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December 2023



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ON THE COVER

Victor Moreno captured this shot of Jennifer Feickert aiming an arrow at a target. For more on archery, see Monica D. Spencer's story on page 36.

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Christmas dinner

THE AFTERNOONS REMAIN WARM, BUT THE mornings and evenings are crisping up like well-behaved bacon. That's how you know the holidays are upon us here in Maricopa.

The seasonal songs that croon over department store speakers this time of year are like the first appetizer before a Christmas feast. It always amazed me how that same old family dining table and familiar ingredients could transform into a meal worthy of being fondly remembered for half the year — and then mouth-wateringly anticipated the other half.

What dishes grace the table? A stuffed bird, obviously. Roasted potatoes, obviously. Stuffing and cranberry sauce, probably. But creamed spinach? Bourbon balls? A glass of fizz?

There's really no meal more diverse and limitless.

Maricopa reminds me of a Christmas dinner. Always a new friend pulling up a chair, a tasty new dish in tow. You'll see what I mean when our newest reporter, Jeff Chew, introduces you to Maricopa's burgeoning Kenyan community in this issue.

The feast gets larger and the menu more diverse — but it's still that same table underneath.

Whether you're setting a Christmas buffet or incorporating the time-honored kids table, there's just no way to get everyone seated at the same time; someone always gets whisked away tending to a tray of parsnips or supervising the pecan pie in the oven.



Maricopans don't sit still too well, either. We're always working on something new and exciting, like starting a band or breathing new life into an ancient sport. Tom Schuman and Monica D. Spender will tell you more about those endeavors.

At Christmas dinner, there's probably going to be a luscious cheesecake or a baked stuffed brie that makes everyone swoon. Someone's got to show up and steal the spotlight — hip-hop icon Snoop Dogg will do just that in Maricopa next month.

Conversely, it seems like one of the dishes never pans out. Maybe a burnt roast or something that fell pudding-side-down on the floor. Whoever is baking the apple pie knows there's always a bad apple in the bunch.

Likewise, not every Maricopan is the hero in their own story. In this edition, I'm busting yet another case of stolen valor.

At the end of the day, though, Christmas dinner isn't about the dishes on the table. It's about the people sitting around it. This holiday season, I'm happy to sit at the *InMaricopa* table with my readers.

'Til next year!

ELIAS WEISS
MANAGING EDITOR

CONTRIBUTORS



JEFF CHEW

Jeff, a new reporter at InMaricopa, offers a profile of Maricopans who moved from Kenya. Hakuna matata indeed.



DAYV MORGAN

Dayv, owner of HomeSmart Premier, takes a trip down memory lane to when soil sulfates were all the rage.



BRIANNA REINHOLD

With Christmas around the corner, it is the season for giving. Brianna reminds us to not forget about ourselves.

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Signs of change

The O.S. Stapley store opened in 1955 south of the railroad tracks and east of Maricopa High School on Maricopa Road. The store carried farm supplies, hardware, paint, small appliances, sporting goods and housewares, sold International Harvester equipment and repaired and serviced farm equipment. It was managed by Marvin Scott. Before the John Wayne Parkway overpass opened to the public in 1919, the sign remained a storied landmark on Maricopa's main thoroughfare. A&R Towing now occupies the property, just north of Auntie's Soul Food & Grill. The sapling saguaro cactus shaded by the sign in the 1950s is now a dominant feature of the landmark today.



THIS MONTH BACK IN...

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



2008

Two Maricopa cops were hospitalized after a motorcycle escort for a toy drive. Officers Pete Torres and Ricky Alvarado crashed on southbound SR 347 during the escort of the W. Steven Martin Toy Run from Chandler to Maricopa. Torres suffered a broken elbow and Alvarado suffered a dislocated shoulder.



2013

Students at Santa Rosa Elementary School's Honor Society made blankets for their homeless classmates. Each student collected fleece and went to school early for two weeks. Together, they created 18 blankets. "They were quite proud of their accomplishment," said Santa Rosa Honor Society sponsor Stephanie Rinehart.



2018

Maricopa's population topped 50,000 people, according to 2018 U.S. Census data released in December, naming it the 18th-largest city in the state. "It's a great accomplishment for the city to reach this 50,000-resident milestone," said then-Mayor Christian Price. Just 18 years prior, Maricopa had only about 1,000 residents.



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Young MC works the crowd up at the Wild West Music Fest at Copper Sky Park.

Worth it?

City unsure if it made or lost money on music festival

BY JUSTIN GRIFFIN

BY MANY ACCOUNTS, THE WILD WEST MUSIC FEST was a finely tuned operation. The event, held Oct. 13-15 to celebrate the city's 20th anniversary, ran on time, traffic issues were nil and police made no arrests.

Official attendance figures are unavailable, but city officials estimated attendance between 17,000 and 20,000 over the course of the three-day event. Despite surpassing a goal of 10,000, the city admittedly may not know if it made or lost money on the event until next year.

Apart from the operational success of the event itself, the question of whether the festival made any money remains up in the air as the city awaits a final account of the attendance figures, expenses and revenues from event producer Steve Levine Entertainment.

According to the contract between the promoter and the city, SLE has 90 business days from the end of the festival until it is obligated to provide those details, along with the accounting of the event and the details of any profits.

To the casual observer, that may sound like three months — but business days exclude weekends and holidays, which means SLE isn't contractually obligated to supply the information until mid-February.

As final details of the festival trickle in, *InMaricopa* has uncovered some facts through Freedom of Information Act requests that bring some of the inner workings of the festival into focus.

The numbers

There's no such thing as a free lunch — or birthday party for that matter. The city of Maricopa agreed to pay SLE \$200,000 in the initial contract signed July 10. The first half of that money was supposed to be paid up front and the second half was to be paid within 10 days after the event.

The initial amount wasn't enough, apparently, as about a month later, Maricopa agreed to pay SLE an additional \$150,000, bringing the city's total buy-in to \$350,000. In an addendum to the original contract signed Aug. 7, the funds were to be paid upon the confirmation of the artist lineup for the festival.

The city, however, may recover some of its upfront costs. The contract stated profits were to be split 50-50 between the city and SLE. How those numbers will work out won't be available until SLE provides the city with the final accounting statements from the event. The contract listed multiple possible revenue streams, including ticket sales, vendor fees,



The Wild West Music festival included rides of all kinds with a full midway.

parking fees, sponsorships and profits from any food and beverages the promoter may sell.

SLE and the city already have a feather in their cap in that sponsorship revenues came in higher than expected at more than \$88,000. The initial forecast outlined in the contract was for \$75,000.

However, achieving profitability through ticket sales may prove to be an uphill battle as prices were anywhere between \$5 and \$300. While an average ticket was supposed to cost \$30 for one day, many discounted tickets were sold for the last day, as part of the Community Day promotion. There were also early-bird discounts given as well as last-minute discounts.

The attendance goal outlined in a marketing memo shared between SLE and the city was to attract 10,000 attendees over the course of the three-day event, meaning from the outset, the city was willing to pay \$35 for each person to attend the festival.

The average daily ticket went for no more than \$30.

Lots of moving parts

The Wild West Music Fest featured several musical acts of national and international acclaim, a midway including nine rides and attractions along with all the games and the food you'd expect at such an event.

Vice Mayor Rich Vitiello felt it was a coming out party for the city.

"These three days were so impressive. We brought people from all over the state," Vitiello said Nov. 7. "The staff worked day and night for weeks on end to make this happen for our city and to put us on the map."

Continued on page 10

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While the contract was signed July 10, planning for the event started months earlier, according to Quinn Konnold, a spokesperson for the city.

“In early 2023, the city council tasked city staff to mark Maricopa’s 20th anniversary with a grand celebration reminiscent of Stagecoach Days,” Konnold said. “The goal was first outlined during the city’s annual Futures Planning Meeting in February.”

Another challenge faced by the city and SLE might have been the relatively short period of time between the signing of the contract July 10 and the start of the event Oct. 13.

The festival was announced July 26 and the partial lineup announcement came just weeks before the event on Aug. 24.

In total, there were only 13 weeks to market the event.

With a minority population approaching 25%, Maricopa is the most diverse city in Arizona, according to data from the U.S. Census. That means there are many tastes to take into consideration for the musical acts and attractions, along with the logistics of putting on such an event.

“Organizing the festival was no small feat,” Konnold said. “Securing a qualified event production partner, enticing performers to captivate Maricopa’s diverse population, and navigating regional marketing while prioritizing local engagement presented significant challenges.”

Konnold pointed out other hurdles.

“With all the unknowns of a first-time event of this scale, there

were questions about the community’s commitment to the event’s entrance fee and concerns about safety and cleanliness,” Konnold said. “However, our investment in an experienced event producer paid off handsomely in putting these concerns to rest.”

Mayor Nancy Smith said she heard from quite a few people who didn’t attend.

“They said, ‘I just didn’t know that it was for me. After reading the comments online, I feel like I really missed out,’ and I agree. They did miss out,” Smith said.

Konnold pointed out that, after the event, the premises were remarkably clean and following the close of the festival, the parking lot was empty in 11 minutes, a statement echoed by Smith and Vitiello at a November city council meeting.

Getting the word out

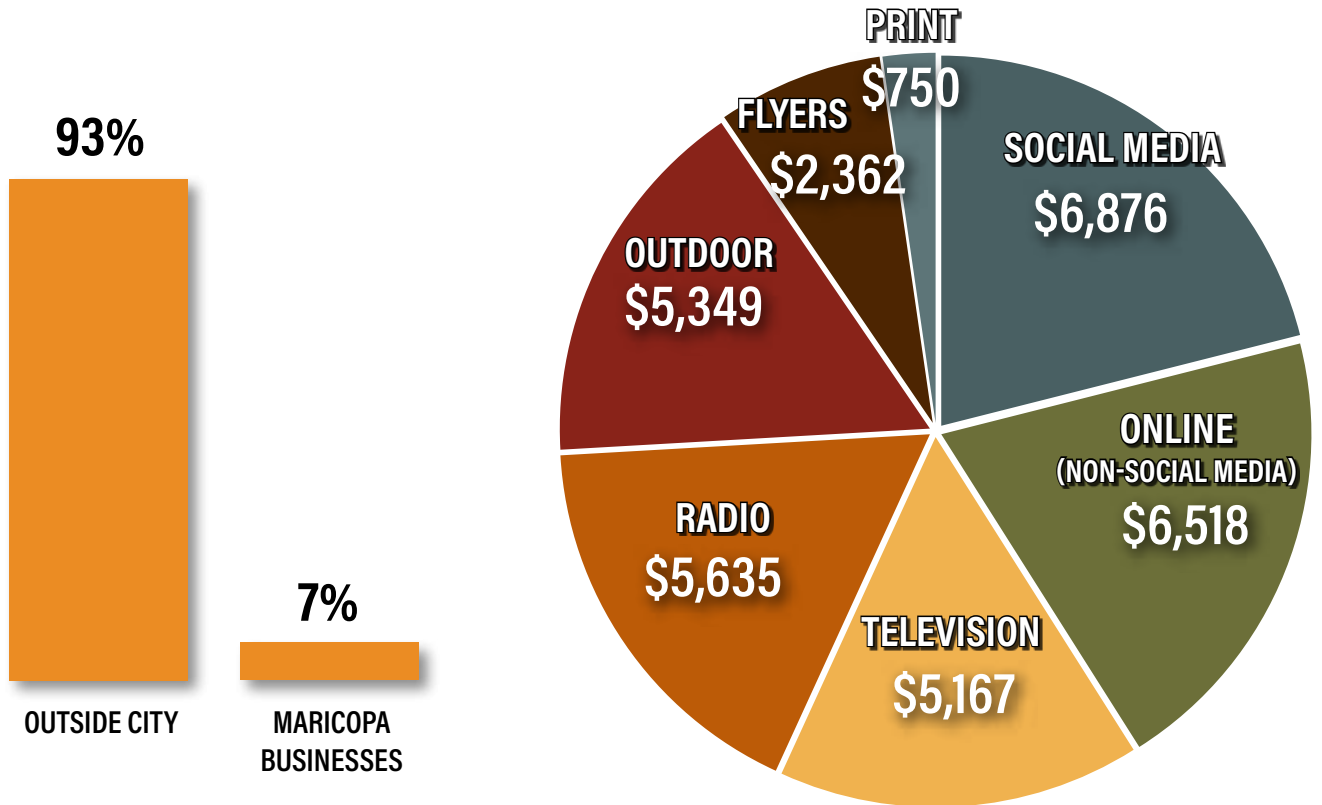
An important part of any party is to get invitations out to the attendees.

The first line of attack was to come through the city’s communications department, along with its communications channels, which include its social media accounts, email lists, a YouTube channel and official websites.

Mara Klein, a spokesperson for SLE, said a major focus was keeping it local.

“To appeal to residents and neighboring communities, we prioritized involving and understanding Maricopa on a deep level,”

ADVERTISING EXPENSE



Source: City of Maricopa

Klein said in a statement. “Intentionally forming partnerships with local businesses and concentrating our marketing efforts in Maricopa, as the event was hosted in honor of the city’s 20th anniversary, was crucial.”

However, when SLE executed its marketing plan, which included an advertising budget of more than \$30,000, roughly 93% of those funds went to efforts outside of Maricopa.

- The top category was social media, which accounted for \$6,876.
- Online (non-social media) was second at \$6,518.
- Another notable expenditure was on three television buys for \$5,167, including 3TV AZ Family (\$1,520), ABC15 (\$1,647) and FOX 10 (\$2,000.)
- An additional \$5,635 went into radio, including Audacy 101.5 (\$1475), IHeart Radio (\$2,660), Sierra H Broadcasting (\$1,500) and \$500 with Spotify.
- Outdoor advertising took up \$5,349 of the budget with a notable purchase at the intersection of I-10 and Chandler Boulevard between Sept. 17 and Oct. 15 for \$2,660.
- Direct advertising, which consisted of door hangers and flyers distributed locally, took up \$2,362.
- Print media outlets accounted for \$750 of the budget, with all of that going to *Phoenix New Times*.

Missing details

The contract stipulated SLE to provide the city weekly progress reports that included ticket sales, marketing efforts, sponsorship and vendor reports.

A FOIA request revealed there’s no record of those contractually-agreed progress reports as the request only garnered a list of paid sponsorships and a 60-page production packet containing a boilerplate list of standard operating procedures for just about every eventuality, a list of vendors and contact information. It didn’t include any updates on ticket sales or any information that would give a greater picture into the inner workings of how the festival was produced.

In another request, the city provided an undated marketing plan with a rough accounting of the promoter’s marketing budget, along with some of the deliverables each media outlet provided or were scheduled to provide with a handful of weeks to go. Some of the wording in the report acknowledged the budget

had been exhausted and referenced a final push to get the word out.

As referenced in the initial contract, the city was supposed to sign off on all contracts for musical acts. Yet none of those contracts were available through a FOIA request.



“The Wild West Music Fest surpassed expectations, boasting robust security measures, efficient traffic plans, top-notch cleanliness strategies and an unwavering commitment to affordability.”

QUINN KONNOLD, CITY SPOKESPERSON

An encore?

The Wild West Music Fest was marketed this year as the first of what may become a yearly event. The website already references the 2024 Wild West Music Fest.

The city was remarkably upbeat with its answer as to whether there will be another festival next year. Konnold said the event “paved the way for future spectacular celebrations.”

He said he felt the event was an overwhelming success but couldn’t answer if the city got any return on investment of taxpayers’ money. Based on the contract and conversations with city officials, it’s unclear yet what the city’s objective returns were — financial or otherwise.

“The Wild West Music Fest surpassed expectations, boasting robust security measures, efficient traffic plans, top-notch cleanliness strategies and an unwavering commitment to affordability,” he said. “While final financial reports are pending, our event partner has already expressed interest in extending the celebration into the coming years.”

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Sex offenders in your neighborhood

Last month, Maricopa Police Department notified *InMaricopa* a new sex offender moved to town. In 2003, Alex Melton (a.k.a. Alex Berrera) was convicted of sexually assaulting a girl aged 7 or below. He has since failed to register as a sex offender three times. The 36-year-old recently moved to 21815 N. Bolivia St. in Rancho El Dorado. Melton is a Level

3 sex offender, reserved for the greatest threats to society deemed most likely to reoffend. Level 2 offenders have a moderate risk of reoffending, while Level 1 offenders are deemed unlikely to reoffend. We've listed the names and addresses of all Maricopa's Level 2 and Level 3 sex offenders along with their crimes as a public service.



Editor's note: Sex offenders with Maricopa addresses outside city limits were not included in this map. For the full sex offender data in the 85138 and 85139 zip codes, visit InMaricopa.com.

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Maricopa's Homepage Since 2004

MAP	NAME	AGE	ADDRESS	LEVEL	OFFENSES
1	Daniel James Lantz	42	45992 W. Belle Ave.	1	Molestation of a child
2	Gregory Jerome Gentry	69	45084 W. Mescal St.	1	Sexual exploitation of a minor
3	David Ian Woodruff	26	42252 W. Anne Ln.	1	Molestation of a child
4	David Franklin Price	56	37765 W. Amalfi Ave.	1	Sexual conduct with a minor
5	Theodore Alan Aird	86	41648 W. Corvallis Ln.	2	Second degree encouraging child sexual abuse
6	James Joseph Attebery	34	21773 N. Bolivia St.	2	Sexual abuse
7	Alden Pascua Cacpal	26	36561 W. Padilla St.	2	employment or use of a minor for obscene matter
8	Troy Austin Copeland	56	43863 W. Cahill Dr.	2	Possession of child porn in sexual performance, failed to register
9	Matthew Slade Dodson	27	41041 W. Somers Dr.	2	1st degree rape by instrumentation
10	Zachary Stephen Dowell	26	20620 N. Mac Neil Ct.	2	Luring a minor for sexual exploitation
11	William Escobar Jr.	44	40623 W. Helen Ct.	2	Sex penetration w/foreign obj: victim unaware nature of act
12	Robert James Fedd Jr.	57	18969 N. Cinder Rd.	2	Sexual assault on a child by one in a position of trust – victim is under 15
13	Richard Juanland Fox	45	19217 N. San Pablo St.	2	Attempted second degree sexual assault
14	Brian Robert Kringer	36	44728 W. Alamendras St.	2	Lewd contact with a minor under 16
15	Devan Gaige Lopez	30	40343 W. Shaver Dr.	2	Attempted sexual conduct with a minor, attempted molestation of child
16	Frank Manuel Madrigal	58	18334 N. Arbor Dr.	2	Sexual penetration with foreign object with force sexual motivation
17	Blanca Millimento Propst	59	36400 W. Costa Blanca Dr.	2	Third degree rape
18	Dean Albano Reyes	52	38165 W. Santa Barbara Ave.	2	Failure to register address change, lewd or lascivious acts with child under 14, concurrent registrations
19	Claude William Richards	82	45359 W. Apple Gate Rd.	2	Attempted molestation of a child
20	Richard Abraham Rodriguez	31	45351 W. Lexington Ave.	3	Not specified
21	Mehrdad Rowshandel	55	36898 W. Nola Way	2	Attempted sexual assault
22	Matthew Sheehy	30	40099 W. Pryor Ln.	2	Attempted molestation of a child
23	J-Vaughn Alexzander Shrader	28	42395 W. Michaels Dr.	3	Gross sexual imposition
24	Jamie Andrew Tarver	47	21424 N. Karsten Dr.	2	Attempted sexual conduct with a minor, failure to register
25	Benjamin Thornton	46	41857 W. Hillman Dr.	2	Pimping sexual motivation, unlawful sexual Intercourse with a minor where minor is more than three years younger than the perpetrator
26	Richard Laverne Vanderhyde	51	38191 W. San Alvarez Ave.	2	Sexual assault and attempted sexual assault
27	Ricky Esai Villalon	36	46108 W. Guilder Ave.	2	Sexual abuse, attempted sexual conduct with a minor
28	Anthony Keith Wallace	45	43224 W. Cowpath Rd.	2	Lewd or lascivious acts with child under 14
29	Michael Shawn Wilkins	43	17741 N. Madison Rd.	2	Sexual assault in the third degree
30	Donald Woods	61	20764 N. Carmen Ave.	2	Attempted sexual assault
31	Sterling Brasfield	47	44432 W. Eddie Way	3	9A.44.130(11)(A) - Sex offender - felony - fail to register (attempted)
32	Willard Morris Castaneda	34	43283 W. Wild Horse Trl.	3	Violation of Sex Offender Registration (Failure to Register), Sexual conduct with a minor (attempted)
33	Frank Albert Lopez	54	45048 W. Miraflores St.	3	Kidnapping, attempted sexual assault
34	Shakir Arthur Thomas	29	44153 W. Cydnee Dr.	3	????
35	Jefferson Douglas McGee	61	18832 N. Leland Rd.	3	First Degree Sexual Assault of a Child, Failure to register
36	Andre Dean Padilla	63	43223 W. Delia Blvd.	3	Lewd or lascivious acts with child under 14 years with force
37	Sean Christopher Jackson	38	42245 W. Lavender Dr.	3	attempted sexual assault, failure to register
38	Justin Wyatt	42	44472 W. Copper Trl.	3	indecent exposure, indecent exposure to a child, attempted indecent exposure to a child
39	Jeremy Daniel Dial	43	42111 W. Balsa Dr.	3	Attempted molestation of a child, failure to register
40	Bennie Lasedrick Harvey	45	41835 W. Rosa Dr.	3	Sexual assault on a victim under 13
41	Ulrich Volker Oertel	80	22828 N. Bolivia St.	3	indecent exposure, notify with new address
42	Marc Anthoni Stefanson	59	37025 W. Bello Ln.	3	Annoy/molest children, failure to register
43	Moises Sandoval	44	40656 W. James Ln.	3	Sexual misconduct with a minor, child molesting
44	Robert Michael Suchy	75	40922 W. Thornberry Ln.	3	lewd acts with a child 14 of 15, indecent exposure
45	Alex Melton	36	21815 N. Bolivia St.	3	First Degree Sexual Assault of a Child, Failure to register
46	Jonathan Jager	35	46136 W. Mountain View Rd.	3	Attempted molestation of a child



Permits

Oct. 9 - Nov. 3

COMMERCIAL

Taco Bell to construct a new building at 42080 W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy., valued at nearly \$400,000. The contractor is Baldwin Development Group LLC.

Molly's House of Little Feet for a splash pad measuring over 760 square feet. It will cost more than \$24,000.

Queen Creek Fiesta LLC for interior racking at Petco, valued at \$60,000.

APEX Landco LLC a major development review permit for its industrial campus.

Southwestern Adult Care for a wall sign at 21300 N. John Wayne Pkwy., Suite 112. The contractor is Arizona Sign and Lighting LLC.

Masjid Bilal Ibn Rabah for exterior improvements at 44370 W. Cesar Chavez Lane.

RESIDENTIAL

D.R. Horton Inc. to build five homes in Sorrento and 15 homes in Tortosa South.

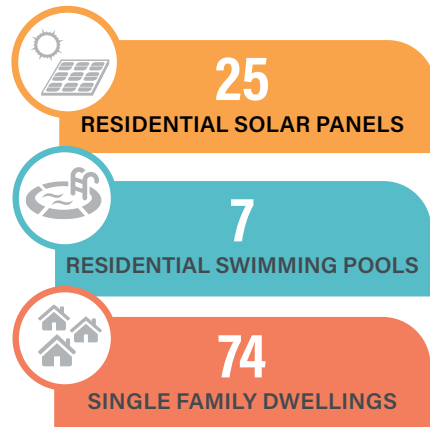
K. Hovnanian to build seven homes in Santa Rosa Springs.

Lennar Arizona Inc. to build three homes in Anderson Farms.

Meritage Homes of Arizona Inc. to build 27 homes in Province and eight homes in Trails at Tortosa.

Century Communities of Arizona LLC to build nine homes in Trails at Tortosa.

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City creating jobs, economic prosperity by funding transportation corridor

The Pinal County Board of Supervisors established the Pinal Regional Transportation Authority (PRTA) in 2015 as a public improvement and taxing subdivision of the State of Arizona to coordinate multi-jurisdictional transportation planning, improvements and funding. This organization developed a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that was taken to the voters in a November 2017 Special Election.

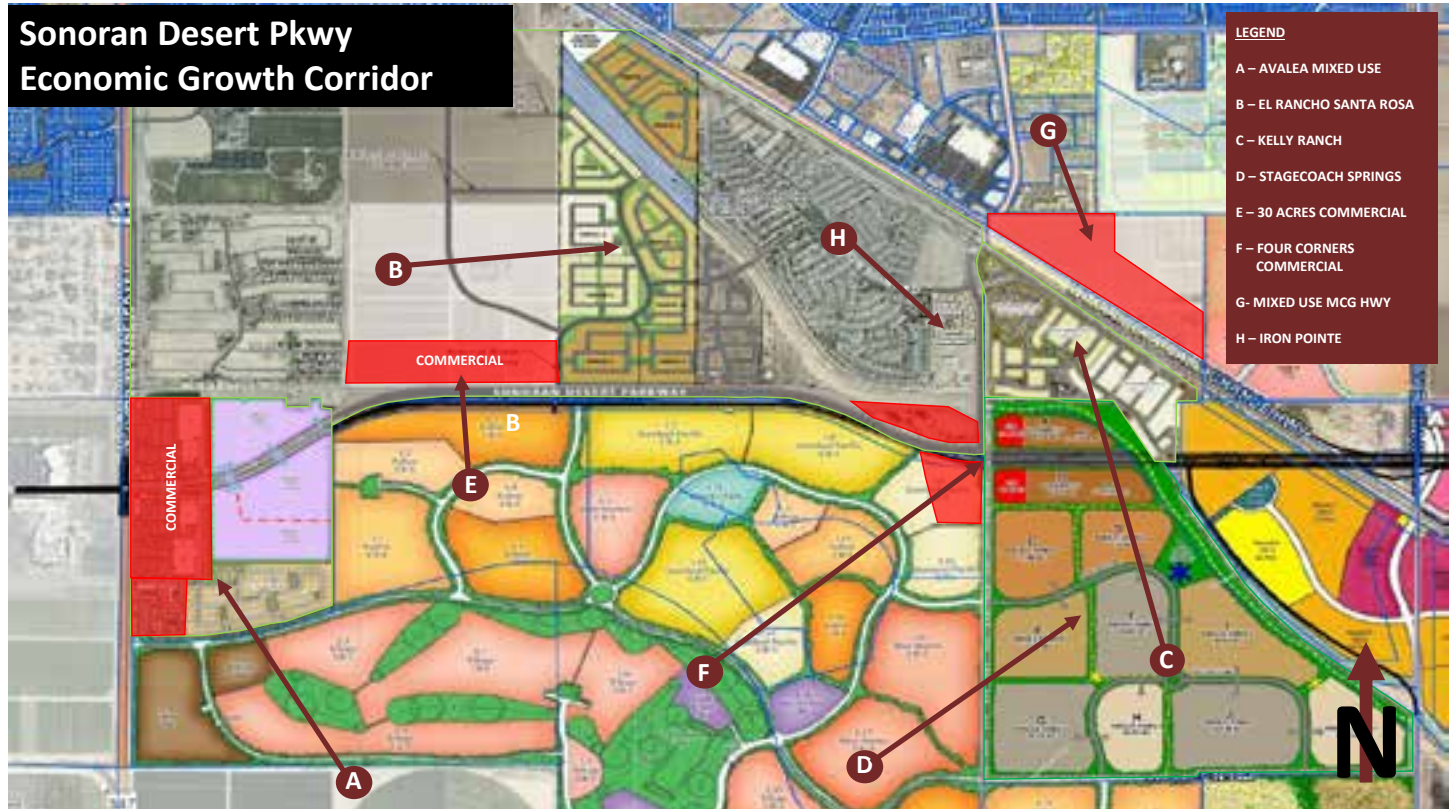
PINAL COUNTY VOTERS APPROVED THE RTP AND A 20-YEAR, half-cent sales tax to fund the transportation improvements contained in the plan. However, the structure of the tax was challenged in a 2018 lawsuit and ruled invalid by the Arizona Supreme Court in March 2022.

The East-West Corridor (now the Sonoran Desert Parkway) project is part of the RTP and involves construction of a 21-mile corridor of new and existing roadways beginning at State Route 347 in the city of Maricopa and extending east through northern Casa Grande to Interstate 10. When it became clear funding from this tax would not

be forthcoming, the city moved to fund this regional corridor with developer impact fees (not citizen-paid taxes). Impact fees are charged to contribute to costs associated with infrastructure and public services that need to be expanded as a direct result of new development in the growth areas of the city of Maricopa, as defined in the General Plan.

This corridor is critical to future transportation needs and will support significant job creation and economic prosperity for the citizens of Maricopa. 

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Purple heartbreak

Fake war hero scammed state — and many others along the way

BY ELIAS WEISS

“A liar knows that he is a liar, but one who speaks mere portions of truth in order to deceive is a craftsman of destruction.” – CRISS JAMI

TO STEAL VALOR IS TO ADORN oneself in borrowed laurels of courage.

It's the product of either malice, cowardice or vanity, and generally misses its aim in each of these aspects. Because sooner or later, the carefully placed blocks of deception topple under the gravity of truth.

Some weave grand lies and exit dramatically. Then there's Stanley Wayne Wineberg Jr., who spun a slow-burning tale of wartime heroism that spans decades and a great distance.

But it's here in Maricopa where the curtain may fall on his exploits. It was in this city where the seemingly innocent U.S. Army vet became the focus of a state criminal investigation in September.

He scammed a state agency and got away with it, forcing a change to the department's legal policy last month. But that's the mere tip of the iceberg.

Cue the unraveling.

Vanity plates

Wineberg, by all accounts, seemed like any other Maricopa resident.

He'd drive home from his job as a cable guy, park his truck in the driveway of his Glennwilde Groves home and greet his newlywed wife at the door.

The setting sun would throw a beam of light against his polished Purple Heart license plates as his wife closed the front door on another picturesque day.

She didn't know about the half-dozen wives who came before her. She didn't know he left them all in financial ruin. She definitely didn't know she'd be next.



What else didn't she know? Plenty — like his criminal record, bankruptcy, mounting back child support, tax fraud and IRS fines. And she hadn't yet figured out those Purple Heart license plates were obtained fraudulently.

Not until that letter from the Arizona Office of Inspector General came in the mail Sept. 11.

Wineberg joined the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association fronting as a Purple Heart recipient injured while saving lives in Somalia. His war story is fabricated — but here, he wears his CVMA jacket plastered with a phony Purple Heart medal.

Mr. Stanley Wayne Wineberg Jr.,

The Office of Inspector General has discovered a discrepancy with your customer record.

Our records indicate that on June 21, July 3 and July 20, 2023, you obtained Purple Heart License Plates and failed to provide the required documents.

No response to this request will result in your license being further suspended or canceled, or other appropriate criminal charges being filed.

Wineberg fronted as a Sergeant First Class in the Army with 15 years of service, a Green Beret in the Elite Special Forces with Top Secret Security Clearance. He earned his Purple Heart, telling anyone who would listen, when he suffered shrapnel wounds, saving his comrade “Eddie” in Somalia.

Indeed, Wineberg is an Army veteran who was honorably discharged, earning 18 medals and badges along the way. And yet no detail in his story — not a single one — is true.

He served fewer than seven years, according to military service records obtained from the National Personnel Records Center through a Freedom of Information Act request.

Wineberg's highest rank was E5, two notches below what he claims. The records don't mention Somalia. Although his awards suggest he saw combat, he was also a driver and mechanic.

He never received a Purple Heart, the National Archives confirmed. He's not credited with saving anyone's life. He had standard security clearance, and he was never in the Special Forces.

Yet his Purple Heart vanity plates read “SF RNGR” — Special Forces Ranger.

Gone fishing

Earl Fisher isn't just a detective at the Office of Inspector General in Phoenix. He's also a proud veteran who served in the Vietnam War as a medical combat corpsman.

For him, investigating stolen valor is personal. So, when the state opened its investigation into Wineberg, Fisher was the man for the job.

“He's a vet, but he's not happy with what he has,” the detective told *InMaricopa*. “He wants more.”

According to Fisher, Wineberg abused a loophole in the system. Had he gone into a Motor Vehicle Division office to request his plates, he would have been denied. But he used

the MVD Now website to order them, which at the time would send the tags by mail and allow the driver to supply his DD Form 214 — military discharge paperwork — after the fact.

Under Arizona law, he needed to prove he received a Purple Heart to obtain those plates.

“Because of the glitch in the system, I couldn't prosecute him,” Fisher said. “I brought it to MVD's attention, so they're fixing that flaw.”

Instead, Fisher sent the letter demanding Wineberg turn in the plates or face criminal charges. The detective didn't confirm whether he surrendered the plates and neighbors reported seeing them months later.

When he received the letter, Wineberg called the inspector general's office.

“**It's hurtful. It's sleazy. It speaks to a number of different psychological conditions that someone is so hard up for attention, they have to go out of their way to make up lies about who they are.**”

BRYAN MASCHE

“He was very distraught when he called me, probably because he thought I was going to arrest him,” Fisher recalled. “He said, ‘I made a mistake, I was in a bad place.’”

For Fisher, Wineberg's Somalia story reeked of falsehood. “I don't know how that story can be true,” he said. As soon as a soldier is wounded, his unit would recommend the Purple Heart and it would be awarded immediately upon treatment.

Wineberg never supplied a DD Form 214.

“If he provided any of those documents, they would have been forged,” Fisher said. “That's where we'd get him. On forgery charges, and maybe tampering with public records.”

Fisher said he believes Wineberg is guilty of stolen valor, a federal crime that carries a one-year prison sentence. It's a separate felony charge in Arizona that could mean more than four years in prison.

It's unclear if a forged DD Form 214 exists for Wineberg. He joined a Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association chapter in Denver, where he wore a Purple Heart medal on his jacket. The nonprofit veterans' charity requires discharge papers from its members.

“We cannot meet your request without authorization from the former member,” the

chapter said in response to inquiries about the matter.

Wineberg did not respond to requests for comment from *InMaricopa*.

Medal detector

Bryan Masche was running a Republican bid for governor when he met Wineberg at a speaking engagement in Maricopa last year. The eight-year Air Force veteran still remembers touching Wineberg's fake Purple Heart medal and thanking him for his service.

It's a memory that now disgusts him.

“There's nothing more disrespectful, hurtful, insensitive and plain disgusting in my book than stolen valor. It speaks to a deep-seated psychological personality disorder,” said Masche, who studied psychiatry in college.

“It's hurtful. It's sleazy. It speaks to a number of different psychological conditions that someone is so hard up for attention, they have to go out of their way to make up lies about who they are.”

Masche worked closely with the Army on deployment. He's active in veterans' groups and understands their psychology.

It made him uneasy when Wineberg didn't ask about his military experience, but rather touted his own heroic stories.

“People who have seen really bad stuff, they just don't talk about it,” Masche told *InMaricopa*. “When Stan talked about Somalia, all these pieces were starting to come together. I was figuring it out in my mind.”

Masche once called out a phony war hero in Scottsdale just minutes after meeting him. This one took him a little longer than he liked to admit, but sooner or later, he figured it out.

“Something in my stomach just didn't sit right in that situation, but I couldn't quite figure it out,” Masche said.

Then, he started replaying their conversations in his head. Something clicked.

“Here I am thinking Stan was somebody who was involved in combat, in a disaster in Somalia,” he said. “In actuality, he wasn't asking me about my service because he knew I would, in a short amount of time, realize this guy was full of sh*t.”

Warriors wanted

Stolen valor — the act of making false claims about military service — is a term coined by Vietnam veteran B.G. Burkett in his titular 1998 book. He busted so many people exaggerating and inventing their service records that he

Continued on page 20

dubbed it “a national phenomenon, a weird ripple in the American psyche.”

At that time, it was a crime to merely display a false military medal as Wineberg did — albeit under the same statute that made it illegal to impersonate a 4-H member. After an Arizona man falsely told newspapers he was a decorated war hero who captured Saddam Hussein, Congress passed the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 making it a crime to wear unearned military medals.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled the law a violation of the First Amendment in 2012, prompting the Stolen Valor Act of 2013, which made it a crime to profit from false military accomplishments.

“I think it was a bad call on the part of the Supreme Court,” American Military News journalist and stolen valor researcher Cheryl Hinneburg told *InMaricopa*. “Those who are guilty of stolen valor should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. It is a slap in the face to our military and veterans.”

In 2019, Congress upped the federal prison sentence from six months to 12 months for violating the stolen valor law. But just one year later, investigators at the National Archives reported stolen valor cases were on the rise.

After *InMaricopa* exposed another fake war hero in July, the magazine asked its readers if the penalties for stolen valor fit the crime.

About 3,000 people answered the poll, with more than 85% saying the penalties are not strict enough. One in 10 respondents said the penalties were adequate while just 1 in 100 said they were too strict.

After learning his story, Hinneburg didn't feel qualified to answer if Wineberg violated stolen valor laws.

“It is a federal crime if he used ribbons or medals to obtain something of value,” says Chuck Pardue, a military law attorney in Evans, Ga.

And obtain something of value he did.

“The trust of the innocent is the liar's most useful tool.” - STEPHEN KING

Veterans affairs

Susan Buonsante was married to Wineberg less than a year when she found out about his stolen valor. Not before he took her for \$70,000, she said.

“I had no idea the man I married was a con artist and a serial predator of women,” she told *InMaricopa*. “He fabricated nearly every detail of his life story.”

Buonsante spent more than \$55,000 on a parcel of land in Hidden Valley under the auspice her new husband would obtain a VA-backed Veterans Home Loan to build a house there.

It was only after closing on the land she learned he was not eligible for a VA loan.

According to a divorce decree in Pinal County Superior Court, Buonsante was awarded the land “due to Wineberg engaging in fraud.”

Wineberg has been married at least six times and has at least six children, none of whom he supports, according to government records.



Susan Buonsante

FACTS VS. FICTION

Stanley Wayne Wineberg Jr. earned plenty of honors while enlisted in the Army, which makes his lies all the more puzzling. Let's separate the facts from the fiction.

THE FACTS	THE FICTION
Rank E5	Rank E7
Served six years, nine months	Served 15 years
Army Commendation Medal	Purple Heart
Army Achievement Medal	Army Elite Special Forces (Green Beret)
Joint Meritorious Unit Award	Top Secret Security Clearance
Army Good Conduct Medal	Shrapnel wounds in Somalia
National Defense Service Medal	Saved life of comrade "Eddie" in Somalia
Soldier for Life Medal	
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal	
Humanitarian Service Medal	
NCO Professional Development Ribbon	
Army Service Ribbon	
United Nations Medal	
Expert Marksmanship Qualification Badge - Rifle Bar	
Expert Marksmanship Qualification Badge - Grenade Bar	
Combat Infantryman Badge	
Expert Infantryman Badge	
Air Assault Badge	
Ranger Tab	
Driver and Mechanic Badge	

He married one woman four days after divorcing another — and owes at least \$27,424 in back child support, according to official records from the Colorado Office of Economic Security supplied to *InMaricopa* by two women.

Caren Fluharty, the mother of one of his daughters, told *InMaricopa* he tried to dodge child support by claiming his sperm was genetically modified to only produce male children. He still owes her more than \$8,000 in child support although his daughter is 21 years old.

“Within a week, he moved in with me,” Fluharty said. “He rented a home in my name that was four times what I could afford. When I told him I was pregnant, he packed his sh*t and left, and I got evicted.”

Fluharty estimates Wineberg took her for \$19,655.

They were never married, although court records show an El Paso County, Colo., judge issued a permanent restraining order against Wineberg in 2001.

Another ex-girlfriend, Tina White, estimates she lost north of \$71,000.

White said Wineberg took out three vehicle loans in her name: \$50,000 for a brand-new



Wineberg (left) reps the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona in Phoenix on Memorial Day last year. The charity declined to answer why Wineberg's CVMA jacket is patched with a fraudulent Purple Heart.

Chevy Silverado and \$21,000 for two brand-new Honda dirt bikes. He convinced her to borrow \$400,000 for a home loan in his name but disappeared the week of closing, she said.

“He put me in a very bad financial situation,” White told *InMaricopa* through tears. “He is very abusive towards women. He promised to pay back the money he owed me, but he never did.”

Crime doesn't pay

It's difficult to pinpoint the genesis of Wineberg's financial woes.

Judges in Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico ordered him to pay restitution in seven civil lawsuits he lost between 1994 and 2016.

He's been evicted at least four times in Colorado and metro Phoenix.

In 1998, on the same day he was discharged from the Army, Wineberg was charged with theft, computer crimes and possessing a forged instrument.

A Denver District Court judge in Denver ordered him to pay his victims \$13,329 in restitution and court fees after he pleaded guilty

Continued on page 22

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to the latter charge in a plea bargain and was sentenced to fines and probation. He violated his probation in 2004, court records show. A public records request for case documents did not reveal specifics about his crimes.

IRS records obtained by *InMaricopa* show Wineberg didn't file taxes for nearly a decade, racking up \$21,738 in penalties as of September last year.

In 2019, he finally filed for bankruptcy.

But his financial misdeeds continued, according to his former employer, Chris Hofmann.

In 2020 and 2021, Wineberg filed W-2 Forms with the IRS naming Sioux Falls, S.D.-based TAK Communications as his employer.

"He never worked at TAK," said Hofmann. "Everything he did with us was 1099 [contract] work."

Hofmann supplied Wineberg's 1099 Forms and called the W-2 Forms "fake." He noted the employer identification number didn't match the company and that the company does not issue W-2 Forms.

Wineberg used those fishy W-2 Forms to both file taxes and apply for mortgage loans.

According to a letter from the IRS to

Wineberg last year, the IRS "has no record of a processed tax return for 2020."

Hofmann, who hired Wineberg based on his resume — which was supplied to *InMaricopa* and boasts the bogus Purple Heart medal — sympathetically loaned him \$3,000.

Weinberg never paid back the loan, telling Hofmann he was tending to his deceased father's affairs in Florida.

His father is alive and healthy today.

Fortunate son

Wineberg since moved to Apache Junction. His days in Maricopa have come to a somber close.

What of his days of stolen valor?

The fabrications about his military service date back decades, according to those close to him.

Some habits are hard to break. But as President Franklin D. Roosevelt famously said, "Repetition does not transform a lie into a truth."

Sooner or later, it all comes toppling down.

"A lie cannot live." – MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



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Best treatments for winter months

BY DR. KRISTINA DONNAY DNP, FNP-C

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It's best to avoid UV rays after receiving laser services because the skin is typically more sensitive and vulnerable post-treatment, and exposure to UV rays can increase the risk of skin damage, pigmentation issues and delayed healing.

Sunscreen is advised year-round as UV exposure can lead to premature aging of the skin, known as photoaging, characterized by wrinkles, leathery texture and sunspots.

Laser hair removal

Shaving is expensive and time consuming. The average American woman spends more than \$23,000 and 72 days of her life shaving her legs. This doesn't even factor in the time or expense for underarms, bikini area and more.

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DiolazeXL apart from the rest of the pack, most patients report little to no pain. Clients typically need just four to seven sessions, which are done four to six weeks apart.

Toenail fungus

At least 10% of Americans have toenail fungus and these numbers increase with age. About 20% of people in their 60s find themselves dealing with toenail fungus and at least half of men and women in their 70s show symptoms.

Once established, toenail fungus is notoriously difficult to treat because the organisms causing your infection can penetrate deep inside your nail. Not only can they sit on top of your nail or grow beneath it, but they can also get in between the nail layers themselves and skin.


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Hakuna matata

Kenyans find 'harambee' spirit in Maricopa

BY JEFF CHEW



Jenece Mordt

SHIRLEEN WARUI LEFT HER NATIVE Kenya in pursuit of the American Dream, choosing Maricopa for its affordable housing and warm temperatures.

But she stayed for the overwhelming spirit of community she found.

“The Maricopa community has demonstrated a strong sense of solidarity and the genuine significance of the phrase, ‘It takes a village,’” said Warui, a registered nurse who moved to Desert Passage in 2016.

She recalls the story of a Kenyan elder visiting family in Maricopa. While on a bicycle ride, Warui said, he became lost because in his eyes “all the houses had the same designs.”

“When I say the city came together, it did,” she said. “We posted a missing person (sign), we had search parties on foot, in cars, and even using drones to find him.”

A neighbor found him safe and helped him return to his loved ones.

It was then, Warui said, “We felt the affection as the Kenyan community in Maricopa, and we are grateful.”

Such a unifying event might be called harambee in Kenya, which “signifies the spirit of cooperation or pulling together,” said Warui.

While harambee sweetens the lives of many Kenyans in Maricopa, according to Warui, it was the skyrocketing cost of housing in major cities that drew Warui and her husband, Samuel, to town.

They have two daughters, ages 6 and 4. Samuel Warui is a production machine operator.

“I spent eight years living in Silicon Valley, Calif., after migrating from Kenya to the United States. My husband and I realized very fast at the end of 2016 that we needed to move out of our one-bedroom apartment in the Bay Area as our family grew.”

The Waruis came across Maricopa Realtor Adam Leach on social media.

“He had a major role in our decision to move to Maricopa as he was able to ease us into the transition, and for that, I will always be thankful,” she said. “After we became homeowners, we were relieved of the burden of the high expense of living.”

Continued on page 28

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Shirleen Warui and her husband, Samuel take a walk in the park with their daughters, Savannah and Saisha.

Fellow Kenyan transplant Rebecca Githinji agrees with Warui's assessment and adds Maricopa is the ideal place to raise a family. She called the city of some 70,000 a "perfect" place for kids to grow up.

"My two sons, who were new immigrants back in 2018, found it easier to settle in and focus in school because of the quietness in the Maricopa city and their limited exposure to the major city hype," Githinji said.

Many other Kenyans who settled in Maricopa cited housing affordability.

The community developed a local support network because so many Kenyan families are moving to Maricopa.

"The Kenyan community is incredibly supportive of one another and we get together to commemorate important life events like holidays, marriages, birthdays, housewarmings, and new businesses just to name a few," Warui said. "When one of us needs assistance, that becomes a community need."

Welcoming new Kenyan families to Maricopa's neighborhoods is a frequent

KENYA BY THE NUMBERS

At least **25**

KENYAN FAMILIES IN MARICOPA

53.1 Million

KENYA'S POPULATION

9,500

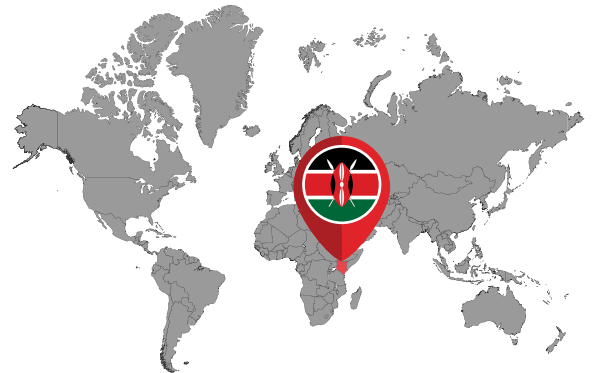
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KENYANS FAVORITES

IN KENYA

FOOD - The usual Kenyan favorite is ugali, a staple of the country's cuisine. Made from white or yellow cornmeal, salt and hot water, it is served at almost every meal. Shirleen prefers chapati, a flatbread with a mild nutty flavor from whole wheat, and beef stew.

SNACK - Kenyan bajias are a popular street food item of thinly sliced potatoes seasoned with turmeric, cumin,

chili powder, garam masala, coriander, ginger, salt and black pepper. Fried until golden brown. Shirleen Warui prefers Kenyan samosas, triangular fried flour pockets with beef, peas and lots of spices.

DRINK - Banana beer, sour porridge and Kenyan tea

GUILTY PLEASURE - Watching trashy soap operas instead of doing home chores.

Shirleen prefers a 5 p.m. nap and reading the comment section on funny videos

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

- Public buses

MUSIC - Folk music based on 50 regional languages.

But Kenyans also listen to Zanzibaran taarab music, hip hop, reggae, soul, soukous, zouk, rock 'n' roll, funk and Europop. Shirleen prefers gospel or reggae.

SPORT - Soccer, known as football in Kenya, takes the trophy.

TEAM - National football team, the Harambee Stars

IN MARICOPA

FOOD - cold beer and cheeseburgers

DRINK - Oreo cookie milkshake at Jack in the Box

GUILTY PLEASURE - New York cheesecake and pineapple dole whip at Yogurt Jungle

MODE OF

TRANSPORTATION - Car

MUSIC - Sunday morning worship at Church of the Celebration

occurrence, Warui said.

“Most of the adult Kenyans in Maricopa were born in Kenya, and a good number of the younger kids were born in America,” she said, adding the first Kenyan to move here was around 2006.

According to data from the 2020 U.S. Census, as many as 1 in 10 foreign-born Maricopa residents could be from Kenya, compared to just 1 in 200 in the previous census.

The growth in Maricopa’s Kenyan community has led to the formation of a local organization called Maricopa Family’s Keeper. Warui said it’s a sort of message board that exists specifically for Kenyans to communicate.

The local Kenyan culture is kept alive through many traditional activities, such as weddings and dowry payments, traditional music performances and maintaining the Swahili language at gatherings. That helps preserve the culture of the East African country, Warui said.

“We also celebrate Holidays like Mashujaa Day, Swahili for Heroes Day,” she said. “Every year, Mashujaa Day is marked to pay tribute to individuals who significantly aided Kenya’s fight for independence from colonial authority.”

Kenyans in Maricopa also celebrate with worship gatherings in the city.

While her native land is a world away, some things remind Warui of home. Take traffic on State Route 347, for example. “We encounter the same issue in certain Kenyan towns as well.”

But you don’t drive on the lefthand side of the road as they do in Kenya, she said. It can be confusing.

Upon moving to Maricopa, Warui said it was the heat that surprised her most.


Located on the equator, the average temperature in Kenya’s capital city Nairobi is 63 to 70 degrees year-round, according to the World Climate Guide.

She explains how you can recognize a Kenyan in Maricopa:

”It’s a funny truth that practically every Kenyan we know wears a bracelet with the national flag’s colors — black, white, red and green. This makes identifying a Kenyan easy,” Warui said.

Recognizing the bracelet, she said you might greet a Kenyan with, “Jambo,” meaning “hello.”

An oft-used Kenyan expression made more familiar in the U.S. thanks to Disney’s 1994 movie “Lion King” — hakuna matata.

English translation: “No worries.” 



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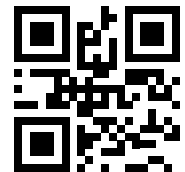


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The Doggfather

How the post office brought Snoop Dogg's dad to Maricopa

BY ELIAS WEISS



Rob and Lucinda Boyd pose for a photo at the MHS Performing Arts Center

WHEN THE PIMP'S IN THE CRIB, MA.

A gang leader-turned-filmmaker channels Snoop Dogg's 2004 hit single with his emotive biopic, and he's ready to "drop it like it's hot" next month — right here in Maricopa.

The Villages resident Rob Boyd is known in town for his criminal rehab outfit *The Streets Don't Love You Back*. What's lesser known is Snoop Dogg's mother, Beverly Tate, served on the Maricopa nonprofit's board for a decade.

Boyd, also a documentary filmmaker, pays her tribute with a new film capturing the family's streets-to-stardom journey — one of military deployment, drug gangs and family drama through the eyes of a mail carrier in the Detroit projects.

Boyd's production studio No Way Out Films debuted with the autobiopic *Trapped in the Hood* in 2019 and spun at more than 100 film festivals around the world. The studio's second effort, *Detroit Mailman*, turns the camera on the D-O-double-G family.

Born Calvin Cordozar Broadus Jr., Snoop Dogg has been crowned "The King of the West Coast" by *The Washington Post*, *Billboard* and *Vibe*. ABC News journalist Paul Donoghue credited him with putting hip-hop in the pop music charts, leading to his induction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame this year. The rap icon has more than 100 million followers on Instagram and X.

And yet the celebrity and his family will come to Maricopa next month for a red-carpet premiere of *Detroit Mailman* before encores in Detroit and Los Angeles.

Soul connection

Boyd met Snoop Dogg's father, Vernell Varnado, at Tate's 70th birthday party in 2021.

"That's when I found out we were both from the east side of Detroit," Varnado recalled. "He grew up right down the street from where I lived, in the projects."

Tate had a heart attack the next day and died shortly thereafter. It was at her funeral when the two men began swapping decades-old memories from the Motor City.

As an ex-gangbanger, Varnado's mailman story infatuated Boyd. It sounded like something straight out of a crime drama like *Boyz n the Hood* — and Boyd became intent on bringing it to the silver screen.

"I felt the world should know his story," Boyd explained. "Papa Snoop has been in the background of his son's career all these years. I said, 'Damn, Pop! You need to get in the foreground!'"

That mailman story aims to be the voice for other mail carriers who went through the same tribulations and show people they, too, can have a successful mail career — any career they want.

And that's the central tenet of Boyd's nonprofit that teaches life skills to at-risk and incarcerated people.

"The motivation is to show people that you can be whoever you want to be," he said. "Pop was a working man way before his son became a star. He wasn't waiting on nobody to get rich or famous."

Stamp duty

Varnado got home from Vietnam in 1970. He didn't think he'd see any more comrades die when he joined the U.S. Postal Service as a mail carrier a month later.

Twenty-five years delivering the mail proved he was wrong.

"Being a mailman, you can get killed," Varnado told *InMaricopa*. "I've had two or three coworkers get killed. It's a dangerous job."

Carrying the mail near Hollywood from 1970 to 1985, people looked down on Varnado. It was a pedestrian route of gang houses, and during that time, Snoop Dogg joined the Rollin' 20s Crips gang in Eastside Long Beach.

Fearing for his son's safety and seeking a more affordable place to make ends meet, Varnado relocated the family to Detroit. In lieu of gangbangers, the city was "like a drug-infested warzone full of hustlers," Varnado recalled.

"Being a mailman in Detroit back in them days, it was dangerous," he said. "I've been caught up in shootouts. I was around drug dealers every day."

Run-ins with cops and federal agents happened daily. Varnado wanted to keep his head down and show his son the key to success was a good work ethic and honest living.

But unlike in Los Angeles, mail carriers in Motown were greeted with respect. That's why Varnado still remembers the names of each member of the 470 families on his route.

He also remembers fishing on the river by the Detroit Free Press one afternoon as Snoop

Dogg practiced rapping freestyle.

"I said, 'I've had a long day, man. I don't feel like hearing that sh*t,'" Varnado reflected. "At 15 years old, he said, 'Pops, one day the whole world gonna know who the f*ck I am.'"

And he was right.

Now, he wants to help return the favor with Detroit Mailman.

"The whole world gonna know Pops," Snoop Dogg said.



After decades running the streets of Los Angeles, Snoop Dogg (right) and his dad (left) turn their attention to Maricopa, where their family biopic premieres next month.

Going postal

Varnado kept that blue and white safari hat adorned with the "sonic eagle" that USPS issued him in 1995.

He'll wear it on a trip to Maricopa from his home in San Diego this month.

"I'll be down in Maricopa real soon," Varnado said. "When I get there, I want to go out on a [postal] route."

Maricopa Postmaster Sharon Kiszczak is ready to make his wishes come true.

When the two met earlier this year working on Detroit Mailman, Kiszczak realized Varnado's wild tales of mail carrying were more universal than he may have originally thought.

"We had an instant connection," she told *InMaricopa*. "His stories of being in the postal service are the same stories we all went

through. Vernell was one of us."

Coincidentally, when Kiszczak became postmaster about a decade ago, Boyd was the very first customer she met.

He was mailing donations for a Christmas charity drive, part of his humanitarian work post-gang life. Boyd, 60, was a gang member and gang leader from age 10 to 45. Behind the façade of fast cars and flashy jewelry was a high-stakes game that could end in an instant with life in prison or an early grave.

He endured and overcame that life in the very neighborhood Varnado used to deliver mail.

"Rob [Boyd] is my godson," Varnado said. "He's family, man."

Signed, sealed, delivered

Boyd produced the Keep It Real Show on cable television for 15 years. It was an MTV-style music video program in L.A. where he interviewed hip-hop legends like Ja Rule, Ashanti, Jadakiss, Ginuwine and Danny Boy.

He was among the first producers to air Snoop Dogg's music videos years before his first No. 1 hit Drop It Like It's Hot was released.

Perhaps the writing was on the wall for Detroit Mailman. It's all come full circle, and that circle ends in Maricopa.


"We were going to do the premiere in Detroit first, but we decided we're going to have it in our own backyard in Maricopa instead," Boyd said.

The film premieres Jan. 28 at the Maricopa High School Performing Arts Center.

Although USPS employs 250,000 fewer mail carriers than it did when Varnado joined the ranks, there are still more than half a million postal workers in the country including dozens in Maricopa.

The Maricopa Post Office advertised a mail carrier job opening Nov. 10. Perhaps the person who occupies that vacancy will go on to serve in the postal service for decades as Varnado did — with all the riveting stories that come with it.

With a little help from Detroit Mailman, that just might come to be.

"A mailman's job is moving the mail," Varnado said. "Anything can go wrong any given day on your route. But people expect you to be there. So, you bring the mail on time, and be there for them — like family." 



2024: Time to focus on you more

BY BRIANNA REINHOLD, LPC



THIS YEAR HAS TRULY FLOWN BY!

It seems I say that every year, but every year feels even faster than the one that came before it. The start of 2023 felt like rush hour traffic. It was at a dead stop and things weren't moving along. However, as the year progressed, it felt like the world just hit the fast forward button.

We've already passed two of the three major holidays, Halloween and Thanksgiving. The most festive season of the year is quickly upon us, which also means the New Year is only a few short weeks away.

Clients often discuss their New Year's resolutions with me. Whether that means shedding some pounds, quitting a bad habit or trying to become financially sound, there is an energy around starting over every year. Unfortunately, for most people, those resolutions are quickly thrown out the window within the first month. Others simply opt out of setting those goals as they've recognized they aren't great at holding themselves accountable.

Whichever side of the fence you fall on, one thing is certain: A new year will be here soon, and we can use this as an opportunity to make some lifestyle changes. The clinicians at

Northern Lights Therapy think the universal resolution for 2024 should be "time to focus on you more." This can come in many forms, but simply being more present in the moment and enjoying all the wonderful things life can offer.

Instead of getting caught up in the hustle and bustle of the rat wheel we find ourselves in, we want to bring back to simple aspects of life. Spending quality time with family. Getting outdoors more and being surrounded by nature. Stop spending money on things that only fill a temporary void but instead, try to help others struggling around us. Simply finding the joy in the little things that we used to love as a kid.

Let's start 2024 going down the same path of living in the moment and focusing on the good that surrounds us. 🗨️



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Below are just some of the amazing clinicians at NLT and their advice as we enter 2024:

"Take time to get out and make friends. Companionship is the greatest deterrent for depression and something many in Maricopa are struggling to find. If you don't see an activity that interests you, then create it. Advertise it on Facebook or other social media. If you build it, they will come. Others are lonely, too, and looking for friends as much as you are. It takes a community to be healthy. Let's be that community for each other here in Maricopa." – *Julie Skelton, LCSW*

"My mantra would be 'consider choosing happiness.' I see a high rate of people just accepting circumstances that are negative rather than making a new choice for themselves." – *Dana McGee, LPC*

"The power of developing a social support system is much greater than one may imagine. It's okay to be vulnerable, it's okay to admit we are wrong, and it's okay to not be your best self 100% of the time. At the end of the day, we are all human. Allow yourself grace while providing it for others; you never know how much someone may need it."

– *Lindsey LeCates, intern*

"Seasonal depression is starting to show up for some. It is important to utilize your coping skills during this time, take some Vitamin D and do not force yourself to do things that you are uncomfortable with. Remind yourself that you are loved, you are worthy and you are stronger than you know. A great book for this is *A Gentle Reminder* by Bianca Sparacino. This book helps with simple reminders that you are able to be happy and sad, but to take it easy on yourself. Holidays can be difficult for people, but you are allowed to be happy and sad during these times. Be gentle with yourself. Please remember that it's okay to not be okay."

– *Katlyn Lawson, LPC*

"Morgan Harper Nichols' book *You are Only Just Beginning* includes short one- and two-page messages and some of her artwork. It covers topics that provide encouragement to be kind to yourself and yet also to be authentic. It is big on perseverance and to find beauty and hope in the midst of the various ups and downs of life." – *Brianna Murphy, LAC*



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Target cactus

Residents hit bullseye with modern take on ancient sport

BY MONICA D. SPENCER

MICHAEL HIGASHI WILL NEVER forget the first time he shot an arrow.

“It was terrible,” the Maricopa resident said.

A competitive shooter since 1979, Higashi took up the sport in 2009 in response to a gun ammunition shortage.

“I bought a used bow and some equipment, and I took it out to the range. I couldn't pull it back,” he recalled. “It was kind of demoralizing because you just assume as a man, you can just do it. But there's more to it.”

But once he adjusted the bow and took a few lessons?

“After that, it was wonderful,” he said. “It became my meditative time.”

Fellow Maricopa archer Jennifer Feickert had a more successful start with sport. Introduced to archery amid the pandemic, she found it exhilarating.

“It was a little nerve-wracking because I've never done anything like that before,” she said. “But when I saw that arrow fly out, it was such a powerful feeling. I was hooked.”

Continued on page 38



Above: Matthew Thompson collects used arrows between shooting rounds. Left: Henry Turner aims an arrow with other members of the Maricopa Archery Club at the Paseo Vista Recreation Area. Below: A view of a target packed with arrows during a Maricopa Trailblazers 4-H Club archery practice.





Matthew Thompson watches as Madelyn Arias shoots her bow during an archery practice hosted by the Maricopa Trailblazers 4-H Club in Hidden Valley.

Right: Michael Higashi demonstrates how to hold a compound bow at Paseo Vista Recreation Area's archery range in Chandler. Below: Joe Goncalves, Maricopa Trailblazers 4-H Club shooting sports leader, sorts through arrows during an archery practice at his Hidden Valley home. Goncalves has worked with the club for approximately six years. Bottom: Goncalves assists Dimitri Larsen during a practice.



Rise, fall and rise again

Pickleball may be the country's fastest-growing sport, but archery has slowly picked up the pace.

In 2021, archery ranked the seventh-most popular sport on social media platforms and this year's Vegas Shoot set a record attendance with nearly 4,000 archers registering for the event.

It's all part of a rise and fall trend archery has seen over the centuries.

Initially a toll of hunters and warriors throughout the world, the oldest known arrowheads date back at least 64,000 years. Arrowheads, bow fragments and art depicting various forms of archery have been found in Europe, Asia and the Americas.

However, once firearms entered the picture

in the 16th century, archery's popularity took a hit. More powerful and more deadly, guns became the preferred weapon for hunting and warfare.

It took a couple of centuries, but eventually archery gained a modest popularity as a leisure sport for Europe's aristocracy. It slowly trickled down to the middle class and its fashion wavered in the decades since.

It seems that tie to tradition entices some to the sport, as it did for 16-year-old Maricopa resident Asher Goncalves.

"We always see it in movies," he said. "We see Legolas in 'Lord of the Rings' where he turns his bow, and it just looks so fun and easy."

It was a similar draw for local resident Henry Turner.

"I've been shooting since 1973," he said. "I bought my first bow because all my buddies were talking about hunting a deer with bows. That never happened, but I just instantly fell in love with it."

In 2020, the Archery Trade Association estimated 17 million Americans participate in some form of recreational archery and more than 5 million shoot competitively.

Bow with the flow

Joe Goncalves first entered the world of archery in 2017 when his son was exposed to the sport through the Maricopa Trailblazers 4-H Club.

"I do like archery the best," he said. "It's very relaxing. You have to remain calm and put out the bad shots and just relax and breathe and take that next shot."

His son, Asher, agreed.

"It's very meditative when I'm doing it alone because I know where I am, where I can stand, what I can do," Asher said. "Guns are cool but they're loud and don't make me as happy."

Despite Higashi's failed first attempt at archery, he also finds solace in the sport.

"This is my meditative time when I can think about my breathing, I can think about my stance, I can think about releasing the arrow and letting it go," he said. "And that's all I need. I don't even have to hit anything. I just have to be there in the moment."

Feickert agreed.

"With archery, you have to know how to relax and how to breathe," she said. "You can't shoot an arrow when you're all tensed up. You've got to relax, you got to drop your shoulders, you got to drop your forehead."

That relaxation is partly what Goncalves said helps 4-H “make championship kids,” but also the excitement in hitting a target.

“You get that immediate gratification of seeing where you hit,” he said. “And there’s always that little possibility of that oddball shot where you stick in another arrow. The Robinhood shot.”

Bringing it home

Higashi estimates Maricopa is home to at least 200 archers based on a callout he made earlier this year.

“I posted on Facebook asking if anyone was interested in starting an archery club,” he said. “I got 145 responses at the time.”

Since then, the Maricopa Archery Club’s scrappy but robust membership is attempting to draw new members and eventually acquire an archery range for city residents.

Unless they have safe access to a wide swath of land to properly set up targets, archers in Maricopa are usually forced to travel to Chandler or Casa Grande to use outdoor and indoor ranges.

But that’s not always the case.

“I’ve seen people shooting in the washes around town, all over the place,” Higashi said, conceding, “It’s not the best practice.”

At the Maricopa Veterans Day Parade last month, the 4-H club’s float was decked out in archery targets. Maricopa’s 4-H club uses Goncalves’ land for a makeshift range, but even he said an official range would be beneficial.

“I think a range would help open the sport up to a lot more people,” he said. “I kicked around the idea, but I wasn’t sure who to talk to.”

In October, the Maricopa Archery Club contacted the city’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee for assistance in moving forward with a municipal range. An initial proposal for the range would allow archers to shoot upwards of 100 yards, which could allow the group to host competitions.

“We have plenty of land,” Turner said. “We’re not shy of land. We just want it to be something for the community to start out with.”

FAST FACTS

- Although no longer common terminology, archery lovers are called toxophilites. This comes from a combination of the Greek words toxon (bow and arrow) and philos (loving).

- The oldest-known arrowheads date back 64,000 years and were found in South Africa.
- Watch out! Arrows can travel up to 200 miles per hour.
- In 1904, archery became the first Olympic sport to include a women’s event.

- In 2015, USA Paralympian Matt Stutzman broke a Guinness world record for longest accurate shot by any athlete, hitting a target from a whopping 310 yards. That’s over three football fields.



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Changing seasons

The fall sports season came to an end as the Maricopa flag football team finished its inaugural campaign with a 2-9 record. This year was the first season that the Arizona Interscholastic Association recognized the sport. The Maricopa football team celebrated senior night with a 21-14 victory over Ironwood Ridge and finished the year with a 4-6 record. Maricopa's volleyball team enjoyed a second-place conference finish en route to a 13-14-2 final regular season mark.







The national pet store chain finally welcomed its first guests Nov. 13 at its location in Edison Pointe. During its grand opening week, Petco also hosted an adoption event and announced its veterinary services will be available in January.



While Cold Stone isn't expected to open its doors anytime soon, the ice cream parlor will share a space with Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory. In early November, the store began tenant improvements, which included electrical and plumbing work, as well as constructing interior walls.



Nando's delayed its opening to 2024 due to construction delays, according to Director of Operations Marijka Anderson. "The owners are saying they think we'll be open early February at the latest," she said.



With interior construction underway, "Arizona's best donut" is headed for Maricopa. The Chandler-based donut chain began a host of tenant improvements to its location on Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway and Porter Road.



Carl's Jr. is making its Maricopa comeback. Nearly five years after closing its first location, now occupied by Wendy's, the fast-food charbroiled burger restaurant broke ground on its new location in late October. The site sits between Maricopa Animal Hospital and Rili B's Taco Shop on North John Wayne Parkway. SimonCRE Content Marketing Manager Nick Robello also said he estimated a 2024 opening.

in Maricopa

InMaricopa hired a new full-time education and local issues reporter, Jeff Chew. Chew holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Arizona State University and has decades of experience reporting on education, government, sports and breaking news all over the state — metro Phoenix, Prescott Valley and Lake Havasu City. He has also worked as a radio and newspaper journalist in metro Seattle and West Texas.



Health-conscious Maricopans rejoiced when health and fitness superstore GNC welcomed its first patrons Oct. 17. On the northeast corner of John Wayne Parkway and Edison Road, it became the first major storefront to open at Edison Pointe since 2019.



Juice and smoothie bowl enthusiasts stopped by Nekter Juice Bar at Edison Pointe for its grand opening Oct. 23. Owner Mike Ries said the company was excited "to bring a healthy concept to the city."



The city's second Taco Bell broke ground near Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway and Stonegate Road in early November. The location's owner, John Baldwin, estimated a grand opening could occur as soon as April.



After months of waiting for the new fast-food chicken restaurant, Maricopa fully embraced Slim Chickens Nov. 6. The restaurant reported the highest-grossing first day in sales in company history. Slim Chickens Operating Partner Lucas Barnett said the location served nearly 3,000 guests during its grand opening and cited an overwhelming response for dine-in and take-out. "For multiple hours, we had over 50 cars in the drive thru," Barnett said.

Good stuff happening at your business? Let us know at News@InMaricopa.com.

Body of proof

Vitiello Primary Care a fountain of youth for the city

BY ELIAS WEISS

IN HIS TWILIGHT YEARS, William Shakespeare noted “from hour to hour we ripe and ripe, and then from hour to hour we rot and rot.”

Similarly, Mark Twain wrote “it is sad to go to pieces like this, but we all have to do it.”

The authors’ quips are among the endless grievances about aging that have been documented for as long as humans have stomachached the discomforts of a long life. That’s why so many since Alexander the Great have sought a fountain of youth to halt the relentless march of time.

“When you’re aging, it freaking sucks,” says JoAnn Vitiello, a certified family nurse practitioner who might have just found that shimmering pool in Maricopa.

The city’s leading whole-body health practitioner exudes vitality. She’s getting ready to celebrate her 57th birthday, but she doesn’t look anywhere close to it. There’s no magic involved — it’s new science, and Vitiello is fronting the movement.

Who would have thought she used to spend her weekends exhausted, immobilized on the couch as the minutes ticked down to a looming work week? Or that she failed to find joy in her many accomplishments? In her early 40s, Vitiello began looking for a solution to get off the medicine and cure her chronic fatigue.

And she found it.

For more than a decade, Vitiello has helped so many women and men from all over metro Phoenix do the same.

“I have a passion for wellness,” she says.

In today’s fast-paced world, anxiety and burnout have never been so prevalent, while energy and self-confidence have never been so difficult to come by. Holistic healthcare emphasizes the interconnected well-being of the mind, body and soul, emphasizing their cyclical influence on energy, happiness and beauty.

“We’re all exhausted with the demands of life,” Vitiello says. “Depression, anxiety, obesity — it’s all a cycle.”

Vitiello started to feel the ill effects of aging around age 40. In Maricopa, nearly half of residents are over 40, according to the most recent U.S. Census Data.

The stresses of life and aging can cause high blood pressure, obesity and cholesterol issues, Vitiello says.

Nearly 40% of people in Pinal County are obese, according to the Center for the Future of Arizona. That’s compared to less than 25% statewide.

“You don’t need hypertension medicine. You don’t need to spend \$500 every month for a shot to lose 150 pounds,” Vitiello contends. “They’re oversaturating these people with medicine. But it’s a money-maker.”

Vitiello stands up to big pharma. Emphasizing dietary coaching, mental health and new, proven treatments like Semaglutide and hormone therapy, Vitiello aims to end her patients’ reliance on endless prescriptions that treat but do not cure.

“Anxiety and obesity are connected,” she explains. “We eat as a coping mechanism. Diabetes isn’t hereditary, so when we ask about a family history of obesity, we’re really asking, ‘Who taught you how to eat?’”

Vitiello, a family nurse practitioner and aesthetic injector, was recently certified in hormone therapy. It’s a “game changer,” she says. She works with endocrinologists, cardiologists, psychiatry, bariatrics and other specialists.

In Pinal County, fewer than 60% of residents have adequate access to locations for physical activity, down from more than 76% in 2018, according to data scientists at MIT and Deloitte.

A recent Lending Tree study ranked Arizona the worst state for mental healthcare access. Two-thirds of people with mental illness are not receiving care. At least one-fourth of people with mental illness can’t afford treatment.

That’s why Vitiello’s practice blazes trails in Maricopa and beyond. With her focus on affordability, she has attracted patients from San Tan Valley, Scottsdale, Gilbert and elsewhere.

“I really care about the individual,” she says.

Vitiello Primary Clinic houses a ritual wellness medispa whose offerings include microneedling, Botox, chemical peels, facials, IV therapy and vitamin injections.

Heading up a primary care clinic and a medispa sounds like a lot of work — but for



JoAnn Vitiello

Vitiello, it’s easier than sticking to just one or the other.

“The medispa complements the primary care,” she offers. “I know my patients better than anyone else from a health perspective.”

That’s why she’s been able to help her patients lose hundreds of pounds, rebound from crippling fatigue and conquer low testosterone. When you look better, you make healthier decisions — and vice versa — she explains.

Some of her patients’ testimonials sound like miracle work. But there’s cutting-edge science behind it.

“When cardiologists and endocrinologists can’t figure it out, they send the patients to me,” Vitiello says.

She stays at the forefront of new science with a monthly commitment to continuing education, giving her an edge over the competition. “I’m always learning,” she says.

After several years as a practitioner in Gilbert, Vitiello knew it was time to move her business closer to her Maricopa home.

Now, she’s planted her roots in the city.

“Maricopa followed me out of town, so I followed them back to town,” Vitiello reflects. “It was scary, it’s still scary, but Maricopa is very, very kind to me.”

Vitiello Primary Care is at 21300 N. John Wayne Pkwy., Suite 108 in the medical plaza. The clinic and medispa are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and always welcome new patients. Same-day appointments may be available. Call 520-568-5943 and mention InMaricopa for a free facial consult, 20% off microneedling and 15% off SkinMedica products with purchase of a Diamond Glow Facial.



A summary of the Oct. 9 through Nov. 3 restaurant health inspections by Pinal County Environmental Health Services.

Restaurant inspections

SATISFACTORY



41433 W. Honeycutt Road

Cold holding

Temperatures of cheese and meat sticks, rice pudding, Lunchables, assorted sandwiches, burritos and pizzas in grab-n-go cooler 47-51° (≤41° required).

Cooling equipment

Air temperature in grab-n-go cooler 45-50° (≤41° required).



Cooling methods

Temperatures of cooked pasta in deep, covered, plastic container in reach-in cooler 47- 48° (≤41° required). To be held in a shallow, uncovered, metal pan.



Hot holding

Temperatures of shredded beef, shredded chicken and enchilada sauce in reach-in cooler 118-121° (≥135° required).

Cooling

Temperatures of cooked beans in walk-in cooler 54-55° (≤41° required).

Cooling methods

Temperature of cut lettuce in deep, closed, plastic cooler 52-54° (≤41° required). Temperature of enchilada sauce in deep, plastic pitchers in food-prep area 120-125° (≤41° required). Different cooling method required, like shallow, uncovered metal pan, or use ice.

Date marking

Open containers of flan and verde salsa in walk-in cooler with expired date marks.



Controlling pests

Live cockroaches around three-compartment, hand and mop sinks.

Sanitizing solutions

Quat-based sanitizer in use without testing strips.

Cleaning frequency

Buildup of debris on floor around three-compartment, hand and mop sinks. Excessive oil spillage on the wall near the pizza dough station.

Cleaning of ventilation system

Buildup of dust on and around kitchen air vents.



When to wash

Staff entered kitchen through the backdoor and began handling clean dishes without washing hands.

Cleaning

Staff washed and rinsed a knife before putting it in storage. No sanitizer used.

Cooling methods

Temperature of cooked pork-broth in covered, 5-gallon, plastic container in walk-in cooler between 56-75° (≤41° required). Different cooling method required, like shallow, uncovered metal pan, or use ice.

Hot holding

Temperature of cooked meat and boiled eggs in prep cooler 50-51° (≤41° required).

Temperature control

Cut lettuce on counter at room temperature. (≤41° required).

EXCELLENT

- A+ Charter Schools
- Circle K - Made To Go
- Dell's Express Pizza & Wings
- Desert Sunrise High School
- Desert Sunrise High School Concessions
- The Duke at Rancho El Dorado
- Heritage Charter School
- Legacy Traditional School
- Maricopa Head Start
- Pizza Hut
- The Slab Premium Meats

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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Introducing Dr. Matine Mirsaidi

MARICOPA FOOT AND ANKLE IS excited to introduce its newest doctor, Dr. Matine Mirsaidi.

Dr. Mirsaidi received his Doctor of Podiatric Medicine at the Midwestern University Arizona College of Podiatric Medicine, receiving premium podiatric medical training from a didactic and clinical aspect in affiliated facilities across the country.

After earning his credentials, he completed a three-year podiatric medical and surgical residency at Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center in Phoenix. He was trained by many well-renowned foot and ankle specialists across the Valley in the diagnosis and treatment of foot and ankle conditions, with vast training in both conservative and surgical management.

Dr. Mirsaidi's diverse training spans across wound care, diabetic foot care and limb salvage, complicated lower extremity infections, athletic injuries, dermatological conditions of the lower extremity, heel pain, flat feet and all other foot and ankle ailments.

Raised here in the Valley, Dr. Mirsaidi has always emphasized the importance of giving back to the community that has given so much to him. He volunteers at several events every year like FitFeet, which is affiliated with the Special Olympics of Arizona.

In his free time, Dr. Mirsaidi enjoys spending time with his loved ones, participating in and following soccer, football and basketball, and playing the guitar.

In addition to English, Dr. Mirsaidi is fluent in Farsi and conversational in Spanish and French.



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Happy Holidays from ED3!

As December rolls around and the holiday season kicks off, let's take a moment to consider our energy usage. Arizona residents know the relief that comes with the end of summer, but don't forget that winter can also have its own challenges.



1. **Install LED lights** – they're brighter, use less energy, and last longer than traditional lights.
2. **Use a timer** – Whether it's for your holiday lights or your heating, using a timer can help you save energy by ensuring that you're only using energy when needed.
3. **Layers** – Rather than turning on the heat, try dressing in cozy layers and using blankets! You can save energy and still feel warm and snug.

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Cacti in the Valley

BY HARRIET PHELPS

WE LIVE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE of the Sonoran Desert. This area stretches north to the Mogollon Rim, south into the Mexican state of Sonora and down the Baja Peninsula, west near San Diego, Calif., and east just past Tucson. All cacti are native to the Western Hemisphere. The range of growing cacti is limited by freezing temperatures and by elevation.

All cacti are succulents but not all succulents are cacti. Succulents require little water and are drought tolerant. Cacti generally require eight hours of sunlight daily. Features of cacti include a waxy cuticle, fleshy leaves, stems or roots for water storage, and a large shallow root system that spreads out. Some succulents may have hairy or small spines and remain rubbery in texture. Cacti have areoles, small nubbin-like structures found on the body.

There are more than 1,000 cactus varieties. Common varieties are identified by shape.

The totem- or column-shaped stems have a vertical growing pattern. Cacti varieties of this shape are the Organ Pipe (*Stenocereus*

thurberi), Saguaro and Golden Torch (*Trichocereus spachianus*).

The cylindrical stems are low-growing and sprout in clusters or mounds. These include pincushion, pineapple-beehive, hedgehog and barrel stems. This group includes the Arizona Fishhook Pincushion (*Mammillaria grahamii*), Fishhook Barrel (*Ferocactus wislizeni*) and Engelmann Hedgehog (*Echinocereus engelmannii*).

Segmented stems are shrubby or tree-like. They grow in new stem segments, or joints, from previous years' segments. This group includes the flat, paddle-shaped Engelmann Prickly Pear (*Opuntia engelmannii*) and chollas such as the Buckhorn Cholla (*Cylindropuntia acanthocarpa*).

Stick-like stems are cylindrical-like rods and the sticks are square or round. Desert Night-blooming Cereus is most common.

Arizona is a great place for cactus lovers. Our climate is conducive for growth from the hot arid south to the cooler temps and grasslands of the north. 📍




THE SAGUARO CACTUS

(*Carnegiea gigantea*) is the king of desert cacti. It is columnar and tree-like, growing 1 to 1.5 inches a year. The branches, or arms, take 50 to 70 years to appear. With lower precipitation, it may take a century to sprout branches. At 35 years, it produces flowers. The Saguaro's white flower is Arizona's state flower and houses the state bird, the Cactus Wren. An adult plant is considered to be 125 years old and could weigh six tons or more.



most expensive HOME SOLD



📍 40411 W. Desert Fairways  Oct. 24 **\$** 650,000

This home boasts a three-car garage and RV garage. In addition to three bedrooms and a great room, there is a study and gourmet kitchen with a breakfast nook. The master suite features a walk-in closet and dual-sink bathroom. A covered patio in the backyard joins an oversized backyard. It sold for \$11,503 under its original list price.

Community: The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado **Days on market:** 57
Builder: Richmond American Homes
Square feet: 2,580 **Year built:** 2023
Price per square foot: \$251.94 **Bedrooms:** 3
Lot size: 10,360 sqft. **Bathrooms:** 2.5

2. 40693 W. Bravo Drive, The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado.....\$599,000
3. 40465 W. Desert Fairways Drive, The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado..\$570,000
4. 40486 W. Desert Fairways Drive, The Lakes at Rancho El Dorado....\$551,214
5. 44162 W. Palo Abeto Drive, Palo Brea.....\$550,000

least expensive HOME SOLD

📍 37649 W. Capri Ave.  Oct. 20 **\$** 273,000



This ranch home has a connected kitchen and living area with a walkout patio. The backyard abuts Sorrento Boulevard and the community greenbelt and tennis court. It sold for \$17,000 under its original list price.

Previous sale:
\$185,990
(2019)

Community: Sorrento **Builder:** D.R. Horton
Square feet: 1,279 **Year built:** 2019
Price per square foot: \$213.45 **Bedrooms:** 3
Lot size: 6,596 sqft. **Bathrooms:** 2
Days on market: 29

2. 20654 N. Tammy St., Homestead North.....\$280,000
3. 41758 W. Mano Place, Santa Rosa Springs.....\$285,000
4. 21098 N. Dries Road, Homestead North.....\$285,000
5. 37421 W. Amalfi Ave., Sorrento.....\$290,000

Source: MLS, Oct. 9 - Nov. 13

Brian Petersheim Jr.

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Teri Romero-Dominguez M.Ed.
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR



Bus service in the city of Maricopa and Hidden Valley





How Maricopa addressed a tricky soil situation

BY DAYV MORGAN

BACK IN 2010, SULFATES IN THE SOIL caused quite a stir in Maricopa. The problem began when Maricopa Meadows HOA board members started noticing abnormal damage to concrete footings, walls, and other structures.

In some parts of the desert, soils have higher levels of sulfates, and when those elements combine with water, they absorb into concrete

foundations, driveways, and walkways, causing damage when they dry.

Maricopa's former mayor, Christian Price, who in 2010, was the Maricopa Meadows HOA president, brought in a geotechnical engineer to look at the soil composition and after testing, found the damages resembled those of houses that were at least 20 years older.

The city even contracted its own specialist to take samples in different Maricopa locations to determine the severity of the problem.

In the end, more than 600 Maricopa homeowners filed a class action lawsuit, and for a few months that year, stories about sulfates dominated the local news, leaving many residents anxious regarding the quality of their homes.


Maricopa Meadows won its lawsuit, finding that builders used improper concrete. The affected foundations were poured with Type II concrete, a suitable mix for moderate levels of sulfates. Type V concrete was created for high-sulfate environments and should have been used instead.

But due to the fact that most of the builders were out of business and the insurance policies were out of date, the majority of the homeowners were unable to collect anything for damages.




So should residents be worried?

I have been involved in over 1,200 transactions in Maricopa, and while I have seen cosmetic damage to block fences and stem walls, to my knowledge there is not a single case where sulfate damage has caused a home to have structural issues that needed to be addressed.

Jim Sullivan, owner of Sullivan Inspection Group, has performed over 500 home inspections in Maricopa, and also agreed that it's not something to be overly concerned about, stating "you are much more likely to see foundation problems in Maricopa occur from the expansive soil conditions than from sulfates."

The city has since updated building codes to require soil testing to determine what type of concrete should be used in footings. So as the city expands and new subdivisions are developed on old farmland, sulfates will be one less thing for home buyers to worry about. 

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

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In this glimpse into the past, we see as a young man, Lloyd Frank, who once served aboard the USS Ticonderoga (CVS-14) in the U.S. Navy.

The Vibe AZ, is a cover band that entertains local audiences in the Province community and beyond.

Banding together

Passion to play unites The Vibe

BY TOM SCHUMAN

ON THE SURFACE, THESE FIVE men have little in common.

They range in age from 59 to 72.

They hail from the Midwest beacons of Chicago and Milwaukee to the East Coast stalwarts of upper New York and New Jersey.

Their work careers — law enforcement, banking, auto restoration, architecture and cybersecurity — were just as varied.

But there is one major similarity. It touched them all — to varying degrees — in their younger days and it brought them all together in Maricopa in recent years.

It is a love of music, and they are The Vibe AZ, a cover band that entertains local audiences in the Province community and beyond.

Ken Grandy, Bob Lame, David Briand, Jim Schrimpf and Scott Turney have only known each other a short time. But they share a strong

connection not everyone can fully comprehend.

“The majority of my long-term friends and acquaintances I met through playing music,” Schrimpf confesses. “There’s kind of a bonding that goes on. It’s almost like a brotherhood.”

Lame, who says he has never stopped playing since age 13, adds, “Music has always been an outlet. It got me through a lot of crap in my life. I connect to something spiritually, and a band is a meeting of souls and minds. I love music — it drives me to this day.”

Early days

Each band member’s story begins with an early start to a musical career. For Turney, who grew up near Syracuse, N.Y., it all began with organ lessons at age 7. The keyboardist recalls experiences with a jazz band that played American Legion halls, New Year’s Eve parties and the like.

“Then I loaded my musical gear and went to California,” he details. “I toured four or five years straight, living out of a suitcase. In Alaska, we played six nights a week from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. for all the fishermen who came in. We were eating good with all the crab and salmon that they brought in.”

The rock band cut a record that received some radio play in the Pacific Northwest in the mid-1980s before the group broke up.

“I moved back east and gave up music for 30 years,” Turney reveals.

Grandy, who plays acoustic and electric guitar as well as serving as one of The Vibe’s vocalists, recalls playing frat and beach parties in Chicago during his later teen years. At age 22, he became a policeman and advanced through the ranks to detective in a career that spanned nearly 30 years.

“The police department came along and then everything else was on the backburner,” he says. “When the kids got older, I did play with a few other cops in a band called The Self-Righteous Brothers. It’s always been fun and enjoyment playing music.”

Briand, who spent his high school and college years not far from Turney in Oswego, N.Y., made an early connection with his

instrument of choice. Part of the inspiration came from the “cool record collections” of his older siblings.

“I would help myself to those records and throw them on. As a kid, I always heard the drums. I would say playing drums kind of found me,” he contends.

Briand played in high school and “jammed” with a few bands in college. Later, while living in Maine, he was involved with several cover bands.

“I really love music — and I do it to kind of escape the daily bullsh*t,” he says. “Working with these guys is easy because they are so talented.”

Motivational beginnings

Schrimpf and Lame share their own startup stories.

The first instrument for Schrimpf was an accordion. But when he saw and heard a friend playing in a band at the end of eighth grade, the tune changed.

“I said to myself, ‘This is something I’ve got to do. This is the coolest thing on Earth.’ I asked Phil, ‘What instrument is hardest for you to find?’ That’s how I decided to become a bass player.”

At age 18, Schrimpf toured Wisconsin and neighboring states with a four-piece band. Many years later, after his children were grown, a new band titled The Boomers played together for seven years. In a sign of the bonds among musicians, both groups included Phil, Schrimpf’s friend from eighth grade.

The beginnings for Lame also involved both family and friends.

“My older brother was a bass player and his band practiced in our basement. I would sneak down and watch them,” he shares. “The drummer asked if I was going to play music like my brother. I would see all the prettiest girls with one guy. I asked: ‘What instrument does he play?’ I found out it was lead guitar and I said, ‘I’m going to be that guy.’”

Lame was paid to play at age 13. Later, he was a sound man for his brother’s band that toured the U.S. and Canada. In his 20s, he played with various bands at famous venues in New York City. Later, he took on the role of Graham Nash in a Crosby Stills & Nash tribute band.

He cites his “claim to fame” was playing five years in a row on the stage at what was then the Garden State Arts Center in Holmdel, N.J., rated one of the top amphitheatres in the country.

“You name a band and they have played there.”

Continued on page 52

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Coming together

Grandy relocated to Maricopa seven years ago and sought others with similar backgrounds through a musicians' page on a networking website.

"I wanted to get a full band back together," he reveals. "Bob and I just started playing and singing together. Then we saw Jim had posted something, and he fit in real nice."

Briand and Turney are the most recent additions, rounding out the band with their expertise on the drums and keyboards, respectively.

Grandy reiterates the individuals in the group share many of the same musical influences, from the Beatles to others in the British invasion. The performances today require a variety of songs and styles.

"Now, you need line dancing and some new country so people can get up and dance right away," he says.

The group constantly adds new songs and replaces others. Lame notes, "You don't want people to hear the same show."

Asked what he likes best about his current efforts, Schrimpf offers, "It's not a matter of money or anything. It's simply playing for people and seeing them have a good time."

Briand believes playing music "definitely keeps you young and helps keep you sharp."



Grandy expands on that thought. "If you don't have things that keep you interesting, retirement can be difficult. If you are not in the mix, the world goes by. If you want to be part of the show, you've got to be involved."

Turney sums up the common sentiment.

"This is the most fun in retirement. It has brought a lot of enjoyment to life." 🎸

David Briand, 59, is the drummer. A native of Oswego, N.Y., he's worked as a cook, drafter and architectural job captain.

THE VIBE AZ

- Ken Grandy, 69, vocals, acoustic and electric guitar. Chicago. Policeman/detective
- Bob Lame, 64, vocals and lead guitar. New Jersey. Computers and cybersecurity
- Jim Schrimpf, 72, vocals and bass guitar. Milwaukee. Credit union CEO/president
- Scott Turney, 70, keyboards. Upstate New York. Auto restoration
- David Briand, 59, vocals and drums. Oswego, N.Y. Cook, drafter and architectural job captain



PREVIOUS BANDS

- **Grandy:** The Rage, The Self-Righteous Brothers
- **Lame:** Token, Brother Pete Band, CSNsongs
- **Schrimpf:** The Coalition, Barry's Truckers, Midlife Crisis, The Boomers
- **Turney:** Fair Choice, Sierra, The Keepers, Brenda Starr
- **Briand:** Dancing Child, Jacob Morris Band, Saturated, Blindsided

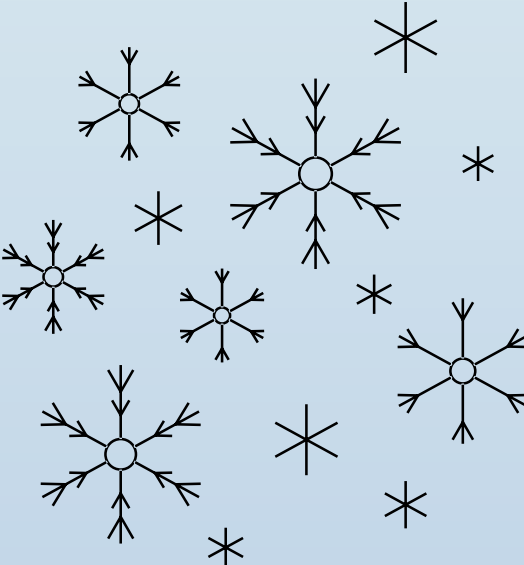


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IF YOU GO

When: Now through Dec. 24 (Select nights Wed.-Sun.)
Time: 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Where: Rawhide Western Town 5700 W. North Loop Rd., Chandler, AZ 85226
Tickets and info: PrattBrothersChristmas.com
Sponsorship or group parties: info@PrattBrothersChristmas.com

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dec 2	MERRY COPA City of Maricopa
dec 2	ELECTRIC LIGHT PARADE Casa Grande
dec 8	CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK Coolidge
dec 15	3RD FRIDAYS IN FLORENCE Florence

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DECEMBER

1 - 24

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2

Maricopa Amateur Radio Association

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

Merry Copa

6 p.m., Copper Sky Regional Park
44345 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

SafeHouse - Break the Ice

9 p.m., Water & Ice
20928 N. John Wayne Pkwy.

5

Maricopa City Council

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

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. Ste. 103

16

Teen Group

10 a.m., Northern Lights Therapy
21300 N. John Wayne Pkwy. Ste. 103

19

Maricopa City Council

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

20

Blue Star Mothers of Maricopa

6:30 p.m., Maricopa Veterans Center
41600 W. Smith Enke Road



Dayv Morgan a Maricopa Realtor and the owner of HomeSmart Premier, holds a Christmas light show every year. Check InMaricopa.com for an exact time for this year's display.

Maricopa Unified School District Governing Board

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

21

Open Bingo

2 p.m., Caliche Senior Living
1640 N. Peart Rd. Ste. 103

28

Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group

6 p.m., Northern Lights Therapy
21300 N. John Wayne Pkwy. Ste. 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

Art and Sip

7 p.m., The Roost
20800 N. John Wayne Pkwy. Ste. 101

Narcotics Anonymous

5:30 p.m., Maricopa Library & Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Drive

Thursdays

Maricopa Police Cadets

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

Alcoholics Anonymous

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

Fridays

Narcotics Anonymous

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

Al-Anon - Strength & Home AFG

7 p.m., Community of Hope
45295 W. Honeycutt Ave.

Alcoholics Anonymous


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

Saturdays

Alcoholics Anonymous

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

ALL EVENTS ARE TENTATIVE

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

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GETTING TO know

VERONICA RODRIGUEZ
 Advertising Professional

Hometown: Bakersfield, Calif.

Reside in: Alterra

Maricopan since: September 2020

Family: Daughter and two sons

Pets: Doberman/Lab and Chihuahua

Pet peeve: Pessimism

Dream vacation: Bali

Like most about Maricopa: Small-town feel

Like least about Maricopa: Lack of family activities



FAVORITE ...

Charity: Animal Humane Society

Book: Atomic Habits

Movie: White Chicks

Actor: Keanu Reeves

Song: "Amber" by 311

Musician: Bad Bunny

Team: 49ers, Lakers, Suns, D-backs

Athlete: Kobe Bryant

Food: Italian

Drink: Coffee and matcha

Restaurant: Zinc Bistro

Quote: "Whether you think you can, or you can't – you're right." - Henry Ford

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

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ADOT steamrolls city plea with more morning closures



Goettl to run for council



MHS soccer star signs DI



Some students get diplomas in December



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MUSD Dual Language Immersion Program Expands PreK - 2nd Grade





Bristletoe

Looks like another Green Christmas in Maricopa. Phylliss Peterson of Province took this photo of desert cactus blooms. Swap your mistletoe this year for its bristly Arizonan twin — alright, you can't quite kiss under it — but this flying saucer cactus seems excited to greet the reindeer overhead as it bloomed a pair of lush flowers just in time for Christmas!

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



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