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TEMPE & WEST CHANDLER

# WRANGLER NEWS

THE PLACE WE CALL HOME

## Then and now... THE CHANGING LOOK OF LOVE

By Don Kirkland

When Cupid takes aim, is he more likely to hit grandma and grandpa or a couple of Generation Z lovebirds? It's a conundrum Lorin Jones faces almost daily, and whatever the answer, it's likely to have lifelong implications.

Jones, newly installed owner of one of the East Valley's oldest jewelry-crafting establishments, says this year's occurrence of Valentine's Day has again reminded him—he's been making rings for more than three decades—that couples 50 and up tend to look at engagement and wedding rings with an altogether different perspective than those inhabiting the younger generations.

This means, of course, that Jones has got to be ready for almost any creative challenge, whether it involves coming up with a 21st century design or one evoking the feel-good sentiments of times past—like a previous generation's white or yellow gold or the tech era, where a newly-in-love couple see their future being locked in immortality by the ring-finger bounds of tungsten, black cobalt or titanium, previously found only in aerospace applications.

And then there's the matter of what stone to use and what shape to cut it.

These kinds of decisions seem to confront loving couples ever more frequently, Jones says, effectively changing the traditions that most jewelers have followed for years.

"So I try to pull the ideas of all the generations together: Things that the millennials like as well as what the people of my generation like," says Jones. "My generation was into the look of richness; millennials are more minimalist. Like it used to be a diamond they wanted for the centerpiece. Now it's a colored stone."

The dilemma of selection doesn't end that simply, though. "The most unique ring I was ever

— CUPID, Page 15



**LIFE CHANGING** — Scott Eckenrode straps on his helmet before heading out for a long bike ride; quick thinking by Sue, Scott's wife, led to CPR until paramedics arrived.

— Photos by Billy Hardiman for Wrangler News

## For Valentine's Day, no better gift than life itself

By Sammie Ann Wicks

"You're telling me that I had a heart attack?" These were the first incredulous words Scott Eckenrode remembers saying after a routine afternoon with his wife in their Chandler living room last Aug. 3.

Now, he lay under the glare of Dignity Chandler Regional's Emergency Department lights, wondering what had happened.

"My wife and I were having an animated discussion about

something or other, but I had no recollection of anything after that 'til I woke up in the hospital," Eckenrode recalls.

With no warning and no previous symptoms, the healthy 59-year-old long-distance biker had suffered what doctors call Sudden Cardiac Arrest, a medical event that causes as many as 383,000 adult deaths in the United States annually.

Eckenrode's experience defied

— HEART, Page 14



SPECIAL CENTER SECTION . . .  
Kyrene Schools Superintendent  
Dr. Jan Vesely's 2019 'State of the  
District' message to the community.  
Inside on Pages 15 & 16

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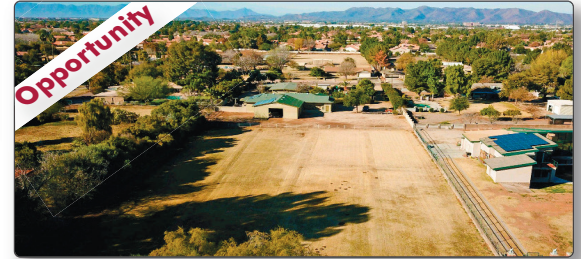
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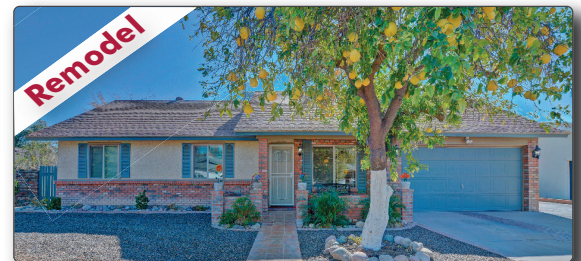
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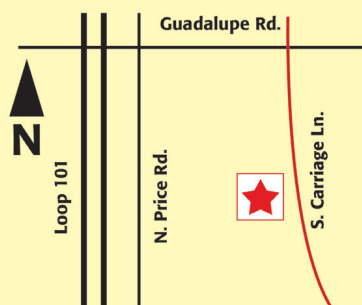
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## Tempe Town Lake

# State's No. 2 attraction may get added pizzazz as planners dive into report



As if Tempe Town Lake isn't already one of Arizona's premier destinations, plans are being discussed to give it even more pizzazz. And with those additions, naturally, the power to attract even more than the 2-million-plus people who annually visit its shores and nearby environs.

Results of a recent study have provided city planners with a tentative road map for improvements that could span the next three decades—provided, that is, that the money needed to enhance attractions at the site would become available.

The concept was floated following completion of a dialog among residents and others focused on the possibility of updating a list of master-plan projects that were approved almost 20 years ago. An in-depth review of the group's findings is due to begin within weeks, along with discussion of where the city might find money to undertake some of the proposed improvements.

Melissa Quillard, a member of the city's public information staff, has been quoted as saying that, while

the proposed additions may require fees from those who utilize any new services, some of the ideas unveiled so far could be considered "visionary" and add to the economic and other advantages that Tempe already enjoys, especially in its downtown venues.

The park area's existing usage, which last year included 30 or more major events, has started to stretch the capability of city staff to maintain landscape and other infrastructure, especially when major events are scheduled close to one another, according to Quillard.

Among ideas being considered are the creation of "green space" for art- and performance-related programs adjacent to Tempe Center for the Arts; areas for such fun and physical challenges as rock climbing and open-air gymnastics; sports fields; and something evoking the style of San Antonio's popular river walk, possibly with shops and leisure attractions.

Tempe Beach Park is second only to Grand Canyon in its number of annual visitors.

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## Northrup Grumman, Intel join in Feb. 9 'Science Spectacular'

For kids who'd like to get a close-up, hands-on lesson in the miracles of modern-day science, a program sponsored by West Chandler space and semi-conductor giants Northrup Grumman, Intel and nearly 50 other scientific trend-setters is coming to downtown Chandler on Saturday, Feb. 9.

The city of Chandler and its Economic Development Division, which are hosting the event, have invited area residents to their eighth annual Chandler Science Spectacular, scheduled from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The one-day event will be centered at 178 E. Commonwealth Ave., between Buffalo and Boston streets along Commonwealth Avenue.

Planners say the event will entertain the entire family and explain how fun, creative and important science can be to daily life. Guests will get a chance to explore the basics of science as notable companies, artists, students and educational organizations host interactive learning activities.

The science competition is designed for Chandler K-12 students and educational organizations. Six winning teams will be awarded a \$500 prize that will be presented to their school's

science club or program for the most educational, creative and passionate projects.

Staff from Intel and Northrup Grumman will judge projects on display at the event. The winners will be announced during the event and will be recognized at an upcoming City Council meeting.

Event sponsor Northrup Grumman will launch a model rocket every hour and the company's scientists and engineers will have a variety of interactive and hands-on activities for families. The company will have a passport for kids to earn stamps as they complete each activity.

Once the passport is filled out, kids may exchange it for a prize. Intel and its volunteers will display Makey Makey/Sparkfun kits and feature activities focused on the fundamental basics of computer science.

The annual Chandler Science Spectacular is part of the Arizona SciTech Festival, a movement to promote and celebrate science in daily lives and to earn recognition for Arizona as a science and technology hub.

Information: [chandleraz.gov/science](http://chandleraz.gov/science).

### Intel's 10,000-plus W. Chandler employees now have a new boss

The more than 10,000 employees at Chandler's two Intel facilities will now be answering to a new chief executive officer.

Robert Swan served as chief financial officer and also was interim CEO until the announcement by the technology and semi-conductor giant.

"I loved my role as the CFO, and over the past seven months I have come to love our company even more—and its mission, employees and customers. When the board approached me (in January) about taking the CEO role, I jumped at the opportunity to remove 'interim' from my title," Swan said.



Swan is supportive of Intel employees' efforts to give back in the community, said Linda Qian, communications and media relations manager for the company's greater Americas region.

"Last year we had more than 6,200 Arizona employee volunteers contribute approximately 130,000 hours to nonprofits and schools in the Arizona community," Qian said.

Intel plans to invest more than \$7 billion to complete Fab 42, which is expected to be the most advanced semiconductor factory in the world. The high-volume factory in Chandler is targeted to use the 7 nanometer manufacturing process.

It will produce microprocessors to power data centers and hundreds of millions of smart and connected devices worldwide.

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## 'Aging in place' Home modifications stressed to help elders stay independent longer

By Melody Birkett

Baby boomers have long been known for their generation's rebellious streak and challenging of established practices.

Since 2011 when 73 million cohorts began turning 65 at a rate of 10,000 per day, baby boomers—those born between 1946 and 1964—have been fixated on their long-held belief that they would never get “old,” choosing instead to remake options for their retirement years.

Rather than moving into retirement and assisted-living communities like their parents did, Boomers are choosing to stay in their homes and adapt the familiar surroundings to their specific aging needs and interests.

South Tempe resident Linda Arters has been studying the aging-in-place concept since 2006, initially attracted to its focus on safety and security in the home.

“I grew up in a homebuilding family so I have always had an interest in home improvements that will make daily living more comfortable,” explained Arters, a public affairs consultant, certified senior adviser and elder-justice advocate.

“Having been an avid tennis player, I now have arthritis in both knees, so I try to take fall precautions at all times. Currently, I'm looking

into slip-resistant flooring as well as enhanced lighting options for brighter illumination since our eyes age along with our bodies. After 24 years, I guess you can say I'm going to give my home a well-needed ‘face-lift and tummy-tuck.’”

Seventy-three percent of Maricopa County housing units were built prior to 2000; the median age of the housing stock in Tempe is 32 years.

That equates to nearly 1.5 million homes constructed in the pre-digital, pre-Great Recession, pre-energy efficient eras.

Home modifications for aging-in-place is now the fastest growing segment of the residential remodeling industry as more boomers realize the financial and physical benefits.

The latest designs not only look great but are appealing to the active, aging marketplace, those with medical conditions or disabilities, and even families with young children.

Fritzi Gros-Daillon, an approved instructor of the National Association of Home Builders, is a seasoned professional in environmental consulting and aging-in-place home safety and modifications industries. Arters reached out to her for assistance in developing a diversified team of trained Certified Aging-In-Place Specialists professionals in Maricopa

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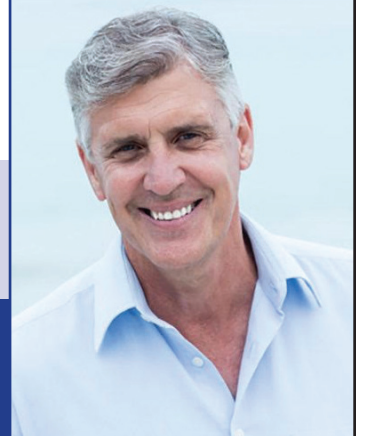
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County after recognizing the void for servicing the 50-plus marketplace.

“When we look at some universal design features, like a motion-activated faucet, these can work well for those struggling with arthritis to turn a knob and if you’re a five-year old child,” explained Gros-Daillon, the national award-winning author of “Grace and Grit: Insights to Real Life Challenges of Aging for Adult Children and their Parents.”

“This type of faucet works well if you’ve sprained your wrist and you have to use your other hand to get water. We’re moving from the aging-in-place thinking toward this universal design and making these features work for everyone regardless of their age.”

Zero-threshold entries are another nice feature that can accommodate people in wheelchairs but are also great for strollers, walkers, scooters and make easy entry for anyone.

Other home modifications include decorative grab bars, comfort high toilets, zero threshold showers, bigger windows, wider doorways, maintenance-free exteriors and landscaping, and flex space.

“We look at the transitions for people accessing their homes and then transitions between the rooms to make sure there are no tripping hazards,” said Gros-Daillon.

“One of my personal modification favorites includes security lighting, motion sensors, and the new voice-activated systems.

“It’s all about improving the lighting to reduce the tripping hazards in a home.”



Stylish and innovative home modifications, as seen in these grab bars — one is part of the soap dish — are helping seniors stay safe at home.

— Photos courtesy Re-Bath and Kitchens



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# Not to be a pest, but keeping home rodent, insect free is a specialty

By Noah Kutz

A sensation of needles being thrust into his skin caused the boy to leap out of bed, exclaiming, "There're nails in my blankets."

His oldest sister rushed to her brother's aid from the room next door, attempting to pick out logical phrases from the uncontrolled shrieks of pain and confusion.

Soon after, the boy's father arrived on scene in the dark upstairs bedroom and began to inspect the bed sheets amid the screaming that pierced the early-morning atmosphere. He shook the comforter a few times before the source of his son's pain dropped to the floor, along with everyone else's jaws: A creeping, crawling, 8-legged intruder, its movement frozen on the carpet, its stinger poised to strike the next victim.

The scorpion stung multiple times in the boy's own bed that night.

Thankfully, the insect from this particular scenario was far from infancy, which meant its sting was less potent. (It seems that Indiana Jones was speaking truthfully when he told his apprentice, "When it comes to scorpions, the bigger the better.")

As such creepy crawlies and unwanted rodents begin to awake from their winter hibernation, Valley residents are bound to catch a few pests wandering between the cracks and crevices of their homes.

As little as Tempe or West Chandler folks want to share their bed with a scorpion, or their pantry with a few hungry mice, the inevitability of such an encounter looms large here.

However, David Marshall, a long-time exterminator and Tempe resident who has "been around the block" pest-wise, has some suggestions to share.

Not that he lacks his own first-hand experience: Marshall has seen practically every kind of infestation that the Phoenix-metro area has to offer. Due to warmer temperatures here in the Valley, Marshall says, insects and rodents come out of their winter hiding places much sooner than anywhere.

Therefore, homeowners may begin to see an increased number of scorpions and vermin in their attics or on their porches before the usual springtime awakening.

According to Marshall, what bugs him the most is when homeowners attempt to eradicate pest problems on their own.

"One of the biggest misconceptions is the DIY method," says Marshall. "The DIY method means going to Home Depot and asking the guy there, 'Hey, I have cockroaches, what do I do?' And of course that guy doesn't know any better than you do. That's why pest control companies are in existence."

As the owner of Arizona Pest Squad, Marshall has dealt with everything from the smallest mouse in the back of a restaurant (yes, restaurants run into the same rodent problems as you) to the largest termite infestations in residential communities.

Because he holds licensure as pest-control expert, Marshall can utilize methods of extermination that cannot be purchased by the average homeowner.

Marshall uses a different method of pest elimination for each job, depending on the circumstances. Some require intense and immediate action, while others respond to slower and more methodical methods to de-rodent a home or business.

"Every time you do a pest control treatment you want to do two things," says Marshall. "First, you want to do a 'knockdown;' that is, anything existing, you want to kill it. Second, you want to apply a residual, so that if something comes up you'll at least have some type of long-lasting effect."

One of the biggest problems that homeowners face, according to those in Marshall and others in his field of endeavor, is breeding among insects and rodents. Scorpion mothers can have up to 100 babies in a single batch (or brood), and carry those on their backs for up to 20 days.

Attempting to kill the mother while she is carrying these tiny invaders will result in them scattering throughout the area unnoticed, creating a false confidence that you have fixed the problem, having only made it worse.

Similarly, cockroaches and other unwanted guests will lay their eggs throughout the place, leaving the impression that they've eradicated the insects via such DIY methods. They don't realize, however, that they've only rid the house of the adult cockroaches, and that, soon enough, the babies will hatch in other areas of the place.

Mosquitos, another unwelcome guest, are one of

— Story continues on facing page



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David Marshall, owner of Arizona Pest Squad. — Photo by Noah Kutz

the most dangerous pests, Marshall says. "They carry diseases." He recommends fogging to rid an area of the tiny pests.

As to why bugs, rodents and other home invaders may pay you a visit, the number one attractions are crumbs and sticky messes.

When was the last time you cleaned the area behind your fridge or your oven? Do you pull out your couch cushions and say, "Oh, I've been looking for that," or similarly, being surprised after discovering several months of trash accumulation in your favorite TV-viewing spot?

Nothing can be more unwelcome than creepy-crawly house guests. If you'd prefer to share your bed with someone (or something) that doesn't have pincers, you may want to rethink your living habits.

And before you watch a YouTube video to learn how to rid your wife's closet of cockroaches, call the experts first, they'll be glad to help.

Marshall is a member of the National Pest Management Association and studied at Arizona State University's W.P. Carey Small Business Leadership Academy.

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# Chandler Regional's Trauma-1 Center sees 'skyrocketing' toll Distracted driving, lack of helmets among the causes

By Joyce Coronel

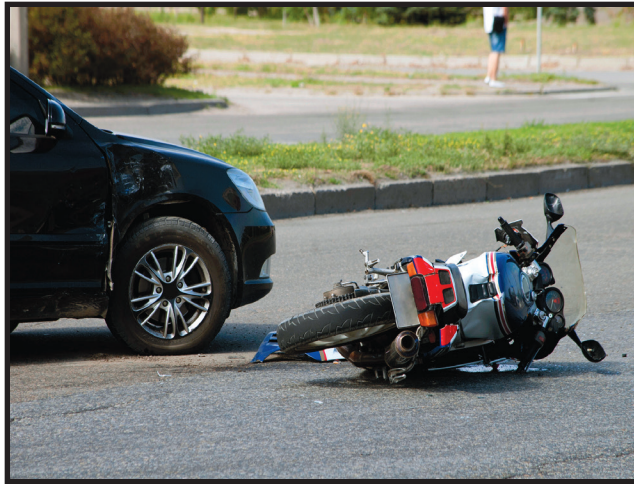
Dr. Charles Hu, director of Dignity Chandler Regional Medical Center's Level-1 Trauma Center, has a message for motorcyclists tempted to jump on without taking the customary—and potentially lifesaving—precautions: Don't forget to wear your helmet.

"My message to everyone out there riding a motorcycle is that prevention is the key and having a helmet and protective gear helps save you so you can ride another day."

Hu says he's seen patients who were involved in major crashes but who walked away from the hospital because they were wearing a helmet. He's also had patients who were involved in less-serious crashes but experienced life-changing injuries.

"They have a head injury and then they realize, 'I should have had a helmet on. Then I wouldn't be here.' I can tell you this: Those who get injured don't want to be in the hospital. They want to be out there riding their motorcycle."

Trauma surgeons at Chandler Regional are encouraging greater roadway safety and awareness in hopes of curbing the rising number of devastating injuries related to motorcycle and motor vehicle accidents. Motorcycle and motor vehicle injuries are the most frequent injury seen in the hospital's Level-1 Trauma Center, which treats some of the Valley's



most critically injured patients.

"Currently in Arizona, only motorcycle operators and riders under 18 must wear a helmet. This is one of the problems we hope to change," says Wendy Otten, RN, Chandler Regional's trauma program manager, who also serves on the executive board for Arizona Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Foundation.

"However, it's not the only problem facing motorcyclists today. One of the things that people don't realize is that these accidents aren't

always the motorcyclist's fault. Distracted driving is an increasing problem, so we also urge our community members to understand that everyone on our roadways needs to be extra aware of their surroundings, share the road, and remember that their cell phones can wait."

Dr. Hu also cited distracted driving as one of the factors that lands patients in the trauma center. Driving while texting or otherwise distracted "puts everybody in jeopardy," Hu said.

"When you're driving at 60 miles an hour, you could drive the length of a football field in like three seconds and you have no idea how fast, how much distance you can cover."

Hu has seen his share of the tragic—and preventable—consequences of distracted driving.

"We see patients that overcorrect because they were doing something else, and they end up crashing into other cars. Then there are people who are riding on motorcycles, and a car swerves into their lane because the driver was distracted."

"Distracted driving puts everybody in danger. It's not worth it."

The number of distracted driving wrecks and deaths has skyrocketed over recent years. Statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration note that nationwide in

— HELMETS, Page 13

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# Helmets

From Page 12

2015, distracted driving was responsible for nearly 3,500 deaths, more than 3,000 fatal car wrecks and 391,000 injuries.

Motorcycling also continues to soar in popularity both as a recreational activity and an everyday mode of transportation, with more than 206,000 registered motorcycles in Arizona. According to the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, Arizona averages more than 3,000 motorcycle crashes each year and approximately 130 motorcycle involved fatalities.

"We see far too many motorcycle-involved deaths and car wreck-related injuries that could have been prevented. In fact, we estimate having treated an average of one motorcycle injury-related death per month in 2018," Hu said.

"Clearly, there is a crucial need for both roadway safety and motorcycle awareness."



Dr. Charles Hu, director of Dignity Chandler Regional Medical Center's Level-1 Trauma Center, frequently treats victims of distracted driving as well as motorcycle riders who chose not to wear helmets. — Photo courtesy Dignity Health



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The Epiphany or Little Christmas is observed on January 6 in many Christian churches.

This day has come to be known as "Kings Day".

Since the 200's, the day has honored the meeting of the Three Wise Men with the infant Jesus. King Cakes became part of the celebration to symbolize the "finding of baby Jesus".

Traditionally King Cakes are oval-shaped to show unity of all Christians. The Mardi Gras season which begins on the "Twelfth Night" (January 6th) is expressed on King Cakes

by using the carnival colors of green (signifying Faith), gold (signifying Power), and purple (signifying Justice).

In the past, a bean, pecan, pea, or coin was hidden inside each King Cake. Today, a tiny plastic baby is used. As a King Cake is cut, each person awaits anxiously for a piece to locate the "baby". The person who finds the baby is "King of the Party" and obligated to bring a King Cake to the next seasonal celebration.

Celebrate this Mardi Gras Tradition in your home, class, or office. King Cake season ends on Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday"), the day before Lent begins.

# Heart

From Page 1

these odds, but his ultimate survival was due in large part to the quick action of his wife, Sue, who had learned cardiopulmonary resuscitation while a Girl Scout troop leader in Pennsylvania 20 years ago.

"We were required to get certified in CPR with the Girl Scouts, but I never thought I would need it," Sue admits. "But on that day, I was thankful I knew what to do."

At first, she says she didn't know what was going on. "It was a normal night—Scott and I had had a little dinner and were talking, and I looked over at him and he looked like he was asleep," she recounts. "But when he didn't respond after I tapped him on the leg, I knew something was really wrong."

With her husband now totally unconscious, Sue says she moved instantaneously into an almost automatic mode.

"I was terrified, but when it all started happening, nothing was really a conscious decision—I just started doing what I needed to do." In spite of her understandably extreme emotions, she was now methodically moving through the steps that are taught in basic CPR courses.

"I started going through the motions. Fortunately, I had

my cell phone on my lap, and called 911 immediately, then got up and unlocked the front door like you're supposed to," she says.

"All the while, I kept thinking, 'I need to start CPR.' My heart was definitely not beating."

She adds one of the dangers of this type of attack is the potential for brain damage if oxygen and blood-flow don't reach the brain after the heart stops beating.

"Fortunately, the local dispatcher on the line with me was able to patch me over to another dispatcher in Phoenix with extensive medical training, and he monitored with me continuously while I got going." Now, both worked together to save a life.

"The first thing the dispatcher told me was, 'We have to get him flat on the floor,'" Sue says, "and I tried that—but Scott is a big man, and he wasn't going anywhere."

Now, moving even more quickly, Sue knew she had to improvise.

"Scott was in a recliner, so I pushed back hard on it and got him as flat as possible in the chair. And I still kept thinking, 'I have to start CPR...I have to start CPR.'" Now, she could start, with a knowledgeable partner on the line, working with her throughout the process.

"The dispatcher said, 'Count with me,' and I started counting out loud with him," Sue says, remembering how closely the dispatcher monitored the emerging situation.

"There were times when I would be keeping up, but would be counting to myself, and he'd ask, 'Are you still counting?' and it went on like that until the paramedics got there. It seemed like a long time, but they got there in four minutes."

Once received at Chandler Regional's ER, Scott went on to suffer three more cardiac arrests, and remained unconscious until the last one. This left his wife with another challenging task: notifying family of Scott's condition, with no guarantee how it would all end.

"My brother in Scottsdale came to the hospital immediately and talked me through it, reminding me that I needed to have the right strength to talk to the kids," Sue recalls, telling her son and daughter their father was still unconscious. It was now 4 a.m. At his fourth episode, Scott came awake and was aware of his surroundings."

The return to normalcy was short lived.

"I looked up and saw the doctors and my wife in the room, and right then, when I had another (episode), it was kind of like passing out. No symptoms, no discomfort."

Because such medical events happen due to an electrical malfunction in the heart, Scott now wears a pacemaker, and a pack called an AED (automated external defibrillator), which includes shock paddles, should they ever be needed. Other than these lifestyle add-ons, Scott says his daily life and physical regimen and commitment to long-distance biking have changed very little.

"The day I had my attack I had just ridden 35 miles," he laughs. "And now, after a slow start and build-up, I have my cardiologist's blessing to keep on biking."

Given that less than eight percent of those who have cardiac arrests outside the hospital survive, the long-married Eckenrodes are both prone to reflect deeply on Scott's survival with no brain injury or ongoing complications; Sue says she still marvels at how various circumstances came together.

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## Heart

From Page 14

"There's no doubt the day it happened, the moon and stars were in alignment, so to speak: I was there. I knew CPR. I had my cell phone in my lap. The best dispatcher and cardiologist were both on duty that night. The emergency medical service got to us in four minutes.

"Scott and I are both very religious, and there definitely are times when you know the Holy Spirit is guiding you." She philosophically brushes off any great praise of her inner strength and resilience during her husband's ordeal: "Most of us never realize what we're capable of until something happens that requires us to draw on everything we've got in us."

Her husband has thoughts of his own about his uncommon survival of and recovery from what is often a fatal event:

"Listen. I was clinically dead for over four minutes, and I made it. And I credit my survival first of all to my wife's enormous courage and knowledge—she's an unbelievably strong woman.

"But there's something else that got me through it, and there's no other way to explain it. I would call it God's providence."

## Cupid

From Page 1

asked for was a peridot that was meteorite based with a lot of different colors but more resilient. Very unique."

That kind of modernization in jewelry design is one of the elements that keeps Jones constantly renewing his interest in—and excitement for—his craft. "The message in all this is that change is good. With each new generation, their desires illustrate how they want to be different from the generations before them."

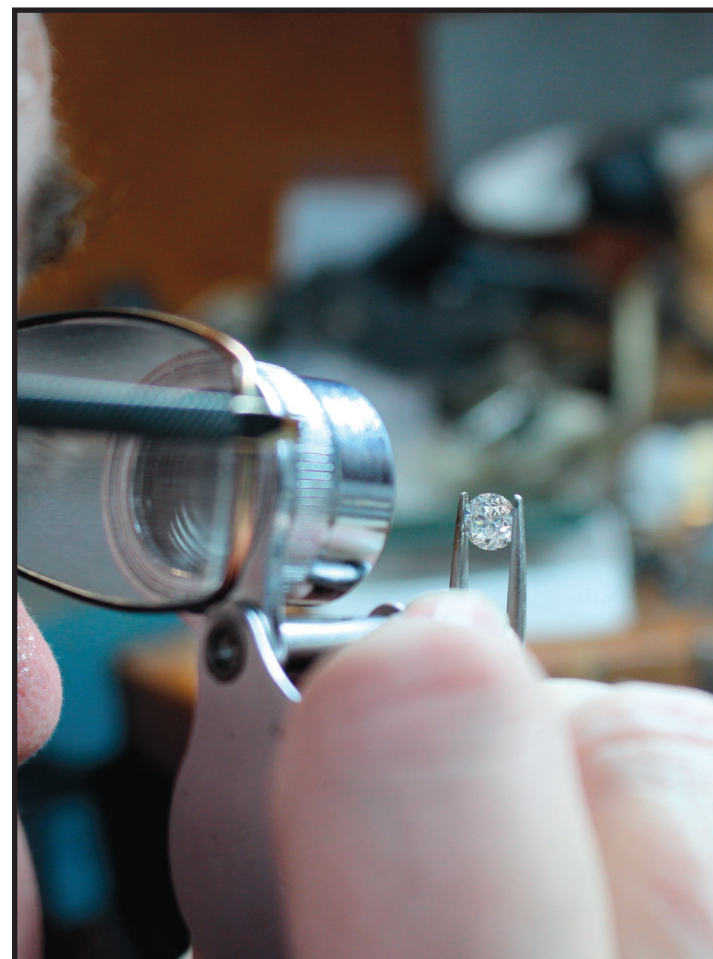
As to what's on the horizon jewelry-wise, Jones says changes happening now provide an intriguing roadmap for what's coming next. "Right now, alternative metals are much more popular," Jones said. "Companies are introducing metals like stainless steel or those that can be treated so the texture will be black when (the ring) is worn."

Now, with Valentine's Day upon us, Jones says he expects even more requests for nuanced jewelry design. And rather than worry about his ability to provide the customer with a suitable answer, he looks forward to both the challenge and the opportunity.

"Somebody comes in and wants a meteorite in the center of their ring, you gotta be ready for anything and everything. It's what makes this such a great job."

Jones and his wife Ginger are the new owners of Day's Fine Jewelry, a landmark among stores featuring creative, handmade design and, not to be overlooked at this special time of year, an unwavering passion for their craft.

*Day's Fine Jewelry is at 1849 E. Guadalupe Road, Suite 103, Tempe, in the Fry's Shopping Center. Information: 480-831-6086.*



Lorin Jones, new co-owner of Day's Fine Jewelry, examines a diamond destined for a jewelry design.

— Photo by Noah Kutz

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# KYRENE SCHOOL DISTRICT: STATE OF THE DISTRICT



Jan Vesely, Ed.D. – Superintendent

The Kyrene School District has been educating children since 1888, and over the past 130 years, we have worked hard to establish a reputation as a high-performing district. While we embrace our history, we continue to pursue innovative programs that will ensure our students are prepared for the future.

As I reflect on my third year as Superintendent in Kyrene, I continue to be amazed by the commitment of our school leaders, our teachers and staff, our parents, and our community to the shared goal of ensuring every student has the opportunity to realize their full potential.

While much has changed over the last century, one thing remains constant: we put students at the heart of everything we do. Students are the focus for the goals and objectives of the Kyrene Strategic Plan 2022. The five key goals are: nurturing and producing High Performing Students, seeking and maintaining High Quality Talent, creating an Inclusive Culture, building a Responsive Organization, and sharing in Collective Governance. What follows is a “State of the District” through the lens of these five goals.

## HIGH PERFORMING STUDENTS

Kyrene School District has long boasted exceptional academic performance, and we continue to make great strides in this area. This year, once again, Kyrene kids outperformed peers on every level of state assessment. AzMERIT results show Kyrene outperformed peer districts by 20% and outperformed charter schools by 11%. Nine Kyrene schools even scored in the top 10% of all Arizona public schools, both district and charter.

While I am incredibly proud of the fact that Kyrene students continue to excel and that our District remains strong despite challenges facing public education, we must always hold ourselves to the highest standards, so our work in the area of High Performing Students will never be complete.

A key area of progress for Kyrene has been in the development of a comprehensive Curriculum Management Plan. Responding to one of the findings of a district-wide audit, we dedicated significant time and effort in engaging key stakeholders—school leaders, teachers—in the formation of a Curriculum Council. The Council did a complete review of our Curriculum Management, Instructional Management and our Assessment Management Principles. Together they began to work toward the alignment of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning, adoption of a written curriculum

process which included an assessment of curricular needs, implementation of curriculum, and a process for evaluation and revision of curriculum. This work can be viewed at [Kyrene.org/curriculum](http://Kyrene.org/curriculum).

In Kyrene’s ongoing efforts to offer a more global education to our students, this year we added Mandarin Chinese to our World Language offerings at both Kyrene Middle School and **Altadeña** Middle School. Students taking Mandarin learn listening, speaking, and writing skills, as well as cultural awareness. Also expanding our students’ horizons is Kyrene Middle School’s International Baccalaureate candidacy. KMS is in its second year as an I.B. Middle Years Program Candidate School, with hopes of becoming a full-fledged International Baccalaureate (IB) School next year. The IB program is designed to motivate students through international education and rigorous assessment in all subjects, including foreign language, which is a required course for all students.

The Middle School Design, now in year two, has been a major point of focus in the area of High Performing Students. Research shows that top-performing middle schools focus on academic excellence, responsive instruction, and student agency. These tenets became the 3 pillars of Kyrene School District’s Middle School Design in 2017. Two years in, the Middle School Design is visible in our expanded AP course offerings, additional foreign language courses, elective differentiation, and choice programs such as our Traditional Academy, IB candidacy, AVID and LEAD Schools. We have also created a road map for multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) that is responsive to the needs of all students and ensures a safe and supportive learning environment to close gaps and access opportunity.

These encouraging signs of success give Kyrene the confidence to move forward with an Elementary School Design, beginning next year. The first phase of the Elementary School Design will focus on social-emotional learning, a key component to teaching the whole child, as we consider social-emotional stability and resilience essential to our students’ success.

Work in this critical arena of social-emotional learning is already underway. In October, we were very excited to learn that the District was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, to provide social-emotional learning in all Kyrene schools, Preschool through 8th grade. The grant, \$230,000 over a period of five years, will allow us to implement curriculum focused on developing socio-emotional skills. It will also help cover the cost of professional development from the Institute for Social and Emotional Learning for eight counselors/psychologists.

## HIGH QUALITY TALENT

We cannot achieve our goal of High Performing Students without first ensuring we attract and retain High Quality Talent. With a teacher retention rate of approximately 86%, and a strong track record of filling certified positions, the District is focused on doing even better. National and local trends show an alarming decrease in teacher numbers, and in response, Kyrene continues to seek new opportunities to attract and retain employees. This is evidenced by partnerships with higher education for the placement of internships that work as pathways to certification and employment.

The District has an active recruitment campaign that targets both digital and print media, in an effort to capture diverse and representative applicants. We continue to research and implement innovative strategies to expand the recruitment pipeline. Some examples include in-house recruitment fairs that attract local and national talent, TV commercials on non-cable streaming services, and college partnerships designed to pay interns and student teachers a wage while they work with Kyrene students. This is a win-win strategy that helps to fill a need for the district as well as provide opportunities to university students who are studying to be educators.

Also embedded in Kyrene’s Strategic Plan 2022 is a diversity recruitment initiative. The District recently issued a request for proposals (RFP) to identify an external partner for help implementing strategies to address identified needs, including talent management, related to diversity and inclusiveness.

# Learning. Creating. Exploring.

## Kyrene Preschool Options

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Kyrene is home to more than one thousand exceptional and experienced educators, including 25 current National Board Certified teachers. Last year, I implemented an appreciation program, Kyrene Values Teachers (KVT), to celebrate educators on every campus. This year, KVT focused on areas of growth, honoring teachers who had brought their students forward on state test results. Our classrooms are full of the best educators in Arizona, and I am committed to keeping it that way.

## INCLUSIVE CULTURE

With our emphasis on providing for the academic success of ALL students in Kyrene, another area of focus in 2018 was on equity. School districts around the country struggle with the challenge of addressing equity in their schools. We know from our analysis of our AzMERIT data where our achievement gaps lie, and we have begun to address the systemic changes needed to provide the supports needed for those students who are falling behind. We will not be satisfied until every student in Kyrene achieves their full potential.

Our work on equity will address the school-based factors, the psychological and emotional

factors, and the out of school factors that contribute to gaps in achievement. In November, the District released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for consultancy services. Those services will include providing professional development for staff, support for culturally relevant teaching strategies, onsite training related to diversity, equity and inclusion, support for leaders in creating restorative systems, including restorative circles and conferences, establishment of an evaluation framework for equity initiatives, the development of skills necessary to hold difficult conversations around equity and inclusion and the development of practices for attracting candidates for open positions from a variety of different backgrounds. Through this work, we hope to be able to create a system of sustainable practices that are embedded in the culture of Kyrene that will assure equitable supports for the needs of all students.

Throughout our strategic plan is a commitment to community engagement. Kyrene has five stakeholder groups established to give our parents, teachers, students, business partners and the community an opportunity to meet with me on a regular basis. These Superintendent Councils serve as my focus groups, providing valuable feedback and input into the work of the District. This past fall, in advance of budget planning for the 2019 school year, we engaged several of these groups in an exercise to help identify spending priorities. We also asked for input on areas of cost savings and efficiencies that would allow for funding of new initiatives such as the elementary school redesign, implementation of a lead teacher model to enhance the quality of instruction, and funding for a salary schedule for support staff.



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## RESPONSIVE ORGANIZATION

We have been in a period of transition in recent years, as we fight to maintain our commitment to students in the face of a funding drought for public education. Even as the nation turns its attention to that severe lack of funding, particularly in Arizona, we still have a mountain to climb before schools are appropriately financed, and Kyrene must continue to work through the challenges we face today. Our students cannot wait.

To be responsive to the current climate, Kyrene must make strategic decisions about resource allocation and organizational structure, always seeking efficiency and improvement within our operational systems. The annual financial report for the 2017-18 school year shows Kyrene School District spending up in all the right areas, such as classroom spending, and down in all the right areas, such as non-personnel operational expenses. To ensure we continue this trend, the Kyrene Governing Board recently voted to move from an inefficient and expensive two-bell schedule to a three-bell schedule which will save the District \$700,000 per year. The Board also voted in favor of efficiencies in the areas of staff discounts and middle school

staffing models. The combined impact of these reductions on the Kyrene annual budget is \$2M that can now be reinvested into our classrooms.

We also need to be responsive to our community by meeting our families where they are – which is, increasingly, online. To that end, Kyrene School District will be launching a new website in June, 2019 that will be more visually appealing with intuitive navigation to match the advancements of our peer districts in this area and better meet the needs of our digitally-savvy families. Kyrene also went digital with enrollment this year. All registration is now online, offering parents and guardians the convenience of enrolling students on their own schedule, from the comfort of their home. This leap forward into the digital enrollment space will also drastically cut down on unnecessary paperwork and redundant practices of collecting information from our families.

Online enrollment for both new and continuing families also allows Kyrene to plan ahead for the new year, to help determine staffing needs and program interest. As we learned this year, enrollment can be difficult to predict. Kyrene demographers anticipated a 1% decline in student enrollment, based on population trends. However, I'm pleased to tell you that Kyrene enrollment remained steady this year, despite regional demographic changes.

## COLLECTIVE GOVERNANCE

The work of Kyrene is a shared effort and we are committed to striving for efficient and collective governance, which is why our engagement of the voices of our stakeholders is so important. Leading this work with us is our Governing Board, and in January, we welcomed two new members, Margaret Pratt and Kevin Walsh. Their perspective, as parents of young children who attend Kyrene schools, together with the experience and knowledge of current board members, Mike Myrick, John King and Michelle Fahy, will help guide our journey toward excellence. We are fortunate to have a community that cares about our schools, evidenced in their support for our bonds and override elections, and we appreciate that continued support.

There is no doubt that this is a challenging time to be in education. In my more than 40 years as an educator, I have seen firsthand how the demands we place on our teachers have grown while the resources available to support them have been diminished. It is very difficult to remain positive in this environment. Recognizing that challenge, we introduced the "Power of Positivity" as a theme for the 2018-19 school year. Based on the work of author Jon Gordon, we engaged our school leaders in a group study of his book, "The Power of Positive Leadership," while staff read "The Power of a Positive Team." I also had our Student/Superintendent Council representatives participate in a discussion of "The Power of a Positive Dog," in which they learned from the story of two dogs—one with a positive outlook, the other with a more negative perspective—with a call to focus on the positive dog within each of them to experience greater outcomes in their academics as well as in their relationships with family and friends. These students had a unique opportunity to meet and hear from Mr. Gordon in person, as he visited Kyrene to address our staff and community to share his message of positivity.

The call for positivity may seem like a simple task, one not clearly tied to academic excellence, but it has great significance. As I walk the hallways and visit the classrooms, I see our future in the faces of these children. It is up to us to give them the support they need, the encouragement they require to believe that they can be successful. I am grateful for the opportunity I have been given to serve as your Superintendent. Together, we can help our children become the problem solvers, creators, and visionaries of tomorrow.

I am so appreciative of the engagement of our Kyrene staff, students, families, and community. In short, it takes my breath away. The Kyrene School District is exceptional because of your collective commitment to children, a commitment that motivates and inspires me each and every day.

Engagement like that is what keeps a District's heart beating for more than 130 years. The challenges we face today are nothing like the challenges of the late 1800s, but the mission remains the same: to invest in the education of our children in order to secure a better future for all.



# Sports

with Alex Zener

## MEMORIES OF A CHAMPION JARRET GIVENS: THEN AND NOW

Two members of Corona's 2014 AIA Boys Basketball Division I State Championship team are currently taking advantage of the same NCAA graduate transfer rule that **Casey Benson**, a third member of that same state championship team, used to transfer to and play basketball at Grand Canyon University in 2016, which would have normally been his senior year at Oregon.

**Jarret Givens** and **Conner MacDougall** are both playing basketball using 2011 NCAA Bylaw 14.6.1 which allows student-athletes



Alex Zener

who have completed their undergraduate coursework, but still have a year of eligibility remaining, to transfer to another college program and play right away.

Benson, who finished his course

work and graduated in three years from Oregon, opted to transfer to Grand Canyon University for several reasons, including the opportunity to play basketball under his brother, T.J., who is an assistant coach for Dan Majerle, but to also play at home in front of friends and family his last year of college basketball.

Both Givens and MacDougall suffered hardships during their first four years of college, but it was these same hardships that gave them an additional year of eligibility.

This extra year made it possible for them to not only earn an undergraduate degree but to take advantage of this grad transfer rule to not play one more year of a sport they love and also receive a scholarship to earn an advanced degree.

Givens was part of Corona's varsity team when they won their second and third straight state championship under coach **Sam**

**Duane**. That same year he was also part of Corona's Division I State Championship track team where he participated in the high jump and long jump events.

In the Aztecs win in the 2014 finals for the second straight year over Pinnacle, Givens scored five points but most importantly grabbed some critical rebounds during the overtime period to help Corona win by one point at 71-70.

"My favorite memory at Corona playing under coach Duane is when we won the state championship final game my senior year," said Givens. "It was exciting playing Pinnacle for the second straight year and that game was so close. It's something I replay in my head all the time."

Givens, who was not done playing basketball after high school, left his hometown of Tempe for Great Falls, Montana, to play in an NAIA Division II program now called University of Providence.

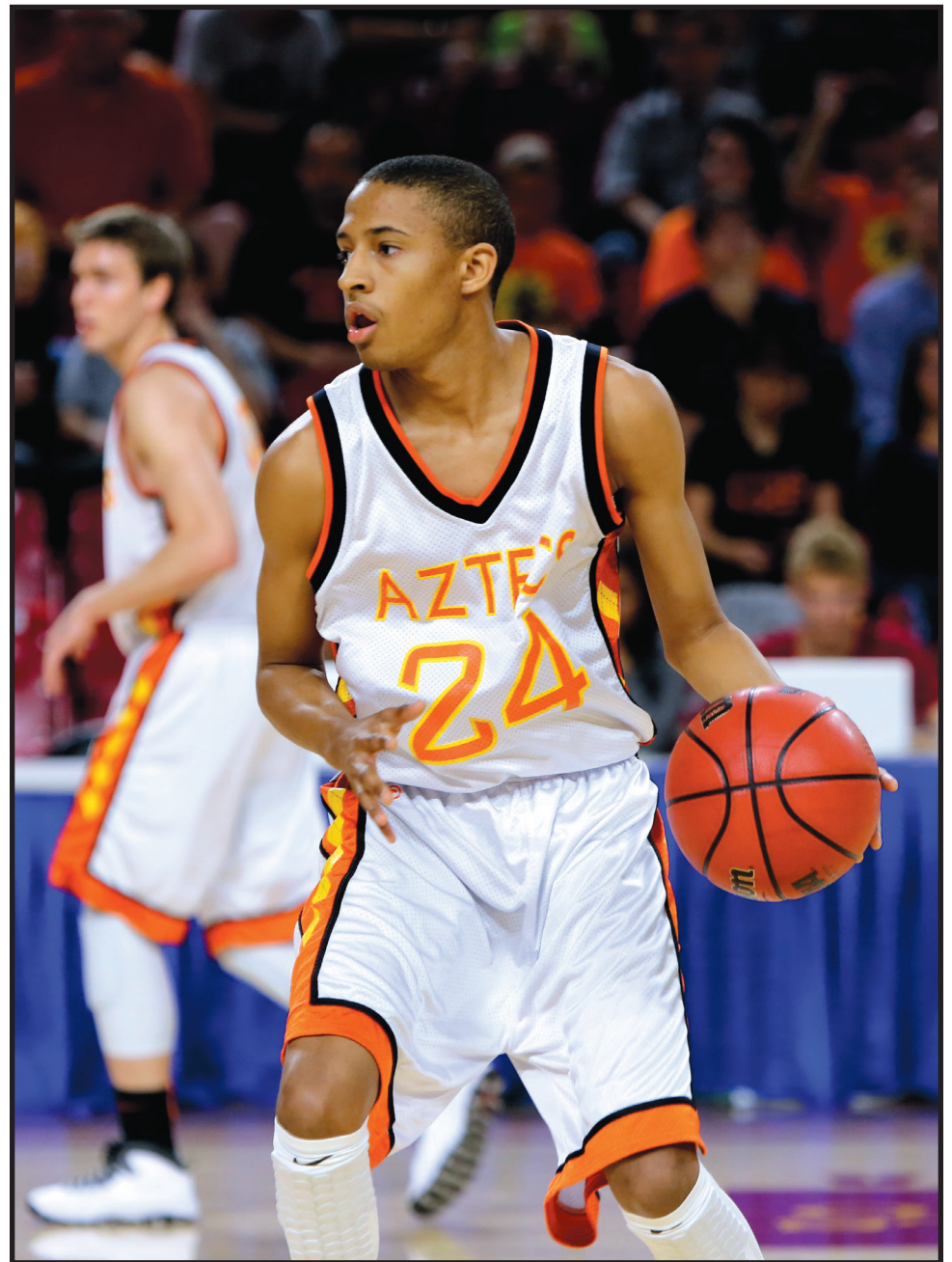
After redshirting his freshman year and only playing in nine games due to injury the 2015-16 season at Great Falls, Givens transferred to Adam State, another Division II school in Alamosa, Colorado.

Although continuing to be nagged by injury his first year at Adam State (2016-2017), Givens never lost sight of his goal to not only perform well on the basketball court but in the classroom.

Although he was only able to play in 15 games over the season, Givens still had the second largest average points per game at 12.3 while maintaining a 3.0 GPA in Business Management with a minor in Business Administration.

Things ultimately looked up his final season in Colorado when he was injury free and able to leave it all on the court. He played in all 30 regular season games his senior year leading the team in three-pointers with 70 treys hitting almost 44 per cent of his attempts.

He was second on the team in steals per game and third in several categories including points per game at 12.6, rebounds at 4.7 and minutes



Jarret Givens was a Corona del Sol Aztec under Coach Sam Duane before playing for universities in Great Falls, Montana, and Alamosa, Colorado. Givens and Casey Benson were members of the same state championship team at Corona. — Photo courtesy Angela Givens

played at 31.3.

Finally playing the way he always knew he could on the basketball court and graduating from Adam State in May with one year of eligibility left, Givens started thinking about playing Division I basketball.

Several DI schools came calling including Furman University, UTEP, Southeast Missouri University, Cleveland State and Austin Peay.

Givens choose to use the grad transfer rule at Austin Peay in Clarksville, TN, about an hour northwest of Nashville.

"I actually had planned on going from the University of Great Falls to a DI school," said Givens. "I was kind of naïve back then and believed I could play DI basketball right away."

"I worked hard every summer so I knew I could play DI ball but I'm proud of the route I took to end up at Austin Peay playing DI basketball my final year now that I'm more mature," said Givens.

What Austin Peay has gotten in return is a veteran student athlete who can be a vocal leader for the team. Givens has three years of college basketball experience and four years of academic experience he can call upon to be a role-model on and off the court for the younger players.

"The skills I bring to practice and during games is my ability to shoot the ball and to play solid defense," said Givens. "I also try to exhibit how

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being unselfish, making the extra pass, and sharing the ball can improve the team's overall success."

Givens has proven he belongs at the DI level playing in all 23 games averaging over 23 minutes and 9.1 points a game so far this season at Austin Peay.

He scored a career high 25 points which included seven 3-pointers at Austin Peay's Ohio Valley Conference opener against Eastern Kentucky on Jan. 3.

"I love playing with my teammates at Austin Peay," said Givens. "They made the transition easy for me by being so welcoming. We have become really close, the closest I've been to a team since my Corona del Sol days."

Givens will finish his master's degree in Leadership and Coaching from Austin Peay in May.

"After I finish my degree, I would like to continue my basketball career if possible, by playing in the NBA G-League or maybe playing overseas," said Givens. "Once that's over, I would love to coach basketball and help other kids follow their dreams like the

coaches I had did for me."

**Connor MacDougall's** story of becoming a basketball grad transfer is similar to Givens except he started transferring schools in high school.

MacDougall started his freshman and sophomore year at Desert Vista before transferring to Phoenix Westwind Prep when the national high school team was first started.

The NCAA would not accept the Westwind courses so MacDougall had to make up for a lost year academically somewhere he could also play basketball.

He chose Corona to make up the course work and sit out the mandatory wait period before he could play during games.

He first noticed his shoulder popping in and out at Corona but decided to play through it helping the Aztecs win their third DI state championship scoring 11 points in the finals

He accepted a scholarship to ASU where his shoulder continued to bother him enough so that he ended up only playing in six games for coach

Herb Sendek before leaving the program after his freshman year and transferring to South Mountain Community College for the 2015-16 season.

While at South Mountain, MacDougall earned an associates degree in psychology while playing basketball. At the end of the season, he was named to the NJCAA Division II All-American team after playing in 34 games with an average of 17.8 points, 11.9 rebounds and 1.8 assists per game.

MacDougall then went to New Mexico where another member of Corona's third straight state championship team, **Dane Kuiper**, played.

During the 2016-17 season, MacDougall appeared in 27 games where he led the team in blocks in three different games and finished the season with a career high of six rebounds on three occasions. He was an Academic All-Mountain West selection.

Then a preseason ankle/foot injury led to MacDougall sitting out his senior season.

Most people would have given up playing collegiately, at that point, but MacDougall loved basketball and just wanted to keep playing.

So, after graduating from the University of New Mexico last May and winning an appeal with the NCAA to get a year of eligibility back, MacDougall took advantage of the NCAA grad transfer rule and

transferred to Utah Valley University which is part of the WAC conference.

After playing at eight different schools starting in high school, MacDougall, at 6-foot-9, 240 pounds, is having an impact on the Wolverines success on the court and at the same time earning an advance degree.

For instance, MacDougall scored 28 points against Idaho State earning him WAC Player of the Week honors after setting a single-game school record for consecutive field goals made.

## Sectional Wrestling Results

Tempe High School wrestling programs competed at the Sectional Tournaments on Feb. 2 to qualify individual wrestlers for the state tournaments which are Feb. 7-8 for Division III and Feb. 8-9 for Division I and II.

Marcos de Niza qualified seven wrestlers for the state tournament at the Section II tournament held at Florence High School on Feb. 2.

Taking first place were junior **Noah Perez**, senior **Malik Shuaibe-Jones** and senior **Gabe Sordia**

Perez (106 lbs.) has a 11-2 record heading into the state tournament while Shuaibe-Jones (142 lbs.) is 39-6 and Sordia (195 lbs.) is 29-11.

Senior **Ellye Hill** (285 lbs.), junior **Zach Martinez** (120 lbs.)

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A bulldozer levels a former Wells-Fargo building that has been sitting vacant at the corner of McClintock Drive and Warner Road in Tempe. The site will soon be home to Raising Cane, offering chicken strips and the convenience of a drive-through window.

— Photo courtesy Mary Contreras

# Sports

From Page 20

and sophomore **Gavin Gonzalez** (113 lbs.) all places second at the sectionals.

Hill has a 21-7 record while Martinez is 22-10 and Gonzalez is 31-11.

Senior **Zach Famoso** (220 lbs.), with a 30-11 record placed fourth at the sectionals.

Tempe High School's wrestling program also had seven wrestlers qualify for the Division III state tournament at the sectionals held Feb. 2 at Florence High School.

Seniors **Quevion Baker McCaulay** (220 lbs.) and **Orlando H. Molina** (285 lbs.) both places first at the sectionals along with sophomore **Mark Sanchez** (120 lbs.).

McCaulay enters the DIII state tournament with a 37-5 record while Molina has an impressive 48-2 record and Sanchez has a 38-11 record.

Seniors **Jaxen Davis** (106 lbs.) and **Maximus Pearce** (126 lbs.) took second place while junior **Edgar O. Yanez Orduno** (160 lbs.) and sophomore **Jonathan Ibarra**

(182 lbs.) placed fourth.

Davis will enter the DIII state tournament with a 12-1 record while Pearce a 40-9 record, Orduno, 37-12 and Ibarra 9-8.

Corona qualified eight wrestlers to the Division I state tournament scheduled Feb. 8-9 at Prescott Valley.

Senior **Zack Kvavle** (120 lbs.) and sophomore **Anthony Gonzales** (113 lbs.) took first place at the Section III sectional tournament held Feb. 2 at Desert Vista.

Kvavle will enter the DI state tournament with an impressive 43-3 record while Gonzales has an equally impressive 40-6 record.

Junior **Shane Aguarin** (138 lbs.) and seniors **Roan Kelleher** (170 lbs.) and **Kevin Beltran-Benitez** (220 lbs.) all took second place at the sectionals.

Aguarin has a 37-8 record while Kelleher a 36-7 record and Beltran-Benitez 21-15.

Junior **Jack Koeller** (195 lbs.) placed third while freshman **Eldon Milton** (182 lbs.) and junior **Matt Gable** (132 lbs.) placed fourth.

Koeller enters the state tournament with a 27-17 record while Milton has a 25-18 and Gable a 12-20 record.



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## Profile . . . Matt Courtney

# Lesson learned: Prevailing on the field isn't only way to win



By Nicholas Johnsen

Springtime is right around the corner, bringing warm weather and sunshine—and, for many, the start of a new baseball season. Marcos de Niza High School's team in particular is looking for a fresh start to the season, with a focus on excellence both on and off the field.

Though the regular season doesn't start for a little less than a month, the Padres baseball program has been putting in serious work. Newly installed head coach Matt Courtney, a 12-year veteran on the Marcos baseball coaching staff, decided to push the

team's pre-season efforts toward giving back to its own community.

Earlier in December, Courtney led the team in an Adopt-A-Family program for the holiday season. The family provided the team a wish list of items and, on Dec. 22, the Padres were able to wrap and deliver the gifts to the family. Courtney explained that the program was done through a foundation he's been part of for as long as he can remember, dedicated specifically to helping families in need in the local community of Guadalupe.

Courtney and the Padres baseball team have also collaborated with Friends of Jaclyn Foundation and adopted Wyrick Wile, a young boy battling Moyamoya disease. The foundation attempts to improve the quality of life for children battling pediatric brain tumors and other childhood cancers. Wyrick hangs out with the team, goes to team events and even got to help wrap and deliver presents.

"It's not always just teaching baseball," Courtney explained, when asked why he was interested in pursuing more than just on the field training for the team.

"It's about teaching them to be good human beings."

The Padres' head coach went on to explain that

this pursuit can lead to a stronger bond between the players on and off the field which, in turn, ultimately leads to better performance. Five-year veteran and active Home Run Club mom Christi Patterson elaborated further, acknowledging the impact the program has had on her two sons.

With one son, currently in his junior year, pitching in the Marcos baseball program and another who has since graduated, Christi expressed gratitude for the driven work the team has been doing.

"From the day he started with the team, academics and giving back to the community came first," Patterson said.

She added that, in turn, nearly 75 percent of her eldest son's college tuition is covered through academic and athletic scholarships—scholarships which she attributes much of to the coaching staff and work ethic of the Marcos baseball team.

To the players and coaches at Marcos, being an all-star means a bit more than just a good batting average. Community involvement, hard work and focusing on giving back are just a few of the things that keep them at the top of their game.

The Padres are hoping to start the season off strong with their first game against Brophy College Prep on Feb. 20.

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# Diversions

## Lego Movie Part 2: Not bad, even from this deprived kid

By M.V. Moorhead

Whenever the subject of Legos comes up, as it does more and more frequently in popular movie reviewing, I feel the need to mention that I never had Legos as a kid, or particularly wanted them. Nor have I played with them as an adult. Even so, I've enjoyed all of the Lego movies I've seen.

2017's *The Lego Batman Movie* was my favorite, an on-the-money spoof of torturous, "dark" superhero flicks. But 2014's original *The Lego Movie* was a charming, funny, unpretentious meditation on conformity versus individualism.

Now we get the sequel to that film, *The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part*, directed by Mike Mitchell from a script by Phil Lord, Christopher Miller and Matthew Fogel, and set, appropriately,

five years after the events of *The Lego Movie*. The locale, once again, is the vast Lego metropolis of Bricksburg. The name has since been changed to "Apocalypseburg," however, after an invasion of cutesy but lethal aliens has reduced the town to dystopian wreckage. Even so, our hero Emmet (Chris Pratt) remains as upbeat and cheerful as ever.

When aliens abduct Lucy (Elizabeth Banks), Lego Batman (Will Arnett), and several of Emmet's other friends, taking them to the distant "Systar System," Emmet follows, intent on rescuing them. Along the way, he meets Rex (also Pratt), a tough guy space mercenary—with a crew of dinosaurs!—who helps him summon reserves of gritty resolve.

This is only the beginning of the plot's twists and turns. Like its



The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part is a lighthearted return to the amusing adventures of Lego creatures and includes references to pop culture icons like Planet of the Apes.

predecessor, *Lego Movie 2* is a dense and complex piece of storytelling. It's almost—though maybe not quite—as seamlessly thought through as the original, yet it flies along with effortless speed and precision.

As before, much of the comedy derives from the limited range of motion available to Lego figures, and there were gags that went over my head. I don't know why, for instance, sequences of numbers appear onscreen when the characters are building some new contraption, but I'm guessing this involves the technical side of Lego-building. There are also endless, and amusing, references to pop culture classics starting with *Planet of the Apes* and *2001* and carrying on

through *Jurassic Park* and the *Lord of the Rings* movies up to the most current industry gossip.

The voice cast also helps, from Pratt's openhearted sweetness as Emmet and his jaunty Kurt Russell-like swagger as Rex, to the tough but soulful heroine of Banks to Arnett's growl as Batman.





Most hilarious here is Tiffany Haddish as Queen Watevra Wa-Nabi of the Systar System; her blossoming romance with Batman made me feel protective of both characters.

*The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part* is rated PG and plays at Harkins Tempe Marketplace, Chandler Fashion Center, Arizona Mills and many other multiplexes Valleywide.

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[tempe.gov/HaydensFerryDays](http://tempe.gov/HaydensFerryDays)

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## Discerning Diner

# Ethnicities blend in newest appeal to culinary 'fusion' fanciers

By M.V. Moorhead

"Fusion" has been a favorite term in the restaurant business in recent years. As the word implies, it's the idea of the culinary traditions or methods of more than one culture being merged to create an entirely new cuisine. Thus we've had Pacific Rim and California Cuisine and Mexican Sushi and other such innovations, often with wonderful results.

If Persian-Chilean Fusion someday becomes all the rage, it may just trace its roots back to Mingle + Graze, the pleasant new cheese bar and kitchen housed in a '30s-era plaza in downtown Chandler. The project of husband-and-wife team Cristobal Alarcon, of Chilean extraction, and Mahfam Moeeni-Alarcon, of Persian descent, opened less than a month ago.

"We haven't done a huge announcement or anything," says Mahfam. "We just opened the doors to see what would happen. We're a cheese bar and kitchen, so you can order a cheese and charcuterie board, and we also have sandwiches. We make our own tapenade. We're vegan friendly as well; all of our soups are vegan, and we have a vegan board."

Said soups include a red lentil with coconut milk that's delicious whether you're vegan or not. Said sandwiches include the not-so-vegan "Maffyletta," named after its designer Mahfam and featuring black

forest ham, motadella, salami, gouda and a "Persian Olive tapenade," among other goodies, skillfully deployed on a wonderful soft bun from Mediterra Bakehouse in Coolidge.

The menu also includes sandwiches like El Chilean, featuring marinated beef, and The Persian, starring pomegranate glazed chicken. These presumably reflect the cultural blend of the owners, filtered through good old American food industry experience.

"My husband and I both went to culinary school," explains Mahfam. A Tucson native who grew up in Arkansas and went to school at Arkansas State, she moved into the foodie biz here in the Valley with her husband, Oberlin grad Alarcon.

"We have a combined thirty years' experience in the business," Mahfam notes proudly. "He wanted to go the management route, so he worked in management at Postino, Snooze, Barrio Queen, Spotted Donkey. I wanted to work on the retail side."

Accordingly Mahfam worked for Whole Foods, in charge of craft beer and wine pairing dinners, and as a wine buyer. At the same time, "I was making marinated olives and selling them at Phoenix Public Market."

"We worked as servers, bartenders," she recalls. "We do catering, too. We think it's really important to be familiar with every part of the business, not just

the kitchen"

So far, Mingle + Graze seems to have both the kitchen and the dining room tastily under control.

*Mingle + Graze is located at 48 San Marcos Place in Chandler. For details, including catering info, call 480-726-2264.*



Mingle + Graze owners Mahfam Moeeni-Alarcon and Cristobal Alarcon offer a fusion of Persian and Chilean cuisine at their downtown Chandler eatery. — Photo courtesy Mingle + Graze

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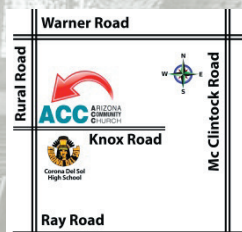
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## Apply for Tempe PRE starting March 4

Applications open March 4 for the 2019-20 school year of Tempe PRE, the city's high-quality preschool program.

Created in 2017, Tempe PRE was designed as a pilot for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. In December, the City Council agreed to continue Tempe PRE into the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, while continuing to explore a permanent funding stream for the program. Currently, Tempe PRE is fully free for qualified Tempe families living at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. The capacity of the program is currently 360 students.

To continue the program, the Council agreed to implement a sliding scale model beginning in 2019-20. All of the current 144 3-year-olds already in the program would continue to be 100 percent funded in their

second and final year of Tempe PRE. For the remaining 216 seats, which are being opened in anticipation of the 2019-20 school year (since currently enrolled 4-year-olds 'graduate' at the end of the 2018-19 school year), 72 families will be 100 percent funded, 72 families will be 50 percent self-funded and 50 percent city funded, and 72 families will pay full tuition for Tempe PRE.

According to data from the first year of Tempe PRE, students in the program made remarkable strides from where they started in terms of kindergarten readiness. Families in the program also reported positive impacts on family well-being from being able to gain employment and save money on childcare. For full details about Tempe PRE, including information about the application process closer to March 4, visit [tempe.gov/TempePRE](http://tempe.gov/TempePRE).

## Dementia Friendly Tempe Summit is March 16

For the fourth year, community members are invited to learn from local scientific and medical experts about why there is hope now and in the future for individuals and families affected by dementia.

The summit is happening Saturday, March 16, from 10 a.m. to noon, at Edward Jones Training Center, 8333 S. River Parkway, in Tempe.

Scientists at Arizona State University's Banner Neurodegenerative Research Center are making new discoveries in identification and prevention methods that may end Alzheimer's disease in the coming decade.

The Tempe community and city government are championing the cause of people with dementia and their care partners.

They are living successfully in their own community through efforts of the city's Dementia Friendly Tempe program supported by Banner Alzheimer's Institute.

Registration is required for the limited number of seats available.

Respite care will be provided for registered attendees who bring their loved one living with dementia.

There are two ways to register: go to [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com) or call 602-839-6850.

## Spring training is here!

The Angels will take on the Giants on Saturday, Feb. 23, for this year's spring training home opener at Tempe Diablo Stadium.

This season boasts matchups against the D-backs, Cubs and Padres to name a few.

Tickets are on sale now at [angels.com](http://angels.com) or you can purchase them at the Tempe Diablo box office.

Tempe Diablo Stadium is located at 2200 W. Alameda Drive.

Visit [tempe.gov/diablo](http://tempe.gov/diablo) for information on games, tickets, stadium hours, directions and parking.

Each year the Tempe Diablos host a charity game,

with proceeds going to the local charities that the Diablos support.

This year's "Diablo Day" is Monday, Feb. 25, at 1:10 p.m., with the Angels taking on the Brewers.

Purchase tickets at [www.tempediablo.org](http://www.tempediablo.org).



## Your budget input is needed

The City of Tempe will hold public meetings and host an online forum to inform community members about projections for the city's operating and capital budgets, and to hear the community's priorities for the 2019-20 fiscal year and beyond.

A public forum will be held Wednesday, Feb. 20, from 6-8 p.m., at the Tempe History Museum, 809 E. Southern Ave. Community members also are invited to submit ideas and feedback via Tempe Forum, the city's online input tool.

Visit [tempe.gov/forum](http://tempe.gov/forum) and select the budget question.

For updated details on the formulation of budgets for the 2019-20 fiscal year, information presented at the public forum, as well as scheduled public meetings, visit [tempe.gov/BudgetPlan](http://tempe.gov/BudgetPlan).

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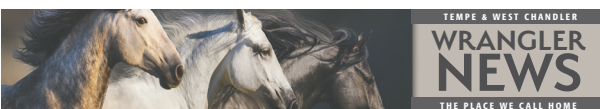
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## 'Great Drum' adventure translates to fun

# Taiko ensemble adds a musical world-view to international studies



By Robyn Martinez

Did the globe-savvy kids at Tempe Academy of International Studies think they'd ever be carried on an educational magic carpet to a Japanese rainforest? Actually, no. But a surprise visit from a Taiko drum ensemble made them aware that virtual reality can be as near as their Tempe classroom.

Taiko is the Japanese word for great drum, and its history dates back centuries to the time it was an ancient musical art form.

The ancient sounds originated centuries in Asia, where the resounding beat of the massive drums, ranging from one to six feet in diameter, could be heard over great distances and historically was used as a means of communication.

Late last month, kids at the school, part of the Tempe Elementary district, had a special visit from Fushicho Daiko Dojo, a Taiko Japanese drum ensemble. The two performers were Eileen Morgan, owner and lead instructor of the group, and sixth-grade language arts teacher Lise Spangenthal.

While the unique sounds may have been new to the kids, it had a familiar ring to those who brought the program to the school.

This is Spangenthal's third year studying and performing with Morgan. As part of a special assembly, Tempe Academy students were able to take part in the unique experience, watching the performers, dressed in Happi coats and two-fingered Tabi shoes—authentic Japanese Taiko attire—as they performed on Japanese drums, most handmade by Morgan herself, as well as on carved wooden frog-shaped instruments called Guiro, which croaked like frogs when played.

The Guiro all had varying pitches, depending on their size, with the largest ones croaking the lowest and the smallest ones almost chirping.

When all were played simultaneously, it sounded like a rain forest, observed one of the youngsters.

Morgan demonstrated the difference in sound between Japanese and Chinese cymbals, explained how the Japanese bow to their instruments before they play, and spent time explaining the importance of respect to the spirit of the instrument to students.

Morgan also chanted certain words which indicated how the performer should play the drum or tap the

drumsticks, ending with some students and their teachers having a chance to play the instruments themselves.

"Tempe Academy is an International Baccalaureate school, and studying world cultures is part of our curriculum," said Spangenthal. "I think it's important for our students to learn about non-Western cultures and integrate that into our music classes."

In its early days, the kids learned, Taiko could be used to signal distant villages, such as to warn of the approach of an advancing enemy or an impending disaster or to signal troops on the battlefield. In shrines and temples throughout present-day Japan, Taiko can still be heard, although now its purpose is more spiritual and celebratory, often occasioned by village festivals.

Only in the last 60 years in Japan and approximately the last 45 years in North America has Taiko evolved into a powerful performing art.

The Fushicho Daiko Dojo will be performing for the general public soon at Arizona Matsuri, an annual festival celebrating Japanese culture and heritage at Heritage Square in downtown Phoenix on Feb. 23 and 24.

Information: (Instagram) @taikoarizona; (Facebook) @taikoaz; or (website) taikoaz.com.

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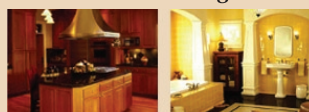
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# Briefly . . .

## Tempe Woman of the Year honorees sought

The Tempe Chamber of Commerce is seeking nominations for the 2019 Business Woman of the Year award, a recognition established to recognize an outstanding businesswoman who has positively affected the Tempe community and the Tempe Chamber of Commerce.

Nominees must demonstrate excellence in their field; display leadership in the community; serve as a positive role model; and be active in programs in the community and the Tempe Chamber.

Nominations close Feb. 22, and qualified nominees must accept the nomination and apply by March 8. Three finalists will be announced on March 20 with the winner announced at a May 17 leadership conference.

Information: [Sukki@TempeChamber.org](mailto:Sukki@TempeChamber.org).

## Arts Center features Spanish dancers, guitar

A spectacular night of colorful and vibrant dance comes to Tempe as Amor al Baile returns to Tempe Center for the Arts.

Now in its fifth year, the performance brings over 30 flamenco, belly dance, tango and classical Indian dancers for a night of artistry.

Joined by live musicians on Spanish guitar, percussion and violin, the group features acclaimed dancers Carlos Montufar, Sarah Castellanos and



Yumi La Rosa.

They will be accompanied by popular flamenco guitarist Chris Jácome (toque), singer Olivia Rojas, percussionist Emerson Laffey (cajon) and Allen Ames on violin.

In addition to traditional flamenco, Amor al Baile will showcase bellydance/flamenco fusion, Kathak, as well as modern dance and tango.

Performance 5 p.m. Sunday, March 10 at Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado. Tickets range from \$20-\$35 and are on sale at [tca.ticketforce.com](http://tca.ticketforce.com) or by calling 480-350-2822.

## School tax credit donations through April 15

Folks who want to help make the future brighter for Tempe Elementary students are being reminded they can still make a 2018 or 2019 tax-deductible donation to the district.

Each state taxpayer is allowed to donate up to \$200 per year to public schools in support of extracurricular activities or character education programs and claim dollar-for-dollar state tax credit.

Married couples filing joint tax returns can donate and claim a tax credit of up to \$400 per year (\$200 per person).

Those who are married and filing separately each qualify for a \$200 maximum state tax credit. The deadline to submit donations is Monday, April 15.

Through donations, the school of the contributor's choice gets the extra funding it needs to pay for activities like music programs, after-school clubs, tutoring, academic field trips, sports programs and uniforms, according to a district spokeswoman.

Secure online donations using a credit card can be made by visiting [tempeschools.org/taxcredit](http://tempeschools.org/taxcredit).

A Tax Credit Donation Form, along with a check payable to Tempe School District No. 3, can also be mailed to 3205 S. Rural Road, Tempe, 85282, Attn: Finance Department.

Or, for those in the neighborhood, forms can be dropped off with a check at the district office from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## Children's choir offers free concert at Corona H.S.

The youthful voices of Chandler Children's Choir will fill the air Thursday, Feb. 21, in a free 7 p.m. performance at Corona del Sol High School.

The show opens with Disney's *Be Our Guest*, complete with simple props and choreography. Attendees at the event can enjoy not only the lively music but also visit food trucks before the performance. "We hope to introduce more families in the area about what our choir is all about and hopefully have new voices join our organization."

"We have so many different opportunities for young singers, including a summer camp happening June 17-21 with registration now under way," said Ashley Arp, executive director of the choir.

Information: [chandlerchildrenschoir.org](http://chandlerchildrenschoir.org)



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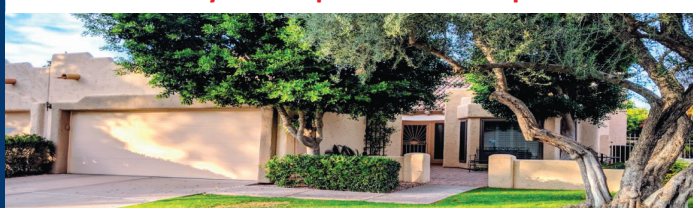
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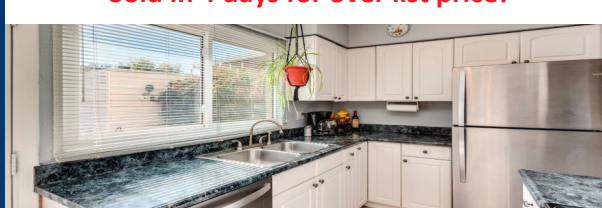
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