



WRANGLER NEWS

August
3-16,
2024

Vol. 35
No. 784

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Domonick Ruiz reaches
toward star power
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Wrangler News photo
by Andrew Lwowski



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— Wrangler News file photo

Chandler Regional, Mercy Gilbert expand their medical staffs **Area's growth prompts addition of 52 new docs**

Hospital care for people living in Tempe and West Chandler is taking another step into the future with the expansion of a graduate medical education residence program at two East Valley hospitals.

Now in its second year, the program adds 33 future physicians to the hospital network's existing group of residents, bringing the total to 52 upon the completion of their training.

The program trains residents in the fields of emergency medicine, internal medicine, family medicine and general surgery.

Obstetrics and gynecology will be added next year.

Said Mark Slyter, president and CEO of Dignity Health Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert medical centers:

"Much like the East Valley, Dignity Health's GME residency program is growing,

"This is driven by a combination of a rapidly growing population in the city of Chandler and town of Gilbert, a need for more physicians to

serve this growing population in the community, and an overall demand to help fill a shortage of physicians in the health care industry."

Roger Bies, MD, FACC, FSCAI, Designated Institutional Official for Dignity Health East Valley GME Program, hailed the expansion of the program and cited its promise for further growth of hospital care.

"This is a new generation of physicians who have the unique opportunity to help build our residency program as they are the future leaders of our training program and future providers for our community," he said.

In the inaugural 2023-2024 academic year, Dignity Health East Valley received 28 residents into the fields of general surgery, family medicine and internal medicine. During the first year, the fourth residency initiative—emergency medicine—received accreditation to begin its program from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

This is welcoming news for Arizona's health care workforce. While programs like the East Valley GME work on expanding, there is a critical need for more health care professionals. The Arizona Board of Regents estimates that by 2030, the health care sector will have a shortage of 23,300 health care professionals.

The residents are now rotating at Dignity Health Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers.

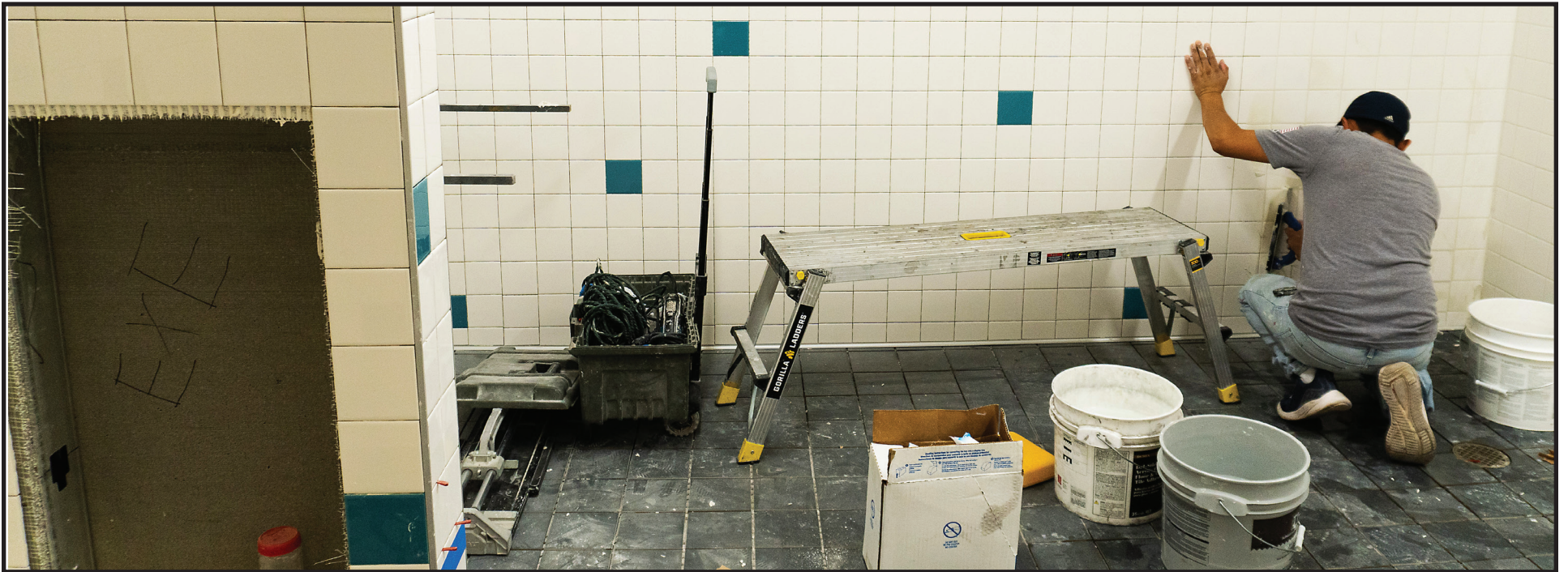
They also train in facilities across Arizona including at Dignity Health St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, Dignity Health Research Institute, Phoenix Children's and several simulation labs.

Some residents will get to experience life as a rural doctor at the HuHuKam Memorial Hospital on the Gila River Indian Community and at Fort Defiance Medical Center on the Navajo Nation.

Visit WRANGLERNEWS.COM for updated news, photos and videos

No vacation for construction projects at Kyrene schools

Bonds, overrides enable campus improvements



Mariposa computer science academy was among Kyrene schools receiving funds for needed upgrades.

— Photo courtesy Kyrene school district

When summer arrives and students depart their classrooms, a different kind of hustle and bustle begins within Kyrene schools. Unlike the usual energy evident during school days, the summer months are a critical period for extensive construction projects that ensure schools remain safe, functional and conducive to learning.

These projects often go unnoticed by the public and are intentionally planned to minimize disruption for both students and staff.

“We leverage the breaks in the school year, especially during the summer, to carry out most of our work with minimal impact,” said Kyrene Director of Facilities Mason Meade.

“This timing allows us to address major projects efficiently, ensuring our schools are in optimal condition for the start of the school year.”

Projects this summer included a new roof installation at Kyrene del Milenio Elementary School; a fitness room renovation at Kyrene Middle School; and a campus-wide restroom

renovation at Kyrene de la Mariposa Computer Science Academy. These improvements are part of a broader strategy to address the needs of aging school facilities.

“The average age of our schools is approximately 35 years, so a comprehensive plan ensures resources are allocated optimally to support student achievement,” Meade said.

“Careful planning allows us to make the most of our resources and maintain a high standard of facilities throughout the district.”

That planning comes in the form of a capital master plan, an extensive document that outlines the work to be done over 10 years.

The document is created with input from both school and district leaders before being brought forward to the Governing Board and community each spring.

Projects in the plan range from installing energy-efficient lighting solutions and furniture purchases to new roofs and HVAC improvements.

Multiply these by 25—the number of schools within Kyrene—and the cost quickly exceeds the amount of capital funding provided by the state, referred to as District Additional Assistance.

“Kyrene typically allocates \$15-18 million annually for facility improvements, maintenance and grounds work,” Kyrene Chief Financial Officer Chris Herrmann said.

“However, we receive just over \$7 million annually from state funding.”

Helping to bridge that gap is funding generated from bond sales, authorized by the community through voter-approved initiatives.

“Each brick laid, wire installed and classroom refurbished is a direct result of the community’s trust and generosity,” Herrmann added.

“Without the additional support from bonds and overrides, it would be impossible for us to meet the standards we strive to provide to our students and staff.”

As the school year resumes, school officials said, the visible results of community investment will benefit students and staff alike, all aimed at fostering a safe, functional atmosphere for the 2024-25 school year.

— Carolyn Wood

2nd gentleman on board with transit planning



Photo courtesy city of Tempe

U.S. Second Gentleman Douglas Emhoff dropped by Tempe recently to discuss transit and expansion of the city's existing streetcar route from where it currently ends near Tempe Town Lake to Mesa's Main Street.

A nearly \$16 million federal grant has been proposed as part of the funding for a streetcar extension to Dobson Road in west Mesa.

Joined by representatives of Valley Metro, city of Chandler, city of Phoenix as well as the Federal Transit Authority and others, Emhoff rode a section of the line to experience it himself.

Said Emhoff:

"President Biden and Vice President Harris understand how important it is that everyone has access to reliable public transportation."

"This grant will improve transportation access for low-income, underrepresented, and transit-dependent populations in both Tempe and Mesa. It will enhance the quality of life for residents by providing a more convenient, frequent, one-seat ride across the Valley Metro streetcar corridor.

"And it will create good-paying jobs—including union jobs—right here in the metro area."

Emhoff rode the streetcar with Councilmembers Arlene Chin and Nikki Amberg, Mayor Corey Woods and Councilmember Berdetta Hodge. Transportation staff members

and elected officials from Chandler, Mesa and Phoenix joined the ride.

The Rio East-Dobson Streetcar Extension Study recently received a \$15.9 million USDOT RAISE grant to help complete the study.

The recommended alignment, also known as the Locally Preferred Alternative, will be presented to Tempe for consideration later this year.

Tempe residents placed multimodal transportation as one of their top 20 priorities in the 2023 community survey. Tempe is said to have the highest per capita transit ridership of any city in the metro Phoenix Area. In just two years, there have been 10 million rides in the city, according to statistics.

"Tempe is a strong advocate for transit, with good reasons. Our community relies on it. Businesses want it. And it brings economic development," said Tempe Mayor Corey Woods.

"In the future, even more people will rely on streetcar, light rail, buses and bikes for convenience and cost savings."

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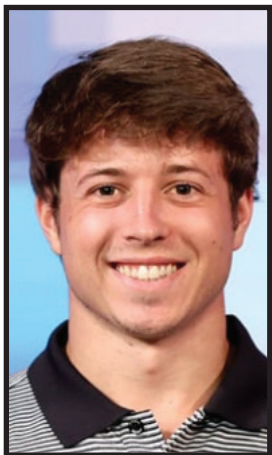
By Andrew Lwowski

We've been talking about stepping into the digital world — more than just dipping our toes — for a while now. I've searched as far back as 2018, finding stories on how the next frontier for Wrangler News is shaping up..

Wrangler News has had activity on its website and various social media for a long time, but what's different now? Over the past couple of months, I have been dedicating time to engaging with our social media following (Facebook, Instagram and X, formerly Twitter). Our digital presence is now at the forefront of our planning for the future.

From sharing articles in our print edition to publishing stories only online, our website is growing.

Expanding online and earning the trust of our readership is critical to our longevity. Over the last decade, numerous traditional print papers have taken a hit, while some of those same publications have moved solely online.



That's not us. Wrangler News will always be something you can rely on to see in your driveway or in a rack near you, of course. Flipping through those pages and getting the stories and coverage of your neighborhood is the fiber of our existence.

However, it's important that our neighbors and local businesses—you—help us

transition to create a strong digital base.

But why?

Everyone has a smartphone or tablet or works on either a desktop or laptop, or both. It's quick and it's accessible. Technology has never been more prevalent than now. Sharing our stories and other content with you online is just one more easily accessible way to read about the latest features or events happening in

your backyard.

For us, having the same faithful readership and following online as we do for our print edition has the advantage of opening doorways for additional content that reaches new eyes, whether it's photos or video from a sports game or school or city event.

Back in June, we wrote about our 18,000-plus page views. That's an incredible number, considering we print 15,000 papers for each edition. We strive to have green arrows in our overview reports, signaling growth.

By consistently providing stories to our website throughout the week, we have seen an increase in new users, total users and sessions. With that, our average session duration increases (nearly 45 seconds, which is up from 31 seconds earlier this year).

Not to mention that our online readership now extends outside of the United States to Germany, Norway, Australia and more.

I carefully monitor our numbers and site every day and manage content to consistently keep those numbers on the rise.

Most of you reach us via Google search engine, followed by X and Facebook. Facebook remains the most used social media platform, while X is more commonly used among the younger generation, so it's pivotal that we share content on both while also publishing the content that registers with you, our traditional print readers. I have found sports to be the premier source of attraction, and it makes sense.



Like planets rotating around the mass of the sun, our schools and sports are a driving force in our community. Sports coverage fosters relationships and allows us to connect more closely with you.

Not to say that our most important stories regarding our locals aren't important, as every story matters.

But just as we have worked with the Wrangler news community for 35 years of coverage, relationships and friendship, we're inviting you to join us on this journey.

Our job is to provide stories that matter—stories that you want to read and that reflect our Tempe and West Chandler neighborhoods and businesses.

We're also inviting you to help spread the word. Give us a follow on social media to keep up to date with our content and help us grow to better connect with your neighbors as the digital landscape evolves.

Simply liking, reposting or sharing stories with your friends, family or colleagues is incredibly important.

Engagement goes a long way, and in the process establishes our trust and foundation online, which is the first big step.

Your story is our story, and your success is our success, so let's continue this relationship.

Tempe native Andrew Lwowski holds a journalism degree from the ASU College of Mass Communications. He is the Associate Publisher of Wrangler News.

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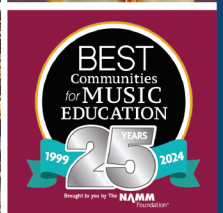
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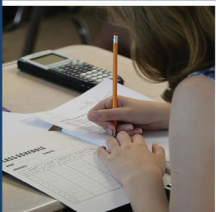


Each school offers a wide variety of clubs, organizations, & extracurricular activities to get involved with on campus.

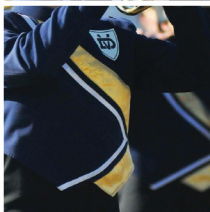


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Tempe OKs expanding smoke free policy to several high-use parks

Several popular South Tempe recreation sites, including Kiwanis Park, Waggoner Park and Tempe Sports Complex, will now be smoke free zones in an effort to encourage healthy communities and enhance experiences at the city's highest density green spaces.

While smoking is already prohibited in the city's preserves and recreation facilities, officials say this will be the first step in what could be a larger effort to eliminate smoking and e-cigarette use at all of the city's parks.

It is said to be commonly known that smoke-free environments can help promote health, enhance park experiences and protect the environment from

smoking-related litter.

The National Recreation and Park Association supports smoke free parks and has taken a stance against tobacco consumption in parks, encouraging agencies to ban the practice.

The benefits cited include healthier recreational environments that promote physical activity, less tobacco use initiation among youth and adult visitors, and cleaner parks that are free of secondhand smoke and cigarette butts.

In addition to those already mentioned, the restrictions will be in effect at the following parks:

Benedict Sports Complex, Clark Park, Creamery Park, Daley Park, Escalante Park, Esquer Park, Evelyn Hallman Park, Jaycee Park, Moeur Park, Papago Park, Parque de Soza, Pio Salado Parks (Tempe Town Lake, Tempe Beach Park, Town Lake Marina, Giuliano, Tempe Arts Park and others), Tempe Sports Complex and Tempe Woman's Club Park.

The list includes parks that share space with schools or recreation facilities, as well as parks with

the highest use or density.

A proposed city code change to prohibit smoking in all parks, preserves and sports complexes could move forward later this year.

An educational period will last through Sept. 1 with a focus on providing information to the community about these changes.

Stickers will be installed on code of conduct signs at each park.

Following the education period, citations could be issued, though the focus will be on providing information and corrective action first.

Tempe is joining several other Arizona cities that have restricted smoking in parks, including Phoenix, Goodyear and Flagstaff.

Tempe was the first city in Arizona to ban indoor smoking in 2002 and the first to ban indoor e-cigarette use in 2014.

The entire Parks Code of Conduct can be found at tempe.gov/parks.

Find answers to frequently asked questions at tempe.gov/SmokeFreeParks.

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Transplanted stylist weaves clients' hair into works of art

By Barbi Walker-Walsh

Photos by Andrew Lwowski

Lillian Herbert is more than just a salon business owner; she's an artist who seamlessly blends hairstyling with artistic creativity.

For decades, Herbert has transformed her clients' hair into intricate, three-dimensional art pieces.

Her unique approach has not only garnered a following but also led to the sale of one of her pieces for \$10,000, she recently told me.

Herbert's work is a testament to the power of creativity and the deep connections she's formed with her clients, one the West Chandler resident hopes to expand on in her new Arizona desert home.

In the early '90s, Herbert began collecting her clients' hair in envelopes, carefully noting the names and dates.

She said she wasn't sure what she would do with these collections at first. Then, one day, while sketching artistic designs, it dawned on her what to do with these strands she'd collected.

"Because I consider what I do as an extension of art," she said, describing her dual role as a hairdresser and artist. Creating three-dimensional art with hair seemed the perfect blend of both her roles.

Her first creations, "Wave" and "Curl," reflect the textures of African American hair and are reminiscent of African cloth and rugs. These symbolize her commitment to creating art celebrating cultural identity and personal expression.

Her signature project, "Hairstory," is more than just a series of art pieces; it's a living tribute to the relationships she has cultivated with her clients.

After relocating to Arizona, Herbert hoped to showcase her art in the Valley of the Sun, where she remains relatively unknown.

However, in Dayton, Ohio, she is well-regarded, having been commissioned in 2014 to create a piece for Bing Davis' "Visual Voices: Visions of Dayton Funk" exhibit.

Davis, a prominent African American artist and educator, is known for his work with found objects and mixed media, often reflecting African and African American textiles.

Inspired by Davis, Herbert finds artistic potential in everyday objects. Even like the palm tree bark she encountered in her Arizona apartment complex courtyard during our recent photo shoot with her.

Herbert's art deeply resonates with women, exploring themes

like the connection to hair, cultural roots, and female solidarity. From “Roots” to “Women’s Work” to my favorite piece, “Sisterhood,” each piece tells a story.

One of her most notable works, "Hair Tangle—A Mind-Blowing Decision," was inspired by the song "Mind Blowing Decisions" by the 70s funk band Heatwave.

With its vibrant colors and intricate details, the piece required painstaking effort as Herbert manipulated strands of hair into place using gel glue, pins, and clips.

“It’s a tedious, sticky job,” Herbert said.

The intricacies of the strands bending and tucking into others make it impossible to believe it’s made from human hair, even up close and personal.

But it is easy to see how much effort and care went into making it. The result is a stunning composition. This work exemplifies the dedication and care Herbert pours into her art.

Each of Herbert's designs carries emotional depth and personal connection, including her signature, which is made from her hair. She views her hairstyling and artwork as a way to celebrate her unique bonds with her clients.

"It’s unique artwork that hasn’t been done since the 1800s," she noted in a 2016 interview with the Dayton Daily News. Among her most poignant works is "Weave," a piece resembling a woven rug incorporating gray strands from her mother's hair. Herbert's mother, who was blind, could feel the textures of the artwork, adding an emotional layer to this tribute. As someone who recently lost her mother, I felt deeply moved by this living homage to the ones who raised us.

Herbert’s work as an artist and hairstylist celebrates individuality and resilience.

Through her unique approach, she not only transforms hair into art but also honors the stories and identities of those she connects with.

Her art is a powerful celebration of the human experience, one strand at a time.

To learn more about Lillian Herbert's art and hairstyling, you can reach her at lillianherbert1976@gmail.com or 937-301-8232.

She can be found at her salon at 4710 E. Warner Road, Phoenix/Ahwatukee.





COMMUNITY



Tempe councilmember Berdetta Hodge hefts a donor's water-bottle bundle.

— Photo courtesy city of Tempe

Bottled water giveaway tops city's all-time record

Did you ever wonder how many bottles get squeezed into those tightly wrapped cases of portable drinking water so popular during our summer months?

Answer: About two dozen—unless, of course, a few fall out.

Using Tempe's calculation, that comprises the 15,000 thirst-quenching (and indeed welcome) handouts from concerned city residents, businesses and faith partners distributed during a particularly hot spell in recent weeks.

The event set a record, gulp, for the most water ever donated in a single community drive.

It couldn't have come at a more vital time, say city officials. Valley neighborhoods are being scorched by another heat record this year, the earliest ever for this many 110-degree days.

And it was the hottest June on record, as well.

Thanks to the Tempe community's generosity, more people stayed cool, hydrated and safe throughout the summer season, which runs through Monday, Sept. 30.

Donations benefit the city's cooling centers and members of the city's homeless outreach team.

"I am extremely grateful for all the individuals,

businesses and organizations that donated bottled water for my inaugural community water drive," said Tempe Councilmember Berdetta Hodge.

Together, she said, the group we collected nearly 15,000 bottles of water, a new record for Tempe," Hodge noted.

At the same time, she urged city residents to consider the needs of those who are adversely affected by extreme heat, noting that lives can be saved by giving back at events such as the one recently held.

Donors to the campaign ran the gamut, from corporate donors Swire Coca-Cola and Google Fiber delivering multiple pallets of water to distribution points, to a Tempe couple dropping off a single case of water "to do their part."

Calvary Fellowship Church Pastor Omar Millan showed up with several cases as part of the church's mission to give back to the community.

A bottle of water, he noted, "could actually save a life."

Donor Cedric Collins, who said he was raised by grandparents, said he was especially concerned about vulnerable older adults.

"Some of them are alone and they may not have access to water," he said.

Tempe city staffers have been operating 10 cooling centers around the community, noting that all are welcome to stop by for a bottle of water, relax in the air conditioned premises and connect with resources.

People needed information or help have been encouraged to visit tempe.gov/HeatRelief for cooling center locations, heat safety tips, utility assistance, air-conditioning repair program details and more.

The city's CARE & HOPE Line at 480-350-8004 is also available 24/7 to help those who may be in crisis or are experiencing homelessness connect to city and community resources.

Note: For any who may have missed a recent water collection drive, there's still time to give.

Donations can be dropped off at Hundred Mile Brewing, Church of the Epiphany, Community Christian Church or University Presbyterian Church. Hundred Mile Brewing is offering a \$100 gift card to one donor selected among those who use any of the available dropoff points.

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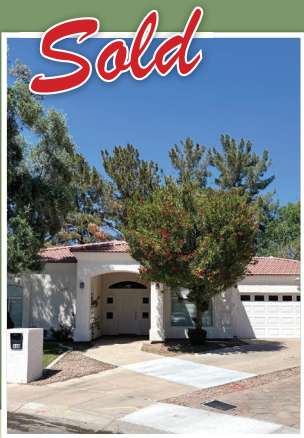
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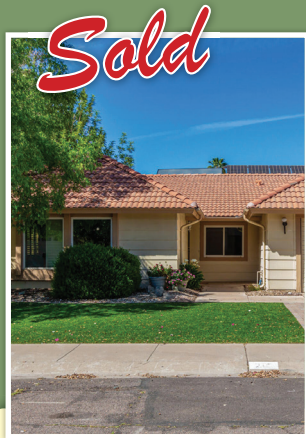
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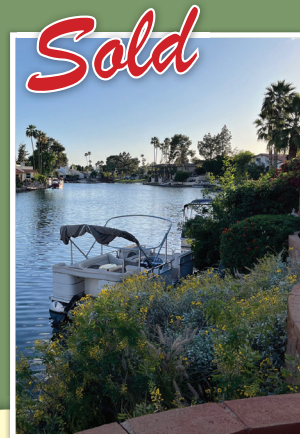
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SUN DEVIL FOOTBALL KICKOFF LUNCHEON



Tempe Chamber hosts 2023 Sun Devil Football Kickoff Luncheon at Sun Devil Stadium

Celebrating its 23rd year, the Tempe Chamber of Commerce and ASU Alumni are proud to partner with the entire ASU Sun Devil Football organization to help celebrate the start of the 2023 season with the Sun Devil Football kickoff luncheon, presented by San Tan Ford! The event will be Friday, August 25th and will be held at the San Tan Ford Club inside Sun Devil Stadium!

With views of the field and "A" mountain, this venue will make you feel like you are part of the game! Highlights include emcee Tim Healey giving his insights into the upcoming year, an interview with starting players, and Coach Kenny Dillingham. You'll also hear from the leadership of the ASU Alumni Association and ASU Athletics.

This event is open to the public. Registration is now open at www.tempechamber.org

Please contact david@tempechamber.org for sponsorship



Friday, August 23
www.tempechamber.org 2024

The awe and wonder of a full moon

Bringing people together to celebrate a natural universe

By Sally Mesarosh

Story on Pages 16-17, with Wrangler News photo by Andrew Lwowski at Grass Clippings Golf Course in Tempe



The full moon, such as the one we'll be seeing through next month, is an enchanting and scientific phenomenon that inspires awe and wonder once a month when the Earth is positioned between the sun and the moon, causing the moon to be fully illuminated by the sun's light.

Witnessing the full moonrise can create a deep sense of connection to the natural world, providing a perfect subject for photographers and artists.

Capturing the moonrise or a full moon can result in breathtaking images, bringing people together in appreciation of the universe's natural rhythms.

Kathy Smith, an amateur photographer, said she loves taking photos of anything in nature, especially full moons.

"The full moon always makes me think how very small I am in this amazing world," she said. "It has an energy that I feel."

The Old Farmer's Almanac identifies August's full moon as a "full sturgeon moon" after the primitive fish that used to be abundant in North America's lakes and rivers during the summer months.

The names used by the go-to source for such information come from Native American, Colonial American or other traditional North American sources passed down through generations.

In August, the full moonrise will appear locally at 7:20 p.m. Monday, Aug 19, at 106 degrees.

Make note of the date and think about what you'd like to experience.

Perhaps you'll want the thrill of watching the moon rise across the water and behind the trees at Kiwanis

Park in South Tempe. Or maybe you'd like to bring a friend and a pair of binoculars to see view the phenomenon at Desert Breeze Park in West Chandler.

The full moon in September is a harvest moon.

Unlike others, this one rises at nearly the same time—around sunset—for several evenings in a row, which according to the almanac gives farmers several extra evenings of moonlight and allows them to finish their harvests before the frosts of fall arrive.

To find information about the upcoming full moon dates and times, enter the month and your location on the time and date website.

If you're a photographer, you might want to bring your camera and tripod to capture the event. You'll use manual mode.

Ideally, set your ISO as low as possible, starting with ISO 100 and increasing it depending on the natural light conditions.

Use an aperture of f/11, sometimes known as "lunar 11," to capture the details. You shouldn't go over f/11 to keep your image tack sharp.

Next, adjust the shutter speed. Even though it doesn't look like it, the moon "moves" very fast within the frame. So, if you set a very slow shutter speed (> 1s) when shooting a scene with very little light or completely dark, the moon will come out blurred.

Try several settings and practice until you're satisfied with the outcomes. You might want to try some photos the day before the moon appears to capture more foreground details.

Start with these tips as a foundation, but don't be afraid to explore and experiment on your own. Every location and lighting situation is

different.

Cellphone cameras can also capture the details of the moon with just the right settings.

Such an image can sometimes capture both the foreground and the moon better than a more complex camera if you adjust the lighting settings.

Michael Marcinko, of Marcinko Photography in Phoenix, describes photographing the full moon as a mesmerizing experience.

"I will always be on the 'lookout' for the next photo of the moon, and it's taken me years, gear, learning, techniques, and a bit of luck to be able to capture her how I see and experience her," he said.

"My advice?

Take all the photos, there's such a vast wealth of knowledge to be learned just going out there and discovering it."

One more tip

If your passion is fishing, you probably already know that the best times are dawn and dusk, when the fish are feeding.

The moon phases trigger a feeding pattern, with more activity during a full moon.

Choose times when sunrise/sunset and moonrise/moonset coincide with new or full moon phases, and you'll increase your chance of catching a fish.

Before venturing out to view the moon, be sure to check local weather forecasts for the best conditions.

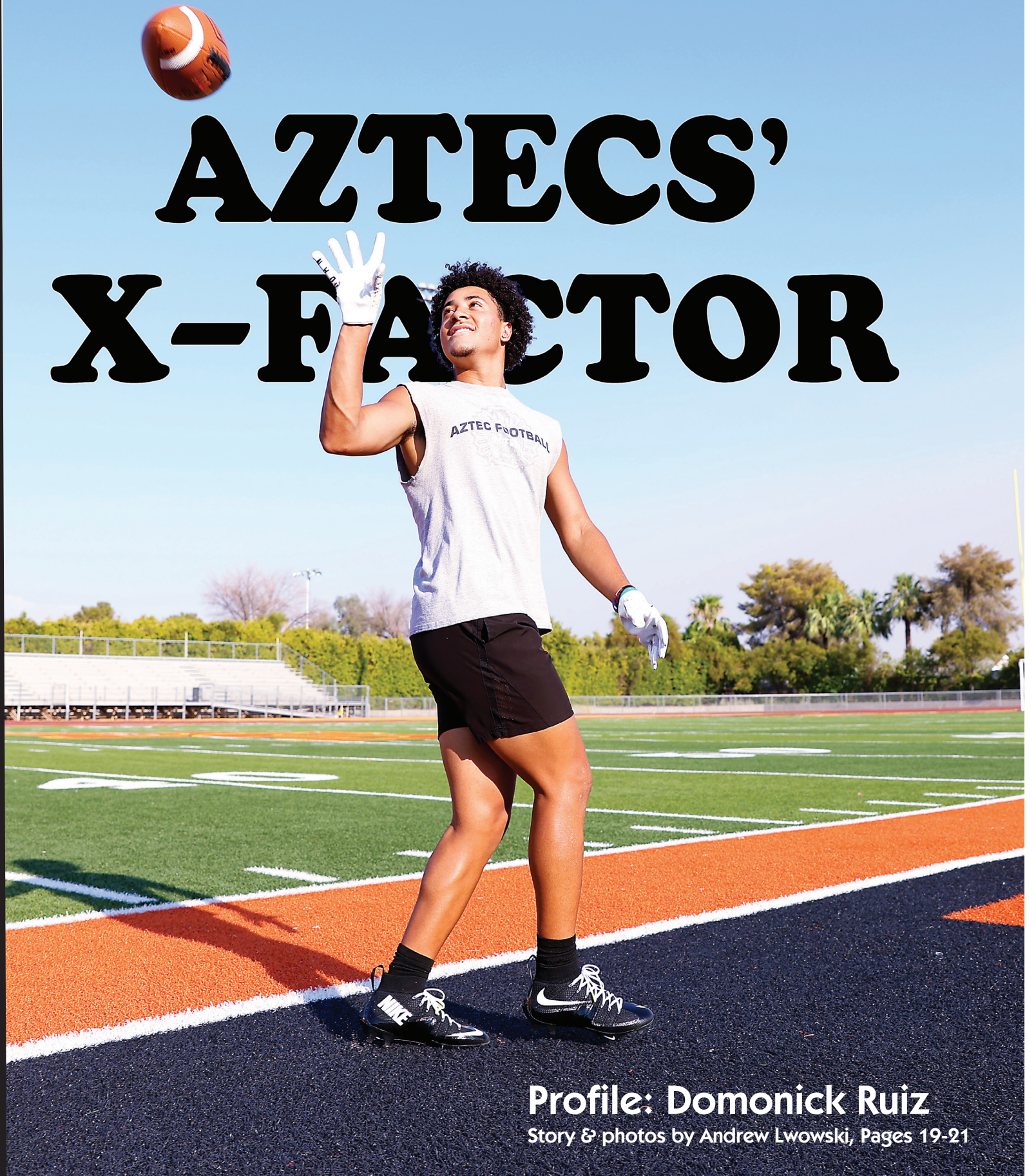
Studying and understanding the moon offers valuable insights into the galaxy and our place within it. So, the next time you look up at the moon, you join countless poets, artists and dreamers across the centuries.

Happy moon-gazing!



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AZTECS' X-FACTOR



Profile: Domonick Ruiz

Story & photos by Andrew Lwowski, Pages 19-21



Corona senior Domonick Ruiz is ready to make his mark with the Aztecs in 2024.

Aztecs' newest leader set for an explosive season

Domonick Ruiz transformed body, mind

Corona del Sol's football team will have a new identity in 2024. After boasting one of the state's top pass-catching units in 2023, the Aztecs will have more of an emphasis in the trenches and playing smash mouth football.

That change comes with heavy turnover with skill position players and growth with returning linemen, head coach Jake Barro says. However, the Aztecs possess a dark horse on offense that could be an X-factor.

And Domonick Ruiz is in position for a breakout season. The 5-foot-10, 185-pound wideout has transformed physically and mentally, and with room to breathe in the

receiving room, it's his time now.

In 2023, Ruiz hauled in 19 catches, managing just shy of 12 yards per reception, and his 223 receiving yards ranked him top-15 in state. His bread and butter has been in the slot where he can find the soft spot in the zone and pick up yards after catch.

However, touches were tough to come by with the Aztecs' ultra-talented position group.

Raiden Vines-Bright transferred to IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fl and Jai Jones transferred to Chandler. Both Crew Swearingen and Zuri Glenn graduated. Ruiz now sits atop, but certainly isn't alone. At the end of the 2023 season, Jake spoke to Ruiz about his role as a leader both on and off the field.

Ruiz has been working relentlessly throughout the offseason, often training twice a day and sticking to a disciplined eating regimen, thanks to his father.

"He [my father] helps me get meal prep. He buys my chicken, rice, vegetables, all that so I can eat well," Ruiz said. "We research drills. We look on YouTube for drills to do. I look at my college receivers and look at what they do."

Paired with the weights at home, Ruiz says he and his father have been putting in work to get to the next level. He has gained roughly 15 pounds of lean weight on top of increasing his performance in the weight room.

"Last year I was 170. I'm about 185 now, and I've been doing sprints. I'm trying to get

faster route running, getting in and out of my brakes.”

Ruiz, who lives close to Marcos de Niza, utilized its amenities for personal training when he’s not training with his teammates. Ruiz wakes up by 6:30 or 7 a.m., he says, and is on the field already warmed up by 7:30. He spends anywhere from 60 to 90 minutes on his own honing on his craft.

Using resistance running bands and a parachute for additional resistance, he has increased his breakaway speed. As for agility, Ruiz works with ladders for sharpening his footwork and technique, and cones for breaking routes.

“I got compared to a lot of people – calling me Zuri’s little brother, Raiden’s little brother,” Ruiz said. “My teammates are always nagging, like in a joking way, but I take it as you’re not better than them. I get motivated by that.”

Jake says that Ruiz may be one of the strongest skill players he has had with his three years at Corona. Ruiz has been laser measured at a blistering 4.40 40-yard dash and is a state qualifier in track in the long jump. Ruiz has substantially increased his power as well. His bench press went from “185 or 190” to 225 while his squat jumped from 315 for three reps to 475 for one rep.

“He’s a tremendous athlete,” receivers coach and pass game coordinator Josh Barro said. “We obviously love his speed. He can just jump through the roof. He can take the top off with his speed, and he has incredible hands...I see the most important thing is how he’s grown as a leader.”

Jake described Ruiz as the “quiet, hard-working leader,” but wants to see him step up even more. “I want him to be a little more vocal than what he likes to do – step outside his comfort zone a little bit. He’s gotten a lot better at that, better at being positive, lifting up his teammates.”

Ruiz says attacks any drill with full effort and technique to demonstrate proper standards. The same applies to the weightroom.

“I make sure people don’t slack off when they’re lifting, make sure everyone’s listening and don’t just joke around and take this seriously,” he said.

Josh said Ruiz is one of the best leaders on offense and will likely become a team captain on top of the offenses work horse.

“We’re going to have to move him around positions this year,” he said. “Put him in the slot, put him outside, get him carries from the running back position, you know. He’s been willing to do all that and knows he has to understand the whole offense.”

Even with the added weight of embracing leadership of a younger team, Ruiz has high expectations for his senior season. Among those are a 1,000-yard season, first team all-region and to lead the 6A conference in receiving yards.

Both Jake and Josh believe Ruiz has what it takes to excel, and it’s time to enjoy the fruits of his labor.

“We’re expecting a lot from him,” Jake said. “As a coaching staff, the team, the school...I believe in him.”



SPORTS NOTEBOOK

with Alex Zener

Transfer portal raises challenges, opportunities for HS college-goers

The transfer portal has had an enormous impact on high school athletes desiring a college scholarship, including some at Corona who were able to commit—maybe not to their dream DI school but to a college program with the possibility of entering the transfer portal themselves later in their career.



Alex Zener

The rush of players entering the transfer portal has rapidly increased ever since the NCAA passed the one-time transfer rule in April 2021, and recently updated it to allow multi-time transfers during the 2024-25 season.

The NCAA rules, as of April 2021, allowed all DI student athletes the ability to transfer once and play immediately without the obligation of a one-year waiting period. If an undergraduate wanted to enter the portal again, they would have needed to submit a waiver to the NCAA to compete immediately.

After several lawsuits filed by athletes in numerous states, the current updated NCAA rules opened the portal door even more by allowing undergraduate athletes who have transferred more than once to immediately be eligible to play at their new institution.

The bylaws in the NCAA rules, which

stipulated an undergraduate student could not enter the portal until they had fulfilled an academic year of residence their first year, has also been changed.

Currently, college athletes who are transferring for the first time as undergraduates are eligible to compete immediately, regardless of whether they satisfied the traditional residence requirement or not.

This ever-growing NCAA transfer portal has remarkably changed the recruiting landscape for high school athletes hoping to get a scholarship at the next level, and their high school coaches who are often trying to help their players find scholarship opportunities.

The creation and subsequent changes of the entry-point process has allowed college players the ability to transfer much more easily, which often gives college coaches the ability to fill their rosters with experienced college athletes rather than having to recruit as many high school athletes as before.

Most high school athletes, especially the ones who are not five-star recruits with the ability to come in and play immediately, need further development to play at the next level. The transfer portal has severely impacted opportunities for these players, especially the ones on the bubble, per se, to get a college scholarship.

One such athlete was Corona basketball standout **Bo Dolinsek**. At 6-ft-8, 240 pounds, he was Central Region Player of the Year, was on the All-State team and was recognized by the Tempe All-City award committee.

In addition, he led 6A schools in scoring, averaging 21.7 points a game, and in free throws made at 144, hitting 80 percent. Plus, he was second in the 6A conference with 14 double doubles,

fourth in rebounds averaging just shy of 10 rebounds a game and fourth in field goal percentage at 52.

Ten years or even five years ago, Dolinsek would probably have had multiple offers from DI schools to choose from but in today's environment, where the portal has taken over as the preferred recruiting route for many college programs, he was getting minimal offers.

Dolinsek did have DII offers and JUCO offers in Arizona, Colorado and Texas but nothing that really appealed to him.

"We learned along the way from coaches that were recruiting Bo and from some we knew personally that the transfer portal was not in Bo's favor," said **Bonny Dolinsek**, Bo's mother. "He wasn't getting the looks from the kinds of schools he always envisioned because, with the transfer portal in play, he might as well have been at the bottom of the barrel as far as the 'pecking order' went in recruiting DI basketball players."

With each year, the movement in the transfer portal has been unparalleled with a record number of players changing teams, some more than once. According to On3.com, 1,090 basketball athletes and 3,272 football players entered the transfer portal in 2024.

"Bo is a great player with his best basketball before him," said Bonny Dolinsek, "but without a bunch of recruiting stars next to his name, he wasn't getting the looks from the kinds of schools he always envisioned."

Similar to other lower ranked high school athletes, when April rolled around, Bo was getting stressed on how the recruiting process was going for him and was starting to wonder what he was going to do, according to his mother.

"Out of nowhere in mid-April I was contacted by coach Derrick Pugh from a small college with 13,000 students in Ventura, Calif., who had seen some film on me," said Bo. "He invited me for a visit and I knew right away it was the school that

was the right fit for me.”

“I loved the coaches, the school and what they had to offer but the biggest draw was that the head coach is very well connected with many DI coaches across the state of California such as Long Beach State, Cal State Fullerton and UCLA, my dream school to transfer to after my two years at Ventura College.”

Dolinsek, who played power forward at Corona is set to play small forward at Ventura College where he plans on studying business classes he can use after he graduates to work in the basketball industry.

Other Corona athletes who signed late in the season but may have hoped for more choices of athletic scholarships include **Brandon Holmes, Julia Owens, Azzlyn Potts, Carson Hammer, Lia Taylor** and **Jolie Saliego**.

Holmes, who played defense as corner back or free safety for the Aztecs football team in all 11 games his senior season, led the team in interceptions, solo tackles and caused fumbles.

He intercepted the ball six times, had

21 solo tackles and caused one fumble. On offense, he returned kickoffs for a total of 141 yards or 12.8 yards a game.

Owens, a prolific setter for Corona’s girls volleyball team, accepted a scholarship to the University of Omaha in Nebraska.

Owens led her team in assists when the Aztecs won their 6A state championship in 2022 and when made it as far as the semifinals in 2023.

In 2022, Owens had 1282 assists or 11.2 assists a set and in 2023, she led her team in assists with 612 or 5.3 assists per set.

Potts, an outstanding outside hitter and all-around player for Corona’s boys volleyball team, will be playing at Park University in Gilbert.

Potts led the team in kills with 273 kills or an average of 3.1 kills per set in the 89 sets he played his senior year.

Playing defense, he was second on the team in digs with 231 or 2.6 digs a set along with 30 blocks along with 20 service aces.

Hammer, a right-handed pitcher for the Aztecs baseball team, accepted a scholarship at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa.

He was second on the team with an ERA of 2.0 after the first eight games. He also played in the outfield when not pitching.

Taylor accepted a tennis scholarship at Rose Hulman Institute of Technology, a top-ranked engineering college, in Terre Haute, Indiana.

She was part of Corona’s girls tennis team who made it all the way to the semifinals in the Division I state championship team tournament her senior year.

She qualified and played in the Division I singles championship.

Saliego accepted a scholarship to play lacrosse at Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, NY.

While playing midfielder on Corona’s lacrosse team as part of the Arizona Girls Lacrosse Association, Saliego scored 11 goals in 11 games.



Wrangler News is delivered every other Saturday throughout the year to home driveways & rack locations in Tempe and Chandler, as well as being posted online.

**‘The Valley’s Best
Community Newspaper’**

— *Phoenix magazine*

Published since 1991 by Newslink LLC

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DIVERSIONS

More DIVERSIONS on Page 28

True 'celebration' for duo coming to TCA Aug. 10

"It's songs you've known all your life, but it's not like a tribute band. You get a fresh version."

By MV Moorhead

That's how Brian Chartrand describes his new show *Lennon & Nilsson—Songs from the Lost Weekend*, playing on Saturday, Aug. 10 at Tempe Center for the Arts.

It's part of TCA's Live 48 series, dedicated to presenting work by artists based here in the 48th state.

Chartrand is, indeed, a Valley-based singer-songwriter, and his costar in *Lennon & Nilsson* is Otto D'Agnolo, based in Scottsdale.

The show does not feature their original songs, however, but those of two pop-music icons, John Lennon and Harry Nilsson, from the time in the early '70s when Lennon, separated from Yoko Ono and living in California, collaborated with Nilsson on musical projects but also on a great deal of drinking and rowdy behavior. Lennon would later refer to the 18-month period as "The Lost Weekend."

The show at TCA is not a musical play, however. Chartrand and D'Agnolo don't actually assume the roles of Nilsson and Lennon, and the musical interpretation is their own.

"It's a concert," Chartrand says firmly. "It's a celebration of the catalogs of two great artists. In between the songs, we're including stories of the songwriters. As a songwriter, I enjoy the context of how a song was written."

Says D'Agnolo, "The show is really the third part of the series by Brian that began with *Live from Laurel Canyon*. Great songs with the terrific band that Brian has put together...You can't wait to hear the song after you hear the story."

It also has a multimedia element, says Chartrand: "As with *Live from Laurel Canyon*, it incorporates vintage video, so that while I'm narrating, I'm showing images. It's almost like a master class. It's educational as well as entertainment."

Chartrand, a native of western Massachusetts who moved to the Valley 20 years ago, began work on *Live from Laurel Canyon* in 2012. That show focuses on the celebrated music that came out of that L.A.



neighborhood in the '60s and '70s. A few years later Chartrand premiered *James & Joni: Their Stories, Their Songs*, about James Taylor and Joni Mitchell.

As for D'Agnolo, a veteran musician and music producer originally from Peoria, Illinois, his connection to the *Lost Weekend* music began when a music promoter "said I looked like John Lennon, so why wasn't I doing tribute shows. So I said I would, if he put the show together and all I had to do was sing."

The resemblance was not just visual. Says Chartrand, "Otto is being very modest...He sounds uncannily like John Lennon, but has his own style... If you're a fan of John Lennon in the Valley, you've probably heard of him"

Indeed, D'Agnolo proudly notes that his work interpreting Lennon's music led to him being mentioned in the book *There Are Faces I Remember*, by Paul McCartney's stepmother and sister Angie and Ruth McCartney.

D'Agnolo and Chartrand are an active mutual admiration society; D'Agnolo notes, of his partner: "Between *Live from Laurel Canyon* and *James and Joni*, Brian's shows have sold out the MiM [Musical Instrument Museum] more than 20 times."

But Chartrand received an invitation from Tempe Center he couldn't refuse.

"TCA Production Supervisor Kathleen Dooner said to me, whenever you have something new, tell us about it first."

Lennon & Nilsson: Songs from the Lost Weekend is performed at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug 10 at Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado Parkway in Tempe.

Regular tickets are \$15; \$10 for students; free for members. Go to tempecenterforthearts.com for tickets and details.

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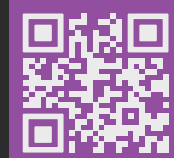


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Tempe Election Information

Are you registered to vote?

Arizona will hold a General Election on Tuesday, Nov. 5. This election includes federal, state, county and local offices that are up for election. It also includes a Special Bond Election for Tempe residents who have registered to vote, and Prop 479, a measure that will ask Maricopa County voters to decide whether to extend the existing half-cent sales tax dedicated to transportation for an additional 20 years.

Register to vote or update your current registration by **Oct. 7** by visiting <https://servicearizona.com/VoterRegistration>. Please call the Maricopa County Elections Department at 602-506-1511 or visit maricopa.vote with questions regarding your eligibility, voter registration or ballot. Visit BeBallotReady.Vote to verify your registration information.



Important voter dates

- Oct. 7** - Voter Registration Deadline
- Oct. 9** - Ballots Mailed and Drop Boxes Available
- Oct. 25** - Last day to request an early ballot
- Oct. 29** - Last Day to Mail Back Your Ballot
- Nov. 5** - Election Day

Tempe Bond Election

Registered Tempe voters will have the opportunity to decide whether to fund public safety and road improvements, quality-of-life enhancements in Tempe neighborhoods and new affordable housing. Voting takes place in conjunction with the Nov. 5 Statewide General Election.

Included in the bond is funding to restore the pavement of every street in Tempe within five years, provide funds for infrastructure projects like water lines, improve neighborhood parks and increase the supply of affordable housing. The estimated average annual tax rate that is required to be calculated by statute for the proposed bond authorization is \$0.87814 per \$100 of net assessed value used for secondary tax purposes.

Get additional information about the bond questions at tempe.gov/election or attend a public meeting. Four meetings are available. All are free and open to everyone.

Sept. 18 - noon virtual meeting and 7 p.m. at Kiwanis Recreation Center

Sept. 23 - 6 p.m. at North Tempe Multigenerational Center

Sept. 24 - 6 p.m. at Tempe Public Library

People can submit arguments “for” or “against” the authorization of one or more of the bond questions, for inclusion in the publicity pamphlet. Arguments must be filed electronically with the City Clerk via email at clerk@tempe.gov by 5 p.m. on Aug. 7. For all submission details and bond election information: call 480-350-8242, email clerk@tempe.gov or visit tempe.gov/election.



Prop 479

Also on the Nov. 5 ballot, Tempe voters may vote on Prop 479, which decides the continuation of an existing, dedicated half-cent sales tax in Maricopa County to fund transportation. This measure determines funding for freeways, buses, light rail, streetcar and improved streets.

In Tempe, this sales tax has funded:

- Light rail
- One-third of Tempe’s bus budget
- Street repaving projects
- Broadway Curve corridor improvements

A “yes” vote extends the tax until 2045. A “no” vote will discontinue the tax at the end of 2025. Read more at tempe.gov/Prop479



more DIVERSIONS

Our longtime film critic writes about one more indulgence **Food: An enviable pastime or . . . not?**

In July Pete Wells, the restaurant critic for The New York Times, announced he was stepping down from the job after 12 years. His principal reason was what the work had done to his cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar and weight.



MV Moorhead

He noted the short life spans of legendary food writers like A. A. Gill and Jonathan Gold. But he also said, simply, that “I realized I wasn’t hungry anymore. And I’m still not, at least not the way I used to be.”

All this rang true in my own experience. For most of my newspaper career, I have principally been an entertainment writer, focusing on movie reviewing with occasional forays into writing about theater, television, books.

But I’ve also written about dining, for various publications, for decades.

I’ve reviewed or profiled many eateries here in the Kyrene Corridor for Wrangler News; I was a fill-in restaurant reviewer for New Times, and later had a regular food review/interview column there called “Lunch Meet.”

More recently I wrote a food column called “Four Corners” in Phoenix Magazine, in which I reviewed four different restaurants from four ends of the Valley, for slightly over four years, until the column was shut down by COVID.

And as fun and delicious as all of this was, I too have suffered burnout.

I don’t expect any sympathy for this, of

course; as Wells hastens to add:

“The first thing you learn as a restaurant critic is that nobody wants to hear you complain.”

This is understandable. Restaurant reviewing is a quintessential example of Nice Work If You Can Get It.

Nobody doing data entry or telephone customer service, let alone paving roads in the Arizona heat, should have to listen to somebody whine about what a drag it is to eat at nice restaurants for free and then write about it.

All the same, after a few years even that nice work can grow old. First of all, not every restaurant is good. It’s not fun—at least it isn’t fun for me—to write negatively about a small business into which people have poured their heart and soul and fortune, and on which their dreams are riding.

Besides that, poor food can be hard on you.

Substandard, misfired meals can clobber your digestion and leave you feeling hungover and help expand your waistline, all without the compensatory pleasure of a culinary success. As Wells says, after a few years you may find you’re not so hungry many more.

Even when the food is good, however, writing about it, for me, was often difficult. Applied to food, adjectives tend to wear out fast through repetition. I adore a good burrito, but it’s hard to find a new word to describe even the most heavenly burrito on the planet.

Truthfully, I have sometimes found this same syndrome creeping into my movie reviewing.

For about nine years, that was my full-time job—going to see movies and then writing down my thoughts about them. No doubt, if you’re a cinema lover, it beats work.

Still, it’s not certain that spending your days sedentary, in a cold dark room, eating greasy popcorn and Dots and Junior Mints and drinking Dr. Pepper is the surest ticket to health and well-being.

Certainly there are many movie critics who live to old age, but two of the most famous departed on the early side, Gene Siskel at 53 and Roger Ebert at 70.

After long stretches of movie reviewing, a sense can sometimes set in that you’ve seen and reviewed all the movies, just with different titles and actors. Just as when you’re reviewing restaurants, a sense can set in that you’ve reviewed all the burritos, with just a different restaurant surrounding them.

In my full-time critic days, people used to sometimes say, wow, you’re lucky, you get to see all the movies.

I would agree that I was very lucky. But then remember, I would say, it’s not that I get to see all the movies, it’s that I HAVE to see ALL the movies.

Again, I do understand how absurdly fortunate I’ve been to spend my working life in these amusing pursuits, and I’m inexpressibly grateful for it.

My only point in all this, I suppose, is that no matter great a job is, in the end it’s still a job. So I wish Pete Wells a happy and hungry post-reviewing life.

MV Moorhead writes about food and films for Wrangler News.

Stay cool this summer

Summer months are brutal with the extreme heat. If you're in need of a place to cool off or get some bottled water — we've got you! Find cooling stations and a respite center location, other resources, or how to donate to the city's heat relief efforts. chandleraz.gov/HeatRelief



Show Us Where You Read Your Wrangler News



Send in photos of where you read the latest edition and be featured in a print and online edition.



Send all photos and any description about the photos to: Ty.Tabat@wranglernews.com

Mary Ann Hemmingson reads The Wrangler News at Ghost Ranch, in South Tempe, while sipping on a Frozen Prickly Pear 'Rita, at 4 PM before the crowds show up for "Happy Hour."

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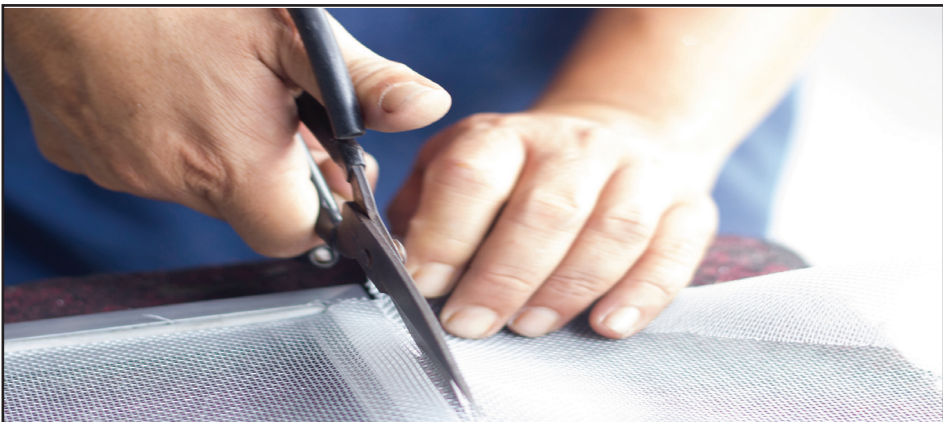
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Blood donor sites open through August

Tempe and West Chandler residents wanting to donate blood can do so at a series of donor sessions scheduled locally Aug. 23-31.

Officials at Vitalant, the center providing service, said the date will enable it to respond to what it calls an emergency shortage.

The need remains especially critical for type O negative, which is the most transfused, because it can be used to help any patient with A-positive, B-positive, AB-positive or O-positive blood.

Donors are urged to make an appointment at vitalant.org, download and use the Vitalant app or call 877-258-4825.

The Tempe donor center is at 1524 W. 14th St. Ste. 120.

Available sites

Friday, Aug. 23, 10:30am-2:30pm—ASU University Services Bldg, 1551 S. Rural Road, Bloodmobile

Tuesday, Aug. 27, 10:30am-2:30pm—ASU Barrett Honors College, 720 E. Apache Blvd, Palm Courtyard

Wednesday, August 28, 10:30am-2:30pm—

ASU Barrett Honors College, 720 E. Apache Blvd, Courtyard

Thursday, Aug. 29, 10am-2pm—ASU Orange Mall-Computing Bldg, 501 E. Orange Street, Bloodmobile

Sunday, Aug. 18, 8am-12pm—Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 2121 S. Rural Road, Holy Family Room

Sunday, Aug. 18, 8am-12pm—Temple Emanuel, 5801 South Rural Road, Bloodmobile

Tuesday, Aug. 20, 11am-3pm, The Westin Tempe, 11 E. 7th St., Opal Ballroom

Wednesday, Aug. 21, 7:30am-11:30am—American Airlines at Tempe Rio West, 1821 W. Rio Salado Pkwy, Bloodmobile

Wednesday, Aug. 21, 9:30am-1pm—OneADP, 111 W. Rio Salado Pkwy, Bloodmobile

Saturday, Aug. 24, 7:30am-11:30am—Desert Cross Lutheran Church, 8600 S. McClintock Drive, community center

Tuesday, Aug. 27, 1pm-5pm, Robertson Fuel Systems, 800 W. Carver Road, Bloodmobile

Friday, Aug. 30, 9am-12:30pm, Cousins at Hayden Lakeside, 40 E. Rio Salado Pkwy, Tower 111, Suite 150

Saturday, Aug. 31, 10am-2pm—Donor Network of Arizona, 2010 W. Rio Salado Pkwy, training room. Also: 11am-2:30pm, Creative Testing Solutions, 2424 W. Erie Drive.

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Your Real Estate Experts



Community Spotlight: Alta Mirada Townhomes



Alta Mirada is one of our favorite neighborhoods! You will love the easy-care lots, amenities and welcoming community. Perfect for those wanting to downsize and stay in South Tempe.

Get more info and see homes currently for sale at:

NickBastian.com/Alta-Mirada

We provide details and insider information about many other amazing Kyrene Corridor communities on our website, too.

If you are thinking of buying or selling a home in the area, give us call. We are happy to help!



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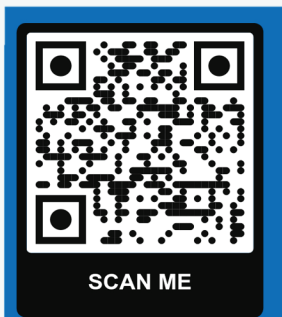
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