



WRANGLER NEWS

MAY 14 - 27, 2022 • VOL 32, NO 9



After more than a decade of planning, the Tempe Streetcar rolls out on May 20. PAGE 3



It's the golden anniversary for Tempe Sister Cities, which has been breaking ground since its inception. PAGE 12



If laughter is best medicine, improv-MANIA in downtown Chandler can fill your prescription. PAGE 19



NO HASSLE WITH THE TASSEL

AFTER A COUPLE OF DISRUPTED YEARS DUE TO COVID-19, LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION CEREMONIES ARE FULL GO, ON MAY 19, AND WE HAVE ALL THE DETAILS FOR YOU. PAGE 25

— Wrangler News file photo by Billy Hardiman

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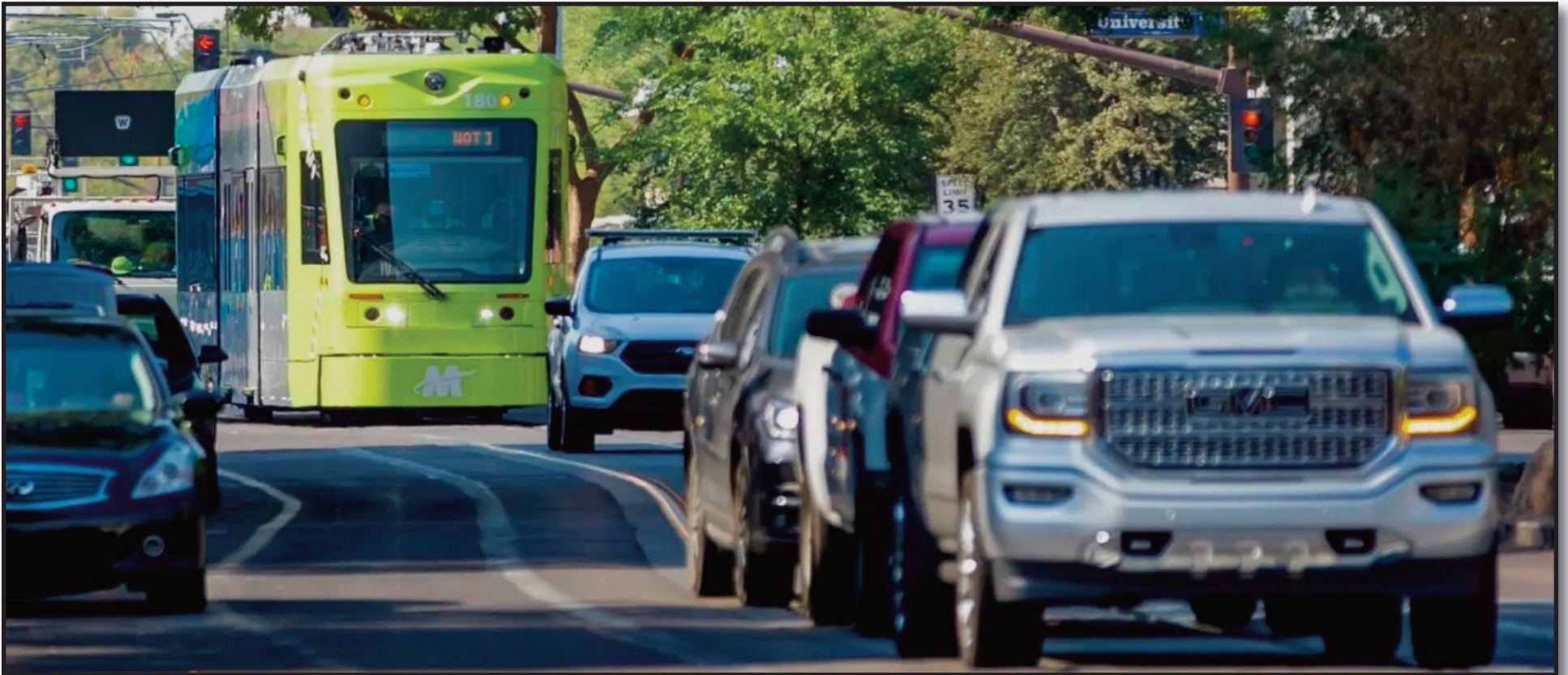
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Ridden into town on a rail

Tempe trolley rolls out May 20 with free rides for a year

Wrangler News story by Lee Shappell | Photos by Billy Hardiman



After a decade of planning and occasional controversy over cost and construction disruption to traffic and businesses, the Tempe Streetcar debuts May 20 through downtown, and the first year of rides will be free.

The Jolly Green Trolley is ready to roll. After nearly a decade of debate over its cost and route, 3-plus years of disruption to businesses and traffic during installation of its rails followed by months of testing along the line, the Tempe Streetcar will make its debut on May 20, and riders get a free ride on the green-and-silver beast during its opening year.

The long-awaited, nearly \$200 million, 3-mile-long system is intended to create a more-connected downtown.

"We are really excited about the streetcar coming into play in the city of Tempe, particularly to add to our regional infrastructure along with light rail and bus rapid transit," said Tempe Mayor Corey Woods. "We are looking forward to doing everything we can to make sure our residents and visitors can get anywhere around the Valley without a car, if they choose to."

Tempe's is the first modern streetcar line in the Valley, connecting riders to the city's historic neighborhoods, small businesses, and arts and cultural destinations. Tempe Streetcar will serve the Arizona State University campus, ASU Gammage, Sun Devil Stadium and Tempe Beach Park.

The route starts on Rio Salado Parkway at the massive Marina Heights development that houses State Farm, and then heads west to Ash Avenue, south on Ash to University Drive, east to Mill Avenue, continuing south on Mill to Apache Blvd., then turning east to the Dorsey/Apache Light Rail Station. On its return trip to Marina Heights, the route goes north on Mill Avenue to Rio Salado Parkway.

The route features 14 sheltered stops — more like bus stops than those of light rail in that they are more frequent than light-rail stops — with unique public art and landscaping that are Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant and accessible by bicycle. There are two connections along the line to light rail.

It won't be a free ride after the first year.

"We will have a fare system in place but we're still

Streetcar

From Page 3

kind of determining what that is going to be,” said Madeline Phipps of Valley Metro.

With its frequent stops, the streetcar is more like a bus than like light rail, the fundamental difference being that the streetcar shares lanes with street traffic rather than having a dedicated lane.

That created challenges designing a system to operate on downtown Tempe streets shared with congested vehicular and pedestrian traffic while powered in stretches by hybrid technology.

Unlike light rail, the streetcar is powered by overhead wires along most of the route but switches to reserve power stored in its lithium-ion battery along some stretches. This feature was particularly attractive to Tempe, which did not want to uproot trees and destroy landscaping along Mill Avenue in order to install overhead wires.

“Obviously, it’s a new mode of transit for Valley residents, and the fact that it shares traffic lanes with cars is a new thing,” Phipps said. “It’s safe to drive in the same lane, for the most part, but drivers should follow the signage and keep back a safe distance. Treat it like any other vehicle. The streetcar will obey the same traffic signals as all traffic. The operator will stop at red lights. It will do the same things that cars do.”

— STREETCAR, Page 6



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Dr. Sarah Trahan discusses the structure of the page with Zachary Moran.
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Streetcar

From Page 4

The streetcar operates as a single car rather than in a train of two or three connected cars, as with light rail. The 72-foot long streetcar's two hinges allow for tight turns and give the appearance of being three cars.

Valley Metro advises those who ride bikes and scooters to not ride between the rails because it is difficult to maneuver in the tight space and their tires could get stuck in the track's grooves.

It also emphasizes that pedestrians cross streetcar tracks only at designated crosswalks. The streetcars are quiet – much quieter than the light rail – so pedestrians must be aware of surroundings and the signals.

Existing street parking did not need to be removed except for the equivalent of three parking spaces at each stop and to clear adequate turning radius in some locations.

Valley Metro purchased six vehicles from Brookville, the only maker of streetcars designed and manufactured

exclusively in the U.S., on a \$33 million contract awarded in 2017.

Four vehicles will be on the system at a time running at 15- to 20-minute intervals. Each has 40 seats. With standing room, a streetcar can transport roughly 120 people along the short-hop line.

So who will ride it?

"We anticipate all kinds of people using this," Phipps said. "Students at ASU, employees at Marina Heights, people coming to Tempe from other parts of the Valley for arts or cultural events, people traveling from Sky Harbor can use light rail and then connect to the streetcar in Tempe.

"Certainly, it is designed for those shorter trips within the city because it has more frequent stops. It's more of a connector between our different transit systems in the Valley."

Anticipated weekday ridership is 2,250 to 2,750, according to Phipps.

The cost, to be paid with a mix of federal, regional and local funds, has been controversial from the start. Tempe also will pay the estimated annual operating and maintenance cost of

— STREETCAR, Page 8

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Streetcar

From Page 6

\$3.1 million. Some critics suggested that it would be less expensive to add buses that run on compressed natural gas.

"Roadways downtown are pretty much near capacity," Phipps said. "The streetcar can transport more people more efficiently. Knowing we have traffic as an issue, efficiency is a consideration. Adding in more buses wouldn't necessarily solve the problem. We need to move more people more quickly. Thinking toward the future, as Tempe continues to grow and there is still more travel demand, it's really about serving the community there and anticipating what the future's going to bring.

"This system gets cars off the street, at least that's certainly what we anticipate."

Also, modern streetcars are quieter than buses and light-rail trains.

Tempe, which has the most densely populated downtown among Valley suburbs, with its high-rise residential structures and the Arizona State Uni-

versity campus just off Mill Avenue, has been proactive in creating multimodal transportation, hoping to get as many automobiles as possible off its crowded downtown streets.

"We didn't build any new park-and-rides for this project, but the existing one at Dorsey and Apache also will serve the streetcar," Phipps said.

Planners envision the streetcar supporting the Tempe-area transit network with an ability to attract new riders, increase mobility, strengthen existing neighborhoods and create sustainable development. It could positively impact housing values near the route as it not only connects to downtown attractions but also connects to Valley Metro Light Rail to downtown Phoenix and downtown Mesa.

Streetcar rails are the same gauge as those of light rail so streetcar vehicles can travel on the light-rail track. In fact, every night, the streetcars will switch over onto the light-rail track and travel to the maintenance center at 30th Street and Washington to be serviced.

More information: valleymetro.org/project/tempe-streetcar.

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OPINIONS

Readers back artificial turf over natural grass in yards

Our April 23 story about artificial turf ("New state law may clear way for artificial turf use in HOAs," Page 3) seems to have resonated with our readers.

The Arizona law the forbids homeowners associations from banning artificial grass becomes effective 90 days after the close of the current session of the Legislature. One Warner Ranch Homeowners Association still prohibits artificial grass, as detailed in our story.

Readers were nearly unanimous in their support for the fake stuff in their comments about our story, which was posted on wranglernews.com and linked to our Wrangler News Facebook page.

A sampling of comments from our Facebook page:

I am disgusted that there is no real leadership in our state to address the water drought situation and to make it mandatory to convert to water-saving methods. — *Jack Elliott*

Real grass should not be allowed. I want to get rid of mine! — *Timothy Spence*

I love natural grass, but believe that homeowners need to rethink this during the present drought and the growth of this area in the desert. I don't have natural grass but am considering some kurapia for a part of my backyard. — *Linda Gilbert*

Good. Artificial turf doesn't radiate heat like gravel or gulp water like grass. — *Kathy Ware*

Artificial turf is needed in Phoenix and is an appropriate solution to help control our filthy air quality, wasteful applications of water and fertilizer that end up polluting lakes, rivers and ground water, and is a SMART way to have your yard look great year round and it's cheaper than grass! — *Bill Brandt*

Wait until these people become aware of the cost and frequency of repair and or replacement for their artificial turf. It's not as simple as one installation and it's done. — *Boyd Cottrell*

Most have a 20-year guarantee now and the quality is good. The manufacturers usually use AZ for testing. If installed properly there is no maintenance except you might want to spray the dust off on occasion. I was skeptical before I finally installed it over 10 years ago. — *John Schroeder*

Grass in the desert makes no sense. Flood irrigation for private homes should cease, in this current drought environment. Where is the sense of it? — *Justin Dunphy*

As water gets more expensive I don't think this will be an issue. — *Joan Edwards Mueller*

People on HOA boards just love to tell you how you are going to live. Kinda like demonrats. — *Bill Bonar*



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Kindness of strangers still alive

I am writing this with the hope that two amazing humans see it.

My name is Jennifer and I am a Tempe native and proud resident of the Kyrene Corridor.

On Monday morning, May 2, shortly before 8 a.m., I had an unfortunate incident with my dog at Hanger Park.

Although it all ended well, I was extremely distraught and stressed.

This wonderful couple out for their morning walk, noticed my angst. They took it upon themselves to help me and my dog. They not

only trudged through the tall, soaked grass searching for my missing keys, they also offered to let me use their cell phone to contact my family member for assistance. Far too many times these selfless acts of kindness go unnoticed.

I unfortunately did not get their names, but did remember they live in Warner Ranch. I would like to express my deepest gratitude for their time, thoughtfulness and help.

I... sincerely appreciate all the assistance and kindness shown to me and am grateful for the positive outcome.

With a thankful heart,
Jennifer Mitchell

Responsible financial path put Chandler in a good place to be a good place

By Terry Roe

Over the past two decades, Chandler, like many other cities in the Valley, has experienced unprecedented growth. That being said, if you remember 2020 – and I'm sure you do – you know Valley cities faced significant hardships during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today it is clear cities and towns are not immune to the effects of a pandemic, high inflation, or supply-chain interruptions that can negatively affect our residents. No, Chandler is not immune, but the truth is we are – and continue to be – uniquely positioned to *grow responsibly*.

What really impresses me is Chandler has always been a fiscally responsible city, and with a AAA bond rating our commitment to making sound financial decisions continues. The result? A fantastic quality of life for people who live, work and recreate in our city.

Our residents are surrounded by clean, safe parks,

multi-use paths and recreation facilities. The city has the best water-treatment process in the state, recycling every single drop of water that is used. Utility rates are among the lowest in the Valley, and our commitment to police and fire professionals remains steadfast.



Terry Roe

I'm proud to report that in the 2022-23 budget Chandler plans to reach deep into the city's pockets to make an ADDITIONAL \$50 million payment to support the pay-down of Chandler's long-term financial obligation to the Public Safety Retirement Fund.

This payment will help position the city to pay off the debt early resulting in a \$9 million dollar annual savings. This means our police officers and firefighters will be well taken care of in retirement without passing off an ongoing debt to our Chandler residents.

Another thing that makes Chandler stand out is a visionary approach to planning.

The City's thriving employment corridors and Chandler's emergence as a top destination for tech companies did not happen by chance. For a number of years City Councils and staff have stayed the course as Chandler slowly and deliberately attracted more than 2,200 businesses and 99,000 jobs to the five corridors.

Today, the Price Corridor is nationally known in the semiconductor industry, with 71 high-tech companies calling Chandler home.

These are just a few examples of how sticking to a long-term plan, balancing the budget and doggedly preserving a responsible financial path for Chandler produces tangible results.

If we remain committed to these philosophies, the sky is the limit for our great city.

Terry Roe is vice mayor of Chandler.



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COMMUNITY

At 50, Tempe Sister Cities a history-maker on world scene

By Cliff Summerhill
Special for *Wrangler News*

As Tempe Sister Cities reaches its 50-year anniversary, it is a pillar of education and understanding with cities around the world.

“What we’ve given back to the community, families and students has saved lives locally and internationally,” said David Carrera, Tempe Sister Cities president.

“This program really changes lives.”

The organization kicked off its half-century celebration in February with a ceremony at its Hackett House headquarters, where the gift shop was renamed “Millie’s



Boutique,” after a lifelong donor.

Recently, Tempe History Museum opened an exhibit that runs through Oct. 15 about Tempe Sister Cities and its 50-year history of “Bringing the World Together – one friendship at a time.”

“The exhibit is amazing, and people are amazed with how great it is,” Carrera said.

In 1956, the Sister Cities national or-

ganization was founded at the urging of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Fast forward to 1971. Tempe Sister Cities founder Dick Neuheisel, with help from former Tempe mayor and U.S. Congressman Harry Mitchell, launched the first partnership with a communist city, Skopje in Yugoslavia. It was a bold move at the time.

While some believed that partnering with a city behind the Iron Curtain was risky, founders believed it was the right move for their mission of fostering peace, education and understanding.

“They pushed forward, and they said, ‘We really need to do this, it’s important,’” Carrera said.

In a 2019 article in *Wrangler News*, Neuheisel shared that Tempe Sister Cities’ first partnership created national shock and disbelief. However, it opened Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to Sister Cities, and today there are scores of American cities twinned with cities in those areas, he said in the article.

In 1976, Tempe gained its second sister city, Regensburg, Germany. Over the next five decades, Tempe would add nine more.

Tempe now has 11 sister cities — in North Macedonia, Germany, New Zealand, India, China and in countries across Europe, South America and Africa. Exchanges are rooted in safety, education, culture and student opportunities.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tempe Police received a grant to visit a sister city in New Zealand to learn how their police handle intense confrontations without deadly weapons. Most New Zealand officers do not carry



Tempe History Museum recently opened an exhibit about Tempe Sister Cities and its 50-year history of “Bringing the World Together – one friendship at a time.”

— Photo courtesy of Tempe Sister Cities

weapons and use de-escalation techniques that don’t involve deadly force.

Unfortunately, that program was scrapped in March of 2020 due to COVID-19.

Tempe Fire Department, however, completed an exchange prior to the pandemic with the same New Zealand city, exchanging practices in combating brush fires.

“They took them up to Prescott, where they learned about what happened to the Hotshots,” Carrera said. “It was a very private affair and very emotional for both departments.”

In other exchanges, Tempe educators may step into classrooms with international educators.

Tempe delegates have traveled to nine sister cities for three to five weeks, living in homes of host families and absorbing their culture.

In the summer, Tempe hosts international delegates. During a five-week exchange, it immerses them in events and recreation.

“All of the international delegates come to Tempe at the same time, lead-

ing to amazing friendships and relationships,” said Carrera, who’s been involved with the program since 2012.

Visiting delegates are taken to the Grand Canyon, Disneyland, the beach, a mayor’s luncheon and a youth summit.

Carrera said the organization is looking forward to resuming delegate exchanges in 2023.

And, the donations-based nonprofit will resume hosting fundraising events, including Oktoberfest, at Tempe Town Lake and Tempe Beach Park.

“We haven’t been able to host Oktoberfest since 2019,” Carrera said. “We feel it’s going to be a huge success this year. People want to get out and do things. We are developing a great program.”

As Tempe Sister Cities moves back to normal, Carrera hopes to not only maintain volunteers but also rejuvenate enthusiasm with new volunteers.

“We can’t be stagnant with leadership, projects or goals,” he said. “It has to be evolving constantly.”

More about Tempe Sister Cities: tempestercities.org.

Don Kirkland

How the legacy of a tough Vietnam nurse lives on

To readers who've encountered my previous column ramblings, I apologize if I occasionally repeat some of the same stories. Like the neighborhood newspaper I printed as a kid using gelatin, indelible ink and a pie tin, one seemingly oft-repeated addendum to the Kirkland archives. Or delivering papers on my bike to the mortuary every morning.

What about selling newspapers on the corner in front of the drugstore a couple of blocks from our house, and spending the money I earned on ice cream at the soda fountain? No? OK, you get the point.

I don't think, either, that I've ever talked much about my days as the media relations guy at Desert Samaritan Hospital, now Banner Desert, in the 1980s. That was an interesting job, too, and I didn't

spend my paycheck on fountain treats, although I'm sure I was often tempted. I was a quick learner in those early days.

What I also came to realize was the passion by which our hospital nursing staff viewed their responsibilities with patients, something that no doubt largely was drilled into them by Jackie Evans, a former Vietnam helicopter nurse who was our associate administrator. As you might guess, Jackie was one tough hombre—not a lady to be messed with.

Because overseeing our hospital's relations with TV, radio and newspaper reporters (mainly keeping them away from our CEO, who disliked that part of his job as much as I disliked delivering papers to the mortuary), Jackie and I more than once clashed on situations involving my interaction with the media versus her stewardship of the nurses' best interests.

Perhaps you already figured this out: Jackie always won. Not, that is, because she was necessarily right on every detail, but because the commitment with which she viewed her role, along with the singular passion of the nurses for their patients' care and recovery—well, it was obvious to me and every other staff member from top to bottom, that the recipients of care were Desert Sam's No. 1 priority. The media not so much.

Since my departure from hospital PR, I've never forgotten what I learned from Jackie Evans and the other likewise passionate professionals who were fortunate enough to have her as their teacher, leader, defender.

So when the time came recently for me to find myself undergoing a seven-week regimen of daily, 5-minute-each radiation treatments at Ironwood Cancer Center in West Chandler, I knew instinctively that I'd be in good hands. Having seen medical professionals at work during those earlier hospital days, I simply took it for granted that I was being cared for by people whose very lives revolve around the same principles I'd seen in practice 30-some years ago.

As of this writing, I've completed the prescribed series of treatments with none of the potential negative outcomes—in fact, with nothing more than the confidence that I'm in good health, along with a deep appreciation for the warmth, professionalism and, yes, Jackie Evans-style passion with which my care has been administered during these past two-plus months.

To the Ironwood staff—Tamra, Leslie, Kim, Alyssa, Bryce and Paul—I offer my salute for the work to which they've dedicated their careers. And, obviously, their hearts.

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Annual Luncheon Featuring Business Excellence Awards

Reflecting on the past year while looking forward to the future, we celebrate and share our vision for the Tempe Chamber and the business community at the Annual Luncheon, presented by Southwest Airlines.

There will be an introduction of the incoming Chairman of the Board, Board of Directors and Committee Chairs while honoring those who are moving on from their terms of service. Presentations by our leadership and an awards ceremony for our members add to the enjoyment of this plated luncheon.

A highlight of the event is the video program and presentation of the 2022 Business Excellence Awards. The awards recognize responsible business leadership and honor those that demonstrate a passion for excellence. Through the awards, the Tempe Chamber identifies companies whose practices in business growth, employee development, community involvement and customer service exemplify excellence.

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BEHIND THE BADGE

The men and women who make Tempe PD a desirable place to work

A specialty pull-out publication of Wrangler News

Tempe Police are looking to bolster their numbers, whether through lateral recruits or new recruits. Pay starts at \$60,258.

Lateral applications are open year round. New recruit applications are open through May 18.

"As I recruiting officer, the first thing I want to do is show them what my experience is like," said Officer Denison Dawson, the department's only recruiting officer. "I want them to know what it feels like here — the family environment, the way we get

along and joke with one another."

Dawson said he recalls being recruited in football and what it felt like on a recruiting trip.

"They show you the stadium. They show you the equipment," he said. "So I thought, 'Why not do that here?' If I feel a certain way about the department, I don't think comes through as well in an email or phone call.

"I show them around — our shooting range and talking to a firearms instructor; the vehicles; walk

through the station and introduce them to investigators and command staff. The feedback has been amazing. They totally felt at home, felt the genuineness. That's the main thing I want to get across. We have the pay scale and technology. But in my opinion, what separates Tempe is that family environment. That's not duplicated at other agencies."

Information about joining TPD: tempe.gov/government/police/join-tempe-pd

Female-friendly department a destination for Flagstaff native, arresting thoughts of moving on to a federal agency

She barely comes to the shoulder of some of her colleagues, yet Lt. Catharina McCann is among the biggest members of the Tempe Police Department.

She is the department's SWAT team commander.

It wasn't a stretch to imagine that she'd land in such a role.

Her father was in law enforcement for 37 years, ending his career as chief of police in Flagstaff, where she was born.

"When I graduated from Northern Arizona University he was a good guide for agencies I should look into, McCann said.

She was interested in Phoenix and Tucson, on his recommendation. She preferred Tempe because it wasn't so big.

"And my dad kept pushing Tempe because of the good things he'd heard about it."

She applied to Tempe only, believing that it would be a steppingstone to a career at a federal agency.

"I actually wanted federal law enforcement, possibly the CIA," said McCann, whose degree from NAU is in political science. "When I graduated I was advised that I should go to a local police department and get three to five years in and then put in for a federal job.



That was the plan."

Then the good things she experienced at TPD got in the way of those plans.

"Tempe became a destination," McCann said.

By Year 3 she tested for an investigations assignment. She worked night detectives and became a narcotics detective. She went on to a stint working sex and child crimes.

"It was around that time I should been applying to a federal agency if that was the route I wanted to take, but I found that Tempe does have a lot of variety,"

McCann said. "I recognized how great Tempe is as a department."

Tempe, she says, has the best equipment and a good training program and training officers that are always at the forefront of any major changes in law enforcement. Those were hooks that kept her.

"Being female, from the very beginning I've never dealt with discrimination. I was lucky to be Tempe's first narcotics sergeant, and now its first female SWAT commander and lieutenant over special investigations," McCann said. "I just feel very fortunate when I hear that other females in other departments are not afforded those opportunities."

Having been raised by a father in law enforcement, from an early age she heard him talk about how important it is in whatever job to make a contribution to society.

"He always talked about how law enforcement is one of the most noble professions you can work in," McCann said. "That stuck with me. It's not always rainbows and sunshine — we are experiencing staffing issues — but the reward is great if you want to give back to your community.

"We're a department that's sized where if you said the name of a person it's very likely I'm aware of that person and where they work. It is a great sense of family. I do try to create an environment where everyone feels they can go to someone — a supervisor, or professional staff — and express concerns and know they'll be addressed."



TEMPE POLICE: THE MEN AND WOMEN BEHIND THE BADGE

A Specialty Publication of Wrangler News



Breakout from tough background led to career in law enforcement

Life easily could have gone another way for Denison Dawson.

He grew up in a dysfunctional family. His mother was a recovering crack cocaine addict. His father was an abusive alcoholic. Many of his friends from his tough south Phoenix neighborhood today live impoverished lives. Some, he said, are in prison.

For Dawson, “the fork in my road” came when his mother re-entered his life and got him to family in Southern California during his high school years. He attended Anaheim Loara High — where basketball Hall of Fame coach Lute Olson had his first head coaching job.

Dawson was a running back on the football team, and received a scholarship to Nevada-Reno. Realizing he wasn’t going to be an NFL prospect, “I took my education seriously” with a major in English and a minor in sociology.

“I didn’t want to go into teaching or law but I majored in English because I love to read. I love literature and writing,” Dawson said. “But when I got out of college, I didn’t know quite what to do.”

He returned to the Valley and worked at several jobs in the corporate world and as a personal trainer. He met a young woman who wanted to be a police of-

ficer.

“I said, ‘Come over to the gym, I’ll get you in shape for it,’” Dawson said. “She told me I should become an officer, too. I thought, ‘Why not?’ Unlike a lot of kids I grew up with, I did not have a disdain for law enforcement.

“So, being a young Christian, I said a prayer, asking, ‘Is this the plan you have for me, God?’ and the answer was yes. Now 19 years, later it definitely is where I am supposed to be. I found my purpose in law enforcement.”

Dawson has been with the Tempe Police Department for nearly 20 years, now as its only recruiting officer.

“Back in ‘02 when I first started, it was unfortunate because some of the people in my old neighborhood called me a sellout because I was working for ‘the man,’ as they see it — a Black man working in a predominantly White environment and for the government,” Dawson said. “I was called an ‘Uncle Tom.’ That stuff really hurt me.

“I finally figured out, you know what, that’s the problem with the community. If someone makes it out or has success, they view it as selling out. Why am I a sellout? Because I have a good-paying job, I’m starting my career, I’m making a difference in the community?”

Dawson started as a Tempe patrol officer, on the street, which he says was perfect given his background.

“I really loved making a difference,” he said. “I grew up like some of the people on the calls I was going to. I could relate to them.”

He later became a motorcycle officer.

“I loved that assignment,” Dawson said. “There’s freedom and independence. You get to go all over the city. But there’s a flip side to that. In accident investigation and reconstruction, it’s challenging. I saw things you really shouldn’t have to see. Giving death notifications, there were times I broke down crying with the family, too, just to see their initial response of their loved one passing, and I had to go deliver that message.”

As a school resource officer at Tempe High, where enrollment was 85 percent minority, “a lot of those kids were bused in in open enrollment, from the same area in south Phoenix where I grew up,” he said. “I come from the same background, the same parent stuff with abuse, drugs, alcohol. I was able to mentor and counsel and help develop them.”

When Tempe Police was selected to take part in a television reality show, Dawson was among the officers selected.

“That involved a week in Switzerland working with Swiss police,” he said. “I’d never traveled like that before. I was ecstatic. It was a life-changing experience for me.”

Being an officer in today’s climate, where in some places officers are held in low esteem and factions call for defunding police departments, can be challenging, Dawson said. From his view, that national portrayal of law enforcement does not match his experience in Tempe.

“I can’t tell you how much support I’ve had out there from Tempe residents, saying, ‘Thank you for your service,’ wanting to buy me lunch, buy me coffee. I get to the window and it’s already taken care of,” Dawson said. “That happens routinely. It’s an amazing experience.

“I’m not saying that there are no bad officers out there, but we can’t label a profession based on a few people’s mistakes. Doctors make mistakes and leave instruments in people every year but we keep going to doctors. Dentists make mistakes but we still go see them to get our teeth cleaned. But for some reason law enforcement is painted with this broad brush and it’s unfair. In my 19 years, I have not experienced racial bias within our department. I’ve not seen an officer mistreat someone, disrespect someone, do anything inappropriate. I work with good people for a really good department.”



TEMPE POLICE: THE MEN AND WOMEN BEHIND THE BADGE

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Naturalized U.S. citizen couldn't wait to be motorcycle officer

Jaime Guzman's parents immigrated to Canada from Colombia in the 1970s. He was born in the Toronto area and grew up to be a police officer there for eight years, on a motorcycle in a place where winters are brutal.

He met his future wife, a graduate of Marcos de Niza High and now an arts teacher there, when she was on a visit to Toronto. He was lured to the Valley, and they married.

On April 15, 2011, Guzman was sworn in as naturalized U.S. citizen at Sandra Day O'Connor U.S. Courthouse in downtown Phoenix.

"It was a great moment. I was very proud," Guzman said. "In the process, you learn a lot about the U.S. and its history. I was very grateful for the opportunity, especially when I listened to others sharing their experiences from different countries who were much less fortunate.

"I teach my boys that when they hear the national anthem that there is a certain etiquette I expect from them, to stop what you're doing and give your attention."

Guzman had been a civilian volunteer for the Tempe Police Department for a couple of years and was determined to become a sworn officer as soon as he became a U.S. citizen. Application deadline was nearing.

Guzman said he rushed home from his naturalization ceremony, emailed his application and was accepted.

Becoming a U.S. citizen and a Tempe Police officer in the same year are dear memories, he says.

"It was like the whole thing was meant to be," Guzman said. "It was quite the process just to get here. At the time, if you were married to a U.S. citizen, you had three years as a permanent resident before you could apply for naturalization."

Guzman started with TPD as a DUI-enforcement motorcycle officer at night. He eventually moved to days and now works the Vehicular Crimes Unit on collision reconstruction and investigation of serious-injury and fatal collisions.

His favorite memory, he says, is every Nov. 11, in the Veterans Day Parade.

"Of course, motor units are part of that parade," he said. "It is so exciting to ride down Mill Avenue and see little kids proudly waving the American flag. Ev-



eryone is showing you the love and excitement to see to motors. You pull up at a restaurant and the focus is on the motors. You interact with kids. Our cycles look pretty cool to kids. They're just drawn to it and they want to sit on one. It's nice to be able to share with the little ones.

"Being a motor officer is exciting, but unfortunately you do see a lot of tragedy, too."

And, he says, he'll gladly take the Arizona summer heat over the Canadian winter cold.

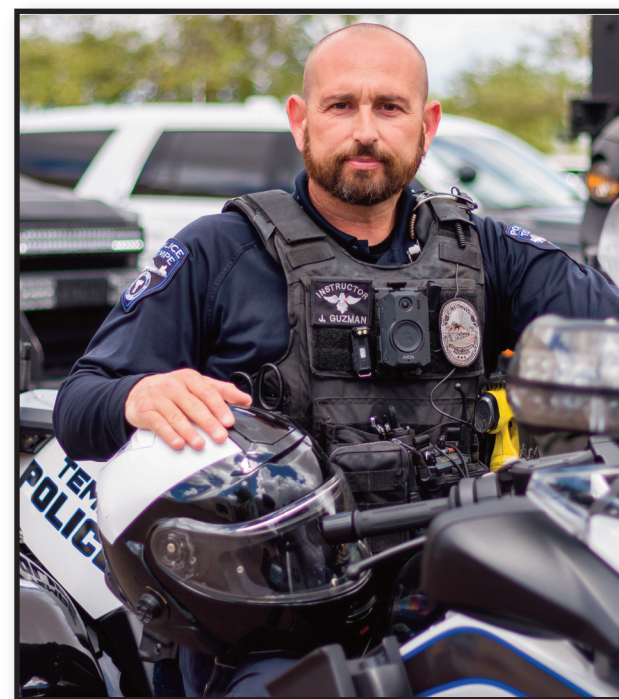
After 11 years with Tempe Police, Guzman says it feels like his second family.

"I would tell a potential recruit that one of the first things I noticed when I started here as a volunteer, not knowing a soul, was a feeling of family. I felt it right from the start," Guzman said. "Many times my role was to bring water to officers in the summer at a scene, and I was made to feel a sense of just belonging to a team and a family.

"Even knowing I had to wait several years so I could get my citizenship, there was just that sense that if somebody needs something, we're going to help them out. As an officer now, you really see it."

It's not easy to buy lunch, either, according to Guzman.

"It's very hard to sit down at a place without random strangers coming up to you and saying, 'Hey, sorry to bother you but thank you for service. Can I buy your lunch? Or coffee?' I feel huge support," he



said. "The squeaky wheel against the police represents only a small percentage of our population. Maybe it's just a Tempe thing, I don't know. For somebody who wants to join an already stressful job, you need to feel like you're a team member with camaraderie in the organization. That, makes stress a lot less difficult to deal with."



TEMPE POLICE: THE MEN AND WOMEN BEHIND THE BADGE

A Specialty Publication of Wrangler News



This special pull-out section was produced by Wrangler News in collaboration with Recruiting Officer Denison Dawson and the Tempe Police Department

Photography by Billy Hardiman

Recruiting sergeant draws on wide background to help prospects find right fit in police work

During his years on the Tempe Police Department, Kurt Mayer has watched the profession, the city and the world around him change drastically.

“The evolution of this city has kept it a very interesting place to work,” Mayer said. “That has brought with it this really neat dynamic of people and events. There is such an amazing group of people: athletes, musicians and you name it. It’s always been fun to be in Tempe. That’s what’s kept me here.”

One thing he says that has not changed is the atmosphere within the department and that, too, has contributed to Mayer staying on for two decades.

“What brought me to Tempe was the vibe it has and how it reminded me, more so than any other city, of where I am from on the east coast – with the trees, the streets and the houses in some of the older neighborhoods,” Mayer said.

He’s a third-generation law-enforcement officer and he has a brother who also is a TPD officer.

“So the profession is in the family,” Mayer said.

Mayer, as a young officer on a late-night shift, recalls a call coming in from a woman.

“She said she had connected a vacuum hose from the tailpipe of her car and placed it in the trunk with intent to commit suicide,” he said. “She called 911 right before she passed out, like she realized this wasn’t a good decision somehow. We got out of her that she was in the Rural and Apache area. I drove directly out there, and somehow found her within minutes. I broke out the car window, pulled her out, started CPR until the Fire Department came, and she ended up living.

“That story always stuck with me. I don’t know what caused me to intervene and drive where I did. It was a miracle I found her. There were bigger powers at

hand.”

Mayer has been a patrol officer, worked on the vice squad on Mill Avenue and in the criminal investigations section; been a juvenile detective; a night squad detective investigating robberies; an audit and compliance sergeant and now a recruiting sergeant at a time when the department’s numbers are declining and finding candidates is difficult.

“Our numbers are certainly down,” Mayer said. “I don’t have an answer to the larger societal problem of why aren’t people serving. The Fire Department has seen a decrease in their applications. The military is struggling a bit with enlistments and retentions. It’s a tough social world right now.”

So what can Mayer offer a young prospect at a time when officers often are disrespected and held in low esteem?

“When young people call about Tempe, I tell them the department is like Thanksgiving dinner with your family: There are people that you see every day and some you haven’t seen in a year,” Mayer said. “You have something in common with some folks – maybe sports or hiking – and others you have nothing in common with but you’re all still family.

“And if something happened at dinner that caused a threat to somebody, you all unite and work together as a family to take care of that. And then you might not see them again for a year.”

That said, Mayer is quick to acknowledge that the Tempe Police Department is not the best fit for everybody and he tries to determine that early in the recruiting process.

“I’d be inquisitive of you,” he said. “What are you attempting to accomplish in your career? What type of environment do you want work in? What type of people do you want to work around? What about professional law enforcement excites you?”

“I tell people I’m a recruiting and hiring sergeant and I’m biased toward Tempe. I can tell you why Tempe is the best police department in the Valley, but what I’m really trying to do is find the best fit for you.”



DIVERSIONS

Hey, did you hear the one about . . . improv comedy shows in Downtown Chandler?

By Meghann Sepulveda
Special for Wrangler News

They say that laughter is the best medicine. And after the last two years, we could all use a little laughter in our lives.

Enter improvMANIA, a comedy club in downtown Chandler.

Its team of yuksters will have you entertained, engaged and smiling for days from your visit to the club, which is just a couple of rim shots away from West Chandler and South Tempe. Get ready for endless belly laughs in family-friendly and adult shows, along with open-mic nights for aspiring comedians.

Dave and Colleen Specht are the heart and soul of improvMANIA. The couple, who met while performing standup in Scottsdale, saw an opportunity to bring comedy closer to their home in Chandler to a hungry market in the under-served Southeast Valley.

"We first began performing at local coffee shops and bars in the area," Dave Specht said. "In 2014, we opened improvMANIA."

The Spechts have had great success during their eight years in downtown Chandler, even when the pandemic hit and they were forced to close. That didn't stop them from making people laugh.

"We offered weekly virtual variety comedy shows so people could tune in from home," he said.

After going dark for seven months, improvMANIA returned.

The business now is getting ready for its next exciting adventure: a per-

manent home.

"We recently purchased a 100-year-old historic building across the street from our current location," he said. "We're currently renovating it and plan to move to that space in the fall."

Unlike a traditional stand-up comedy show, improv utilizes the audience to develop content. So, if you think you can hide in the back, think again. During the show, the comedians walk around and ask about your age, where you met your spouse and what you dressed up as for Halloween. They use your answers to develop hilarious songs, tell silly stories and play amusing games.

"It's very unusual," Specht said. "Most people are taught to sit quietly and watch a show. We encourage audience participation."

The team consists of about 15 comedians – including Dave and Colleen – who regularly perform. They are extremely creative and never seem to stumble, able to come up with funny content within a few seconds.

"We pay close attention to detail," he said. "We have to be quick thinking and in the moment."

Since the audience is constantly changing, you'll always see something new.

Improv shows featuring unfiltered content for adult audiences only are offered at 9 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights.

On Saturdays at 7 p.m., you can bring the kids for a fun family night out with family-appropriate acts.

Ticket prices start at \$12 for kids and \$15 for adults. Beer and wine as well as light snacks like popcorn and candy are available to purchase.

Thursdays at 7 p.m. are open-mic nights, where amateurs can take their shot onstage.



JC Carlson, Mandy Case and David Specht delight the audience with their improvisational comedy at the Downtown Chandler improvMANIA. – Photo courtesy of improvMANIA

Film Fare

'Dr. Strange' good medicine for tired Marvel 'Multiverse'

By MV Moorhead
Wrangler News Film Critic

On the one hand, I'm a little over the Marvel "Multiverse." On the other, *Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*, the newest adventure of Marvel's mystical mage, is a lot of fun.

For those who may be unacquainted with this conceit in the "Marvel Cinematic Universe," I'll summarize as best I understand it: The Multiverse is the premise that our reality exists alongside countless concurrent realities in other dimensions, complete with other versions of ourselves and the people we know, including our favorite superheroes, and that many of these alternate realities are similar but none are quite identical.

When we dream, according to this movie, we're really experiencing a taste of the lives of other versions of ourselves.

The Multiverse has already played a major role in two previous entries, 2018's dazzling animated flick *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, where it was

wittily used to explore racial, gender and other variations on comic-book themes, and last year's *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, where it was used as an amusing excuse to mingle the actors and situations from various "reboots" of the franchises.

In both cases, it was also a spoof (and a servicing) of the familiar, OCD-nerd need to make every "canonical" version of a pop-culture franchise at least technically consistent with every other version (*Star Wars* and *Star Trek* fans sometimes demand this, too).

Enjoyable as both of those earlier movies were, I'm afraid that the Multiverse has the effect, for me, of diluting the dramatic stakes. Death has always been negotiable in superhero stories, of course, but in Multiverse-heavy yarns, major characters — iconic characters — are killed off, or lose their heroic status, and it doesn't feel like it matters that much, because there's an apparently endless and easily accessible supply of replacements from other universes.

Thus, I don't know how sustainable the Multiverse gimmick is for me. Even though I greatly enjoyed the original 2016 version of *Dr. Strange*, I went to this sequel a little grumpily. It turned out to be a non-stop, vigorously imaginative blast.

This time, the surgeon-turned-sorcerer Stephen Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) is called away from the wistful experience of attending the wedding of his ex (Rachel McAdams) to

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 Benedict Cumberbatch stars as surgeon-turned-sorcerer Stephen Strange in the new hit movie *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*.

Film

From Page 19

come to the defense of America Chavez (Xochitl Gomez), a teenage girl who has innate magical powers she can't control. She's pursued by Scarlet Witch (Elizabeth Olsen), who for some reason needs the kid to obtain a book that will allow her to steal the life, including two little boys, of a suburban-mom version of herself in another universe. (All of this is related, I understand, to a Marvel TV show called *WandaVision* that I haven't seen). Strange and his allies attempt to prevent this. Tentacled Lovecraftian abominations interfere with his efforts.

Or something like that.

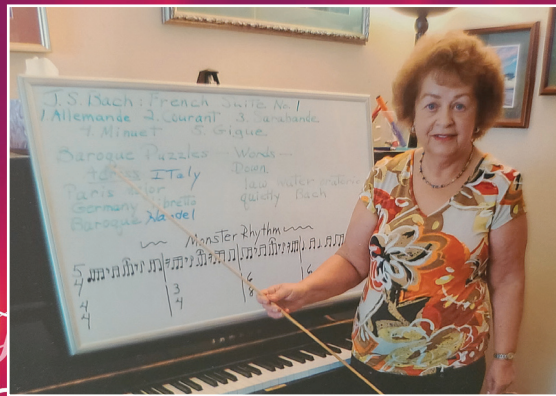
Big-name Marvel characters from other franchises turn up, sometimes in

new versions, sometimes in versions we've seen.

Epic surreal action scenes leap giddily from universe to universe. And if you sense more than a nod or two to the *Evil Dead* flicks, it probably won't surprise you that the director is Sam Raimi, back after a hiatus from directing features. His wild headlong style is as exhilarating as ever, as is his flair for macabre slapstick, and both are splendidly abetted by a driving score from Danny Elfman.

Cumberbatch plays Strange with his usual old-school, movie-star suavité and aplomb, and Gomez is charming as America. The standout in the cast, however, is Olsen, who keeps her voice down and makes Scarlet Witch intimidating, but also poised and glamorous, with a strong undercurrent of the sorrowful.

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Tempe, Chandler outdoor movie series return under the stars this month

Although the afternoons are beginning to get toasty, the evenings remain spectacular, perfect for taking the family to an outdoor movie in Tempe or Chandler.

Pack a picnic dinner, grab a blanket, and get ready for the spring edition of Movies in the Park under the stars at Kiwanis Park. It's Tempe's free movie series on Friday nights in May.

Movies begin at dusk, approximately 7 p.m., on the north soccer fields at Kiwanis, Baseline Road and Ash Avenue (just west of Mill Avenue).

Watch *The Goonies* (PG) on Friday, May 13, and *Encanto* (PG) on Friday,

May 20.

More information: tempe.gov/movies.

Meanwhile, Chandler moviegoers can head Tumbleweed Park, 2250 S. McQueen Road, for CinePark, the city's free outdoor movie series on Friday evenings.

On Friday, May 13, see *Luca*. On Friday, May 20, the city presents *Sing 2*.

These family-friendly movies are shown on a large outdoor screen in the park's amphitheater. Admission is free. Come early to this family event, grab a spot on the lawn and enjoy movie-theme activities prior to the show starting at 6:30 p.m. Movies begin promptly at 8 p.m.

Guests can purchase their favorite snacks courtesy of local vendors, including Jasperz Island Fusion Cuisine & Harkins Popcorn Truck.

More information: 480-782-2735 or chandleraz.gov/CinePark.



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SPORTS

Aztec baseball team falls in 6A state tournament to top-ranked Hamilton

Corona del Sol High's baseball team, ranked 12th going into the 6A state tournament, had its season come to an end on May 5 with a 9-3 setback to top-ranked Hamilton in the losers' bracket.

The top-ranked Huskies had been upset by Chaparral in the opening round.

Corona fell to Queen Creek, 14-4, in the first round on April 30. The Aztecs kept their season alive by upsetting No. 4 Red Mountain, 5-3, in the losers' bracket on May 3. Corona had defeated No. 21 Westwood, 13-2, in a 6A Conference play-in game on April 27 to get into the state-tournament field.

The Aztecs honored their seniors at their last home game on April 22, when they defeated Desert Vista, 11-10. Sophomore **Myles Harrison** started on the mound, before senior **Zac Wroble**, senior **Austin Balmes** and junior **Justin Corless** relieved him to close out the win.

Seniors honored included first baseman/pitcher **Jalen Seward**, outfielder **Ayden Crouse**, pitcher Wroble, infielder **Keaton Walker**, pitcher/outfielder Balmes, outfielder **Bryson Proctor**, outfielder **Angel Morales** and first baseman/outfielder **Braeden Schnabel**.

Seward led the Aztecs with a 2.33 ERA. Crouse led the team in on-base percentage. Outfielders Morales and Balmes had a 1.000 fielding percentage.

Corona del Sol softball

Corona's softball team went 7-3 in April, outscored opponents, 81-27; ended the regular season 16-13 overall and 6-4 in Central Region, and made the 6A state tournament by winning a play-in game.

Then, the 10th-seeded Aztecs lost their opening tournament game to seventh-seeded Basha, 4-2, dropping into the losers' bracket in the double-elimination tourney.

Their season then came to an end on May 3 in a 4-2 loss to No. 15 Tolleson.

The Aztecs had offensive power and defensive skill. Corona had five players batting at least .400: junior **Gina Jackson** at .441, senior **Bella Cummins** .432, senior **Emmalyn Brinka** .0419, junior **Jaelyn Ibarra**

.400 and sophomore **Siena Meraz** .400.

Senior Teagan Neumann hit four home runs, scored 22 runs and led the team with 27 RBI. Brinka had 24 RBI on 31 hits, 10 of them doubles, one triple and two home runs. Junior **Isabelle Freund** scored 30 runs. She had 23 RBI and four home runs. Junior **Madison Romero** scored 24 runs.

Senior **Megan Ireland** hit a respectable .358 and scored 21 runs on 24 hits. Ireland along with Brinka led the team with 10 doubles each.

Ireland, Brinka, and Cummins posted slugging percentages of .641, .662 and .689, respectively.

Freund's 10 stolen bases led the team. Romero was close behind with nine.

Brinka, who pitches and plays first base, had the highest fielding percentage at .990, followed by junior catcher **Jacqueline Tom** at .986. Senior **Alani Beltran**, junior **Larysa Pagel** and sophomore **Abby Ritchhart** all posted fielding percentages in the .900 range.

Sophomore **Alyssia Munoz** was Corona's third pitcher.

Brinka, who has carried the majority of the pitching load in 104 innings, went 7-5 with a 2.55 ERA and 125 strikeouts.

Ibarra (6-5), another experienced pitcher, worked 62 innings, posting a 4.73 ERA.

Munoz pitched 10 innings, striking out eight.

Additional team members were freshman outfielder/catcher **Miquela Tamarro** and sophomore third baseman **Olivia Rios**.

Corona del Sol boy's tennis

Although Corona's boys tennis team did not qualify for the Division I state team tournament, its doubles team of junior **Luke Vigil** and sophomore **Austin Glogowski** did qualify for state, however they were eliminated in the opening round.

Vigil and Glogowski fell on April 29 in three sets to a doubles team from Queen Creek High.

Other players in the top six spots include sophomore **Valin Verma**, freshman **Gary Hoffland**, freshman **Aidan Yu** and sophomore **Adrian Garcia**.

Additional players on the roster include seniors **Moh Amjad** and **Loftin Holden**, juniors **Jose Morales** and **Ian Stark**, sophomores **Greg Arciniaga**, **Sean Boyle**, **Brandon Chaloupka**, **Tray Daniels**, **Adam El-Rabaa** and **Felipe Jue**, and freshman **Ethan Culp**, **Marco LaRussa**, **Jeremy Steinberg**, and **Alix Walker**.

Marcos de Niza boys tennis

The Padres for the Division II state team tournament nor for individual singles and doubles.

The top six players, who worked hard for 10 weeks, were all freshmen: **Hadino Nugroho**, **Galen Works**, **Preston Shaw**, **Timothy Mosna**, **Gael Ramo** and **Moises Hanika**. Their youth gives the Padres hope for the future.

Another freshman, **Noah Spears**, was the alternate.



May 2022

Elder abuse educational event planned for June 17

Exploitation of seniors is a growing crime in the United States. That's why the City of Tempe is part-

nering with community volunteers on a free educational opportunity during Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

On Friday, June 17, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Pyle Adult Recreation Center, 655 E. Southern Ave.,

residents are invited to learn about this alarming trend and how to protect themselves and those they love. There will be speakers and breakout workshop groups. For more information, contact Heather_Hamilton@tempe.gov or 480-350-5556.



Are you ready for monsoon storm season?

As monsoon season approaches in June, residents are encouraged to take precautions and be prepared in case of severe weather. Here are some tips to help you prepare for before, during and after storms:

- Clear debris from roof gutters and downspouts.
 - Trim trees, especially those close to the house, to help prevent breakage and uprooting.
 - Pretreat pools with chlorine shock to help prevent algae growth.
 - Keep storm drains and gutters clear of debris. City crews are checking and clearing storm drains to allow rainwater to drain as efficiently as possible; residents can help by clearing any debris from the gutters adjacent to their property.
 - Pack a three-day bag of supplies, including clothes and medications, in case of emergencies.
 - Keep pets indoors when storms are predicted.
- Check out our Monsoon Prep Checklist for more tips to keep your family and property safe and secure.
- Visit tempe.gov/monsoon or call 480-350-4311 for more information.



GENERAL PLAN 2050

General Plan 2050 online survey

Tempe Tomorrow: General Plan 2050 is the city's effort to create a new general plan that is forward-thinking, inclusive of everyone in our

community, sustainable and achievable.

All Arizona cities are required to update their general plans every 10 years.

These plans are created in concert with residents, area businesses and other interested people.

We are conducting a baseline survey to help us launch our planning efforts.

Visit tempe.gov/2050 beginning May 23 to give us your thoughts on what future Tempe should look and feel like.

Backstage Pass with Doreen Garlid

Take a tour of the Tempe Municipal Court and meet Presiding Judge Kevin Kane. Learn about Tempe's homeless and veteran specialty courts, jury duty and more. Join Councilmember Doreen Garlid for her regular conversation event - Backstage Pass - on Tuesday, May 24, at 5:30 p.m. at the court, 140 E. Fifth St. Additional details and registration at tempe.gov/garlid.


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BUSINESS

Cryptocurrency now accepted for Chandler utility bill payment

By Cliff Summerhill
Special for Wrangler News

In a sign of the ever-changing technological times we live in, Chandler has implemented the ability for residents to pay their utility bills using cryptocurrency.

“We made an assumption that with so many tech companies within the city boundaries, their employees may delve into cryptocurrency with their strong technical skills,” said Dawn Lang, Chandler deputy city manager and chief financial officer. “So, we wanted to be sensitive to that.”

Chandler is home to some of the largest tech companies in the U.S., including Intel, NXP Semiconductors and Microchip Technology. According to the city, there are more than 26,000 employees among 268 tech companies within Chandler’s boundaries.

Chandler joins a handful of municipalities across the country that accept cryptocurrency as payment for city services.

As of February, Colorado was the first state to accept virtual currency for state-level fees and charges.

“It’s about customer service for our residents,” Councilmember Mark Stewart said. “Digital currency and blockchain is advancing quickly, and as the ‘Community of Innovation,’ we feel it is important to be on the forefront of this technology and offer it to our residents as a payment method for utility payments and other fees.”

Residents must have a PayPal ac-

count with Bitcoin, Litecoin or Ethereum linked to their virtual wallet in order to use the service. Those who use PayPal for payments easily can select cryptocurrency as payment method when checking out online.

Learn more on the city’s website: chandleraz.gov/utilityservices.

How Chandler manages the risk

One of Chandler’s strategic goals is rooted in its continued development of technology, leading then-vice mayor Stewart to establish a \$5,000 budget amendment to research how the city could incorporate cryptocurrency for city residents.

Upon completion of the research, the city found itself not wanting to invest in cryptocurrency because the current market is too volatile to pursue investments. However, it challenged its third-party payment vendor, Invoice Cloud, to find a way to incorporate cryptocurrency as a method of payment.

The challenge resulted in the partnership with PayPal.

“PayPal takes on the risk and does the market conversion, then simply sends the City of Chandler the cash payment for the utility, thereby eliminating any market volatility risk for Chandler,” Lang said.

While Chandler is starting with utility-bill payments, it hopes to expand to other services.

The city is working with PayPal to parse out cryptocurrency payments from other PayPal Checkout payments, which can include a bank account or



Chandler, which prides itself for being on the cutting edge of high tech, now accepts cryptocurrency, like this Bitcoin, as payment for city utility bills.

credit card, to gauge the program’s use and effectiveness.

What is Cryptocurrency?

Cryptocurrency is simply a virtual currency that is exclusively digital, encrypted and decentralized, according to *Forbes*. There is no central authority for cryptocurrency, meaning its value and management is owned by its online users. The lack of regulation and authority makes for a volatile and uneasy market for those unacquainted with it.

“The easiest way to explain it is that it’s a virtual form of currency and it is priced based on the market at that time,” Lang said. “It’s managed through a secure, virtual wallet.”

Unlike physical currency, such as the U.S. dollar, the value of cryptocurrency changes constantly, kind of like stocks traded on Wall Street, but with even more risk.

There are several types of cryptocurrencies — more than 18,000 around the world as of April. Among the most popular are Bitcoin, Litecoin or Ethereum. Those are the only ones accepted by Chandler for utility bills.

As for the city’s future in cryptocurrency investments, Lang said, “Anything is possible in the world of technology and innovation. As use of cryptocurrency becomes more normal, and policies and procedures and laws are set up, anything is possible.”



SCHOOLS

Graduation night is May 19 at Corona del Sol, Marcos de Niza

Commencement, it often is said, is only the beginning, but the May 19 commencement ceremonies at Corona del Sol and Marcos de Niza also mark the completion of high school for the Class of 2022.

At Marcos de Niza, graduation ceremonies are 7 p.m. at Victor C. Sanchez, Jr. Stadium on campus. Gates open at 5:30 p.m. and the program will be live-streamed at facebook.com/PadrePride.

School officials say no tickets will be required. Seating is open and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Blocking off or saving seats will not be allowed.

No outside food or drink, except sealed water bottles, will be allowed in the stadium. No bags, purses or backpacks will be permitted except for a small, clear-sided bag.

Student Body President Sydney Stortment will deliver opening remarks and

graduating student Desiree Lopez will give the senior-class address.

Salutatorian Mia Franco and valedictorian Adam To will deliver commencement addresses.

At Corona del Sol, gates open at Haskell Henshaw Stadium on campus at 5 p.m. for the 7 p.m. ceremonies, which will be live-streamed at facebook.com/CoronaDelSolHS.

To accommodate families equitably, each graduate will be given six guest tickets for admission to the ceremony. Any family needing additional tickets may go to Corona del Sol's home page and select Graduation under the Academics tab, where the '21-'22 Graduation Ticket Request Form may be found. Requests will be granted until the stadium reaches capacity.

Seating is first-come, first-served and cannot be reserved.

Handicapped seating is available. The person requiring the accessible seating may be accompanied by one family member who can sit with them. Other family members must sit in the stands.



Graduates in South Tempe will parade across the stage to pick up diplomas on May 19. Ceremonies for Corona del Sol and Marcos de Niza are in the schools' respective football stadiums. — Photos by Billy Hardiman for Wrangler News

Creativity is in bloom in Kyrene School District

Springtime in Kyrene School District is the season for creative exploration and endeavors.

Its arts season began with launch of the District Art Show, hosted virtually for the second year. The interactive gallery can be explored from anywhere in the world, allowing friends and family near and far to

enjoy the works of young Kyrene artists. Many school hallways also proudly exhibit selected works for students and staff to enjoy each day.

"Kyrene has always had a robust arts program that allows students to express themselves in a variety of ways," said Julie Hackmann, District Fine and Performing Arts Coordinator. "The arts are an essential part of Kyrene's commitment to educating the whole child."

Whether painting, sculpting or singing, students in

Grades K-8 have plenty of opportunities for self-expression.

The district also recognizes the written word each year during the Kyrene Poetry Contest.

For the first time in three years, student poets were invited to the District Office to be recognized in front of the superintendent, Governing Board and community members. The 27 winners represented

Tempe El lands esteemed music education honor

The NAMM Foundation has once again recognized Tempe Elementary School District for outstanding efforts of teachers, administrators, parents, students and community leaders who make music part of a well-rounded education for every child.

Tempe Elementary is among five Arizona school districts to receive the recognition.

The foundation evaluated schools and districts nationwide on behaviors, policies, practices and community opportunities that support music. This year's evaluation also included how music education was supported and the role it had in supporting students during virtual learning and upon return.

Nevitt Elementary teacher receives scholarship from credit union

Nevitt Elementary fifth-grade teacher Lauren Gentile was awarded the first Christine Busch Continuing Education Scholarship, made possible by Landings Credit Union.

The \$2,500 scholarship honors the years of dedicated service and impact of former Tempe Elementary Superintendent Christine Busch. Gentile plans to use the scholarship to complete her masters in School Counseling.

National School Library Month: Donors help librarians complete special projects

April is School Librarian Month, and nine Tempe Elementary librarians received \$1,000 to invest in their libraries from the Arizona Department of Education. Librarians used the money to purchase books, supplies and items to make their libraries more organized and inviting for students and staff.

So far in the 2021-22 school year, Tempe Elementary students have checked out more than 191,070 books/items from school libraries.



(Top) Landings Credit Union makes presents awards at Nevitt Elementary ceremony. (Above) The NAMM Foundation again recognized Tempe Elementary for making music part of a well-rounded education for every child. — Photos courtesy of Tempe Elementary District

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Founder/Publisher: **Don Kirkland**
Executive Editor: **Lee Shappell**
Contributors

Andrew Lwowski, Alex Zener,
M.V. Moorhead, Janie Magruder,
Sally Mesarosh, Billy Hardiman,
Pablo Robles, Nicole Greason,
Meghann Sepulveda,
Cliff Summerhill

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Kyrene

From Page 25

each grade level (K-8). Some who were selected to read their poems moved the audience to tears.

Rachel Polay, a Kyrene Aprende Middle School English-language arts and AVID teacher, coordinated this year's contest.

"My heart was touched as I read these poems," Polay said. "There were multiple occasions where I laughed out loud, personally reflected, and yes, cried with the speaker of the poem."

Polay also reminded young writers that, "There is such strength and unity in the written word. Your words hold power that can never be taken away from you."

The 27 winners of the poetry contest received a

certificate and 2022 anthology at the celebration.

Winners are:

• **Kindergarten:** DeAndre Fisher, Kyrene de la Paloma Arts Integration Academy; Vikunth Kanukollu, Kyrene Traditional Academy; Casidhe Taylor, Kyrene de la Colina.

• **First grade:** Gracie Coleman, C.I. Waggoner; Elliott Lopez, Kyrene del Cielo; Maliyah Pinedo, Kyrene Digital Academy.

• **Second grade:** Addison Gibbs, Kyrene del Cielo; Alejandro Santhanam, Kyrene de los Lagos Dual Language Academy; Aliya Topkar, Kyrene de los Cerritos Leadership Academy.

• **Third grade:** Adrian Harrison, Kyrene de la Mirada Leadership Academy; Zoe Morales Jimenez, Kyrene de los Lagos Dual Language Academy; Chloe Snitselaar, Kyrene de las Manitas.

• **Fourth grade:** Elise Klucsarits, Kyrene de los Lagos Dual Language Academy; Natalia Quintanilla-Piña, Kyrene de la Mariposa Computer Science Academy; Michael Yahyapour, Kyrene del Cielo.

• **Fifth grade:** Madison Baumann, Kyrene de la Mirada Leadership Academy; Ryan Joyner, Kyrene de la Sierra; Zeke Scholes, Kyrene del Norte Dual Language Academy.

• **Sixth grade:** Jennifer Carpenter, Kyrene Digital Academy; Remington Catana, Kyrene Traditional Academy; Jocelyn Prather, Kyrene Altadeña.

• **Seventh grade:** Bella Duong, Kyrene Aprende; Tabitha Naegele, Kyrene Digital Academy; Natalie Yang, Kyrene del Pueblo.

• **Eighth grade:** Lucy Abel, Kyrene Traditional Academy; Victoria De la O Lobo, Kyrene Digital Academy; Sarah Wiederkehr, Kyrene Altadeña.

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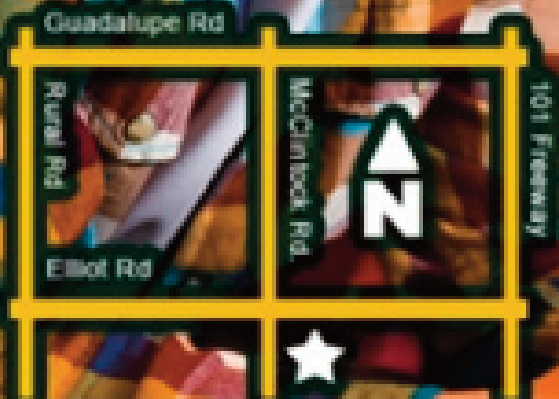
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