



**WRANGLER  
NEWS**

DEC. 2 - 15, 2023  
VOL. 33, NO. 770

**THANKS TO  
ALL FOR A JOB  
WELL DONE**

As he approaches retirement, Chief Sean Duggan talks of Chandler PD's unity and caring 'that will long remain' in his memory.

**Page 8**



— Wrangler News file photo by Alex J. Walker



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FIND NEW ROADS™





## Future-ready problem solvers tackle real-world issues in new TUHSD program

By Janie Magruder

If you didn't know better, you'd think the projects are funded by global foundations led by billionaire philanthropists — Bill and Melinda Gates or Warren Buffett, perhaps — and the research conducted by PhDs with deep pockets.

But at the new Tempe Union High School District Innovation Center, the work is financed by the district and its Arizona business partners, and a surprising demographic — teenagers — are tackling real-world topics.

“Our students are very capable,” said Christine Barela, executive director of the district’s Innovation Programs. “They are very invested in technology, and they know that things are happening in the world, both very good and very bad. We felt they needed the opportunity to come together and provide real solutions.”

The Innovation Center, which Barela said is the first among Arizona high school districts and is especially unique because of its two dozen business partners, exists to produce future-ready learners.

“We have to be visionary because we don't even know today what jobs will

be out there for our students,” she said. “That means them being academically sound, but also having other skills as innovation leaders and learners — problem solving, resilience, agility, integrity, initiative and empathy.”

After two years of planning, which involved designing the space, building the curriculum, obtaining buy-in from the district’s five high schools, and soliciting the business community for support and project ideas, the Innovation Center opened in July in the former Compadre High space at the district’s headquarters.

Five days a week, 89 sophomores, juniors and seniors, some with Individualized Education Program plans (IEPs) and some in honors or Advanced Placement classes, spend part of their day at the center, collaborating on 40 projects. They are bussed back and forth to their home high schools, where they take regular classes, and also have career exploration, English Language Arts, science and social studies, business and interdisciplinary studies courses at the center. Each student makes a year-long commitment, and earns three credits toward graduation.

In teams of four to six, the students are studying the force bite of snakes and saving the bees for the Phoenix Zoo, biodegradable alternatives to foam stuffed inside the oversized hats made by Phoenix-based Noggin Boss, and preserving Southwestern seeds with Native Seed/SEARCH, a conservation organization in Tucson.

They gather in a maker space with drill presses, 3D printers, a welding machine and other equipment for prototyping, a creation lab with sewing

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3



Groups gather to become acquainted with TUHSD's new Innovation Center concept.

— Continued on Page 11





**2023**  
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 Arizona Community Church

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 Dec 10 @ 3:30pm & 5:30pm

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## Schools' TIE group delivers food again

The Tempe Elementary School District took another run at its annual Beans & Rice distribution initiative on Dec. 1.

The distribution is sponsored by the Tempe Impacts Education, or TIE, Foundation and Tempe Sunrise Kiwanis.

The beans and rice are delivered to elementary schools in the district for distribution to families at those schools.

Just under 15,000 pounds (8-pound bags) of beans and 13,710 pounds (5-pound bags) were distributed to 21 Tempe Elementary schools and to two Mesa schools.

Deliveries are accomplished with the help of Tempe Fire Department staff, a Facilities Management group from the school district, and members of Tempe Sunrise Kiwanis Club.

The program began in 1994 with the guidance of a teacher at Frank Elementary school.

The group distributed beans and rice to 30 families, expanding their coverage to six families in 2003.

It didn't take long before all schools in the district were involved.

It's estimated that over 40,000 families have been served. The success of the program is the result of the school representatives' work and is dedicated to the families of each recipient school.



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# A CLOSE-UP LOOK AT THE FUTURE

**Corona del Sol HS  
student Jack Hunter**

**Wrangler News photo  
by Andrew Lwowski**



# AZTECH robotics: Triumph through teamwork, innovation . . . and fun!

By Barbi Walker-Walsh

**I**n the bustling robotics room at Corona del Sol High School, the sounds of machinery, buzzing conversations, and focused work create an energetic atmosphere.

Ben Lewandowski, the president of the student-run robotics program, gives his team final instructions before they disperse to their respective stations. Fresh from their victory at the Arizona FIRST Robotics State Championship, the team vibrates with excitement.

The AZTECH Robotics Team 6749 has been making surges in the world of robotics for the past few years. They have competed in various regional and national events, showcasing their skills and creativity in designing, building, and programming robots that can perform various tasks and challenges. But winning big has been elusive until now.

"Winning state was huge!" Lewandowski, a junior at Corona, said. "It meant the world to me." The team attributes their success to an unwavering commitment to hard work, teamwork, and dedication. Hours spent refining their robot and strategies in the school's robotics lab culminated in a hard-fought victory at the state championship.

Their triumph was no small feat. The team faced formidable competition from across the state and navigated through intense matches. Despite a setback that landed them in the loser's bracket, their determination and commitment shone through, ultimately securing the state title with a 5-point difference in the 116-111 final. Even though

Lewandowski couldn't be present at the final match due to homecoming commitments, he and his friends eagerly watched the results on an iPad during homecoming dinner. "We had the iPad up, and we were, like, so ecstatic!" Lewandowski said when they watched the results.

Lewandowski focuses on team building and infusing enjoyment into every facet. This ethos extends even to naming the robots. Quetzalcoatl (big one) and Quetzalcoatl Junior (small one), their two robotic creations, playfully reinterpret the Aztec god's name. Alix Walker, the team's documentation, explains that the game's cone-centric nature influenced the decision. Instead of the predictable Quetzalcoatl, they opted for the spirited Quetzalcoatl. (Full disclosure—Walker is also my son.)

Mel Wendall, a mentor and engineering teacher, attests to the team's exceptional commitment. The program relies on teachers like Wendall and Sable Padilla, a biology teacher, for guidance and support, but it is entirely student-run. Wendall shares stories of students going above and beyond, working on projects for the team even after finishing their tests in a recent AP biology class. Their dedication, she notes, is what makes the program thrive.

However, success comes at a cost. Raising funds for building robots and covering competition expenses is a significant challenge. Wendall breaks down the financial burden. The cost of building just the robot is around \$4,000, adding that competition fees range from \$3,000 to \$6,000. In fact, the registration fee for the FIRST World Championship in Houston, TX, increased by \$750 for the upcoming year, bringing the total to \$5,750 per team. Travel expenses add another layer, chartering a bus alone is estimated at \$25,000, she said. And that's just for travel, entrance fees and construction costs, and do not include lodging and food expenses. Or other wanted or needed items.

The team's financial dreams extend beyond competition. Sophomore Geo Tucker, the club's finance director, and his team wish they had a super pit setup. Their current pit, comprised of folding tables, falls short of their needs and doesn't work too well, Piper Smith, a sophomore, said. The dream? A sophisticated super pit is an efficient workspace for refining their robot during competitions. Together, Tucker, Smith, sophomore KK Lim and Walker, a junior, educate me on what a super pit is, what it costs and why it's infinitely better than the few folding tables they currently use in the pit. The pit costs \$1,350, but, according to

Tucker, it also offers a substantial upgrade from the makeshift folding tables and provides a space for creating and designing improvements to the robot during competitions.

Tucker adds that going to competitions usually requires a lot of out-of-pocket money for students to go, so they have a lot of fundraisers.

Between the parents organizing the Booster Club, they had restaurant nights that brought families and friends together to help support the students in funding their projects. They had a fantastic car wash that raised a little over \$1,400, Wendall said in an email.

From programming to fundraising to mentoring, in robotics, there's something for everyone.

Ash Faucher, a former student turned mentor, emphasizes the inclusivity of robotics.

"To join a robotics team, you don't need any experience, and you don't even need an interest in robots," Faucher said. Adding that robotics teams encompass a wide range of activities, from graphic design and video production to website building, finances, and essay writing, it is a place for everyone.

This year, the team's focus is on the CAD (computer-aided design) component, with Jack Hunter, a junior and club technical director, spearheading efforts to improve communication and coordination between robot-related sub-teams. Wendall underscores the importance of effective CAD and graphic prototyping for competition success.

"Last year, one of our bottlenecks was communication issues between the sub-teams," she said. This year, they are trying to get everybody up to speed so they're a step ahead.

Wendall aptly describes robotics as the "varsity sport of the mind." The skills learned—competition and handling adversity—are akin to those developed in traditional sports. Beyond that, Wendall highlights the myriad opportunities that open up for students after high school. FIRST champions the idea that these students will excel in tech fields, removing any limitations in the professional world.

Faucher agrees, mentioning FIRST's prestigious Impact Award, given to teams with significant local and global impact. It goes beyond creating robots; it's fostering a community of passionate, dedicated individuals poised to make a lasting impact. "Robotics isn't actually about building robots," Faucher said. "It's about building a team that builds good people."



## Chandler's Sean Duggan voices thanks for 37 years in law enforcement, 10 years as chief

**A**s I approach my retirement from policing and final weeks serving as Chandler's police chief, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the Chandler community for the level of support and appreciation I have felt serving as your chief these past ten years.

Leading and working alongside the dedicated and courageous men and women of the Chandler Police Department has been the highlight of my 37 years of police service.

The last ten years serving as your chief have been especially rewarding.

From driving down crime to historic low levels, to forging deep rooted relationships with the community, our culture of earning support and trust by serving our community in a fair and equitable manner has been the cornerstone of our highly successful system of policing.

Our strong culture has enabled us to thrive in a chaotic and rapidly changing landscape over the years.

It is born out of our adherence to the highest standards of performance while continually seeking self-improvement and perhaps, most importantly, holding each other accountable.

The police department has been in a continuous state of change and evolution to meet the many challenges of modern policing.

From enhanced training, new and revised policies and procedures, community trust building, and the implementation of new technologies, the stresses and demands of being a police officer today are enormous.

Yet, despite all the changes and the many challenges, our department is recognized regionally and nationally as a modern, transparent, and model agency where the community supports and appreciates their police.

And while we experienced many successes over the past ten years, we have suffered heartbreaking and incalculable loss with the deaths of five of our colleagues and friends.

As a department and a community, we relied on each other for strength and support to press on. These moments of unity and caring will long remain in my memory.

The future of the Chandler Police Department is bright, and its current upward trajectory will continue to soar while upholding the highest standards of performance.

Years of succession planning have cultivated a deep bench of highly talented and skilled executive leaders immediately capable of guiding the department well into the future.

It has been the greatest honor and privilege to serve Chandler as your police chief these past ten years.

Chandler is a special community with the spirit of unity and collaboration where residents and police work together to help keep our city safe.

I am grateful for the people of Chandler who have placed their trust in our department and the bonds forged over the years helping to make Chandler one of the safest cities in the United States. I am especially grateful for our dedicated officers and professional staff. I have witnessed their nobility, courage, determination and selfless service and sacrifice time and again.

Chandler is my home, and I am confident the values of service, trust and respect will flourish long after my retirement. Thank you for allowing me the privilege of being your police chief.

— Sean Duggan, Police Chief, Chandler

## Plans under way now for March return of popular Chandler festival

Chandler's popular Ostrich Festival returns for its 34th year in March, drawing expected thousands of visitors to Tumbleweed Park for two consecutive weekends, according to the sponsoring Chandler Chamber of Commerce.

Tickets for this year's events, scheduled March 8-10 and March 15-17, are on sale now and can be purchased at [OstrichFestival.com](http://OstrichFestival.com).

Organized each year by the Chamber and Steve LeVine Entertainment & Public Relations, the festival is renowned as one of the premier events in the Southwest, as well as having become a long-standing community tradition.

It's a family-friendly event featuring national and local entertainment, stage shows, carnival rides and

games, classic festival food, and interactive activities for all ages.

Featured again will be performances by a variety of local community groups, followed by nationally renowned headliners each night.

Past headliners include Train, Walker Hayes, Sublime with Rome, Nelly, The Beach Boys, The Commodores, Andy Grammer, Flo Rida, and The Temptations among others.

Limited presale tickets for ages 5 through 12 will start at \$20; general admission starts at \$30; and VIP tickets start at \$150. Festival entry for children four and under is free.

Prices will increase once the entertainment lineup is announced. Tickets are valid for one-day

entry. Family and combo packs, as well as unlimited ride wristbands and fast passes, will be available at a later date.

The Ostrich Festival will continue to implement the clear bag policy and utilize radio-frequency identification (RFID) wristbands for festival entry. For more information regarding festival policies and wristbands, please visit [OstrichFestival.com](http://OstrichFestival.com).

"We're thrilled to bring back the Ostrich Festival for two consecutive weekends in March 2024! This gives our community the opportunity to experience two full weekends of award-winning entertainment, festival food, carnival rides, and so much more," said Terri Kimble, President/CEO of the Chandler Chamber of Commerce.



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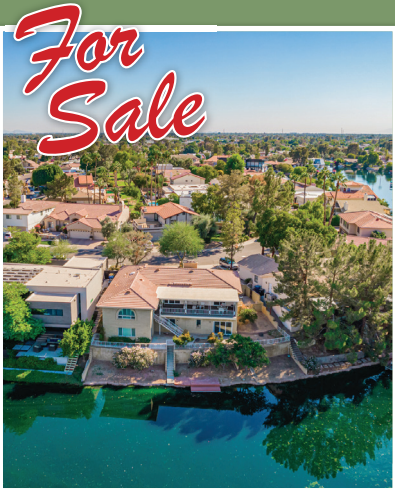
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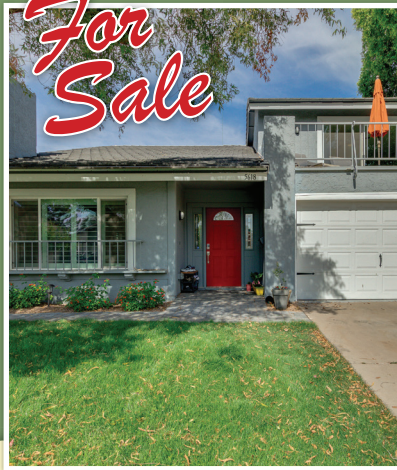
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## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

and embroidery machines, a library with comfy chairs, bean bags and couches, and common spaces to research vendors and project costs. A \$10,000 grant from Raytheon built a podcast studio with state-of-the-art cameras, microphones and laptops.

Olivia Winsor, a Tempe High junior, and Cailynn Gaskin, a Desert Vista High junior, are working with Native Seed/SEARCH. It conserves and promotes crop diversity in support of sustainable farming and food security. It also finds, protects and preserves the seeds of the people of the Greater Southwest to benefit and nourish a changing world.

Their team plans to build a 4,000-square-foot farm behind the center and plant only native cultivars. Many of the seeds are genetically resistant to heat, drought and poor soil conditions, and need preserving for future generations, Gaskin said. They also are studying alternative uses to the Jack Bean that could solve

issues with blowing dust.

“Oh my gosh, this is exactly what education should be — students learning to critically think and work on problems that have real-world applications,” said Winsor, 16.

For Gaskin, also 16, the experience already is changing her career aspirations, from math teacher to perhaps an engineer. “(She’s interested in) applying math and doing something with more value to it than just being on paper,” she said.

A big change in Winsor is how she now prefers to think, question, answer, research and present findings — no longer alone.

“Before, I wouldn’t have considered myself someone who likes groups projects. I would avoid that,” she said. “I like being able to collaborate and work together now. And I would love to have an impact on the world.”

For more information about the Innovation Center, including the '24-'25 school year, visit [www.tempeunion.org/Innovation-Center](http://www.tempeunion.org/Innovation-Center).

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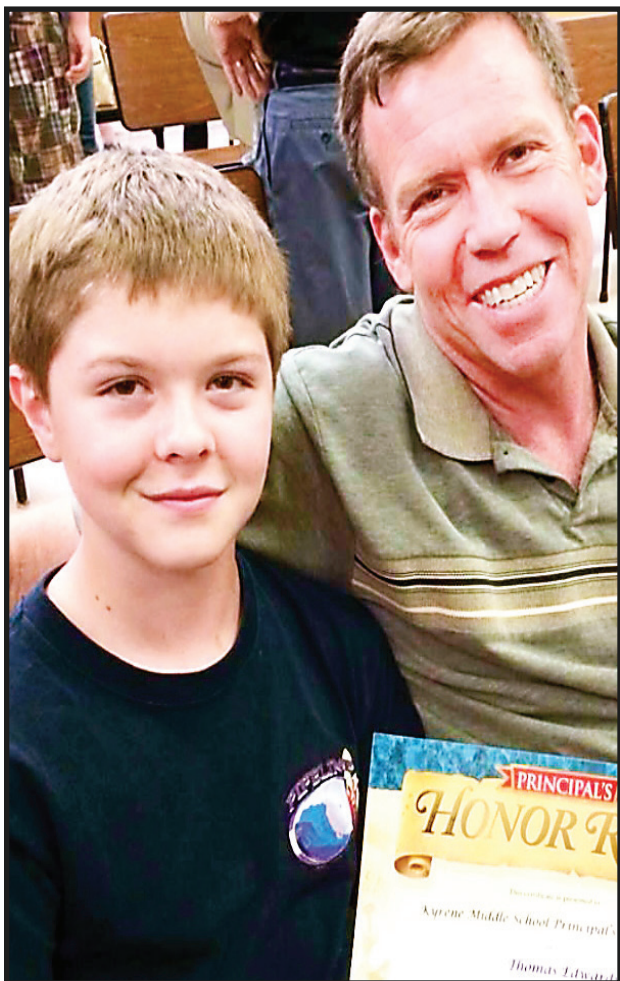
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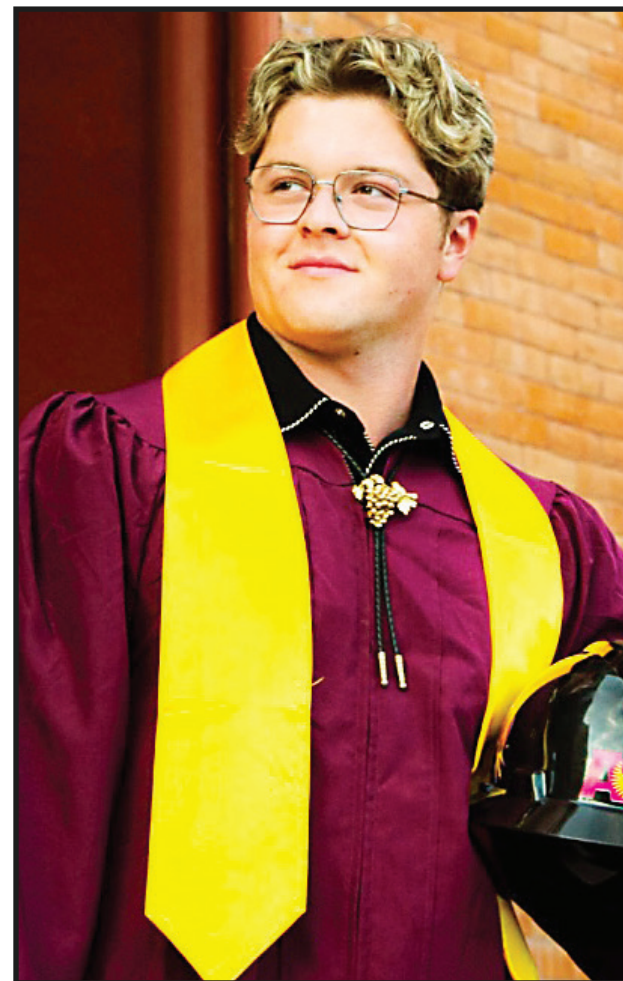




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# MILESTONES: Thomas Edwards

A Dad Salutes His Son for Some Truly Memorable Moments in Life

**This is a story about gratitude for a son who has brought joy, satisfaction and pleasure to those around him, and for the people who have helped make it possible.**

To all the teachers in our South Tempe community, from Dayspring PreSchool to Waggoner Elementary to Kyrene Middle School to Corona del Sol to Arizona State University: All of your collective efforts have helped our son THOMAS EDWARDS achieve his Bachelor of

Science Degree in Construction Management from the ASU College of Engineering in December 2023.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Thomas for staying motivated, staying focused and staying on track to move forward successfully in life.

We all know that 'a good education can change anyone. A good teacher can change everything.'  
— *Anonymous*

'Most of us end up with no more than five or six people who remember us. Teachers have thousands of people who remember them for the rest of their lives.' — *Andy Rooney*

**The Edwards Family is hosting a graduation Open House from 3-9 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 15. We hope that many of you can stop by so we might reconnect and thank you. Phone, text or email us for the Evite.**

To the rest of our South Tempe community — the Coaches, the Parent and Grandparent volunteers, the many wonderful families we have met throughout the years, we would love to see you, too..

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# NEXT LEVEL

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# SPORTS



With stadium lights up, the Rolling Hills course will now offer the next big thing for golf, whether during the day or at night.

## Grass Clippings giving Arizona golf a ‘makeover’

Story & photos by Andrew Lwowski

**I**t started as an organic conversation with four buddies — one former pro and three scratch golfers — who roomed together after college who decided it was time to give a new draw to golf in Arizona.

In 2018, Pete Wilson and his three friends created Grass Clippings, a golf clothing company set to honor the greenskeepers who keep the courses open.

Shortly thereafter, they hosted their inaugural Grass Clippings amateur tournament at Mountain Shadows golf course.

While the tournaments were successful, Wilson realized the layout of the course was not ideal, so the search for the perfect venue began.

Wilson’s vision to give Arizona golf a makeover involved grandstands, stadium lights for night golf, live music and entertainment. However, nearly all courses are encapsulated by houses and have ordinances — except for Rolling Hills, which is an executive course situated between the Phoenix Zoo, Papago Buttes and Downtown Tempe.

After two years of haggling with the city of Tempe and \$15 million later, he got his course.

“We went looking around the greater Phoenix



area looking for properties that would be able to check those boxes,” Wilson said.

“And there was really one property. We were like, wow, Rolling Hills is right here and right under our noses.”

Wilson and Grass Clippings inked a 30-year lease with a pair of 10-year extensions with the City of Tempe. They also partnered with Troon Golf to renovate and put a new spin on golf in Tempe.

Grass Clippings at Rolling Hills is opening Arizona’s first-ever 18-hole lighted course.

“The goals of the public-private partnership are to ensure the long-term viability of public golf, address capital improvement needs at the course, provide revenue to the city, and expand golf and recreational amenities to wide and diverse audiences,” Tempe spokesperson Savannah Harrelson said.

Also on board is the “greatest greenskeeper in Arizona,” former Phoenix Open greenskeeper Scott

Hebert. Wilson said Hebert jumped at the opportunity to join the Grass Clippings team, adding one more notch into the company’s already impressive run.

The group will continue to host tournaments, with hopes that high school, amateur and eventually professional golf tournaments are hosted at their new course, whether that be during the day or under the lights.

Wilson said he is currently working on TV deals as well.

Not only will Grass Clippings at Rolling Hills offer a unique experience to golf, but a section called “the lawn” will allow up to 7,000 to enjoy live music and events with a jumbotron, paired with a new restaurant and pro shop.

While night golf will be set to tee off by December of 2023, all renovations will be complete by the end of 2024 and tee times will remain low.





# Sports Notebook . . . with Alex Zener

Coach **Pat Smith**, known affectionally as TAC, after 26 years at the helm of the Aztecs boys, and sometimes girls, cross-country and track teams, is retiring after the 2024 spring track season.

In eight of those 26 years, his boys cross-country teams finished among the top five schools but the year that the Aztecs won the Division I state championship, 2013, was one that TAC won't forget.



Pat 'Tac' Smith  
Photo courtesy of Janelle Davies

It was Corona's second state championship. The first Aztec state championship was in 1992.

The Aztecs 2013 team's total time of 1:19:50.497 was the lowest combined team time in Arizona state meet history, according to **Eric Aiken**, coach TAC's assistant for the past two seasons.

Corona's top three runners crossed the finish line 1-2-3 on the hot, hilly Cave Creek Golf Course, Nov. 9, 2013.

Senior **Nate Rodriguez** crossed the finish line first with a time of 15:29.980. Right behind Rodriguez, in second place, was his teammate senior **Ryan Normand** with a time of 15:32.618.

On Normand's heels was junior **Marcus Wheeler** in third place with a time of 15:36.681.

Senior **Patrick Cullings** was the 20th racer to cross the finish line with a time of 16:34.535 followed by senior **Blake Fisher** in 22nd place with a time of 16:36.663.

The total for the top five Aztecs runners added up to 1:19:50.497, a record that still stands as the lowest combined times of the first five runners of any Arizona high school team.

Corona's last two runners were freshman **Slade Sumners** in 33rd place and senior **Andrew Truswell** in 66th place.

Coach TAC's girls teams finished among the top 10 schools at the state championship meets from 2006 through 2015.

Recently, Corona's cross-country teams competed at the Division I state meet Nov. 4 where the girls team took 10th place out of 21 teams and boys team came in 21st.

Sophomore **Addison Stewart** was the top finisher for the Aztecs. She came in 28th out of 160 racers.

Senior **Paige Davies-Boerner** had a great finish



McClintock High School's varsity and JV girls soccer teams spent an evening writing over 50 thank-you cards to those who have donated to the AZ Tax Credit for McClintock's and/or to their specific girls soccer team. The teams say they would like to encourage residents to donate to their local high schools before the April 15, 2024 deadline to be claimed as a credit on their 2023 state tax return. — Photo courtesy of Rebecca de la Torre

coming in 37th followed by junior **Sloan Guess** in 46th, freshman **Naomi Jue** in 87th and freshman **Isobel Mackinney** in 95th. The last two finishers for Corona were freshman **Rhima Edratide** and freshman **Mya Armijo**.

The top runner from the boys team was freshman **Santiago Araiza** followed by senior **Stephen Brown**, senior **Sean Waters**, sophomore **Jack Black Feather**, senior **Zachary Wiesner**, junior **Henry Yazzie** and sophomore **Blake Yosowitz**.

Corona's girls volleyball team came within two points of having a chance to play in the 6A state volleyball championship finals to defend the Aztecs state championship title from a year ago.

As the No. 3 seed, the Aztecs defeated No. 14 Chandler in the first round, 27-25, 25-12 and 25-13 to face No. 6 Liberty across the net in the quarterfinals.

Liberty was a bit more difficult for the Aztecs who are a young team with only three seniors, but they made it into the semifinals round by defeating Liberty 3 to 1.

In the semifinals against Perry, the first four sets were a dramatic back and forth affair that was stressful for both teams, their coaches and their fans.

First Perry proved they were better than a No. 7 seed, easily defeating the Aztecs in the first set 25-17.

The Aztecs roared back in the second set with a 25-16 win of their own.

Corona lost the third set by two points 24-26 only to bounce back to defeat the Pumas 25-21 in the fourth set and force a fifth set to determine the team who moves on to the finals against No. 1 seeded Sandra Day O'Connor.

The Aztecs started strong in the fifth set going up 5-1 and then 9-6 before the Pumas caught up to be within one point at 11-10. Perry continued to use their momentum to go on to defeat Corona by a measly two points in the fifth set, 17-15.

The team honored their three seniors, setter **Julia Owens**, outside hitter **Maggie Beauer** and opposite hitter **Cora Bullard**.

Owens amassed 612 assists over the season while averaging 5.3 assists a set over the 116 sets she played.

"Julia has been our starting setter for the past four seasons, so we will greatly miss her leadership and volleyball IQ on the court," said head coach **Ben Maxfield**. "She is very competitive and puts her hitters into a great position to be successful."

One of those hitter is Beauer who had developed a good working relationship with Owens.

But Beauer is not just a hitter. She can serve aces and play defense by blocking and digging the ball.

"Maggie has developed into an incredibly talented six-rotation player," said Maxfield. "We will miss her power on offense and her blocking and back row defense. She works hard and leads by example both on and off the court."

Beauer was second on the team in kills with 380 or 3.3 kills a set. The only player on the team with more kills was junior **Alyssa Aguayo** who had amassed 511 kills or 4.4 kills a set.

Beauer led the team in aces with 59 aces. She was also the leading blocker with 32 solo blocks and 44 assisted blocks for 76 total blocks.

Aguayo was second on the team in blocks with



29 solo blocks and 41 assisted for a total of 70.

Beauer was second to sophomore libero **Erin Clark** in digs. Clark had 545 digs while Beauer had 396 and Aguayo had 346 digs.

Bullard played in 24 sets earning points with her service game and digs while playing defense.

"Cora is the epitome of a teammate," said Maxfield. "She works hard to improve and continuously cheers on and motivates her teammates to improve. She is a lot of fun and her energy and personality will be missed in the gym next year!"

The Aztecs should return 13 of the 16 players on this year's team including sophomore setter **Avery Lim** who was second on the team in assists with 525, sophomore middle blocker **Hayden Conner** who played in 63 sets, had 164 kills with a 0.306 hitting percentage plus 66 blocks, junior **Emma Uribe** who had 154 digs and served 45 aces along with sophomore defensive specialist **Avalon Legg** who had 43 aces plus junior middle blocker **Morgan Moraga** with 63 blocks and 65 kills.

Additional players who gained valuable experience this season include sophomore opposite hitter **Mira Banks** who had 50 kills, sophomore middle blocker **Kennedy Allen** with 49 kills and 50 blocks, and sophomore opposite **Paige Nenaber** who averaged over one kill a set.

Others who contributed to the success of the team on and off the court are sophomore outside hitter **Taryn Vesely** who averaged two kills a set, junior opposite hitter **Mia Hutchinson** with 21 kills and sophomore middle blocker **Shannon Coggins** with 12 kills.

If you tuned into the rivalry football games this past weekend, especially the Florida versus Florida State game, you may have seen a name you recognized on the back of a Gator uniform.

Former Corona wide receiver **Ricky Pearsall**, wearing No. 1, is the Florida Gator's leading receiver.

As a fifth-year senior, Pearsall started in all 12 games where he caught 65 passes for a total of 965 yds and four touchdowns.

Pearsall, a standout wide receiver at Corona, had a break-out junior year where he caught 74 passes for 1,153 yds and 13 touchdowns including a 95-yd touchdown catch.

His senior year he made 65 catches for 815 yds and four touchdowns while also rushing for four additional touchdowns.

While at Corona, Pearsall expanded his skill set to return kick-offs. His senior year, he returned two kick-offs for touchdowns (98 and 99 yds) for a total of 762 total kick return yds.

ASU recruited Pearsall where he played his first three seasons. He played in all 13 games in 2019, his freshman year.

In 2020, Pearsall played in four games where he had six catches, one receiving touchdown and one rushing touchdown before Covid caused the PAC12 to cancel the football season.

During the 2021 season, at ASU, he started in 11 of the 13 games where he led the Sun Devils in receiving yds and total touchdowns.

In 2022, Pearsall took advantage of the transfer portal plus the extra year of eligibility due to Covid and transferred to Florida.

In the recent Florida vs Florida State game on Nov. 25, Pearsall recorded a reception in his 40th-consecutive game, the sixth-longest streak in the FBS according to <https://floridagators.com/>.

FBS is an acronym for Football Bowl Subdivision which refers to the top half of Division I college football. FBS programs, 130 schools in total, are the most competitive in the sport of football.

The Florida Gators, with a 5-7 record most likely have played their last game of the 2023 season because they may not be bowl eligible with only five wins.

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# SPORTS

## Scoreboard doesn't tell full story of ASU-UA Cup



Arizona State and Arizona are at different stages of the same process.

— Photo courtesy of Zac BonDurant, House of Sparky

By Andrew Lwowski

**T**hirty-six is the difference in points scored between the No. 15-ranked Arizona Wildcats and the lowly 3-9 Arizona State Sun Devils in the 97th Territorial Cup.

However, the fundamental differences between the two programs are not as wide as those on the scoreboard.

Three years ago, before Arizona found itself ranked and before it beat four ranked opponents in a single season, Arizona found itself in the same situation as the Sun Devils are in currently: Suffering a humiliating 70-7 loss in the Territorial Cup, which ushered in the hire and rebuild for





The Corona del Sol boys varsity basketball team launched its preseason in the annual Welcome to the Jungle tournament at Gilbert High School during Thanksgiving week. The team, with a roster full of seniors, went 3-0, making it to the championship game but losing a heartbreaker to a tough Gilbert team. Bo Dolinsek (6'7 PF) and Crew Swearingen (6' G) were named All-Tourney MVPs. Dolinsek scored 26 points in the game and averaged 20 points throughout the week, with Swearingen doing it all—scoring, steals and assists. The regular season begins Dec. 5 with the home opener on vs Higley on Dec. 7.

— Photo courtesy Bonny Dolinsek

Jedd Fisch. It was a necessary evil Arizona took to grow and one Arizona State is now embracing.

The Wildcats, led by freshman quarterback Noah Fifita's 527 passing yards, returned the favor of a lopsided Territorial Cup loss and Arizona lit up the Sun Devils for 619 total yards of offense with seven touchdowns behind its 59-23 win.

It was ugly, and it marked rock bottom for Arizona State as a fitting end to a rather unordinary season.

Although, Dillingham pointed out one silver lining that is Arizona State won the same number of games this season as it did last, despite all the adversity.

Dillingham will now embrace the throes of establishing a culture in hopes to mirror the success in Tucson.

"I didn't take this job and expect to go win eight games," Dillingham said. "So, the buy-in, what we're doing and the direction we're going, 100 percent.

It's the direction that needs to be headed, it's what needed to be done this year even though it's

not fun to lose games this year. It's not fun for all of this stuff, sometimes it's needed. Sometimes you have to hit rock bottom to bounce back up and where we were as a program in the direction we're going.

"I have 1000 percent confidence that the ball's bouncing up, not down."

The players have been buying in, and it showed in the second half in the loss to No. 6 Oregon and the second half of the Territorial Cup.

The Sun Devils displayed grit and fight by finding the end zone twice more, including an interception by linebacker Tre Brown at the goal line, to prevent the Wildcats from running up the scoreboard.

Getting the players to fight and trust the process is the first stepping stone of building a program. Brown, who has been a part of five separate programs, said he sees a bright future under Dillingham.

"This is the first culture I genuinely bought into

whether it was the weight room, whether it was the playbook on defense, whether it was special teams and just believing in what coach echoes every day," he said."

The culture that coach has built is only going to get stronger and bigger. And I'm just saying for the future man, it's going to be something to see."

It's not easy to pin-point progress after a three-win season, but matching last season's win total during the most tumultuous season that included a bowl ban, the athletic director resigning and rotating between five players at quarterback is now with Year 0 complete, Dillingham said his off-season plans are to fundraise, because "that's what the name of the game is now" while his staff recruit.

As Dillingham prepares for year 2 and so on, the program will more directly reflect his leadership as he is in control of everything that comes through, contrary to the NFL.

More importantly, Dillingham said, is a successful program starts with the donors and support, so that is where his attention will be.





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## DIVERSIONS With MV Moorhead



### Film Fare: 'Napoleon' hints at a bit of historical authenticity

Returning to France, uninvited, from exile in Elba, the title character of *Napoleon* is confronted with a regiment of soldiers he used to command.

"I missed you," he tells them,

seemingly sincerely. Soon he's back in charge.

Apparently there is some historical basis for this scene; Napoleon is said to have had a fond relationship with his troops, despite his willingness to



get them slaughtered. But to the casual viewer of this Ridley Scott epic, the moment may come as a surprise.

Nothing in the movie prepares us for it. Played by Joaquin Phoenix, this Napoleon shows little affection or even interest toward anyone or anything apart from himself, and a certain almost adolescent erotic fixation on Josephine (Vanessa Kirby).

In between campaigns, he makes rather unromantic attempts to impregnate her, and reacts with sullen outrage when they don't succeed.

Scott's movie, based on a script by David Scarpa, is largely a pageant of carnage. It begins with a graphic depiction of Marie Antoinette's meeting with Madame Guillotine, then shows us Napoleon navigating the deadly mayhem of the Revolution and the First Republic. It then traces him from battle to battle: Toulon, Austerlitz, Moscow and some of his other greatest hits, culminating, of course, against Wellington (Rupert Everett) at You-Know-Where.

This *Napoleon* isn't boring. It's entirely

watchable and well-staged. Scott deploys his forces with the care of a child playing with toy soldiers on his bedroom floor. But it doesn't really hit hard emotionally; something is missing from it.

Early on, we see a cannonball splat into the chest of a horse, and the resulting explosion of gore is so obviously computer-generated that, for me at least, it carried little shock (it has this in common with the splatter effects in the holiday shocker *Thanksgiving*, which, exhaustingly enough, I saw the same day).

This sort of detached unreality hangs over the movie's horrors, and the same detachment extends to the central character.

While Phoenix holds our attention with his movie star charisma, it's as if he's working in a vacuum.

Except here and there in his scenes with Kirby's drolly unflappable Josephine, Phoenix seems to be anomic, walled off from the other characters by his own narcissistic self-regard.

Maybe that's deliberate; maybe Scott is trying to dramatize the Napoleon of Walter de la Mare's

unforgettable poem:

*What is the world, O soldiers?*

*It is I.*

*I, this incessant snow,*

*This northern sky.*

*Soldiers, this solitude*

*Through which we go*

*Is I.*

In any case, the movie has a point to make about the appetite for an autocratic "strongman" leader that seems to inevitably arise in reaction to the messiness of democratic movements. It's a theme which would, admittedly, seem to have a slight smidge of relevance to our current times.

It should be noted that, warmongering megalomaniac though he was, Napoleon was also a tremendously intelligent and curious person, which puts him in a very different category than our most notable current would-be Emperor.

*Napoleon* is rated R and plays at Harkins Tempe Marketplace, Harkins Chandler Fashion Square, Harkins Arizona Mills and other multiplexes Valleywide.

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## Library on wheels to expand services to West Chandler, other city residents

Chandler Public Library is planning to bring a fifth branch, a mobile one, to West Chandler and other sections of the community. Chandler City Council approved the purchase of a library bookmobile/techmobile at its meeting on Nov. 9.

According to city planners, having a mobile library vehicle can accomplish some of the same goals as an additional branch, without the cost of a new building.

It will make accessing library services more convenient, they say, as well as extend services to underserved communities and generate

outreach opportunities at special events, school tours and other public places.

With the addition of a bookmobile, officials say the library anticipates an increase in the number of cards issued, circulation of materials, program participation, in-house visits and collection turnover rate.

The mobile outreach can also positively impact cultural and social connections with residents, enhance neighborhood quality of life and add to overall community wellness, it was said.

In addition to being an innovative and convenient library service point for community members, there is believed to be a socioeconomic need to remove barriers to library access and simultaneously increase literacy opportunities.

Services that could be available in the mobile library include STEM/STEAM

instruction, Makerspace equipment, story times, job search assistance, library collections to browse, roaming reference services, mobile connectivity, technology instruction and equipment loans and heat relief supplies.

The purchase of the bookmobile from Farber Specialty Vehicles was made possible with \$135,000 in funding from the Friends of Chandler Public Library and \$500,000 from the Intel Corporation designated for library technology enhancements.

It will be staffed by existing library staff.

There is a two-year lead time to design and build the vehicle so this approval from City Council secures a delivery date in 2025.

For more information about Chandler Public Library, visit [chandlerlibrary.org](http://chandlerlibrary.org).



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