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COVER STORY

Still my Valentine

Couples share their secrets to love that lasts.

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What's inside



Eye on the future

Whether exploring space science or wielding a camera, Billy Hardiman is always in focus. *Page 16*



Helping the homeless

Chandler 'Change Up' campaign: It's working.

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WRANGLER NEWS

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Think Local. Read Local.



Wrangler News photo by Billy Hardiman

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WRANGLER NEWS

THE PLACE WE CALL HOME

Tempe / West Chandler NEWS

Tempe advances use-of-force policies; task force report coming in February

By Lee Shappell
wranglernews.com

To say that creation of the Tempe Public Safety Advisory Task Force elicited meaningful discussion would be an understatement.

So much came out of the initially scheduled six three-hour meetings that a seventh and final meeting was added Jan. 27. Now the panel will draft recommendations and make them available to the public during February for review and comment.

Mayor Corey Woods, who created the group and appointed its 22 members, said that the city isn't waiting for the task force to complete its work to move forward on other de-escalation policies.

Tempe has implemented measures that make it the first city in Maricopa County and the second in Arizona to qualify for Eight Can't Wait, a set of policies by the national organization Campaign Zero that cities can include in their use-of-force policies. Tucson has a similar procedure in place.

The Eight Can't Wait policies:

- Ban chokeholds and strangleholds.
- Require a warning before shooting.
- Make it the duty of officers to intervene if a fellow officer engages in excessive force.
- Require a use-of-force continuum that restricts most-severe force to most-extreme situations.

- Require officers to de-escalate a situation where possible through communication and maintaining distance.
- Require officers to exhaust all alternatives before resorting to deadly force.
- Ban officers from shooting at moving vehicles in all situations.
- Require comprehensive reporting by officers each time they use force or threaten to use force against civilians.

"The last few months, the Tempe Police Department has taken a microscope to its use-of-force policy," Woods said. "Our city had some of these in

— POLICE, Page 6

Tempe Diablos in pitch to offset lost Cactus League revenue

In some ways, the Tempe Diablos feel like mighty Casey at the Bat after the umpire said, "Strike two!"

They're assuming that the Cactus League spring-training season will proceed as scheduled, and the latest word from Major League Baseball is that it will.

But even if it does, crowds at Valley Cactus League stadiums, and, most important to the Diablos, Tempe Diablo Stadium, likely will be sparse as the coronavirus pandemic rages on.

This is potentially crippling to the Diablos, a Tempe charitable organization that funds several worthwhile endeavors across the city. They derive a significant

chunk of their annual revenue from their contract with Tempe to provide parking operations, ushers and ticket takers at the stadium. All Diablos who work the games are volunteers.

The Diablos reinvest approximately \$1 million a year back into the Tempe community in high school scholarships, an extensive grant program to non-profits and a variety of services that help make Tempe families' and residents' lives better.

Unlike mighty Casey, the Diablos have no intention of going down swinging.

The group is scrambling to replace anticipated lost revenue from the Cactus League for the second straight spring.

"Baseball is the heart and soul of the Diablos," said Bill Ottinger, a member of the organization's Board of Directors. "This group formed back in 1968 as more of a program of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce to bring spring

training baseball to Tempe. We did that. We attracted the Seattle Pilots at the time. Today, we have a wonderful relationship with the California Angels and Arte Moreno, their owner, who has strong ties to Tempe.

"It's a wonderful partnership. The ballpark is named after the Diablos. It's a rich history."

One day each spring, the Angels have Diablos Day at a Cactus League home game at Diablo Stadium, in which Diablos Charities receives all proceeds from tickets, parking and concessions in addition to the money they earn at each home game.

Will it happen in 2021?

In mid January, the Cactus League sent a letter endorsed by several Valley mayors and city managers to Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred suggesting that it might be "wise to delay the start of spring training to

— DIABLOS, Page 25

So. Tempe's Cotton & Copper closing; owners contemplate new path for future venture

By Lee Shappell
wranglernews.com

It's the kind of place that South Tempe residents say they crave as part of their neighborhood fabric.

It's classy, chic cuisine. Now, another "C" is being added to Cotton & Copper: Closed.

After nearly three years, the popular restaurant and bar in the strip center on the northeastern corner of Warner and Rural roads will cease operation on Feb. 6, a COVID-19 casualty, co-owner and chef Tamara Stanger confirmed on the restaurant's Facebook page.

"The news is out. Heartbroken and full of joy all the same. Thankful for everyone who has supported me through the years. The best thing about the future is that it has a path, but it is not defined. AZ will always be home," Stanger wrote on Facebook.

— CLOSING, Page 15

Housebound? Join your neighbors by painting, fixing up

By Joyce Coronel
 wranglernews.com

One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants, bars and other businesses continue to struggle, with some going under entirely.

Not so for two local, family-owned hardware stores. They're a bright spot in an otherwise dismal economic landscape. Did we mention landscaping companies are doing well too? Ditto for anything related to beautifying and updating home and hearth.

Gary McKay started out in the hardware business as a teenager, working in his father's store back in 1973. Now, nearly 50 years later, he stands in his West Chandler McKay's True Value and U-Haul, answering customers' queries.

The doorbell chimes sound again and again on a rainy afternoon as he heads over to the cash register to assist a man holding a new bathroom faucet.

"Sales are up," McKay says. "A lot of it has to do with people being confined to home. They're not taking vacations so they're spending money fixing up their homes."

Many of his customers are remodeling bathrooms, repainting and sprucing up. All those vacations they didn't take and meals they didn't eat out, the clothes

they didn't buy—it's all added up to more funds available for home improvement, McKay says.

"The hardware industry as a whole is up more than normal, whether it's Ace or True Value like us or even the big box stores. Everybody is up because people are stuck at home."

McKay says his business tends to be seasonal with the winter months generally showing an uptick in sales. Though there aren't as many Canadian snowbirds this year, West Chandler and Tempe are still attracting plenty of snow-weary Midwesterners who want to freshen up their winter home.

It helps that his wife has been doing kitchen and bath remodeling for the last 20 years. "Her business is real busy," McKay says. "It's why we have the flooring and everything in our stores."

Compared with this time last year as the pandemic was just beginning, sales are up by almost 40 percent at McKay's True Value. "We're a young business that's growing so part of that is our growth or people finding us but it's still up just because of the nature of the business. My brother's got a couple of stores and he's up 20 percent."

Things are going so swimmingly at the West Chandler store, McKay's is planning to expand.



Gary McKay, owner of McKay's True Value and U-Haul, checks inventory. — Wrangler News photo by Joyce Coronel

— FIXUP, Page 23

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More NEWS

City seeks to break cycle of poverty, homelessness

By Joyce Coronel
wranglernews.com

For motorists traversing our familiar streets, it's an everyday occurrence to see men and women holding cardboard signs, begging for spare change as they stand along street corners and freeway exits.

Rory Minor has a message for big-hearted people seeking to alleviate the human pain they see etched on lined and weathered faces: Those few coins or dollar bills you share might help

in the short run but they don't fix the problem.

Minor, the special events and marketing coordinator with the city of Chandler, points to the Change Up campaign initiated in November 2019. "When people give out money on the streets, or the side of the road, it can buy someone a meal or transportation, like one bus pass basically. But that person is still on that corner the next day, in need again."

Giving to Change Up, however, aims to make a

more fundamental and long-lasting difference.

"Our Change up campaign is focused on breaking that cycle," Minor says. "We have a homeless navigator on our staff and her main focus—her only job—is to focus on giving people experiencing homelessness a path to take toward housing."

The navigator assists people in getting important documents such as birth certificates, and can get them a

— HOMELESS, Page 14



A woman experiencing homelessness stands near the exit ramp at Warner Road and the 101, asking for change from passing motorists. — Wrangler News photo by Joyce Coronel



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SWAT Team engages in a training exercise.

— Photo courtesy Tempe Police Department

Police

From Page 3

place, but I'm pleased to report that Tempe now has implemented all eight of these policies.

"These are common-sense solutions that protect all of our residents and support our Tempe police officers alike. It is imperative that we move forward together. I fully believe that you can support public safety and also see the need to evaluate policies and practices for continuous improvement."

Woods created the public-safety task force in October in the wake of the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer last May and a number of use-of-force incidents by White Tempe officers against people of color. It rocked the nation, all the way to Tempe, where protestors took to the streets calling for social justice. Tempe residents had been coming to City Council meetings and demonstrating outside meetings for months prior to Floyd's death.

The task force's mission is to look at ways that TPD can build trust, accountability and dialogue with the community and how it can better engage with Black, indigenous people of color, vulnerable youth, LGBTQ-plus community, people experiencing homelessness, those with mental-health challenges and other underrepresented groups.

"As a result of the task force, we are considering substantial changes to the way we respond to emergencies and calls for service," Woods said. "Not every call may require an armed officer.

Some calls may not require a police officer at all. Some may be better served by trained mental-health specialists. The determination of who is sent to an address may start at a reimagined 9-1-1.

"There are also measures to help ensure that our Tempe police officers are supported with the mental and physical resources that they need to stay healthy. They have exceptionally challenging jobs and we want to make sure that were proactive in assisting them."

Woods said that he looks forward to seeing the final report and what the panel's recommendations are.

"I think it's going to lead to some very interesting, forward-thinking recommendations, so I'm excited about getting ... something in writing," Woods said. "I would add that we have not waited for the report to get written to get started. There are things outside of the task force that are connected.

"Besides our Eight Can't Wait, recently Tempe decided to take a new approach toward park security. We're taking a much more human-services, forward-centric viewpoint. For people in the park experiencing drug or alcohol issues or mental-health challenges, perhaps it is best if their first contact instead of being with a police officer is with a mental-health professional."

The task force has taken long looks at de-escalation, training, use of force, recruiting, retention and mental health within the Police Department.

"There have been a whole lot of discussions within the task force," Woods said. "The tone has been let's try to right-size things."

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BRIEFLY

Tempe Chamber Feb. 19 session targets help for small business

Tom Sullivan, vice president of small business policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, will focus on current federal actions that are in place to help small businesses weather the Coronavirus pandemic at a meeting scheduled 8-9 a.m. Feb. 19.

Sullivan will address what small businesses wish to see the new administration present to help them survive, and detail emerging new trends that will impact small businesses in Tempe and nationwide.

Information: events@tempechamber.org.

Food drive for needy families and pets

A drive-through food drive for needy families and pets in Tempe is noon-4 p.m. Feb. 13 at Pyle Adult Recreation Center parking lot, 655 E. Southern Ave.

Tempe Neighborhoods Together is organizing the collection of non-perishable food and pet food in partnership with Tempe to benefit Tempe

Community Action Agency's food pantry, which serves the working poor; the Aris Foundation, which serves those who are homeless; and Save One Life, which serves pets.

Participants are asked to remain in their vehicles and wear masks when talking with volunteers. Volunteers will wear masks and gloves, and physically distance. Those who are not feeling well are asked to stay home.

"People are hit hard by COVID, loss of jobs and the loss of means to live with dignity," said Judy Tapscott, a member of TNT's food-drive planning committee. "Homeless numbers are on the rise for both families and their pets. In just a few months, demand for food boxes has tripled.

More on Tempe Community Action Agency: Tempeaction.com. More on Aris Foundation: arisfoundation.com. More on Saving One Life-Feeding Homeless Cats and Dogs: savingonelife.org.

Tech firm bringing 150 jobs to Tempe

A projected 150 jobs will be coming to Tempe following the announcement by Align Technology, which designs and manufactures the Invisalign system and other technology, will relocate from San Jose to Tempe.

Align says it has helped treat over 9 million patients with the Invisalign system and is driving the evolution in digital dentistry with the iTero intraoral scanner and exocad CAD/CAM software, modernizing today's practices by enabling enhanced digital orthodontic and restorative workflows to improve patient outcomes and practice efficiencies.

"Tempe is proud to welcome the Align Technology corporate headquarters and its 150 jobs to our tech-based business community," said Tempe Mayor Corey Woods.

"The move...especially in the midst of a pandemic, demonstrates Tempe's continued strength as a hub for medical device technology. We look forward to working with Align and celebrating their success in our community."

Align's new corporate headquarters address is located in the Watermark Tempe 410 N. Scottsdale Road, Suite 1300, Tempe.

To apply for a job, visit jobs.aligntech.com/jobs. The company's San Jose campus remains the hub for its global innovation, product and marketing organization and will become home to its new Digital Innovation Center, currently under construction. Several members of the executive team for the company have relocated to Tempe.

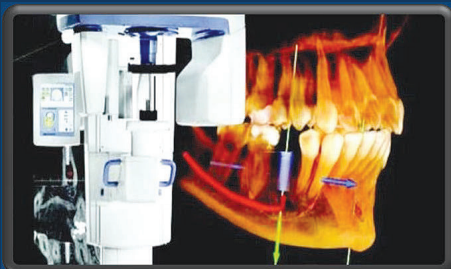
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Tempe kids, families get 16k books for literacy

Tempe recently handed out 16,000 books to three school districts, several community organizations and a range of city programs through a program sponsored by The Molina Foundation and Read On Arizona.

Tempe is among six Acceleration Zone communities that received books because of its focus on increasing early literacy skills. It has been working to boost kindergarten readiness and future school success through Read On Tempe, with a focus on children ages 6 and younger in the Thew/Escalante community.

“Reading or being read to improves language skills by learning new words, learning about our world, or by learning

new ways to express feelings, emotions or thoughts,” said Naomi Farrell, Tempe’s Human Services director. “Increasing access to books for Tempe’s children is a vital step in helping us work toward our goal of 65 percent of Tempe’s residents achieving a post-secondary degree or certificate by the year 2030.”

Tempe PRE, the city’s preschool program, used its share of the books to build classroom libraries and to send two books home with each student.

Tempe Elementary School District filled school libraries for elementary and middle school students.

Tempe Police Department gave away roughly 100 books during Shop With Your Cops and has more on hand for officers, detectives and staff to use while on calls for service or as part of community outreach efforts.

“As children and families remain isolated, these books will allow our officers to create dialog, connect in a meaningful way and promote literacy,” Detective Natalie Barela said.

The Molina Foundation is a Southern California-based non-profit dedicated to reducing disparities in access to education and health. More than 1.5 million books were given away nationwide through the foundation’s Families Learning Together campaign as a way to place free learning resources into the hands of children, parents and caregivers. Part of the goal is to encourage literacy and reading skills during summer and school breaks as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

Reading programs have been proven to reduce or even eliminate this loss in learning, according to the foundation. Learn more: molinafoundation.org.



Students at Aguilar Elementary page through some of the many books donated to the school by the Molina Foundation and Read On Arizona.

— Photo courtesy Tempe Elementary School District



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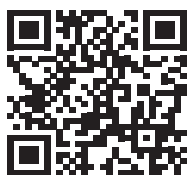
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SPORTS . . . with Alex Zener

Cross-town rivals Marcos, Tempe in finals face-off

The Marcos de Niza Padres, after defeating Seton Catholic in a close 57-54 on Jan. 22, went on a three-game losing streak which they hoped to break when they squared off at home against Tempe, in a cross-town rival game, that was scheduled for Feb. 3.

Marcos was said to be counting on the team's leading scorers, senior **Jase Langley**, junior **Tony Mottola** and senior **Nehemiah Washington** to pull out a win for the Padres,

Langley is averaging 11.8 points per game while snagging 7.6 rebound and 2.6 steals per game.

Mottola is contributing an average of 10 points, 3.4 rebounds, one assist and one blocked shot per game while Washington is close to the same with 9.6 points, 3.2 rebounds and 2.6 assists per game.

Two younger players, sophomore **Jamaal Young** and freshman **Anthony Seumanu**, are both averaging around seven points a game, while Young is averaging 4.4 rebounds and 3.2 assists per game and Seumanu is averaging 4.0 rebounds a game.

Seniors **Cameron Gaffney**, **Brennan Hill**, **Mike Powers** and **Erik Hernandez**, along with juniors **Wesley Salter** and **Aiden Baker**, have all seen minutes on the court during games this season.

Salter is averaging 2.6 points a game, Gaffney 2.5 points, while Hill is averaging 2.8 points and 3.4 rebounds. Baker is averaging 2.4 rebounds a game.

Tempe, on the other hand, is on a

four-game winning streak the Buffaloes hoped to make five when they were due to meet Marcos on Feb. 3.

A win against the Padres would surely move the Buffaloes up the rankings. They are currently ranked No. 7 in the 4A conference and are in third place in the 4A Skyline section.

Tempe started the 2020-21 season defeating Moon Valley in a home game

57-53 on Jan. 20, followed by 50-41 win at Shadow Mountain on Jan. 22 and then two away game victories—first on Jan. 26 with 47-33 win over Thunderbird and another 47-33 win, this time over Coronado on Jan. 27.

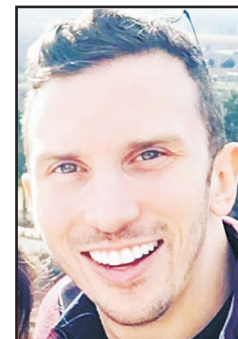
The Buffaloes have been counting on the experience of six seniors to get them a win against the Padres and keep their winning streak alive.

The top three leading scorers on the team are seniors **Nathan Robinson**, **David Galeana Sanchez** and **Dante Brown**.

Robinson leads the team in scoring with an average of 11.3 points a game or a total of 34 points over four games. What is amazing, though, is that 21 of those 34 points came from behind the three-point line, where he went seven for seven or shot 100 percent. He is also the leading shot-blocker with six blocks credited to his name.

Sanchez is the second leading scorer, averaging 8.7 points per game shooting 77 percent while Brown is third with an average of 6.3 points, hitting 62 percent of his attempted shots.

The leading rebounder on the team is Sanchez with 16 rebounds followed by



Alex Zener

Brown with 14 and then senior **Michael Cherry** with 9 rebounds and 11 total points.

Seniors **Juno Leggett** and **Levar Lewis** have both played in all four games. Leggett is credited with scoring nine points, four assists, two rebounds and two steals while Lewis is credited with seven points, four rebounds, three assists and one steal.

In addition, other players who have contributed to the team's success on and off the court include senior guards **Osiris Villalobos**, **Omair Young** and **Dante Edison**, juniors **Torian Gant**, **Jamey Washington II**, **Jalen Harris**, **Donovan Quinn**, and **KB Hayes** plus sophomore **Rogelio Beltran**.

Former Corona athlete shines at BYU

It is nice to see former Corona athletes do well at the next level, especially **Alex Barcello**, who discovered he had not lost his love of basketball once he decided to transfer from the University of Arizona after his sophomore season to BYU in 2019.

Barcello was excited to play for the Wildcats when he accepted their offer his senior year at Corona but after two lackluster years where he saw his minutes and productivity diminish, he was thinking maybe basketball or at least basketball at Arizona, was not the right path for him.

Barcello had a rather illustrious basketball career at Corona, where he played varsity as a freshman, coming

off the bench, and was a significant part of the team's success all four years.

He helped the Aztecs win a 6A state championship his freshman and sophomore years, and a state championship runner-up spot his senior year.

Barcello finished his high school career having scored 2,254 points while averaging over 24 points, 5.8 rebound, 3.0 assists plus 1.9 steals per game while shooting 54.8 percent from the field, 39.5 percent from the 3-point range and 89.3 percent from the free-throw line.

He was twice named the Arizona Gatorade Player of the Year and three years as a member of the AZ Central Sports' All-Arizona Teams.

He also had advanced to the finals of the of American Family Insurance National 3-Point Shooting Competition.

Barcello will most likely be remembered, though, by the fans who watched the 2015 Corona versus Perry state tournament game, when he scored 51 points, hitting 19 of his 25 shots.

After his senior season at Corona, Barcello was recruited by multiple schools as a member of the 247 Sports 2017 Top Basketball Recruits—No. 83, one ahead of ASU's Remy Martin who was No. 84--and was the No. 2 Arizona recruit.

After two seasons at Arizona where he played in 51 games, averaging 2.9 points a game, Barcello put his

hat in the transfer portal and ended up transferring to BYU in the summer of 2019.

That October, just as before the season started, the NCAA granted Barcello a transfer waiver in time to start the 2019-20 season, where he rekindled his love of basketball and never looked back.

His first season as a Cougar, Barcello started all 32 games, where he not only felt like he fit in but where he was appreciated for his experience, passing ability, quickness and physical presence on the court, according to a *Deseret News* feature by Jeff Call, that can be seen at byucougars.com.

Barcello ended the 2019-20 season averaging close to 10 points a game, hitting just under 50 percent of both his two- and three-point shots, plus averaging 3.1 rebounds and 1.8 assists while blocking three shots and stealing 30 balls.

This season, the 6-foot-2, 180-pound senior has once again started all 18 games but his numbers are up over last season.

He is currently averaging 15.4 points, 4.6 assists and 4.7 rebounds a game.

Alex Zener, who co-captained the Aztecs' varsity basketball team during his years at Corona, has been writing a sports column for Wrangler News for more than a decade.

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In the past, a bean, pecan, pea or coin was hidden inside each King Cake. Today, a tiny plastic baby is used. As the King Cake is cut, each person anxiously awaits to see if his or her slice contains the "baby." Whoever receives the baby is King of the Party and obliged to bring a King Cake to the next seasonal celebration. Hurry in, because King Cake season ends on Mardi Gras (Feb. 16 this year), the day before Lent begins.

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'We get to play games for a living'

Casino G.M. views his life's work as a jackpot of fun

By Lee Shappell

Behind every funnyman, it is said, is a serious story. So, when Chandler resident Mike Kintner parades around Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino south of Maricopa in a costume for every occasion, or glad-hands and back-slaps a guest, or rolls out some wacky promotion in his new job as general manager of the casino and its 500-room resort, or keeps his 800 employees loose with his sense of humor, it's a manifestation of several meaningful experiences that weren't always funny along his life's journey.

"People will ask me, 'What, exactly, does a casino general manager do?' and I have to think about it for a second," Kintner said.

"My canned answer is that, working here, we get to play games for a living. We're here to entertain people and have a good time."

It's more than that. No doubt, the guy, at his roots, truly is goofy. He also has serious values and personality traits shaped by his father, a career Air Force man. Consequently, Kintner had to move frequently as a schoolkid.

Philanthropy and serving others became the essence of Kintner's fiber from the example of his dad. He also is shaped by the specter of being left out. Always the new kid, he learned to adapt to new situations and get to know people quickly.

Kintner craved the stability that he now has with his 16 years at Ak-Chin. He especially wanted that for Mason and Chase, his two teenage sons, his wife Amanda, who he met as an undergrad at the University of Arizona, and Oakley and Kyah, a couple of Rhodesian Ridgebacks. They love the Chandler lifestyle. He's an avid outdoorsman who enjoys working out with his family, running long distances and motorbiking with his kids.

Kintner also relishes the sense of family and community he feels from nurturing employees on the job, including a half-dozen from West Chandler.

Among them is Harrah's Ak-Chin Employee Engagement Manager Jane Stimmel, who lives in the Ray/Rural area. She has been at the casino since Day 1 in 1994, starting as a beverage server and advancing into human relations. She was the first person Kintner met when he came to the property.

"I did his one-on-one onboarding," Stimmel said. "He and I immediately hit it off. I was friends also with his wife. We were pregnant at the same time. We've been friends since. Our families have camped together. Our kids were friends.

"One thing about his leadership is he takes feedback very well, and I've had to give him feedback

that he's taken humbly and graciously and made changes. He's done some amazing things for the company that are very telling of who he is personally and professionally."

Ak Chin also is popular among West Chandler residents who are members of Caesar's guest-rewards program and make the drive frequently to play.

Kintner acknowledges that moving around so much as a kid really made him who he is.

"When I go into a situation, I want to find something in common with folks so I can start a conversation and make that relationship," Kintner said. "As a military brat, you didn't have a lot of time. You're in a place two, three years. Either you make friends quickly or you didn't have friends. What kind of kid doesn't want to have friends?"

At Ak Chin, just about everybody, whether it's a guest playing in the casino or a housekeeper in a luxury suite, is his friend. He hopes.

"We have a hotel. We have a casino. We have gaming. We do events and promotions. We make marketing offers. It's a 24/7 business. It can be kind of stressful," Kintner said. "People work all different shifts and we have all sorts of different occupations.

"I'm lucky enough to work for the almost 800 people who work here. I help make sure they're successful every day. I have to make sure I'm humble and understand what they have to go through, especially now with these crazy times through the pandemic, where our people have to worry about virtual learning for their children, or about getting sick, or working around the public. We're supporting each other by being positive. So, keeping a good sense of humor and telling our people to relax and have a good time is just part of what we do and who we are."

All of this, it should be pointed out, is delivered in Kintner's rapid-fire, 200 mph speaking cadence. That, too, is a reflection of his youth, and feeling that if he doesn't say what he needs to say quickly, he might not get the chance to say it at all.

Kintner spent most of his childhood at bases in Turkey and England.

"As a military brat, you get to experience different cultures and see how other people live," he said. "That also allows you to see how fortunate you are."

In Turkey, he swept floors and washed trucks for the Explosive Ordinance Department at Incirlik Air Force Base. In England, he worked at the base post office and gas station at Lakenheath Air Force Base. He began riding horses in England at 9, and later rode competitively. That would become a life-altering avocation.

At 16, Kintner's family moved back to Kansas.

"Kansas is the most foreign country I've lived in," Kintner said.

Kintner enrolled in Kansas University, intending to be a lawyer. He attained senior-class standing in political science and history before he said, essentially, "Whoa!" He still had horses on his mind. He took KU's horsemanship class. He also joined the equestrian club and was pretty sure he wanted to become a horse trainer. Instead, on the advice of his dad, he transferred to the University of Arizona into its renowned Race Track Industry Program, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1996.

That set him up for a position at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia, Calif. He learned horse racing. He learned marketing. And it was his introduction to the gambling industry. It was a dream job for seven years.

"Then, with the advent of telecast wagering, on-track attendance started dropping but the handle was still good," he said. "Casinos were picking up in the early 2000s. I heard a lot about Harrah's, now Caesar's. So, after seven years, I reached out a little bit."

Harrah's Ak-Chin called him back. He worked up through the ranks, in the process returning to the UofA on the side and earning an Eller Executive MBA. He became Ak Chin GM last fall.

Casinos aren't for everybody. The hayseed winter visitor might get to the door and freeze, intimidated. Casinos are viewed by some as smoky, seedy places where good people are separated from their money.

It's part of Kintner's job to break down those stereotypes and make them feel at ease.

It doesn't necessarily require donning a clown suit to do that.

"We have lots of what I call Golden Retrievers around here," Kintner said. "They smile. It takes less muscles to smile than it does to frown. When you smile, it releases all the chemicals in your brain and makes you feel better. Then you make somebody else smile, so now you're making them feel better, too.

"Our Golden Retrievers just want to say hi to you. They greet you. That really defines who we are."

Stimmel said that Kintner, essentially, is the employees' Golden Retriever.

"He guides us, supports our development, our training, our growth," the West Chandler resident said. "The fun environment that he creates, just coming to work and having fun and playing – that's really what he encourages our employees to do, not only with each other but with our guests.

"It's an entertainment venue. We want guests to have fun and keep coming back."

Kintner points out that there are plenty of things to do at Ak-Chin besides gamble. With the addition



West Chandler residents say Ak-Chin's new general manager, Mike Kintner, seen here sporting his lucky shamrock jacket, creates a fun and welcoming environment for those who visit the casino. Kintner has worked at Ak-Chin for 16 years and was recently promoted to GM.

— Photo courtesy Ak-Chin Casino

of a new tower, Harrah's now has 500 guest rooms for an easy weekend getaway or a staycation. There is golf nearby.

"We also have excellent food options – a wine bar, a steak house, a 24-hour quick-serve grill," he said. "We have a heated pool. During normal times we have concerts, and we're looking to bring those back in 2021, perhaps in the second quarter. Next door is an entertainment center with a bowling alley, movie theater, laser tag, dining. Lots of fun stuff. We have nice hotel rooms. We also have a spa.

"And some people like to play slot machines. Obviously, with slot machines you're taking a little bit of a chance. First off, I'm a bad loser. I don't like losing. The first thing is always know your budget and stay within your budget. For some people it's 20 bucks at a slot machine, for others it's \$2,000 at a table game. My vision is for this to continue to be strong and healthy and be a really fun place for people to come and relax."

The pandemic has challenged attaining that vision, he concedes. He said that these times are the toughest

of his career, more than the 2008 financial crisis.

"Our employees are up to the challenge," he said. "They're finding new ways to do things, better ways to do things. We're doing our best to keep the place clean with our sanitation squad. We have electromagnetic sprayers."

Ak-Chin is a Native American community. Some of the take from the casino goes back into the community, into homes, education and businesses.

"Building those relationships and having those relationships is very meaningful to me," Kintner said. "We're coming up on 26 years that this property has been open. It's been successful for both sides and we're hoping to extend that well into future.

"Getting to be GM is very humbling. I've been a part of building the culture here and involved at the highest level of what's going on here for the past 10 years. One of the things I'm really grateful for came when we had to close the casino for eight weeks (last spring due to the pandemic). The Ak-Chin community really stepped up and kept our employees whole. They paid them during the entire time. When we opened

back up, we were able to make that money back up for them."

The casino also has HERO – Harrah's Employees Reaching Out – in which they give back to the community.

For 10 years, Kintner has been a state-appointed Pinal County council member on First Things First, which is an Arizona voter-approved tobacco tax.

Funds go toward early childhood education through age 5. He has been the chair for two years.

"I learned from my dad that the ability to serve is a person's greatest attribute," Kintner said. "That service was my dad's life – that and that good, old Midwestern work ethic.

"That shaped my world view and how I do things myself."

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Homeless

From Page 5

meal if that's what they need in that moment. In some cases, she gets them a bus ticket back to their family in another state, or reconnects them with people they haven't talked to or people they have burned bridges with in the past.

Money raised in the Change up Campaign typically pays for things like a bus ticket or a night at a hotel while the navigator is waiting to get them into shelter.

"It's the little bridge pieces that are missing and a lot of times that's how they end up falling through the cracks," Minor said. "They don't have that support."

Signs for the Change Up campaign are in city-owned parking lots at parks, libraries and the police station. Those who wish to participate can text Change Up to 44-321.

They will then receive a donation link to be able to donate via Google Pay, Apple Pay or credit card. It doesn't take much to make a difference and participants can choose to give monthly. The average donation is actually pretty small, Minor says. She believes some users donate when they spot a person begging for change.

"You'll see from the same person multiple



A passing motorist offers change to homeless woman.

— Wrangler News photo by Joyce Coronel

donations, like a dollar on a Tuesday and then the next week, another dollar. Whenever they see someone it when it reminds them to give to the campaign."

Donations are making a big difference, Minor says. "They are literally changing lives with the \$5 they give, the \$20 they give, or whatever it is.

"People are going from being on the streets in the middle of their addictions to sober with their families and getting their kids back that are in the system. It's amazing work that's being done through this campaign."

Amazing work that just might help a desperate woman like Stephanie.

On a chilly, rainy recent afternoon, Stephanie—she

didn't want to provide her last name—sits near the Warner Road exit just off the 101. Her cardboard sign states "Lost everything."

Trying not to lose my faith."

Wearing a dirty white hoodie, her hair swept up into a bun atop her head, her piercing blue eyes peer over a mask. Thinking back to the day a man introduced her to heroin, she expresses regret.

"I lost three years of my life," she says in a matter-of-fact tone. "I wish I'd never tried it."

She says she tried to get clean but ended up getting arrested and spending time in jail, facing felony charges.

Her mother got her into a detox program and she says she's now been sober for eight months.

Through a prison diversion program, she's hoping to get back on her feet and able to support herself again. She says she was once a respiratory therapist.

These days, she's homeless. With rain clouds threatening above, she sits beside two flimsy paper bags. As nighttime temperatures dip into the 30s and 40s, she says she has blankets but they are drying out today after being drenched by rain.

A man in a nearby Chandler neighborhood lets her sleep on his porch and do her laundry. "He's not creepy," she says of the man.

A young couple in a dark blue mini-van pulls up and offers her some change and a smile. She thanks them profusely, then turns back.



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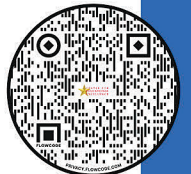
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Closing

From Page 3

While Cotton & Copper removes its spurs and calls it a roundup, the space is not expected to be vacant long. Co-owner Sean Traynor plans a new concept in its place. Stanger is headed to Utah but she will remain a partner with Traynor in the new venture.

She shed some light on what that might look like.

“Our lease is still intact,” Stanger wrote. “This place, this space is not done. But it’s getting a full reboot. Not a Cotton & Copper variant or derivative, something completely new. Something being created with the same intention Cotton & Copper was founded on: to serve our local community. This time in the format of an all-day cafe and bar, adding some fun things like local craft coffee and Chef’s take on cafe cuisine.

“We’ll have updates for you as soon as they’re available. For now ... ‘thank you’ doesn’t do it. It’s been a hell of a ride. To all of the staff and patrons who have become like family, we are beyond grateful.”

Cotton & Copper’s name was derived from Arizona’s famed five C’s – copper, cattle, cotton, citrus and climate – which served an important role in the state’s pioneering economy when many jobs were in agriculture, ranching and mining as Arizona emerged from the Old West.

The Five C’s still play a strong cultural role, and Cotton & Copper attempted to stay true to them in its theme and menu. Stanger is noted for using Arizona ingredients in unique ways. She has earned a special reputation for her creative pies.

The restaurant and its iconic Old West-style bar consistently earn 5 stars on social-media rating sites.

“Nearly 3 years ago we got the keys to suite 113 of the Landis Center in South Tempe. Our plan was to prepare food that focused on local farms with foraged ingredients, craft cocktails on par with our peers at the best places in town, and employ an amazing team of friends and staff,” Stanger wrote. “If 2020 taught us anything, it’s that things don’t always go as planned.”

The restaurant was a modern take on the traditional public house, committed to serving thoughtful food and beverages with only the highest quality ingredients, all with a local and seasonal focus. From handcrafted cocktails, carefully selected beer and wine, and a seasonal menu, Stanger said that it aimed to bring a unique and enjoyable experience.

Cotton & Copper is in the same strip center where another neighborhood favorite, Tempe Public Market, closed last year, another COVID casualty. That space has been taken over by wine bar Postino. Ghost Ranch, yet another popular trendy eatery with a Southwestern theme, remains open in the same center.

Restaurants, bars, coffee shops and gathering spots within an easy drive or perhaps even a healthy walk of nearby homes have been high on the priority list of neighbors, who protested vehemently last year to plans to place an oil-change shop on a vacant lot a mile away.

Delivering what the public wants during the pandemic has been a challenge to the restaurant and bar industry everywhere, however.

“The last year has been a true struggle,” Stanger wrote. “The persistence of COVID has made it painfully obvious we won’t be in the clear anytime soon. After countless pivots and regularly putting out fires, focusing on the numbers has become a greater percentage of our days than spending time with our loved ones and giving back to community programs. No, that’s not us.

“To drain our savings and go further into debt to merely survive and hope whatever comes next after this mess is enough to make it all back was tempting. Frankly, we’ve wrestled with it for weeks, clinging to hope, no matter how small, and (to) keep going until we have exhausted every single possible means. Well, they’ve been exhausted. After take-out service next weekend, C&C will be no more.”

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Close Up . . .

West Chandler native followed dual passions in pursuit of his dreams. 10 years later, they've both become reality.

Profile by Samuel Voas
wranglernews.com

Billy Hardiman carries himself with the understated confidence of a man who knows he is gifted. But it's a humble, honest confidence — the kind that doesn't need to be propped up with hubris. Though he seems to have no use for cockiness, it would be tough to fault him if he did. After all, it's not every day you encounter a photographer turned engineer turned aspiring aviator—much less one who has enjoyed enviable success in all three of those pursuits. All by age 24.

Hardiman's aptitude for photography came into focus in 2011, at the age of 15, when he snapped some close-ups of blooming flowers using the macro mode on his mom's digital camera. Only months later, his newfound interest would blossom into a paying gig as wunderkind photojournalist for Wrangler News.

While Hardiman remains the newspaper's top go-to photographer, his talents have morphed well beyond. He is one of those rare few who has turned creative passion into a lucrative business.

He conducts five or six professional shoots a week — capturing anything from graduation portraits to professional sporting events.

— BILLY, Page 19

Clockwise from upper left: Billy Hardiman and fellow photojournalists with their mammoth-sized lenses at a professional sports game; young slugger takes a swing in a cleverly staged photo; a tennis player seems to float as she takes aim; sunrise over Tempe; wine from a goblet in an ad agency product shoot; Hardiman stands near a chopper, ready for takeoff; sharing gameside duties with an ASU cheerleader.

All photos prior to mask requirements

Photos of . . . and by Billy Hardiman
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Billy

From Page 16

Along that path, Hardiman has established himself as the preferred photographer for various ASU student organizations, such as the Spirit Squad, and several sororities. He also regularly shoots Arizona Cardinals games from the sidelines.

For Billy Hardiman, photography is just part of the picture. When he is not snapping photos of NFL athletes or enthusiastic sorority girls, Hardiman's main job is as a salaried engineer for Northrop-Grumman, the respected worldwide space and defense technology company.

Like his passion for photography, he recounts, his interest in engineering was also sparked at an early age, when he began tinkering with simple electrical components his grandfather bought him from Radio Shack.

He'd go on to explore these newfound—and fortunately short-lived skills—for such teen-age pranks as rigging a classroom TV to turn on spontaneously during a lesson, leaving his teacher both mystified and mildly aggravated, and his classmates joyously entertained. That, of course, evolved into a more productive future focused on the career he achieved as a result of the electrical engineering degree he received from the Ira A. Fulton Schools at ASU.

Photography and engineering may seem to some like unrelated skillsets. But in Hardiman's view, the disciplines are more closely intertwined than one might imagine. He directly applies his engineering prowess to his photography career, and in fact, improves upon it through some of the same principles.

For example, Hardiman has singlehandedly written custom software programs to streamline his photo editing and captioning process. And, of course, navigating complex Photoshop software and camera settings requires no small measure of technical expertise on their own.

Although Hardiman appreciates the technical dimension of photography, he does not view it through such a lens. To him, photography is about expression.

“There's no right or wrong way of doing it. You get rules all the time, but you can't follow them. It's an art form,” he advises. “It's just about what you want to convey — a message or a feeling. I think that's what's most interesting about photography.”

Between his full time job as an engineer and his thriving photography business, it's hard to imagine Billy Hardiman has much time for hobbies. When asked what he likes to do in his downtime, Hardiman responds in his characteristically nonchalant aspect, “I've gotten into aviation more. I like

that a lot.”

Curious about that extension to an already crammed schedule, we learned that this photographer-turned-engineer is learning to pilot helicopters. This “hobby,” he says, was inspired after a photoshoot he conducted while soaring over New York City in a helicopter with a friend. “It's like you're on a magic carpet,” he says of the experience.

Despite his battery of noteworthy talents and successes, Hardiman's primary focus is being the man behind the lens. Where others might boast or posture, Hardiman remains humble. This, he says, is because he is not pursuing renown or acclaim. Rather, he continues to push his limits as a photographer, engineer, aviator, and man for the sake of personal fulfillment — for the sake of self realization.

“I've always been attracted to challenges,” he explains. “And photography is a challenge.”

‘There's no right or wrong way of doing it. You get rules all the time, but you can't follow them. It's an art form. It's just about what you want to convey — a message or a feeling. I think that's what's most interesting about photography.

— Billy Hardiman



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Love birds, retweeted

By Joyce Coronel

Wranglernews.com

Valentine's Day is nearly here and lovelorn residents of Tempe and West Chandler are wondering if that special someone will return their ardor.

Not so for two couples at North Chandler Place, a senior living center in West Chandler, where Ron and Darlene Johnson plus Bud and Irene Woods have been celebrating the sure aim of Cupid's bow for more than six decades.

So how did they meet and fall in love all those years ago? And, perhaps more significantly, how have they managed to stay in love?

"Her dad and mother and kids came to our church as our new pastors," Ron Johnson said. "When they were introduced that Sunday morning, they walked onto the platform and I said, 'I'm going to marry that girl right there.'"

"We were 11," Darlene Johnson says.

Thus began the romance that still has them sitting close, completing each other's sentences. But it wasn't always that way in the beginning, back in 1945.

"She was beautiful—her blue eyes and blonde hair and, well, she had no use for me," Ron says. They were in the same class at school.

"Well, the pastor's daughter plays the field first, right?" Darlene chuckles. "There may be others in the wings."

The strategy worked.

"I just kept waiting until we turned 20 and then

— VALENTINES, Page 22

Valentines forever

Wedding photos of North Chandler Place residents form part of a Valentine's display at the senior living center; Ron Johnson listens as his wife Darlene plays a tune; former Chandler Vice Mayor Bud Woods in his scooter, adorned with a Montana plate in tribute to his many summers there with wife Irene; the Woods reminisce about their wedding day.

— Wrangler News photos by Billy Hardiman





Valentines

From Page 20

we got married,” Ron says. Darlene worked as a bookkeeper at a bank and Ron did odd jobs, then moved onto construction, a job he toiled at for 37 years, hanging dry wall mostly.

Like everyone, they must have had their storms during some of their years of wedded bliss. Right?

“No storms,” Ron says.

“Everyone loves a love story,” Darlene says, “like it’s all about how I feel and if I’m feeling loved, but love is really going the other way. It’s loving outside yourself.”

Marriage isn’t a 50-50 proposition, the Johnsons say.

“It’s 100 percent. There’s no making the other guy measure up to your 50. It’ll never happen--don’t expect your mate to be your happiness,” Darlene says.

In their marriage, it meant acknowledging that

they were different, with Darlene the extrovert and Ron a bit more reserved.

“She’s a socialite and I’m not,” Ron declares.

“You have to work at it,” Darlene says.

“She talks and I listen,” Ron quips.

“He says, ‘Yes, dear.’”

“For him, it’s sports—all kinds of sports,” Darlene says. “He loved me very much from the time he was 11.”

“I still do,” Ron says.

As for advice to newlyweds, Ron has a clear idea. “If you’re not established in a church and serving God, you’ve got a problem. That’s what got us through. A lot of prayer.”

That faith was called upon when the Johnsons faced a tragedy the likes of which has been known to tear other couples apart. Ron and Darlene had three children, two daughters and a son. Sadly, their son Dwayne died of leukemia when he was just 3 years old. How did their marriage survive such tremendous loss?

“The grief actually brought us together as a family because God is with us in the good times and the bad

times. That was a bad time,” Ron says.

“I didn’t want to live anymore. Life was over for me.”

“You want to just crawl in the casket,” Darlene says.

Dwayne was the much longed-for son who lived life exuberantly, radiating joy. “In three and a half years, he lived a lifetime.”

‘The grief actually brought us together as a family because God is with us in the good times and the bad times. That was a bad time.’

— Ron Johnson

“We had two daughters that we had to think about. They didn’t know what death was,” Darlene says. She had to be strong, helping the girls process the grief. Two days after the funeral, the family attended a professional baseball game.

“We had to go on. You can’t live in the sorrow forever,” Darlene says.

Bud and Irene Woods have their own love story to tell.

They met at a dance in Globe nearly 70 years ago while Irene, a student at Northern Arizona University, was visiting a friend. Bud was older and teaching school at the time, living in Pinedale. Cupid’s aim was true and the two began dating in the months following the dance.

“Her dad worked for the railroad so she could come to Holbrook on the train and somebody would meet her,” Bud says.

“We met in the fall and got married in July,” Irene says.

The Woods raised their children in Chandler back when it was mostly farm fields. Their son lives in Montana while one daughter is in Flagstaff and another lives in Gilbert.

Their first home in Chandler, a modest, two-bedroom dwelling, cost \$7,600 which Bud points out is less than a recent dental bill he incurred for a toothache.

“I was expecting it to be about \$200,” Bud says. “I came unglued and they knocked off about \$4,000.”

The couple says they knew their share of struggles earlier in life, having grown up during WWII.

“We are familiar with hard times, gas rationing, sugar rationing, all that kind of stuff,” Bud says. “You couldn’t run down to McDonald’s and get a snack—you had to figure what you were going to dig up at home to eat.”

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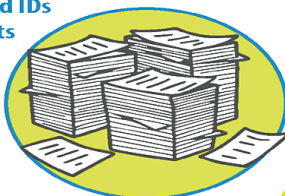
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—CONTINUED on facing page

"I stayed home and to raise money I took care of neighbors' children," Irene says of their earlier years. Bud eventually became principal of what was then known as Denver School not far from downtown Chandler. In 1953 he became principal of a new junior high school on Oakland Street. In the late '60s and early '70s, he served on the Chandler City Council for 12 years, including two terms as vice-mayor.

What would the Woods tell young people considering marriage in 2021?

"First of all, make sure you have a good job and profession that has a retirement program," Bud says. "One of the things that causes problems early on is the finances."

How have they dealt with quarrels in their marriage?

"I grew up believing that conflict is a fact," Irene says. "You're going to have arguments but that doesn't mean those arguments are going to cause any serious trouble."

"You have to discuss things. And arguing lots of times is the word discussing."

"I pulled rank on her," Bud says.

"Good luck with that," Ron Johnson interjects.

"She always looked up to me because I'm older than her," Bud says.

"Conflict happens," Irene says. "I always grew up believing when you marry, that's it. You stay together you make the most of it and you work things out."

The Woods and the Johnsons have done just that and plan to celebrate Valentine's Day just like many other couples—with love and memories of the past that brought them together.

Fixup

From Page 4

"We're getting a lot of customers that are looking to us for more pool supplies than what we currently carry. They don't want to go to the pool stores and it fits with our business. And we want to expand our grill area and our patio furniture section, too."

Scott Wilson, owner of three Ace Hardware stores, including one in Tempe, says his business is also doing well during the pandemic.

"We had the initial rush during February and March of last year when everyone was hoarding toilet paper and cleaners

and things like that. That happened back then but since then we haven't really seen that," Wilson said.

"But business has been very good even right up to now," Wilson says.

So what does the future hold for the hardware business? Will it stay at this level?

"I think we'll have a little slow down in our business but I don't think it's going to be a big. We'll still be good but not these incredible numbers like we've been having."

"We try to give them terrific service while they're in here and hopefully they'll remember us next time they need something."

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CECILY TYSON



LARRY KING



HANK AARON

Closeness of celebrity deaths traces a pattern ... once again

By M.V. Moorhead
wranglernews.com

It's often observed that celebrity deaths happen in bunches, and this past month took several true legends from us. The most recent, at this writing, is Cicely Tyson.

The radiant Harlem-born actress, who was 96, had been working on stage and in TV and movies since the '50s, but was especially well known for a series of roles she played in the '70s: as a struggling sharecropper wife in *Sounder* (1972); as a woman who lives from slavery until the civil rights movement in the TV movie *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1974); and as Binta, mother of Kunta Kinte, in the classic miniseries *Roots* (1977).

I can remember being taken to see *Sounder* in '72 at a theater in Washington, D.C., and thinking, even at 10 years of age, that Tyson seemed to be showing the audience her soul.

But it's possible that *Miss Jane Pittman* is an

even greater acting achievement. Tyson is not only completely convincing from teenager to centenarian—with an assist from the special-effects make-up of Rick Baker and Stan Winston—but also generates a sense of Miss Pittman's lifelong heroism.

A few days earlier we said a reluctant goodbye, at 94, to Cloris Leachman, the wildly versatile character actress who won an Oscar for her dramatic turn in *The Last Picture Show* and two Emmys as Mary's obnoxious downstairs neighbor Phyllis on *The Mary Tyler Moore* show. She was also unforgettable in several Mel Brooks films, most notably as *Young Frankenstein's* "Frau Blucher," who is so forbidding that just speaking her name makes horses whinny in terror. But Leachman's credits extend far beyond these favorites; she acted in everything from the chilling *Twilight Zone* episode "It's a Good Life" to last year's animated feature *The Croods: A New Age*.

Last month didn't just take acting giants but also titans from media and sports, like home run king Hank Aaron, at 86.

While visiting my sister in Atlanta in the summer of 1973, I got to see Hammerin' Hank play, before he broke the record the following year.

He didn't hit a homer that day, but he did get two hits, and the Braves beat the Cards. It was "bat day" at Fulton County Stadium, and the bat I got that day was my baseball bat thereafter; the Hank Aaron pennant I got that day was on the wall of my room for many years thereafter.

More than a decade later my father met Aaron on an airplane and got his autograph for me.

Except for Muhammad Ali, who I loved for his humor rather than any interest in boxing, Aaron was the first of my few sports heroes.

Not that Aaron didn't have a sense of humor himself; he once reportedly quipped "It took me 17 years to get 3,000 hits in baseball. It took one

afternoon on the golf course."

Finally, one more RIP: to radio and TV perennial Larry King, at 87.

In 1984 and '85, I ran the overnight board at WSEG, Ron Seggi's long-since-departed station in Erie, Pennsylvania.

I hosted and played oldies for the first hour, then babysat the feed of Larry King's talk show from the Mutual Network for the rest of the night. In those days, King had regular eccentric callers, like Norman the Numbers Man from Paramus, New Jersey, who insisted that sports scores revealed his divinity via his obsessive numbers-crunching, and would invariably end by exploding with anger at King's attempts to reason with him (Norman probably needed professional help).

There was also the Portland Laugher, who never said anything, but would simply cackle maniacally at anything King asked him.

For all King's accomplishments on TV, nothing he ever did in that medium was as marvelous as this radio work.

Anyway, one night, at the height of the Reagan-era Cold War, I called in to the show.

As it happens, I've always been a dinosaur geek (it's only one of my many geekdoms, but it's the earliest). Earlier that day I had been discussing with my friend Ron which dinosaur was more well-known, the T-Rex or the Brontosaurus.

So that night, bored and restless at the studio, I called into King's show, got on the air, and asked "Larry, what do you think is the most famous dinosaur?"

And without missing a beat, Larry King said "The brontosaurus, or the Defense Department."

Longtime Wrangler News contributor M.V. Moorhead has written for New Times and Phoenix Magazine, among other publications.



Tempe Diablos member Frank Coen takes money and directs guests to parking during a Cactus League spring-training game at Tempe Diablos Stadium.

— Photo courtesy Tempe Diablos

Diablos

From Page 3

allow for the COVID-19 situation to improve here.”

The league has said that it is in favor of moving back the start of spring training due to COVID-19, but the Players’ Association has refused to go along with it unless the league can guarantee that a full 162-game regular season still would be played so that players receive full pay for the season.

The millionaire players might not be aware of the ramifications of their position on a local charitable group that needs revenue from the Cactus League to continue doing good in the community.

The Diablos are proceeding as if the Cactus League will start on time and play a full spring-training schedule, knowing that they’re looking at a reduced take whether the games are played or not.

They have issued a public plea for donations to help make up lost revenue.

“We look to give back any way we can,” said Vincent Vasquez, chairman of the Diablos’ Baseball Committee. “We give our time and our efforts so the maximum amount of money can pass through to recipients of the funds that we raise. While baseball is a very important function, we do have other activities

throughout the year. At this time, we’re reaching out to the community and saying if you have an opportunity to give, consider the Tempe Diablos. We do help support teachers and scholarships to students.

“Anything anyone can give is meaningful. Our organizational strategy at this point is to make people aware of what we do, how we do and how we give our time. So, if you are a company or an individual that can help, please do.”

Accordingly, two annual Diablos events become even more important to the group this year, according to David Formisano, Diablos marketing chairman.

One is the April 24 Ignite the Night, a 5-6 p.m. online fundraiser with auctions and prizes, and information about the Diablos and their impact in the community. A silent auction runs April 12 through April 24. Corporate sponsorships are available. Email info@tempediablos.org for information.

The group’s other key event is the May 6 Excellence in Education Awards, which normally is at Tempe Center for the Arts, but will be online this year due to the pandemic.

Formisano says this is “basically the Academy Awards for educators,” in which honors will be presented to teachers and staff from Tempe Elementary, Kyrene and Tempe Union High School districts.

The 30 Tempe Diablos scholarship winners in

the Class of 2021, who will heading to Arizona State University or Maricopa Community Colleges, also will be unveiled.

Formisano points out that sponsorships for individual awards are available from \$500 to \$3,500. Information is available by email at info@tempediablos.org or on the Diablos website, tempediablos.com.

“We want to make sponsorships more accessible to people in the community who want to be part of the event,” Formisano said. “These two events are more important than ever because of our baseball situation.”

Ottinger pointed out that the Diablos have gotten creative in sponsoring activities that have impact in the community but do not require significant funds to present. Among them are a food drive and a blood drive.

“The Tempe Diablos always have made a difference in the community and that isn’t going to change,” he said.

By Lee Shappell
wranglernews.com

Got a story idea or news tip? Give us a call at 480-966-0837. We'd love to hear from you . . .

Police

From Page 6

Last June, when Tempe City Council moved forward in the 2020-21 fiscal budget with full funding of \$97 million for the Police Department, officers in riot gear greeted several-hundred marchers outside City Hall after their half-mile trek in triple-digit heat from Tempe Beach Park. They advocated defunding the department.

Recent high-profile incidents of use-of-force by Tempe PD include the fatal shooting of 14-year-old Antonio Arce, who was running away from an officer; the Tasering of Ivaughn Oakry, as he was holding an infant; and in August, Officer Ronald Kerzaya, who had been involved in the Oakry incident, was accused of holding a Black hotel employee at gunpoint while supposedly looking for a White suspect.

Jeff Glover, who retired in February as a commander after 20 years with the department, was named interim chief in September, a week after chief Sylvia Moir agreed to resign. Glover is Tempe's first Black police chief.

Among those who applaud creation of the task force is Tempe resident Bill Richardson, a retired Mesa Police Master Police Officer, former member of the Tempe Police Citizen Review Board and Family Justice Commission.

In two emails to the task force and Woods, which Richardson shared with *Wrangler News*, he pointed out that "policing has changed over the years but its core is still how you treat the people you serve."

"The problems in Tempe didn't just sprout up when Antonio Arce was shot following a poor police response. It was a response reflective of a shoddy culture that had been growing for more than ten years," Richardson wrote.

"This culture didn't live in a vacuum," Richardson continued. "It's been publicly discussed in the press and presented many times to the two previous police chiefs, Tom Ryff and Sylvia Moir. The current city manager and former city attorney, Andrew Ching, was also fully aware of the issues even as Mr. Ching had direct and strong influence and oversight of the Police Department since 2006."

In 2019, there were more than 140 sexual assaults and two arrests in Tempe while there were 394 marijuana-possession arrests, Richardson pointed out from crime-data statistics that he researched.

From Tempe's disproportionately high arrest rate of Blacks vs. non-Blacks, Richardson wrote, to the poor outcomes in sexual-violence investigations involving women and children, and Tempe's lack of an advocacy center for crime victims, victims in Tempe seldom get justice.

Woods said that he advocates an advocacy panel. "Tempe has one of the highest crime rates in

the state and Maricopa County," Richardson wrote. "Tempe has serious crime problems on top of serious policing problems."

During his 45-year police and private-investigative career, Richardson said he was directly involved in dozens of investigations involving officer-involved shootings, use of force, civil-rights violations and criminal investigations of police officers. At the time of his retirement from the Mesa PD, he was the supervisor of the Criminal Intelligence Unit.

According to Richardson, Tempe Police Department has a pattern of minimizing serious and potentially criminal conduct by officers, who often are White, when the victims of the police misconduct are men of color and others "viewed by Tempe police as a lesser status."

"For too long, Tempe police chiefs and city management have failed to lead and protect. Accountability is not just an issue at the Police Department, it extends to City Hall," Richardson wrote. "Any organization is only as good as its leadership. Reform at the Tempe Police Department will only occur when there's serious reform for those who provide Police Department oversight. Otherwise, (the task force's) work will become nothing more than an online Power Point presentation for the police chief, city manager and elected officials to boast about and hide behind."

More information: tempe.gov/

Chandler Business Owners:

The City of Chandler is providing relief funding to businesses through its Business Hiring & Retention Program. Businesses that have retained employees, hired employees, or used independent contractors during the COVID-19 pandemic may qualify for funding. Applications are now being accepted and businesses are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

Program Details

Chandleraz.gov/icc



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Residents: open invitation for budget input

Tempe community members always have an open invitation to provide their thoughts on the city budget – and especially during the spring preparation period each year for the next fiscal year’s budget.

Please contribute your thoughts about how the city should be maintaining and investing in our community.

Input opportunities for the fiscal year 2021-22 budget start next month:

- Feb. 1 to March 5 – Visit tempe.gov/forum and participate

in this annual exercise in which each resident is given a theoretical \$100 to allocate to their particular community priorities. This helps the City Council understand the top priorities of residents.

- Feb. 24 – A virtual public budget forum will be held via WebEx starting at 6 p.m.

City staff will provide an overview of the budget and priorities for fiscal year 2021-22, which starts July 1.

Residents will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments.

Directions for accessing WebEx will be available at tempe.gov/budget. The forum will be recorded and available for future viewing at tempe.gov/budget.

Additional public input opportunities will be available as part of the Council’s budget hearing process later in the spring and early summer.

Detailed information about the fiscal year 2021-22 budget process is available at tempe.gov/budget or by calling Tempe 311 at 480-350-4311.



Tempe and ASU offer COVID-19 saliva tests

The City of Tempe and ASU are offering free COVID-19 saliva tests every Tuesday through Feb. 23 at Cahill Senior Center, 715 W. Fifth St.

The university’s free saliva-based COVID-19 test is quick and easy, with results in 24 to 48 hours. Visit tempe.gov/testing to register for a test at Cahill Senior Center or find links to other testing dates and locations.

About 40% of people who contract COVID-19 never experience symptoms, so even those who feel fine should consider getting tested to stop the unintentional spread of the virus.

In addition, people should be tested if they have: spent more than 15 minutes within 6 feet of unmasked people not in their core group; traveled by air; or been exposed to someone who has COVID-19.

While there, you can also get a flu shot if you haven’t yet.

Additional dates and locations for flu shots are available at tempe.gov/vaccines.

Refined designs for Country Club Way project

Tempe is adding more miles to our bicycle and pedestrian network with the Country Club Way Bike and Pedestrian Improvement Project.

Join us for another round of virtual public meetings on Saturday, Feb. 20, at 11 a.m., or Wednesday, Feb. 24, at noon, to

view refined designs based on public feedback.

The project, which adds 3.5 miles of improvements between the U.S. 60 and Warner Road, includes public art, shade nodes, lighting, landscaping, improved crossings, improved sidewalk ramps and enhanced bikeways.

Once completed, this project will connect to several regional multi-use paths, bicycle and pedestrian corridors, schools, parks and transit.

For project information and to comment online Feb. 20 to March 7, visit tempe.gov/CountryClubWayPath.

New online payment system launches in March

Tempe’s new centralized online payment system is launching next month.

This change will impact customers who pay by credit card or are enrolled in recurring credit card payments.

You can access the new portal once it launches in March at tempe.gov. Click on the “Pay” button on the homepage.

When paying your Tempe utility bill, you’ll need to register for a new account.

If you make recurring payments with a credit card, the automatic payments cannot be processed until

a new account is created.

Watch for notifications when the new payment system is activated.

If you are enrolled in Surepay (automatic deduction from checking or savings account), or you pay by cash or check, you do not need to make any changes, and the new system will not affect you.

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Music lessons— Take one-on-one music lessons with a certified music teacher! Digital lesson options are always available and especially encouraged during a public health crisis. Please visit tinyurl.com/lessonswithadam for more information! 1/22

Painting — Village Painting – Interior/Exterior painting, drywall repair with texture matching, custom faux finishes, and cabinets. Small jobs also welcome. (ROC#069679) CALL (480) 814-1588. 1/21

Pool Equipment repair/replacement—Weekly Service, GREEN pool Clean-ups, the only company where the owner has a degree in hydrology! Insured, Certified Pool Operator, Arizona Oasis Pool Service & Repair, 480-694-1158. 3/21

Remodeling — JAK Construction Inc. – Specializing in all phases of construction. Rain gutters, Downspouts, Aluminum and Vinyl siding, AZ rooms, replacement windows & doors, overhang trims/eaves. We love small jobs! Call (480) 820-8711. Licensed, bonded and

insured. ROC #112275. 2/21

Remodeling — English Building Company, LLC, General Contractor, Your Neighborhood Contractor, Remodeling, Additions, Kitchens, Bathrooms, See Project Pictures and Customer references online at www.englishbuilding.net, Tempe Native, Licensed, Bonded, Insured ROC 189470 Call today for a free estimate 480-603-8813. 3/21

Remodeling — Infinity Remodel specializing in Tempe home remodels, repairs and so much more! We are your one-stop shop for all your home improvement needs. Free estimates. Licensed. Bonded. Insured. ROC #228281 480-999-1385. 2/21

Sprinkler & Drip Repair—AQUA MASTERS Specializing In: System Check-Ups; Valves, Heads, Timers; Leak Detection; Wire Locating and Troubleshooting; Brown Spots & Low Pressure Problems; 30+Years' Experience, Quality Service; 480-478-0073 www.Aquamaster-sAz.com 1/21

Storage—Elliot Kyrene Storage: Rent affordable, secure, climate-controlled storage units in Tempe 85284; all units on ground level and individually alarmed; onsite manager, 480-418-6946, elliotkyrenestorage.com 3/21

Tree & Yard Clean-Up—Tree Trimming, Yard Clean-up, Weeding, Pruning, Desert Landscaping, Removal & Hauling of Anything; Reasonable, Reliable, Prompt. Saia 480-201-8966 2/21

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We welcome your stories, photos — and ideas! Feel free to call with article suggestions. We accept manuscripts and photographs from area residents about topics of interest to our community. Sorry, we do not accept paid "advertorials."

CALL US TO LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP YOU PROMOTE YOUR TEMPE AND WEST CHANDLER ENDEAVORS

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Free to Chandler Businesses that Qualify “I Choose Chandler PPE Kit”

**Must meet program qualifications*

\$240 value—Kit includes:

- 2 boxes of 50 non-medical surgical masks
- 1 automatic hand sanitizer standing dispenser
- 1 gallon of hand sanitizer

To see if your business qualifies, visit:

www.ChandlerChamber.com

Call 480-963-4571



“Protecting public health has been Council’s top priority throughout the pandemic. The I Choose Chandler PPE Kit Program is another way the City continues to create innovative programs to keep employees and patrons safe, while providing much needed assistance to our business community.” ~ Chandler Mayor, Kevin Hartke

Chandler businesses must meet the following criteria to be eligible for a PPE Kit:

- Be a registered business with the City of Chandler
- Have 100 or less employees

*The following are excluded from qualifying: Non-Profits, home based businesses, vacation rentals, rentals of commercial property, internet based businesses, kiosks or vending businesses, car service providers.

Visit www.ChandlerChamber.com to fill out the application.

In memoriam: Gary J. Contreras, 62

Gary Joseph Contreras, 62, of Chandler, was born and raised in St. Paul, Minn.

On Jan 17, 2021, he passed away due to complications of Covid. Gary was preceded in death by his mother Julia Schwegman.

He is survived by his wife of nearly 40 years, Mary (Bielmaier) Contreras, his son, Callan Contreras and fiancé Jennifer Oman, his sister Anita Sellers (Mike), and a host of loving nieces and nephews.

Gary was known for his love of the Grand Canyon and hiking and backpacking the wilds of Arizona, another reason his nickname "GC" was so appropriate.

He delighted in world travels with his wife, Mary, as they ventured all but two of the continents together.

Gary worked in the Prosthetic and Orthotic industry for over 35 years.

He was inspired into this career by his dear friend Pierrot Apikelis after an industrial accident. In this field, he used his creativity to help others find mobility and ability.

Gary's creativity extended to his love of playing his classical guitar and gardening.

Gary was a genuinely kind soul and his spirit will live in the hearts of those who knew him.

He was a wonderful husband, father, brother, brother-in-law, uncle, and friend, whose kindness was truly as vast as the Grand Canyon that he loved.

As a Minnesota native, he loved his Vikings, the Twins, the St. Paul Saints, Gopher Hockey, the Minnesota Winter Carnival, and the Minnesota State Fair.

Catholic Mass and interment will be announced at a later date to

be held in St. Paul, Minnesota, and celebration in Wall, South Dakota, and Tempe.

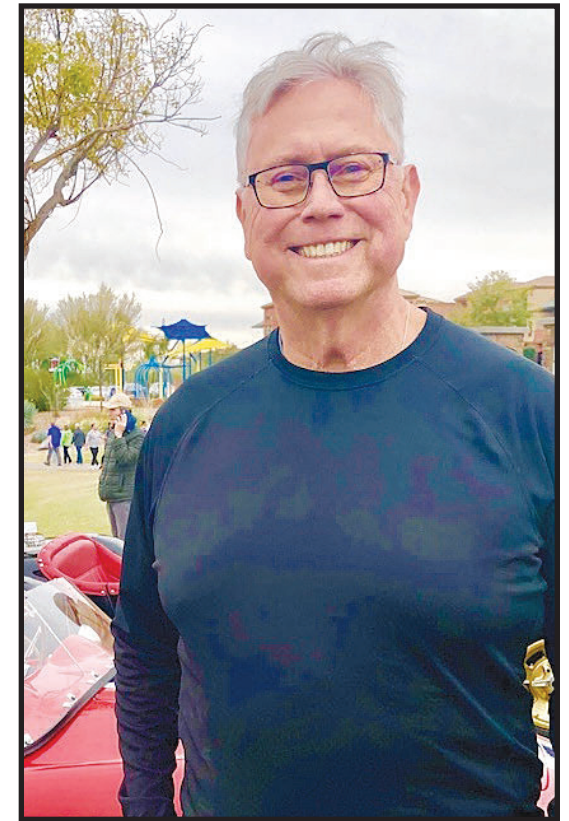
A Private Service will be held at the Grand Canyon on October 15 and 16.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to one of the following:

Foundation for Living Medicine, 9400 E. Shea Blvd #210, Scottsdale, AZ 85260; Grand Canyon Conservancy, 4 Tonto St, Grand Canyon Village, AZ 86023.

Honorary Pallbearers:

Mike Sellers, Christophe Prosnier, Craig Bielmaier, Kevin Bielmaier, Dr Aaron Scott, Scott Stewart, Dr Keith Thompson, Keith Koecher, Tom Haenfler, Kip Foye, Dave Mazzara, Tom Hayden, Jay Peterson, Dr Konard Hauffe, David Persighel.



Gary J. Contreras

The Nick Bastian Team
Your Real Estate Experts

REALTY EXECUTIVES

Kyrene Corridor Market Snapshot

Subdivision	Address	Square Feet	Beds/Baths	Sold Price
Camelot Village	6506 S. Kenwood Lane, Tempe 85283	3,080	4 / 2.75	\$670,000
Estate La Colina	1901 E. Carver Rd, Tempe 85284	2,683	4 / 3	\$585,000
May's Pond	5739 W. Del Rio St, Chandler 85226	2,452	4 / 3	\$460,000
Ray Ranch Estates	6451 W. Gary Dr, Chandler 85226	2,959	4 / 2.5	\$500,000
Tempe Royal Palms	1803 E Oxford Dr, Tempe 85283	2,385	4 / 2	\$427,950
Warner Ranch Estates	9 W. Vera Lane, Tempe 85284	2,681	3 / 3	\$505,000

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KyreneCorridorHomes.com 602-803-6425



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in the area.**

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As Our Housing Needs Change, Homes Must Adapt

The Covid 19 Era has changed how families look at their living spaces. With parents having to work from home and kids attending school online, the need for adequate, dedicated space has never been greater. The home now must be dynamic enough to sustain each family member's needs in the living, entertaining, working, and educational categories.

Before Covid, a family of four could be happy in a 4-bedroom home, but today might need a den and even additional "flex" space. Instead of that 4-bedroom home, they are expanding their search to include additional bonus rooms, some now potentially looking at a 6-bedroom home to accommodate their working and schooling needs. As a nationally recognized expert Realtor, I will position your home for optimal buyer demand, illustrating to prospective buyers how to best use your living space.

Additionally, with the disappearance of organized youth sports, school gyms, parks, and other outdoor amenities, more and more families want the accommodating backyard paradise, especially those featuring pools, spas, outdoor kitchens, pizza ovens, fire pits and SPACE. Families need an escape, and their backyards are quickly becoming the destination as travel and entertainment remain less conventional and available.

If you have a home to sell, your home may be just what these buyers are looking for! Let me position your home in the best light, achieving your top dollar and the least amount of hassle. If you're a home buyer, I have the key to unlock the home inventory you won't find elsewhere. Every day I have new to the market homes. I share these exciting and hard to find homes with those wanting to buy. Knowing the needs of both today's Buyers and Sellers are my specialty. I always go the next step beyond what most Realtors are willing to do to find the right home buyer for your home and just as important, the right home for my home sellers who are downsizing, up-sizing or right-sizing. Call me today and I look forward to working for you.

For more information on home values in the area, call Carol Royse, 480-776-5231 and ask about her "Trade-Up" program and experience her ability to show you hard to find homes for sale.

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\$1,700,000

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Carol Royse, Keller Williams Realty East Valley

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