

Happy GRAD-ulations!

Photo coverage from Corona del Sol & Marcos de Niza, Pgs. 13-22

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Erosion of traditional journalism a concern of evolving technology

AI-generated content called a threat to news industry's ability to uphold integrity

By Andrew Lwowski

Andrew is a graduate of ASU's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication



The turn of the century marked a new frontier of technology

and innovation, with the introduction of smartphones serving as the catalyst for a new era.

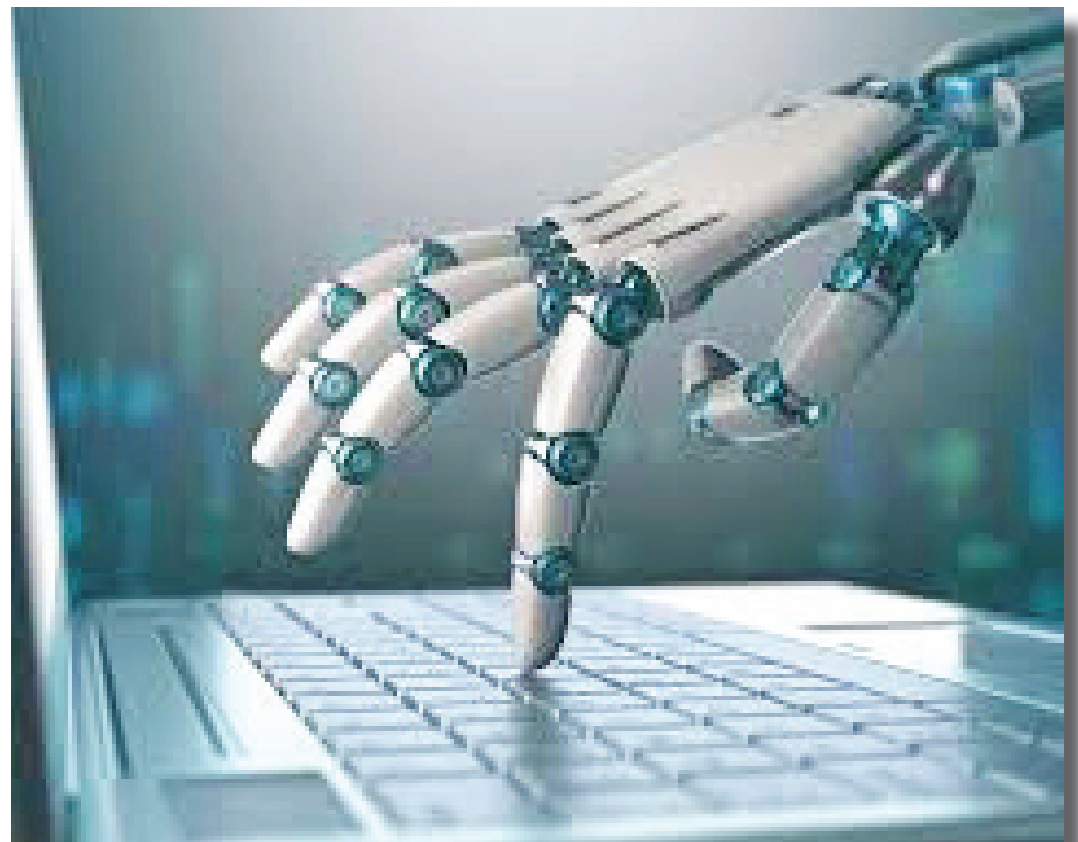
Since then, new industries have emerged while others have fizzled out.

Journalism has been a long-standing industry built on integrity, transparency and, most importantly, reporting.

However, the rapid rise of technology has eroded journalism, forcing companies such as *Sports Illustrated* to transition from traditional print to online while widely reducing staff. Generative AI entered the picture within the last few years, spearheaded by ChatGPT, a free-to-use engineered system to manufacture conversation and automate tasks.

The *State Press*, Arizona State University's student paper, was the latest publication to face generative-AI controversy, retracting 24 stories in April.

A struggling industry is at the intersection of technology, and the



future appears murky.

"There are places where it can be very valuable and places where it can be very dangerous," said Brett Kurland, an assistant dean and professor of practice at ASU's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass

Communication. "So, it is not the boogeyman, but like with any technology it needs to be used responsibly...ethically and transparently."

An instance, Cronkite has embraced the use of generative-AI in translating stories first

written in one language before transcribing using AI software. The stories are then revised by an editor and feature an editor's note stating the use of artificial intelligence.

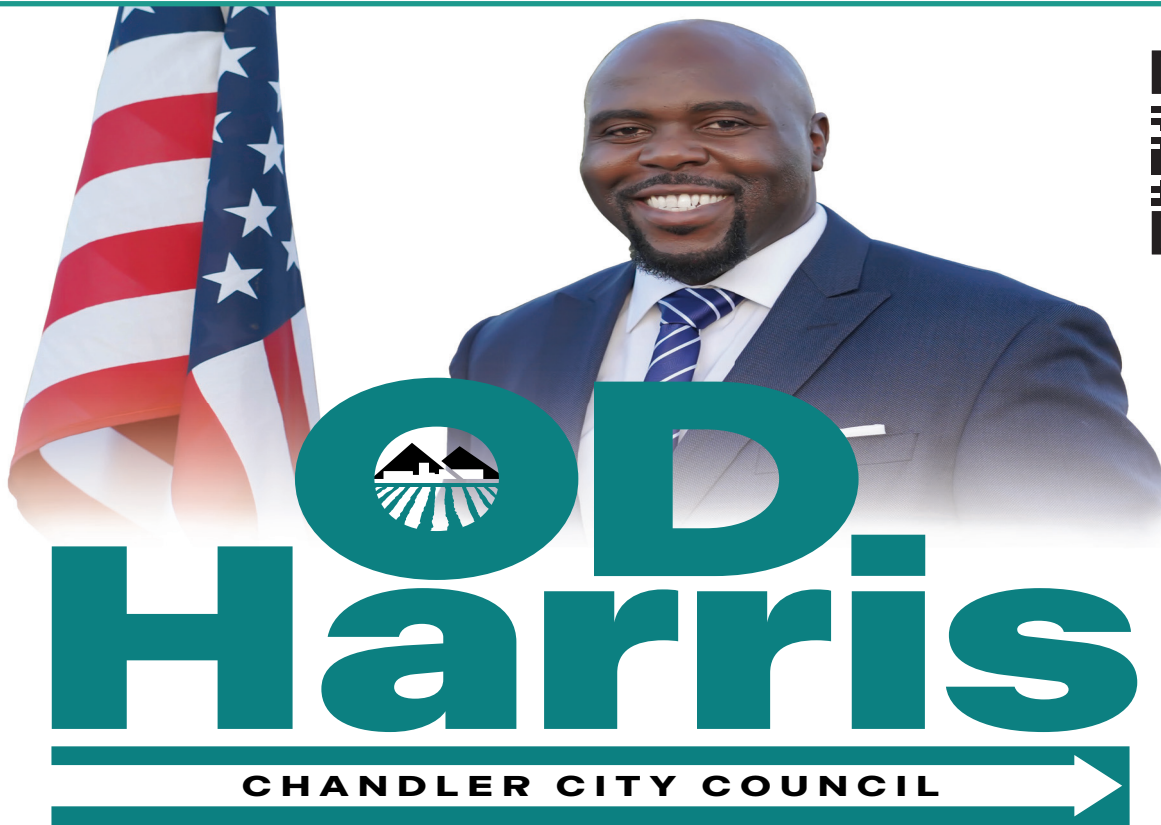
The use of transcribing
— **Continued on Page 31**

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Helmet, quick reactions, 'heroic' hospital staff get credit for saving cyclist

A young man is recounting the heroic efforts of medical teams at Dignity Health Chandler Regional Medical Center who cared for him after he suffered traumatic injuries in a motorcycle crash.

Last July, Jeff Mugongo sustained catastrophic injuries to both of his legs after being hit by a car while riding his motorcycle.

The collision threw him off, shattering his left leg and breaking the right. Thankfully, say hospital officials, a helmet and some incredible luck saved the rest of his body from harm. The injuries to his legs were significant and he was rushed to Chandler Regional for trauma care.

A Chandler Regional spokesperson says that injuries from motor vehicle and motorcycle accidents are the leading cause of admission to the hospital's Level I Trauma Center, which comprises critical/acute care surgeons, neurosurgeons, orthopedic and plastic surgeons, emergency doctors and nurses, radiologists and CT techs.

Uniquely, they say, the hospital's orthopedic and plastic surgeons work as a singular team in the trauma space to provide more effective coordination and care for difficult, traumatic injuries that involve bone and soft tissue.

Mugongo recounted his days in the U.S: "I was born in Rwanda and first came to the United States as a child refugee in 2010 from a refugee camp in Tanzania.

"If I was in the camp when this happened, I would not have survived," says Mugongo, 26, who learned English, began to excel in school and eventually earned a Bachelor's degree in social work from Chardon State College in Nebraska before moving here.

An open fracture in Mugongo's leg and a large soft tissue injury required specialized and reconstructive care from the hospital's orthoplastics team. Mugongo underwent seven different surgeries to save both legs, and has had countless hours of physical therapy throughout his first year of recovery.

Since the accident, Mugongo is walking daily and working out. He's also working on growing his career, providing motivational speeches about his life experience and using his social work degree to write self-awareness programs that focus on inner

strength.

He also leads JTS Fitness, an East Valley organization that focuses on providing competitive advantage to young athletes along with guidance and tools to help them become better leaders of tomorrow.

"I am a walking miracle," says Mugongo.



— Photo courtesy Chandler Regional Medical Center

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Top winners or not, Corona's robotics team managed to draw an enthusiastic crowd of enthusiasts.

From robot wranglers to future leaders

How 'no pressure' competition teaches grit and growth

By Barbi Walker-Walsh

Corona del Sol's AZTECH robotics team didn't get the victory they hoped for this year. Still, they became champions in their own right while competing in the Aerospace Valley Regional FIRST Robotic Competition.

Dubbed the varsity Sport for the Mind, the competition combines the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology.

According to the organization, the competition is as close as students can get to real-world engineering.



Barbi

So, no pressure. Time-management issues, design snafus and a malfunctioning robot during the first of three matches threatened to derail the Tempe team's progress in the competition.

More than 3,500 teams competed, with 600 of those advancing to the championships in Houston.

But this year, the team learned it's about more than winning trophies—it's about building champions.

Even in their impressive second-place finish, they learned to face adversity, have resilience, pivot and foster a growth mindset.

That's the true power of robotics.

It's all in the attitude

"The biggest challenge was time management," said Ben Lewandowski, the team president. From prototyping to design, CAD, building, programming and testing, time management fails followed them

in every direction, he said. Transitions between development stages snowballed into delays. Unforeseen design issues required last-minute tweaks, eating into precious build time and preparing for the competition in Lancaster, CA.

The contest coincided with the ACT and SATs, compounding the team's workload for the handful of juniors on the team, including Lewandowski. The pressure was intense, and the team ended up using the competition as a test phase for its robot.

It's not an ideal strategy, Lewandowski said. However, the team tackled obstacles head-on, learning valuable lessons in adaptability and problem-solving.

Lewandowski said that building the robot and preparing for the competition took over their lives, but he also took oversight responsibility as club president. He said everyone had a positive attitude, even through the most challenging parts. Lewandowski's mom, Christina, said that the season was not only a roller coaster of emotions but also stressful worrying about Ben's workload.

— Continued on Page 30

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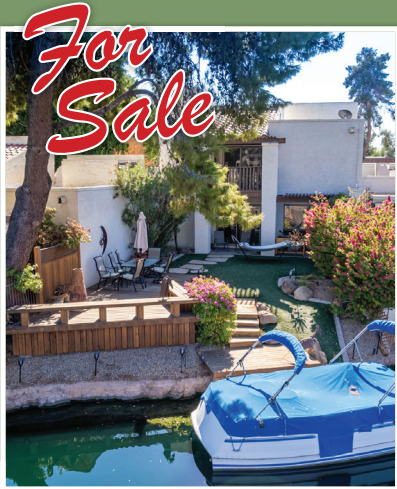
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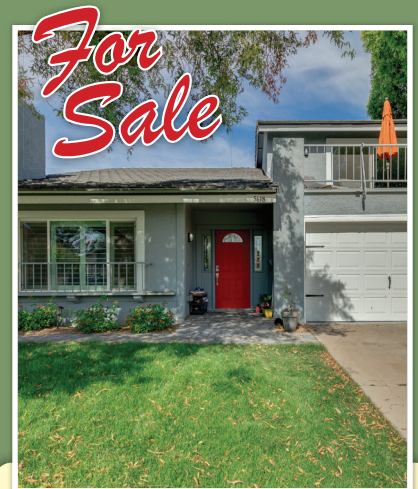
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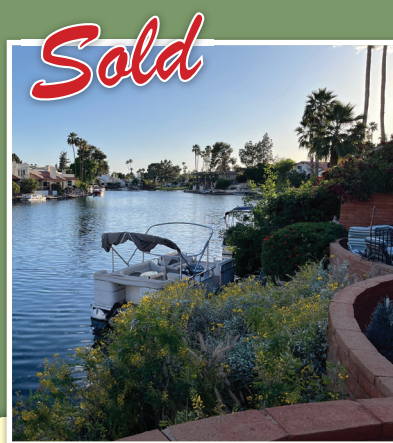
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Aztecs well represented at DI championships

Corona had 10 boys and 13 girls qualify to compete at the Division I Championships held at Red Mountain High School May 2 and 4.

Senior **Brandon Holmes** qualified to run in the 100 meters while sophomore **Ryan McVaugh** qualified in the 110-meter hurdles event.



The only other track event the Aztecs qualified for was the 4x100 relay team made up of sophomore **Jude Stevens**, junior **Domonick Ruiz**, senior **Zuri Glenn** and Holmes.

Seven Aztecs qualified to compete in the field events including Ruiz and Glenn who qualified to compete in the long

jump and triple jump.

Junior **Keane Abril** qualified to compete in the shot put and discus along with senior **Jose Chavez**, in both events.

Junior **Filipe Ma'ake** and freshman **Colin Duffy** also qualified to compete in the discus while senior **Malcolm Flynn** competed in the javelin.

Abril and Glenn were Corona's top finishers at the Men's Division I Championships when they both placed fifth in a field event.

Abril was fifth in the discus with a throw of 148-00 while Glenn was fifth in the long jump with a jump of 22-06.25.

Ruiz, also competing in the long jump, landed just 1.25 shorter than his teammate, Glenn, to take sixth place with a long jump of 22.05.00 in that same division 1 championship.

Glenn also took 10th place in the triple jump with a jump of 43.05.75.

The 13 athletes who qualified to compete in the Women's Division 1 Championships for Corona's team participated in three track events and four field event.

Senior **Reilly Speaks** qualified in the 100 meters while sophomore **Addison Stewart** in the 1600 meters and junior **Jenna Hatton** in the 100-meter hurdles.

SPORTS NOTEBOOK with Alex Zener

Stewart was the only Corona runner to make it to the finals in a track event. She finished 17th in the 1600 meters race with a time of 5:23.50.

The Aztecs had the 4x100 relay team of sophomore **Melanie Lindenstruth**, Speaks, senior **Maia Flanagan** and sophomore **Cristina Cooper** qualify to compete. The team finished 13th in the prelims and, therefore, did not race in the finals.

In the field events, sophomores **Mya Polec** and **Mackenzie Flynn** qualified for the javelin while Cooper qualified in the pole vault event.

Cooper was the top finisher at the Division I Championships for the Aztecs when she pole-vaulted 1-09.00 to take third place.

Polec took 14th place with a javelin throw of 92-10 ft. while Flynn finished in 21st place with a throw of 80-01 ft.

The Aztecs had six athletes qualify in the field jumping events including senior **Fiona Duffy**, sophomore **Emily Wyatt** and Cooper in the high jump and senior **Paula Hoyos**, junior **Morgan Beatty** and sophomore **Hanna Teleb** in the triple jump.

Duffy, Wyatt and Hoyos failed to jump the beginning height in the high jump so did not place.

Teleb was the top finisher in the triple jump for the Aztecs when she jumped 34-01.50 ft. for 16th place followed by Beatty for 20th place with a jump of 33-04.75 ft. and Hoyos was 22nd with a jump of 32-04.50 ft.

Cooper was the only athlete from Corona to participate in the varsity section of the State Heptathlon and Decathlon held May 17-18 at Red Mountain High School.

This event consists of seven track and field events over a two-day period culminating with an 800-meter run.

Cooper came in 19th in the 100-meter hurdles, 12th in the high jump event, 15th in the shot put, 10th in the 200-meter race, 8th in the long jump, 22nd in the javelin and 23rd in the 800 meters.

Cooper finished the heptathlon competition with 3175 points to finish 22nd.

The Aztecs honored 25 seniors from the boys team and 18 seniors from the girls team at the end of the regular season.

Recognized for their dedication and athletic skills from the boys team were **Aidan Weber**, **Alex Konzel**, **Ariyan Wade**, **Brandon Holmes**, **Cameron Guss**, **Cory Block**, **Ethan Mwangi**, **Gregory Arciniaga**, **Guillermo Gonzalez**, **Jay Rodina**, **Jose Chavez**, **Lincoln Vondra**, **Luke Holly**, **Malcolm Flynn**, **Michael Brewer**, **Nguyen Dinh**, **Owen Buckley**, **Preston Lee**, **Quinton Bradley**, **Sean Waters**, **Stephen Brown**, **Stevie Humphrey**, **Tyler Pearson**, **Zachary Wiesner** and **Zuri Glenn**.

The athletes recognized by the girls team included **Alysha Jenkins**, **Anna Maney**, **Brooklyn Patterson**, **Destinee Hodelin**, **Fiona Duffy**, **Grace Johnson**, **Jameson Jacoby-Carver**, **Lauren Luscombe**, **Lilly Chavez**, **Lindsey Chavez**, **Maia Flanagan**, **Maria Gonzales**, **Mariel Chavez**, **Mia Brannon**, **Paula Hoyos**, **Rachel Sindlinger**, **Reilly Speaks**, and **Tajanae Hairston**.

Marcos de Niza Track and Field

Marcos de Niza had one athlete qualify to compete in the Division III Championships held May 3-4 at Deer Valley High School.

Senior **Jhaimier Walker** competed in two field events, the high jump and the long jump, at the championships.

Walker finished fifth in the high jump event with a leap of 6-00.00 and was 17th in the long jump when he soared 19-05.75 ft.

Walker set a personal best record in the long jump when he jumped 20-8.25 at the Tempe All-City Championships on April 18.

He matched his best high jump record of 6-00.00 he set at the Westwood Hohokam Invite on April 12.

Most decorated coach in state history now in retirement

Long-standing Seton Catholic high softball coach Jerry Mullin has retired after 38 years.

Mullin, regarded as one of the best high school coaches in the state and has been inducted into the Arizona High School Coaches Hall of Fame (2013).

Mullin first arrived at Seton in 1985 and took the reins of the softball program during the 1986-87 season. He molded the small-school program into a softball power house and won 10 state titles between 1996 and 2010. He holds the most state titles of any coach in Arizona, leading Seton to 2A state titles in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999; 3A state titles in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005; and 4A-II state titles in 2009 and 2010. Mullin has never lost a title game.

On top of his hardware collection, Mullin led the Sentinels to 14 regional titles, winning his last in 2021. He was named Region Coach of the Year eight times, All-Star Coach three times, and Small-School Coach of the Year twice.

“Legendary,” is the first word that came to Athletic Director Jim Shewbridge’s mind when asked about Mullin. “He has been the heart and soul of Seton Catholic softball for nearly four decades. A lot of athletes went on to compete at the next level, including 2023 graduate Sierra Daniel who is playing for LSU. His leadership and dedication to Seton Catholic Prep will surely be missed.

“I want to thank Coach Mullin for his dedication and passion for Seton Catholic and the softball program for nearly 40 years,” Principal Victor Serna said. “He has been a strong supporter and professor



Jerry Mullin has had quite an impressive career.

of our Catholic values and mission, as well as being a pillar of our community no matter what role he has served. I am grateful for his continued support as he will remain a member of our Counseling Department.”

The success and influence Mullin’s had stretched beyond the field, however. Mullin’s has been a counselor during his tenure at Seton and he will remain as such despite stepping down as softball coach.

“I want to congratulate Jerry on his incredible career and thank him for his guidance and the exceptional standard he has set for everyone,” said

girls head basketball coach Karen Self, who has worked alongside Mullin since the 90s.

“There are just no words to express what he means to the Seton community,” she said. “He leaves an incredible legacy and I feel so blessed to have worked beside him for over 30 years.”

A staple to the Seton community, his success may never be replicated, but his legacy will be forever cemented with the program and school. Seton is currently searching for a replacement for the 2024-25 school year.

— By Andrew Lwowski

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Corona del Sol (left) and Marcos de Niza graduates celebrated a joyous (and welcome) occasion. See following pages for 2024 graduates' names.

A GRADUATION SALUTE FROM WRANGLER NEWS

Tempe's high schools have once again sent their best and finest on to the next step of each one's future — a time when these outstanding young people, the Class of 2024, will go forward into a world full of opportunity and rewards. This year's almost 2,700 (depending on final tallies) TUHSD grads were offered more than \$64 million in scholarships, a compelling piece of evidence that their education represented a valuable investment. We at Wrangler News have worked with and personally know many of these students — teens who have contributed not only to us but to their friends, families and community—and, not to be overlooked, to a future that we're sure will be better because of them. Based on what we read and see in today's media, some of us occasionally ask where our world is headed. If we answer that question by looking at the young people who are celebrating their high school graduation this year — students who have made their way through four challenging years at one of our Tempe Union High School District campuses — we can feel confident that this world of ours indeed will be a better place.

**To them we say Congratulations — Go Forth, Make Your Mark.
Along with what we believe is important parting advice: Carpe Diem.**





The long awaited ceremony for the class of 2024 arrived as thousands of family and friends pack the Corona de Sol stands. Roughly 800 Aztecs had their name called, received their diplomas and tossed their caps, signaling the end of one chapter before embarking on the next life adventure. Corona Principal Nathan Kleve acknowledged those who have served and those who will enlist to serve our country after high school, along with those who earned honors, and congratulated the graduating class on what all agreed was an amazing four years.

Wrangler News photos by Andrew Lwowski



The Marcos de Niza Padres sent off their graduating class of 2024 with love and emotion, as the seniors closed out their high school career. Family and friends shared their joy and pride hearing the names called across the stage anticipating that their children will now take on life with a mountain of opportunities and possibilities.

Photos courtesy MdN CTE Photography



CORONA DEL SOL CLASS OF 2024

Ty Vinsone Wenceslao Abella
 Connor Jackson Ackerley
 Sergio Jack Acosta-Thelwell
 Tahj Nasir Adams
 Jarek Theodore Agnick
 Sophia Lily Aguilar
 Luka Aleksic
 Mason Jordan Alexander
 Zakaria Abukar Ali
 Breeze Alana Alston
 Nathalya Michelle Alvarez
 Madison Justine Alvidrez-Saiz
 Nina Denai Amaro
 Mohib Ahmad Amjad
 Gabrielle Tiwaa Amoah
 Kemnor Adangozi Anaba
 Joseph Johnson Ang
 Amelia Lenore Anzaldua Trujillo
 Kyarra Marie-Andrea Aparicio
 Gregory Panayiotis Arciniaga
 Christian Javier Arellano
 Hannah Elizabeth Argo
 Adrian Bernard Arleo
 Isabelle Marie Armendariz
 Mustafa Mohammad Arshad
 Adrian John Arthur
 Brianna Elise-Enda Artiaga
 Riteesha Asam
 Carly Sue Athmer
 Sydney Katharine Avigian
 Joshua Robert Babendure
 Leila Okada Baker
 Isaiah Jordan Balderas
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 Mackenzie Jane Beattie
 Joey Gabrielle Beatty
 Addis Duke Beaty
 Joseph Edward Beaudion
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 Lily Claire Betcher
 Camille Jeanette Bickham
 Mia Rosalena Blanco
 Cory Robert Block
 Jacob Eliezer Block

Makayla Brianna Bogart-Getner
 Gavin Joseph Boggs
 Caitlin Elise Bowman
 Grace Elizabeth Boyer
 Sean Michael Boyle
 Quinton Andre Bradley
 Hunter Peter Brake
 Mia Charlene Brannon
 Benjamin Domenick Ellen Brasile
 Reese Parker Kenneth Breiner
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Kaylee Brooke Cooper
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 Audrey Klara Craig
 Sophia Noelle Craig
 James Jullian Crosson
 Gavin Cole Cutlip
 Aubree Brooke Daniel
 Kaylee Renae Daniels
 Trayoni Octavius Daniels
 Zachary Thomas Danielson
 Amira Summer Davidson
 Paige Davies-Boerner
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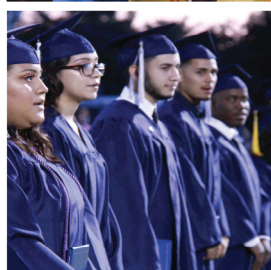
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Diploma a milestone of near-centenarian's Holocaust triumph

By Barbi Walker-Walsh

Oskar Knoblauch wasn't like the others waiting for their diploma on a warm May day at his high school graduation ceremony.

He already had an eight-page resumé summing up a lifetime of experiences that are a massive part of history – history that graduating students had learned in class. Knoblauch is a 98½-year-old Holocaust survivor.

Knoblauch received his honorary diploma thanks to an accommodation on May 20, thanks to the generosity of folks at Chandler High School.

2024, because he has educated and advocated for over 17 years the importance of remembering the Holocaust while teaching about tolerance and peace at Chandler schools and organizations worldwide.

“I never graduated from high school. If we take all the school years put together in my lifetime, I went to school for four years. Period,” he told me. “I actually got most of my education during the war and after the war.”

Knoblauch spent his youth in the German Nazi concentration camp in Krakow, Poland. There, he worked in the basement boiler room of the ginormous building used for the Gestapo police headquarters and the SD (Security Department), the SS and the SP (Security Police). Although Knoblauch missed high school and a significant portion of his education, his intellectual prowess continues to be a testament to his resilience and thirst for knowledge. During the pandemic, he even held Zoom meetings with the FBI to share his knowledge and experience. He continues to tell his story of survival but also of being an upstander. So, for Knoblauch, his honorary diploma helps assure his legacy of never letting humanity forget about the past to help create a better future.

“Oh, it was exciting!” Knoblauch said to wear the gown and hat and receive his honorary diploma that day. It's a culmination of a lifetime of achievements.

It was something he'd not been able to do in his youth. This was a milestone that was taken away from him as a young boy during the Holocaust. Thanks to the efforts of Oskar's granddaughter, Jyll Harthun, the Arizona Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) and a teacher from Chandler High School, they could honor Knoblauch. A man who lost so



Family and friends of Oskar Knoblauch were on hand for the ceremony.

— Photo courtesy Jack Harthun

much in his youth but has given so much more back to help people learn to choose kindness over hate, forgiveness over grudges, and to find ways to connect with one another despite our differences.

Harthun says that when her grandfather tells his story of survival, he always ends it with the most important part of his survival, the moral of being an upstander, of having respect, tolerance and love because that is why he survived.

Sitting at his daughter and son-in-law's cozy and inviting home in the Arcadia area of Phoenix, Knoblauch is clear, sharp, witty and smiles easily. In fact, he laughs easily. He sees the seriousness in life but also the beauty in every tiny aspect. I listened to one of his podcasts on my way to my interview with him, and it was amazing. I was wrapt listening to him talk with his granddaughter, the host of the “Tomorrow Will Be a Better Day” podcast, about the beauty of the cacti flower. I've lived in the desert my entire life, and I'm a native Arizonan, and never have I seen the short-lived flower of the cacti as clearly and visceral as I did listening to him on that podcast.

But that's what Knoblauch does — he teaches people to see, listen, and recognize the world around them. He teaches people to connect with the other humans on this planet, regardless of how

different they may seem from each other. Even if they are your captors in a Nazi camp.

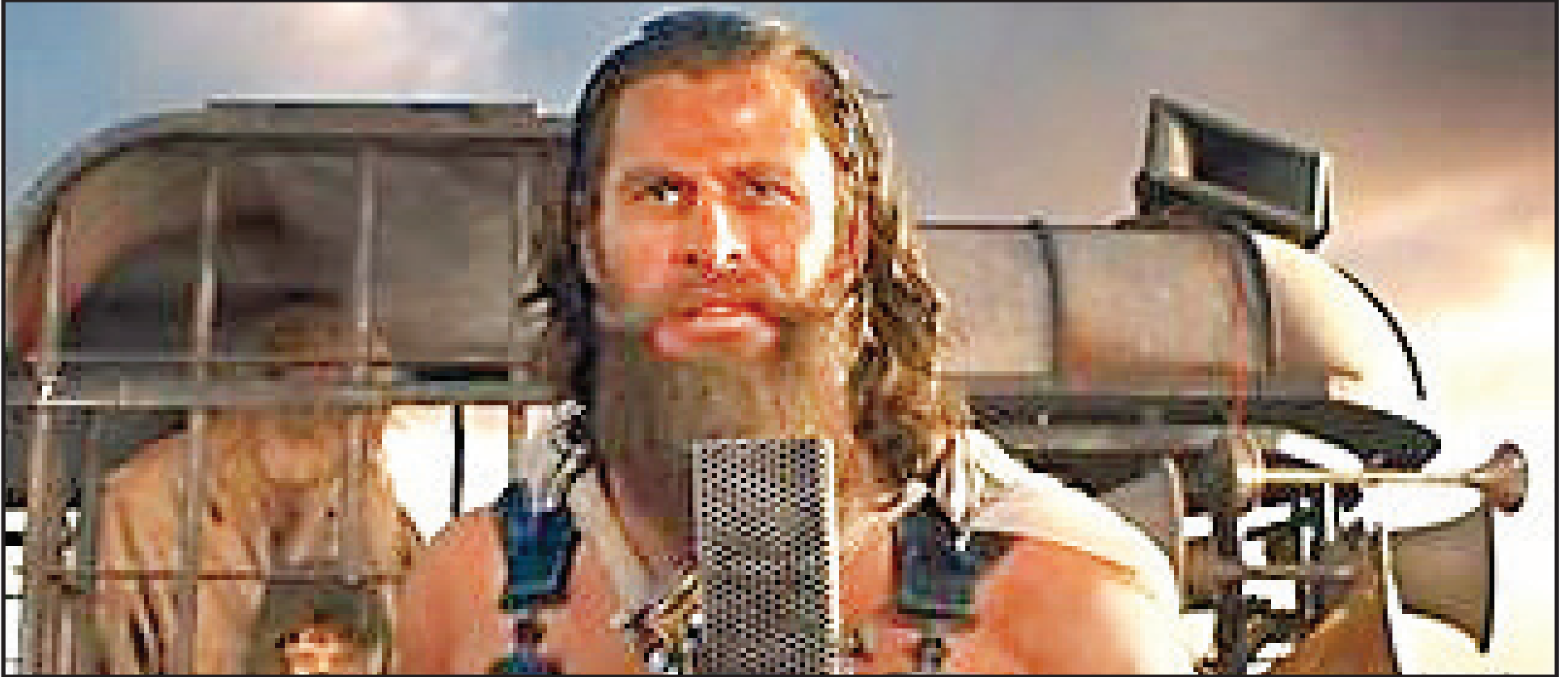
He said that regardless of color or religion, you must work together to be an upstander, including yourself. He adds that you should be proud of yourself, even in the face of a bully. He had to do this in the face of his captor, but it won him respect. When he stood up to a German SS officer, that officer not only saved his life but also became his friend. Knoblauch said that the officer was an upstander. Although it's hard for teenagers to figure out how to stand up for themselves sometimes, it can change everything when they do. And it starts with being proud of who you are. Smile and be proud of who you are. Not only does it change you, but it also changes how others perceive you.

“It's amazing what that inner confidence, regardless of how people are going to perceive you, whether they're still going to bully you, chase you,” he said. “But the inner confidence changes the trajectory.”

He also reminds students of the importance of standing up when they see clear injustice, citing civilians who helped him survive. Knoblauch's legacy of teaching hope, love, tolerance and kindness is a lesson that can and should continue throughout our lifetimes.



DIVERSIONS



'Decent human values' help save Furiosa

By M.V. Moorhead

In the unlikely event that I'm ever asked to take the "Colbert Questionert" on *Late Night*, my answer to the question "Favorite Action Movie?" will be George Miller's 1981 *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior*.



It would probably be on the list of my twenty or thirty favorite movies, all-time. So any later chapter in George Miller's postapocalyptic Down Under car chase franchise has a lot to live up to.

The fifth entry, *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga*, is a prequel, offering a backstory on the one-armed warrior played by Charlize Theron in 2015's *Mad Max: Fury Road*. Turns out that Furiosa was

abducted, as a child, from a "place of abundance" into the Wasteland, a vast desert region inhabited by gnarly

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motorcycle-borne pirates shuttling between three horribly symbiotic fiefdoms: The Citadel, Gas Town and The Bullet Farm.

Furiosa is dragged into this miserable world as a girl (Ayla Browne) and ends up in the clutches of the gabby nomadic biker chieftain Dementus (Chris Hemsworth), who more than earns her grudge against him.

Over the more than two-hour run of the movie, the grown-up version of Furiosa (Anya Taylor-Joy) is carried along through Miller's lengthy showcase chases and battle scenes, which have the feel of movements in a symphony.

I saw this film in IMAX, with a large screening audience, and what I noticed is that every time one of Miller's mad, headlong, thundering action sequences

wound down, the crowd was left quiet, mesmerized. The term "gripping" gets thrown out a lot in describing movies, but *Furiosa* truly grips.

I liked but didn't love *Fury Road*; this one still falls shy of *Road Warrior* for me, but it's a majestic piece of filmmaking nonetheless.

There's no director quite like Miller. His action scenes are staged with an epic sweep but also with a macabre slapstick intricacy.

His view of humanity seems deeply jaundiced; he's forever showing us people taking cruelty and indifference to their fellow humans to horrifying extremes, yet he does it with a casual humor, as if to say, of course we're capable of this.

Yet somehow this bleak outlook doesn't come across like cheap, sophomoric cynicism, and it isn't depressing. Partly this is because he always shows us decent human values struggling to hold on in this world, but it's also

because the generous-hearted Miller imbues his characters, even the deplorable ones, with so much personality and grotesque glamour.

Taylor-Joy, with the jolting anger that takes over her almost inhuman urchin face, fits the role perfectly. As her love interest, driver Praetorian Jack, handsome Tom Burke has a valiant and sympathetic appeal. But it's Hemsworth, his eyes wounded and his tone aggrieved every time somebody has the temerity to resist him, who really engages with the audience. The final clash between Dementus and Furiosa, featuring some of the best dialogue from the script (by Miller and Nico Lathouris), gets at the impulse to revenge with a subtlety that few action movies attempt.

There can be little doubt that Miller's films have contributed to the dangerous illusion that many people, especially young men, seem to hold: that the collapse of civilization would be cool and liberating and fun. He should probably be censured for this, but it sure makes his movies exhilarating.

Another origin story, *The Garfield Movie* begins by tracing the humble beginnings of the indolent, lasagna-loving housecat from the calculatingly marketed comic strip by Jim Davis. Turns out that as a kitten, Garfield, voiced here by Chris Pratt, was left in an alley by his feral father, Vic (Samuel L. Jackson) and met his loyal human Jon (Nicholas Hoult) when he saw him through the window of an Italian restaurant. His overeating is a psychological overcompensation for early want.

The rest of *The Garfield Movie* concerns our hero and his exuberant canine pal Odie getting abducted by the cronies of the Persian cat Jinx (Hannah Waddingham), who has a grudge against Vic. Somehow it all leads to an attempt to steal milk from a commercial dairy, and an alliance with a glowering, lovelorn Bull (Ving Rhames, who's pretty funny).

Admirable as Pratt is as an easygoing onscreen star, his voice struck me as a bit generic for this character, after being performed in earlier iterations by such distinctive voices as Bill Murray and Lorenzo Music. But he's not bad, and the movie has imagination and a snappy, propulsive comic precision, not to mention a catchy theme song by Jon Batiste. It's inconsequential but slickly-made fun, and when it was over, I'll admit I went out for lasagna.

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga is rated R; *The Garfield Movie* is rated PG. Both play at Harkins Tempe Marketplace, Chandler Fashion 20, Arizona Mills and other multiplexes Valleywide.

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— Continued from Page 6

She said he spent many hours in the robotics room, working on the project in the evenings, on weekends, on school holidays, and during his lunch breaks. "As the president, I knew he did not want to let the team down," she said.

One goal he was determined to accomplish was maintaining a positive mindset, both for himself and as a leader. The new president's attitude is effervescent, and he was resolved to help the team have fun even in the hardest of times, something he accomplished.

"The team spirit was definitely higher and more enjoyable than in previous seasons," he said. Although this is only his third year with the robotics team, he said even in the slogs of the work, this year had a better vibe and camaraderie.

The power of perseverance

Engineering teacher and FIRST robotic mentor Melissa Wendell explained team setbacks.

"We had a rough start to this regional competition as we ran into some issues with the robot control system, leading to our robot being carted off in the first match of qualifications," Wendell said.

The team worked through the night to diagnose and fix the robot, and this grit paid off. As the competition progressed, the robot's performance steadily improved, earning the team the respect of their fellow competitors.

Wendell said the team managed to get the robot to work flawlessly. Even though they didn't make it into the final competition round, the team was sought out to help the leading team when three of its robots went down.

Learning from failure

The top seed chose AZTECH as a backup alliance, a testament to their commitment and determination.

"We answered the call, helping the alliance take second overall," Wendell said. "Our team started unpacking the pit, plugging in the batteries, and getting ready to go in."

This experience highlights a crucial aspect of robotics: learning from failure.

The most valuable takeaways were not wins or losses but the character-building experiences that unfolded along the way. The team learned the importance of grit—the ability to persevere through challenges. They confronted their fear of failure head-on, understanding that calculated risks are essential for learning and growth.

"It's important to do your best," Lewandowski said. "But it's a learning experience at the end of the day."

Robotics fosters a growth mindset where failure isn't something to fear, FIRST founder Dean Kamen says. It allows students to confront the fear of taking risks, a vital skill for future success in any field.

"Kids often come in not knowing what to expect – of the program nor of themselves," Kamen says. "They leave, even after the first season, with a vision, with confidence and with a sense that they can create their own future."

Building leaders by community support

Both Lewandowski and Wendell agree. During this competition, they learned valuable leadership skills, effective communication, and the importance of teamwork. They also know it's okay to fail if you learn from it and keep moving forward. The ability to adapt, overcome, and lead are all essential qualities for future success, not just in engineering but in all walks of life.

"Every January, the robotics team participates in a new game that requires them to build a new robot," said Christina Lewandowski, who is also a booster member. New robots can be expensive, so community support is paramount to helping the team. Every bit of community support is greatly appreciated, from fundraisers to business sponsorships to local restaurants feeding the team.

"Overall, support from the community helps them make their robot a reality and allows them to travel to competitions," Christina said.

This support prepares students to become influential leaders and members of their communities.

Looking ahead: A brighter future

This year, the AZTECH Robotics team more than embodied the ethos of FIRST and its "Gracious Professionalism," a term coined by the FIRST Executive Advisory Board Co-Chair, Dr. Woodie Flowers.

Not only did they compete fiercely, but they also showed they understood the importance of teamwork. They exemplified that knowledge, competition and empathy are valuable skills while exemplifying the true spirit of sportsmanship. Now, the team is gearing up for next season with a new robot named "Baby Huey-Hue."

Some are even taking summer courses to up their game next year. But more importantly, they are carrying over the lessons learned this year into next year.

"I think a lot of that comes down to that grit that we have," said continuing president Ben Lewandowski. "We managed to persevere and never give up."

"I truly believe the individual determination of the members of our team – the FIRST alumni and robotics as a whole – you're in a great environment where you can learn and that it's okay if you fail."

— Continued from Page 3

through AI tools such as Otter AI or Adobe Premiere can transcribe lengthy interviews and save valuable time.

While used as a tool, AI programs can be incredible, but it's a slippery slope, warns Shane Brennan, a former *State Press* editor and 2024 Cronkite graduate.

"If you're [in] journalism, your job is in danger in the next decade because of AI," he says. "People are using it for illustrations and people are using it for captions. It's going to be less of the intersection and more the day-to-day kind of overhaul...AI is cheaper and faster."

Sports Illustrated and Gannett have tried using generative AI, but have floundered. *Sports Illustrated* was caught publishing stories written by fake authors with AI-generated biographies in order to reduce costs. Gannett attempted to use Lede AI, an artificial intelligence company that used game scores to generate newsroom game stories. Both stories were littered with odd wording and nonhuman phrasing, catching the eye of their readership.

Vincent DeAngelis says fingers on the keyboard is the only way.

"The person doing the story is the most important part," DeAngelis, a former *State Press* editor and 2024 Cronkite graduate, said. "You've seen it through their lens as objectively or subjectively as possible. So, when you put a robot in there instead – and I know it's pretty general—it just takes authenticity out of it. Say someone does reporting on an Indigenous reservation or something like that; if that starts getting AI-generated, then we're doomed."

Brennan added that there will always be a place for journalists, and there will also be those who will put in the work, but he can't say the same for the industry.

"I hope and pray that the jobs will not be taken over soon, and that there'll be just as many jobs as there are in five years," Brennan said. "At the end of the day, it is still dollars and cents, unfortunately. It's happening in many other industries as well. AI has taken over a lot of different industries and spaces where it shouldn't really be."

Generative-AI is only as good as its input, and being in the moment is incalculable.

"AI cannot do what actual journalists can do," Brennan said. "Because it is not human, we tell the stories of other people doing things. AI does not know what those things are. AI does not know context. AI does not know raw emotion. AI does not know how to connect with others. It's just a stupid website. It's a calculator. You know, it's like a TI-84 (calculator) at best. Fortunately, the TI-84 didn't take over accounting jobs."

The exponential rise of generative-AI and technology has pushed journalism to uncharted water, but there's nothing that can ultimately replicate the complexities of the human mind.

"I don't see it as an existential threat to journalism," Kurland says. "We need good reporting...and that's what makes the best journalism, is good reporting. We talked about our reporting with your eyes, you know, describing the sights and sounds and what's going on. You can never replace that."

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