

JANUARY 14 - 27, 2023  
VOLUME 33 • NUMBER 1



# WRANGLER NEWS

**Flippin' out over Mill Avenue's 2nd Sunday funday**  
Wrangler News image by Pablo Robles • Details & more photos, Pages 14-15



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Retired science teacher Carol Stewart was among elite leaders honored for contributing their talent in a citywide tribute to Black History Month and MLK Day.

— City of Tempe photos on this and succeeding pages by Gordon Murray

## Honoring the dream of MLK: Tempe presents its 2023 Diversity awards

By Janie Magruder



Janie Magruder

From caring for refugees and teaching children about African American culture to building self-esteem among young girls and supporting the LGBTQA community, people and organizations working for a more diverse, inclusive society were honored this month by the city of Tempe.

Co-hosted by the city's Human Relations Commission, the MLK Diversity Awards annually recognize those who mirror the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and

work to make his dream a reality.

The federal holiday honoring the slain civil-rights leader's birthday and commitment to the disadvantaged and impoverished is Monday, Jan. 16.

The city's Individual Adult Awards were given to Carol Stewart, a retired science teacher and Youth Committee Chair of Tempe's African American Advisory Committee, and Holly Herman, leader of volunteer efforts at University Presbyterian Church in Tempe to help refugees.

Formed 15 years ago, the African American Advisory committee advises the Tempe History Museum on collecting, preserving and presenting African American history and promoting these

— Continued on the next page



# Coming Up at Tempe Center for the Arts

**Gallery @ TCA**  
**Earth & Sky Exhibition**  
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**from Indigenous Perspectives Panel Discussion**  
Jan 19, 2023 | 6:00 pm

**Tatiana Crespo**  
Jan 26, 2022 | 7:30 pm  
**Sophia Bavishi**  
Feb 2, 2022 | 7:30 pm  
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Tempe Center for the Arts



Holly Herman was honored for her help to refugees.

stories to the community. Last February, Stewart developed a curriculum and hosted the first annual Black History Children's Activities Day.

She prepared a booklet, "At the Crossroads of Freedom Street and Equality Lane," comprising inspirational quotes, facts on Africa, inventions of Black people, details on Black History Month and unique crafts and activities.

Stewart set up nine tables, which were geared for children in grades 3 through 8, at the museum with volunteer assistance of Phoenix nonprofit, Fulfillment in Training.

Activities included reading about animals in Africa, making paper masks, bracelets, shields and other crafts, becoming familiar with Black inventors and leaders, and learning about the quilt codes that some historians say African American slaves may have used to navigate the Underground Railroad.

Stewart, who moved to Arizona from New Jersey in 2019 to be nearer to her son, knew her education background was well suited to opportunities at the museum and elsewhere.

"African history is not taught or encouraged," she said. "I don't think it's because no one wants to, it's just because no one has done it."

Stewart, 75, said she was humbled by the MLK Diversity Award.

"It's one of the most beautiful feelings — to do something at this stage of the game, and an organization says, 'You did a good job for the

— Continued on Page 6



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Among MLK Diversity Awards recipients were the Tempe Alumnae chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority, left, and Kyrene de las Manitas school's No Room for Hate club.

### Continued from Page 4

children’,” she said. “Dr. King believed in instilling a strength in each of us to be who we are and to be the best we can. It’s ‘If not you, who? If not here, where? If not now, when?’ You just have to do the right thing.”

Upon her retirement six years ago from three decades in corporate banking and in administration at the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, Herman traveled a bit, cleared her to-do list and thought about her next chapter in life. Her pastor husband, John, had retired two years before, and the couple was becoming involved in University Presbyterian Church.

“I had to find something to do to be useful,” she said. “Everyone needs something that feeds them.”

That something appeared on New Year’s Eve in 2018 when asylum seekers were being left outside the Phoenix bus station in the rain and cold. Pastors at City Square Methodist Church in downtown Phoenix reached out to Herman’s church for help.

“Once you see these people, you just can’t not do something,” she said of the migrants.

“When we first started hosting families at the church, when we really started to talk with people, using translators, and learned how cruel our immigration system can be — well, it brings you to tears.”

And, in Herman’s case, to action. She began recruiting and coordinating volunteers from her church and other faith communities and organizations to help with food and clothing, supplies, language translation and transportation. When Covid-19 closed onsite housing,

Herman arranged for delivery of food and

grocery gift cards to a small Hispanic church in west Mesa whose members had lost their jobs and could not collect benefits.

She was not afraid to ask for help.

“People want to do something, they just may not know what or how. If you ask people one-on-one — ‘Would you like to have a conversation with an Iranian guest who needs to develop his or her fluency once a week?’

“Most will say, ‘Yeah, I can do that,’” said Herman, 74.

She asked people to clean out their closets, donate toiletries, buy extra toilet paper and give money.

Last year, University Presbyterian converted three rooms to apartments and began hosting three Iranian families. Herman coordinates all of their needs, including legal assistance and medical care.

“It totally takes a village to do this,” she said.

Herman said she was honored to receive the MLK Award, and that she is sharing it with many others. “It’s incumbent on us to continue Dr. King’s work,” she said. “You just have to open your ears to what’s out there, because when it hits your ears, you can’t forget it. And then all you have to do is find the group that will help you live that out.”

If you are interested in helping Herman in University Presbyterian’s work, email [hbbillsmom@gmail.com](mailto:hbbillsmom@gmail.com). To learn more about Stewart’s dream of bringing her project to churches, Scout groups and others, email [stewartcarol120@yahoo.com](mailto:stewartcarol120@yahoo.com).

The city also recognized two teenagers, Mariangela Bernal Martinez, a peer leader with Peer Solutions, a youth organization at Tempe High, and Rohn Ragland, student union president at Desert Vista High School, with its Individual Youth awards.

Martinez and other leaders at her school help end violence through education, advocacy and

engagement in their school and community. Ragland has demonstrated a commitment to improving diversity by volunteering for numerous social justice causes, speaking out on issues impacting minorities and leading voter drives.

Tempe’s other MLK Diversity Awards honorees are:

**Tempe Alumnae Chapter Delta Sigma Theta Sorority**, which received the Community Group/Organization Award for providing information and services to the city’s youth, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) for 50 years. The group has programming to build self-esteem, support academic success and prepare young women ages 11 to 18 for community leadership. Additionally, they partner with the National Council of Negro Women and its network to share accurate information about vaccines.

**Kyrene de las Manitas Innovation Academy’s No Place for Hate Club**, which received the Education award for giving students the responsibility of creating a movement for good change.

By polling students, club leaders learned that nearly half did not think the books used in their classrooms represented them. A book drive was held to collect books that fulfilled students requests, and the club also secured a grant to fund a diversity library for each classroom.

Further, the club started diversity libraries at three other Kyrene schools with No Place for Hate Clubs. **Brick Road Coffee** in Tempe, which received the Business Award for hosting weekly LGBTQA-friendly events such as book clubs, movie and game nights, open mic nights and free HIV testing. In June, the shop hosted a reproductive rights gathering for participants to share their stories and support each other in a safe space.



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# First graders bring life to these cute (and smart!) robotic wonders

By Rebecca Smouse

In a classroom at Broadmor Elementary School, a dozen students hover around a playmat with iPads in their laps, awaiting their name to be called. These kids have spent the past six weeks working with programmable STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) robots that are not only cute but smart as, well, a robot should be.

Proud parents eagerly sit in small chairs around the room with cell phones in hand, looking on as

their children prepare to present. The room quiets and the lights are dimmed as a small blue robot named Dash edges onto the carpet and begins to perform a light show, following code custom-programmed by a first-grader.

These robotic wonders, manufactured by a Silicon Valley startup, are designed to introduce elementary-age students to the world of coding. A group of Broadmor students is learning how to use them through the school's first-ever coding club.

The program was launched thanks to a donation of \$10,000, enough to fund 16 Dot and Dash robots along with accompanying iPads and the coding programs.

The donors, who prefer to remain anonymous, have followed the progress of the club from Day One.

"(The donors) have been to every class to help us," said Broadmor second-grade teacher Lori Schmidt, who runs the club.

"They've not only donated money, but their time, which is invaluable."

The majority of the robots are allocated for use by club members, the remainder in Schmidt's class of second graders.

The afterschool program, also supported by Broadmor first-grade teacher Alyssa Fisher, has 14 members ranging from first- to fifth-graders. Last fall, the students filled out applications to join the club, explaining why they were interested in learning about coding.

Since October, the group has met once a week for an hour after school to learn how to build code from scratch.

Schmidt said she had several community partners jump in to help her and Fisher, including ASU researcher Julie Bufkin and Broadmor parent Frank Soqui, who works for Intel. Both have offered their time to help the students learn to code and troubleshoot the robots.

"It's amazing to have the community involved," Schmidt said.

All these people have come in and offered to help."

The results have been remarkable. Schmidt said she's blown away with how much the students have learned in such a short timespan. "Some of the kids

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are very bright and gifted, but this was a real challenge for them,” she said.

“These kids are really hard workers and just stay with it.”

## Robots that sing

Families and district staff gathered as the students presented a project with the robots to show off their coding skills. The presentations varied: some robots sang, others talked, one drew a picture. One even played a song on a xylophone, an additional attachment that is available for Dash.

“I love watching the light bulb go off with the kids and watching the projects they came up with at the end,” Schmidt said. “They’re persistent, and watching them figure out things [has been the best part.]”

Several members of the club are siblings and were able to share devices, as well as encourage each other through the learning process. The students took home the robots on a weekly basis, and many were supported by parents and older siblings to continue the learning at home.

“This has been a very enriching experience for our parents and families, too,” she added.

Schmidt said she’s seen significant growth in her students who have struggled to connect to the classroom. Not only are the students learning coding skills, but practical life skills, like listening and following detailed instructions.

“This club motivated them because they want to come to class and do this,” she said. “It’s been a way for them to get them more involved in school.”

The first cohort of students will work with the robots through the beginning of January 2023, then the club will open applications for new members in the spring.

Schmidt said the club was inspired by her own daughter who works as a mechanical engineer. The two talked about finding ways to incorporate STEM in her classroom to help spark an interest in technology and science fields among girls at a young age.

“That’s how all of this got started,” she said.

Schmidt said she hopes to fund more robots for her classroom.

She wants the club to reach more students, help them get interested in the STEM field, and get them excited about the future of technology and coding careers.

“My goal is to expose as many kids as I can so they are prepared when they eventually go to look for jobs, and more people will want to go into that field,” she said.



Lori Schmidt with one of her robotic teaching assistants.

— Wrangler News photo by Don Kirkland





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## At Wrangler News, a new face, a new look at the future

By Ty Tabat

I'm Ty Tabat, and I'd like to introduce myself as the new associate publisher of Wrangler News and strategist for several new ventures we plan to launch in the coming months. My experience in the publishing industry dates back more than 35 years, and with that background I'm looking forward to helping launch new initiatives in the design, layout, photo, illustration, content and social media portions we plan to pursue once we have new staffing in place.

I'll also be getting out into the community soon to meet the business people who have supported Wrangler News with their advertising dollars, and to collaborate on ways we can help you grow your business even further.

In the meantime I'll be recruiting talented, committed freelance staff members who love the idea of community newspapers, and who feel

they have abilities that we might want to consider as we expand our reach, both here and in other potential growth areas.

Our founder Don Kirkland has done a great job of making Wrangler News an integral part of these Kyrene Corridor communities, and I see this year as a perfect opportunity for us to take a giant step forward.

While we read regularly that print media is on a downslide, that applies primarily to the big dailies around the country, which are having to reinvent some of their strategies to remain relevant.

But for small newspapers like Wrangler News and certain others that are thriving, now is an opportune time to consider expansion.

That's what we're doing, and we will keep you up to date as our plans unfold further.

In the meantime, please feel free to email [ty.tabat@wranglernews.com](mailto:ty.tabat@wranglernews.com) or call me at 480-966-0837 any time 9-5 M-F if you have ideas to share. This is your community and your hometown newspaper.

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# Did our staff win something? If so, that's great news.

But it's not the reason we do this.

Commentary by Don Kirkland

**W**e've been on a long overdue two-week break, therefore I haven't yet had time to verify this piece of apparent good news. It seems that a few of our contributors, past and present, are among the latest crop of Valley news media recognized for some form of journalistic achievement during the past year or so. I'm sure they deserve a pat on the back, at the very least.

Nonetheless, for those of us who have been here for the longer haul—30-plus years and still going strong—shouldn't we get a trophy for sheer stick-to-itiveness? Not that there's actually an award for that, although maybe there should be.

What is most astounding is that we have done this by focusing on neighborhood news and the good works of neighbors who have strived to make this such a great place to live.

Oh sure, we've had those who tried to steer us in the direction of being more like a "real"

newspaper. But somehow that never seemed to be what our readership looked forward to or wanted. When I drive our little hard-to-miss Wrangler News car to Fry's or Safeway, or when one of our photographers tells us about the friendly waves that come our way when they're out on assignment, it becomes clear that our readers enjoy us trying to use a positive, neighborly approach to story-telling.

So if that's not what those venerable news media judges want as justification to enshrine all of us at Wrangler News in their newspaper Hall of Fame, they can keep their trophies.

It was back in the early 1990s that two friends and I decided we could produce a newspaper with the same good-news flavor many of our neighbors found in the hometown Times or Podunk Herald they happily retrieved from their mailboxes every couple of weeks.

And so was born the original Warner Wrangler, so named because we hand-delivered it exclusively to those enviable horse-property homes on both sides of Warner Road in South Tempe.

As we grew and expanded our distribution, more and more people seemed to like the idea of a predominately local journal that was aimed at the families, the businesses, the churches, the schools—the very places we all frequent on a practically everyday basis.

Having earlier in my career been on the staffs of some of the big L.A. dailies, and having covered my share of murders, scandals and other unforgettable-headline stories, the idea of aiming our own news coverage at the brighter side of our communities'

comings and goings admittedly was quite a departure. But the longer we did it, the more we heard the refrain: "We love your little newspaper!"

So while we're delighted, of course, that some of our contributors, not overlooking our talented current writer Janie Magruder, are recognized by the Valley news media's awards gurus, we'd like to think that we can celebrate our own longevity in an environment where many publications have come and gone.

I don't know how many more years I'll want, or be able to, lead this little enterprise of ours on an everyday schedule, but I do know that we have achieved a place in the homes—and hearts—of the readers who look forward to finding Wrangler News awaiting them in their driveway every two weeks throughout the year.

As to the breaking news that we're regularly inundated with by a lot of other media sources, well, we're happy to relinquish that role to them. For us, the satisfaction in what we do comes from having so many loyal staff members who have passed through our portals over the years, doing their work because they, like us, consider it a labor of love, not simply a way to stir a journalistic stewpot that is already boiling over. Nor because of the awards they might win (albeit deservedly, we'd be first to admit) but rather because of those in our community who send a friendly wave or tell us, "We love your little newspaper!"

*Don Kirkland is the founder and publisher of Wrangler News.*

## Show Us Where You Read Your Wrangler News

*Ruth Morrow recently visiting from Iowa over Christmas was caught up in a recent edition of The Wrangler News while enjoying the Arizona sunshine.*

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## SUNDAY FUN-DAY

On assignment for Wrangler News, our photographer found himself in the midst of an abundance of picture possibilities that an image-maker with less know-how might have found daunting. Not our guy. The event, a Mill Avenue festival that runs every second Sunday through March, promises pure fun for all, including an outdoor market, live music and entertainment, snack vendors — in other words, something for virtually everyone. Free admission, family focused and dog-friendly. What more could any sun-and-fun-seeker want?

— Photos by Pablo Robles for Wrangler News









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## DIVERSIONS

### Film Fare

# A 'Whale' of a tale, plus an Oscar-worthy comeback by Brendan Fraser

By M.V. Moorhead

Charlie, the main character of *The Whale*, is an English professor, passionately teaching online courses in essay writing. But his center square on the Zoom grid is always blacked out. He claims the camera on his computer doesn't work, but his students, inevitably, are intrigued. Ever self-deprecating, Charlie assures them that they're not missing much.

This isn't really true. Charlie, played by Brendan Fraser, is morbidly obese, weighing in at 600 pounds. He lives alone in, and works from, a shabby apartment, visited by his sole friend Liz (Hong Chau), a nurse who tries to warn him about the imminent danger of death he's in.

At the same time, she is his pained enabler, supplying him with fried chicken and candy bars. The two share a link to the tragedy which led to Charlie's self-destructive eating habits.

In the course of the story, Charlie bribes his furious estranged teenage daughter (Sadie Sink) to spend time with him; he's also pestered by a young missionary kid (Ty Simpkins).

Eventually we get to meet Charlie's ex (Samantha Morton) as well. Almost everything takes place in or just outside the apartment; director Darren Aronofsky wisely hasn't bothered to "open out" Samuel D. Hunter's play (Hunter wrote the adaptation).

This concentrated setting only adds to the claustrophobia of Charlie's situation.

It's hard to miss the story's parallel to that of Aronofsky's 2008 *The Wrestler*—a guy at the



A once-hunky Fraser takes on a weighty assignment, in more ways than one.

end of his physical rope tries for an 11th-hour reconciliation with his daughter.

And as Mickey Rourke, in a comeback role, was the story with *The Wrestler*, the story here is Brendan Fraser, likewise in a comeback role.

I've always found Fraser enviable—hunky looks plus an unpretentious likability. Thus even the many terrible movies he's starred in come across like they were fun to do, and that in itself made stuff like *George of the Jungle* and *Journey to the Center of the Earth* less dreary, at least a little (maybe not *Furry Vengeance*).

But in *The Whale*, Aronofsky has put Fraser's soulful sweetness to use beyond merely ingratiating himself with the audience.

Working inside harrowingly convincing prosthetic makeup by Adrien Morot, Fraser is an angelic presence as Charlie, radiant with compassion and love, yet also with reflective intelligence, and depths of unexpressed sorrow and anger and desperation.

There may not really be a lot to the film beyond Fraser's performance, and the crisp, controlled mix of anger and adoration in Hong Chau's Liz.

Some scenes here verge on the overwrought, I suppose, and there are revelations that would probably play better on the stage. But nothing seems campy or patronizing. *The Whale* is a vehicle,

perhaps, but it's a vehicle for an unforgettable, maybe even classic star turn.

*The Whale* is rated R and plays at Harkins Tempe Marketplace, Harkins Chandler Fashion 20, Harkins SanTan Village 16, AMC Abwatukey 24 and other multiplexes Valleywide.

### Chandler Center for the Arts to host John Mueller's Winter Dance Party, April 2, at 3 p.m.

John Mueller's Winter Dance Party has performed in front of over 2 million people and is the official live and authentic re-creation of Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and the Big Bopper's final tour.

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Information: [events@chandlercenter.org](mailto:events@chandlercenter.org)





# SPORTS

## Sports Notebook

# Corona, Marcos wrestlers confront a tough season

By Alex Zener

**T**he Aztecs have participated in two tournaments so far during the 2022-23 season, including the Nate Johnson Memorial Duals Tournament at Red Mountain High School, here they took fifth place out of 20 teams with a total of 32 points.

Corona also took eighth place out of 24 teams in the Mile High Challenge hosted by Chino Valley and held at Findlay Toyota Center in Prescott Valley Dec. 30-31.

At the Johnson event, the Aztecs finished third in the Red Pool on their way to the championships.

Corona sophomore **Aidan Odom** won all 10 of his matches in the 215 lb. weight class, defeating **Alejandro Reyes** of Marcos de Niza in his first match in a 5:11 fall. He went on to win four of the next nine matches by fall as well.

Junior **Michael Winiker**, wrestling in the 106 lb. weight class, won nine out of his 10 matches, losing only to a wrestler from Walden Grove.

Corona junior **Gavin Martinez**, wrestling at 113 lbs., won seven of his 10 matches, while sophomore **Evan Soliz** won six out of nine matches in at the 120 lb. weight category to finish 6-3.

Senior **Aidan Lightfoot**, in the 126 lb. weight class, won his first five matches before losing three in a row. He was then able to regroup to win his last two and finish the tournament with a 7-3 record.

In the 132 lb. weight class, Corona senior **Tyler Hamm** won his first six matches before falling to a Marana wrestler. He came back to win one more to end up 7-3, while sophomore **Brayden Johnson-Brown** lost in the first round of his 138 lb. weight class but went on to win the next nine matches to end up 9-1 overall.

Senior **Gabriel Gonzales** won his first match at 144 lbs. in a fall over a Queen Creek wrestler, but then lost two in a row to finish 3-2 overall while freshman **Sebastian Martinez** also wrestled at 144 lbs., winning one match out of five to finish the tournament 1-4.

**Caden Gorishek** won his first two matches before losing the third in the 150 lb. weight class. He went on to win his last three matches to finish the tournament 5-1.

Junior **David Navarro** went 6-3 in the 157 lb. weight category, winning his first three while **Andrew Mushkin** and **Julian Rodriguez** also

wrestled in the 157 lb. weight category.

Mushkin won his first match against a wrestler from Marana but lost the next to two ending with a 1-2 record while Rodriguez had his two opponents forfeit so he finished 2-0 by default.

Senior **Cabhan Kelleher**, at 165 lbs., ended up with a 6-4 record after defeating wrestlers from Queen Creek, Sunnyslope, Campo Verde, Yuma Catholic and Red Mountain.

Corona's **Joel Arias**, wrestling in the 175 lb. weight category, lost his first match to a Queen Creek wrestler but rallied to come back and win eight out of ten matches while junior **Kevin Santiago** lost his first three matches but won six out of the next seven to go 6-4 in the 190 lb. weight class.

At the Mile High Challenge, Soltz, wrestling at 113 lbs., made it all the way to the finals before losing in a close 7-6 decision to a wrestler from Marana. He medaled for second place.

Winiker won his first three matches before losing in the semifinals to take home the third-place medal along with Hamm who fought his way through the consolation bracket in the 126 lb. weight class to win a third-place medal.

Although Gavin Martinez lost in the second round, he went on to fight his way through the consolation brackets to get sixth place in the 113 lb. weight category.

The Aztecs had three wrestlers compete at the Mile High Challenge Girls Division, where the team took 17th place out of 27 teams.

The three wrestlers included senior **Summer Cameron** in the 114 lb. weight class, sophomore **Miranda Ellsworth** in the 132 lb. weight class, and senior **Ana Jovanovic** in the 145 lb. weight class.

Janovic won her first two matches with Falls before losing in the finals to a Casteel wrestler. Janovic podiumed to receive the second-place medal.

Up next, the Aztecs were due to wrestle at home against Desert Ridge before heading to the Flowing Wells Boys Wrestling Invitational Jan. 13-14 at Flowing Wells High School. They will have three more dual matches before the sectional tournament to be held Feb. 11 at Desert Vista High School.

The results at the sectionals will determine who qualified for the Division I State Wrestling Tournament to be held Feb. 16-18.



## Marcos de Niza wrestling

The Padres took 17th place with the six wrestlers who competed at the Nate Johnson Memorial Duals Tournament where their leading wrestler ended up being **Luic Pichardo** in the 165 lb. weight class where he won his first nine matches before losing to a Walden Grove wrestler in his last match to end up with a 9-1 record.

**Taiwan Hopkins** went 5-5 in the 113 lb. weight category while

**Daniel Horton**, wrestling at 175 lbs., won six out of his 10 matches while **Samuel Aguero** ended the tournament with a 2-8 record in the 190 lb.

weight category.

**Alejandro Reyes** won three of his ten matches in the 285 lb. weight category to end up with a 3-7 record.

**Damarques San Agustin** won five out of his nine matches to finish with a 5-4 record in the 150 lb. weight category.

The Padres, wrestling in Division III, Section III, have two more invitationals and three dual meets before the sectionals.

On Jan. 10 they were scheduled to wrestle Coronado, Notre Dame Prep and AZ College Prep at AZ College Prep while on Jan. 18 they will be wrestling against Eastmark, Mesquite and Saguaro

at home.

On Jan. 20-21 the American Leadership Academy in Gilbert is hosting the ALA WAR Duals where the Padres will compete against several schools before their last home meet against Moon Valley, Shadow Mountain and Tempe on Jan. 25.

The Padres' last competition before the sectionals, Feb. 11, will be Jan. 27-28 at the Tim Van Horne Memorial Wrestling Invitational at Payson High School.

The Sectional tournament will be held at Moon Valley High School on Feb. 11 and the Division III State Wrestling Tournament will be Feb. 16-18.

## For Tempe Diablos, holiday gifting is a bright spot of year

Gift baskets with green beans, corn, stuffing and a turkey offered a happy surprise to 300 families gathered at McClintock High School, thanks to a collaboration by Tempe Diablos, the Tempe Elementary School District, Arizona Coyotes and United Food Bank at a holiday-

season Feed the Need fundraiser.

"The holiday season is a perfect time to give back, and we are fortunate (to be) able to do that each year," said Mike DiDomenico, Tempe Diablos president.

"We are grateful to be able to work with amazing organizations to bring this event to life and help those in need."

The families were chosen by the Tempe Elementary district, which was searching for community members who would benefit from such an event and the accompanying donations.

"Our partnership with the Tempe Diablos

is a very special one," said Tempe Elementary's Michele Grimaldi.

"They help provide for our school district and in our community in many different ways, and they wanted to do something special for the holidays that would really make an impact on the community. Because of this event, more than a thousand people were supported with a holiday meal."

In 2020, the groups raised funds and donated more than \$13,000 worth of nonperishable food items. In 2021, the donation amount increased to \$23,000.



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# Investing in your streets: How Tempe is improving roads for all

By Corey Woods

One year ago in Wrangler News, I wrote about the accelerated improvements we are making to streets citywide, including substantial investments in south Tempe roadways.

It's time now for me to update you on how we are progressing in

meeting our goals.

As you may remember, Tempe uses a data-driven approach to measure the quality of our streets. We assess surface distresses, like potholes and cracks, of course.

We also look at ride quality – how pleasant is the road to use? Each street segment is assigned a Pavement Quality Index (PQI) score.

Those scores, along with other data metrics such as traffic volumes, are used to plan and prioritize street repair and maintenance projects.

Tempe uses a preventative maintenance approach to pavement management.

This approach maximizes available funding by allowing the city to find a balance between maintaining streets that are considered to be in good condition and rehabilitating streets considered to be in poor condition.

At the time of my last column, we were just six months into accelerating our pavement quality goal. I'm proud to announce that in 2022, we have completed 29 improvement projects citywide, amounting to more than 130 lane miles resurfaced.

In south Tempe, you may have noticed the improvements along Warner Road, between Rural and Price roads, or in several of your neighborhoods.

As a result of the City Council's acceleration, we are dedicating more than \$12 million in our current 2022-23 fiscal year alone, which is almost triple the amount we spent prior to prioritization.

This will allow us to improve several sections along Warner Road, McClintock Drive between Guadalupe and Ray roads, and large neighborhoods, like Optimist Park.

Greater investments planned over the next few years are aimed

at raising our citywide PQI average score to 70 by 2028.

While we will continue our commitment to ensuring our roads meet the high standards our residents deserve, I also want to take this opportunity to tell you about other ways we are refreshing your city.

Public safety facilities, water lines, parks and downtown sidewalks are all among the areas being improved.

You can track the progress at [tempe.gov/RefreshTempe](https://tempe.gov/RefreshTempe).

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](mailto:corey_woods@tempe.gov), call my office at 480-350-8793 and follow me on Facebook and Twitter.

— Corey Woods is  
the mayor of Tempe



# Building an even stronger Chandler is our goal

By Kevin Hartke

On January 12, 2023, I will have the incredible honor of being sworn in again for another four-year term as Chandler's Mayor.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to continue serving the community I love so much.

For two decades I have had a role in shaping the direction of our great city, first serving on three boards and commissions, as a councilmember, and then as Mayor.

Though we've come a long way since then, our work isn't done.

I remain fully committed to building an even better community and a stronger Chandler.



I'm so fortunate to continue working with Councilmember Matt Orlando, who will also be sworn in as a councilmember in January. He has been a pillar in

this community for decades and his experience is a tremendous asset to the Council.

I'm also excited to work with Council-elects Jane Poston and Angel Encinas. Both are new to the political arena, and I welcome their fresh sets of eyes. They are both successful Chandler entrepreneurs, embedded in our community. They will bring such unique perspectives to the Council.

As we welcome two new faces, that means we're also saying goodbye to two familiar ones – Vice Mayor Terry Roe and Councilmember Rene Lopez. Both have been serving on the City Council since 2015. Vice Mayor Roe, a former police sergeant, is a strong advocate for public

safety and business development. Councilmember Lopez is passionate about city and regional water infrastructure, bringing a strong voice to organizations such as Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (AMWUA). Both of their voices will be greatly missed on the DAIS. They were fantastic councilmembers and are even better people.

Each new year brings with it an opportunity for positive changes to our lives and to this wonderful community in which we live. I hope that's what you'll all focus on as we wrap up the holiday season and ring in 2023. I can't wait to see what's in store for the city.

— Kevin Hartke is the mayor of Chandler

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# A history, a thank you, but not a goodbye

By Rene Lopez

As I near the end of my eight years of serving the residents of Chandler, I want to say thank you for the humble opportunity to represent you and our City to improve the lives of our residents.

My wife of 25 years and I are blessed to have landed in this great City back in 2007 to finish raising our children.



I had been involved with many communities and political projects and was serving on the Parks and Recreation commission when I became aware of the opportunity to further be involved in the City as a

Councilmember.

With two young kids, and my wife and I working full-time jobs, it was a major sacrifice for my family to support my run. However, it was the best decision we made.

Now that our children are grown and my tenure is wrapping up, I reflect on all the accomplishments we have made to keep Chandler the shining example for other cities to strive to be:

In downtown Chandler, we saw the completion of Overstreet, New Square, and two new parking garages, and we have still more developments to come.

We saw massive economic investments with Intel's \$20 billion expansion, the retention and growth of Orbital ATK, and their subsequent purchase by Northrop Grumman with additional investments and growth along the Price Road corridor, and many other new headquarters moving to Chandler. Our population grew by over 15% with 38,000 new residents now calling Chandler home.

All this growth occurred while still

maintaining best in class for cost of service by lowering the City portion of our property tax seven consecutive years in a row, cumulatively cutting it by 6.5%.

Continue to be a leader in water conservation, water infrastructure investments, and a City that is well prepared for the coming years of drought.

Paid down Chandler's unfunded liability to our Public Safety Pension Retirement System by over \$125 Million, securing the retirements of our police officers and firefighters, and putting more money back into the pockets of our, and into our reoccurring general fund.

Continued to expand our partnerships with non-profits, completed the Chandler Museum, and reinvested in the Chandler Center for the Arts.

Developed new parks such as Citrus Vista, Homestead North and South and Lantana Ranch.

Renovated several other parks including Harris, Summit Point, Vida, Folley and Tumbleweed, to name a few.

Lastly, my most proud and enduring contribution, completing the Veteran's Field of Honor at Veteran's Oasis Park.

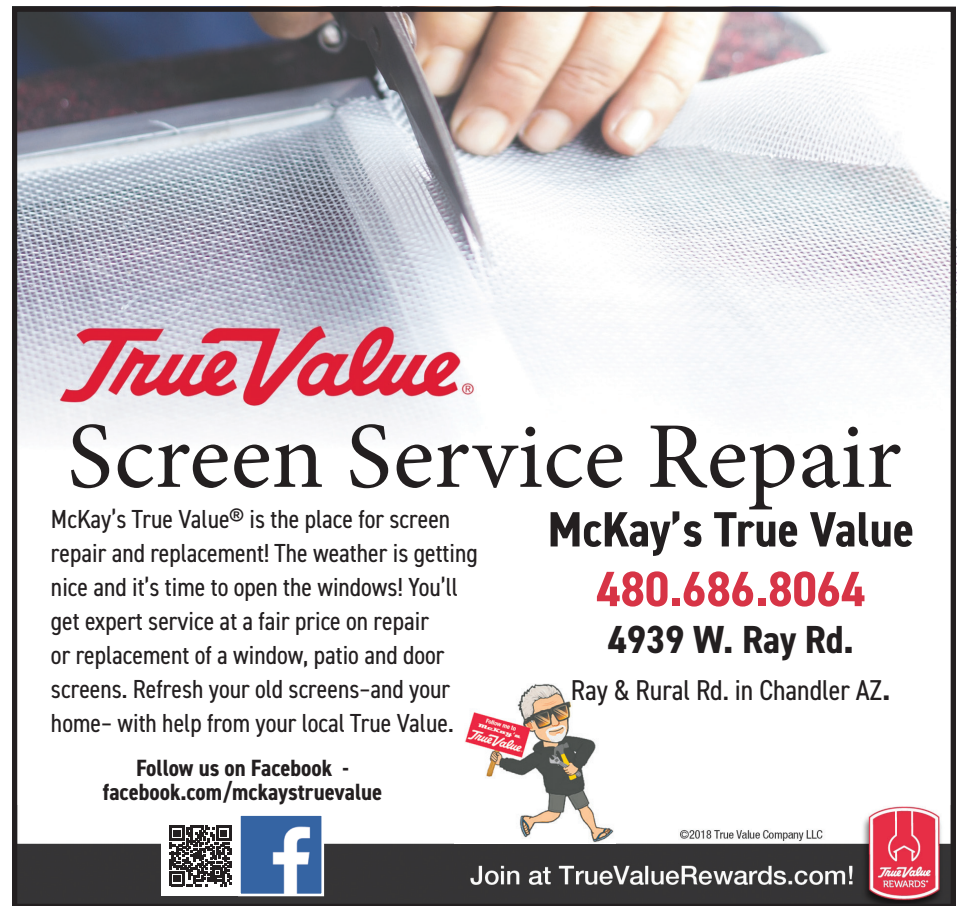
I also want to thank my personal mentor, prior Mayor Jerry Brooks, in providing guidance, support, and collaboration during my time in office. I only regret that he passed before he was able to see the completion of our Veteran's Field of Honor.

I have been privileged to serve our City alongside many great people that hold the residents of Chandler in extremely high regard. I am leaving the City in great hands of leaders that want to see Chandler continue to succeed, a City staff led by Joshua Wright, and a great contingent of executives and directors that make me proud to have spent eight years serving with them.

They have become more than just friends, but part of my Chandler family.

This is not goodbye, as I continue to serve our community in other ways, so I hope to see you around Chandler. And if you see me, please stop to say hello.

— Rene Lopez is a member of the Chandler City Council



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## Rehab services now more convenient with new Dignity location

Tempe and West Chandler residents who typically utilize rehab services offered through Dignity Health Chandler Regional Medical Center now have another close-by location to obtain needed health care.

Dignity's Lifepoint Rehabilitation, a business unit of Lifepoint Health, is celebrating the opening of Dignity Health East Valley Rehabilitation Hospital-Gilbert, a 50,000-square-foot inpatient rehabilitation hospital.

The facility, which is the second of its kind in the East Valley under the joint venture, is aimed at helping to meet what is said to be a growing need for inpatient rehabilitation services in the area.

The two-story, 40-bed hospital features all private rooms and personalized inpatient care models, focusing on acute rehabilitation and recovery for patients who suffer from stroke, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, complex

neurological disorders, orthopedic conditions, multiple traumas, amputation and other injuries or disorders.

Additionally, the facility also houses multidisciplinary therapy gymnasiums, which are outfitted with the latest therapeutic technologies including augmented-reality balance training, therapy bionics and a full-body exoskeleton.

The hospital also includes a therapeutic courtyard with exterior amenities designed to promote patient ambulation and activity.

"We've experienced tremendous growth in complex care...including orthopedic and neurosurgery patients who may require acute, hospital-based rehabilitation services," said Mark Slyter, president and CEO of Dignity Health Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers.

The new facility will represent a much-needed resource for those in this community who have suffered from serious illness and injury, noted Slyter.

"We are proud to partner with Lifepoint Rehabilitation to provide care and services close to home that will help people resume engaging in the activities that they enjoy, and to live life to the fullest.

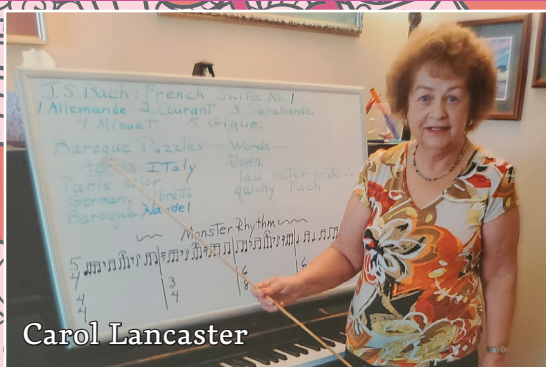
"The continued partnership between Dignity Health and Lifepoint Rehabilitation (formerly known as Kindred Hospital Rehabilitation Services) further emphasizes both organizations' strong commitment to provide the East Valley community with the highest quality of care balanced with compassion and humankindness," Slyter added.

Russ Bailey, president of Lifepoint Rehabilitation, said: "This state-of-the-art facility is fully dedicated to helping those in the community who have experienced the debilitating effects of a serious injury or illness receive the compassionate, excellent care that they need.

"We are proud to advance our partnership with Dignity Health to increase access to these much-needed rehabilitation services in the East Valley and beyond." Under the terms of the joint venture creating Dignity Health East Valley Rehabilitation Hospital, both Lifepoint Rehabilitation and Dignity Health are stakeholders.

The new facility is the second Dignity Health freestanding rehabilitation hospital in the East Valley and the latest in a series of major partnerships for the organization, according to hospital officials.

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Tempe resident Bill Marcotte, photo at left, standing between his wife, right, and then Cardinal Ratzinger. Marcotte also was among group, second from right, who met again with the future pope. — Courtesy photo

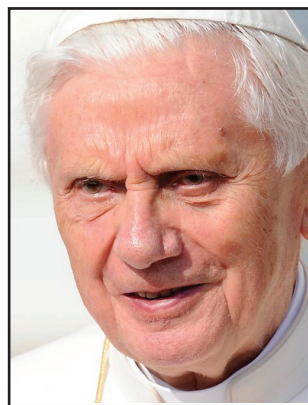
# For Tempe man, death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI holds special memories

By Tony Gutiérrez

When Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI died Dec. 31, 2022, Catholics around the world mourned the loss of the retired pontiff who'd served from 2005 to 2013.

Bill Marcotte, a Tempe resident and faculty member for the Institute of Catholic Theology, recalled meeting the pope as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger — before his election — on two occasions.

A German priest who was serving at Marcotte's parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Tempe at the time — the Rev. Markus Zimmerman — was also a doctoral student



under Ratzinger, a renowned theologian.

During a visit to Rome in 1996, the German priest facilitated a meeting between Marcotte and some colleagues with the future pope.

"We waited, and he came up with his hands stretched out," recalled Marcotte. "He said 'Americani. Americani.'"

The group told Ratzinger they were attending a Catholic charismatic conference. The cardinal then turned to his priest student and asked if he was charismatic.

"Father Markus was stunned by the question; he didn't know how to answer. I told him, 'Your Eminence, he's very charismatic,'" said Marcotte.

"He didn't know how Ratzinger would react to that. Then Ratzinger pointed his finger at him and said, Father Markus, 'You'd better be.' Then everybody started laughing.

"Basically he's saying we should all have the gifts of the Holy Spirit working in us," he added.



“Charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit. We got to have them if we’re going to make an impact in the world as Christians.”

Pope Benedict XVI was born April 16, 1927 in Marktl, a town in the German state of Bavaria. During World War II, he — along with youth throughout the nation — were forced to join the “Hitler Youth,” although he refused to participate.

After the war, he entered seminary and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising on June 29, 1951.

As a priest, he became an academic, and served as a theological consultant during the Second Vatican Council of 1962-1965.

“You have this theologian who was not at all close-minded. At that time, it was Father Ratzinger who was a scholar. He was very involved in the liturgical renewal movement that wanted to see the church less self-referential and enclosed and be more out in the world,” said the Rev. Charlie Goraieb, pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

“As time went on and he saw how poorly those reforms of the Second Vatican Council and the documents of the Second Vatican Council were implemented — and in many cases distorted.

“There has to be continuity. That became his mantra and focus and teaching,” he added, noting that the pope’s episcopal motto was “*Cooperatores Veritatis*,” “Cooperators of the Truth.”

Ratzinger became archbishop of his home diocese in 1977, and later that year he was named a cardinal by St. Paul VI.

When the latter died, he participated in the conclaves that elected Blessed John Paul I and St. John Paul II.

“He got on the pope’s radar when they met at the conclave for John Paul I, and they knew each other.

“It was clear when they gathered in 1978, that those two men met, and Cardinal [Karol] Wojtyła [the future John Paul II] knew this

was a kindred spirit who understood the real function and purpose of the Second Vatican Council and came to a balanced and authentic interpretation of it,” said Goraieb.

John Paul II tasked the German cardinal with leading the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican office charged with maintaining proper Catholic teaching. In that role, Cardinal Ratzinger headed a commission that compiled what is now the “Catechism of the Catholic Church.”

“He is considered by some the ‘Father of the Catechism,’” said Marcotte.

“You had confusion as to what does the church really teaches. That confusion was the impetus of a Catechism, something that would bring clarity to what the church taught, the doctrines of the church.”

Marcotte recalled selecting Cardinal Ratzinger as a modern-day theologian to present on while he pursued his master’s degree in theology.

The second time he met Ratzinger was in 1999, when the cardinal signed a copy of his book, “*Gospel Catechesis Catechism*.” Six years later, when the prelate was elected pope, Marcotte was ecstatic and went searching for that book.

“We thanked him for all his service to the Church, and he shrugged his shoulders in a very humble way and said, ‘You do what you can,’” Marcotte said.

“He had a lot on his shoulders. Everything in the church that was coming up went across his desk, including the scandals, not to mention very out-there theologians. He had to really discipline them.”

As pope, Benedict XVI wrote a series of encyclicals — authoritative papal teachings — on the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. He was also known for his interfaith outreach — he was the first pope to visit a mosque, and he established a way for members of the Anglican tradition to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.

“The lord was not just a theological figure

we speak about, but he was someone we could know and bring us to a transformative relationship,” said Goraieb, who saw Pope Benedict at a general audience during a pilgrimage to Rome in 2010.”

Whether it was his homilies or apostolic letters or his reflections that he would give at different times, even without going into the documents he wrote, his main theme was to know Jesus Christ and to experience a personal transformative relationship with him, and that that call was for everyone.”

Accused of being conservative for maintaining the church’s teachings on moral issues, and in some cases of being liberal for maintaining the church’s teachings on social justice issues, Goraieb said it’s a mistake to apply American political labels to him.

“People who say that are people who are steeped in ignorance about the nature of the church and who this man was. To try to understand him from a political point of view, is an impossible situation, because you’re going to have to shoehorn him in your categories. He doesn’t fit,” said Goraieb. “I’m impatient with that kind of talk. Categories of left and right, those belong in Washington, (D.C.). If that’s what you’re looking for, you’re missing what it’s about.”

Benedict XVI shocked the world in 2013 when he became the first pope in 600 years to resign. He retired to a monastery in Rome, and though he expected to live only another year, his post-papal life lasted longer than his pontificate.

“I was really touched by what I heard were his last words, ‘Jesus I love you,’” said Marcotte on reacting to the news of Benedict’s death.

“I was very proud that we had such a great pope who gave us such a great witness to what it meant to be a disciple of the Lord, and one who used his intellectual gifts to the max to help bring clarity to a Church that needed it in its time.”

*Tony Gutiérrez writes regularly for Wrangler News, frequently on topics of interest to our area's faith community.*





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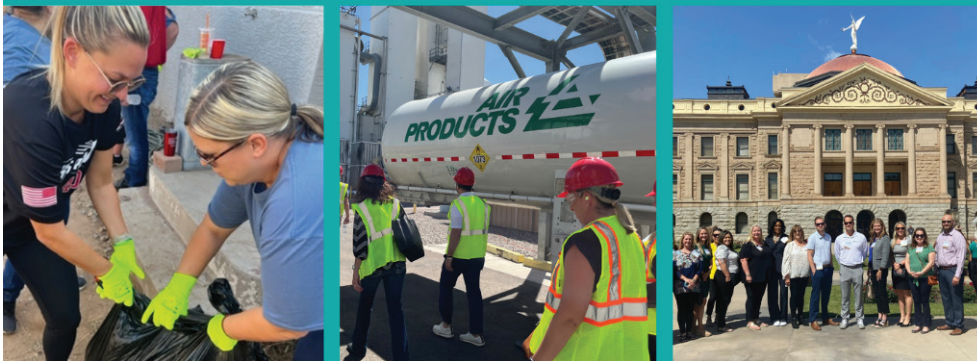


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# How To Sell a House That Didn't Sell



If your home has just come off the market and hasn't sold, don't be discouraged. The reason your home did not sell may have nothing to do with your home or the market. In reality, your home may have been one of the more desirable properties for sale. So Why Didn't Your Home Sell?

In the last 6 months, many of the homes listed for sale never sold at all, and many sellers found that there was a tremendous amount a homeowner needed to be educated on how to sell their home for top dollar in the shortest time period. Don't risk making the wrong choices and losing both time and money on your investment. Before you hire a realtor, know the right questions to ask to save you time and money. Industry experts have prepared a free special report called "**How to Sell a House that Didn't Sell**" which educates you on the issues involved. To order your FREE Special Report, Call Carol Royse.

**Your Home Sold Guaranteed  
or Carol will Buy It!\***

**480-776-5231**



*CarolRoyse.com*



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## SOLD Properties



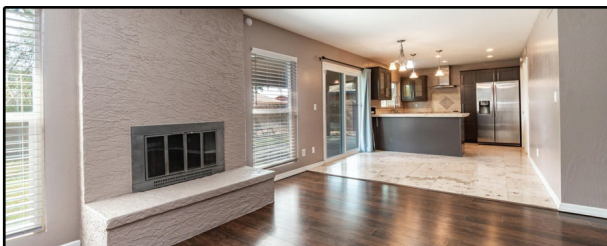
**PENDING - Chandler  
\$625,000**



**PENDING - Tempe  
\$425,000**



**SOLD - Chandler  
\$900,000**



**SOLD - Southern Palms  
Tempe \$425,000**



**SOLD - Warner Ranch  
Tempe \$552,500**



**SOLD - Chandler  
\$589,000**