



Pollack name on area centers says more than business savvy

Goal is to make a positive difference in the community

By Joyce Coronel

It's Friday night and Michael Pollack stands a few feet from the ticket counter, greeting patrons as they make their way to one of six screens to take in a movie in South Tempe.

Unlike most theaters, the ticket prices aren't a whopping \$9 or \$10 a pop. This is Pollack Tempe Cinemas, where a ticket to see a movie costs less than a café latte at area coffee shops.

Pollack, a widely recognized real estate re-developer, is known for acquiring rundown strip centers in Chandler, Tempe, Mesa and other East Valley cities, and turning them into thriving retail hubs.

Since starting his career in 1973, he's had a hand in more than 100 such projects and more than 10 million square feet of retail redevelopment projects. All that experience has given him an eagle eye for discerning which properties will benefit from a serious makeover.

"I can look at a project and tell pretty much whether or not it's going to be a candidate for redevelopment," Pollack said.

"I can usually tell right away when I do a walk-through on the existing property."

Such was the case when he purchased the plaza at McClintock and Elliot in Tempe about 15 years ago. The discount cinema on the premises was "failing miserably," Pollack said.

"The cinema was losing a small fortune for the



Michael Pollack greets patrons in the lobby of Pollack Tempe Cinemas, a discount theater the redeveloper has refurbished and updated twice.
Photo by Billy Hardiman for Wrangler News

Keeping middle schoolers on track

Program pushes kids to reach their full potential

By Diana Whittle

Editor's note: See related story on Page 10

Kyrene unfolded its 2017-18 school year with the launch of a newly redesigned program placing added emphasis on providing middle school students with the educational tools and support systems they need to achieve at maximum potential.

The program fell into place following formation of a group involving principals, teachers, students, families and community members charged with creating a new vision for

the future of Kyrene's middle schools.

Working collaboratively, they completed a redesign of the middle-school program with the objective to increase achievement, provide learning opportunities and support for all students; to continue the tradition of excellence in Kyrene; and, to encourage families to choose Kyrene schools.

The specific elements of the curriculum redesign include a renewed concentration on academic excellence, more responsive instruction and a new emphasis on encouraging a

student's personal initiative and self-advocacy, which is known as student agency.

"Agency is the opposite of helplessness and it teaches students the importance of perseverance," said Scott Maxwell, district director of school effectiveness.

"Students must develop grit, determination and passion to move forward to reach their goals," said Maxwell.



— POTENTIAL, Page 24

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SRP canal update

Drought cycle continues despite ‘very good’ runoff year

By Jeff Lane

Through a network of 131 miles of canals, SRP delivers raw water to 10 cities, including Tempe and West Chandler, as well as irrigation customers across the Valley.

Moving water by gravity, these canals—such as the Western and Tempe canals—connect to water treatment plants and another 1,000 miles of laterals and ditches that carry water to a variety of irrigation users, including agricultural lands.

After an unprecedented six consecutive runoff seasons of below-median inflow into the reservoirs on the Salt and Verde rivers, pardon Salt River Project water managers for feeling a bit greedy these days.

The final numbers for the January-to-May runoff season have been counted, and the 970,440 acre-feet of rain and snowmelt that made their way into SRP’s reservoirs this winter was about 140 percent of normal and nearly double the 30-year median of 534,336 acre-feet.

That’s significantly more than the previous six-year period, which averaged about 280,000 acre-feet a year with a high of 444,788 acre-feet in 2013 to 148,000 acre-feet in 2014, which was the eighth-driest year since SRP has been keeping records for the last 119 years.

So, who’s complaining?

Not Charlie Ester, SRP’s manager of Surface Water Resources, who says the 2017 runoff year “was very good, but not great.” What started out as a very wet January and February turned into a much drier March and April, he said, with most of the snow at higher elevations having melted off early after initial indications projected a chance at filling up all six of the Salt and Verde reservoirs.

“I get a lot of questions about the drought, such as if this healthy winter ended the drought cycle in Arizona,” he said.

“No, the drought cycle isn’t over, but we did have a very productive winter – the best winter since 2010. In fact, if some of the larger storms we had early on in January and February would have dropped more on the Salt River side than the Verde, we might have even filled Roosevelt Lake this winter.

Now, that would have made for a great runoff season.”

Because more runoff occurred on the Verde River than the Salt this year, SRP initiated a low-level water release from the Verde in February when the forecast of another weekend storm combined with the rapidly filling Horseshoe and Bartlett lakes left no place for additional storage on the Verde.

This runoff season, SRP spilled more than 110,000 acre-feet of water over Granite Reef Dam – nearly all from the Verde River. The last winter in

which water was released through the Valley was in 2010, when about 1,430,000 acre-feet of runoff filled the Salt and Verde reservoirs.

Ester said Theodore Roosevelt Lake, which holds about two-thirds of the combined water SRP stores, maxed out in April at about 76 percent—the only SRP reservoir that didn’t reach 100 percent of capacity this winter.

Also, C.C. Cragin Reservoir, located on East Clear Creek and a critical water supply to Payson and communities in northern Gila County, was filled by Feb. 12 and continued to spill water through April 9.

With the peak water demand season upon us, the six SRP reservoirs combined are currently at about 68 percent of capacity – up from about 49 percent one year ago.

The total Verde River system stands at 62 percent full, while the Salt River reservoirs are at 69 percent of capacity.

For updates on lake levels, visit the SRP Daily Water Report at <https://www.srpnet.com/menu/water/damslakes.aspx>.

Roosevelt Lake today stands at 64 percent full with more than 1 million acre-feet of water, with still about 578,000 acre-feet of available space. Every other reservoir on the Salt and Verde rivers is still more than 90 percent of capacity except for Horseshoe Lake, which stands at 12 percent during its usual summer drawdown.

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Explosive car fire emphasizes need for So. Tempe station



— Wrangler News photos

The need for a city fire station in South Tempe came sharply into focus in the Wrangler News parking area on Aug. 30—hours before the paper's Sept. 2 edition was due to go to print.

A spectacularly viewed fire erupted in a 2010 Ferrari 2-seat sports car, which originally sold for \$225,000, after the driver, who was southbound on the Price/101 freeway, said he smelled smoke coming from the rear engine compartment and heard what he thought was a backfire.

By the time he had pulled into the parking area, across the street from GoDaddy's Tempe location, flames were streaming from the back of the vehicle. Several people in the lot called 911 and others hurriedly reached for fire extinguishers, but the flames already had reached near-conflagration levels.

The time that passed after multiple phone calls to 911, one of which was transferred three times, according to the caller, exceeded 10 minutes, with a Chandler fire crew finally arriving from the closest available station, which like others in many parts of the country is linked through a joint-use agreement that ensures response from the nearest station, no matter the originating station. In this case, as in many responding to emergency-medical calls from a kidney dialysis center in the same business center, crews from Chandler are quicker to arrive at the scene. The nearest Tempe fire station is on Elliot Road west of Rural.

A plan to build a Tempe Fire substation in Tempe's Estrada Park, which is on McClintock Drive north of Warner Road, has drawn complaints from some residents in the Estates la Colina neighborhood, who argue their area does not want to lose the recreational offerings that might be sacrificed as a result of building a fire station at the site.

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Sculptor Lyle London, left, and Lakes of Tempe founder Arnold Dahlberg were part of a dedication ceremony for a carved egret that welcomes visitors and residents to the long-established community.
— Photo courtesy Lakes Community Association

Group launches pilot program to bring more public art to Tempe

By Madeline Johnson

A group focused on bringing arts into cities Valleywide has launched a creative-thinking initiative designed to fuse the arts into the life and surroundings of the residents of south Tempe.

The group, part of AZ Creative Communities, plans to use the coming year to plan a pilot program that can be used to integrate the arts into existing parts of the city, specifically in south Tempe where studies show citizens expressing a propensity to feel more connected to the arts in their community.

The concept for the project began in 2015 after the city of Tempe was receiving consistent feedback from south Tempe residents seeking more culture.

“We recognize that there is a need to fill in south Tempe, so we’re working together to come up with what that plan looks like, and connect it to the people,” said Maja Aurora, director of arts engagement for the city.

AZ Creative Communities, which commissions teams to collaborate on arts development, selected four Tempe citizens who are said to be deeply rooted in Tempe’s culture to execute the project for their city.

What makes the project so unique, says Aurora, is the process in which it is funded. Grant funding usually happens after a plan is precisely thought out and ready to be executed, but bringing the project to life in Tempe required a different approach, she said.

The team presented their grant idea with the evidence that showed people of Tempe felt they were lacking a connection to arts and culture. The team plans to use the money and resources to become more knowledgeable about what their city is missing, and the needs of citizens before the project gets to work.

“In this case we’ve flipped it on its head,” Aurora said. “We need to talk about what our community needs and then go through a process of understanding how arts can be incorporated to fill that need, or support that need.”

The project managers are collaborating with Tempe Union High School District and Tempe Arts & Culture Commission to help bring more culture via several different avenues. The team will spend the next year deciding how to incorporate the arts into the city, along with commissioning artists to breathe life into the vision.

Because south Tempe does not offer many traditional locations for art installations, the team is challenged to work creatively to build on the assets Tempe already has.

Though ideas are still in their early stages, according to Aurora, the team has hopes to see arts and culture installations popping up in locations that already have a strong presence in Tempe such as local parks and canal systems.

Madeline Johnson is a sophomore in the ASU Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication.



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Winning voices

Tempe Chorus was among 29 non-profits to receive funding from a grant by the city's Arts and Culture Division. The chorus has been sharing its blend of musical fare since 1991 and features more than 100 voices.

Wrangler News photo by Alex J. Walker

Arts get a boost through grants

Twenty-nine Valley nonprofits contributing to the enhancement of Tempe's arts initiatives will share in \$185,000 in grants from the city's Arts and Culture Division.

The number of recipients exceeds those of all previous years.

More than half of the selected projects will directly support youth and families through the arts.

Projects range from school residency programs to musical performances to art festivals and camps.

The grants were awarded to applicants in two categories:

Youth & Family Arts Grants:

Quality arts projects with a primary mission of supporting family and youth-centered arts programming in Tempe.

The following organizations received funding in this category:

Arizona Theatre Company; Arizona Wolftrap/Scottsdale Arts; Broadmor PTA; Cultural Coalition; Free Arts; Musica Nova; Musician Enrichment Foundation; Phoenix Boys Choir; Phoenix Conservatory of

Music; Phoenix Symphony; Tempe Historical Society; Tempe Impact Education Foundation; Tetra String Quartet; United Sound; and Unlimited Potential.

Artistic Excellence Grants:

Demonstrates high artistic quality as well as innovation in both programming and artist selection.

The following organizations received funding in this category:

Arizona Wind Symphony; Hayden's Ferry Chamber Music; Bridge Initiative; Lakeshore Music; Carolyn Eynon Singers; Mac & Company; Childsplay; Movement Source; CONDER/dance; Stray Cat Theatre; Desert Overture; Tempe Community Chorus; Grand Canyon; and Tempe Winds.

A competitive review process was conducted by two independent and objective community review panels.

Each panel was comprised of representatives from the Tempe Arts and Culture Commission; Tempe residents; educators; business owners. Information: www.tempe.gov/ArtsGrants

Happy anniversary!

Ralph Remington, artistic director for Tempe Center for the Arts and deputy director of arts and culture for Tempe, said the center can't be beat as a venue in the community. TCA is celebrating its 10-year anniversary with a weekend of entertainment.

Photo courtesy of Tempe Center for the Arts



Arts Center, Tempe's 'Jewel in the Crown,' celebrates a memorable first decade of success

By M.V. Moorhead

Ten years ago this month, Tempe welcomed the glossy Tempe Town Lake edition of *Wrangler News*, focusing on the downtown arts and culture scene.

The timing of this splashy, magazine-style issue wasn't accidental. It celebrated the long-anticipated opening of Tempe Center for the Arts, a venue we referred to as the "Jewel in the Crown" of a city with a bright performance and artistic future.

Now, 10 years later, we are celebrating again—sans glossy edition but with a nonetheless congratulatory sense of achievement—as TCA moves into its next decade of noteworthy accomplishments.

TCA will mark the occasion starting Friday, Sept. 8, kicking off with "TCA Presents," a gala presented by Friends of TCA, emceed by Cory McCloskey of Fox 10 News. Following a reception, the headlining performer for the evening will be Arizona native Jordin Sparks, who is also celebrating a 10th anniversary: It was in 2007 that she won *American Idol*.

— ANNIVERSARY, Page 14

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Savvy

From Page 1

owner—it was exceptionally run-down at that time.”

Thus unfolded Pollack’s venture into the movie business, but through hard work and dedication to the community he has kept it not only going but thriving.

When he initially acquired the center, he thought the theater owner would remodel. After Pollack learned the owner planned to shut it down, he realized he had three choices.

Turning the space into a big-box store was one of them, but that would be a challenge due to low visibility from the street and the theater’s sloped floors. Pollack jokingly said he briefly considered a second option: inventing a new game called downhill-bowling.

“That sounded really good the night I thought it up,” Pollack chuckled. “By morning, not so much.” So he went with the third option: A complete remodel.

“Fifteen years ago I knew nothing about the movie-theater business. I knew how to buy a ticket, buy popcorn and get my seat and watch the movie,” Pollack recalled. “I said, you know what? It can’t be that difficult.”

The project turned out to be a costly one: Flooring had to be replaced plus the bathrooms and snack bar needed a complete overhaul. “You could tell time

had taken its toll on the interior of the theater,” Pollack said.

The theater became a popular destination for price-conscious movie lovers who were willing to exercise a bit of patience and wait for the films to cycle through first-run theaters before reaching Pollack Tempe Cinemas.

Facing a dilemma

About four years ago, Pollack was faced with another crossroad: Close the theater or invest approximately \$1 million on upgrades.

“I could either shut it down or I could modernize it because everything in the theater business was going to digital projection,” Pollack said. “We were told directly, point blank, that within 12 months there would be no more film available.”

Between the pricey digital projectors and brand new seating, Pollack had a tough call to make. “I received hundreds of emails and letters asking me to keep the nostalgic discount theater open. The surrounding neighborhood, for several generations, had grown up with the theater and felt a strong connection to it.” Pollack said.

The theater remained, and audiences continued to line up. Although Pollack shows no sign of buyer’s remorse, he may have a slightly different view of the movie theater business today.

“Would I recommend owning a

discount cinema in the year 2017? Absolutely, positively not.” He’s received calls from people around the country wanting to know if he’d buy their old theaters. The answer, he said, is always the same: No.

“At best case, if we do everything right—everything—we can hope to break even,” Pollack said. “I don’t really do it because it’s a source of big revenue for us. It would have been nice and we wouldn’t have complained if it was actually profitable, that’s for sure.”

Instead, Pollack Tempe Cinemas has become a place where young couples, retirees and families who see no sense in spending three times as much for a movie ticket at a first-run theater, take in a film or two while they munch on popcorn and sip soda.

And while ticket prices are comparatively inexpensive (\$7.50-\$10.50 elsewhere), Pollack said that doesn’t mean patrons should be subjected to a less-than-first-class experience.

He’s often there on Friday and Saturday nights, as well as at every employee monthly meeting, because he wants to make sure customers leave with a good feeling about their visit.

Just because the prices are low, he said, doesn’t mean the service or quality should be substandard.

“We are not about being the Beverly Hills of the East Valley shopping centers. That’s not what my brand is about,” Pollack said. “All the centers

that I renovate are designed to benefit the local community. I’m there because I want to make sure we’re giving that kind of quality service and quality product to people.”

As an example, the Safeway plaza that sits at Alma School and Guadalupe is one of dozens Pollack has renovated, which also can lead to tenants being inspired to undertake their own improvements.

Inspiring others

Rhonda Schmitz, office manager of Alma School Animal Hospital located in the center for many years, said Pollack’s refurbishing project inspired her owners to undertake their own re-do.

The center upgrades took about six months and were completed about a year ago. Stone facades, awnings and other touches breathed new life into the center.

“It called attention to the people on the street, that’s for sure,” said Schmitz. “The buildings are now very up-to-date and clean-looking. It’s a nice place you’d want to shop at—it’s very inviting. Everybody has noticed it.”

Said Pollack:

“My goal is to always make a positive difference in the projects I renovate. When I am finished with a project I want it to be something the community is as proud of as I am.”

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Time out for movie night

Michael Pollack said he likes to be at his theater—whenever a busy schedule permits—to make sure customers have a quality experience. The movie hub, which boasts digital projection and upgraded seats, attracts hundreds of price-conscious customers throughout the week, but particularly on Friday and Saturday nights. Regular moviegoers in addition to Pollack include son Robert, below.

Photos by Billy Hardiman for Wrangler News



Teachers 'passionate' about implementing new elective **Self-determination seen as key to students' success**

By Diana Whittle

Kyrene educators draw on several programs in the district to help middle school students master the concepts of inclusion, self-determination and goal-setting, a composite of skills referred to as student agency.

According to educational planners, student agency describes the ability of each child to use and develop individual initiative when it comes to meeting scholastic and personal goals. It's the opposite of helplessness and allows students to grow at their own rate, at the same time feeling a sense of achievement and social connectedness at school.

Newest in this cohort of offerings for the 2017-18 school year is Advancement Via Individual Determination, with Aprende Middle School in West Chandler taking a leadership position with its adoption of AVID.

At a recent Governing Board meeting, Aprende Principal Renee Kory spoke enthusiastically about teachers' plans for using AVID during the coming year, describing how Aprende teachers will promote and

integrate school-wide AVID strategies in their classes.

These focus on writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading skills, which are essential for students to pursue a level of college readiness.

AVID contains an extensive professional development component, so during this first year of AVID, Kyrene leaders are tasked with providing teachers the training necessary to incorporate these school-wide skills, strategies and philosophies.

"We've jumped in head-first to AVID and developed a site team of teachers who are passionate about the impact it will have on students," said Principal Kory. "We are very excited at Aprende to be part of this program."

"AVID has a school-wide component as well as an elective component. The AVID Elective supports a group of approximately 20 students who are selected based on specific academic and behavioral criteria and who go through an extensive interview process in order to

— DETERMINATION, Page 12



Dr. Jan Vesely, superintendent of the Kyrene school district, joined students at Aprende Middle School for a "Where Everybody Belongs" assembly. With Vesely are Payton Aucunas, front, and Jasmyne Monroe, behind.
— Photo courtesy Kyrene school district

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lives lost in the 9/11 terror attacks.

The eight-foot flags will snap in the wind during a Friday, Sept. 8 Freedom Concert that commences at 6:30 p.m.

The third annual concert will feature the Coast

Guard Arizona band, Dr. Jessie McGuire and his championship trumpet, The Valley Christian Singers and a top duo from GCU as well as 150 Tempe junior high singers.

On Monday, Sept. 11, the public is invited to be present for the opening event at 5:46 a.m., the hour at which terrorists crashed planes into the World Trade Center in 2001.

Donna Killoughey Bird, whose husband Gary was killed in the attack, will speak at 7 p.m. during the closing event.

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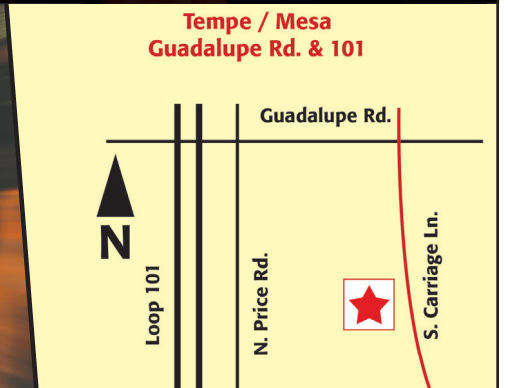
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Determination

From Page 10

be selected.”

At Aprende, the students who participate in an AVID Elective may not typically be enrolled in advanced classes. However, teachers believe that the selected students have the

motivation, grit, attitude and aptitude to achieve at higher levels with support.

Students who are part of the AVID program create a binder to organize the assignments and documents for the advanced course elective that they select.

“Then each student is provided explicit academic support from AVID tutors, typically college students, two

days a week,” said Kory.

“During the rest of the week, the AVID Elective teacher focuses on skills that promote and strengthen mindset, determination, public speaking skills, self-advocacy, organizational skills, and collaboration/team building.”

AVID is designed to impact the instruction and atmosphere of a school to support high expectations and levels of achievement for all students. By pushing students into more rigorous coursework, and advocating for them every day, this greatly increases the likelihood of students making it to and through college, says Kory.

Many times, middle school students are stressed about academics and social interactions, studies show. They are anxious to find friends and look for positive role models, which is where another student-agency program, WEB, can be helpful.

WEB, short for “Where Everyone Belongs,” has been in place in the district for several years and is used at several schools, including Aprende.

WEB is built on the belief that older students can help younger students succeed in the transition from elementary to middle school, according

to Kory. It’s a national program that is a way for selected eighth graders to act as mentors to incoming sixth-grade students.

Several students spoke to the Governing Board to explain how being part of WEB helped them adjust to middle school.

Kory agrees that the student agency component of education is vital and helps to close gaps in students’ achievement.

“Self-advocacy and organization are essential middle school skills, yet they are not always fully developed in our students.

“Students need to be taught critical thinking and collaborative skills, while also having an opportunity to develop leadership capacity and the ability to plan and organize for the future,” said Kory.

“AVID provides the tools to ensure students experience success and growth in all of these areas. Most importantly, AVID teaches students that with determination, anything is possible.”

Information: www.kyrene.org

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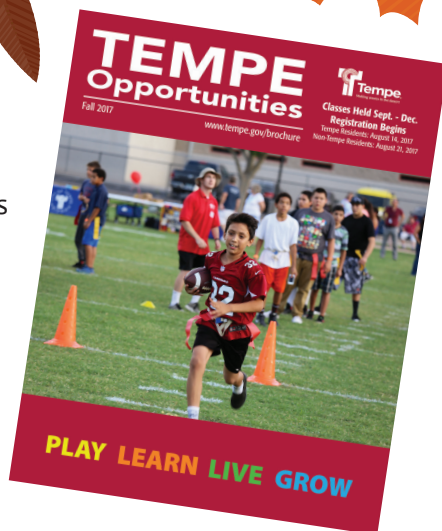
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Walk/run remembers 9/11

September will mark the 16th anniversary of 9/11.

In remembrance of that tragic day, Arizonans will participate in the Stephen Siller Tunnel-to-Towers 5K Run/Walk celebrating the heroism of first responders and military service members.

The Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation will hold its event at Tempe Town Lake on Saturday, Sept. 9, beginning at 8 a.m.

The route will start and end at the city's Healing Field, a tribute of honor and respect those who were lost throughout those tragic days.

It also pays tribute to Arizona's first responders—fire, police, EMTs and paramedics—as well as military service heroes who serve, sacrifice and protect every day.

Registration for the 5K Run/Walk is now open and participants may register at

<https://tunnel2towers.org>.

Registered walkers and runners will have the opportunity to create their own profile pages that will feature their personal photos and individual stories.

Additionally, participants can compete to raise the most funds and recruit the most friends to their team.

Tunnel to Towers is a non-profit dedicated to providing services for the nation's first responders and military. Proceeds from the event will benefit America's bravest.

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Ralph Remington, of Tempe Center for the Arts, is hoping the center will eventually present 25 shows each year. For now, he’s prepping for TCA’s 10-year anniversary celebration.

Anniversary

From Page 7

A meet-and-greet will follow the concert, tickets for which start at \$75.

The following evening, Saturday, Sept. 9, TCA will present *Too Marvelous for Words: The Story of Nat “King” Cole*.

This show also has an odd 10-year-old connection for TCA:

The opening act at the venue back in 2007 was Nat’s daughter Natalie Cole, who passed on in 2015.

Too Marvelous for Words features performances of Cole’s beloved songs from a musical ensemble fronted by Keith David.

An actor familiar from films like *Platoon* and *They Live*, David is no stranger to musical theater, having received a 1992 Tony Nomination for *Jelly’s Last Jam*.

Tickets are \$25 and \$35.

The Center’s visual arts season kicks off on Sept. 8 as well, with a preview during the gala for “Tempe Xhibition” in the Gallery at TCA.

A public opening reception for the show will follow from 6 to 9 p.m. on Saturday, and the exhibition will run through Jan. 6.

This all makes for a lively weekend, to be sure.

But it’s only the beginning of an arts season which will include performances by “Memphis jookin’”

street dancer Lil Buck (Nov. 11); all-female Mariachi ensemble Flor de Toloache (Feb. 3); a *cappella* group VoicePlay (Feb. 9), and many other notable acts.

Go to www.tempe.gov/tca for details.

But how, after that memorable first decade, is TCA doing?

Ralph Remington, TCA’s Artistic Director and Deputy Director of Arts and Culture for the city of Tempe, has an opinion.

“As a venue,” says Remington, “TCA can’t really be beat in this town as to location and aesthetics, and how people feel in the place.”

This doesn’t mean, however, that the facility has nothing left toward which to aspire.

“The challenge,” Remington notes, “has been to have a ‘curatorial presence.’”

We’re trying to establish that with our partners and resident companies,” like Childsplay, Hayden’s Ferry Chamber Music Series, Lakeshore Jazz Series, Desert Dance Theatre and many others.

“We’re co-producing a play with Stray Cat Theatre called *Gidion’s Knot*,” says Remington, as an example of this more “curatorial” approach.

So where would Remington like to see in TCA another 10 years?

“When we’re up to full capacity, cookin’ with grease, we’ll be producing six plays a year, and presenting 25 shows a year.”



Connolly Middle School purchased eyewear to enable the entire student body at the Tempe school to view the historic eclipse. The students' observations will play into lessons in math, science, English and journalism. — Photo by Amy Garza, Tempe Elementary School District

Solar event eclipses school-desk routine for Connolly students, staff

By Amy Garza

August 21, 2017, was a big day for astronomy and eclipse aficionados all across the U.S., including students at Tempe Elementary's Connolly Middle School. The celestial display marked the first solar eclipse to cross the U.S. from coast to coast, west to east, since 1918.

Despite some spotty cloud cover, observers in Arizona witnessed a partial eclipse, where about two-thirds of the sun was covered by the moon at the peak, which occurred at 10:33 a.m. Arizona time. Just walking outside from about 9:30 a.m. to almost noon, there was a sort of eerie, diffused sunlight overhead.

At Connolly, the seventh-grade science team thought it would be a great opportunity for the entire school to watch the eclipse outside, wearing official protective eyewear.

Students had to receive parent permission to participate. Two teachers for each grade level stayed inside with those students who opted out of the activity.

The STEM-inspired lesson was something the school has been planning for more than a year. "It was actually an initiative started by former seventh-grade science teacher Jennifer Might, who ordered the official solar eclipse viewing shades approved by NASA a year ago," explained Principal Kathy Mullery.

After consulting with district-level administrators,

Mullery and the Connolly staff decided to take advantage of this rare opportunity and make it available to their students.

"With careful planning and supervision, we were able to provide what could be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many of these students," said district STEM specialist Jason Parsons.

Like all teachers at Connolly—and throughout the district—Holly Barwick emphasized to her class the extreme importance of not looking up toward the sun at all, even for a split second, without wearing the protective eyewear that each one received.

They were instructed to look down at the ground at all times until they put on their shades.

Each class filed outside with their teacher, then covered their eyes with their eclipse shades, and looked up.

Patrick Young, associate professor with Arizona State University's School of Earth and Space Exploration described the eclipse well when he said the sun will look like it has a big bite taken out of it.

"It looks like cheese!" exclaimed seventh-grader Arely Pina Vazquez.

"I thought it would be way bigger," said classmate Sofia Murillo. David Parra Muñoz added, "I thought it would be more red." "I thought it would be dark out," said Kevin Boiorquez Parra.

Before the eclipse, the district STEM department coordinated curriculum resources for the schools

for all grade levels and encouraged teachers to teach STEM activities and lessons.

Connolly students in math classes will use their observations to bring increased meaning to scientific notation calculations, and English language arts classes wrote summaries of their experiences.

Lisa Jones' Journalism PBL class at ASPIRE Academy applied the group's reporting skills by researching the solar eclipse and covering the event for publication in the September edition of the school newspaper, ASPIRE Times.

Holly Barwick's seventh-grade science class will further study solar and lunar eclipses in the spring and will look back on what they witnessed during today's eclipse as they learn more about them, giving them real world experience for better understanding.

A Connolly community member even got in on the excitement. Arnold Meyers isn't a teacher or a staff member. He doesn't even have a child attending Connolly. He came just to experience the eclipse.

"I thought it was cool! It was awesome! I saw the last one and I didn't want to miss this one," he said. He explained that this was his last chance because he will be about 100 years old for the next one.

"Who knows if I will be able to see it then!" Meyers said. "This is the biggest astronomic event of our lifetime," Parsons said. "Connolly Middle School is the only school in our district I'm aware of that made it a school-wide event."

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Sports

With Alex Zener

Football openers divided as results differ widely

Football fans from Corona and McClintock had the chance to see their teams win big last weekend, while fans from Marcos were probably happy just to get a one-point win. Tempe High lost its first two games but discovered some positive aspects for the rest of the season.



Corona Football

Corona's football team and their new head coach **Jon Becktold** gave Aztec football fans and their home field crowd something to cheer about in their 42-7 rout over La Joya Community on Aug. 25.

"It was a big win for us," said coach Becktold. "It was nice to get the first win under me as their new head coach but it will also be a good confidence booster for the team heading into the rest of the season."

The Aztecs came out firing on all cylinders, after receiving the kickoff, when junior quarterback **Ryan Helt** completed his first pass out to the Fighting Lobos 38-yard line.

Helt then hit **Brandon Gavel** from 20 yards out with his first touchdown pass of the game with 10 minutes still left of the first quarter.

Helt would go on to complete three touchdown passes in the first half.

"Ryan Helt has done a great job for us so far this year as a leader and in running the offense," said Becktold. "He has some big weapons to help him in **Ricky Pearsall, Kobee Marion, Brandon Gavel** and **Luther Saxton** who have also been doing a great job on the offensive end for us as well."

The Aztecs scored six touchdowns in the first half against the Fighting Lobos. Three in the air and three on the ground.

Pearsall had four receptions for a total of 140 yards. He took a short pass from Helt and ran the rest of the 95 yards into the end zone to score.

Marion had four receptions for 102 yards and one touchdown while Gavel scored his first touchdown on a reception but went on to score a rushing touchdown in the second quarter.

Saxton was the leading rusher on the team with 10 carries for 75 yards and two touchdowns against La Joya.

On defense, the Aztecs held the Fighting Lobos to seven points or a touchdown at the beginning of the second half.

Junior **Ben Rafalski** led all defensive players with three solo and eight assists for a total of 11 tackles.

He was followed by senior **Evan McQueen** who had an impressive six solo tackles and four assists for



The Corona varsity football team socked it to the LaJoya Community Lobos in a 42-7 game that boosted the Aztecs' confidence and included six touchdowns in the first half.

— Photos by Billy Hardiman for Wrangler News

a total of 10 tackles.

Senior **Books Canfield** had four solo and five assists for a total of nine tackles while **Brian McCluskey** had seven total tackles, **Xavier Burrell** had six, and Aaron Arenas was credited with five

total tackles.

Canfield led the team in sacks with two while both **Parker Christenson** and **Clayton Klingerman** each had one sack.

Senior **David Acedo** intercepted a Fighting Lobo

pass and ran it back 25 yards.

Senior **Justus Stockton** blocked a punt in the second quarter that set up Gavel's rushing touchdown.

Matt Gill is the kicker responsible for the Aztec's kickoffs and point-after-kicks. He had seven kickoffs with an average of 35 yards per kickoff. His longest was 56 yards. Gill hit all six of his point-after-kicks to score six points.

Arenas is the punt kicker for the Aztecs. He punted the ball two times for an average of 26 yards.

On Sept. 1, the Aztecs will play at Mesa Mountain View. The Toros won their first game of the season, 31-7, against Valley Vista.

The next home game will be Sept. 8 against Cesar Chavez.

McClintock Football

McClintock, with new head coach, **Corbin Smith**, got its season off to a great start with a 42-6 win over Vista Grande, an away game played in Casa Grande, on Aug. 25.

The Chargers played an outstanding first half scoring two touchdowns in the first quarter and four in the second quarter. At the same time, the McClintock defense held the Spartans to only six points the entire game.

Tyrese Green, the Charger's

5-foot-8 senior running back, had an incredible game. He scored five rushing touchdowns in the first half alone. He carried the ball 20 times, gaining 166 yards for an average of 8.3 yards per carry.

Dylan McMonigal was the second leading rusher carrying the ball 14 times for 103 yards and one touchdown.

The remainder of the 301 rushing yards the Chargers tallied in just their first game was gained by senior **Sergio Medina**, sophomore **David Cisneros** and junior quarterback **Cordell Colter**.


Colter completed six of 11 passes for a total of 100 yards to receivers **William Roberts**, **Tyson Ka'ahanui** and Green.

The Charger defense kept the Spartans scoreless in the last three quarters amassing 62 total tackles, with eight players recording solo tackles.

McMonigal led the team in tackles with eight assists and one solo for a total of nine tackles.

Marcus Johnson, **Keyon Lindsey**, **Jerone Davison**, and **Branden Martinez** all have five or more total tackles.

— SPORTS, Page 20




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Thu	08/31	Skyline	6:00
Tue	09/05	Hamilton	6:00
Thu	09/07	@ Pinnacle	6:00
Tue	09/12	@ Mountain View	6:00
Wed	09/13	Basha	6:00
Thu	09/14	Mountain Pt.	6:00
WESTWOOD TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS			
Tue	09/19	@ Desert Vista	6:00
Thu	09/21	Boulder Creek	6:00
Tue	09/26	Highland	6:00
Wed	09/27	Desert Ridge	6:00

VARSITY FOOTBALL 2017

HEAD COACH: JON BECKTOLD / ASSISTANT: JUSTIN CLARE

DAY	DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
NIKE INVITATIONAL			
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GILBERT INVITE AT GILBERT HIGH SCHOOL			
Tue	10/17	@ Desert Ridge	6:00
Wed	10/18	@ Gilbert	6:00
Thu	10/19	Gilbert	6:00
Mon	10/23	@ Highland	6:00
Tue	10/24	@ Mountain Pt.	6:00
Wed	08/09	@ Williams Field	6:00 (scrimmage)
Fri	08/18	@ Highland	7:00
Fri	08/25	LaJoya Community	7:00
Fri	09/01	@ Mountain View	7:00
Fri	09/08	Cesar Chavez	7:00
Fri	09/15	@ Perry	7:00
Fri	09/22	Boulder Creek	7:00 (Homecoming)
Fri	10/06	@ Desert Ridge	7:00
Fri	10/13	Gilbert	7:00
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Fri	10/27	@ Desert Vista	7:00

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Sports

From Page 19

Martinez is listed as having two solo tackles and 2.5 sacks for a total loss of 13 yards against the Spartans.

Keyon Lindsey is credited with 1.5 quarterback sacks for a loss of nine yards.

In addition, the defense had three interceptions that results in a total of 76 additional yards.

William Roberts intercepted a Spartan pass and ran it back 56 yards. Davison also had a reception with a 20-yard gain. Medina had the third interception.

McClintock's two kicker also played well. Senior punt kicker **Luis Chaparro** punted the ball three times averaging close to 50 yards a punt with his longest at 61 yards.

Chaparro made all six of his point-after-kicks to score six of the team's 42 points.

Senior **Juan Cisneros** handles the kickoffs for the team. He is credited with seven kickoffs for an average kick of 54.7 yards. His longest was 60 yards and a kickoff touchback.

Green not only rushes with and catches the ball, he is also one of the two designated kickoff return players. In the game against Vista Grande, he had an 88-yard kickoff return.

Davidson took the other kickoff return back for 32 yards and two of the punt returns for a total of 42 yards.

Together Green and Davidson recorded 162 yards kick-return yardage against the Spartans.

The Chargers will have an opportunity to start the season 2-0 when they play at Marana on Sept 1 starting at 7 pm.

It will probably be a different game since the Tigers, with a 0-2 record, are a passing team averaging over 300 yards a game in the air while the Chargers had over 300 yards in their first game on the ground.

McClintock will have their first home game of the season Sept. 8 against Campo Verde, a team that started the season a week early and won both of their first two games.

Marcos de Niza Football

Marcos de Niza won its season-opening game 15-14 against the Prescott Badgers in Prescott on Aug. 25 on a night where fans were probably thinking what else could possibly go wrong. How about the sprinklers on the field going off in the middle of the fourth quarter, resulting in not only a delay of game but a wet field?

On Sept. 1, the Padres were due to have another away game, this time at Cactus. Their first home game will be Sept. 8 against Peoria. This game will be broadcast live on the High School Sports Network streamed on AZPreps365.com.

Tempe Football

Tempe High School lost its first two football games of the season, 17-8 at Estrella Foothills on Aug. 18 and 12-0 at home against Catalina Foothills on Aug. 25 but some positive aspects were present that the team could build on for future games.

Tempe was able to score in the first quarter against Estrella Foothills when **Sione Tonga'uiha** caused the Wolves to fumble and **Nathan Brox** recovered the fumble on Estrella's three-yard line.

The Buffaloes capitalized on this outstanding field position when **Dominick Harper** rushed three yards to score the first points of the game giving Tempe a 6-0 lead with three minutes left in the first quarter.

Tempe scored two points on a safety in the second half while the Wolves ended up scoring a field goal and two touchdowns to win the game 17-8.

Sophomore quarterback, **Joseph Near**, despite throwing two interceptions, completed 11 passes out of 21 for a total of 119 yards spread out to four receivers: **Isaiah Bruner**, **Dominick Harper**, **Stevie Maddox** and **Isaiah Williams**.

Two sophomores led the team in tackles: **Keau Pau** had 11 total tackles while Tonga'uiha had a combined seven total tackles.

The Buffaloes' next game will be Sept. 1 at Buckeye and on Sept. 8 they will play at home against



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How ‘Ridge’ became a popular coach and a campus legend

By Jonathan Coronel

Corona del Sol girls badminton coach Darren Ridge casually calls his team off the court to wrap up a practice session and offer some reminders for their upcoming games. As the team filters in, one player notes it’s their coach’s birthday:

“Ridge on three: One, two, three—RIDGE!”

Sauntering off with a smile, Ridge seems to think it’s over until the team breaks out into its own stylized version of “Happy Birthday.”

Just one more example of how his young players—in fact, most of the school’s students, it seems—consider Ridge not only a good teacher but a bonafide staple on campus.

Known to many students and players affectionately as just “Ridge,” Darren Ridge has been a familiar presence at Corona, where he has taught for 15 years and coached for 17. This, however, is his first season as a badminton coach.

Though badminton admittedly is not his real forte, he notes that his 16 years of coaching basketball made the transition easy. That experience isn’t the only thing he has to fall back on, however. He also has the benefit of having his daughters, themselves both former Corona badminton players, as assistant coaches to help with the technical aspects of the game that he may be less familiar with. “This is an awesome group of girls. It’s different from basketball, but I enjoy this environment. We’re just working on getting better every practice and instilling commitment and hard work in our players,” Ridge explains as the last of his players file out of the gym.

While anybody can talk about hard work and dedication, Ridge showed his team what that really means before the season and school year even started.

Since most people don’t have anywhere to play badminton on their own, Ridge took the time to start his team practicing three days a week for five weeks this summer, in addition to fulltime practices during the two weeks leading up to the beginning of the school year—something his players say they believed really helped their performance on the court.

“We always did summer basketball when I was coaching, so it was logical for me to bring that to this team,” Ridge explains.

Using his vacation time to do extra coaching was considered by many to be a logical thing for Ridge, if for no reason other than it offered a view of the kind of coach—and man—he is. Aware of that portrayal, Ridge credits his dad, who also taught social studies in high school, for instilling in him the work ethic that he tries to impart in his students and players each day.

“My dad was in the Marine Corps and fought in the Pacific during World War II. After the war



Corona teacher and coach Darren Ridge dishes out some strategy to the Lady Aztecs badminton team before a show-down against reigning champ Xavier College Prep. Ridge, who has been a presence at Corona for 17 years, said he enjoys time with the students both in the classroom and during athletic matches like this one.

Editor’s note: These photos were the first taken by our photographer Alex J. Walker since a motorcycle accident in June that left him badly injured. Welcome back, Alex! Glad you are on the mend.

he spent time as a cowboy and a high school history and economics teacher in Tombstone, where I grew up. During the summer he worked measuring rain gauges for the (U.S.) Department of Agriculture. He really just showed by example the importance of hard work.”

It’s evident from talking to Ridge that despite the long hours often demanded of coaches after the school day typically ends, he doesn’t view the extra time as a chore. Though high school coaches don’t get paid for their work over summer, and the time they spend coaching during the year far outweighs the compensation they do receive, Ridge says the money doesn’t matter to him.

“There’s things in sports that you can learn that you can take further into life. You learn disappointment. You learn how to win and lose with honor. You learn camaraderie and commitment. Kids can get so much out of it, so I don’t care about spending my free time coaching because I enjoy helping them learn—not just the sport but how this carries over into your life.”



Though high school sports often can seem like life or death for student athletes, most won’t actually remember the specifics of their many games.

What they do remember are the lessons they learned and the relationships they forged through adversity. After 17 years on the job and counting, it’s evident that the beloved “Ridge” knows this all too well.

“The thing I enjoy the most about coaching is the relationship you develop with kids. Kids are energetic — there’s an electricity you get from being around them. There’s just never a dull moment.”

3 info sessions scheduled for franchised Primrose Preschool



A new preschool in West Chandler is hosting a series of information nights for parents at Makutu's Island at 6919 W. Ray Road.

The sessions begin at 6:30 p.m. and take place Monday, Sept. 11; Wednesday, Sept. 27; and Wednesday, Oct. 11.

Construction is currently underway on Chandler Boulevard east of Rural Road.

Primrose Preschool is a national franchise of preschools that serves infants through kindergarten. The new West Chandler school, currently being built, will play role in children's early development—and their future success.

A recent national survey of human relations managers revealed that many entry-level employees lack skills such crucial skills as problem solving, team work and adaptability.

“Early educators have the privilege of partnering with parents during their child's most important years for learning, and that comes with great responsibility,” said Gloria Julius, Ed.D., vice president of education for Primrose Schools.

“As children work together on a task or are prompted by their teachers to ask questions, they are actually developing the skills they need to successfully navigate our ever-changing world.”

Information: primroseschools.com

The Music Store's Ukulele Jam Night

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College Connect Tempe helps students, parents

Tempe's College Connect program is designed to connect students and parents to the resources they need to fulfill their dreams of a post-secondary education.

Participants can attend free workshops, group sessions and

one-on-one meetings with college experts.

Topics include applying for college, paying for college, available scholarships, career choice, picking the right high school classes, and many more.

The fall workshops will take place at the Tempe Public Library

on:

- Saturday, Sept. 16
- Saturday, Oct. 28
- Saturday, Nov. 18

For a full calendar, including 2018 workshops, and to schedule a one-on-one appointment, visit www.CollegeConnectTempe.org.

Fall into events season in Tempe

Tempe has an amazing lineup of fun family events this fall. Here are just a few:

Tempe Tardeada – All are invited to the 19th Annual Tempe Tardeada from noon to 8 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 8, to celebrate and recognize Tempe's Hispanic roots.

This free festival will take place at the Tempe Community Center Complex, 3500 S. Rural Road, at the southwest corner of Rural Road and Southern Avenue.

A tardeada is a vibrant afternoon festival and social dance featuring music, dancing, traditional Mexican foods, arts and crafts for children, community booths and inflatables.

All activities are free. The event takes place each year in conjunction with National Hispanic Heritage Month. For more information, visit www.tempe.gov/tardeada or call Ginny Belousek at 480-350-8979.

Old Settlers gather Oct. 21 – For more than a century, longtime Tempe residents have reconnected

during an annual reunion. On Saturday, Oct. 21, the Tempe Old Settlers Association will hold its celebration from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Arizona Community Church, 9325 S. Rural Road. Registration is from 10-11 a.m., lunch starts at 11:30 a.m.; and a business meeting starts at 12:30 p.m. Guests are asked to bring a

potluck dish to share. Old Settlers members must have been born in Tempe or have lived in the city for at least 30 years.

For more information, call Councilmember Joel Navarro at 480-688-9907.

Movies in the Park – Join us Friday evenings in October for Movies in the Park, a free family movie series.

Bring your blankets, a picnic dinner and the entire family. Movies begin at dusk (about 6 p.m.) on the north soccer fields at Kiwanis Park (Ash Avenue and Baseline Road).

The lineup features:

- Oct. 6: *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (G)
- Oct. 13: *Moana* (G)
- Oct. 20: *Monsters Inc.* (G)
- Oct. 27: *E.T.* (PG)

For more information, visit www.tempe.gov/FamilyFun or call 480-350-5200.



2017 Utility Rate Study is underway

Tempe is conducting a utility rate study for water, wastewater and solid waste.

This study occurs every two years to evaluate present and projected costs in order to ensure we continue to provide safe, reliable and cost-effective services to our community.

Water, wastewater and solid waste services are exclusively paid through user fees.

Water and wastewater studies are driven by policy directives and the above guiding principles.

Based on the results of this process, changes may be made to the rate structure and rates, to better align costs to each customer class.

As the rate study progresses, details and recommended changes, if any, will be provided during public participation meetings and City Council meetings.

Solid waste changes being considered

are ideas like incentive pricing based on container size and same-day collection for solid waste and recycling. These are being reviewed to see if they would help the city meet its goals for diverting waste from landfills to recycling centers and for expanding its green organics program.

Tempe wants your feedback and there are several public meeting opportunities coming up:

- Sept. 7, Tempe City Council Chambers, 31 E. Fifth St.
- Sept. 23, Arizona Community Church, 9325 S. Rural Road.
- Sept. 27, Tempe History Museum, 809 E. Southern Ave.

In November, the City Council will hold a public hearing to discuss rate adoption.

If approved, new rates will go into effect in January 2018.

More details are at www.tempe.gov/utilityratestudy.

Sustainability Circle September schedule

Join Councilmember Lauren Kuby as she discusses topics related to sustainability on three dates:

Sept. 19, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., at Arizona Community Church, 9325 S. Rural Road;

Sept. 26, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., at the North Tempe Multigenerational Center,

1555 N. Bridalwreath St.; and

Sept. 30, from 10 to 11:30 a.m., at the Tempe Public Library's Connections Café, 3500 S. Rural Road.

For more information about Kuby's service to Tempe, visit www.tempe.gov/kuby.

Potential

From Page 1

“In middle school, they learn interpersonal skills that will help them over a lifetime.”

The district adopted these changes in response to s recent curriculum audit, and Maxwell believes that the new emphases will improve students’ academic performance and college readiness.

In a presentation to the Kyrene Governing Board, Maxwell outlined the goals of more responsive instruction:

“To provide support that meets the cognitive and non-cognitive needs of students.” In other words, said Maxwell, “We want to create a classroom culture where students are joyfully engaged, meaningfully on-task and feel ownership for their individual and collective successes in class, college and life.”

In addition to the environment in classrooms, progress is being made on developing written

curriculum guides to have a common academic framework for all Kyrene schools in the district, according to Maxell.

The first guides being updated are for English Language Arts and Math. Other curriculum teams are focused on Science and Social Studies while a third is working toward meeting the needs of gifted and advanced learners in collaboration with the state’s Department of Instruction.

Each Kyrene middle school offers opportunities for students identified as gifted, as well as for advanced learners.

Grade level and advanced classes are available in Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. High-school level courses in mathematics and Spanish are available to students who qualify.

“We plan to increase the advanced course offerings for students and now have a gifted program at middle schools,” said Maxwell.

“We also plan to ensure quality instruction to students by offering teachers more professional development.”

The district is reviewing the available on-line assessment tools to make sure that learning by students is accomplished in the four core content areas.

Maxwell is one of two directors in the district who are devoted to school effectiveness.

His past teaching experience includes stints in China, South Africa and three other U.S. states. He most recently worked at the Arizona Board of Education, where he visited districts and their classrooms all across the state.

From Maxwell’s perspective, the work being done in the Kyrene district is on the leading edge.

“I say to families, if you’re not impressed with what’s happening in Kyrene, then you’re not paying attention.”

More information about Kyrene’s middle school re-design and the curriculum choices for students can be found at www.kyrene.org

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Hurricane Harvey's impact felt by one-time Valley cleric

By Joyce Coronel

As the torrential rain and strong winds of Hurricane Harvey continue to pound South Texas, dramatic stories of flood victims stranded in homes and vehicles poured in.

My heart immediately turned to a longtime friend, the Rev. James Kelleher, who lives in Corpus Christi. How were he and the rest of the members of the Our Lady of Corpus Christi community faring in the midst of the epic storm?

"We're refugees from the storm," Kelleher told me in a phone call. "Rockport—that's where the hurricane hit—is just 35 miles from Corpus Christi."

He began watching and reading news reports about the storm the day before Harvey struck.

His superior in his religious order asked him to take the novices and flee to San Antonio where the community has friends.

"It should only take two hours to get to San Antonio but it took us four and a half because the highways were jammed," Kelleher said. "I know the back highways. If I would have stayed on the main roads it would have taken seven to eight hours."

My friend and his religious brothers left on Thursday, but Rev. Samuel Medley, who trained for

the priesthood in the Philippines, stayed behind. "Friday the electricity went out in Corpus Christi," Kelleher said. "Father Sam—if he weren't a priest he'd be Special Forces—is still there. He's adventurous. He said they are just very grateful they only got hit with three to five inches of rain."

After two nights in San Antonio, Kelleher said he and the novices again fled, this time to Dallas.

"It looked like there was going to be a lot of rain dumped on San Antonio so we left. It's a good thing we did because there is flooding and roads are shut down."

At this point, Kelleher said his gut feeling is that they might be able to return home by Wednesday.

And while many were evacuated from the areas hardest hit by the epic storm, there were those who headed into the fray. NCO Blas Minor of the Arizona National Guard's public affairs office said local troops are on the scene in Texas.

"We have sent three Black Hawk crews," Minor said. "That's a little over a dozen. We've also sent a UH70, a smaller helicopter."

The death toll from Hurricane Harvey has risen

to eight and dozens more have been injured. Some 30,000 people in Houston and the Gulf Coast region have sought shelter from the ongoing ferocious storm.

The American Red Cross is seeking financial and blood donations to assist victims. Info: redcross.org.

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Dr. Roxane Huber & Dr. Stacy Tracy

30-plus years later: A close-up look into the remarkable surgery that brought light to the eyes of Tempe boy



By Deborah Hilcove

“I spy with my little eye....” For many children, those words start a commonly played game of observation, an entertaining way to pass the time, especially when confined to the back seat of a car during family excursions. But for Nicholas Kindgren those words meant the gift of sight.

“It started back in the 1980s,” recalls Tempe resident Alecia Kindgren, “when I was eight months pregnant with Nick, and I was bitten by a tick at Martha’s Vineyard. Then, at his two-month check-up, I asked the pediatrician to examine his eyes.”

The cornea was cloudy, Kindgren continues, a possible precursor to serious visual problems.”

“We saw doctors in Boston at the Children’s Hospital and also in San Francisco. They thought it might be glaucoma or perhaps CHED, congenital hereditary endothelial dystrophy, a very rare corneal disorder.

Whatever it was, though, they said it needed to be corrected as soon as possible. The brain is like a computer, and without the stimulation of outside details, it won’t develop properly.

“They suggested two pediatric cornea specialists. One was in San Diego, another in Atlanta, but that meant a move for our family because the surgery would require a lot of follow up. There was one doctor here in Phoenix, and although Dr. Edward Shaw was doing corneal transplants on adults all the time, he’d never done an infant.

However, he said, ‘In my research at St. Luke’s Hospital, I’ve done some transplants on little monkeys.’ Imagine our reaction!”

“The first cornea came from Texas. It was from an infant, since Dr. Shaw thought it was necessary

for the cornea to grow with the child. An adult’s cornea would have been exposed to diseases like measles and such, and later, when Nick would be subjected to childhood diseases, there would be a greater chance his body would reject the cornea. He had that first transplant when he was three months old.”

The care—and the concern—continued.

“At six months, a cornea came from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. It was also from an infant. Nick wore an eye patch to protect the transplant, and at night he wore mittens so he wouldn’t scratch his eyes. At the time, doctors still hadn’t determined a cause, and his corneas were sent out of state for research. Now, it’s been proven that Lyme Disease can affect an unborn child.

“When he was 18 months old, he was fitted for hard contact lenses since we knew an infant would pull off glasses. We went through hundreds of hand-crafted contact lenses in those first years. He ate them and he’d also lose or hide them—they were probably uncomfortable,” Kindgren says.

“He had one brown contact and one blue one so I could make sure he was wearing them. One time when I cleaned his car seat, I found six or seven contacts hidden under the cushion.”

When Nick was about three, Gov. Rose Mofford declared a “National Transplant Day,” and signed the documentation with Nick at her side. There were billboards for “Donor Awareness Month,” and he was pictured with Phoenix CBS news anchor Mary Jo West.

“We encouraged him with Little League and tennis, but he didn’t have depth of vision, so those were difficult,” recalled Kindgren. “As he grew—and he was a big guy—we encouraged him in sports, but avoided contact sports like football or basketball. He took up swimming in high school. He still has to be careful.

“Someone suggested the Foundation for the Blind—I thought, ‘Blind! No!’ But they were so helpful. They produced audio textbooks for him and he listened to them. They found whatever library books he wanted.”

As Nick got older, the advent of technology delivered new hope,” said Kindgren.

“When computers came along, they were the perfect tool.

He holds two master’s degrees, one in business, the second in business information technology. These days, Nick’s an IT guy and, actually, his life is pretty normal now,” says Kindgren.

“He’s getting married before long.”

Doubling back to Nick’s childhood days, Kindgren says the availability of specialization was nowhere near as widespread as it is today.

Take for example Dr. Jon Konti, a Tempe cornea specialist and one of the pioneers of corneal transplantation who understands not only how the procedure has advanced but what happens to make it a viable approach to visual normalcy.

According to Konti, the cornea is the front, clear window of the eye. When it becomes hazy or damaged because of inherited disorders, infection, disease or injuries, then a corneal transplant may be required.

Corneal transplants have come a long way since the 1980’s and Nick’s surgery, said Konti. In fact, a corneal transplant, or keratoplasty, is the most common type of transplant.

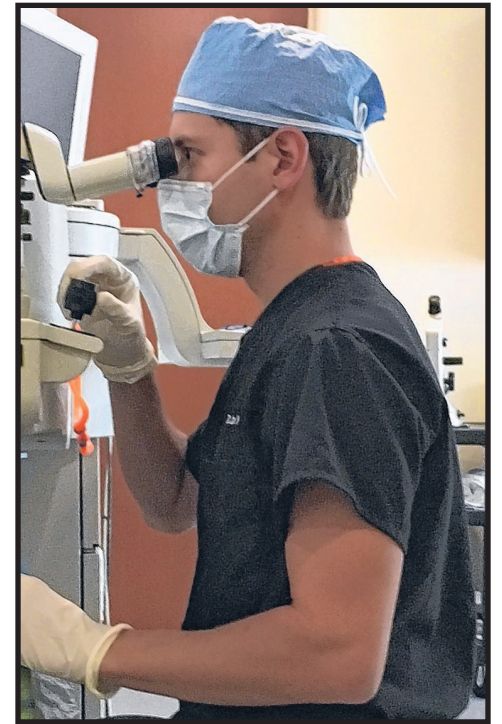
The Eye Bank Association of America estimates more than 47,000 transplants are performed annually.

In the most common type of procedure, performed while the patient is under local anesthesia, the surgery typically takes between 30 minutes and an hour. The surgeon uses a microscope and laser to cut meticulously through the thickness of the abnormal or diseased cornea, removing a small disk of tissue.

The donor cornea, cut precisely to fit, is placed into the opening, and with thread finer than a human hair, the surgeon carefully stitches the new cornea into place.

A patient probably will wear a protective eye patch for several days while the top layer of the cornea heals. Since the cornea is nourished by tears and the watery fluid in the front part of the eye, instead of blood, it heals slowly. At a follow-up visit, the surgeon will examine the eye for inflammation or swelling before removing the stitches.

Konti, who performs about 15 corneal transplants a month,



Corneal transplant expert Dr. Jon Konti

notes that this corneal defect, or dystrophy, “can run in families, with typical onset in the [patient’s] 60s.

Since it’s often a bilateral disease, he does “one eye first, then the second eye 6-8 weeks later. Patients can expect great vision with this procedure,” although sometimes cataract surgery is also needed.

Reflecting on his career choice, Konti says:

“I went to medical school wanting to be a cardiologist, and randomly did an elective rotation in ophthalmology in my third year...and I immediately fell in love with the field. It has exploded with technological advances over the past 10-15 years. It’s rewarding to give my patients their sight back and see how happy they are.”

As to the senses we think little about, Konti says sight may top the list.

“It is our greatest sense; it’s what connects us and allows us to see and feel emotion and to see beauty in the people that surround us. It allows us to be independent.”

In several months, Konti travels to the Dominican Republic, where he’ll perform 50-60 cataract procedures as part of a Christian charity mission.

“I’m greatly looking forward to this,” he says, adding a promising expectation for those suffering with visual defects: “The future is bright for the field of corneal transplantation.”

Discerning Diner

As summer ebbs, our minds turn to dabbling in the art of the omelet

EDITOR'S NOTE: Once again, a request has arrived for a reprint of a column by our longtime Discerning Diner, who departed our staff—how many years ago? Ten? Twelve? No matter; she's still missed by us and obviously by a number of readers who reappear every so often to suggest that we resurrect one of her earlier musings. Thus, the following, which originally appeared in May 2005.

Whenever I'm too tired or busy to make an elaborate dinner—which has been most of the time, lately—I'll often turn to what is my “old standby,” the omelet.

Omelets, which I started making in high school, were my first true specialty. Before then, I had never really cooked on my own.

But on Saturday mornings, my mom wasn't interested in superintending the kitchen. So I had license to cook up a storm before settling in for cartoons (provided, of course, that I cleaned everything up when I was done).

My first instruction in the dish came from the *Joy of Cooking*, which offered three full columns of sober instruction on the art of omelets.

Wow. I hadn't known that there was an art of omelets. And the ethereal creations they described were nothing like the heavy restaurant omelets I'd been eating all my short life.

Although I didn't achieve omelet nirvana until five or six years later, thanks to the *Joy of Cooking*, I knew it had to exist. And now I can offer my own advice on attaining it.

Before you begin, you have to know what you're aiming for, and that might be the hardest part of all. Frankly, if you've found a great French omelet at a restaurant—any restaurant—you've had better restaurant luck than me.

The classic, oft-quoted description of an omelet is from the French chef Auguste Escoffier, who called it “scrambled eggs enclosed in a coating of coagulated egg.”

Maybe it sounds better in French. But his point is that an omelet is a delicate creation: two distinct, yet inseparable, textures skillfully coaxed from the same couple of eggs.

Unfortunately, this fragile omelet just can't stand up to a ton of fillings. So if you're picturing a massive omelet stuffed with ham, cheese and onions, get it out of your head—such a meal is better made as a frittata, which is another column entirely.

You'll need a nonstick pan. Eight or nine inches is a good diameter for a single-serving omelet, and omelets are best made as single servings.

If you're particularly hungry, or would like a little culinary leeway, use three large eggs. Two-egg omelets are trickier to handle, but they're proportionally more glorious.

Crack the eggs into a bowl and beat them lightly with a fork. Have your fillings handy: a scant 1/4 cup of grated cheese, a few tablespoons of sour cream, or some thin strips of smoked salmon—you get the idea.

Now melt a scant tablespoon of butter in your nonstick pan over medium heat, swirling the pan to distribute the butter evenly.

Pour in the beaten eggs. With one hand, hold the pan an inch or two above the heat source and rotate it back and forth, just as you swirled the butter before. With the other, stir the eggs with the flat side of a fork.

When the eggs begin to set, switch from a fork to a flat spatula. Lift the edges of the forming omelet and pull them toward the center of the pan, meanwhile allowing uncooked egg to run onto the pan's hot surface.

When the omelet is a cohesive whole, but still quite moist on top, lay your fillings in a line down the center.

Here's where the pros use a swift jerking motion of the pan to “roll” the omelet. But I'm not a pro.

I use the spatula to carefully lift and fold one side of the omelet, then the other. Note that you want to fold it in thirds, like a letter, not in half.

If your omelet seems to be a little runny inside, remove it from the heat and let it sit in the hot pan for a minute. But don't overdo it: an omelet should never be tough.

Finally, flip the omelet seam-side down onto a waiting plate. Enjoy it immediately, perhaps with a glass of champagne.

Come to think of it, the combo's not bad for breakfast, either.



Selichot services Sept. 16-17 welcome High Holiday season

The Jewish High Holiday season starts with a spiritual journey with a Selichot service Sept. 16, continuing into Sept. 17.

The recital of the traditional

Selichot song with meditative singing will take place at Pollack Chabad Center for Jewish Life in Chandler. Light refreshments will be served.

“Selichot is an experience all Jews should take an active part in,” said Rabbi Mendy Deitsch. “We open our doors to the entire Jewish community.”

Chabad Center for Jewish Life is at 875 N. McClintock Drive, Chandler

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The Big Questions

• • •

Got a story to share? Would you like to contribute to our Wrangler News team? Curious about something going on in our community? Got any hot news tips for us?

Let us do your sleuthing for you!

Contact us:
editor@WranglerNews.com



Our next issue is Saturday, Sept. 2.

For advertising space reservations be sure to let us know by 3 p.m. Friday, Aug. 25. For story or photo ideas, call 480-966-0845 or email editor@wranglernews.com by 5 p.m. Monday, Aug. 21. You're also welcome to drop by our office at 2145 E. Warner Road, just across the street from GoDaddy, any time 9-5 M-F. **We're always glad to see you.**



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The Final Word

SOS Arizona: A Legendary Story Begins of the Many against the Money

BY MITZI EPSTEIN



Millennials and grandparents with grit; Mama Bears and Papa Bears worked with bears that have no cubs who know that every generation must help the youngest generation.

These are the people who are SOS Arizona—Save Our Schools Arizona—our neighbors from Chandler and Tempe to all corners of the state. 2000 volunteers collected signatures from voters in every

county to stop private school voucher expansion that drains funding from public schools.

They are powered by a common cause: to save public education.

Why does it need saving?

Public education in Arizona is under attack.

Whether politicians are purposefully trying to destroy it or not, it is seriously threatened.

Yes, public education, the foundation of our economy and our quality of life.

Arizona teachers do very fine work, as evidenced by improvements in national tests.

Despite the fine quality of our professional educators, funding per student was cut drastically about a decade ago, and since then it has not been restored. Teacher shortages, low pay, archaic books, and buildings in need of repair are just a few of the reasons we must restore funding.

I ran to become a State Representative and won because public education deserves support.

Our students need a 21st Century education in order to solve the problems of our times and our future. In the State House, I was heartened by legislators in both parties who also want to fund our charter and district public schools adequately.

But party politics conquered them instead.

Smaller players in the legislature who genuinely care about public education were unable to overcome the power of Koch-Brothers money and the clout of political partisanship.

Governor Ducey thanks the Koch Brothers for their campaign help. The Betsy DeVos-funded AFC, American Federation for Children, funnels overwhelming dollars into Arizona campaigns. Instead of improving funding for schools, bills were passed that drain funding away from public schools into private schools without accountability to the taxpayer.

In May, the AFC was ready to celebrate the passage of their pet project, SB1431, the private school voucher expansion bill in Arizona, but then, unorganized parents stepped up to the plate.

Parents hit a few baseline drives that advanced their cause for public schools. The media heard them, and Arizonans agreed with the parents for

strong public education.

So the AFC canceled their luncheon over fallout from their private school vouchers.

The Moms, Dads, retirees, and community volunteers hit a few pop-ups that were caught in the air, and stopped. They were shushed, and told to simmer down, and even asked to leave.

But they stayed. They would not leave a ballpark, and they did not leave the gallery of the State Legislature.

I was proud to read their stories aloud on the floor of the State House because their stories are the stories of a million children in public schools.

Next, SOS Arizona took the message to the streets and sidewalks of Arizona. “Do you support public education?” Yes! Arizona voters answered loudly and clearly!

Our American success stories depend on great public schools, the only schools required to serve all children. Voters, alongside the SOS Arizona volunteers are working for exactly that.

And they have hit a homerun!

Over 111,000 voters signed petitions to put this bad law on the ballot to let the Arizona voters decide, not politicians who are funded by dark money.

We will see how much dark money from out of state gets thrown against the thousands of Arizona voters’ signatures. We will see how many lawyers will be hired by DeVos’ AFC to drag this out in court.

But no matter what, the SOS Arizona volunteers and the voters of Arizona have begun their legendary story of the many standing up to the money, driving democracy to prevail!

Mitzi Epstein is Arizona State Representative for Legislative District 18. She is a computer systems analyst and small business owner. She has been a statewide public education leader for over 20 years, including serving on the Kyrene School District Governing Board and founding statewide coalitions. Wrangler News invites its readers to submit The Final Word commentaries for consideration. Please include your contact information for us to discuss your submission with you. Thanks!

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