ARCADIA NEWS

VOL. 31 NO. 09 — ARCADIA • BILTMORE • CAMELBACK CORRIDOR — DECEMBER 2023

A CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Host families welcome international exchange students into their homes and hearts.

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THAT'S A WRAP!

The Titans' undefeated season is one many success stories in our annual high school sports fall wrap up.

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PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Seventh-grade violinist Graham Schaub reaps the reward of rigid practice, winning the ASTA Solo Competition.

PAGE 5

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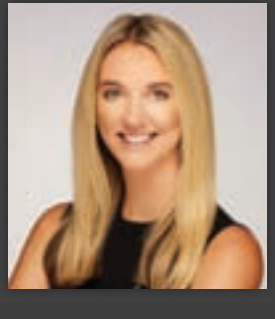

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DECEMBER

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Environmental advocate and author Robin Shaw released her debut novel, *The Tree That Called Us Home*, which focuses on the disappearance of the American Chestnut Tree.

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A group of Veritas students are grabbing their fishing poles and heading to local lakes and ponds, thanks to a brand new after-school club called "The Anglers."

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Local teen Milan Coraggio-Sewell created the Boxed Up Project, an organization that assembles and donates grief toolkits for kids struggling with sadness and loss.

58 **The Titan Times**
A motivated group of Arcadia high-schoolers have set out to share their writing skills, interact with the community and have their voices heard…introducing the Titan Times.

The Titans went undefeated this season and as of press time, are in the State Championship semifinals. Read more about area high school football, cross country and swim seasons in this month's sports round up.
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EDITOR'S NOTE

This year, I learned the hard way that if you have a seven-month-old kitten, there is no chance you can also have a Christmas tree in your living room. Presents under that tree? Forget it. Any kind of glass holiday décor? Don't do it. Alas, I love my cat, and even though he's been very naughty, he will still have something to rip into come Christmas day. I just have to move all my decorations to the tallest shelves.

December is one of our favorite editions of the year because we get to highlight some of the fun goings-on happening around the Valley (and all the spots sharing their yummy dishes to eat!) – along with all the good news our neighborhood has to share.

Graham Schaub, an Ingleside seventh-grader, won first place with his violin piece at the American String Teachers Association Solo competition. Veritas' Zoe Wong and Hollyann Mortenson won third and first place at the USA Archery Arizona State Outdoor Championships. Xavier's Sejal Patel won a Student Production Pillar from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. Whatever our Arcadia students are up to, they sure know how to do it well!

We also feature a story on the American Field Services organization, possibly better known as a foreign exchange student program, that various Arcadia families have long been a part of. Since its inception in 1915, more than 424,000 students have gone abroad, and 50,000 people have volunteered with the organization.

We hope your holiday season is filled with all the love, laughter and joy – happy holidays, and thank you for reading Arcadia News. See you next year!

Mallory

– Mallory Gleich

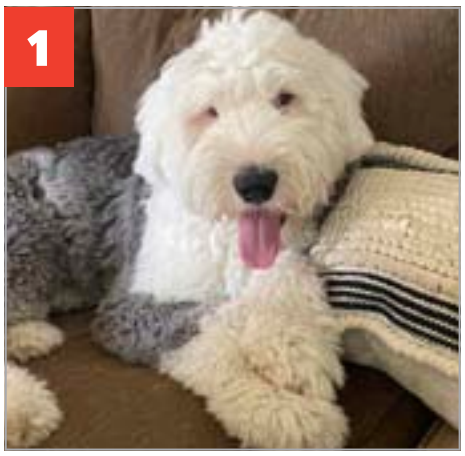
UPCOMING THEMES:

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
Health and Fitness	*Events and Adventures*	*Spring / Arcadia Home & Design*

No one has better coverage in the areas of Arcadia, Biltmore and the Camelback Corridor. Promote your business to 45,000 loyal *Arcadia News* readers. For more: **602-840-6379** or email **roni@arcadianews.com**.

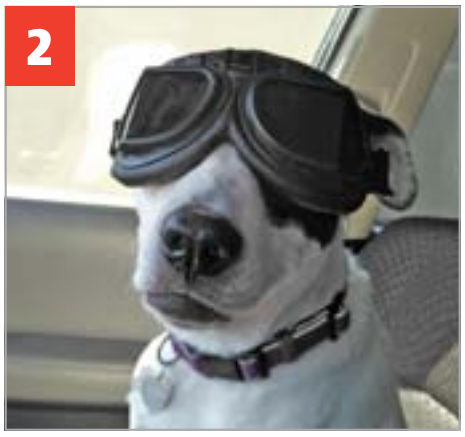
"Three phrases that sum up the holidays are: Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men, and Batteries Not Included." *– Unknown*

ARCADIA'S PETS



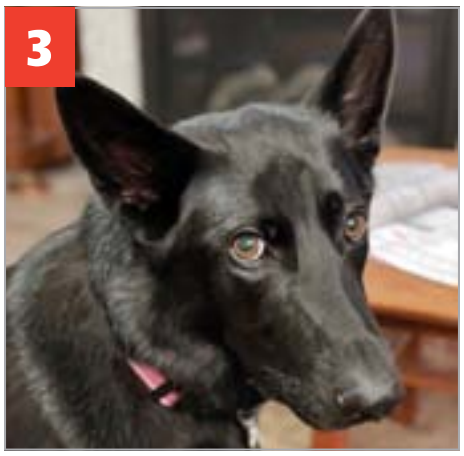
1. Finley is a seven-month Old English Sheepdog that we've had since he was eight weeks old! Finley is a giant teddy bear. He is happiest when playing with his big brothers, Sterling and Shane, going on walks, snuggling up to his humans, and tagging along on family adventures!

– Hailey P.



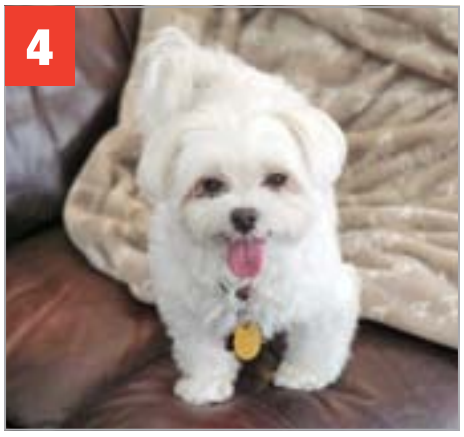
2. Harry is about five years old. Our best guess is he's part pit bull and part Dalmatian. We got him from the Globe Humane Society after they found him in the desert. We've had him for two years. He is shy around other dogs but loves people and being copilot when he can!

– Kate W.



3. Bella is a four-year-old German Shepherd who has us wrapped around her four paws. We used to be cool but now we are just her treat dealers. She loves nothing more than to play ball – nonstop! Her favorite TV show is Star Trek - TNG and she hates the news.

– Kathy and Al C.



4. I adopted Coco from a lovely woman who entered hospice. I can't describe the joy she has brought into my life! She loves her daily walks, playing like a crazy pup with her beaten up pink toys, and snuggling with me. I just love her!

– Leslie K.

*Would you like to share your pet? Send a photo and a description (50 words max) of your pet to **editor@arcadianews.com**. Include your pet's name and age, along with any fun facts about them you'd like to share. All animals are welcome!*

Practice makes a first-place win for this violin player

By Tiffany Gonzalez

On Graham Schaub's violin stand is a quote by Robert Schuller:

"Spectacular achievement is always preceded by unspectacular preparation."

This is a mantra that Graham returns to daily – especially if those seemingly endless hours of practice get to be too much.

All the preparation has paid off, though, as the Ingleside seventh-grader won first-place in the Junior Division at the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) Solo Competition this fall.

Founded in 1946, ASTA was developed to support orchestra teachers and performers. Over 75 years later, the organization "continues in its commitment to serve and lead a community of diverse members in advancing string teaching, performing and scholarship."

Within ASTA is the annual solo competition for its younger students, who not only are given the opportunity to study privately with members of the association but also contend for a top spot. This is Graham's first big win in the competition realm. He has been playing since he was three years old.

"The violin became a way of self-expression and a way to process my emotions," Graham said. "I also love performing for others."

Practicing for the competition was tense – and busy. Graham also plays second chair in Division 1 for the Mesa Youth Symphony, so his normal rehearsal times were split in two leading up to the big day. For three months straight, he practiced for 90 minutes on school days and two hours on Saturdays and Sundays.

Graham credits his instructor, Jing Zeng – an accomplished violinist for the Phoenix Symphony – for helping him achieve the first-place win.

"Jing was extremely supportive during our time together," he said. "Those were actually my favorite practices."

Graham said he was nervous in the days before the competition. He felt there were still some things that he needed to work on, but his anxiousness and focus helped him power through those last lessons.

At the solo, competitors must choose a piece of music from the standard classical literature matching their instrument and weren't allowed to exceed 10 minutes in performing.

Memorization was not required but encouraged – and Graham exceeded that expectation, as he learned by heart Violin Sonata No. 5 in F major, Op. 24, Movement 1 by Ludwig van Beethoven and performed for what he said "felt like forever."

According to Graham, he only made two mistakes.

"He is a natural performer and would love it if he could be awesome without studying. Graham is at a level that requires hours of daily rehearsal to simply maintain his skill," Dad, Tristahn, said. "Getting him to uphold those commitments can be challenging. One day I asked, 'Is this how you want to remember your childhood, all these fights over violin practice?' and his response was, 'I like that mom makes me practice when I don't want to.'"

Though he will not be eligible to compete for the next solo competition again until freshman year, Graham diligently continues practicing every day.

After the ASTA competition, he got right back to work, studying Max Bruch's Concerto No.1 Opus 26 for the Arizona International Music Competition, which took place on November 15.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TRISTAHN SCHAUB

Graham Schaub has been playing the violin since he was three years old.

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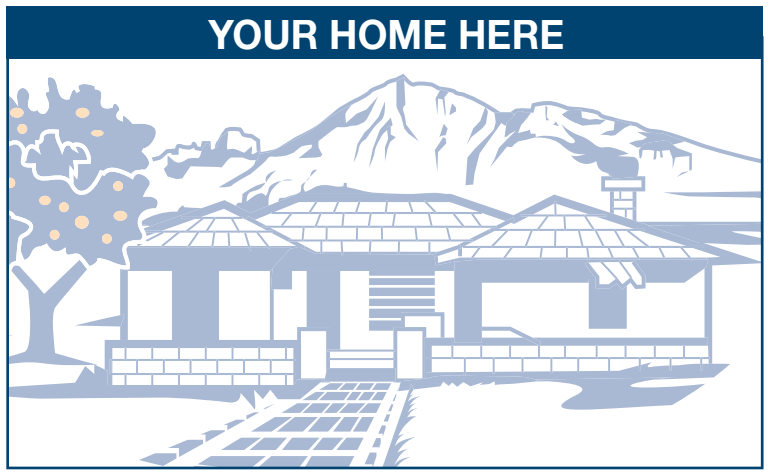

TOMMY ATKINSON
602.625.6020

Arcadia Real Estate Stats

2023 HOPI SCHOOL DISTRICT SALES RESULTS

(1/01/2023-10/31/2023)

Active Homes -	89 Homes
Homes Sold -	177 Homes
Average Sale Price -	$2,500,000
Average Sold $ Per SF -	$671
Average Days On Market -	73 days

There is currently 4 months of home inventory. (based on 2022 sales results)
2023 home sales have decreased 10% this year. (based on 2022 sales results)
2023 home prices have increased 1%. (based on 2022 sales results)
2023 $ Per Square Foot prices have increased 0%. (based on 2022 sales results)
2023 homes are taking 41% more time to sell. (based on 2022 sales results)

2023 TAVAN SCHOOL DISTRICT SALES RESULTS

(1/01/2023-10/31/2023)

Active Homes -	66 Homes
Homes Sold -	128 Homes
Average Sale Price -	$1,304,000
Average Sold $ Per SF -	$492
Average Days On Market -	83 days

There is currently 3 months of home inventory. (based on 2022 sales results)
2023 home sales have decreased 38% this year. (based on 2022 sales results)
2023 home prices have increased 6%. (based on 2022 sales results)
2023 $ Per Square Foot prices have decreased 2%. (based on 2022 sales results)
2023 Homes are taking 52% more time to sell. (based on 2022 sales results)

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WHAT'S HAPPENING, *ARCADIA?*

BRIEFS

Lee Sepanek and his family would like to let the community know that after 35 years, the **Christmas House** (4415 E. Calle Tuberia) is closing up shop, as Lee has retired from his business. *From all of us at Arcadia News: Thank you for the memories!*

Arcadia Boy Scout Troop 6 is having their annual drive-thru wreath sale at Prince of Peace (3641 N. 56th St., Phoenix) on December 2 and 3 from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. or while supplies last. Proceeds from this fundraiser help Troop 6 fund backpacking trips, camp outings and community service projects. Wreaths – and other holiday greenery and decorations – start at $30.

Arcadia City Church (3313 N. 40th St.) is hosting an abridged version of *A Christmas Carol* on December 22-24. Friday's play is at 7 p.m., Saturday at 2 and 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 and 4 p.m. The community is welcome to this free event.

arcadiacitychurch.com

Paul Komidina and Kristina Spellman are debuting the **Arcadia Luminary Experience**, a display that will light up Lafayette in between 44th St.-68th St., and Arcadia Dr. from Camelback to Indian School. The event will happen on Christmas Eve at 4:30 p.m., but the duo is looking for volunteers to help with a packing party on December 10 to load supplies, drop them off, and help with decorating.

For more information, email arcadialuminaries@gmail.com.

John Hoban wrote a song called **Merry Christmas with You**, in appreciation for beating cancer, and is sharing it with the community. The song can be downloaded for free, but donations are welcome, with proceeds going to St. Vincent de Paul to help provide food and shelter to families in need.

heartsourcemusic.com

A **Charity Garage Sale** will be held in the Hilker neighborhood on 51st St. and Lafayette on December 10, from 8:30-11 a.m. Those looking to donate can bring their items to the sale, and the proceeds will go toward the Arizona Human Society. Items that don't sell will be donated to Goodwill. *For more, email slayton9679@gmail.com.*

Dance Theater West (3925 E. Indian School Road) is holding an open house and holiday classes from December 9-14. Dancers age 3-10 can join in various ballet, tap and jazz classes – family members are encouraged to join in. Classes are free, but registration is required.

dancetheaterwest.com

The Global Ambassador (4360 E. Camelback Road) opens its doors on December 6. Hospitality leader Sam Fox crafted each aspect of the 141-room hotel to reflect his travels. The hotel boasts five original restaurants: Le Âme, a Parisian steakhouse; Le Market, with pastries,

espresso and an in-house cheesemaker; Pink Dolphin, with Mexican and Peruvian-inspired dishes and drinks; the lobby bar, and théa Mediterranean Rooftop.

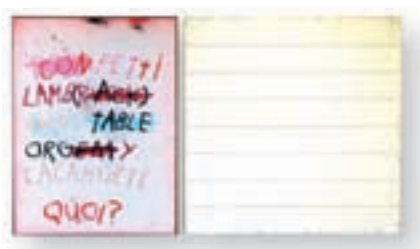
globalambassadorhotel.com

Kimpton Palomar Phoenix (2 E. Jefferson St., Phoenix) has transformed into the **Saguaro Summit Ski Lodge**. This winter-themed pop-up transports patrons to "classic alpine luxury with a modern twist." The Ski Lodge boasts rustic charm, faux fur throws, vintage ski décor, a special menu of winter-themed cocktails (hot toddy, anyone?) and sharable bites and is open from 4-11 p.m. daily.

hotelpalomar-phoenix.com

The Arizona Biltmore (2400 E. Missouri Ave., Phoenix) is hosting **Champagne and Caviar** events throughout December. Guests will find a curated menu featuring Petrossian Caviar, premium vodka brands, and a rotating selection of champagnes. On December 6, the featured brand is Moet, 13-19 is Dom Perignon, 20-26 is Laurent Perrier, and 27-January 3 is Veuve Clicquot. A small lunch menu is included.

arizonabiltmore.com



Renowned Phoenix artist Gino Belassen is hosting a Solo Show exhibit called "Essentials" from December 1-31 at **Belhaus** (5538 N 7th St., Phoenix), a contemporary art gallery in the Uptown neighborhood. The opening reception takes place on December 1 at 6 p.m.

belhaus.co

The 32nd annual **ZooLights** event is here! Ongoing until January 14, 2024, families will find four million twinkling lights and a music-in-motion light show. Check out the zoo's brand-new Wildlife Lanterns, the Glow Garden, photo booths, hot cocoa, s'mores and snacks, and of course, take photos with Santa! There will be a sensory-friendly night on December 4. Zoolights is open nightly from 5:30-10:30 p.m. at Phoenix Zoo, 455 N. Galvin Pkwy. General admission is $30.

phoenixzoo.org

HOLIDAY DONATION DRIVES

The Foster Alliance, previously known as Arizona Helping Hands, is hosting various events to collect gifts for foster kids. On December 8, there will be a free benefit concert at Scottsdale Quarter. On December 14-16, The Foster Alliance will host the Holiday Joy Fest, where foster families can visit the resource center and pick out gifts for the children in their care. Visit the website to find gift ideas and more information.

thefosteralliance.org/holidaytoydrive

The **Fill the Bus Toy Drive** is happening on December 3 from 12-3 p.m. at Wine Girl (4205 N. Scottsdale Road). This good deed comes with drinks attached. The third annual toy drive will offer donators a mimosa bar, photo ops, wine tastings, games and giveaways. Guests can grab a bite to eat, something to sip and even do some shopping while also giving back to the Arizona Cancer Foundation for Children, the event's beneficiary.

winegirl.com

Nourish Phoenix (501 S. 9th Ave., Phoenix) is hosting a Holiday Toy Drive until December 8. Families can "adopt" a child or family to make their gift wishes come true. Donations of gift cards, toys and kids clothing are preferred. The organization's Winter and Holiday Food Donation Drives run until December 31. Donate blankets, socks, jackets, gloves, scarves, pillows, canned gravy, stuffing, canned fruit/vegetables, bread mixes, rice, soups, instant potatoes and dessert mixes. Drop-offs are accepted Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-12 p.m.

nourishphx.org

The 17th annual **Ton of Toys and Food Drive** + Distribution event will happen from December 14-17 at the Walmart Supercenter, 5250 W. Indian School Road. This year's goal is to collect at least 10,000 pounds of non-perishable food, 2,000 pounds of toys and 200 bikes. The drive will benefit UMOM New Day Centers, the Who I Am Foundation, Mindful Wellness, and St. Mary's Food Bank.

criscoskids.org

On December 5, Barro's Pizza will host the 11th annual Doran Barro **Holiday Hunger Fight** benefiting St. Mary's Food Bank. From open to close at 47 locations across the Valley, the restaurant will donate 100 percent of proceeds from all sales to help those in Arizona facing hard times during the holidays. In the last decade, the pizza chain has raised a total of more than $2.5 million for St. Mary's through the annual event.

barrospizza.com

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WHAT'S HAPPENING, *ARCADIA?*

EVENTS

FRIDAY 12/1

Rock the Rooftop

7 p.m. at the W Hotel, 7277 E. Camelback Road, Scottsdale. This second annual concert will feature up-and-coming artists, including Chris Lane, Josh Ross, and more. Proceeds from the event will benefit Make-A-Wish Arizona and Riot Gives Back. General admission is $40; VIP packages start at $100.

rocktherooftopfest.com

SATURDAY 12/2

Phoenix Electric Light Parade

7 p.m., starting at Central and Montebello Aves. For more than three decades, the APS Light Parade has delighted the public with a two-mile-long illuminated event featuring musicians, marching bands, trucks, floats, balloons and performances. This year's theme is "It's Electric!" Afterward, children can take pictures with Santa, participate in workshops, and engage in other fun holiday activities.

phoenix.gov

Storytime and Holiday Party

2-4 p.m. at the SOCA Gallery, 4160 N. Scottsdale Road. Author and illustrator Patty Gannon invites kids of all ages to SOCA Gallery to celebrate the release of her latest book, *Desdemona*. Patty will read to attendees while they color their thoughts about the story. Snacks and refreshments will be served. RSVP by calling 480-946-2333. This event is free.

socagallery.com

Dirt Expo

9 a.m. at WestWorld, 16601 N. Pima Road, Scottsdale. Outdoorsmen and women are invited to the ninth annual Dirt Expo, showcasing off-road, UTV, overland and motorcycle product and service vendors. Visitors can check out free educational seminars and classes, and toy haulers and trailers will be on display. Giveaways, food and drinks will be available. Tickets start at $20 for general admission.

thedirtexpo.com

Merry Merchantile Market

10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Scottsdale Civic Center, 3939 N. Drinkwater Blvd., Scottsdale. This year, the Merchantile is bringing together over 80 local businesses, artisans, and vendors to the Civic Center. There will be immersive workshops – for grownups and kids – in collaboration with Scottsdazzle. Live music, yummy treats, giveaways and a kids' play area will also be available. This event is free.

merchantilemarket.com

***Rock the Rooftop** at the W Hotel in Scottsdale.*

SUNDAY 12/3

Sit. Stay. Brunch.

10 a.m. at the Scottsdale Resort, 7700 E. McCormick Pkwy., Scottsdale. Benefiting the Lost Our Home Pet Rescue, the 15th annual holiday champagne brunch and auction is back. This event raises funds needed to support services and programs for pets and people in the community. Guests can enjoy drinks and brunch, take photos in the photo booth, hang out with adoptable pets and participate in the silent auction. Tickets start at $175.

lostourhome.org

Holiday Pops

7:30 p.m. at the Phoenix Symphony, 75 N. Second St., Phoenix. The holiday season is here, and what better way to celebrate than with festive music? Phoenix Symphony's annual Holiday Pops concert features hymns and carols from various traditions. Vocalists Andrea Ross and Dane Suarez, along with the Phoenix Symphony Chorus, will sing all the classics – it might be hard not to sing along. Tickets start at $34-$110.

phoenixsymphony.org

SATURDAY 12/2 – SUNDAY 12/3

Spirits of Mexico

11 a.m. at Heritage Square, 113 N. 6th St., Phoenix. An event held to connect attendees with Mexico's culture, flavors, and traditions. There will be agave spirits, tequila, mescal and sotol tastings and live entertainment, including a Mariachi band, Ballet Folklorico, and fine art from Mata Ortiz pottery. Tickets include an engraved shot glass, 10 sample tickets, activities and an optional cooking class. Admission is $50.

imexliveevents.com

SATURDAY 12/9

Mimosas and Monet

9:30-11:30 a.m. at the Hermosa Inn, 5532 N. Palo Cristi Road, Paradise Valley. Calling all painters, beginners and experts alike. Hermosa Inn welcomes Carrie Curran Art Studios for a morning of art and mimosas. Carrie will teach and guide guests with an acrylic on canvas painting of Monet's Mosaic Desert Sunset. Enjoy a mimosa and snack on pastries while creating your masterpiece. Registration is $120.

hermosainn.com

Fuelfest

1-8 p.m. at WestWorld, 16601 N. Pima Road, Scottsdale. Fuelfest boasts all things auto, with more than 600 custom, exotic, rare, and exclusive cars and trucks. There will also be car exhibits, drag racing, drift exhibits, ride-a-longs, food, drinks and live music. A portion of proceeds benefits Reach Out Worldwide, the nonprofit founded by actor Paul Walker. Tickets start at $35, with VIP packages available.

fuelfest.com

Wreath Workshop

10 a.m. at Dig It Gardens, 3015 N. 16th St., Phoenix. Looking for something new to deck out the front door? Make it yourself at the Dig It Wreath Workshop! Instructors will be on hand, guiding attendees in constructing a wreath with Echeveria and Haworthia succulents. Drinks and snacks will also be provided. Attendance is $75 per person and includes all materials.

digphx.com

SUNDAY 12/10

Indian and Young Artists Market

9 a.m.-4 p.m. at the S'edav Va'aki Museum, 4619 E. Washington St., Phoenix. The 46th annual Indian Art Market at features over 100 artisan booths, traditional Native American performances, demonstrations, authentic foods and hands-on activities for the whole family to enjoy. The museum and park will also be open during this event. Admission is $5.

phoenix.gov

WEDNESDAY 12/13

Willy Wonka Dinner

6:30 p.m. at Match Market & Bar, 1100 N. Central Ave., Phoenix. Fans of that whimsical candy maker are invited to watch the film at Match Market – with a themed meal to complement your favorite parts. Each course is named after scenes or props (Bucket Family Dinner, The Testing Room, etc.), and guests will, of course, be given some sweets. Tickets are $70.

matchphx.com

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Wishing everyone a very safe and Happy New Year.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING, *ARCADIA?*

FRIDAY 12/15

Trivia Night @ SMoCA

7 p.m. at the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, 7374 E. 2nd St., Scottsdale. Comedian Anwar Newton returns to host an evening full of holiday-themed movie, TV, and music references to test your pop culture IQ. Put on your favorite holiday sweater, grab a cup of hot cocoa, compete to win prizes, and become trivia champions of SMoCA. Tickets are $15.

smoca.org

SATURDAY 12/16

A Merry-Achi Christmas

8 p.m. at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, 7380 E. Second St. A fifth-generation mariachi musician, Maestro José Hernández and his platinum-selling Mariachi Sol de México will head to Scottsdale to perform various treasured holiday classics and favorites from the mariachi songbook. If you feel like dancing, no one will judge! Tickets are $39-$59.

scottsdaleperformingarts.org

Fiesta Bowl Parade

10 a.m., starting at N. Central and Montebello Ave., Phoenix. The Fiesta Bowl is one of Arizona's most iconic sporting events, and the parade is one way to kick off the big game. The 51st annual parade will showcase marching bands, balloons, cheerleaders, baton twirlers and community organizations. This year's theme is "Spirit of Competition." Grandstand seating is available for $30 per person.

fiestabowl.org

***A Merry-Achi Christmas** at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts.*

SUNDAY 12/24

Christmas Wonderland

2-7 p.m. at Paradise Valley United Methodist Church, 4455 E. Lincoln Dr. Squeeze in one final holiday event before Christmas Day with PVUMC and its Christmas Wonderland. Attendees will find various arts and crafts, cookie decorating, giant inflatables, a hot chocolate bar, a birthday cake for Jesus, and a train ride that will be available from 2-5 p.m. This event is free for all ages.

pvumc.org

TUES. 12/26 – WED. 12/27

Winter Baseball Camp

1-4 p.m. at Salt River Fields, 7555 N. Pima Road, Scottsdale. Students can enjoy three hours of hitting, swinging, and everything in between as they learn the fundamentals of a successful baseball game at the Salt River Fields spring training facility. Former minor league and MLB players and coaches will lead this camp for ages 5-12. Cost is $150 per person.

saltriverfields.com

SUNDAY 12/31

NYE Cirque Spectacular

7:30 p.m. at Symphony Hall, 75 N. Second St., Phoenix. Fusing elements of cirque acrobatics, classical dance and contemporary theater, Troupe Vertigo will take audiences on a journey through artistic movement. Led by Aloysia Gavre, Rex Camphuis and Conductor Stuart Chafetz, guests will see acrobats, aerialists, contortionists and strongmen who perform feats of strength and agility on stage – and above it! Tickets start at $35.

phoenixsymphony.org

Gatsby's House New Year's Eve Party

8 p.m. at Renaissance Phoenix Downtown Hotel, 100 N. 1st St., Phoenix. Get ready to celebrate New Year's Eve – 1920s flapper style! Patrons can enjoy hand-passed appetizers, two DJs, 2024 party favors, drinks, surprises throughout the night and casino gaming, finished with a midnight countdown. This is a 21+ event. Tickets start at $70.

marriott.com

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Dear Neighbors...

As a local business, we could not be more appreciative of the neighborhood support that we continue to receive year after year.

We opened The Brokery's Arcadia branch office in 2017 with 7 real estate advisors. Today, we have 4 locations and we are home to over 80 advisors who currently transact more than $360,000,000 in real estate annually. Our growth has been fueled by neighbors like yourself who have referred and championed our business from day one. We are truly humbled by the support and we will continue to keep our promise of being "Relentlessly Local."

In 2024, we expect to see homes stay on market longer than recent years as higher interest rates continue to put pressure on buyers in the lower and middle tier price points around the Camelback Corridor. The upper end of the market in Arcadia Proper will continue to remain resilient as cash buyers still make up a large portion of the buyer pool. While inventory won't surge, we do expect there to be more homes for sale next year than in the past. Additionally, buyers may gain some control if sellers get antsy and can't temper their expectations of a quick sale.

As this "new normal" evolves, the market will prove to be difficult for those who dabble in real estate. The professional brokers will continue to stand out in markets like this where hyper-local knowledge, sales tactics, and marketing firepower make a difference in your home's success on the market. Fortunately, we have been playing the long game and have built our business across multiple market cycles for times like today. If you have any questions going in to 2024, we are always around and ready to assist.

Thank you again for a phenomenal year and we look forward to seeing you around the neighborhood in 2024!

OLEG BORTMAN
ASSOCIATE BROKER
& CO-FOUNDER
602.402.2296

TUCKER BLALOCK
MANAGING BROKER
& CO-FOUNDER
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THE BROKERY
LOCAL REAL ESTATE BROKERS

OUT OF THE AREA, *BUT WORTH THE DRIVE*

North Pole Experience *at Little America in Flagstaff.*

Lights in the Night *at Thompson Event Center in Mesa.*

FRIDAY 12/1

Frosty Fest

6-8 p.m. at Park West Mall, 9744 W. Northern Ave., Peoria. Tis the season for all things jolly. During this free event, guests will find two real snow play areas, an inner tube snow slide, a live performance by the Jingle Belles, photo ops with Santa, "reindeer" rides and train rides. A seasonal scavenger hunt will allow attendees to collect "believe" bells at participating stores and restaurants, redeemable for a free light-up Santa hat.

shopparkwest.com

SATURDAY 12/2

Holiday "Open Barn"

9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Desert Mirage Alpaca Ranch, 19007 W. Roadrunner Road, Wittman. Desert Mirage has a lot of holiday spirit going around – and this is made even better with one thing: alpacas! Spend time with the fluffy animals, browse through local vendors and take care of Christmas shopping at the alpaca store. The man in red will also be making an appearance. This event is free.

desertmiragealpacaranch.com

SUNDAY 12/3

Santa Hustle 5K

7 a.m. at Westgate, 6751 N. Sunset Blvd., Glendale. Now's the time to run off all those calories from Thanksgiving to make room for Christmas dinner. The Santa Hustle race offers a half-marathon, 5K and Kids Dash. Dress in your best Santa-themed outfits, enjoy the race and then head to the post-race party for the awards show – there's even an award for best costume. Registration is $50 for the 5K and $70 for the half-marathon.

santahustle.com

FRIDAY 12/8 – SUNDAY 12/10

4th Avenue Winter Street Fair

10 a.m., along 4th Avenue in Tucson. This 54th annual, family-friendly street fair brings over 350,000 people to the Old Pueblo annually. There will be live entertainment, 40+ food and drink stations, a vendor village, beer and wine and more than 350 artists from around the world showcasing their mediums. This event is free.

fourthavenue.org

SAT. 12/9 – SUN. 12/10

West Valley Wonderland

10 a.m.-6 p.m. at State Farm Stadium, 1 Cardinals Dr., Glendale. A one-stop holiday shop with over 100 vendors offering everything from handmade crafts and jewelry to home goods, holiday ornaments and apparel. There will also be games, activities, food vendors, live music, balloon rides and more. Tickets start at $12.

westvalleywonderland.com

SUNDAY 12/10

Hanukkah Menorah Lighting

5:30 p.m. at Tlaquepaque, 336 State Route 179, Sedona. Hosted by Chabad of Sedona and Tlaquepaque Arts and Shopping Village, attendees are welcome to watch the lighting of the menorah on the first night of Hanukkah at Tlaquepaque. Latkes, donuts, and hot chocolate will be available, as well as festive music. Kids will have the opportunity to meet Judah the Maccabbee, take a photo and receive chocolate coins. This event is free.

tlaq.com

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FRIDAY 12/15

A Winter's Eve with David Arkenstone

7:30 p.m. at the Musical Instrument Museum, 4725 E. Mayo Blvd., Phoenix. Five-time Grammy nominee David Arkenstone and his band will host a candlelit concert of holiday classics performed in Arkenstone's signature style: a blend of neo-classical crossover, new age, Celtic, progressive rock, orchestral and world music. Tickets start at $42.

mim.org

FRIDAY 12/15 – SUNDAY 12/17

Art at Anthem

10 a.m.- 5 p.m. at Outlets North Phoenix, 4250 W. Anthem Way. The inaugural Art at Anthem event will boast over 60 fine artists and vendors, live music, activities, food vendors and more. Saturday will see a Drum Circle activity for the kids, and on Sunday, Native hoop dancer Moontee Sinquah will perform. Admission is free.

oakcreekartsandcraftsshow.com

SATURDAY 12/16

North Pole Experience

Times vary; at Little America, 2515 E. Butler Ave., Flagstaff. Visit with Santa before he heads out to drop off Christmas gifts. Go behind the scenes of Santa's workshop and help the elves build toys for Christmas, take a tour of the workshop, visit the Toy Hall of Fame, read stories with Mrs. Claus – and visit her bakery – and build arts and crafts. Tickets start at $52 per person.

northpoleexperience.com

Lights in the Night

6-8 p.m. at Thompson Event Center, 1901 N. Alma School Road, Mesa. As families and friends travel through this drive-thru light show, they may be dazzled by over one million lights glittering on candy canes, snowmen, presents, and more, all synchronized to festive holiday tunes. New this year is a VIP train ride experience. Tickets start at $35 per vehicle.

arizonalightsinthenight.com

WEDNESDAY 12/20

DRUMline Live! Holiday Spectacular

7 p.m. at The Vista Center for the Arts, 15660 N. Parkview Pl., Surprise. If you've seen the movie *Drumline*, you know what's happening at this evening's event. Except this time, the drummers will perform soulful renditions of favored holiday classics like The Little Drummer Boy, Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer and more. Tickets start at $30.

thevistaaz.com

FRIDAY 12/29

African Children's Choir

7 p.m. at Desert Hills Community Church, 34835 N. 7th St., Phoenix. International nonprofit Music for Life is hosting the 2023 U.S. African Children's Choir Tour. The concert will include performances of popular children's music, traditional spiritual songs and African cultural pieces. This concert is free, but donations are welcome.

africanchildrenschoir.com

SUNDAY 12/31

New Year's Eve Celebration

3-6 p.m. or 7 p.m.-12:30 a.m. at Arizona Broadway Theatre, 7701 W. Paradise Lane, Peoria. Ring in 2024 with two performances and a three-course meal. Tribute band Not Fade Away will play songs by Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, Jerry Lee Lewis, The Beatles, The Big Bopper and more. There will be a champagne celebration and a balloon drop when midnight strikes. Tickets are $175 per person.

azbroadway.org

Blazin' M New Year's Eve

7 p.m. at Blazin' M Ranch, 1875 Mabery Ranch Road, Cottonwood. Dinner, drinks and dancing are on the docket for this ranch's NYE event. Guests can choose from prime rib, chicken or a vegetarian meal, and after dinner, there will be a live DJ and dancing, plus a champagne toast at midnight. Kids and adults are welcome. Tickets are $109 per person.

blazinm.com

A story about the disappearance of the American Chestnut

By Shi Bradley

Earlier this year, Arcadia-based environmental advocate and author Robin Shaw released her debut novel, *The Tree That Called Us Home*. This story centers around the disappearance of the iconic American Chestnut Tree.

The novel regales readers with a journey that spans seven generations of the Hayes family, who run a hog farm in southwestern Virginia. The protagonist returns from her busy life in the city to begin a project focused on the chestnut tree in her hometown, telling a tale of the circle of life, the importance of family, and the significance of the tree in the Appalachian region.

"The chestnut was this giant of a tree that grew all over the eastern seaboard. It was used for everything," Shaw said. "Lumber, people made it a source of nutrition, they used it to make bread. It became a staple in American history. Many streets are named after the chestnut. It's even in a famous Christmas song."

Over the last 100 years, nearly 60 species of chestnuts have gone extinct. The blight of the American chestnut highlights a moment in environmental history widely regarded by ecologists as one of the most significant disasters since the Ice Age.

"Our chestnuts built no immunity to the blight," Shaw explained. "It traveled and wiped out an estimated four billion trees."

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBIN SHAW

Robin Shaw (front, right) with some of her guests at the book launch for her novel – a project that took over three years.

With a degree in biology and a background in creative writing, Shaw wanted to find a way to advocate for and bring awareness to the American chestnut – in a way didn't require a return to the lab or significant funds, which was part of the inspiration for her novel.

"I realized storytelling is truly the birthplace of connection for human beings," Shaw said. "We love to hear stories; we love to tell stories. So I thought, I will write about a real family, what life was like when they lived in the chestnut forests, and then when the blight came, what that was like and how it affected their family."

Shaw says the support in publishing the book and the reception in both the local and chestnut advocacy communities has been incredible.

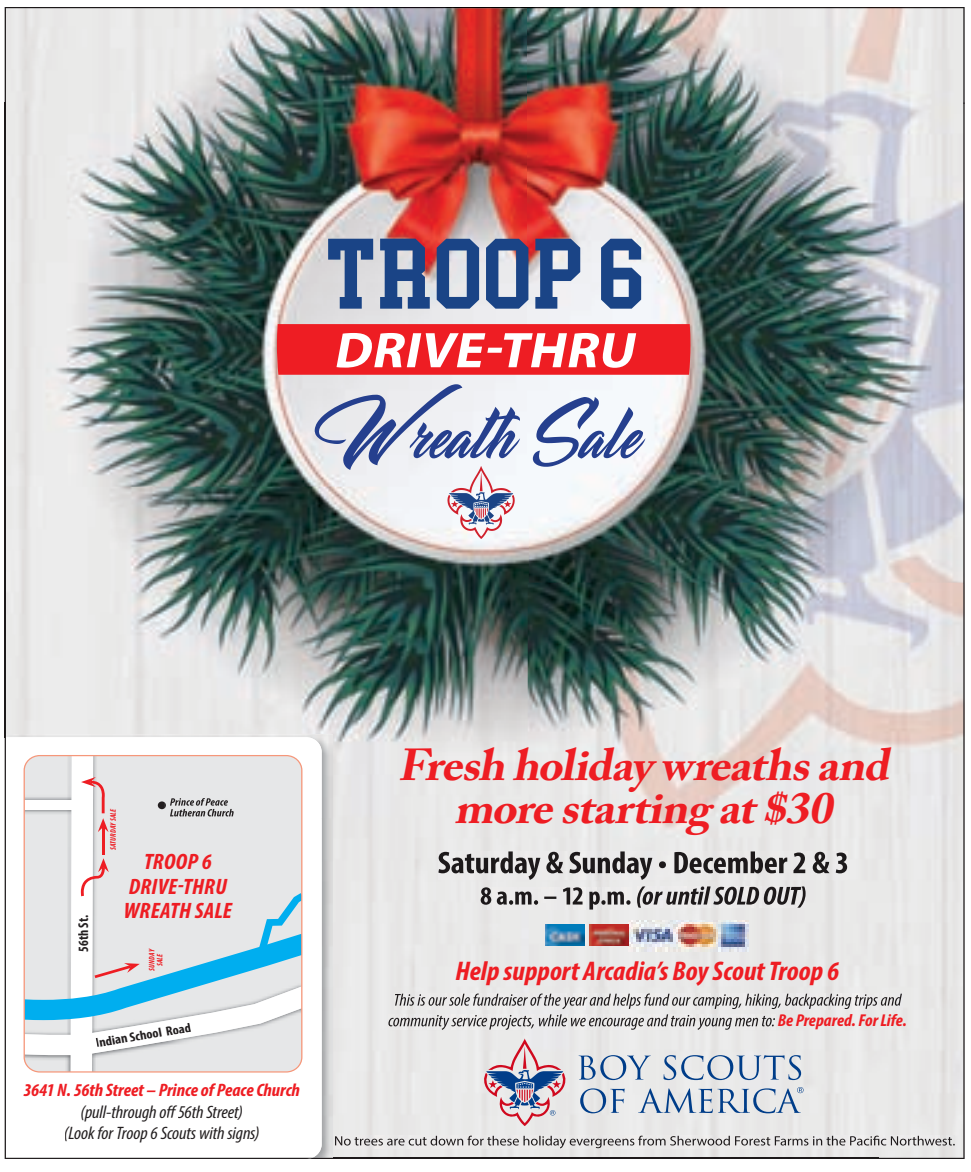
"I've done many things in my life and had many different careers. But this was definitely a culmination of everything I've worked for," Shaw said. "I had a book launch, and the energy was amazing."

Shaw hopes her novel inspires people to help the cause, but her first and foremost goal is to spread awareness about an underrated part of history.

"I want everyone to know that this happened," Shaw said. "This was a devastating event that Americans should be aware of, and if you want to be involved and advocate for the cause, even better."

The Tree That Called Us Home is available on Amazon.

wildamericanchestnut.com



Remembering the 'date which will live in infamy'

The Lowe Road

BY SAM LOWE

A former Valley newspaperman who now writes about his travels across Arizona, the U.S. and the globe.

Sam's mother on her fifth wedding anniversary in 1936. (right) The North Dakota Armored Battalion – Jim, Dick and Sam Lowe – in 1940.

Even now, more than 80 years later, I remember the dress Mom was wearing. It was faded blue, with little white flowers. She made it herself. It didn't fit quite right, but she didn't mind because it was just for wearing around the house after church on Sundays.

The day was clear and sunny, hardly typical for December on the plains of North Dakota. The weather had turned unseasonably mild, so my brothers and I were playing in the front yard instead of huddling over the open furnace grate in the living room where we usually spent wintry Sundays, trying to keep warm. Mom came out of the house and stood on the front porch.

She didn't say anything, just stood there, looking first at us, then off into the distance with her arms clasped across her chest, staring out across a field that had earlier borne a wheat crop but now lay barren. Her presence was unusual because normally, as soon as the cold weather arrived, the front door was ritualistically closed and locked to hold back the slashing winter. But she had opened it so she could stand on the porch. And she was crying.

Had it been a weekday, we might not have noticed. She always cried on weekdays because she listened to the soap operas on the radio. Sometimes, she'd suffer through "Young Widder Brown" or "Pepper Young's Family" while she was cooking, and the tears would run off the end of her nose and drop into the stew. She just stirred it in with the meat and potatoes.

But it was Sunday, and the soaps didn't air on Sundays. And so, with the embarrassed hesitations and youthful attempts at comfort that accompany seeing your mother cry, we asked what was bothering her and if we could fix it with hugs and kisses, the way she always cured all our ailments, real or imagined. She gracefully acknowledged our feeble offerings, then gathered all three of us into her arms.

"We're at war," she said.

Though she sobbed the words out, there was comfort in them because we had been afraid it was something serious. But it was only a war, and wars were fun. We'd had one just the previous Friday afternoon. Dick and Jim, and I had held off two artillery divisions and a tank unit. According to our childish versions, they had come up from the south, from the fortress at Leichtenheizelburg and had already taken our neighboring towns. But they weren't ready for what lay in store for them when they messed around with the Sixth Kensal North Dakota Armored Battalion.

As wars go, this had been a relatively short one. It would have been longer, but Dick had to stay after school, so we had to wait around for him because he was the only experienced machine gunner in our unit, which meant he rode on the back of the tricycle while Jim pedaled. And because it was winter, the sun went down around five o'clock, so we only got in about a half-hour of actual combat. Mom's anguish didn't have quite the effect she might have expected.

In fact, it was probably just the opposite because Dick released himself from her embrace and yelled, "Oh boy! War!" Then, with the proper saliva-enhanced sound effects, he fired off multiple rounds from the box elder tree branch that sort of looked like a machine gun when you squinted just right.

And I, always willing to do anything to make my mother feel better, jumped in front of her as a brave young protector, then fell forward and clutched my stomach, the way the movies and my imagination always portrayed someone who had taken a direct hit. Instantly, however, I rose to my full upright position and assured her, "It's only a flesh wound, ma'am, so put me back in the front lines with my buddies where I belong while you take shelter in that abandoned farmhouse."

But our childish efforts were in vain.

Mom didn't smile.

Instead, she put her face into her hands and wept even harder, and these were not the gentle tears that fell when she listened to the soap operas. So we gathered once more around her and, in schoolboy fashion, patted her on the shoulders and tried to be of some comfort.

"There, there," we said, with as much sympathy as we knew how to generate, considering the circumstances. "It'll be all right," we said, hoping it would ease her pain as she had done for us so many times.

She seemed to take some consolation in that, for she tried to dry her tears with the sleeve of her faded blue dress, then gathered all three of us into her arms, hugged us and smothered us with kisses. She went back inside, back to the radio to get more news, and we returned to whatever we had been doing before being interrupted by something so trivial as actual combat.

"Guess Mom doesn't know much about war," I said as we resumed.

"Guess not," Dick replied while Jim cranked up our armored tricycle for the upcoming battle.

It wasn't a very good assessment.

She knew.

Enjoy this new Christmas song and help those in critical need!

Get your free download and donate today to St. Vincent de Paul at heartsourcemusic.com – thank you!

© Cover art: Mark Vranesh, nationally acclaimed artist, former Arcadian

I am a long-time Arcadian and created this joyous Christmas song in gratitude for beating cancer. Your donation to St. Vincent de Paul will provide food and shelter for those in need – and restore hope during these difficult times.

Special thanks to everyone behind this Christmas miracle including my wife Catherine, Mark Vranesh, Arcadia News, St. Vincent de Paul, and to all of you as my fellow Arcadians for your support!

Happy Holidays!

John

Patricia and "Christmas Lee" Sepanek

Arcadia's Christmas House dims the lights

After more than 35 years of what has grown to be the largest holiday lights display in Arcadia, Lee (aka Christmas Lee) and Patricia Sepanek have decided to take a break. Now that Lee has retired from a 45-year career in construction, he's ready to enjoy looking at lights, instead of working on lights.

"I didn't decide on this course easily," Lee said. "But it's getting too expensive – the costs run more than $12,000 per season."

The largest expense is the electric bill, but there's also storage fees and maintenance. Plus, there's always new decorations.

The setup for the 250,000-plus lights, yard displays and the hundreds of characters in the dioramas, is arduous work that starts in September

> ***Thank you to all of you who have been to my home over all these years and supported us.***

and requires double-digit man hours every day. Plus, Lee is "out there every night from Thanksgiving through New Year's."

"It started when I took my boys out to look at lights when they were young," Lee said. "They asked if we could do it at our home and it just grew from there."

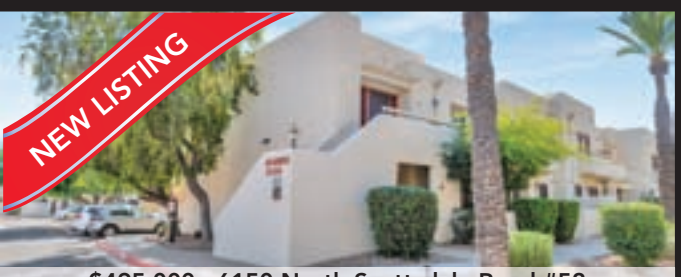
An average busy night probably brings a couple thousand visitors, but it's hard to say how many for sure. Most people just drive by and miss the details that go into the operation, like the hot cocoa machine.

"One season we served up nine thousand cups of cocoa," Lee said.

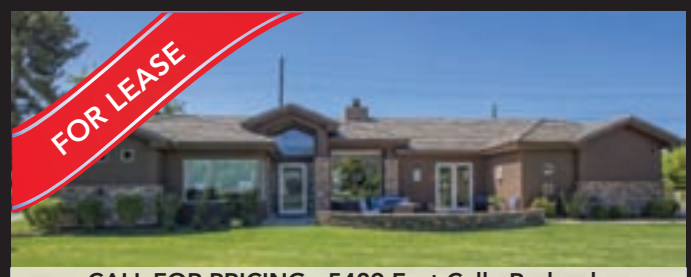
Over the years, he's noticed there are generations of people who bring their kids to see the lights they used to go see when they were little.

This year, Lee says they still plan on putting some lights up. They've also shared some of their collection with the neighbors, so Christmas cheer can still be found around the Christmas House on Calle Tuberia.

Nobody Sells More Homes in Arcadia Than The Joffe Group



$495,000 6150 North Scottsdale Road #52
2 bedrooms, 2 baths, 1,056 square feet
6150scottsdaleroad.com



CALL FOR PRICING 5429 East Calle Redonda
4 bedrooms, 4 baths, 3,531 square feet
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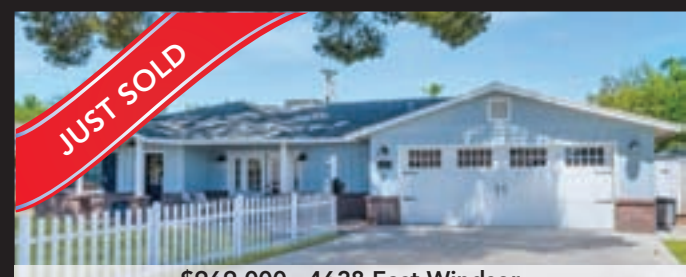
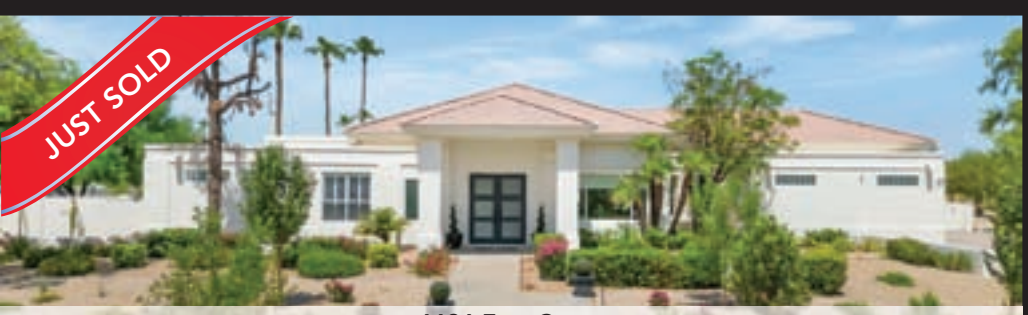
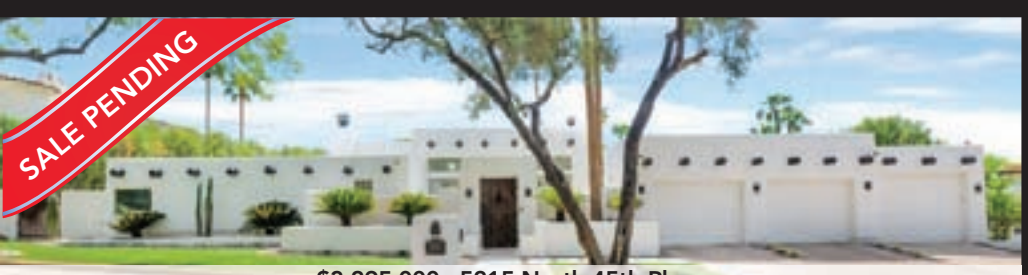


$969,000 4628 East Windsor
4 bedrooms, 3 baths, 2,331 square feet
4628windsor.com



6636 East Caron
CALL FOR PRICING AND INFORMATION.

CALL FOR PRICING 6701 East Fanfol
6 bedrooms, 7 baths, 7,011 square feet
6701fanfol.com



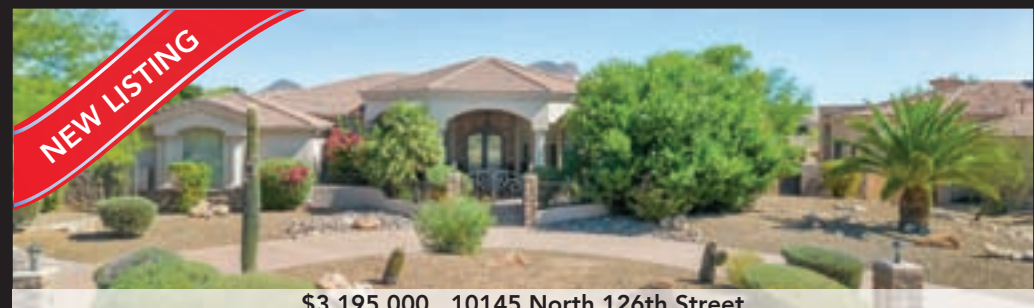
$3,295,000 5215 North 45th Place
4 bedrooms, 4 baths, 3,633 square feet
5215north45thplace.com

CALL FOR PRICING 4715 East Calle Del Medio
4 bedrooms, 5 baths, 5,530 square feet

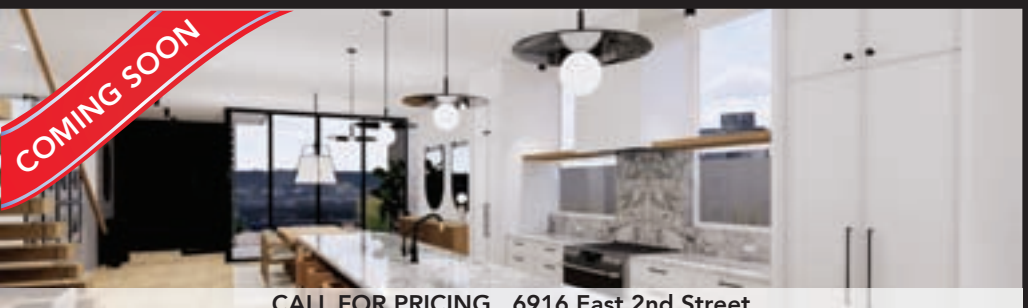
$5,175,000 8200 North Charles
4 bedrooms, 4 baths, 4,810 square feet
8200charles.com

CALL FOR PRICING 6737 East Exeter
5 bedrooms, 7 baths, 6,876 square feet
6737exeter.com

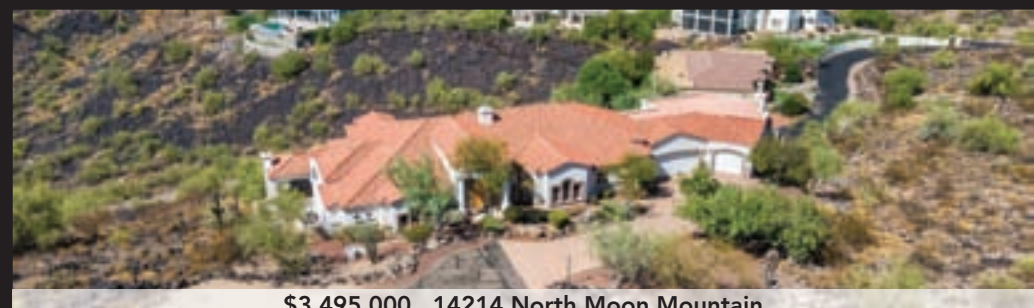
$3,099,000 4015 North 40th Place
5 bedrooms, 6 baths, 4,614 square feet
4015north40thplace.com



$3,195,000 10145 North 126th Street
6 bedrooms, 6 baths, 6,227 square feet
10145north126thstreet.com



CALL FOR PRICING 6916 East 2nd Street
4 bedrooms, 5 baths, 3,014 square feet
Oldtown5.com



$3,495,000 14214 North Moon Mountain
4 bedrooms, 4 baths, 10,018 square feet
14214moonmountain.com

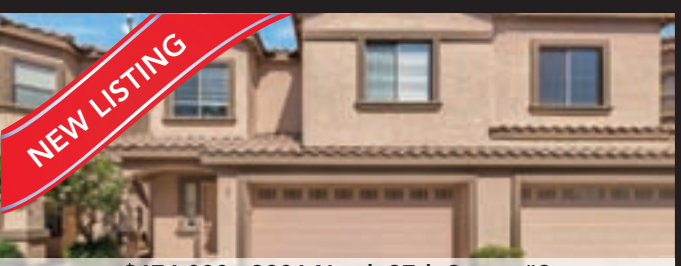
602.989.8300 | robert@thejoffegroup.com | TheJoffeGroup.com

$2,119,000 5808 North Sundown Drive
4 bedrooms, 4 baths, 5,235 square feet
5808sundown.com

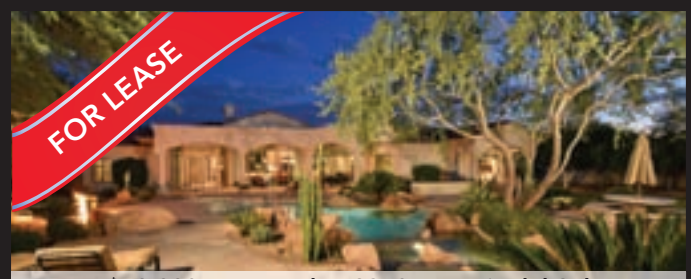
$995,000 3801 North Goldwater Blvd #403
2 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2,043 square feet
3801northgoldwater.com

CALL FOR PRICING 5812 North 44th Place
5 bedrooms, 4 baths, 4,205 square feet

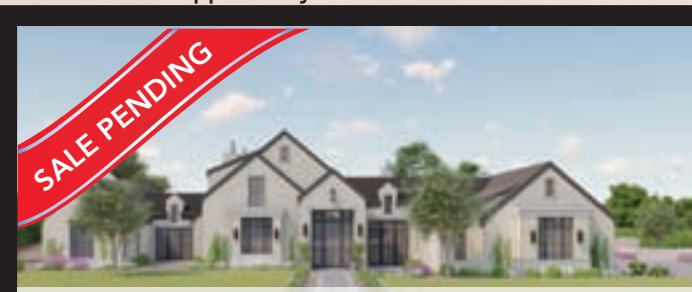
$3,495,000 6733 East Exeter
1 Acre Lot Opportunity



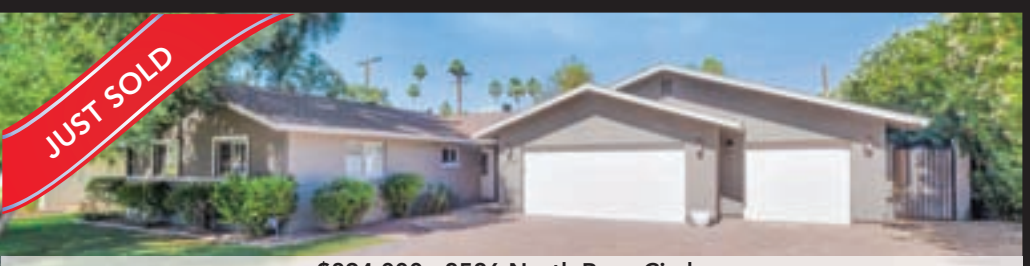
$474,000 3006 North 37th Street #2
2 bedrooms, 3 baths, 1,554 square feet
3006north37thstreet.com



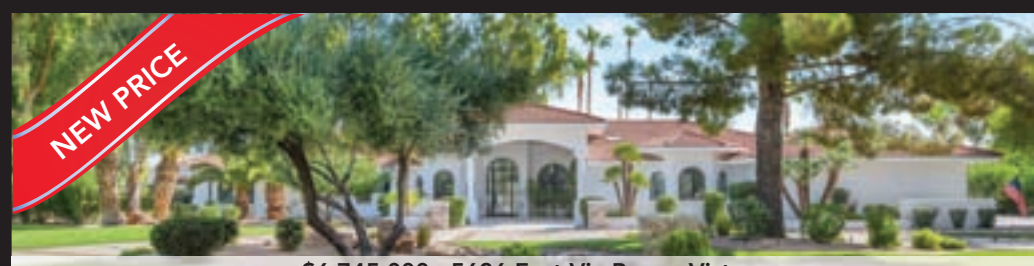
$18,000 per month 8350 East Via del Sol
4 bedrooms, 5 baths, 4,783 square feet



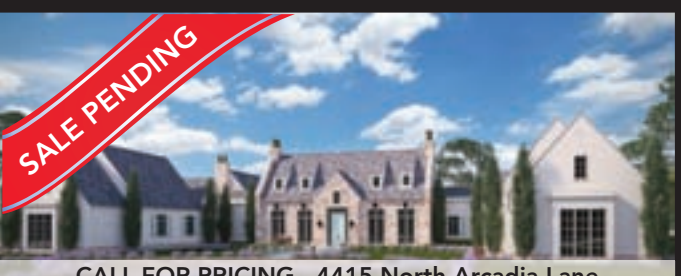
5115 East Exeter
CALL FOR PRICING AND INFORMATION



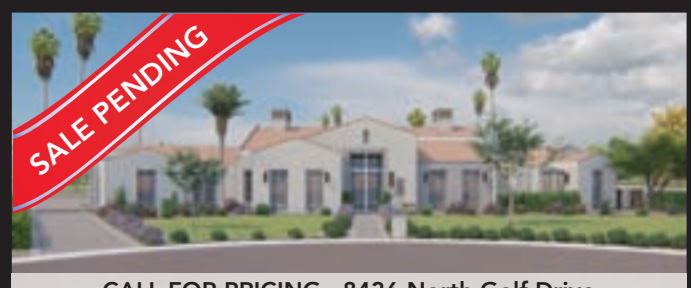
$894,000 3526 North Rose Circle
4 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2,008 square feet
3526rosecircle.com



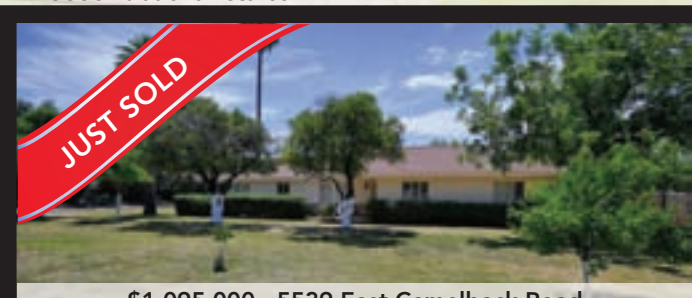
$6,745,000 5636 East Via Buena Vista
5 bedrooms, 7 baths, 6,872 square feet
5636viabuenavista.com



CALL FOR PRICING 4415 North Arcadia Lane
6 bedrooms, 14 baths, 12,748 square feet
4415arcadialane.com

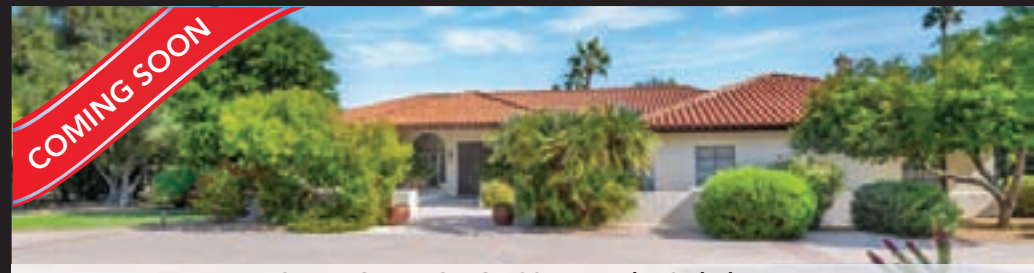


CALL FOR PRICING 8436 North Golf Drive
6 bedrooms, 7 baths, 8,216 square feet



$1,095,000 5539 East Camelback Road
4 bedrooms, 3 baths, 2,732 square feet

CALL FOR PRICING 5944 East Lafayette
5 bedrooms, 6 baths, 4,022 square feet
5944lafayette.com



CALL FOR PRICING 8815 North 63rd Place
3 bedrooms, 4 baths, 3,915 square feet

Andrew Mehlman, Jen Sheedy, Robert Joffe, Meredith Lane, Jonah Joffe

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In the Kitchen

with Executive Chef Charles Kassels of El Chorro

5550 E. Lincoln Dr., Paradise Valley • *elchorro.com*

It's more than just a place with famous sticky buns. Whether you've spent the holidays here for the past 50 years or have lunch on the patio every Saturday, El Chorro has been a staple for many since it opened in 1937.

The 22-acre property was originally a schoolhouse built by Dr. John C. Lincoln in 1934 called the Judson School for Girls. Lincoln built the school so his daughter could get an education while he was constructing the Camelback Inn. In 1937, the school was purchased by Jan and Mark Gruber and converted to a restaurant and lodge.

Fast forward 30+ years: Bartender Joe Miller and his wife Evie purchased El Chorro and expanded seating from 70 to 200. In 2009, the property was acquired by Jacquie Dorrance and Kristy and Tim Moore and in 2021, Grossman Company Properties and Classic Hotels & Resorts took over.

Behind the scenes and manning three on-site kitchens, though, is Executive Chef Charles Kassels.

Where are you from originally?

I've been in Arizona for about 45 years. I'm originally from upstate New York but moved out here during my freshman year of high school, so I grew up here.

Any specific reason for choosing Arizona?

The winter of 1978 was brutal. My mother – who had visited Arizona a couple of times prior – never wanted to deal with that weather again. After my parents divorced, she said, 'If the weather is one less thing to worry about…' It was like the television show *Alice*, a couple of kids in a beat-up old station wagon moving out to the Wild West. It was a fun four-day road trip!

Where was your first job?

I worked at C. Steele & Company. It was an old-school gourmet shop on 74th and Indian School. Carol Steele was the original visionary of fine food. It had plates, cheeses, a bakery – it was incredible and far ahead of its time. It was across the street from my high school, too, so I could walk there.

Where else have you worked?

I'll go backward [*laughs*]. I've been at El Chorro for 14 years. Before that, I was the Executive Chef of the El Dorado Hotel in Santa Fe for four years; I opened up the Westin Kierland and was there for four years. I worked for an off-premise catering company, Continental Catering, for about ten years. Before that, I worked at The Boulders Resort for seven years. That covers most of my career.

Are there many differences between working at a catering company and large events at El Chorro?

We don't have to load a truck! Continental was off-site catering. They were the first group to cater the Phoenix Open; we used to do the NASCAR races and the golf tournament at Desert Mountain – a lot of high-end catering for homes and businesses.

It's easier at El Chorro because everything is here. I don't have to go off the premises. We have seven venues on the property and do around 300 catered events a year – 160 of those are weddings. We keep out of trouble [*laughs*].

One of those events was the Super Bowl, correct?

Yes! Last year, the NFL bought out El Chorro for a week before the Super Bowl. This was their headquarters. I saw Joe Montana on the wedding lawn throwing footballs to a kid – it was cool.

While they were here, we set up six different food areas, each with its own theme, that would change three times a day: lunch, dinner and late-night. There was a southwest station, a grill and seafood station, etc.

Do you curate specific menus for each event?

For the Kentucky Derby, for example… it's such a big event. There were 150 chefs from across the country brought in for that. The executive chef put everything together, and we helped execute.

Each event gets a theme. NASCAR fans aren't the same as horseracing fans, you know?

What was your inspiration for becoming a chef?

I realized I liked cooking more than finance – what I was studying at ASU at the time – so I moved back to New York, went to the Culinary Institute, and flew back to Arizona. I still didn't like the winters [*laughs*]. Growing up out here, I knew and loved the Valley. I had friends. It was easy to come home.

What was your favorite class at the Culinary Institute?

Oh, wow. You're going back a while! Anyone who went to the institute would remember Seafood Kitchen with Chef Clark. He was a crazy old redneck chef with a big, tall hat. He always had a chew in. Just a great, old-school teacher. He was a trip.

What is the inspiration behind the dishes at El Chorro?

We're very history-driven and respectful of the history of El Chorro. Everything is on-brand, keeping what the three original owners had set up. For lack of a better word, we've been kind of a supper club with some old school dishes, a steak and seafood house. It's clean and simple – veg, starch, meat on the plate.

Tell us about the famous sticky buns.

They've been around since the beginning! It's an original family recipe from the Grubers. We give the first round of buns compliments of the house, and they go fast. During a weekend seating, we'll go through 1,000 of them. Holidays, we have about 60 dozen orders. They're pretty popular.

What is the most challenging part of working in the industry?

That's a double-edged sword. Probably giving up weekends and holidays with the family and having them understand it. They'll be at El Chorro for Christmas meals, though.

…your favorite part?

I'm never bored! There's always something new and different happening. No two days are alike.

What is your favorite ingredient to use when you're cooking?

I love working with fresh fish. We have an incredible fish purveyor I've been working with for the past 14 years. We fly it in six days a week. I love working with and eating fresh fish.

Who is your biggest inspiration?

I hate to only have one, but it's my mom. She was so tough. My parents got divorced, and she moved three kids out here all by herself and established a life.

What industries are your siblings in?

My brother is a medical engineer in Silicon Valley, and my sister is retired. She worked for London Insurance on 44th St. for 20 years – she's now a gypsy. She's got a motor home and travels around the country.

If you weren't in this industry, what would you be doing?

I can't even imagine. I've been doing this since high school, and nothing else sounds good. I wish I had been smart enough to get into real estate in Arizona 40 years ago or hold on to that first house that wasn't great but is now worth… [*laughs*]

What advice has stayed with you?

It's simple: work hard, show up early, stay late, and be fair to everybody. I'd give that advice to anyone doing anything. The world's changed, and I don't think the next generation takes it quite as seriously. Being late is one of my pet peeves, so I tell my kids, 'always be early. It puts you ahead of 90 percent of the people.'

What do you do when you're not working?

Golf – half the time when I'm not here, I'm on the course. My kids are grown, so as long as the chores are done and the wife is happy, I'm golfing.

What's next for Charles Kassels?

We've got some newer owners that took over, so I'm going to help them pass it along to the next generation. I don't see myself getting another job before I retire, so I'll be here!

Tween archers finish their year with top three wins

By Jennifer Marshall

On a warm, clear October morning, Veritas Prep and Archway Veritas students Zoe Wong and Hollyann Mortenson headed to the Ben Avery Shooting Facility to participate in the 2023 USA Archery Arizona State Outdoor Championships.

Ten-year-old Hollyann placed first. She has competed in various tournaments since she started two years ago. Twelve-year-old Zoe – participating in her very first competition that day – placed third out of eight contenders in the Under 13 Division.

Zoe's third-place win happened after a pressure-packed match that came down to the last arrow in the final set. Hollyann, facing the No. 1 seed, shot a perfect 30 in her final set to clinch first place. This is Hollyann's second state title in 2023 – she also won the USA Archery Arizona State Indoor Championship earlier this year.

"It was an extremely fun tournament to watch, especially in that division, as all of our girls were so dominant," Coach Kevin Ikegami said. "It was amazing to watch how kind and supportive they were to each other. I'm looking forward to watching them all grow into amazing archers."

Both girls got their start in archery by participating in Veritas' after-school archery club, led by Coach Ikegami's American Archery Academy.

"I suggested Hollyann give the after-school club a try. At first, she was pretty upset about it, but a few weeks into the club, Coach Kevin brought pizza to one of the sessions, and she decided it was fun," Hollyann's dad Larry said. "She progressed quickly due to excellent coaching and her own efforts. It is a great sport for kids. Coaches Kevin Ikegami, Kelsey Lard, and Waylon Hjerpe are amazing!"

Zoe's dad is a novice archer, and the pair started practicing together a year ago. Hollyann and Zoe are also members of the Papago Archery Association and the Papago

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LARRY MORTENSON AND MARK WONG

The USA Archery Arizona State Outdoor Championship was Zoe's first tournament, where she placed third among eight competitors. (right) Hollyann Mortenson participated in six archery tournaments in 2023.

Junior Olympic Archery Development Program (JOAD).

"I like the challenge of target shooting and the monthly 'Pin Shoots' in our Papago JOAD Club," Hollyann said.

Pin Shoots simulate a tournament environment and reward an archer's progress and development. The "pin" is a reward earned when an archer shoots the required score at their designated distance to get the corresponding achievement.

Archers shoot 36 arrows for outdoor pins and 30 for indoor pins. The indoor distance is 18 meters – but the targets are either 40 cm or 60 cm in diameter, depending on the archer's age.

Each arrow shot earns a value between 0 and 10, depending on where it hits the target. The archer gets a pin if they meet the cumulative score designated to get the next colored pin after shooting all 30 or 36 arrows.

"Archery is very relaxing because you get to be outdoors and focus on only yourself and your target," Zoe said. "I like to see my improvement by shooting higher scores and earning pins."

Hollyann has participated in six tournaments and plans to compete in eight more next year. She said that one of her favorite aspects of the sport is all the friends she's made.

Now that she has a third-place win under her belt, Zoe is excited to enter more competitions.

"I like to compete because I can be with my friends while we cheer each other on," Zoe said. "After the most recent competition, we all went to In-and-Out and ate burgers and drank milkshakes – that was one of my favorite moments."

Hollyann will enter Veritas Prep next year and hopes to eventually become a veterinarian. Along the way, she will continue to grow her archery talents. In 2024, she will compete nationally at tournaments like The Vegas Shoot and the USA Outdoor Target Nationals.

usarchery.org

This school club blends fun, education…and fish!

By Mark Hays

A local group of kids is straying from the typical after school activities, grabbing their fishing poles, and heading to the water with a brand new club at Veritas Prep: The Anglers. The club, which started in October, has grown rapidly since its inception, welcoming students of all levels.

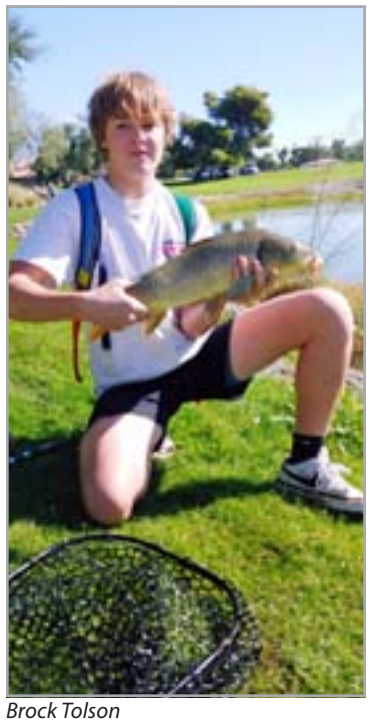
"Right now, we have twelve students ranging from sixth to 11th grade, some with almost no experience and others with a wealth of it," Club Founder Jeff Dick said. "I have set a limit for enrollment to 20 – if we get there, that's great. With the nature of fishing and visiting fisheries, it is often the case that 'less is more.' I would like to see it become an established tradition eventually."

Jeff is the Master Teacher of Fine Arts and Instructor of Studio Art at Veritas. He and his son have been into fishing for the last three years and thought it could be beneficial to share the hobby with interested students.

"The Anglers was officially started around the first of October, but I'd been toying with the idea since last year," he said. "I was approached by some upperclassmen who are also into the sport, and basically, I just realized that now was the time to finally get something established."

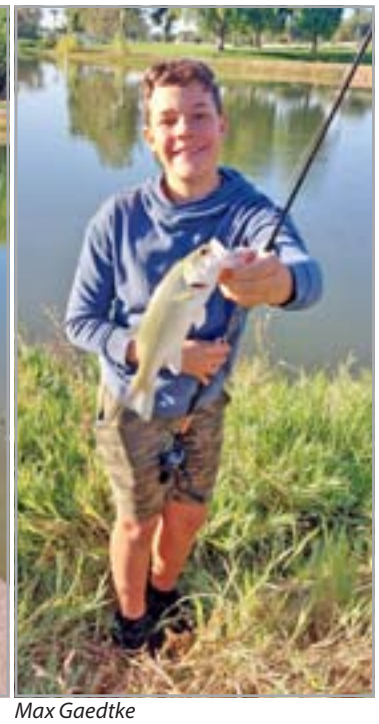
The members have found it to be a fantastic way to enjoy fishing in a community setting.

"I love fishing, but it's hard to make the time for it on my own, so being in the club makes it a commitment," junior Ariane Cawley said. "I also like the idea of being part of a community of students with a shared interest. The first meeting was fun, calming, and a definite escape from the normal routine."


Brock Tolson

Emerson Bassi

Matthew Torrez


Max Gaedtke

Seventh-grader Max Gaedtke agreed, noting how much fun he had at a recent gathering: "It was great – I caught nine largemouth bass! My favorite moment in the club so far was when we were all fishing for carp – they're fun to target because they are aggressive but tricky to catch. You have to work with each other for best strategies."

The Anglers Club sets up shop at local spots, like Camelback Lake and Papago Ponds, but Jeff says they hope to hit some locations in the Rim Country and White Mountains eventually.

The club fishes for largemouth bass, catfish, bluegill, and carp. This month, they'll start fishing for trout as local ponds are stocking up.

"I have been really impressed by the interactions among members out in the field," Dick said. "For one thing, I think just being outside together casually focused on the ritual of angling is a joy. But the fact that there is such a range of students, both boys and girls, experienced and novice, all in communion with each other, helping each other, sharing stories, techniques – it's just got a great vibe."

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SCOTTSDAZZLE STROLL

Scottsdale Waterfront Canal Bank

Saturday, Dec 2, 9, 16 | 6:00 – 9:00 PM

With live music leading your step, grab a sweet treat and stroll along the canal gazing in awe at the live entertainment and capturing memories in front of the new 2023 holiday lights.

HOLIDAY TRIVIA AT THE NORTH POLE

Porters Western Saloon · 3944 N Brown Ave

Sunday, Dec 10, 17 | 3:00 – 5:00 PM

Enjoy Christmas themed trivia located above Porters Western Saloon. Includes one cocktail off the North Pole Cocktail Menu.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION AT THE CHEF'S TABLE

Marcellino Ristorante · 7114 E Stetson Dr

Tuesday, Dec 5 | 6:00 PM

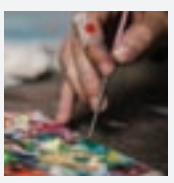
Join Chef Marcellino and Sommelier Dario Soldan for perfectly paired Italian wines and cuisine at the beautiful Chef's Table.

HOLLY-JOLLY PAINTING PARTY

Marshall Way Bridge · 7124 E Stetson Dr

Sunday, Dec 10 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Create your own "Festive Saguaro" in this step-by-step acrylic painting class hosted outdoors in the heart of the holiday magic.



GOLD PALETTE ARTWALK

Art Galleries along Main St & Marshall Way

Thursday, Dec 7 | 6:30 – 9:00 PM

Join for a special holiday-themed ArtWalk with strolling carolers and live entertainment.

ICE IT UP COOKIE DECORATING

Marshall Way Bridge · 7124 E Stetson Dr

Sunday, Dec 10 | 3:30 – 4:45 PM

With techniques and tips from a Pastry Chef, decorate cookies to wow family and friends this holiday season.

SUGAR PLUM TEA PARTY

Marshall Way Bridge · 7124 E Stetson Dr

Saturday, Dec 9 | 10:00 – 11:00 AM & 1:00 – 2:00 PM

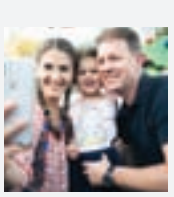
Receive the royal treatment at a magical tea party with live entertainment and treats on the Scottsdale Waterfront.

MERRY CENTERPIECE MAKING

Marshall Way Bridge · 7124 E Stetson Dr

Sunday, Dec 10 | 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Join a festive design workshop and learn how to create your own Christmas décor using a fresh, miniature tree, berries, and florals.

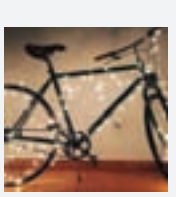


ULTIMATE FAMILY PLAY DATE

Scottsdale Civic Center · 3939 N Drinkwater Blvd

Saturday, Dec 9 | 9:00 AM – 1:30 PM

With activities for early learners, school-aged children and tweens/teens join for a morning of art, science, sports and building activities followed by a family-friendly concert at noon.



SPARKLE & SPIN SCAVENGER HUNTS

Various Locations

Sunday, Dec 10, 17 | 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Discover hot spots and historical markers as you spin your way through Old Town solving riddles and brain teasers.

Check out the dazzling event lineup

SCOTTSDAZZLE.COM

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CITY OF SCOTTSDALE | Old Town SCOTTSDALE

HO, HO, HERE WE GO: HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

By Ann Stone

Santa and reindeer and cocoa – oh my! The holidays are here, and with it, a plethora of fun events that the whole family can enjoy. Below is a list of just some of the Valley happenings this December.

CHRISTMAS AT THE PRINCESS

7575 E. Princess Dr., Scottsdale
christmasattheprincess.com

Families can bask in the holiday sparkle of 7.5 million lights at this cherished resort for the annual Christmas at the Princess. There will be igloos and fire pits available, and on Monday-Thursday from 5-10 p.m. and Friday-Sunday from 4 p.m.-11 p.m., visitors can ride the Ferris wheel, ice skate, make s'mores, visit Santa and Twinkle Town, ride the Princess Express train and try out the new Nordic 9 Mini Golf attraction. General admission is $35 per person.

ENCHANT SCOTTSDALE

Salt River Fields, 7555 N. Pima Road
enchantmagic.com

Enchant is an immersive walk-thru light show with over four million sparkling lights. The event includes a 100-foot-tall holiday tree, an ice skating trail, live entertainment, Santa visits and a village marketplace with crafts, treats and cocktails. There will also be a "Cozy Christmas" lounge, wine tasting and an all-new Mischievous Elf light maze. Tickets start at $30.

DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN

1201 N. Galvin Pkwy., Phoenix
dbg.org

The Mexican tradition of La Posada is being celebrated on December 17 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Las Noches de las Luminarias is another popular event at DBG; families can enjoy various live music events, decorations, food, and drinks. Tickets are $40 for ages 18 and older and $17 for ages 3-17.

MCCORMICK-STILLMAN RAILROAD PARK

7301 E. Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale
therailroadpark.com

For a family-friendly holiday light display, check out the dazzle with Holiday Lights at McCormick-Stillman. The $15 event is ongoing through January 7 and includes train and carousel rides. If you're hungry, stop at Hartley's General Store for a snack!

HOLIDAY MAKER'S MARKET

Rise Uptown Hotel
400 W. Camelback Road, Phoenix
riseuptownhotel.com

On Saturday, December 2, from 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Rise Uptown is hosting a holiday market with handmade goodies from local shops. Grown-ups can sip mimosas from Lylo while browsing items from Milky Candle Company, Form Floral, Jade & Clover, Voyager Bake Shop and Cisco Studio. There will also be a free yoga class on the lawn at 9 a.m. with desert mvmt, and permanent jewelry appointments available from LINK X LOU.

LIGHTS AT THE FARM

Vertuccio Farms, 4011 S. Power Road, Mesa
lightsatthefarm.com

There are so many options for fun; it'll be hard to decide what to do first. Guests will find over two million twinkle lights and holiday displays, a synthetic ice skating rink, visits with Santa, a petting zoo, lawn games, a sweets shop (cocoa and kettle corn!), fire pits with s'mores and a craft area. Tickets are $15 per person – skating rink is a $8 add-on.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT MUSEUM'S MAGICAL MUSIC MEMORIES

4725 E. Mayo Blvd., Phoenix
mim.org

The MIM offers a variety of holiday concerts, such as the Klezmatics Hanukkah Tour, Melissa Errico, the Phoenix Boys Choir, the John Jorgenson Quintet, Irish Christmas in America, a Peter White Christmas, David Benoit's A Charlie Brown Christmas, and more. Dates and ticket prices vary.

BALLET ARIZONA PRESENTS: THE NUTCRACKER

203 W. Adams St., Phoenix
balletaz.org

The Nutcracker is one of the most well-known ballets, and now, families can see it brought to life thanks to Ballet Arizona and the Phoenix Symphony. Audiences will watch scenes set to Tchaikovsky's familiar songs, complete with dancing mice, the Sugar Plum Fairy, the Nutcracker Prince, the Mouse King and the "Waltz of the Flowers." It runs December 8-24, and tickets start at $40.

CHRISTMAS AT RAWHIDE

5700 W. North Loop Road, Chandler
prattbrotherschristmas.com

Pratt Brothers Christmas at Rawhide is open through December 24. It offers over six million lights with a Gingerbread House light show, letters to Santa, Christmas movies, a parade, train ride, holiday shopping, a snow show and stunt shows on Wednesdays-Sundays from 6-10 p.m. Tickets are $25- $75.

SCOTTSDAZZLE

3939 N. Drinkwater Blvd., Scottsdale
scottsdazzle.com

Scottsdazzle is as busy as Santa's elves with various activities throughout December, including a free winterland stroll at Scottsdale Waterfront from 6-9 p.m. (December 2, 9, and 16); free photos with Santa at the Old Town Farmers Market (9 a.m.- 12 p.m. December 2, 9, and 16); a $35 Sugar Plum Tea Party on December 9 from 10-11 a.m. and 1-2 p.m. and a free Ultimate Family Play Date and concert at Scottsdale Civic Center (9 a.m.-1:30 p.m.); a holiday art walk from 6:30-9 p.m. on December 7; magic shows and the live nativity at the Old Adobe Mission. Other events include a painting party, centerpiece making, cookie decorating and a bicycle scavenger hunt through Old Town.

SHOPPING WITH SANTA

Biltmore Fashion Park, 2502 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix
shopbiltmore.com

Before the crowds ascend on Biltmore on December 3, Sensory Santa with Autism Speaks will offer a quieter option for neurodiverse children. The same day – and on December 17 – Mrs. Claus will read from 2-4 p.m. In addition, on December 10, Hanukkah in the Park begins at 6 p.m. Through December 24, people can visit for photos or pet nights with Santa.

SKATE WESTGATE

6770 N. Sunrise Blvd., Glendale
westgateaz.com

Phoenix might not have snow, but at least Glendale has ice. Guests are welcome to enjoy the 3,300-square-foot skating rink at Fountain Park in Westgate. Skating sessions are on a first-come, first-serve basis. Afterward, guests can do some shopping, grab a cup of hot cocoa and visit with Santa. Tickets are $22 with a rental and $18 bring-your-own.

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Scottsdale

5015 E Osborn Road
Phoenix

1030 E Bethany Home Rd #107
Phoenix

6249 N 78th St Condo #52
Scottsdale

6242 E Calle Del Paisano
Scottsdale

4240 E Mulberry Drive
Phoenix

41831 N 101st Way
Scottsdale

6279 E Wilshire Ave
Scottsdale

2544 E Meadowbrook Ave
Phoenix

2115 E Solano Drive
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7131 E Berneil Lane
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6637 E Lewis Ave
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Channeling grief into a mission for others

By Melissa Hirschl

When she was only six years old, Milan Coraggio-Sewell's best friend passed away in a tragic accident. Losing two grandparents a few years later only amplified feelings of confusion and grief. With three losses in such a short time, Milan had difficulty processing her emotions and kept her feelings boxed up.

As a teen, Milan recognized that she struggled with unresolved grief. She wanted to help other kids and teens experiencing similar feelings, so she researched what was available for those struggling with loss and sadness.

The result was a nonprofit that Milan created called Boxed Up Project. With a dedicated group by her side, the organization fundraises, creates tutorials, assembles, and donates grief toolkits in both English and Spanish. The boxes are filled with familiar, non-threatening therapeutic items such as books, journals, stuffed animals, bubbles, stickers and more.

Thus far, the Boxed Up Project has put together and distributed approximately 3,000 boxes. They've also raised more than $100,000 from donations and grants to go toward the boxes and items within.

Recipients include Ryan House, New Song Center for Grieving Children, Billy's Place, Stepping Stones of Hope, Amanda Hope Rainbow Angels, Tu Nudito, Open Hearts Wellness Center and six tribal communities in Arizona. The Boxed Up Project is still gaining momentum, even after Milan graduated high school and became a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania. The miles have not dimmed her passion.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBIN SEWELL

Milan with Channel 3 anchor Paul Horton. Arizona's Family *highlighted the Boxed Up Project for their "Pay It Forward" campaign in 2022.*

"I check in weekly with team members. I hold our mission very close to my heart. College is challenging, but I make it a priority to set aside time for the project and keep it running," Milan said.

In 2022, *Arizona's Family* highlighted the Boxed Up Project for their "Pay It Forward" campaign by having a box packing party in their parking lot. Close to 100 people showed up to help, and a special guest – a representative from Resolution Copper – bestowed the nonprofit with a check for $20,000.

Significant donations were also received from the Phoenix Suns and Mercury teams during the event. Boxes were delivered to organizations around the Valley and also to Uvalde, Texas, to help families and children in May 2022. Dose Moving Company donated drivers and their trucks for the delivery.

"The most fulfilling aspect about the Boxed Up Project is helping make a lifelong difference," Team Member Sinclaire Titzck said. "It's important to give back because there is so much joy in helping other people."

In April 2023, the Boxed Up Project received a donation from the Peoria School District, which picks a yearly charity to support. A check for more than $6,500 was awarded at an assembly, providing an excellent example of the power of philanthropy to the students.

"I love the passion and care everyone puts into the Boxed Up Project," Team Member Georgi Mesnick said. "It's a sense of community that is unmatched. Being able to help others is a fulfilling experience that everyone should take part in."

The organization has multiple packing parties planned for the coming year, as well as adding several partner organizations. One is an organization in Nogales, and another is the Swift Youth Foundation in Scottsdale.

Boxed Up Project is working with the Phoenix Indian Center to indigenize the boxes to be more culturally relevant to the tribal communities.

Milan is also working on starting the first college chapter of Boxed Up Project and hopes to open more chapters nationwide.

boxedupproject.org

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Watch out Spielberg – Sejal is on her way!

By Jennifer Marshall

One of Arcadia's connections to fame is award-winning filmmaker Steven Spielberg, who started his film career when he was a student at Arcadia High. During his junior year, he created his first feature film, *Firelight*, which was screened at the Phoenix Little Theater in March 1964.

Now, another talented teen may be on her way to Tinseltown, as Xavier senior Sejal Patel just won her first Student Production Pillar award from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS). Sejal won for her Public Service Announcement, titled "Don't Text While Driving."

> **"I hope to bring people together through laughter."**

"The National Student Production Awards (through NATAS) recognize outstanding achievement in video production," Xavier Marketing Director Lisa Zuba said. "NATAS promotes excellence by showcasing work created by high school students in news, craft and programming categories."

Sejal initially created her PSA for a scholarship opportunity sponsored by the Project Yellow Light Advertisement Competition, which highlights the dangers of – and calls for an end to – texting and driving.

"My dad found the Project Yellow Light challenge and suggested that I do it," Sejal said. "I was brainstorming how to make my ad different and more appealing to teens than the current texting-while-driving advertisements."

Her solution? Dogs!

"I thought using my dogs, Coral and Ginger, would be silly and different from other PSAs," she said.

While she didn't win the scholarship, Sejal decided to also enter the PSA in the Student Production category through NATAS.

"The most difficult challenge was getting my dogs to cooperate while filming," Sejal said. "One of them is a pro since she's been in many of my films, but my new dog kept lying in the street or running back to my house!"

The PSA is only 25 seconds long, so Sejal filmed it all in one day and it took a little over a week to edit.

Because she was standing up on the side of a golf cart for many shots, she used her cell phone to shoot the video.

"I am the sole creator of my PSA and most of my films. I produce, write, direct, and edit everything," Sejal said. "My dad was a huge help with driving the golf cart. He was in charge of moving the fake dog paws, and helped me handle the puppies since they definitely do not cooperate most of the time!"

The stars of Sejal's PSA, Coral and Ginger.

PHOTO COURTESY OF XAVIER PREP

Sejal Patel won a Student Production Pillar for her PSA.

She entered her PSA through the Rocky Mountain Southwest Chapter, which covers Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and El Centro, California – meaning Sejal's PSA went head-to-head with 291 total entries (high school and college) from across the region.

"I wasn't able to attend the awards gala, because of my soccer game the same day. After, I watched the live recording and saw that my PSA had won. I was shocked since I wasn't expecting that specific film to win anything!" Sejal said.

While she missed the formal ceremony, this ambitious filmmaker hopes to have another to attend in the future. She's currently finishing up her college applications – and is looking forward to the college film projects that she'll have next fall.

"I want to major in film production and pursue a career in Hollywood. I want to become a director or producer of sitcoms and hope to bring people together through laughter," Sejal said.

Readers can view the PSA by searching for Sejal Patel at vimeo.com.

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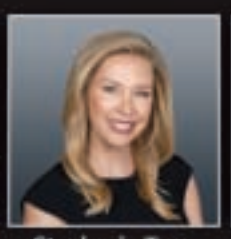

Stephanie Tarr

Shawna Bonnett

Kathy Miller

"Meet Mr." | Ray Artigue

Christopher Kringle

It's that time of year and there are already rumors that Santa Claus – also known as Old St. Nicholas – will again make Arcadia among his first and favored stops as he passes through Arizona.

He's not supposed to play favorites, but he just can't help himself, given how wonderful the residents are. Especially the children.

"There's just something extra special about the Arcadia neighborhood, always has been, always will be," the jolly old fellow said. "The people are so very friendly, downright neighboring, and there isn't a naughty kid in the bunch. Even the dogs are well-behaved."

> ***"Then he sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle, and away they all flew like the down of a thistle. But we heard him exclaim, as he drove out of sight, MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT."***

The man also known as Kris Kringle – that plump, spectacled, bearded pillar of the holiday – is beloved by all, and not just because he brings presents to people throughout the world.

"I really admire his work ethic because they work 24/7 at the North Pole and there's not a single complaint about wages or overtime hours," Tom McGeorge, a longtime Arcadian, said. "The elves are in the workshop every day; no working from home for them."

While Santa's travels around the globe steal the headlines every Christmas Eve, Mrs. Claus – or Gertrude – is the selfless woman helping make it all happen. She tends to the home, oversees the finances, keeps the elves in line, organizes Santa's schedule, and yes, keeps tabs on the naughty and nice children.

"I never worry about Kris when he's in Arcadia because those folks are so darn nice. My only concern is they put out way too many snacks and we all know how much Santa loves his cookies," said Mrs. Claus with a wink.

"It's a real bonus that I can park my sleigh on those bike paths, 'cause I'm starting to get a bit old to be climbing around on roof tops," Kringle chuckled, his belly shaking like a bowlful of jelly.

Though Santa's mailbag is always overflowing, an unnamed source in the workshop (no doubt a nosey elf) has learned what a couple of the Arcadia children want under their tree:

Mia and Ruby Frey, 9 and 7, have both asked for a Squishmallow, or two or three. Truth be told, the elves had to check YouTube for how to make those. Drew and Emmy Powers, 10 and 5, are hoping for an electric scooter and Barbie Dream House, respectively.

The children promised that they were very, very, *very good* all year long, and after fact-checking their claims, Mrs. Claus put a good checkmark next to their names.

With just a few weeks to go before the big day, Arcadia families are hurrying to get ready, setting up Christmas trees and lights everywhere, decorating their homes with stockings hung with care; some even illuminating shrubs, palm trees and cacti.

Said one overzealous neighbor, "You don't ever want to be shown up by someone down the street. Besides, why not extend Santa the festive welcome he deserves?"

We all can't wait to hear that familiar refrain, "ho, ho, ho!"

Arcadia News' Meet Mr. column celebrates five years

By Mallory Gleich

Avid readers of the Arcadia News may be familiar with a column called Meet Mr. (or Ms., or Mrs.!), which focuses on introducing the community to others in the neighborhood. Thus far, columnist Ray Artigue has introduced moms, dads, nonprofit creators, managers, animal lovers and everything in between.

In October 2023, Ray celebrated his 60th column by hosting a get-together at Shemer Art Center. He invited each of the 60 men and women featured in his column for appetizers, drinks and socializing.

"I've been writing for Arcadia News for a little over five years. My first column appeared in August 2018," Ray said. "I resurrected Meet Mr. as a tribute to my father."

Ray Artigue, Sr. started the "Meet Mr." weekly column for the *Phoenix Gazette* in 1949 and continued profiling businessmen for nine years. Ray also attributes his love of writing to his mother, who was an award-winning journalist for the *Arizona Republic* and the *Las Vegas Sun*.

Ray is the founder of Artigue Advisors, a marketing consulting firm that he opened in 2016. He served for four years as executive director of the MBA Sports Business Program at ASU and was also the senior vice president of Marketing Communications for the Phoenix Suns.

The only criteria to be considered for the column is that the person lives or works in Arcadia, but Ray says, "everyone qualifies, because everyone has a story to tell."

Arcadia News held a similar event after the first year of published stories and it was a big hit, so Ray decided to throw another party – but this time, with more people.

"I also wanted to introduce Shemer to those who hadn't seen it, and let our neighbors know about their exciting expansion plans," he said. "Seeing everyone come together, either meeting for the first time or renewing existing friendships, was amazing. Arcadia is all about the people and Arcadia News is such an important part of the equation!"

Ray's plans include continuing the next installment of Meet Mr. (check out the latest feature above!) and publishing his fourth book, titled *Words, Wisdom & Wonderment*.

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The Dining Scoop

If you're hoping to stay out of the kitchen this December – or prefer someone else do the cooking – we found a few area eateries who are offering holiday and New Year's Eve specials.

Chef Christopher Collins and **Common Ground Culinary** are offering specialty pies this holiday season! Guests can choose from pumpkin, apple, coconut cream, butterscotch pecan, key lime and chocolate mousse. Prices are $24 for graham cracker crust and $28 for specialty pies. Orders should arrive by December 22 for pick-up on December 23 and 24.

commongroundculinary.com

Royal Palms (5200 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix) and **T. Cook's** will serve a festive array of culinary delights on Christmas Day from 1-8 p.m. This three-course, prix fixe menu, specially curated by Chef Hillson, includes prime rib with confit garlic smashed potatoes; lobster bisque with crème fraiche and caviar; halibut with butternut squash; peppermint crunch pie with white chocolate candy cane gelato and more. Price: $175 per person.

royalpalmshotel.com

McArthur's and **Renata's Hearth** at the Arizona Biltmore (2400 E. Missouri Ave., Phoenix) are both hosting holiday dinners. From 11 a.m.-8 p.m., McArthur's will offer à la carte dishes like winter squash soup, NY steak, scallops, and vegetable ragout. Renata's Hearth will open from 3-8 p.m. and offer à la carte items like espresso-rubbed pluma steak or pan-roasted duck breast. Family-style dishes are also available. Prices vary for both spots.

arizonabiltmore.com

Geordie's at Wrigley Mansion (2501 E. Telawa Tr., Phoenix) will offer a Christmas Eve four-course meal on December 24 from 4-9 p.m. Options include a poached pear salad, New Zealand lamb chop, Parisian gnocchi, smoked prime rib and gingerbread Bavarian cream for dessert. Price: $195 for adults, $65 for children 5-12.

wrigleymansion.com

El Chorro is sharing Christmas Eve with visitors from near and far. On December 24, guests can delight in dishes like classic lobster bisque, organic roasted turkey, grilled filet mignon and red velvet cake or peppermint cheesecake for dessert. Don't worry – the sticky buns will also be available! Price: $98 for adults, $32 for children 5-12.

elchorro.com

Chesnut Fine Foods

On December 24, guests can enjoy brunch at **Lon's at the Hermosa** from 7 a.m.-1 p.m., with dishes like short rib hash and peanut butter French toast. Christmas Day dinner will be held from 12-7 p.m. Items include crispy pork belly, smoked prime rib, Chilean sea bass and gingerbread cake. Lon's will host a NYE dinner with seatings from 5-10 p.m., featuring agnolotti carbonara, foie gras duo, poached lobster tail and more. Price: $105 for adults, $35 for kids. The NYE dinner is $195 per person.

hermosainn.com

Hearth '61 at Mountain Shadows (5445 E. Lincoln Dr., Paradise Valley) is offering a three-course dinner from 12-8 p.m. on December 25. Menu options include McClendon's organic winter squash soup, duck confit croquette, braised beef short rib and gingerbread cheesecake with cinnamon Chantilly. Price: $150 for adults, $35 for children 12 and under.

mountainshadows.com

Christmas morning at **Zuzu at Hotel Valley Ho** (6850 E. Main St., Scottsdale) starts with a breakfast buffet and omelet station from 6-11 a.m. Christmas dinner (11 a.m.-9 p.m.) features a starter buffet followed by entrées like Australian rack of lamb or mushroom Bolognese. Finish with Buche de Noel, yogurt panna cotta, or poached pear tart. Zuzu also has a family-style to-go meal with prepared sides and a choice of prime rib or ham. Price: Breakfast – $32 for adults, $14 for children 12 and under. Dinner – $78-$95 per adult, $25 for children 12 and under. To-go meals start at $326 (feeds 4-6). Orders must be placed by December 18.

hotelvalleyho.com

Frasher's Smokehouse (3222 E. Indian School Road) will be open on Christmas Eve from 11 a.m.- 5 p.m. and closed on Christmas Day. Smoked ham and turkey orders should be sent in by December 19 for pick up by December 24. Sides include traditional stuffing, acorn squash mash, and turkey gravy. Check the website for pricing and additional menu items.

frasherssmokehouse.com

Maple & Ash (7135 E. Camelback Road, Scottsdale) is offering a Christmas dinner plate that includes Chateau tarragon butter and roasted bone marrow branzino with capers and preserved lemon, spinach with garlic, chili and shallots, asparagus with orange, almond and mint, and gratin with thyme, gruyere and parmesan. There will also be a holiday dessert option. Price: $100 per person.

mapleandash.com

If you've got dinner settled but want something sweet for breakfast or dessert, **Chestnut Fine Foods** (2398 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix) has an option! The eatery is offering its seasonal, ready-to-bake cinnamon rolls for purchase throughout December. Price: $25 for four rolls.

chestnutaz.com

Moon River Beef launched Holiday Gift Boxes for the 2023 season. Online orders are accepted until December 18. There are five options: The Southwest Sampler Pack for $125, The Cattleman Pack for $220, Burger Box for $70, Cowboy Pack for $350 and the Beef Discovery Pack for $300.

moonriverbeef.com

OUT OF THE AREA

The **FOUND:RE Phoenix Hotel** (1100 N. Central Ave., Phoenix) has two options: to-go and dine-in on Christmas Day. The to-go meal serves 4-6 and includes a maple and date salad, cheesy garlic flatbread, family-sized lasagna and one dozen Christmas cookies for $120. On Christmas Day, Match Market will host dinner from 5-10 p.m. Dishes include a holiday cheese plate, beef roast with fingerling potatoes, and Santa's Milk and Cookies Mini Cake. Price: $59 per person.

matchphx.com

Salt and Lime Modern Mexican Grill (9397 E. Shea Blvd.) has transformed into the Feliz Navidad Cantina. The restaurant has floor-to-ceiling holiday decorations, a menu of holiday-themed dishes and signature cocktails, appearances from Santa and the Grinch, and classic holiday movies playing throughout the restaurant. The eatery will also partner with Maag Toy Foundation for a holiday toy drive.

saltandlimeaz.com

Tracy Dempsey Originals (1325 W. University Dr., Tempe) is offering sides and desserts for the holidays. Order by December 18 for pick-up on December 24. Offerings include charcuterie and cheese boards, Parker House Rolls, mushroom and herb gravy made with roasted turkey, flourless chocolate cake, apple cranberry streusel galette or a pumpkin yule log. Price: $20-$200.

tracydempseyoriginals.com

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Talavera (10600 E. Crescent Moon Dr., Scottsdale) will have specials on Christmas Eve and day. The December 24 menu includes chilled Garrotza cheese tart bacalao, king crab cake, New Zealand lamb rack, and a showstopper dessert. An a la carte menu will also be available. On Christmas Day, brunch will be served from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., with a carving station, pasta, children's buffet, dessert and hot chocolate station. Brunch price: $165 for adults, $58 for children 5-12.

fourseasons.com

NEW YEAR'S EVE

On December 31, **Postino** (3939 E. Campbell Ave., Phoenix) is offering the Boujee Board & Bottle, featuring a board of bruschetta and an upgraded bottle of Blanc de Blancs Brut Sparkling Wine for $50 from 5 p.m. to midnight.

postinowinecafe.com

New Year's Eve at **Hearth '61** (5445 E. Lincoln Dr., Paradise Valley) features a special four-course menu and live music from DJ Brittney Novelli from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. Dinner starts with roasted heirloom cauliflower soup, followed by butter-poached Maine lobster, beet carpaccio, Snake River Farms Wagyu beef, and Valrhona chocolate and vanilla bean torte. The first seating is at 6:30 p.m.; $165 per person. The second seating is at 9:30 p.m. and includes party favors and a champagne toast for $190 per person.

mountainshadows.com

ZuZu at Hotel Valley Ho's (6850 E. Main St., Scottsdale) New Year's Eve party features a special menu, bubbly, and a DJ spinning from 9 p.m.-1 a.m. General admission includes light bites. Or, reserve a VIP table that includes champagne, a seafood platter, and noshing stations. Price: $99 per person for the party; starting at $499 for two for VIP.

hotelvalleyho.com

Maple & Ash

The four-course NYE dinner at **Maple & Ash** (7135 E. Camelback Road, Scottsdale) includes items like wagyu beef carpaccio, lamb chops, fire roasted seafood, Chicago classic boneless ribeye, ricotta agnolotti, and gooey butter cake, chocolate cake or raspberry entremet for dessert. Caviar is available for an additional $120. Price: $250 per person for 5-7:45 p.m. seating; $300 per person for 8-10:30 p.m. seating.

mapleandash.com

Cala (7501 E. Camelback Road, Scottsdale) is transporting guests to 1940s New York on December 31 with a la carte items along with Cala's regular menu. Dishes include arugula and roasted pear salad, duck and foie gras raviolo, and butter-poached Maine lobster risotto. Cala will host a happy hour from 3-5 p.m., dinner seatings from 5:45-9:15 p.m. (with the later seating offering a champagne toast and balloon drop), or the bar package, with hors d'oeuvres, dessert and a midnight champagne toast. Times and prices vary.

calascottsdale.com

Thirsty Lion Gastropub (2000 E. Rio Salado Pkwy., Tempe) is celebrating with a specialty menu from 4-9 p.m. that includes dishes like grilled filet mignon, ribeye steak, sea scallops and a waygu beef burger alongside cocktails like an espresso martini, maple old fashioned, and the winter white cosmopolitan. Prices vary.

thirstyliongastropub.com

DINING SCOOP

The Spot at Arcadia

The Spot at Arcadia held its grand reopening after a two-month renovation that included adding televisions, a revamped menu – including brunch dishes – live music and DJs, and the addition of a private lounge that boasts tables, chairs, couches and multiple televisions to be used for private parties. New menu items include lobster benedict, Fruity Pebble pancakes, bottomless wings, tacos, mozzarella sticks and sliders.

thespotarcadia.com

Chestnut Fine Foods has a new home – and is now open! Formerly housed in The Vintage Arcadia at 44th St. and Osborn, the eatery relocated to the Biltmore Business Park at 24th St. and Camelback. The new location will feature breakfast, lunch, and dinner, plus a full bar. Chestnut continues to feature its pastry case with homemade cookies, muffins, scones, and pop tarts.

chestnutaz.com

Broken Yolk Café opened its latest concept at Camelback Colonnade (1928 E. Highland Ave., Phoenix) in November. The San Diego-based eatery offers breakfast classics like omelets and benedicts, griddle items and south-of-the-border-themed dishes, plus lunch items like sandwiches, wraps, salads and bowls.

thebrokenyolkcafe.com

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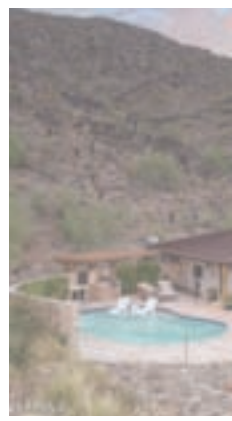
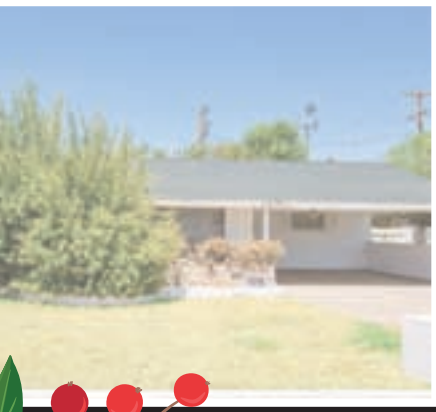

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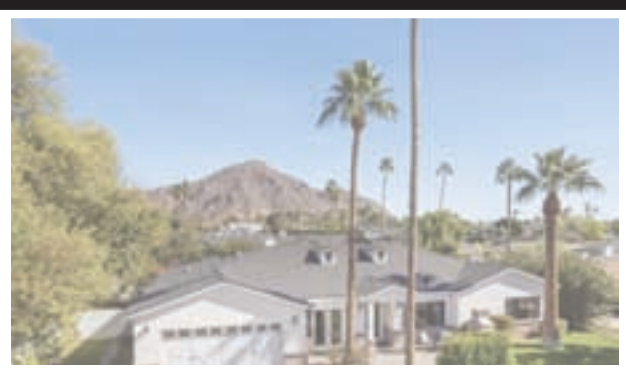
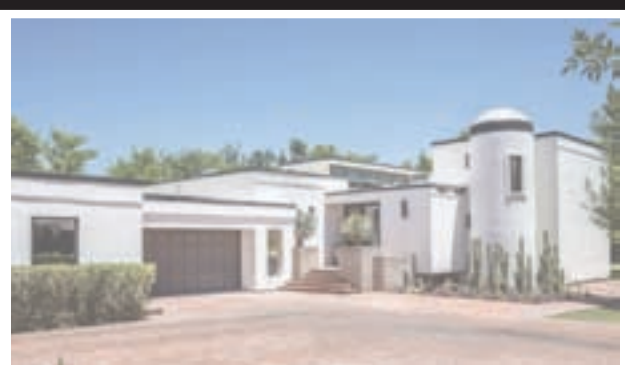
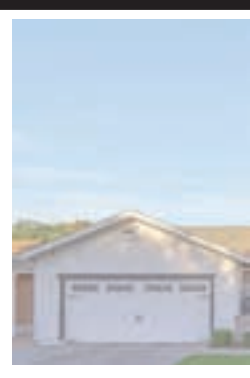

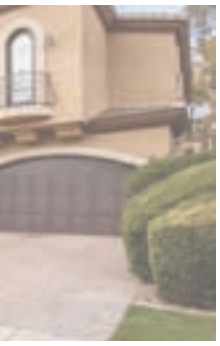

Tis the season...

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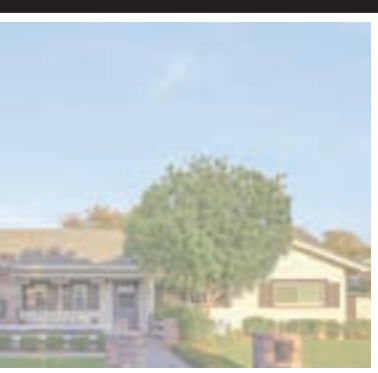
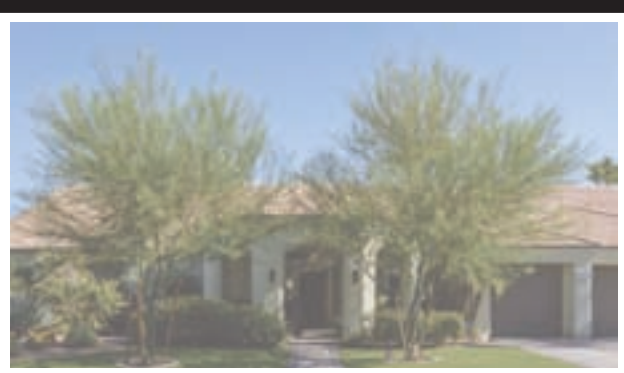
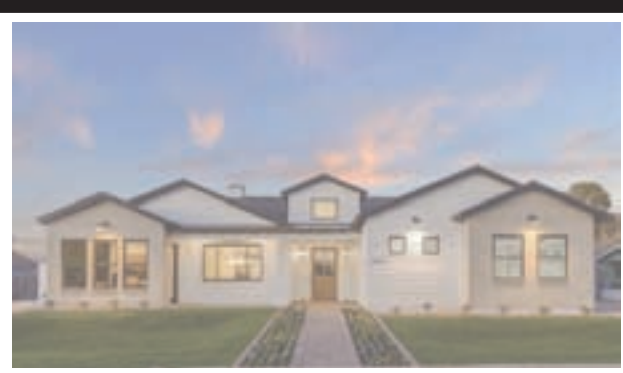
Meghan Marum / Brooke Fair / Rebecca Clayton-Hoyt / Lara Broadrick / Shawna Warner / Laura Ingram

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Tavan's Kindness Week

By Shi Bradley

As a part of World Kindness Week, which is unofficially recognized November 13-19, Tavan Elementary students were encouraged to donate various food and hygiene items to a Valley charity called Gathering Humanity.

"With World Kindness Week, Tavan was looking for a new way to model the word – it's something we're continually doing. We thought the drive would be a good way to teach kindness to our students and show them the physical impact," Tavan educator Ellen Young said.

The school chose to partner with Gathering Humanity due to its proximity and its work with vulnerable populations in the Phoenix area.

"It was important that we gave back to a place where we knew where everything was going," Young said. "That way, our students can see the difference they are making within their community."

Gathering Humanity is a volunteer-based organization that provides food and necessities to populations experiencing vulnerable conditions. Its main focuses are refugees who are resettling, immigrants seeking asylum, children who have aged out of the foster care system, women in domestic violence situations, and those experiencing homelessness.

When Young contacted the organization about the World Kindness event, she was met with positive, enthusiastic responses. Additionally, Tavan is partnering with local churches to donate everyday household items to members of their community.

"We partnered with two churches, Arcadia City Church and the Church of Latter Day Saints, and donated things like side table lamps, clocks, things that are helpful for those finding new places to live," Young said. "The churches fall within our school's boundaries, so that's a fun thing, seeing the different ways local community organizations choose to get involved."

Tavan's future goals include continuing to partner with local charities and donating resources to the local community, which they achieve through a variety of events.

"We partnered with Feeding Students USA around Thanksgiving and hosted a food drive," Young said, "where we collected around 300 pounds of food. The drive helped feed 45 Arcadia families and 125 families throughout SUSD."

Young hopes the experience is inspiring for the students and encourages them to continue spreading kindness and get involved with the community.

"Every little bit helps," Young said. "The kids can see the difference they are making when they bring in cans. Last year, they brought in twice what was expected, which was awesome. But we want to let them know they're doing a good thing no matter what."

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Fridays at 9:00am in the Gift Shop

Advent Concert:
December 4th at 7:00pm

Immaculate Conception of Mary:
Holy Day of Obligation
December 8th with Mass times at
6:30am, 8:30am, Noon, 6:00pm

Parish Mission:
Equipped to Serve - Finding Strength and Joy through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit with Fr. Klockeman
December 6th, 6:00pm-8:00pm

Called and Gifted Workshop:
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December 9th, 9:00am-3:30pm
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SECOND WEEK of ADVENT

Candlelight Masses:
5:00pm Sunday, December 10th

Christ In Our Neighborhood Bible Study:
Thursdays at 6:00pm and
Fridays at 9:00am in the Gift Shop

Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass and Reception:
Join us after Mass for
light refreshments, crafts and music.
December 12th at 6:00pm

THIRD WEEK of ADVENT

Candlelight Masses:
5:00pm Sunday, December 17th

Christ In Our Neighborhood Bible Study:
Thursdays at 6:00pm and
Fridays at 9:00am in the Gift Shop

Penance Service:
December 20th, 6:00pm-8:00pm

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 24th, 4:00pm, 7:00pm, Midnight (music starts at 11:30pm)

Monday, December 25th, 9:00am and 11:00am

*Christmas Vigil Mass times do not fulfill the Sunday obligation.
*Sunday Mass times do not full ll the Christmas obligation.

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Holiday shipping tips

Arcadia News reached out to Becky Biciolis-Pace, communications manager at UPS, to learn more about the when, what, where and how of shipping during the busiest time of the year for deliveries. To ensure your cards and packages arrive on time and in excellent condition, here are a few tips:

Know the last day to ship

Check the delivery company's website to ensure your packages arrive before Christmas Eve. UPS also has a holiday calendar to help plan ahead.

- Ground shipping depends on where you're shipping from.
- UPS 3 Day Select – December 19
- UPS 2nd Day Air services – December 20 (or the 21st with Saturday Delivery)
- UPS Next Day Air services – December 21 (or the 22nd with Saturday Delivery)

Make sure your item is shippable.

Below are a few prohibited and restricted items:

- Fireworks
- CBD products
- Vape products
- Postage stamps
- Alcoholic beverages
- Golds
- Furs
- Biological substances

Adequately label and securely pack for transportation.

Not all boxes are created equal!

Find a rigid box and check the burst strength. Make sure all its flaps are intact, and you're using strong shipping tape. Avoid string or wrapping paper, and remove old labels or shipment markings.

What's inside counts.

Take the time to wrap all items separately and make sure they won't move while in transit by using plenty of cushioning materials to protect your precious cargo.

The label is the most important item.

Make sure you're using a label with clear and concise delivery information and return details. Always leave a duplicate address label inside the package for safe measure.

Download the app.

Major retailers send emails or text messages to alert you of your delivery, but there's always the risk of hackers. UPS and other shippers have apps that help you safely track your packages and adjust delivery details without concern that you'll become the victim of a phishing attack.

ups.com

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RETSY Forbes GLOBAL PROPERTIES

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHANNON MCAFEE

Justin, Keegan, Shang-Chi (Marvel character), Josephine and Shannon McAfee with AFS student Pablo Nunez Gomez.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SONYA KIM

Sonya Kim and her exchange family from Denmark, circa 1988.

Building lifelong friendships, one student – and family – at a time

By Mallory Gleich and Kathy Murphy

For more than 75 years, American Field Service (AFS) host families have welcomed international students into their homes and hearts, providing so much more than shelter.

AFS began as the American Ambulance Field Service, a volunteer group in WWI and WWII. It transformed from a wartime humanitarian aid organization into an innovative plan to solidify friendships made during wartime and peacetime, an international school exchange and volunteer platform with a vision to help build a more peaceful world by promoting understanding among cultures.

The first exchange occurred in 1947 when a group of high school students from France, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, Norway, England, and Syria arrived in the United States on a scholarship program.

Since then, over 424,000 students have gone abroad with AFS, and the Arizona chapter hosts several of these students annually. The exchange begins with an application and screening process. Students participating in AFS programs are sponsored on a J-1 student visa issued through the U.S. State Department. These visas are strictly limited and are only given to private, nonprofit organizations like AFS.

The primary purpose of a J-1 visa is a "cultural exchange," and the student may not be related to the host family under any circumstance. Students attend an accredited high school. Scottsdale Unified School District supports a maximum of three J-1 visas per high school each year.

The F-1 visa is another option for a nonimmigrant student visa. It is issued through the Department of Homeland Security. The F-1 visa is granted to schools and districts that receive compensation for the hosted students. They must attend the specific schools sponsoring their visa but are permitted greater flexibility with the host families.

"Most of us will share that it is the host family that makes the difference in the AFS experience. The beginning is often a bumpy road as everyone adjusts to another person sharing the family space and bridges the unexpected cultural differences," volunteer Kathy Murphy said.

A well-trained group of volunteers check in frequently, supporting host families and students as they navigate their schools and communities. In return, families experience an intercultural journey without packing a suitcase or leaving home.

"It becomes an expanded family with loved ones across the globe – new brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, cousins and grandparents. Personal growth and broadened perspective in tolerance and understanding," Murphy said.

Arcadia High School Guidance Counselor Sonya Kim has experienced these feelings and more, thanks to her involvement in AFS. Her mother was one of the first students to travel abroad, sailing to Finland for the summer in 1956.

Kim loved the program so much that she started an AFS Club as a student at Arcadia High. When she was a senior, her family hosted a student from Brazil, and the two became fast friends.

"She was like a sister to me. We had such a good time together. After I graduated college, I sold my car and bought a plane ticket to Brazil and spent a year living with her and her family," Kim said. "The only con was that sometimes it was a struggle to share with her because I'd never had a sister."

Kim took her AFS journey even further, spending time in Denmark and returning to the States to work as an intern in the AFS office in California. She then returned to Phoenix

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and Arcadia High, becoming the guidance counselor while staying involved in the program.

"I've always taken the exchange students on my caseload because I can relate to what they are experiencing. One thing I try to do is put them in our Student Government class because it's such a unique American experience," Kim said.

Students take part in planning school pep assemblies, dances like homecoming and prom, build floats and learn about the traditions we have in American high schools. Kim has had many exchange students tell her they feel like they are experiencing high school just like they see in the movies.

"The friendships they create with each other and American students are fantastic. We have students traveling to other countries to visit our exchange students after they return home, and we have exchange students who return to Arcadia to visit," Kim said.

Shannon and Justin McAfee have been involved with AFS for seven years as hosts and volunteers.

"I have enjoyed traveling internationally since backpacking through Europe in college. When Justin and I had children, we didn't stop. We have taken our kids – now 18 and 17 – to over ten countries, and they were interested in being foreign exchange students," Shannon said.

> ***It is an extended family. I love those kids like they are my sons and daughters.***

The couple researched programs and decided to go with AFS based on its history and philosophies. Their first host student, Nuno from Portugal, came to America in 2016. They also hosted Rutbaa from Pakistan in 2021, and in 2023, they welcomed Pablo from Spain.

Shannon said that the pros of hosting include gaining a new understanding of another culture and sharing American culture.

"It is an extended family. We have visited our Portuguese family twice and have plans to travel to Pakistan this summer for Rutbaa's high school graduation," McAfee said. "I love those kids like they are my sons and daughters."

There isn't a con to it, according to McAfee.

"You have to assume you have added another child to your family, which means they witness the ups and the downs. All families have good traditions and arguments and disagreements. When you add this child to your life, they become a part of it," she said.

Pablo will stay with the McAfee family until the end of the school year. He's currently attending Arcadia High and said his success at the high school is attributed to Mrs. Kim as a guidance counselor. Pablo joined the student government, has enjoyed football games and also became the basketball team manager – something he was very excited about.

"The reason I love AFS so much is because it is made up of volunteers. It's not an organization that makes money off of students, but truly wants to fulfill the original goal of the World War I ambulance drivers: to unite people worldwide by learning and living with people from other cultures," Kim said.

AFS is one of the largest volunteer organizations in the world, with more than 50,000 volunteers, including 2,600 in the U.S. Over 100,000 students who studied abroad with AFS currently live in the United States.

afs.org

From the Archives

ARCADIA NEWS

Vol. 19 No. 9 AWARD WINNING NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS SINCE 1993 December 2011

ARCADIADAILY.COM

A SPARKLING TRADITION

In one of the brightest neighborhood traditions, the Christmas lights adorning the home of Lee and Patricia Sepanek are something not to be missed. *Story on page 14*

There are fun, family and friends at the holidays but also dangers special to the season. They can easily be avoided with a little extra care.

Page 6

Arcadia Boy Scout Troop 6 honored veterans and country with the safe disposal of more than 150 U.S. flags no longer suitable for display.

Page 32

The beginnings may have been in a Harry Potter movie but Arizona State University students have mounted brooms and taken to the sport of Quidditch.

Page 50

In one of the brightest neighborhood traditions, the Christmas lights adorning the home of Lee and Patricia Sepanek were something not to be missed. After 35 years, the family has officially retired the Christmas House. Thanks for the memories!

ARCADIANEWSARCHIVES.COM

This organization is empowering youths to be Game Changers

By Jennifer Marshall

Each year, more than 120,000 young golfers take to the links, thanks to a national nonprofit called First Tee. The organization was established in 1997 by the LPGA, the Masters Tournament, the PGA of America, the PGA Tour and the USGA.

Through the use of interactive games, introspective questions and immersive exercises, First Tee helps kids not only learn the game of golf, but use those learning lessons in their everyday lives.

The Thunderbirds, a local philanthropic group, began the First Tee-Phoenix Chapter and were instrumental in its success, which was evident at the 20th annual fundraiser. This year, First Tee-Phoenix raised almost one million dollars.

The nonprofit offers two robust programs: On Course and its School and Community Program.

On Course takes place at 14 golf facilities throughout Maricopa County, utilizing a curriculum developed by experts in positive youth development through sports.

Executive Director Erin McDonough describes the action-oriented program as "building Game Changers."

PHOTO COURTESY OF FIRST TEE

PGA Tour golfer Max Homa with First Tee members Izzy Junio, Cadence Garcia, Ian Kennedy and Gavin Diaz.

The curriculum is designed to empower kids to grow to be the best they can be, while living their best life.

Interwoven throughout their golf clinics are lessons in character building, which McDonough said results in kids having better mental and emotional strength, self-confidence and resilience, valuable skills that they can apply every day.

"First Tee-Phoenix has amazing coaches and volunteers that have shaped me into who I am thanks to their kindness and important life lessons, such as setting myself up for success," alumna member Isabelle Junio said.

The program is taught by more than 50 staff and volunteer coaches.

Nearly 2,000 youth participate each year. As they continue through the program, golfers are eligible for the First Tee PHX Tour, the tournament series, Thunderbirds Ace Club, the capstone experience and college scholarships.

The School and Community Program currently operates in 17 different locations. Coaches teach the curriculum and philosophy to educators and instructors who, in turn, teach their students.

"Through First Tee-Phoenix, I have learned how to succeed in both golf and school by setting attainable goals and maintaining control over them, while at the same time keeping them specific," member Drew Stauffacher said.

Wyndham Clark, Max Homa, board members, donors, Thunderbird members, former Govorner Doug Ducey and former VP of the United States Dan Quayle attended this year's fundraiser gala. "The money raised will support our programming, including investing in coaches and mentors, training, equipment, course fees, college scholarships, camps, clinics, and more," McDonough said.

firstteephoenix.org

Becoming a voice for 1.4 million fellow Arizona students

By Mark Hays

The Arizona State Board of Education's Student Advisory Panel connects a like-minded group of student representatives with similar goals to share input on educational matters. This panel assists officials as they make state policies – and Phoenix Country Day School junior Kaleb Gebresillasie was recently appointed as Vice Chair.

The purpose of the Student Advisory Panel is to share student input and insight with the school board, introduce students to the workings of state government related to education, and provide them with the opportunity to elevate concerns and issues to the board.

The group is made up of 10 sophomores, juniors, and seniors enrolled in Arizona schools. They meet virtually each month with quarterly in-person gatherings in Phoenix.

Kaleb's journey to the panel began when he applied in August.

"I was driven by a passion to serve as a bridge between students and educational policymakers," he said. "With the Arizona Board of Education representing over 1.4 million students, it was paramount to ensure that the student voice was not just heard, but effectively integrated into the policymaking process."

Kaleb Gebresillasie

Kaleb saw the position as a way to enact positive change in his and other's lives.

"I felt that this panel would be the best platform to facilitate and bring about real, impactful changes," he said.

According to Kaleb, serving on the board is both an honor and a responsibility.

"It signifies trust, as I was selected to represent the diverse student voices of Arizona. It's a role that I cherish because it provides me with an opportunity to advocate for my peers, ensuring that our concerns, aspirations, and challenges are directly communicated to the highest levels of our state's educational system," he said. "It's a chance for me to demystify the workings of state government in education, making it more comprehensible and accessible to all."

One of his goals is to develop an approach for student-led advocacy strategies to broaden civics education in Arizona's rural school districts. Another priority is facilitating direct access to financial literacy resources so students are equipped with skills to succeed in the future.

After graduation, Kaleb is considering a career in law or finance.

"Both fields hold the potential for substantial impact, allowing me to advocate for meaningful change in diverse arenas," he said.

"Kaleb's appointment is a testament to his leadership, academic excellence, and passion for creating positive change," PCDS Director of Communications Chris Martinez said. "Through this role, Kaleb will empower fellow students by providing them with a platform to voice their concerns."

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Happy holidays! Let's eat!

Welcome December and the fun festivities that come with the season! If you don't want to let things get too out of hand healthwise, here are some tips to stay on track during the holidays:

• **Don't leave the house starving:** Before attending gatherings, eat something so you're not hungry and forced to consume unhealthy options. Consider bringing a plant-based dish to share with others.

• **Stay hydrated:** Don't forget to drink plenty of water, especially when indulging in holiday treats and beverages. There are lots of non-alcoholic beers and fun mocktail-type drinks on the market, or make your own mocktail by combining a flavored kombucha with sparkling water and adding lemon or mint.

• **Meal prep:** Make your weeknight meals nutrient-packed. Carve out an hour or two a week to make batches of healthy food, so they're ready during the week. Roast a pan of vegetables, whip up some healthy hummus, cook up some quinoa, and chop up some raw veggies so they're ready to eat.

• **Mindful indulgence:** It's okay to indulge in sugary treats, but do so mindfully. Be selective about the sweets you consume, and balance them with healthier options throughout the day.

• **Stick to your exercise regimen:** Getting off track with exercise will make it much harder to get back into the swing in January. Include movement daily, even if it's a 10-minute walk or stretching.

Here are some festive recipes for the season, and check out my monthly membership for recipes, health videos and live Zoom cooking classes for only $10 a month!

Plant-based Wellness

BY MIRIAM HAHN

Owner of YouCare-SelfCare, a private wellness practice specializing in plant-based lifestyle and disease prevention. youcare-selfcare.com

Gingerbread granola SERVES: 8

Ingredients

- 4 cups rolled oats
- ½ cup walnuts, chopped
- ½ cup pecans, chopped
- 1 cup slivered almonds
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. ground ginger
- ¼ tsp. ground cloves
- ¼ cup coconut oil
- ½ cup maple syrup
- 2 tbsp. molasses
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup dried cranberries

Directions

1. *Preheat oven to 325 F.*
2. *Chop the walnuts and pecans into chunks.*
3. *In a large bowl, combine the oats, walnuts, pecans, almonds, cinnamon, ginger and cloves.*
4. *Add the coconut oil, maple syrup, molasses, and vanilla to a small pot and heat on medium-low for about three minutes, until well blended.*
5. *Pour the warm mixture over the dry ingredients and stir well to blend.*
6. *Lay the mixture out on a large cookie sheet lined with parchment paper or cooking spray.*
7. *Bake for 15 minutes, then stir the mixture and put back in the oven for about five more minutes. Check to make sure it isn't getting burnt.*
8. *Cool the granola on the baking sheet for about 30 minutes. Then add the dried cranberries and stir to combine. Ready to serve or store. Keep in an airtight container for up to a month.*

Pomegranate bruschetta SERVES: 8

Ingredients

- 1 baguette loaf
- Dairy-free cream cheese
- 1 container pomegranate seeds
- ¼ cup basil, cut into slivers
- 2 tsp. maple syrup

Directions

1. *Slice and toast the baguette.*
2. *Spread cream cheese on slices.*
3. *Toss pomegranate seeds with chopped basil and drizzle with the maple syrup.*
4. *Top the cream cheese with the pomegranate mixture and serve.*

Stuffed shells SERVES: 4-5

Ingredients

- ½ box of jumbo shells
- 1 package extra firm tofu, pressed
- 1 tbsp. nutritional yeast
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. each: oregano, pink salt, garlic powder
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 2 cups chopped spinach
- ½ cup vegan parmesan
- 1 jar marinara sauce
- Fresh basil for topping

Directions

1. *Preheat oven to 350 F.*
2. *Get the shells cooking.*
3. *Add the tofu, nutritional yeast, olive oil, spices, and lemon juice to a food processor. Blend until smooth. Then add the spinach and vegan parmesan and blend again.*
4. *Spread some sauce in the bottom of a 9x13 baking dish. Lay in the shells and stuff with the mixture. Top with remaining sauce.*
5. *Bake for 25 minutes. Top with more parmesan and fresh basil.*
6. *If you want to make two trays, just double the tofu mixture and use the whole box of shells!*

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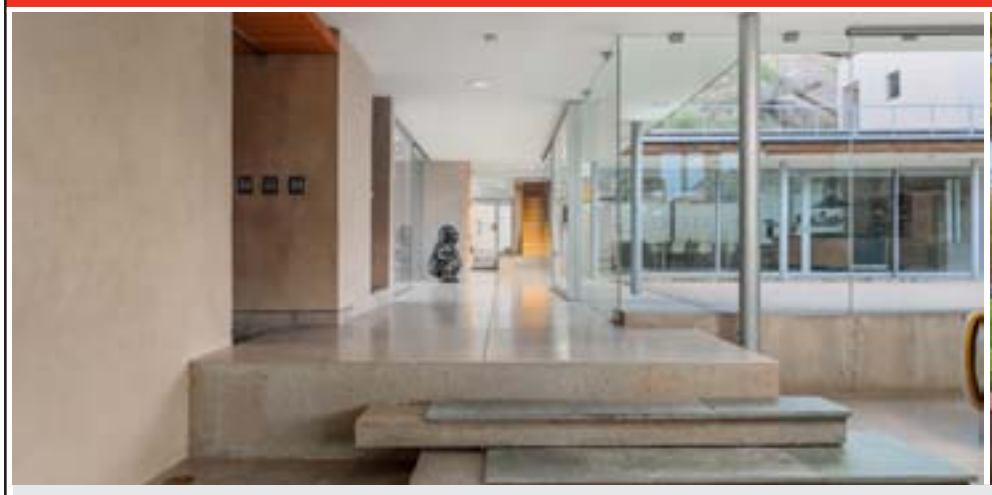

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This fully Restored Mid Century Modern home was magically transformed. Purchased from original Architect/owner, it incorporates the convenience of today while retaining the 50's details that makes this one special. A jewel-box; enjoy natural light, large yard and pool. Stunningly Updated!

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SWEDISH MODERN – BILTMORE TERRACE

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity! Rare one-owner property meticulously maintained and wonderfully upgraded. PENTHOUSE location offers privacy and views of lake and golf course. Fabulous floorplan offers a split primary suite; great-room, dining and cook's kitchen make it ideal!

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Embracing the festive spirit in Arizona

Robin's Adventures

BY ROBIN SEWELL

Robin is the host and executive producer of the Arizona Highways Television, *Saturdays and Sundays on CBS.*

From dazzling light displays to uniquely Southwest celebrations, there's no shortage of activities in the Grand Canyon state this December.

Noches de las Luminarias at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix is one of the most creative ways to enjoy the season. While you stroll the garden pathways and the sculpture garden listening to music, thousands of luminarias will light your way, making for a magical evening under the stars. If you find yourself craving chestnuts roasting on an open fire, head over to the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. Every year, the resort is transformed into a winter wonderland.

Lace up your skates for a spin around the rink, jump on a train for a ride around the resort or head into the sky on the ferris wheel. There's a carousel, a slippery slide, hot chocolate and s'mores.

Christmas at the Princess.

Mesa's Hanukkah menorah.

It's something my family looks forward to every year.

Mesa is a town that loves to be merry. The festivities take place on "Merry Main Street," with a four-story Christmas tree, an ice-skating rink, and Jack Frost's food truck forest. Check out the Christmas lights at the local church on the Temple grounds. Mesa will hold a menorah lighting ceremony on the first night of Hanukkah and a sundown market with crafts and activities for kids and families. The city's official menorah is a modern 12-foot candelabrum that will be lit each night of Hanukkah.

If you head south to Tucson, you'll find the annual Winterhaven Festival of Lights, an event you can enjoy on foot or drive through. Four-legged family members are welcome! Celebrate Hanukkah at the annual lighting of Tucson's tallest menorah at El Presidio Park, where visitors enjoy a spectacular light show by Cirque Roots, munch on holiday treats, and take home their own menorah.

If you are looking for a different kind of entertainment, the Gaslight Theatre hosts a holiday show called "A Small Town Christmas," which runs through January.

Prescott, Arizona is known as the official Christmas City. Experience a holiday procession and light show at the courthouse. The Prescott Resort and Conference Center is home to a gingerbread village display, or you can ride in a horse-drawn carriage through town. The Frontier Christmas Presentation at the Sharlot Hall Museum teaches visitors about historic traditions.

Further north in Williams, get ready to be transported to the North Pole. The enchanting journey departs from the Williams Depot and takes guests through the moonlight forest, where they glimpse some of Santa's helpers.

Come dressed in your favorite holiday pajamas and enjoy some hot cocoa and cookies as you read the story of the Polar Express on your way to Santa's village. The man in red might even make an appearance.

No matter where you go in Arizona, there are plenty of places to explore the sparkling wonders of holiday lights, savor seasonal treats and immerse yourself in the distinctive festivities that make December in Arizona truly magical.

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Arcadia News scholarship winner

By Mallory Gleich

The Arcadia News scholarship was created in 2004 by publisher Greg Bruns as a way to encourage the pursuit of journalism or a related field. Since then, Arcadia News has gifted over $15,000 to graduating seniors. Solomon is the 29th recipient.

Solomon Riccio

Always one to help break the tension of a stressful day, Solomon Riccio is an Arcadia High graduate who is taking his experiences from high school and applying them to his newest adventure as an Arizona State University freshman.

Solomon said he's looking forward to learning new skills and ideas that he can use later in the professional world. He's pursuing a digital marketing degree.

"I want to tap into the digital side of selling a product or service for a business," he said. "Having a social media presence is important today, and I want to help contribute to that."

While attending Arcadia, Solomon was involved in the Student Equity & Inclusion Club, Votech TV and played baseball with the Titans for four years. He also anchored the school-run news program, Arcadia News Network, for three years.

"Solomon was a proud student, willing to be the face of the program. His love of campus, the people and his ability to be professional lead him to be one of the best speakers Arcadia has seen," AHS Film Teacher Luis Peralta said. "His consistent nature and willingness to take on projects made him an adored member of our News Network."

"That was a great experience. I've had media aspirations for as long as I can remember and loved watching SportsCenter as a kid. I was fascinated by the people at the anchor desk," Solomon said.

While he misses seeing the familiar faces of his friends in the hallways and classrooms at Arcadia, he said that he looks forward to reuniting with them over the holidays. He's also excited about what ASU has in store.

"College allows for a change of scenery and new perspectives that will help me grow. Although my major isn't journalism, I believe digital marketing and journalism go hand in hand," Solomon said. "The objective of both is to tell a story across communities, which is the ultimate goal in my eventual career."

Along with that goal, he's excited to gain new skills, keep a strong work ethic, and grow his network with people everywhere. He credits his former film and media teachers – Mr. Peralta and Mr. Luse – for helping grow his love of journalism and media.

"They are outstanding. Mr. Luse and Mr. Peralta have left an everlasting impact on my life regarding the media world," Solomon said.

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Fifth-generation squash coach joins Village community

By Mallory Gleich

Six World Championships. Twenty-three British Open Championships. Sixteen North American Open Titles and 19 U.S. Professional Championships.

This is the legacy of Sakhi Khan's family when it comes to the game of squash – titles they have accumulated for five generations.

The family came to America from Pakistan when Sakhi was four months old. One of his father's earliest accomplishments was an exhibition squash match at the Pentagon, where he was invited to the Harvard Club of Boston by John F. Kennedy, who happened to be in the stands.

"My family has been involved with squash at the highest levels for many, many years," Khan said. "I started playing at 12 when I was old enough to take the bus to the Harvard Club of Boston, where my father worked as a coach."

Squash is a game where two people hit a small rubber ball against a wall in a small, indoor court. Players take turns trying to make the ball bounce twice before the other person can hit it back. The court is like a box, and the game is fast and intense.

Using a long racquet to smack the ball around, players score points when the other person can't hit it back. It's like tennis in a little room.

Matches are won at best of three or five games. Each game is played to 11 points. If the score reaches 10-10, the game continues until one player wins by two points.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAKHI KHAN

Sakhi with a group of ASU squash players at Village Health Club, Ocotillo.

"It's like physical chess. You have to have a game plan to win. It can be very cardio intensive with long rallies and no let up until you win after playing close to two hours," Khan said.

Khan was – and is – up for the challenge. While attending Tufts University in the 80s, he was the No. 1 ranked junior squash player in the country and a four-time All-American.

He played No. 1 on the USA team in the Pan Am Games in South America and the World Cup and competed on the World Professional Tour for seven years, winning several tournaments. He competed at the World Teaching Professional Championship twice.

"Winning the World Championships was wonderful because it was the biggest venue I've played, in front of the largest crowd I've played," Khan said.

He was also a two-time Coach of the Year in the College Squash Association and a two-time NESCAC (New England Small College Athletic Conference) Coach of the Year at Colby College, a liberal arts institution in Waterville, Maine. Most recently, he was admitted to the Tufts Athletics Hall of Fame.

"Being inducted was one of the best things that's happened to me during my squash career," he said.

Khan and his family moved to Phoenix from Waterville in August 2018.

"We came here because I wanted to retire in a warm place with no winter weather – also, a place that holds job opportunities for my kids," Khan said.

His children Ameena, Mariam, Syra, Ilyas, Nadia, Yusef and Sulmahn also play squash and are hoping – and already practicing – to follow in their father's footsteps.

Khan started coaching at the Ocotillo Village Health Club in 2019. Today, he teaches at all Village locations, including the Camelback Village Racquet & Health Club in Arcadia, where he is the Director of Squash.

"I give lessons, clinics and group instruction. I also help manage tournaments and league matches," Khan said.

His goals include making sure as many people play squash as possible.

"I am an ambassador to squash, more so than a typical employee. I want the game to grow and for everyone to enjoy it. Anyone who wants to play can contact me for an introduction on how to play, and then I can match them with others at the same level," Khan said. "Growing a squash community starts with knowing how to play and then getting on the court."

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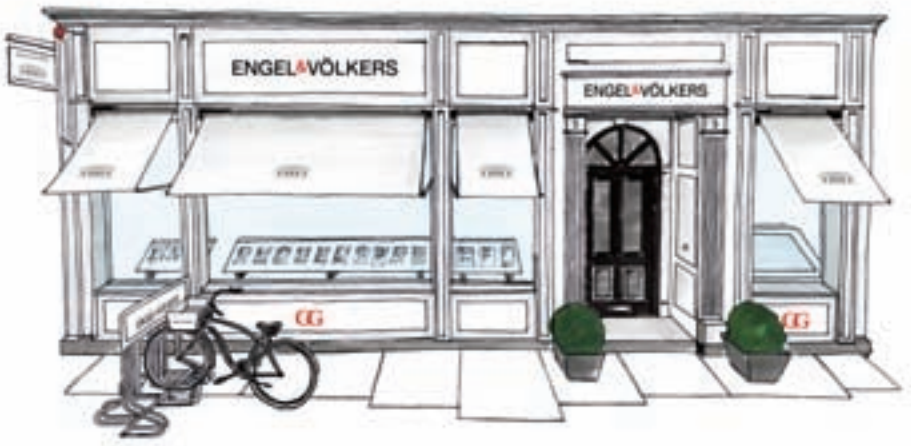

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DID YOU KNOW? CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

WHO'S THAT?

Krampus

St. Nick's evil counterpart, Krampus – celebrated throughout Germany, Austria, Czechia, Slovenia, and Hungary – has one job: to punish bad children before the feast of St. Nicholas on December 6. Krampus is a half-goat, half-demon-looking figure with fur and horns. Instead of carrying a bag of toys, he has a basket for snatching especially naughty children and hauling them back to the underworld.

LOTS O' LIGHTS

612,000

The most lights on an artificial Christmas tree is 612,000 and was achieved by Universal Studios in Osaka, Japan, on November 8, 2022. Universal Studios Japan has been continuing to break its own record every year for "the most lights on an artificial Christmas tree" since 2011.

HOW LONG?

177 FEET

The record for the world's largest Christmas stocking hasn't been broken since 2017. The honor was bestowed to the Sedalia, Missouri, community after they rolled out a stocking that was 177 feet long and 72 feet wide. A local radio host at the time came up with the record-breaking idea to help raise money for underprivileged families for the holidays.

HOW MANY?

710

In 2022, Joel Strasser won the Guinness World Record for "most baubles in a beard" by hooking 710 mini-ornaments in his facial hair. Strasser is a serial record-breaker and has achieved multiple World Record titles by putting various items in his beard.

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DID YOU KNOW? CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD FACTS

There are dozens of towns across the U.S. with names inspired by the holidays: North Pole, NY; Rudolph, WI; Christmas, AZ; and Eggnog, UT, are just a few.

Icelandic tradition tells of a cat who *eats* anyone who isn't dressed well enough to handle harsh winter weather. In Iceland, families celebrate by coming together to protect one another and ensure nobody gets taken by the Christmas Yule Cat.

In December 1974, KFC Japan created a 'Kentucky for Christmas' ad campaign, stating that fried chicken is the perfect Christmas meal. Now, eating KFC has become a Japanese holiday tradition.

The Municipality of Águeda in Portugal created a 69-foot-tall, 30-foot wide and 41-foot-deep Santa Claus using eight tons of aluminum and iron, with 24 volts of LED lights. The massive Santa was used to bring more tourists to the area during the holiday season.

The largest fresh-cut Christmas tree in Arizona is set up in Anthem at the Outlets North Phoenix. The tree is 70 feet tall and 20 feet wide, decked out with more than 1.5 miles of lights, 10,000 bulbs and 5,000 ornaments.

On December 22, families in Spain gather around the TV or radio for a chance to hear their names called in the Christmas Lottery – with the hope of winning El Gordo, or "the fat one." The top prize is usually around $650 million!

There's no mention of December 25 in the Bible, and many historians say Jesus was most likely born in the spring – which means Christmas may not have been celebrated on the 25th like it is now.

Some Norwegians believe witches and evil spirits roam the night sky on Christmas Eve. Out of an abundance of caution, people in Norway hide all of the brooms in their houses to prevent any witches from getting their hands on them.

Welsh people participate in the Mari Lwyd ("Gray Mare") tradition, where a group of carolers will sing and then challenge the homeowner to a battle of rhyming insults in Welsh.

WORD SEARCH

H	P	P	R	B	G	R	A	Y	M	A	R	E	C	T	M	X	Q	F	L	T	O	K	V	L
Z	Y	F	Y	E	C	O	W	S	S	K	B	H	M	C	T	K	X	B	C	O	C	V	D	X
J	L	D	U	P	V	C	N	P	B	E	U	U	B	E	X	C	A	M	B	N	D	J	Q	B
P	J	Y	A	F	Z	U	X	G	B	H	I	J	K	Y	U	U	P	L	P	P	Q	R	P	F
X	J	U	O	B	O	G	G	Z	G	E	D	P	L	U	B	K	D	L	R	J	X	F	Y	H
V	L	P	A	A	L	U	X	L	R	E	J	S	N	L	V	M	M	A	I	T	G	I	B	Z
U	B	S	Z	Q	K	Z	V	A	V	U	J	G	E	E	O	A	X	M	S	K	X	L	I	J
J	B	D	V	L	W	U	D	Y	P	F	X	F	W	C	T	R	W	R	A	J	J	T	Q	X
L	Y	O	F	G	P	I	W	U	J	G	O	W	W	A	J	E	R	R	I	S	K	F	M	N
G	G	H	H	S	S	A	N	T	A	V	P	G	V	T	F	E	X	F	N	J	C	Z	W	I
Q	Z	P	U	H	Q	R	N	P	G	L	D	R	V	Y	U	Q	Q	Z	T	H	M	N	S	Q
F	X	X	L	U	G	N	D	R	A	D	V	K	T	Q	A	B	G	F	N	M	Q	A	B	B
F	K	J	Q	M	N	A	I	S	K	A	X	G	S	A	T	W	R	N	I	Q	A	Y	H	A
F	N	S	U	P	M	A	R	K	D	W	Y	W	K	T	E	L	R	Y	C	L	X	B	X	T
K	Z	N	U	D	I	L	T	T	S	K	C	D	E	I	J	J	S	O	K	R	S	I	E	K
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W	E	P	S	Z	D	W	Y	P	H	X	I	H	S	Z	M	T	I	I	J	T	Y	B	G	E
O	R	N	A	M	E	N	T	W	E	X	F	R	U	P	N	K	B	P	H	Q	K	N	U	X
K	D	V	E	Q	Z	U	R	Y	M	T	Y	I	P	I	L	Q	Y	E	V	I	I	K	A	Y
Q	U	G	L	B	J	B	J	T	U	C	S	S	S	R	M	U	M	C	R	K	Z	E	V	Z
V	X	L	A	S	P	D	G	A	L	U	I	T	B	N	S	K	S	B	C	H	H	X	J	H
R	Z	J	F	H	Y	N	O	Q	L	P	V	M	Y	R	E	T	T	O	L	I	R	Z	V	Q
C	S	P	J	P	L	Y	E	H	M	L	V	A	R	N	R	Y	T	K	K	U	W	I	O	W
S	G	L	T	E	E	H	P	B	P	C	A	S	J	D	J	S	G	L	R	E	P	E	Q	S

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EGGNOG
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KRAMPUS
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ORNAMENT
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SAY WHAT?

NIGHT OF THE RADISHES

Noche de Rabanos, *or Night of the Radishes, is a tradition stretching over a century in Oaxaca, Mexico. Merchants hoping to attract potential customers to their shops before and after Christmas church services would carve intricate shapes into the radishes' skin – nativity scenes, local wildlife, architecture or vegetables and other relevant displays. Locals bought the most intricate offerings to use as Christmas centerpieces.*

In 1897, Oaxaca's then-mayor turned the radish-carving tradition into an official celebration, declaring December 23 the official Night of the Radishes – and the contest has been going strong since.

The radishes used in the Noche de Rabanos *carvings are larger than normal (some as heavy as six pounds!) and are not meant to be eaten. The creator of the best radish design wins 12,000 pesos – around $215.*

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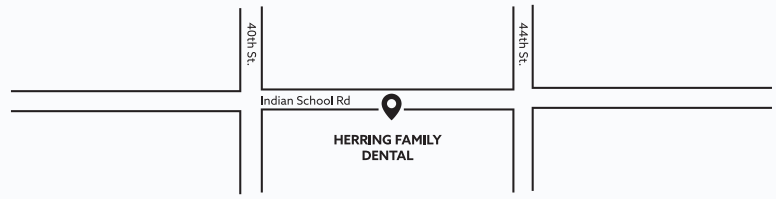

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2023 high school fall sports wrap up

By Rachael Bouley

It's been a busy fall for Arcadia, Brophy, Veritas and Xavier high school athletes, who spent their seasons gearing up for the ultimate goal – the State Championships. Here's how the season unfolded for football, cross country and swim teams.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRITTNEY BLYSTONE

Arcadia High diver Avery Bowling, Coach Brittney Blystone and diver Avery Klose.

PHOTO: DAVID SMITHERS

Xavier runners Genevieve George, Adriana Lawterborn, Carter Cook and Victoria Larson.

ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL

Football

The Titans picked up where they left off last year, winning the 4A Desert Sky Region Championship with a 10-0 regular season record. In their first ten games, Arcadia scored 362 points and allowed 125, with three shutout victories under their belts.

Their undefeated streak and region title was secured with a 27-0 win over AZ College Prep on November 3, setting them up for a playoff run. Junior quarterback Braylen Rooney threw 18 touchdown passes with 1,454 yards in the first ten games.

"We worked very hard in the off-season," Braylen said. "The team deserves these wins, and we are very proud of our progress – the job isn't finished, though."

Senior running back Brady Forst led the team with 21 touchdowns and 95.2 rushing yards per game in the regular season. Senior wide receiver Jeremy Smith had 53.7 receiving yards per game.

In the first playoff game, the Titans faced off with Coconino High, winning with just three minutes left for a final score of 23-20.

In game two, they got past Thunderbird by a field goal in OT, winning 31-28, setting up the 4A State semifinals on November 24.

Cross country

Arcadia runners logged over 100 miles in summer training ahead of the season, and their hard work paid off with impressive showings at Peaks Invite in Flagstaff and Ojo Rojo Invite in Chandler, plus a trip to the Golden State.

"The highlight of our season included an out-of-State invitational to Oceanside, California, where the team enjoyed some much cooler weather and set several personal best times in the 5K event," Coach Tyler Moore said.

Senior Captain Kaileena Ferguson and sophomore Chase Braden qualified for the State championships, finishing 13th and 72nd, respectively.

"Both Kaileena and Chase showed exceptional determination and strength at the State meet," Moore said. "We are looking forward to building on this year's success and eagerly anticipate the next cross-country season."

Swim & Dive

The Titans made a splash with a successful swim and dive season, qualifying two divers for the Division 2 State Competition.

Senior Avery Klose placed 13th in girls' State diving with her highest score of 243.6, while junior Avery Bowling competed in boys' State diving for the third year, finishing second with his highest score of 423.95. They were backed by a close-knit team, smaller in size than the last two seasons after seven divers graduated in 2023.

"The smaller team size caused the divers to be more connected with and supportive of each other," Coach Brittney Blystone said. "We will be graduating two seniors this year, so for next season, we are looking forward to improving the diving skills of those on the team already. We are hoping for more underclassmen, or even upperclassmen, to take a chance and come out for dive."

BROPHY PREP

Football

The Broncos bounced back from a close week one loss to win eight of their last nine games in the regular season, going 8-2 overall. They clinched the 6A Central Region Championship with a 14-12 victory over Salpointe Catholic on November 3.

"We have a ton of talented players, but one kid playing extremely well has been quarterback Charlie McGinnis," Coach Jason Jewell said. "He has made a ton of plays through the air and on the ground and is leading the team very well."

The senior QB earned Region Player of the Year honors with 2,172 total passing yards, while senior linebacker Alex Salome was named Region Defensive Player of the Year. These on-field leaders are keys to Brophy's success as they set their sights on State glory.

"We hope to make a deep playoff run and compete for a championship," Jewell said.

The Broncos advanced to the AIA 6A Conference semifinals with a 31-17 comeback victory against Casteel on November 17. The team trailed 17-0 in the third quarter and 17-2 entering the fourth but scored four times in the final quarter to advance to the semifinals and win 10 games for the first time since 2014. This is the sixth consecutive win for the program.

Cross country

Brophy wrapped up the 2023 season with a ninth-place team finish among the Division 1 programs. They had a busy fall, enjoying another varsity team trip to Irvine, California, in September for the prestigious Woodbridge Invitational.

They also claimed the runner-up team trophy at the Casteel Invitational in October, overcoming the challenges of a young team to build experience and set a strong foundation for the future.

"Our State meet placing was well above what was projected," Coach Oscar Borboa said. "Junior Santiago Sanchez claimed an all-State medal with a ninth-place individual finish at the State meet and also broke 16 minutes for an official 5K this fall. Senior Jack Kyle was also outstanding, and his 15:10 time for three miles at Woodbridge is one of the fastest in program history."

Swim & Dive

Brophy swim and dive ranked third at the AIA Division 1 State Championships, with 256.5 points from three top relay finishes and 20 finalists.

Senior Theodore Neilson had two podium finishes in the 200-yard individual medley and 100-yard breaststroke. He joined seniors Jackson Douglas and Tristan Oudman and freshman Finn Conley with a third place win in the 200-yard medley relay.

Neilson went on to lead a 200 individual medley "A" trio, placing third with sophomore Mark Heffern in fifth and senior Nico Wood right behind at sixth.

Freshman Patrick Dunn and sophomore

Ashton Joswiak also had successful swim performances at State after winning the Cummins Invitational and the Brophy/Xavier Invitational earlier in the season. Senior diver Sean Kennedy finished 16th overall in the State.

VERITAS PREP

Football

The Falcons made it to round one of the AIA 2A State Championship playoffs but fell 28-26 to San Tan Charter. They finished 5-1 in the region and 7-3 overall in the regular season, scoring 379 points.

Cross country

Veritas boys' varsity cross country placed 17th at State, captained by four-year senior Kishan Bhatnagar, who set a personal best of 19:09 and helped push his teammates to succeed.

"All nine boys set lifetime bests in the 5K distance this season. They stayed accountable to each other and pushed themselves," Coach Sawyer Koops said. "Sophomore Declan Travis continued his breakout from spring track, setting a new personal best of 17:03 during the season and finishing 29th at the State Championship."

The varsity girls also had an impressive season, qualifying for State as a team and finishing 10th overall.

"Sophomores Hazel Haggerty and Rachel Barney led from the front, setting season bests of 20:52 and 21:28 to finish 30th and 43rd at State," Koops said.

XAVIER PREP

Flag Football

In the first officially sanctioned AIA season for high school girls' flag football, the Gators had a blast on the field and even made it to the second round of playoffs. They went 3-1 in the 6A region and 8-4 overall, with a 14-6 win against Mountain Pointe to start their playoff run before a narrow 7-6 loss to Red Mountain in the next game.

"The season was great. Highlights included the girls bonding as a team, and it was a highly competitive initial season," Coach Michael Patterson said. "Imani Campbell led in tackles, and Isa Ady led the team in sacks."

Although each team member helped lead the successes of the season, Patterson cited Kate Macdonald as the lead in touchdowns and Gigi Bulkley in catches.

"Our future goal is to take our team to State," Patterson said.

After playing flag football in physical education classes for years, the Gators are eager to build on this new competitive sporting opportunity with one of the only fields in the State featuring official flag football lines.

Cross country

Twenty-four cross country runners participated in the 2023 season, with the Gators finishing as State runners-up.

"Our challenges were the usual mid-season injuries, but Julia Russo, Lily Beaver, Kaitlyn Markam, Ella Wadsworth, and Maggie Mostoller led the team this season," Coach Dave Van Sickle said. "Our goal is to win State next year."

Swim & Dive

The Gators enjoyed lots of success this season, going 5-1 in dual meets and winning the Brophy/Xavier invite, the Craig Cummins invite and the AMDG invite.

They placed sixth, just one point away from fifth, at the Division 1 State Meet, with a fourth-place finish in the 200 medley relay for Geni George, Adrianna Laterborn, Carter Cook, and Victoria Larson. Audrey McEwen joined these standout swimmers with top 10 finishes throughout the State events, while Maya Superfon came fourth in the diving championships.

"Some of the highlights were winning the Brophy/Xavier invite for the first time in three years, and our second-day swims at the State meet," Coach David Smithers said. "Every swim but one was faster, or the swimmers moved up a place from their prelim swims."

Xavier had three Academic All-American swimmers this year: Brooke Person, Audrey Schaub and Sophia Sweatlock.

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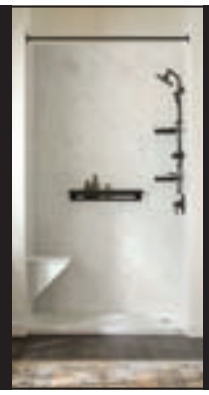

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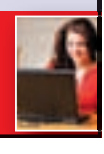

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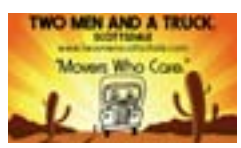

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Titan Times

VOL. 1 NO. 01 DECEMBER 2023

WHAT IS THE "TITAN TIMES," ANYWAY?

Editor's Note: *Arcadia High student Ahva Ghazanfari approached Arcadia News to gain some perspective on how a local newspaper operates, with the hope of resurrecting the school newspaper, which they have named the Titan Times. We are so excited to help Ahva's vision come true. Introducing the first edition of the Titan Times!*

By Ahva Ghazanfari and Amelia Guzman

Arcadia juniors and seniors are looking for ways to make our voices heard, especially with college on the horizon. What started as just an idea became a reality when a few of us with a shared passion got together and put pen to paper.

We, the writers of the *Titan Times* page, are an ambitious group of Arcadia High School students looking to share our writing skills and interact with our community on a larger scale. Writing for *Arcadia News* is one way we plan to foster these hopes, especially since our school doesn't have its own paper…yet.

Informing the community about ongoing events at Arcadia and highlighting some of the school's finest students and teachers is our aim, while also using this opportunity as a platform to share our opinions and insight with the larger community!

TEST SCORES: TO SUBMIT OR NOT SUBMIT?

By Ahva Ghazanfari

Now that the semester is coming to a close and college applications are wrapping up for most seniors, colleges' test-optional policies have become a circulating topic for all high schoolers. Colleges recognize that not all students are in positions that favor test-taking, so many of them have made submitting standardized test scores (like the SAT or ACT) optional.

Fundamentally, these policies aim to create a more inclusive and fair admissions process that considers the whole student beyond just a number. So, what does Arcadia think about test-optional admissions that theoretically reduce applicants' stress levels?

Brianna Moy, a senior at Arcadia High, said she won't be submitting scores in her applications. Additionally, she agrees that some of the pressure with test-taking has been lifted since score submissions are no longer required.

"I think it's good," she said. "It allows students to showcase their other abilities and talents, and [show] that test scores aren't everything."

Karen Treon and Jennifer Steen, Arcadia's College and Career Advisors, have some thoughts, too.

They describe how many factors contribute to whether students decide to submit scores or not. Socioeconomic status, access to preparation methods, scores, and specific schools of interest play huge roles in determining what a student should present to colleges. Schools being test-optional "opens up avenues for strong students who don't have access to preparation classes or coaching that can lead to higher scores. I think that's great," Ms. Treon said.

But while it may seem so, the college application process isn't stress-free sunshine and rainbows just because score submissions aren't required. "In theory, test-optional seems like it should alleviate [test anxiety], and in practice, it doesn't," Dr. Steen adds. "Students still stress over how they did on the test, and now they also worry about whether their score is good enough to submit." It's almost as if a layer of stress has been added through test-optional colleges. Nevertheless, most people agree that the benefits outweigh the costs, but whether a student submits their test scores depends entirely on their situation.

Amelia Guzman, Ahva Ghazanfari and Maya Campbell.

WINTER FASHION TRENDS (ARIZONA'S VERSION)

By Maya Campbell

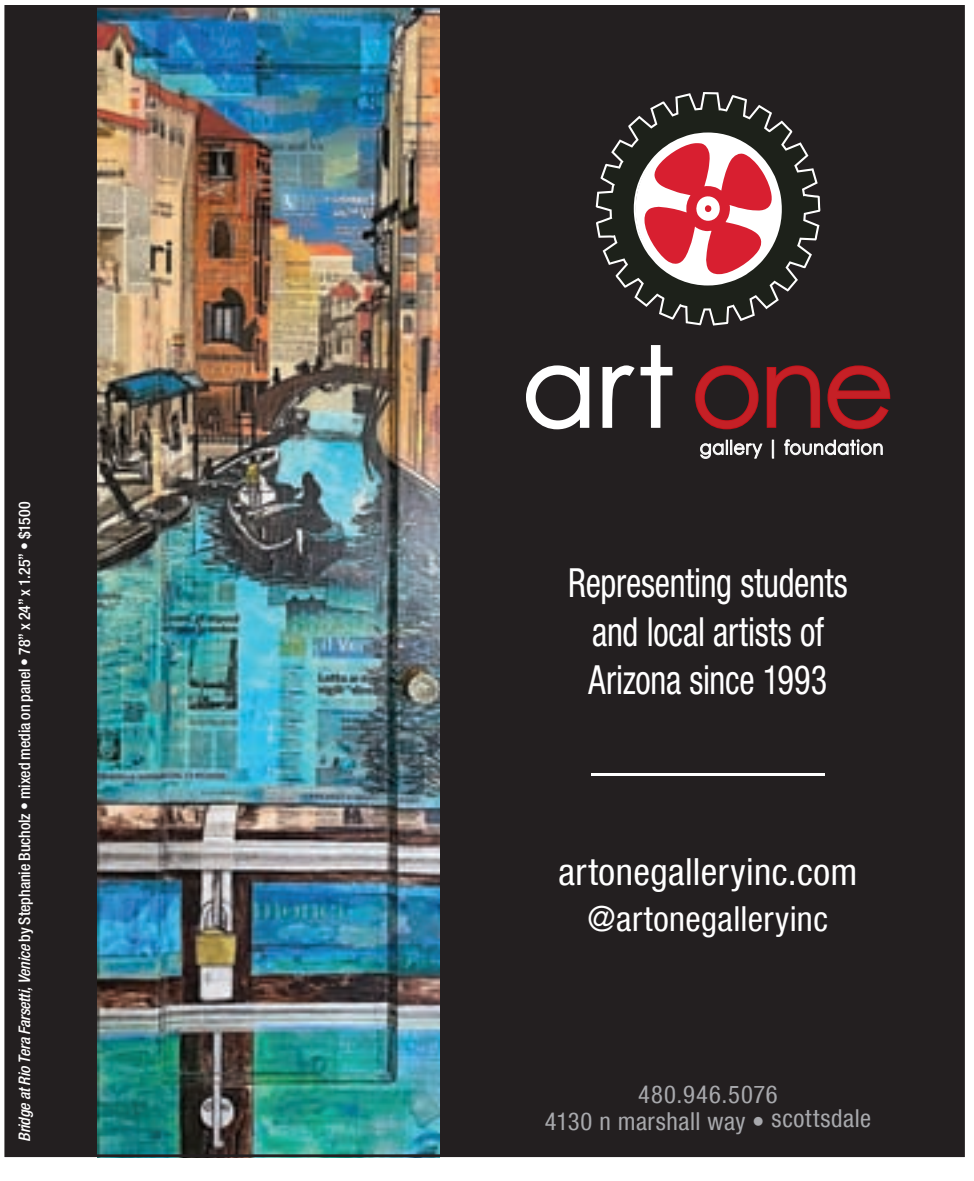
It's that time of year again. The weather is changing, leaves are falling, Starbucks has released its holiday menu, and the people of Arizona are once again struggling with the same question: "How can I participate in the winter fashion trends?" Colored tights appear all over the runways but are much too thick and perhaps gaudy for everyday wear.

Trench coats are popping up in new and exciting ways, and the red leather one you saw in *Vogue* is to die for, but there's a high of 70 degrees this week. You're feeling left out of being fashionable in your everyday clothes – but you don't have to!

Year in and year out, there's one winter staple that's perfect for Arizona weather and has never, and will never, be out of style. This, of course, is the black leather boot.

Chic and fashionable, styling any look with a pair of quality black boots will automatically make it look better and, more importantly, make your outfit more wintery! Black leather boots come in all lengths and styles, depending on what you like best. Square toes are in right now, but if your heart loves a point, those black boots will be in every department store. It doesn't matter what style, black boots are IN.

For a standard black boot, you can go with the Dolce Vita Flin Knee-High Boot. Or, if you're looking for an ankle boot, Jeffery Campbell's Geist Square Toe Boot is another option. And so, this holiday season, the best thing you can do for your wardrobe is to buy a pair of boots.



Wishing you and yours a beautiful holiday season and a happy new year!

Heather, a resident of Arcadia who takes immense pride in her hometown, brings a wealth of local expertise that is incredibly valuable to her clients. Specializing in the neighborhoods of Arcadia, the Biltmore/Camelback Corridor, and Paradise Valley. Heather's affiliation with CMN & Associates along with Launch Powered by Compass, provides her clients with access to an exceptional range of services and global networks. Let Heather's extensive experience and unwavering professionalism, once again empower your real estate journey.

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