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WRANGLER NEWS

Signing Day for Corona del Sol athletes came with plenty of excitement to share in anticipation of college days awaiting them. More, Page 18.

JULIA OWEN
University of Nebraska



Wrangler News photo
by Andrew Lwowski

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SCAN FOR
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Understanding teen violence; schools seen as a vital entry point

Aimed at problem solving, enhancing self-image

Editor's note: Matt Orlando is a member of the Chandler City Council, as well as a community activist with many years of involvement in a wide range of programs and services. We felt his remarks were especially relevant to recent occurrences in area cities.

By Matt Orlando

The East Valley has witnessed graphic accounts of teen violence and rallied for justice to hold those involved accountable.

We're struggling to understand the behavior and seeking answers to prevent teen violence in the future. Communities have come together to discuss, listen and take action that keeps our kids safe.

We recognize teen violence isn't defined by geographic, cultural, economic and social boundaries. Teens and families of all backgrounds are being affected.

There are several proactive actions that we're taking in West Chandler and other nearby areas to keep our community safe.

We're voting on city ordinances

this month that would equip the Chandler police with tools to address unruly gatherings of minors through education and enforcement, including measures that would prohibit the sale and possession of brass knuckles by minors.

Schools are essential places to connect with students. Last year, we renewed agreements with Kyrene, Chandler and Mesa school districts for Chandler police to provide a school resource officer dedicated to each public middle school and high school campus in Chandler.

These officers serve an essential role to engage students, parents, teachers and administrators. We're leveraging those opportunities to prevent and address teen violence.

We've also allocated \$147,000 for a program to expand the presence of Chandler police in elementary schools. The School Education Engagement program is designed specifically for 6th grade students to provide tools and knowledge to navigate challenges of social media, drugs and peer pressure. Hopefully, early intervention can help these future teens safeguard their potential



Orlando with Chandler police officer on the lookout for signs of gang activity.

Contributed

and make informed choices.

Two seasoned, retired law enforcement officers are spearheading this program for Chandler Police. They are delivering a four-week curriculum approved by the Arizona Department of Education that addresses leadership, respect, substance abuse and cyber-dilemmas.

The goal of the program is to promote problem-solving skills and a positive self-image through student's character development.

By encouraging respect of people, authority, laws and rules, the focus is to develop responsible future teens and discourage delinquent behavior.

Eight elementary schools in the Chandler Unified School District are participating in the program this spring. We aim to expand this

program to other elementary schools and districts serving West Chandler and other cities' students in the coming school year.

Programs involving police and schools reinforce and supplement lessons learned in the home.

It's vital that parents and family members engage in the lives of our teens and pre-teens. We must acknowledge the unique challenges our kids face in a world that is constantly connected, comparing and commenting.

Perhaps we can begin by disconnecting from things that pull our attention away and taking time to reconnect with our kids. Listen and observe. It's an investment of time that no one will regret.



CURIOUS MINDS

'Curious Minds,' Tempe Center for the Arts' current exhibition, invites curious humanoids to explore its newest showcase, with select displays by artists aiming to evoke deep thought, creativity and discussion. The showing, which houses work by a handful of artists whose careers involve photography, painting, sculptures and other visuals, is free to the public and profiles the creativity of those whose craft, based judges' reviews, was chosen so viewers would be able to share a piece of each one's world.

— Wrangler News photos by Andrew Lwowski (Please see facing page)



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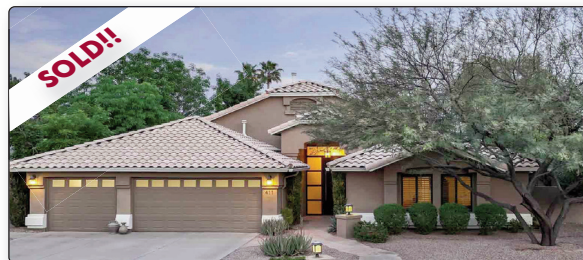


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Empowering the autism community for 25+ years

By Barbi Walker-Walsh

Photos courtesy SARRC



Barbi

In 1997, when Resnik's 2-year-old son Mathew received an autism diagnosis, people initially misunderstood, assuming she was referring to his "artistic" abilities.

That's when she realized that more needed to be done to raise awareness and support those affected by autism, according to an interview with Resnik.

"Needless to say, SARRC was established during a time when options were scarce," said Beatriz Orr, clinical director of the SARRC Community School.

"Despite limited funds, real estate and staffing, our founders were resolute in providing a place for children, teens and adults with autism and their families to turn to for support."

Two determined Valley mothers with children on the autism spectrum, Denise Resnik and Cindy Schneider, united with their developmental pediatrician over 25 years ago to establish the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center.

In 1997, when Resnik's

2-year-old son Mathew received an autism diagnosis, people initially

misunderstood, assuming she was referring to his "artistic" abilities.

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"Needless to say, SARRC was established during a time when options were scarce," said Beatriz Orr, clinical director of the SARRC Community School.

"Despite limited funds, real estate and staffing, our founders were resolute in providing a place for children, teens and adults with autism and their families to turn to for support."

Their dedication led to the creation of a place where their vision—to provide comprehensive support and reliable answers—has brought immense reassurance to families navigating the challenges of autism spectrum disorder, or ASD.

ASD is characterized by social impairments, communication difficulties and restricted, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior," Orr said—adding that ASD varies significantly among individuals.

However, it affects all age groups and occurs in all ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

Today, SARRC is an internationally recognized nonprofit organization. Its mission encompasses research advancement by pioneers pursuing groundbreaking research to deepen our understanding of autism.

Their studies inform evidence-based practices and drive progress in the field.

SARRC also provides unwavering support for individuals with autism and their families. From early childhood through adulthood, it offers a lifeline of lifetime services, education and community building.



Building inclusive communities

SARRC provides evidence that it understands research alone isn't enough.

Its work has resulted in a network of comprehensive services designed to empower individuals with autism throughout their lives.

With a flagship school, the group provides a nurturing environment specifically designed for autistic learners.

The school offers individualized education plans, social skills development, and vocational training, aimed at preparing students for success beyond graduation.

Nestled in the heart of Tempe, at 975 E. Warner Road, it leads with innovation and inclusion at its facility. The school's unique preschool blends children with and without autism in the same classroom. This inclusive approach is designed to foster social growth, empathy and understanding.

With individualized attention, the impressive 4-to-1 student-teacher ratio ensures each child receives personalized attention, including a detailed and individualized learning plan for each child.

Here, educators focus on kindergarten readiness and developmental milestones. The curriculum is a play-based, developmentally appropriate program that lays the foundation for academic success.

The school is currently enrolling for the 2024-25 school year for children aged 15 months to 5 years. For more information on enrolment, contact Family Resource Team at 602-606.-806.

With campuses in Tempe, Phoenix and Scottsdale, there is a location that provides services in a wide geographic area.

Research broadens knowledge

SARRC's ongoing research initiatives contribute to global knowledge about autism. Its findings

help shape best practices and empower families. Many families, say the organization's planners, find solace in SARRC's support groups, workshops and counseling services, including a grandparents group. Teens and adults continue to thrive beyond childhood due to services that help them transition from childhood to adulthood with vocational training and social opportunities.

Said Orr:

"The cornerstone of our inclusive model is that it fosters a supportive culture that promotes acceptance and, even more so, an environment where differences are embraced."

Along with community engagement, SARRC continues to build inclusive communities by fostering acceptance and understanding through many programs, including training for law enforcement with VirTra.

VirTra, located in north Chandler, is a global provider of training simulators for law enforcement, military, educational and commercial markets.

It teamed up with SARRC to develop comprehensive training for law enforcement in providing a safer and better understanding of how to quickly assess individuals with an autism diagnosis.

In this first-of-a-kind curriculum and virtual scenarios using actors with an autism diagnosis, videos include a variety of topics to teach communication strategies, recognition and best practices for law enforcement.

More than 300 agency locations will receive this new training.

"Because people with ASD can present a wide range of social, communication and behavioral skills, initial interactions can be particularly challenging for law enforcement officers," Daniel Openden, president & CEO at SARRC, said in a statement.

"This new curriculum highlights specific behaviors to help police officers quickly recognize they may be interacting with a person with autism."

Thanks to the supportive community, SARRC has been able to increase its impact in Arizona and, in some cases, across the country every year. Notable highlights include 6,650 people supported through educational outreach events and training programs, with 100 percent of SARRC's adult clients seeking employment securing meaningful, competitive positions.

"A key component of SARRC's strategic plan is to expand the organization statewide, ensuring that impactful services are accessible to every resident of Arizona," Orr said.

Starting in early 2025, SARRC will open its fifth campus, located at Power and McKellips roads.

The new Kathryn G. Bosco campus aligns with SARCC's plan to operate nine "brick-and-mortar" campuses across the state by 2030.

Tempe and beyond

SARRC's impact extends far beyond Tempe. It hosts national conferences, attracting leading researchers and practitioners to share knowledge and best practices.

It also offers online resources and training programs, making its expertise accessible to a global audience.

As SARRC celebrates its years of service, one thing remains clear: its unwavering dedication to the autism community continues to be an empowering force—not just in Tempe but across the nation.



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Hospital's aim at excellence adds Dignity to future careers in nursing

EDITOR'S NOTE: Following a recent conversation with the senior nurse director at Dignity Health Chandler Regional Medical Center, we felt a report on our discussion would provide a way to help recognize the significance of the current, month-long observance of National Nurses Month. Her thoughts and comments follow.

While nursing has been integral to this country's leadership in healthcare, Tricia Coryea-Hafkey offers insight into how

and why Chandler Regional Medical Center has worked notably to achieve one of the state's, and the nation's, signature environments for excellence of care.

Coryea-Hafkey, who has overseen the work of as many as 1,500 of the hospital's nursing staff at a time for more than a decade, attributes CRMC's success to a commitment that focuses on quality—a goal she says involves a multitude of efforts that, among many others, focus on “making sure that patients feel they receive everything they need” while involved in a hospital stay.

While incoming nurses are carefully evaluated for their potential fit to the hospital's philosophy of care, said Coryea-Hafkey, their ongoing performance also gets regular checkups, including twice-yearly give-and-take discussions that involve not only a view of their own satisfaction with the job but an “onboarding” evaluation by the management team.

Because of its longtime faith-based focus, among other attributes, the hospital emphasizes equality of care for all, according to Coryea-Hafkey—“no matter who they are, where they're from, how much money they have.”

It is, thus, a widely utilized assemblage of data, from social media and personal observation

to simple word of mouth, that provides hospital management with an array of information by which to monitor the effectiveness of efforts to maintain quality of care.

In addition to an ongoing emphasis on the nursing staff's performance in the area of patient care, new technology also has played an important role in that same pursuit, according to Coryea-Hafkey.

The arrival of some exciting new modalities, made possible in part by a generous donation from the Gila River Indian Community, has added even further to CRMC's continuing march into the future of healthcare.

As to the continuing measure of her own work gratification—in a field sometimes previously thought of as a “burnout” profession—Coryea-Hafkey views it as the career of a lifetime.

Finally, we asked, would she recommend nursing as a pursuit for young people undecided about what direction they want to follow in the future?

“Heck, yeah,” she says, smilingly. “In a job where you can help others—that's what I call true job satisfaction.”

— Don Kirkland

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People

REVISITING LOUIS TAYLOR

A hopeful end to a story that shouldn't need to be told

By Don Kirkland

It has been several years since I wrote about Louis Taylor, the 17-year-old arrested in the 1970s for his purported role in a fire at Tucson's historic Pioneer Hotel that resulted in 29 deaths.

Louis spent almost 42 years in custody, including the time I knew and occasionally visited with him during his stay as a juvenile at Chazen Institute, previously Arizona Ranch School, a nationally recognized adolescent treatment center in Tucson.

During conversations I had with Louis, and likewise in talks I was aware of him having with the school's founder, Marshall Chazen, he repeatedly denied having a role in the Pioneer Hotel tragedy.

In fact, he had been called a hero for helping to save the lives of some of the victims.

My part in this story

As a bit of background, my peripheral connection with the case was the result of the years I spent overseeing an intensive schedule of newspaper, television and public appearances that Chazen, the school's founder, made around the U.S. to describe his innovative treatment regimen.

Thus, in the time I spent with staff at the facility, I came to know Louis and some of the others referred there, mostly by government entities wanting custodial treatment for young people considered at risk.

Louis, based on his lack of previous criminal activity, was an unlikely candidate even for that type of minimal care. However, in the Pioneer Hotel case, the public's unyielding determination to exact retribution for a calamity of such magnitude left police with no choice but to track down the supposed perpetrators

and pursue an arrest quickly.

Because of the urgency of that mandate, and the magnitude of the event itself, an imminent arrest was no surprise.

The fire and what came next

Looking back at the night of the tragic event, Louis and a group of friends had been on a fun-seeking escapade, looking more for a night of teenage revelry than a treacherous killing-spree.

That was their story when police finally learned of the group's havoc-making and tracked down its participants. What followed, according to the record, was police interrogating Louis for hours, without an attorney or a recording device involved.

Louis, who at the time and throughout his custodial years maintained his innocence, was sentenced to life in prison. He was released in 2013 after serving 42 years, part of which, as mentioned previously, were spent in Chazen's Tucson facility.

Although Chazen at the time was largely certain of his Louis' claim of innocence, and helped in the efforts by

others to reconsider what role, if any, Louis had played in the fire, no court was willing to rehash the case or, apparently, consider the possibility that Louis had been falsely accused and convicted.

In the years that followed, one group after another, including the Arizona Justice Project, tried to intervene on Louis' behalf.

Even a finding along the way that the real cause of the fire, an electrical malfunction, failed to result in a retrial for Louis.

It was only after a "60 Minutes" investigation, and further efforts by the Justice Project, raised even more compelling questions about Louis' alleged guilt, and he finally was released from custody after agreeing to plead no contest to the charges.

Said Taylor upon his release:

"I'm just grateful to God, man, that I finally got out."

According to those who welcomed him less than 24 hours after his departure from prison, Taylor was full of conflicting emotions. "I did 41 years of my life for something I didn't do. It was shameful—it was shameful what they did to me."

Asked why Louis' attorneys didn't go forward with another trial to completely clear Taylor's name, one of them said, "We would have done that, but the Pima County Attorney's Office said they'd fight the petition of relief all the way to the Supreme Court. It would have meant another two, three, four years of incarceration for Louis."



Taylor said he almost cried when he made the decision to plead no contest.

"I didn't want to go against my principles but I didn't have a choice," Taylor said. "How should I give them another minute, another hour, another decade in prison for something I didn't do? I wanted my freedom."

Now, all these years later, it appears there may be one more chapter to the story. A financial settlement was being pursued, based on a rush to judgment in arresting and incarcerating him, and failing to consider the faulty conclusions that led to him going to prison.

"They overpowered him, for hours, to the point he would say anything to get them off his back," said Howard Kashman, who was Taylor's attorney.

Taylor filed suit against Pima County and the city of Tucson asking for damages for a wrongful prosecution, violation of his constitutional rights, and prosecutorial misconduct.

Both the city and county were scheduled to hold behind-closed-doors executive sessions to discuss the case and

what appear to be settlement options.

The city's call for an executive session reads "in order to consider its position and instruct its attorneys regarding the City of Tucson's position in pending litigation or in settlement discussions in order to resolve litigation."

As Taylor looks back on his lost years, friends tell him things could have been different if he had reacted in other ways.

"You could have run that night," one asked.

"Run? Run from what?" he said.

"Run away?" the friend said.

"Run away for what reason," Taylor said. "I had no reason to run away."

As to my comparatively short-term connection to the story, it was one nonetheless that has stayed with me these many years. One that has most recently come to mind again and caused me to wonder if I should call or email Louis with a reminder of the few times we met and a simple word of congratulations: "Finally!"

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



Corona grinds out tough win on Senior Night.

— Wrangler News file photo by Andrew Lwowski

Seniors push Aztec men's volleyball to play-in game

By Alex Zener



The Aztecs ended their regular season with a 6-12 record in power-ranked games and 10-22 overall to end at No. 22.

The top eight ranked teams got an automatic bid to the 6A state championships, while the teams ranked No. 9 through No. 24 matched up to play in a conference play-in tournament. In that event, the eight winners get seeded into the state tournament bracket to make up a field of 16 teams.

SPORTS NOTEBOOK

Corona played against No. 11 seed Desert Vista on May 1, losing 3-0 and being eliminated from the state championship playoffs, ending the season with an overall 10-23 record.

Before their last home game, April 23, the Aztecs honored their departing members.

Seniors **Kevin Saldana, Oliver Elthon, Luke Vlcek, Joseph Azzlyn Potts, Jake Frausto, Scott Miller, Jack Lwowski** and **Micha White** were recognized before the team defeated Desert Ridge, 3-2.

Outside hitter Potts led the team in kills with 273, or 3.1 kills a set, and was second in digs with

231 or 2.6 digs a set.

Middle blocker Miller had the highest hitting percentage at 0.217 and led the team in total blocks with 54.

Libero Vlcek led the team in digs with 543 or 5.7 digs a set and service aces with 31 or 0.3 aces a set.

Setter Peshak was the assist leader with 533 assists and was tied with Vlcek in service aces with 31. Peshak was also third in total blocks with 38.

Defensive specialist Saldana played in 73 sets amassing 147 digs or 2.0 digs per set and 11 service aces.

Defensive specialist or outside hitter Frausto played in 63 sets in the regular season with 114 digs or 1.8 digs a set.

Opposite or outside hitter Lwowski averaged close to one kill a set and had 24 total blocks.

Middle blocker or opposite hitter White was the second leading blocking on the team with 46 total blocks while averaging one kill a set.

Setter Elthon averaged 1.8 assists a set while playing in 27 sets along with five service aces.

Other members of the team include junior outside hitter **Mason Bowser**, who had the second largest number of kills at 120 or 1.6 kills a set, junior setter **Joseph Brown** and junior middle blocker **Philip Moreno**.

Sophomores on the team included opposite hitter **Keoni Garrido** and outside hitter **Cameron Davis**.

Brown played in 46 sets where he had 30 total blocks and 11 kills while Garrido averaged about one kill in each of the 50 sets he played and Davis averaged about one kill per set, as well.

Corona baseball

After winning the last two regular season games, Corona's baseball team finished the regular season ranked No. 12 with an 8-10 record in power-ranked games and an overall 9-16 record to earn a chance to play in the 6A state baseball championships.

As the No. 12 ranked team, the Aztecs first had to play in the 2024 Baseball 6A Conference Play-In against the No. 21 ranked Tolleson Union Wolverines on April 24.

The Aztecs defeated the Wolverines, 3-2, to advance to the first round of the state playoffs where they were guaranteed two more games because the championships are a double-elimination tournament.

In the championship first round, Corona lost, 2-1, to the No. 5 ranked Mountain Ridge Mountain Lions on April 27. The Mountain Lions entered the tournament with a 12-12 regular season record.

In the second game of this double elimination tournament, Corona played at home against No. 13 Chandler on April 30.

Although the Aztecs and the Wolves each had eight hits, Chandler was able to score a run in the first inning and third inning to go up 2-0 before

Corona could put a run on the scoreboard.

The Aztecs ended up losing 4-2 to the Wolves and were therefore eliminated from the state playoffs, ending their season with a 10-18 overall record.

Before the state championships, the Aztecs had been on a two-game winning streak defeating Highland in their last two games of the regular season.

Corona's won their last home game, 6-1, against Highland, on April 19 when they recognized eight seniors.

The honored seniors include outfielders **Theo Rodriguez**, **Owen McGraw**, **Nick Mustacchia** and **Carson Hammer**, infielder **Jaxon Hamilton**, catcher **Jack Trimble**, left-handed pitcher **CF Arellano**, right-handed pitcher and first baseman **Myles Harrison**, and right-handed pitcher/outfielder **Carson Hammer**.

The other members of the team who contributed to the team's success on and off the field include juniors **Jaiden LoRe**, **Max Sinkovic**, **Zane Burns**, **Ryan Caruso**, **Quintin Pelczarski**, **David Baxter Jr.**, **Eli Wilbricht**, and **Cooper Clouser**, and sophomores **Santiago Morales**, **David Moss**, **Cesar Valentine**, **Carter Jacobson**, **Parker Williams**, **Preston Berg**, and **Kellan Tom**.

Marcos de Niza baseball

The Padres ended their season with a 9-9 record in power ranked games and 9-17 overall record to end the regular season ranked No. 28.

The Padres honored their seniors on April 22, their last home game of the season, when they defeated Mesquite 6-4.

The senior players included catcher **Jeremiah Paiz**, infielder and pitcher **JP McIntyre**, infielder and pitcher **Michael Rowley**, infielder and pitcher **Jadon Valenzuela**, first baseman and pitcher **Spencer Schellhase**, infielder and outfielder **Alejandro Garcia** and outfielder

Daniel Berg.

Berg led the team in hits with 19 while McIntyre led the team in runs batted in with 17 and slugging percentage with 0.417.

McIntyre also started eight games and made nine appearances as a pitcher where he was credited with two wins and three losses and ended the season with a 5.05 ERA.

Valenzuela started eight games and made 10 appearances as a pitcher where he was credited with two wins with a 5.53 ERA.

Schellhase started one game and made four appearances on the pitching mound with a 9.33 ERA.

Paiz played in 24 of the 26 regular season games, earning seven runs. Rowley played in 15 games with three appearances on the pitching mound.

Garcia played in seven games where he scored one run with two RBI's and was credited with two stolen bases.

Other members of the team who contributed to the team's success on and off the field included juniors **Izayah Abril**, **Julien Arroyo** and **Nathan Dierker**, sophomore **Isael Olmos**, **Jackson Matherson**, **Gabe Gutierrez**, **Tony Medina**, and **Jesus Valles**, and freshman **Angel Medina**.

Tony Medina led the team in three statistical categories including batting average, with 0.317, on-base percentage with 0.488 and doubles with five.

Valles led the team in runs, with 22 and in stolen bases with four, while Abril had the best-earned run average with an ERA of 4.39.



Senior leadership brought Aztecs together on their playoff run.

Mindset of no expectations leads to quarter-final appearance

Story & photos by Andrew Lwowski

Corona del Sol women's softball had a less-than-desirable regular season, finishing on a seven-game skid and a 14-22 record. But all the Aztecs needed was a chance, something to spark the flame that Coach Sean Thornton knew they had.

And that came against Perry in the play-in game. To the girls' surprise, they came out on top, and the girls bought into each other from that point on. Thornton, affectionately given the nickname "Thor" by the Aztec community, knew his team had the juice to contend with the top teams in state, but they could only do so by playing as a team. It wasn't until the team had reached the do-or-die

stretch of the season to meld.

Tethered by senior pitcher Alyssia Munoz and senior catcher Abby Ritchhart, the leadership and selflessness of the team propelled them to upsetting the top-seeded team in the tournament and making a quarter finals appearance.

"I think we surprised ourselves by beating Perry," Ritchhart said. "Like, 'Oh, okay, we can do it.'"

A foot in the door was all the Aztecs needed. Corona went on to upset No. 1 Red Mountain, 4-1, before suffering the first loss of the double-elimination tournament to No. 8 Hamilton. The Aztecs responded with a 13-10 win over No. 13

Desert Ridge.

“I think all of us came together after the Desert Ridge game – that was our first losers-bracket game,” Munoz added. “We’re all a family; might as well just go with it and see how far we can go.”

That’s when the team truly brought into playing as a team, Ritchhart says. “Earlier in the season, it almost felt like we were going through the motions and weren’t together – like we were playing for individual success. But when playoffs hit, we knew it would be a team effort and everyone bought into that without evening saying it, which was really cool.”

Corona, entering the tournament as the 16-seed, was largely counted out by the rest of the teams, but the Aztecs fully embraced the underdog mentality.

“I told the team there’s no reason to be scared or have pressure on yourself, we’re literally the 16th seed,” Munoz said.

“Nobody expected us to go out there and make a quarter-finals run. I told them play for one another and that’s what brought us to the Hamilton game (in the quarter finals).”

After advancing past Desert Ridge and Red Mountain again, Corona ran into Hamilton once more, suffering a 5-4 loss in the quarter finals.

While the revenge tour ended short, it may not have happened at all if it weren’t for one change: pitching.

Thor began the season calling pitches, but after an early ejection against Desert Vista late in the season, Munoz and Ritchhart got the opportunity to run the defense. Munoz says that Ritchhart virtually lives at her house and the two share their thoughts after each game. Together, they established great chemistry and communication—an intangible asset to the Aztecs’ run.

“I think it literally got us to the point where we were at,” Ritchhart said of the pitching calling change.

“He (Thornton) believed in us the entire time,” Munoz added. “I think he really trusted me and Abby. We started calling our pitches and he let us go and play our own game.”

The display of leadership and fighting from the 2024 Aztecs softball team no doubtedly set an example for those returning in 2025 and helped move the pin for the years to follow.





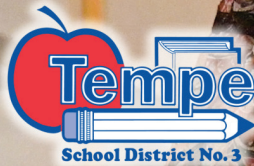
COVER STORY

Corona del Sol hosted seven athletes across multiple sports on Signing Day, each submitting the usual national letter of intent to further pursue academic and athletic careers. Featured in the event were Julia Owens, who signed with the University of Nebraska Omaha for volleyball; Azzlyn Potts, who plans to play volleyball with Park University in Gilbert; Bo Dolinsek, who signed to play basketball for Ventura Community College in California; Brandon Holmes, signing with Fresno City College to play football; Carson Hammer, who signed to play baseball for Loras College in Iowa; Lia Taylor, who plans to play tennis for Rose Hulman Institute of Technology; and Jolie Saliego, who will play lacrosse for Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, New York.

— Photo on left by Coach Jake Barro; on right by Wrangler News photographer Andrew Lwowski

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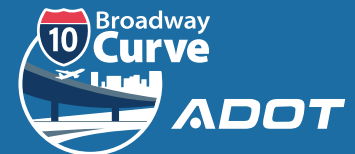


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Find more detailed info at
i10broadwaycurve.com/findyourlane.



couldn't stop physical harm itself, a Kind Bot could detect physical harm and alert a nearby adult to help.

It also could send the child positive messages to help boost confidence when they are having a bad day, or it senses that they are sad.

Another student, from C.I. Waggoner Elementary School, designed a website that would expose on the dark side of greyhound racing with the goal of bringing an end to its popularity.

To make the subject more approachable, the student included a glossary of terms, games and a community tab for people to discuss ways to stop the practice.

Opined the student:

"I believe that awareness is important to kids, especially on topics that aren't widely known."

Many students designed solutions to help their fellow humans, including one student from Kyrene de las Lomas school, who proposed a way to help end homelessness by creating shelters that prioritize access to healthy, balanced meals and mental health professionals.

Individuals who work in the large garden on site would be paid a small wage and be able to stay at the shelter for no cost.

Said gifted-and-talented adviser Snyder:

"We're immensely proud of the imaginative prowess and innovative approaches displayed by our students in their projects," Snyder said.

"Witnessing their passion for enhancing our world is both inspiring and heartening."

— Thanks to Nicole Ashton

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Introducing the city's archived records search portal

Chandler has just launched its new archived records search portal. If you're trying to find a city ordinance, resolution, election record, or agendas and meetings from City Council and boards/commissions — it's now easier to find. Start your online search at chandleraz.gov/ArchivedRecords.



TEMPE BUDGET REFLECTS COMMUNITY VALUES

By Corey Woods

On June 6, the Tempe City Council will vote to adopt the City's budget for 2024/2025.

Tempe's budget is more than \$1.5 billion this year. This includes the operating budget – used for daily expenditures – and the capital improvement budget – used for projects like water line improvements and city construction. Think of it like paying for weekly groceries versus paying to build a garden.

It's not easy to determine how to best spend taxpayer dollars. Like with any budget, there are always more needs than there is cash.

To help us make decisions, we reach out to the community. From December 2023 until the end of March 2024, people had the opportunity to tell us how they would spend a figurative \$100 on city services. Hundreds of people participated. Their choices helped direct decisions.

It was particularly important to hear from residents this year.

The State of Arizona reduced Tempe's budget significantly when it ended the ability for cities to charge a rental tax.

In our city, where about half of all residents rent, that means a reduction of \$10 million in revenue this year and a loss



of about \$21 million next year. That means we have to make the most of the money we have and ensure we are budgeting with our community values in mind.

The top budget priorities this year, based on community responses and input from Tempe City Council, included helping Tempe's unsheltered, increasing the feeling of safety in our neighborhoods, improving the quality of neighborhood appearances by increasing code compliance and improving Tempe's streets.

Tempe voters will have a chance to speed up our ability to pave streets in November.

We estimate that it would cost \$180 million to bring our city streets up to excellent condition over four years.

The budget proposes bonding for these critical improvements through a bond authorization election.

Without bond funding, it would take 15 more years. Waiting would not only result in bumpy streets for a substantially longer time, but repairs would likely cost significantly more.

If the bond election passes, residents can expect to see the first improvements by spring 2025.

Also on that ballot will be an opportunity to approve \$32 million in funds for affordable housing and historic preservation projects with total funding in excess of \$12 million .

These align with what residents told us is important to them in the 2023 Community Survey and in budget outreach surveys.

Your voice matters.

This budget is a direct reflection of our city's priorities – compassion, connection with neighbors and community pride.

Corey Woods is the
Mayor of Tempe



Family fun all summer long

Make it the best summer ever! The City of Tempe offers many programs and activities for all ages to stay active, learning and having fun throughout the summer. Splash in one of the city's pools, take an art or boating class, join a reading challenge or learn about history. Tempe.gov/FamilyFun

Join Tempe Time Machine on a FREE hunt for history every Wednesday from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., May 29 through July 17 (no program June 19). How do you think kids from long ago were different? How were they just like you? Explore the museum's amazing objects to find out. Kids and their grownups will learn and discover with crafts, stories, activities and live demonstrations. The 2024 Tempe Time Machine program is inspired by the museum's Main Exhibit Gallery, where you can learn and explore Tempe's history. Learn more at tempe.gov/TimeMachine.

Beat the heat at Tempe's pools and splashpads! Kiwanis, Clark, Escalante and McClintock pools, as well as the Cloud at Kiwanis Park will be open for the summer. Find hours of operation at tempe.gov/pools. Swim lessons are available for people of all ages and skill levels at Tempe's pools. Visit tempe.gov/swim for details.

Tempe Public Library's Summer Reading Program goes from June 1-Aug. 1. Registration begins May 1. Everyone from preschoolers to adults can win prizes and participate in activities. Books can be read in a variety of formats: print, digital and audiobooks. Being read to or reading to someone

even counts. This year's theme, "Adventure Begins at Your Library," celebrates the joy and adventure that reading can bring. Log online to track your reading minutes – every minute read is a point earned. Register at tempepubliclibrary.org/SummerReading.

Celebrate PRIDE

Join your friends on Mill Avenue's CenterPoint Plaza for an unforgettable night of celebration and love at **Downtown Tempe's Pride Party** on June 1 from 7 p.m.-11 p.m. Downtown Tempe celebrates love with a silent disco featuring three DJs to suit any music preference. Enjoy delicious food, beer, and wine, explore the market, and other surprises to ensure your night is pure pleasure. www.downtowntempe.com

Celebrate Juneteenth

The Tempe History Museum's African American Advisory Committee presents the 11th Annual **Juneteenth Celebration** on Saturday, June 15, from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., at the Tempe History



Museum, 809 E. Southern Ave. The free, family-friendly event will feature hands-on activities and performances, community resources, story time, first responder vehicles, food trucks and more. Learn more at tempe.gov/Juneteenth.

In the evening, head over to downtown Tempe for the **Juneteenth Block Party** on Saturday, June 15, from 7-11 p.m. in the CenterPoint Plaza. The event will feature a DJ, spoken word performances, steppers, breakdancing, live art, BBQ food vendors, an old-school ice cream truck, roller skating, double dutch, adult beverages, a mobile cigar lounge and more. Learn more at downtowntempe.com.

Elder Abuse Awareness Day

The City of Tempe is proud to recognize **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** June 15 and help elevate the issue of elder abuse and exploitation. Tempe and community resident Linda Arters have been actively engaged in raising awareness about this global epidemic, which comes in many forms including physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse and also neglect. An estimated one in 10 older adults in communities experience abuse every year. Details about a World Elder Abuse Day event in Tempe will be forthcoming. For resources and city programs, visit tempe.gov/AgeFriendly.

Stay safe as summer heats up

Arizona's heat can be dangerous and sometimes deadly for unsheltered people, those with health conditions, older adults and households without access to adequate air conditioning. In 2023 alone, there were 645 heat-related deaths in Maricopa County, a 52% increase from 2022. During the May 1 – Sept. 30 heat relief season, stay cool, stay informed and stay safe.

Cooling centers: Tempe provides heat relief at city facilities and through community faith partners. All are welcome to come cool off and hydrate. Get locations at tempe.gov/HeatRelief.

Resources and education: Tempe will be sharing heat safety information and resources throughout the season at tempe.gov/HeatRelief and on city social media, including the Sustainable Tempe Facebook page. Sign up for city news at email.tempe.gov/news and for alerts about excessive heat warnings at azdhs.gov/heat.

Resilience Hubs: Learn about Tempe's work in helping create resilience hubs, community-focused facilities that offer services before, during and after disruptions, through the Sustainability and Resilience Office at tempe.gov/ResilienceHub.

CARE & HOPE Line: Anyone in need can call the city's 24/7 CARE & HOPE Line at **480-350-8004** to connect to resources and our HOPE homeless outreach team.

tempe.gov

tempe **311** One Call to City Hall

City of Tempe

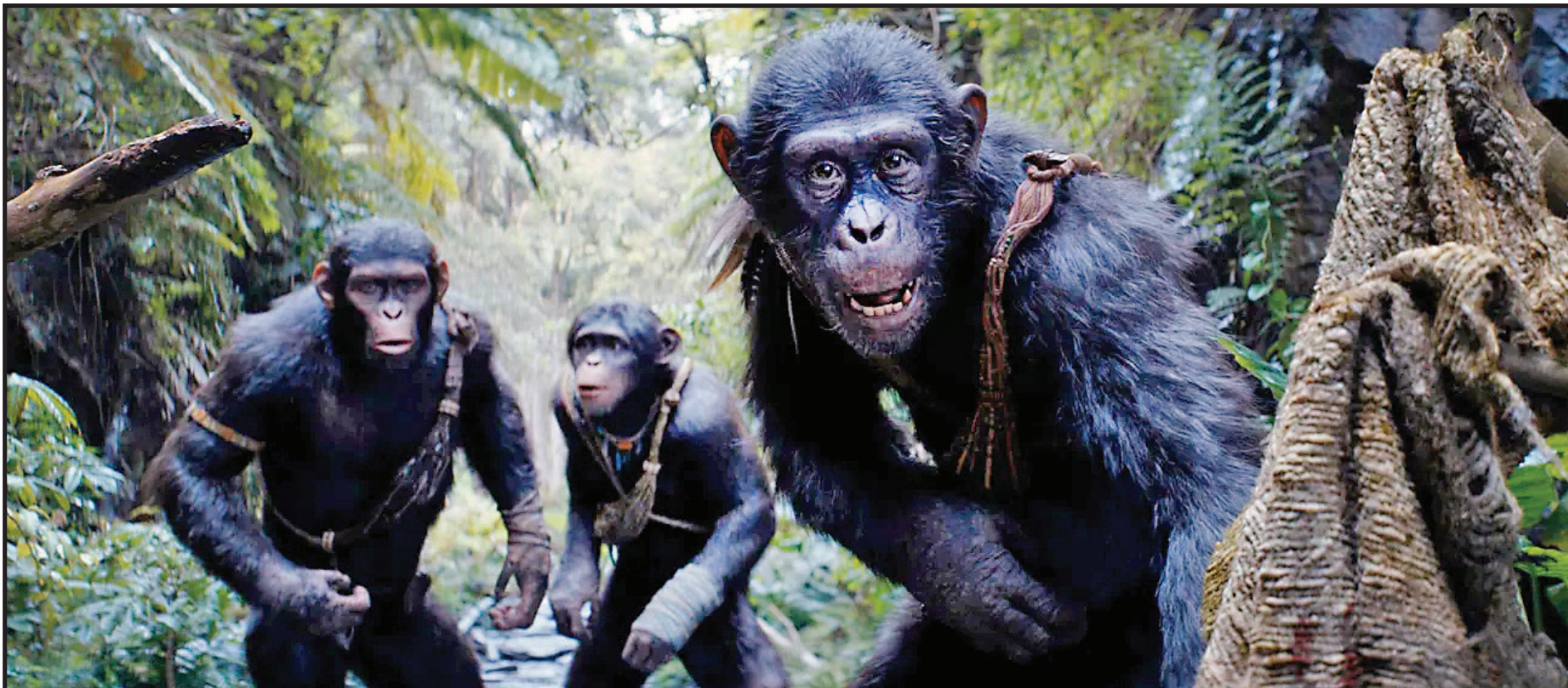
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DIVERSIONS



Latest ape flick called 'ape-ist' of all

By M.V. Moorhead



Moorhead

Generations after the death of Caesar, the chimpanzee who founded ape civilization, apes live in clans along the California coast, around the grown-over ruins of human civilization.

Noa (Owen Teague), the young hero of *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*, is part of the Eagle Clan, a sort of peaceable low-tech utopia that practices fishing by falconry.

Trouble arrives in the form of a raiding party which abducts the Eagle Clan while Noa is away.

FILM FARE

He follows, along the way picking up a scholarly orangutan, Raka (Peter Macon), and a waiflike human, ae (Freya Allan).

Noa eventually finds his clan enslaved on a beach, under the rule of Proximus Caesar (Kevin Durand), a swaggering monarch complete with crown and throne, demanding in blustery rhetoric that his throng of subjects pay him obeisance from his palace, a rusted shipwreck.

Proximus claims authority in the name of Caesar the Lawgiver, but Raka has already taught Noa that his tyranny is an outrage to the true Caesar's egalitarian traditions.

What Proximus really wants, it turns out, is to open

the massive door to an underground seaside vault full of old human technology and all the potential power that any potentate could want.

This fourth of the latter-day *Apes* movies is, one might say, the ape-iest of them, the one most immersed in an established ape culture and with the most meager human presence. Directed by *Maze Runner* veteran Wes Ball from a script by Josh Friedman, it's also the most modest, in blockbuster terms; the cast is made up largely of journeyman TV actors mostly unfamiliar to me. The only name player I recognized was the always reliable William H. Macy, as a human bookworm who's teaching Proximus the follies of human history, often to the King's uproarious laughter.

It's a moody, evenly paced adventure that borrows not only from the original *Apes* series, especially 1970's satirically seething *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*, but from

other mythic sources including *Star Wars* and *The Lion King*.

And it's admirably unsentimental, with characters seemingly ripe for redemption that aren't redeemed and alliances that don't warm into friendships.

The atmosphere is bitter but bracing, and the film has a heart of hard but noble honor.

It's difficult, these days, for many of us to see any movie about autocratic rule, or the undermining of democratic values, or the allure of "strongman" leadership, as anything but a political allegory for our times.

The mangy, orange-furred ape tyrant "Skar King" in the recent *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire*, for instance, seemed like little more than a heavy-handed, though entertaining, political cartoon.

But if Proximus was intended as a stand-in for our current would-be sovereign, I have to say that his high-flown language and historical curiosity make for an overgenerous caricature.

Kingdom of the planet of the Apes is rated PG-13 and plays at Harkins Tempe Marketplace, Arizona Mills and other multiplexes Valleywide.



Larry Bellorín, a Venezuelan virtuoso of Llanera music, and Joe Troop, a Latingrass GRAMMY-nominee straight out of North Carolina, stir up a spicy musical gumbo, blending Venezuelan and Appalachian folk tunes with a dash of harp, banjo, cuatro, fiddle, upright bass, guitar and maracas.

Their act is not just a musical feast but also a storytelling soiree, connecting dots between music and social movements.

It's a bilingual bonanza coming to Tempe Center for the Arts, 7:30 p.m. June 12 | 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$10-\$20.

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Downtown Chandler poised for updates on streets, City Hall

Residents of West Chandler and nearby communities who travel regularly to downtown Chandler will find signs that major improvements are under way.

Construction for three capital improvement projects is taking place on Boston and Wall streets, and the City Hall parking lot.

Work on all three projects is expected to be completed this fall.

Boston Street — Reconstructing of the roadway on the east side of Arizona Avenue from San Marcos Place to California Street includes removal and replacement of travel lanes in the eastbound and westbound directions; curb, gutter, sidewalk and upgrades to meet criteria of the Americans with Disabilities Act; as well as related upgrades, striping, utility adjustments and landscape improvements.

A new drop-off zone will support area restaurants and shopping, along with the addition of parallel parking on the north side of the street and the angled parking on the south side of the

street.

Wall Street — City crews are also constructing aesthetic and pedestrian improvements along Wall Street from Chicago Street to Frye Road. The undergrounding of overhead electric and communication utilities has already been completed.

Plans that were due to get under way this month involve reconstructing the street south to the Historic Square. Improvements will include stamped asphalt, festive overhead lighting, landscaping and monument signage.

City Hall parking lot and alley improvements — In early June, work will begin on the City Hall parking lot, located on the west side of Washington Street south of Boston Street, and the adjacent alley.

The lot surface will be removed and repaved with new striping. The alley to the north of the lot will be reworked to include concrete curbing, additional lighting and a trash enclosure.

The project is expected to be completed by early fall.

Access to downtown businesses will be maintained during the construction. Visitors to downtown Chandler are encouraged to utilize Arizona Avenue, Chicago Street, Buffalo Street and Frye Road, and to park in the garages on the east and west sides of Arizona Avenue.

Information: chandleraz.gov/

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Press Option 1 for your call to be directed.

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June 14, 2023

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STARRY EYED

A crowd several thousand strong was on hand for an evening of live Music Under the Stars by bands from five area high schools. Performers from Corona del Sol, Marcos de Niza, Desert Vista, McClintock, Mountain Pointe and Tempe high schools joined forces to present the program for parents, families, friends and others who showed up for a cool, joyous evening under the stars. Steel drums from Corona and Desert Vista combined with the mariache ensemble from Marcos to bring sounds and beats from around the globe to Tempe Diablo Stadium. The concert concluded with a spectacle of fireworks saluting those who serve in the U.S. military.

— Wrangler News photo essay by Andrew Lwowski



MARK STEWART

FOR MARICOPA COUNTY SUPERVISOR



Paid for Mark Stewart for Maricopa and approved by Mark Stewart

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