

WRANGLER NEWS

DRESSED FOR FUN, OKTOBERFEST STYLE

Beers, brats and polka, plus carnival rides and live music, brought crowds to Tempe Town Lake for three fun-packed days of Four Peaks Oktoberfest. More photos on Pages 14-15.

— Wrangler News photo and illustration by Billy Hardiman



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TEMPE & WEST CHANDLER

WRANGLER NEWS

THE PLACE WE CALL HOME

Latest big hit: Smashing stuff Founder of new W. Chandler business says it's all in your head



It was all smiles as these kids donned their protective gear to partake in a smashing good time.

— Photo courtesy Desert Smash AZ

By M.V. Moorhead

Why is it that so many people enjoy smashing inanimate objects?

Krysten Leach, owner and manager of Desert Smash AZ in West Chandler, has a theory.

"I think basically it's all in your head," says Leach. "You're getting to do something you're usually not allowed to do; something that's typically taboo. Also, you don't have to clean it up."

On that last point, she's

referring to her own new business, at which people can work out their frustrations by taking a baseball bat or golf club or sledge hammer to a variety of computer terminals and old TV sets and other disused and discarded breakables, for a price.

Leach has seen the psychological liberation of her customers once they get started: "You see that baseball bat go from small hit to small hit to really releasing all that tension."

When you're done wrecking—wrecking, maybe?—havoc with the screens and keyboards and glass bottles, you can walk away, blissfully free of any responsibility to clean up the mess you've made. Leach confesses that she might find an ulterior pleasure for herself in the clean-up process.

"I love it," she says with a laugh. "Before I leave work, if there's any leftover computer monitors or whatever, I finish them off."

Scrounging her smashables through

donations, garage sales, stuff left by the curb, Craig's List and bars—a good source for empty bottles, after all—Leach maintains a good stock of surrogate rage targets for bachelorette parties, team building groups—"Mommy Meltdown Release."

Customers must wear closed-toed shoes, even though they're required to wear coveralls,

— SMASH, Page 10

Survey aims at alarming rate of traffic deaths

Special for Wrangler News

You're backing out of your driveway when, at the last second, a bicyclist appears unexpectedly behind you on the sidewalk. You slam on the brakes, avoiding a potential tragedy.

Unfortunately, many other drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians aren't as lucky. With more than 280 fatal bike and pedestrian crashes throughout the Valley last year, the Maricopa Association of Governments is working on a new strategic transportation safety plan.

But not without input, notes Tempe mayor and MAG chair Mark Mitchell. Just fill out an online safety survey.

"This survey will determine how the public feels about their personal safety as it relates to walking, biking and driving in our region—or what we call the 'culture of safety' in the MAG region," says Mitchell.

"This crucial information can be used to develop a safety plan that reduces deaths and injuries on our roadways for all users."

— TRAFFIC, Page 26

Director's early days add new impetus for Tempe preschool innovations

By Susie Steckner

Tempe PRE, the city's high-aiming preschool initiative, started off this year under the guidance of an overseer endowed with early-childhood experience born in the classroom, amplified even further by a determination to advance the quality of education for young learners statewide.

This year, Leslie Totten is overseeing a citywide program that serves 360 children at 12 elementary school campuses within the Tempe Elementary and Kyrene school districts.

Established by the city council as a pilot program in 2017, Tempe PRE has grown into a sought-after, full-day preschool opportunity for families who want to boost kindergarten readiness in their three- and four- year-olds.

— PRESCHOOL, Page 26

'Workaholic' roots readied her for living life at breakneck speed

By Sammie Ann Wicks

What kind of woman with a family can fly over the city in a plane covering breaking news, perform as a jazz singer, run her own newspaper, design and market jewelry, art and clothing, write and publish books, direct and produce plays, produce movies and videos, work as a TV and radio anchor, and—among other things—donate her time doing PR for worthy non-profits?

Ask Laurie Fagen.

"A woman with an excessive amount of energy and a short attention span," the former editor-publisher of South Chandler's Ocotillo (now San Tan) News, laughs, describing herself, and trying to account for her sometimes simultaneous pursuit of all of the above activities.

Fagen's storied biography, and unflagging tendency to conduct her life at breakneck speed, started in Iowa with her father as a major influence.

"Honestly, I got my energy and drive from my father," Fagen says. "He was a workaholic."

Fagen's own penchant to

wrestle multiple bulls by the horns is mirrored in her father's vocational model.

"My dad was a farmer. He sold trucks and cars, he sold airplanes—you name it, he was never idle," Fagen remembers.

Next stop, Arizona, a locale which, later, became the setting for her father's ultimate derring-do.

"Believe it or not, my dad successfully renewed his real estate license online when he was *ninety*," says Fagen. The elder man worked in real estate for 30 years and passed away four years ago.

Whether genetics or role-modelling, Fagen is definitely a chip off the dad's block.

Earning a bachelor's degree in radio-television at Arizona State University, Fagen worked as an assistant producer with radio talk show host Preston Westmoreland, and on graduation was hired as a reporter for Phoenix's KTAR Newsradio, doing live traffic reports out of a small aircraft monitoring the city.

The young reporter then returned to her home state to sign on as an on-air reporter and videographer for Waterloo, Iowa's NBC Affiliate KWWL-TV, covering the state capital. She later took on the station's crime beat, reporting on the Waterloo Police Department, Black Hawk County Sheriff's Department, and county courts. With her news media career now firmly launched, Fagen made a decision that was to change not only her base of operations, but her destiny as well.

"Running around working the news out there, I finally remembered why it was I left Iowa in the first place—it's so bloody cold!" Fagen chuckles.

Traveling back to the Arizona sun, Fagen went to work for the city of Phoenix's Public Information Office, and, drawing on her previous experience as a news videographer, spearheaded a program to create and implement employee training videos.

"When I started at the city, I just happened to find a video camera in another department,

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and figured I could put it to good use, so started producing employee videos,” Fagen says. She went on to found The Phoenix Channel, the city’s government-access cable television station.

With a successful career working for others, Fagen recalls she began to feel strong entrepreneurial urgings, and decided to go to work for herself to enable her to draw on her increasingly diversifying creative gifts.

Word Painting, Fagen’s first business, allowed her to serve as writer, producer and director for professional corporate videos, an enterprise that grew into a new career spanning 13 years, providing training and informational video pieces for businesses in many different venues, even while she kept up with her main love, creative writing.

“My automobile license plate reads, ‘R-Y-T-U-R’, so you know where my heart is,” jokes Fagen, hastening to add her commitment to original writing is a lifelong, passionate one.

As a writer contributing to print and broadcast media, Fagen has written numerous magazine articles, murder mysteries, plays and documentaries broadcast by KAET-TV, KPNX-TV, the Phoenix Suns, the Educational Management Group and Randy Murray Productions.

Fagen’s novel, “Fade Out,” first in a series of crime fiction novels, is available in print, and in ebook and audiobook formats, as is her second in that series, “Dead Air.”

“Equalizer,” what Fagen calls a “prequel novella to

‘Fade Out,’” is available in ebook format only.

Another of Fagen’s novellas, “Deadly Misfire,” is part of the Tawnee Mountain Mysteries’ multi-author series.

She and her late husband, Geoff Hancock, purchased the Ocotillo News in South Chandler (sold and later renamed the San-Tan Sun News) and operated it for 13 years.

A singer, Fagen also finds time to pursue another great love—mainstream jazz—which she calls “classical jazz,” a style she performs around the area with various backing musicians, who include her son, a local guitarist.

She’s also deeply involved helping promote the upcoming Worldwide Women’s Film Festival (wwfilmfestival.com) slated for early next year, showcasing a documentary on pioneer film-maker Guy-Blaché with support from by actors Jodie Foster and Robert Redford.

Foster helped produce and narrates the film, directed by the well-known documentary director Pamela B. Green.

But in the relative (for Fagen) term of “meantime,” time’s-a-wastin.’

“For me, there’s always that ‘next thing,’” Fagen muses. “Which some of my friends don’t always get. They ask me, ‘What DON’T you do?’

“And I say, ‘I don’t do toilets, and I don’t do windows.’ Anything else, I’m IN. ‘I’ve just got to do keep doing things while I have energy.

“Life’s about that.”



Chandler author, producer and director Laurie Fagen is loaning her talents to help promote the Worldwide Women’s Film Festival early next year.

— Photo courtesy Laurie Fagen

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Tempe Union Superintendent Dr. Kevin Mendivil addressed the Chandler Chamber of Commerce where he spoke about the core values and mission of Tempe high schools.

— Wrangler News photo by Noah Kutz

Education experts offer insiders' look at needs, concerns, values

Chandler Chamber hosts Tempe Union, other top execs at Public Policy session

By Noah Kutz

Approximately 20 percent of the positions now open in Arizona's school districts remain unfilled, many of them associated with higher-level math and science departments and special education.

That was the somewhat worrisome report from Kathy Hoffman, state superintendent of public instruction, when she spoke to members of the Chandler Chamber of Commerce.

"For example," said Hoffman, "Arizona only has about 150 physics teachers for the whole state."

Teacher shortages within each school district also apply to non-teaching positions; Mesa schools alone have announced a need for 80 bus drivers.

Policy plans and updates for Arizona schools were the focus of Hoffman's comments, with additional remarks by the superintendents of Tempe Union and Chandler Unified school districts.

As seen in the Red for Ed movement, it was noted, teachers' salaries have become a hot topic for discussion all across Arizona. Related to this discussion, Hoffman highlighted the severe job shortages in schools

as one of the key issues her office is working to solve.

Additionally, with the growing need for school safety positions (jobs related to the physical and mental security of the students, such as school counselors, social workers and SROs), \$20 million has been allocated to addressing that issue.

Each school participating in the state office's project sent an application for a grant that would support jobs in student security. Citing the approximately 900 schools that applied for grants totaling \$97 million, Hoffman said, "\$20 million is clearly not enough."

According to her office's study, Arizona has the worst student-to-counselor ratio in the entire country, with about one counselor for every 900 students.

Dr. Camille Casteel of the Chandler unified schools said her district submitted 23 applications for grants to its hiring needs alone, primarily for school resource officers and social workers. The growing number of deaths by suicide among teenagers, as well as security concerns on school campuses, have given this project top priority for policy makers, she noted.

Another major topic for discussion involved the ongoing development of teachers in Tempe and Chandler schools to ensure that their students receive the best support and education.

Tempe Union Superintendent Dr. Kevin Mendivil directed the audience toward a list of the core values and mission statements for Tempe high schools.

Written under a strategic plan for 2018-2023, the vision statement says: "All students will graduate with skills necessary for success in college, career and life."

One of the core factors of a teacher's job, advised Mendivil, is to differentiate instruction for their students, a challenge he called more and more difficult.

"It's not that our teachers don't want to do the absolute best," he said; "they want to be able to impact, in a positive way, student achievement

outcomes—student outcomes in general—and we need to do better at that, quite frankly."

He added that part of this need is not based on any lack of willingness or desire among teachers to impact their students, but rather a lack of certain skills of differentiating instruction in some classrooms to make sure each student receives the proper kind of instruction.

By continuing to cultivate excellence in each teacher through training and mentorship programs, he said, the district hopes to build a platform for students to succeed in all areas of life when they leave high school.

Mendivil added that integrity is also something educators strive to uphold every day, and the district will continue to ensure there is accountability for this core value in every employee.

We hear you . . .

Early literacy skills key to future

Editor:

Next month, 26 school districts across the state are asking voters to approve bond proposals for new buildings, facility upgrades, added security and other educational necessities. Those who know me or my work as a former Chandler city councilmember know I am passionate about education and the myriad roles it plays in a successful community.

During my eight years on the City Council, I was deeply involved in many critical issues including water, parks and recreation and perhaps most notably education. At that time, I established the Chandler Education Coalition, composed of representatives from the Kyrene School District, Chandler Unified School District, and city and community representatives.

The work of the coalition led to many successes, including the creation of the popular Chandler Science Spectacular technology festival. I was also integral in working with the Coalition to develop the Read On Chandler early stage literacy campaign.

Developing early literacy skills, and instilling greater interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education in our youth is vital to not only a student's success, but that of the community. Particularly, for East Valley cities that have cultivated a broad array of technology companies that depend on a talented and well-educated, local employment pool. It

is a reason why so many businesses choose to locate or expand in Chandler and in our neighboring communities. This work in education and the lasting partnerships we continue to forge between the City and local districts also earned honors from the Arizona Schools Public Relations Association.

As a 37-year resident of West Chandler, it's been a privilege to have had the opportunity to work on a diverse range of projects and many local boards and commissions.

That includes 2006, when I was chosen to co-chair a Citizen's Bond Committee, successfully overseeing a City of Chandler municipal campaign – approved by voters—for \$450 million in critical bond funding for future city projects. I learned the intricacies of bond elections, and the fiscal considerations that go into taking such matters to the public for a vote. If you are being asked to vote in one of the upcoming bond elections, please take the time to study the proposal of your district and vote accordingly.

— Rick Heumann, Chandler

Editor's note: We welcome your letters and will publish those of general interest in our print editions, on our website or both on a space-available basis. We reserve the edit submissions for relevance and/or space limitations.



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Beating daughter's disease creates 'tidal wave' of concern, hope

By Joyce Coronel

“Please can we go to the park, Daddy? Pleeese?”

Such is the plea parents in 2019 may long to hear.

In a milieu in which video games and digital devices captivate, swinging across the monkey bars may not hold quite the appeal it once did for children.

That's not the case for one little girl who misses the carefree pleasures to be had on area playgrounds. Lily Taylor has leukemia. She is 5 years old.

Her parents, Brad and Peggy Taylor, say the family's cancer journey began with what seemed like an ordinary childhood illness—an ear infection.

“She did have an ear infection, but the reason she couldn't get rid of it was because she did not have an immune system at the time. And that was due to leukemia,” Brad says.

Lily is the couple's only child. That their daughter would be diagnosed with such a serious condition never crossed their minds.

“It was a tidal wave. That's really the only way I can explain it,” Brad says. The diagnosis of Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia came on December 19 and the family spent Christmas and New Year's in the hospital alongside Lily.

“She had over 200,000 cancer cells in her body at the time. They start nuking them with chemotherapy immediately,” Brad says. “Literally we found out at around two in the morning and by 8 a.m. I had signed enough documentation to buy a house.”

After spending a month in the hospital, Lily was discharged and went into outpatient treatment. It was supposed to be just a couple of times a week but complications nixed that plan.

“We went to and from the hospital every single day to receive a chemotherapy shot or an IV bag full of chemo or

a blood transfusion,” Brad says.

As the treatments kill fast-growing cancer cells, they also kill fast-growing good cells—including the immune system. Patients go into something called neutropenia, an immune-compromised state. A healthy child might have between 1500-2,000 neutropenic or baby white blood cells to fight infection or kill bacteria.

“Our child would only have like two or five or 200,” Brad explained. “So in order to keep her healthy, we had to keep her at home.”

It wasn't easy. “She's a high-spirited child,” Peggy explains. “When she was neutropenic and too sick to go anywhere, it became difficult for all of us because she was pretty depressed.”

The couple had to take Lily out of daycare and preschool. No more trips to the library or church or the playground. “She could no longer go to any of the places she once enjoyed,” Brad says. “That happens for about eight months as they go through this process.”

The “process” is one that would make the most battle-hardened soldier shiver. After the medical team gets the child stabilized, treatments mellow out for a bit, but the phase known as delayed intensification comes next.

“That's when her hair fell out, her skin was peeling off and she was throwing up,” Brad says. It was the middle of summer and Lilly had been fighting the cancer since December.

“After having her home for six months, we had nothing else to do.

“She was tired of the medicine and the side effects because the only thing we ever got to do was go to the hospital,” Brad says.

He decided to take her for a drive to get her out of the house. As they made their way through the winding

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streets, Lily spotted a playground.

"She begged me to get out of the car and play. And I could not let her. I could not let her play," Brad related, his voice thick with emotion.

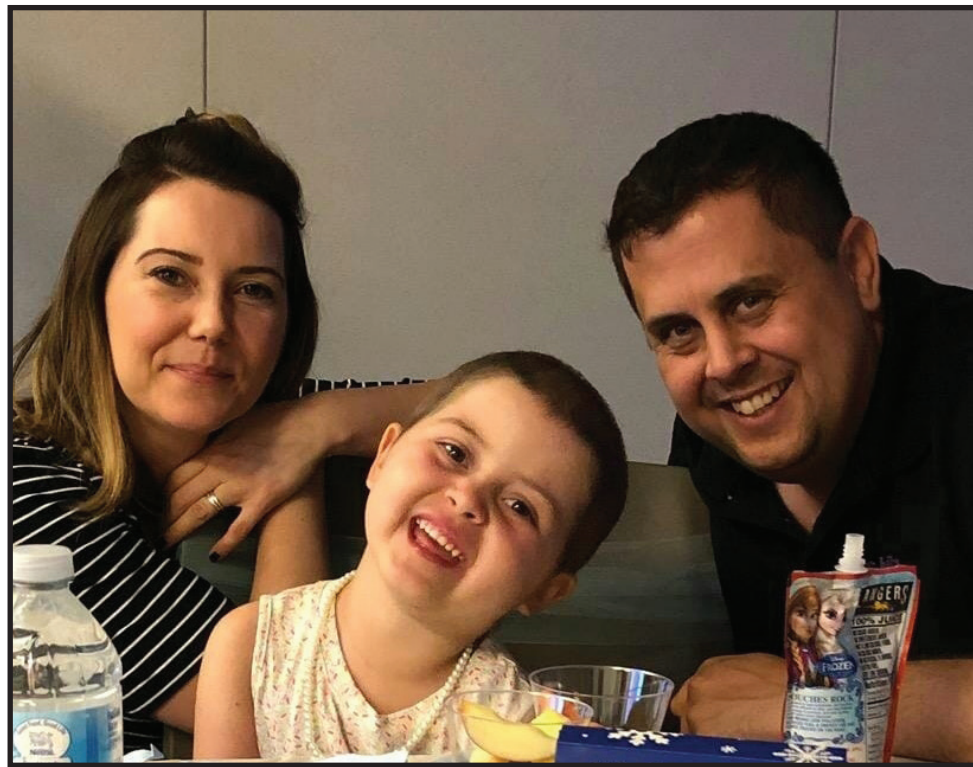
"She lost it. She was throwing shoes at me and screaming and crying. Eventually she ended up crying herself to sleep."

Brad got her home, laid her down on the couch and went upstairs to take a shower.

"To be 100 percent honest about this, I started praying hard. What do I do in this situation? Why have you put this in my life? What's my response to this?" The answer would be forthcoming.

The next morning when Brad woke up, he had an epiphany: He would build a special playground for kids like Lily. And that's how the concept of Lily's Pad was born.

When it's completed, Lily's Pad will be a 2,500-4,000 square-foot indoor playground with the same climate control and air purification system as a hospital. It will be hyper-cleaned like an operating room. The Taylors are looking for a North Tempe



Peggy and Brad Taylor alongside their daughter, Lily. The couple plans to create an indoor playground for immunocompromised young children like Lily. — Photo courtesy Taylor family

location for Lily's Pad, somewhere that would be midway between Phoenix Children's Hospital and Cardon Children's Medical Center, the two facilities that provide pediatric cancer treatment. Lily's Pad,

the Taylors say, will help give kids back their childhood.

"Our goal was to be able to give parents and children a place to gather again, a place to have a sense of community but also to be able to interact with physical touch where they weren't going to be transmitting diseases," Brad says.

To keep the playground safe for children fighting cancer and other diseases that weaken the immune system, the playground will be fogged twice daily with a military-grade cleaning agent called Decon7.

"We are working with Baylor University which is one of the leading infectious disease programs," Brad says.

"We're working with a scientist there to create the most hyper-clean space we can."

The Taylors hope to open Lily's Pad April 29, 2020. They've got a special reason for such a particular date.

"Lily's last treatment is April 28 of 2020," Brad says.

"We want Lily to open the doors to the public cancer free.

"It's our goal for her to cheer other children on and say, 'I am Lily and you can beat this.'"

Lily's Pad won't happen without community support and the Taylors are still in need of sponsors, donors and space. Information: LilyspadAZ.org or email Brad@specialmomentsaz.com.



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Horizon Honors now taking lottery forms

Horizon Honors Schools in Ahwatukee is now accepting lottery forms for the 2020-2021 school Year.

These must be submitted online at horizonhonors.org/lottery by Jan. 20.

In addition, info sessions and tours are available for prospective families. Reservations are required and available at horizonhonors.org/enroll.

Horizon Honors Schools is an organization of tuition-free, public, charter schools that provide continuous learning, K-12.

Over 1,500 students from cities throughout the East Valley attend the schools.

Smash

From Page 3

goggles and face masks (and sign a waiver, of course) before they take their first swing. They're also kept under video surveillance during their stay.

Surprisingly, there's technically no age limit at Desert Smash: kids are simply put in smaller-size coveralls.

"It makes them look like shrunken-down astronauts," she says.

So how did this young mother from Alaska come to run a business based on an activity, e.g., breaking stuff, that traditionally has been regarded as male? Leach doesn't concede the preference.

"You would think it would be more of a boy's forte," she says. "But women love it. (We) women don't get to express ourselves aggressively. I'd love to break that bottle, and here I can."

Specifically, she was inspired to Desert Smash's innovation when she and her husband had their first date night out after their child was born.

"I found a smash room on Groupon," she recalls. "So we got a babysitter. We were in there for a few minutes, and we were done. So [at Desert Smash AZ] you don't have to get a babysitter, because realistically you're not going to be here for two hours; you're going to be here for a few minutes."

Thus Desert Smash provides a variety of day care activities for your little ones while you're in there taking out the fury that those same Terrible Twos or thereabouts likely have contributed to, on poor defenseless computers.

On 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 26, Desert Smash AZ will go seasonal with a "Pumpkin Toss and Trunk or Treat."

The event, at which costumes are encouraged, will feature competitive pumpkin-tossing and "Gallagher-style" pumpkin smashing, along with face painting, vendors, a "Trunk-or-Treat" plus other fun.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit The Armer Foundation for Kids, a local non-profit that assists families with kids with extreme medical needs.

Desert Smash AZ is at 5865 W. Ray Road #10. Call 480-401-6144 for details.



Outdated lamps, VCRs and television sets compose an array of smashables for patrons of Desert Smash AZ.

— Photo courtesy Desert Smash AZ



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Four from area among MCC honorees

Newest Hall of Famers share myriad experiences, skills, successes

Three Tempe residents and one from West Chandler are among the 11 alumni and community members who will be welcomed into Mesa Community College's Hall of Fame during a reception and ceremony hosted by the MCC Alumni Association on Oct. 24.

The recognition honors alumni, community members and MCC employees whose personal and professional accomplishments, plus positive contributions to the college and community, set them apart.

Honorees from Tempe are **Ann Tway Ewing**, **Garrison Tahmahkera** and **Pau Tonnesen**. Selected from West Chandler was **Scott Russell**, Ph.D.



The selections committee noted that **Ewing** distinguished herself as a gifted psychology professor as well as an engaged scholar who has brought national fame and acclaim to Mesa Community College.

Earning her doctoral degree in educational psychology from Arizona State University, she

anchored her career at MCC until her retirement in 2018.

Ann founded the MCC chapter of Psi Beta, a national honor society for students attending two-year colleges. She served as president-elect, president and past-president of the National Psi Beta organization. Ewing was also Western Regional Vice President of Psi Beta.

She is a founding member of the Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges and was instrumental in setting up a national undergraduate research competition.

She earned a wealth of awards and accolades including being the first community college faculty member in the 55-year-history of the Western Psychological Association to be named Faculty Member of the Year.

The American Psychological Association honored her with the Teaching Excellence Award of the Year for two-year colleges.

Russell, retired with status as MCC faculty emeritus, taught anthropology at MCC from 2003 through 2015 and was involved in activities and mentoring to

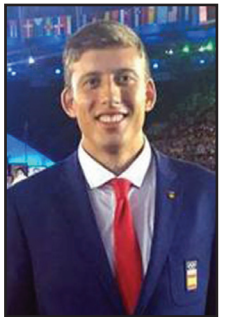


foster student success and retention. As a cultural anthropologist, Russell worked to enlighten his students on cultural difference in the United States and around the world.

He chaired the Title III Committee and helped write a grant that brought \$2 million for developmental education. He co-directed the MCC Honors Program and chaired the Arizona Honors Council, an organization of honors directors from colleges and universities in the state.

A Tempe native, **Tonnesen** excelled in what many consider the ultimate athletic endeavor—the decathlon. As a freshman at MCC, he took gold in the decathlon at the 2012 NJCAA Indoor Track & Field Championships. At MCC, he became the only athlete in NJCAA history to win all four of the multi-event championships during his career.

Attending the University of Arizona, he won the PAC-12 decathlon title in 2016 and still holds the UA



— MCC, Page 12

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Editor's note: After receiving many inquiries over the years, Wrangler News is now making space available for obituary placements. Please email editor@wranglernews.com or call 480-966-0837 from 9-5 M-F for format requirements, deadlines and rates.

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MCC

From Page 11

points record for the event. Tonneson competed for Spain (he holds dual citizenship because his mother is Spanish) in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, placing 17th in the decathlon. He also participated in the bi-annual 2015 and 2017 World Championships placing 18th and 14th respectively.



Tahmahkera, an MCC retiree affiliated with American Indian Center, is credited with his vision and leadership to create a legacy at MCC that serves as a foundation for success among American Indian students.

He led the founding of the center in 1986 and served as its first director until 2003,

continuing to contribute for additional years as an Elder in Residence.

He has been recognized with a multitude of honors including MCC 1987-1989 Adviser of the Year; 1990 Chief Manuelito Appreciation Award from the Navajo Nation; 2006 Native American Recognition Days Man of the Year; and 2006 Outstanding Haskell Alumnus Award. Currently, he works with the American Indian Alliance collecting food and clothes to distribute to people living on reservations in remote locations.

The awards program begins at 7 p.m., preceded by a reception at 6 on the MCC Art Gallery patio. The public is invited to attend; however, RSVP's are requested as seating is limited.

Police Beat

Alamo Cinema bandit sought

Police remain on the lookout for a black male suspected of robbing Alamo Draffhouse Cinema on Baseline Road in Tempe on Oct. 12 after brandishing a small handgun.

The suspect is described as approximately 50 years old, 5'6," 200 pounds with salt-and-pepper hair and unshaven. He was last seen wearing a white golfer-style hat, gray long-sleeved shirt and tan cargo shorts.

Police said the man confronted an employee as the employee entered the business, and demanded money from the cash register.

The suspect then stole the employee's vehicle, described as a 1997 Pontiac Bonneville displaying Arizona license plate CNE-5760.

Information: Tempe Police Department, 480-350-8311. Police advise not to attempt contact with the suspect, who is said to be armed and considered dangerous.

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The 113th Old Settlers Picnic brought together community leaders from across Tempe to honor the memory of the city's pioneer settlers. Members of the Old Settlers group have lived in Tempe 30 or more years. Pictured here are representatives of the Tempe Historical Society and the Corona del Sol High School Key Club, as well as other longtime Tempeans.

— Wrangler News photos by Billy Hardiman



HIGH FLYIN' CELEBRATION . . . AS THE BAVARIANS DO IT

Flying through the air, dancing the polka to the beat of live music, imbibing the array of beer and savoring the bratwurst and other German fare at the Four Peaks Oktoberfest at Tempe Town Lake, 75,000 festival-goers took in the carnival-like atmosphere of the event. Some 1,500 volunteers put in the elbow grease necessary to make the annual celebration a success and help fund the Tempe Sister Cities project, which sends students and city representatives abroad to one of Tempe's 10 sister cities.

— *Wrangler News photos by Billy Hardiman*





SPORTS

With Alex Zener

Teams evenly balanced until penalty causes a costly setback

The Aztecs 0-7 loss to Queen Creek on Oct. 10 could be considered somewhat a balanced affair until midway through the fourth quarter, when the Bulldogs managed to score a touchdown after a costly Aztec penalty. Until the fourth quarter, neither team could put together much of a sustained drive, but when they did get something going, both teams turned over the ball with a fumble or an interception.

For instance, both teams caused and recovered one fumble. Corona players **Alex Rafalski** caused a Bulldog fumble and **Scott Musgrave** recovered another.

Both teams intercepted passes. Corona had three interceptions, one by **Jack Farley**, one by Rafalski and one by Musgrave but then was

unable to capitalize on any of the three interceptions to score points.

Although Aztec quarterback **Quade Swearingen** completed 32 out of 48 passes, for 270 yards, Queen Creek intercepted two of his passes that were detrimental because both occurred when the Aztecs were in the Red Zone threatening to score.

To be fair, both interceptions occurred when the Aztecs were under pressure because the clock was running out.

Queen Creek's Hunter Barth intercepted Swearingen's pass on the Bulldogs' six-yard line when the Aztecs were threatening to score with less than a minute left in the first half.

The second interception came after Corona had moved the ball from its

own 41-yard line, with two minutes left in the fourth quarter, all the way to Queen Creek's eight-yard line with less than a minute to go in the game.

Queen Creek's Keshaun Calip intercepted Swearingen's pass in the endzone to safeguard the Bulldogs' win.

Both teams had numerous penalties, but nothing more costly to the outcome of the game than a roughing-the-kicker penalty sustained by the Aztecs midway through the fourth quarter.

The Bulldogs had finally started to wear down Corona's defense in the fourth quarter with a long-sustained drive that put them inside the Aztecs' 20-yard line or in the Red Zone with five minutes left in the game.

The Aztec defense stood firm against the Bulldogs, forcing them to try for a field goal.

An unfortunate roughing-the-kicker foul not only turned the ball back over to Queen Creek but gave the Bulldogs another set of downs with short yardage and took time off the clock.

The Bulldogs took advantage of the penalty situation, scoring on a 3-yard rushing touchdown to go up 7-0 with five minutes to go in the fourth quarter.

The Aztecs' defense and offense

put forth a valiant effort, to no avail, in those last five minutes to even the score at 7-7 and tie the game.

The offense had two possessions in the last five minutes to even the score, but an Aztec fumble recovered by the Bulldogs and, on their second possession, an interception in the endzone by Queen Creek with time running out, sealed the Aztecs' fate.

Eric Blackwell led the team in total yardage, catching nine passes for 93 reception yards. He was followed by junior **Bryce Douglass**, who caught eight passes for a total of 80 passing yards and rushed for two yards for a total of 82 yards.

On defense, senior **Conner Burns** was credited with four solo and four assisted tackles to lead the team with eight tackles. **Tyson McLain** had seven tackles, while Rafalski, **Jake Schmitt** and **Myles Sheppard** each had six.

Sophomore **Anyale Velazquez** punted the ball four times for an average of close to 30 yards a punt.

The Aztecs had a bye on Oct. 11 just before Corona closed for fall break. With a current 3-4 record and 1-1 section record, the Aztecs, currently ranked No. 17, have three games left to move up in the 6A rankings.

Corona was scheduled to play at

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Highland on Oct. 18 then at Desert Vista on Oct. 24. Both games can be watched live on the NFSF network at <https://www.nfhsnetwork.com/sports/football/arizona>

The Aztecs' last regular season game is scheduled to be played at home against Mountain Pointe on Nov. 1. Tradition dictates that this last home game will be the night the Aztecs recognize and honor their senior players.

Marcos de Niza Football

The currently No. 9-ranked Padres pulled out a 41-38 home conference win over Poston Butte on Oct. 11 in an exciting game where both teams put up points and the winner was not determined until the final minute.

The Broncos struck first, midway through the first quarter, with a rushing touchdown but the Padres scored on their next possession with a rushing touchdown by **Yakeen Baylis**.

Poston Butte scored again with two minutes left in the first quarter and the Padres roared back with a long pass from quarterback **Antonio Hernandez** to **Martell Thompson** to put Marcos on the Broncos' 14-yard line.

Hernandez finished the game, throwing for 92 yards with nine completed passes.

Unfortunately, the Padres fumbled the ball, which was recovered by the Broncos, just before the end of the first quarter.

A Bronco fumble in the beginning of the second quarter, recovered by Marcos, resulted in another rushing touchdown by Baylis which, along with senior **David Redhouse's** PAT, tied the score at 14-14.

Baylis would go on to score his third rushing touchdown with two minutes left in the second quarter, and Redhouse would score his third PAT to put the Padres up 21-14.

In the second half, Baylis scored his fourth TD with a three-yard rushing touchdown after **Collin Gordon** recovered a Bronco fumble on Poston Butte's six-yard line. After a successful PAT by Redhouse, the Padres were up 28-14.

Poston Butte continued to keep the fans thrilled with another rushing touchdown, including a two-point conversion in the third quarter to come within six points at 28-22.

With three minutes to go in the third quarter, someone besides Baylis scored for the Padres.

Freshman backup quarterback **Jorge Beltran**, who completed four out of his five pass attempts, threw a 37-yard touchdown pass to Thompson.

Thompson, a senior, ended the game as the Padres' leading receiver with 76 yards.

Redhouse scored his fifth PAT to put the Padres up 35-22.

The Broncos continued to make things interesting with a 70-yard rushing touchdown and two-point conversion to pull within five points at 35-30.

Marcos again marched down the field into the Bronco's Red Zone so that Baylis could score his fifth rushing touchdown from three yards out capping off his 32-carry, 196-yard game.

Redhouse missed the PAT but the Padres had 41-30 lead with 11 minutes left in the fourth quarter.

The Broncos, with their never-give-up attitude, used a 12-yard run by Kahlil Cooper to score another rushing touchdown and two-point conversion to pull within three points at 41-38 with eight minutes left in the game.

Marcos marched down the field and was threatening to score in the Red Zone when the Broncos broke through to sack the Padres quarterback, forcing Marcos to punt the ball.

Poston Butte started its drive on its own seven-yard line and moved down the field, ending at the 30-yard line when the two-minute warning sounded.

The Broncos were then able to continue their drive, moving the ball from their own 30-yard line all the way to the Padres' 12-yard line before the final whistle sounded, sealing a 41-38 win for Marcos.

Junior **Jayden Calderon** was the second leading rusher on the team behind Baylis with five carries for 45 yards, including a 24-yard breakaway run. Junior **Nathan Camarena** caught four passes for 29 yards.

On defense, senior **Anthony Brown** led the team in tackles with six solo and four assisted, for a total of 10. Brown tied fellow senior **Malaki Corella** who had five solo and five assisted tackles.

Senior **Frank White** had one quarterback sack for a 29-yard Bronco loss while junior **Schofar Hill** sacked the Bronco quarterback the second time. Senior **Micah Willingham** recovered two fumbles.

The Padres, with a 5-2, 2-0 section record in the 4A Division, were scheduled to play at home against the No. 1 conference leader Saguaro on Oct. 18.

After Saguaro, Marcos has two home games left to its standings in the 4A state playoffs. On Oct. 25 they were scheduled to play Mesquite and then Nov. 1 against Arcadia.



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Corona Girls Volleyball

The Aztecs, who are ranked No.2 in the 6A Division behind Perry with a 27-7 overall record and a 5-0 section record, recently competed in the Nike Tournament of Champions, which included highly competitive teams from throughout the United States.

The tournament was held Oct. 4-5, with Corona winning four out of the seven matches in the Gold Division slated for that weekend in the Phoenix area.

The team is led in kills by senior outside hitters **Mady Noble** and **Nicole Newman**.

Both have played in all 98 sets so far this season with Newman registering 331 kills on 902 attempts hitting .215, while Noble has an astounding 1,002 attempts with 321 kills while hitting .233.



Outside hitter Mady Noble passes the ball while libero Becca Morse and outside hitter Nicole Newman prepare for the next move.

— Photo courtesy Kris Cartwright/kriscartwright.smugmug.com

Two other players with significant kills include senior opposite hitter **Morgan McNulty** with 138 kills, hitting .222, and freshman middle blocker **Ella Lomigora** with 125 kills hitting .268.

Lomigora also leads the team in blocks with a total of 107 total blocks, 26 solo and 81 assisted blocks, while senior middle blocker **Sadie McRae** is second with 84 total blocks, 13 solo and 71 assisted.

Outside hitter Noble, an outstanding beach volleyball player, is the third leading blocker with 23 solo and 40 assisted blocks for a total of 63. Sophomore middle blocker **Natalie Meyer** amassed 43 blocks while playing in only 64 sets.

Fellow senior, **Becca Morse**, playing the libero position, leads the team in digs with 622 digs and only one error. Morse is averaging an outstanding 6.7 digs a set or 19.4 digs a match.

Noble is second in digs with 303, followed by senior opposite hitter **Rachel Mertes** with 193 digs and sophomore setter **Anita Babic** with 163.

Morse is also the team leader in service aces with a current 60 aces while Babic is second on the team with 46 aces.

Noble has 36 aces, **Rachel Mertes** has 34 and senior setter **Ashley Hayden** has 30.

Babic and Hayden share the setting duties with Babic tallying 566 assists and Hayden 359 assists.

Corona was scheduled to play a conference game at Desert Ridge on Oct. 15, and then the Aztecs were on tap to play two home matches, Oct. 16 against Sunnyslope and Oct. 17 against Queen Creek.

Corona will only have three matches left in the regular season which include Oct. 22 at Highland, Oct. 24 at Desert Vista and then Oct. 29 at home against Mountain Pointe.

Corona will recognize and honor its 10 senior players before the last home game on Oct. 29.

The 2019 6A Conference Play-In Tournament will be held Oct. 31.

Here, the Nos. 9- through 24-ranked teams will play. The eight winning teams from this play-in will compete against the No. 1- through 8-ranked teams, which automatically qualify for the 6A state tournament.

Corona is currently ranked No. 2 behind No. 1 Perry.

The other top eight currently ranked teams who would potentially automatically qualify for the 6A state tournament include Xavier Prep, Basha, Sandra Day O'Connor, Chaparral, Desert Vista and Pinnacle. The state tournament starts Nov. 5 at the higher seed.

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Body found at Tempe Lakes community

Tempe Police and Fire Rescue were called to The Lakes' 5600 block of Marine Drive on Oct. 15 in response to the report of an adult female discovered deceased in the neighborhood's manmade lake.

The woman was identified as 49-year-old Jing-Li Morley.

The initial investigation, conducted by the Tempe Police Department's Criminal Investigations Bureau in conjunction with the Office of the Medical Examiner, determined foul play did not appear to be a factor. Police noted there are no safety concerns at this time for the residents of The Lakes Community in connection with Morley's passing. An official cause of death will be determined by the Office of the Medical Examiner.

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Dignity Foundation 5K raises \$16,000+

Dignity Health Foundation East Valley, philanthropic arm of Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert medical centers, says that more than \$16,000 was raised by the 364 participants in a Heroes in Health Care 5K event on Sept. 28.

Nineteen teams participated.

Sponsors were Air Methods/ Native Air; Hanger Clinics; Bright Health; Anytime Fitness; Tough Mudder Bootcamp and Chandler/Gilbert YMCA.

The event included a Heroes 5K Run/Walk; a F.A.S.T. 1 Mile; and a Kids Dash of 100 yards.

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Arizona Avenue Alternatives Analysis

Public Meeting Notice



The City of Chandler and Valley Metro are hosting a public meeting to share information about two transportation studies: the Chandler Transportation Master Plan (TMP) 2019 Update and the Arizona Avenue Alternatives Analysis (AAAA) study.

Chandler is updating the city's transportation master plan and will be presenting study recommendations to the public.

The AAAA study is evaluating high-capacity transit options to connect key destinations with local and regional transit services. The study team will be seeking input and comments from the community.

Stop by anytime during the hours listed. Staff will be available to answer questions.

Thursday, October 24 | 5 - 7 p.m.

Chandler Community Center, Multipurpose Room #110
125 E. Commonwealth Ave., Chandler

UNABLE TO ATTEND?

Meeting materials will be available starting **October 24, 2019** as follows:

For the Chandler TMP 2019 Update, visit: KeepChandlerMoving.com

For the Arizona Avenue Alternatives Analysis study, visit: valleymetro.org/az-ave.

For more information or to make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities, contact:

Chandler Transportation Master Plan 2019 Update
Jason Crampton
480.782.3402 | jason.crampton@chandleraz.gov

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Diversions

Robert Forster: Recalling a memorable encounter

By M.V. Moorhead

Robert Forster passed on last week, at 78. Even though his hair had recently gone gray and thinner, the verve and sharp edge of his acting always made him seem at least 10 years younger. Like many actors, the soulfully craggy-faced fellow with the accent that sounded like pure Chicago—though he hailed from Rochester, N.Y.—paid the bills over the years with a great deal of low-rent dreck, often elevating it by his very presence.

I met Forster once, by the way; more than a decade ago, at the Phoenix Film Festival, I introduced a not-very-good crime movie in which he appeared, and ran the Q&A with him after the screening.

I introduced him so effusively that when he stepped up to shake my hand he gave me a quizzical look, as if he wondered if my enthusiasm was a put-on. It wasn't.

As to his few and far between career highlights, they were such that they've given him the legacy of a true star.

The son of an elephant trainer for Ringling

Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Forster—born Foster but changed to avoid confusion with the other actor by the same name—studied history at the University of Rochester, but was lured away from pursuing a career in law when he followed a pretty coed into a theater audition. His film career started on a high-profile note, when he was poached from a brief tenure on Broadway to appear opposite Marlon Brando in *Reflections in a Golden Eye*.

Roles opposite the likes of Gregory Peck in *The Stalking Moon* or Anthony Quinn in *The Don is Dead* followed; so did his lead in Haskell Wexler's 1969 *verité* classic *Medium Cool*.

Alas, this was followed by two failed TV series in the early '70s, and soon Forster's career was in decline. Despite the occasional starring role in an A-list production like 1979's *The Black Hole*, by the late '70s and throughout the '80s and early '90s many of Forster's credits were in stuff like *Satan's Princess* and *Maniac Cop III*.

Things changed in 1997, when Forster was cast as the stoic bail bondsman Max Cherry in Quentin Tarantino's best movie, his Elmore Leonard adaptation *Jackie Brown*. Cherry assists the title character, played by Pam Grier, in her elaborate scheme to trick the deadly arms dealer for whom she smuggles money in and out of Mexico.

Forster's thunderstruck expression when Cherry sees the imperious Jackie emerging from a lockup may be the single most effective portrayal of love at first sight in all of movies.

Max Cherry was the performance for which Forster got his Oscar nomination, and it will probably, and deservedly, be remembered as the signature role of his career. Even so, I have a favorite from the lean part of Forster's career: his star turn as the perplexed police detective Dave Madison in Lewis Teague's 1980 *Alligator*. Helped by the reflective dialogue of John Sayles, Forster turns the what could have been a routine lead in a routine monster picture into a sly and even touching character study.

He kept acting for more than 20 years after *Jackie Brown*, and while the work was steady and probably more lucrative, it was only a little better in terms of quality; there were lots of forgettable supporting parts in action movies, and there were still credits like *Dragon Wars* and *Rise: Blood Hunter*. He did well on TV, with roles on *Breaking Bad* and *Karen Sisco* and *Last Man Standing*, and the reboot of *Twin Peaks*.

My road to fandom was based on appreciating Forster's low-key, unpretentious everyman persona with an underlying tinge of melancholy.

At his best, he was deeply lovable. This past weekend I caught up with one of his very last movies, 2018's *What They Had*, in which he plays a devoutly Catholic husband and father struggling to care for his dementia-afflicted wife (Blythe Danner) at home.

It's the kind of role he should have gotten to play more often.



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Walt Richardson's musical genius: Tempe boasts a Valley gem

By Carmen De Alba Cardenas

Downtown Tempe is known for its vibrant nightlife. One person who has seen the live music scene evolve and grow over the years, alongside the community, is Walt Richardson.

Richardson moved to Tempe in the late 1970s and has since been a staple of the local music scene. He has performed his original music to the community at different venues on Mill Avenue and around the Valley.

For the past 10 years, Richardson also has hosted Tempe Center for the Arts' Walk-in Wednesday Open Mic nights, at which artists of all ages can sign up to sing two songs on stage from 6-9 p.m.

Here, local, aspiring artists can perform original pieces or covers in a welcoming environment.

Richardson treats the audience to two songs as well; he is usually the 11th spot.

Anyone who ever gets to see Richardson perform can instantly feel the passion he exudes in his music. The audience snaps, claps and sings along with him.

At first, Richardson wanted to pursue a life in the sciences. He consistently took a liking to biochemistry but, music was always there.

"Science and music were always running side by side, but my guitar always made me feel good, it made me feel centered," Richardson said.

Along with performing and hosting open mic nights, Richardson also has his own radio show. Every Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on radiophoenix.org, you can listen to "My World of Music: A Peaceful Place in Quantum Space." Richardson takes you on a "musical journey" on his show, playing a variety of genres and artists.

Living in Tempe for so long, Richardson has seen generations of people in the community grow and they have seen him grow.

"There's a lot of people who I have met that have gone to college, started their career, got married, had kids and grandkids and come back to see me and tell me, 'you're still playing?'," Richardson said.

The Tempe community seems to know of Richardson one way or another. Whether they have seen him at Cartel Coffee Lab, (which he calls his office), or they listen to his radio show, people know his name.

Public Information Officer Kris Baxter-Ging discovered Richardson when she was in college and would go to see his band play. They have even worked together at some of the mic nights.

"Walt has become a beloved community icon. He is the musician that everyone

wants to see at traditional Tempe events... he is an ambassador for Tempe wherever he goes, spreading a message of peace [and] love," Baxter-Ging said.

Richardson has impacted the community in such a significant way that, in 2014, he was inducted into the Arizona Music and Entertainment Hall of Fame. The city even named Jan. 18 Walt Richardson Day. He was also the inaugural inductee to Mill Avenue's Music Walk of Fame; his plaque is located at Mill Avenue and Fourth Street.



Walt Richardson: A Tempe musical legend.

— Billy Hardiman/Wrangler News

Councilmember Joel Navarro is also fond of Richardson. Navarro is another advocate for the live music scene and believes that Richardson can keep it alive for years to come. While he was in college, Navarro says, he also saw Richardson perform.

"I want to embrace live music in Downtown Tempe; I want to see more

bands on Mill rather than DJ's," said Navarro. "Walt has been in the music scene for a long time, he has been our guidance and catalyst in pushing for more live music in Tempe."

Richardson's view of his connection to the city and how it has affected him can be expressed in a few succinct words.

"My living is playing music, and that is living the dream," he said.

Anniversary sale features something for everyone

McKay's True Value in West Chandler is marking its first anniversary in business with a community event Saturday, Oct. 19 and Sunday, Oct. 20.

The festivities begin at 8 a.m. and include grilled hotdogs on Saturday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., with proceeds benefiting Dogs for the Blind.

The store is offering 20 percent off whatever items can fit into a McKay's True Value shopping bag.

The business is located at 4939 W. Ray Road in the Goodwill plaza on the southeast corner of Ray and Rural.

Information: 480-686-8064.



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Commentary . . . By Joyce Coronel

At Oct. 26 neighborhood event, there will be plenty to G.A.I.N.

Tempe's outdoor temperature will not hit the century mark again for the remainder of 2019 and all of us, I'm certain, are glad of that.

With those cooler temps comes a renewed interest in venturing outside, just in time for the annual Getting Arizona Involved in Neighborhoods event.

GAIN Night takes place in Tempe Saturday, Oct. 26, and it's your opportunity to get to know and mingle with the people who live near you.

Maybe you've seen them walking their dog or pulling into their garage and unloading groceries. Did you wave?

Cross the street and chat? No? Perhaps you have no idea who these people are and wonder what you could possibly have in common.

The thing is, you likely share this: a desire to not fall victim to criminals.

Getting to know the people who live in your neighborhood is one more way to help prevent crime, police say. "Neighbors who enjoy good relationships are more comfortable reporting crime and suspicious activity to the police, and are more likely to work together to keep a great quality of life in their neighborhood."

So declares the Neighborhood Services page at tempe.gov in promoting GAIN night.

Having grown up during the 1960s and '70s in Peaceful Valley, a modest "Old Town" Scottsdale neighborhood, I remember the days in which residents were generally better acquainted than neighbors are in 2019.

We knew every single family on our block, and that was no small achievement. There must have been at least four dozen kids to ride bikes and skate with after school and on weekends. (Be home before the street lights go on, kids!)

My best friend, Meg, lived across the street and her older brother, Mike, taught me to ride a bike.

He eventually grew up to become a Superior Court judge, but I remember him as the guy who ran behind my prized magenta Huffy with the banana seat, clutching the metal loop on the back and then finally, gloriously, letting go as I sailed off solo. Thanks,



Judge!

No doubt Judge Mike observed more than a few crooks as he presided over court in the years following his gig as a bike instructor.

I'm guessing he'd be all in favor of GAIN night.

The first GAIN event I ever attended was years after those memorable days of childhood. It was 1993 and my husband and I had just purchased a newly built home in Warner Ranch.

Snow-cones and hot dogs, friendly police officers, face-painting and getting to know our neighbors—it was a blast!

We raised our five sons in the neighborhood and have lived in the same spot ever since. Our family was among some of the early readers of what was then known as the Warner Wrangler.

(Little did I know I would someday be writing for the publication that has outlasted every other attempt at community news in our little interconnected hamlet of Tempe and West Chandler.)

The last original owners on our street moved out in August. Over the last couple of years, we've slowly come to know the new arrivals but we haven't yet gotten around to organizing a GAIN night again. We're a little late to the party this year but I'm putting it on my calendar now to try to get something going for 2020.

How about you? What are things like in your part of our town?

Has your neighborhood planned a GAIN event for this year?

How can we work together to make this a stronger, better community in which to live? We hope Wrangler News is one more way to connect people with each other and continue to be the place we love to call home.



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The Chandler Chamber of Commerce invites you to join us in honoring the 2019 top 100 Companies that help shape Chandler! Enjoy fabulous food, as we present The Taste of Chandler®, plenty of fun and the opportunity to meet Chandler's stakeholder businesses.

Register @ ChandlerChamber.com/calendar

Chandler Chamber Diversity & Inclusion Round Table "Exploring Faith Traditions"

Thursday, December 5
8:30 am to 9:30 am

SoHo63
63 E Boston St, Chandler, AZ 85225



A popular event last holiday season, this event returns as we look at Chandler's diverse religious community. We will take a look at the faith-based institutions in Chandler, including holiday traditions, religious teachings, how they give back and the important role they play in building a community.

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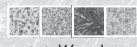
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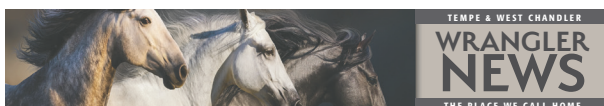
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Preschool

From Page 3

The opportunity represents Totten's passion for early childhood programs that she's pursued since her growing-up days in Tempe, and just another step in her career's progression.

"I am thrilled to build on the success of Tempe PRE and help families in our community prepare their children for kindergarten and beyond," Totten said.

"We know that 90 percent of brain development occurs before age five," she said. "Tempe PRE is playing a vital role in supporting early learners with a comprehensive program that includes qualified teachers, a play-based curriculum and small class sizes."

Totten steps into the role as Tempe PRE shifts to a sliding-scale tuition program based on need. As part of the pilot, Tempe PRE was a free city-funded program open to families with an income at or below 200 percent of Federal Poverty Level.

Marie Raymond, Tempe human services manager, hailed Totten's selection for the post.

"Leslie's breadth of experience and leadership in the state fostering quality early childhood programs provide a solid foundation as Tempe PRE evolves to serve families of all income levels who live and work in Tempe," said Raymond.

Tempe PRE is an ideal fit for Totten in many ways, starting with her Tempe roots. She attended Tempe schools and Arizona State University. As a child, she remembers exploring books at the Tempe Public Library.

A human resources director herself for a decade, Totten hit a turning point when she became a mother

and saw firsthand the benefits of early childhood learning. Those experiences with her own children, she said, launched a new career that took Totten from teaching young learners in public and private settings to teaching community college courses and coordinating a teacher mentoring program at ASU.

Before joining Tempe PRE, Totten worked for nearly a decade at First Things First, a voter-initiated, statewide organization that funds early education and health programs for young children. For the last five years, Totten served as director of the organization's Quality First initiative, overseeing 1,200 early childhood programs as part of Arizona's statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System.

In her role at Quality First, Totten assisted the city of Tempe with developing its PRE pilot program.

"I was so excited that Tempe was choosing to promote early childhood education with a high-quality preschool program," she said. "That commitment and my Tempe roots are what drew me to this position."

Now in its third year, Tempe PRE offers low student-to-adult ratio (9:1), with 18 students per classroom, as well as early childhood education certified teachers; use of a child-centered, play-based HighScope preschool curriculum; teaching strategies that identify and address challenges throughout the year, improving kindergarten readiness; and before- and after-school hours at select schools.

Tempe PRE is available in 20 elementary school classrooms, with access to support systems such as a school nurse. This partnership also allows for ease of transition from preschool to kindergarten at the same school, depending on family preference, officials noted.

Information: tempe.gov/TempePRE. To contact staff, email pre-k@tempe.gov or call 480-858-7735.

Traffic

From Page 3

In 2018, reports MAG, there were 1,337 crashes involving pedestrians in the region, with 169 fatalities.

There also were 957 bike crashes, claiming 117 lives. MAG, along with other state and regional partners, has set up a task force to develop an education and enforcement program to address bicycle and pedestrian safety.

The online survey will allow participants to place "pins" on a map of areas where they have experienced safety issues when riding a bike, driving or walking.

"The first goal is to identify concerns people have about safety and connect with their personal experiences," says Carl Langford, chair of the MAG Transportation Safety Committee.

"Once we identify risk factors related to their experiences, we can work on finding ways to promote safe behaviors. This may be through education, enforcement or adapting infrastructure."

The safety team also will compare the findings to other regions and states to see how they have addressed similar safety concerns.

The team will incorporate best practices into any final safety plan.

According to Mitchell, safety for all modes of transportation will be a cornerstone in the next Regional Transportation Plan, Imagine, which is currently under development by the MAG Transportation Policy Committee.

To respond to the survey, visit azmag.gov/safetysurvey.



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Improving oneself, world, is laudable goal of collaboration

Dayspring, Temple Emanuel congregants join forces to promote good

By Janie Magruder

On a recent warm autumn afternoon, Xhris Castillejo paused in the courtyard of Dayspring United Methodist Church in Tempe before entering Yom Kippur services. Castillejo studied some of the handwritten messages on hundreds of pastel paper tags tied to tree branches and spinning in the breeze.

"I was surprised to see my own intention here," said Castillejo, a Phoenix resident and member of Temple Emanuel of Tempe. "Mine is for forgiveness, to forgive my mother and myself. My mom passed away in March, and we had a strained relationship. I hold some resentment and anger, but casting that off and starting the new year is what this is all about."

Castillejo is participating in Temple Emanuel's and Dayspring's Blessing Tree Project, a communal activity encouraging people of all faiths to "describe something you will do in the year ahead to improve yourself and the world" on one of the tags.

The project was introduced to congregants in both religious communities in late September, in time for Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. For the past three years, Dayspring has hosted Temple Emanuel's High Holy Days services, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The tags were distributed to members, from children in Sunday School and youth to elderly people and those in an Alcoholics Anonymous group

meeting at Temple Emanuel.

The messages then were commingled as an expression of Temple Emanuel's and Dayspring's strong partnership. They will hang in olive and palo verde trees at both houses of worship until Nov. 3, the date Dayspring celebrates All Saints Day.

Senior Rabbi Dean Shapiro of Temple Emanuel knew of blessing tree projects elsewhere, and while walking down a tree-lined street in Jerusalem last summer, he imagined them covered with prayers.

"I thought, 'That's it, the High Holy Days are coming, and this would be perfect,'" he said. "It's a beautiful and tangible symbol of humanity. It gives people the opportunity to make a personal commitment to improving themselves and send messages of acceptance, neighborliness and friendliness to the world, despite our differences."

"And I think the world needs that now."

Rev. Shirley Wells, Dayspring's minister of spiritual formation, said the Blessing Tree Project also was embraced by women attending a weekend church retreat in Northern Arizona.

"They really took it seriously—there was a hush in the room," she said. "One woman wrote that she wanted to become a better listener, and she put that into practice the following Sunday when befriending a visitor at church. That made an impact on both of them."

Dayspring Sunday School teachers like Andrea Farley, who has first- and second-graders, taught the

children that prayers can help people live better and also improve the world.

"They gave it a lot of thought," Farley said. "They came up with not fighting with their brothers and sisters, not littering, to share better. It's promising to see the youngest generations being thoughtful like this because they are the future and will be the decision-makers. Appreciation for one another will be a way of life for them."

Giving back through volunteerism, being more brave and communicating more openly are other intentions on the tags, as well as:

"I will change the law."

"Be nice."

"Ignore the divisiveness! Focus on living!"

"Be kind to everyone, even if they are not kind to me."

Beyond the expression of individual hopes and goals, the Blessing Tree Project demonstrates that people of different backgrounds and perspectives can be unified, Wells said.

"We are all neighbors," Shapiro added. "We belong to different houses of worship and have different central stories, but we are all human beings, and we are all neighbors in Tempe."

Now through Nov. 3, the public is invited to participate in the project by reading the messages at Temple Emanuel, 5801 S. Rural Road, and Dayspring United Methodist Church, 1365 E. Elliot Road.

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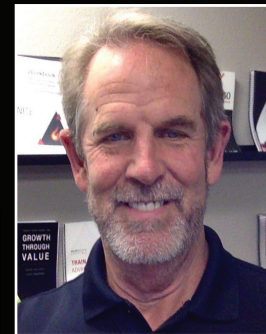
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