

OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE

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SIZE	BUY 3 PRICE
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20565R16 Assurance Maxlife 95H BLK	\$186.99
21560R16 Assurance Maxlife 95V BLK	\$184.99
22560R16 Assurance Maxlife 98H BLK	\$179.99
21545R17 Assurance Maxlife 87V BLK	\$217.99
21555R17 Assurance Maxlife 94V BLK	\$215.99
22565R17 Assurance Maxlife 102H BLK	\$217.99

OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE

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SIZE	BUY 3 PRICE
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20560R16 Assurance All-Season 92T BLK	\$160.99
21560R16 Assurance All-Season 95T BLK	\$157.99
21555R17 Assurance All-Season 94H BLK	\$180.99
23555R17 Assurance All-Season 99T BLK	\$196.99
23545R18 Assurance All-Season 100H BLK	\$218.99

OTHER SIZES AVAILABLE

\*Buy 2 select tires and get 2 free OR buy 3 select tires and get 4th free. Select tires only. Must purchase tire protection plan and nitrogen package, which includes valve stems, balancing, free tire rotations, free alignment checks, free flat repairs and free replacement for the first 25% of tread wear on a tire that is not repairable (with the nitrogen and tire protection plan purchased). Restrictions and exclusions apply. See store for complete details. Offer may not be combined with any other discounts unless otherwise stated. No dealer or carryout. Offer ends 9/30/2023.

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Expires 9/30/23

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### GOODYEAR

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State or local taxes or surcharges for Environmental protection will be an extra charge.





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# Hey Maricopa!

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**ON THE COVER**

Bryan Mordt captured this photo of intern Abigail Brown assisting in the cleanup after an exam at the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office.

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# A song of ice and fire

Let's rewind to four Septembers ago.

I'm standing inside the majestic *Hallgrímskirkja*, a volcano-esque chapel towering over Reykjavík's seaside skyline in Iceland. As the choir croons a hymn, *Heyr himna smíður*, I learn the fascinating history of this remote country's medieval folk music.

Above the arctic circle, the sun doesn't muster a peep over the horizon all winter. Blackness, despair and unbearable cold quickly turned fatal. And yet, in the middle of this disconsolate season came *Jól* — Christmas — a massive banquet that reverberated notions of communion and cycles of renewal.

All the while, Icelanders sang hauntingly bittersweet hymns like *Heyr himna smíður*, a sonant prayer not to be forgotten in the darkness.

Summers in the Sonoran Desert bear a common but converse theme, as impeccably encapsulated in Monica D. Spencer's riveting collection of pieces about the Maricopa residents who lost their lives to a historic heat wave this summer — ironically, only to end up inside the coroner's cooler.

But here, in this final edition of our magazine before the autumn leaves begin to crisp, Ms. Spencer juxtaposes this tragic resolve with those Maricopans who are surviving the hottest summer ever recorded; friends, neighbors and strangers who risk their own safety to build our houses, repair our power lines and even fight our fires.

A summer that claims lives alludes to rebirth for others. Take Maricopa's Jacob Cowing, the University

of Arizona wide receiver who's embarking on a new football season. He's closer than ever to his son.

How about the local politician standing up to her own party to ease a burden on the people of our city? Justin Griffin explores both stories in this edition of *InMaricopa*.

And let's not forget the momentous milestone this great magazine surpassed recently when we published our 25,000th story. How blessed I am not just to have arrived in time to celebrate a freshly rejuvenated mission to eclipse 50,000 stories (too soon? I think not!) but also to see one of my own that you might remember from last month's edition in our curated list of the 25 most-read pieces en route to that waypoint. It's a gallery I have no doubt you'll thoroughly enjoy.

Like *Jól* for the Icelanders, this is a liminal time for us in Maricopa. As such, I can't think of a better one to reflect upon our lives, our community and our aspirations for both.

And I'd be remiss not to mention my piece in this edition, "Raising Kane," the fascinating story of a one-time world record-holding masseuse who turned to a life of anarchy.

And as always, thank you for reading *InMaricopa*.



**ELIAS WEISS**  
MANAGING EDITOR  
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## CONTRIBUTORS



**AMANDA RICE**

Amanda shares her thoughts on the Jerusalem artichoke, a plant that offers nourishment and thrives in places like Maricopa.



**RONALD SMITH**

Ron saw a need in the community and he did something about it by starting a website aimed at helping seniors find the information they need.



**JULIE SKELTON**

Any parent will tell you that they are tasked with the hardest job in the world. Julie offers a few tips.



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**MISSION**  
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We believe in:  
• An informed citizenry.  
• Holding ourselves and others accountable.  
• The success of deserving businesses.

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• Integrity  
• Accountability  
• Open, honest, real-time communication  
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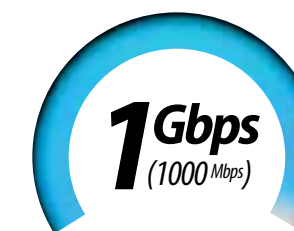
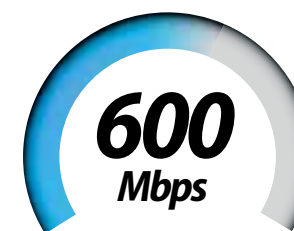
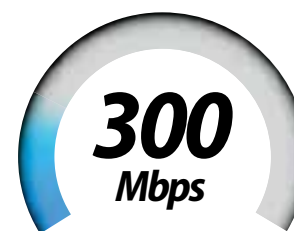
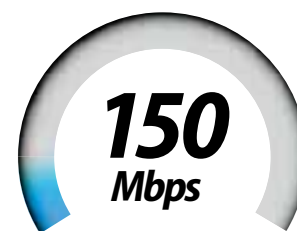
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### A past rooted in farming

This black-and-white photo shows a young Maricopa 4-Her with a prize cow. In 1953, area residents began teaching the youth cooking and sewing, which later expanded into leathercrafts and gardening. The 4-H Fair at Eleven Mile Corner was the place the club would show off their prized animals including cows and pigs. In 2023, Maricopa 4-Hers attended and showed off their animals. Kaden Cardon and future 4-Her Kacie Cardon are pictured with a cow at the fair. Today, the 4-H Club has about 40 members and 10 leaders.



### THIS MONTH BACK IN...

For these and other historical stories, visit [InMaricopa.com](http://InMaricopa.com).



## 2008

Designed by city spokesperson Jennifer Greutz, the Maricopa flag was introduced to the public. Then-Mayor Anthony Smith and Councilman Edward Farrell gave the flag its final approval. Residents can find it flying in front of city hall and in the council chambers.



## 2013

After a groundbreaking ceremony two years earlier, Central Arizona College's Maricopa campus finally held its ribbon cutting. The campus spans three buildings and features classrooms, labs, a library and meeting spaces. Central Arizona College remains the only brick-and-mortar college campus in the city.



## 2018

A house fire in Tortosa injured three people and killed one. Maricopa firefighters and paramedics responded to the fire on West Nina Street where two adults and a 2-year-old child escaped onto a patio roof. Angel Coffman, 19, was rescued from the second story in critical condition and later succumbed to her injuries.

Maricopa Historical Society | Brian Petersheim Jr.

# MUSD Dual Language Immersion Program

## Serving Students in Preschool-2nd Grade

The Dual Language Immersion Program introduces preschool, kindergarten, first grade, and second grade students to the world of bilingualism, biliteracy, and cultural competency. Students receive instruction and explore content in English/Spanish to develop building blocks that will prepare them to be fluent speakers of a second language.



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- Improved cognitive stimulation
- Higher levels of engagement
- Promotes bilingualism and biliteracy
- Greater cultural competency

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To register for preschool, kindergarten, first grade, or second grade Dual Language Immersion classes call **520-568-6150**.  
*Serving Students in Preschool-2nd Grade*

### PROGRAM FEATURES

- English/Spanish programming
- Certified teachers
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- Open enrollment\*

### LEARN MORE

Visit [www.musd20.org/duallanguage](http://www.musd20.org/duallanguage)

\*Preschool: Tuition is \$640/month for children ages 4 & 5  
Kindergarten-2nd Grade: Tuition-free







# Stories about you — and counting



**INMARICOPA JUST SURPASSED 25,000 STORIES PUBLISHED ON** our website, *InMaricopa.com*.

Our first article came on the Ides of March in 2004. It was the story of a community raising more than \$20,000 to fund cancer treatments for Andrew Cole, a Maricopa resident of 52 years. It was a heartwarming nod to a small town uniting around a neighbor who fell on hard times.

Cole succumbed to his disease at age 67 in 2010. While he may have passed on, this community's drive to help others hasn't.

Maricopa's population ballooned from fewer than 4,000 then to more than 70,000 today while retaining that small-town feel that helped sustain Cole's life all those years ago.

The history of *InMaricopa* and the city itself are intimately intertwined. Maricopa was incorporated in 2003 and a few months later, *InMaricopa* became the first — and remains the only — media outlet dedicated to bringing the daily news to Maricopa residents.

The numbers don't lie — we've published an average four stories a day for 19 years straight. It's a statement about our dedication and consistency. For nearly two decades, *InMaricopa* has brought you the news about your city — good, bad and ugly.

To celebrate this milestone, we've curated an all-time list of our top 25 stories based on readership and impact. As you browse our collection, take a moment to recall if you yet called Maricopa home when each chapter unfolded.

In the spirit of good fun, we've come up with a scoring system to determine just how "O.G." you are:

- If you've stuck around long enough to remember 20 stories, you're a Pioneering Maricopan. Your roots are deep here.
- If you lived through 10 events but fewer than 20, you are a Homesteading Maricopan.
- Less than 10? You must be a Newbie Maricopan.



## SCAMOUFLAGE

July 6, 2023

Billy Zinnerman posed as a retired sergeant major of the U.S. Marine Corps with nearly 25 years of service, decorated with the most portentous service medals like the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. None of it was true.

Zinnerman spun up a false identity as a drill sergeant stationed in San Diego, a far cry from the reality that he was a low-ranking pawn with a lengthy criminal record, booted from the service amid accusations of repeated misconduct. He portrayed himself as a war hero and was a Maricopa City Council hopeful.

Zinnerman hoodwinked Maricopa's American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts, the Marine Corps League of Arizona and eventually the Marine Corps itself. He even fooled *InMaricopa* and was featured on its cover last year. But the joke's on him — our recent story exposing his mischief made national news and became one of our most-read articles of all time.

Zinnerman is now the subject of a federal investigation.



## NOT INTERESTED

Aug. 14, 2022

For Maricopa resident Dawn Houle, a bid to learn more about her family tree came to an unceremonious end. After discovering she wasn't related to the mother who raised her, she located her biological father and reached out to him, only to be rejected.

Houle shared the story of her mother with *InMaricopa* and from there, local genealogist Phyllis Lewellen reached out to help her solve the rest of the puzzle.

After a bit of work, Lewellen helped Houle locate her biological father, a man named John Brooks in Polo, Ill.

Houle wrote to her father, telling her story and explaining she wasn't interested in his money. She only wanted to learn about her family.

Instead, Brooks scribbled his response on the back of her heartfelt letter: "Not Interested."

Houle discovered the mother who raised her, Carol Whitt, was actually a friend of her birth mother, Barbara Hughart. The two women agreed to a scheme in 1969: Barb would use Carol's name when she checked into the hospital in Rochelle, Ill., to give birth, and then hand over baby Dawn to Carol and her husband.

Both mothers passed years ago, Barb in a car crash in her 30s and Carol in 2009 of natural causes.

## INGLORIOUS BASTERD

March 4, 2012

Maricopa resident Louis Brod fought in World War II under Gen. George Patton and was part of one of the most important advancements in the European Theatre that led to the Germans' surrender on May 9, 1945.

After marching 400 miles across France, Luxembourg and Germany, Brod was among the first American troops to liberate concentration camps from Nazi control.

The Army man said the camps were more shocking than any other atrocity

he witnessed during the war.

"The only ones who survived were the ones who weren't there very long," he said of the prisoners.

Brod said one of the biggest accomplishments of his division was crossing the Rhine River in Germany, for which he was awarded a Bronze Star, a military decoration for bravery and valor.

He was one of two soldiers in his squad to survive intense gunfire from German troops on the hills above the riverbanks during the crossing.

## ANIMAL MAGNETISM

Feb. 2, 2012

Pinal County Animal Care and Control responded to a case of extreme animal hoarding in Hidden Valley. In total, 93 dogs and five birds were seized.

"Our officers have responded to multiple cases of animal hoarding in the last 12 months," said Kaye Dickson, the Animal Control director at the time. "We worked through the night to shuttle these animals to our shelter after finding them on a remote rural property.

Our shelter is exceeding capacity, and we are operating under emergency conditions."

The home was uninhabitable, according to Animal Control. There was no electricity and no running water. Floors were covered with garbage and several inches of fecal matter. One dog had severely infected bite wounds and had to be euthanized.

## BAD JUDGE

Oct. 1, 2014

The Arizona Supreme Court banned former Maricopa City Magistrate and Maricopa-Stanfield Justice of the Peace Scott Sulley from serving in any Arizona court for life.

A few months later, Sulley was disbarred by the state of Arizona.

The embattled judge was accused of mishandling more than \$200,000 in the Justice Court and failing to administer it correctly. The Commission on Judicial Conduct also found he created a hostile work environment.

The State Bar of Arizona accused him of verbal abuse, inappropriate remarks from the bench and giving the court a bad reputation in the public eye.

Sulley was elected to the bench of the Maricopa-Stanfield Justice Court and became the first-ever magistrate of the city of Maricopa after incorporation in 2003.

In June 2017, Sulley drove himself to a hospital where he fell into a coma for unknown reasons. He did not have any next of kin and the hospital struggled to find relatives.

Eventually, the hospital found the name and phone number of Sulley's estranged wife. Because the couple were not officially divorced, she took over his health decisions.

She decided to take him off life support.



# AS SEEN ON TV



## SHARK BAIT Feb. 23, 2012

When The Villages resident Shane Pannell found himself a stay-at-home dad after selling his share of a pest control company, he didn't know he was on his way to being on the television show "Shark Tank."

Weeks of scraping messes from his three kids and pets off the floor led Pannell to invent the SweepEasy, a broom with a scraper that ejects from the bristles to remove gunk stuck on the floor without having to bend down or grab a butter knife.

Pannell applied to be on "Shark Tank," a lengthy process with several audition phases.

After a couple rehearsals with executive producers, Pannell found himself in front of rolling cameras and five millionaires. He accepted a rare offer from Kevin Harrington and Daymond John, but it eventually fell through.

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## HAND PICKED June 14, 2011

Selling off some old stuff can put a few extra bucks in your pocket. And with a little ambition, it also can get you on television.

Raceway Bar & Grill owners Jeanna and Rand Del Cotto became television stars when they were featured in an

episode of "American Pickers."

More than a decade later, American Pickers announced plans to film once again in Maricopa in March 2022 and again earlier this month. No word yet whether the Pickers came across any Maricopa finds those times.

## VIPS AND SALSA April 26, 2009

The lure of spicy concoctions helped the fifth annual Maricopa Salsa Festival Presented by *InMaricopa.com* draw a record crowd to Pacana Park. More than 11,000 people — an increase of 3,200 over the year before — joined a foodie celebrity at the event.

Ingrid Hoffmann, host of Food

Network's "Simply Delicioso," served as a celebrity judge. Hoffmann, known for her Latin-inspired dishes, told the crowd, "I do know a thing or two about salsa — making, eating and dancing it."

She said she greatly enjoyed her time in Maricopa.

## BOOZE CONTROL March 19, 2022

Cops responded to a car in a ditch near Honeycutt and White and Parker Roads and arrested Kio A. Thomas last year.

Maricopa Police Department provided six hours of body camera footage from the incident, which *InMaricopa* edited to an 11-minute video that amassed millions of views and grabbed national attention.

According to Pinal County Superior Court documents, Thomas faced two counts of aggravated assault on an officer. Those charges were dismissed in exchange for a guilty plea to a lesser count of attempted aggravated assault on an officer.

Thomas was sentenced to supervised probation.



## BAKED ALASKAN May 2, 2012

Bristol Palin, daughter of former Republican vice-presidential candidate and Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, moved out of Maricopa.

The third-place finisher on the popular reality TV show "Dancing with the Stars" sold her nearly 4,000-square-foot Cobblestone Farms home for \$175,000.

The house on West Sedona Trail was sold to Michael and Carrie Lipp on April 10, 2012.

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# TRAGEDY



## POLICE SHOOTOUT

Aug. 31, 2022

Brian Simmons was found dead in his backyard after shooting at police and barricading himself inside his Villages at Rancho El Dorado home for two hours. He had a history of erratic behavior around the city.

Originally of Idaho Falls, Simmons suffered from mental illness, a likely result of radiation exposure while he was employed at the Idaho National Laboratory. He was shot and killed by Maricopa police officers during a noise complaint call that turned hostile.

Weeks earlier, the 39-year-old was arrested after forcing his way into the Copper Sky Gym complex despite not having a membership. Simmons was seen topless on John Wayne Parkway, throwing his shirt at passing vehicles. He was also spotted lunging toward moving vehicles cars and sprinting down the sidewalk on Plainview Street as cops chased him two days before his death.

## KILLED BY LOVER

May 19, 2014

After a Maricopa woman was found dead at her home in The Villages at Rancho El Dorado, police arrested and charged her 21-year-old lover for murder.

Maricopa police officers responded to a reported suicide attempt on West Cydnee Drive in the wee hours of the morning. The caller, a neighbor, said Miguel Daniel Tapia asked him to dial 9-1-1.

Officers found the victim, 43-year-old Holly Berry, deceased at the home. A trail of blood led from the kitchen to the backyard.

At the scene, Tapia said his victim “got stupid” and they fought until Berry stopped breathing.

Tapia was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to eight and a half years in prison.

## CHRISTMAS CRASH

Dec. 27, 2014

Two Maricopa teenagers were killed in a single-vehicle crash on Christmas Day in 2014.

The tragic accident happened in the early hours of the night on Papago Road. The car’s three occupants were headed from

Thunderbird Farms to The Villages at Rancho El Dorado.

A 15-year-old boy and a 14-year-old girl died at the scene. The driver of the vehicle survived and was hospitalized.

## OFFICER DOWN

March 15, 2014

A Chandler police detective died in a two-vehicle crash involving a motorcycle on State Route 347 near Maricopa.

The Arizona Department of Public Safety said Det. Sean

McKenzie died in the crash near the Riggs Road intersection.

The crash occurred around noon and shut down Maricopa’s main highway for hours.

## DOUBLE MURDER

Jan. 5, 2018

After more than two years, a Maricopa double-murder case went to trial in 2018.

Jose Ignacio Valenzuela Jr., who lived on Papago Road in the Thunderbird Farms area, was convicted of killing two of his neighbors — Tina and Michael Careccia — after an argument.

The husband and wife were found shot to death and buried on Valenzuela’s property. Prosecutors sought the death penalty before

settling on a plea deal, which was approved by the victims’ family members. Valenzuela got life in prison.

The case had its share of twists and turns. Pinal County Attorney Kent Volkmer, then a private attorney, was the legal guardian to Valenzuela’s son. When he was elected, he recused himself and Navajo County Attorney Ron Lusk took his place as prosecutor.

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# GOOD GOVERNMENT GONE BAD

## DOG GONE

Aug. 23, 2022

Maricopa upheld the termination of former Police Officer Craig Curry after an appeal hearing.

There were 19 citizen complaints and internal investigations against Curry from Sept. 28, 2013, to Nov. 7, 2021. Among them:

Ten use-of-force complaints, including three in just over two months in 2018.

Two vehicle collisions, including a disciplinary action for backing his patrol vehicle into a parked Maricopa firetruck while setting up for a community event at the Villages at Rancho El Dorado clubhouse.

Accusations of killing his police dog partner, a 9-year-old Dutch Shepherd who died after Curry left him in a patrol car for 103 minutes in June 2020.



## DOUBLE AGENT

May 19, 2006

Maricopa was abuzz as City Councilman Stephen Baker and his real estate firm stood to make more than \$435,000 representing the landowner in a 150-acre deal for the city's town hall complex.

Maricopa City Council voted to spend more than \$14 million to buy the land at \$97,000 per acre. The contract noted the property owner used Baker as its agent and would pay a 3% commission, despite the property being advertised "For Sale by Owner." Brokers and agents typically split such commissions.

Before the land purchase was discussed at a city council meeting, Baker sat in the audience, taking part in neither the discussion nor the vote — common when an elected official has a conflict of interest. Neither he nor anyone from the city disclosed what his conflict was.

Amid backlash, the deal fell through. In 2007, after realizing most of the councilmembers had conflicts in other land purchases, the city put together a committee to find another piece of land for its town hall and to make sure there wasn't a repeat of the public relations debacle that Baker caused.

Baker resigned from the council at the end of that year after accepting a new job.

## SHIPPING SPREE

Feb. 28, 2012

After a five-day trial, former Maricopa Community Services Director Marty McDonald couldn't prove he was illegally terminated.

Pinal County Superior Court Judge Robert Carter Olson said McDonald failed to bring forth enough evidence to even bring the case before a jury.

The city placed McDonald on administrative leave in May 2009, one day before he was indicted on two felony charges stemming from the alleged misuse of a city FedEx shipping discount. He was terminated in August 2009.

However, those charges were dropped when McDonald produced an email showing he requested his personal FedEx account be unlinked from the city's.

## THROWN UNDER THE BUSS

March 12, 2008

Former City Manager Rick Buss asked Maricopa for \$5.78 million in damages, claiming the city prevented him from obtaining a job by libeling him in the press.

Buss took issue with the city's investigation into his alleged order to an IT director to record phone conversations of fellow staffers.

According to a 10-page legal

notice, Buss said information given by a public information officer to the now-defunct Maricopa Tribune cost him an opportunity to become the deputy town manager in nearby Queen Creek.

The city's probe into the alleged spying scheme was turned over to the Arizona Department of Public Safety for further investigation.

## COP BLOCKED

July 2, 2013

Maricopa Police Detective Jose Lizarraga was arrested and charged with fraudulent schemes, forgery, tampering with public records, attempted money laundering and theft.

Then-Pinal County Attorney Lando Voyles requested the Pinal County Sheriff's Office initiate an investigation into Lizarraga. When the detective's actions while on duty seemed suspicious, the Sheriff's Office asked the FBI for additional assistance.

In the joint investigation, Lizarraga was arrested and questioned about an alleged theft of \$1,300 while on duty. After the theft, Lizarraga was suspected of throwing the stolen money out of his department-issued vehicle.

Lizarraga pleaded guilty to fraudulent schemes and theft. He was later sentenced to two years in prison and three years of supervised probation in 2015.

## HONORABLE MENTION

### COURT JESTER

May 17, 2012

Former Maricopa Police Sgt. Aki Stant sued the city and demanded \$1.5 million after he was fired for failing to answer questions during an internal investigation.

Pinal County Superior Court Judge Gilberto Figueroa upheld his original order to send Stant's dismissal case back to the city to reconsider whether the sergeant's rights were violated.

After his termination was upheld three times in different courts, Stant took the case up the ladder, eventually reaching the state Supreme Court where his claim was finally killed. Stant only ever got \$840 from the city.

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# DEVELOPMENT

## A COOL FIRST

July 13, 2004

Maricopa got its first grocery store when Bashas' opened its doors for business to the delight of thousands. The pre-Grand Opening celebration (official opening was July 14) filled the parking lot and store aisles alike.

The community's first grocery store made a huge impact. As one old-timer put it, "We had to shop in Ahwatukee and had to pack coolers to avoid the ice cream melting on the way home!"

Bashas' success served as proof of concept as grocery chains followed. Fry's Marketplace debuted in the fall of 2005, and Walmart opened doors in 2009.

Most recently, Sprouts Farmers Market's long-awaited ribbon-cutting took place in late summer 2021.

Another big development came February last year when BoSa Donuts, an Arizona favorite for sweet breakfast fare, announced plans to come to Maricopa.

The drive-thru restaurant, which has more than 20 locations in metro Phoenix, is under construction near Bahama Buck's at Porter Road and Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway.



## BEACH BUMMER

May 15, 2021

Back in the spring of 2021, plans for a major water park in Maricopa were publicized.

The city would sell three parcels from a vacant 79-acre property at West Smith-Enke Road and North Loma Road.

The sales were made to three Mesa corporations: Copa Surf LLC, PRLG Holdings LLC and E Jacks LLC for \$3.86 million.

Plans included two wave pools,

water slides, a lazy river and an outdoor music venue with water-related shops and dining. Developers promised "ocean views and the sound of crashing waves breaking in the desert sun."

Earlier this year, plans were slashed to just one pool and eliminated the water slides, the lazy river and the outdoor music venue. Many doubt development will progress.

## ROAD YET TRAVELED

July 3, 2022

Construction officially began on the Sonoran Desert Parkway in June last year.

Proposed as the East-West Corridor, the Sonoran Desert Parkway will link John Wayne Parkway on the south side of Maricopa to Interstate 10, providing an alternative to State Route 347 to get to the Valley.

While the road may look like a fairly straight shot on the map, there have been plenty of twists and turns to get to the point where city, county and tribal officials could gather one hot morning to celebrate

groundbreaking.

And even after that groundbreaking, there were a few more twists, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs issuing a cease-and-desist letter to the city of Maricopa to halt construction on the parkway. But the project is slated to be complete by early fall.

After Maricopa completes its phase of the project, the next steps will be up to Pinal County and Casa Grande. In total, nearly 20 miles of new highway and a new bridge over the Santa Rosa Wash will be built.



## ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

Nov. 15, 2011

More than a decade ago, construction began on what was then the largest entertainment center in Arizona.

Tribal and Maricopa city officials shook hands next to Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino Resort on Ak-Chin Indian Community land that day.

About 100 people celebrated the groundbreaking of a 162,000-square-foot family entertainment complex featuring a 12-screen movie theater, 24-lane bowling alley, arcade, laser tag, restaurants and an outdoor amphitheater.

## OLD TOWN ROAD

May 1, 2022

Of the many road construction projects on State Route 347 through the years, readers seem most interested in the one that began last May.

The project added new traffic signals, built merge lanes and repaired potholes on Maricopa's most-traveled highway.

Starting this fall, ADOT is partnering with Maricopa to add new lanes, rehab pavement and install sidewalks in Maricopa.

The work is part of the city's plan to make as many improvements as possible to the state highways under its control. Maricopa gained that right last year when ADOT ceded control within city limits.



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# Voters outside county could solve SR 347 puzzle

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN



**A**FTER A YEAR OF POLITICAL wrangling in the state legislature, voters will decide whether to extend Prop 400, a half-cent sales tax that funds transportation projects in Maricopa County.

While the referendum may seem like a foreign issue, whether the bond passes next year will have lasting effects on the thousands of Maricopa residents who travel to work every day on State Route 347.

For those making the daily commute north toward Phoenix, the last five miles before reaching Interstate 10 are in Maricopa County and an important part of any enhancement for the long-troubled highway. According to Arizona Department of Transportation statistics, it's one of the most dangerous in the state.

At a Maricopa town hall in June, ADOT officials released a treasure trove of statistics showing 967 crashes on the highway between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2022. Over the same

five-year period, there were 21 crashes with serious injuries and 15 were fatal.

On the final day of this year's legislative session, Senate Bill 1102 passed 19-7 in the Senate and cleared the House 43-13, paving the way for a Prop 400 placement on the ballot.

Maricopa County is unique — it's the only county in Arizona where the state legislature decides whether to bring sales tax referendums

*Continued on page 20*

Bryan Moritt



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to a vote.

Rep. Teresa Martinez (R-Casa Grande) voted in favor of SB 1102 for the second time in as many years.

Martinez represents Legislative District 16, which includes Maricopa and spans into a sliver of Tucson.

"I believe we should have limited government," Martinez told *InMaricopa*. "But I also think that the proper role of the government is fixing our roads."

Martinez vice-chairs the House Committee on Transportation and considers transportation to be the most important issue facing Maricopa.

"I have two major projects — the widening of 347 and I-10 — that affect my constituents," she said. "There's 10 miles along I-10 in Maricopa County and five miles of 347 in Maricopa [County] that need widening."

Last year, Martinez supported a different house bill that would have put Prop 400 on the ballot this year, only to have fellow Republican then-Gov. Doug Ducey veto the bill. He cited concerns that Maricopa County residents could not afford the sales tax tick and would struggle to understand what they were voting for.

"Today, I vetoed a measure to extend a sales tax for transportation funding," Ducey said in a statement last year. "Across the country, families are facing unprecedented costs for food, gas, housing and other necessities. Now, with inflation higher than it has been in 40 years, is not the time to ask voters in Arizona to tax themselves. Further, if and when voters consider such a proposal, they deserve to cast their ballot for a measure that is responsible and transparent."

The same inflationary concerns that led Ducey to veto last year's bill concern Martinez, although for different reasons.

Martinez replaced Rep. Bret Roberts (R-Maricopa), who left in 2021 for the greener pastures of South Carolina. Prior to his departure, Roberts secured \$35 million in state funds for the upcoming Riggs Road overpass, which would be built in Maricopa County.

It concerns Martinez that she hasn't yet seen those funds at work. She wonders if there will even be enough money to fund the project once the construction begins in the coming years.

"We haven't gotten any of that money yet, and what about the inflationary costs?" she said. "There's likely to be additional funds needed to finish the overpass. It's going to have to come from somewhere."

The passage of SB 1102 was a crucial first step to improving SR 347, said Vincent Manfredi, a

Maricopa City Council member who also sits on the Arizona Rural Transportation Advocacy Council.

"SB 1102 gives the people of Maricopa County the ability to decide their transportation funding future," Manfredi said. "A large portion of the SR 347 sits in Maricopa County, so if the people of Maricopa County vote to extend their transportation tax, it makes expanding the SR 347 more likely to happen."

After last year's arduous battle ended in an anticlimactic veto, Martinez wanted more this year and feels she got it.

"It's not a perfect bill by any means," Martinez said of SB 1102. "But it's a good bill and there are a lot of good things in it."


The original draft by the Maricopa Association of Governments, a group of governmental leaders in and around Maricopa County, leaned away from highways and more toward public transit. That spotlights light rail and buses, to name a few.

It called for more than 40% of the estimated \$21.7 billion raised over the next 20 years to funnel into public transit with highways getting just 37% and arterial roads getting the rest.

The bill would have left 5% of the money fluid, meaning that a chunk of those funds could be taken away from highways and moved to public transit, or vice versa.

Martinez pointed out that under the brokered agreement, none of the funds could be shifted from their original earmark. It also increased highway spending by 3%, which may not seem like much, but over the course of 20 years, it means roughly \$670 million more for highways.

The deal also included Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs signing a separate GOP bill that banned municipalities from collecting renters' tax, an offering she'd vetoed earlier this year.

Prop 400 will go before Maricopa County voters in the fall of 2024. If passed, it will mark the third time voters have supported the tax, which was first approved in 1985 and extended in 2004. 

*Editor's Note: Councilmember Vincent Manfredi is an owner of InMaricopa.*



Arizona State Rep. Teresa Martinez

**GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN**

Rep. Teresa Martinez (R-Casa Grande) supported all efforts to hand Prop 400 to the voters of Maricopa County. She said she went "against the grain" of her party and shouldered bitterness from her own side of the aisle to support the referendum. When the topic was

broached again recently, that sour taste returned to her mouth. "We went through so much last year to get that thing passed," Martinez said. "This year, when someone asked me if I was going to support it, I was asking myself, 'Do I want to go through this rigmarole again?'" While last year may have been an exercise in

frustration, Martinez said her answer was never in doubt. She wasn't going to back away from the fight. "A few months ago, we had a little girl get killed on 347," Martinez said. "I'm going to do everything I can to get money to fix these roads." The girl that Martinez spoke of was 10-year-old Suheiry Fernandez, who in March, died in a multi-car crash on SR 347.

Bryan Mordt

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## Permits

July 8-Aug. 11

### COMMERCIAL

**Apex Landco LLC** obtained four commercial tenant improvement permits for vehicle storage and other buildings valued at \$717,600.

**Century Communities of Arizona LLC** to spend \$25,000 to convert a garage to a sales office for a model home at The Trails.

**City of Maricopa** two commercial permits valued at more than \$1 million for its municipal court.

**K. Hovnanian** to manufacture and install signs on the Rancho Mirage monument sign.

**Maricopa Heritage Pointe** to build a 117-foot fence. The contractor is AZ Roofing Works LLC.

**Meritage Homes of Arizona Inc.** to build a commercial shade structure valued at \$67,500.

**Neaux Coffee Company** for on-site improvements.

**Maricopa AZ II XL LLC** to install three new signs, two of which are illuminated, at The Wells. The contractor is Above All Signs LLC.

**Queen Creek Fiesta LLC** for new wall signs at Edison Pointe, including one for Art of Fades.

**Tacoma Financial Center Partners LLC** to install two exterior wall signs at the Sonoran Creek shopping center.

### RESIDENTIAL

**KB Home Phoenix Inc.** to build three homes in Tortosa South.

**Lennar Arizona Inc.** to build four homes in Anderson Farms Phase 1B.

**Starlight Homes** to build two homes in Tortosa South.

**CW Tortosa LLC** to build six homes in Tortosa South.

**K. Hovnanian** at Santa Rosa Springs LLC to build 10 homes at replat of Santa Rosa Springs.

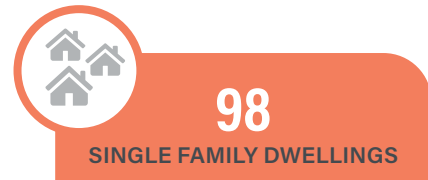
**DR Horton Inc.** to build three homes at Tortosa South and 12 homes at Rancho El Dorado Phase III.

**Richmond American Homes of Arizona Inc.** to build three homes in Rancho El Dorado Phase III.

**Meritage Homes of Arizona Inc.** to build eight homes in Rancho El Dorado Phase III and 21 homes in Province.

**Century Communities of Arizona LLC** to build 26 homes at the Trails at Tortosa.

## Permits Issued



## Ordinances

**ORD 23-31:** On July 18, the city approved and adopted an amendment to remove several land parcels from the Heritage District's zoning map to "promote pedestrian-oriented" development.

**ORD 23-34:** On July 18, the city approved and adopted an amendment to the city's Transportation Corridor Overlay Map. This will realign the overlay map to be consistent with the current location of John Wayne Parkway.

**ORD 23-35:** On July 18, the city passed and adopted an ordinance to formally update the city code related to the role of a hearing officer for decision-making purposes in group homes. An amendment was initially passed in April.

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# Dark side of the sun

Brutal summer heat claimed lives in Maricopa

BY MONICA D. SPENCER



Andre Davis, medicolegal investigator supervisor at the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office, gives a tour of the facility.

**TOP DEATH INVESTIGATOR**  
André Davis' breath lingers visibly as he unhinges the cooler door.

Some of the bodies are intact. Some faceless remains yearn to be named.

Inside the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office, a porthole beckons the eyes to more body bags, identifiable only by strings of numbers scribbled on top. They lie serried on steel shelves like motionless soldiers in the barracks.

The head, stomach and feet undulate with canvas folds, teasing what's inside.

Davis hauls open the door. A puff of frozen air carries a distinctly sweet — yet foul — smell that assails the senses.

In death, the bodies are frigid. Yet in the final moments of life, many suffered fatal heat.

In Maricopa, there's a dark side to the sunshine.

## Longest heatwave on record

Maricopa — and the Southwest in general — are experiencing the hottest summer on record this year.

While daily temperatures didn't top a 122-degree July afternoon more than three

decades ago, central Arizona experienced its longest-lasting excessive heat warning ever, according to the National Weather Service.

Daily high temperatures were consistently 110 to 117 degrees for 31 consecutive days.

High pressure prevented monsoon storms from entering the region, bringing about a generational weather event.

Rain showers, which were unprecedentedly few this year, are the medicine that treats the desert's summer fever, said NWS meteorologist Sean Benedict.

Continued on page 26

Bryan Werd



Clockwise from top left: Forensic technician Brianna McGinnis (right) and PCMEO intern Abigail Brown (left) clean up after an examination. | The exterior of the Pinal County Medical Examiner's office in Florence. | Stored tissue samples. | Walk-in coolers for storing human remains. | Pinal County Medical Examiner Dr. John Hu discusses heat-related deaths. | Inside a walk-in cooler for storing remains of the deceased.





### HEAT DEATHS AS OF AUG. 14

Toxicology reports that point to causes of death can take three months to complete. In mid-August, the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office had confirmed 29 pending cases.

**MAY 18**

A 33-year-old man died at 11:22 p.m. from hyperthermia and dehydration.

**MAY 22**

A 74-year-old man died at 9:06 a.m. of diabetes, heart disease and hyperthermia.

**JUNE 21**

A 57-year-old man died at 12:02 p.m. of heart disease, physical exertion and heat exposure.

**JULY 11**

A 71-year-old woman died at 10:35 p.m. of heart disease worsened by heat exposure and chronic alcohol abuse.

**JULY 14**

A 61-year-old woman died at 3:21 p.m. of heart disease and hyperthermia.

**JULY 14**

A 63-year-old woman died at 9:15 p.m. of heart disease and hyperthermia.

**JULY 15**

A 64-year-old man died at 1:36 p.m. from cirrhosis due to chronic alcoholism and hyperthermia.

**JULY 21**

A 69-year-old man died at 1:55 p.m. from heart disease worsened by heat exposure and chronic alcohol abuse.

**JULY 21**

An 80-year-old woman died at 1:49 p.m. from heart disease worsened by heat exposure.

**JULY 21**

A 79-year-old man died at 6:48 p.m. from heart disease worsened by heat exposure.

**JULY 22**

A 57-year-old man died at 5:55 p.m. from heart disease worsened by heat exposure and obesity.

**JULY 26**

A 71-year-old man died at 7:25 p.m. from hyperthermia and stroke.

**JULY 31**

A 75-year-old man died at 9:48 a.m. from hyperthermia and heart disease.

"High pressure allows the temperature to warm up a lot more than usual," Benedict told *InMaricopa*. "High pressure is associated with heat; low pressure is associated with storms."

Another contributing factor: Unusually warm overnight lows.

In July, nights rarely dipped below 90 degrees, which prevented the area from properly cooling, said NWS meteorologist Chris Kuhlman.

In greater Phoenix, this equated to a monthly average temperature of 102 degrees, making July the hottest month on record. The second-hottest month took place in August 2020, when the average temperature was 99 degrees.

That seemingly innocuous 3-degree tick proved deadly, according to medical experts.

#### Death by heat

The Pinal County Medical Examiner confirmed 14 heat-related deaths through midsummer. The office predicts about 40 heat-related deaths by the time the hot season is over.

At least two occurred in Maricopa. The first fatality came June 21, the second, July 21.

The county's numbers varied in previous years — 25 in 2020, 18 in 2021 and a whopping 32 in 2022. Last year, most deaths occurred in July, with 11 taking place over a two-week stretch.

This is not unusual, according to Davis, the PCME investigations supervisor.

"I believe July and August are historically the months we see the most heat-related deaths," Davis said.

Data from the last three years shows that to be true for July. The exception was 2021, where June and August had higher totals than July.

On July 28 of this year, PCME had 15 examinations with pending toxicology reports to further clarify all causes of death. However, Director and Chief Medical Examiner John Hu said he expects nearly all to list heat as a contributing, if not primary, factor in the death.

"Most of those 15 will end up as hyperthermia, or heat-related deaths," Hu said July 28. "This July, we had eight cases total confirmed, so it will at least double from last year."

Davis said many die while attempting to live without air conditioning for a short time.

"I can't tell you how many scenes I've been to where you suspect heat is a factor," he said. "The family says the person's air conditioning went out two weeks ago, but they didn't have the funds to get it repaired or they don't have someone to assist them in fixing it. That ultimately either led to or contributed to their death."

*Continued on page 28*

#### BY THE NUMBERS (as of Aug. 14)

##### Heat-related deaths in Pinal County

Source: Pinal County Medical Examiner

	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.
2020	4	3	11	2	2	2
2021	2	7	2	5	1	1
2022	1	10	13	4	3	1
2023*	2	2	10	n/a	n/a	n/a

\* PCME forecasts at least 40 heat-related deaths this year after pending toxicology reports are conclusive

##### Heat-related ER visits in Pinal County

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services

	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.
2020	32	31	56	67	27
2021	23	79	60	47	32
2022	20	45	67	63	23
2023	17	36	101	n/a	n/a

#### FIREFIGHTER SCENARIOS



78°

Common summer room temperature



98.6°

Average body temperature



106°

Body temperature during a fire



115°

Hottest day in 2023



950°

Burning building temperature

Sources: Maricopa Fire and Medical Department, Accuweather

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Andre Davis, Medicolegal Investigator Supervisor at the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office, pointed out that heat deaths peak in July and August.

**Circumstances of a heat death**

Sifting through the medical examiner's extensive database of heat-related deaths over the last few years quickly shows it doesn't discriminate among races, sexes and ages in Pinal County. The youngest victim was a

19-year-old white man in Red Rock last year. The oldest, a 92-year-old Black woman in Casa Grande the year before.

However, some trends emerge.

Older adults with underlying conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes or cirrhosis, are more likely to die in the heat.

Hu said extreme temperatures make a bad situation worse by causing the body to exhaust its ability to cool itself.

"They have a lower tolerance, so the heat and the disease contribute to each other," he said of people with underlying health conditions. "Usually, it is an unfortunate situation, like they are in a home without air conditioning."

Most often, these occur in homes that aren't cooled properly.

Long shifts of outdoor work in the heat and using alcohol or drugs in a non-air-conditioned environment are commonplace, too.

**How a heat death occurs**

No matter the victim or location, each scenario bears a common likeness: hyperthermia setting in from exposure to the desert sun's sweltering

*Continued on page 30*

**A HEAT VIGNETTE**

*For each person who died from heat this summer, an extraordinary number survived it.*

It's just after lunchtime on July 26, nearly a month into the record-topping excessive heat warning.

With my recent stories about heat deaths still fresh in my mind, I spotted a construction crew working just off Smith-Enke Road. Heat emanating from the blacktop distorted the workers as I pulled over to chat with them.

To call a sunny afternoon in Arizona "hot" is a dire understatement. My skin burned walking the short distance from my car to the worksite, and I could already feel sweat trickle down my back upon making my introduction.

The crew, however, had been toiling for more than eight hours, drilling to install fiber-optic cables in one of Maricopa's many soon-to-be-not-vacant lots.

I spoke with Corey Triplett, a supervisor with six years of construction work under his belt. We stood in the sun as he talked about how he always enjoyed getting his hands dirty and working outdoors, even amid a seemingly unending heatwave.

"People think it's easy. But it's not," Triplett said. "It's not easy working out here in the summer. You might be working in the heat 10, 12 hours a day just to get a job done."

It was less than two minutes into my interview when my iPhone displays a warning message — it overheated. I couldn't tell if it was still recording, but I continued talking with Triplett about working long hours in the summer.

Bryan Morcht



Ignacio Valdez (foreground) and Gary Fields of Prestige Landscaping plant oleanders in 103-degree heat.

"You try to sneak some shade if you can, but mostly just stay hydrated," he said. "It's rough, especially this summer."

While describing how he prepares for each day and keeps his crew safe (by continuously providing water and electrolyte packets and taking breaks in the air-conditioned work truck) my iPhone stopped recording and powered itself down despite ample battery charge.

A moment later, drill operator Dakota Hatch made a hand motion.

"We have a guy cramping up here," Triplett said. He left to fetch a water bottle and electrolyte packet from the truck.

Hatch, seated under an umbrella next to the drill, complained of leg pain.

The temperature climbed to 111 degrees at the time of the

interview, several degrees shy of the hottest day that month.

I think back to one of the first heat-related deaths reported in Pinal County this year: A 57-year-old Hispanic man who succumbed to heart problems exacerbated by physical exertion and, of course, the heat.

That man likely experienced those same cramps as fatigue, excessive sweating and dizziness. How long did it last before he became confused and unresponsive?

He died June 21 at noon, when the high had not yet reached 104 degrees.

After Triplett supplied Hatch bottled water and a packet of electrolytes, I was left with one question: Is the risk worth it?

"I mean, you gotta think, 'Who are you out here working for?'" Triplett asked. "I have a little girl at home I have to try to provide for. That's my wheel that keeps me motivated. That's what keeps me pushing because I've got to feed my family."



Gary Fields

Bryan Morcht

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PCMEO intern Abigail Brown assists in cleanup after an exam.

rays, or an overheated house.

Hyperthermia occurs when the body overheats and can no longer cool itself — typically setting in when the body exceeds 104 degrees due to environmental factors.

Early warning signs include thirst

and headaches. This can lead to dizziness, weakness, muscle cramps or vomiting, all indicators of heat exhaustion, according to Exceptional Community Hospital Medical Director Lionel Lee.

Left untreated, the result is often heatstroke. “They may start to have neurological conditions where they’re confused or unresponsive,” Lee said. “That’s when it becomes heatstroke.”

Other symptoms include hallucinations, seizure and coma. In the worst cases, this leads patients to the medical examiner’s walk-in freezer.

“While a clinical doctor will see more moderate cases, we only see the fatal cases,” Hu said.

### Investigating and determining death

Not every body arrives at the medical examiner’s office.

“There’s certain stipulations under state law that make someone a medical examiner’s case,” Hu said.

*Continued on page 32*

Bryan Mordt

# Laboring in the heat

**I**N A RAPIDLY GROWING CITY, progress takes no summer vacation. Many toil under a blazing sun or in stifling conditions. Drill operators, roofers, landscapers, HVAC technicians — the list goes on.

Fiber-optic installer Corey Triplett said he prefers working outdoors. He’s not the only one.

“I’ve been doing a lot of tradesman work since I was young, so I’ve always worked outside,” said Ignacio Valdez, a landscaper in Maricopa with Prestige Landscaping. “Working in the heat is definitely something that will wear you out throughout the day.”

Coworker Gary Fields agreed.

“I’ve always liked working outside,” he said. “It’s just the heat. The heat can get to you.”

The two said they often begin their workday as early as possible to avoid the most scorching afternoon stretch. But in central Arizona, even the wee hours of the morning quickly grow hot.

“I just continue to stay hydrated,” Fields said. “You do everything you can to prepare.”

For the local landscapers, preparation includes chugging water during and after work, eating well and being mindful of warning signs.

“We just anticipate knowing what’s going to happen with the heat throughout the day and look forward,” Valdez said. “The outside work, it’s a struggle if you don’t take care of each other.”

Firefighters, meanwhile, work in uniquely excruciating conditions. Active fires can reach 1,000 degrees and each member wears approximately 70 pounds of gear and protection, according to Maricopa Fire Corps volunteer Sherrie Hagemo.

Most firefighters spend 20 to 40 minutes at a time in a fire, which can raise core body temperatures to 104 degrees or higher — the temperature medical examiners say can be fatal. This can escalate to danger quickly.

“We want to cool them down,” Hagemo said.

Heat-related stress causes some firefighters to suffer seizures, cardiac arrest and even death. “We’ve seen that happen in other places,” Hagemo said.

To prevent this, she and other volunteers monitor crews’ health. They ensure each



Above: Corey Triplett, a construction worker, brings cold water to an overheating coworker during the height of the summer’s heat wave. The group still had a couple of hours of work left at 1:30 p.m.



Left: Drill operator Dakota Hatch takes a bottled water and bag of electrolytes from supervisor Triplett.

firefighter cycles through 10-minutes of cooling with wet compresses, soaking arms in cold water and drinking cool water with electrolytes.

### Utility breaks energy use record

A heatwave wasn’t the only record-topper this summer.

Electrical District No. 3 broke previous records for energy use this summer.

The utility company saw a “multi-day record peak” demand for electricity in July, which topped at 263 megawatts July 25 — an 11% increase from the previous record set July 11 last year when the peak reached 237 megawatts.

The high temperature July 25 was 113 degrees, according to AccuWeather. The high temperature July 11 last year was 112 degrees.

ED3 General Manager Brian Yerges told *InMaricopa* the relentless heatwave caused the unprecedented energy consumption.

“It is clearly driven by the weather and the heat,” he said.

Yerges added continued growth in Maricopa and surrounding areas may have also contributed to the spike. The utility is used to annual usage upticks in recent years.

“For the last three years, we’ve seen our peak demand increase,” he said. “This year, we did see

a larger increase than in previous years that is consistent with other utilities like SRP or APS.”

Powerhouse utilities in metro Phoenix, Salt River Project and Arizona Public Service, reported record usage that month as well, breaking multi-day records during the excessive heatwave.

Despite this, ED3 and other utilities reported “below average” outages thanks to the lack of summer storms.

“We typically have higher outages during the monsoon season with the wind and the rain,” Yerges said. “Those have a bigger impact than the heat.”

The utility also avoids disconnecting for nonpayment during the summer months, especially when an excessive heat warning goes into effect.

“We do not disconnect during any of the heat advisory days issued from the National Weather Service,” said Assistant General Manager Kari Woodward.

On days without a warning, the utility ups the threshold for dues before a shutoff.

“June through September, we will not disconnect for any (bill) below \$300 regardless of what’s going on with the weather,” Woodward said. “We have that in place as a safety net for our customers.”

Monica D. Spencer



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An Arizona law requires the medical examiner to get involved when a death is sudden, violent, suspicious, unexplained or accidental. Heat deaths typically fall under the accidental category.

This begins with law enforcement reporting a death and investigators arriving at the scene.

“The most important factor we need to know is in what environment the body was discovered,” Hu said. “Was it outside? Was it in a room without air conditioning?”

Investigators examine circumstances and medical history, photograph the body and note the temperature in hopes of telling the story of what happened to the decedent. The body is then, ironically, transported to the cooler at the medical examiner’s office.

The body’s condition makes this examination variable. Knowing the core body temperature at death is ideal but often unlikely.

Instead, examiners often test electrolyte levels found in blood or, more often, in pockets of fluid in the eyes.

“That sometimes can shed light on the person’s electrolyte status when they died,” Hu said. “For example, if he’s severely dehydrated, a certain number from the test will tell us that. Or if the person sweat a lot and did not drink too much electrolyte fluid, we can tell that as well.”

These tests may take three months to return. Heat death investigations tend to be lengthy, especially when much of the body has decomposed, Hu said.

Once the toxicology report is available, the medical examiner will list the most obvious cause of death. If several factors are present, he will list them all.

“A 72-year-old with heart disease walking in a hot environment for 30 minutes, his heart probably won’t keep up,” Hu said. “One may have contributed a little more or a little less, but we say they all contributed to death. They worked together.”

**Awareness and prevention**

The calendar may say summer ends in September, but the emblematic seasonal

temperatures in Arizona can continue well into October. Experts recommend taking precautions to prevent heatstroke and death.

“I think some people downplay the heat of Arizona and Mother Nature in general,” said Lee, the hospital director in Maricopa. “People get caught up in activities and they just don’t realize how hot it is until it’s too late.”

During the hot season, NWS meteorologists continuously recommend staying indoors as much as possible, drinking more water than usual and dressing in lightweight clothes.

Lee agrees with these recommendations. “You have to stay hydrated and take these illnesses seriously,” Lee said. “It can be very serious, especially if you don’t get help right away. I always tell patients, don’t hesitate.”

For Hu, living and working in the desert can quickly become a death sentence for anyone.

“When a person is subjected to extreme heat for a long period of time, it will take a toll on just about anyone,” Hu said. “That heat really kills.”



**‘Hot’ take on beating muscle cramps**

BY DR. ALEX M. STEWART

**DON'T LET CRAMPING CRAMP YOUR STYLE.**

As Arizona’s summer temperatures continue to reach record-breaking highs, I have seen many patients complain of increased cramping. They all have the same question: Why?

Cramping is very common — especially here in the sunny southwest — and it happens for several reasons. But perhaps the most common reason is dehydration.

Drink water! Avoid drinks high in caffeine and other dehydrating chemicals. Opt for low-calorie sports drinks and electrolyte replacement supplements to maintain balance. Sodium, magnesium and potassium also prevent cramping.

If you are staying hydrated and still suffering from cramps, it could be due to other medical conditions: poor blood flow, poor diet, back problems or injuries, high stress, overuse and muscle fatigue, kidney or thyroid disorders, diabetes, pregnancy, and medication side effects.

So, if your cramping won’t go away, let us help you figure out the “Why?” and get you feeling better!

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**DR. ALEX M. STEWART**

Certified by the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery, Dr. Alex M. Stewart is a podiatrist at Maricopa Foot and Ankle Center.

He received his doctor of podiatric medicine degree from Midwestern University in Glendale and completed his residency at the University of Texas Health Science Center’s orthopedics department in San Antonio.

His extensive training and practice focus on foot and ankle trauma, diabetic care, reconstructive surgery and sports medicine. As a former college baseball player and avid golfer, Stewart relates to athletes of all ages and performance levels.

He has treated everything from minor ailments to major trauma in a decade at the Maricopa practice.

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# Faces of Maricopa



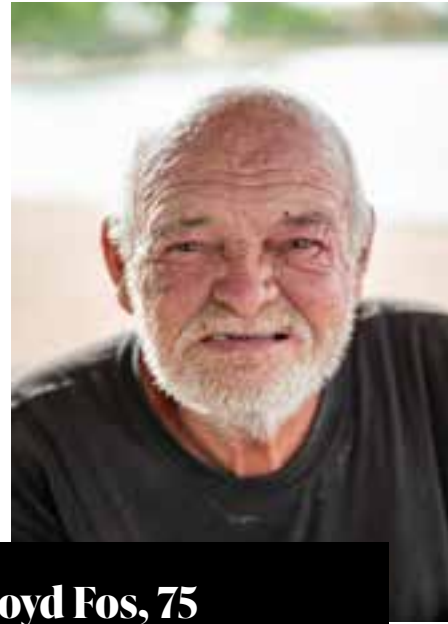
## The Jones Family

The Joneses, Paul and Colleen, moved their family to Maricopa in 2019. Paul works as a production manager at a seafood warehouse in Phoenix. He likes living in Maricopa because, it's "somewhat quieter compared to the town." Colleen said, "I love the small hometown feel and how safe it is for our kids." Their kids are Andrew, Gabriel, Slade and Scarlett.



## Christopher Lopez, 30

Lopez, with his 3-year-old son Maverick, is CEO at The Gasman LLC. "I like the people and the fact it's not a huge city," Lopez said. "Maverick loves fishing. My dad started this company in 2005; we recently just lost him, and that's why we're taking more time to come do these things with him. It's made me realize how important time is with family."



## Lloyd Fos, 75

Retiree Fos has lived in Maricopa since 2020. Fos said, "I like the people around here. Very nice people and its vicinity to the city."

## Kristin Victor

Victor is a homemaker and has been a resident of Maricopa for two years along with her three children. She enjoys the laid-back lifestyle of Maricopa. "I like that it's a small town and away from the city."

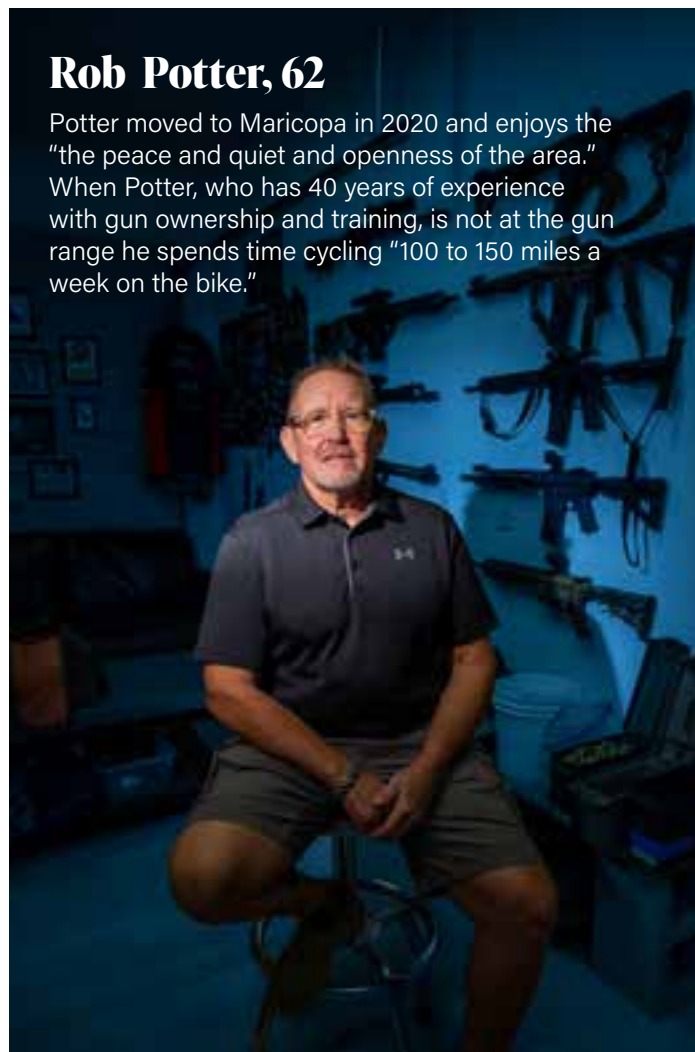


## Casey Smith, 28

"What brought me to Maricopa? My parents moved here a few years back while I was in the military. Once I got out last year, I just ended up here as sort of a transitioning point, and I plan to be here for the foreseeable future."

## Rob Potter, 62

Potter moved to Maricopa in 2020 and enjoys the "the peace and quiet and openness of the area." When Potter, who has 40 years of experience with gun ownership and training, is not at the gun range he spends time cycling "100 to 150 miles a week on the bike."



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## A new era of weight loss: Shedding pounds with Semaglutide

BY DR. KRISTINA DONNAY DNP, FNP-C

**O**BESITY AND BEING OVERWEIGHT can pose serious health risks linked to leading causes of death like heart disease, stroke, diabetes and even cancer.

Losing 5 to 10% of your body weight through diet and exercise can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease in adults with obesity.

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Semaglutide mimics an amino acid that regulates appetite in the brain. This helps signal you to feel full and eat less. The class of medications is not new, however. It's been used for more than 15 years to treat type 2 diabetics.

Injected under the skin weekly, Semaglutide has been used to treat obesity as a chronic metabolic disease, reframing obesity as a chronic illness rather than perpetuating the misconception that it's a problem best overcome by willpower.

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*The New England Journal of Medicine* showed that the average weight loss was 12.5% against the placebo group, while one-third of participants lost 20% of their initial body weight. All anti-obesity medications should be prescribed along with lifestyle changes to maximize benefits.


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## 4 superior parenting tips

BY JULIE SKELTON, LCSW

**D**OES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

It's the end of a long day. You finally sit down with your spouse and the first thing out of your mouth is, "Bobby misbehaved today." Fill in the blank with issues from your home.

The result? You both feel deflated. Bobby gets upset when reprimanded.

That leads to more tension and bitter words. Finally, it's time to put Bobby to bed and all you can think is, "Thank goodness!"


This can become a vicious, daily cycle. Something has to give, or else things will worsen and your relationship with your child could be damaged permanently.

As a behavior consultant, here are four simple steps that make a difference:

- **Focus on the positives.** Think about it. Our attention makes things grow stronger. If you went to the gym and worked out your legs, what would grow stronger? Your legs. Your arms could grow weaker from being neglected — and our minds are the same. If we focus on bad behaviors, they worsen in our minds, influencing our interactions on a subconscious level. We start expecting the bad seeing it in things that aren't really that bad. Others get discouraged and feel like all you see is the bad. Why try to do good? How long would you give your best effort at a job if you felt like your boss was frustrated with you? Instead, make a conscious effort to focus on the positives at the end of the day. Tell your spouse about the happy moments and try to let the rest go. That will change your underlying feelings and, in turn, how you interact with your child. The child will sense the positive reinforcement and work to please you. Again, relate this to work. If your boss notices the good things you do, don't you try harder to do more?
- **Be confident.** Our feelings about ourselves influence how others, including our kids, respond to us. Aggression won't work. It does mean to be confident. Isn't it easier to follow a boss who's confident rather than unsure or micromanaging?



- **Be consistent.** Kids need to know the rules to follow them. If rules and expectations keep changing, it is confusing, and they will give up.
- **Spend quality time together.** Parenting is about our relationships with our children. The only way for those relationships to strengthen is through meaningful, positive interactions. Kids are happy with simple things as long as your focus is on the child and not distracted by work, a cell phone or other people. These are not miracle cures, but if done consistently, they're impactful. They can evoke

dynamic changes. They can inspire children to behave positively. There's no overnight fix — no matter how you approach it — but these helpful hints can help put your family on a better track. 



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Maricopa Assistant City Manager Jennifer Brown and Police Chief Mark Goodman are confronted by First Amendment auditor Zane Kane at City Hall Aug. 14.

## Raising Kane

A world record-holding masseuse declares war on Maricopa police

BY ELIAS WEISS

**M**ARICOPA CITY HALL RECREATED a scene from the original Batman movie on that balmy mid-August afternoon.

But hold Bruce Wayne's awkward dinner with Vicky Vale at a gapingly long banquet table — here's Police Chief Mark Goodman and Assistant City Manager Jennifer Brown locked in a yet more uncomfortable standoff with perhaps one of Maricopa's most fascinating characters.

There's no meeting scheduled inside that conference room, unmeant for such drama. Yet there the dignitaries sit as the dull glow of fluorescent bulbs bounces off the table's glass expanse.

Tension widens the yawning gulf between the bureaucrats and Zane Kane, who perches himself — and his video camera — at the far end of the sprawling table. He doesn't remove his signature mirrored sunglasses.

"This is the worst town," he says. "The worst town with the worst police force I've ever seen."

It's a fall from grace for the world-record holder who says his life and dreams were marred by Maricopa's power-drunk police cadre. But he perseveres.

"The whole thing seems very Nazi Germany."

### The man behind the sunglasses

On a self-guided tour of City Hall Aug. 14, Kane confronted and lobbed insults at a half-dozen city staffers. He posted the video to his YouTube channel a day later.

Kane takes credit for starting the trend of First Amendment auditing. It's the practice of filming public officials at work — with varied levels of antagonism — in search of a "gotcha" moment. These moments can quickly go viral.

"I could make money all day," Kane told *InMaricopa*. He dreams of being like Christopher Ruff, the cop watcher based in nearby Gilbert who experts say can generate more than \$150,000 per month broadcasting to his 65 million viewers.

But Kane's recent encounter doesn't get any views on his YouTube channel named "Overturn Terry v. Ohio."

The channel's name is a hallmark of sovereign citizen ideology as described by the Arizona Counter-Terrorism Information Center. It's a callback to the 1968 Supreme Court decision deeming it constitutional for cops to stop and frisk people.

Kane doesn't consider himself a sovereign citizen, but he bears its calling cards. Sovereign citizens almost never consider themselves as such, experts say. The loose ideology centers

around one core belief: Laws challenged in cases like *Terry v. Ohio* don't apply to them.

It's an anti-government brand of restorationism that metastasized online and grasped the nation. A Connecticut man who decapitated his landlord with a sword declared himself sovereign Aug. 8 — the same day a woman claiming sovereignty in North Carolina was charged with terrorizing a neighborhood and burning disturbing items in a "witch's cauldron."

But experts tell *InMaricopa* modern sovereign citizen ideology has strong roots in Pinal County. *InMaricopa* staff spotted at least three counterfeit license plates in town one recent weekend, each displaying sovereign citizen slogans like "NOT FOR HIRE."

The seed is first planted when frustration boils over speeding tickets or lofty child support payments, experts say. Such disregard for the law can quickly spiral toward life behind bars.

Just ask Kane, whose girlfriend faces more than a century in prison.

### Facing serious time

Tunnisia Nelson, 45, had no criminal record

*Continued on page 40*

Wood splinters slashed Kane's eye into four pieces. The world-record-setter-turned-police-agitator never takes off his signature mirrored sunglasses.



Bryan Mordt/Zane Kane



before she and Kane were arrested at their home on West Cahill Drive in April. Charges of burglary, resisting arrest, trespass and disorderly conduct lodged against Kane were later dropped. But not before he was tortured and maimed, he says.

Nelson wasn't so lucky. This month, she'll face 10 felony charges of child abuse, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, recklessly handling deadly weapons and assault with intent to injure in Pinal County Superior Court. Under Arizona law, she could be sentenced to as many as 168 years in prison.

"They kidnapped me," Nelson told *InMaricopa* of her arrest.

Her choice of words is another telltale sign of the sovereign citizen mind. Similarly, Kane called the jail a "dungeon" and referred to cops as "some strangers wearing police badges."

Sovereign citizen ideology batters on the altruism of police — anything to undermine the legitimacy of the law.

Nelson, a behavioral health worker from Harlem in New York City, says she was falsely arrested in a racist campaign by Maricopa police "because I'm a Black woman."

She's accused of threatening to shoot her children.

"Only thing they was telling me is, 'You should have died, Black lady with locks. Die, b\*tch,'" Nelson said.

"My life doesn't matter," she said through tears. "Thank you, Maricopa, for letting me know that. I know if I was a White woman, it would not have went down the way it was. All they see is my little Black ass."

Nelson spent her life savings on her Rancho El Dorado home and closed in January. It's the worst decision she ever made, she said.

### Dire accusations

Kane's version of events is somehow more harrowing.

When Maricopa police officers found him in the Bashas' parking lot on John Wayne Parkway, he allegedly refused their orders. Nothing new — he bragged about refusing to pull over for Phoenix police in a 2014 arrest, saying he "never signed a contract with them." More sovereign citizen fodder.

But in the Bashas' parking lot, Kane said he feared for his life.

"I literally thought this guy was going to kill me," he said of the arresting officer. "I thought he was going to pull over and shoot me."

Kane says the officer tortured him.

"The guy was beating me with a baton," he said. "I'm burning, I'm screaming, I'm crying,

## KANE RAP SHEET

### Disorderly conduct by fighting

Maricopa - April 4, 2023

#### Burglary

Maricopa - April 4, 2023

#### Resisting arrest

Maricopa - April 2, 2023

#### Criminal trespass

Maricopa - April 2, 2023

#### Running a red light

Phoenix - Feb. 22, 2021

### No insurance in car accident

Phoenix - Feb. 22, 2021

#### Running a stop sign

Phoenix - Feb. 9, 2021

### Failure to carry registration

Glendale - June 13, 2019

### No insurance in car accident

Glendale - June 13, 2019

#### Giving a false name

Glendale - June 13, 2019

### Obstruction of justice

Glendale - June 13, 2019

### Illegal windows, windshield

Glendale - June 13, 2019

### Failure to appear in court

Phoenix - Oct. 11, 2018

### Failure to appear in court

Phoenix - Oct. 11, 2018

### Failure to appear in court

Phoenix - Oct. 11, 2018

#### Illegal parking

Phoenix - May 24, 2018

#### Running a red light

Phoenix - Aug. 9, 2017

#### Obstructing police

Glendale - Sept. 1, 2016

#### Resisting arrest

Glendale - Sept. 1, 2016

#### Criminal trespass

Glendale - Sept. 1, 2016

### No insurance in car accident

Phoenix - June 10, 2015

### Driving with a revoked license

Phoenix - June 10, 2015

#### Illegal turn

Phoenix - June 10, 2015

### Failure to appear in court

Phoenix - Dec. 10, 2013

### Failure to appear in court

Phoenix - Dec. 30, 2013

### Illegal advertisement on public road

Scottsdale - July 8, 2013

### Failure to appear in court

Phoenix - Oct. 17, 2011

*\*Not every charge ended in a conviction*

I'm crying, and crying, and crying, and kicking and screaming."

When he arrived at the Pinal County jail in Florence, corrections officers continued to torture him, he claims.

"They violently ripped my clothes off. I was naked, peeing on the floor. I was sitting in my own pee, standing in my own pee."

He said his hands and arms were permanently crippled during the beating.

### Criminal kneads

That's a problem for Kane, who's a licensed massage therapist. In 2007, he appeared in the *Guinness Book of World Records* after performing the longest massage ever in Scottsdale at six hours straight.

In 2015, the Arizona State Board of Massage Therapy placed Kane on probation for two years after his anti-government antics led to arrests for endangerment and resisting arrest, state records show.

The city of Maricopa denies ending his massage career. It denies all other allegations related to the April episode.

"Both Nelson and Kane were lawfully arrested," city spokesperson Brandon LaVorgna said. "No evidence exists of excessive force being used in those arrests."

Goodman, the police chief, said his officers sometimes "have contact with individuals who identify themselves as sovereign citizens." But, he told *InMaricopa*, "It is our policy and my expectation that everyone we come in contact with will be treated with dignity and respect."

Respect is something Kane says was never extended. Maricopa cops booked him under his birth name, Steven Kanowsky. The 52-year-old legally changed his name back in 1997. He said he associates the name with childhood abuse he suffered.

"I've never seen a more 'F\*ck you' attitude to a civilian," he said.

But that's coming from the man who, in the same interview, said registering his car with the Arizona Motor Vehicle Division and paying for a driver's license is an illegal "extortion fee."

"Like Nazi Germany, it's still papers," he said. "It's a plastic rectangular card, but does that change it? It's the same premise."

That warped worldview led to multiple arrests for failing to carry a license and registration, court records show.

Kane said he has been arrested 26 times in Maricopa, Sun Lakes, Phoenix, Scottsdale and Glendale. Some were drugs charges, according to Maricopa County Superior Court records.

### Ground zero

There was no license plate on Kane's car when he came to the *InMaricopa* office for an interview Aug. 14. Maricopa Police Department has notes in its system Kane is anti-police, a First Amendment auditor and a sovereign citizen.

The sovereign citizen movement is on the rise in Arizona and nationally, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. Its disciples only recognize the county sheriff as a law enforcement authority and expert observers say Pinal County is "ground zero" for the ideology.

"When you run into these SovCit guys, they might not recognize the authority of police," Pinal County Sheriff Mark Lamb told *InMaricopa*. "But they recognize the authority of the sheriff."

Sovereigns may be empowered to vaunt their iconoclasm in Maricopa. Perhaps because Lamb, the current Republican frontrunner for U.S. Senate in Arizona next year, is a self-styled "constitutional sheriff," some speculate.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, a national civil rights group, the constitutional sheriff's central tenet is "borrowed from the anti-government extremist sovereign citizen movement."

Lamb refutes this, however.

"I never heard of that coming from the SovCit movement," he said. "Our allegiance comes from the oath we take, not the sovereign citizens."

But he gave the movement's acolytes a subtle nod.

"Everybody has a little truth," the sheriff said. "Some more than others. Sometimes, people go overboard."

Jessica Pishko, a senior counsel at the

Justice Collaborative in Dallas who researches constitutional sheriffs, met Lamb on a shooting range near Maricopa several years ago.

When the twosome made a pit stop at a convenience store, it was like a paparazzi swarm, she said.

"Mark Lamb wields an extraordinary amount of influence," Pishko told *InMaricopa*.

"Pinal County doesn't set policy for Arizona. Sovereign citizens are this angry, righteous, dissatisfied minority that uses the sheriff to gain a disproportionate voice."

### Deep roots

It's no wonder some posit the constitutional sheriff dogma borrows from sovereign citizen tenets. The entire movement has roots here.

"There's a core in Pinal County that's deeply rooted in sovereign citizen stuff," Pishko said. "Right-wing ideology about abolishing the CIA, the constitution hanging by a thread and defunding the federal government, it all comes from the sovereign citizen movement."

Lamb has curried favor over such propositions. And when she ran a failed GOP bid for governor last year, former Phoenix newscaster Kari Lake even said "Arizona is a sovereign state."

But expert observers say the roots go much deeper — back to when a territorial Arizona flirted with becoming the last contiguous state to enter the union.

"This ideology is very prevalent here," local extremism researcher Haley Orion told *InMaricopa*. "Arizona is unique from other states due to its history and location."

The last mainland state to be incorporated, Arizona also cedes its southern border to the

federal government and nearly one-fourth of its land to tribal governments. It pushes many in the state to reject federalism, Orion said.

Pishko agrees.

"Arizona always had this image of cowboy sheriffs on horseback," she said. "They transformed it from part of Mexico into an anti-federal impulse of western expansion."

Sovereign citizens act throughout the state. In 2020, Tucson passed a law to deter First Amendment auditors, like Kane, in the city.

In Phoenix, police arrested known sovereign citizen Michael Crane in connection with the murder of an elderly Paradise Valley couple. And in Seligman, sovereign citizen "guru" Shawn Talbott Rice was arrested in a money laundering scheme after a day-long, heavily armed standoff with the FBI.

Here in Pinal County, look beyond the license plates and you'll find their declarative statements filed with the county recorder's office. Such statements are meaningless, according to legal experts.

A review of records found one of these bizarre filings from Phyllis Clardy Fox, who claims to be "a temporary inhabitant living in Arizona State/Republic, thankfully endowed by our Creator God with Unalienable Rights partially enumerated in America's founding organic documents."

### A slippery slope

Arizona laws, naturally, are not among America's founding documents. And therein lies the problem for so many like Kane.


Court records show his daughter's mother filed an aggressive injunction of harassment against him in Maricopa County Superior Court in 2002. What followed was a brutal custody battle where Kane was subject to mental health evaluations and nearly 60 drug tests.

The family court case dragged on for nearly a decade. Shortly after, a Maricopa County judge ordered Kane to pay thousands in a civil lawsuit.

All the while, he racked up arrests around greater Phoenix.

With each bite of a steel handcuff and every shuddering stroke of the gavel, he became more traumatized, he said. More paranoid to leave his house, and more afraid of the justice system from top to bottom.

And likely, he inched closer to sovereign citizen ideas every time — the ideas that may put his partner in prison for the rest of her life.

Experts say sovereign citizen ideology starts as a seed. Some flowers ought not to bloom. 



Pinal County Sheriff Mark Lamb at a Maricopa City Council meeting.

Bryan Wordt





## Historic weather event

A blanket of grey clouds Aug. 20 brought rain showers, bright flashes of lightning, heavy gusts of wind and even dust devils to Maricopa. Weather from Hurricane Hilary marked the first time such a tropical storm ever made landing in central Arizona. A similar storm touched the southwest all the way back in 1939, but it only made it as far as San Diego before it fizzled out.



Jenece Moritt



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# Instant offense

Maricopa High School grad  
a UofA football leader

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN

**I** T DIDN'T TAKE WIDE RECEIVER Jacob Cowing long to make his presence known on the University of Arizona's football roster.

In his first game as a Wildcat last year, the Maricopa High School grad torched San Diego State for 152 yards and three touchdowns as Arizona rolled to a 38-20 victory to open the season.

It was quite a statement for Cowing, who the year before was a Miner at University of Texas El Paso, a mid-major university.

As the 2022 season progressed, it became apparent Cowing was ready to make the jump to a Power Five conference. His first game with Arizona was anything but a flash in the pan.

Cowing led the Pac-12 in receptions with 85 and was fourth in the league in receiving yards with 1,034. His one-season reception total marked the third-best campaign among Arizona receivers all-time and the school's best outing since Bobby Wade caught 93 passes in 2002.

During three seasons at UTEP, Cowing led the Miners in receiving each year. In 2021, he finished with 69 receptions for 1,354 yards and seven touchdowns. He finished ninth nationally in receiving yards.

With college football success at all levels, Cowing was well positioned to enter the NFL draft. But earlier this year, he decided against it.

The reason? Cowing likes to finish what he starts.

In 2021, Arizona finished with a 1-11 record. Last year, with the help of Cowing, the Wildcats improved to 5-7. His goal this year is to improve upon that success.

"I want to leave Arizona with a bang and knowing that I've helped build a good foundation for this program," Cowing told *InMaricopa*. "I want to be part of something special and to see this team succeed."

History seems to be on Cowing's side in achieving his goal to help Arizona complete



its turnaround. When he arrived at UTEP in 2019, the Miners were 1-11. In his final season in El Paso, the squad put together a 7-6 record, its first winning season since 2014.

When deciding whether to make the jump to the NFL, a player in Cowing's situation must consider many factors. A big one for Cowing was teammates like quarterback

Arizona Wildcats receiver Jacob Cowing led the Pac-12 in receptions with 85 last year and the Maricopa High graduate was fourth in the Pac-12 in receiving yards with 1,034.

Bryan Mordt

Jayden de Laura.

Despite having never played together, the two quickly developed chemistry.

"We connected early," Cowing said. "And it's the same thing this year. We crack jokes, but at the end of the day, we're both very serious about the game and trying to provide for our families and continue to play the game that we love and those are the things that matter."

Kevin Cummings, Arizona's wide receivers coach, said Cowing's return brings only upside.

"I think he understands that he can go out there again and put up huge numbers and has the opportunity to be an early draft pick," Cummings said.

"He's one of the top receivers in the country as far as receiving yards. He knows that all he has to do is keep working."

It seems that, for Cowing, the desire to keep working is embedded in his very DNA.

De Laura picked up on Cowing's work ethic immediately as the two became fast friends last spring.

"Jacob attacks everything like a professional," de Laura said. "He comes in early and leaves late."

The quarterback said Cowing's blue-collar approach extends to all facets of his life.

"I look up to Jacob and it's not just with school and football," de Laura said.

"He's got a son to take care of and it's just the hard work and dedication he puts into the ultimate goal of getting to the next level."

De Laura isn't the only player who looks to Cowing as a leader. Sophomore wide receiver Tetairoa McMillan has taken notice of his teammate's sustained success.

"He's done it in two conferences," McMillan said. "He's the captain of our offense and the best receiver on the team. I learn from him each day, whether it's film study, rehab, nutrition and his mobility and overall ability to make plays."

With Cowing's work ethic, anything is possible, Cummings said.

"I think the sky's the limit for Jacob," he said.

## Making his way back home

After his third season at UTEP, Cowing accomplished many goals in the sport. But since becoming a father his freshman year, he had a yearning to be closer to home.

The separation from his son, Chase, ate at Cowing as the miles between Maricopa and El Paso seemed to widen.

"I wanted him to not have to travel six hours to come and watch my games," Cowing said. "I wanted him to be part of my last two years of college."



## JACOB COWING STATISTICS

YEAR	SCHOOL	RECEPTIONS	YARDS	TDS
2022	Arizona	85	1,034	7
2021	UTEP	69	1,354	7
2020	UTEP	41	694	3
2019	UTEP	31	550	3

## ARIZONA 2023 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
2 Northern Arizona	7 at University of Southern California	4 UCLA
9 at Mississippi State	14 at Washington State	11 at Colorado
16 University of Texas - El Paso	28 Oregon State	18 Utah
23 at Stanford		25 at Arizona State
30 Washington		



Arizona wide receiver Jacob Cowing takes passes from receivers coach Kevin Cummings during preseason practice.

During the pandemic, the NCAA offered athletes an extra year of eligibility. Even though Cowing played three seasons at UTEP, he had two more seasons to play — ideally, somewhere closer to home.

But the question was, where would that be? Cowing's stat line made him an attractive option for many schools. When he entered the NCAA's transfer portal this year, he garnered scholarship offers from Arizona State University, Mississippi State University, Louisiana State University and the UofA.

Ultimately, a connection with Arizona Head Coach Jedd Fisch was the deciding factor.

**“I think he understands that he can go out there again and put up huge numbers and has the opportunity to be an early draft pick.”**

KEVIN CUMMINGS

U OF A WIDE RECEIVERS COACH

"He talked to me about elevating my game and talked to me about where I wanted to get as a player," Cowing said. "I trusted him and I feel that since I've come here, I've not only grown as a player, but my IQ as a player has changed."

Cowing lived in Maricopa most of his life. The son of Monte Cowing and Nycole Parker, he has two sisters.

"I'd been there since I was 5 years old," Cowing said. "I grew up there. I was born in the Phoenix area, so I was kind of familiar with the whole Tucson area, so it's kind of like home to me."

At Maricopa High School, Cowing was considered one of Arizona's top prep receivers. He caught 89 passes for 2,065 yards and 21 touchdowns during his high school career.

**Extra points:** Cowing was voted Preseason All-Pac-12 Second Team and is on watchlists for the Maxwell, Paul Hornung and Biletnikoff awards. Had Cowing entered the NFL draft, scouting services projected he would have been selected in the fourth round.



# Get the truck(s) out

Food trucks on Maricopa's main strip a failed experiment for now

BY CAMERON JOBSON



**F**OOD TRUCK OWNERS ALONG John Wayne Parkway were recently given the boot. The nomadic restaurateurs aren't sure where to go or who exactly wants them gone.

Complaints from a property owner sparked the eviction of more than a dozen food truck operators in mid-July.

From breakfast burritos to Puerto Rican empanadas, the busy Fry's Marketplace parking lot became a sort of culinary hub. It was a central, consistent gathering place for months, owners said.

However, harmony was disrupted when a dispute with the property owner led to an abrupt eviction.

## Don't park on the parkway

The owner of the property — home to Dollar Tree, Ross, Goodwill and Planet Fitness — did not want mobile vendors on the property, citing maintenance issues and excess garbage.

The city stepped in to halt a growing mountain of trash.

"After some of these weekend events, trash cans are getting filled," Maricopa Civilian Services Manager Wes Moss said in a July 19 email obtained by *InMaricopa*. "And trash is getting thrown throughout the property causing property management to pay for additional maintenance costs."

According to the city code, food truck owners must transport trash to an authorized

waste disposal site.

The unexpected move has left vendors and patrons in a state of uncertainty and disappointment.

Among the affected eateries was Cobber's Cravings, known for its Mexican fusion flavors.

"We had no place to go," owner Shaun Cobb said.

Cobb said his truck was stationed near the Fry's and Goodwill parking lot since February after receiving permission from store managers there.

"It was OK with them," Cobb said. "We weren't going to disrupt their operations. And they were all for wanting us there."

A Goodwill manager agreed to welcome

the food trucks. While customers wait for their meal to be cooked to order, they could stop in and browse the shelves for second-hand goods.

"We brought commerce to that shopping area," said Michael Franz, owner of Sofrito Tan Rico. "We were driving sales there."

Nonetheless, in mid-July, Cobb was contacted by a pair of city officials who requested written permission to operate in the parking lot.

Within half an hour, Cobb sent his proof — a makeshift contract scrawled on an orange sticky note.

City officials weren't satisfied. The next day, they returned to the lot and demanded the trucks shut down immediately.

"They had told me that wasn't good enough," Cobb said. "They needed consent from the property owner. And we had to shut down right there."

Food truck vendors admitted they weren't well-informed when they first rolled into town. Nor did they make much effort to be.

"I think a lot of people that understood that were just kind of testing the waters to see what would happen," Franz said. "And it just became a big thing in the parking lot where everybody was coming."

But the experiment in camaraderie only lasted a couple of months.

Clockwise from left: The Sofrito Tan Rico food truck in the Exceptional Health parking lot. | Owners of Sofrito Tan Rico, Venus and Michael Franz. Venus shows a tray of freshly prepared Tostones. | Shaun Cobb, 45, and his wife Maria, 41, in front of their food truck, Cobber's Cravings.

*Continued on page 26*





Venus Franz, co-owner of Sofrito Tan Tico, a local food truck, prepares plantains for tostones.

Maricopa spokesperson Quinn Konold said the property owner notified the city, claiming the food trucks did not obtain permission to operate in the shopping center.

“Code enforcement officers notified the operators, and they complied by vacating the premise,” Konold said. “The city expresses its gratitude for their speedy compliance.”

**An impossible task?**

An uptick in roving eateries requires cities to establish rules and regulations to ensure public safety and sanitation.

Under the city's thumb, food truck operators in Maricopa struggle to find a forever home. They face stringent permit and operational requirements.

The city code and Pinal County Environmental Health Services outline licensing requirements and mandates. Namely, food truck operators inside city limits must obtain a valid license from the Pinal County Department of Health.

Owners also need a food-service permit, similar to any brick-and-mortar restaurant in the county. The permit must remain in plain view.

Food trucks must pass annual health inspections by the county and at least one more at random, which includes reviewing food

preparation, storage, water supply, disposal systems and the truck's overall cleanliness.

In Maricopa requested food truck inspection reports, but the request was not fulfilled. County officials said the reports, which are several months old, are holed up in the Pinal County Attorney's Office.

But even if a vendor jumps through all these hoops, the decision ultimately ends with property owners.

“Code requires all mobile vendors to have written authorization to operate on private property,” Moss said.

Written consent must be readily available at the city's request.

“If there is a violation to city code, the city will step in to correct it,” city spokesperson Brandon LaVorgna said. “Obtaining permission from the property owner is the responsibility of the mobile merchant.”

The recent evictions along John Wayne Parkway are a testament to this.

Once operators have permission squared away, there are further restrictions: Walkways must be clear, parking rights are not guaranteed and occupying more than one

parking space is prohibited.

Food truck merchants are also restricted from operating within 250 feet of a residential area.

**Where will they go?**

After a few days of scrambling and many phone calls, food truck operators were forced to find new homes.

While some shutter during the summer, others relocated to various parking lots across Maricopa.

Cobber's Cravings is now located in front of an old water tower on North John Wayne Parkway. Cobb said his hours won't change.

However, breakfast spots like Sario's Cuisine won't hit the streets again until summer's end.

**Foodie feedback**

A recent, informal InMaricopa poll revealed many voters are frequent food truck patrons.

The survey of more than 300 readers found about 60% can't live without a good serving of street food. About a quarter prefer hitting the drive-thru.

Pro-food truck respondents cited a heightened sense of community.

“Bringing Maricopa together and making small businesses a success,” self-proclaimed foodie Laurie Hayes said. “That is everything.”

She's eager to see a comeback. “They work hard to create authentic recipes shared to all,” Hayes said. “I would hate to see that disappear.”

Only 3% of voters claimed to “hate food trucks.”

Negative opinions centered around pricey menus and long wait times.

“The quantity and quality never seem to match the prices at food trucks,” Corry Wheeler said. “I can usually go to a restaurant for the same price, skip the lines and disappointment.”

The naysayers and evictions aren't discouraging new players in the food truck business, however.

Local resident Patricia Hinojos announced a new food truck Aug. 12. Strawberia will dish out smoothies, açai bowls and juices — if it can find a place to park, that is. No such luck yet.

But the industry is a resilient one.

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**DUKE'S ROADHOUSE**

Last month, *InMaricopa* shared a first look at the western bar that could bring a smoky taste of nightlife to Maricopa. The 7,800-square-foot restaurant, located in the former A1 Pawn on Maricopa and Edwards Roads, would boast a large bar, dance floor and outdoor patio seating 250 patrons. The concept would host live country music artists several nights a week.



Construction is making steady progress at the agricultural and pet supply store on Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway and Shea Way. A representative told *InMaricopa* a soft opening is slated for Oct. 28, though a hiring timeline has not been announced.



The spa announced a new line of skincare products. Dubbed "Desert Love," the facial oils and serums contain ingredients such as prickly pear seed, Arizona-grown jojoba and wild watermelon seed oil.



The fast-casual fried chicken joint plans to begin serving its southern-style tenders and sandwiches in the fall. In the meantime, the company is seeking applicants for management and team member positions. Interested parties can apply online at [azslims.com](http://azslims.com).



The Tucson-born sub and frozen drink shop quietly backed out of opening a restaurant in Maricopa in late July. Just days after stating the company would open a location in the "very near future," an eegee's representative revealed the eatery about-faced, saying it was "not happening." Representatives from eegee's didn't return several interview requests.



In addition to a fresh renovation, the rustic American fare restaurant updated its brunch hours to be open from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the weekends. The restaurant is also open for dinner Wednesday through Sunday from 4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. It is closed Mondays and Tuesdays.



The specialty coffee shop celebrated its one-year anniversary Aug. 15, honoring the occasion with week-long specials.

Good stuff happening at your business? Let us know at [News@InMaricopa.com](mailto:News@InMaricopa.com).

Submitted

**Long-awaited chicken joint eyes debut next month**

**THE WAIT IS ALMOST OVER.**

After more than two years, Tom Barnett is opening Slim Chickens in Maricopa. In the process, he has passed the torch to the next generation of his longtime partner, Shane Jacobs, and his son, Lucas Barnett. Lucas will be operating the Slim Chickens locations in Arizona.

The chicken-centric restaurant will be located at The Wells shopping center between McDonald's and Big 5 Sporting Goods, near Walmart.

The company is targeting a late October opening.

Slim Chickens will feature chicken tenders, chicken wings, chicken sandwiches, 17 house dipping sauces and sides including fried okra and pickles. The restaurant will be open seven days a week from 10:00 AM to 11:00 PM.

Tom Barnett and Barnett Management Company also own Maricopa's Burger King location — one of the 57 such restaurants they operate throughout Arizona. Barnett Management Company will be the exclusive operator of Slim Chickens restaurants in the state, slated to build 32 locations in the next 10 years.

Lucas Barnett describes Slim Chickens as a competitor to Chick-Fil-A. He said it took nearly a year to find the ideal location for the first Arizona location when he decided he wanted Maricopa to be home to his flagship Slim Chickens location in Arizona.

Maricopa, Barnett said, is the ideal market for the Slim Chickens concept and the first Arizona location.

"The Slim Chickens in Maricopa is going to be the biggest restaurant we ever opened," Barnett said last year when announcing the Maricopa location. "If we open four or five of these in the next year, Maricopa is going to do the most sales by a mile."

The restaurant has a huge potential market sitting right in its backyard. The City of Maricopa has approved more than 1,300 apartments in the area near Porter Road and Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway in the past two years, providing ideal market conditions for a fast-casual restaurant.

Barnett said Slim Chickens will fill a niche for a chicken-focused restaurant that has been lacking in Maricopa.

Maricopa's Slim Chickens restaurant will be the first of up to 32 locations around



Arizona, which will operate under the AZ Slims Restaurants umbrella. AZ Slims broke ground on the location 41470 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway in May.

Barnett Management will invest more than \$120 million to bring up to 32 locations of the chicken concept to life in the Valley. A company executive said the restaurants offer not just jobs, but opportunities, to those who join the AZ Slims team early.

"Joining AZ Slims at this stage in our growth is an incredible opportunity to get in on the

ground floor for those seeking a rewarding career with a lot of upward mobility," Lucas Barnett said. "Barnett Management Company is known for cultivating positive relationships with its staff, investing in our employees, and retaining managers for decades," Lucas Barnett continued. "We are excited to build a fun, rewarding and hard-working culture in our AZ Slims restaurants throughout Arizona."

AZ Slims is in the process of hiring up to 250 people in the next year, including general managers, assistant general managers, district managers and team members. Eventually, each location will have about 75 employees for a total of about 2,400 AZ Slims employees statewide in ten years.

There are eight other Valley locations in the queue behind the Maricopa Slims. A location at 35th Avenue and Happy Valley Road in Glendale is slated to open in late 2023 or early 2024, with 6 other locations set to open in 2024.

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# Restaurant inspections



A summary of the July 10 through Aug. 9 restaurants health inspections by Pinal County Environmental Health Services.

Health inspectors weren't as generous as last month's perfect ratings, docking eight Maricopa eateries for shoddy conditions and improper food storage.

## SATISFACTORY

	<b>Hot holding</b> Temperature of cooked chicken in hot holding display case 114-119° (≥135° required).	
	<b>Cold holding</b> Temperatures of sour cream, salad dressing and butter in prep-cooler 51-56° (≤41° required).	<b>Equipment</b> Gasket on prep-cooler was damaged.
	<b>Cold holding equipment</b> Air temperature in prep-cooler 61° (≤41° required).	
	<b>Hot holding</b> Temperatures of cooked ribs in warmer 118-121° (≥135° required).	<b>Hot holding equipment</b> Large crack in wooden countertop needs repair.
	<b>Hot holding</b> Temperatures of hotdogs on steam warmer 117-118° (≥135° required).	<b>Storage of single-use objects</b> Cup lids stored next to hand sink, stacked above sink's splashguard.
	<b>Cold holding</b> Temperatures of cheese in display cooler 50-51° (≤41° required).	<b>Cleaning</b> Excessive debris on floor, under sinks.
	<b>Cold holding</b> Temperatures of cut lettuce, tomatoes and precooked ham in walk-in cooler 49-50° (≤41° required).	<b>Cold holding equipment</b> Air temperature in walk-in cooler 45-49° (≤41° required).
	<b>Cold holding</b> Temperatures of beans and cooked hot sauce in cooler 55-57° (≤41° required).	
	<b>Cooling methods</b> Temperatures of sliced turkey, ham and salami stored in deep metal pans in walk-in cooler 50-51° (≤41° required). Meat should be held in shallow sheet pans to chill quickly.	

## EXCELLENT

- Bashas' Bakery
- Bashas' Retail
- Butterfield Elementary School
- Dickey's Barbeque Pit (Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway)
- Dunkin' Donuts
- Exceptional Community Hospital
- Firehouse Subs
- Fry's Marketplace
- Fry's Marketplace Bakery
- Fry's Marketplace Cheese
- Fry's Marketplace Deli
- Maricopa Wells Middle School
- Raceway Bar & Grill
- The Roost
- Roots Eatery
- Sprouts Farmers Market
- Sprouts Farmers Market Bakery
- Sprouts Farmers Market Deli (John Wayne Parkway)
- Walmart
- Walmart Bakery
- Walmart Deli
- Wingstop

**EXCELLENT** No violations found.

**SATISFACTORY** Violations corrected during inspection.

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

**UNACCEPTABLE** Gross, unsanitary conditions necessitating the discontinuation of service.



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This publication was made possible by SAMSHA grant number B08T1084630. The views expressed in these materials do not necessarily reflect the official policies or contractual requirements of the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) or the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.





# Jerusalem artichokes perfect in Maricopa climate

BY AMANDA RICE

**J**ERUSALEM ARTICHOKEs — also known as sunchokes, wild sunflowers or sunroot — can easily be mistaken for a common sunflower at first glance. But these plants native to every coastal U.S. state (no, not Jerusalem) are edible beyond the seeds and grow perfectly in Maricopa's arid climate.

While the Jerusalem artichoke and sunflower are both members of the *Helianthus* genus, the Jerusalem artichoke is grown for its bright yellow flowers and edible tuber. These plants produce clusters of daisy-like flower heads on stalks that can reach 10 feet tall and five feet wide, giving the appearance of a large bush. As a bonus, the Jerusalem artichoke is a low-maintenance perennial plant that's hardy in the Maricopa desert.



Jerusalem Artichoke



Jerusalem artichokes roasted with garlic and parsley.

Safe for pets and wildlife, the stalks and flowers are used for grazing animal feed while the flowers support bees, butterflies and birds. They're usually grown from tubers but it's possible to grow them from seeds, although that could decrease tuber production in the first growing season. The Jerusalem artichoke can proliferate as the tubers spread out and the stalks compete with neighboring plants, but their size can be easily managed by removing the tubers.

These full-sun-loving plants grow well in Arizona and can improve the compacted soils we find in our yards and gardens. Jerusalem artichokes thrive when organic compost or fertilizer and enough water are provided to bloom and produce those sought-after tubers. While many plants struggle with the summer sun, these flowers provide a pop of color and

bloom all summer long. Jerusalem artichokes can also be grown in containers as long as the plants have adequate room for the tubers to spread.

As winter weather moves into the valley, the Jerusalem artichokes begin to die back, signaling the tubers are ready for harvesting. The flesh can be eaten raw or cooked potato-style in an array of dishes. High in inulin and iron — but with a low glycemic index — the Jerusalem artichoke is a healthy vegetable that everyone can enjoy.

Amanda Rice is a resident of Maricopa and a Pinal County Master Gardener volunteer.

520-374-6263  
 macmastergardener@gmail.com

**most expensive HOME SOLD**

22334 N. Daniel Drive Aug. 1 \$ 740,000

This lakeside former model home boasts both a 3-car garage and an RV garage. Aside from the home's three bedrooms, there is a study room and gourmet kitchen. The kitchen is connected to the great room with a bonus nook for a breakfast table. The master suite features a dual-sink bathroom and large walk-in closet. The backyard's covered patio offers views of the community lake. It sold for \$24,000 less than its original list price.

**Community:** The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado  
**Days on market:** 99  
**Builder:** Richmond American Homes  
**Square feet:** 2,580  
**Year built:** 2023  
**Lot square feet:** 10,551  
**Bedrooms:** 3  
**Price per square foot:** \$286.82  
**Bathrooms:** 2.5

- 2. 22015 N. Diamond Drive, The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado.....\$618,000
- 3. 41993 W. Sequoia Drive, Province.....\$587,000
- 4. 42419 W. Blue Suede Shoes Lane, Province.....\$565,000
- 5. 40853 W. Desert Fairways Drive, The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado..\$559,995

**least expensive HOME SOLD**

44811 W. Garvey Ave. July 21 \$ 120,000

This single-wide manufactured home is in the middle of town and one of the few not bound to a homeowners' association. The home has a family room that opens to the dining and kitchen area. It sold for its original list price.

**Community:** Heritage District  
**Builder:** Unknown  
**Square feet:** 500  
**Year built:** 1985  
**Lot square feet:** 8,759  
**Bedrooms:** 1  
**Price per square foot:** \$240  
**Bathrooms:** 1  
**Days on market:** 126

- 2. 45370 W. Hathaway Ave., Heritage District.....\$260,000
- 3. 36596 W. Montserrat St., Tortosa.....\$273,000
- 4. 43638 W. Bedford Drive, Rancho El Dorado.....\$290,000
- 5. 47835 W. Coe St., Amarillo Creek.....\$291,000

Brian Petersheim Jr.

Source: MLS, July 10–Aug. 9



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## Keeping good tenants a key to success

BY SHERMAN AND EUPHEMIA WEEKES

**TENANT RETENTION IS CRUCIAL FOR** a rental property's profitability. It costs as much as three times the monthly rent when a tenant leaves. To maintain profitability, a landlord must find ways to keep tenants in the building.

Here are five ways a landlord can improve tenant retention:



**1 Offer quality property.** It's well known in property management that quality properties attract quality tenants and poor properties attract subpar tenants. Offer your tenants a good, clean property they can feel proud to call their home. That curbs motivation to leave.

**2 Screen your tenants rigorously.** Verify income and debt to ensure they can afford to stay. If they can't afford rent, hefty costs come down on you. We recommend the take-home income for each tenant is at least three times the monthly rent.

**3 Keep your property safe and in good condition.**

An improperly maintained home is frustrating for most tenants. Make sure your tenants can submit their maintenance needs around-the-clock and keep response times quick. Tenants will be less likely to leave if you do.

**4 Fair rental price.** It is important that the rent the tenant pay is fair. Finding

the right rental price for your property can be tricky. You don't want to charge too much and risk losing tenants to cheaper alternatives, but you also don't want to charge too little and make tenants doubt the quality of your property. A good way to avoid these problems is to do a market analysis every year and compare your property with similar ones in the area. This will help you set a fair and competitive rental price. Hire a property manager if you are unable to do a proper market analysis.

**5 Communicate effectively so your tenants know you value them as a resident and a human being.**

Reply to phone calls, emails and text messages promptly. Your tenants should feel comfortable contacting you about any lease-related issues. They'll be frustrated if they can't reach you, which could lead to them not renewing their lease. If you don't want to deal with tenants, you should hire a property management company.

Crest Premier Property Management has a reputation for keeping tenants in their homes. If you're struggling with tenant retention, then it's time you contact us.

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## Not all upgrades worth the effort

BY DAYV MORGAN

**WHEN PUTTING UP A HOME FOR** sale, a seller may look to improve a few things to either speed up the sale or increase its value.

However, if you're not careful, you'll spend a lot of money and fail to accomplish either goal.

In my experience as a Realtor, I've seen improvements that did little to move the needle. Here are a few examples:

**1 Insulation.** Spending thousands upgrading your home's insulation will improve its heating and cooling efficiency. But potential

buyers can't see the work you've done because it's hidden behind the walls, or in the attic. Most homeowners already expect the house to have good insulation.

**2 Solar energy.** While this is a popular addition for many homeowners, very few buyers are interested in pre-existing systems. You're not likely to get back anywhere near what you put into it, and a current lease or loan that a new homeowner would have to assume is viewed as a headache.

**3 Plantation shutters.** These window dressings are beautiful additions to any home. But they can cost thousands of dollars to outfit a home. If the window treatments need replacement, install 2-inch blinds for about a tenth of the cost.

**4 Water softeners/ filtration systems.** Depending on how you purchase the system, you can easily spend up to \$7,000 and get very little of it back in the sale of your home. Most buyers can't tell the difference between a \$500 system and one much more expensive, and an appraiser will not give you a higher value because of this addition.

**5 If it ain't broke, don't fix it.** When trying to decide whether to replace anything, consider

functionality. For example, if you have a stove that's working fine and it looks all right, just clean it. If the stove is broken, replace it. But keep in mind, you don't need to spend extra money on high-end brands. A new affordable option that's well-made will do the trick every time. Brand new always looks good.

Many of the improvements I've listed here are wonderful for a homeowner who plans to be there long-term. But their true value comes from the years of enjoyment and not from reselling.

I'm a big believer in renovations. I have a program where I loan sellers who list with me the money to improve their homes and increase the final sale price. But regardless of your approach, it's important to make sure that the money spent garners a return.

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

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## Just a click away

BY RON SMITH

**A**FTER MANY COMPLAINTS ABOUT the need for a consolidated source of senior resources in Maricopa about three years ago, I started aggregating the best lists available. The lists included the city's Senior Resource List, the Be Awesome Directory, the Pinal-Gila Council for Senior Citizens Resource Guide and a resource directory from Hospice of the Valley.

The list I created was an index that directed curious minds to answers about their inquiries. At that time, both the front desk at the Maricopa Community Center and the Maricopa Police Department used the directory list to help answer questions.

As an experienced planner and IT support worker, I thought it might be helpful to develop a database and an information kiosk for use at the community center. A grant request to support this project was denied funding. Yet, surveys from the annual Senior Info Expo indicated a better source of disseminating information was a high priority of seniors. The Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee adopted a goal to improve such communications.

But the consolidated senior information database problem persisted. Frustrated, I decided to create a new website dedicated to resources for seniors on my own. As a senior advocate and writer, I've been stockpiling material for years. I partnered up with local web designer James Singleton to build the website. It had to be user-friendly and adaptable. The target audience was seniors and those transitioning to older age and family members of seniors.

Senior living is not something people are trained for. Unless you have been a caregiver, you likely arrive at retirement with limited experience dealing with senior issues.

The senior resource website aims to provide information on a wide range of senior-related topics to empower people. Hopefully, for some,

the material might even lead to exploring new topics of interest.

The site also provides links to a library of resources for both daily living and future needs. There are links to the city of Maricopa, *InMaricopa.com*, Pinal County and Arizona resources, and national organizations. Joan's Corner features a very popular monthly newsletter from Joan Koczor. There are also links to the Maricopa Community Center calendar and a What's New page to apprise of recent changes. For easy access, a Quick Contact link provides telephone numbers for important resources.

Feedback from the site's early users show pleasure with the depth of content and ease of navigation. The content is updated almost daily. It will evolve as users provide feedback. And it is all just a click away!

Try it out. It was designed for you.

[MaricopaSeniorLiving.org](http://MaricopaSeniorLiving.org)

*Ron Smith is a senior advocate, a member of the Age-Friendly Maricopa Advisory Committee and a member of the Maricopa Community Advocates. He is a CAPS and CLIPP™ certified planner.*



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### An emphatic “aloha”

Decked in vibrant Hawaiian shirts, leis and faux grass skirts, Maricopa’s seniors celebrated a milestone. Around 100 seniors gathered at the Maricopa Community Center to celebrate its second anniversary with a luau fit for the islands last month. Attendees toted tasty dishes and vied for a chance to win door prizes. Jennie Young was among several people who won a gift basket filled with food and other treats during a raffle drawing. She said she appreciated the opportunity to socialize at the senior center. “I just love being with the people here and the events are fun,” Young said. “The senior center is just a wonderful place to be.”



Monica D. Spencer



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### THINGS TO DO

#### SEPTEMBER

- 2**  
**Maricopa Amateur Radio Association**  
9 a.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural Center  
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive
- SafeHouse - Break the Ice**  
9 p.m., Water & Ice  
20928 N. John Wayne Parkway
- 4**  
**Maricopa Historical Society**  
5 p.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural Center  
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive
- 5**  
**Maricopa City Council**  
6 p.m., City Hall  
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza
- 10**  
**Maricopa Arts Council Town Hall**  
5:30 p.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural Center  
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive
- 13**  
**Maricopa Unified School District Governing Board**  
6:30 p.m., District Office  
44150 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy.
- 14**  
**Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group**  
6 p.m., Northern Lights Therapy  
21300 N. John Wayne Pkwy., Suite 103
- 16**  
**Teen Group**  
10 a.m.- noon, Northern Lights Therapy  
21300 N. John Wayne Pkwy., Suite 103
- Maricopa Arts Council Open Mic Showcase**  
6 p.m., Honeycutt Coffee  
44400 W. Honeycutt Road, Suite 109
- 19**  
**Maricopa City Council**  
6 p.m., City Hall  
39700 W. Civic Center Plaza
- 27**  
**Maricopa Unified School District Governing Board**  
6:30 p.m., District Office  
44150 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy.
- 28**  
**Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group**  
6 p.m., Northern Lights Therapy  
21300 N. John Wayne Pkwy., Suite 103
- Sundays**  
**Narcotics Anonymous**  
7 p.m., Maricopa Meadows Community Park  
45511 W. Honeycutt Ave.

#### Mondays

- Narcotics Anonymous**  
5:30 p.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural Center  
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive
- 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 Large and Small Group**  
7 p.m., Maricopa Community Church  
44977 W. Hathaway Ave.

#### Wednesdays

- Al-Anon - New Beginnings**  
10 a.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural Center  
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive
- Alcoholics Anonymous**  
Noon, Maricopa Library & Cultural Center  
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

- Narcotics Anonymous**  
5:30 p.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.

- Alcoholics Anonymous**  
7 p.m., Community of Hope Church  
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

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

#### Fridays

- Narcotics Anonymous**  
4:30 p.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural Center  
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

- Alcoholics Anonymous**  
7 p.m., Mountain View Community Church  
50881 W. Papago Road

#### Saturdays

- Alcoholics Anonymous**  
10 a.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural Center  
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Hometown: A small town in Indiana

Reside in: The Villages

Maricopan since: 2010

**Family:** I'm married to my best friend and business partner, Christian, and we have four children.

**Pets:** Three rescue dogs (Aura, Puffin, and Lolly).

**Cars:** We're a Toyota family, but my dream car is a Rolls-Royce Phantom.

**Hobbies:** I enjoy spending quality time with my family, playing poker, cooking, and exploring/traveling.

**Pet peeve:** People who fabricate stories for no apparent reason.

**Dream vacation:** Ireland, Greece, and Italy.

**Like most about Maricopa:** Maricopa's small business community support is unmatched!



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