

Seed Library



Seedy setting for an earth-changing idea

W. Chandler's Sunset library and its drawers of sample packets sow joy into newly energized gardening enthusiasts. See Pgs. 7-8

AUG 19-SEPT 1, 2023 • VOL 33, NO 14



Wrangler News photo by Andrew Lwowski

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Drawers in the seed garden at West Chandler's Sunset branch library offer a fascinating repository for the area's gardening enthusiasts.

— Wrangler News photo by Andrew Lwowski

Seed garden shows blossoming interest at Sunset branch library

Friends' \$81,000 contribution supports unique checkout system

Special for
Wrangler News
by Sally Mesarosh

Gardeners will be pleased to learn that a portion of this year's \$81,000 donation from the Friends of the Chandler Public Library will go toward maintaining Sunset Library's Seed Library. \$1,000 of the donation will help keep popular seeds in stock and provide the seeds that the community says it wants.

About 6,000 packets of seeds have been checked out from the seed repository since it started in 2021. Residents can check out up to three seed packets each month with their Chandler Public Library card so they can grow a thriving garden and participate in gardener-to-gardener seed swaps.

Seeds are free, cannot be reserved,

and availability is determined by supply and season.

Chandler Public Librarian Aubrey Kowitt said planting that first seed in the ground often inspires people to learn other ways to show appreciation for the earth that they can pass onto the next generation.

"Seed libraries encourage individuals of

all ages to learn about the environment we live in and to have a greater awareness of how the natural world works, including what's good for it and what can harm it," Kowitt said.

Bob Lowry, the president of the Friends board, expressed gratitude to the community for their support.

Kowitt said the

Friends' allocation of dollars will allow it to purchase non-GMO seeds (produced without genetic

— Continued on Page 4



— Continued from Page 3

engineering) to replenish the library and purchase labels and envelopes for packaging seeds.

“We will also be able to provide an occasional workshop on seed saving so residents can learn how to not only grow plants successfully, but to save the seeds for their friends and neighbors and to continue growing those plants year after year.”

The seed library was made possible by a grant awarded to Sunset Library by the American Library Association, Resilient Communities: Libraries Respond to Climate Change.

“We were one of 25 libraries in the nation to receive this grant which aimed at engaging the community in programs, conversations, and activities related to the climate crisis, as well as climate resiliency,” Kowitt said.

Librarian Kowitt said they try to make available seeds that have a long history in the Southwest—for example, tepary beans that are extremely heat- and drought-tolerant.

“Some of the seeds in our library are purchased, and many are donated by local growers in the area,” she said. “You can grow something from climate-adaptable seeds, save the seeds from your healthy harvests, and then donate seeds so your neighbors can do the same.”

Kowitt said another aspect of seed libraries is how they promote food security.

“If food becomes more challenging to grow on a large scale and more expensive over time due to the climate crisis (extreme heat, drought, wildfires, etc.), you can learn how to have an endless supply of home-grown food on hand,” she said.

“No matter the cost of food at

the grocery store, learning how to grow your own nutritious food means you’ll live a more resilient and sustainable life. Plus, seeds from the Seed Library are free!”

Finally, seed libraries promote and encourage healthy habits.

“Gardening is exercise for both your body and your brain,” Kowitt said.

“Getting outside is good for all of us (when we can do it safely) and working in your garden can be very meditative, good for your mental health. It can be a fun activity for families to do together, and it forces you to move your body.”

Upcoming Seed Swap Event at Chandler Sunset Library: Saturday, Aug. 26 from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Seed Saving Workshop at Chandler Sunset Library (space limited and registration required): Saturday, Sept. 23 from 10 – 11 a.m.



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Another chance for public review of Tempe's General Plan 2050

Update

Wrangler News Staff

If Tempe's forward-looking Character Area concept ever was to show off its worth, the role it played in development of the city's newly unwrapped General Plan 2050 must have been one of those times.

A gamut of forward-looking concepts developed by Tempe planners in recent years were among the priorities of the 60 or so advisers who've been working to develop a completed draft of a new General Plan for the city, a process that reoccurs every 10 years.

What now appears to be the opportunity for a wide ranging public review of General Plan 2050 will be held Thursday, Aug. 24, with the measure, incorporating any possible revisions, due to appear

on Tempe's ballot in March 2024.

As to how much work has gone into developing the nearly finalized plan, staff from various city departments began meeting in March 2022, determined, said one member of the group, to use it to provide what was termed "a holistic view" of Tempe.

The approach, it was said, was to help to ensure that, for planning purposes, the city is viewed in its entirety—parks and recreation, public services, land development and more, and more...and more.

As the group's work unfolded, staff made what some said could have been called its No. 1 goal: to ensure that public involvement and input would be available at every opportunity along the way.

This led to open houses, booths at city events, mailed information in utility bills, postal cards—every conceivable way public contributions to the study could be encouraged.

As to how any outcomes of the study can

become vital mileposts during its 10-year lifespan, those working on General Plan 2050 call it the latest in Tempe's ongoing commitment to incorporate population growth, among other issues, into whatever is being done on an annualized basis to keep up with new needs or demands.

While the 10-year requirement for updated strategies isn't aimed at stimulating population growth—"we know people will be coming here, and we want to be ready," said one staffer interviewed for this piece—any efforts to keep up regularly with trends enables experts to conduct planning and develop responses over 30 years, not just those in the immediate future.

Finally, say members of the group, it's important to remember that none of the proposals they have studied would affect zoning laws, and any proposed changes would have to go first through the full gauntlet of approval processes.





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Chandler Council priority: 'Investing in what matters'

Commentary by Kevin Hartke

Every single day, even in the heat of summer, Chandler children can be spotted at city parks playing on playgrounds, shooting hoops and riding bicycles. They stop to for a quick drink at a water fountain. Their parents sit on park benches nearby. Softball and soccer programs bring plenty of feet to fields. It's a wonderful sight to see.

But it takes a tremendous amount of TLC to ensure those parks and playgrounds remain intact and that drinkable water comes out of those fountains. That's why investing in infrastructure is so important.

The City Council and I are committed to investing in what matters. Last month, we approved several infrastructure projects that will improve the quality of life for all residents by enhancing those experiences.



Kevin Hartke

Maintaining the access and amenities at city parks is one of the city's most important tasks. We've added funding for improvements to the aging parking lots at Arrowhead Aquatic Center, Snedigar and Paseo Vista. Additionally, we increased spending on park maintenance and landscaping which means more trash pickup, irrigation repairs and tree planting and trimming. And we've added funding for street maintenance to do asphalt patching and roadway repairs on city streets.

For decades, we've managed the city's water

supply with a forward-thinking, thoughtful approach that has resulted in a robust, sustainable water portfolio for Chandler. It is our intent to preserve it. We approved a new partnership with SRP that will expand the city's water supply by building a new well on an unutilized Central Arizona Project (CAP) facility.

And Chandler wouldn't be the Community of Innovation without investing in technologies like solar.

We've entered into a new agreement to evaluate the most cost-effective and energy-saving solar solutions for City facilities, which will ultimately increase our solar footprint across Chandler.

To learn more about these projects, which were all approved at the July 20 Regular City Council Meeting, visit chandleraz.gov and search for *Council Meetings*.

— Kevin Hartke is mayor of Chandler

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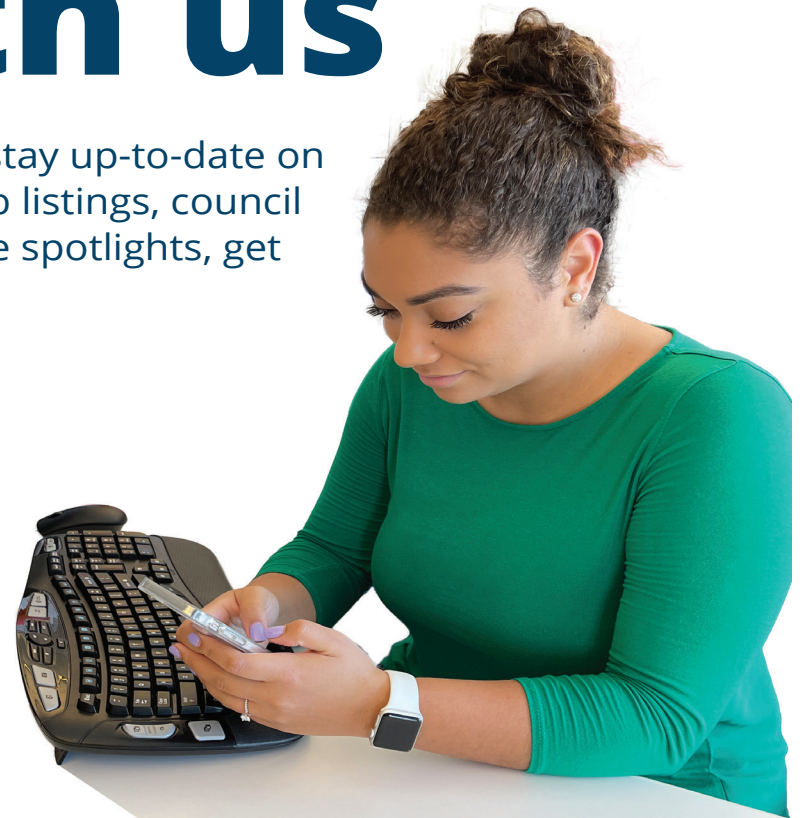
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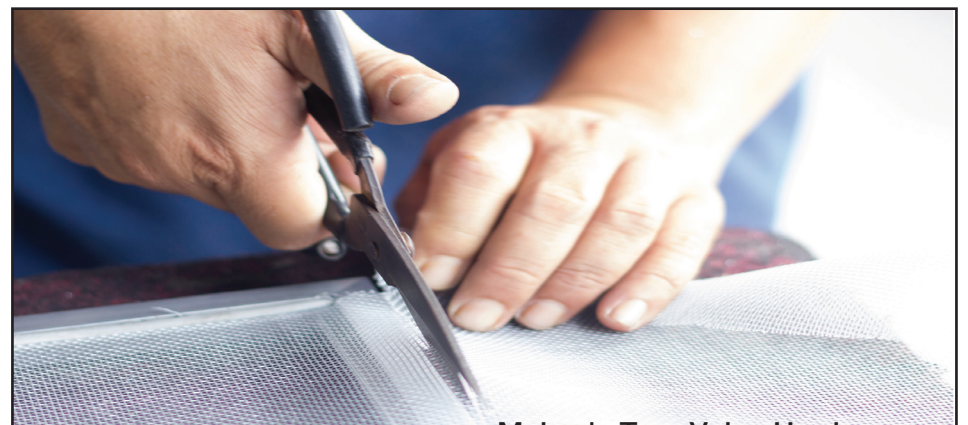
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Tempe Chamber elects new board, officers

A new board of directors has been elected by the Tempe Chamber of Commerce for the 2023-24 term. Said incoming Board Chair Suzy Greenwood about priorities for the coming year:

“... I am excited about the coming year, about continuing to work alongside our dedicated, knowledgeable and professional board members. Together, along with the Chamber’s exceptional staff, we will steer towards progress, innovation, and prosperity – our vision for the Tempe business community.”

In addition to Greenwood, the board includes:

Colin Diaz, ACE, IOM, Tempe Chamber, President/CEO; **Suzy Greenwood**, Arizona Tax Advisors, Board Chair; **Megan Martin**, SRP, Past Board Chair; **Tom Binge**, Renaissance Financial, Incoming Board Chair;

Jayashree Ganesan, The Centers for Habilitation, Treasurer.

Board of Directors — Deborah Arteaga, Tempe Community Action Agency; **Nick Bastian**, Exchange Club of Tempe; **John Bauer**, Dignity Health; **Mike Bradley**, ECD Systems LLC; **Laura Briscoe**, Laura’s Gourmet; **Ashley Bunch**, APS; **Kelsey Files**, ASU; **Lori Foster**, Tempe Downtown Authority; **Tim Gomez**, ASU; **Matthew Heil**, Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport; **Mark Holthaus**, Edward Jones Brokerage; **Rosa Inchausti**, City of Tempe; **Michael Martin**, Tempe Tourism; **Michael Neely**, Tempe St. Luke’s Hospital; **Paul Quinn**, R&K Staffing; **Kate Smith**, Rio Salado College; and **Beth Stull**, State Farm Insurance Companies.



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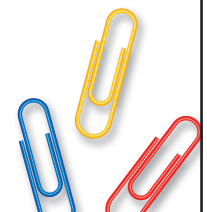
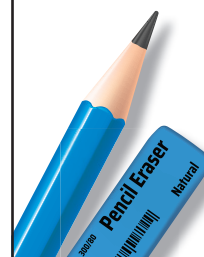
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Details at tempe.gov/CityManager

Tempe Schools chief will join other U.S. leaders in quest to 'reimagine education'

For Dr. James Driscoll, facing the routine, day-to-day business of running one of the state's best recognized school districts apparently is only one of the challenges the Tempe Elementary superintendent wants to confront.

The other is when he gathers with his likewise esteemed counterparts around the country as a way to explore even more innovative ideas to achieve students' futures.



Dr. Driscoll

Good news, Driscoll recently learned.

He has been selected to join the 2023-24 Fellowship for Public Education Leadership cohort run by the Broad Center at Yale's School of Management.

The fellowship, made up of 19 senior-level public education leaders from across the United States, will collaborate in examining

the challenges that currently affect public education, and be aimed at reimagining possibilities for students in the future.

Starting this fall, Driscoll will begin the program that is said to bring the brightest minds in public

education together.

The fellows are scheduled to meet four times over 10 months, during which they are to be exposed to leading management research on effective public education systems and educational policy.

The topics are intended to be applied to the public school systems in which the participating leaders serve.

Said Driscoll:

"I am honored to be joining (the fellowship), which I believe will help bring Tempe Elementary closer to my long term goal of changing the educational outcomes for all students, and the work experiences for all employees in our district."

Driscoll has set forth a vision for Tempe Elementary through the implementation of the district's strategic plan, which includes the goal of "all students having access to engaging and meaningful instruction taught by high quality educators no matter what school that they attend within the district."

Driscoll added that he sees the Broad Fellowship with which he is participating "as a communion of individuals who share a strong commitment to

expand access to world-class public education to every American student, and I am excited to learn from them."

The Yale program, a think-tank-style concept, places an emphasis on connecting participants with leading practitioners in the field to help further their transformative work.

Driscoll said he believes that this will help strengthen the important efforts that Tempe Elementary staff "are leading each and every day."

Noted Driscoll:

"I know that I don't have all of the answers or solutions for the problems our district may encounter.

"But I know that I want to be the best leader I can possibly be for the students and employees that I proudly serve."

As to how his upcoming experience at the Yale School of Management's Broad Center will be useful, Driscoll added:

"I believe that in starting this dialogue among my counterparts across the nation, I will be able to better help Tempe Elementary students, employees, and community obtain the outcomes I deeply dream for them to achieve."



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Enchanting Wonders: The World of Hummingbirds

Instructor: Kathe Anderson
Wednesday, Nov. 1 | 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Overcoming Victimization: Building Resilience Through Community

Instructor: Cassie Harvey
Monday, Nov. 13 | 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Vietnam: Your Next Vacation Destination?

Instructor: Dan Fellner
Wednesday, Oct. 18 | 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Designing and 3D printing a Geometric Cookie Cutter

Instructor: Brett Kennedy
Friday Nov. 10th | 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Listen to Your Oracles: Delphi & the Greeks

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Bolmarcich
Wednesday, Dec. 6 | 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

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IT TAKES A VILLAGE

The Meals on Wheels service of Tempe Community Action Agency provides homebound seniors get a meal and a daily well-being visit with a staff member or volunteer thanks to initiatives by TCAA.

The recent extreme heat has increased the need services, according to TCAA officials.

While grants and contracts help to support TCAA's Meals on Wheels program, it is not enough to keep up with the growing need, said a spokesperson.

Information: tempeaction.org/village



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ENROLL NOW FOR CLASSES

Aug-Sept 2023



Healing Field is Sept. 9-11

Tempe will honor the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks with a display of patriotism and unity at the annual Healing Field tribute at Tempe Beach Park, located at Mill Avenue and Rio Salado Parkway. The free event runs Saturday, Sept. 9, through Monday, Sept. 11.

On Sept. 10, there will be a Tunnel to Towers 5K Run/Walk at 8 a.m. and a Freedom Concert from 6:30-9 p.m.

On Sept. 11, there will be candlelight ceremonies at 5:46 a.m. and 7 p.m. to read the names of victims and first responders.

Volunteers are invited to assist in standing up and down the flags on Sept. 9 and Sept. 12 at 6 a.m. Healing Field is presented by the Exchange Club of Tempe.

For more information, visit tempehealingfield.org.



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Every student who participates is eligible for a chance to win a \$1,000 scholarship at the end of the school year. Get connected at tempe.gov/CollegeConnect.



Navigate your path to college and career success.

South Tempe to see contractors in neighborhoods this month

Tempe is working on a water service line inventory project to improve public health, which includes inspections of service lines near water meters. The inspections are quick, performed outside and involve visual verification of service line material near the water meter

and the hose bib where water enters the home. Results of the inspection will be delivered on a doorhanger—no action is needed from Tempe water customers; however, contractors may request some residents temporarily relocate vehicles. Find more information at tempe.gov/ServiceLine.

City grants fund neighborhood improvements, art

This summer, the City Council approved funding \$327,250 in grants for neighborhood improvement projects as part of this year's Maryanne Corder Neighborhood Grant program.

The funded projects are neighborhood-generated requests for art, bike racks, sustainable landscaping and adaptive streets initiatives.

Kudos to all neighbors who applied this cycle – your work to enhance quality of life in Tempe is so appreciated! Learn more about the program and apply next year at tempe.gov/NeighborhoodGrants

Tempe has always been a community that

supports the arts – that's why the City Council in 2022 increased funding support for arts grants by 50%.

This year, the city has just awarded nearly \$225,000 in arts funding for exciting, inclusive arts and culture programs.

Tempe awarded 35 arts grants to nonprofit organizations and artists collectives to support a wide variety of activities, from theatre groups to musical performances to inventive arts events in unexpected spaces.

An additional \$75,000 will be distributed through more grant categories this fall.

Learn more at tempe.gov/ArtsGrants.

www.tempe.gov





SPORTS



– Photos courtesy of Mike Pollak

Hometown hero Mike Pollak took his talent from the Aztecs to the Sun Devils, where he became an All-Pac-10 starter.

Coaching a safer, not softer game

From a one-on-one interview with Mike Pollak by Andrew Lwowski

Mike Pollak, who played football for Corona del Sol and Arizona State before having a successful seven-year stint in the NFL, returned to Tempe questioning the game he dedicated his life to. He questioned his long-term health and even asked himself if he wanted his kids playing the sport he grew up playing and loved.

His concerns were heightened by ‘Concussion,’ the Will Smith film that hit theaters in 2015 and

caused an epidemic of concern in the world of football regarding player safety.

“There was all these news stories of CTE,” Pollak said. “Former players — we had in depth conversations with ourselves and were going, ‘Are we broken? Like what’s going on?’ And there was this negative stigma of football.”

It took a few years for Pollak to find his calling after leaving the league, but now his love for the game is as strong as ever.

Pollak graduated from Corona del Sol in 2003 after becoming a standout two-way player in football as guard and defensive line, but was also an

ace pitcher. As a highly-regarded three-star football player who earned All-Region honors, First-Team All-Arizona, First-Team All-City and All-Conference, Pollak went on to play center for Arizona State from 2003-07.

After a successful three years for the Sun Devils where he earned All-Pac-10 second-team in 2006, first-team honors in 2007 and received the Tim Landers Iron Man Award, Cecil Bono Team Captain Award and Pat Tillman Award team awards his senior season, he declared for the 2008 draft where he was selected 59th overall in the second round to the Indianapolis Colts.

He played seven years between the Colts, the Carolina Panthers and Cincinnati Bengals before retiring and moving back to Tempe and finding work as volunteer offensive assistant before taking on offensive coordinator under then-head coach Cory Nenaber.

Pollak brought experience, knowledge and a passion to his alma mater (Corona) and was eventually offered a head coach position when Nenaber moved to athletic director.

It seemed like a dream come true for Pollak.

"I kind of looked at this fork of the road and where my life is going," Pollak said. "I can be a really young head coach for the high school that I went to and be here for a long time. But there was something about safe football, which is the Tip of the Spear, that I just couldn't turn away from because I felt like there was an opportunity to change the game for the positive."

During that time, he reconnected with Scott Peters, a former Sun Devil lineman and seven-year NFL veteran himself who founded Tip of the Spear, a program aimed at teaching contact technique to limit blows to the head during the game.

Pollak began shadowing Peters during his clinics around the Valley to promote better technique for linemen. That changed Pollak's perception of the

game.

Peters' epiphany of how to better the game took a more humbling path for him, however, says Pollak.

"So, at the end of (Peters') NFL career, he was like studying Jujutsu as like a way to stay in shape," he recalled. "NFL guys do all sorts of crazy stuff in the offseason, and so he gets into this realm of martial arts that was pretty foreign to him at the time.

"He figured, 'I'm a big strong NFL offensive linemen, I can throw guys around at will,' and he quickly learned that even guys half a size and twice his age can really do damage to him.

"He got into this realm of martial arts where he was getting his butt kicked by guys that were smaller than him. It didn't make sense because in the world of football, bigger, faster, stronger mindset is what has always been preached from coaches at all levels."

It was through that experience that Peters began to question how he could translate such power through technique and leverage into the world of football.

The hips generate the most power of any movement, but by having the hips as the driving force to initiate contact for the hands rather than

upper body, Pollak says, the head is prevented from being drawn toward contact.

And there's evidence of the program's success. Peters accepted a role as an assistant offensive line coach for the Cleveland Browns, and during that span, the Browns offensive line recorded the fewest hits across all 32 clubs. The study was done independently by the NFL using accelerometers.

Pollak himself has seen it first-hand. While coaching at Corona, he began working with Austin Dixon, a 6-foot-6, 265-pound lineman that was on no one's recruiting radar. With training from Pollak, Dixon was "able to put his life on a completely different course." Dixon went on to sign with Boise State, but his life was forever changed, and Pollak said that was a "really cool experience."

Even though Pollak's mother is an educator and his brother is the head baseball coach for Arizona Preparatory College, he never thought of himself as a teacher. But seeing how he could change lives reignited his passion for the game.

Now in his seventh year, Pollak has taken over as director of training, but the program remains the same. Tip of the Spear travels nationwide to teach technique clinics to coaches and players for all levels of the game, from youth leagues to the NFL and everything in between.

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SPORTS NOTEBOOK with Alex Zener

Season opens with a bit of media 'buzz' for Corona's Aztecs



Varsity quarterback Connor Ackerley looks to lead Corona's Aztecs back to playoffs.

— Wrangler Photo By Andrew Lwowski

With a second-year head coach who has put together an explosive offense led by an experienced quarterback and a number of notable players, the Aztecs are creating some buzz in the high school sports media before the 2023 season starts the first Friday in September.

Coach **Jake Barro**, in his first year as head coach, led the Aztecs to an 8-3 record in 2022 making it into the state playoffs where the team lost to Mesa by just three points, 24-21, in the first round.

Since then, Barro has had a full year to work together with the team to create what he believes to be a positive team culture, where players are passionate, want to be a talented team and want to win, which has to start with individual and team accountability.

Barro has also been working on getting the Aztecs to be more disciplined and play with more toughness.

In addition, Barro is counting on his senior leadership, which he believes is one of the strengths of this year's team, along with the number of returning players, positive team chemistry and player speed, to help them win games now that the season is about to start.

A great deal of leadership of a football team usually starts with the quarterback which is one of the areas that Barro is confident Corona has from their senior quarterback, **Connor Ackerley**.

Ackerley has improved since last season as a leader, leading by example and vocally, when necessary, and someone the younger players look up to, according to Barro.

Ackerley, ready to start his third season as quarterback, has had his name batted around the Arizona high school media all summer.

For instance, he was listed as No. 67 in the Arizona Republic's Big 150 Top College Football Prospects in Arizona's 2024 high school class.

The Arizona Republic declared "watch for a monster senior season from Ackerley, who has continued to make big strides since his

sophomore year."

Ackerley played in 10 games his sophomore year completing 75 out of 143 passes for a total of 1051 yards and nine touchdowns.

Last season, his junior year, the 6 ft-1 quarterback played in nine games completing 130 out of 198 passes for a total of 2215 yards or 246 passing yards a game with a total of 22 touchdowns.

Another name being batted around the media

included 6 ft. junior wide receiver **Raiden Vines-Bright** who was the Aztecs leading receiver last season with an average of 84.6 yards a game or a total of 761 yards with nine touchdowns.

Vines-Bright was listed at No. 5 on the Arizona Republic's Top 100 prospects in the Class of 2025 where he was described as having "jet speed with great moves and the ability to elude defenders after catches."

Vines-Bright is being recruited by a number of universities and has received offers from ASU, Arizona, Colorado State, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ole Miss and UCLA.

Vines-Bright is only one of Corona's top three receivers who have also received scholarship offers, which may be part of the reason, besides Ackerley, that the Aztecs were listed as No. 3 when the Arizona Republic listed its top teams with the best receiving groups.

The other two Aztec receivers with college scholarship offers, who are expected to make it hard for defenses to contain, double-team or focus on just one receiver, are senior **Zuri Glenn** and freshman **Jai Jones**.

Glenn, who caught 29 passes for a total of 585 yards and six touchdowns last season, was the second leading receiver on the team. He has received a college scholarship offer from North Dakota.

Jones is one of Corona's four freshman players to make the Arizona Republic's freshman phenom 50 list from the 2027 graduating class.

Currently at 6-ft, Jones, who is No. 7 on the Republic's list, already has offers from ASU, NAU and Colorado State. He is one of the most talented young receivers Barro has seen.

The other three Corona freshman who made the Republic's freshman phenom 50 list include No. 20 **Keegan Pederson**, No. 38 **Kam Richardson** and No. 39 **Luke Farrell**.

Playing wide receiver, Pederson has been compared to potentially end up as good as **Ricky Pearsall** by the time he is a senior.

Another wide receiver, Richardson, is said to have great breakaway speed and may potentially play varsity this season.

Farrell, who is already 6-3, is a good all-around athlete with great arm strength. He may have the potential to be a Power 5 quarterback, according to Barro.

Three additional seniors made the Republic's

recent football prospects list in the 2024 graduating class including **Malcolm Flynn**, **Keyvon Thomas** and **Jose Chavez**.

Flynn is the Aztecs punter who was ranked No. 10 in the Arizona Republic's kicker list. He is also ranked by Kohl's as the No. 54 punter in the nation after punting the ball 32 times last season for a total of 1312 yards in 10 games for an average of 41 yards a punt.

Flynn put 11 punts inside the 20-yard line pinning down the Aztecs opponents deep in their territory. His longest punt was 70 yards. He has a college scholarship offer from Brown University.

Playing cornerback on defense, Thomas is ranked No. 41 on the Republic's list of prospects

due to his "great ball skills and speed."

Thomas averaged two tackles a game and had one interception. He is being recruited by several universities and has offers from Nevada, Utah and Colorado State.

Chavez, as an offensive lineman, is ranked No. 118 out of 150. He is described as "a big anchor on a strong line that will be instrumental in helping Corona run their explosive offensive."

Two of Corona's juniors made the Arizona Republics top football prospects in the 2026 high school class: **Jaz Tureaud** and **Jude Stevens**.

Tureaud, playing at the defensive end position, listed at No. 18, is described as a "dominating pass

rusher who should play varsity as a sophomore and should get more college interest after this season."

Stevens, listed at No. 48, can play the wide receiver position as well as return kickoffs for the Aztecs. He is described as "fast, running 40 yards in 4.6 seconds, with great return skills and good vision."

The Aztecs have a more difficult schedule than last season, starting the season off with two away games, at Centennial on Sept. 1 and at Pinnacle on Sept. 8.

On Sept 15 Corona will be at home but against Chandler and then at home on Sept. 22 against Marcos de Niza.

Barro aiming to replicate his championship success



Story and photo
by Andrew Lwowski

Jake Barro, a Corona del Sol graduate himself, took over coaching duties for the Aztecs a season ago, and his championship pedigree was visible from the start.

Before Barro came to Tempe, he led Casa Grande Union High School to the 4A state championship, beating Poston Butte 33-28 and claiming the programs first undefeated record since 1950 and first-ever state title.

Now, he will lead the Aztecs against his former program to open to the 2023-24 season on Aug. 25 at Hascall Henshaw Stadium.

Before Barro was at Casa Grande, the program was in shambles. In 2016, Barro led the Gauchos to their first winning record in 10 years.

Corona finished its season 5-5 before Barro's arrival, and during his first year players saw more explosive players and dynamic play calling, which provided a spark for the system.

The Aztecs finished 8-3, a drastic change from a year ago, and managed to earn a playoff berth.

Now with his base set through the players, expect Barro and his key returning playmakers, such as senior quarterback Connor Ackerley and junior receiver Raiden Vines-bright on offense, to shine while the defense anchors down.

Corona cross country boosters launch 50/50 fundraiser

Hoping to double last year's contributions

Contributed by Emily Horton

Running long distances has always been about overcoming challenges. Often, it's runner against self. But a team of cross country runners at Corona del Sol High School face a challenge beyond where their legs and heart can

carry them.

They're looking for support from the outside their control to get them to the finish.

The Corona Cross Country Boosters Club is seeking support for its annual 50/50 Raffle, which is now officially open. The goal is to raise \$10,000 or more, which would almost double last year's amount. In a 50/50 raffle, the winner can choose



to take home half of the total pot or donate the winnings back to the club.

Last year's winner won more than \$2,700.

Additionally, club parents and supporters say

the money is needed to help bridge a gap in school district funding that would enable the athletes to stay on course in the new season.

The 50/50 Raffle is live now and runs through Halloween.

Tickets can be purchased at <http://go.rallyup.com/coronadelsolxc5050>.

Ticket prices are one for \$20, three for \$50, and 10 for \$100. The winner will be announced on Nov 1.

Corona del Sol cross country athletes represent the community in local and regional races, usually at a distance of 5K (3.2 miles).

In addition to the team-sports component, the students are aimed at developing self-esteem, confidence, discipline and the ability to persevere.

The Corona Cross Country Boosters Club is a charitable nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the members of the Boys and Girls Cross Country teams.

The club may be reached at coronadelsolxc@gmail.com. Address: 9920 S. Rural Road, Suite 108, PMB 49, Tempe, Arizona, 85284.

New 'quirky' artwork coming to I-10 pedestrian bridges

Valley residents will soon start noticing tall, magenta structures poking out of new pedestrian bridges being constructed as part of the Arizona Department of Transportation's I-10 Broadway Curve Improvement Project.

It's not imagination. New artwork is coming to life over the next several months, and Tempe artists are behind the design.

In June, crews began installing the spans on two brand new multi-use bridges between Baseline and Broadway roads designed to provide safe access for walkers, runners and bikers traveling between Tempe and Phoenix.

The bridges create new freeway crossings at bike and pedestrian corridors at Alameda Drive, between Broadway and Southern Avenues, and the Western Canal, just south of US 60.

In addition to increasing safety and convenience for pedestrians and bicyclists, planners say the bridges will offer a pleasing visual for anyone walking or biking, as well as the drivers who travel underneath.

In 2019, the city of Tempe conducted a national search to find an artist to enhance the future pedestrian

bridges with art that speaks to the Arizona climate.

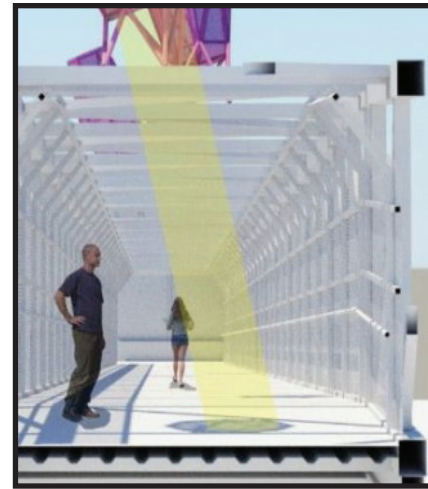
A group of panelists made up of community members, city staff and professional artists recommended the selection of Tempe residents Matthew and Maria Salenger of coLAB Studio.

The Salengers' explained that their design is inspired by the fruit of the prickly pear cactus. The top of each bridge features 10 large magenta sculptures meant to evoke the look of the fruit. Each sculpture has a metal plate at the bottom that allows the sun to pass through and cast shadows of hand drawn organic patterns based on local flora.

"The 'City Fruit' public art installation will be quite unique. It is quirky, but the intent is serious," Matthew Salenger said.

"I want people to feel the art is celebrating the two pedestrian bridges over the I-10, and to make the connection that these bridges are a tasty treat for Tempe; in other words, they are 'City Fruit.'"

Matthew and Maria have lived in Tempe for over 25 years. coLAB's work has included dozens of public art installations in addition to architecture projects and master plans. The firm's work can be found



throughout the Valley.

These new pedestrian bridges help achieve Tempe's goal of increasing multi-modal transportation. The Alameda Drive bridge will connect to the Alameda Drive Bicycle and Pedestrian Street Improvement Project. The project is in progress now to create larger bike lanes and add traffic calming measures, among other components, to make the corridor more walkable and bikeable.

Tempe is one of the leading bike communities in the country with over 220 miles of bikeways. The League of American Bicyclists recently

re-designated Tempe as a Gold-Level Bicycle Friendly Community. These bridges will provide a low-stress, off-street connection for people to safely get to a host of destinations every year.

"These bridges represent decades of work by the City of Tempe to fill gaps in our bicycle and pedestrian system and link not just Tempe bicycle corridors but also create a regional pathway of systems along the canals regionwide," said Eric Iwersen, Director of Sustainability and Resilience for the City of Tempe.

"These investments by Maricopa Association of Governments, ADOT, City of Tempe and voters are a partnership to create a sustainable transportation system for generations to come."

The artwork for the project is funded through Tempe Transit Tax and Municipal Arts funds. The pedestrian bridges are funded in part by a dedicated half-cent sales tax approved by Maricopa County voters in 2004 for projects, such as this one, identified in the Maricopa Association of Government's Regional Transportation Plan. The Federal Highway Administration provided additional funding.



Familiar call: Play ball

Diablo Stadium
a crowd pleaser,
as always

Special for Wrangler News
by Andrew Lwowski

Even minus nearly a dozen of its top performers and a few other minor complications, Tempe Diablo Stadium can still draw a crowd. Check out the numbers:

Tempe Diablo and the familiar Los Angeles Angels organization saw nearly 110,000 fans in attendance during the 2023 spring training season, best numbers in a decade. Despite Diablo having the smallest capacity of the other 10 Cactus League stadiums, seating only 9,558, it ranks seventh, with an average attendance of 7,292.

Even more remarkable is that Tempe was able to top its attendance numbers without 10 players due to the World Baseball Classic, including MLB stars Mike Trout and Shohei Ohtani.

Now, Diablo Stadium Manager Jerry Hall says the fans are excited to be back enjoying baseball again; he knew both Trout and Ohtani would miss part of the training season.

However, Hall began to realize, it may not have

been the stars that attracted the high attendance but the back-to-normalcy, something Tempe Diablo and fans missed for the last few seasons.

“So, in 2020,” said Hall, “we went almost all the way through; we lost about five games...“And, for 2021, we had the 15 games but we were only allowed to have 1,500 people in attendance at a time when people spread out all throughout the stadium.

“And then, in 2022, there was the lockout and they came back, and we ended up playing six games, but that was at the very end of March.

“And I think a lot of people didn’t want to make reservations for hotels and cars, and (at that time) they didn’t know they were going to be able to get tickets or what was allowed.

“I think a lot of it had to do with just planning, like nobody knew when they were going to come out of the walkout.”

Now that all the dust has settled and there are

no longer obstacles, fans flocked back for America's favorite pastime in one of the pristine tourist cities, Tempe.

The location and backdrop are a draw in the stadium's success as well, says Hall. "The location along the I-10 freeway, stunning desert butte views and proximity to other stadiums in the area, just minutes from Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport—it's primed for welcoming visitors to the warmer spring Arizona climate."

The location along Interstate-10 and short commute from Sky Harbor makes spring training at Tempe Diablo a breeze. In fact, roughly 80 percent of attendees this year live outside of Arizona, according to a survey conducted by Tremont Global.

‘To have spring training right here in our backyard is such a tremendous benefit, not only for the locals who live here but also for the folks who get to experience Tempe as visitors.

**Corey Woods
Mayor of Tempe**

Some fans come straight from Sky Harbor or plan for flying out after the game, Hall says, and he and those at the stadium accommodate that situation by holding luggage, which is a "major advantage" over the competition.

"To have spring training right here in our backyard is such a tremendous benefit, not only for the locals who live here but also for the folks who get to experience Tempe as visitors," said Tempe Mayor Corey Woods, adding his enthusiasm for the Diablo Stadium's popularity.



"And these travelers aren't just attending games—they are also dining in local restaurants, staying in our hotels and spending dollars that get invested right back into our city."

Hall, who has been a city of Tempe employee for 25 years and has been working for Diablo Stadium for the last 17 years, allows him to work with Tempe events and the Angels organization. Tempe Diablo hosts a number of charity and social events as well as athletic events outside of the MLB.

"Obviously, high school baseball is one of our biggest things," he said. "We knew that 21/2 weeks of the state championships is one reason why they like us, and because of our location as well. It's this right the middle of everybody."

Additionally, Tempe Diablo is the headquarters for National Adult Baseball Association and Men's Senior Baseball League, which bring in players from across the globe.

"From the end of September to the beginning of November, we'll have close to 300 or 400 men's teams playing in our stadium," Hall said. "Most of them are out of state, from all over the country.

Some come all the way from New York; we've

had teams from the Netherlands come play, we've had teams from Australia, and from other places outside the country."

Hall says that the stadium's east parking lot isn't just for business, but for community events such as the Sharing Walk for Down Syndrome, Best Buddies Friendship Walk, Arizona Truck Driving Championship and the World of Illumination during the holiday season.

Diablo stadium's prime location and its history—being the oldest in the Cactus league—has cemented itself as has been a staple for not only Tempe, but Arizona.

The Angels have called it home for the last 30 years and, fortunately, the city of Tempe and the Angels organization have signed a new agreement, securing Tempe as the Angels home through at least 2035.

Officials of the involved entities have said that renovations, including a new clubhouse, outfield concourse and additional seating to better accommodate fans and entertainment, are also due to be undertaken as part of plans for improvement to the facility.

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**The Tempe Coalition meets the second Tuesday of each month.
For more information please contact Bernadette_Coggins@Tempe.gov.**

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DIVERSIONS with M.V. Moorhead



5-time Grammy nominee bringing interactive kids' music to Arts Center

By M.V. Moorhead

When it comes to children's music, Justin Roberts doesn't offer up "This Old Man" or "The Wheels on the Bus."

The singer and songwriter, who performs on August 26 at Tempe Center for the Arts, assumes that kids can handle a bit more lyrical and musical sophistication. Five Grammy nominations would suggest that he may be right.

By phone from his native Chicago, while he's driving with his four-year-old son Eli, Roberts explains how he learned the musical capacities of small kids.

"I was playing in a band for grown-ups, and working in a preschool," he recalls. "I would sing Sam Cooke and the Ramones for the kids, just always making sure that the lyrics were appropriate. There's nothing more beautiful than watching a bunch of kids sing 'Cupid.'"

Roberts also began writing songs for the kids in his class. A graduate of Kenyon College in Ohio and

member of a band called Pimentos for Gus, Roberts dropped out of both the band and graduate school when a recording of his children's songs gained the interest of a record producer. His debut album, *Great Big Sun*, followed in 1997.

More than a dozen albums have come since, along with multiple awards and nominations. He plays as many as a hundred live shows a year around the country, though scheduling can sometimes be tricky:

"My wife is a classical cellist, and she also tours."

Asked who his major musical influences are, he replies unhesitatingly "Brian Wilson. Elvis Costello. Any kind of melodic rock. Lyrics like Loudoun Wainwright or Ron Sexsmith."

Wilson is a particular favorite. Roberts recalls that when he was a kid his older brother forbade him from becoming a Beatles fanatic like him, so he opted for Wilson instead. He names *Pet Sounds* as his favorite album.

"I actually met Brian at one point," Roberts proudly notes. He got to open for the Beach Boys legend in a concert at a school in California,

he says, after "Keith Richards fell out of a tree. [Wilson] heard me singing an Elvis Costello song at soundcheck, and came up and said that made him happy." But as to his influences specifically in the field of music for kids, Roberts also shows no hesitation: "Schoolhouse Rock."

The '70s-era educational song cartoons from Saturday morning TV, designed to teach kids multiplication and grammar and civics and the like, were another important model for his style.

Roberts and his band The Not Ready for Naptime Players bring their current show, Space Cadet, to Tempe Center for the Arts at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 26. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for youth. The show is a concert with theatrical elements. "Being kids' music," says Roberts, "it's very interactive, with puppets onstage. I'm the straight man. I have the easy part."

Tempe Center for the Arts is located at 700 W. Rio Salado Parkway. For details call 480-350-2822.



Lifetime award for MCC music director Shryock

One of Mesa Community College Music Theatre's most notable program directors, Tempe resident Darin Shryock, has received a lifetime achievement award from the Arizona Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association.

Said Shryock: "It is a great honor to be recognized by one's peers. The list of music educators in Arizona that I look up to is long, and it gives me pause to be recognized as one among them."

Choir has been a part of Shryock's life for more than 45 years, he said. "It gave me focus in high school, purpose in college and grad school, and a career in Arizona," he said.

Live music fees reduced

Start planning for patio weather: For Tempe businesses who'd like to host live music, now's the time to get the needed permit.

Best of all, fees are now significantly more affordable—the one-time fee is now \$200 through March 1, down from \$1,671.

By reducing the cost of the permit, say city officials, it's hoped that more businesses will hire musicians and offer more entertainment.

Councilmember Joel Navarro, who supported the change, said having musicians enhances customer experiences and potentially creates a draw for additional business.

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JUSTIN ROBERTS

& The Not Ready
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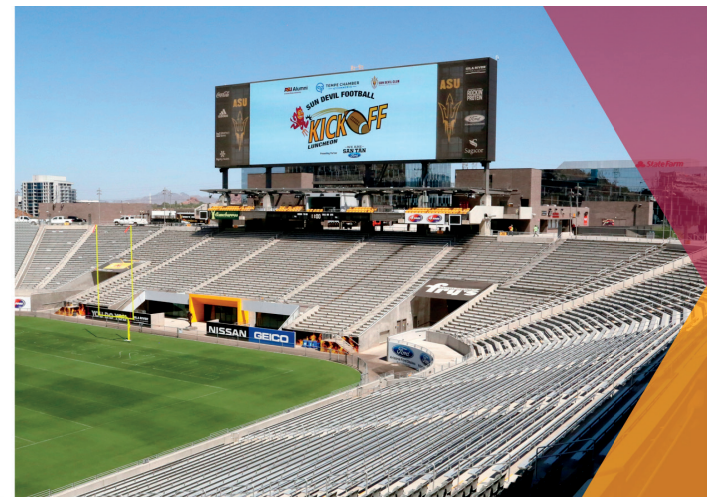
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August 25, 2023

San Tan Ford Club
Sun Devil Stadium

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Tempe Chamber hosts 2023 Sun Devil Football Kickoff Luncheon at Sun Devil Stadium

Celebrating its 22nd year, the Tempe Chamber of Commerce and ASU Alumni are proud to partner with the entire ASU Sun Devil Football organization to help celebrate the start of the 2023 season with the Sun Devil Football kickoff luncheon, presented by San Tan Ford! The event will be Friday, August 25th and will be held at the San Tan Ford Club inside Sun Devil Stadium!

With views of the field and “A” mountain, this venue will make you feel like you are part of the game! Highlights include emcee Tim Healey giving his insights into the upcoming year, an interview with starting players, and Coach Kenny Dillingham. You’ll also hear from the leadership of the ASU Alumni Association and ASU Athletics.

This event is open to the public, with Tempe Chamber of Commerce members receiving discounted admission. Registration is now open at www.tempechamber.org

Please contact david@tempechamber.org for sponsorship packages.

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