



WRANGLER NEWS

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Our 32nd year of publication

**Tempe Center for the Arts joins
Arizona Theatre Company to
celebrate an applause-worthy
sharing of talent, stagecraft.**

Story & more starting on Page 8

Wrangler News photo by Andrew Lwowski

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PAGE 3



Think Local.
Read Local.



'It takes a village'

A community united helps a new friend experience the American dream

Editor's note: This is the second of a two-part story about a community member who fled his home in Tehran in 2021 because of religious persecution and the fear of being jailed, harmed or worse. Part 1, published on Oct. 21, chronicles his upbringing in Iran, career as a hospital lead nurse, and events that drove him away, through Mexico. This part is about his lengthy incarceration in an Arizona detention camp, and how he is rebuilding his life with the 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

His first night in America was spent on a crowded bathroom floor of an immigrant detention center in southwestern Arizona. The room was freezing, a stark contrast to earlier that day, Aug. 28, 2021, when he and three others trudged under the broiling sun, across the white-hot sand of the Sonoran Desert, without water or knowledge of their location or fate.

The man, with two women who were sisters and the husband of one of them, had fled their homeland for fear of being harmed for choosing Christianity over Islam. He believed he was coming legally to Canada, but a smuggler sent him instead to Mexico.

Six months later, the Iranians were robbed of their belongings and dumped by a river on the border. They crossed it, and soon were apprehended by the Border Patrol, then driven to Eloy, Ariz.

The man, formerly an accomplished nurse in Iran, was sent to a federal prison for people in custody of Immigration Customs and Enforcement. Due to Covid-19, he was confined to a small cell for

— Continued on next page

Photos from couple's wedding at University Presbyterian Church. John Herman, below, also gave the bridegroom his grandfather's ring. — Photos courtesy Pastor Eric Ledermann

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23 hours a day, allowed only into a hallway for the other hour. He learned Spanish by talking with the guards, and English by reading a prison Bible.

He lost 50 pounds during a 94-day incarceration, but the nightmare ended after an immigration attorney persuaded authorities of his credible fear of being persecuted, tortured or killed, if sent back home.

One goal had sustained him.

“I planned in my cell what I was going to do (in order) to make myself calm,” he said. “I would study English, go back to my joy.”

Today, the 34-year-old man has a driver’s license, a job and is married to the other sister, an ICU nurse whom he barely knew back home but with whom he fell in love in Mexico. They have asylee status, and he recently passed the most difficult English proficiency exam offered in the U.S.

All of this took a village. And the village responded.

• • • • •

Two years ago this month, in shackles at the wrists, ankles and waist, the man was driven from Eloy to the Phoenix Welcome Center. Operated by the International Rescue Committee and its nonprofit partners, it provides humanitarian assistance to asylum-seeking families.

He found his Iranian friends, noting, “It was kind of a miracle.”

The miracles continued, as people from Tempe and surrounding areas stepped up to provide shelter and other basic needs, friendship and love, English tutoring and legal assistance.

A temporary apartment at Living Streams Church in Phoenix was their first home. It was arranged by Guadalupe Presbyterian Church’s retired pastor, Joe Keesecker, and his wife Selena, who operate a prison ministry in Eloy. The Iranians began to explore their city, and the man continued his English study, this time with YouTube.

When Living Streams needed the apartment for returning missionaries, the Keeseckers contacted Mesa resident Holly Herman who, in 2018, was drawn to the plight of desperate asylum seekers crossing the border. Herman started recruiting an army of volunteers at University Presbyterian Church in Tempe to help.

Her team at UPC converted two classrooms at the church into apartments, and donated beds, appliances, furniture, linens and clothing. One member loaned the man a violin to play after his own was damaged during shipment from Iran. Another paid to have that violin repaired.

“With everybody chipping in and enfolding them, I’m hoping we helped overcome his first impression of the U.S., being thrown into detention,” Herman said.

She helped the foursome enroll in Mesa Community College’s ESL classes, and the man tested out of all four levels immediately. Herman turned to recruiting tutors, among them Tempean Diane Hillyard, a retired teacher in the Kyrene School District and Mesa Public Schools.

Hillyard tutored him for more than a year, focusing primarily on writing, and their meetings increased as the test day approached last summer. He chose the International English

Language Testing System exam, the most rigorous, because he wanted to have the best English possible to work in an American hospital.

“He was the ideal student,” she

‘I planned in my cell what I was going to do (in order) to make myself calm. I would study English, go back to my joy.’

— Recounting the time he spent spent pondering his future in America.

said. “He wanted to learn, he had a natural curiosity about things, he learned quickly, and he has a memory that’s unbelievable. He was a delight to work with.”

The man passed, and the village celebrated.

“It was announced Sunday during church, and everybody stood up and cheered,” Herman said. “Everyone had just fallen in love with them. They’re our family.”

At about the same time, armed with a work permit, he got a job in the employee dining room at Friendship Village in Tempe. He is grateful for the work and kind treatment, but the man has his sights set on returning to his medical career. He studies every free moment for the Arizona state nursing certification exam.

UPC members once again teamed up to plan a special Sunday morning service in April, renting a white gown

and a smart suit, and contributing flowers, food and decorations for the couple’s wedding. UPC Pastor Eric Ledermann officiated, and Herman and her husband John, a retired pastor, gifted the couple her mother’s wedding ring and his grandfather’s ring.

The couple’s next big moment, in May, was a 6-hour hearing in immigration court in Phoenix. Church members wrote stacks of support letters, and 15 of them came to court. His lawyer was successful, and asylum was granted, meaning the couple can live and work legally in the U.S., and will have the opportunity to apply for lawful permanent residence and citizenship.

When a third sister, her husband and their son arrived from Iran, UPC turned a third classroom into an apartment.

All seven have since moved into a large home that was offered by friends of Herman’s who are out of state for a couple of years.

“That’s what churches are supposed to do,” Herman said. “UPC has shown that America is not the ugly, unwelcoming place some have made it out to be.”

Most people want to help those in need, but they don’t know precisely how to offer their time and talents to make a difference. But this village came together, and their abilities fit like pieces in a puzzle. As a result, a remarkable start was given to this new family in a strange land.

“They’ve added so much to my life, their sense of kindness, of always giving love, of smiling no matter the circumstances,” Hillyard said. “They’ve provided me with a model for traits that I’d like to develop.”

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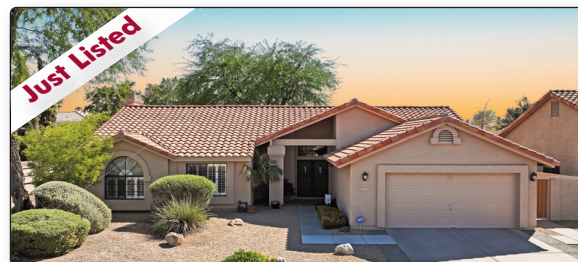
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MYTH: Kyrene has unspent bond dollars left over from the 2017 election.

FACT: Kyrene has sold all of the remaining bonds from the 2017 election, and funds have already been allocated in the 2023-24 Capital Master Plan.

MYTH: Kyrene School District has a "spending" problem.

FACT: For the last 29 years, Kyrene School District has received the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting (COA) from the Government Finance Officers Association.

Kyrene has the highest credit rating assigned to school districts in Arizona, resulting in lower interest rates for taxpayers. (*Moody's, S&P*)

Kyrene was the only district in Arizona to receive the Meritorious Budget Award from the Association of School Business Officials.

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Matt August, Arizona Theatre Company's Kasser Family artistic director, and Pat Engles, chair of The Board of Trustees for Arizona Theatre Company, get a close-up look at new performance venue.



Mayor Corey Woods offered a welcoming message.

TCA + ATC = 'A really big deal'

COVER STORY

By Barbi Walker-Walsh
Photos by Andrew Lwowski

Arts Unite: Tempe's Dazzling Pact with the Official State Theater of Arizona Sets the Stage for a Cultural Renaissance

Tempe Center for the Arts and Arizona Theatre Company have announced details of a five-year partnership to bring high-quality, professional theater to Tempe. The announcement came during an Oct. 20 ribbon-cutting at the Tempe venue.

The deal also includes options for three contract extensions.

Tempe city officials and influential members of both TCA and ATC the ceremony. Among guests were Lucy Urias, state tourism director, and Michael Martin, Tempe tourism director.

Excitement about the joint venture was echoed by all involved, with seemingly unanimous agreement: *'This is a really big deal!'*

"Having our beautiful Tempe Center for the Arts building be the new home for Arizona Theater Company is an honor for Tempe and really reinforces the city's commitment to the arts," said

Tempe Vice Mayor Jennifer Adams, who joined the observance with Mayor Corey Woods.

Geri Wright, executive director of ATC, echoed the sentiment, adding she couldn't be more excited to call TCA and Tempe its new home. Wright said the city has given ATC such a warm welcome, noting they are looking forward to being part of what she described as a thriving and growing community.

Looking back on how the collaboration evolved, officials noted that pandemic conditions were in part responsible for the impetus to move TCA from Herberger Theater in downtown Phoenix, its home for over five



Guests were all smiles at ceremonies celebrating the partnership of Tempe Center for the Arts and Arizona Theater Center.

—Wrangler News photo by Andrew Lwowski

decades. Wright took the helm of ATC in 2020, a tough year to start a new position, let alone for an organization knocked off its feet due to the pandemic. The company shuttered shows, laid off cast and crew, and canceled performances altogether. Herberger Theater reported losing 90% of its revenue from March through November 2020.

But Wright said she took the opportunity to think about how to move forward. She said they had to reboot and rebrand after the pandemic, noting, “It’s really important to build a new audience,” she said.

The pandemic changed habits for some theatergoers. “They got out of the habit of it, so we needed to really identify Arizona Theater Company as the state theater, and moving to a different location was how we decided to do it.

“Lucky us!” Wright said of finding a home at TCA.

The new venue blew away cast members upon seeing it, Wright said. Plus, it’s an incredible opportunity. The ATC family, including many trustees at the ribbon cutting, indicated they were ecstatic when they heard about the decision.

“Our new home, the Tempe Center for the Arts, is positioned at the cross-section of future geographic markets, providing ease of access, a state-of-the-art venue, and a more intimate feel for our patrons,” Wright said.

The partnership, it seems, represents a boon for both organizations. ATC is one of the country’s leading regional theaters, and its productions have been praised by critics and audiences alike. TCA opened in 2007, and at the time was likened by the Society of Architectural Historians to a Sydney

(Australia) Opera House in the desert. It has a 680-seat main theater, a 200-seat studio theater and a variety of other spaces for performances, events and educational programs.

“Stacked seating ensures that no seat is farther than 55 feet from the stage,” according to the society. Bonus: each seat has individual cooling units.

“The building is an architectural icon,” said Brendan Ross, Tempe’s deputy director of arts and culture and the main architect of the two organizations’ partnership.

The collaboration will bring high-quality, professional theater to Tempe and make it more accessible to residents of the entire metropolitan area.

“The center was built because residents of Tempe said we need an arts and culture center,” Ross said. A survey revealed Tempe residents love theater more than those from surrounding cities. “They really want to see more of that,” he said.

The benefits of a partnership between the center and the theater start by bringing the theater’s mainstage productions to the venue. The technology and amenities of the main theater at TCA offer a superior audience experience.

“The partnership goes beyond the incredible season they’ve put together for audiences,” said Matt August, Kasser Family Artistic Director. “We can make the arts more accessible to everyone with various programs,” he said. August added that programs will include community nights, partnerships and various educational programs, including student matinees.

The collaboration also allows ATC to expand

its reach and serve more patrons. Located just west of Mill Avenue, on the southwest corner of Rio Salado Parkway and Hardy Drive, the center is easily accessible to all Valley cities by car, public transportation and bike.

In addition, it was noted, the partnership will create new opportunities between TCA and ATC, which plan to collaborate on educational programs, community event, and other initiatives.

“We are thrilled to call Tempe Center for the Arts the official new home of Arizona Theatre Company,” said Tempe Mayor Corey Woods, adding that the long-term agreement allows the community to experience great theater for years and opportunities for enriching and inspiring our youth.

The partnership is also expected to generate millions of dollars in economic activity for the region. TCA and ATC are major employers and attract visitors from all over the country. The endeavor also nurtures the creative environment—not only by supporting local artists but the community’s small business owners and entrepreneurs, “who frankly rely on the arts as a source of inspiration and income,” Woods said.

In summary, the announcement seems to represent the beginning of a beautiful and long relationship, Ross said. “My gut says this is gonna work out really well,” he said, adding that the two organizations joining forces makes for a friendly and welcoming center with something for everyone.

“People should feel a sense of belonging,” Ross said. “This is not just for art types — it’s for everybody to come and try something new, see a different show—have a good night out.”



COVER PHOTO — There was plenty to cheer about at ribboncutting ceremonies for a newly forged collaboration between Tempe Center for the Arts and Arizona Theater Company. On hand to celebrate were Tempe Vice Mayor Jennifer Adams, left, and Councilmember Berdetta Hodges.

W. Chandler street improvements due from city's 2023-24 budget allocation

West Chandler residents will be getting some welcome improvements to major street arterials, along with selected neighborhood streets, as a result of the Chandler City Council's approval of significant investments in asphalt and concrete street maintenance at their Oct. 19.

Major funding will provide for work on Ray Road from I-10 to Kyrene Road; 56th Street from Ray Road to the 202 Freeway; and Chandler Boulevard from Kyrene to Rural roads.

This will nearly double the city's capital improvement program investment in city streets for FY 2023-24 from \$17.3 million planned last year to \$33.4 million adopted in this year's capital program.

Chandler's pavement management restoration and repaving program is designed to ensure the quality of city-maintained roadways through preventative maintenance and rehabilitation.

City Council approved two agreements with M.R. Tanner Development and

Construction, Inc., for street maintenance repaving, surface seal and repair services. Another agreement was with Vincon Engineering Construction, LLC, for concrete repair maintenance services to make Americans with Disability Act improvements on pedestrian ramps and sidewalk panels.

Federal law requires state and local governments to bring pedestrian routes into compliance prior to beginning road rehabilitation projects, including asphalt repaving.

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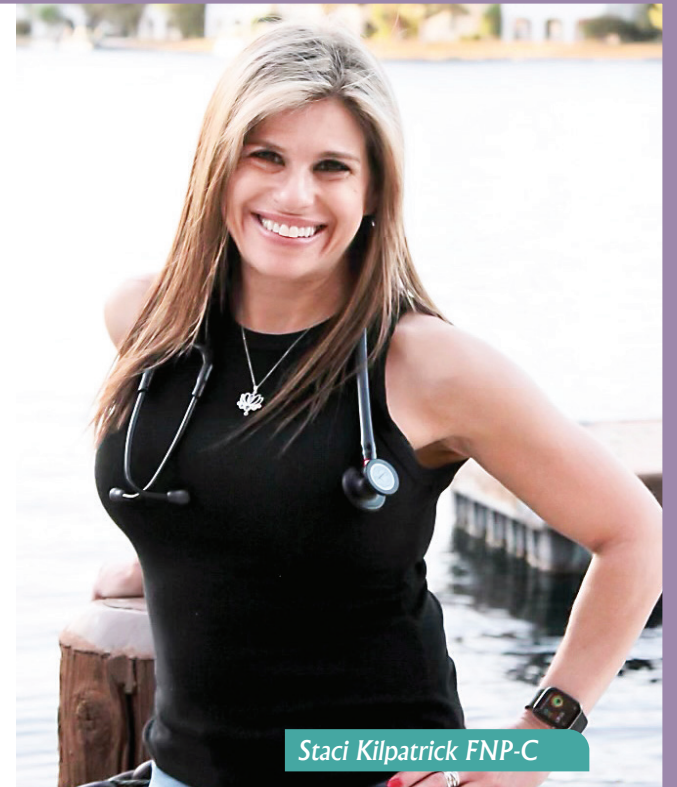
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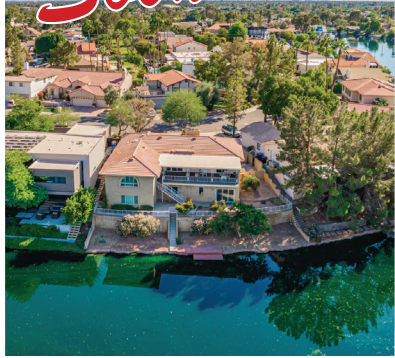
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VIEWPOINTS

Carrot, not stick called best solution to city housing dilemma

By Courtney Gilstrap LeVinus

Property owners in Tempe who help ease the city's housing crisis by renting out homes and apartments may face new city rules that could force some of them to exit the city's undersupplied rental market.

The Tempe City Council may soon consider following Phoenix and Tucson by passing a so-called "source of income" anti-discrimination statute. Such a law would force property owners to accept federal housing voucher recipients despite the massive red tape and difficulty getting paid that often comes with such government programs.

Such a policy could exacerbate Tempe's housing crisis rather than fix this very serious problem. If property owners are forced to accept housing vouchers and to wade through the labyrinth of the federal bureaucracy to collect payment, it could convince those owners to exit the market.

Taking away a property owner's freedom to choose its qualified renters goes against property rights long established in Arizona.

Rather than the proverbial "stick" to mandate

behavior, Tempe could instead look at what some other cities have done to offer "carrots" to property owners.

Offering incentives to entice property owners to accept federal housing vouchers makes more sense and ensures willing participation in the program.

Phoenix, Mesa and Chandler have all offered modest financial incentives to property owners who sign up for the Housing Choice Voucher program – formerly known as Section 8 vouchers. Chandler set aside \$1,000 to property owners who enrolled in the program and also guaranteed rent in case a tenant lost his or her source of income.

Phoenix, which budgeted \$4 million in federal COVID money, offered \$2,000 for a new property owner to enroll in the program. While these programs have since expired, they show what collaboration can achieve in helping residents find housing they can afford.

Under the Housing Choice Voucher program, tenants pay 30 percent of their income toward rent, with the federal government making up any difference in the form of a voucher.

Most cities in the program have waiting lists with tenants who cannot find affordable housing. Encouraging property owners to enroll in the federal program helps reduce the homeless population, but doesn't force owners who don't

want to participate.

Glendale sweetened its offer to property owners: the city offered to pay for any damage not covered by a security deposit if a tenant in the program left a home in severe disrepair.

At the Arizona Multihousing Association, which represents more than 2,000 property owners statewide, we hear daily about the bureaucratic nightmares created by dealing with the federal government.

Forcing property owners to accept housing vouchers will scare away many owners who will take their units off the market rather than being forced to rent to someone and not receiving rent payments for months on end.

By contrast, offering incentives reduces the risks created by voucher programs – and eases many property owners' discontent.

Other Valley cities have shown that working with property owners and offering incentives provides encouragement to sign up for housing voucher programs, becoming willing partners with the cities to reduce the Arizona's housing supply crisis.

We encourage Tempe to take a similar approach, offering the rental industry the carrot, not the stick.

Courtney Gilstrap LeVinus is president and CEO of Arizona Multihousing Association

Students best served by return to reading, writing, arithmetic

By Cindy Barnes

This is in response to the commentary in posted on the Wrangler News website regarding Kyrene School District No. 28 (KSD), where no evidence was provided. The heart of schools are the STUDENTS!

KSD is stealing the students' success by keeping them at failing achievement levels. When our tax dollars go towards buildings and transportation, student success is not achieved which is why the bond and override election are being opposed. If they really cared about the students, KSD have millions of dollars to raise their achievement levels. Parents would be overjoyed to see their children succeed.

Achievement levels should be increased because as the writer stated, KSD follows strict guidelines for financial reporting to the State of Arizona.

According to the Arizona Auditor, KSD has almost \$14 million in unspent COVID relief funds. As well as \$19.5 million in unspent funds from the 2017 bond initiative.

Which shows the voters that KSD has millions of unspent dollars to implement proven student initiatives.

Arizona School Report Cards reflect:

- 47% of Kyrene Students are below proficiency in English Language Arts in 2021-2022.
- 56% of students below proficiency in math 2021-2022.

Kyrene Chief Financial Officer, Chris Hermann, projected student declines of about 1,250 despite the significant population growth within Arizona. Enrollment may be down as parents are choosing to place their children in charter schools that outperform the state's public schools for \$2,000 LESS per student per year.

Why are they asking for more money even though enrollment is down, and the students are failing? With this knowledge, it is imperative to have a serious conversation on reviewing the budgets,

student achievement and declining enrollment of KSD.

The writer also stated that Arizona is 48th on the per student expenditures nationwide. According to the Arizona Joint Legislative Budget Committee, 2023-2024 student expenditure is \$14,673 per student. On the other hand, New York State spends nearly twice the national average per student, while delivering below-average results in achievement. Alternatively, Utah has the lowest per student expenditure, yet they have higher achievement rates than Arizona or New York. Thus, proving that throwing money at schools is not the solution. School districts need to live within their means and be held accountable for reaching academic achievement.

Bonds are supposed to be temporary, not a revolving credit card for perpetual empire building and bureaucracy. Consider getting back to the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic.

Cindy Barnes is involved with the No on Kyrene Bonds campaign.

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SPORTS

AZTECS STORM ON THUNDERS' HOMECOMING

It was a party in the end zones as Corona lit up Desert Vista for five scores in the first half, in a 45-14 blowout.

More sports, Pages 15-18



Aztecs offense proves too much for Thunder

The Corona del Sol Aztecs rained on the Desert Vista Thunder's homecoming parade with an emphatic 45-14 victory. The Aztecs, now 3-6, exploded on offense with all cylinders firing after putting up 35 first-half points behind five scores from five different players.

The Aztecs dominated all three phases of the game, and it started quickly as the 6A conference leader is passing yards, Connor Ackerley, found receiver Zuri Glenn on the opening drive for a 38-yard deep pass.

That later set up fellow receiver Raiden Vines-Bright for a screen pass that he took 21-yards for the touchdown.

The success is the passing game opened up the running lanes, and on the Aztecs second offensive possession, Crew Swearingen reeled in a 20-yard completion then capped off the drive with a 19-yard rushing score out of the wildcat formation.

On the ensuing offensive possession, Ackerley was able to step up in the pocket and connect with Glenn for a 39-yard strike.

Ackerley again found Vines-Bright across the middle for a gain of 26 before running back Nick Mustacchia punched in Corona's fourth touchdown of the first half. With 11 ticks on the clock before half, Ackerley found Jai Jones for the 14-yard score.

The Aztecs scored on every offensive possession during the first half, and Ackerley credited the success to the screen passes that later opened up the downfield attack – and some help from coverage breakdowns by the Thunder.

The Corona defense did its part and limited the Thunder offense to just a pair of touchdowns, while safety Elijah McKay collected two interceptions. His second was a 70-yard house call in the fourth quarter.

Ackerley finished his efficient night with 236 yards and three scores. Vines-Bright, Swearingen, Glenn, Mustacchia and Jones all contributed to the offensive onslaught.

The Thunder defense had no answer, however; Corona coach Jake Barro was more impressed with the complete game put forth by his program.

"Four quarters, right? We didn't play a good first half, then fall apart in the second. We didn't play a bad first half and pick it up in the second. We played it all the way through, which I think was crucial," Barro said. "Connor made really good decisions out there. Offensive line had a good day. Just overall a lot sharper, not as many missed assignments as what we have had in the last couple weeks."

Corona hosts Casteel for its final game of the regular season and playoff chances may be at stake.

— Story & photos by Andrew Lwowski





Ready to defend their title

Corona del Sol volleyball celebrated its four seniors, opposite and setter Cora Bullard, setter Julia Owens, outside hitter Maggie Beauer and team assistant Luke Vlcek. The Aztecs rewarded their seniors with a sweep of the visiting Desert Ridge Jaguars 25-13, 25-11, 25-11 in the final regular season match before playoffs. The Aztecs secured the three seed with a 32-8 record (9-1 Central Section) and will prepare to defend their state title.

Wrangler News photos by Andrew Lwowski





SPORTS NOTEBOOK . . . with Alex Zener

OK of girls flag football ends 11-year effort



Alex Zener

2023 was a historic year for girls high school sports when, last December, the AIA Board of Directors gave a green light to girls flag football, starting with the fall 2023 season, with 56 schools divided into two divisions, 6A and 5A.

Advocates for girls flag football had been trying to get the AIA to make it a sanctioned sport for over 11

years.

Corona del Sol, in the 6A Central Region, and Marcos de Niza, in the 5A Central Region, had

teams where girls competed this first season of Arizona girls high school flag football starting in late Aug.

The Aztecs, with a 5-7 overall record, qualified as the No. 16 seed, in the first AIA Flag Football 6A State Championship.

Unfortunately, they lost to the No. 1 seed, Highland, in the first round, on Oct. 24.

The Aztecs had 17 players on the roster of their initial girls team coached by **Emily Eswonia**.

Sophomore **Alana James** was the starting quarterback who completed 166 out of 325 pass attempts for a total of 1649 yards or an average of 183.2 yards a game, including 10 touchdowns, with only two interceptions.

Senior **Deven Kircher** was the leading receiver

averaging almost 63 yards a game followed by freshman **Aaliyah Van Heel** at 54 yards a game. Van Heel and Kircher both scored three receiving touchdowns.

James was the rush leader on the team, averaging 55 yards per game while scoring four touchdowns. Senior **Grace Johnson** was the second leading rusher.

On defense, Kircher was the leading tackler averaging 3.9 tackles a game followed by Van Heel with 3.2 tackles and sophomore **Leilani Pastrano** with 3.0 tackles a game.

Kircher also led the team with eight interceptions while Van Heel had two and Pastrano had one.

Pastrano had eight quarterback sacks to lead the

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Aztecs followed by junior **Miquela Tammaro** and senior **Olivia Rios** who both had two sacks.

Junior **Bridget Leyva** caught seven passes for a total of 84 yards in addition to scoring one touchdown while sophomore **Grace Wombacher** scored a touchdown on one of her three receptions.

Junior **Bryce Watson** caught 30 passes for a total of 140 yards and one touchdown and sophomore **Rasia Perkins** played in eight games catching four passes.

On defense, junior **Sanaa Smith** was credited with seven solo tackles, junior **Symiah Gill** recorded eight solo tackles, sophomore **Delvina Martinez** had four solo tackles, and sophomore **Reese Lauffer** five tackles.

Senior **Jania Stuart** and junior **Donyae Poullard** were involved in the team's success on and off the field.

Corona Badminton

Corona senior Michelle Chen, seeded No. 4 entering the 2023

AIA Badminton Division I Singles Championship, ended up taking home the third-place trophy after being defeated by the No. 1 seed from Hamilton in the semifinals.

Chen easily won in the first two rounds but, in the quarterfinals, Chen had to rally to defeat the No. 5 seed from Red Mountain in three sets.

Chen defeated the No. 3 seed from Mountain Ridge in three sets in the Consolation Final, to earn the third-place trophy.

Corona's doubles team of senior Rachel Sindlinger and junior Joy Tokishi entered the Division I doubles championship unseeded but defeated a team from Pinnacle in the first round but lost to the No. 7 seeded team from Perry in the second round.

Corona's team, including, Chen, Sindlinger, Tokishi, senior Mel Burnside, senior Julia Tran, junior Surahya Hashim, junior Tabitha Sywak, and sophomore Sabrina Trieu, entered the D1 state team championship as the No. 10 seed but unfortunately lost to No. 7 Basha in the first round on Oct. 23 and were eliminated.



The Kyrene Aprende Middle School Junior Varsity Volleyball Team, made up of sixth and seventh graders, won the Kyrene District JV Volleyball Championship on September 21. The team fought hard through three sets against Kyrene Altadeña Middle School to win the trophy!



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Chilean emigre's success advice: Believe in yourself

From a disruptive childhood to diving in to what's now a thriving pool business



By Andrew Lwowski

Very rarely does one's first job become a lifelong career, but Jose Garcia, who emigrated from Chile, found his calling early on.

Now, 30-some years later, he is still doing the work he did when he first got his student visa, leading him to become the embodiment of the American dream.

Garcia grew up in Chile until he was 7 or 8 years old, he said, when his parents divorced. When his mother remarried an American citizen who worked in Argentina, he followed.

"When they got married, we ended up moving over there for about another 10 years or so where I did most of my school all the way up through high school," Garcia said. "And my sister was born there, so there's like lots of roots from that area."

Garcia said it was a hard decision to leave his childhood and family in South America. He was part of a traditional large family and enjoyed seeing his cousins, playing soccer and traveling while growing up, but he couldn't pass up the opportunity of coming to the United States.

"I was faced with a choice of either going back and staying with my Dad in Chile and my grandma—and I love both of them—but it also gave me an opportunity and a choice to move back to the States with my Mom, my stepdad and my sister and go to college here," he said.

"I thought it was amazing. The whole idea of the United States was always very appealing and definitely something that I dreamt about."

Garcia moved to the U.S. when he was about 17, and even though he was ahead from his schooling in

Argentina and had enough credits to apply for colleges, he and his parents decided it was best for him to take a year off high school to adjust to the language and culture.

"That gave me the chance to really practice the language, get more comfortable with friends and not really have to worry too much about the academics," he said.

Garcia was in high school for roughly eight months before he took up business classes at Arizona State University. Around that same time, he got his first job doing manual labor in his neighborhood; it was all he was allowed to do under his student visa.

It wasn't until a friend offered him a position at a pool supply store, and he jumped at the opportunity.

"I worked there for about a year or more before I basically moved on to do my own thing in the same business," he said. "My first job was in the pool business that I had never really left."

Garcia said the work became organic to him, and his education in business and management from ASU guided him toward what would become Barefoot Pools.

Once he understood the concept of economics, it clicked and he excelled quickly.

Now, 30 plus years later, Garcia is still doing the job he had when he entered the U.S. and enjoys every minute of it.

"It's always been a lot of fun," he said.

"Just to keep this is internal belief – I just believed in myself a lot and I never doubted that. I think if I was gonna tell myself something just to be reassured that those dreams, with effort and hard work, will come true. And that's true for me and I think the same for most people."

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DIVERSIONS

With MV Moorhead

Giamatti scores another 'best' in 'The Holdovers'

With news about coming Jewish Film Fest



Nobody does bitterness like Paul Giamatti.

From his earliest noticeable roles, as Pig Vomit in the Howard Stern movie *Private Parts* or as a pit bull owner on *Homicide: Life on the Streets*, he made his mark as a vessel of bristling, eye-bugging, impotent rage, and this has carried over into his best lead roles, in *American Splendor* or *Sideways*, or even in his miniseries as John Adams.

His seething high dudgeon



generally is played for comedy, but even then this great actor brings it a stinging, near-tragic undercurrent; he makes his pained ineffectuality moving. With *The Holdovers*, the latest from *Sideways* director Alexander Payne, Giamatti gets another vehicle for splenetic, barely contained fury and defeated disgust. It's one of his best.

The time is 1970; the setting is a blueblood boys' school in Massachusetts. Giamatti plays Paul Hunham, a brilliant, exacting Ancient History teacher. Paul is single and friendless in his personal life; in class he brims with acerbic, sarcastic contempt for his lunkheaded, entitled rich-kid students.

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ENROLL NOW FOR CLASSES

On the eve of Christmas break, Paul gets stuck with a miserable detail: supervising the “holdovers,” the handful of students stranded on campus with nowhere to go for the holiday. Perhaps the unhappiest of this unhappy lot is Angus Tully (Dominic Sessa), a bright kid with a troubled past whose mom has excluded him from her holiday plans with her new husband. Paul’s only adult ally is Mary (Da’Vine Joy Randolph), the cafeteria manager and chef, who’s in mourning for her son, recently lost in Vietnam.

It likely won’t astonish you to learn that as this little group clash, and then get to know each other and their backstories better, bonding and compassion start to develop between them. Working from a script by David Hemingson, Payne shades this process carefully, generating genuine and plausible warmth without slipping into holiday-movie sentiment.

Not only is the film set in 1970, Payne seems to be trying for the modest, unassuming style of a Hal Ashby or James Bridges flick of that period, right down to the opening rating card and production company logos (even the movie’s trailer was crafted as a throwback to this time).

The Holdovers is perhaps a bit on the poky side; little in the story gives much urgency to the pace. But the actors bring their connections to life. Giamatti’s initial bile is highly entertaining and his gradually rising empathy is touching. Tall and tousle-haired, with a look of stricken perplexity on his handsome features, Sessa has a pleasing, callow awkwardness as Angus. Carrie Preston gives the movie a lift in each of her couple of scenes as a sunny-natured school administrator. And as Mary, Randolph steers around any hint of overt pathos, and as a result makes the character heroic.

The Holdovers is rated R and plays at Harkins Camelview at Fashion Square.

On another, very different movie note: Greater Phoenix Jewish Film Festival, the Bureau of Jewish Education and Phoenix Holocaust Association co-sponsor a screening of the Israeli documentary *The Devil’s Confession: The Lost Eichmann Tapes*. Directed by Yariv Mozer, it presents selections from 70 hours of interviews with Nazi officer Adolf Eichmann, recorded in Buenos Aires in 1957.

The screening will be held at 11:30 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 12, at Harkins Shea, and will be followed by a talk with Dr. Volker Benkert, associate professor in the School Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies at ASU. Tickets are \$18, \$10 for students under 25 with ID, free (+1) for Holocaust survivors.

Go to film.bjephoenix.org for details.

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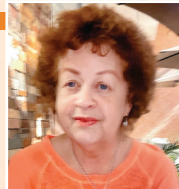


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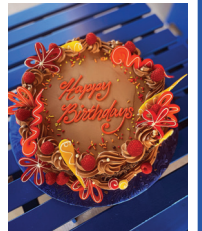
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Waggoner fence question: A deserved case of compromise?

Commentary

In recent weeks, the city of Tempe announced that plans were being developed, and neighborhood input invited, for proposed fencing at the east end of Waggoner Park, one of two city-owned areas on each side of Waggoner Elementary and Kyrene Middle schools.

However, some residents in the surrounding neighborhoods felt that the provided information did not thoroughly describe the proposed work, and in fact understated the fence aspect.

Hearing the concerns, and in an effort to help deal with what nearby South Tempe residents had said, Vice Mayor Jennifer Adams announced that a community meeting would be held so that residents could comment on the proposal, and city and school district spokespeople could explain what led to the fence decision.

About 60 area residents appeared for the outdoor public session, which led to what most seemed to feel was a reasonable resolution:

No fence.

Neighbors in the area, as well as school and city departments involved in pursuing the project, attended the session.

The following commentary represents what was learned from both sides of the discussion.

However, as the meeting got under way, Adams revealed that city officials only hours before had reviewed details of the project and had decided not to proceed with fencing.

The following represents what various voices had to offer regarding the question.

Statement by Matt Schmehl, neighborhood resident

In the aftermath of an event failure or project catastrophe, a post mortem to examine what went wrong, and how can the processes be improved, so the mistakes aren't repeated can be very valuable. (Actually, good practice in Project Management in general.)

This process is not meant to punish the people who made mistakes, nor to hold them up to ridicule, but to improve the process going forward. The result of a good post mortem is sometimes called Lessons Learned.

In the aftermath of the Waggoner East Fence proposal communication failure, some Lessons Learned are as follows:

- Recognize that the stakeholders of a project

are not isolated to the city staff, or as in this case, the school staff and students.

- Establish points of contact in the local community with the stakeholders that represent the HOAs, Neighborhood Associations, even the neighborhood email lists, and possibly local businesses.

- Communication with the stakeholders in the community is paramount. Communicating with full transparency needs to happen early in the process of a project.

- As in any well-run project, objective data and input must happen to identify both the problem being addressed (is it really a problem or just perceived as one?) and the range of solutions or options.

- In the process of collecting data and analyzing, be objective and accurate. Avoid falling victim to identifying problems and stating conclusions that reference "everyone knows" or "this group or person said." It is important to obtain actual, verified, data to support or back up such statements. In the case of this fence proposal, the reliance on the statement that the fence was needed to make the children safe should have been supported by accurate objective data rather than relying on an emotional response because no one would want to go on record saying children aren't important.

- And lastly, although our Tempe Councilmembers are elected at-large, dividing Tempe into zones assigned to a Councilmember (possibly on an annual rotating basis) and presenting a periodic summary listing of city projects to the responsible Councilmember would help keep the Tempe City Council in touch with projects affecting Tempe citizens.

Jill Cohen, neighborhood assn. president

(Based on) a phone call from my neighbor Mike Walborn, who informed me of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the neighborhood did not want this fence project to move forward. I immediately called the City Manager, and we organized an emergency neighborhood meeting at the park. We were surprised to have over 60 people show up—during Game 7 of the Diamondbacks, no less!

Jennifer Adams, vice mayor

Myself and several key city staff who've overseen the discussions with the school district were there

to listen to the residents, and I'm happy to say that the fence project is no longer on the table.

We will continue discussions with the school district regarding improvements in the Park, and look forward to further input from the neighborhood during that process.

Savannah Harrelson, city of Tempe

Kyrene School District approached the City of Tempe about fencing eastern Waggoner Park, citing concerns from staff and families about safety.

The school uses the park and playground for recess and school activities. The district's proposed plan was to fence the park and allow neighborhood access after school hours and on weekends, holidays and school breaks via two gates.

The city coordinated a public meeting and survey to gather feedback from area community members about the proposal before making any decision.

We received a large response at the meeting and through the survey, and the city and school district decided not to move forward with the district's proposal. The City of Tempe will assist the Kyrene School District in working on alternative safety and security measures while including parents and neighbors in discussions. We thank all community members who provided feedback and actively engaged in the public input process.

Erin Helm, Kyrene School District

To the Waggoner community: As you know, Kyrene School District has been working closely with the City of Tempe to address the safety and security of Waggoner Park.

The City of Tempe has provided an update... and we'd like to thank the community for providing insightful feedback during this process.

We will continue to work alongside the City of Tempe to find a solution that fits the needs of our families, staff, and the surrounding community.

To the Waggoner Park area: Thank you so much for providing your input thus far on Kyrene School District's proposal to fence the eastern portion of Waggoner Park.

We've received a large response to the public input opportunity and will be closing the survey. y.

The existing fencing proposal will no longer be considered. The City of Tempe will assist Kyrene School District to work on alternative safety and security measures while including parents and neighbors in discussions.

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This November, Julian Wright is opening two new concepts on Fourth and Mill in the former Rula Bula space – **Idle Hands Enchanted Cocktail Bar** and **Devil's Hideaway**, a restaurant with sunken booths, an open-air back patio and a stage for bands. What will the food be like? Think the best finger foods you've ever had. Small sandwiches, poutine, Chinese dumplings and more.

Also opening soon is **Bang Bang Sushi**, an Asian fusion restaurant that blends great food with live DJs for a fantastic night out. Dance underneath the biggest disco ball in Arizona after enjoying poke nachos or Godzilla rolls.

And if you watch Shark Tank, you may have seen this ice cream shop pitch its concept. **Crispy Cones** is opening on Mill Avenue and Fourth Street. A Crispy Cone is a fresh dough cone, grilled rotisserie-style and covered with cinnamon + sugar or a specialty powder. The cone is filled with your choice of spread, gourmet soft-serve ice cream, fruit and a variety of delicious toppings. Yum!

Further down the road, **Pretty Decent Concepts**, the high-end restaurant group behind Wren & Wolf, Trophy Room and Carry On, are bringing a new concept to the former PF Chang's space. It will feature two concepts under one roof: a chef-driven New American restaurant and a craft cocktail bar. We have to wait a while for this one, but it will be worth it!

A new restaurant called **Silo** is coming to Hayden Ferry Lakeside at the confluence of Mill Avenue and Tempe Town Lake later this year or early next year. Construction is underway! And things are in the works for the **Hayden Flour Mill**. Plans call for restaurants and retail to go on the property while still maintaining the historic integrity of the Tempe icon.

► Don't miss opportunities!**2nd Sundays on Mill – Celebrating Native American Heritage**

Nov. 12 | 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

It's like a mini Festival of the Arts! Check out arts, crafts, gourmet foods, dance performances by Red Mountain Creations and artists and craft demonstrations by Native Art Market

Rooftop sunsets – Yes please!

- **Lucero at Omni Hotel**
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- **Westin Hotel Skysill Lounge**
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Open daily – hours vary
- **Canopy by Hilton**
Monday Bingo, Thursday Trivia and Saturday DJ. So much fun on this rooftop bar 14 stories above downtown Tempe.

ASU Gammage

Have dinner on Mill Avenue before a great show.

Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons: The Last Encores | **Nov. 10**

Ain't Too Proud – the Life and Times of the Temptations | **Nov. 14 – 19.**

Reserve a swan

Tempe Boat Rentals date package includes a swan pedal boat, decorated with flowers.

Make your plans: tempe.gov/MillAvenue



Same classrooms, same teachers said to boost kids' excitement, learning

By Nicole Ashton

It's one of the universal questions parents have when their newly transformed middle schoolers saunter into the classroom for the first time: What are the habits they need to help them learn more and worry less? At Kyrene Aprende this year, where new strategies have led to new results, sixth graders recently showcased projects highlighting what some educators believe are the seven most highly effective things students can do to pave the way to a successful education, and lessen the chance their parents will experience too many sleepless nights.

Thus, when these Aprende kids picked up their class schedules at the beginning of the year, they not only got a class list but guidelines assigning them to either Team A or Team B.

Each team is part of an innovative educational model, prescribing a specific group of teachers that works to develop a cohesive dynamic rather than one that changes throughout the day.

So, rather than students walking to different classrooms, they remain in the same part of campus with the same team of teachers.

The goal: To surround them with teachers working together to advance their progress across

all subjects. Observed 6th grade humanities teacher Lindsey Strength: "I'm really excited to see this transform the way education works. This is so new and different from anything we've done before."

The new model allows teachers a chance to pivot based on what students need, and to teach in ways that allow for more interactive work compared to traditional lectures.

Students participate in more learning through discovery activities, a process which teachers believe has increased their engagement and excitement in class.

For example, rather than a one-hour lecture about ancient Egypt, students are making flipbooks about Egyptian gods or creating a map of the early civilization.

Already, teachers say they're noticing grades have improved and the amount of missing work has decreased significantly.

"When you're alone in a classroom, it's difficult and often scary to try new things and adjust to what students need on the fly," Strength said.

"My partner teacher and I have constant discussions about what worked and what didn't in each of our lessons, and how to adjust to meet (the resulting) needs."

Strength and the other teachers at Aprende have been intentional about including things that students need more help with, such as time management, collaboration with peers, and breaking larger projects into smaller, more manageable tasks.

At Aprende, an AVID—acronym for Advancement Via Individual Determination— National

Demonstration School, these habits are taught in specialized classes, but the team model provides an opportunity to implement the strategies in all classrooms.

With the flexibility to decide student schedules, teachers can expand the amount of time spent on each activity, allowing the incorporation of more collaborative strategies.

"I am so proud of the collaboration and dexterity that our 6th grade teacher team has already shown," said Kyrene Aprende Principal Renee Kor.

"This new model has allowed them the time and flexibility to pivot their lessons when needed to better serve students and ensure that they have what they need to be successful."

In late September, at the end of first quarter, students presented multimedia projects that detailed what they believe are the best learning strategies for a middle school student, loosely based on the 7 Highly Effective Habits from Stephen Covey, a program that helps build leadership and life skills in students and staff.

Some habits highlighted by students included getting good sleep, practicing good hygiene and studying. "We tried the project with Team B this quarter and loved it," Strength said. "We'd like to move toward completing a portfolio that includes projects from all classes."

Following this first implementation year, Kory noted that the school will evaluate the model, receive feedback from students, parents and teachers, and consider rolling the program into 7th and 8th grade in the future.

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