

WRANGLER NEWS

Jan. 22 - Feb. 11, 2022 | Vol. 32, No. 2



ADOT director calls S. Tempe/W. Chandler I-10 upgrades ahead of schedule. PAGE 8



She isn't chatty, but restaurant's brainy new server Shiela certainly is reliable. PAGE 12



Hover with your cellphone camera and click the prompt to see these stories & others at our Wrangler News website



Take me to the store, James
WAIT... where'd he go?
Janie Magruder, a fearless pursuer of ways to confront the humdrum of our daily lives, ventures out and (spoiler:) survives her first driverless expedition.



Story & photos Pages 15-18.

Wrangler News photo by Pablo Robles

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FIND NEW ROADS™

Jan. 25 street count aims at crisis facing area's homeless

By Lee Shappell

Wrangler News Executive Editor

Homelessness continues to be a troubling reality in Tempe and Chandler. We don't always see it from the comfort of our upscale South Tempe and West Chandler homes, but it is out there.

To what extent?

The annual effort to count the number of people experiencing homelessness in our region, postponed last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resumes in person this year.

The Point in Time Homelessness Street Count is Tuesday, Jan. 25, at 6 a.m. in Tempe, Chandler and other communities across the Valley.

In 2020, the last year that the count was done, 7,419 people were found to be experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County on a single night. That was an increase of 12 percent overall homelessness from 2019 and an 18 percent increase in unsheltered homelessness.

To illustrate the explosion in homelessness, eight years ago the total for Maricopa County was 1,053.

Factors contributing to homelessness can include:

- Increased cost of living, particularly housing costs, across the region.
- Underfunded health and behavioral health service systems..
- Substance abuse and mental health.

— HOMELESS, Page 5



Homelessness remains a growing problem across Maricopa County, and South Tempe-West Chandler neighborhoods are not exempt. The latest count will take place Jan. 25. Wrangler News photo by Joyce Coronel

From our Publisher

A new face, a new direction, a new future

By Don Kirkland

Isn't it interesting, I realized the other day, how seemingly stand-alone moments in our lives can have a way of creating a broader universe by which we ponder our day-to-day existence.

If that sounds overly metaphysical, forgive me. I'm simply intrigued by the way random happenings with no evident connection occasionally drop into our laps, leading us on a connect-the-dots pursuit to confront challenges or create entirely new ways of building, well, that familiar better mousetrap.

Such has been the case for me in the last few months, as several significant changes have occurred within our little hometown publishing endeavor. Those may have started when our longtime writing and advertising mainstay announced she had been recruited to take on what she viewed as an exciting, potentially rewarding new job.



Don Kirkland



Lee Shappell

While we were sorry to hear the news but happy for her, we also realized it would open the door for our veteran journalist Lee Shappell to assume new responsibilities and expand our ability to cover more of the kind of incisive stories that we believe are important to the readers of community-centric newspapers like ours.

So it was at that time that we advanced Lee into the position of executive editor, a job universally recognized for providing significant influence over the stories a newspaper covers, how it covers them and the guidelines by which news and feature content are researched and developed.

Lee, of course, was the perfect choice for that assignment. In his nearly 40 years at The Arizona Republic, Lee covered an impressive range of assignments, from sports writer to local news reporter to copy desk chief to community-edition manager. During his three ensuing years at nearby Times Media Group, he oversaw publications from Ahwatukee to the East Valley and, ultimately, helped guide development of the papers' online initiatives.

More recently, since Lee assumed his new responsibilities for us, we've seen significant changes in how we select, cover and package our content. Our stories increasingly focus on topics that we—again, namely Lee—recognize for their relevance. That, of course, relates to the kind of insight he is able to pass along to our regular contributors, not just to give them a better overview of the assignments involved but to aim them toward sources he feels are well suited to provide not only the obvious details but the back story, as well.

So welcome, we say, not only to Lee's impressive experience but to the knowledge with which he is able to help newer reporters become even better at what they do.

Thereby, I should inject here, lies one more reference to what I described earlier as a random moment: Our earlier partner's departure and the opening for Lee Shappell to take on important new duties.

Such unexpected, stand-alone experiences, though, don't seem isolated from the other changes that have presented themselves to us lately—changes that seem to be forming a panoply of new opportunities for which we are not only excited but moving actively to pursue.

One of those is the exploding popularity of our website, wranglernews.com, where we can deliver

— NEW, Page 6

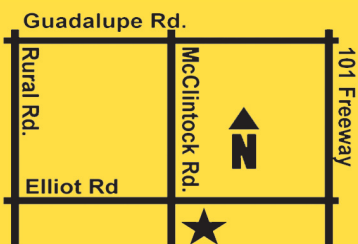
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Homeless

From Page 3

- Loss of income.
- Prior criminal-justice involvement, impacting the ability to access housing and employment.

Negative impacts on youth involved in the child welfare system.

Education and employment gaps making housing unattainable and unaffordable.

The Point in Time count also includes homeless pets. Information gathered in 2020 found 237 pets on the street across the county, including some service animals.

On Jan. 25, hundreds of volunteers in Tempe and Chandler will scan alleys, parks, riverbeds, building doorways and other areas, hoping to get an accurate count of the men, women and children living in unsheltered conditions or on the streets from that one-day snapshot. Those in shelters also will be counted to complete the homelessness picture.

The count, coordinated by Maricopa Association of Governments, uses vol-

unteer teams that include city, county and state representatives, community and faith-based organizations, businesses and private residents.

The results allow resources to be better tailored to help people access services and find housing. The survey also identifies trends that yield an understanding of the resources needed through the MAG Pathways Home Regional Homelessness Action Plan, which

was implemented late last year to combat homelessness.

Riann Balch, Chandler Community Development and Resources manager, chairs the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care Board, the group tasked with addressing homelessness.

"The goal is to help people without causing more damage, but in order to do this you have to meet the person where they are at," Balch said. "We want

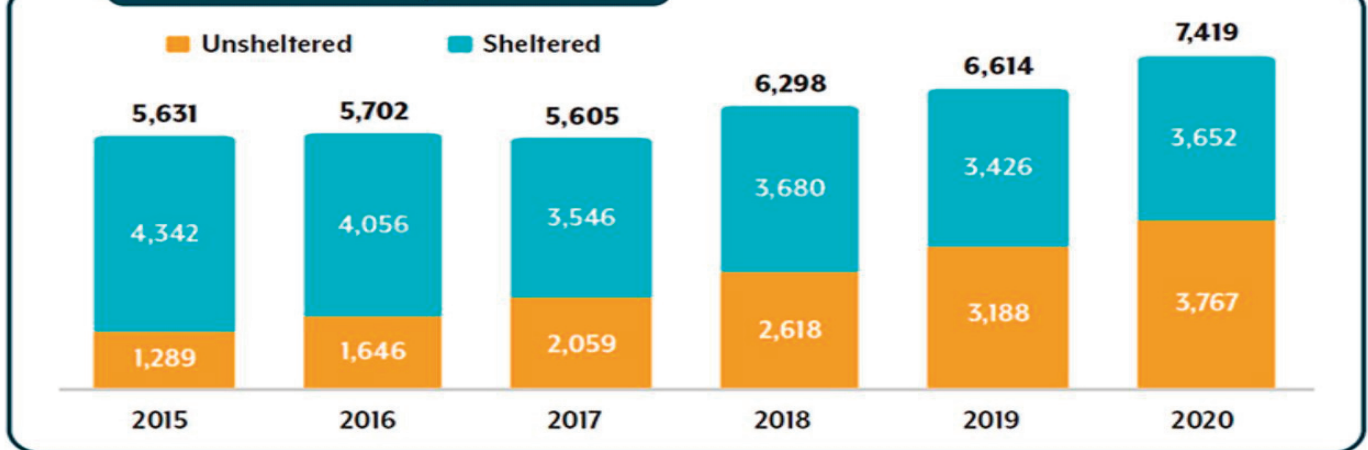
to empower people to improve themselves."

Along with the count, Point in Time aims to make contact with each individual to learn more about their homelessness experience.

"If they don't wish to be interviewed, the volunteer will record what information they can," Balch said. "The count

— HOMELESS, Page 6

Total PIT Count, 2015-2020



LUCAS

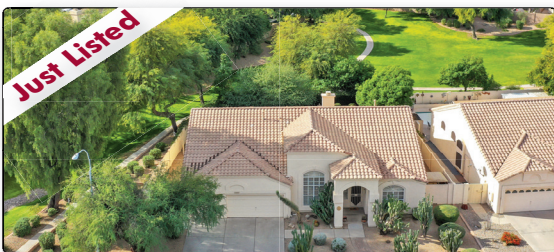
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New

From Page 3

news immediately without waiting two weeks for our next print edition.

Another is the arrival of hundreds of new subscribers to our online edition, a phenomenon for which Lee can take much of the credit and which has enabled us to begin a transition from bi-weekly status to daily, breaking-news stature within our local news environment through our electronic media. In fact, we are now taking a close look at adding even greater vigor to our digital coverage initiatives.

And, finally, there are two more of those conjectural awakenings that have come to me in recent weeks. One is the questioning we've done among the growing predominance of millennials in our own neighborhoods, revealing that their preferred mode of information-gathering is focused more on the cosmos of digital news than print, driveway-delivered publications like

Wrangler News.

The other came from a friend who has spent many years in the newspaper-printing business, indicating that the supply of those huge, mega-ton rolls of specialty paper is in growingly short supply, and that some smaller publications are being forced to consider new ways of providing their readership with reliable, consistent hometown news.

Could that be a full switch-over to newspapers available only online? We don't see that happening for us anytime soon. Could it be a 50-50 split: one print edition each month and one expanded digital edition covering even more news, photos and feature stories?

What do you think? If you have thoughts you feel might be helpful as we contemplate the future of our own community newspaper endeavors, send an email to lee.shappell@wranglernews.com.

He'll add yours to our list of potential solutions—even those we once might have considered the ultimate exercise of head-scratching.

Homeless

From Page 6

is extremely valuable for determining how many people need resources and what types of resources are most needed.

People who are experiencing homelessness are such a diverse group, so creating a place that accommodates the needs of all groups can be a serious struggle."

In Tempe, new Homeless Solutions Manager Jessica Wright calls the Point in Time Homelessness Street Count data vital.

"It raises awareness of the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness in the City of Tempe and provides the opportunity to advocate for federal funding to support the efforts our city makes to end homelessness," Wright said.

Tempe's HOPE team leads the city's Point in Time effort.

The team's homeless outreach specialists and city police park officers engage with people who are homeless every day to assist them with needs, including housing, mental-health services and addiction-recovery services.

In 2019, the Tempe HOPE team served 1,207 individuals, up from 1,117 the previous year.

The team also helped 366 people find housing in 2019, up from 239 the previous year. On average, a person who engages with the HOPE team about housing will be housed within 35 days.

"I am privileged in my work to be able to witness small successes daily that lead to people being sheltered and lives being changed for the better," Wright said.

"Individuals experiencing homelessness are people just like you and I. Every single unsheltered person has a unique story of what led them to what they are currently experiencing today.

"Engaging with those we serve is the key to understanding and providing them with impactful resources and applicable services to meet their individual needs.

"These connections can be what ultimately ends their homelessness."

MAG is working with the Maricopa County Department of Health Services to see that all necessary COVID-19 protocols are followed for the protection of volunteers and those they interview during the count.

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OPINION

Early completion forecast for initial phase of Broadway Curve project eagerly awaited by area's commuters

By John Halikowski

Guest columnist



The New Year is upon us. It's a time when many of us set new goals and are optimistic about achieving them. As I look ahead into 2022, I think about all the project goals we at the Arizona Department of Transportation have as we continue to improve our state's transportation system.

It's always nice to start off a new year with good news, and here's some for motorists who are eastbound on Interstate 10 from Baseline Road to Chandler Boulevard: Expect to see a significant uptick in construction activity early in 2022 and we anticipate the work in this area to be completed two

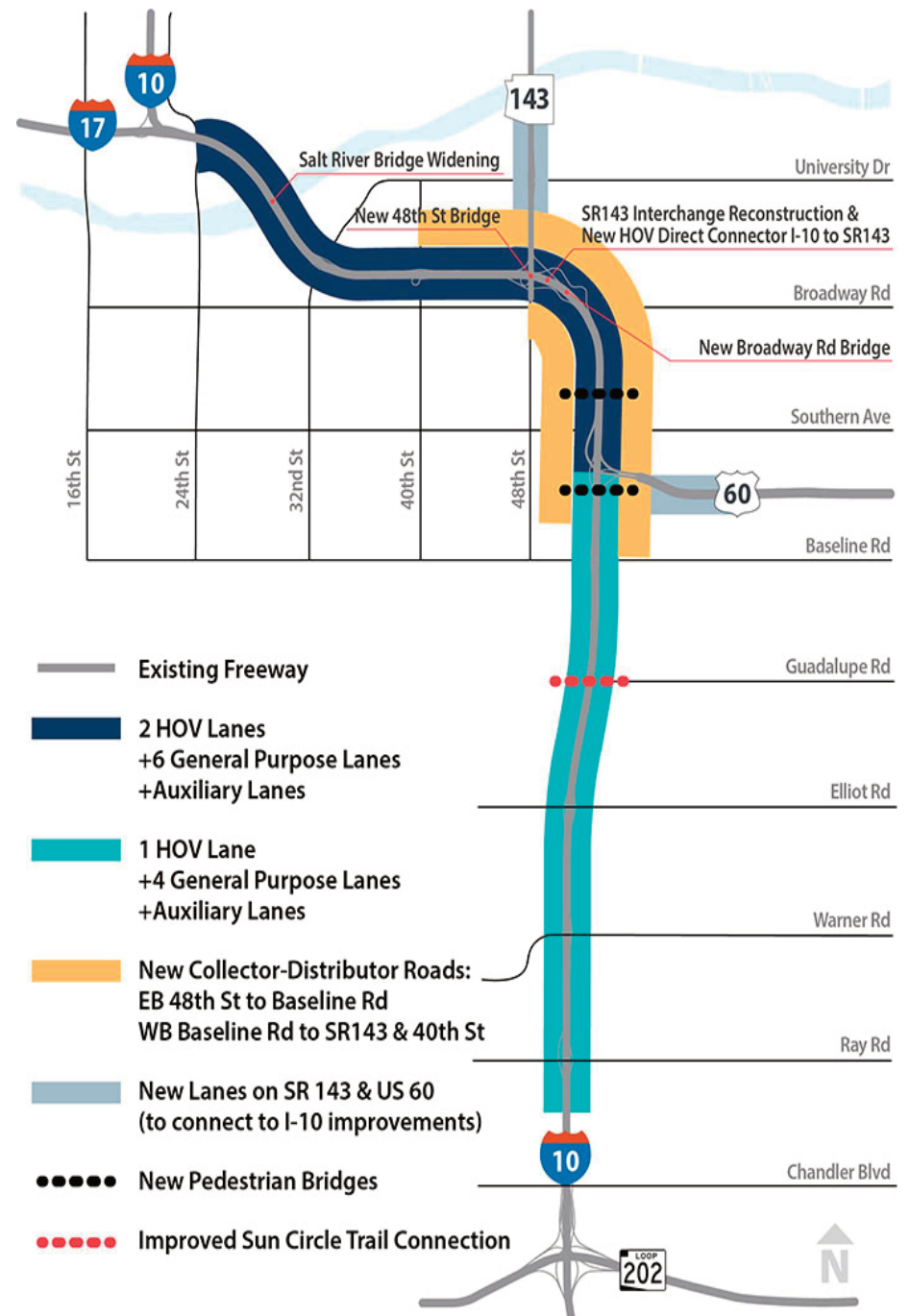
years earlier than much of the I-10 Broadway Curve Improvement Project - in 2022 rather than in 2024.

ADOT saw value for our customers in working to complete construction on eastbound I-10 from Baseline Road to Chandler Boulevard early in the project. So, we worked with the developer team that is designing and building the project to make it happen. We recognized the I-10 Broadway Curve Improvement Project will be highly impactful in other areas of I-10, the U.S. 60 (Superstition Freeway) and State Route 143.

Completing this stretch two years before the remainder of the project is one way we're striving to reduce those impacts for at least some motorists in the 11-mile project area.

The primary work along eastbound I-10 from Baseline Road to Chandler Boulevard is widening on the outside to provide another travel lane. Crews will work behind the concrete barrier, limiting the need for restrictions or closures that impact drivers. In terms of highway construction, it is relatively "easy" work, yet the payoff for thousands of motorists is tremendous.

Our work south of Baseline Road also includes widening the Guadalupe Road bridge over eastbound and westbound I-10 and improving the Sun Circle Trail crossing for pedestrians,



bicyclists and equestrians.

I encourage you to stay up to date on progress of the I-10 Broadway Curve Improvement Project at i10Broadway-Curve.com and [#StayAheadOfTheCurve](https://twitter.com/StayAheadOfTheCurve). While you're there, you can subscribe to receive traffic alerts and project updates by email and learn more about our free project app, The Curve - another valuable resource as construction ramps up.

Thank you all for your patience as we continue to deliver on our commitment to maintaining and improving Arizona's freeways. In the end, our projects aim to ensure that every one of us gets where we need to be through safe, efficient and reliable transportation.

Happy New Year!

The writer is Director of Arizona Department of Transportation.

John Halikowski, director of Arizona Department of Transportation, says that work is ahead of schedule and could be completed this year to widen eastbound lanes of Interstate 10 from Baseline Road to just north of Chandler Boulevard (right) and to widen the Guadalupe Road Bridge over I-10 (below). Wrangler News photos by Lee Shappell



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Move over, rough roads. Here's to smoother travels.

Commentary by Corey Woods

When I was preparing to pursue the Mayor's seat, I took a drive around south Tempe one day with an active and informed resident of the area. He and I scanned all the roads, checking out the conditions of streets.

Many are in good shape. However, there is still quite a lot that we need to do to ensure that all of our Tempe roads meet the highest standards that our residents deserve. This was also true, by my observation, in other parts of the city.

It is clear that we have a lot of work to do to create better roadways.

Our City Council is wholly committed to improving our city streets. That's why we added \$15 million towards street pavement projects during the 2021-22 fiscal year, bringing the total investment in roadway repairs to \$63.5 million over the next five years. This 30 percent increase puts us on course to ensure all of our 1,241 lane miles of city streets are meeting our standards by 2028.

Guiding our staff on which streets should be prioritized for pavement improvements is what we call the

Pavement Quality Index (PQI). The PQI was created as an efficient pavement management tool for the Transportation Maintenance team to score each city street segment on a scale from zero to 100 (poor to excellent).



Corey Woods

Every three years, staff members do a comprehensive evaluation of roadway cracks, potholes and other pavement distresses that contribute to uncomfortable conditions travelers may experience. They assign a score for each street segment, which determines its placement on an overall maintenance schedule. The city's current PQI

average is 60 – I am determined that we can do much better.

The Great Recession kicked off multiple years of deferred maintenance on our streets. We fell behind in keeping our street surfaces smooth for cars, trucks, buses and bikes. Now, with our recommitment to

catch up, our aim is to achieve a citywide PQI average of 70 within the next six years.

It will take some time to reach our goal. The good news is that we are using data to decide where to invest capital improvement funds more efficiently to increase taxpayer value. This data-driven method for streets is one example of how we are raising our level of performance to improve quality of life for residents. For more information about the Pavement Quality Index and the city's other performance measures, visit performance.tempe.gov.

I want to hear from you anytime with questions or input about how we're serving you at the City of Tempe. Please reach out via email at corey_woods@tempe.gov, call my office at (480) 350-8793 and follow me on Facebook and Twitter.

One final note: I am grateful that Wrangler News offers this monthly space for your Tempe City Councilmembers to elaborate on important issues and information. It is a meaningful opportunity and a true public service.

Corey Woods is Mayor of Tempe.

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State of the City



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COMMUNITY

Her conversation is a bit robotic, but she gets an 'A+' for delivery

By Nicole Greason
Special for Wrangler News

She approaches our table smoothly and quietly, with a basket of toasted garlic naan and platters of paneer, a firm, pungent cheese, in a spicy orange-red sauce and tender braised okra with onion and bell pepper, along with fragrant jasmine rice and steaming lentil soup.

"Your order is ready. Please take it away and confirm. You can start your meal now," she says politely.

We reached out to take our lunch off of the trays she held and pressed OK on a digital screen. She turned to leave, adding:

"I will go to serve other guests now."

This wasn't a live server, like those who wear a uniform and linger at the table after taking your order, asking how you are, where you're from or how you like the sunny weather.

This was something new that we hadn't seen in our previous visits to Chennai Fusion Grill in West Chandler, a local, family-owned spot at 4929 W. Chandler Blvd. near Rural Road, that specializes in Indian cuisine.

She was an interactive robot named Shiela - about 4-feet tall and a couple of feet wide, with a screen at the top, wheels at the bottom and four tiers for trays in between. At a time when food-service employees are difficult to find, she's a reliable new addition to the wait staff.

Our visit started with a human taking our order and running it to the kitchen, where cooks prepared our food. Then, through the magic of technology, with sensors, mapping of the restaurant and programming in Shiela's mechanical brain, the robot took over, delivering the trays of food to our table.

Shiela, which has been at the restaurant for about six months, has proven to be helpful in smoothing out operations, supplementing the serving staff and helping to maintain social distancing amid the coronavirus pandemic, said restaurant owner Arvinder Kaur.

Shiela "helps us to take precautions as safety is our main motive in having it. The robot supplements staff, it is not a replacement," Kaur said.

Patrons have responded positively, enjoying the uniqueness of having a robot server and some taking photos when Shiela rolls up to their tables.

"They're really liking it. It's working well," Kaur said.

Ranjani Venkatakrishnan, a recent lunchtime diner, said Shiela was different than what she was expecting.

"I imagined more of a humanoid robot when I heard about this," Venkatakrishnan said. "It's not what I imagined, but it's still very cute and a novelty that could attract customers. Also, the robot's voice kind of sounds like Mickey Mouse."

Vegetarian and non-vegetarian options are available at the restaurant.

Information at chennaifusiongrill.com.



She won't give you much lip but Shiela, a 4-foot-tall interactive robot, will give you your order quickly at Chennai Fusion Grill, 4929 W. Chandler Blvd. in West Chandler. Wrangler News photo by Nicole Greason

Chandler ranks 4th in U.S. for tech use in Digital Cities Survey

By Sally Mesarosh
Special for Wrangler News

A recent award boosts Chandler's claim that it is a techie-lover's dream come true.

The Center for Digital Government ranked the city No. 4 in the nation among those with a population of 250,000 to 499,999 in its Digital Cities Survey. Chandler's population was estimated at 281,000 this past November.

The Center for Digital Government's annual survey recognizes cities that apply technology to tackle social challenges, enhance services and strengthen cybersecurity.

"As the 'Community of Innovation,' our talented staff work day in and day out to ensure Chandler remains at the forefront of technological advancements and has the infrastructure in place to facilitate future opportunities," Mayor Kevin Hartke said. "It is an honor to receive this recognition, and I look forward to continuing to share how our

city uses technology to engage the community, enhance services and strengthen cybersecurity."

Chandler, with its long-held commitment to innovation and technology, aggressively pursues opportunities for smart, sustainable solutions and innovative ideas that promote efficiency, productivity and connectivity.

Chandler Chief Information Officer Sandip Dholakia and IT Chief Technology Officer Kerstin Nold said that city staff, along with a culture of innovation among all departments, divisions and roles, account for the recognition.

City leadership encourages the generation of innovative ideas and cutting-edge concepts that are constantly being reviewed and actioned, they said. The city measures the effectiveness of innovation through identified success criteria and performance measures that result in a positive value proposition.

— Continued on facing page

Recreation technology

The city's citizen-centric technology services include recreation classes, enrichment classes, science experiments and workout sessions that moved online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When shelter at home orders due to COVID-19 were implemented, recreation centers, libraries and the senior center were closed for extended periods. This accelerated the need for on-demand virtual classes, and the city responded with an array for senior drawing and watercolor classes as digital resources for families and caregivers looking to fill the day with practical, educational, inspirational and entertaining content. The city also expanded remote streaming options for live concerts and events, and virtual tours of art exhibits and museums.

Chandler's Go Play Chandler home edition at www.chandleraz.gov/recathome, offers activities and ideas in crafts, enrichment classes, sports, aquatics, wellness and fitness, therapeutic recreation for special-needs residents and outdoor discovery. Virtual programming will continue to be part of the city's recreational offerings, officials said.



When Chandler recreation centers were closed for extended periods, the city created on-demand virtual classes for residents – among reasons Chandler ranks fourth in the nation in Digital Cities Survey. Chandler photo

Public-safety technology

The Information Technology Department applied CARES Act funding to support a next-generation workforce, replacing desktop computers with laptops and upgrading telepresence rooms and enhancing infrastructure security.

The Center for Digital Government cited Chandler's focus on infrastructure through its fiber-assessment program and the initiation of the first phase of improvements for fiber networking. The city also installed upgrades that enable citywide Wi-Fi capabilities.

The city's innovative virtual threat simulator, which Chandler jumped ahead of the pack by implementing more than 10 years ago, drew praise. In 2021, the simulator technology was upgraded when City Council authorized \$256,000 for a five-screen device that virtually places officers in life-like scenarios. This provides better officer training and improves techniques and real-time response to public-safety incidents. For example, the technology allows them to imagine how they might react to an active shooter.

Chandler offers the ability to text to 911, making emergency services more accessible to those who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech difficulties.

Virtual courtrooms

Chandler responded to the recent Arizona Admin-

istrative Office of the Courts' mandate to leverage technology to provide virtual-justice services to manage jury selection, facilitate arraignments and conduct trials. The city worked quickly to design a solution for three distinct spaces in the Chandler Municipal Court Building.

"The virtual courtroom experience has allowed the court to continue to serve the needs of the public during a challenging period and has become an efficient new way to adjudicate cases within the court and our community," said Presiding Magistrate Alicia Skupin. "Over the last six months, the Chandler Municipal Court has addressed approximately 760 virtual cases and settings."

Mobility

Chandler offers a number of technological solutions to improve mobility of services, enabling 700-plus employees to telecommute. It has deployed more than 1,400 laptops, offered WebEx Citywide for virtual meetings, implemented 32 collaboration conference rooms and enabled call-center employees to telecommute.

InfoMap, a digital offering for residents, is Chandler's platform for sharing information about facilities and neighborhoods. Click on a symbol and it activates

a pop-up window with the address, phone number, website and description of the facility. Road-restriction information also appears on the map as red, green or blue lines, depending on the severity of the traffic restriction.

Infrastructure and security

Finally, the city has enhanced overall security through a virtual private network upgrade, Wi-Fi expansion, automation and orchestration services and micro segmentation.

Chandler's Digital City Award is the latest in a series of tech recognitions for the city, which also has been named among the nation's Best Places to Find a Job and Best Cities for Women in Tech.

For women working in tech who value telecommuting, Chandler ranks No. 9 on SmartAsset's 2020 list of best cities to work from home. Smart Asset is an online publication for consumer-focused financial information.

The most-famous piece of Chandler's high-tech reputation, the Price Corridor, is home to 15 companies on the Fortune 1,000 list at sites that include Intel's sprawling campus, Chandler Freeway Crossing, Chandler Viridian, Park Place and Northrup Grumman.

Acts of kindness make a world of difference, advises S. Tempe author

By **Glynn Gilcrease**
Special for Wrangler News

It is amazing where random acts of kindness might lead. For author Andy Dzurinko, who has lived and worked in South Tempe for more than 30 years, it was observing noted Tempeans Dick and Jane Neuheisel and Virginia Thompson that touched him.

And former Mayor Harry Mitchell's work founding Tempe Sister Cities and that organization's Making a World of Difference program.

Dzurinko also was inspired by Grand Master Andy Bauman, founder of Ja Shin Do, who worked side-by-side with Dzurinko on the Governor's Council on Health, Physical Fitness and Sports.

And by the late, longtime Tempe Pastor Guy Davidson and veterans-education advocate David Lucier.

They all moved Dzurinko to write his third book, *Inspired: Making a Mark on the World*.

Dzurinko is no slouch himself. He has shared his positive spirit with all around him and in many local and national organizations for decades, making him a highly sought motivational speaker.

So it is particularly telling to read what motivates a motivator.

Two inspirational stories that Dzurinko relates in his book offer insight.

Random acts of kindness

The philosophy of *Pay It Forward*, a novel written by Catherine Hyde, embraces the belief that through acts of kindness toward strangers we all foster a more-caring society. In Dzurinko's book, a social studies teacher in Atascadero, Calif., Reuben St. Clair, challenges his students to "change the world." That's something we would all

like to do, right? What if we could change the world, even in some small way?

Among the students in the class is Trevor McKinney, who takes the challenge to heart. As he goes about his day, he wonders what he could do, as a 12-year-old student. He starts by showing kindness to a stranger and, from there, moves on to the next person he can help.

Helping others: It's contagious

Dzurinko's brother, John, and his niece, Nijmie Dzurinko, also moved Dzurinko.

It started with John's nurturing influence on Nijmie. Upon her graduation from the University of Pennsylvania, she expressed her gratitude because, without John, she said, she would not have survived.

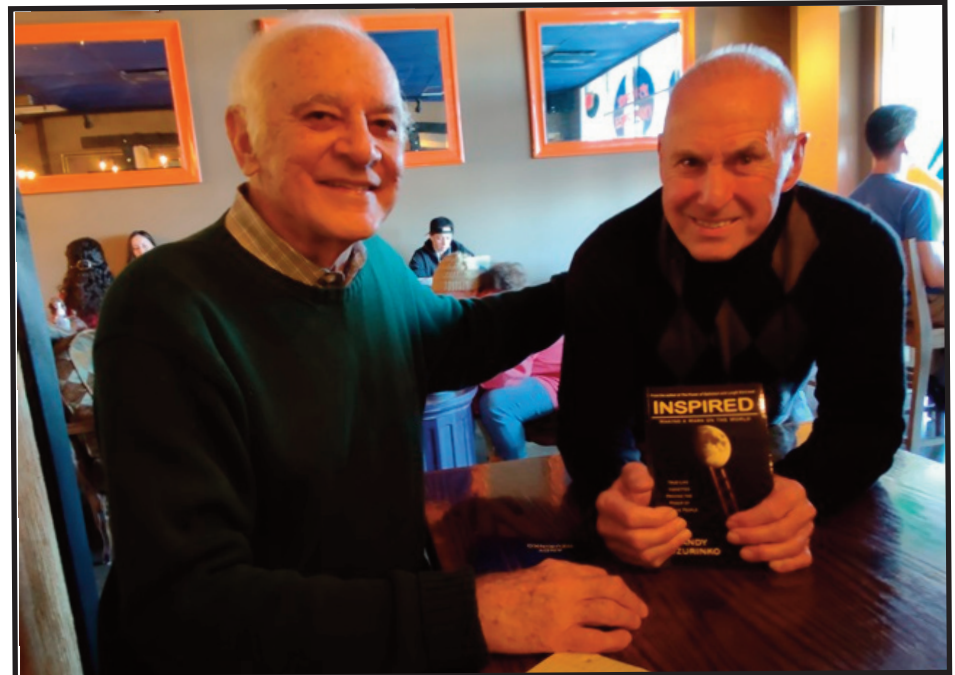
She explained how he taught her that all human beings want and need the same basic things: to be loved, to be heard and to be seen. John's legacy was one of loving, giving, caring and helping anyone at any time. John was not an organizer, yet he taught Nijmie the skills to communicate effectively with others. As a result, she gained a passion for working with youth.

It was effort worth the doing. She now is a past executive director of the Philadelphia Student Union, an organization that gives young people a voice in their education. She began working with them in 1999 and left in 2003 to further her own education. Philadelphia Student Union has since trained thousands of young people in its leadership-development program.

To this day, Nijmie still is orchestrating effective change with youth and their ability to influence educational change all over the U.S.

His lifetime of service

Dzurinko grew up in the once-thriving steel town of Monessen, Pa., 27 miles south of Pittsburgh. Sports always were a big part of his life. He was an All-State lineman for the Monessen High



Tempe attorney Glynn Gilcrease (left) and author Andy Dzurinko talk about Dzurinko's new book 'Inspired: Making a Mark on the World.' Wrangler News photo by Don Kirkland

football team that won a conference championship in 1960. Dzurinko attended Bucknell University on a football scholarship, playing guard and linebacker. The Bucknell Bisons won the Lambert Cup as the top small-college program in the East while he was there. He was inducted into Pennsylvania's Mid Mon Valley All Sports Hall of Fame in 2009.

Commissioned a second lieutenant, Dzurinko served two years in the U.S. Army, including a tour in Vietnam. Upon his return to civilian life, he earned a masters' degree at the University of Pittsburgh, where he began a 10-year coaching career that took him to Williams College and Brown University before he entered the insurance industry in 1978.

Dzurinko was director of training and regional vice-president of agencies for American United Life Insurance Company in Indianapolis. Ten years later, Dzurinko relocated to Arizona to become a general agent and personal producer for American United Life. He has qualified for the Million Dollar Round Table and the National Quality Award and has been accredited as a chartered life underwriter and a char-

tered financial consultant by The American College.

Although his playing and coaching days are long behind him, Dzurinko maintains an active workout and training regimen. He ran his first marathon at 56. He trained rigorously for years with Ja Shin Do and its founder. Dzurinko achieved his bucket list after age 65 by hiking Mount Whitney, the half-Dome in Yosemite, the Grand Canyon and Mount Kilimanjaro.

Dzurinko was executive director of Arizona Governor's Council on Health, Physical Fitness and Sports, for which he received the Outstanding Council Member Award from the national association. He has given back to the community through his involvement with Tempe Sister Cities, Sigma Chi Fraternity Alumni, Bucknell Alumni and the National Football Foundation. He led the Frank Kush Youth Foundation for the past 30 years.

Dzurinko's first two books were *The Power of Optimism* and *LOL-Laugh Out Loud: Feel Good and Live Longer*.

Dzurinko, who welcomes speaking invitations, can be reached at 480-921-0533 or by email at dzurinko@gmail.com.

My 90 minutes with Waymo

A Wrangler News first-person account



Strife in the fast lane?
None at all during minivan rides chauffeured by 'Autonomous'



Article by Janie Magruder
Photography by Pablo Robles



Wrangler News' intrepid Janie Magruder greets a Waymo driverless minivan as it pulls up in front of her South Tempe home for her ride.

Although some may disagree, I'm not a back-seat driver. At least, I wasn't until last week when I found myself in said seat, rolling north on Rural Road. With nobody in the front seat of the car.

It was as if Casper the Friendly Ghost was signaling, accelerating, braking and turning the wheel.

The back(seat) story: Waymo, the Silicon Valley, Calif.-based, autonomous-driving-technology company, whose white vehicles with peculiar rooftop protuberances often spin through your neighborhood, invited *Wrangler News* to hitch a ride with Waymo One. There's only one region in the world where this fully autonomous (no driver) ride-hailing service is available, and that's a 50-mile radius in the East Valley, including Tempe and Chandler.

So, of course, we said yes. I used the Waymo One app to input our pickup location and destination, got a fare estimate and hailed a vehicle to my south Tempe neighborhood. Seven minutes later, *Wrangler* photographer Pablo Robles and I climbed into the second-row seats of a Chrysler minivan, clicked on our seat belts and off we went.

The service has been open to the public since October 2020. Its map is a long, imperfect rectangle bounded generally on the west by either Kyrene or Rural roads or College Avenue; on the north a few blocks north of McClintock High; on the east a few blocks west of Arizona Avenue; and on the south by Loops 202 or 101, and Ocotillo.

Tempe mom Sophia Lovasz is way ahead of us. She has taken an estimated 60 rides on Waymo since 2018 when the company first sought people with diverse backgrounds and transportation needs to ride and give feedback about its self-driving cars.

She and her husband, Attila, took their first ride on a date night to a sushi place, immediately noticing a big plus: no designated driver needed. On that ride, another person was in the driver seat, and Lovasz initially couldn't accept that the person wasn't driving.

"I sat diagonal to him and looked for evidence that he was driving," she said, "but his feet weren't pressing any pedals. I started to see that the car actually was driving itself."

Lovasz's rides haven't always been perfect. A bird once flew in front of the car, causing it to behave "weirdly," she said. Another time, the car stopped in the middle of a busy intersection and the driver had to take over.

But her experiences mostly have been prompt, comfortable, safe and smooth, and she appreciates — as Waymo states on its website — that it "never gets drunk, tired or distracted." And compared to other ride-hailing services with human drivers, she's felt safe from COVID-19. Masks are required if a Waymo "autonomous specialist" is present up front, and some cars even supply face coverings.

Lovasz took her first fully autonomous ride last

Article continues on Page 18



Waymo's driverless vehicles have been available for rides in South Tempe-West Chandler for a few months now. At left: Riders get a personalized greeting on a screen in front of them. It's eerie riding with no driver, as our Janie Magruder discovered. At right, a screen in front of passengers tracks the route of the driverless vehicle, which is distinguished by its exterior equipment designed to make the ride safe.



April, then began chronicling those experiences on TikTok. She rides often to her job as manager of Arizona State University's Sun Devil Marketplace, disembarking at an ice-cream parlor off campus, to Costco where shoppers have reacted to Waymo's empty front seat with "shock and awe," and to Chandler Fashion Center.

After a brief stop at Chandler Regional Hospital (I was fine, it was my error on the app), where our car impressively detected pedestrians approaching a crosswalk and stopped early for them, Pablo and I rode to the Chandler mall.

As with taxis, a plastic divider prevented us from trying to reach into the front. Unlike a cab, there were wipes and hand sanitizer, a car seat in the third row and air-temperature controls.

I watched our route on screens on the back of the front-seat headrests and offered specific feedback on our ride, choosing from faces — happy, neutral, nervous or surprised.

Our car accelerated quickly to reach the speed limit on any given street, but never surpassed it. Although braking, such as when a pedestrian was sensed on a sidewalk, or steering, such as around a large truck, could be abrupt, we felt in good hands, albeit invisible ones, the whole time.

But on the way to the mall, we noticed a peculiarity that some riders would not appreciate: Our car went out of its way to avoid making left turns onto busy streets without traffic signals. Instead, it took us through residential areas (one with speed bumps!) to either reach a stop light or make a safer right turn.

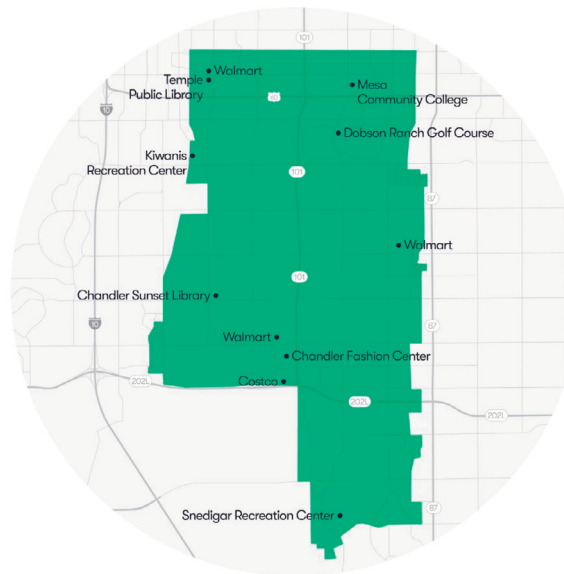
That resulted in a 13-minute ride from the hospital to the mall, where we were dropped across a large parking lot next to a sandwich shop. Waymo seeks the safest, not necessarily the closest, spot to deliver its riders.

Distance: 13.3 miles. Duration: 36 minutes. Cost: \$19.63

Since beginning its technology development in 2009, Waymo vehicles have recorded more than 20

Where can I go?

Waymo operates across Chandler and southeast Tempe. Check out our current service area below. Keep in mind there are some places we can't go just yet, but we will get you as close as we can.



million autonomous driving miles on public roads, and more than 20 billion miles in simulation. The technology has been tested in 10 states, plus the District of Columbia, and in more than 25 U.S. cities. Vehicles have been heat-tested in Death Valley and Las Vegas, and driven in freezing Michigan and Lake Tahoe.

Last March, Trent Victor, Waymo's director of safety research, reported the findings of its study on how autonomous technology performs in real-world, fatal crashes by human drivers. How might Waymo's system perform in actual fatal-crash scenarios?

The report cited a World Health Organization statistic that more than 1.3 million people die on the world's roads each year. It's the scary equivalent of a full passenger plane crashing every hour, or one death every 30 seconds, Waymo reported. Further, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration estimates that 94 percent of all fatal crashes result from human error.

Pedestrian deaths are especially a problem in Ma-

ricopa County, which ranks second on the NHTSA's list of counties with the highest pedestrian traffic fatalities, according to a 2019 study. With 160 in 2018, Maricopa County was second only to Los Angeles County (225).

In Waymo's research, data on every fatal crash in Chandler from 2008 to 2017 was collected and analyzed, excluding those not matching situations a Waymo vehicle would face. Those outside its operating area, for example Interstate 10, weren't included.

The remaining germane accidents were reconstructed, and 72 simulations were created. Those simulations found that Waymo's technology avoided or mitigated all of the crashes, except those in which its vehicle was struck from behind.

The point isn't lost on Lovasz.

"Some people think I'm crazy — 'Why would you bring your kids on that?' — but people should want the roads to be safer," she said. "The cars are clean and comfortable, and the driving is consistent."

From Chandler Fashion Center, I ordered our next Waymo vehicle to take us home, arriving 12 minutes later.

Distance: 5 miles. Duration: 14 minutes. Fare: \$11.82

I wanted to experience riding alone, so I summoned a third car which took 13 minutes to arrive, the longest time of the morning.

I realized two things on the way to my destination, Tempe Public Library. Waymo is far more courteous than many human drivers — it stopped well in front of a crosswalk when the traffic signal at Rural and Guadalupe roads turned red.

However, Waymo may not be for the impatient, or those in a hurry or for whom the only route between Point A to Point B is a straight line. As we approached the library, my car stayed in the right lane, prompting the backseat driver in me to point and shout, "Get in the left lane! Left! Turn left!"



Instead, it calmly passed Southern Avenue, turned right on Campus Drive, left on Jentilly Lane, left on Alameda

Drive and finally found a light at Rural from which it could turn left. After a 3-minute stop at the library, we returned to my home. Had I wanted to run a book into the library, I could have used a multi-stop feature on the Waymo app to keep my car there — a great convenience.

Distance: 8.3 miles. Roundtrip duration, including stop: 28 minutes. Fare: \$14.65

Total fare for three rides in safe, clean, comfortable vehicles: \$46.11. No aggression. No germs. Oh, and no tipping.

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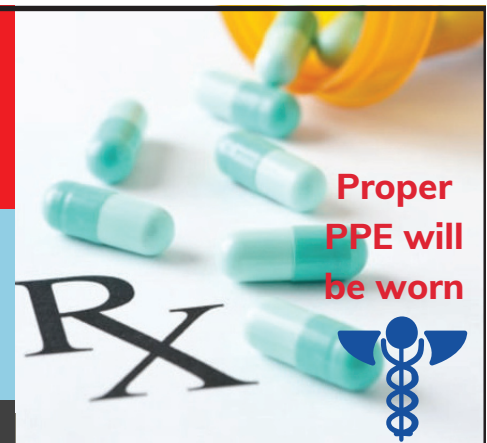


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DIVERSIONS

Rooftop lounge atop new Westin in downtown Tempe beckons with views, music, special drinks

By: **Meghann Sepulveda**
Special for *Wrangler News*

If you've lived in the Valley long enough, you'd know that Tempe never has had a destination lounge atop a high-rise.

Until now.

Skysill Rooftop Lounge, above the 18-floor of the new Westin Tempe in the heart of thriving downtown, boasts a gorgeous open-air patio with majestic views that set the scene for a relaxing afternoon in the sun or a sophisticated evening at sunset or after dark.

Visitors from South Tempe and West Chandler can see nearly all the way to their homes.

Paying homage to the Sonoran Desert, Skysill created its food-and-drink menu using fresh and local products with the Southwest in mind.

Guests snack on tasty appetizers dubbed "A-Mountain Snacks," – a nod to the landmark downtown peak that is hard to miss to the north – including Skysill Nachos, loaded with chorizo queso fundido, fresh salads and entrees, such as smoked short-rib sliders.

"The menu offers easy-to-grab shareable items," said Shannon Maloney, the property's food and beverage

manager.

Those who are looking for a more traditional sit-down meal can check out the hotel's ground-floor restaurant, Terra Tempe Kitchen & Spirits. Both restaurants feature a unique menu with seasonal ingredients curated by executive chef Alexander Robinson.

The comprehensive rooftop bar is inspired by poolside favorites with a flirty twist, an impressive assortment of draft, canned and local Arizona brews, crisp wines and signature Skysill Spritzes.

"We offer simple twists on classic favorite highball cocktails," Maloney said.

Skysill is open to the public Mondays-Thursday, 5 to 11 p.m.; Fridays, 2 p.m. to midnight; Saturdays, 11 a.m. to midnight, and Sundays, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

A spot like no other in Tempe

When you step out onto the rooftop, you are greeted by striking panoramic views of the Valley that include downtown Phoenix, Camelback Mountain and Four Peaks.

High-top tables and cozy couches create a warm, inviting atmosphere to share food and conversation on the 200-seat patio. A space for private



The views are topped only by the food, beverages and ambiance at Skysill Rooftop Lounge atop the new Westin Tempe downtown. Photos courtesy of Westin Tempe

parties is available and ideal for corporate events, birthdays and other special celebrations.

Live music from Valley artists, including acoustic performances and DJs, is available every Friday and Saturday evening, 5 to 8 p.m.

To soak up Arizona's beautiful patio weather, Skysill hosts a variety of rooftop events, among them game-day-theme drink specials, perfect for the

upcoming Cactus League spring-training season at Tempe Diablo Stadium.

An exercise and wellness series for Westin guests and the public is planned. The hotel will be partnering with local trainers and instructors for classes that include yoga, high-intensity interval training and Zumba.

More information about Skysill Rooftop Lounge or to book a reservation: SkysillRooftop.com.



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Hilarious 'Ladies Gone Mild' at Graduate Hotel in Tempe

Two awkward '90s moms are on the run from their families. They are hiding out at their ultimate resort destination as they unwind from their daily motherly grind.

It's Ladies Gone Mild, created and performed by Marlene Strang and Leanne Schmidt, and is a luxury getaway for these ladies on the run. It plays Jan. 29 and Feb. 5 at 7 p.m. at the Graduate Hotel in Tempe.

Tickets are \$29.99 and are on sale at weareladies.net.

There is audience participation.

Equipped with a map, ticket holders will experience the resort's comically bizarre amenities, including the Sunscreen Sommelier, the Relaxation Guru and the Retro Dance Specialist.

A new surprise awaits around every corner as audience members find their own path to the climactic rooftop promenade where The Ladies get back in touch with their bachelorette spirit.

This project is partially funded by the city of Tempe - Community Arts Grant.

FILM FARE

WITH M.V. MOORHEAD

'Tender Bar' uneven as The Dickens and never quite comes of age

J. R. Moehringer's 2005 memoir is the basis for *The Tender Bar*, a coming-of-age story directed by George Clooney, from a script by William Monahan.

J. R. (the excellent Daniel Ranieri as a kid; the perfectly acceptable Tye Sheridan as a youth) grows up in the run-down Long Island home of his run-down grandfather (Christopher Lloyd at his most run-



M.V. Moorhead

down). His single mom (Lily Rabe) has retreated there, in common with other failed or struggling or stuck descendants of the house.

J. R.'s father (Max Martini) is barely in the picture; a radio disc jockey known as "The Voice," he's a mean and unreliable drunk, so this is likely for the best.

In his absence, the narrator turns to his Uncle Charlie (Ben Affleck) as a surrogate father, and lucks out. Charlie, another inmate of the shabby Manhasset manse, maintains a mildly gruff pose, but is a pussycat who adores his nephew, slipping him a bill now and then and dispensing life wisdom about how to be an upstanding guy. He's also a bibliophile who runs a bar called The Dickens, which is full of great literature that



"The Tender Bar" stars Ben Affleck and Christopher Lloyd in J. R. Moehringer's coming-of-age story directed by George Clooney, from a script by William Monahan.

he encourages—dares, really—J. R. to read.

Apparently this educational strategy works, because in the second half, the grown-up J. R. goes to Yale. We follow him there as he chases a gorgeous rich chick (Brianna Middleton) who likes him but doesn't take him seriously, though he can't get this through his head. We also see him break into the pages of the *New York Times* and begin his meteoric career. Through it all, he never loses his affection for The Dickens, its regulars, and the quietly tender Uncle Charlie.

There's nothing very wrong with any of this, but there's nothing very urgently dramatic about it, either. The scenes between J. R. and his sneering, contemptuous father are the only ones in the movie that show any real volatility. There's a pleasant, nostalgic rhythm to the first half, buoyed along easily by Affleck's keenly likable performance. The second half, with J. R.'s adventures in college and beyond, feels more formulaic and tired.

The Tender Bar is rated R and plays and Chandler fashion 20 and other multiplexes Valleywide.

2 great actors in 2 great roles still yield 1 blasé film in 'Tragedy of Macbeth'

Nothing says "Happy New Year" like a tale of witchcraft, madness, tyranny and the murder of a guest by his host. So Joel Coen, working independently of his brother Ethan for the first time, served us up an adaptation of *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Shakespeare's bad-juju masterpiece, with the great Denzel Washington in the title role and the great Frances McDormand as the Lady.

It's a fine-looking film, shot in lustrous black-and-white by Bruno Delbonnel on stylized, angular sets by Stefan Dechant, and it isn't saddled with any heavy-

handed “interpretation.” Still, it’s full of choices I found disappointing.

All three witches, for instance, are played by the same actress, Kathryn Hunter, switching voices and contorting her body. She’s brilliant, but the conceit doesn’t come off authentically. It feels like an Oral Interpretation class exercise rather than true drama. As in Roman Polanski’s 1971 version, the Thane of Ross is here portrayed as a scheming, side-switching Machiavel. In both versions, this seems to me to dilute the central spiritual tragedy of the main characters.

There are successful aspects to the film: Coen’s use of crows as a recurring motif is creepy and effective, for instance, and the confrontation with Young Siward is handled imaginatively. Stephen Root, excellent as usual, tosses off the Porter scene with no mugging.

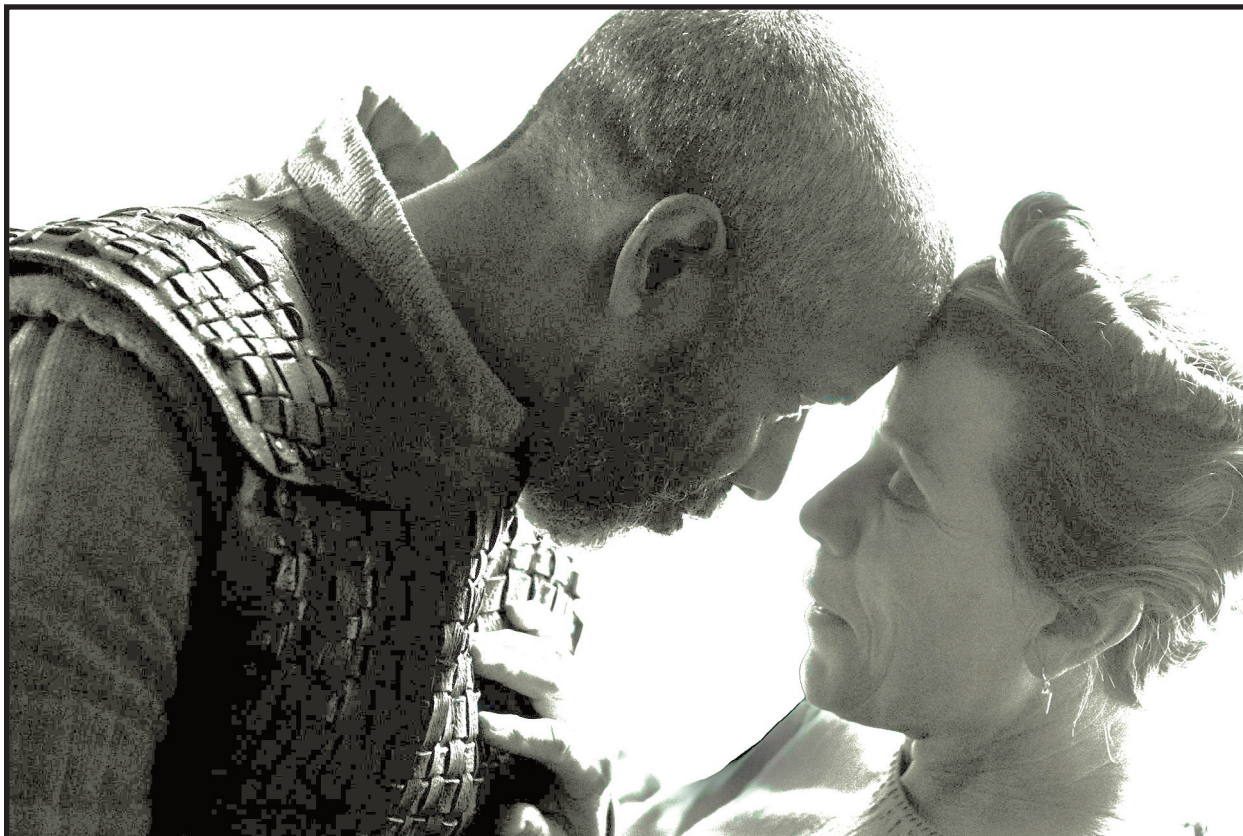
On the whole, Polanski’s Middle Ages bloodbath of

’71 is a more satisfying version. But Coen’s film has something Polanski’s doesn’t: true, charismatic stars in the leads. Washington keeps it reserved and quiet, but his internal power is commanding.

McDormand, on the other hand, lets it rip from her first scene, with terrifying intensity but also with lucidity and focus. You can see why her husband’s reluctance to commit the dreadful deed wilts before her inexorable will. You can also see, appallingly, the psychological pit she’s digging for herself. She’s flawless.

Whatever its shortfalls, this movie has two of the very best actors of their generation playing two of the greatest roles in Western drama. That’s not something one should skip lightly.

The Tragedy of Macbeth is rated R and plays at Harkins Camelview at Fashion Square.



A pair of heavyweight actors – Denzel Washington and Frances McDormand – star in “The Tragedy of Macbeth,” shot in lustrous black-and-white by Bruno Delbonnel.

Got something to share with Wrangler News for our Feb. 12 edition? Be sure to let us know by Friday, Feb. 4 so we’ll have plenty of time to be in touch.



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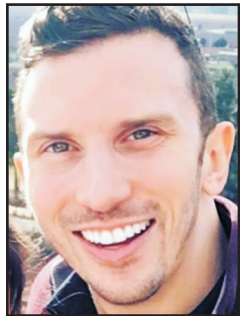
SPORTS

Notebook . . . with Alex Zener

MacDonald: Lack of consistency costs

The Aztecs, as of Jan. 13, with a 7-10 record, were ranked No. 18 in the Arizona Division 6A Conference after some hard losses over winter break dropped them down in the rankings.

Corona played in the 14th Annual Visit Mesa Basketball Challenge, Dec. 20-23, with 16 other teams from Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma and Utah held at Mountain View High School.



Alex Zener

The Aztecs lost to Perry, 69-42, in the first game and then in the second game to Rancho Solano Prep, 58-46, on Dec. 21. They had a closer, 68-59, game with Smoky Hill High School out of Aurora, CO, on Dec. 22 but still lost to Mesquite, 68-43, on Dec. 23.

"We had a tough Visit Mesa Tournament the week before Christmas," said coach **Neil MacDonald**. "Although we defended well at times, we were not consistent enough to get wins against four very good teams."

"The guys did do a good job of

sticking together as a team and our effort was good."

After the winter break, Corona was able to win three out of the first five games played in 2022.

Although the Aztecs lost to Chaparral by 10 points, 36-46, right after the break on Jan. 4, they were able to defeat Desert Ridge, 49-40, and get their first section win on Jan. 7.

Senior guard **Quinn Thornton** led the team in scoring with 13 points along with six rebounds, three assists and one blocked shot.

Junior 6-ft-9 center **Ollie Hinder** had active hands against the Jaguars stealing the ball two times while scoring six points, grabbing two rebounds and dishing out two assists.

Senior guard **Brandon Lee** had a great defensive game with four steals that led to fast-break opportunities in addition to grabbing three rebounds.

On the offensive end of the court, he had four assists and four points.

Senior guard **Hunter Stratton** stole the ball under the Jaguars basket, raced down court scoring a layup to go along with his two assists and one rebound.

At Highland on Jan. 11, the score was close throughout the first three quarters before the Hawks pulled ahead in the fourth quarter to defeat

Corona, 68-61.

Thorne led the Aztecs in scoring against Highland contributing 25 points, six rebounds and five assists including three treys in the first half.

Senior guard **Raymond Lam** was next with 13 points, six rebounds and three assists against the Hawks. He had at least two treys in the first half. One with an assist from senior guard **Brandon Lee**.

Brandon Lee scored eight points along with seven rebounds, one assist and one blocked shot from behind the Highland player.

Another highlight included a steal by senior forward **Nikola Kostadinovski** creating a fast break opportunity for him to score a layup.

On Jan. 12, the Aztecs defeated Cibola, 60-50, in a game played in Yuma, but lost on Jan. 14 to the Queen Creek Bulldogs, 46-42.

Sophomore guard **Preston Lee** had a breakout game against the Bulldogs scoring 11 points, including two treys and at least one outstanding floater plus two rebounds, one assist and two steals.

The Aztecs had a blowout game against Skyline on Jan. 15, defeating the Coyotes, 67-37 to improve their record to 8-11 overall.

Hinter's buzzer beater three-point shot that went in the basket from halfcourt should be in a highlight reel at the end-of-season banquet.

The Aztecs were scheduled to play at Desert Vista on Jan. 18 and at home against Mountain Pointe on Jan. 21.

Both teams are in Corona's 6A Central Region Conference but could prove to be a challenge, especially the Desert Vista game.

The Thunder has a better record at 6-5 but has lost four of their last

five games and will have played a game against Sunnyslope, 15-2, and ranked No. 1 in the 6A Southwest Region Conference, the night before.

Defeating Mountain Pointe, with a 10-1 overall record and ranked No. 4 in the 6A Division, may be more of a task for the Aztecs.

The Pride are on a five-game winning streak. They have three players, whose combined scores average 55 points a game. The entire Mountain Pointe team averages 75 points a game which is 20 more points a game than the Aztecs.

To finish out games in Jan., Corona is scheduled to play at Desert Ridge on Jan. 24 and at home against Highland on Jan. 28.

"We have been battling injury and illness all year which has resulted in the necessity for different lineups most of the time," said MacDonald. "We are hoping to continue to get healthy this month so we can string together some wins to move up in the standings before the state playoffs in Feb."

As of Jan. 18, the Aztecs have seven games left in the regular season to improve their rankings.

Marcos de Niza Boys Basketball

The Padres are off to a good start to the 2021-2022 season with a 12-5 overall record and are ranked No. 13 in the Arizona Division 4A Conference.

Marcos went on a four-game winning streak to start the season while playing at the PXU Coyote Classic Tournament held during the Thanksgiving holiday break, Nov. 22-27.

After losing to cross-town rivals McClintock on Nov. 29 and Tempe in a one-point heart breaker on Dec. 2,

the Padres won eight of their next nine games before they started playing teams in their own 4A Desert Sky section on Jan. 6.

In their game against Mesquite, the Wildcats started strong outscoring the Padres, 22-12, in the first quarter. Marcos outscored Mesquite in the second and third quarter but never was able to recover the 10-point deficit losing 66-72.

The Padres were able to bounce back with a 72-68 win over Mingus in Cottonwood on Jan. 10 when seniors **Tony Mottola** and **Julius Rhodes** lit up the court scoring 23 and 22 points respectively while senior **Kenyelle Bailey** scored 14 points.

The next night, Jan. 11, Marcos had another away game, this time at the American Leadership Academy in Queen Creek, where they lost to the Patriots, 63-73.

The Padres are led in scoring overall this season by Mottola who averages 14.8 points per game and Rhodes averaging 13.9 points a game.

Bailey and junior **Charles Clark** are the next leading scorers with both averaging almost nine points a game.

Additional points come from juniors **Marcus McClure** with 7.6 points per game and **Jamaal Young** with 6.3 points a game. Seniors **Cam Bueno** and **Wesley Salter** have each scored in all 15 games they have played.

Mottola is the leading three-point shooter on the team hitting 39 out of 102 of his three-point attempts or sinking 38 percent.

Bailey dominates the team in rebounds snagging 71 offensive and 69 defensive rebounds for a total of 140 rebounds or 80 more than the

next leading rebounder, Clark, with 60 total rebounds.

Bailey, who has played in all 16 games, is averaging 8.8 rebounds a game followed by sophomore **Michael Turner** who has only played in nine games but averages 4.7 rebounds a game.

Young is the assist leader on the team with an average of 3.5 assists a game while McClure leads the team in steals with an average of 2.1 a game.

Bailey and Mottola are the top blockers with just less than one block per game on average.

Other members of the team include senior **Chris Romero**, who has played in six games shooting 32 percent, senior **Joseph Hernandez**, who averages 33 percent shooting, junior **Caylor Turner**, who has played in 11 games with close to three points a game, senior **Devin Gentry**, who has played in eight games with close to two rebounds a game, and junior **Rayvell Suggs**.

On Jan. 17, the Padres were scheduled to play at Saguaro but that game was cancelled and replaced with a game against Mica Mountain High School out of Tucson on the Padres home court. No results were available at publication.

Until the Mica Mountain game, Jan. 17, Marcos had not had a home game since Dec. 7.

The Padres actually played 13 of their first 17 games in the 2021-22 season somewhere other than on their home court.

As of Jan. 17, the Padres will have home-court advantage for the next seven games. The next four scheduled home games are Seton Catholic on Jan 21, then Mesquite, Jan. 25, Notre Dame Prep, Jan. 27 and American Leadership Academy on Jan. 28.



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BUSINESS

Chandler, Tempe firms unite to focus on Native American projects

By Alison Bailin Batz

Special for Wrangler News

CHASSE Building Team, a Tempe contractor that oversees more than \$425 million in construction projects across Arizona annually, and Pimmex Contracting, a Native-owned firm in Chandler that provides building services across Arizona, California, New Mexico are teaming up to focus on Native American projects across the state.

Pimmex-CHASSE already is familiar with building for tribal entities, including two early-education Head Start facilities for the San Carlos Apache Tribe, a physical-therapy expansion for Gila River Health Care and an EMS station for Gila River Health Care.

The partnership comes after years of vetting by Pimmex founder and owner Carlos Munoz, a 2019 *Native Business Magazine* "Native Business Top 50 Entrepreneur."

A member of the Gila River Indian Community,

Munoz started Pimmex with his father (whom he has since bought out) in Chandler in 2008. Munoz has grown the business to a staff of nearly 30 as it averages \$20 million in construction projects annually. Pimmex holds licenses with GRIC, the Navajo Nation and the state of Arizona.

Among its most notable projects is the remodel of the Apache Gold Casino and Hotel for the San Carlos Apache Tribe.

"We'd been approached what feels like a dozen times over the past few

years about the concept of a joint venture to help us expand the work we can do on tribal land," Munoz said.

"I knew CHASSE through project director Matthew Wedding, who volunteers on the Chandler Compadres with me. It was clear from the onset that CHASSE shared our core mission to build efficiently, effectively and sustainably while giving back to the community at the same time. It was a perfect fit."

Through Pimmex-CHASSE, the team can bid on larger projects on tribal land statewide.

According to Munoz, the partnership also ensures that he will help lead the charge in high-quality development for tribes.

"We retain our own core businesses, as well, working on projects independently under our parent companies as we did prior," said Wedding.

Wedding's team at CHASSE was named 2020 Tempe Business of the Year and a 2021 Most Admired Company in Arizona.

Among CHASSE's most-recent projects are Hohokam Elementary School, John S. McCain III Elementary School, Novel Midtown Luxury Apartment Complex,

The Fillmore Multifamily Development, U-HAUL Conference and Fitness Center, The Astor at Osborn, Union on 6th Student Housing,

The January 8th Memorial, West Point High School, The Crossing at Cooley Station, The Creighton Academy and Overture Kierland.

For more, visit www.chasse.us.



Longtime friends Carlos Munoz, owner of Chandler's Pimmex Contracting, and Matthew Wedding, Tempe CHASSE Building Team's project director, are now co-workers as their firms team to focus on Native American projects in Arizona. —Photo by Claudia Johnstone for Wrangler News

Tempe-based Chasse surprises staff with stock ownership plan

Christmas is over, but in a way it is just beginning for employees of CHASSE Building Team, an award-winning general contractor headquartered in Tempe.

Chasse has become a 100-percent, employee-owned firm by launching an Employee Stock Ownership Plan in a surprise announcement made to the staff. Chasse oversees more than \$425 million in construction projects annually across Arizona.

"To preserve CHASSE's culture, which since day one we shaped around 'building to make a difference...for our

teammates, our clients and the local communities we serve,' and our mission to be 'built different, on purpose,' we also decided to call it our Teammate Stock Ownership Plan, or TSOP," founder and president Barry Chasse said. "We want our employees to act and think like owners, and directly benefit from CHASSE's continued success as participants in the TSOP. Over the past 14 years, CHASSE has grown from a handful of team members to more than 200. Its work includes new construction and renovations in a variety of markets, including K-12 education, higher education, multi-family, municipal, commercial, health care and nonprofit.

The move to TSOP does not change the management structure of the privately owned firm.



EMD Electronics plans to bring about 100 jobs to the West Chandler area by the end of 2022 at its new factory that will manufacture equipment for its delivery systems and services business, which support the semiconductor industry. EMD Electronics photo

100 jobs coming to W. Chandler as EMD Electronics expands

EMD Electronics, the North American division of Darmstadt, Germany-based Merck KGaA, is bringing 100 jobs to the West Chandler area by the end of 2022 in a new factory to manufacture equipment for its delivery systems and services business that supports the semiconductor industry.

The factory will operate on a new property in Chandler where EMD signed a long-term lease. As part of EMD's Level Up program, the \$28 million investment will enable the firm to grow its gas and chemical delivery systems business in North America, Europe and Asia. At full ramp-up, staffing levels will grow to greater than 100 total employees, the company said.

"EMD Electronics' Delivery Systems and Services expansion is a valuable addition to our state's thriving semiconductor ecosystem, increasing manufacturing and transportation capabilities critical to the semiconductor production process," Arizona Governor Doug Ducey said. "We look forward to continuing to grow

Arizona's unrivaled semiconductor supply chain."

The new factory at 1720 E. Germann Road will provide additional capacity to meet EMD's forecast business needs.

"EMD Electronics' investment in Chandler advances its position as a global semiconductor materials leader," said Sandra Watson, President and CEO of the Arizona Commerce Authority. "The company's enhanced presence will bolster Chandler's position as a technology hub, creating quality jobs and supporting existing semiconductor leaders in the state."

The Level Up growth program seeks to capture growth opportunities that come along with significantly accelerating global demand for innovative semiconductor and display materials.

"The Chandler Airport Area employment corridor's infrastructure, central location and highly skilled workforce has a track record of attracting renowned companies like EMD Electronics," said Chandler Mayor

Kevin Hartke. "EMD Electronics is a respected leader in the semiconductor industry and we look forward to strengthening our relationship with them and advancing Chandler's leadership position as the premier destination for semiconductor investment in the world."

The new factory will supplement the company's ability to support customers' investments in the U.S. and boost its overall global footprint of manufacturing facilities.

"There's a ripple effect occurring as the semiconductor industry has its sights set on Greater Phoenix, and EMD Electronics' expansion to Chandler shows that trend in action," said Greater Phoenix Economic Council President & CEO Chris Camacho. "With the increased presence of this international innovator in our region, the local semiconductor ecosystem continues its upward trajectory as a global leader."

More information: emd-electronics.com.

Chandler names new chief exec for city's airport-related services

Ryan Reeves has been appointed Chandler Airport Manager with oversight of the city's growing segment of aviation-related services

Reeves has more than 20 years of airside and landside management experience in the Valley, previously serving as the airport coordinator for the Buckeye Municipal Airport, and as customer-service manager and general manager for Lux Air Jet Centers at the Phoenix-Goodyear Airport.

Reeves was Chandler airport business coordinator since August 2019, and an integral part of the updated Chandler Municipal Airport Master Plan.

"His knowledge of the aviation industry is second-to-none and he has proven himself an outstanding leader who can capably execute the mayor's and City Council's bold vision for Chandler Municipal Airport," City Manager Josh Wright said.

Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, Reeves is in the process of completing his private pilot's license.

Reeves earned his bachelors degree at Eastern Illinois University and a masters from the University of Illinois.

He holds leadership roles for several aviation organizations, including past president for the Arizona Airports Association, vice president of the American Aviation Historical Society-Phoenix Wing and vice president of the Arizona Aviation Historical Group.

Chandler Municipal Airport, 18 miles southeast of Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, offers trouble-free access to the region.

The centerpiece of the Chandler Airpark employment corridor, it is an excellent business airport and home to world-class training institutions.

With more than 200,000 operations this year, the airport is among the nation's busiest general-aviation ports.

CHD's location is well-situated for easy travel to southwestern U.S. markets and beyond, as well as a base for charter, transport and sightseeing excursions.



Ryan Reeves

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Former state corrections director shoots self, points gun at officers during 3-hour S. Tempe standoff

A former director at the Arizona Department of Corrections is expected to face criminal charges following a three-hour South Tempe standoff with police, in which he pointed a gun at officers.

It finally ended with the man surrendering and being admitted to a hospital due to a self-inflicted gunshot in a hand.

Charles Ryan, who retired as head of DOC Rehabilitation and Reentry in 2019, was armed inside his home near Rural and Warner roads when officers responded at about 9:30 p.m. on Jan. 6 to a call of a shooting.

Ryan's wife and daughter safely escaped the home

and spoke with investigators outside, officers said.

Attempts by officers to communicate with Ryan were unsuccessful.

At one point, officers said, he opened the door from the house and pointed a gun at them.

Police attempted to use non-lethal force and made commands for Ryan to surrender, but he went back inside.

Negotiators were called in and finally convinced Ryan to come out of the house at about 1 a.m. He was taken into police custody and transported to a hospital with the gunshot wound.

Police, who are continuing to investigate, in a state-

ment Jan. 11, said that Ryan was "experiencing a mental health crisis" and could not yet say what charges Ryan might face.

Police said in the statement that they "will recommend the appropriate criminal charges to the Maricopa County Attorney's Office for consideration" after investigators complete their review.



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