

ARCADIA NEWS



VOL. 32 NO. 9

ARCADIA • BILTMORE • CAMELBACK CORRIDOR

DECEMBER 2024



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Wishing all our friends, family and neighbors a safe and happy holiday season, from all of us at Arcadia News!

A HOMETOWN TALE

Arcadian John Heckenlaible debuted his first book, a fictional tale about overcoming life's obstacles.

PAGE 24

FALL SPORTS ROUND-UP

Arcadia, Brophy, Xavier and Veritas each finished their fall sports seasons with a multitude of recognitions.

PAGE 40

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December sees Scottsdale turning into a wonderland, complete with twinkling lights, music, and over 40 events for families to revel in the fun of the holidays.

22 Connecting generations

CLS fifth-graders spent time with the folks at Hospice of the Valley's Adult Day Club, where they played games, heard stories and made friends – all in one afternoon.

26 Need a tissue? Hopi can help.

Hopi Elementary's first annual tissue box contest allowed students to decorate the boxes with their favorite book characters while also helping out their fellow middle school.

32 Sing it loud!

The Orpheus Male Chorus of Phoenix has been entertaining crowds near and far for over 90 years. This month's concerts are gearing up to be full of holiday spirit.



Uptown Plaza in Phoenix will host a day of shopping, Christmas carols, activities for kids and, of course, photos with Santa.

PHOTO COURTESY OF UPTOWN PLAZA



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EDITOR'S NOTE

It's that magical time of year when the air is filled with the scent of cinnamon, pine and apples, the glow of twinkling lights fills every home, and there's the unmistakable sound of someone – me – yelling at the cat to leave the ornaments alone. It's been a continuous struggle to get Pubbins interested in something else, but these moments *almost* make the season more fun and definitely memorable.

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 (including holiday pop-ups and New Year's Eve fun) – along with all the good news our neighborhood has to share.

The Spirit of Arcadia Marching Band has their sights set on heading to the Happiest Place on Earth and are enlisting the help of the community with their Disneyland fundraiser. Hopi Elementary channeled their artistic abilities in creating book-themed tissue

boxes for their fellow students at Ingleside.

St. Thomas is making progress on a \$20 million renovation that will bring the 75-year-old school a more modern approach to classrooms, labs, and more. Fall sports have finished up their seasons, so we're highlighting all the accomplishments our high school teams made in 2024, too!

We hope your December 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

Fitness and Health

FEBRUARY

History

MARCH

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 ads@arcadianews.com.

"Nothing ever seems too bad, too hard or too sad when you've got a Christmas tree in the living room."

– Nora Roberts

Arcadia News
Meet & Greet

Kick off 2025 with your neighborhood newspaper! Stop by Scooptacular ice cream shop to say hello and pick up a copy of the January edition. We'd love to meet our readers!

Monday, January 6
2 p.m. - 4 p.m.



ARCADIA'S PETS



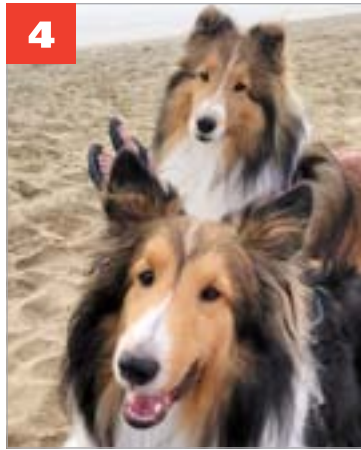
1



2



3



4

1. This is **Freyja**! She's a three-year-old German Shorthair Pointer that has endless amounts of energy. We got her from First Point Gun Dogs in Whitman, AZ. She loves going for bike rides on the canal or to drop her best friend off at school.

– Matt S.

2. **Cocoa Puff**, our five-year-old chocolate cat, is a handful of furry fun. He plays fetch and catch like a dog and is such a warm and sweet boy. He's smart, adventurous and likes to take walks on a leash. Here he is clowning around with Santa!

– JD T.

3. **Franco Harris**, our four-year-old white French bulldog, is named after Pittsburgh Steelers running back Franco Harris, who played in the 1970s. Franco Harris enjoys long walks in Arcadia, sleeping under the Christmas tree, and rooting for – you guessed it – the Steelers!

– Lauren N.

4. **Teddy** and **Molly** are both age 4. We've had at least one Sheltie (Shetland Sheepdog) in our home, along with various rescues over the years, since 1994. We love them all and this picture is from our recent trip to Newport Beach.

– Karolina D.

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!

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His journalistic expeditions saw Sam becoming a clown in the circus, impersonating a king and walking on the wing of an airplane.

A LIFE WELL-REPORTED: Arcadia News columnist passes away at 91

By Mallory Gleich

Sam Lowe lived a life as intriguing and captivating as the stories he told. Raised in the small towns of Wimbledon (population 176), Kensal (population 147), and Jamestown (population 15,000), North Dakota, Sam found his calling in the journalism world, a path that would span more than four decades and take him around the globe.

His career, filled with humor, tutelage, and unique experiences, made him a beloved figure in Arizona journalism – and a treasured part of the Arcadia News.

In 1955, Sam started writing at *The Jamestown Sun* as the sports editor. But the bitter North Dakota winters left him longing for a change. Tired of shoveling snow, he moved to Arizona in 1969, taking a job at the *Scottsdale Progress*. It was in Arizona that Sam would find his home, discover his passion for travel, and meet the love of his life, Lyn.

He wrote daily columns for the *Phoenix Gazette* for 22 years, blending humor and insightful reporting. He worked a brief stint as the managing editor of the *Lake Havasu Herald* and also spent some time reporting the weather for the *Gazette*. When the publication merged with *The Arizona Republic* in 1996, Sam moved to the morning paper and continued his work there until retiring in 1999.

He continued on as a freelance travel writer, and it was in 2019 when Arcadia News had the pleasure of meeting the wordsmith for the first time. Sam introduced himself as a neighbor and frequent reader of the paper – and told us he would love to share his prose with our neighborhood.

For over five years, Sam penned more than 60 columns for Arcadia News. His monthly column, “On the Lowe Road,” was a reader favorite that won multiple national awards for the publication. Sam also participated in the Arcadia News podcast, sharing his experiences and behind-the-scenes stories from his childhood and throughout his career.

Sam’s life was full of adventures, many of which he shared through his writing – and through an obituary that he penned for himself before his death. In that obit, Sam mentions walking on the wings of a plane mid-flight, portraying a wax dummy, serving as a Christmas elf, acting as a circus clown, and even impersonating an English king.

He rubbed elbows with music legends Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings and Western film star Lash LaRue. He met three of the Kennedy brothers: John, Bobby, and Ted. He was nearly stranded on a train after a discussion about boxing – a discussion that happened to take place with Muhammad Ali.

Sam crossed paths with political figures Prince Philip, Menachem Begin, and Chiang Kai-Shek. He visited iconic landmarks like the Great Wall of China and the Western Wall in Jerusalem and even reported from the Egyptian desert at the end of a war.

He also judged Dolly Parton and Buck Owens look-alike contests, participated in chili and margarita competitions and judged a whiskey tasting where he and a colleague ended up going home with more than a few bottles to enjoy. He interviewed a wide range of celebrities, including Linda Lovelace, Western heroes like Roy Rogers, and the Lone Ranger, and captured images of political figures such as Richard Nixon, Spiro Agnew, and astronaut Alan Shepard.

He educated readers on architecture in Arizona and beyond, of sculptures and art, historical figures – even the time he sang on a CD and was horrified to find out that he sounded nothing like Frank Sinatra.

Sam did, however, sing with the Orpheus Male Chorus off and on for 33 years. During this time, he also made several international tours with Masterworks Chorale – and it was here that he and Lyn crossed paths for the first time.

“He was actually dating someone else, but there was just something about him,” Lyn said. “Sam went on an international tour and when he returned to the states, I

gathered up the courage to ask him out. It was the first time I’d ever asked a man out!”

The pair attended a symphony and halfway through, realized they were both bored and decided to head out to a jazz lounge instead. They were married in a civil ceremony in 1987 and moved to their home in Arcadia.

Lyn said that Sam kept a binder with photos of each well-known figure he met – and while those interviews were surely memorable, his favorite way to make memories was to travel. His quest to visit every country in the world fell short, but Sam made it to 47, and each was an experience to remember. Arcadia News readers lived vicariously through his stories of trips to Russia with Orpheus, to Italy, kissing the Blarney Stone in Ireland, Germany, China, and across the U.S.

“Sam had so many exciting adventures. One time, he almost got stuck in Zambia while delivering books to children,” Lyn said.

Throughout his career, Sam wrote over 3,500 stories and columns. In 1988, he was named Humor Columnist of the Year by the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. He wrote 14 books, many of which chronicled his travel experiences, and his articles appeared in publications like *Arizona Highways*, *Sunset Magazine*, the *Robb Report* and airline in-flight magazines.

Despite his many accomplishments, Sam often spoke most fondly of Lyn. In his self-written obituary, Sam described her as his “inspiration, true love, guide through life’s journeys, and a constant companion through whatever transpired.”

Sam’s life was a celebration of living – of seeking new experiences, telling captivating stories, and connecting with others. His legacy continues through the countless stories he shared with the world. Sam closed his obituary with a simple statement: “He lived a good life and left it no regrets.”



After the circus “expedition,” Sam came home with two full sized billboards announcing the show. One was at Sam’s first house, and the second went up in the family garage – but only after Sam convinced Lyn to let him put it there!



Sam had a woodworking studio that boasted pictures of himself with famous faces like Johnny Cash and Linda Lovelace.



He also started taking painting classes at a Scottsdale senior center – above is his first completed piece.

WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?

BRIEFS

Arcadia Boy Scout Troop 6 is having their annual drive-thru wreath sale at Prince of Peace (3641 N. 56th St., Phoenix) on December 7 and 8 from 10 a.m.-2 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 greenery and decorations – start at \$30.

A new comic book store, **Cosmic Comics**, has opened in the Arcadia Birdcage Plaza near 44th St. and Thomas Road. Cosmic Comics specializes in Godzilla-themed memorabilia, but they also offer an extensive collection of retro and modern comic books, figurines, games, records, apparel and more. The store plans on debuting movie and game nights and events in the future.

Learn more on Instagram
@cosmiccomics2024

Join Arcadia News for our monthly **Meet and Greet** to check out the latest edition and meet the people behind your good news newspaper! The next event takes place on January 6 at Scooptacular, 4730 E. Indian School Road.

For more, email
editor@arcadianews.com

Paul Komidina and Kristina Spellman are hosting the second annual **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 15 to load supplies, drop them off, and help with decorating.

For more, email
arcadialuminaries@gmail.com



The 33rd annual **ZooLights** event is here! Ongoing until January 12, 2025, families will find four million twinkling lights and a music-in-motion light show. Check out the zoo's Wildlife Lanterns, the Glow Garden, photo booths, hot cocoa, s'mores and snacks, and of course, photos with Santa! There will be a sensory-friendly night on December 2. Zoolights is open from 5:30-10:30 p.m. at Phoenix Zoo, 455 N. Galvin Pkwy. General admission is \$30.

phoenixzoo.org

'Tis the Season superstore (8960 E. Talking Stick Way, Scottsdale) is officially open. The store offers décor, accessories and a collection of 13 fully custom-designed Christmas trees on display. Shoppers can purchase a fully decorated tree (including optional installation), individual ornaments, sprays, glass ornaments, garlands and Santas of every size. 'Tis the Season also offers decorating classes, corporate décor and installation.

tistheseasonscottsdale.com

DRIVES

Nourish PHX (501 S. 9th Ave., Phoenix) is hosting a toy drive through December 6. Options are to "adopt" a child and shop their holiday wish list, donate gift cards or donate the following: gift wrap and bags, new kids clothing, makeup, sports equipment, building sets, hygiene items, etc. Gifts should be donated to the office unwrapped.

nourishphx.org

Pita Jungle is participating in the **"Empty Bowls"** fundraiser, aimed at supporting Arizona nonprofit Waste Not, which works to alleviate hunger and reduce food waste in the community. Guests can purchase a limited number of hand-crafted clay bowls made by artisans from the Arizona Clay Association for \$20 at select Pita Jungle locations across the state.

pitajungle.com

This year, **Jamma Jingles** is collecting new, unwrapped pajamas and gently used or new books to benefit The Foster Alliance. Donations can be dropped off at 7819 E. Paradise Lane in Scottsdale until December 20.

magicalbuilders.org/jammajingles



From December 6-15, Arizonans can donate new, unwrapped toys for children who are hospitalized at PCH during the holidays. Donations can be dropped off at the Rosenberg Medical Plaza (1920 E. Cambridge Ave.) on weekdays from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. and weekends from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. On December 23 and 24, a special area will be transformed into **Toyland** where parents can "shop" for gifts free of charge for their hospitalized children.

phoenixchildrensfoundation.org

The Foundation for Senior Living is looking for volunteers for their **Christmas Angels** program to sponsor a gift up to \$30 for a low-income senior or adult with mental illness. Gifts will be distributed to FSL group homes or to individuals living in low-income housing throughout Maricopa. Volunteers can sign up by December 10 and deliver a wrapped gift to FSL's corporate office (1201 E. Thomas Road) by December 13.

For more, email adeleon@fsl.org.

We can give you the numbers: Thousands of meals served, individuals rehoused, and patients cared for. But we can't quantify the joy, comfort, and confidence that our guests feel every day. A **St. Vincent de Paul** tax credit donation of \$938 can serve 208 hot meals for families and individuals in need in our Valley dining rooms.

taxcreditimpact.org

EVENTS

THURSDAY 12/5

Jingle Bell Jive

11 a.m. at Hotel Valley Ho, 6850 E. Main St., Scottsdale. AZ Opera is hosting a luncheon that promises merriment and surprises. Guests will be treated to a cocktail reception, three-course plated lunch and various live performances. This event is chaired by Jenny Holsman Tetreault and benefits the programs at AZ Opera. Tickets start at \$250 per person.

azopera.org

Bud Shootout Golf Tournament

7:30 a.m. at Camelback Golf Club, 7847 N. Mockingbird Lane, Scottsdale. This year the 32nd Annual Bud Shootout is supporting the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation's college scholarship initiatives. The event kicks off with breakfast, then a four-man scramble golf game with contests on each course. The tournament ends with lunch and an awards ceremony. Registration prices vary.

azhcc.com

THURSDAY 12/5 - FRIDAY 12/6

Troon Grass League Championship

3-9 p.m. Thursday, 12 p.m. Friday at Grass Clippings Rolling Hills, 1415 N. Mill Ave., Tempe. The Troon Access GL Championship brings two days and nights and 36 holes of high stakes par 3 golf, live country music concerts, food trucks, a beer garden and more to Tempe. Attendees can watch two-person golf teams, including Phoenix United and Scottsdale Strikers, as they compete – and at this event, it's okay to get loud! Tickets are \$20.

grassclippingsaz.com

SATURDAY 12/7

FQ Story Historic Home Tour

11 a.m. starting at 11th Ave. and Willetta in Phoenix. The F.Q. Story Home Tour and Holiday Marketplace features historic homes, creative gardens, an historic school, vendors, food trucks and the famous Cookie House with home baked goodies. Historic homes open their doors at 11 a.m. for the tour and the marketplace will be open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$25 per person.

fqstoryhometour.org

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-

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WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?



The Nutcracker at Symphony Hall in Phoenix.

long illuminated event featuring musicians, marching bands, trucks, floats, balloons and performances. This year's theme is "Let Every Holiday Shine!" Afterward, children can take pictures with Santa, participate in workshops, and engage in other fun activities.

phoenix.gov

Holiday Bazaar

10 a.m. at St. Stephen's, 2310 N. 56th St., Phoenix. This annual marketplace is chock-full of talented artists and crafters showcasing their homemade wares. There will also be live music and food and beverages for purchase...and maybe even a holiday surprise or two. This event is free for all ages.

ststephens.org

SUNDAY 12/8

Scrooge!

3 p.m. at the Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado Pkwy. Arizona Theatre Company's musical extravaganza, "Scrooge," celebrates the season with the story of Ebenezer Scrooge and a tale of transformation and redemption. With songs by Grammy-winner and Tony-nominated composer Leslie Bricusse, this unique rendition will run until December 28. Tickets start at \$70.

tempecenterforthearts.com

Holidays at Uptown Plaza

11 a.m. at Uptown Plaza, 100 E. Camelback Road. The man in red will be on-site at this festive celebration! Guests can get their photo taken with Santa while listening to live music and performances, and participating in a seasonal craft activity that you can take home. This event is free.

uptownplazaphx.com

MONDAY 12/9

ACI Luncheon

10:30 a.m. at Arizona Biltmore, 2400 E. Missouri Ave., Phoenix. The Arizona Costume Institute is hosting its annual

luncheon to celebrate fashion and support the PhxArt fashion-design collection. Guests can kick off their morning with a champagne reception and style-focused luxury raffle, lunch and a program with keynote speaker and international fashion designer Christian Siriano. Ticket prices vary.

arizonacostumeinstitute.org

TUESDAY 12/10

Pawlidays

4-6 p.m. at Royal Palms Resort, 5200 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix. Pawlidays is a festive, fur-a-good-cause event to benefit Almost There Pet Rescue. Guests can indulge in a unique happy hour – bring your pups along – that includes special treats and festive sips for both pups and their owners, plus a paw ornament making activity. Admission is free.

almostthererescue.org

Alice in a Winter Wonderland Bus Tour

5 p.m. at Burton Barr Library, 1221 N. Central Ave., Phoenix. New York Times bestselling author Jan Brett is heading to Phoenix to promote her new book, "Alice in a Winter Wonderland," where the well-known characters are reimagined as Alaska's native animals. At the event, Jan will do a drawing demonstration, Q&A and book signing. This event is free but registration is recommended.

changinghands.com

THURS. 12/12 – SATURDAY 12/14

Phoestivus

5-10 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 8 a.m. on Saturday, at 720 N. 5th St. Downtown Phoenix presents the 15th annual Phoestivus craft market, presented by Community Food Connections. The three-day outdoor event will feature 175 small business vendors, music, food and appearances by Phreddie the Yeti and Hipster Santa. The free event is open to humans – and pets – of all ages. Donations will be accepted.

phoestivus.com



Phoestivus in Downtown Phoenix.

FRIDAY 12/13

The Nutcracker

7:30 p.m. at Symphony Hall, 75 N. 2nd St., Phoenix. 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." The show runs December 6-24, and tickets start at \$40.

balletaz.org

Cars & Tattoos for a Cause

6 p.m. at Sentient Tattoo Collective, 227 S. Smith Road, Tempe. Sentient Tattoo is bringing the community together through art, cars, and compassion. This year's theme is Nightmare Before Christmas, and attendees are encouraged to dress up and get a flash tattoo – with 50 percent of proceeds going to Lost Our Home pet rescue – and browse through hundreds of classic cars while visiting with adoptable pets. Attendance is free, tattoos are \$130.

sentienttattoocollective.com

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WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?

SATURDAY 12/14

Rock the Rooftop

7 p.m. at the W Hotel, 7277 E. Camelback Road, Scottsdale. This third annual concert will feature up-and-coming artists, including Niko Mood, Austin Snell 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

Merry Merchantile Market

10 a.m. at Scottsdale Civic Center, 3939 N. Drinkwater Blvd., Scottsdale. The Merchantile brings together over 80 local businesses, artisans, and vendors to the Civic Center for holiday shopping all in one. There will be immersive workshops – for grownups and kids – in collaboration with Scottsdazzle, plus live music, treats, giveaways and a play area for the kids. This event is free.

merchantilemarket.com

Ignite Hope Walk

3-7 p.m. starting at North High School, 1101 E. Thomas Road. The Ignite Hope candlelit walk raises funds for Phoenix Children's while showing patients and their families they are not alone during the



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

season. Families will walk from NHS to Phoenix Children's while patients watch from their rooms. There will be a pre-walk festival with activities and entertainment. Tickets are \$40 for adults, \$10 for kids.

ignitehope.raiselysite.com

A Merry-Achi Christmas

3 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 start at \$49.

scottsdaleperformingarts.org

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 Illuminated Cactus. Enjoy a mimosa and snack on pastries while creating your masterpiece. Registration is \$120.

hermosainn.com

SUNDAY 12/15

Happy Holidays, With Love

2 p.m. at the Madison Center for the Arts, 5601 N. 16th St., Phoenix. Bender Performing Arts and DanceMotion Performing Company bring you a story of struggle, redemption and hope with their latest production. By taking a magical trip through five classic holiday stories, each member of the Tinsel family learns an important lesson that helps them to overcome their personal struggles and rediscover the happiness they thought they had lost forever. Tickets are \$22.

benderperformingarts.com

MONDAY 12/30

Menorah Lighting

5:30 p.m. at Ragsdale-MLK Park, 24 E. 6th St., Tempe. Hosted in partnership with ASU Chabad, this special evening will feature a menorah lighting, traditional blessings, festive kosher treats, and kid-friendly games and crafts. This event is free.

downtowntempe.com



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Practice will begin in February. Season runs from early March until May.
See website for dates and times.

Rooted in Community: *A Year in Review*

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

In 2013, I had a vision for creating the best local real estate company possible. A company that could serve the community in an approachable location with high touch and intimate local knowledge. That year, I acquired a piece of land at the corner of 40th Street and Hazelwood that kicked off a multi-year mission to turn my vision into a reality. After a few years of building our track record and saving up for a down payment, I broke ground on The Brokery building in 2016 using an SBA construction loan and almost every dollar that I had to my name. At the time, the pressure was immense.

I had my second child on the way and I was making a huge financial decision for my young family.

Opening our doors in 2017, we had 7 real estate advisors and a dream. Fast forward to today and we now have 5 locations across the Valley with 95 real estate advisors who are transacting almost \$500,000,000 annually. While we have grown since our early days, I can say without a doubt that the dream and mission to be the best local real estate company still burns bright. We are grateful every day to wake up and do what we love in the neighborhood.

We are truly humbled by the support and appreciate all of you that champion and refer our business daily.

Thank you for a phenomenal 2024 and we look forward to serving you in 2025!

Tucker Blalock



THE BROKERY

Tucker Blalock Managing Broker, Co-Founder
602.561.0445 | Tucker@TheBrokery.com

Oleg Bortman Associate Broker, Co-Founder
602.402.2296 | Oleg@TheBrokery.com



OUT OF THE AREA, BUT WORTH THE DRIVE

SUNDAY 12/1

Pratt Brothers Christmas

6 p.m. at Rawhide Western Town, 5700 W. North Loop Road, Chandler. Featuring over seven million lights and a variety of attractions, this town isn't short on cheer. There will be a holiday train ride, a nightly parade, stunt shows featuring the Arizona Roughriders, shopping, a gingerbread house light show, live entertainment, meet-and-greets with Santa Claus and more. Tickets start at \$29 per person.

prattbrotherschristmas.com

THURSDAY 12/5

Lights in the Night

6-9 p.m. at Thompson Event Center, 1901 E. Alma School Road, Mesa. Whether celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or simply embracing the festive spirit, this family-friendly drive-through light show offers displays of twinkling lights, from glowing reindeer and candy canes to oversized snowmen, all choreographed to classic and modern holiday tunes. Tickets start at \$27 per vehicle.

arizonalightsinthenight.com

FRIDAY 12/6

Desert Farm Lights

5-8 p.m. at Desert Farm, 14629 W. Peoria Ave., Waddell. The west valley is ready to light up the night. Tickets to this family-friendly event includes pictures with Santa, candy cane maze, jolly journey train ride, slides, trampolines, a carousel, fire pits with s'mores, yard games and more. There's also an ice skating rink, snow globe experience and plenty of hot chocolate and treats. Tickets start at \$23 per person.

desertfarmlights.com

SATURDAY 12/7

Festival of Tales

9 a.m. at Paradise Valley Community College, 18401 N. 32nd St., Phoenix.

Presented in partnership with Southwest Human Development, the Festival of Tales aims to inspire a love of reading and cultural understanding in all ages. Guests will find immersive storytelling sessions, live music and dance performances, interactive arts and crafts, free books and food and drinks available for purchase. This event is free.

paradisevalley.edu

Fuelfest

1-8 p.m. at WestWorld, 16601 N. Pima Road, Scottsdale. Fuelfest boasts more than 700 custom, exotic, rare, and exclusive cars and trucks. There will also be exhibits, drag racing, drifting, ride-alongs, food, drinks and live music with headliner Bizzy Bone from Bone Thugs N Harmony. 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

SUNDAY 12/8

Hanukkah Holiday Bazaar

4 p.m. at the Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus Library, 12701 N. Scottsdale Road. The Hanukkah Holiday Bazaar is a festive celebration of community, culture and creativity. Attendees will find vendors showcasing handcrafted gifts and decorations, arts and crafts, games for the kids, a silent auction and a children's raffle. This event is free to attend but registration is required.

bjephoenix.org

WEDNESDAY 12/11

Manheim Steamroller Christmas

7:30 p.m. at the Mesa Arts Center, One E. Main St. Grammy Award Winner Chip Davis has created a performance that features Mannheim Steamroller Christmas classics in the show's distinctive sound. This evening's program includes 15 musicians playing more than 20 instruments against a backdrop of multimedia effects, capturing



Desert Farm Lights at Desert Farm in Waddell.

the spirit of the season in an immersive setting. Tickets start at \$40.

mesaartscenter.com

FRIDAY 12/13 - SUNDAY 12/15

Art at Anthem

10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Outlets North Phoenix, 4250 W. Anthem Way. The second annual Art at Anthem event will boast over 60 fine artists and vendors, live music, food vendors and fun activities like face painting, balloon tricks, a train ride and a special cookie vendor. The venue is also home to Arizona's tallest Christmas tree. Admission is free.

oakcreekartsandcraftsshow.com

SATURDAY 12/14 - SUNDAY 12/15

Holidays at MIM

9 a.m. at the Musical Instrument Museum, 4725 E. Mayo Blvd., Phoenix. Experience the season on a musical note with the MIM. Guests can make their own handbells, enjoy songs sung by the strolling Dickens Carolers, join junior museum guides for tours focused on celebrations across the globe, check out Kwanzaa traditions with storyteller and musician Súle Greg Wilson and hear New Orleans-style holiday tunes with The Hot Beignets. Ticket are \$20.

mim.org

THURSDAY 12/19

Christmas at the Princess

5 p.m. at the Scottsdale Fairmont Princess, 7575 E. Princess Dr. The resort has been transformed into a holiday haven for the 15th annual Christmas at the Princess. Guests can go ice skating or slide down snow mountain, take photos with Santa and his elves, sip cider or cocoa and send Christmas wish off with special wish paper. The lagoon lights and Princess Express are also available. Tickets are \$35 for general admission.

fairmontscottsdaleprincess.com

Snow Fest

12 p.m. at Salt River Fields, 7555 N. Pima Road, Scottsdale. Thanks to Valley Toyota Dealers and R Entertainment, Salt River Fields is bringing 350 tons of real snow to the Valley. Guests will find a 20-foot toboggan hill, snowman building stations, snowball throwing contests, Santa meet-and-greets, vendors, twinkling trees, food and beverages for all. General admission starts at \$25 for adults, \$15 for kids.

holidaysnowfest.com

FRIDAY 12/20

A Christmas Carol

7:30 p.m. at the Peoria Center for the Performing Arts, 10580 N. 83rd Dr. This timeless story of kindness, compassion and redemption is the perfect way to finish out the season. Charles Dickens' beloved characters – Ebenezer Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, and Tiny Tim – will come to life on the TheaterWorks stage at this evening's performance. Tickets start at \$43.

theaterworks.org

SATURDAY 12/21

Hi-Fi Holidays

7:30 p.m. at Hale Concert Hall, 50 W. Page Ave., Gilbert. The folks at Hale have enlisted the help of the elves to go through their vinyl record collection and create a night of everyone's favorite Christmas hits. The concert will feature guest stars from around the country and the North Pole, and include songs made famous by Judy Garland, Julie Andrews, Burl Ives, Bing Crosby, and more. Tickets start at \$45.

haletheatrearizona.com

Christmas Concert

7 p.m. at the Ravenscroft, 8445 E. Hartford Dr., Scottsdale. Fans of jazz and Christmas songs won't want to miss this show. Valley Jazz Cooperative program alumni combine forces with a handful of leading area jazz artists for the first time and perform big band arrangements of the classics, infusing Ravenscroft Hall with the Spirit of Christmas. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for students.

theravenscroft.com

FRIDAY 12/27

Hanukkah Celebration

4 p.m. at Jordan's Corner, 8541 E. Anderson Dr., Scottsdale. Mr. Mouse (you know the one.) will be on-site at this afternoon's Hanukkah celebration. Youngsters can partake in activities like creating glittery slime, filling their own *sufganiyot* (jelly donuts), making and decorating a dreidel to take home and meeting Mr. Mouse himself. Attendance is \$11 per person.

jordanscorneraz.com



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PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANGELICA CIPULLO



The ninth annual Scottsdazzle celebration doesn't just stop at daily events: attendees will find eats, drinks, music, fun and cheer around every corner.

Experience magic close to home with Scottsdazzle

By Eliana Ganz

Old Town Scottsdale is preparing for another spectacular holiday season. The city’s annual Scottsdazzle has returned for its ninth year, with food, art and music programs that last until New Year’s Eve. The month-long celebration features over 45 events, drawing thousands of attendees to revel in the magic.

Angelica Cipullo, City of Scottsdale’s Marketing Program Manager, emphasizes that the event is not just about dazzling lights and delicious food – though those are plentiful – it’s about “bringing the community together and highlighting the businesses in Old Town.”

The festivities kicked off on November 30 with a stunning tree-lighting ceremony

and lively sing-along. Throughout the rest of the month, guests can look forward to a delightful array of outdoor movies, magic shows, small business sales, and opportunities to meet Santa Claus. More than half of the events are free and specifically designed to be family-friendly.

For example, Holly Jolly DIY Decor, hosted by the Scottsdale Artists’ School,

will provide a chance to create decorations for the home on Saturday, December 14. Scottsdazzle Strolls invites guests to walk through magical light displays surrounding the canal every Saturday in December.

Cipullo said there will also be brand-new events this year, including Pancakes and Pajamas with Santa on December 14. At this event, Soleri Bridge will be transformed into a winter wonderland for families to enjoy breakfast with the man of the hour.

The Entertainment District will come alive as Peppermint Plaza, featuring nine locations that are collaborating to showcase community spirit. Grownups can visit various establishments that will offer specially crafted cocktails.

Light and Bark Candle Co. will host a winter candle-making class on the bridge, inviting participants to create a unique scent to enjoy well into the new year. Meanwhile, Barrio Queen will share culinary techniques with a delightful Jolly Tamale class. Adding to the festive spirit, Hotel Valley Ho’s restaurant, ZuZu, will unveil a Scottsdazzle-themed shake topped with an edible Christmas tree.

At the heart of the season is the idea of giving. To highlight this, many events will benefit local charities like Not My Kid and the Scottsdale STARS.

Old Town businesses will also participate in the “Shop Scottsdale” event, offering special prices and discounts. Once all your shopping is done, you can head to the free gift-wrapping station and win a chance to trade receipts for a free tote bag. Dancing trio “The Jingle Bells” will also appear, spreading cheer as they dance through the town.

These vibrant events promise to fill the community with the spirit of the season and create joyful memories for all who attend. If you’re looking for the perfect tradition for your family, Scottsdazzle is the ultimate destination!

scottsdazzle.com

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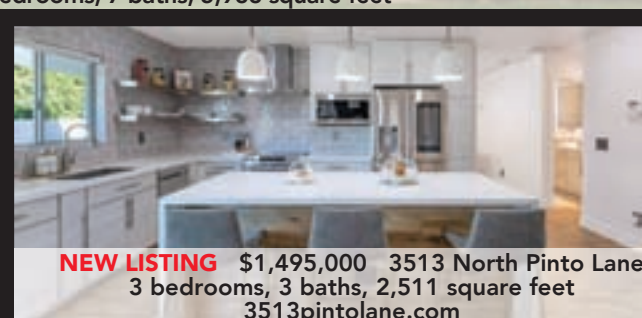
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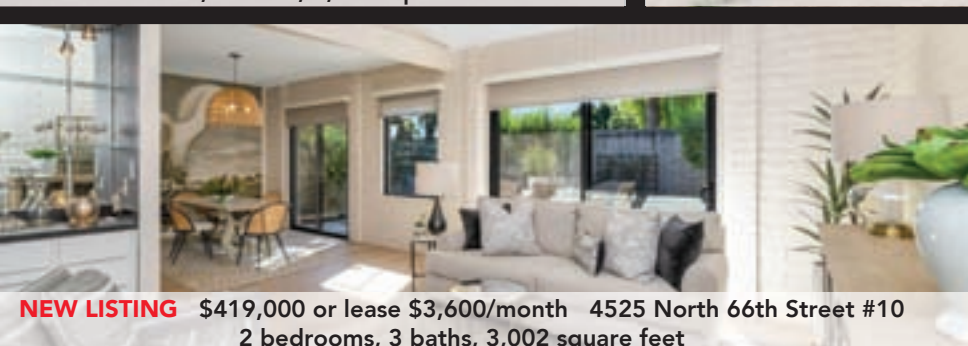
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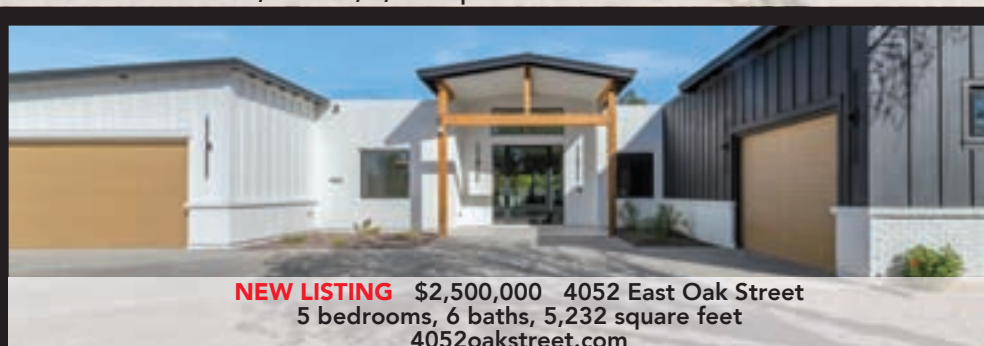
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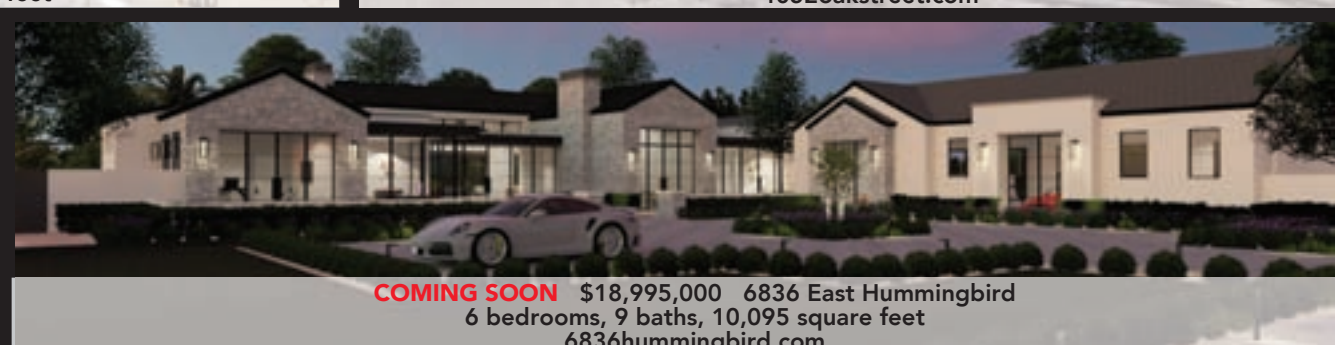
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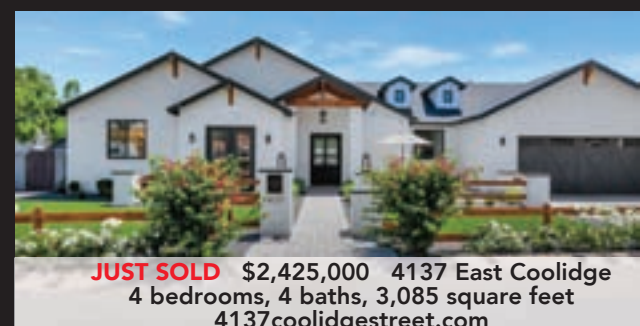
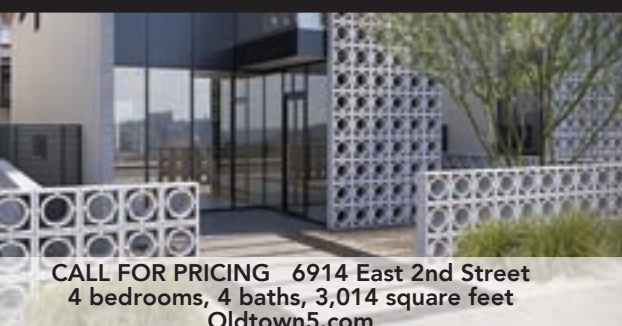
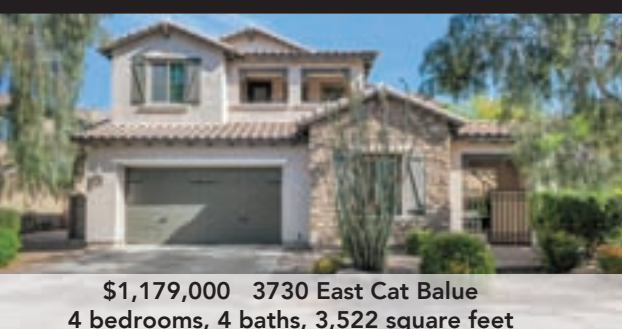
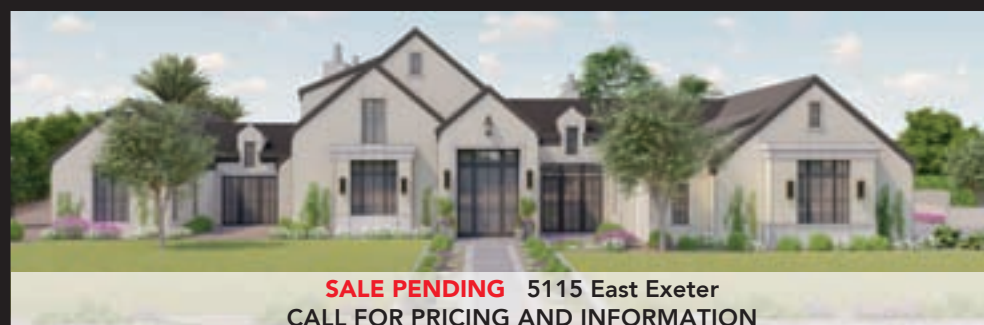
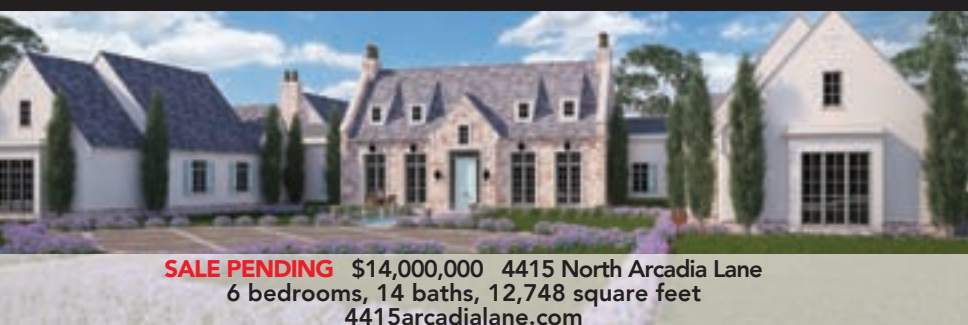
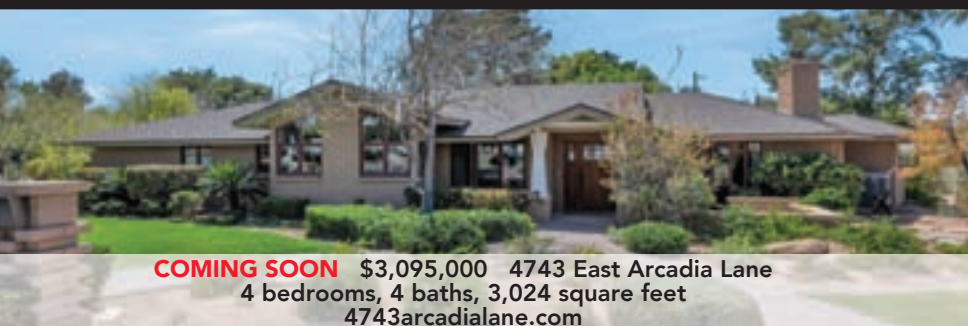
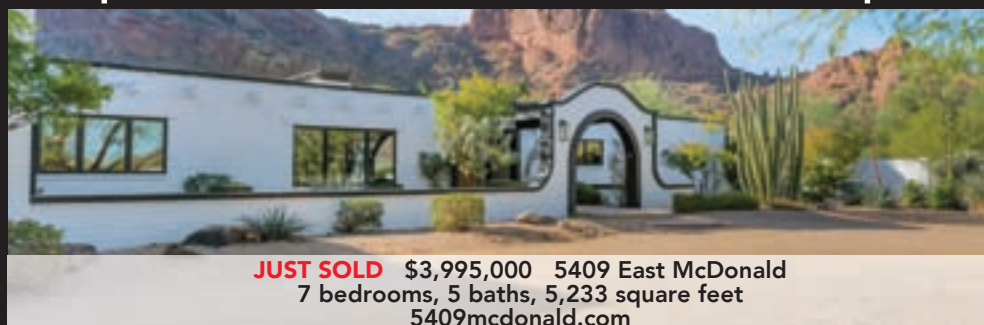
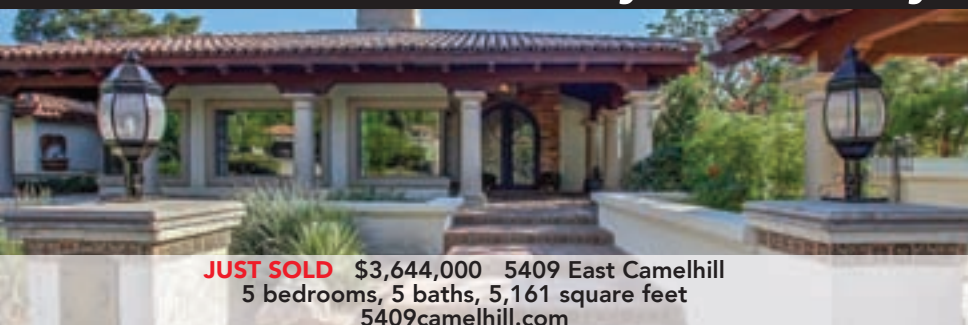


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In the Kitchen

with **Armando Hernandez,**
owner of Santo Arcadia

4418 E. Osborn Road • santoarcadia.com

For Armando Hernandez, dining in a restaurant is more than eating a good meal – it's a celebration of life and a way to feed both body and soul. As the owner of Santo Arcadia, Armando is set on bringing the flavors of his hometown to the neighborhood while also providing a place for family and friends to gather, learn, love and thrive.

Where are you from originally?

I am from Soto Maynez – also known as Santa Ana – in Namiquipa, Chihuahua, Mexico. It's a small town. The closest city is an hour from us. We live right next to a huge Mennonite community down there. The Mennonites are a German, Canadian and French-Canadian influence that came to Mexico over 100 years ago and bought land, and they have an area just for themselves, like their own little community. They interact with Mexico, but it feels almost like a reservation for them. They do a lot of stuff with agriculture.

When my dad brought us to the States, we lived in Las Vegas for four months and then moved to Phoenix when I was eight.

Tell us the story of Santo Arcadia.

We opened in January 2024. The story is interesting for two reasons. We have a restaurant in Mesa called Espiritu, and at one time, we were going to close. The landlord was going to turn the building into something else, so we started looking for another spot in Mesa. One day, I was driving by this spot [where Santo is now] and saw the for sale sign. I told my partner, Roberto, 'I know we love downtown Mesa, but I think this could be a really cool spot,' and that was the start.

I worked with Chris Bianco – we had a restaurant called Roland's Market back in the day – and he had already mentioned this location to me a while back. He was going to buy this spot, but it didn't work out so we'd kept it in mind. It's in the neighborhood, part of the neighborhood, because it's nested between the homes.

After we signed the lease in Arcadia, we learned that Espiritu's closing fell through, and we had an opportunity to own the space. Initially, Santo was going to be the new spot for Espiritu, but it all came together, so we've got both restaurants.

There's also a speakeasy.

Yes! It's called Pecado. Santo means saint, and Pecado can be translated to sin. The idea is that Santo is bright, with live plants and white, clean, straight lines, and then Pecado is a dark atmosphere with no food – its vibe is curated specifically for drinks and hanging out with friends.

Where was your first job?

My first job was at Applebee's as a host. I worked there for a couple of years and then went to work at Pointe South Mountain. It was a temp-type thing. Whatever they needed at the hotel, that's what we did... serving, cleaning, and industry-related stuff. From that, I started working for Chris at Pane Bianco, then went to Pizzeria Bianco, and then we opened our first restaurant.

What was it like working for Chris Bianco?

It was amazing – he's a good role model based on his love of the craft. That's what it's really about, you know? You love the craft and the food; you romanticize the food more than a regular person. You see the ethos of what food is and what it can be. If you get the best ingredients, you'll get a better dish. It's a simple format. Besides the fact that he's a fantastic person, it also has to do with his menu. With a smaller format, you can specialize in those specific things and make them the best they can be.

How do you approach the way you cook the dishes at Santo?

It's hard to replicate things from a different region. With Mexican food, you won't get the same dish you'd get in Mexico. You have to find a way to create something new that's an homage to the dish at home. With Italian food, that's what happened, and with Mexican food, that's what's happening now. We're closer to Mexico, but here in Phoenix, everything is different: the water, the air, the way veggies grow. We import a lot of stuff, but it's still difficult to recreate the exact thing, so we're making it our own and thriving within that.

Was there anything specific that cemented your love for the industry?

Working in restaurants gives you a lot of empathy for life in general. Restaurants should be a celebration, and I fell in love



with that aspect. You're coming in, you're having a nourishing meal for your mind that can also be nourishing to your soul. That's what geared me toward the industry. I like creating things that people can enjoy. There's so much negativity in our world, and having a space where you can come, have a good meal, relax and enjoy the company... there's something really beautiful about that.

Altogether, how many restaurants do you own?

There are two Tacos Chiwas in Phoenix and Mesa. We have another location opening at the airport. We have Santo, Pecado, Cocina Chiwas, Aruma Café, and Espiritu. We're investors in Bacanora. We're also developing a beer garden in Tempe that should open soon.

What about your family?

Everybody works with us. When we first moved here, my mom and dad worked all over the Valley, washing dishes, bussing, whatever they needed to do to support us. My brother makes the tortillas. My mom and dad are involved in Tacos Chiwas. My sister helps with payroll, and my wife Nadia's sister is the GM for the Tacos Chiwas in Mesa. Nadia's twin brother is taking over a new restaurant we're working on. Everybody has their own spot.

What's your first memory of food?

I have an insane memory of waking up and smelling flour tortillas cooking. My grandma has a wood-fired stove and you could smell the smoke from the corn husks burning – that's how she started her fires. I would watch her with the rolling pin and watch her throw the tortilla on the stove and catch it when it was done. Throw some butter and salt on it, roll it – that's the best.

In Chihuahua, flour tortillas were the big thing. My grandma would carry bean

and cheese burritos in her purse. There weren't any fast food restaurants, so we'd be walking, and someone would ask for a burrito, and boom, she'd grab one out of her purse. Who knows how long they were there, but they were fantastic.

My grandma on my dad's side had a butcher shop, so at an early age I got to see that side of the business and of food in general.

What's the inspiration behind the dishes at Santo?

We try to create something that's Arizonan but inspired by Chihuahua and Sonora. Chihuahua is a landlocked state that has influences from the Mennonite culture, like cheese, which is how we came up with queso Chihuahua. I grew up thinking Mortadella was Mexican because I watched them make it.

We use a lot of peppers and Chile Colorado. A lot of the bases of our food have to do with that pepper specifically. We'd call it the mother ingredient that goes into a lot of the rubs and dishes. Anaheim or hatch chiles are also a huge influence.

We deal with a lot of protein-heavy foods. The Sonoran inspiration is the seafood, but since Arizona is also landlocked, we have to import. We work with K4 Ranch in Prescott that supplies us with protein. We want to represent what Mexican food is in Arizona, and the best way to do that is to find the things that grow here and put our twist on it.

All of our recipes have family ties. For a long time, we were stuck in the realm of authenticity and keeping recipes true to themselves, but as we progressed we realized we had to modify. It's important to stay true to the recipes and cherish the ways our family cooked them, but innovate them as well. Everything is an homage to them but we're also creating our own traditions.

What about the drinks?

You fall in love with the ideology of what liquor is to begin with, where it comes from, why it's special. Our mixologists also have their sommelier certificate because – while all the stuff from Mexico is cool – we want to have a selection for everyone. It's a lot of 'one-offs,' specialty tequilas and sotoles, things that are different.

Our beverage program has worked out really well for us. There's nothing wrong with Don Julio, but it feels nice to venture out and go with family businesses. We traveled to Oaxaca and met some of the families that are growing and creating the liquor and it feels special to have that bond with them.

What's the most challenging part of working in the restaurant industry?

Consistent change. In the industry, the one constant is that it's always changing. We're navigating strange waters, from an employee's perspective to interactions with customers. There's this saying that the customer is always right, but I don't believe that. That's how you end up with nothing but chain restaurants. We put a lot of thought and time into the venue, the food and drinks, and it's best to experience it for what it is instead of comparing it to something else.

Trying to explain – especially with Mexican food – the difference in regions is an uphill battle. There's a huge difference

There's so much negativity in our world, and having a space where you can come, have a good meal, relax and enjoy the company... there's something really beautiful about that.

in cuisines from Oaxaca and Puebla to Chihuahua and Sonora. There are a lot of people who are 'experts' who want to do reviews, and it's difficult because everyone has different tastes, and if it's not for you, fine. We put on a show every night and hope for the best – we love what we do!

On the flip side, what's your favorite part?

I'm optimistic by default. I see great things coming – and if I can do it, anyone can do it. My wife and I started with a little *taqueria* all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, convinced it was going to be amazing. Then you get to the reality of the workload and everything that comes with it...but we're on the fortunate side.

We've opened 14 restaurants in nine years, and I take each one to heart. We

want to earn people's trust and be part of the community. That's where we thrive. I could go on a tangent forever about how much I love doing this. Hearing from customers about what they love and helping remind others of home – those little moments make it worth it.

Who is your biggest inspiration?

My family. Leaving their hometown to give us an opportunity to have a better life is an enormous feat, and I'm forever indebted to them. At this point, I don't think I could uproot my entire life and start over somewhere else. They inspire me to be a good person, be humble, and be thankful for my opportunities – that doesn't go away. Because of them, I am incredibly lucky. And I'm thankful for every person that comes in here, spends

their hard-earned money and helps me live this dream. It's not lost on me the amount of privilege I have in loving my job.

When you're not working, what are you doing?

I work a lot [*laughs*]. I work with my family and a lot of friends, so when we're not here, we're hanging out at home, cooking, and celebrating life every day. I know that sounds cheesy, but I really love that part of it. I have two kids and love hanging out with them; it's more fulfilling than anything else. We love to travel, explore, and learn!

Where's a favorite spot you go for dinner?

We go to Glai Baan a lot. She's doing her thing – it's an amazing little spot. For lunch, I go to Yoshi's. I went to Camelback High and there's a Yoshi's right there, so eating there brings back a lot of memories.

What's next for Armando Hernandez?

Future plans are to continue growing Santo, until it becomes a staple in the community. We are planning on doing a lunch menu – right now we do brunch on Sundays and we'd like to expand that as well. We're hoping to do more events and dinners featuring other chefs and restaurants. The major thing is continuing to grow the dinner part and serving good food to our neighborhood.

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Nancy Silver

Nancy Silver was a gift to all who knew her, someone you looked forward to being with, lingering in her company while unwrapping the love and laughter of a trusted friendship, reveling in the moment and not wanting it to end.

But sadly, those joyous occasions have come to an end, for Nancy passed away in October, and her family and a legion of friends will never be the same.

This happens when you lose a larger-than-life personality, someone who gave of themselves without keeping score. She feasted on her friendships and cultivated them with honesty and humor.

The place where many of these friendships began and were nurtured was The Paper Place, an Old Town retail store that she and her mother started in October 1978. Soon after, Nancy's sister Betsy joined them, and 47 years later, the store is a Scottsdale fixture. They don't have customers; they have a brigade of loyal fans. People would drop in even when they didn't need anything, just so they could say hello to Nancy and pick up where that last conversation left off.

"Nancy was a creative genius and could transform the ordinary into extraordinary. I was the business one, and together it was a perfect partnership. We spent so much time together, we were almost like twins, and very often

people would mistake me for Nancy. But I am pretty sure no one ever mistook her for me," Betsy laughed.

She said the outpouring over her sister's death has been incredible; people are behaving as though they lost a family member, not just a friend.

"People have reminisced about how Nancy helped them with their wedding invitations, birth announcements, parties, their kid's wedding invitations, their grandchildren's birth announcements," Betsy said. "We have seen the 'Circle of Life' and being involved in these events builds a bond; they have become a part of 'The Paper Place Family,'"

The Silvers grew up in Arcadia and have never left, Nancy affectionately referring to it as the "hood." Betsy still lives in their childhood home, and it was a place for bringing family and friends together.

"Nancy's hobby was entertaining, and whether it was a family dinner or her famous 'JewEaster' celebration, it was always the perfect amount of over-the-top," she said.

Nancy's love of dogs was unfailing, and The Paper Place always featured a furry mascot, first a Lhasa Apso named Bentley, and then a couple of Basset Hounds, Mr. P and Miss Lacie. She parlayed her zeal/affection for dogs into starting Two Pups Wellness Fund in 2017, a nonprofit organization that provides medical aid to dog families who cannot afford to pay for their pet's critical care.

"Nancy loved everyone, and everyone loved her," said Jerry Lewkowitz, Nancy's self-professed uncle. "We weren't related, but you would never know it. She was a very special person with great style and individuality."

Added Betsy, "My sister's superpower was being able to create something out of nothing. She saw trends and styles well before others."

Her younger brother, Bob, agrees. "Nancy can be

Nancy loved everyone, and everyone loved her.



summed up in just three words: creative, creative, creative, and very loving and loyal. That's more than three but you get the idea, loving, loyal and very creative."

Throughout this holiday season, Nancy Ruth Silver is a gift that will be sorely missed.

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Help Spirit of Arcadia Marching Band meet its \$12K goal!

By Rachael Bouley

With the opportunity to attend an Imagination Campus Performing Arts Workshop on the horizon, the Spirit of Arcadia Marching Band is raising funds for a field trip to California – and, more specifically, to the Happiest Place on Earth.

Arcadia Instrumental Band Booster President Tess Calvert explained that the instrumental workshop would be a great source of inspiration for the band, which has earned five state titles in the last eight years.

“Unfortunately, we weren’t able to compete this year due to our smaller numbers, but we’re working hard to rebuild the program and aim to be back in competition next year,” Calvert said. “In the meantime, the band has been performing at football games and delivering a halftime show.”

As part of those efforts, the Disney fundraiser aims to support and grow the band program while helping students pursue their passion for music through a renowned instrumental workshop.

“Students get to experience a professional recording studio environment, work with industry experts, and learn valuable musical skills,” Calvert said. “This trip is about encouraging our students to dream big, develop their talents, and see what’s possible through their dedication to music.”

The AHS marching band, including the color guard, has 32 students. They show up for early morning practice four days a



PHOTO COURTESY OF TESS CALVERT

After boosting school spirit with football halftime shows, the Spirit of Arcadia Marching Band has started a fundraising campaign for an instrumental workshop at Disneyland.

week and perform at every football game, even though they didn’t have the chance to compete this year.

Calvert believes the students’ unwavering commitment proves they will make the most of their trip, where they will learn advanced skills such as ensemble performance and intonation.

“The Disney Imagination Campus workshop is an incredible opportunity for our students to be inspired and see where their passion for music can take them,”

Calvert said. “This trip enhances their musical abilities and teaches teamwork, focus, and perseverance – skills they’ll carry into school and life.”

During the workshop, students will study and exclusively play Disney music to learn what it’s like to work in the music industry. They will be treated as professionals, which Calvert hopes will boost their confidence and give them insight into how far music can take them.

“Disney is the trip we all look forward to every two years,” senior drum major

Cora Reiter said. “We get to play music and enjoy the park, but the hardest part is raising the money to go. I hope we reach our goal this year!”

With every donation bringing them closer to their Disney dream, the band is grateful for ongoing community support to ease the financial burden and fuel their dedication. The funds – while supporting the trip – will also help them buy music, hire choreographers, build props, and pay for entrance fees.

The goal is \$12,000; as of mid-November, they have raised close to \$4,000.

“Add to that the costs of feeding the band after long, exhausting days and renting U-Hauls to travel, not to mention the countless hours spent packing, unpacking, and performing in over 100-degree heat,” Calvert said. “It’s a labor of love, and everyone – students, parents, and volunteers – works incredibly hard to make it happen.”

While they work toward reaching their goal, the band is eager to keep building and inspiring the next generation of musicians, with many marching band students participating in upcoming middle school visits and zero-hour Jazz Band practice next semester.

“We miss being out there and can’t wait to bring the energy and excitement back next year,” Calvert said.

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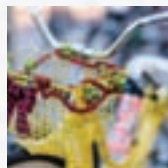


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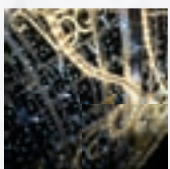


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Marshall Way Bridge • 7124 E Stetson Dr

Sunday, Dec 15 and Saturday, Dec 21 | 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Discover Old Town in a whole new way! This holiday headscratcher invites guests to hop on their bikes and spin around Old Town for a seasonal scavenger hunt.



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Scottsdale Waterfront Canal Bank

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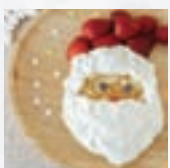


SHOW STOPPER SHAKE

Hotel Valley Ho

Sunday, Dec 15 – Saturday, Dec 28 | 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Indulge over a Scottsdale favorite, the iconic Hotel Valley Ho “Show Stopper” Shake. It’s an over-the-top delight with house-made ingredients piled on top.



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Kids of all ages are encouraged to wear holiday-themed pajamas for a festive breakfast that features a meet and greet with Santa Claus, dance performances and crafts.

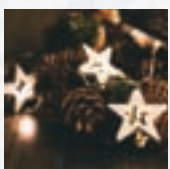


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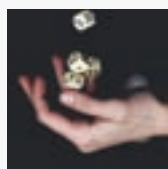


HOLLY JOLLY DIY DÉCOR

Marshall Way Bridge • 7124 E Stetson Dr

Saturday, Dec 14 | 2:00 – 5:00 PM

Enjoy live holiday music while professional artists from Scottsdale Artists’ School lead attendees in decorating and creating their very own unique holiday decoration.



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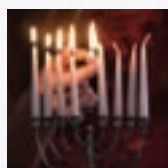


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Entertainment District

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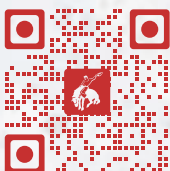


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Hospice of the Valley and CLS bridge the generation gap

By Cliff Summerhill

Hospice of the Valley (HOV) and Christ Lutheran School (CLS) are entering the second year of a partnership that connects students with individuals at the Dementia Care and Education Campus.

As part of HOV's Adult Day Club, fifth-grade students visit individuals living with dementia to bridge intergenerational divides and spread enrichment, support, and joy that lasts long after the day's activities have ended.

"Intergenerational time has so many proven benefits for young and old people alike," Day Club Manager Sara Meins said. "We are so grateful for the beautiful opportunity to build this relationship with Christ Lutheran School."

"The focus is on fun and being together," Community Engagement Director Lin Sue Flood said. "The smiles and laughter are a genuine indication of how much joy both age groups find in their time together."

Students partake in various meaningful activities with club members, including painting, coloring, gardening, and activities like cornhole, catch, and shuffleboard. The most important activity, however, is conversation.

"Even though there is an age gap, both the Adult Day Club members and the students have the opportunity to learn from each other as they share stories and various interests,"



PHOTO COURTESY OF MANDI SCHNEPF

Fifth-graders from Christ Lutheran School visited HOV's Adult Day Club members and spent the day painting, gardening and playing games.

CLS Service Learning Coordinator Mandi Schnepf said.

Schnepf highlights that the program is special to the school because it allows students to meet and care for new friends, even if they are generations ahead of them. In addition, the students learn valuable information about the different types of dementia and their impact on individuals and their families.

"You can truly see the joy it brings to the club members and the students by the smiles on their faces when they are together," Schnepf shared.

What started as a pen pal program after a visit to the school from Meins to share some education about dementia quickly blossomed into an ongoing in-person event because of the students' interest in learning more about the disease and their passion around bringing joy to their pen pals.

The students spent time writing letters back and forth and even brought treats and hand-drawn pictures to the club's mailbox before they finally got to meet their pen pals for the first time in the spring.

"The students coming to campus and interacting with the club members is extraordinary and heartwarming for all," Meins said.

Ashlee, one of the students who participated in the program, shared that

she loved playing games and getting to know everyone when she visited earlier this year.

"I thought it would be fun to go and see how people with dementia live life, and it was really fun," Ashlee said. "Even though they need special help, they can still do a lot of things that everyday people can do."

Another student, Andrew, said his favorite part was meeting the patients and playing games with them because they usually don't get visits from kids.

"I wanted to go because these people don't get a lot of visits, and I want to make their day fun and happy and surprise them," Andrew said. "I learned that no matter what age you are, you can always have lots of fun."

Students will visit HOV's dementia campus three more times this year, just in time to bring much-needed joy this holiday season.

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How one Arcadian found strength in his small-town roots

By Sherry Sklar

The concept of this coming-of-age story had lingered in his mind for some time, but its true impetus came at the top of Camelback Mountain. As Arcadian John Heckenlaible recounts, pausing to take in the vista, the opening line appeared: “It wasn’t where I wanted to be, but there was nowhere else I’d rather be.” In that instant, he knew his narrative journey had begun.

John’s first novel, *NO BETTER PLACE: A Hometown Tale*, is set in southern Minnesota in the early 1980s. John describes it as a “pseudo memoir,” a fictional tale informed by his first-hand experiences managing the singular grief of a parent’s death and romantic heartbreak and surmounting those obstacles through personal grit and determination.

The story is told through the eyes of the main character, Karl Bruchenheiser, a college student from New Prague – a town with a population of 2,700. John’s self-deprecating humor and wit keep the narrative aloft, peppered with what he describes as “Easter eggs” to connect the reader to a specific place and time.

“For me, everything started with hard work. That’s the foundation. Growing up in New Prague, it was simple: you were either a ‘hard worker’ or ‘good for nothing,’” John

said. “It didn’t matter if you were wealthy, poor, or somewhere in between. At our dinner table, the only measure of a person was whether they were willing to put in the work.”

Recollecting the promising Reagan era, John lays out the precariousness that clouded his young adulthood.

“The early eighties Midwestern economy was terrible. We faced a farm crisis, high inflation, and widespread unemployment. I had graduated into this job market and

couldn’t find work after being laid off,” John said. “The future felt bleak and uncertain. My dad had recently passed away, so his support and guidance weren’t there. I had to dig deep, bootstrap my life, and figure it all out on my own, and that’s exactly what I did.”

John draws a parallel between his own early adulthood and his daughter’s experience entering today’s rapidly evolving workforce, shaped by technology and AI.

This connection partly inspired him to write the book.

“My daughter is in her senior year at the University of Arizona, and uncertainty surrounds her future, just as it did for me in my early twenties,” he said. “The core message I want to reaffirm is that overcoming adversity can lead to a deeper understanding



PHOTO: KATE BURKE

John Heckenlaible

of yourself, honing your capability and confidence that ultimately guides you to a better place.”

John recalls the lively Kolache Festival and sweet and savory ethnic delectables that characterize the Bohemian Triangle,

incorporating Lonsdale, Montgomery, and New Prague. He recalled, “As a kid, we ate pork dumplings (*knedliky*) and sauerkraut. I have included a recipe in the back of the book and a food glossary explaining what my characters are eating.”

New Prague’s high school, football rivalries, teachers, and community provided a civic framework for belonging.

“You always knew that you had a home,” John said. “I always felt supported. I never thought I was alone. I was brokenhearted, but people in my community always understood me and knew what I was going through. I was never a stranger, and there’s a certain comfort in that.”

John writes about this intimate town atmosphere, Karl’s relationships, and linguistic cadences, bringing the experience of growing up in the Midwest to life.

Drawing similarities between New Prague and Arcadia, John – who moved to the Phoenix neighborhood as a newlywed in 1993 – cites a similar hometown feeling and is grateful for the neighbors and local friends he sometimes runs into at Teepee and LGO.

“I grew up in a family of seven, which influenced me tremendously, but it was my community that made me what I am,” he said. John regularly celebrates the local activities that make Arcadia a special place to call home and nurture memories. *NO BETTER PLACE: A Hometown Tale* is available on Amazon.



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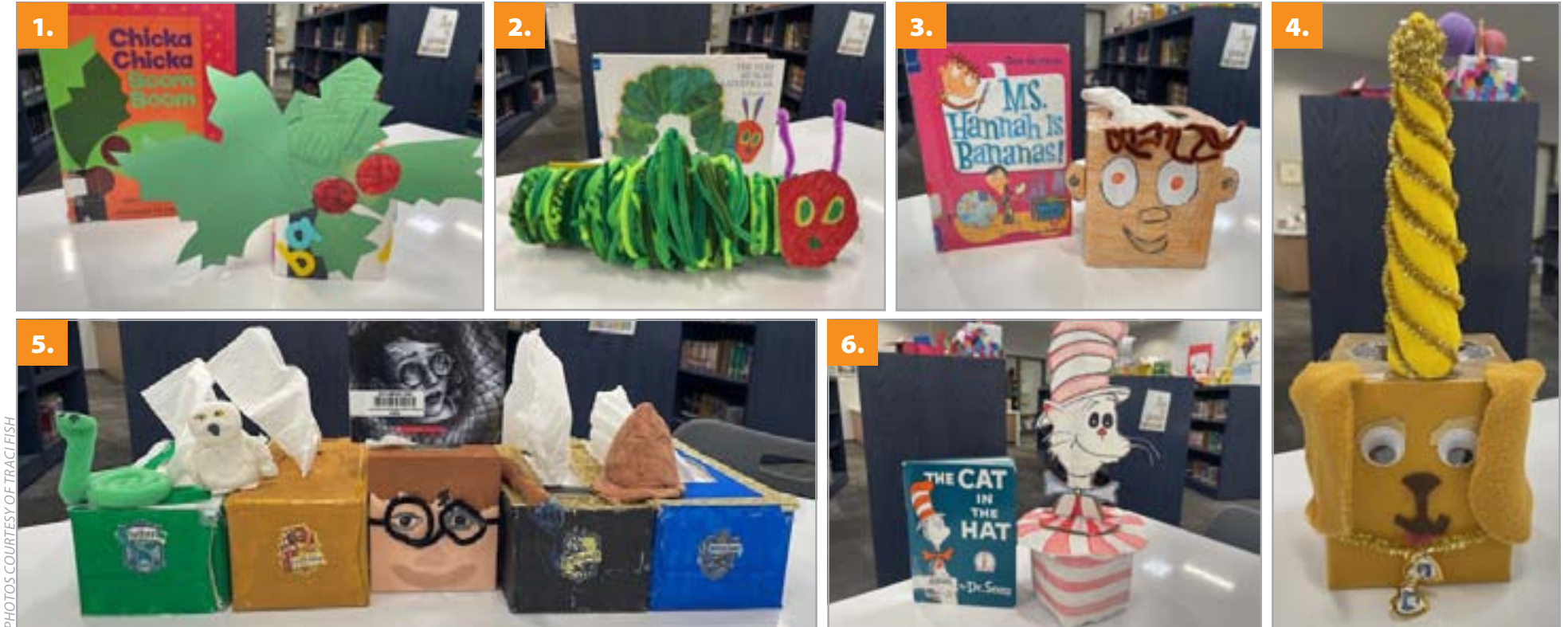
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1. The kindergarten winner was Keira for her project Chicka Chicka Boom Boom. 2. First graders Taylor and Dylan won for their The Very Hungry Caterpillar box. 3. The second grade winner was Ada. She created a My Weird School-themed box. 4. The third grade winner was Scarlett for her project Cutiecorns - Heart of Gold. 5. The fourth grade winner was Makena for her project Harry Potter and the houses. 6. The fifth grade winner was Milana for her Cat in the Hat-themed tissue box.

Hopi contest provides a creative way to bring books to life

By Mark Hays

At Hopi Elementary School, Library Resource Specialist Traci Fish discovered a way to bridge the gap between her elementary students and the middle school they'll soon attend through a creative art project.

Fish challenged Hopi students to design tissue boxes based on characters from their favorite books. It gave them a chance to work on their art skills and create an item that could be helpful for other students.

"I saw the idea on a librarian's social media page and thought it would be fun to try," Fish said. "The librarian had been doing it for years, and almost every student in her school participated. It had become a tradition within the school."

This year's contest at Hopi saw an enthusiastic response, with students submitting 55 decorated tissue boxes. The themes they chose reflected a wide array of characters and themes.

Some of the featured characters were *Curious George*, *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, *Rainbow Fish*, *Harry Potter*, *Cat in the Hat*, *Piggie and Elephant*, *The Wild Robot*, a giraffe, a llama, a unicorn, and even Batman made an appearance.

"The students were extremely creative in their designs and stuck to using simple materials for the decorations," Fish said.

In addition to the artistic aspect, Fish said the project was aimed at building partnerships with Ingleside Middle School,

which received the tissue boxes after the contest was complete.

"The inspiration was honestly trying to find ways to connect our elementary students more with the middle school that most of them will be attending," Fish said. "Our middle schools are notoriously short on tissue donations, so this was a fun way to help them and bring extra joy to their classrooms."

As part of the contest, Fish invited two special judges, Ingleside's Assistant Principal Patricia Mastropolo and school psychologist Emily Higgins, to help select the winning designs. Together, they reviewed the entries and chose the winning designs from each grade level.

Beyond the friendly competition, the

contest became a valuable community-building exercise. By encouraging students to work on a project tied to creativity and philanthropy, Fish and the school helped foster a sense of continuity and connection for students as they transition to middle school.

The event's success has prompted the librarian and her team to consider making the tissue box contest an annual tradition. This inaugural contest set a promising foundation for future collaborations between Hopi Elementary and Ingleside. By giving students a chance to express their love for their favorite book characters and help stock classrooms with much-needed tissues, the contest has already proven to be more than just a fun activity.

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Brophy newspaper celebrates 75 years with first place win

By Lauren Geiser

Brophy Prep's student journalists are on a winning streak. The Arizona Interscholastic Press Association crowned their publication as the best online school newspaper in Arizona, awarding it first place in the online category and second place in print.

This isn't new territory for the team, which has consistently excelled in the AIPA contest and is now celebrating its 75th anniversary. In 2023, *The Roundup* took first in print and third in online categories, underscoring its strong presence in both formats. Schools across the state submit entries each May, and the winning publication is announced during the AIPA's annual fall convention.

Since 2017, advisor Jake Kelly has mentored and taught *The Roundup* team, fostering a newsroom environment that values professionalism, creativity and collaboration.

"We learn valuable skills in this process – deep listening, leadership and critical thinking," Kelly said. "It forces students to be resourceful and thoughtful and allows them to put these skills into action."

Under his guidance, students cover everything from school policies to pop culture debates. The paper operates like a professional newsroom, with a team of 35 student contributors. Writers pitch story ideas on various topics, from Brophy attendance policies to lighthearted conversations like "Harry Potter vs. Star Wars."

Editors push their reporters to think critically, conduct thorough research and engage in meaningful interviews to produce well-rounded articles for print and digital platforms.

Leading the team has been a rewarding journey for co-editors-in-chief David Robaina and Henry Walters. Both



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAKE KELLY

The *Roundup* operates like a professional newsroom, with a team of 35 student contributors pitching stories on topics that cover everything from school news to conversational pieces.

have been involved with *The Roundup* since their freshman year and as they head into their final year at Brophy, they're proud of how the publication has evolved.

"A lot of our work is collaborative," David said. "When you're working on a story together for a couple of weeks, it could seem like lost time, but finishing with a strong product and getting recognized on a large scale is incredibly validating."

Henry echoes this sense of accomplishment.

"It's a validation of the effort we put into the paper each year," he said. "I'm proud we scored well in both print and online categories. In the past three years, we've worked

hard to make our website just as good as the print edition to move forward in the digital age."

Their dedication to both formats reflects a broader trend in journalism, where digital engagement has become essential. For Brophy student journalists, *The Roundup* offers hands-on experience that extends far beyond high school.

Researching, interviewing, and publishing helps students develop journalism skills, a sense of purpose and teamwork. The latest awards from AIPA affirm their commitment to quality journalism.

roundup.brophyprep.org

Student-led club aims to transform lives through volunteering

By Sherry Sklar

Hearts to Serve, a new club at Valley Lutheran High School, is fulfilling the school's mission by fostering community support and sharing hope, compassion, and faith. Kicking off in 2024, the club and its ambitious student leaders are already making an immense impact through their volunteer opportunities and plans for the future.

Led by students, Hearts to Serve strives to make meaningful connections within the community. From providing beds to distributing food boxes, each project extends beyond volunteer hours, creating experiences that bring students closer to the people they help and fostering a deep concern for others.

These efforts are making a lasting impact not only on those they serve but also within the school community itself.

Freshmen Natalie Neal and Leighton Roberts, along with senior Paula Tapia, lead the club by presenting volunteer opportunities to the larger student body.

"Our school offers students a list of interest groups to join. We were familiar with other organizations on the list, but we chose 'Hearts to Serve' for its mission. Our club advisor, Mr. Meyer, works with us to organize community projects," Paula said. "We all pitch in ideas and try to do as much as possible. We involve other students through announcements at chapel service,

where we share our work and put up posters at the school."

Marketing Director Michael Axtman said that the school dedicates service days each semester for the students to fulfill their volunteer work.

"When students like Natalie, Leighton and Paula take the lead in organizing service opportunities, volunteering feels more approachable and less intimidating for others. They do a fantastic job of making it casual and showing that making a big difference can be easy and enjoyable," he said.

For Leighton, Hearts to Serve goes beyond simply fulfilling service hours; it's about helping community members facing difficult times.

"We all have bad days, and the people we're helping do, too. They might be parents going through a tough time – maybe they've just lost a job, or they're facing other struggles. We're just trying to help them have a better day and support them however we can," he shared.

The group's first project involved students working at Sleep in Heavenly Peace's workshop to assemble and deliver beds, bedding, and other essentials to families in need. Spending the day cutting wood and hammering beds together, students described the project as an active ministry that put their faith into action. Another major initiative included distributing food boxes at Christ Lutheran Church in partnership with St.

Mary's Food Bank each Wednesday. By 6 a.m., the church parishioners, including students, distribute food to over 250 families.

Paula describes her experience volunteering as a calling.

"I'm about to become an adult and I want to share hope and compassion, spread God's word, and be a positive force in the world. We have so much – a great school, wonderful friends, food on the table – things some people don't have. We are not just giving material items but planting a tiny seed of faith, always being there for support," she said.

Hearts to Serve has several projects on the horizon. The group plans to partner with Christ Church Lutheran for a Thanksgiving food drive and volunteer with the national "Shop with a Cop" program, which pairs police officers with children to select holiday gifts. Other upcoming projects include building braille books to provide accessible texts for visually impaired community members and assembling military care packages.

At Valley Lutheran High School, young people like Natalie Neal, Leighton Roberts, and Paula Tapia are showing that age is no barrier to making a difference.

"If you have a desire to help, you can make an impact," Axtman said. "Young people are often capable of more than they realize, and giving back not only supports the community but also brings a profound sense of fulfillment and personal joy."



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DISTRICT 6 UPDATE



A note on electric bikes and scooters

Dear neighbors,
On October 30, 2024, a 15-year-old-boy had a serious accident on an electric scooter near the intersection of Indian School and 56th Street. This brings to light an ongoing issue we have regarding electric bikes and electric scooters.



KEVIN ROBINSON
Councilman
District 6
2-262-7491
kr6@phoenix.gov

If kids are going to ride, it's crucial they do so as safe as possible. I encourage parents to have in-depth conversations with kids who ride electric bikes and scooters. These conversations need to express the necessary safety measures that should be taken as well as the importance of paying attention to traffic.

Key points to discuss include always wearing a helmet, staying aware of your surroundings, obeying traffic signals, riding in designated bike lanes or paths, ensuring all safety equipment is in good condition, knowing your limits, and riding with both hands on the handlebars. The ACMNA has been working with the city to address these issues and the dangers of 56th St.," Arcadia resident Tristahn Schaub said. "The street intersection will begin construction this coming summer with a variety of safety improvements, most notably a separate bike pedestrian pathway on the main road."

By emphasizing these measures, we can help ensure that our kids remain safe while enjoying electric bikes and scooters. Our next District 6 Coffee Chat will be on November 6 from 7-9 a.m. at Hole in the Rock at Mayo Park (625 N. Galvin Pkwy., Phoenix). Hope to see you there!

Kevin

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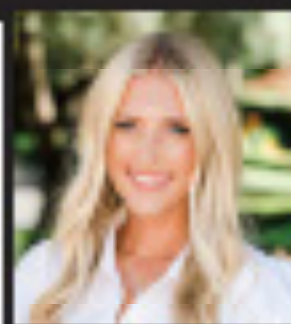
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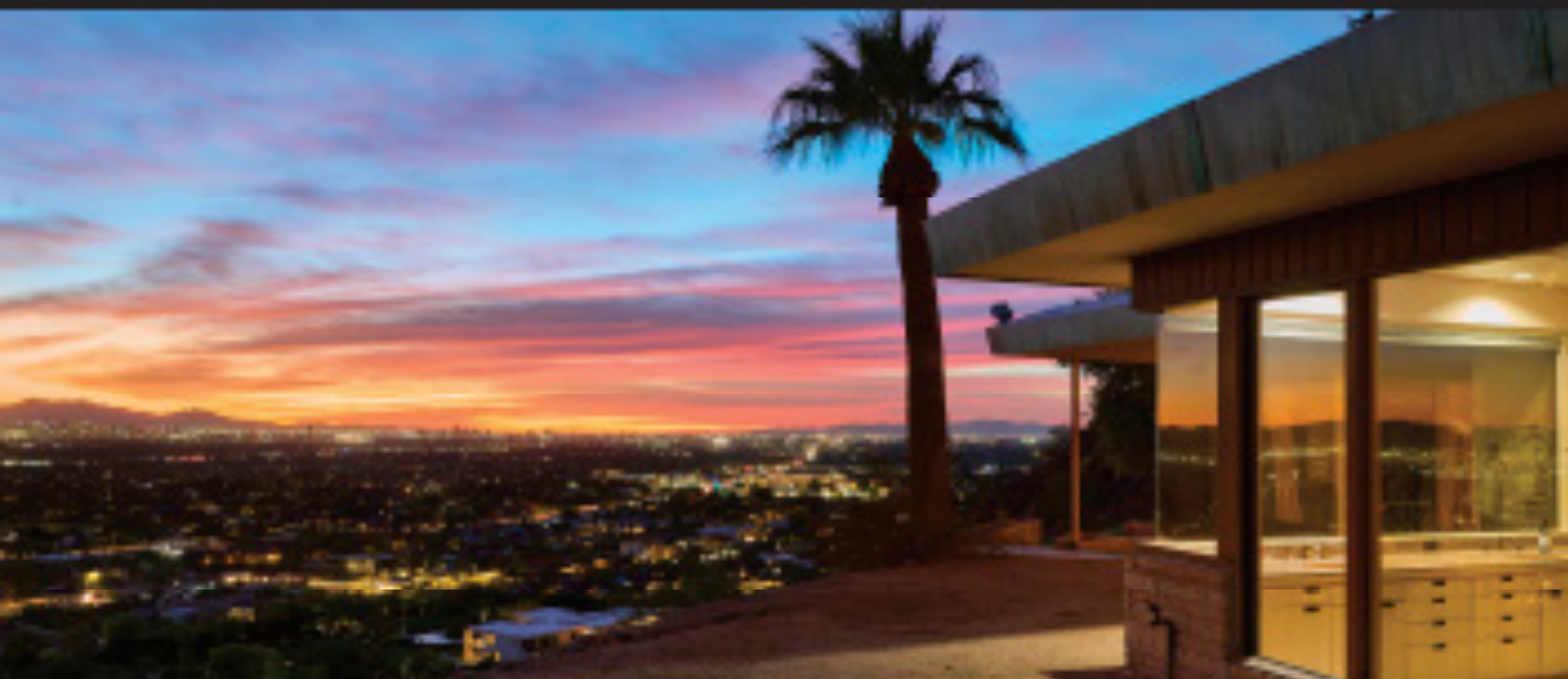
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Sing loud for all to hear:

The Orpheus Male Chorus is gearing up for the holidays

By Mark Hays

Arizona's longest-standing men's chorus has enriched the community with powerful performances and a commitment to service for 96 years.

Founded in 1929, the Orpheus Male Chorus is one of Arizona's most well-known male choirs. Its mission is to promote the enjoyment and appreciation of choral music through performance and outreach. Its 100+ members have become known for their wide-ranging repertoire, including classical, contemporary, and barbershop styles. The group has performed at major venues in the Phoenix area and beyond, building a strong community presence and earning a dedicated following.

Three of those 100 members are Arcadia residents: Matt Roberts, Drew Peterson and Dave Thomas. Peterson, a local since 1985, joined Orpheus after attending a fundraiser concert at Trinity Cathedral in 2001.

"Another member, Skip Richards, a fellow Arcadia High School band parent, had invited us. Having been a singer all my life, I was drawn to the group by their rich four-part male harmony," he said.

Peterson is now in his 24th season, and his wife, Gail, has been involved as a volunteer for over 20 years. Peterson said that Orpheus



PHOTO COURTESY OF ORPHEUS MALE CHORUS

Orpheus offers three concerts for the holiday season – a tradition that's lasted over 90 years.

is essential to the Arcadia community, especially during the holiday season.

"My neighbor has told me more than once that 'the holidays without the Orpheus concert just wouldn't be complete,'" he said.

Roberts first encountered the group over a decade ago.

"I started singing with Orpheus through a couple of mutual friends, Ron Rhode and Ron Tanner," he said. "Ron Rhode was the pianist for Orpheus and also at the church

I attended, where my wife was one of the ministers. Tanner sang in the choir. They invited me to a concert, and I thought they were amazing, so I accepted their offer to audition."

Thomas was introduced in 2014. After attending a Christmas concert, he knew he wanted to be part of the group – and said that the decision has led to some lasting friendships.

"The music we create brings me and our

audience so much joy, peace and comfort. It really is true that music is the universal language of the soul," he said.

For Roberts and other members, the chorus provides a unique opportunity for musical performance and a sense of community.

Orpheus also participates in service projects, such as volunteering at Feed My Starving Children, caroling at the Arizona Veterans Home, and offering scholarships to young musicians.

Artistic Director Dr. Brook Carter Larson noted that rehearsals balance focus and camaraderie. New members join a group of men who love music and value the friendships formed through singing together. Rehearsals are held weekly from August through April.

For those who would like to experience the music, Orpheus will hold three concerts: one on December 8 at 3 p.m. at The Church at Litchfield Park, one on December 10 at 7:30 p.m. at Velda Rose United Methodist Church, and one on December 15 at 3 p.m. at Camelback Bible Church.

Those interested in joining the chorus can attend the next Open Holiday Rehearsal on December 3 at Cross Roads United Methodist Church.

orpheus.org

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Ring in the New Year with these festive celebrations

By Jennifer Marshall

New Year's Eve in Arizona offers a wide range of events for all kinds of revelers. From upscale galas and themed parties to casual gatherings and family-friendly activities, there's something for everyone. Arizona's vibrant nightlife scene also comes alive with DJ sets, concerts, and bar events, ensuring the night is filled with dancing and celebration. Welcome 2025 – we're celebrating you with style!

HAPPY NOON YEAR

Children's Museum of Phoenix
215 N. 7th St.
childrensmuseumofphoenix.org

The Happy Noon Year Celebration offers two times to celebrate: 9 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1 to 4 p.m. Attendees will be served sparkling cider, move and groove on the dance floor, create a colorful noisemaker, and countdown to the festive balloon drop. Prices are \$27 for nonmembers and \$10 for members.

GATSBY'S HOUSE

Renaissance Downtown Hotel
100 N. 1st St., Phoenix
marriott.com

Gatsby's House New Year's Eve Party kicks off at 9 p.m. in true 1920s flapper style! Patrons can enjoy hand-passed appetizers, two DJs, 2025 party favors, drinks, casino gaming and surprises throughout, finished with a midnight countdown. This is a 21+ event. Tickets start at \$75 with VIP packages available.

NYELECTRIC COUNTDOWN

Canopy by Hilton
108 E. University Dr., Tempe
hilton.com

Guests are invited to enjoy cabana spaces, a roaring fire pit, seats at a custom wrap-around bar that features retractable climate-controlled glass walls, areas to mix and mingle, multiple DJs, party favors, casino games and more at NYElectric. Plus, this party takes place on the rooftop, offering unobstructed views of the city and the perfect place to see fireworks.



Night at the Museum at Arizona Heritage Center.

POSH PHOENIX

Caesars Republic Scottsdale
4747 N. Goldwater Blvd.
caesars.com

This 21+ event includes prepaid drinks, complimentary snacks and party favors, three DJs, three areas to mingle and dance, an LED screen for the countdown and lots of fun. Ticket prices vary.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Arizona Heritage Center and Museum
1300 N. College Ave., Tempe
arizonahistoricalociety.org

Relive the Roaring 20s at Arizona Heritage Center and Museum's New Year's Eve Roaring 20s party. This is a fundraiser for the museum, so along with plenty of nightlife fun, there will also be live and silent auctions along with the opportunity to have your name installed in the Time Capsule.

MIAMI VICE

FOUND:RE Hotel
1100 N. Central Ave., Phoenix
foundrehotels.com

FOUND:RE Phoenix is hosting a Miami Vice themed party to ring in the New Year. Guests will be transported to the 80s with pastel hues, palm trees, and art deco-inspired décor – and of course, all who attend are encouraged to embrace the theme by donning their best Miami Vice attire. Think white suits, vibrant shirts, and flashy accessories. The evening will host multiple DJs, specialty cocktails inspired by the iconic TV show and a champagne toast at midnight. There will also be themed photo opportunities, interactive experiences, and late-night bites.

VALLEY HO NEW YEAR'S EVE

Hotel Valley Ho
6850 E. Main St., Scottsdale
hotelvalleyho.com

ZuZu's party will feature a lounge atmosphere, a special menu, bubbly, and a DJ spinning from 9 p.m.-1 a.m. Guests can also reserve a VIP table starting at \$525 for two that includes champagne, a seafood platter, and "noshing stations." General admission for the NYE party is \$125 per person and includes bites and drinks.

HEARTH '61 DINNER

Mountain Shadows Resort
5445 E. Lincoln Dr., Paradise Valley
mountainshadows.com

Celebrate New Year's Eve at Hearth '61 with a special four-course menu from Chef Charles Wiley and enjoy live music in the lounge. Dishes include scallop and caviar followed by kabocha squash bisque, poached pear salad, steak and lobster, and Valrhona chocolate torte with raspberry gelato. The first seating is at 6:30 p.m. and is \$175 per person. The second seating is at 9:30 p.m. and also includes party favors and a midnight champagne toast for \$195 per person.

A NIGHT IN MYKONOS

Cala Scottsdale
7501 E. Camelback Road
calascottsdale.com

Cala is offering guests the opportunity to step into Mediterranean paradise with photo ops, an all-white dress code, and a sparkling complimentary midnight toast. There are several options for guests to enjoy the night.

Seatings one and two can be reserved at various times and includes an a la carte menu. The Night in Mykonos general admission ticket grants guests entry after 10:30 p.m. with dessert and champagne for the midnight toast, plus live music and immersive experiences. Dinners are \$125 and \$175 for later reservations; Night in Mykonos tickets start at \$55.

GREAT PINECONE DROP

Weatherford Hotel
23 N. Leroux St., Flagstaff
flagstaffarizona.org

For the past 23 years, the Weatherford has been dropping the giant pinecone from the third floor of their hotel. There are a few options for celebrating, starting with a kid-friendly visit to Charly's restaurant, which will host a meal and sparkling cider for those who want to celebrate early. Flagstaff encourages families to gather and watch as the pinecone drops at noon, 10 p.m., and midnight. The Downtown Business Alliance even offers a "Noon Year's Eve" celebration. For grown-ups, the Zane Grey Ballroom, bar, and balcony will offer a VIP celebration with drinks, snacks, dancing and more.

CASINO ROYALE

Arizona Broadway Theatre
7701 W. Paradise Lane, Peoria
azbroadway.org

Ring in 2025 in 007 style! Guests are encouraged to dress as their favorite secret agent, Bond Girl or Bond villain to sip themed cocktails, try your luck at the casino tables, dine on "cultured" cuisine and experience a show. There will be a red carpet VIP entrance with paparazzi, passed hors d'oeuvres, a commemorative photo and a concert of James Bond inspired music performed by Stars of ABT with songs like Goldfinger, Diamonds are Forever and Skyfall. There will also be a balloon drop and champagne toast at midnight. Tickets start at \$196.



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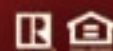
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Saint Thomas renovation honors the past and embraces the future

By Sherry Sklar

For the first time in nearly 75 years, Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School is undergoing a transformation, rededicating its role in the community and preparing for the future. Its students' bustling activity, now housed in temporary modular classrooms, will soon shift to an advanced 76,652-square-foot, four-story building designed to meet the needs of 21st-century students.

The \$20 million project will upgrade infrastructure, elevate technology, and create differentiated learning spaces while honoring the school's mission to teach the life and message of Christ.

The school, which was founded in 1953, looks forward to celebrating its milestone anniversary next year and is committed to its future to meet the needs of today's students. It anticipates opening the new campus building in early spring 2026. In an era when education demands are evolving rapidly, Saint Thomas has embraced a visionary renovation that honors its mission while addressing the needs of its 545 students in preschool through eighth grade.

The state-of-the-art academic home will include STEM-dedicated space, a performing arts stage, and an art studio. The lab will provide hands-on learning opportunities with 3D printers, fostering a spirit of innovation from kindergarten onward. The school will also build more classrooms for younger grades to support



RENDERINGS: HAMILTON ARCHITECTURE



St. Thomas's renovations will include a STEM-dedicated space, performing arts stage, art studio and more classrooms for younger grades.

smaller teacher-student ratios and a more personalized learning environment.

Constructed in the early 1950s from renovated army barracks, the original campus structures had long outlived their functionality. An aging infrastructure presented daily challenges – from failing air conditioning to limited electrical capacity – and made it clear that the school needed an updated space to support its mission and the demands of a modern curriculum. The school has been raising funds since 2015 to implement these changes.

Parish Manager Bri Cooney was heavily involved in the new building's planning and design. Her background in higher education campus design made her a natural collaborator with Hamilton Architecture and Wespac Construction. The building's

shell and first floor will be completed first, allowing subsequent capital fundraising to pay for the completion.

"Our strategy is to be able to make tenant improvements and complete the remaining floors as the funds are raised," Cooney said.

Initially, the school considered a more modest approach, but undertaking a blue-sky exercise early in the process with a potential funder helped them re-envision more than just a partial renovation of the old facility.

"It was a blessing that we went through that activity because I think, as a community, it allowed us to imagine and realize that we could do something extraordinary and build our dream school," Cooney said.

Vice Principal Katie Zeches agrees with her colleague.

"The new building will give us more space for differentiated instruction and learning," she said. "We'll be able to meet the needs of those who may need a little more help and also make sure that students who are excelling are reaching their full potential."

This commitment to building a dream school reflects the broader values of the Saint Thomas community, where faith and education are paramount.

"The long-term impact of this new building on our community will amplify our mission statement, which is poignant and one to reflect on to teach the life and message of Christ by instilling deep faith, academic excellence, and a commitment to service," she said.



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Dodging Dinos: Regan Rassas, Kadan Dubina, Mary Cardenas, Lia Karber, Bianca Wong and Coach Cardenas.



Duck and Cover: Daniel Riley, Jack Ladd, Leo Pucci, Jack Collins, Grant Pierce and Mrs. Kinkle.



Dunk Mamas: Bella Espinosa, Will Barrett, Lily McGeough, Jack Mason and Carson Pope.

Community is at the center of this dodgeball tournament

By Kylie de Best

Remember the rush of walking into gym class and spotting a line of red rubber balls waiting in the center of the floor? It could only mean one thing: dodgeball. You can almost still feel the bounce of the ball while trying to catch it and stay in the game. That same energy was alive and well at Veritas Prep this fall, where the school hosted its fifth annual dodgeball tournament.

Open to middle and high school students, the tournament allowed them to engage in a fun activity with their peers while building relationships with teachers.

To participate, students had to fill out a form listing who they wanted on their team, including one faculty member. Each team came up with a name and themed

costumes. This year, 18 middle school teams participated in two games with a bracket-style elimination. Eight high school teams did a “best out of three games” style tournament.

Each round lasted around three minutes. A unique part of the game for the middle school teams was that if a team lost a round, it did not mean they were eliminated from the tournament. Instead, the team played against other losing teams, with the team that won having the ability to go back into the regular tournament.

The Dodging Dinos and Power Girls won the best costume contest; The Human Targets and Soulja Boys were runners-up, and the Dunk Mamas and Duck and

Cover were the official winners of the fifth annual event.

“I loved seeing how our teachers behave outside of a normal school day. It was also a great opportunity to bond with my classmates,” student Berkley Tran said. “The music was so much fun, and when my it was team’s – Soulja Boys – turn to play, they played music from Soulja Boy. We were undefeated until the very last round, and I am so proud of the motivation and effort put in by my teammates.”

The tournament gathered families together for an afternoon, and in addition to watching the game, fans could pick up a drink and snack from one of the food trucks that stopped by. The money raised is used to cover the cost of the tournament, with

leftover funds going toward the senior trip in March.

Prizes were given out for the winners, runner-ups, best costumes, and fastest out. The best costume received candy and a medal; the middle school runner-up received a medal and a Zoyo gift card; the high school runner-up received a medal and a Dutch Bros. gift card; and the fastest out received candy and a Starbucks gift card. Dave & Busters and TopGolf gift cards were also part of the pot for this year’s winners.

“Each of the winning teams also shares in the glory of a massive trophy that has the previous year’s winners etched on it, plus a custom t-shirt and a medal for each player,” Community Events Chair Jillian Cook said. “We’re excited for next year’s games!”



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2024 high school fall sports wrap-up

Rachael Bouley

The last few months have been jam-packed for local sports, with high school athletes giving their all in pursuit of State titles and personal success. Arcadia News caught up with Arcadia, Brophy, Veritas, and Xavier to find out how the football, cross country, swim, golf, and volleyball teams finished their seasons.

ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL



Arcadia football

Football

After making it to the State semifinals last year, the Titans are determined to build on that success. They hit the ground running this season, with eight straight wins before their first loss and an 8-1 overall record (with one 'no decision,' a forfeit at Vista Grande), earning them second place in the 4A Desert Sky Division and a spot in the 2024 playoffs.

As of press time, the Titans won the first playoff game against Seton Catholic, 34-30 and were gearing up for their second game against AZ College Prep. This is their third year in a row making it to the playoffs.



Arcadia flag football

Girls Flag Football

The Lady Titans made history with their first flag football season, a 33-0 victory over Arete Prep to kick off the season. They finished with a 6-6 record and scored a spot in the playoffs. Ashton Connelly finished in the top four offense rushing and scoring for the 4A Desert Sky region. She scored 80 points and 10 touchdowns with 3,419 total yards going into round one of the postseason.

Cross Country

The Titans enjoyed a memorable season marked by historic achievements and standout performances. For the first time in eight years, the Arcadia boys' team qualified for State, led by junior Chase Braden who finished 7th overall out of 234 runners and was joined by fellow junior Brady Lord and seniors Isaiah Talamantes, Ari Schott, Javier Pulido, Efrain Carmona, and David Darnall.

AHS ranked 15th out of the top 30 Arizona schools, which head Coach Tyler Moore believes is a testament to the athletes' hard work, dedication, and perseverance.

"Throughout the season, the boys demonstrated exceptional teamwork and resilience, consistently improving their times and pushing each other to new heights," Moore said.

The girls' team also had a phenomenal season, with five individual runners qualifying for the State Championships: Ashman Samantha Gagnon, sophomore Evra Therien, juniors Cay Catton and Kelly Mitchell, and senior Charlotte Hopper. Each of these athletes showcased incredible talent and determination, earning their spots at the qualifying Division

2 sectionals meet," Moore added. "Their support for one another was evident in every race, creating a positive and motivating environment. The boys' historic qualification for State and the girls' individual successes have set a new benchmark for the program."

Swim & Dive

It was a successful season in the pool, with the Arcadia swim and dive boys team placing eighth, their highest finish in five years, and the girls' team finishing 13th overall at State.

Ryan Mallender and Aidan McClure finished eighth in their respective events, while Tristyn Abbott, Andrew Brown, Hudson Pentkowski, and Adlai Lipton all swam lifetime bests in the boys' 200 free relay. The boys' 400 free relay of Ryan, Grant Moy, Aidan, and Paul Huisman dropped 10.34 seconds to win their heat and finish eighth overall.

In the girls' championship, Evelyn Klein and Zoë McClure had top 20 finishes in the 200 free, plus the 500 free and 100 fly respectively. In State relay swims, the 200 medleys of Presleigh Voris, Elsa Nunley, Zoë, and Elle Stultz swam a season-best to finish tenth.

On the diving side, Arcadia had the most divers advance to State with five athletes, something coach Brittney Blystone said she was very proud of.

Avery Bowling placed second this year, and Kingston Williams placed 13th in boys' diving. Logan Costello placed 11th, Eva Bowling placed 15th, and Kendall Sawkiw placed 18th in girls' diving.

Golf

It's been a transition year for Arcadia, with just a handful of seniors and many younger players strengthening their skills on the course. Even so, they reached their goal of qualifying for State, participating in the Division 2 Boys Golf State Championships at the end of October. The Titans finished ninth overall with a 606 overall score, led by Jackson Malatesta in 22nd place and Hank Hubbard in 35th place. The girls came in eighth at State with a 696 overall score, as Logan Jenkins finished 25th and Payton Connelly finished 39th.

Volleyball

The Titans came close but ultimately fell just short to St. Mary's, dashing their playoff hopes despite 11 aces and scoring more points across five sets. Their last game marked three consecutive contests with at least 10 aces.

The team finished with an overall record of 15-16, and their best run was a five-match winning streak, including four straight 2-0 wins. Emma Lindenmeyer ranked fifth in the State with 864 assists, and senior Katie Musselmann ranked tenth with 113 total blocks. Senior Lane Sheedy was another key contributor with 416 digs, putting her in the top 25 for all of Arizona.

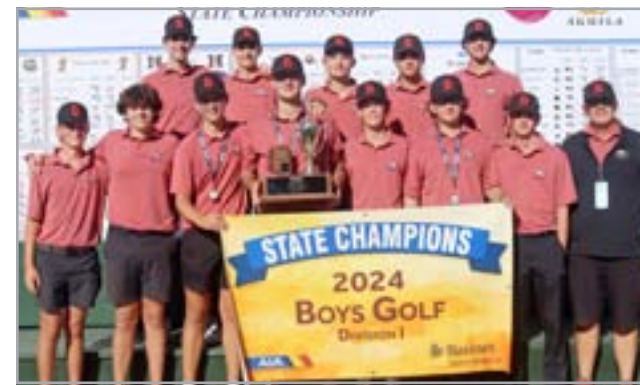
BROPHY PREP

Football

After a one-point overtime loss in the semifinals last year, the Broncos looked to go one step further and once again clinched the No. 1 seed in the AIA 6A Conference playoffs. Brophy finished the season 8-2 and ranked fifth in Arizona. They opened the season with five straight wins, outscoring opponents 171-62.

Junior quarterback Case Vanden Bosch had 14 touchdowns, in 10 games with an average of 80.6 rushing yards per game. Junior wide receivers Daylen Sharper and Devin Fitzgerald led the team in receiving yards and touchdowns. Senior Dominic Woods led the defense as a middle linebacker with 8.1 tackles per game.

In one of their closer games this season, sophomore Ryder Noche came in clutch with a 93-yard kickoff return in the fourth quarter to hold off Mountain Pointe.



Brophy golf

Golf

The Broncos finished the season 8-0 on matches and won the Brophy Rodeo presented by PING and the PING Invite. They placed second in the Brophy Invite and tied for second at the Dobson Classic. This set them up for success on the State stage, as they won the 2024 Division 1 State Tournament after defeating second-place Perry by 21 shots.

Brophy had three players in the top 10: Dylan Boennig, second at nine under par, Asher Nelson tied for fifth at three under par, and Jack Langbein tied for tenth at two under par. Asher finished second in team scoring average.

"I am most proud of the overall team effort, that 12 guys came together to support and encourage one another. We had a very competitive team and everyone contributed to the overall success, which culminated in a State Championship," Head Coach Jon Shores said.

Cross Country

The Broncos finished in the top 10 at the Division 1 State Championship, marking their 17th consecutive season.

Senior Santiago Sanchez was the first Bronco to ever break 15 minutes for three miles at the Woodbridge Invitational and finished as a State medalist for the second straight year. Fellow seniors Evan Giesecke and Ryan Rastad raced the fastest times at State to help bolster the team.

"We are proud of having 60 boys on the team this year, with 20 of them running under 20 minutes for the full 5K distance," Coach Oscar Borboa said. "This team hopes to be back in the top five at the State meet again next year, with the continued development of its underclassmen."

Swim & Dive

Brophy has now won 43 State titles, winning the first since 2019 after taking out the AIA Division 1 State Championship with 417.5 points, a healthy lead over second-place Pinnacle with 324 points. Their successful State campaign included two individual titles, three top-four relay finishes, and ten top finishes in the finals at Skyline Aquatic Center.

Junior Mark Heffern won the 200-yard individual medley and sophomore Patrick Dunn secured the 500 freestyle. Heffern was also fourth in the 100 backstroke, while Dunn finished seventh in the 200 freestyle.

Finn Conley, Markus Crawford, Mark Heffern, and Frank Sunderhaus placed third in the 200 medley relay (1:37.64), followed by Thomas McCauley, Finn, Asher Gomez, and Mark Heffern, who also came third in the 400 free relay. The 200 free relay team finished fourth, with Thomas, Asher, Tritan Oudman, and Frank, who was eighth in the 50 freestyle.

Finn touched seventh in the 100 butterfly and 11th in the 200 free. Asher placed sixth in the 100 freestyle, and Tritan came eighth. Ashton Joswiak was third in the 500 free and 10th in the 100 backstroke.

On the diving platform, Jonah Geist finished 14th, while Scott Schubert came in 21st. This also marked the second straight season of Daren Brubaker receiving Division 1 Coach of the Year honors.

VERITAS PREP

Football

After dropping out in the first round of the playoffs last year, Falcons were ready to fight this season, improving their record to 8-3 and 4-2 in the 2A Verde region. In 11 games, they scored 319 points and gave up 189, with three and four-game winning streaks under their belts.

The team made school history with their first-ever AIA State playoff win, winning 23-20 over Phoenix Christian Jaguars. Throughout the season, junior Rocco Guido earned 11.8 percent quarterback rating with 13 touchdown passes. Junior Tico Lentz averaged 61.8 rushing yards per game with team-high six touchdowns and junior Baylor Arnold had four interceptions.



Veritas cross country

Cross Country

The boys' team had a strong season and qualified for the AIA Cross Country Division 4 State Championship, where they finished 17th overall. Junior Declan Travis led the way, winning a season-best and finishing 29th. Sophomore Santiago lowered his personal best to over two minutes faster than his freshman year.

Freshmen Kingston Travis and James Blakely also ran personal bests, which ranks them as the 12th and 16th fastest freshmen in State this year. Junior Dominic Heil set a new personal best of and was a consistent key contributor to the team's top five. Rounding out the top seven were sophomores Kevin McNeal and Bridger Bahen, who lowered his personal best over three minutes from his freshman season.

"With no seniors on the team, the junior boys stepped up their leadership and the underclassmen ran hard every meet, showing excellent grit and determination," Coach Sawyer Koops said. The girls' team won the Metro Sectional meet and qualified for the AIA State Championship meet, where they placed fourth overall. They were led by junior Rachel Barney, freshman Violet Haggerty, and junior Hazel Haggerty, who all ran personal bests.

Freshman Athena Skikos ranked the fourth fastest first-year high schooler in Division 4 State with a personal best of 21:30. Sophomore Mila Mestaz beat her best record by almost four minutes. Seniors Maggie Powell and Adelia Quayle provided consistent leadership. The former lowered her personal best two minutes and the latter ran a season-best of 26:48.

"Winning their sectional race as a team was a fantastic effort that took the whole team doing their parts to take home the section championship plaque," Koops said. "A top-five team finish in the State is an amazing accomplishment and highlights the depth and strength of this year's team."

Swim & Dive

The Falcons made a splash in the AIA Division 3 Championships, with the girls finishing ninth and the boys placing 26th overall. Andrew Youssef, Jaspar Loel, Mason Shard, and Louis Cristanelli finished inside the top 20 for the boys' 200-yard medley relay.

On the girls' side, Michelle Pham, Abigail McKinzie, Sicily Matteri, and Sara Yani placed fourth in the same relay. Michelle and Abigail placed eighth and ninth in the 200 individual event while Sicily hit 16th in the 100 fly. Michelle also came sixth in the 100 back.

Volleyball

The Falcons rode a three-match win streak into the playoffs with a 25-13 overall record but ultimately fell 3-2 in round one to North Valley Christian. They finished with a 9-1 record at home and went 6-2 in the 2A Valley Region.

Junior Mary Hamann ranked sixth in the State with 469 kills and 24th with a 0.327 hitting percentage. Senior Joanna Llusco ranks 14th Arizona-wide with 739 assists.

XAVIER COLLEGE PREP

Flag Football

Flag football is a relatively new offering at Xavier, but the Gators have wasted no time leaving their mark on the competition in the last few seasons. Although they fell a bit in rankings this year with a 5-7 record, they won some close contests against tough competitors and have plenty to build on.

Their biggest win came in round seven against Tucson High Magnet School, who they beat 28-6. Although it's a young team, all players contributed to their success. Junior Isa Ady ranked ninth statewide with 19 sacks, while junior Ana Matuz Moran recorded 1,808 passing yards as quarterback. Junior wide receiver Gigi Bulkley made seven touchdowns and averaged 82.4 receiving yards per game.

Junior Ruth Reyes received both first team all-region on offense and defense, with Gigi Buckley and Imani Campbell earning first team honors.

"I'm most proud of our work ethic and sportsmanship. It was not the best season, but we played hard and held our heads high, and won the 6A Sportsmanship Award for our sport," Coach Michael Patterson said. "Our goals are to improve and polish the little things."



Xavier cross country

Cross Country

The Gators enjoyed a fun win at the Division 1 Southwest sectionals before heading to State in November. They rolled into the championships ranked tenth and were led by junior Ella Wadsworth and seniors Kaitlyn Markham and Maggie Mostoller; all State meet veterans.

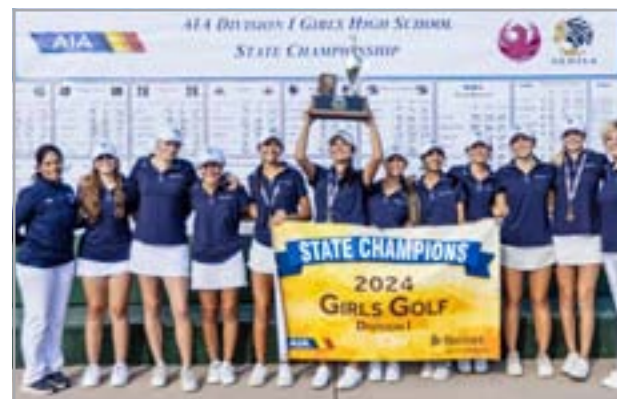
They took fourth place with 168 points. Ella and Kaitlyn were the top runners, finishing 13th and 23rd. They were one of the best duos in the state with personal records of 18:58 and 19:08 in the 5K. LilyGrace Anderson and Evelyn Montes finished in the top 10 of every in-state freshmen and JV race they ran in.

Other highlights included a second-place result for varsity and a first-place finish for JV at the Peaks Invitational, as well as strong showings at the Western Equinox Invitational, Woodbridge Classic, Twilight Invitational and Glendale Showcase. Both varsity and JV won at the John Gleeson Lancer Invitational with Xavier sweeping the top six places.

"By showing up every day and enjoying the process and work, they are all training at a much higher level than they previously have and improved immensely," Head Coach Nissa Kubly said. "Half of our team is new to the sport, yet we had the second-best JV team in the state. Our varsity team averaged 45 second improvements over their times last year. We trained like we loved the sport and raced confidently, which led to us taking fourth at State."

Swim & Dive

The Gators were named AIA Division 1 Champions, capping off an undefeated season with their first State title in eight years. They scored 398 points, putting them 31 points in front of Arizona College Prep.



Xavier golf

Freshman Adelyn Burns claimed two State titles as a freshman, both lifetime bests in the 200 IM and 1:02.85 (a new school record) in the 100 breaststroke. In the opening 200 medley relay, Genevieve George, Adelyn, Carter Cook, and Audrey McEwen set the tone for the meet, winning in 1:45.63.

The Xavier girls placed highly in all three relays, taking third in the 400 free relay and fourth in the 200 free relay. Genevieve also made it onto the podium in two events, taking second in the 100 fly (new school record) and 100 butterfly. In total, Xavier had 12 athletes score in individual events to secure their title.

On the diving platform, senior Maya Superfon placed sixth overall, producing 17 points for Xavier's team score. She was joined by freshman Genny Fischer as they competed against some of the top high school girl divers in Arizona. Genny was seeded 34th and finished in 30th place, a strong start for a dedicated diver with three high school seasons to go.

"The ladies set a goal of top three as a team at the beginning of the season with the true goal of being No. 1," Coach David Smithers said. "They worked through the 'hard' at every practice slowly moving toward their goal. They always stuck to Coach Glen's saying: 'swim fast, smile a lot and have fun.'"

Golf

After going 11-0 in matches this season, Xavier made history once more, securing a 39th State golf title. No other Arizona high school has more than eight. As defending State Champion, Xavier entered the final tournament as the top-ranked team in Division 1, and they lived up to expectations despite a tight battle between Pinnacle and Casteel. When the dust settled, their score was +18, with second place sitting +26.

Sophomore Alexis Lamadrid had scores of 68 and 69 and won in a close race for the individual title, ultimately coming away as a medalist with a one-stroke win.

Isabella Piazza tied for eighth place and Natalia Lamadrid tied for tenth to earn medalist status. Ellie von Kolen and Sophie Pe Benito-Brooks tied for 13th and 19th place out of 82 golfers respectively.

"I'm most proud of how the whole team came together to help us win. All of the top five finished in the top 20," Head Coach Tui Selvaratnam said.

The Gators also won the Aguila Invite, came runner up at the Brophy Rodeo, and third place in the Brophy Invite. The winning streak has been extended to 305 matches and zero losses.

Volleyball

The Gators set their sights on their first State title since 2011 and their 28-4 overall record put them in a good position. They entered playoffs ranked No. 1 in the 6A Division, earning home advantage through quarterfinals and semifinals.

Xavier beat No. 16 Valley Vista 3-0 and No. 8 Queen Creek 3-0 in the first two rounds of the playoffs. They finished 3-0 over Sunnyslope in the semifinals, heading next to the championship with Corona del Sol, in which the Gators prevailed 3-1 to bring home the title.

"I'm proud that we won 6A Central Region as first year members of the new conference," Head Coach Lamar-Rene Bryant said. "Vivian Hickman, Tessa Larkin, Selah O'Connell, Elle McCreery, Mattea Saunders were all key contributors."



The Dining Scoop

THIS MONTH: WINTER WONDERLANDS

Many restaurants are embracing December's festive spirit by transforming their spaces into holiday-themed pop-up experiences.

From cozy, seasonal menus and whimsical décor to unique cocktails and limited-time events, these pop-ups help diners celebrate the season in style. Here are a few to check out!

Ember Lounge

21001 N. Tatum Blvd., Phoenix
shopdesertridge.com

Until January 12, Desert Ridge Marketplace invites guests 21+ to experience Ember Lounge: A District Dome Experience. This immersive experience will transport guests to an evergreen forest that showcases chef-driven bites like bruschetta boards and meatball skillet, craft cocktails like the Northern Lights or the Great Pumpkin, plus a high-definition projection show. Dome after Dark is a late night experience that includes a signature cocktail menu and DJ. Ticket prices vary but start at \$60 for a table of two.

50 Shades of Rose

7419 E. Indian Plaza, Scottsdale
50shadesofroseaz.com

Christmas cheer meets a mischievous twist at this year's 50 Shades of Rose pop-up. Grown-ups can sip on themed cocktails inspired by those wacky movie villains and enjoy wall to wall decor. Menu items include the North Pole Platter, Ya Filthy Eggplant dish, flatbreads and wings (which are 50 cents on Wednesdays!), plus cocktails like the Sleigh All Day, Kiss and Tell hot cocoa, and Clausemopolitan. Reservations are recommended for parties of eight or more.

36 Below

3620 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix
36belowaz.com

36 Below has embraced the magic of the season at its annual Christmas-inspired pop-up. From now until January 5, the space is transformed into a nostalgic wonderland, designed to transport guests into the charm of Christmas. The walls are decked with vintage décor and on the visual screens, diners will gaze out at a serene winter scene – snow gently falling outside a cabin window, complete with distant twinkling lights.

The Nutcracker cocktail blends vodka and coffee liqueur with pistachio cream for a holiday twist, while the Holiday Nog has a mix of rum, cacao liqueur, and egg, topped with marshmallow. Light bites include the prosciutto and burrata plate, smoked salmon dip and a seasonal dessert.

Candytopia

7014 E. Camelback Road, Scottsdale
candytopia.com

The winter wonderland display at Candytopia will shower guests with sweets around every corner and will run through December 31. With 11 unique, interactive environments, each room will have a fun theme and tons of candy, from fan favorites to seasonal treats, for guests to sample. In addition to the displays, there will also be an ornament-making station. Ticket prices are \$15-\$26 per person.

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craft gingerbread houses and enjoy themed milkshakes with toppings like cookies, cakes or pies. Grown-ups can try cocktails like the Frozen Polar Espresso or Jingle Juice – and of course, there will be plenty of snacks on hand. On December 23, the man in red will make an appearance from 4-6 p.m. for photo ops!

Sippin' Santa

1 W. Jefferson St., Phoenix
bitterandtwistedaz.com

Sippin' Santa is an annual tiki-themed Christmas pop-up at Bitter & Twisted that serves cocktails in a festive, tropical setting. Guests 21 and up will find decorations from 10,000 lights, palm trees, surfboard Saint Nicks, and more. Cocktails may include Sippin' Santa, Yule Tide or the Sugar Plum Mai Tai. If you get hungry, the regular B&T menu is available – grab a bowl of hurricane popcorn, barbacoa tacos or keep it sweet with a tiramisu cup.

The pop-up runs through December 28 and guests who book a \$15 Sippin' Experience will be able to skip the line at reservation time and receive a secret Santa gift.

Salt and Lime Modern Mexican Grill

9397 E. Shea Blvd., Scottsdale
saltandlimeaz.com

Salt and Lime has transformed into the annual Feliz Navidad Cantina. The restaurant has decked its halls and boasts a menu of holiday-themed dishes and signature cocktails, appearances from Santa and the Grinch, and classic holiday movies playing throughout the restaurant.

Scottsdale Resort & Spa

7700 E. McCormick Pkwy.
thescottsdaleresort.com

The Social Boardroom at Scottsdale Resort and Spa will transform into a festive pop-up bar, bringing holiday magic with tinsel, garlands,

twinkling lights and all the cheer until December 31.

Guests can savor the season with holiday cocktails, including the Snow Fall with white cranberry juice, champagne and silver shimmer; Silent Night with Howler Head Whiskey, Sazerac Rye Whiskey, banana bread simple syrup, walnut bitters and chocolate bitters; and Frosted Fable with Sazerac Rye Whiskey. When it's time for a bite, The Social Boardroom has a menu at the ready, with dishes like KC BBQ wings, chorizo and black bean empanadas and brisket sliders with Cajun aioli, horseradish pickles and brioche.

THE SCOOP

Chef Chris Collins and his restaurant group, Common Ground Culinary, opened **Saint Urban Wine Bar** at the Mercado at Hayden Shopping Center (8260 N. Hayden Road) in November. Collins' latest concept offers a rotating selection of 30 premium wines by the glass, cocktails, craft beers, and a menu with gourmet bar bites, charcuterie boards, sandwiches, salads and more.
sainturbanaz.com

A new Peruvian-based restaurant has opened near Arcadia. **Mister Pio**, located at 4502 E. Thomas Road, offers half and quarter orders of Peruvian chicken made with a 21-spice rub and cooked in a traditional spinning oven. Each dish comes with a side salad, with triple-cooked French fries available for an additional cost. Chef Justin Nasralla plans on adding other items, like a sandwich and cornbread, in the future.
misterpio.com

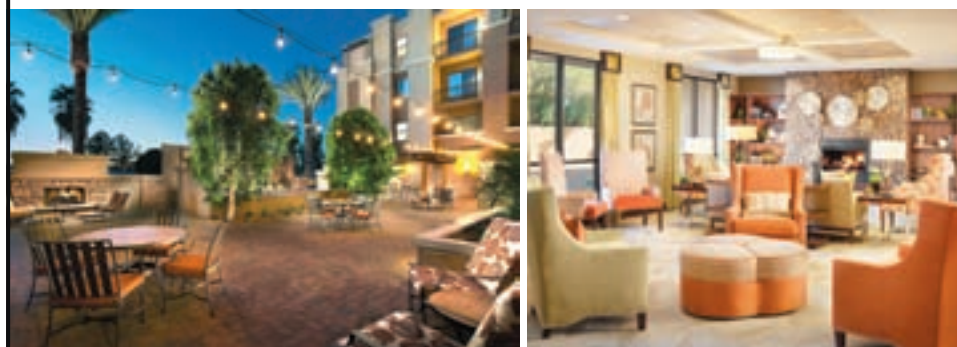
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Ho, ho, let's head to the snow!

For many of you, this is still shorts and t-shirt weather. Sometimes, because of that, it can be a challenge getting into that holiday spirit. I've lived in Arizona for 20 plus years, so the minute the morning temperatures dip below 60, I'm pulling out my sweaters



Robin's Adventures

BY ROBIN SEWELL

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

and getting ready for a hot chocolate or a hot toddy. I'm also a person who doesn't wait until after Thanksgiving to start decorating and celebrating my favorite time of year.

If you are dreaming of a white Christmas and in need of a little festive nudge, how about a road trip?

Not far outside the Valley, you will find a crisp nip in the air, a

bit of that winter chill, which makes the perfect backdrop for the season's sparkly festivities. Let's start by heading up north to Camp Verde where visitors can enjoy a Victorian Christmas.

The fort at Fort Verde State Historic



Northern Arizona offers twinkling lights, festive tunes and plenty of events throughout December.

Park is a feast for the eyes in the winter. It's decorated with ribbons, garlands, and Victorian decorations and on December 7, they host a Victorian ornament making workshop. On select evenings, the park hosts candlelight tours of the homes along Officer's Row, a salute to past and present.

A little farther, but well worth the drive, is Prescott, designated in 1989 by former Governor Rose Mofford as Arizona's Christmas City. This town takes its moniker seriously, with festive events that run through January. Following the "feel the spirit" Christmas City itinerary means driving by the Prescott Valley Library and Town Hall, then through the Valley of Lights in Prescott Valley.

Next, head over to the resort and Conference Center to check out the

world's largest gingerbread village. The Yavapai County Courthouse Plaza is also covered in lights. If you still can't get enough of that warm, fuzzy feeling, there's the Christmas parade, a cocoa crawl, a jingle bar hop, sleigh rides and the third annual Christmas Village and Christkindl market.

Inspired by the longstanding European tradition of holiday markets, visitors can enjoy German foods, beer, and mulled wine while shopping for one-of-a-kind gifts. When you're ready to say goodbye to 2024, the Whiskey Row New Year's Eve Boot Drop is perfect family fun.

Prescott may be our "official" Christmas city, but nothing feels more like the holidays than the smell of Ponderosa Pines dusted or blanketed in snow. If you are ready to bundle up, head

to Flagstaff for the city's famous winter wonderland and tree lighting events.

Snuggle up with your loved ones and enjoy caroling, cookie decorating, s'mores and hot cocoa. There's plenty of activities for all ages, like the winter market at the Museum of Northern Arizona or the North Pole Experience, where guests are whisked away to the "North Pole" to meet that Jolly, white bearded man in the red suit.

Arizona's road trip destinations offer more than just scenic views; they bring the magic of the season to life. Whether you are exploring twinkling lights in the desert or sipping hot chocolate with marshmallows under starry skies, these journeys will leave you with memories as warm as the Arizona sun. Pack your bags and let the holiday spirit lead the way!

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The power of inclusivity

Why do you think most job seekers are looking for a new job? Many managers would confidently report that their employees leave because they are looking for more pay. To some degree, this theory makes sense. Employees are often not honest with their employer about why they're moving on. They often take a "it's not you, it's me" approach to breaking up the work relationship. In exit interviews, they often avoid sharing the real reason they are leaving.

The truth is typically very different. Most employees are uncomfortable with change – it is one of the last things that they want to sign up for. An employee looks for a new job as a last resort. Many won't fully commit to a job search until they are crying in the bathroom stall at work or unable to sleep at night. Those tears have very little to do with pay.

Jessica Hardeman from Indeed.com interviewed ibelong CEO Rajkumari Neogy on the topic of how leaders can reclaim diversity, equity, and inclusion during a divisive time. Neogy shared a personal

story about feeling excluded at work, and the unnecessarily difficult experience it can cause for employees.

Exclusion is a tool that can be used to make an employee feel like an outsider, and that they aren't welcome to bring their whole self to work. Neogy said that after moving on to a new role, it became apparent how much exclusion had made an impact.

Neogy also stressed the importance of

psychological safety in the workplace. Walking on eggshells each day can be emotionally taxing, and can create a difficult dynamic both for impacted employees and those around them. It's hard to share your ideas when you don't feel they will be accepted or even considered. It's hard to let your guard down enough to share.

When workers feel more accepted and understood, they are able to perform at a higher level. And, ultimately the company benefits from reduced turnover and increased productivity. In other words, companies where employees feel included and accepted make more money.

In terms of inclusivity and psychological safety, there is one group that stands out as doing a great job. I was initially surprised to see Gen Z employees being so supportive of one another. Gen Z seems less competitive with one another, and more supportive of the success of their colleagues. They are not out to try to tear one another down. They try to support and build each other up. In addition, they are far more accepting and inclusive of other people who are different than they are. This creates a more collaborative and effective team.

There is something that we can all learn from Neogy and our Gen Z colleagues: There's an incredibly positive power in inclusivity.



*Career
Corner*

BY ANGELA COPELAND

Career expert
and founder of
Copeland Coaching.
copelandcoaching.com

27 YEARS AGO



In 1997, this class of Ingleside eighth graders was getting ready to host a food drive for deserving families. Arcadia News caught up with a few to see what they're up to 27 years later!

Melissa (Jirauch) Metsch: I've been married for 15 years and now call Chandler home. I have a daughter that is a junior in high school and a son in eighth grade. Both kids followed in my foot steps and live and breathe soccer. I am a Regional Manager with Optum and when not working you can find me at a local soccer field or traveling out of state for a tournament!

Drew Davis: This picture makes me smile. So many great people together for each other and the community. Mr. (now Dr.) and Mrs. Davis are still public school educators with two Wildcats at U of A. We look back at our time at Ingleside as some of our best years in education because of the incredible students we got to work and laugh with. And it was heavy with laughter. Thanks for the great memories!

Stephanie (Sherman) Campbell: I'm a mom of four, currently living in Washington. My husband is the Commanding Officer of the USS JIMMY CARTER and we have lived all over the country for the last two decades. I have my master's degree in marriage and family therapy and enjoy volunteering in the many communities we have lived.

Christine (Cimellaro) Scown: After graduating from ASU, I spent my professional career across commercial real estate, consulting, and proptech startups. I recently stepped away from the corporate world and am enjoying my time seeking out passion projects and spending time with family, friends, and my husband. We enjoy mountain biking and spending time outdoors with our English Bull Terrier pup.

Recipes for those who love sweet *and* savory

This month is a fantastic opportunity to add some delicious, plant-based side dishes to your table, and the best part is, no one will even know they're vegan! With just a few simple swaps, traditional flavors can be kept intact, while adding some lighter, nutrient-rich choices to your meal.

Classic sides like scalloped potatoes, savory stuffing, roasted vegetables, and dairy-free desserts are easy to make plant-based without sacrificing taste. A rich cashew cream, coconut milk, or a dollop of dairy-free sour cream can keep those textures and familiar flavors, while vegetable broth adds depth to stuffing and soups. Adding these dishes accommodates everyone at the table and is a gentle way to explore plant-based options in a festive setting.

As we head into the new year, consider setting a few plant-based goals that bring

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

health benefits and environmental impact. If you're not already doing *Meatless Mondays*, it's a great place to start – a single day each week devoted to plant-based meals.

Incorporating small steps can lead to big changes in the way you eat, look, and feel over time. As you celebrate this holiday season, know that a few delicious, plant-based sides are a wonderful way to start making those goals a reality.

Scalloped potatoes SERVES 10



Ingredients

- 1 cup raw cashews
- 3 pounds Yukon gold potatoes
- 2 cups plant-based milk
- 1 cup "no chicken" bouillon broth
- 3 tbsp. nutritional yeast
- 1 tbsp. miso paste
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. garlic granules
- 1 tsp. onion granules
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tbsp. arrowroot powder or corn starch
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- ¼ cup chopped chives

Directions

1. Add the cashews to a small bowl and soak in boiling water for 30 minutes.
2. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
3. Slice the potatoes very thin either by hand or with a mandolin. To prevent them from turning brown you can add them to a large bowl of ice water prior to layering.
4. Drain the cashews and add them to a blender with the dairy-free milk, broth, nutritional yeast, miso paste, Dijon mustard, garlic granules, onion granules, salt and pepper.
5. Blend until smooth. Add in the arrowroot powder and blend again.
6. Spray a 9x13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Layer half of the potatoes into the baking dish and pour on half of the sauce.
7. Add the remaining potato slices and top with remaining sauce.
8. Cover with foil and bake for 60 minutes. Then uncover and bake for 30 more minutes.
9. Cool for 10 minutes then add chopped chives to garnish and serve.

Kale and brussels salad SERVES 6-8



Ingredients

- 2 cups quartered brussels sprouts
- 2 cups bite size cauliflower florets
- 2 cups cubed sweet potato
- Avocado oil spray
- Salt and pepper
- 1 bunch Dino Kale, stems removed
- Juice of one lemon + salt to shake on
- 1 cup cooked farro or quinoa
- ½ cup golden raisins
- ½ cup sweet and spicy pecans
- ½ cup toasted pumpkin seeds

Dressing

- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ tsp. mustard powder
- 1 diced shallot
- 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp. maple syrup
- 1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp. vegan Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. grainy mustard
- 1 tsp. each: garlic granules, pink salt

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400.
2. Spread veggies on a baking sheet and spray with avocado oil, salt, and pepper. Bake for 20-30 minutes.
3. Cut the kale into slivers and put into the serving bowl.
4. Squeeze the lemon juice on and some salt. Massage for a few minutes with gloved hands.
5. Mix up dressing.
6. Toss everything together and enjoy!

Cinnamon simmered apple crumble SERVES 10



Ingredients

- 8 peeled and cubed granny smith or honeycrisp apples (or a mix)
- ½ cup coconut sugar
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 2 tsp. cinnamon, divided
- ¼ cup water
- 1 ½ cups rolled oats
- ½ cup almond flour
- ¼ cup melted coconut oil
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- ½ chopped walnuts

Directions

1. Add the apples to a slow cooker with the coconut sugar, lemon juice, one tsp. cinnamon, and water. Cook on high for two hours (or low for four hours). Or, on the stove top, put into a pot and cook on medium heat for about 10 minutes, then simmer for about 20 minutes with cover on.
2. Preheat the oven to 350.
3. In a large bowl combine the oats, flour, coconut oil, the remaining cinnamon, maple syrup and walnuts.
4. Spread the apples into a 9x13 dish that has been sprayed with cooking spray. Top with the crumble mixture and bake for 30 minutes. Cool for about 15 minutes before serving.
5. Serve with dairy-free Coco Whip topping.



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DID YOU KNOW? SMOKEY

WHAT YEAR?

1944

Smokey Bear was created by the U.S. Forest Service in 1944 as part of a campaign to raise awareness about wildfire prevention. His original slogan was "Smokey Says – Care Will Prevent 9 out of 10 Forest Fires." Smokey Bear is the longest-running public service campaign in U.S. history. Fun fact: While most people refer to him as "Smokey the Bear," his official name is simply "Smokey Bear." The "the" was added later in common use, but is technically incorrect.



Smokey Bear turned 80 years old in 2024! His birthday is celebrated annually with special events and activities focused on wildfire prevention.

HOW MANY?

120

There are over 120 Smokey Bear statues scattered throughout the United States. Since 1952, the life-sized statues have appeared in national forests, parks and schools. Some of them are part of memorials to honor firefighters who lost their lives in wildfires, while others are placed as part of educational efforts.

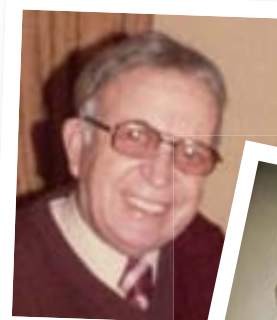


WHO WROTE IT?

Steve Nelson and Jack Rollins wrote a song for Smokey in 1952. Here's a snippet of the lyrics:

"With a ranger's hat and shovel and a pair of dungarees, will find him in the forest always sniffin' at the breeze.

People stop and pay attention when he tells 'em to beware, 'cause ev'rybody knows that he's the Fire Prevention Bear."



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DID YOU KNOW? SMOKEY

The mascot was inspired by a real bear cub that was rescued from a wildfire in New Mexico in 1950. The cub lived out his days at a zoo in Washington, D.C.

The 'real' Smokey died in 1976 and was returned to Capitan, New Mexico, where he is buried at the State Historical Park, now called Smokey Bear Historical Park.

Smokey was a black bear that weighed over 300 pounds.

"Only YOU can prevent forest fires," was introduced in 1947. The phrase was part of a broader push to encourage personal responsibility for wildfire prevention.

In 2001, the slogan was updated to "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires" in response to a massive outbreak of wildfires in natural areas other than forests.

The Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention program created Smokey Bear after losing the rights to use Disney's Bambi characters on posters.

Smokey Bear became a talking character in a series of animated films starting in 1952.

He has appeared in comic strips, books, posters, advertisements, and on television and is one of the most recognizable mascots in America.

The original Smokey Bear design was created by artist Albert Staehle.

Smokey has embraced modern technology to spread his message. His official Twitter account (@Smokey_Bear) provides wildfire prevention tips, news and updates.

The first Smokey Bear statue was erected in 1952 in Tennessee.

Kids (and adults!) can write him a letter at Smokey Bear, Washington, D.C., 20252.

WORD SEARCH

M C O C J M T P B L I I M J R R G O H A P W I K S
M C E Q I D K G J Q Z M B P D P W L P W M V P S D
E V O R M U J K G N O N B U J Q W Q O A H U T S V
Y S C P M D D V E C I V R E S L N Y O L L L Y D L
D M Y H K F U C A U B B Q C A U N K X B A G R W O
U V A T F O T B X N T B Q B X R K G O D N M A Q G
Q U D U N Z E Y B E E C D E B E V J N R O O U A L
R E T T I W T Y Y Q R X X S K F N Y E T I P T W T
G B C S F R K S F U I I F E E F O X B C T Q J U H
X P S C D Y K F Z C F K F Y O A N Q B W A D S I L
U A Z Y J R N W B Z D H H O O O K U D O N Q H Z F
Q A T C K L G L P M L X U T T S Y C H D N I K N X
W I Y C L U M W Z W I I H G E V T V Y T O T L G S
J V H E J I Q U P Y W X N Z B N B K F Y S B R I S
Q A Z M K O L R Y W O I K N B I N R T E V T M A R
M V F S K O A M G T H T B E A L B E R T W K P P N
C H V T N B M D I S C O L N E W O O S C X N F M M
F E U L D D B S A I M N R X S J F N F S T W H A L
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May the spirit of the holiday bring forth light

One of my favorite sights at Christmastime are the blazing lights from illuminated paper bags that line walkways and the tops of walls and houses. The Winter Solstice is the darkest time of the year, so lights and lanterns have been incorporated into winter traditions for hundreds of years. As darkness blankets the landscape, the magic of luminaries unfolds. The

penetrating glow of the candles nestled within the paper bags illuminate their surroundings, casting a soft and serene ambiance. It's not uncommon for people to stroll through the streets, reveling in the ethereal beauty that these

child, these fires were symbolically lit to guide the Holy Family on their journey. Some believe a type of luminaria lit the way in Bethlehem.

There are links to Hanukkah, when people mark the miracle of the container of oil that was only meant to last one day, but instead lasted eight. Hanukkah, known as the Festival of the Light, is celebrated with a multi-branched candelabrum and it's the multiple lights and their use throughout history in guiding, saving and celebrating that cause some to see the candles as forerunners of luminarias.

The first Franciscan padre to arrive in Old Mexico in the early 1500s described how the Indians of New Spain had begun to celebrate "the feast of the Lord, of Our Lady... with much rejoicing and solemnity." Writing in the late 1530s, Padre Fray Toribio De Motolinia noted, "On Christmas night the Indians place many luminarias in the patios of the churches and on the terraces of their houses to resemble starry skies."

Mentions of the lights in the Rio Grande Valley came from a December 1590 journal of Spanish explorer Gaspar Castano de Sosa. He wrote of the lighting of fires along the trail to guide a scout back to camp.

He referred to the fires as luminarias, establishing that as a name for the guiding lights, thereby casting the first stone in a

— “
**Light is a universal symbol
of good, knowledge,
hope and love.**
” —

400-year-old, northern-versus-southern New Mexico debate over the little paper bags. A common thread between these traditions is the influence of Spanish colonization and the attempt to blend Roman Catholic tradition of Christmas into local cultures and winter traditions. Luminarias throughout history have been an ancient tradition of communicating, warning and celebrating through linked bonfires.

The first luminarias were Sosa-style bonfires of crisscrossed pinon bark and dry wood arranged in three-foot-high squares. These were used until American settlers brought Chinese lanterns to Santa Fe via the 18th century Manila galleons and El Camino Real and introduced them to Mexico and New Mexico. In the Philippines, merchants of Spanish origins were doing business with Chinese traders. The Chinese had for centuries made festive lighting with colored paper a thing of great beauty.

The Spanish traders liked what they saw and adopted the custom. Instead of hanging these delicate lanterns from trees or on wires, they were placed on the ground, on rooftops and along pathways. When square-bottomed paper bags were invented in 1872 and brought west on the Santa Fe Trail, people discovered they could put

sand in the bottom of the bag and insert a small candle in the sand. This option was much more economical and efficient.

Over the years, in New Mexico especially, there has been great controversy over what to call the holiday lights. The term luminaria in Spanish means "illumination." North of Santa Fe they prefer to call the lighted bag farolitos, from "farol," derived from the Spanish word faro, meaning lighthouse or "little lantern" and "luminaria," the small stacks of firewood. In the 1930s, as more people got the paper-bag-bug, newspaper articles alternately called them farolitos, linternitas and farolillos.

Whatever you choose to call them, they are all beautiful and have a similar meaning.

Luminarias may have been adopted by Christianity; however, they are not unique to Christianity as light is a universal symbol of good, knowledge, hope and love. A sign of caring, peace, joy and blessings for the next year. In the process of this historic path, the traditions of China and Spain, Mexico and America all merged in these flickering lanterns we now see in many communities across the United States. Today the bags-and-candles tradition stretches from California to Maine, and around many other countries.

The process of preparing and placing luminarias involves the collective efforts of community members fostering a sense of unity and shared celebration. It's a wonderful way for families and neighbors to come together as a reminder of shared values that transcend cultural boundaries. This enduring tradition stands as a testament to the cultural heritage and resilience of the Southwest.

December's cookbook recommendation: "The Christmas Table" by Diane Morgan
December's novel recommendation: "The Heartbeat Library" by Laura Imai Messina
December's recipe: Cranberry Orange Scones



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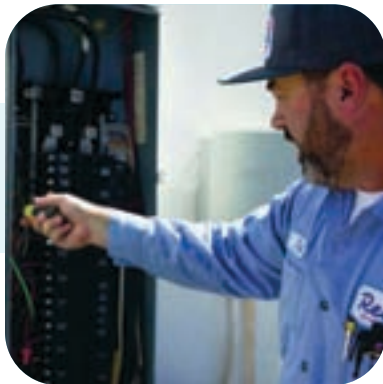


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Driven by purpose: Arcadia's National Honor Society

By Ahva Ghazanfari

The students of Arcadia are always looking for ways to give back to their community. Some – the members of the National Honor Society, to be more specific – actively volunteer on and off campus to help those in need.

“NHS allows for its members to be more hands-on and connected to their surrounding communities,” NHS President Siddha Lennox said. “With the effort the club puts into bettering the community, the community feels appreciated and gives back in return, creating a more positive environment and culture.”

Some activities students have volunteered in include tutoring students, helping teachers around campus and helping at sporting events. Along with independent volunteer work, Arcadia's NHS is in charge of organizing events with its feeder schools, like Tavan's Field



Arcadia High's National Honor Society 2023.

Day event that will take place on Arcadia's campus in December.

Students will pair up with Tavan second-graders and compete in numerous field

events. The students in NHS have also been writing letters to said second-graders – their “buddies” – in which they talk about their interests and ask questions to keep the young kids engaged. This activity is something members have done in past years and an interactive way for them to brighten their buddy's day. The tradition continues throughout the year, allowing students to build genuine relationships with the younger generation.

Being a part of Arcadia's NHS isn't all fun and games, though. It comes with a lot of responsibility. A minimum of six service hours is required for the students to complete each quarter, with four of those hours being acquired on-campus. Sometimes, juggling volunteer work and schoolwork can be a tricky feat.

“I encourage my peers to not procrastinate their work, especially when it comes to volunteering for NHS, and to set aside time in their busy schedule to be able to accomplish the things needed by the deadline,” Siddha said.

Though the students invited to apply are among the top of their class, it is easy to underestimate just how much effort is needed to be an active member of the organization. Their main goal is to encourage students and members of the community alike to use their time to give back. The organization aims to promote its pillars of Scholarship, Service, Leadership, and Character, and NHS exhibits such values to the highest degree.

Arcadia's Market Day

As December arrives, so does the season of giving. The holidays are a time

to celebrate traditions – and one of those for Arcadia seniors is partaking in Market Day. This is an event where all the seniors in economics classes create a product at the beginning of the semester, aiming to sell it at Market Day during lunchtime.

Students are given a budget of \$100 per group member and a due date of December 5 and 6. The rest is left up to them. The semester is spent designing, planning, producing, and advertising their chosen products. Groups get together inside and outside of school to practice their business, teamwork, and communication skills.

Market Day production is overseen by Arcadia's economics teachers, Mr. Guy and Ms. Brodison. Each group must obtain approval for their products, business plans, purchases and advertisements. Items typically found at Market Day include t-shirts, hats, seasonal items like snow globes or Christmas cards, tote bags, and more.

Since students spend months preparing, the actual event is quite professional. Each group gets a table to decorate, and underclassmen go around looking at the different products, purchasing whatever they like. The exchange is complete with actual receipts. This project takes place in both the first and second semesters, depending on when students' schedules allow them to take economics. Market Day ultimately aims to teach students responsibility, communication, leadership and entrepreneurial skills.

– Amelia Guzman



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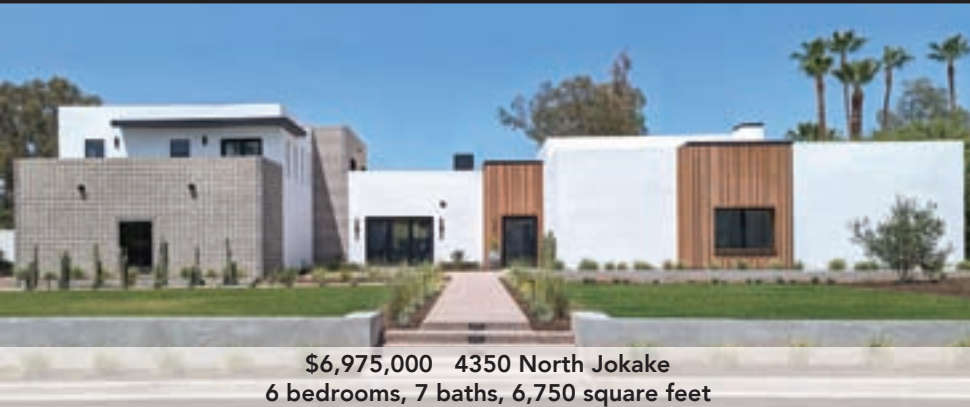


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