



# WRANGLER NEWS

OCT. 21 - NOV. 3, 2023

VOL. 33, NO. 17

Our 32nd year of publication



**MORE SCARY**

**PHOTOS BY**

**ANDREW LWOWSKI**

**STARTING ON PAGE 8**



# F R E E W A Y C H E V R O L E T

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## 'It was something I had to do'

A desperate Iranian leaves his homeland for freedom and liberty in America

*Editor's note: This is the first of a two-part story about a community member who fled his home in Tebran in 2021 because of religious persecution and the fear of being jailed, harmed or worse. This part details his upbringing in Iran, his career as a hospital lead nurse and the events that drove him away, through Mexico, before being dumped by smugglers at the U.S. border.*

*Part 2, to be published on Nov. 4, tells the story of his lengthy incarceration in a southern Arizona detention camp, how he is rebuilding his life, and the great outpouring of love and support from his new community. Because most of his family was left behind in Iran and is presumed to remain in danger, Wrangler News is concealing his identity.*

By Janie Magruder



As an unprecedented global pandemic raged, the young nurse was in a life-and-death situation like no other. Shaking with fear, his heart pounding, he dialed his mother and siblings to share his circumstances.

"You have to leave from Iran," they



responded. "If they found you, they will kill you."

Six months later, he landed in Mexico.

The fourth of five children, the subject of our story was born in Isfahan, 285 miles south of Tehran. He loved soccer, taekwondo and ping pong, and he studied a lot, especially physics. He practiced the violin and Islam, although his family was not

very religious.

He studied nursing at Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, acing his tests, and graduating with a bachelor's degree.

"I fell in love with nursing, being connected with patients, seeing the value in hospitals to society and community," he said. "It became the

— Continued on next page

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Starting with this familiar printed version of Wrangler News, you'll find even more of the stories, photos and advertising content on the pages of our newly expanded online edition.

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Although the costs and amount of people-power to do this has been prohibitive until now, the availability of new, more affordable technology

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— along with the excitement and energy of our staff — have enabled us to make this major move into the future of news and feature coverage.

Best of all, we'll be focusing on the kind of content that three-plus decades of experience tell us is what our readers want.



— Continued on Page 24



thing I would love to do.”

He enrolled in 2011 in a master’s program in nursing at Tehran University of Medical Sciences, where the words spoken by a professor stuck. “You are chosen by God for nursing. This is not something all people can do.”

The degree helped him advance his career, and for nearly nine years, he worked at two hospitals in Tehran, primarily in intensive and cardiac care units. He lived alone, but enjoyed camping and dining out with friends. He also loved a challenge, trying something new, and he started providing home care to patients while keeping his hospital job. He eventually had a dozen patients, one a Christian man who began to share his faith as their friendship grew.

“I started being curious, asking more questions, because, generally in Iran, people don’t know about Christianity,” said the nurse, who

believes many Iranians are not devoted to Islam, but are afraid to leave it. “I was always looking for something that made sense to me.”

Stories in the Bible made sense. “I felt something in myself, and I got called to God,” he said. “I prayed and decided to share my story with my friends. But I was pretty private about it.” However, arriving at his Christian patient’s home one morning, the caregiver said he had been taken away without explanation. As he drove to the hospital, his supervisor called to say two security people were asking questions about him. Once there, a coworker with whom he’d had an argument admitted turning him in over his new faith.

Fearful for his life, he went to the home of a friend who offered to keep him hidden, and he called his family. They were devastated, but united in telling him to leave. He stayed mostly

hidden for six months, in Tehran, during which time his mom was visited by strangers asking questions and threatening her if she was lying.

“I was really afraid, shaking, frightened because I didn’t know what would happen,” he said. “I couldn’t eat, I couldn’t sleep, I had bad dreams. I prayed a lot.”

(A side note: Two years ago, Iran’s Supreme Court ruled that practicing Christianity at home is not a national security threat prosecutable under Iranian law. However, according to a 2022 report by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, the government continues making “egregious violations” of religious freedom. It regularly persecutes religious minorities, the report found, including Baha’is, Muslim minorities and Jews. Christians in Iran, particularly converts from Islam, have been arrested and given excessive

prison sentences.)

He connected with a person who claimed to be a lawyer and could help him legally emigrate to Canada. A friend paid the “lawyer” about \$20,000 for his “safe, legal passage,” and armed with a travel visa, he went to the airport on Feb. 7, 2021. He never saw his family again, nor was he able to tell them goodbye.

“It was something I had to do,” he said in tears. “There weren’t any choices.”

At the airport, he saw a familiar face, an ICU nurse who worked in different departments, but at the same hospitals as he. She, too, was escaping religious persecution with her sister and brother-in-law. They flew to Mexico, briefly staying in Cancun and Tijuana, before being relocated to Mexicali on the Mexico/California border.

During those seven months

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in Mexico, they feared for their security and future, and repeatedly tried to reach the “lawyer.” He was told they had to stay put because of COVID-19, but no explanation of Title 42, which enabled the U.S. Border Patrol to turn away millions of migrants attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border between 2020 and 2023, was given.

The silver lining of the two nurses’ time in Mexico, however, was they had the chance to get to know — and love — each other. They became engaged in December 2021.

“We took turns preparing food, and we talked about our families, our jobs,” he said. “I

felt like I found a new family for myself. I didn’t have anyone else.”

On Aug. 28, 2021, the “lawyer,” actually a smuggler, said they would be taken to the airport the next day for their flight to Canada. Instead, they were robbed of their belongings — clothes, money, cellphones, everything — and dumped at a riverbank. The temperature was high, and they had no water, no coverings, no way to know where they were. They crossed the river, walked 15 minutes in the desert heat, and were arrested by the Border Patrol.

“He saw that we were afraid,” he said. “He spoke mostly Spanish, but then in English, he said, “Don’t worry, USA. USA.”

## Nov. 11 museum festival traces glory days for lovers of trains, their history

All aboard—train lovers and history buffs of all ages can climb aboard and explore the glory days of local and long-distance travel on America’s railways during the Fall Rail Festival in Chandler.

The celebration will be 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 11 at the Arizona Railway Museum, 330 E. Ryan Road.

The free public event is hosted each year by museum volunteers at the southwest corner of Tumbleweed Park.

The event will include displays of artifacts and memorabilia, tours of vintage railcars and a large sale of railroad books, magazines, and timetables at very affordable prices. Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

Visitors will learn about the historical importance of railroads from museum volunteers who can explain the type of work that is required to restore and refurbish railcars to keep them “alive” as a testament to the glory days

of rail passenger travel. Several cars feature interior displays of the typical accommodations for the traveling public, including seating, sleeping arrangements and dining facilities, complete with custom-made railroad dining-car china.

The museum’s diesel locomotive will be open, giving visitors the opportunity to blow the horn, and Chandler’s historic #2562 steam locomotive will be on display. Displays will include a variety of railroad signs, signals and mining equipment.

The museum’s standard entrance fee is waived for the Fall Rail Festival. However, donations from the public and local businesses are welcome. Visitors should access the event on Ryan Road, from Arizona Avenue or McQueen Road.

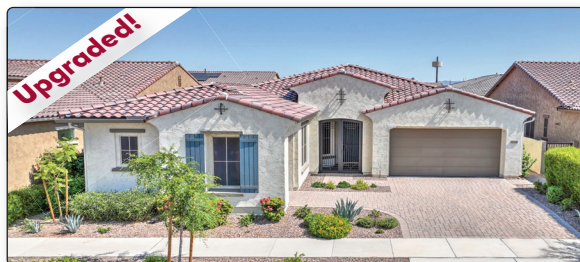
Parking is free. Although the display building and restrooms are ADA Compliant, due to the historic nature of the equipment, access to the railroad cars is not ADA Compliant.

# LUCAS

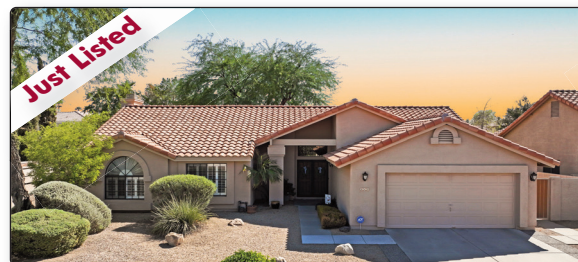
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## REFLECTIONS

# A tribute to the few we (undeservedly?) love to hate

When life brings a surprise — and thanks — for an unexpected kindness

By Don Kirkland

If you're among those of us who live in an association-managed neighborhood, or have ever lived in one, I may have a hard time selling you on the notion that not all HOA managers are placed on earth with the sole intent of making our lives unbearable.

As it turns out, however—SPOILER to follow—there seem to exist a few of these frequently hated enforcers who really do care about their minions, those who don't go out of their way each day to update the list of residents whose grass has grown higher than what the CC&Rs allow; whose trash cans have been lounging at the curb longer than permitted; whose exterior walls have been imbued with eye-aberrant colors that are not among those approved by the Architectural Committee overlords and as a result must be repainted to avoid a hefty fine or some form of public admonishment, maybe even decapitation.

Simply stated, most HOA managers take their responsibilities very seriously.

So it's happily surprising to hear of one who apparently can undertake the job with at least a modicum of charity. And while I've

pledged not to reveal the name or HOA of this particular angel of CC&R compassion, I didn't promise to withhold this story of fundamental human kindness.

To wit:

It started a couple of years ago when the manager, who was on a routine neighborhood inspection, encountered a disheveled man who could be assumed to be his 50s. Admitting he was not a resident, the man, presumably homeless, was camped in one of the area's greenbelts and therefore not allowed to be there.

And so, per the rules, the manager helped him gather his belongings with the counsel he'd have to find a different temporary home.

As that manager had done many times previously, the two of them walked together to a nearby street, with a suggestion of possible destinations where the uninvited visitor might be able to stay for a night or two, and a parting good-luck wish.

And so went the brief meeting between the two—a man down on his luck and wanting only a place to camp disturbance-free for a few days, a manager sympathetic to the

situation but unable by strict HOA mandate to accommodate even such an otherwise harmless request.

For any similar story, that would have been the end—the memory evoking itself only occasionally as the manager escorted other non-residents out of a residents-only habitat in the weeks and months that followed.

So it should come as no surprise to learn of the momentary confusion that occurred a couple of years later when a vaguely familiar face appeared in the manager's HOA office. A man, clean shaven, not poorly dressed, not seemingly down on his luck, walked through the doorway. "Hi," he said. "Remember me?"

"Hmm," pondered the manager. "You look familiar...but no, I can't seem to place you."

"I'm the guy you found sleeping in one of your grassy areas a couple of years ago. You told me I couldn't be here, and you walked me to the next street over. I'm clean, I'm sober. And you were kind to me. It helped me turn my life around. And I don't think I said this, but...thank you."

*Don Kirkland is founder & publisher of Wrangler News.*



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# BOO!

Celebrating Halloween with a not-so-scary  
Wrangler News photo essay by Andrew Lwowski











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### 085 | The American Scene Painters

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### 107 | C.S. Lewis: An Introduction to His Life & Writings

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# 'On the Street' Q + A

Our reporter asks what inquiring minds want to know:

## 'WHAT'S YOUR FAVE HALLOWEEN CANDY? OR NOT?'



**Corey Woods, Tempe's Mayor**

*Reese's peanut butter cups — it's the combination of the chocolate and peanut butter, very much sweet but slightly salty, easily I would eat Reese's peanut butter cups frankly all day. My brother, when we were children, used to try to hide his Halloween candy from me because at the end of the night after we would go trick or treating, we would both dump our bags of candy on the ground and I used to eat more candy than he did. He would like ration his. One time after he hid the candy from me, like six months later after Halloween I found this massive bag of Halloween candy in his closet that he had tucked away from me that of course he had never gone back to eat so at that point it was all bad. Least favorite candy, I'm going to say this just to upset people, because I know how this is going to cause a lot of tension out there, but Candy corn.*



**Jennifer Adams, Tempe's Vice Mayor**

*Reese's peanut butter cups because I love the peanut butter inside and the contrast between the peanut butter and the chocolate. I think it's a great combination. When I was little, I used to dress up as a little tiger because I went to a Parochial school and we were the tigers, so I liked to dress up for Halloween as a tiger. Later on, I became the mascot for the school. Probably about four (years) and I still dress up as a tiger. Least favorite would be sour patch kids — too tart. I also don't like taffy, it's too chewy.*



**Kevin Hartke, Chandler's Mayor**

*My favorite candy is probably peanut MnM's because there's something about the peanut and chocolate combo that works for me. Least favorite would be things that are not chocolate and peanuts, so there's a whole variety of just sticky syrupy things that I'm not a big fan of. I used to go trick or treating in my neighborhood, I would put on one of my dad's big coats and take a cork and burn it and give me a fake beard. My go-to was always a hobo, nothing negative for anyone homeless, but it was the quick and easy thing to do."*

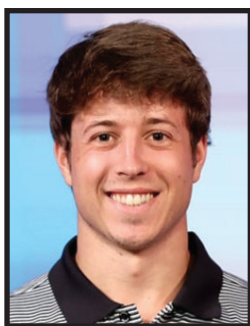
*— Questions and photographs by our always inquisitive Man on the Street Andrew Lwowski*





# SPORTS

## Aztec Vball reloading, not rebuilding



By Andrew Lwowski

**A**fter capturing the 6A state championship in five sets over the Hamilton Huskies in 2022, Ben Maxfield and the Aztecs volleyball team are not looking to rebuild; they're simply reloading.

The Aztecs are now one step closer after sweeping rival Desert Vista and improving to 24-6 (6-0 6A Central) on the season.

The Aztecs are in prime position for the playoffs with only a handful of games remaining. While the model of this years' team is a little bit different, the goal is still the same.

Maxfield said the goal is always to finish top four in PowerPoint Rankings, which would grant Corona home court advantage for the first two round, and then top two, which would allow Corona to host the semi-finals.

Last season, the Aztecs were able to accomplish this feat at 39-5 (10-0 6A Central) and the

No. 1 team.

Part of the reason Corona has had so much success in 2023 is the experience and leadership brought from returning players, says Max field.

"I would say in general, our ball control was actually better this year," he said.

"We pass a lot better than we did last year. With the experience of Avalon (Legg), this is her second year and Alyssa – and Maggie's really improves in her passing, so we actually pass a lot better."

Despite losing seniors outside hitter Kierstyn Barton and middle blocker Ella Lomigora, who were major contributors last season, the Aztecs have been able to keep the same high-powered attack, although it comes in a different fashion.

"It's kind of a little bit more by committee," Maxfield said. "So, we kind of spread it out a little bit more.

Alyssa (Aguayo) scores a ton of points for us, she and she

makes hardly any errors, which is nice. And then Maggie scores a ton of points for us as well. And as you saw tonight, I don't know how many kills Hayden had, but she puts up a good number. I think we are scoring the same amount (as last year's team) but with just more players doing it."

Part of that committee comes from players who this is their first year playing varsity level volleyball.

Getting those new additions up to gear took extra practice, Maxfield said, but they have molded quite well.

Half of Corona's varsity roster are sophomores, with only three seniors leading the team.

Middle Hayden Conner and Avery Linn are of that sophomore group that have stepped up in a major way along the Aztecs' path for a consecutive state championship appearance.

If the Aztecs can win out the remainder of the regular season, they should be able to lock in the two seed.





### **Sweeping the competition**

The Corona del Sol Aztecs swept the visiting Desert Vista Thunder 25-18, 25-19, 25-8. Coach Ben Maxfield and his team are now looking to run the table on their remaining games to secure a top 2 seed for the postseason, which has been the goal every year under Maxfield.

Wrangler News photos by Andrew Lwowski









## SPORTS NOTEBOOK . . . with Alex Zener



The Corona girls and boys swim and dive team is a talented group of young athletes who are pushing themselves these last few meets in order to qualify to compete at the state meet.

— Photo courtesy of Kathie Silva



Corona's boys and girls swim and dive team lost four stellar swimmers to graduation but have several younger athletes on the team who are working hard to leave their mark in Corona's record books.

"We have yet to replace the two All-American swimmers, **Reed Lucero** and **Colin**

**Campbel**, who graduated, along with **Daytona Duggan**, last May," said head swim coach **Ron Musgrave**. "All three are currently swimming in college."

Out of the 35 athletes on Corona's 2023 team, 17 are underclassmen, including seven freshmen and 10 sophomores.

"We have a talented young group that joined our team this year," said Musgrave. "Plus, a majority of those who returned from last season's team have really improved."

This improvement may be due to athletes who have joined swim clubs.

"Our team is slightly smaller than last year but we have increased the number of year-round swimmers, which has had an impact on our results," said Musgrave.

According to Musgrave, 24 out of the 35 athletes on the 2023 team participate in a year-round swim training club.

Another aspect that may be having an impact on results is that Corona now has use of the pool at McClintock H.S. for training and competitions.

"We are very excited to be practicing and competing at McClintock's pool this season," said Musgrave. "This move has been a long-term goal of mine, especially in light of the fact that I teach at McClintock and that the pool is the best facility in our area."

"Swimming and diving at McClintock's pool has been a major upgrade for our program," said Musgrave. "We have been so happy training at McClintock."

These two aspects may be among the reasons the girls team has shown improvement over last season.

"Our girls team has improved vastly this year

with a combination of new team members and returning swimmers," said Musgrave.

For instance, the girls team took an outstanding third place, out of 22 teams, at the 34th Annual Brophy Xavier Swim Invitational on Sept. 23 with a score of 223 points, just behind Xavier, which took first place; Mesa Mountain View came in at second place.

Senior **Brea Zandt** was one of the top performers at the Xavier Invite with a second-place finish, out of 94 racers, in the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 25.21.

Zandt also placed fourth in the 100-yard freestyle.

Sophomore **Paige Dancz** was another top performer for Corona at Brophy Xavier, taking second place out of 62 racers, with a time of 1:09.40 in the 100-yard breaststroke.

One of the promising young swimmers on the girls team is freshman **Tila Tometich**.

"Tila has a very bright future ahead of her," said Musgrave. "She trains hard every day and even pushes our boys to work harder, as they struggle to keep up with her pace."



“Tila is a very talented athlete who can swim several events including the 200 individual medley, 100 butterfly, 100 backstroke and 100 freestyle but she will most likely swim the 200 individual medley and 100 butterfly at the state meet.”

Zandt, Dancz and Tometich along with sophomore **Dylan Rhodes** helped the girls team place fourth, out of 24 teams, in the 200-yard medley relay race at the Brophy Xavier Invite.

Zandt and Tometich paired up again with junior **Sofia Ramirez** and sophomore **Reagan La Ra** to take fifth place, out of 21 teams, in the 200-yard freestyle relay.

La Ra was Corona’s top finisher in the 500-yard freestyle where she came in fifth. She took seventh place in the 200-yard freestyle event and Dancz came in 12th place.

In the 200-yard individual medley, Rhodes beat her teammate Tometich by a fraction of a second to take fifth place. Rhodes time was 2:15.23 while Tometich took sixth place with a time of 2:15.26.

Rhodes and Tometich competed in the 100-yard butterfly with where Rhodes touched the wall in sixth place and Tometich took 11th place.

Additional racers for the girls team who finished in the top 25 included juniors **Sofia Ramirez**, **Isabella Politico**, and **Kate Pyatt**, sophomore **Kimsey Sundberg** and freshman **Penelope Murphy**

Ramirez finished 14th in the 100-yard freestyle and 12th in the 100-yard backstroke along with Politico who finished 20th and Pyatt who was 24th out of 77 racers.

Ramirez is also a member of the 400-yard freestyle relay, along with Tometich, La Ra and Zandt, which finished fifth out of 21 teams.

Sundberg and Murphy were members of the 200-yard freestyle relay team along with Dancz and La Ra that took ninth place out of 25 teams.

The boys team, who took sixth place at the Brophy Xavier Invite, also had quite a few talented athletes join the team this year including three water polo players, **Mason Burd**, **Colin Stover** and **Olga Begus**, one transfer from Hamilton, sophomore **Kimsey Sundberg**, plus one foreign exchange student from Japan, **Yuichiro Miyake**.

“Yuichiro has a magnetic personality, is very friendly and has made friends quickly on the team, as he works to improve his English,” said Musgrave. “He has been an awesome addition to our team in and out of the pool. He brings a lot of excitement with his energy and sense of humor. His presence has been a true gift to all of us in Corona’s swim and dive program. We will miss him.”

In addition to seniors **Tristen Lo** and **Justin French**, juniors **Diego Silva**, **Ezra Friez** and **Landen Sutton**, sophomores **Bruss Bowman**,

**Joshua Shepherd** and **Christopher LaPrath**, watch for three freshman swimmers, **Landen Tran**, **Cohen Barkley** and **Caden Lo**, to steadily improve over the next two seasons.

“Landen Tran is a highly touted freshman who can compete in several events including the 200 freestyle, 200 individual medley, 50 freestyle, 100 butterfly and 500 freestyle,” said Musgrave. “He is currently weighing his options for the two individual events he will swim at the state meet.

“Cohen Barkley had a late start due to a back injury but is currently recovered enough to start preparing for the state meet where he will most likely swim the 100 butterfly and maybe the 200 individual medley,” said Musgrave.

The top finisher for the boys team at the Brophy Xavier Invite was Silva who touched the wall third in the 100-yard breaststroke, out of 66 racers, with a time of 1:02.37.

Next was a fourth-place finish in the 200-yard medley relay, out of 21 teams, for the team of **Tristen Lo**, **Silva**, **Tran** and **Friez**.

**Triston Lo** also came in eighth out of 93 racers in the 50-yard freestyle and was the final swimmer or anchor in Corona’s 200-yard freestyle relay race, along with teammates **Bowman**, **Shepherd** and **Landen**, who touched the wall in seventh place out of 24 teams.

**French** came in ninth in the 100-yard butterfly followed by **Silva** in 14th, **Barkley** in 15th and **Sutton** in 22nd place.

**Tran**, **Bowman** and **Shepherd** also swam in the 200-yard freestyle where they took 10th, 12th and 25th place, respectively.

**Barkley** was 13th and **Caden Lo** was 18th in the 200-yard individual medley while **Bowman** was 13th, **French** 15th and **Tran** 16th in the 100-yard backstroke.

Lastly, **Friez** touched the wall in 18th place while **LaPrath** was 21st in the 100-yard freestyle. **Tristen Lo** came in 16th and **Caden Lo** was 17th in the 100-yard breaststroke.

Corona’s dive team returned six divers from last season and added two new freshman according to dive coach **Kacee Hoffer**.

“The team is looking great this year,” said Hoffer. “We have competed in two invites and all but two dual meets so far this season.”

Two seniors, **Gavin Buttram** and **Isabella Meyers**, have taken the helm as captains. Both competed at the Brophy Xavier Invite with **Buttram** taking third place with a score of 390.05 in the mens 1-meter diving event and **Meyers** came in 13th in the womens 1-meter diving event with a score of 287.15.

“Gavin Buttram has an automatic qualification to state and **Isabella Meyers** has provisional

qualification to state,” said Hoffer.

**Alana Marquis** and **Ashley Chaloupka** both dove in the same womens 1-meter diving event at the Brophy Xavier Invite with **Marquis** coming in 11th with a score of 292.20 and **Chaloupka** 14th with a score of 278.50.

“If any divers have stepped up their game this year it’s **Katherine Saenz** and **Ashley Chaloupka**,” said Hoffer. “Both have come up with strong intentions for their dives at state and increased their degrees of difficulty quite a bit.”

“Katherine set a new team record for a six-dive list with a score of 206.10 while **Ashley** has a provisional qualification to the state meet.”

Corona’s dive team competed Oct. 13 at the Aztec Invite and both swim and dive teams will be participating at the Tempe All-City Invitational Oct. 24 at McClintock High School’s pool.

## Corona volleyball

Corona’s girls defending state champion volleyball team, currently ranked No. 4 in 6A with a 27-7 overall record and 6-0 in the Central section, is four matches away from finishing the regular season.

Junior outside hitter **Alyssa Aguayo** leads the team in kills per set at 4.8, total kills with 362, hitting percentage at 0.304 and total blocks with 51.

Senior outside hitter **Maggie Beauer** is tied with **Aguayo** in blocks with 51 total blocks plus leads the team in service aces with 40 aces or an average of 0.5 aces per set.

Sophomore libero **Erin Clark** has 341 digs or an average of 4.5 digs a set.

Senior setter **Julia Owens** leads the team in assists with 391 while sophomore setter **Avery Lim** is close behind with 366 assists.

The Aztecs just finished the Rise N’ Roar Classic Invitational on Oct. 13 at Millennium High School where they defeated Centennial, 2-0, Notre Dame Prep, 2-0 and Casteel, 2-0 before being defeated by the No.1 ranked 6A team, O’Connor.

Up next, Corona was scheduled to play at home against Highland on Oct. 17. It could turn into a grudge match because the Hawks defeated the Aztecs, 3-1, on Sept. 21.

Next, Corona was scheduled to play at home against Gilbert on Oct. 19, then play at Queen Creek on Oct. 23.

The Aztecs will honor their seniors at the last home game, Oct. 25, against Desert Ridge.

The 6A Conference Play-In for teams ranked No. 9 through 24 will be held Oct. 31. The Aztecs, currently ranked No. 4, should get an automatic bid to the 6A state tournament which has Round 1 scheduled on Nov. 2 at the higher seed.





## Parade will honor veterans on Saturday, Nov. 11

Tempe will continue its annual tradition of honoring military veterans with a Veterans Day parade on Saturday, Nov. 11.

The parade will begin at 10 a.m. at ASU Gammage and proceed north on Mill Avenue, concluding at Tempe Beach Park at Mill Avenue and Rio Salado Parkway.



## Tempe Jam takes over Tempe Sports Complex on Saturday, Nov. 4, from 6-9 p.m.

The free event will feature live music from local Tempe Playlist artists, as well as fire and dance performances. Screen print your own T-shirt and get hands on with arts activities for all ages. Check out the food truck offerings and sip on beer or wine sold by the Tempe Diablos. Learn more at [tempe.gov/TempePlaylist](https://tempe.gov/TempePlaylist).

## Zero Waste Day is Nov. 4

The 50th Zero Waste Day event is here! Residents can dispose of unwanted items for reuse, recycling, repurposing or proper disposal from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., on Saturday, Nov. 4, at the Tempe Fire Training Center, 1340 E. University Drive, at no charge. Participants must live in Tempe or Guadalupe and provide proof of residency. For the full list of items accepted, visit [tempe.gov/ZeroWaste](https://tempe.gov/ZeroWaste).

## Serve your city – Apply to be on a Tempe Board or Commission

Your voice matters – apply to be on one of Tempe’s boards or commissions. Tempe’s Boards and Commissions make important recommendations to the City Council about all aspects of Tempe. There are 28 Boards and Commissions, each connected to an area of special interest, such arts and culture, sustainability, veterans’ programs and more. Meet neighbors with similar interests and help shape the future of your city. Apply by Nov. 13 to be considered for the next appointments. Visit [tempe.gov/clerk](https://tempe.gov/clerk).

## Ironman Arizona returns Nov. 19

The event brings athletes from all over the world to Valley streets and Tempe Town Lake. Rio Salado Parkway will have multiple closures and restrictions, and several other streets will be impacted. Visit [tempe.gov/StreetClosures](https://tempe.gov/StreetClosures) for a full list of restrictions and transit impacts. You can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook for event and emergency closures and detours or visit [AZ511.gov](https://AZ511.gov) for Valleywide daily street restrictions and closures.

## City counts show fewer unsheltered people

Tempe’s last two Point-in-Time homeless counts have showed decreases during an 11-month period, down to 355 people experiencing homelessness from 515.

The city has conducted each of its recent counts in the same manner to promote consistent and reliable counts. On June 15, with the support of 60 staff and volunteers, the city counted 355 unsheltered people throughout the city. That compares with 406 in January 2023 and 515 in August 2022. Learn more about the city’s Homeless Solutions: [tempe.gov/HomelessResponse](https://tempe.gov/HomelessResponse).



# How to Prepare Your Child for Middle School

Before you know it, your preschooler has become a pre-teen! Middle school is a big step in your child's educational journey, and parents play an important role in helping students feel confident and ready for this exciting transition.

Here are 5 ways parents can lay the foundation for a successful middle school experience.

## 1. Know Your Choices

Every child learns differently and with so many choices, it can be overwhelming to figure out the best option for your child. That's why it's important to explore. Whether it's visiting a school website, browsing social media, or scheduling a tour, taking the time to explore the variety of options that are available is an important first step.

All middle schools are currently offering in-person tours to our community. Visit [www.tempeschools.org/tours](http://www.tempeschools.org/tours) to schedule yours today!

## 2. Attend Open House Events

Oftentimes, attending a middle school means that your child will be starting at a new school. Open House events are a fantastic opportunity for your family to tour the campus, ask teachers and school administrators questions, and enjoy performances and opportunities to interact with current students.

We will be hosting Open House events at all of our middle schools! Visit [www.tempeschools.org/middleschool](http://www.tempeschools.org/middleschool) and mark your calendar for these upcoming events.

## 3. Practice Organizational Skills at Home

Going from one homeroom teacher to multiple teachers is a big transition when students start middle school. Help your student prepare by starting organizational strategies at home. Encouraging your child to write "to-do" lists, keep track of time, and set a weekly backpack cleaning day can help get them used to juggling multiple classes in a day.

All Tempe Elementary middle school teachers are certified and hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited university.

## 4. Connect with School Staff

If you are joining a new school, it is important for both you and your child to build relationships with the staff. Get to know the school administration team, school nurse, and counselor and have their contact saved for your reference. If you would like to get a head start with building these relationships, consider signing up for an individual school tour!

All Tempe Elementary middle schools have onsite counselors for our students' social and emotional well-being.

## 5. Get Involved

Middle school marks the beginning of more opportunities in electives and school clubs! This is an exciting time for your student to make new friends while they are learning and developing their hobbies and passions. Encourage your student to consider joining an afterschool club, or work together as you explore the variety of electives that are available in their school schedule.

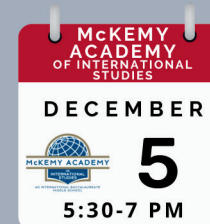
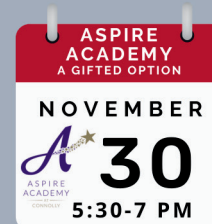
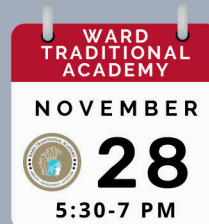
We offer extracurricular activities, arts, clubs, and athletic conference sports – at little or no cost to families.



Tempe Elementary has a variety of choice options for middle school! Learn more at: [www.tempeschools.org/middleschool](http://www.tempeschools.org/middleschool)

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SCAN ME







# DIVERSIONS

## Sixth redux emerges as best yet of continuing 'Exorcist' sequels

By MV Moorhead

Two 13-year-old girls go missing one day after school. Their panicked parents, single Dad Victor (Leslie Odom, Jr.) and evangelical couple Miranda (Jennifer Nettles) and Tony (Norbert Leo Butz) frantically search their Georgia suburb, but three days later the girls turn up alive.

These early scenes of *The Exorcist: Believer*, the sixth *Exorcist* follow-up, are tense and gripping, convincingly



dramatizing a dread familiar to parents, but also deploying a few well-executed cheap scares. Soon after the girls reappear, they start showing unmistakable signs of demonic possession.

The nonbelieving Victor is skeptical at first, but before long he has enlisted the aid of Chris McNeil (the radiant Ellen Burstyn), who went through a similar experience with her daughter Regan up in Georgetown half a century earlier.

Act *Two of Believer* is mostly devoted to a rather ecumenical exorcism, with Catholics, Evangelicals and what appear to be Voodoo practitioners all participating, among others. This section

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falls flat. We get all the obligatory stuff—levitation, projectile tummy trouble—but none of the elliptical yet grueling intensity that the late William Friedkin brought to the 1973 film.

Put simply, the second half of the movie just isn't very scary.

Part of what made the first film so potent was its harsh, judgy small-c conservative Catholicism. It seemed to suggest that Chris McNeil's worldly career and single life left the door open for the devil to take her daughter.

The new film almost gets this right; it implies that Victor's daughter's yearning to communicate with her dead mom gives the demon a foothold, as Regan playing with a Ouija board invited in "Captain Howdy" back in the original.

But the kum-ba-yah sensibility of *Believer's* interfaith exorcism weakens this blood-and-thunder atmosphere.

Don't misunderstand; I agree, on the whole, with the sentiments expressed in this movie's mild little homilies about faith and community and hope. But I don't think they're the most effective way to scare an audience.

Decades ago I had a girlfriend, a lapsed Catholic, who found the original *Exorcist* so terrifying that she could barely stand to have it mentioned (I used to tease her by imitating the demon's voice).

The new film lacks the ruthlessness that could create that sort of reaction. Nor did I really find it plausible that these staunch traditionalist faiths could practice this archaic rite in harmony. As soon as anything went wrong, wouldn't they start blaming each other?

The director, David Gordon Green, works from a script that he wrote with several hands including Danny McBride. They were the team behind 2021's *Halloween Kills*, another honorable but unsuccessful revival of a classic horror franchise. The cast here is capable, with one standout—that splendid, always reliable warhorse Ann Dowd as a nurse with a relevant past who befriends Victor.

This much more, if little else, can be said for *Believer*: although the insolently absurd yet imaginative spectacle of John Boorman's 1977 *Exorcist 2*:

The *Heretic* has its fascinations, *Believer* can probably still claim to be the best of the *Exorcist* sequels.

But that's a low bar.

*The Exorcist: Believer* is rated R and plays at Harkins Arizona Mills, Harkins Tempe Marketplace, Harkins Chandler Fashion Square, AMC Centerpoint and other multiplexes Valleywide.

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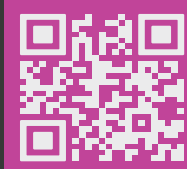
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## ONLINE . . .

Continued  
from Page 3

Heading up the team that's responsible for this expert in production of both print and online content for almost the entirety of his professional career, and Andrew Lwowski, a

graduate of the Walter Cronkite School of Communications at ASU who also attended Corona del Sol High School, Waggoner Elementary and Kyrene Middle School.

In other words, hometown boy made good.

We're looking to these two staffers to not only spearhead this new

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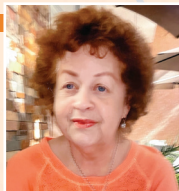
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Carol Lancaster Donigan is a member of the Desert Valley and East Valley Music Teachers Associations









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## Tempe Workforce Skills Accelerator Scholarship Now Open

The Tempe Chamber of Commerce and Rio Salado College have partnered to create the Tempe Workforce Skills Accelerator, which will offer three microcredentials to Tempe businesses to upskill their workforce.

The program's microcredentials are accredited, transferable and stackable to higher-level degrees, giving students the opportunity to further their education and in-demand workforce skills.

Tempe employees and residents interested in improving their skills set and preparing to meet employer needs can now apply for the Tempe Workforce Skills Accelerator Scholarship, presented and funded in partnership with Amazon. Scholarships are available on a first come first served basis per program funding.



Participants in the program will have access to scholarships for three micro-credential programs: Small Business Management, Data Analytics, and Quality Customer Service.

Applicants must be a Tempe resident, a Tempe Chamber of Commerce member, or work in a business in Tempe. Learn more visit [www.tempechamber.org](http://www.tempechamber.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### TempeTukee Chamber Foundation Golf Classic

**Date:** November 9, 2023

**Location:** Arizona Grand

**Admission:** \$797/foursome  
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### STATE OF THE CITY Mayor Corey Woods

### State of the City featuring Mayor Corey Woods

**Date:** December 8, 2023

**Location:** Omni Hotel at ASU

**Admission:** \$80 member early bird, \$110 general admission

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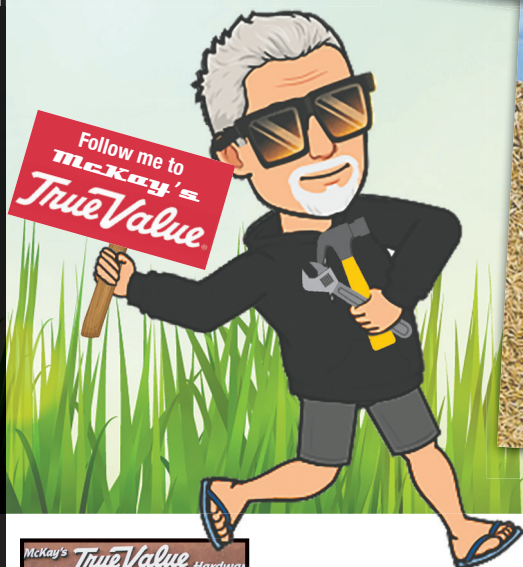


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## Nov. 4 event lets Tempe residents join forces to help people, pets

Gather up non-perishable food, feminine hygiene supplies and pet food then head to an easy, drive-thru food and supply drive organized by Tempe Neighborhoods Together and the city of Tempe.

The drive supports Tempe Community Action Agency, Aris Foundation, Lost Our Home, Women4Women and the City's Family Advocacy Center.

Event details:

- Saturday, Nov. 4, 11 am - 1 p.m.
- Pyle Adult Recreation Center parking lot, 655 E. Southern Ave., Tempe

Members of the Tempe community are being encouraged to give whatever they can.

For a list of needed supplies, products and food, visit TNT's Facebook page.

Donations are 100 percent deductible and each of the agencies accepts monetary donations.

Contributions to TCAA and Women4Women qualify for the Arizona Tax Credit Qualifying Charitable Organization.

Money donated up to \$400 for a single person or \$800 for married persons is reimbursed dollar-for-dollar on Arizona tax returns.

More information can be found at AZ Tax Credit Funds.

Lost Our Home has 501(c) 3, status and the Family Advocacy Center is a city of Tempe service.

"We are grateful to have our Family Advocacy Center included in this year's Tempe Neighborhoods Together drive," said Tim Burch, the city's Community Health and Human Services director.

"This event really highlights the spirit of Tempe, bringing together generous residents, community partners and volunteers to support individuals, families and pets in need."



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# Clubs & orgs, and more



## Kiwanis elections mark 75th year

The Kiwanis Club of Tempe, a men's and women's community service club founded in 1952, has installed its officers and board for 2023-24. They are:

Laura Taylor, president; Marni Anbar, president-elect; Dr. Janie Hydrick, secretary; Oliver Yandle, treasurer; and Allison Fox, past president.

Seven members were installed for terms on the board of directors. They include:

Jana Lynn Granillo, Ann Lynn DiDomenico, Karyn Lathan, Katie Phalen, Joe Forte, Michelle Helm and Sheryl Troop.

Taylor, who is executive director of the Phoenix Union Foundation for Education, was installed as the club's 75th president at its annual awards and installation dinner at the 100 Mile Brewing Company in Tempe on Sept. 28.

The club has about 80 members and is best known for helping to support the development of Kiwanis Park about 50 years ago. In related news, Dr. Judy Aldrich was honored at "Kiwanian of the Year" for leading the Tempe 4th of July celebration at Tempe Diablo Stadium.

Joe Forte was named "Rookie of the Year" for quickly diving into club activities after joining. Tom Sands, a member for 29 years, was honored as the year's George F. Hixson Fellow Award recipient for longtime service.

Fifteen members were recognized for faithful involvement with perfect attendance recognition, with the longest string those of Lawn Griffiths, 37 years; Linda Spears, 32 years; Judy Aldrich, 23 years; and Mark Richwine, 16 years.

It was reported that 62 of the club's members carried out 21 service projects the past year for 2,484 in volunteer hours in the community.

The club sponsors Arizona State University Circle K Club, Tempe High School Key Club and Boy Scout Troop 474.

Known as "The Club of Clubs," it has raised more than \$2 million over the years to support youth and community projects.

The club holds weekly luncheon meetings, with community speakers, at noon Thursdays at Shalimar Country Club. Visitors are welcome.

Information: [www.kcot.org](http://www.kcot.org) and on Facebook.

TEMPE KIWANIS officers for the past year include, from left, Laura Taylor, Kathy Stevens, Joseph Haris, Oliver Yandle, Michelle Helm, Joe Forte, Karyn Lathan, Jana Lynn Granillo and Allison Fox.

— Courtesy Judy Aldrich



KYRENE ROTARY President Dave Kline and member Rich Hamilton represented the club at an awards presentation ceremony at the Arizona State Capitol as Arizona State Treasurer Kimberly Yee and representatives from University of Arizona presented scholarships to three Arizona teachers for excellence in teaching financial literacy to their students. The scholarships are for the UA Master of Legal Studies online program. In addition, Kyrene Rotary Club provided gift cards for school supplies so the teachers could choose what they needed. Photo includes, from left, President Dave Kline with winners Claudia Brown-Morgan, grades 7-8, Aguila Elementary School; Jim Welty, grades 9 & 11, Brophy College Preparatory School; and Giselle Astrid Romero, grades 11-12, Douglas Unified School District.

— Courtesy Rich Hamilton



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## Southwestern cookoff coming to Tumbleweed Nov. 10-11

Come and get it! Chandler's Tumbleweed Ranch will host the Chandler Chuck Wagon Cook-off on Nov. 10 and 11.

The unique, family-friendly event features a Dutch oven cooking competition in which 1880s-style chuckwagon teams cook five courses—meat, potatoes, beans, bread and dessert—over a wood fire.

The ranch is an event space within Tumbleweed Park, 2250 S. McQueen Road.

While the main culinary competition is on Saturday, this year's event includes a Meet, Greet and Eat VIP Dinner at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 10.

The menu features Southwestern pork tenderloin tips, fire roasted pork ribs, baked dirty rice, summer corn salad and dessert.

Guests can enjoy the opportunity to visit with the chuck wagon teams at this intimate dinner.

Seating is limited and tickets are \$50 per attendee.



On Saturday, the event runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with free parking, admission and activities. Meals are served at noon.

Saturday lunch tickets are \$20 and can be purchased in advance at the Partners of Tumbleweed Ranch website. Each wagon cooks 50 meals, and the tickets always sell out quickly. Judges will reward the best meals with cash prizes.

Tickets for both the Friday evening event and Saturday lunch are available online.

The Chuck Wagon Cook-

off is hosted by the Partners of Tumbleweed Ranch, a 501c3 entity, and the Chandler Museum.

Funds raised help develop educational outreach opportunities at Tumbleweed Ranch.

"Think of chuck wagons as the first food truck and the black iron pot, called a Dutch oven or camp oven, was the original slow cooker," says Dave McDowell, president of the Partners of Tumbleweed Ranch.

"The whole family will enjoy this homage to the Wild West, with comfort food prepared just as it

would have been during at 1880s cattle drive."

Saturday's activities include a welcome from Mayor Kevin Hartke; a flag ceremony; trick roping with Cowboy Steve; a Lil' Rustlers kids' game area; a performance from the Maricopa County Cloggers and more.

Small plates, like mesquite fire roasted chicken, camp pork stew, biscuits and peach cobbler, will be available both Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Tickets, ranging from \$4-\$15, will be available for purchase onsite.

"This is one of the largest events of its kind in the Southwest," said Chandler Museum Administrator Jody Crago.

"The Chandler Museum team is honored to work with Partners of Tumbleweed Ranch to bring this event to the community each year."

*More information can be found at [partnersoftumbleweedranch.org](http://partnersoftumbleweedranch.org), or by calling 480-782-2717.*

## We speak your language...

The City of Chandler is currently assessing a language translation device at select city facilities to help our customers communicate with staff in their native language. With more than 120 languages and dialects to choose from, users can instantly have a real-time conversation to get the help they need from city staff. Learn more and see the schedule/locations at [chandleraz.gov/LanguageAssistance](http://chandleraz.gov/LanguageAssistance).







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